

ROOTING OUT CORRUPTION

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® *LIVING
FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

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The Fraternity of Tharos has troubled Impiltur since the devastation of the Spellplague. Today, the power of the Fraternity is great enough that they have penetrated all levels of life in Impiltur including the Grand Council. Adventurers may have experienced this very real threat over the last few years in Impiltur and now there is an opportunity to begin putting an end to this corruption. This continues the major quest started in *IMPI1-5 How to Hunt a Demon* and *IMPI1-6 The Ancient Temple*. A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Impiltur for characters levels 14 - 17.

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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OFFICIAL D&D PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an event, or you received it from your organizer. To play this adventure and receive rewards for it, you must schedule it as an event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To schedule a game for public play, you must be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network. Information on enrolling in the program can be found at www.wizards.com/wpn. If you are scheduling the game for private play, you do not need to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network. The person who schedules the event, called the organizer, is in charge of making sure the event is scheduled before play, runs smoothly on the date scheduled, and gets reported back to Wizards in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the organizer is also the table DM. You don't have to be enrolled in the Wizards Play Network to DM this adventure if you are not the organizer.

By scheduling and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First, it is an official game, tracked under your play history. Second, DMs gain rewards for scheduled play if they are members of the DM REWARDS program. DMing this adventure is worth one (1) point.

To learn more about event scheduling and DM REWARDS, visit the D&D Events website at www.wizards.com/dnd and click on "Events."

PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the following D&D 4th Edition rulebooks: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*. 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 on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear 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 an officially scheduled event, 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. A lower-case letter (used only in some 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 when you DM for a group:

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

To reinforce this golden rule, keep in mind the following:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and make decisions about how the group interacts with the world of this adventure.** This is especially important and applicable outside of combat encounters, but feel free to use the "scaling the encounter" advice (usually for adjusting to different-sized groups) to adjust combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time in an adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult for a group.** 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 ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each of them the experience they're after when they play D&D. Give everyone a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game session moving along appropriately.** 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 within 3.5 - 4 hours; try to be very aware of running long or short. Adjust the pacing accordingly.

- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with their environment.** Players should always know when enemies are affected by conditions and are bloodied. They should be given clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting too frustrated over lack of information. This helps to encourage immersion in the adventure and gives players “little victories” for figuring out a good choice from a clue.

In short, 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 adventure is designed for player characters (PCs) levels 14 - 17. Characters that fall outside of the level range may not participate in the adventure. Make certain to check the levels of the PCs before beginning play to ensure that they are the proper level.

Each adventure has a low-level version and a high-level version. The low level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the lower levels of the adventure's level spread. The high level is meant for a group whose levels, on average, fall in the higher levels of the adventure's level spread.

A group may decide to play the high level when their levels are more suited to the low level if everyone in the group agrees to do so; however, some of the rewards may not be available to them. Conversely, a group may decide to play the low level when their levels are more suited to the high level if everyone in the group agrees; however, some of the rewards may be less than what they'd ideally want from the adventure.

Reading the Numbers: Each encounter has a level and sometimes other values (such as XP or skill check DCs) listed with two numbers divided by a slash. The number before the slash is always the value for the low-level version of the adventure; the number after the slash is the value for the high-level version of the adventure.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If a group fails to defeat an encounter - that is, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they reach the predetermined number of failures in a skill challenge before reaching success - they are only awarded half experience points (round down) for the encounter. If they manage to tackle the encounter later and defeat it, award them the other half of the experience points for the encounter.

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 the component cost for the ritual.** If the group chooses this option, the cost should be divided evenly among the group (500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). Using a source outside the group to cast the ritual costs 20% more than the component cost. Total cost when using an outside source is 600 gp for heroic tier, 6,000 gp for paragon tier, and 60,000 gp for epic tier. A PC that dies and chooses this method of return gains full (or half, if the party was defeated) experience points from the encounter in which the character died, but no experience points for any encounters that were missed while the character was dead. If there are encounters remaining, the PC continues to earn experience as normal, and receives a normal cut of the rewards at the end of the adventure.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group cannot afford to pay for the ritual (or doesn't desire to do so), the PC can choose to return to life at the end of the adventure. Doing so forfeits all rewards (including treasure and story rewards) earned for the adventure except experience points gained prior to the character's death (the character receives the experience point award for the encounter in which they died). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

MILESTONES

No matter if the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they reach a milestone if it is the second

encounter they've had since the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. **Encounters that do not give out experience points do not count for purposes of reaching a milestone.** Make certain to mention this information to the players when applicable, as it gives each PC another action point and affects how some magic item powers are used.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't easily resolved before the end of the adventure. The two most common lasting effects are the death penalty and diseases.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life by the Raise Dead ritual, that character suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until they have reached three milestones. The player should simply record the adventure where the character died on their adventure log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, they no longer suffer the penalty.

Diseases: Diseases take hold of a character and last until they are cured or they reach their 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 the adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cure or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may decide to 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. Any effects that last for a specific period of time (that end after a certain number of days or a certain number of extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified). Effects that use some sort of adventuring benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's logsheet and tracked across adventures.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In *IMPI1-5 How to Hunt a Demon*, mysterious blood-soaked letters detailing a plot against Impiltur were discovered. The handwriting was later matched to Lord Belgaros of the High Council after he attempted to

secure a powerful relic in *IMPI1-6 The Ancient Temple*. Despite the evidence against him, Belgaros was able to deflect the accusations and remain in power. Lord Grigor Van Deesbrock has long suspected Belgaros of being a Fraternity of Tharos member, but he has been unable to gather sufficient proof to oust the corrupt noble from the council. Tonight, however, he may have finally gotten the break he has been hoping for: His men learned of a message delivered to a warehouse mentioning a dawn meeting to sell an ancient crown. Grigor knows of only one person interested in such an artifact: Belgaros. Rather than seize the relic for safekeeping, Grigor decided to take the opportunity to obtain conclusive evidence to expose his fellow councilman's ties to the cult. To that end, he has called for the aid of a group of trusted adventurers.

Unbeknownst to Grigor and Belgaros (not that Belgaros would care) the "merchant" delivering the crown is the Netheril agent Erart Mirt (appearing in *CORE1-1 Inheritance*). For Erart, delivering the crown is not only a supplementary income, but also a way to prevent Impiltur from returning to its former glory as a peaceful powerful kingdom under the guidance of the faithful of Torm. He uses shadow magic to keep his ship and the crown hidden, and he is hard to fool, making the work for the adventurers all the more difficult.

DM'S INTRODUCTION

Some of the NPCs in this adventure reference *IMPI1-5 How to Hunt a Demon* and *IMPI1-6 The Ancient Temple*. Before starting, ask if any of the PCs have completed both adventures and what their relation is to the various NPCs so you can adjust the encounters and NPC interactions appropriately. Of particular interest are **IMPI07 Member of the Luminous Society**, **IMPI8 Enmity of the Luminous Society**, **IMPI10 Trusted Agent** and **IMPI11 Dishonest**.

Keep in mind that this adventure completes the major quest line of those two adventures. Lord Grigor's goal is to bring Lord Belgaros to justice, not have him killed. The major quest thus cannot be fully completed if the PCs kill Lord Belgaros during the adventure.

Erart Mirt, a high-ranking Shadovar agent, appears in this adventure. While he does not necessarily care who gets the crown, he might have a particular opinion about the PCs in which may influence is interactions in Encounter 2. PCs who have formed an alliance with Netheril, such as those with the story awards **CORE02 Shade Coin** from *CORE1-1 Inheritance* or **CORE30 Wrath of the Moon** from *CORE1-15 Where Dragons Die*, are greeted with respect and have an easier time. PCs that have earned the enmity of the faithful of Shar

or Netheril, such as those with the story awards **CORE15 Humiliated the Dark Moon Monks** from **CORE1-8 Taken** or **CORE29 Mixed Blessings** from **CORE1-15 Where Dragons Die**, are greeted with disdain and have a harder time.

There is a more minor role for captain Flin, a respected member of the Fire Knives from Westgate and an experienced smuggler and pirate. He is the captain of the ship transporting Mirt and the Crown. He has been hired to protect Erart Mirt, but can be convinced to look the other way. Doing so is harder for those who have earned the enmity of the Fire Knives in a Dragoncoast adventure, and easier for those who befriends that organization.

The adventure starts at Lord Grigor's estate. Grigor wants from the group to intercept the sale of a powerful artifact and gather irrefutable proof that Belgaros is a member of the Fraternity of Tharos. Grigor and the Luminous Society have long suspected the noble of corruption, and they feel they can at last put an end to his influence on the council.

Grigor wants the PCs to gain possession of the relic, currently with a merchant on a ship anchored in the harbor, and act as the seller. He hopes the PCs can gain access to a warehouse suspected of housing cult activities and find the evidence he is seeking against Belgaros.

The PCs locate Erart's ship. They then negotiate with the crew to be allowed aboard and convince Erart that it is in his best interest to let them handle the exchange. Finally, they convince Belgaros' agent Tawn that they are truly the merchant's liaisons, all while avoiding any suspicion so as to not alert Belgaros of their involvement.

The PCs are ambushed as they hand over the crown, the details of which vary depending on whether or not they succeeded in the skill challenge to avoid arousing suspicion.

Once the PCs have dealt with the guards, they either resume negotiations or find their own way down into the secret demonic temple. The PCs deal with a series of lethal traps before finally arriving at the Summoning Room was Belgaros' is eagerly waiting for his servants to deliver the crown.

Belgaros and his guards do not go down without a fight. After defeating Belgaros, the PCs find ample evidence linking Belgaros to the Cult of Tharos.

Ultimately, the PCs must deal with the repercussions of fighting with a Council Member and having a powerful evil artifact in their possession (which they can destroy if that is their wish). If all things go according to plan, Belgaros is convicted and the PCs are hailed as heroes. Otherwise, the PCs might have a more

difficult time bringing down a politically savvy man like Belgaros.

The adventure uses the DCs from the *Rules Compendium*.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

The PCs are in New Sarshel for whatever reason they fancy. If they have befriended Lord Grigor in the past, they are here on his invitation to discuss plans on how to thwart the Fraternity of Tharos. They might have brought the other characters along. If they are not his friends, there are countless other reasons for being in the city. Regardless of those reasons, a disguised servant asked them to attend a midnight meeting with his Master, Lord Grigor Van Deesbrock. The man was clearly in a hurry, looking for experienced adventurers for a dangerous task, and he promises both glory and gold. He is sincere. If the PCs accept the invitation, read aloud or paraphrase the following:

The clock strikes midnight as you enter the grand parlor of the Van Deesbrock estate. A roaring fire casts a golden glow over the room. A middle-aged man paces nervously in front of the fire, then stops and turns towards you.

"Praise be to Ilmater that you were able to heed my call so quickly!" Lord Grigor exclaims as he approaches. "Tonight, my friends, we strike a blow to the Fraternity of Tharos and those who would harm Impiltur. Do you stand with me?"

ENCOUNTER 1: MIDNIGHT MEETING

SETUP

Important NPCs:

Lord Grigor Van Deesbrock

This scene takes place in the grand parlor of the Van Deesbrock estate. Lord Grigor's attitude towards the PCs is dependent upon which story rewards the PCs have been awarded. If any of the PCs have the story awards **IMPI07** and/or **IMPI10**, Grigor is pleased to see them and eager to converse with the group.

If any of the PCs have the story awards **IMPI08** and/or **IMPI11**, Grigor is angered to find such an untrustworthy scoundrel in his presence, muttering about the lack of skill of his servants. PCs with these story rewards must first regain the trust of Grigor before the scene continues. Skip to Regaining Acceptance before continuing.

Lord Grigor manages a faint smile that fails to conceal his concern. "For those of you who were not aware already, a member of the Grand Council is suspected of being in league with the Fraternity of Tharos. Tonight, I have received information that can place us one step ahead of his treachery and help me expose his corruption to the council once and for all."

Lord Grigor offers the following information:

- Grigor's men intercepted a note delivered to a warehouse that has been under surveillance for suspected cult activity.
- The note can be found in Player's Handout 1. Lord Grigor has no idea who M is. The Dark Lady is a reference to the goddess of the night Shar.
- Grigor knows of only one person interested in a crown: Belgaros. The artifact recovered from the Telluric Nod temple was not the crown of might.
- Rather than seize the ship and the crown, Grigor wants to use this chance to find hard evidence that Belgaros is after the relic.
- Grigor wants the PCs to take the place of the intermediaries so that they can keep the relic secure, and be directly involved in the meeting to discover who is trying to buy it.
- Grigor also wants the PCs to search the warehouse for evidence of cult activity.

- The warehouse is within walking distance of a wealthy section of New Sarshel, where several council members keep manor homes, including Belgaros.
- Belgaros has never been seen entering the warehouse.
- Grigor was able to trace ownership of the warehouse to Belgaros, but this is circumstantial. He wants hard evidence that puts Belgaros in the warehouse should the PCs find a cult meeting place there.
- Grigor makes it absolutely clear that he does not want to be connected to the hunt for evidence against a fellow noble in any way. Anything the PCs find must be taken directly to the Council.
- He offers 1000/3000 gp each, half up front, to help cover any costs the PCs might incur on the mission.

REGAINING ACCEPTANCE

If any PCs have been deemed untrustworthy, they must win back the trust of Lord Grigor before he deals with the group. He wants an explanation for why those characters are here - a DC 22/23 Bluff or Diplomacy check. PCs who are in his good graces can vouch for the PCs, allowing them to aid or make the check instead.

If the PC fails to talk his way back into Lord Grigor's favor, as a last ditch effort he or she can offer something valuable as a token of faith to be left in the noble's keeping until the PC returns from the completed mission. The item is unavailable to the PC for the duration of the adventure.

Should a PC fail this attempt to regain acceptance and not be willing to part with a magic item, the PC is dismissed. He can rejoin the rest of the party outside of Lord Grigor's home. Lord Grigor trusts the rest of the party to do what is best for Impiltur and the success of the mission, so although he is not naïve, he trusts in those he is hiring.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Grigor dismisses the PCs and apologizes for being unable to help directly. When the players are ready, proceed to Encounter 2.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs do not earn any XP for this encounter, and it does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

Each PC receives 500/1500 gp.

ENCOUNTER 2: I'M ON A BOAT!

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 15/17, COMPLEXITY 2 (2400/3200 XP)

SETUP

Important NPCs:

Captain Flin, elderly, grim ship captain

Erart Mirt, cold Shadovar agent

Tawn, Belgaros' agent

The PCs arrive at the docks in the dead of night. There are some street lamps flickering dimly to allow visibility.

The scent of the sea is carried on a brisk breeze that wraps you in a chilly mist. Wooden ships creak as waves gently roll beneath them; ropes strain and squeak as the boats rise and fall. The docks are mostly deserted, but the muted sound of singing comes from a nearby tavern and you are certain beggars are resting in nearby alleys.

The PCs need to locate the ship, get on board, convince the merchant to hand over the crown and get Belgaros' men to allow them to hand over the crown in person, all without rousing Belgaros' suspicions.

Troubleshooting

The skill challenge is a social skill challenge; as such there is a risk that one or two PCs with good social skills dominate the encounter. Try to prevent this. One thing you can do is making sure other characters have a reason to get involved in the negotiations. Only do so when the other character has a reasonable social skill check modifier, or reduce the DC to 15/16. Alternatively you can let the PCs use non-social skills to gain a success, but be careful it does not feel too contrived.

SKILL CHALLENGE: TRUST ME

Goal: Delivering the crown at Belgaros' warehouse without rousing any suspicion.

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Varies

Other Skills: Varies

Victory: The PCs get the crown at the warehouse without triggering an alarm, having an easier fight.

Defeat: The PCs face Belgaros' full forces at the warehouse.

This challenge takes place in five scenes. Each scene describes what happens if a third failure is scored. The noted skill uses are suggestions, and you should allow the use other skills if such makes sense.

Bluff DC 15/16 (0 success)

When a PC wants to disguise him- or herself to avoid being recognized they need to succeed at this check.

SCENE 1: A NEEDLE IN A HAYSTACK

The PCs find themselves on the docks of New Sarshel. They have to learn which ship is hiding the crown without alerting Belgaros' agents.

Only ships loading or offloading cargo are docked. Most trading ships are anchored in the bay outside. Getting a list of the recently arrived ships is easy. Doing so provides a list of four potential ships: the *Grey Seal* from High Imasker, the *Wavestrider* from Calimshan, the *Kingfisher* from Sembia and the *Flaming Lady* from Westgate.

The *Flaming Lady* carries Erart Mirt and the crown. The PCs get this name when they score 1 success in this scene. Getting to the *Flaming Lady* is easy. Once they do, proceed to the Scene 2.

3rd Failure: Erart Mirt loves to play games with people. He decides to invite the PCs to see what they want. Ignore Scene 2 and play out Scene 3 and 4 for role-playing purposes. Belgaros' agents though have spotted the PCs as well.

History DC 22/23 (1 successes; 1 maximum)

Once the choice for the PCs is limited to four possible ships, the *Flaming Lady* is the most likely candidate to transport dangerous magical artifacts. Captain Flin has good connections with the Fire Knives and a good reputation. PCs from the Dragoncoast make the check against DC 15/16.

Insight or Perception DC 22/23 (1 success; 1 maximum)

By observing the various ships in the harbor, the PC realizes there is something odd about the *Flaming Lady*.

Streetwise DC 22/23 (1 success; 1 maximum)

Getting the names of the ships is easy, doing so without rising suspicion less so. Regardless of success, the PCs learn of the four new arrivals. If successful they learn the captain of the *Flaming Lady* has not given his sailors shore leave, which is odd, and it has a gray skinned passenger aboard.

If the PC beat DC 30/31, they learn of captain's Flin reputation as described under History, as well as that

the gray skinned passenger is a shade, a Netheril agent named Erart Mirt.

SCENE 2: AHoy!

The sight of a boatful of well-armed adventurers appearing alongside your ship in the pre-dawn hours puts anyone on edge, especially an old sea dog like Captain Flin.

A lantern hangs over the railing, casting light down upon you. A weathered face appears and peers at you cautiously. "And who might ye be, come callin' at me ship this time a' night? Be quick about yer explainin', Captain Flin will have yer answers now, or be off with ya!"

Scanning the ship's deck, the PCs make out a number of the crew, standing at the ready with hands resting on their weapons. The sailors are veterans. The PCs can fight their way aboard, but that is bound to draw a LOT of attention from the harbor, and there is no way to know the skill of people transporting powerful artifacts. Once the PCs earn a success, go to Scene 3.

3rd Failure: The commotion on deck draws the attention of Erart Mirt, who comes up to see what is going on. Angered by the apparent disrespect shown by the PCs, captain Flin makes sure Belgaros is aware of the characters' involvement. Proceed with Scene 3 and 4 for role-playing purposes.

Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 22/23 (1 success) Whether using lies, honeyed words or threats, the PCs convinces captain Flin to let them aboard and talk with Erart Mirt. Known enemies if the Fire Knives have a -5 penalty on this check. The PCs gain a +2 bonus per 50 gp offered as a bribe. If they offer 250 gp or more they score an automatic success.

Stealth DC 22/23 (group check; 1 success; 1 maximum)

The PCs can try to sneak aboard, but doing so is not easy. If caught, the PCs can try to talk their way out of it (especially if they have not yet tried negotiations).

SCENE 3: DARK AGENT

The PCs are brought below deck to a cabin down a narrow hall. On the other side of the door are Erart Mirt and a pair of shadar-kair bodyguards.

You are brought below deck to a small door. The door is opened before you can knock. In the opening stands a dangerous looking shadar-kai female warrio. Behind

her, you see a luxurious cabin. A well-dressed male shade relaxes in a chair while sipping from a glass of wine. He smiles at you, but it does not reach his cold black eyes. "Unexpected guests. Please sit. Take a glass of wine. How can I help you?"

The two shadar-kai bodyguards are Redeen and Sallen, efficient killers, impervious to threat or bribe.

The shade is Erart Mirt, an extremely polite gentleman who keeps his arrogance well hidden. He takes a somewhat perverse pleasure to remain polite and dignified no matter what others in his company do, acting as if those he is dealing with remain equally polite and well behaved.

Erart hopes to cause havoc in Impiltur. He wants to keep the country in chaos since he is aware the risk of a theocracy of Torm would be to Netheril's plans of conquest. It is a long-term plan since for now Impiltur lies far outside Netheril's sphere of influence. The crown is known to corrupt its owner, regardless of the owner's original moral outlook, as such he does not care overly much who gets the crown.

If asked how he came to have the relic, Erart says that he was asked to broker a deal by an associate. He was asked to transport the property here and transfer it to the buyer. He does not go into elaborate details on the reasons for his involvement, let alone about his employers.

Once the PCs score 2 successes in this scene, Erart is convinced to hand over the relic. He gives the PCs an ornate carrying case. Inside, there is a black crystal box. Erart explains the box was crafted to seal the crown inside. Only the buyer knows the secret ritual to open the box. Erart cautions that any attempts to tamper with the crystal box produce "a dire outcome." He does not elaborate. The buyer would send an agent to greet him. In order to identify the buyer's agent, the agent pretends to be a beggar and ask for a coin. The proper response is "I have more to offer than gold can buy." The agent confirms by then asking to see "the treasure from far away."

By this time it is dawn, and the *Flaming Lady* sets course for the docks. Proceed to Scene 4.

3rd Failure: Erart decides to hand over the crown, simply because he feels it is not worth the trouble. In this case though, he "forgets" to mention the password and also sends a warning to Belgaros. Run Scene 4 and 5 for role-playing purposes.

Enmity/Friendship of Shar

Depending on the story awards PCs might have earned the friendship or enmity of the followers of Shar and/or Netheril Empire. Friends gain 1 automatic success. Unless successfully disguised, enemies earn 1 automatic

failure. The group can earn both a maximum of 1 success and 1 failure due to these story awards.

Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 22/23 (1 success; 1 maximum per skill)

The PCs convince Erart it is a good idea to hand over the crown whether through lies, honeyed words.

History DC 22/23 (1 success; 1 maximum)

The involvement of a shadovar agent is a bit odd until one considers Impiltur of old. In the pre-Spellplague days Impiltur was a powerful kingdom under the sway of the followers of Torm. Chances are Erart is here to keep the country in chaos. Regardless, he is unlikely to care overly much to what happens here.

Insight DC 22/23 (1 success; 1 maximum)

Erart does not seem to care overly much about the fate of the crown. In fact, he seems to be a bit amused of the PCs' involvement. Money, angering the buyer and honesty of trade are his arguments against betraying his employer, but none are all that important if the downsides of giving the PCs' the crown are somehow offset.

SCENE 4: LOYAL SERVANT

The boat with the PCs aboard has just docked.

In the gloaming light before dawn breaks, you see the port is bustling with activity now that ships are allowed to dock. Amongst the crowd, you note a thin human man pacing the docks, wiping his hands on his thick garments. He appears eager if a bit slow-witted, and seems to be looking for something...or someone.

The man is Tawn, Belgaros' agent. Tawn appears to be a halfwit, devoted to his beloved master with no ambitions beyond serving him faithfully. In truth, Tawn is an accomplished sneak who has perfected this role to trick others into letting their guard down.

Tawn's mission is to assess the person who has the relic. He 'lets slip' bits of information in a chatty, rambling style. PCs who are fooled by his simpleton performance might see this as an opportunity to gather some vital information and ask Tawn questions.

Use the following information for engaging Tawn:

- If the PCs kept on the good side of Erart, they exchange the proper lines and Tawn insists on seeing the box. He bounces excitedly and claps his hands, saying things such as "Pretty!" and "Yes, that's it!"
- If Erart never mentioned the passwords, the PCs need to bluff their way along. Tawn does

not give away that they flubbed the prearranged codes.

- Once Tawn has seen the crystal box, he motions for the PCs to follow him. If a PC tries to stow the box in a container, Tawn insists it be kept visible at all times by saying "No, let me see, let me see! No tricks, I want to see, Master told me to see...no tricks!"
- Tawn deflects questions with shrugs and non-answers such as "I don't know; I am not allowed into some rooms; Master told me that is a secret!" and so on.

Once the players are done conversing with Tawn, proceed to Scene 5.

3rd Failure: Tawn keeps up the pretence he trusts the PCs. Once at the warehouse in Scene 5 he immediately signals the tanarukk to ambush the PCs.

Bluff DC 15/16 (group check; 1 success; 1 maximum)

The PCs convince Tawn that they pose no threat to Tawn's master and that they are really simple mercenaries brought along to keep the crown out of the hands of thieves.

SCENE 5: WAREHOUSE ENTRY

The PCs are lead into a warehouse by Tawn. From the outside it is an ordinary warehouse. Once the PCs enter it, they see crates stacked variously in the room, with a couple of guards standing at attention in plain sight. The most notable feature of the room is a table loaded with neat stacks of coins.

Tawn rushes happily past the broad-shouldered hooded guards, saying "See, I did it right!" and stops behind a table piled with gold coins. "Here, put the box here, like Master said, to test it." He points to a small rune circle drawn on the table. "This is your gold, half like promised, before the test. Then Master will come and give you more."

The PCs should cooperate. If they refuse, have one of the guards encourage them in a non-threatening manner. If anyone makes an Arcana check on the rune circle, they detect magic involving an unknown divination ritual and does not include teleportation or anything malicious. Insight on Tawn lets the PCs know he is sincere about the box needing to be tested.

If the players cooperate, once the crystal box is placed in the circle, Tawn steps back, and he tells the PCs to do the same. The runes illuminate and the black crystal now becomes clear, revealing the crown within. At that point the tanarukks either get greedy and attack,

or, when the PCs failed the skill challenge, Tawn signals them to attack.

Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 22/23 (1 success; 1 maximum)

If the PCs simply allow Tawn to do as planned, they score an automatic success. If they protest, or try to see Belgaros before handing over the crown, they must make the check to prevent raising undue suspicion.

Examining the Guards

Arcane DC 23 (after successful Perception; 0 successes; 1 maximum)

The hooded guards are tanarukk, a magical crossbreed of orcs and demons. Tanrukks are created through powerful arcane rituals. They are strong, violent and difficult to control.

Insight DC 30/31 (0 successes; 1 maximum)

One of the workers seems to be under some kind of magical disguise. It keeps a close eye on the PCs.

Perception DC 22/23 (0 successes; 1 maximum)

The guards keep their features well hidden, but they are clearly not human. If a character succeeded at a DC 30/31 check they see glimpses of the guards' large tusks, red glowing eyes, shark-like tooth and leathery green skin. This opens the Arcana check to identify their true nature.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Tawn takes the PCs to the warehouse regardless of the PCs' success or failure in the skill challenge. Once the players are done conversing with Tawn or in some way act against the guards, go to Encounter 3. In case of success, Tawn and the local dockworkers keep out of the fight. In case of failure, they get involved. Similarly, what happens after the fight in Encounter 3 also changes depending on the results of this skill challenge. See Encounter 3 for more details.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 480/640 experience points each for completing the skill challenge.

TREASURE

There is no treasure found in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 3: NOT SO SIMPLE AFTER ALL

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 15/17 (6400/8400 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following at the low tier:

2 tanarukk steel warriors (level 16) (S)

2 tanarukk marauders (level 15) (M)

1 incubus (level 15) (I)

If the PCs failed the skill challenge add:

1 Tawn (level 15) (T)

9 human cultists

This encounter includes the following at the high tier:

2 tanarukk steel warriors (S)

2 tanarukk marauders (M)

1 incubus (level 15) (I)

If the PCs failed the skill challenge add:

1 Tawn (level 17) (T)

9 human cultists

There are two possible scenarios depending on the outcome of Encounter 2. If the PCs succeeded at the skill challenge, they fooled Tawn. At seeing the crown, the tanarukk and the incubus are overcome by greed and want it for themselves. If the PCs failed, they did not fool Tawn, in which case Tawn tries to grab the box from the rune circle, flips the table, and commands the guards to attack.

Characters with a passive DC 22/23 Perception note the vague outlines of the magic circle on the floor beforehand.

Suddenly, the guards throw their hoods back, revealing demonic orc faces. "Give us the box, and your death will be swift," one of them growls. The faint outline of a magic circle in the warehouse floor suddenly flares and begins glowing a violent blue.

If Tawn still trusts the PCs, he is taken by surprise, and retreats outside of the warehouse. He plans to take the crown from whoever wins. In this case the cultists also retreat. One of the dockworker cultists is an incubus in disguise in the service of Belgaros. He sees an

opportunity to steal the crown and flee to Belgaros with it to claim an additional reward.

If the PCs failed the skill challenge, Tawn orders the attack. He flips the table to provide cover, ordering the tanarukk and cultists to get the crown at all costs.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Braziers: Two large burning braziers provide illumination.

Brazier	Single-Use Terrain
A large black iron brazier is filled with glowing red coals, spreading both light and heat in the room.	
Move Action	
Check: DC 22/23 Athletics check	
Success: The brazier is knocked over.	
Target: Each creature in blast 3 in front of the brazier.	
Attack: +18/+20 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 fire damage.	
Effect: The area of the blast becomes difficult terrain, and a creature that enters or starts its turn in the zone take 5 fire damage.	

Dockworkers/Cultists: To keep up pretense, 10 dockworkers (all cultists) are working in the warehouse. Place these randomly over the map, mostly amongst the goods at the back. They pose little threat to the PCs, and unless directed by Tawn, flee at the first sign of trouble. If directed by Tawn, they recklessly throw away their life, assisting the demons on their attacks and/or defenses through aid-another action. They are considered minions, but are unable to directly damage the PCs, and are hit on any attack roll except a natural 1.

Magic Circle: The magic circle on the floor appears as soon as the combat begins. The circle (and area within), and any square adjacent to it, is considered rage stone. A creature that starts its turn in a square of rage stone and doesn't make a melee attack on that turn takes 10 psychic damage at the end of its turn.

Stacked Goods: The open areas between the tiled floor represent stacks of crates, barrels and large sacks. These stacks reach the ceiling and are blocking terrain. The stacked goods provide superior cover if 2 squares wide or less. Otherwise, they block line of sight and line of effect.

Single Crates: Individual crates provide partial cover and count as blocking terrain. They are no higher than five feet and can be jumped on or over.

Table and Coins: The table is overturned just before the fight begins, spilling coins into the 4-square (2x2) area in front of it. The table provides partial cover and blocks one of the passages into the back of the warehouse. The spilled coins count as difficult terrain.

TACTICS

Tawn and the demons try to secure the crown at all costs, picking it up as a minor action if it is not already held, or attacking whichever PC is holding the crown. Whoever has the crown retreats to the back of the warehouse to gain a better position.

The incubus tries to dominate the owner of the crown through *dream control*. Once it has dominated the PC, it moves the PC to the back and drop the crown into the hatch. If these tactics are impossible, it fights to the best of its ability. It flees once all its allies are dead, either through the hatch at the back (taking the crown if it was dropped) or by turning into an eagle and flying through a hole on the ceiling.

The tanarukks' tactics are simple. The steel warriors mark sturdy looking opponents while outside of the direct line of effect from potential ranged attacks and the marauders rush in and out of the fight using *brutal rampage* as often as possible. If undirected they flee if more than half are dead, preferably with the crown. If lead by Tawn, they fight to the death.

Tawn keeps to the back, trying to keep as many PCs and tanarukk within the area of his *awestrike*. He slides opponents into the circle of rage stone. He directs the incubus to focus on stealing the crown, but if the incubus is incapable of doing so, he does so instead. He fights to the death, unless he sees a chance to grab the crown and flee through the hatch (doing so only when all tanarukk are dead).

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove one tanarukk marauder. The incubus' *dream control* recharges only on a 6.

Six PCs: Add one tanarukk marauder. The incubus' *dream control* recharges on a 4-6.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

In the unlikely case the PCs lose the fight, they are killed and the adventure is over.

If they defeat the tanarukks, what happens next depends on whether or not the PCs were successful with the skill challenge in Encounter 2. If they were successful, Tawn still believes their story. Proceed to Encounter 4A. If they failed the skill challenge in Encounter 2, Tawn fought along the tanarukk, and is likely dead, captured or has fled the scene. Proceed to Encounter 4B. Encounter 4B contains details on what Tawn and the tanarukk know.

Note that at this time of day, it is virtually impossible to keep a fight inside a warehouse secret. The local guards are either in the pockets of Belgaros or too afraid to act against him, and no guards are willing to investigate - whether on their own initiative or at the request of the PCs.

Troubleshooting: It is possible the PCs defeat the tanarukk, but somehow lose the crown (if lost to Tawn or the incubus they fled to Belgaros and Encounter 4B can be run normally). The tanarukk have fled with the crown into the city. In that case, you can deal with the chase through narrative only with the PCs eventually getting the crown back and losing 1 healing surge in the short struggle. If you have the time, you can run an impromptu complexity 1 skill challenge (easy DC 15/16, medium DC 22/23, hard DC 30/31) to describe the chase with failure leading to the loss of 1 healing surge, but still allowing the PCs to regain possession of the crown.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 1280/1680 experience points each for defeating the tanarukk.

TREASURE

The PCs find 800/2000 gp each on the cultists and spread over the floor. One of the steel warriors carries an *absorbing shield*. Tawn has a *symbol of security* +4, which the PCs either get here or during Encounter 4A or Encounter 5.

ENCOUNTER 3: NOT SO SIMPLE AFTER ALL STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Tanarukk Marauder (level 15)	Level 15 Skirmisher
Medium elemental humanoid (demon), orc	XP 1,200
HP 149; Bloodied 74	Initiative +11
AC 29, Fortitude 27, Reflex 26, Will 26	Perception +10
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 5 fire	
TRAITS	
Nimble Reaction	
The marauder gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.	
STANDARD	
m Greataxe (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d12 + 10 damage.	
M Brutal Rampage • At-Will	
Effect: The marauder moves its speed and can move through enemies' spaces during the move. At any point during the move, the marauder can use <i>greataxe</i> . The marauder gains a +5 bonus to the damage roll for each opportunity attack made during the move before the attack.	
r Hand Axe (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 10 damage.	
M Flame Harrower (fire, weapon) • Encounter	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d12 + 8 fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 fire damage and grants combat advantage (save ends both).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Indomitable Fury	
Trigger: The marauder drops to 0 hit points for the first time.	
Effect (No Action): The marauder instead has 1 hit point, and it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +4 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the encounter.	
Skills Athletics +18	
Str 22 (+13) Dex 15 (+9) Wis 17 (+10)	
Con 21 (+12) Int 8 (+6) Cha 10 (+7)	
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Equipment hide armor, greataxe, 3 handaxes.	

Tanarukk Steel Warrior (level 16)	Level 16 Soldier
Medium elemental humanoid (demon), orc	XP 1,400
HP 161; Bloodied 80	Initiative +12
AC 31, Fortitude 28, Reflex 27, Will 28	Perception +11
Speed 5	Darkvision
Resist 5 fire	
STANDARD	
m Broadsword (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d10 + 8 damage.	
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the steel warrior's next turn.	
r Crossbow (weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 15/30 (one creature); +21 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 4 damage.	
M Burning Cage (fire, weapon) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d10 + 18 fire damage, and the target takes 5 fire damage whenever it enters a square during its turn (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
M Combat Awareness	
Trigger: An enemy marked by the steel warrior shifts or makes an attack that does not include the steel warrior as a target.	

Effect (Opportunity Action): The steel warrior can use <i>broadsword</i> against the triggering enemy.
Indomitable Fury
Trigger: The marauder drops to 0 hit points for the first time.
Effect (No Action): The marauder instead has 1 hit point, and it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +4 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the encounter.
Skills Athletics +19
Str 22 (+14) Dex 15 (+10) Wis 17 (+11)
Con 25 (+15) Int 8 (+7) Cha 10 (+8)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, broadsword, crossbow, 10 bolts.

Incubus (level 15)	Level 15 Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (demon, shapeshifter)	XP 1,200
HP 119; Bloodied 59	Initiative +16
AC 29, Fortitude 28, Reflex 27, Will 28	Perception +7
Speed 8, fly 4 (clumsy)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Bloodied Invigoration	
When the incubus is bloodied, it gains a +5 bonus to attack rolls and deals 10 extra damage against a creature it has dominated during the encounter.	
STANDARD	
m Clutching Claw • At-Will	
Requirement: The incubus must not have a creature grabbed.	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 4d6 + 13 damage., and the incubus grabs the target.	
M Lover's Bite • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the incubus); +20 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the incubus's next turn.	
R Dream Control (charm) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +18 vs. Will	
Hit: The incubus enters the target's body and mind. The incubus is removed from play, and the target is dominated (save ends). On each of its turns, the incubus can use its move action to use one of the target's normal movement modes and its standard action to use one of the target's at-will powers. When the target saves against this effect, the incubus reappears in a square adjacent to the target or in the nearest unoccupied square.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Change Shape (polymorph) • At-Will	
Effect: The incubus can alter its physical form to appear as a Medium Humanoid or any Medium or Large beast until it attacks, until it uses <i>change shape</i> again, or until it drops to 0 hit points. The incubus retains its statistics in its new form. Its clothing, armor, and other possessions do not change. To assume a specific individual's form, the incubus must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 31 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Variable Resistance • 2/Encounter	
Trigger: The incubus takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.	
Effect (Free Action): The incubus gains resist 10 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter or until it uses <i>variable resistance</i> again.	
Skills Bluff +18, Intimidate +18, Stealth +17	
Str 21 (+12) Dex 20 (+12) Wis 11 (+7)	
Con 23 (+13) Int 18 (+11) Cha 22 (+13)	
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	

ENCOUNTER 3: NOT SO SIMPLE AFTER ALL STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Tawn (level 15)	Level 15 Controller (leader)
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,200
HP 148; Bloodied 74	Initiative +9
AC 28, Fortitude 26, Reflex 26, Will 28	Perception +19
Speed 6	
TRAITS	
O Shared Clarity • Aura 10	
Each ally within the aura gains a +2 bonus to saving throws	
STANDARD	
m Mystery's Touch (implement, psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d6 + 13 psychic damage., and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against Tawn until the end of Tawn's next turn.	
R Bend Perception (illusion, implement, psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +17 vs. Will	
Hit: 3d6 + 13 psychic damage, and until the end of Tawn's next turn, the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and saving throws.	
C Awestrike (healing, implement, psychic) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Close burst 5 (all enemies in burst); +17 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 psychic damage, Tawn slides the target 6 squares, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Effect: Tawn slides one ally in the burst 6 squares, and tat ally regains 10 hit points.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Veil of Inscrutability • At-Will	
Trigger: Tawn is missed by a melee or ranged attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Tawn shifts 2 squares and gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex until the tend of its next turn.	
Skills Arcana +18, Bluff +14, Insight +19	
Str 12 (+8)	Dex 12 (+8)
Con 20 (+12)	Int 22 (+13)
	Cha 15 (+9)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Equipment robes, holy symbol	

Note: Human mystagogue with modified damage, and to be a demon cultist (alignment, language and trained in Bluff instead of Religion).

ENCOUNTER 3: NOT SO SIMPLE AFTER ALL STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Tanarukk Marauder		Level 17 Skirmisher
Medium elemental humanoid (demon), orc		XP 1,600
HP 165; Bloodied 82		Initiative +12
AC 31, Fortitude 29, Reflex 28, Will 28		Perception +11
Speed 6		Darkvision
Resist 5 fire		
TRAITS		
Nimble Reaction		
The marauder gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks.		
STANDARD		
m Greataxe (weapon) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +22 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d12 + 12 damage.		
M Brutal Rampage • At-Will		
Effect: The marauder moves its speed and can move through enemies' spaces during the move. At any point during the move, the marauder can use <i>greataxe</i> . The marauder gains a +5 bonus to the damage roll for each opportunity attack made during the move before the attack.		
r Hand Axe (weapon) • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 5/10 (one creature); +22 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d6 + 12 damage.		
M Flame Harrower (fire, weapon) • Encounter		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 2d12 + 10 fire damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 fire damage and grants combat advantage (save ends both).		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Indomitable Fury		
Trigger: The marauder drops to 0 hit points for the first time.		
Effect (No Action): The marauder instead has 1 hit point, and it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +4 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the encounter.		
Skills Athletics +19		
Str 22 (+14) Dex 15 (+10) Wis 17 (+11)		
Con 21 (+13) Int 8 (+7) Cha 10 (+8)		
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common		
Equipment hide armor, greataxe, 3 handaxes.		

Tanarukk Steel Warrior		Level 18 Soldier
Medium elemental humanoid (demon), orc		XP 2,000
HP 177; Bloodied 88		Initiative +13
AC 33, Fortitude 30, Reflex 29, Will 30		Perception +12
Speed 5		Darkvision
Resist 5 fire		
STANDARD		
m Broadsword (weapon) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d10 + 10 damage.		
Effect: The target is marked until the end of the steel warrior's next turn.		
r Crossbow (weapon) • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 15/30 (one creature); +23 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d8 + 6 damage.		
M Burning Cage (fire, weapon) • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 3d10 + 20 fire damage, and the target takes 5 fire damage whenever it enters a square during its turn (save ends).		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
M Combat Awareness		
Trigger: An enemy marked by the steel warrior shifts or makes an attack that does not include the steel warrior as a target.		

Effect (Opportunity Action): The steel warrior can use <i>broadsword</i> against the triggering enemy.		
Indomitable Fury		
Trigger: The marauder drops to 0 hit points for the first time.		
Effect (No Action): The marauder instead has 1 hit point, and it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +4 bonus to damage rolls until the end of the encounter.		
Skills Athletics +20		
Str 22 (+15) Dex 15 (+11) Wis 17 (+12)		
Con 25 (+16) Int 8 (+8) Cha 10 (+9)		
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common		
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, broadsword, crossbow, 10 bolts.		

Incubus (level 15)		Level 15 Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (demon, shapeshifter)		XP 1,200
HP 119; Bloodied 59		Initiative +16
AC 29, Fortitude 28, Reflex 27, Will 28		Perception +7
Speed 8, fly 4 (clumsy)		Darkvision
TRAITS		
Bloodied Invigoration		
When the incubus is bloodied, it gains a +5 bonus to attack rolls and deals 10 extra damage against a creature it has dominated during the encounter.		
STANDARD		
m Clutching Claw • At-Will		
Requirement: The incubus must not have a creature grabbed.		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +20 vs. AC		
Hit: 4d6 + 13 damage., and the incubus grabs the target.		
M Lover's Bite • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the incubus); +20 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the incubus's next turn.		
R Dream Control (charm) • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +18 vs. Will		
Hit: The incubus enters the target's body and mind. The incubus is removed from play, and the target is dominated (save ends). On each of its turns, the incubus can use its move action to use one of the target's normal movement modes and its standard action to use one of the target's at-will powers. When the target saves against this effect, the incubus reappears in a square adjacent to the target or in the nearest unoccupied square.		

MINOR ACTIONS		
Change Shape (polymorph) • At-Will		
Effect: The incubus can alter its physical form to appear as a Medium Humanoid or any Medium or Large beast until it attacks, until it uses <i>change shape</i> again, or until it drops to 0 hit points. The incubus retains its statistics in its new form. Its clothing, armor, and other possessions do not change. To assume a specific individual's form, the incubus must have seen that individual. Other creatures can make a DC 31 Insight check to discern that the form is a disguise.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Variable Resistance • 2/Encounter		
Trigger: The incubus takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.		
Effect (Free Action): The incubus gains resist 10 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter or until it uses <i>variable resistance</i> again.		
Skills Bluff +18, Intimidate +18, Stealth +17		
Str 21 (+12) Dex 20 (+12) Wis 11 (+7)		
Con 23 (+13) Int 18 (+11) Cha 22 (+13)		
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common		

ENCOUNTER 3: NOT SO SIMPLE AFTER ALL STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

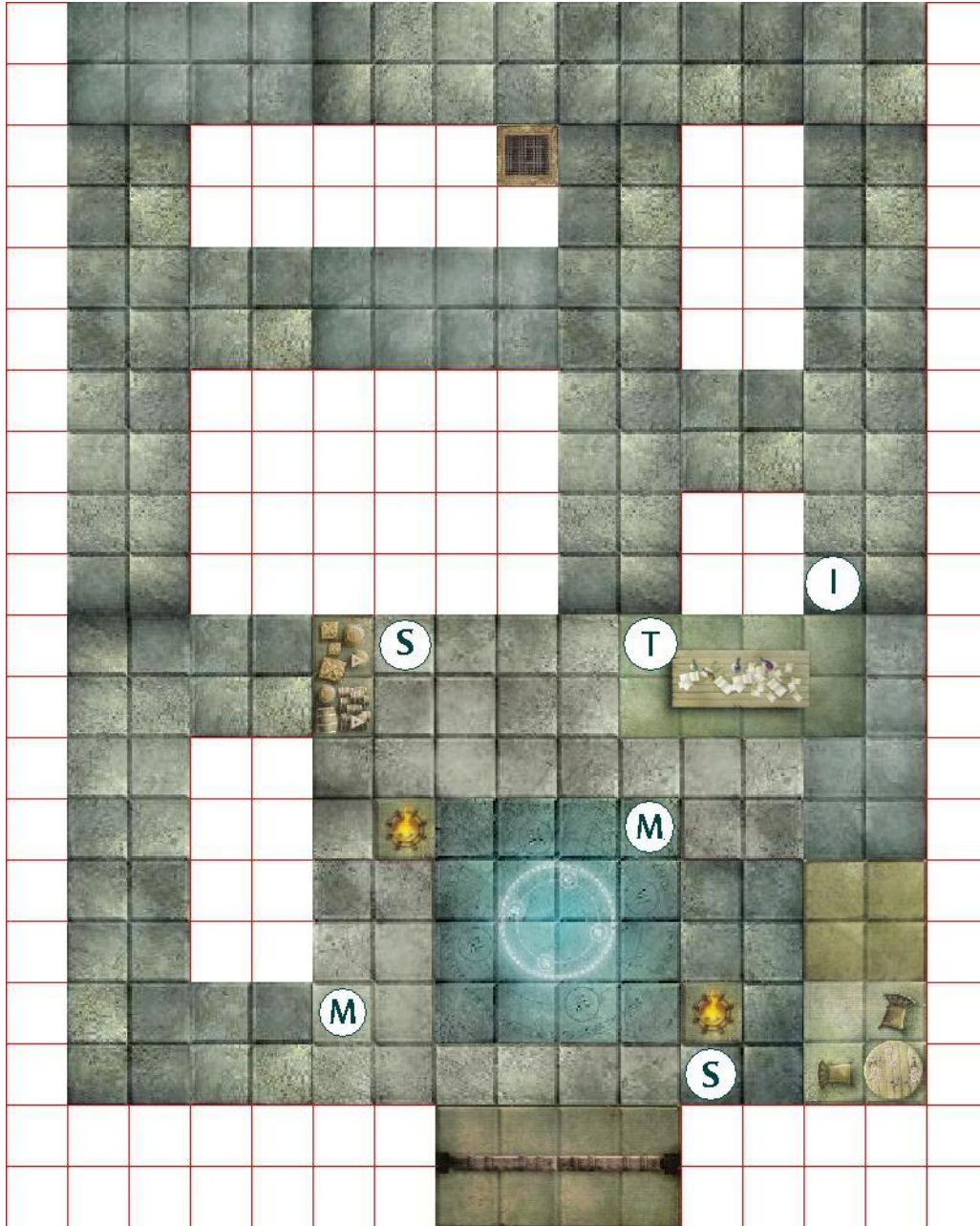
Tawn (level 17)	Level 17 Controller (leader)
Medium natural humanoid	XP 1,600
HP 164; Bloodied 82	Initiative +10
AC 30, Fortitude 28, Reflex 28, Will 30	Perception +20
Speed 6	
TRAITS	
O Shared Clarity • Aura 10	
Each ally within the aura gains a +2 bonus to saving throws	
STANDARD	
m Mystery's Touch (implement, psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d8 + 12 psychic damage., and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against Tawn until the end of Tawn's next turn.	
R Bend Perception (illusion, implement, psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +19 vs. Will	
Hit: 3d8 + 12 psychic damage, and until the end of Tawn's next turn, the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and saving throws.	
C Awestrike (healing, implement, psychic) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Close burst 5 (all enemies in burst); +19 vs. Will	
Hit: 3d6 + 9 psychic damage, Tawn slides the target 6 squares, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Effect: Tawn slides one ally in the burst 6 squares, and tat ally regains 10 hit points.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Veil of Inscrutability • At-Will	
Trigger: Tawn is missed by a melee or ranged attack.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Tawn shifts 2 squares and gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex until the tend of its next turn.	
Skills Arcana +19, Bluff +15, Insight +20	
Str 12 (+9)	Dex 12 (+9) Wis 24 (+15)
Con 20 (+13)	Int 22 (+14) Cha 15 (+10)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Equipment robes, holy symbol	

Note: Human mystagogue with modified damage, and to be a demon cultist (alignment, language and trained in Bluff instead of Religion).

ENCOUNTER 3: NOT SO SIMPLE AFTER ALL MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Dungeon Tiles Master Set: The Dungeon x1



Notes:

- The dockworker cultists are spread throughout the warehouse. Place them randomly over the whole map.
- The open spaces between the tile floors are filled with crates, barrels and large sacks. See Terrain Features for more details.

ENCOUNTER 4A: NEGOTIATIONS RESUME

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 15/17, COMPLEXITY 2 (2400/3200 XP)

SETUP

Important NPCs:

Tawn, Belgaros' agent

Belgaros, proud beligerent cultist leader

Throughout the fight Tawn keeps up his act as a simpleton, hiding fearfully in a corner during the fight in Encounter 3. Once the fighting is over, he crawls back while begging for forgiveness.

With the last tanarukk gone, silence returns to the warehouse. The workers remain hiding amongst the crates, fearful of your vengeance. Tawn though crawls from his corner, whimpering, "Forgive us? Not all Master's servants are as loyal and reliable as me. You not punish poor Tawn, please? Leave crown, take gold? We not tell Master, so Master will not punish poor Tawn either?"

Tawn is sincere, and considering the reputation of tanarukk it is believable. Tawn hopes the characters forgive him, and that they simply take the gold, drop the crown and leave. Since Grigor asked the PCs to deliver the crown in person to Belgaros to be absolutely certain of the man's involvement, it is unlikely the PCs simply walk away.

If the PCs do drop the crown and leave, in the hope of following Tawn, adapt Encounter 4B since Tawn uses the secret corridor to get to Belgaros. Similarly, if the PCs use violence to get information from Tawn, you should run Encounter 4B instead as well.

SKILL CHALLENGE: WORDS TO DISARM

Goal: Getting a face-to-face meeting with Belgaros.

Complexity: 2 (special)

Primary Skills: Special.

Other Skills: Special.

Victory: The PCs find Belgaros with a minimum loss of resources.

Defeat: The PCs eventually confront Belgaros personally, but the PCs do so at a loss of resources.

Unlike a regular skill challenge, the results of successful and failed skill checks are described in the individual

scenes. There is no need to determine an overall success or failure because of this. The complexity is for experience point purposes only.

The skill challenge describes the most likely path the characters take, but you need to adapt the scenes and skills depending on the actions of the PCs. Easy DCs are 15/16, moderate DCs are 22/23 and Hard DCs are 30/31. For example, if the players are having a lot of fun with negotiating and manipulating Tawn, you can let him bring the PCs to Belgaros, avoiding all the traps. In that case though, it is a good idea to add Tawn to the fight in Encounter 5.

SCENE 1: NEGOTIATIONS

The deal with Erart was that his agents would deliver the crown at the warehouse, collect the gold and be gone. There was no requirement on Belgaros personally collecting the crown. Still, Tawn is well aware how much Belgaros wants the crown. So if confronted by characters refusing to let go of the crown, he eventually relents. He is convinced though, that Belgaros is going to kill the PCs, so Tawn plans to at least try to weaken the characters before the coming confrontation.

With a DC 22/23 (passive) Insight check the PCs realize that Tawn really wants the crown, so the characters are negotiating from a position of strength. Once he relents, a second check makes it clear, that he is planning a nasty surprise for the PCs en route to Belgaros.

The scene is just for role-playing purposes, since, regardless of the PCs' skill, Tawn eventually relents and guides the PCs to the secret demonic shrine. Proceed to Scene 2 once the conversation with Tawn has run its course.

SCENE 2: A RITUAL OFFERING

The PCs are guided through a narrow corridor to a hidden shrine/ritual meeting place under the main floor of the warehouse. Here Tawn hopes to trick the characters before leaving them alone to get his master.

Tawn guides you through a hidden hatch at the back of the warehouse down into a corridor and eventually a dimly light room. From the walls, statues of demons leer silently. In the center of the room, an expertly drawn ritual glyph glistens with blood as if recently used. At the far end of the shrine, an altar waits quietly for the next sacrifice.

Tawn tries to get everybody within the room, saying that he cannot proceed without closing the door (which automatically locks it). He is correct, but if pressed, he

does not insist for everybody to enter the room. Proceed with Scene 3 if this triggers a violent reaction.

It is here the PCs need to wait while Tawn gets the Master. Before opening the next door, Tawn wants to perform a short ceremony in honor of the demons, asking for their blessing on the ordeal. Tawn plans to burn dangerous incense during the ritual that would infect anybody breathing the smoke with a variant of mummy rot. After the ritual, Tawn leaves through a back door, ordering the PCs to wait.

If the PCs allow Tawn to go, proceed to Scene 4. If the PCs attack Tawn, proceed to Scene 3.

Arcana DC 22/23 (special)

The PC recognizes the incense (either when in the character's hand or when burning) as mummy powder - a dangerous reagent that when burned create a smoke that causes mummy rot when inhaled.

Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 30/31 (special)

Using honeyed words or threats the PCs stop Tawn from performing the ritual without the need to use actual force.

Endurance DC 22/23 (special)

Each character exposed to the smoke needs to make an Endurance check or become infected with mummy rot. Note that Tawn leaves before the effects of the disease become apparent.

Mummy Rot Level 16 Disease

Endurance improve DC 31, maintain DC 22, worsen DC 21 or lower

Improve: The target is cured.

Initial Effect: The target regains only half the normal of hit points from healing effects.

Worsen: The target regains only half the normal number of hit pots from healing effects. In addition, it takes 10 necrotic damage, which cannot be healed until the target is cured of the disease.

Final State: The target dies.

(passive) Insight DC 22/23 (special)

The ritual is an excuse for something nasty. After the ritual, or when confronted beforehand, a similar Insight check reveals Tawn's excuses, that he did not know how dangerous the smoke was, as lies.

Perception DC 22/23 (special)

When the PCs allow Tawn to leave, they note that he places his hand on the door and whispers a few words in Abyssal. If the PCs succeeded at a DC 30/31 instead, they hear the words ("Abnoul Agt Argus"), and see him grow a bit paler for a few seconds.

SCENE 3: A TREACHEROUS GUIDE

On his own Tawn does not pose much of a threat to the PCs and he knows it.

It is easy to overcome Tawn, but doing so while keeping him alive is not. Tawn is a fanatic, and deadly afraid of his Master and his Master's masters. He rather dies than to reveal anything. So first the PCs need to overwhelm Tawn, without giving Tawn the opportunity to kill himself. Once that is done, they need to get him to talk.

Athletics DC 22/23 (special)

The PC grapples Tawn, and managed to knock him down before he can react. On a failed check, Tawn manages to get in a few solid hits before being overwhelmed and the PC loses 1 healing surge. In addition, Tawn manages to swallow a vial of lethal poison.

Heal DC 30/31 (special)

Once Tawn swallowed the poison, it is very hard to save his life. Doing so makes the Intimidate check to get him to talk against a DC 22/23 instead of a DC 30/31.

Insight DC 22/23 (passive or active)

The PCs note Tawn wriggling himself out of his ropes. If it fails, Tawn manages to get a hand out, giving him the opportunity to swallow a vial of poison. If the PCs already found the poison he does not attempt this.

Intimidate DC 30/31 (special)

Tawn is hard to crack, but if he does, he tells the PCs how to open the door of the shrine without triggering the trap (see Scene 5) and he gives some details about the trapped corridor and that it can be disabled from the Summoning Room (see Scene 6). He also tells a bit about the powers of Belgaros, his bodyguards and the Summoning Room.

Perception DC 22/23 (special)

The PC finds the vial of poison on Tawn. If the PCs do not find it, Tawn tries to swallow it at one point. If the check fails, the PCs get an Insight check at some point during the interrogation or else Tawn kills himself.

SCENE 4: WAITING

While waiting or otherwise being able to investigate the demonic shrine, the PCs have an opportunity to locate evidence against Belgaros and find treasure placed throughout the room.

Quickly scanning the demonic shrine you realize the shrine looks like it has been used often. There are ample

of places to hide things, and you have been asked to find any condemning evidence.

Use the following information as the PCs search the area (note that any Perception checks can be made passively):

- The statues surrounding the ritual area are of generic demons.
- There are small offerings and candles placed around each statue.
- The ritual glyph emits a faint aura of dark arcane energy, but it is not active. Blood is congealed in the design.
- Religion checks reveal the shrine is used to glorify demons in general and not to worship a specific demon.
- There is a storage unit at the back of the shrine containing various items needed by the cultists when they gather.
- The altar is stained in blood. A DC 22/23 Perception roll discovers a hidden compartment on the underside of the altar containing. A second successful Perception check locates the trap - see Thievery below for details.
- The statue on the far wall close to the storage unit is hiding a secret doorway. PCs making a DC 22/23 Perception check note the tapestry behind the statue is askew and a slight breeze of damp air can be felt near the wall. When the tapestry is moved aside, a hidden door is exposed. It is locked and trapped.
- A DC 22/23 Perception check reveals a speaking tube in one of the statues.

If the PCs wait for 5 minutes, proceed to Scene 5. If they open the secret door and proceed into the corridor proceed with Scene 6 immediately.

Thievery DC 30/31 (special)

The false bottom in a secret compartment in the altar is trapped. If opened incorrectly, it explodes with a burst 1, +19 vs. Reflex, dealing 3d10 + 6 fire damage on a hit and half damage on a miss. The fire destroys all paper evidence. The magic items remain unharmed. The trap triggers if the Thievery check fails by 5 or more.

Inside the small cubby, there are notes on the *Crown of Might*, on the temple of Maglubiyet and plans on how to get someone out to the Telluric Nod temple in the Earthspur Mountains, demon-summoning scrolls and partial instructions written in the same handwriting as the blood-soaked letters found in *IMPI1-5* (story award *IMPI09*). There is also a +4 *bloodthirsty dagger* and a

mask of the matriarch (demon face instead of a beautiful drow woman) both of which are used in various demonic rituals.

Trapped Secret Door (special)

The door leading from the shrine towards the summoning chamber and Belgaros is locked with an Arcane Lock and trapped with a magical trap.

The trap can be detected with a DC 22/23 Perception check, and it can be disabled with a DC 30/31 Thievery check (and as always triggering the trap if the check fails by 5 or more). It is a magical trap that covers the entire shrine with creeping ice. Any creature that starts and ends its turn in the room takes 10 cold damage. Once activated, it cannot be quickly deactivated. The door can be opened with a DC 22/23 Thievery check or a DC 23 Strength check. Unless the trap is disabled any such check, regardless of success or failure, triggers the trap.

The door can be safely and easily be opened if touched with a bare hand while whispering the words “Abnoul Agt Argus” and spending 1 healing surge.

SCENE 5: A VOICE IN THE DARK

The PCs have about 5 minutes until after Scene 2 to investigate the room and/or deal with Tawn when Belgaros uses the speaking tube to contact the PCs. Note that if the PCs blocked the tube, Belgaros cannot communicate with the PCs. In this case, if still possible (the PCs might have disabled it in Scene 4), he immediately triggers the creeping ice trap in the room.

Suddenly a metallic hollow voice emanates from the statue above the altar. “So you are the impertinent souls that dare to break the deal I had with your master? Who are you? Scratch that. Just give me the crown, and you might just survive the day.”

Belgaros uses a speaking tube to try and learn a thing or two about the PCs. He is an arrogant, blustering man who is desperate for the crown. He is not a fool a though and by now he does not trust the PCs to simply drop the crown in the shrine and leave. Instead he wants one PC to bring him the crown, fully expecting the whole group coming barging into the room as well. He explains how the PCs can open the door safely, but does not mention the trapped corridor nor that he can trigger the trap at a distance even if the door is opened correctly.

The scene is for role-playing purposes. Don’t spend too much time on it. Belgaros eventually tires of the conversation, triggering the trap (see Scene 4), opening the door and hoping the PCs come running towards him.

Note that Belgaros cannot see the shrine. He works by ear. Keep this in mind when running this scene. Belgaros is a skilled, but ordinary mortal, not an omniscient deity.

SCENE 6: SHIFTING BLADES

The corridor leading from the Demonic Shrine towards the Summoning Room is trapped and dangerous to traverse for the unwary.

You are standing at the start of a 15 feet wide 60 feet long hallway. At the end you note light pouring around a sturdy looking. Suspended inside the corridor though are hundreds of steel blades suspended from thin lines. The blades are in constant motion, slashing past each other in a dizzying blur. It looks like an almost impenetrable barrier, but you note the occasional opening...

Normally the blades are pulled up into the ceiling, but since Belgaros suspected treachery, he had it triggered beforehand. It can only be disabled from the Summoning Room (see Encounter 5). Theoretically the PCs could destroy each single blade, but doing so costs a lot of time, giving Belgaros more than enough time to summon reinforcements or simply fleeing the scene.

The corridor is 14 squares long, 2 squares high and 3 squares wide. Each move through the corridor requires a skill check. The squares directly after the door in the Demonic Shrine **are** trapped and those in front of the Summoning Room **are not** trapped. So there are a total of 13 trapped squares. Teleportation makes things considerably easier, but unless the teleport takes a character outside the corridor a check still needs to be made. On a failed check though, the number of attacks is halved.

The door into the Summing Room is locked, but can be opened with a DC 22/23 Thievery check or a DC 20 Strength check.

Note: The scene is based on a similar scene from the mega-adventure *Tomb of Horrors*.

Acrobatics, Athletics or Insight DC 22/23 (special)

The character dodges past the blades, simply crashes through it with brute force and speed or uses careful calculation. A successful check allows the character to spend one move action safely into the corridor.

On a failed check the character still makes one move, but is attacked by 1d4 blades: +20/+22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 / 3d6 + 9 damage. A character who takes damage from two or more blades is slowed.

Special: Characters who wield a large metal or wooden object (for example, a heavy shield or a two-

handed weapon) can use the item to gain a +2 bonus to the skill check.

(Tawn's Insight is high enough to easily deal with corridor.)

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PC steps through the door at the end of the Trapped Corridor (Scene 6) and into the Summoning Room (Encounter 5) the encounter ends and Encounter 5 begins.

Since there is some space in front of the door of the Summoning Room, the PCs are able to have a short rest between Encounter 4 and 5. If you want make things more challenging though, you can let the trapped squares lead up to the door. It prevents the characters from taking a short rest, and also forces them to enter the Summoning Room instead of waiting in the corridor out of sight of the monsters in said room.

Note that at a first glance, there does not seem to be a time limit. In reality this is not the case. Belgaros is a powerful and influential man. He was not expecting opposition of the same power as the PCs. Given time and enough incentive he can destroy all direct evidence and organize a proper reaction. Make the players aware of this if they are contemplating taking an approach that would take a long time to resolve.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 480/640 experience points each for completing the skill challenge regardless of success or failure.

TREASURE

In the demonic shrine (Scene 4) the PCs can find a *bloodthirsty weapon* +4 and a *mask of the matriarch* (although it is carved to resemble the features of a leering demon instead of a beautiful drow woman). Tawn has a *symbol of security* +4.

ENCOUNTER 4B: WHICH WAY TO GO?

SKILL CHALLENGE LEVEL 15/17, COMPLEXITY 2 (2400/3200 XP)

SETUP

Once the dust settles, it is clear Belgaros was expecting the PCs. They need to act quickly, before the man has more time organize a defense.

Belgaros is clearly aware of your intentions and he is unlikely to show up after your victory over his demonic servants. He is obsessed with the Crown and is likely somewhere nearby. If you act quickly, you might find him before it is too late.

Luckily for the PCs, Belgaros' greed and arrogance has gotten the better of him. Instead of destroying any evidence before fleeing, he is eagerly waiting for the Crown in the Summoning Room below his mansion. All the PCs have to do is, find the secret corridor and get passed the many traps. If they wait too long though, that opportunity passes.

SKILL CHALLENGE: HIDDEN SECRETS

Goal: Finding Belgaros and evidence of his involvement in the Cult of Tharos with a minimum loss of resources.

Complexity: 2 (special)

Primary Skills: Varies

Other Skills: Varies

Victory: The PCs find Belgaros with a minimum loss of resources.

Defeat: The PCs eventually find Belgaros, but the PCs do so at a sizable loss of resources.

Unlike a regular skill challenge, the results of successful and failed skill checks are described in the individual scenes. There is no need to determine an overall success or failure. The challenge describes the likely path the characters take, but you need to adapt the scenes and skills depending on the actions of the PCs. Easy DCs are 15/16, moderate DCs are 22/23 and Hard DCs are 30/31.

Note that in case of Insight and Perception checks you should be using **Passive** checks unless specifically said otherwise. Try to avoid it becoming a tedious string of careful movement and Perception and Thievery checks. The idea is to give the PCs the feeling they are

traversing a well-protected corridor, not to bore and/or irritate the players.

SCENE 1: PRISONERS

If the PCs captured any enemy alive, they likely want to question them. Getting the prisoners to reveal anything useful is not easy since they fear their masters more than death.

Note that the PCs are able to securely tie any of the prisoners up to be collected later on and handed over to authorities. The exception is the incubus, which can change its shape into for example a snake, making it very hard to keep it tied up (putting it in a sturdy crate would certainly keep it imprisoned though). If it escapes, it release Tawn, and kills the rest.

Dockworkers: The dockworkers/cultists are jealous greedy cowards, overcome with self-pity. Getting them to talk is easy, but they know nothing. They were asked by Tawn to be at the warehouse to deal with any trouble. The cultists know Tawn works for somebody else, but not whom.

Tanarukk: The tanarukk are dumb muscle. The only thing they respect is strength. A DC 30/31 Intimidate check gets them to talk, but they know nothing. They never saw the Master's face, and never questioned his orders. When the Master told them to jump, they jumped (being too stupid to ask how high).

Incubus: The incubus is a conniving sadistic cowardly creature. At first it tries to lie his way out of its predicament, offering all kinds of false information and promises. It is always open for a deal that does not involve it being killed, and a DC 22/23 Intimidate or Diplomacy check eventually gets it to talk.

The incubus never saw the face of the man that summoned him, nor does it knows his name. The incubus does know about the secret passage (see Scene 2), and that it leads to a demonic shrine (see Scene 4). He is aware the entrance is trapped, and that it can be avoided by flying down. He does not know how earthbound people avoid the trap or its nature. He is unaware the corridor with statues (Scene 3) is trapped. He does not know what comes after the demonic shrine.

Tawn: Tawn arrogantly defies the PCs as much as possible, taunting and insulting them instead of answering questions. He is certain his master will prevail.

A DC 30/31 Intimidate check gets Tawn to talk, but before he talks, he tries to get an arm free and swallow a deadly poison. Characters, who succeed at a DC 30/31

Perception while searching him, find the poison, or a DC 22/23 Insight check while interrogating him to note him getting free on time. Note that you should use common sense to determine if Tawn can get his hands loose or not. Once the vial of poison is swallowed, a DC 30/31 Heal check revives him.

Tawn refuses to name Belgaros, but he does know it. His devotion to and fear of the man outweighs anything he thinks the PCs can do to him. He does not know the details of the crown or the ritual used to seal the relic. He knows his master is nearby, including the route and the traps guarding it. He tries to lie about the path, and he is willing to die.

- Scene 2: He knows the details of the trap, as well how to disable it. He is most willing to reveal these details since he assumes the PCs have an easy time to deal with it.
- Scene 3: Tawn is aware of the demonic roots in the corridor. He knows the password to disable the trap, as well as the words that instantly activate the trap. Of all four traps he is most unwilling to reveal these details even if it means his death.
- Scene 4 - Altar: Tawn is aware of the secret compartment in the altar, but he does not have the keys and is not allowed to open it (suspecting a trap).
- Scene 4 - Secret Door: Tawn knows how to open the Arcane Locked door (touch the door, spend 1 healing surge and say the words "Abnoul Agt Argus"). He tries to provide a false password.
- Scene 5: Tawn knows about the blades, and that the trap can be disabled from the Summoning Room. Since knowledge about the trap is not going to help, it is knowledge he is most willing to use as a bargaining chip.

SCENE 2: SECRET ENTRANCE

Hidden below a stack of crates at the back of the warehouse is a hatch. It leads down into a small room, and from there access to a narrow secret passage and ultimately the ritual chamber of Belgaros.

Through the open hatch you see a small bare stone room. A rusty iron ladder leads down to the floor 15 feet below.

The ladder and the room are trapped. Before the PCs can enter the room below, and find the secret corridor, they need to deal with it.

Once below, finding the secret passage leading to the Demonic Shrine is easy and the PCs succeed at the

necessary Perception check. The secret door is not trapped, and behind it starts a narrow corridor leading below the warehouse. If the PCs follow the corridor, proceed to Scene 3.

Trap: The ladder appears to be trapped, but it is a decoy. The 4 necrotized floor tiles directly below the ladder is the real trap. A person climbing the ladder can jump away at the bottom of the ladder (see Athletics and Acrobatics below). The trap can be disarmed through a hidden control panel, reachable about halfway the ladder.

When a creature enters or begins its turn on one of the trapped squares, the trap activates. The creature is attacked: +18/+20 vs. Fortitude. Hit: 3d8 + 7 necrotic damage. On a critical hit the target loses 1 healing surge as well. Miss: Half damage.

Acrobatics or Athletics DC 22/23 (special)

PCs aware of the trap squares directly below the ladder avoid them with a successful check.

(Passive) Perception DC 22/23 (special)

The ladder is trapped. It is connected to some kind of trigger mechanism and anybody using the ladder activates it. The exact nature is impossible to determine from the position above the hatch.

(Passive) Perception DC 30/31 (special)

As above, except the character realizes the trap on the ladder is a decoy. The squares directly below the ladder are trapped with some kind of shadowed force. In addition, the hidden panel is revealed as well.

Thievery DC 22/23 (special)

The trap on the ladder is disabled. If the PC succeeds at a DC 30/31 check instead he realizes the trap on the ladder was a decoy.

Thievery DC 30/31 (special)

A character adjacent to one of the necrotized squares can disable it.

SCENE 3: TUNNEL VISION

The narrow secret passage leading from the warehouse suddenly opens to a brightly lit chamber housing several demon statues.

The narrow, dimly lit tunnel twists and turns. Then, after a sharp corner, a chamber appears. Silent statues stand guard over small offerings placed at their feet. Flames dance from cisterns and candles, their flickering light giving each statue a grim, foreboding countenance

in the quickly shifting shadows. A steel spiral staircase leads down at the other end. The whole wall is covered with a strange brown vine like plant with razor sharp leaves.

The room is 4 squares wide, 8 squares long and 2 squares high. It contains six demonic statues. The statues are ordinary statues. The vine on the other hand is razor vine choker, a dangerous demonic plant. The staircase and entrance are outside the room, and the vine does not target creatures standing in those areas.

Trap: Anybody entering the room, or starting in it, is attacked by a vine: +18/+20 vs. Reflex; Hit: 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is restrained and while restrained takes going 10 necrotic damage. There are two major vines. Each vine can hold a maximum of 2 creatures.

Each vine has AC 10, Reflex 10, Fortitude 28, and hp 200. When it is reduced to 0 hit points, the trap is destroyed.

Acrobatics or Athletics DC 22/23 (a restrained character)

Move action. The character escapes the vines.

Nature or Thievery DC 22/23 (special)

A character next to the vine can attempt to disable it for one round, releasing any victims it might hold. If the character succeeded at a DC 30/31 check the vine is permanently disabled. A failed check strengthens the vines, causing it to attack as an opportunity attack to anybody moving through the room until the end of the character's next turn.

Nature DC 22/23 (special)

There are two distinct plants in the room, one on each side. They are known as razor vine chokers, dangerous plants that grab their victims and drain them of all blood. They are often used as guardians.

Stealth DC 22/23 (special)

The character can move through the room without triggering the trap.

SCENE 4: DEMONIC SHRINE

The PCs find themselves in a hidden shrine. The PCs have an opportunity to locate evidence and find treasure. While searching, the PCs find a hidden doorway that leads to an underground passage.

Dim light from flickering candles casts eerie shadows around you. From the walls, statues of demons leer

silently. In the center of the room, an expertly drawn ritual glyph glistens with blood as if recently used. At the far end of the shrine, an altar waits quietly for the next sacrifice.

Use the following information as the PCs search the area (note that any Perception checks can be made passively):

- The statues surrounding the ritual area are of generic demons. There are small offerings and candles placed around each statue.
- The ritual glyph emits a faint aura of dark arcane energy, but it is not active. Blood is congealed in the design.
- Religion checks reveal the shrine is used to glorify demons in general.
- There is a storage unit at the back of the shrine containing various items needed by the cultists when they gather.
- The altar is stained in blood. A DC (passive) 22/23 Perception check discovers a hidden compartment on the underside of the altar containing. A second successful Perception check locates the trap – see Thievery below for details.
- The statue on the far wall close to the storage unit is hiding a secret doorway. A (passive) DC 22/23 Perception check note the tapestry behind the statue is askew and a slight breeze of damp air can be felt near the wall. When the tapestry is moved aside, a hidden door is exposed. It is locked and trapped.
- A DC 22/23 Perception check reveals a speaking tube in one of the statues.

Thievery DC 30/31 (special)

The false bottom in a secret compartment in the altar is trapped. If opened incorrectly, it explodes with a burst 1, +19 vs. Reflex, dealing 3d10 + 6 fire damage on a hit and half damage on a miss. The fire destroys all paper evidence. The magic items remain unharmed. The trap triggers if the Thievery check fails by 5 or more.

Inside the small cubby, there are notes on the *Crown of Might*, on the temple of Maglubiyet and plans on how to get someone out to the Telluric Nod temple in the Earthspur Mountains, demon-summoning scrolls and partial instructions written in the same handwriting as the blood-soaked letters found in *IMPI1-5* (story award **IMPI09**). There is also a *bloodthirsty dagger* +4 and a *mask of the matriarch* (demon face instead of a beautiful drow woman) both of which are used in various demonic rituals.

Trapped Secret Door (special)

The door leading from the shrine towards the summoning chamber and Belgaros is locked with an Arcane Lock and trapped with a magical trap.

The trap can be detected with a DC 22/23 Perception check, and it can be disabled with a DC 30/31 Thievery check (and as always triggering the trap if the check fails by 5 or more). It is a magical trap that covers the entire shrine with creeping ice. Any creature that starts and ends its turn in the room takes 10 cold damage. Once activated, it cannot be quickly deactivated. The door can be opened with a DC 22/23 Thievery check or a DC 23 Strength check. Unless the trap is disabled any such check, regardless of success or failure, triggers the trap.

The door can be safely and easily be opened if touched with a bare hand while whispering the words "Abnoul Agt Argus" and spending 1 healing surge.

SCENE 5: SHIFTING BLADES

The corridor leading from the Demonic Shrine towards the Summoning Room is trapped and dangerous to traverse for the unwary.

You are standing at the start of a 15 feet wide 60 feet long hallway. At the end you note light pouring around a sturdy looking door and you hear the sounds of an arcane ritual of sorts. Suspended inside the corridor though are hundreds of steel blades suspended from thin lines. The blades are in constant motion, slashing past each other in a dizzying blur. It looks like an almost impenetrable barrier, but you note the occasional opening...

Normally the blades are drawn up into the ceiling, but since Belgaros suspected treachery, he had it triggered beforehand. It can only be disabled from the Summoning Room (see Encounter 5). Theoretically the PCs could destroy each single blade, but doing so costs a lot of time, giving Belgaros more than enough time to summon additional demons. So if the PCs want to face Belgaros without the support of several demons at least one character needs to risk the blades.

The corridor is 14 squares long, 2 squares high and 3 squares wide. Each move through the corridor requires a skill check. The squares directly after the door in the Demonic Shrine **are** trapped and those in front of the Summoning Room **are not** trapped. So there are a total of 13 trapped squares. Teleportation makes things considerably easier, but unless the teleport takes a character outside the corridor a check still needs to be made. On a failed check though, the number of attacks is halved.

The door into the Summoning Room is locked, but can be opened with a DC 22/23 Thievery check or a DC 20 Strength check.

Note: The scene is based on a similar scene from the mega-adventure *Tomb of Horrors*.

Acrobatics, Athletics or Insight DC 22/23 (special)

The character dodges past the blades, simply crashes through it with brute force and speed or uses careful calculation. A successful check allows the character to spend one move action safely into the corridor.

On a failed check the character still makes one move, but is attacked by 1d4 blades: +20/+22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 / 3d6 + 9 damage. A character who takes damage from two or more blades is slowed.

Special: Characters who wield a large metal or wooden object (for example, a heavy shield or a two-handed weapon) can use the item to gain a +2 bonus to the skill check.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Once the PC steps through the door at the end of the Trapped Corridor (Scene 5) and into the Summoning Room the encounter ends and Encounter 5 begins.

Since there is some space in front of the door of the Summoning Room, the PCs are able to have a short rest between Encounter 4 and 5. If you want make things more challenging though, you can let the trapped squares lead up to the door. It prevents the characters from taking a short rest, and also forces them to enter the Summoning Room instead of waiting in the corridor out of sight of the monsters in said room.

Note that at a first glance, there does not seem to be a time limit. In reality this is not the case. Belgaros is a powerful and influential man. He was not expecting opposition of the same power as the PCs. Given time and enough incentive he can destroy all direct evidence and organize a proper reaction. Make the players aware of this if they are contemplating taking an approach that would take a long time to resolve.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 480/640 experience points each for completing the skill challenge regardless of success or failure.

TREASURE

In the demonic shrine (Scene 4) the PCs can find a *bloodthirsty weapon* +4 and a *mask of the matriarch* (although it is carved to resemble the features of a leering demon instead of a beautiful drow woman).

ENCOUNTER 5: CAUGHT YA!

ENCOUNTER LEVEL 16/18 (7000/10000 XP)

SETUP

This encounter includes the following at the low tier:

- 1 Belgaros (B)
- 1 iron golem (level 16) (G)
- 2 abyssal eviscerators (level 16) (E)

This encounter includes the following at the high tier:

- 1 Belgaros (level 18) (B)
- 1 iron golem (level 18) (G)
- 2 abyssal eviscerators (level 18) (E)

The PCs arrive at the end of the secret trapped passage and find a hidden chamber where Belgaros is waiting. Expecting trouble, he has summoned several demons in addition to his personal creation, an iron golem. If Tawn did arrive in the room alive and free, Belgaros has him killed for incompetence.

Belgaros is prepared against anyone attempting to sneak in on him, assuming he is not already aware of the PCs. Once the doors are opened, the PCs notice a large rune set in the stone floor at the entrance. This is one of the five points creating an Eye of Alarm ritual zone. Refer to the tactics section for details on the ritual. If the ritual detects an intruder, the sound of a gust of wind rushing through the chamber swirls around the PCs. This is the signal to Belgaros that someone has entered his hidden chamber.

Describe the room as follows (this can be read either before or after the Eye of Alarm ritual is set off):

The sound of deep growls and heavy footfalls seems at odds with the simple, well-kept room filled with bookshelves. Two iron statues watch over glowing runes set in the floor. From the back of the chamber, a sickly, macabre glow bathes the whole room in a fell light. In between you note several bookcases and a couple of green four armed reptilian demons looking almost pleased with your arrival.

The ritual circle that Belgaros has prepared to unseal the crystal casket causes the glow. If the crown somehow made it to the room before the PCs, they see the crystal illuminated by an eerie, unearthly light from within. Randomly mention that the color changes from time to time during combat to signify that the ritual is progressing.

When the PCs get further into the antechamber, they are able to make out Belgaros, wearing a hooded cloak, standing over a ritual glyph inscribed on the floor. Nearby, there is a leather satchel with hastily gathered documents stuffed inside.

Note that one of the steel statues is an iron golem, the other is a perfectly ordinary statue. The golem either activates when it or Belgaros is attacked, when directed by Belgaros or when somebody steps in the runes between the statues. The handle to disable the trap in Encounter 4 is right next to it. Once activated it takes 1 full round before the blades are gone.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Runes: The runes between the statues and set into the floor of the antechamber delineate three of the five boundary points of an Eye of Alarm ritual area. Refer to the map to locate the guarded area. The zone extends from the floor to the ceiling. The eyes of the ritual can visually detect an intruder with a Perception roll +20/+22. The eyes have both darkvision and tremorsense.

The rune at the back of the room is the runic circle where the crown can be released from its crystal casket.

Tables: Tables are blocking terrain and provide partial cover.

Statues: Statues are blocking terrain and provide cover.

Bookcase: Bookcases are 10 feet high and count as blocking terrain and provide superior cover. The bookcases can be pushed over using a standard action, Athletics DC 22/23. The area of the fallen bookcase counts as difficult terrain. If a creature is behind the bookcase when a PC attempts to push it over, you can choose to make this an opposed check against the creature's Strength roll. Otherwise, any creature near the bookcase when it begins to fall shifts out of the way or becomes airborne if it has flight as an immediate reaction.

Books and Scrolls: The scattered books and scrolls on the floor make it difficult to maintain sure footing.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 25 feet high.

TACTICS

The demons fight to the death. Belgaros does not give up; it is up to the PCs to kill him or use non-lethal means to render him unconscious. He understands the repercussions of his actions both with the Fraternity of Tharos and within Impiltur and death is a preferred option for him to what may happen to him. Belgaros tries to hide behind the bookcases. The demons rush forward.

Increasing the Challenge: If the PCs had an easy time till this point, and Tawn is present in the room, instead of having him killed by Belgaros, you can have him join the fight.

bralani cloak +4. If Tawn somehow made it to his room, the PCs find a *symbol of security* +4 on his corpse. If the PCs destroyed the crown, they also find a *crown of command*.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

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

Four PCs: Remove an abyssal eviscerator.

Six PCs: Add an abyssal eviscerator.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs defeat Belgaros, they locate official Council documents bearing the noble's seal mixed with Fraternity of Tharos journals, all written by the same hand. Most of these documents are stuffed into a leather satchel near the bookcase—Belgaros was busy collecting it all when the PCs caught up with him. Further investigation of the room leads the PCs to a door that opens into the Belgaros home.

They also find a ritual book next to the circle describing how the crystal casket can be opened. It contains a warning that if performed incorrectly, it destroys whatever is inside. Astute PCs might decide to immediately use this knowledge to destroy the Crown to great horror of Belgaros. If done, it shatters in several pieces. Since it is an artifact the fragments can be joined again to restore it, but by spreading the pieces doing so becomes much harder. The PCs can keep one of the pieces and use it to get a *crown of command*. See Encounter 6 for more details on this.

If the PCs decide to return through the secret passage and back to the warehouse, they find some of the city watchmen looking over the scene. The PCs are escorted to the Grand Council.

If the PCs fall, Belgaros has no real reason to spare them, but plenty of reasons to make sure they never repeat a word of what they've seen. If Belgaros is dead or unconscious, the demons have no qualms about finishing off the PCs. The adventure ends here.

Go to Encounter 6 when the players are ready.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

The PCs earn 1400/2000 experience points each for defeating Belgaros and his demonic servants.

If the PCs captured Belgaros alive, the documents from the Demonic Shrine and this room and the crown, they each earn 200/160 minor quest XP.

TREASURE

The PCs find 400/1000 gp each in coin and residue in the room. They also find a *staff of fiery might* +4 and a

ENCOUNTER 5: CAUGHT YA! STATISTICS (LOW LEVEL)

Belgaros		Level 16 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 1,400
HP 157; Bloodied 78		Initiative +12
AC 30, Fortitude 28, Reflex 28, Will 30		Perception +11
Speed 6		
TRAITS		
O Demonic Taint • Aura 1		
Any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
STANDARD		
m Abyssal Staff (poison, weapon) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d8 + 12 poison damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.		
R Demonic Bolt (implement, poison) • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 4d6 + 2 poison damage, and the target is weakened until the end of its next turn.		
C Abyssal Visage (fear, implement) • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Close blast 3 (one creature); +19 vs. Will		
Hit: 3d12 + 11 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
C Demonic Pact (poison) • At-Will		
Trigger: A demon ally within 5 squares of Belgaros drops to 0 hit points.		
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 2 (each creature in burst); +19 vs. Will		
Hit: 2d6 + 5 poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
Skills Arcana +18, Bluff +20, Religion +18		
Str 17 (+11) Dex 18 (+12) Wis 16 (+11)		
Con 21 (+13) Int 21 (+13) Cha 24 (+15)		
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common		
Equipment black robes, abyssal staff.		

Note: Belgaros is a faithmarked necromancer modified into a more demonic theme.

Abyssal Eviscerator (level 16)		Level 16 Brute
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)		XP 1,400
HP 193; Bloodied 96		Initiative +11
AC 28, Fortitude 30, Reflex 27, Will 26		Perception +10
Speed 6		
STANDARD		
m Claw • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d10 + 7 damage.		
M Grab • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +19 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 4d6 + 6 damage, and the eviscerator grabs the target (escape DC 22) if it has fewer than two creatures grabbed.		
MINOR ACTIONS		
M Eviscerating Talos • At-Will		
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the eviscerator). The target takes 8 damage.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Variable Resistance • 2/Encounter		
Trigger: The incubus takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.		
Effect (Free Action): The incubus gains resist 15 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter or until it uses <i>variable</i>		

resistance again.		
Skills Athletics +19		
Str 23 (+14)	Dex 17 (+11)	Wis 15 (+10)
Con 23 (+14)	Int 7 (+6)	Cha 11 (+8)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal		

Iron Golem (level 16)		Level 16 Elite Soldier
Large natural animate (construct)		XP 2,800
HP 322; Bloodied 161		Initiative +12
AC 32, Fortitude 32, Reflex 26, Will 24		Perception +8
Speed 6 (cannot shift)		Darkvision
Immune disease, poison		
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1		
TRAITS		
O Noxious Fumes (poison) • Aura 2		
While the golem is bloodied, any creature that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 5 poison damage.		
Energizing Flames		
The first time the golem takes fire damage each turn, it can shift up to 2 squares as a free action, even if it could not normally shift.		
Interfering Bolts		
When the golem takes lightning damage, it is slowed until the end of its next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Iron Blade • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +21 vs. AC		
Hit: 3d10 + 8 damage.		
Effect: The golem marks the target (save ends).		
M Cleave • At-Will		
Effect: The golem uses <i>iron blade</i> twice, each time against a different target.		
C Breath Weapon (poison) • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in blast); +19 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 4d8 + 5 poison damage, and ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
M Dazing Fist • At-Will		
Trigger: A creature that is within 2 squares of the golem and marked by it moves.		
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 2 (triggering creature); +19 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).		
C Toxic Death (poison) • At-Will		
Trigger: The golem is first bloodied or drops to 0 hit points.		
Attack (No Action): Close burst 3 (each creature in burst); +19 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: 2d8 + 7 poison damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).		
Str 27 (+16)	Dex 15 (+10)	Wis 11 (+8)
Con 25 (+15)	Int 3 (+4)	Cha 3 (+4)
Alignment unaligned Languages -		

ENCOUNTER 5: CAUGHT YA! STATISTICS (HIGH LEVEL)

Belgaros (level 18)	Level 18 Controller (Leader)
Medium natural humanoid, human	XP 2,000
HP 173; Bloodied 86	Initiative +13
AC 32, Fortitude 30, Reflex 30, Will 32	Perception +12
Speed 6	
TRAITS	
O Demonic Taint • Aura 1	
Any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.	
STANDARD	
m Abyssal Staff (poison, weapon) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 14 poison damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.	
R Demonic Bolt (implement, poison) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d6 + 4 poison damage, and the target is weakened until the end of its next turn.	
C Abyssal Visage (fear, implement) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Close blast 3 (one creature); +21 vs. Will	
Hit: 3d12 + 13 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
C Demonic Pact (poison) • At-Will	
Trigger: A demon ally within 5 squares of Belgaros drops to 0 hit points.	
Attack (Immediate Reaction): Close burst 2 (each creature in burst); +21 vs. Will	
Hit: 2d6 + 7 poison damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Skills Arcana +19, Bluff +21, Religion +19	
Str 17 (+12)	Dex 18 (+13) Wis 16 (+12)
Con 21 (+14)	Int 21 (+14) Cha 24 (+16)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Equipment black robes, abyssal staff.	
Note: Belgaros is a faithmarked necromancer modified into a more demonic theme.	

Abyssal Eviscerator (level 18)	Level 18 Brute
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 2,000
HP 213; Bloodied 106	Initiative +12
AC 30, Fortitude 32, Reflex 29, Will 28	Perception +11
Speed 6	
STANDARD	
m Claw • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d10 + 9 damage.	
M Grab • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +21 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 4d6 + 8 damage, and the eviscerator grabs the target (escape DC 23) if it has fewer than two creatures grabbed.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
M Eviscerating Talos • At-Will	
Effect: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the eviscerator). The target takes 10 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Variable Resistance • 2/Encounter	
Trigger: The incubus takes acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage.	
Effect (Free Action): The incubus gains resist 15 to the triggering damage type until the end of the encounter or until it uses variable	

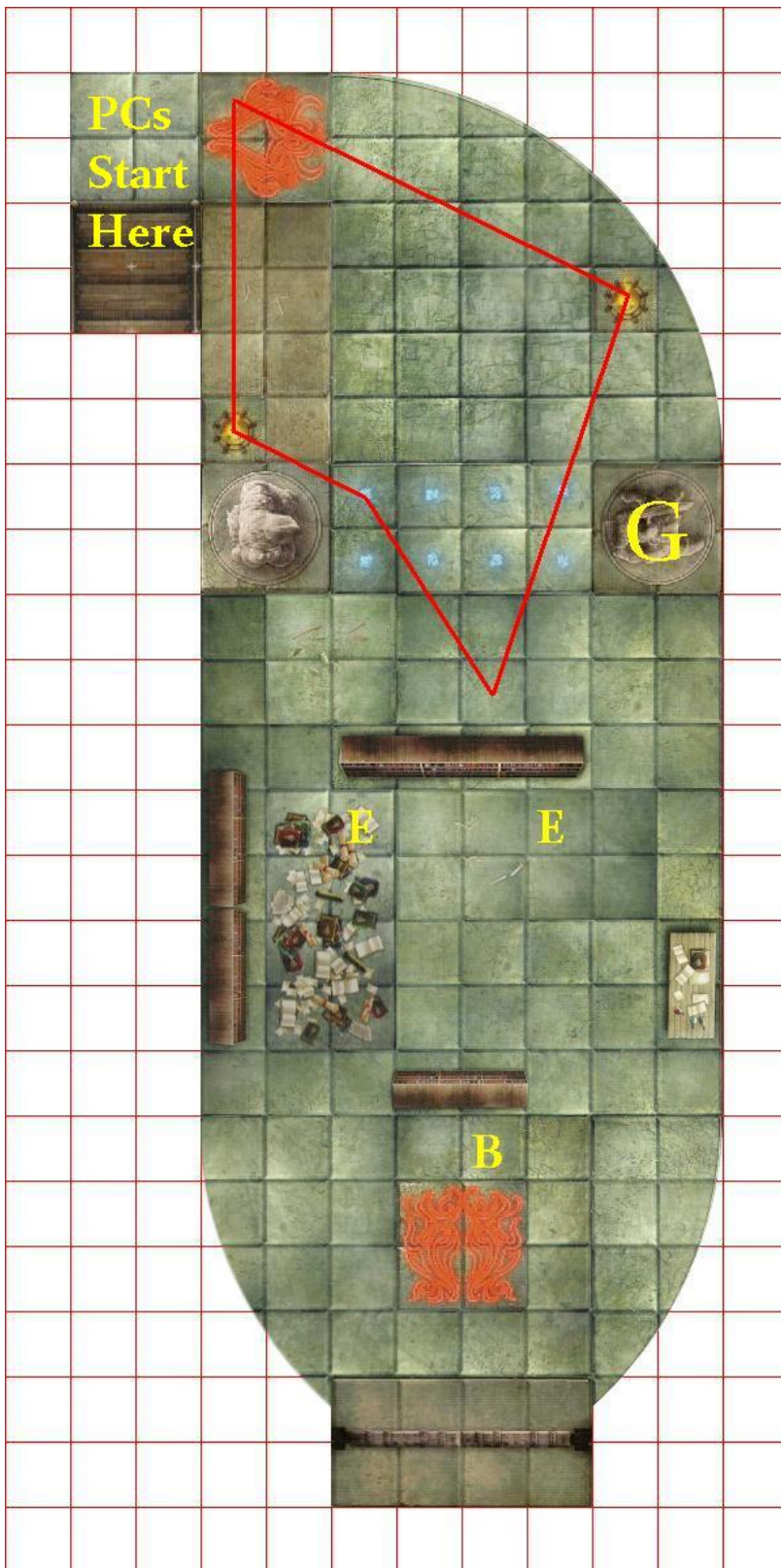
resistance again.		
Skills Athletics +20		
Str 23 (+15)	Dex 17 (+12)	Wis 15 (+11)
Con 23 (+15)	Int 7 (+7)	Cha 11 (+9)
Alignment chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal	

Iron Golem (level 18)	Level 18 Elite Soldier
Large natural animate (construct)	XP 4,000
HP 354; Bloodied 177	Initiative +13
AC 34, Fortitude 34, Reflex 28, Will 26	Perception +9
Speed 6 (cannot shift)	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison	
Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1	
TRAITS	
O Noxious Fumes (poison) • Aura 2	
While the golem is bloodied, any creature that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 5 poison damage.	
Energizing Flames	
The first time the golem takes fire damage each turn, it can shift up to 2 squares as a free action, even if it could not normally shift.	
Interfering Bolts	
When the golem takes lightning damage, it is slowed until the end of its next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Iron Blade • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +23 vs. AC	
Hit: 3d10 + 10 damage.	
Effect: The golem marks the target (save ends).	
M Cleave • At-Will	
Effect: The golem uses <i>iron blade</i> twice, each time against a different target.	
C Breath Weapon (poison) • Recharge 5-6	
Attack: Close blast 3 (creatures in blast); +21 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 4d8 + 7 poison damage, and ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
M Dazing Fist • At-Will	
Trigger: A creature that is within 2 squares of the golem and marked by it moves.	
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 2 (triggering creature); +21 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).	
C Toxic Death (poison) • At-Will	
Trigger: The golem is first bloodied or drops to 0 hit points.	
Attack (No Action): Close burst 3 (each creature in burst); +21 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 2d8 + 9 poison damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).	
Str 27 (+17)	Dex 15 (+11) Wis 11 (+9)
Con 25 (+16)	Int 3 (+5) Cha 3 (+5)
Alignment unaligned	Languages -

ENCOUNTER 5: CAUGHT YA! MAP

TILE SETS NEEDED

Arcane Towers x2, Halls of the Giant Kings x2



ENCOUNTER 6: ALL IS SAID AND DONE

SETUP

Important NPCs:

Lord Grigor Van Deesbrock

What happens next depends on two things: the fate of Belgaros and the amount of evidence found. For story purposes the fate of the Crown is also important. Regardless, the PCs have to bring forth their case for the Grand Council.

Standing before the Grand Council of Impiltur, you recite the tale of your adventure. Dour, concerned faces stare down at you, uncertain of your story, especially when weighed against the word of one of their own. But then you present the evidence you gathered, and many Council members become alarmed. You are quickly dismissed as they begin to discuss their next course of action.

After presenting their case, the PCs have to wait. During the wait, Lord Grigor calls them over to go over the situation in private.

BELGAROS CAPTURED, MOST EVIDENCE FOUND

If the PCs successfully obtained all the evidence against Belgaros and captured him to be brought before the Council for judgment, Lord Grigor summons the PCs back to his estate to go over the details of the mission. He greets the PCs enthusiastically, and compliments them on a job well done. It is clear Belgaros cannot escape justice and he will face judgment for his actions.

Grigor then pays the PCs the remainder of the promised gold, and offers a non-rare magical waist-slot item of the PCs level +2 or lower from a player legal source as a bonus for stopping Belgaros. If any PC turned over an item to Lord Grigor to gain his temporary trust in Encounter 1, he returns it to them, and that PC has gained his full trust. Go to the Conclusion. In addition they earn the story reward **IMPI20 Honored by the Grand Council**.

Despite Belgaros' brilliant defense, the evidence you gathers was overwhelming. Belgaros was found guilty, and publicly executed as an example to all other cultists. He died while cursing your names.

BELGAROS KILLED, ALL EVIDENCE FOUND

If the PCs gathered all the evidence but killed Belgaros, Grigor is less enthused about the outcome, but still grateful a serious threat has been stopped. He calls the PCs to his estate after they have presented their findings to the Council. He greets the PCs grimly. He is happy Belgaros is dead, but the Grand Council is much less happy about the affair. They feel it was not the place for the PCs to act both judge and execution. The evidence off-sets any potential problems, but they fears it sets a dangerous precedent.

If the PCs argue that Belgaros was killed in self-defense, Grigor responds that this was already factored into the decision to let them go, but the council is still disappointed by the PCs. They fear it could become common practice to claim "justified cause" for killing a noble if enough evidence, which could be false, is presented. Grigor pays the rest of the promised gold. The PCs earn **IMPI21 Noble Disfavor**. If any PC turned over an item to Lord Grigor to gain his temporary trust in Encounter 1, he returns it to them.

The Grand Council has weighted the evidence, and it is clear that Belgaros was a dangerous corrupt man despite a few who claimed you falsified the evidence. Still, it is clear few like it that you killed one of their own, and while they cannot punish you, they will most certainly not reward you for it.

UNABLE TO STOP BELGAROS

If the PCs were unable to stop Belgaros (by either retreating from the final encounter or choosing to end the adventure after being defeated in the warehouse and/or secret tunnel), they have the option of reporting back to Grigor to explain what happened and hand over anything they found. If they do this, Grigor is not pleased. Not only did they fail in gathering enough evidence and stopping Belgaros, but by doing so they left Belgaros in power, giving him ample opportunity to take vengeance against the PCs. He refuses to pay the remainder of the gold or offer anything from his vault. If any PC turned over an item to Lord Grigor to gain his temporary trust in Encounter 1, he returns it to them in order to make sure there is no possible way to connect him to the PC via the item. The PCs earn **IMPI21 Noble Disfavor** when Belgaros starts besmirching their names.

FATE OF THE CROWN

Before the PCs leave Impiltur they have to decide what to do with the encased Crown.

The smartest thing to do would be to destroy it, preferably in the prepared ritual circle in Encounter 5. If the characters do so later, they need to prepare the proper ritual, which costs 3600 gp in material components and is only possible if the PCs have the ritual description found in Encounter 5. In that case the Crown shatters in half a dozen pieces, making it inert for the moment. These pieces cannot be further harmed, but it is considerably easier to keep these out of the hands of those wanting to do evil than the whole crown. One of the pieces can be converted into a *crown of command* for the PCs to safekeep.

Lord Grigor prefers to keep the Crown in one piece in case they ever need it for the safety of Impiltur. The PCs can convince him this is not a good idea by pointing the inherent risks of doing so (powerful evil artifacts tend to corrupt those around them; it is much easier to steal one crown than half a dozen pieces). If kept in one piece, Lord Grigor either wants to keep the Crown himself, or deliver it to the temple of Ilmater or Torm. He certainly does not want to mention its existence to the Grand Council, rightly fearing they will demand ownership of the Crown.

Give the PCs some time to think over the options, and note it down on the story award **IMPI22 Fate of the Crown**.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

EXPERIENCE POINTS

PCs must have both the IMPI09 from *IMPI1-5* or IMPI12 from *IMPI1-6* story rewards to be eligible for the Major Quest XP.

The PCs earn 1200/1600 Major Quest XP if they gathered at least some of the evidence, the crown, and captured Belgaros.

The PCs earn no Major Quest XP if they were defeated and unable to stop Belgaros.

TREASURE

The PCs receive 500/1500 gp each from Lord Grigor for stopping Belgaros.

If the PCs captured Belgaros, Grigor gives them a set of none-rare magical waist-slot item of the PCs level +2 or lower from any player legal source as a reward.

If the PCs did not stop Belgaros, they receive no gold or equipment from Grigor.

REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn experience points, treasure, and possibly story awards. All totals listed here are per PC. A number before the slash is the low-level value; after the slash is the high-level value.

EXPERIENCE POINTS

Give PCs a full award for each encounter they successfully completed, and a half award if they were unsuccessful. Give no award if the characters did not play the encounter at all.

Encounter 2: I'm On a Boat!

480 / 640 XP

Encounter 3: Not So Simple After All

1280 / 1680 XP

Encounter 4: Negotiations/Which Way to Go?

480 / 640 XP

Encounter 5: Caught Ya!

1400 / 2000 XP

Minor Quest: Conclusive Proof

200 / 160 XP

Major Quest: Rooting Out Corruption

1200 / 1600 XP

Total Possible Experience Without Major Quest XP:

3840 / 5120 XP

Total Possible Experience With Major Quest XP:

5040 / 6720 XP

Gold per PC

2,200 / 6,000 gp

(Encounter 1: 500/1500 gp; Encounter 3: 800/2000 gp; Encounter 5: 400 / 1000 gp; Encounter 7: 500/1500 gp)

TREASURE

Each PC receives treasure in the form of gold pieces as well as one share from a treasure bundle. The treasure bundle 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; players may choose the same treasure bundle. Note that it is possible (and likely) that some characters will not select a bundle for each session of play.

If characters buy or sell magic items or other gear during the adventure (or pay for services) add or subtract that amount from the total gold the PC receives

at the end of the adventure. If a player selects an option that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character's base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character who spends more gold than he or she earns to have a negative total for the adventure. PCs receive 20% of the item's market price when they sell any magic item or consumable. They receive 50% of the market price for ritual books and alchemical formulas.

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 choice in a bundle, 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.

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

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING BUNDLES:

Bundle A: *absorbing shield** (level 17; *Adventurer's Vault* 2)

Found in Encounter 3.

Bundle B: *bloodthirsty weapon +4** (level 18; *Adventurer's Vault* 1)

Found in Encounter 4

Bundle C: *mask of the matriarch** (level 18; *P2 Demon Queen Enclave*)

Found in Encounter 4

Bundle D: *symbol of security +4** (level 18; *Manual of the Planes*)

Found in Encounter 3, 4 or 5

Bundle E: *staff of fiery might +4* (level 17; *Player's Handbook*)

Found in Encounter 5.

Bundle F: *bralani cloak +4** (level 20; *Adventurer's Vault* 2)

Found in Encounter 5.

Bundle G: *crown of command* (level 17; *Player's Handbook*)

Found in Encounter 5.

Bundle H: a set on magical none-rare waist-slot item of the PCs level +2 or lower from a player legal source

Found in Encounter 6.

Consumable plus Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add an *augmenting whetstone** (level 16; *Adventurer's Vault* 1) plus 1,500 / 4,700 gp to their rewards from this adventure. The player should write the consumable gained on their adventure log. That character (and only that character) then receives the consumable plus the listed amount of gold (if any) instead of any other treasure bundle. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found magic item slots.

More Gold: If a player doesn't want to select one of the bundles listed above for their character, they can choose to add 3,300 / 6,500 gp to their rewards from this adventure. That character (and only that character) receives more gold instead of any other treasure bundle.

☐ Gave it to Lord Grigor.

☐ Gave it to another trusted party:_____.

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. Normally, if a PC earns three awards, they may only have 2 of them and must pick which two they want before ending the session (exceptions to this will be noted in the story award text).

IMPI20 Honored by the Grand Council

For your service to Impiltur by exposing Lord Belgaros of the Grand Council as a member of the Fraternity of Tharos, you have been honored by the Council and received their thanks. This has not passed without notice by other Fraternity members, however, so while the nobles of Impiltur publicly praise you, other powers are watching from the shadows.

IMPI21 Noble Disfavor

Your reckless actions in New Sarshel have garnered you ill favor with the nobility of Impiltur. By either killing Lord Belgaros, or connecting Lord Grigor to your covert mission, growing numbers of Impiltur nobles do not trust you. You find your name spoken in hushed whispers all across Impiltur.

IMPI22 Fate of the Crown

During the adventure you acquired the encased Crown of Might, a powerful evil relic whose fate will influence the future of Impiltur. You did the following with the Crown:

☐ Destroyed it.

☐ Lost it to Belgaros (or the Grand Council).

NEW RULES

Absorbing Shield

This steel shield absorbs the power from attacks, protecting both you and your allies.

Level: 17

Price: 65,000 gp

Item Slot: Arms

Prerequisite: Heavy Shields, Light Shields

Power (At-Will): Immediate Interrupt. Trigger: An area attack misses you and hits an ally. Effect: The triggering attack instead misses the ally.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page(s) 53.

Augmenting Whetstone Level 6+

This rough sharpening stone temporarily grants your weapon a magical enhancement.

Lvl 16 1,800 gp

Whetstone

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. Touch this whetstone to a melee or ranged weapon you hold. The weapon gains a +2 enhancement bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls until the end of the encounter. This has no effect on the extra damage dice or other special effect applied when the weapon scores a critical hit.

Level 16: +4 enhancement bonus.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault*, page 190.

Bralani Cloak

This cloak lets you slip through the Feywild and call upon its winds to move you off the ground.

Level: 20

Price: 125,000 gp

Item Slot: Neck

Enhancement: +4 Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: You gain resist 15 psychic.

Power (Daily * Teleportation): Move Action. You teleport a number of squares equal to your speed + this cloak's enhancement bonus. You don't have to end the teleport on the ground. You gain a fly speed of 8 (hover) until the end of your next turn.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page(s) 65.

Bloodthirsty Weapon

This weapon drinks the blood of its victims.

Level: 18

Price: 85,000 gp

Weapon: Any melee

Enhancement: +4 attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +4d10 damage

Property: Gain a +1 item bonus to attack rolls against bloodied targets, and add an item bonus equal to the enhancement bonus of this weapon to damage rolls against bloodied targets.

Reference: *Adventurer's Vault 1*, page 65.

Mask of the Matriarch

An obsidian mask, it is carved to resemble the features of a beautiful drow woman.

Level: 18

Price: 85,000 gp

Item Slot: Head

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

Power (Daily o Fear): Immediate Interrupt. This power triggers when you are the target of a melee attack. You cancel the attack and the target must move its speed away from you, provoking opportunity attacks as normal.

Reference: *P2 Demon Queen Enclave*, page(s) 24.

Symbol of Security

The hand of fate intercedes on behalf of your allies.

Level: 18

Price: 85,000 gp

Implement (Holy Symbol)

Enhancement: +4 attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +4d6 damage

Power (Encounter o Teleportation): Immediate Reaction. Use this power when an ally within 10 squares of you is first bloodied in an encounter. That ally teleports to a space adjacent to you.

Reference: *Manual of the Planes*, page(s) 154.

PLAYER'S HANDOUT 1: SMUGGLER'S NOTE

My ship has arrived and is anchored in the harbor. We dock at dawn. I will look for your man on the pier. The crown is safe. I look forward to completing our deal. The Dark Lady smiles on us.

M.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

(character name)

HAS RECEIVED STORY AWARDS FROM:
(cross out those not received)

IMPI2~3 ROOTING OUT CORRUPTION

IMPI20 Honored by the Grand Council

For your service to Impiltur by exposing Lord Belgaros of the Grand Council as a member of the Fraternity of Tharos, you have been honored by the Council and received their thanks. This has not passed without notice by other Fraternity members, however, so while the nobles of Impiltur publicly praise you, other powers are watching from the shadows.

IMPI21 Noble Disfavor

Your reckless actions in New Sarshel have garnered you ill favor with the nobility of Impiltur. By either killing Lord Belgaros, or connecting Lord Grigor to your covert mission, growing numbers of Impiltur nobles do not trust you. You find your name spoken in hushed whispers all across Impiltur.

IMPI22 Fate of the Crown

During the adventure you acquired the encased Crown of Might, a powerful evil relic whose fate will influence the future of Impiltur. You did the following with the Crown:

- ☐ Destroyed it.
- ☐ Lost it to Belgaros (or the Grand Council).
- ☐ Gave it to Lord Grigor.
- ☐ Gave it to another trusted party:_____.

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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.

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

SESSION TRACKING

DUNGEON MASTER

DM Name: _____

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

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