

E3

AN EPIC TIER ADVENTURE

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

PRINCE OF UNDEATH™



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 27TH-30TH LEVEL

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PRINCE OF UNDEATH™



ADVENTURE BOOK ONE

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INTRODUCTION

Orcus intends to usurp the powers and privileges of the Raven Queen, the god of death, fate, and winter. If he accomplishes his aims, no soul shall rest easy again. To avert this theft of divine portfolio and purpose, epic adventurers must dive down to the bottommost pit of existence, where the Heart of the Abyss festers.

Prince of Undeath is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure for characters of 27th to 30th level. You need the Player's Handbook®, the Monster Manual®, and the Dungeon Master's Guide® to play. D&D™ Dungeon Tiles and D&D® Miniatures can enhance your play experience.

BACKGROUND

Orcus, Demon Prince of the Undead, wants to usurp control over the spirits of the dead from the Raven Queen, the god of Death and Fate. The Prince of Undeath has slowly drawn his plans against her from the heart of his Abyssal realm, the citadel called Everlost. Everlost straddles a yawning chasm whose sheer slopes hold hundreds of tombs and burial sites, creating a tiered necropolis.

Just as with his citadel, Orcus's plans against the Raven Queen are tiered, one plot hiding beneath another. Each past undertaking has moved Orcus a step closer to achieving his goal, even while concealing an even more devious plan beneath it. Orcus has salted the natural world and its echo planes with death cults to oppose the Raven Queen, has fostered powerful servitors to sap worship away from her, has diverted souls from her judgment to weaken her, has looted the banned armory of the Dawn War to fight her, and even launched a raid against Fate's Temple of Temples to directly threaten her.

But all of these efforts pale before Orcus's ultimate aspiration. In order to achieve it, the Prince of Undeath acquired an ancient primordial, a creature called Timesus the Black Star. Few primordials were feared as much by the original gods as Timesus.

Through the efforts of various servitors, from the cultist Kalarel, to the dragon Urihtar and Elder Arantham, to the Ghoul King Doresain, Orcus's grand plans have progressed to their endpoint. Now the Demon Prince has gained Timesus the Black Star, a primordial whose power was once so incontestable that an entire divine armada went down in defeat before it.

The primordial, trapped in stasis, was unearthed from its prison and broken into chunks of blackstar rock. The chunks were transported in crates from the Shadowfell to Sigil, and then to the White Kingdom, deep within the Abyss. Orcus plans to reconstitute the pieces of the primordial, returning Timesus to its original state. The Demon Prince has one improvement to make upon the primordial, however. Orcus wants to turn Timesus into an undead creature—so that it will better serve the Demon Prince of Undeath.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

In *Prince of Undeath*, the epic heroes confront Orcus's plans head-on, following leads introduced in E2: *Kingdom of the Ghouls* or using the adventure hooks described on page 4.

Chaos Ship: The adventurers step through a portal onto a *chaos ship* designed to ride the roiling waves of the Elemental Chaos. The ship, named *Shevaithan*, is controlled by servants loyal to Orcus. Several portals aboard the ship allow instant teleportation to distant locations. Only two of these portals are currently active: one from wherever the adventurers were before boarding the vessel, and one that leads to Orcus's citadel on Everlost (specifically, a portion of the citadel called the Red Hold). The adventurers must gain control of the vessel, defeating the captain and crew. Afterward, it becomes a movable base capable of seeing them through most of the rest of the adventure.

The Red Hold: To commandeer *Shevaithan*, the adventurers need to release it from its moorings—a mystic binding that takes place as soon as they kill the ship's captain. In addition, they learn that the best way to use the ship to reach the depths of the Abyss where Orcus's plans unfold is to make themselves appear to be more demonic. The solution to both of these dilemmas can be found only in Orcus's citadel of Everlost—and specifically in the Prince of Undeath's inner sanctum, the Red Hold. The portal on the *chaos ship* sends the party to the entrance of Orcus's bastion. Though the demon lord is not in residence, the adventurers must fight their way through his servitors and the Red Hold's deadly defenses. After successfully freeing the ship and masking their presence in demonic essences found in the citadel, the adventurers learn that two other *chaos ships* have already launched and are traveling downward upon orders from Orcus. The ships plan to rendezvous at a place called the Forge of Four Worlds. The adventurers must use their commandeered ship to follow.

The Forge of Four Worlds: In the *chaos ship* *Shevaithan*, the adventurers descend to an ancient island-mote hanging deep within the Abyssal void. Known as the Forge of Four Worlds, it acts as a conduit for elemental and arcane energy—energy that Orcus plans to use to restore Timesus and convert the primordial into one of the undead.

As the party arrives, the Forge has been seized by Orcus's demonic horde but is under attack by a force of raging devils. The adventurers bypass the brunt of this conflict by way of a portal dock, but as they explore the Forge, they find themselves caught up in the three-way battle between demons, devils, and the forgeborn—immortal guardians created to defend the site.

The adventurers have the opportunity to make a deal with the devils as they fight the fiendish invaders, during which they learn that the demons have transported Timesus to an area called the Soulfire Furnace. However, after fighting their way through to the heart of the Forge, they face not Timesus but two lesser fragments of the Black

Star. The primordial has already been restored and is traveling to the depths of the Abyssal Nadir where the Heart of the Abyss lies.

Abyssal Nadir: The adventurers plunge to the bottom of the universe in the stolen *chaos ship*. En route, they encounter monstrosities that hunt the Abyssal depths. Upon finally reaching the bleeding edge of raw creation, they find the final *chaos ship*—a gargantuan craft, rebuilt into something resembling a dwarven mining platform.

Inside this temporary shelter, the Heart of the Abyss beats, stuck into reality's side like a tick burrowing in flesh. And here Timesus labors, breaking shards from the Heart of the Abyss at Orcus's command. The adventurers might stop Timesus here, but a shard has already been liberated and given to Orcus. The Demon Prince of the Undead, armed with the shard, has marched on the Raven Queen's domain.

Court of the Raven Queen: The adventurers can travel to Latherna to learn the Raven Queen's fate. Bypassing Zvomarana, the adventurers fight through the demon hordes and undead army filling the outer chamber of the palace to reach Death's sanctum. They find Orcus on the Raven Queen's throne, with the Raven Queen on the floor before him, pierced by the deadly shard.

Here, the adventurers can either defeat Orcus and return the Raven Queen to her throne, or decide to grant Orcus the domain of Death.

USING THIS ADVENTURE

Prince of Undeath is designed to take a party of five player characters (PCs) from 27th to 30th level. You can use this adventure as the conclusion to the epic storyline that began in E1: *Death's Reach* or as a stand-alone adventure in your campaign. Either way, it makes for a grand conclusion to 30 levels of adventuring.

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

The *Prince of Undeath* adventure contains these components:

1. *Adventure Book One* (this booklet) provides a background and synopsis of the adventure, hooks to interest the PCs, an overview of each of the main sections of *Adventure Book Two*, illustrations to show players, new monsters, new artifacts, and new magic items.

2. *Adventure Book Two* contains the many possible encounters that constitute the adventure. The encounters take place throughout five areas: The *Chaos Ship*, the Red Hold, the Forge of Four Worlds, the Abyssal Nadir, and the Court of the Raven Queen.

3. A poster map depicting important encounter areas, including the *chaos ship*.

4. A folder to hold both the booklets and the poster map.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

Begin this adventure as either the logical consequence of previous play (such as the events that occurred in E2: *Kingdom of the Ghouls*), or use one of the hooks provided here to lead the adventurers into the story. (If you prefer, feel free to fashion a hook that better suits your campaign.) All the hooks provide the PCs with opportunities to gain additional experience by completing associated quests.

HOOK: THROUGH THE PORTAL

If the players successfully completed E2: *Kingdom of the Ghouls*, their characters likely defeated Doresain and came into custody of Audaviator, the staff of portals. Audaviator is connected to at least one permanent teleportation circle, inscribed on the deck of the *chaos ship* named Shevaithan. Audaviator's wielder can use the portal to reach the ship. See **Encounter S1: Boarding the Ship** on page 4 of *Adventure Book Two*.

From here, the adventurers are invested in discovering what has become of the primordial Timesus, and will discover clues on the ship (and in the Red Hold) that will see them through to the end of the adventure.

Quest XP: 11,000 (minor quest) if the adventurers commandeer the *chaos ship* Shevaithan and gain full control of the vessel.

HOOK: SECLUSION OF THE ARCHMAGE

Provide an archmage character in the party (if any) with the following information at some point during the time the adventurers travel through the Forge of Four Worlds. Customize the text as necessary to match the archmage's specific situation.

DESTINY'S CONCLUSION

As the player characters move toward 30th level, they come closer and more into alignment with their epic destinies. This could include foreshadowing dreams or visions. Adventurers might see a great foundry built on a remote island around which a ferocious conflict between demons and devils rages. They might have a vision of a citadel straddling a yawning chasm with sheer slopes that hold hundreds of tombs and burial sites, creating a tiered necropolis. When they reach the Abyssal Nadir, an image of Orcus triumphantly rising above the spires of the Raven Queen's palace might haunt their waking moments.

Feel free to sprinkle such visions and dreams into the adventure to add to the growing sense of destiny finally coming home to greet the epic adventurers.

You have plied spells of fabulous power and performed rituals of rare vintage. You've seen much of the world, and in that sight, the arcane threads that underlie all existence have begun to become clear to you. They dance at the corners of your eyes, not quite yet in perfect resolution. To achieve perfect clarity, you need time in seclusion in a location suited for deep contemplation and the manipulation of arcane energies.

The Forge of Four Worlds is just such a place, a citadel worthy of an archmage. Here, magic seethes and the threads of the ultimate arcane formula appear, at long last, within your reach. If you can cleanse the place of demons, devils, undead, and other servitors of Orcus, it might be ideal for construction of your sanctum sanctorum and the study of the Demispell.

The Forge of Four Worlds calls to the archmage, and he or she recognizes it as a place where great magic can be worked. Mainly, this hook is intended to get the archmage thinking about what's next after the campaign reaches its conclusion.

Quest XP: 19,000 (minor quest) if the archmage indicates that he or she intends to return to the Forge of Four Worlds after the adventure's conclusion to turn it into a sanctum sanctorum. Award the XP before the final encounters with Orcus.

HOOK: A DEADLY TRICKSTER'S FINAL PATH

Offer a deadly trickster character in the party (if any) the following information at some point during the time the adventurers explore the Red Hold. Customize the text as necessary to match the deadly trickster's specific situation.

The universe is your playground, and you're enjoying nearly every moment of your exhilarating journey through it. Your arsenal of tricks and deceptions has grown as your power blossomed. Your ability to scandalize, charm, upset, reward, and confound those around you makes your friends wary of you—they never really know when you will carry an enthusiasm too far, or if your loyalties might shift with the next strong breeze.

Upon finding yourself walking the halls of the Red Hold, the citadel of Orcus, Demon Prince of the Undead, a strange thought tugs at you. What if, against all expectations, you threw your aid to Orcus at the last moment? What if you were the factor that actually boosts Orcus to godhood? What would be your reward? But, you also wonder, what would such an act mean to your ultimate destiny?

If the foregoing is too leading for your campaign, you can summarize it with some subtle hint to the player controlling the deadly trickster, explaining that the thought does suddenly enter his or her mind. This hook provides the deadly trickster one basis for how he or she will be remembered after the campaign's conclusion.

Quest XP: 13,000 (minor quest) if the deadly trickster shrugs off the temptation to aid the Demon Prince before the final encounters with Orcus.

HOOK: A DEMIGOD'S APOTHEOSIS

Offer a demigod character in the party (if any) the following information after the adventurers realize they must go to the Raven Queen's realm of Latherna. Customize the text as necessary to the demigod's specific situation.

A strange daydream suddenly takes hold of you. In it, you fall backward in time. Your journey is brief, for you already know its endpoint—you visit yourself, back before you decided to reach for divinity. You advise your past self to petition the Raven Queen to relinquish her claim on your soul, that it might one day ascend to godhood.

You blink away the strange vision, and realize that the Raven Queen has been your bridge to true godhood all along. If she is in direct peril, as seems increasingly likely, what of your own plans for divine ascension? It is in your hands to save her, or allow her to fall before a terrible usurper.

The player should recognize that his or her character can either salvage the divine status quo by rescuing the Raven Queen, or by inaction or even failure, change the equation of divine power forever. The adventurer's success or failure determines which divine realm awaits the character at the campaign's conclusion.

Quest XP: 15,000 (minor quest) if the demigod makes a vow to aid the Raven Queen in her hour of need. Award the XP before the final encounters with Orcus.

HOOK: THE ETERNAL SEEKER'S PATH

Provide an eternal seeker character in the party (if any) the following information when the adventurers first gain control of Shevaithan, before they begin their descent into the Abyss. Customize the text as necessary to match the eternal seeker's specific situation.

Your path is not set, and even Fate herself cannot bind your destiny to her tapestry. But your journeys have empowered your ever-growing supernatural awareness of events occurring in the greater multiverse.

A warning dream breaks upon your mind. In it, you gaze into a void that extends forever, swirling ever downward. You see souls falling into the cavity, endless in number. Some, the yawning chasm swallows. But most do not even reach the void, for in that space above the infinite fall, demons hunt. They flit across the void on scaled wings, spearing glowing life force out of the air with claws, spiked tails, or weapons too horrible to comprehend. Some of the falling souls you recognize as your companions, others as acquaintances, and even members of your own family.

Sweat soaked, you emerge from the vision after finally glimpsing the vortex's bottom, where a blood red light beats a relentless cadence of evil. You know these visions spell out your future, or your doom.

The eternal seeker has seen a vision of what might become his or her final destination, and can choose to embrace it, or work fervently to avoid it.

Quest XP: 13,000 (minor quest) if the eternal seeker follow the visions and successfully plumbs the very depths of the Abyss. Award the XP before the final encounters with Orcus.

HOOK: RISE OF ORCUS

If your players haven't adventured through E2: Kingdom of the Ghouls or earlier adventures leading up to this adventure, use this hook to bring them quickly up to speed.

The epic adventurers have come to the attention of the pantheon of gods that inhabit your campaign. The gods have recently learned of a secret plot by Orcus to claim the domain of Death for himself. As is their wont, the gods seek powerful mortal agents in the world to set things right.

In a flash of golden light, a marut concordant (see *Monster Manual*, page 185) appears before the party. In Supernal (a language that all characters hear in their native tongue), the marut says:

"Your exploits have marked you as the Heroes of your Age. If you would ensure your names shall live forever, mark well the task the gods ask of you. Orcus, Demon Prince of Undeath, has set free a primordial of dissolution from the Dawn War. Called Timesus the Black Star, this primordial commands unparalleled power—power that Orcus claims as his own. Somehow, Orcus seeks to use Timesus to strip Death of her divine mantle. This cannot be allowed. If you would see Orcus's plans overturned, journey now to the chaos ship Shevaithan, which ferries residual chunks of the Black Star deeper into the Abyss where the Demon Prince waits. Time is of the essence. I leave you with a portal to the chaos ship Shevaithan. Take the ship as your own, and follow Orcus to the nadir of existence."

The concordant gives the adventurers a bone scroll case. Inside is a ritual scroll of Planar Portal keyed to carry the party to the teleportation circle on the *chaos ship Shevaithan* (see "Chaos Ship Overview" on page 6). The marut departs as it came.

Quest XP: 11,000 (minor quest) if the adventurers accept the mission and capture the *chaos ship Shevaithan*.

CUSTOMIZING EPIC DESTINY HOOKS

If your players have chosen epic destinies other than those described here, use these as examples to create epic destiny minor quests for those characters. This way, none of your players or their characters are left out of the epic wrap-up to your campaign.

CHAOS SHIP OVERVIEW

Whether through a portal opened by Audaviator, a scroll of Planar Portal provided by a godly messenger, or through some other agency, the adventurers find the *chaos ship Shevaithan* moored to a docking mote within the swirling vortex of the Abyss. Even if not arriving by portal, it is important that the adventurers begin play in this adventure as they arrive or approach the deck of the *chaos ship*.

CHAOS SHIP DETAILS

The upper deck of *Shevaithan* is 130 feet from stem to stern. It is constructed of shiny black wood and iron spars.

A 5-foot-high railing surrounds the upper deck. The railing holds stanchions every 5 feet, through which hawsers can be tied to secure crew or cargo during elemental storms.

The cargo hold is accessible through two hatches on the main deck in front of the sterncastle. A smaller aft hold is accessible through a single hatch at the craft's stern.

Three crystal *anarch spheres* are inset in the deck.

Four permanent magic circles adorn the deck.

Illumination: Bright light. The swirling *anarch spheres* inset in the deck bathe the ship in alternating fiery red, electric blue, and other energetic colors as they radiate through the spectrum in their cradles.

Sterncastle: This two-story structure occupies much of the ship's stern. One set of stairs provides access to the first level, and a second set of stairs to the second level. The top level of the sterncastle contains the wheel that steers the craft.

Sterncastle Cabins: Four doors on the sterncastle each lead to interior chambers.

The lower port cabin contains a variety of supplies, including hundreds of feet of silk rope, barrels of water, crates filled with jerky, and other similar essentials.

The lower starboard cabin contains stores amenable for repairs, including nails, hammers, saws, tackle, and even a work table for crafting and making repairs.

The upper two sterncastle doors open into two chambers of equal size. Both contain rotting carrion for demons to nest in.

Holds: The forward two thirds of the ship's underdeck area can hold a significant amount of cargo, but is currently nearly empty. A few lone crates contain inanimate black stone—part of Timesus the primordial. The stern hold serves as a vast bunk area for demons and undead.

Anarch Spheres: These crystal spheres sit in cradles. Each contains the bottled essence of chaos, and provides the ship's motive power.

Magic Circles: Each of these inscribed circles provides teleportation access to a different, distant location, depending on *Shevaithan*'s current position and the rituals used to create the circles.

ARRIVING ON THE SHIP

When the adventurers first arrive on the *chaos ship*, they likely appear in the central inscribed magic circle on deck closest to the sterncastle. If the adventurers do not arrive on *Shevaithan* by way of a portal, they can alight on the craft wherever they choose.

See **Encounter S1: Boarding the Ship** on page 4 of Adventure Book Two.

SECOND WAVE

If the adventurers overcome the initial resistance they encounter when they arrive on the ship, they have a chance to take a short rest or two. Either after their short rest or when the adventurers open any of the floor hatches that lead down into the holds, a second wave of demonic and undead crew members pour forth to attack.

See **Encounter S2: Ship Second Wave** on page 6 of Adventure Book Two.

Chaos Ship Shevaithan

Colossal vehicle

HP 2,000 Space 27 squares by 16 squares Cost n/a

AC 3; Fortitude 20, Reflex 2

Speed 0, fly 12 (hover), overland flight 15

Pilot

The pilot must stand at the wheel, which sits atop the sterncastle deck. The wheel is mounted on a gimbaled lever that controls pitch and altitude. Cables running beneath the deck connect to three *anarch sphere* cradles. These *anarch spheres* provide motive power and lift. The ship will hover without a pilot or crew, but forward motion requires both.

Crew

In addition to the pilot, *Shevaithan* requires a crew of three for any movement other than hovering. Each must be stationed adjacent to one of the three inset *anarch spheres*. Each of the crew must spend a standard action each round to help control the vessel once it is under way. Reduce *Shevaithan*'s fly speed by 4 for each missing crew member. If the ship reaches fly speed 0 on any given round after it is under way, *Shevaithan* is unable to be steered and flies out of control. Once out of control, regaining control requires 3 consecutive rounds with the pilot and three crew members manning their stations.

Load

200 Medium creatures; 4,000 tons of cargo.

Out of Control

When out of control, *Shevaithan* moves forward at half speed. Each round, roll 1d20. On a roll of 1-5, it descends. It descends 5 squares per round for the first 10 rounds it's out of control. After 10 rounds, it descends 10 squares per round. If *Shevaithan* hits a solid mote in the Elemental Chaos or the Abyss after traveling out of control for more than 20 rounds, the *chaos ship* is destroyed.

Chaos Attunement

The *Shevaithan* functions only in the Elemental Chaos and the Abyss.

Wheel and Three Anarch Spheres (Navigation Focus)

This vehicle is equipped with three *anarch spheres*, which serve as the navigation focus for the wheel mounted on top of the sterncastle deck.

CHAOS SHIP LORE

Arcana DC 30: In the Astral Sea, craft known as astral ships ply the silvery sky. Other craft, including planar dromonds and spelljammers, can sail between the planes. If all these are possible, then so are craft suited to the Elemental Chaos, despite the environment's more challenging terrain.

Arcana DC 35: Chaos ships are rare vessels designed to travel through the Elemental Chaos, and like their tumultuous environment, no two are exactly alike in shape and size. Stories recount of a few as large as caravels. However, all require bottled chaos to drive their great bulks through the boil of the ever-changing environment. Containing the essence of the Elemental Chaos itself into crystal globes (called *anarch spheres*) is a monumentally difficult task, and very few creatures know the secret of their making.

ANARCH SPHERES AND CHAOS SHIPS

Anarch spheres contain the bottled essence of the Elemental Chaos. Each one vibrates with condensed, tumultuous energy that can be siphoned for a variety of purposes. Few creatures possess the knowledge required to create *anarch spheres*, but Orcus has such skill. *Anarch spheres* power the deadly wards of the Red Hold, the demon lord's sanctum above the fortress of Everlost. In addition, *anarch spheres* power Orcus's fleet of *chaos ships*.

PLANAR PORTALS AND TELEPORT CIRCLES

Four magic circles are inscribed on Shevaithan's deck. Three serve as portals, as well as permanent teleportation circle endpoints for rituals such as Linked Portal and Planar Portal.

However, in the lower portions of the Abyss, the flux of the unraveling universe prevents teleportation across long distances, and thus two of the three inscribed circles are dark and inactive when the adventure begins. The portals, activated by proximity, link to the following sites (and they begin to glow when close enough to use):

Sterncastle Circle: This circle does not serve as a portal, but only as a permanent teleportation circle that can be used as the end point for various teleportation rituals. This circle always glows. This is the portal where the adventurers likely arrive.

Starboard Circle: This circle serves as a portal that connects to a circle in the Forge of Four Worlds. It is inactive when adventurers board the *chaos ship*, but it becomes active when Shevaithan moves to within a mile of the Forge. If the adventurers step through when the portal is active, see **Encounter F1: Portal Chamber** on page 34 of Adventure Book Two.

Port Circle: This circle serves as a portal that connects to another circle on the *chaos ship* currently lodged in the Abyssal Nadir. It is inactive when the adventurers first board the *chaos ship*, but the portal becomes active when Shevaithan moves to within a mile of the uttermost bottom of the Abyss. If the adventurers step through the portal at this time, see **Encounter H1: Boarding Level** on page 50 of Adventure Book Two.

Bowsprit Circle: This circle serves as a portal that connects to another circle in Everlost. It becomes active when the moorings appear, but becomes inactive when Shevaithan plunges farther down the Abyssal void. If the adventurers step through when the portal is active, see **Encounter R1: Death Gate** on page 8 of Adventure Book Two.

TAKING COMMAND OF SHEVAITHAN

To commandeer the *chaos ship*, the adventurers must enter the Red Hold and release the mystic moorings that secure the vessel. Once the adventurers accomplish this, they have one last obstacle to overcome to truly take command of Shevaithan.

See **Encounter S3: Commanding Shevaithan** on page 30 of Adventure Book Two.

INTO THE ABYSS!

Upon taking command of Shevaithan, the adventurers can use the *chaos ship* to dive into the central cavity of the Abyss to reach depths not even accessible by the Plain of a Thousand Portals. However, the lower Abyss is a dangerous realm, and the ship is beset on at least two occasions by denizens attracted to the ship's passage.

Travel time downward to reach the Forge of Four Worlds is four days. After two days, a scourge of hunting demons wings in and demands a toll.

See **Encounter S4: Shevaithan's Toll** on page 32 of Adventure Book Two.

After the ship has cast off from the Forge of Four Worlds and just prior to reaching the Abyssal Nadir, awful creatures that hunt the lower Abyss attack the ship and its crew of adventurers.

See **Encounter S5: Fathomals Below** on page 48 of Adventure Book Two.

RED HOLD OVERVIEW

The adventurers' need to free Shevaithan from its mystic moorings takes them to Orcus's fortress of Everlost and the demon prince's inner sanctum—the Red Hold.

A character knows the following information about Everlost with a successful Arcana check:

DC 30: *Few mortals journey to Everlost, but those who do speak endlessly of its horrors. The fortress of Orcus, the Prince of Undeath, lies at the center of Oblivion's End, a desert of bone crushed to dry grit. Within a vortex of screaming winds that howl with the voices of the dead, Everlost rises as a towering fortress built of obsidian and bone.*

The foundations of the citadel arch above a sheer-sided chasm necropolis, its tiers holding hundreds upon hundreds of crypts and sepulchers extending down into an endless darkness. The stench of blood burns as a red haze in the air above the citadel's walls and towers, and the shrieks of demons and the creatures they consume create a horrid chorus through the endless abyssal night.

DC 35: *Even rarer are those who gain access to the bastion at the apex of Everlost—the Red Hold, an impenetrable citadel that serves as Orcus's sanctum. Its exterior walls drip a foul red-black ichor, and its Necrotic Gate is said to open only to those with absolute loyalty to the demon lord—or those destined to be consumed by the Prince of Undeath.*

As the adventurers seek to free the *chaos ship*, they travel through the Death Gate and into the Red Hold. If the adventurers are intent on bypassing the Death Gate in **Encounter R1** to explore the larger citadel of Everlost, a few random encounters in the sprawling fortress should convince them to focus on the task at hand.

ENCOUNTERS IN THE RED HOLD

The Red Hold features eleven encounters, plus a larger number of undescribed chambers and passages. See Encounters R1-R10, pages 8-29 in *Adventure Book Two*.

GENERAL DETAILS

The interior of the Red Hold is divided into a haphazard arrangement of passageways and chambers. The varying size of Orcus's servitors means that passageways designed for Huge and Large creatures often serve as chambers for smaller demons.

The critical portions of the Red Hold where the adventurers are most likely to travel in order to free the mystic bindings holding the *chaos ship* appear as numbered areas on the map (see page 10 for details).

Areas outside the encounters can be developed as you see fit, whether in conjunction with a random encounter or just to set the mood. Use the following table to generate area contents or to inspire ideas of your own.

Details of the Red Hold

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Demon nest (filthy rags, ground bones, the flayed skins of other demons or mortal creatures) |
| 2 | Worthless art objects (profound statues, burned or acid-etched jewelry, fragments of foul tapestries) |
| 3 | Skeletal remains (skulls, splintered bones, shattered carapaces, charred armor) |
| 4 | Broken weapons (burned, shattered, acid-etched) |
| 5 | Detritus (bones, rocks, charred wood) |
| 6 | Storage (garbage, blood-filled urns, demonic weapons and armor, discarded supplies) |
| 7 | Corpses (mortal slaves, demons, undead) |
| 8 | Religious relics (charred or shattered holy symbols, torn priest's robes) |
| 9 | Worthless magic (implements, weapons, wondrous items of 10th level or lower) |
| 10 | Fixtures (fountain, pool, trench; filled with blood, shadow, ooze) |
| 11 | Equipment (torture implements, arcane research) |
| 12 | Slaves |

The following features are common to all areas of the Red Hold.

Illumination: All areas within the Red Hold are dark unless otherwise noted in the encounter descriptions.

Air: A stench of filth and decay pervades all parts of the Red Hold. However, the adventurers quickly grow used to the reek, and it has no detrimental effect.

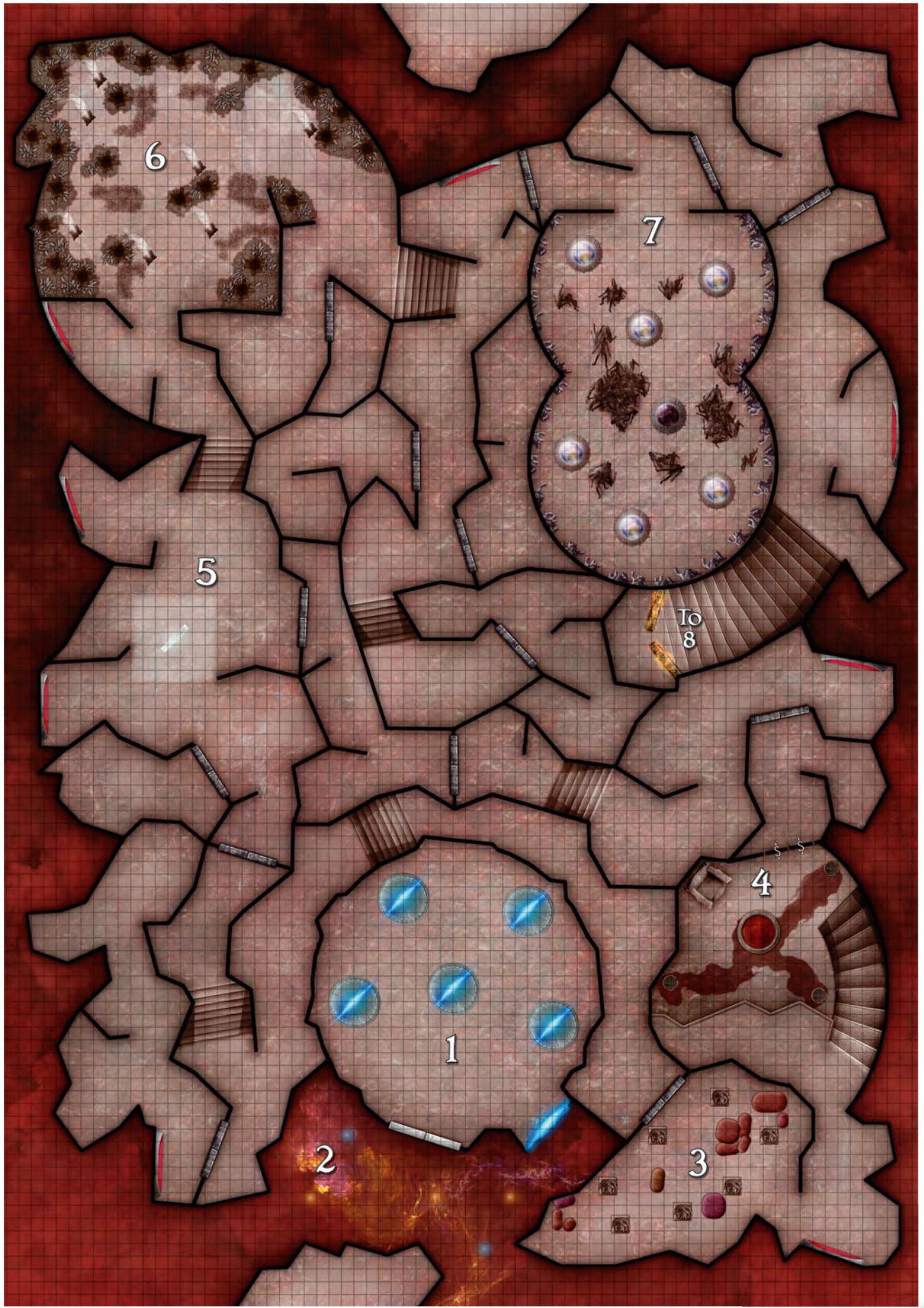
Walls and Floor: As in all Everlost, the walls of the Red Hold are formed of solid masses of abyssal obsidian within which are set the bones of countless creatures slain during the citadel's construction. However, the powerful wards of the Red Hold give its walls a kind of animate life—Orcus's sanctum slowly shifts and rebuilds itself. As the adventurers explore, they can see where old portals have sealed over and new entrances have been blasted.

Passageways and chambers within the Red Hold are uneven stone that slopes severely in many areas. Sometimes portions of the floor that seem smooth become partly animate as the bones inset within them move, giving rise to unanticipated difficult terrain.

RESTING IN THE RED HOLD

The best chance for adventurers in the Red Hold to take an extended rest is with the angels of the White Fire after **Encounter R7B** (see page 22 of *Adventure Book Two*). However, if the adventurers are taxed by earlier encounters, they might attempt to take an extended rest in an area in which Orcus's servants are unlikely to find them, such as the forbidden court (**Encounter R3**), since the demons of the Red Hold are banned from this area. Adventurers who want to retreat to Shevaithan can do so, or they can use some other method to leave the Red Hold and return at a later time. Otherwise, random encounters likely find the adventurers while they are resting and recuperating.

RED HOLD OVERVIEW



RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Though it features a number of fixed encounters, the Red Hold is not a static location. Orcus's servants, vassals, and allies come and go constantly within the bastion, and the adventurers need to be wary as they search for a way to release the mystic moorings holding the *chaos ship*.

Until they complete **Encounter R7B**, the adventurers have a chance of encountering Orcus's subjects and servitors throughout the Red Hold. Roll for a random encounter every time the adventurers pass through one of the Red Hold's doors, or if the party spends more than one hour in any area (including attempts to take an extended rest outside Location 3).

A random encounter is indicated on a roll of 1 on 1d8. On a roll of 8, the adventurers see or hear the residents of the Red Hold before they are spotted, reminding them to stay wary.

Choose a random encounter from pages 2-3 of *Adventure Book Two*, or use those encounters as inspiration to create your own. Choose the level of random encounters carefully, especially if the resources of the party are already depleted. Don't be afraid to lower the level of the sample random encounters if need be.

THE RED HOLD ON ALERT

The adventurers do not automatically draw attention to themselves as they fight their way into the Red Hold in **Encounters R1 and R2**. Though the elite forces of the Red Hold are arguably more dangerous than the rabble and guards of Everlost, even Orcus's most devoted servants fight constantly among themselves, often with deadly results. As such, combat encounters in the Red Hold do not draw the attention of other creatures unless the encounter text says so.

For the most part, demons aware of intruders within the Red Hold will assume that dealing with those intruders is someone else's problem. Additionally, not all the residents of the Red Hold are spoiling for a fight. Before **Encounter R5**, adventurers who want to avoid a random encounter by stealth (or by fleeing if a fight goes against them) should be given every opportunity to do so.

The appearance of the ghost door and the adventurers' fight with its iron golem guardians puts the Red Hold on alert. After **Encounter R5**, random encounters should involve creatures that actively pursue the adventurers, though Orcus's servants are not above fleeing if pressed.

After **Encounter R7B**, the Red Hold goes on high alert and Orcus's forces scour the bastion in search of intruders. However, the angels of the Order of White Fire work to keep Orcus's servants engaged outside the party's escape route through **Encounters R8-R10**. As long as the adventurers stick to that escape route, make no further checks for random encounters. However, if the party backtracks into the Red Hold, roll for random encounters in every location and for every minute they stay in one place.

THE RED HOLD MAP KEY

The following location descriptions refer to the maps on pages 9 and 11.

1. DEATH GATE

An open courtyard provides the only access to the Red Hold, but it is well guarded by Orcus's servants and the power of the Death Gate.

See **Encounter R1: Death Gate** on page 8 of *Adventure Book Two*.

2. BLOODSTORM

The most potent defense of the Red Hold is a river of boiling blood held within an impenetrable stone channel that fully surrounds the lowest levels of the bastion.

See **Encounter R2: Bloodstorm** on page 10 of *Adventure Book Two*.

3. FORBIDDEN COURT

This chamber is protected by undead guardians that the demon lord trusts.

See **Encounter R3: Forbidden Court** on page 12 of *Adventure Book Two*.

4. FIRST MOORING WARDS

A marilith and lich vestiges dwell here, using their deadly arsenal of weapons and abilities to protect the *chaos ship* moorings.

See **Encounter R4: First Wards** on page 14 of *Adventure Book Two*.

5. GHOST DOOR

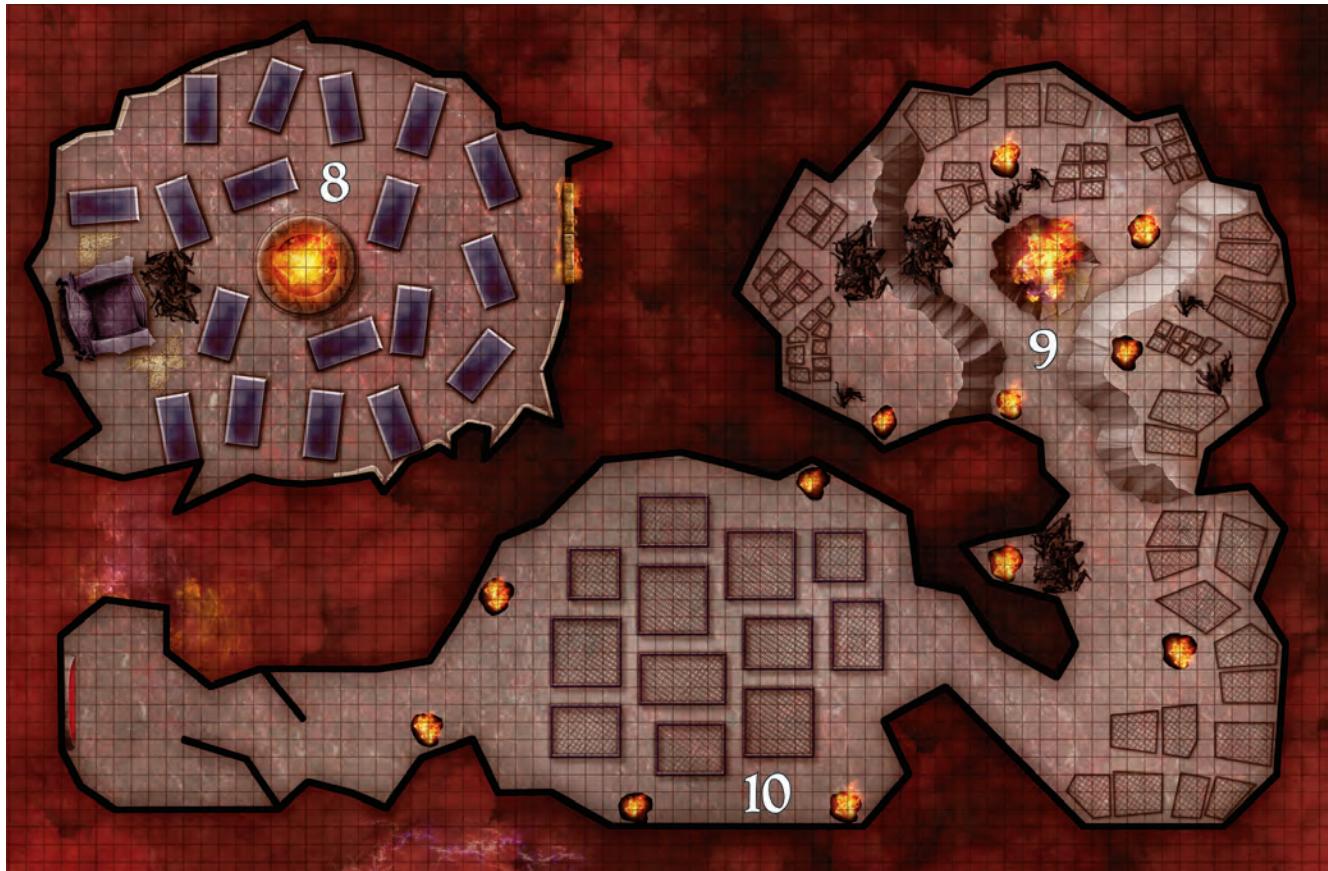
This empty common area is the current location of the ghost door—the access point to a secret extradimensional space maintained within the Red Hold by a group of angels in the service of the Raven Queen. The ghost door is activated by the presence of the Raven Queen's most trusted servants, a role the adventurers took on in **E1: Death's Reach**. However, their inability to open the door sees them attacked by its potent defenses.

See **Encounter R5: Ghost Door** on page 16 of *Adventure Book Two*.

6: DARK GARDEN

When the adventurers inadvertently activate the ghost door, the forces within the Red Hold are put on alert against intruders. A squad of Orcus's elite hunters corner the adventurers in this demonic garden.

See **Encounter R6: Dark Garden** on page 18 of *Adventure Book Two*.



7. SPHERE NEXUS

Demons met a grisly end when an *anarch sphere* malfunctioned. The adventurers must face the servants of Orcus attempting to quell a flare-up of elemental power, then shut down the malfunctioning sphere before they can release the mystic moorings holding the *chaos ship*.

In the aftermath, the forces of the Red Hold send their most deadly hunter against the intruders—a retriever holocaust. However, even as the adventurers deal with that threat, they come upon unexpected allies. The angels of the Order of White Fire take them back to the ghost door and the extradimensional sanctuary within, allowing the party to rest and to learn that Orcus has sent two additional *chaos ships* to the Forge of Four Worlds.

See **Encounter R7A: Sphere Nexus** on page 20 of *Adventure Book Two* and **Encounter R7B: Holocaust** on page 22 of *Adventure Book Two*.

8. GREAT HALL

The forces of Orcus are on high alert, but the angels of the White Fire assist the adventurers in their escape from the Red Hold. A relatively safe route through the kitchens keeps the adventurers from running into wandering patrols, returning them to the Bloodstorm and the Death Gate beyond. However, the great hall that provides access to the kitchens is protected by some of Orcus's fiercest guardians, including a high aspect of the demon lord himself!

See **Encounter R8: Great Hall** on page 24 of *Adventure Book Two*.

9. SLAVE KITCHENS

The adventurers fight their way through more of the Red Hold's defenders, but the kitchens of the Red Hold are a place of horror. Here, the adventurers can find the demonic essences that can be used to mask their mortal presence as they descend deeper into the Abyss.

See **Encounter R9: Slave Kitchens** on page 26 of *Adventure Book Two*.

10. SLAVE PENS

The adventurers discover a chilling chamber in the bowels of the Red Hold. In foul cages, demonic overseers herd mortal slaves for Orcus.

FINAL BATTLE

After the adventurers travel back through the Death Gate, they find themselves facing the lich Harthoon, castellan of Everlost and Orcus's second in command. Only by defeating the Warden of Everlost and his servants can the adventurers safely make their way back to the *chaos ship* Shevaithan.

See **Encounter R10: Warden of Everlost** on page 28 of *Adventure Book Two*.

FORGE OF FOUR WORLDS OVERVIEW

The adventurers know that Timesus the primordial has been freed from its eternal prison, broken into chunks of black rock, and transported to the Forge of Four Worlds. There, Orcus plans to restore the primordial to its original power and glory—while also making it subservient to the Demon Prince of Undeath.

A character knows the following information about the Forge of Four Worlds with a successful Arcana check:

DC 30: *Set in the blackest depths of the Abyss, the Forge of Four Worlds is an ancient site known to few in the mortal realm. The greatest of demons, gods, and primordials know the location of the Forge, but its history and purpose is mostly forgotten.*

DC 35: *The Forge is a crystalline island-mote of pure power—a lattice of raw elemental and arcane energy, congealed and crystallized into solid matter. Its interior is an intricate web of chambers and passageways guarded by the forgeborn—immortal abominations created to defend the Forge of Four Worlds.*

DC 40: *At the heart of the Forge stands the Soulfire Furnace, where the incalculable energy of the Abyss is channeled and shaped. It is written in obscure texts that the Forge of Four Worlds offers the power of a primordial to those who can control the Soulfire Furnace. Among some archmages and eternal seekers, it is said that the Forge of Four Worlds might in fact be constructed from the essence of an ancient primordial.*

GENERAL DETAILS

The critical portions of the Forge of Four Worlds where the adventurers are most likely to travel appear as numbered areas on the accompanying map.

A maze of shattered crystal caverns and twisting passageways runs between the encounter areas in the Forge. The map shows the keyed encounter areas and the routes between them, some of which double back on themselves. Each time the adventurers exit an encounter area, note their destination. During the initial encounters and for random encounters, place intervening caverns and passages whose detail are up to you; they could be blank widening portions of passages, if you desire. If the adventurers are close to finishing this section of the adventure, allow one encounter area to simply lead to the next.

Chambers within the Forge feature gravity local to each room and passageway. Adventurers leaving one cavern might find gravity slowly shifting as they walk along the adjacent passageway, emerging into another cavern that appears upside down relative to the first.

The latent arcane energy of the Forge causes the connections between encounter areas to change if the adventurers retrace their steps. Each time they travel between two specific encounter areas, they pass through a different set of connecting caverns and passageways, face a new set of random encounters, and might emerge at their destination through a different entrance if one is available.

The details of the Forge can draw on any arcane or elemental inspiration. Use the following table to generate area contents or to inspire ideas of your own.

Details of the Forge of Four Worlds

1	Elemental vent (fire or lightning attack)
2	Storm of crystal shards (provides concealment, deals ongoing damage)
3	Elemental mist (provides concealment)
4	Trap or hazard (upgraded doomspore, flame jet, treacherous ice sheet)
5	Detritus (crystals, bones, charred rocks)
6	Forgeborn graveyard (forgeborn slain by intruders are interred here)
7	Skeletal remains (intruders' skeletons, carapaces, rusted armor and weapons)
8	Worthless magic (implements, weapons, wondrous items of 10th level or lower)
9	Equipment (ancient alchemical apparatus, dead teleportation portal, worthless ritual components)
10	Corpses (demons, devils, forgeborn)

The following features are common to all areas of the Forge of Four Worlds.

Illumination: Unless otherwise indicated, the walls of the Forge shed bright light prior to **Encounter F4**; dim light thereafter.

Walls and Floor: All the interior areas of the forge are carved from fractured crystal whose fragments are spread across the floor. Creatures can move normally within the forge, but a creature that runs in any area must make a DC 19 Acrobatics check or fall prone at the end of its movement.

RESTING IN THE FORGE

If the adventurers determine enough of Orcus's plans to guess that the Demon Prince means to restore Timesus with the power of the Forge, their desire to prevent this might make them unwilling to take an extended rest.

However, if they do take a moment, any of the non-keyed chambers that lie between the keyed chambers can serve the purpose adequately, as long as they make some effort to hide their presence. It is also possible to return to Shevaithan to rest.

RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

As the adventurers explore the Forge of Four Worlds, they can find themselves targeted by the demons that hold the Forge, invading devils, forgeborn guardians, or all three of these factions at once. Roll for a random encounter when the adventurers exit an encounter area, or if the party spends more than one hour in any area.

A random encounter is indicated on a roll of 1 on 1d8. Choose a random encounter from pages 2–3 of *Adventure Book Two*, or use those encounters as inspiration to create your own.

FORGE OF FOUR WORLDS MAP KEY

The Forge of Four Worlds features encounter areas connected by a maze of passageways and caverns.

F1. PORTAL CHAMBER

When Shevaithan gets to within 1 mile of the Forge, one of the magic circles aboard the *chaos ship* activates to create a portal that links to this location.

See **Encounter F1: Portal Chamber** on page 34 of *Adventure Book Two*.

F2. FORGEBORN ASSAULT

As the adventurers explore the Forge, they enter a wide cavern occupied by standing stones. Here, they come under attack by immortal forgeborn guardians.

See **Encounter F2: Forgebore Assault** on page 36 of *Adventure Book Two*.

F3. HOLD THE LINE

Determined to prevent the invading devils from gaining access to the heart of the Forge, a force of demons defends this multi-leveled chamber.

See **Encounter F3: Hold the Line** on page 38 of *Adventure Book Two*.

F4. DEMON DEFENDERS

As the adventurers approach this chamber, which features a higher and lower plateau, a tremor announces that the Forge of Four Worlds has been activated. Within this cavern, a squad of demons led by a balor champion defends against all intruders.

See **Encounter F4: Demon Defenders** on page 40 of *Adventure Book Two*.

F5. DEAL WITH THE DEVILS

In this large cavern of crystal and standing stones, the adventurers have the opportunity to form an alliance with a pit fiend and its squad of invading devils.

See **Encounter F5: Deal With the Devils** on page 42 of *Adventure Book Two*.

F6. FORGESTORM BRIDGE

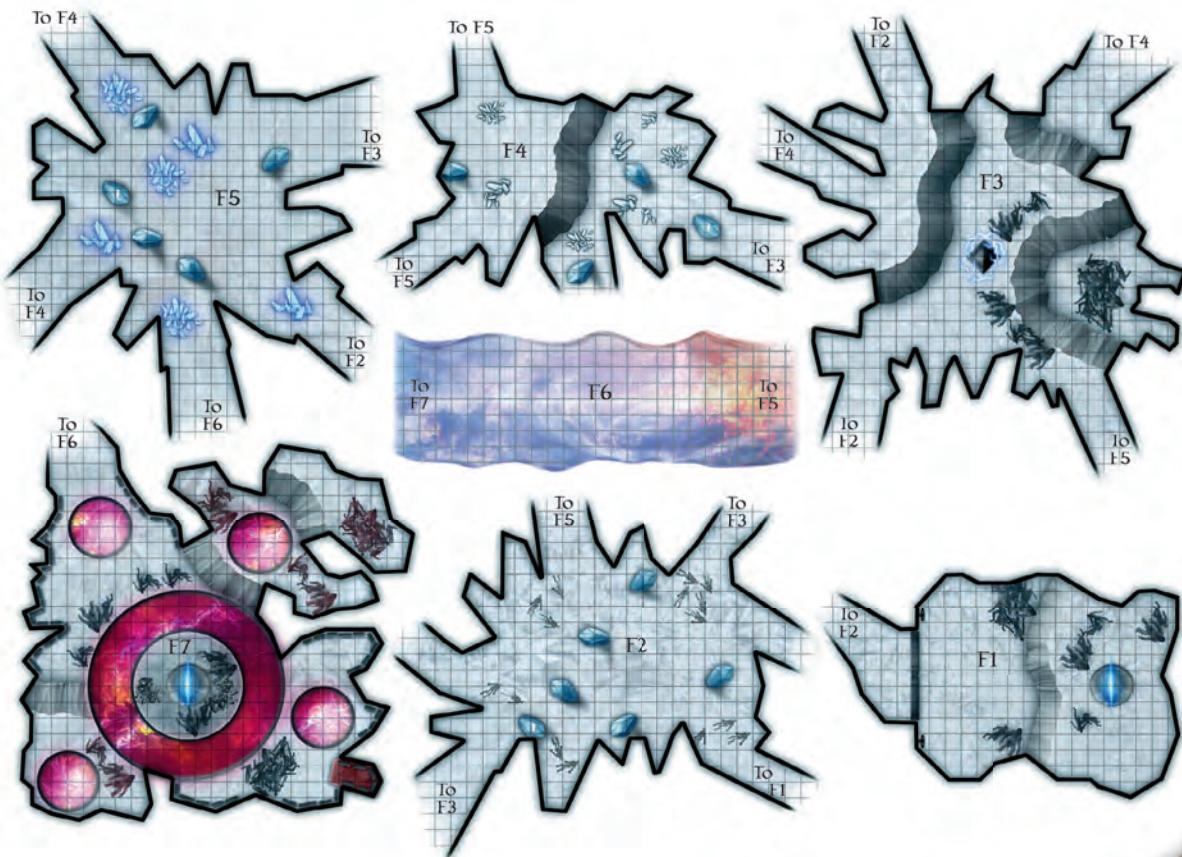
A bridge of fractured stone leads through an elemental vortex storm through which the adventurers must pass.

See **Encounter F6: Forgestorm Bridge** on page 44 of *Adventure Book Two*.

F7. SOULFIRE FURNACE

In the heart of the Forge of Four Worlds, the adventurers reach the Soulfire Furnace.

See **Encounter F7: Soulfire Furnace** on page 46 of *Adventure Book Two*.



ABYSSAL NADIR OVERVIEW

The adventurers travel to the bottom of the Abyss itself, where the Heart flashes out its evil rhythm, to stop the Prince of Undeath from accomplishing his unholy task.

THE HEART

Where Tharizdun planted a shard of evil in the Elemental Chaos, it metamorphosed into a crystalline Heart that grew in size and power over the eons. Traveling all the way down the throat of the Abyss to find the Heart at its foundation is nearly impossible. Only a dozen or so creatures have previously managed it. Of these, less than a handful managed to carve off a splinter of the Heart for their own foul purposes. The true nature of the Heart may never be known, but those who know of its existence believe it is evil made manifest.

A character knows the following about the Heart with a successful Arcana or Nature check.

DC 28: *A crystalline splinter of evil pierces the universe somewhere far beneath all imagining. It was planted by he whose name is spoken only in panicked whispers. It spawned the Abyss, a yawning chasm of infinite darkness that swallows and corrupts anything that draws near. In the festering depths of the Abyss, demons breed and swarm.*

DC 30: *The Heart corrupted elementals, making demons of those it didn't destroy. It still has the power to corrupt any creature that draws too close.*

DC 35: *According to a document in Sigil, written in the Supernal script, the Heart is the remnant of a demolished universe overcome by some unspeakable apocalypse.*

DC 45: *A splinter of the Heart grants the wielder the power to slay a god.*

EXTRACTION TOWER DETAILS

The vertical structure of the extraction tower is the reconfigured body of a *chaos ship* much larger than Shevaithan. It is constructed of shiny black wood and iron spars, reinforced with rituals that temporarily bolster it against the corruption and destructive power of the Heart.

The open upper deck leads down through a hatchway to the boarding level. The boarding level contains four inscribed magic circles, similar in configuration though closer together than those on Shevaithan's main deck.

The crystal *anarch spheres* that helped drive the ship before its reconfiguration were used as components in the rituals used to render the superstructure temporarily resistant to the tumult raging around it.

Ceilings: The boarding level and support level each have ceilings that are 20 feet high. The extraction level ceiling is 60 feet high.

Level Access: Reconfigured stairs provide access between the three levels of the superstructure.

THE EXTRACTION TOWER

The Abyssal Heart expels an immeasurable tsunami of malign influence to maintain the swirling vortex of the Abyss. The energy is enough to shred the flesh of any mortal or demon that gets too close to the Heart's pulsing, crystal core.

After Orcus drives his largest *chaos ship* to the Abyssal Nadir, he repurposes its superstructure to shield himself and his most powerful servitors from the Heart's influence. The ship, reconfigured to resemble something like a dwarven mining tower, squats over the Heart, slowly disintegrating as immense forces rend and batter it. This makeshift extraction tower retains structural integrity for the moment, but how long it can survive the radiance of the Heart remains to be seen.

The extraction tower still has a part to play in the grand plot that Orcus has woven. Orcus has left Timesus behind within the tower's bottommost chamber, commanding the primordial to break off yet another piece of pure evil from the pulsing Heart. The Demon Prince has one shard already, a shard he plans to use to slay the Raven Queen. He wants the primordial to harvest another shard or two, for there are other gods that might be removed to further Orcus's future plans. Asmodeus, for example, needs to be dealt with for past transgressions against the Abyss and its multitude of demons.

ARRIVING ON THE TOWER

When Shevaithan approaches, the *chaos ship* begins to buck and rattle, threatening to break apart. Continuing downward will destroy the craft. However, the final magic circle on Shevaithan's deck lights up, providing the adventurers with a portal to the superstructure below.

When Shevaithan nears the superstructure of the extraction tower, read:

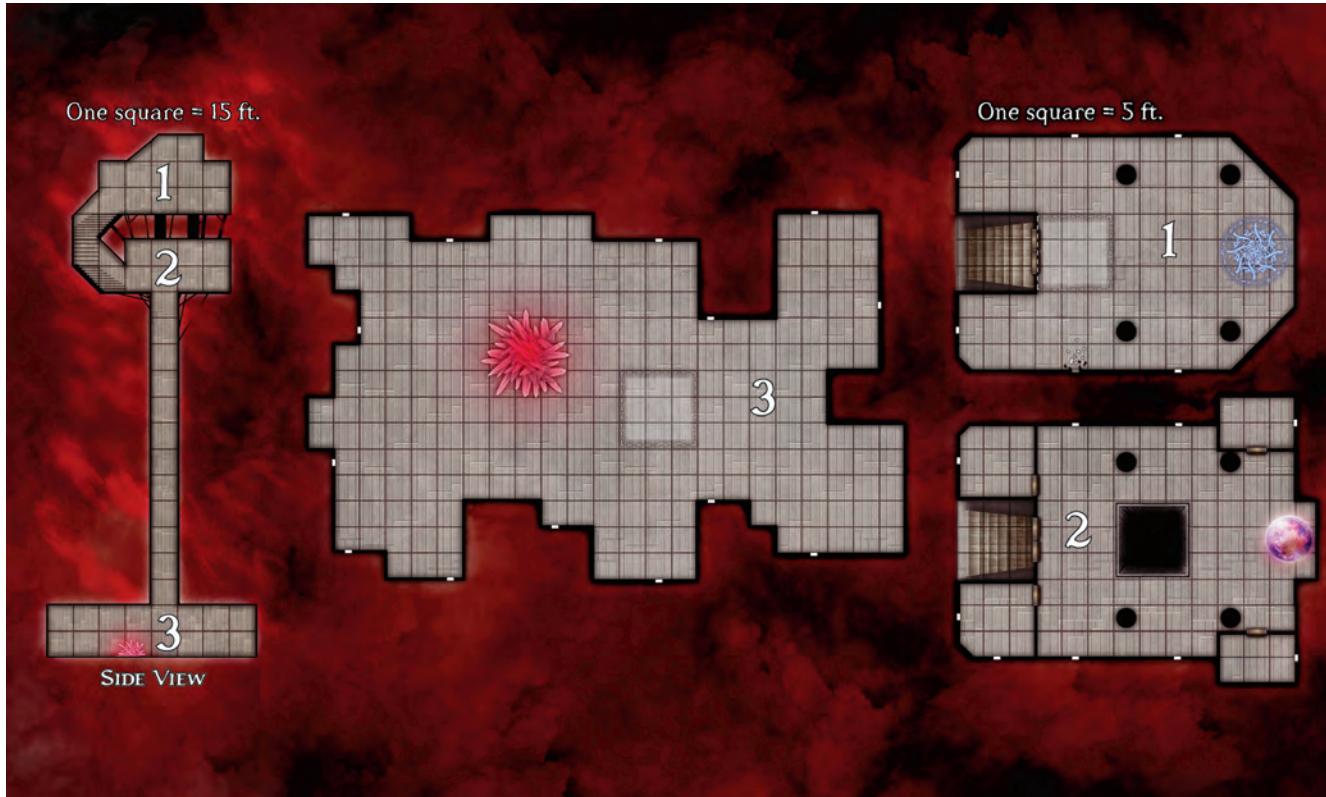
The walls of the churning vortex pulse crimson like the heartbeat of a dying god. Below, the vortex rises from a plain of boiling white clay, the physical manifestation of reality's deepest limit.

A gargantuan chaos ship has crashed stern down into the boiling clay. The craft has been reconfigured, turned into an elaborate, enclosed mining platform. It sways and shakes, but manages to retain its integrity amid the battering chaos.

Catastrophic energy seethes the area around the tower, especially near its base.

On Shevaithan, the port magic circle suddenly lights up. A portal connection has been made.

If the adventurers use the portal (or fly to the top of the extraction tower), see **Encounter H1: Boarding Level** on page 50 of Adventure Book Two.



EXTRACTION TOWER MAP KEY

The extraction tower has three main levels: the boarding level, the support level, and the extraction level.

1. BOARDING LEVEL

Adventurers can reach this level most easily by walking through the magic circle portal on the port side of Shevaithan when they get close enough to the Abyssal Nadir. A hatch in the ceiling of the boarding level also provides entry, but anyone approaching through the tumult must travel through 100 feet of lethal conditions that exist around the tower (see the sidebar).

See **Encounter H1: Boarding Level** on page 50 of *Adventure Book Two*.

2. SUPPORT LEVEL

Adventurers reach this level via stairs down from level 1. The crew Orcus left behind to aid Timesus resides here, under the command of a deathpriest necromancer.

Two life boats hang from this level. They provide a method to escape the tower and travel up the swirling vortex of the Abyss to Orcus's fortress of Everlost.

See **Encounter H2: Support Level** on page 52 of *Adventure Book Two*.

3. EXTRACTION LEVEL

Adventurers reach this level by climbing, flying, or falling down the shaft on level 2. The restored primordial Timesus is here, as is the Heart of the Abyss.

Being so close to the Heart is a dangerous proposition, but even more dangerous is the restored primordial of dissolution.

See **Encounter H3: Extraction Level** on page 54 of *Adventure Book Two*.

CONDITIONS OUTSIDE THE TOWER

Orcus reconfigured his largest chaos ship into a protective tower for good reason. The edge of the cosmos would be an unstable, dangerous region even without a shard of pure evil protruding from it like an infected splinter. Together, the Heart and the elemental storm make the region around the tower deadly to mortal and god alike. The tower keeps the malign influence beyond its walls, forming a small area of protection at the heart of the devastating storm.

Creatures outside the tower rapidly disintegrate; their bodies corrupt so quickly that they crumble to dust. Model this effect by subtracting $1d4$ healing surges each round from characters outside the tower. Unattended objects erode to nothing in $3d6$ rounds.

The tower rises 100 feet from the Abyssal Nadir, while the corruption zone reaches 200 feet; creatures attempting to reach the boarding level without using the permanent magic circle must travel 100 feet through the zone.

FATE'S PALACE OVERVIEW

The Raven Queen's citadel nestles among jagged mountains in the Shadowfell, in a realm called Letherna. Her mighty stronghold consists of a maze of reaching towers and graceful bridges cut from stone and ice. Above all, a maelstrom of stars spin, each bright pinpoint the life force of a recently deceased mortal. From this spirit storm, a grim procession descends through the gates, summoned to learn their final fates.

CITADEL OF THE RAVEN QUEEN

Most creatures visit the Raven Queen as formless souls at the conclusion of their lives. However, the adventurers have a more urgent need. They learn that Orcus has a shard of evil, and has moved to attack the citadel of the Raven Queen.

Normally, visitors have two options to reach the Raven Queen's realm: either through the Temple of Temples, Zvomarana, or through the winter-shrouded woods and up the steep-sided slopes of the mountain chain to Letherna.

However, while still in the extraction tower at the Abyssal Nadir, the adventurers receive a specific sequence of sigils that correspond to a permanent teleportation circle inside Death's palace.

Once the adventurers have traveled far enough up the throat of the Abyss (a trip requiring at least 8 hours), teleportation once again becomes an option. They can use a Planar Portal ritual (or the Staff of Portals, Audaviator, if they obtained it in adventure E2: Kingdom of the Ghouls) to transfer directly to the palace.

The portal leads to a courtyard outside the Raven Queen's throne room.

EARLY ACCESS?

During the course of this adventure, the player characters might determine that Orcus's ingenuity has relegated them to always playing a game of catch-up. Instead of following a trail of clues, they might decide, based on what they already know of Orcus's ultimate goal, to break off the adventure in midstream and merely make for the Raven Queen's palace to guard her. Should you let them?

The answer is yes. If you don't, it will seem as though you are railroading the game. The only downside is that the adventurers will miss some treasure and will likely fail to achieve 30th level (and their capstone epic power).

If the adventurers remain determined to stop the chase into the Abyss in favor of heading to the Raven Queen's citadel, there are a few things you can do to make their choice a valid and rewarding one.

First, for their brilliant deduction, consider rewarding the adventurers with sufficient experience points to reach 30th level, and thereby allow them to gain their 30th-level epic destiny power. It is only fitting that they have access to their entire suite of abilities when they confront Orcus in the final battle.

Second, provide them with a way to reach the throne room courtyard. The simplest way to do that is to have the lurking Vecna provide a version of the message described on page 55 of *Adventure Book Two*. Presage the delivery of the permanent teleportation sigil sequence with something along these lines:

"You've seen through layers of distraction to the heart of Orcus's most well-kept secret, while the gods themselves sit and wonder. You truly are heroes of the age. Perhaps you can do some good yet, if you are quick enough."

COURTYARD ARRIVAL

If the adventurers use the sequence of sigils provided by the image of the one-eyed old man, they find that, indeed, it is keyed to a permanent teleportation circle that provides direct access to a very large chamber right outside the Raven Queen's throne room.

To enter the throne room, the adventurers must first deal with the demonic forces Orcus left to protect the area.

See **Encounter L1: Throne Room Courtyard** on page 56 of *Adventure Book Two*.

DEATH'S THRONE ROOM

When the adventurers make it out of the throne room courtyard, they can enter the throne room and discover what has become of Orcus, the shard, and the Raven Queen.

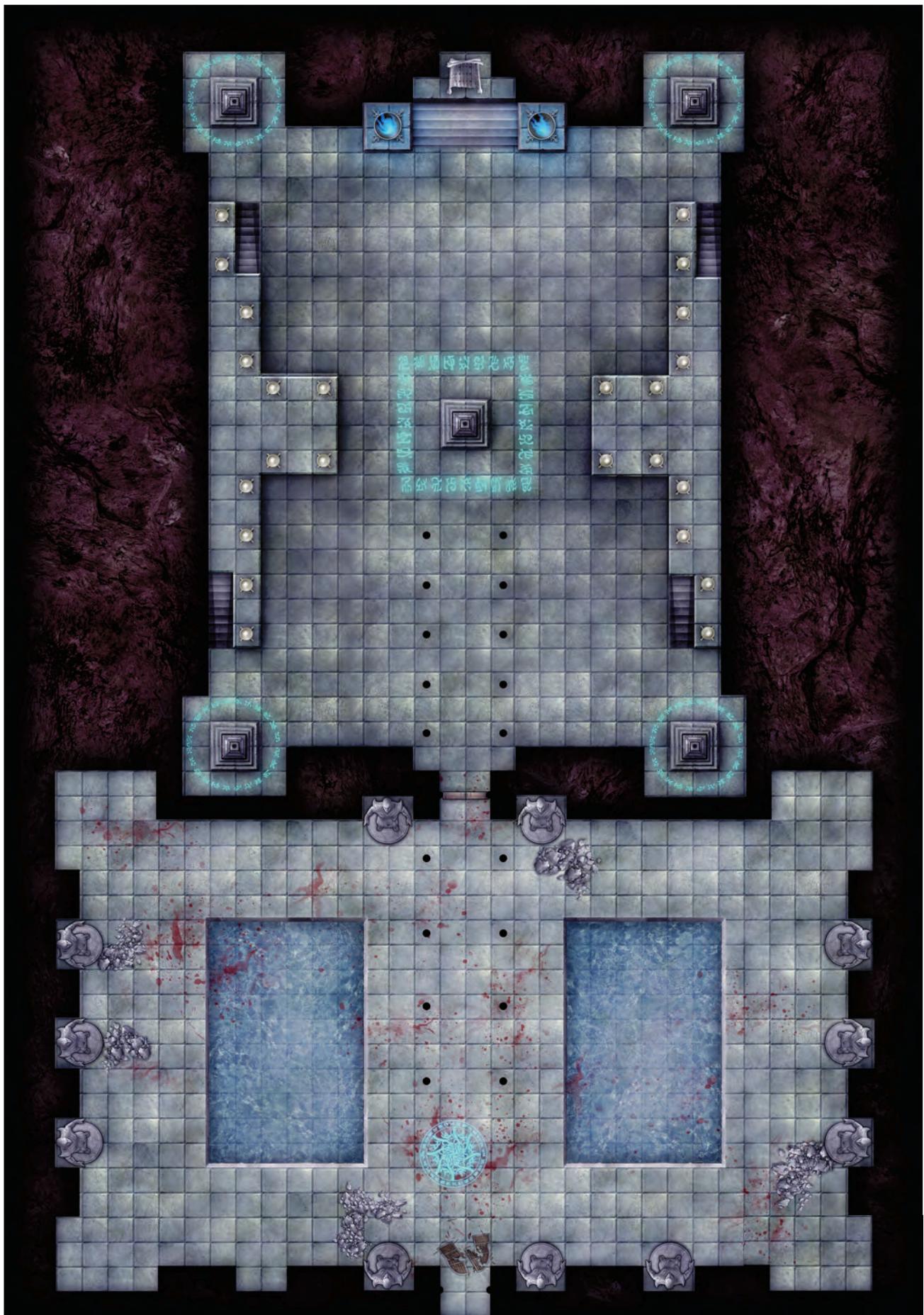
See **Encounter L2: Throne Room** on page 58 of *Adventure Book Two*.

DYING WHILE DEATH IS WOUNDED

By the time the adventurers rush to the Raven Queen's aid, she is already staked to the floor of her throne room by the shard of evil. Although she is not yet destroyed, her power to judge souls and send them to their final destinations fails.

The consequences of this have yet to propagate. Within Letherna, Raise Dead and similar rituals work normally—however, each time a creature is raised to life, a dread wraith (see *Monster Manual*, page 267) appears in a square adjacent to the raised creature. The dread wraith is utterly intent on pulling that life back into death, and to that end gains a +5 bonus to all attack rolls against the raised player character.

FATE'S PALACE OVERVIEW



NEW MONSTERS

ABYSSAL SERVITORS

The demons that plague the natural world are those creatures intelligent enough to navigate the hazardous gateways between planes or those summoned by others for evil intent. Within the Abyss, uncounted demons of all descriptions dwell, and most are unknown in the natural world. The lowest of these are the abyssal servitors—unintelligent creatures that serve the demons as deadly guardians and savage beasts of burden.

Achree are piranha-like demonic creatures that pull themselves along on land clumsily but can flash through liquids. Gulari are triple jointed hound-like abyssal servitors with eyes of green fire. Laamisha are vaguely insectoid creatures with eight splayed legs and a variety of lashing tentacles.

Achree	Level 27 Skirmisher		
Large elemental beast (aquatic, demon)	XP 11,000		
Initiative +24 Senses Perception +26; blindsight 10			
HP 250; Bloodied 125; see also <i>jaws of death</i>			
AC 41; Fortitude 39, Reflex 40, Will 39			
Resist 20 Fire			
Speed 4, swim 10; see also <i>relentless attack</i>			
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)			
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 4d8 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed. The achree cannot make bite attacks while it has a creature grabbed, but it can use its <i>vicious rend</i> .			
† Vicious Rend (standard; at-will)			
If an achree begins its turn with a target grabbed in its jaws, it makes an attack against the grabbed creature: +30 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 10 damage, and the target slides 5 squares, is knocked prone, and is no longer grabbed. Miss: Half damage, no slide, still grabbed.			
† Relentless Attack (standard; at-will)			
The achree moves its speed and can enter enemies' spaces. This movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the achree must end its move in an unoccupied space. When it enters an enemy's space, the achree makes a bite attack. Once after a successful bite attack, the achree can end its movement within reach of the same target and make a <i>vicious rend</i> attack against the target.			
↔ Jaws of Death (when reduced to 0 hit points)			
Close burst 1; the achree makes a bite attack against all enemies in the burst.			
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages – (understands Abyssal)			
Str 23 (+19) Dex 29 (+22) Wis 26 (+21)			
Con 26 (+21) Int 2 (+9) Cha 20 (+18)			

ACHREE TACTICS

The voracious achree stays in constant motion as it uses *relentless attack* to target as many foes as it can. When bloodied, it forgoes the opportunity attacks provoked by that power to target the closest foe with a bite attack, make a *vicious rend* against a grabbed foe, then discard the target for another.

Achree Spawn	Level 26 Minion Brute		
Medium elemental beast (aquatic, demon)	XP 2,250		
Initiative +22 Senses Perception +20; blindsight 10			
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see also <i>jaws of death</i>			
AC 38; Fortitude 36, Reflex 38, Will 36			
Resist 20 Fire			
Speed 4, swim 10			
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)			
Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 16 damage. Miss: 8 damage.			
↔ Jaws of Death (when reduced to 0 hit points)			
Close burst 1; the achree spawn makes a bite attack against all enemies in the burst.			
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages – (understands Abyssal)			
Str 20 (+18) Dex 28 (+22) Wis 25 (+20)			
Con 25 (+20) Int 2 (+9) Cha 17 (+16)			

ACHREE SPAWN TACTICS

Achree spawn swarm around foes to gain combat advantage for their deadly bite attacks. They stay in the thick of combat to maximize the effect of their *jaws of death*.

Gulari	Level 25 Soldier		
Large elemental beast (demon)	XP 7,000		
Initiative +21 Senses Perception +24; truesight 6			
HP 236; Bloodied 118			
AC 41; Fortitude 38, Reflex 36, Will 36			
Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb); see also <i>shifting assault</i>			
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison			
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 4d6 + 9 poison damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.			
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)			
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 damage, and the target is knocked prone.			
† Shifting Assault (immediate reaction, when an enemy within 2 squares of the gulari shifts; at-will)			
The gulari shifts to within 2 squares of the triggering creature and makes a bite attack and a slam attack against the triggering creature.			
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages – (understands Abyssal)			
Skills Athletics +23, Acrobatics +24			
Str 22 (+18) Dex 25 (+19) Wis 25 (+19)			
Con 28 (+21) Int 2 (+8) Cha 20 (+17)			

GULARI TACTICS

A gulari alternates bite and slam attacks against a single target until it hits with both, then abandons the prone and dazed foe in favor of new prey. It stays in motion in the hope that a foe's movement triggers its *shifting assault*.

Gulari Whelp	Level 25 Minion Soldier
Medium elemental beast (demon)	XP 1,750
Initiative +19 Senses Perception +19; truesight 6	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion	
AC 40; Fortitude 37, Reflex 35, Will 35	
Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb); see also <i>shifting assault</i>	
④ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
+31 vs. AC; 10 poison damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
† Shifting Assault (immediate reaction, when an enemy adjacent to the gulari whelp shifts; at-will)	
The gulari makes a bite attack against the triggering creature.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages – (understands Abyssal)	
Str 20 (+17) Dex 25 (+19) Wis 25 (+19)	
Con 28 (+21) Int 2 (+8) Cha 16 (+15)	

GULARI WHELP TACTICS

Gulari whelps fight as a mob, hoping to catch shifting foes in a barrage of extra attacks.

Laamisha	Level 27 Soldier
Large elemental beast (demon)	XP 11,000
Initiative +24 Senses Perception +26; darkvision	
HP 246; Bleeding 123	
AC 43; Fortitude 39, Reflex 40, Will 39	
Speed 6, climb 6	
④ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
Reach 2; +34 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 damage, and the laamisha makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +32 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 15 poison damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the laamisha's next turn.	
④ Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +34 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the laamisha's next turn.	
† Tentacle Lash (standard; recharge [] []) ♦ Poison	
Reach 3; +32 vs. Fortitude; 5d10 + 9 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends). A target already weakened takes ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages – (understands Abyssal)	
Str 26 (+21) Dex 29 (+22) Wis 26 (+21)	
Con 22 (+19) Int 2 (+9) Cha 18 (+17)	

LAAMISHA TACTICS

A laamisha fights without thought to its own safety as it defends the creatures it guards. It makes bite and claw attacks to hinder a foe's movement, then follows up with repeated tentacle lash attacks until the target is dead.

ABYSSAL SERVITOR LORE

A character knows the following about abyssal servitors with a successful Arcana check.

DC 30: The lesser kin of intelligent demons, abyssal servitors serve their masters as guard creatures and beasts of burden. Uncounted varieties of abyssal servitors dwell within the Abyss, but they are rarely seen in the natural world except in the service of a demon that brings them to the mortal realm.

DC 35: Achrees are aquatic abyssal servitors that lurk in the elemental maelstroms of the Abyss. They are often trained as guard creatures for abyssal moats and pools.

Gularis serve their demon masters as guards, mounts, and pack animals.

Laamishas are guardian servitors, trained to protect important demons or their prisoners.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Though abyssal servitors are sometimes found operating independently, they are seldom far from their demon masters.

Level 25 Encounter (38,500 XP)

- ◆ 1 achree (level 27 skirmisher)
- ◆ 6 achree spawn (level 26 minion brute)
- ◆ 1 aspect of demogorgon (level 25 elite controller, *Monster Manual 2*, page 44)

Level 27 Encounter (55,000 XP)

- ◆ 4 gulari (level 25 soldier)
- ◆ 8 gulari whelps (level 25 minion soldier)
- ◆ 1 immolith seeker (level 28 controller, *Adventure Book Two* page 18)

Level 27 Encounter (55,000 XP)

- ◆ 2 laamishas (level 27 soldier)
- ◆ 1 balor (level 27 elite brute, *Monster Manual*, page 52)
- ◆ 1 solamith hunter (level 30 artillery, *Adventure Book Two* page 52)



FATHOMAL

Creatures with names like balor, marilith, and vrock hunt the upper and middle portions of the Abyss. Though awful in their destructive might, these demons are at least known quantities.

But the lower portions of the Abyss, those areas directly above the growing shard of evil, are prowled by demonic monstrosities few ever see. Among these terrors, fathomals are the most terrible.

Like all demons, a fathomal is embodied annihilation. It is chaos given form that hungers forever for the destruction of all other things—even other demons. Each fathomal appears as a demonic apocalypse clothed in the cast-off flesh of an ancient being. Thankfully, few ever manage to crawl from the depths of the Abyss beneath the Elemental Chaos to terrorize more stable locations.

FATHOMAL BLIGHT

A human-sized tangle of teeth, horns, and scales infused with pure hate, fathomal blights flutter through Abyssal voids in search of prey.

Fathomal Blight

Medium elemental beast (demon)

Level 28 Minion

XP 3,250

Initiative +15 Senses Perception +20; darkvision

Demonic Aura aura 1; each allied demon that starts its turn within the aura gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls until the end of its turn.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 42; Fortitude 38, Reflex 42, Will 40

Immune fear; Resist 25 cold, 25 fire, 25 thunder

Speed fly 8

④ Abyssal Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic

+33 vs. AC; 10 psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

↳ Death Burst (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Psychic

The fathomal explodes in a scream of psychic annihilation. Close burst 10; targets enemies; +31 vs. Reflex; 16 psychic damage. Miss: Half damage.

Alignment Evil Languages –

Str 10 (+14) Dex 13 (+16) Wis 12 (+15)

Con 14 (+16) Int 22 (+20) Cha 18 (+18)

Level 29 Elite Brute

XP 30,000

Fathomal Clasp

Huge elemental beast (demon)

Level 29 Elite Brute

XP 30,000

Initiative +19 Senses Perception +26; truesight 6

Grip of Chaos (Psychic) aura 5; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 20 psychic damage.

HP 660; Bloodied 330

AC 41; Fortitude 43, Reflex 37, Will 40

Immune fear; Resist 25 fire, 25 lightning, 25 thunder

Saving Throws +2

Speed fly 10

Action Points 1

④ Slam (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +32 vs. AC; 4d10 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed. A target trying to escape the grab takes a -4 penalty to the check. A fathomal clasp can grab only one creature at a time, and only creatures that are Large or smaller.

† Grab and Hurl (standard; at-will)

The fathomal clasp can make a slam attack. If the slam attack hits, it makes an ally missile attack. If the slam attack misses, or if the ally missile attack would provoke an opportunity attack, the fathomal instead makes a second slam attack.

† Filch Foe (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent to the fathomal clasp while no creature is grabbed; recharge ☷ ☷)

The fathomal clasp makes a slam attack.

↗ Ally Missile (standard; at-will, while the fathomal clasp has a creature grabbed)

The fathomal clasp hurls the grabbed creature at another foe. Ranged 20; +30 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 9 damage to the target and the hurled foe, and the target is pushed 2 squares (the hurled foe falls prone in the target's vacated square). The fathomal clasp can throw the grabbed creature at any open space in range if it has no other targets.

↖ Cry of Anarchy (standard; encounter) ♦ Psychic

Close burst 10; targets enemies; +29 vs. Will; 4d8 + 10 psychic damage, ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends), and the target is dazed until the end of the fathomal clasp's next turn.

Alignment Evil

Languages –

Str 41 (+29)

Dex 20 (+19)

Wis 35 (+26)

Con 30 (+24)

Int 5 (+11)

Cha 16 (+17)

FATHOMAL BLIGHT TACTICS

A fathomal blight attempts to stay adjacent to one or more demonic allies in order to confer upon them the benefits of its *demonic aura*. If threatened, it uses *abyssal touch*, and if it is destroyed, its *death burst* triggers.

FATHOMAL CLASP

The fathomal clasp's long, serpent-like body coils through the air, eager to grasp and destroy. It seeks to feed on anything that falls into the oddly hand-like head.

FATHOMAL CLASP TACTICS

The fathomal clasp uses its *filch foe* ability to intercept creatures that move too close. If it grabs a victim, it uses the victim as ammunition in its *ally missile* attack. On its first full round the clasp begins a *grab and hurl* attack, then spends an action point to use *cry of anarchy*.

FATHOMAL SCREAM

Fathomal screams are terrible, corrupted memories given life. Flashing between one horrible image after another, fathomal screams are adroit in producing terrified outbursts in its foes, thereby giving the insubstantial creature its name.

Fathomal Scream	Level 29 Controller
Large elemental beast (demon)	XP 15,000
Initiative +22 Senses Perception +18; truesight 6	
Darkest Memory (Psychic) aura 1; each creature within the aura taking ongoing psychic damage takes 5 extra psychic damage.	
HP 265; Bloodied 132	
AC 43; Fortitude 41, Reflex 40, Will 40	
Immune fear; Resist insubstantial; 25 acid, 25 force, 25 necrotic	
Speed fly 10, phasing	
④ Dreadful Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
Reach 2; +33 vs. Will; 2d10 + 10 damage (crit 6d10 + 30), and ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).	
↔ Nightmare Dredge (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
Close burst 10; targets enemies; +31 vs. Will; 2d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target slides 3 squares, takes ongoing 10 psychic damage, and is immobilized (save ends both). When the target fails a save, it slides 3 squares.	
✿ Mote of Dread (standard; encounter) ♦ Psychic, Fear, Zone	
Area burst 3 within 20; the fathomal scream fashions a phantasmal mote of churning mist. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the zone takes 15 psychic damage. The mote blocks line of sight. It remains in place until the end of the encounter.	
Alignment Evil Languages –	
Str 29 (+23) Dex 26 (+22) Wis 18 (+18)	
Con 25 (+21) Int 5 (+11) Cha 26 (+22)	

FATHOMAL SCREAM TACTICS

The fathomal scream's mere presence intensifies the psychic damage inflicted by itself and others courtesy of its *darkest memory* aura. Its touch causes physical dread to burn through its foes. It uses its *nightmare dredge* to slide foes around, usually into reach of allied fathomals or into its *mote of dread* zone.

FATHOMAL GNAW TACTICS

The fathomal gnaw appears as a cascade of twining hair, as if shorn from a giant. It blinks in and out of sight, leaving psychically scarred and slowed victims in its wake.

Fathomal Gnaw	Level 28 Lurker
Large elemental beast (demon)	XP 13,000
Initiative +31 Senses Perception +26; truesight 6	
Self-Inflicted Wounds (Psychic) aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 psychic damage and 10 poison damage.	
HP 205; Bloodied 102	
AC 42; Fortitude 38, Reflex 41, Will 38	
Immune fear; Resist insubstantial; 25 fire, 25 force, 25 lightning	
Speed teleport 12	
④ Lash (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Psychic	
Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 poison and psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends)	
† Blink and Strike (standard; recharge ☷ ☷ ☷) ♦ Poison, Psychic	
The fathomal gnaw teleports up to 6 squares and makes an attack. Reach 2; +31 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 poison and psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). Then the fathomal gnaw teleports up to 12 squares.	
Alignment Evil Languages –	
Skills Stealth +32	
Str 29 (+23) Dex 36 (+27) Wis 24 (+21)	
Con 31 (+24) Int 24 (+21) Cha 30 (+24)	



FATHOMAL GNAW TACTICS

The fathomal gnaw appears suddenly before its foes, lashes, then teleports away, leaving a potentially slowed or immobilized foe behind in its wake. The fathomal gnaw waits until its *blink and strike* power recharges to attack again.

FATHOMAL LORE

A character knows the following about fathomals with a successful Arcana check.

DC 35: Fathomals are corrupted motes of chaos that hungers forever for the destruction of all other things. They live in the deepest portions of the Abyssal void.

DC 40: Fathomals first emerged from the body of a defeated, dying primordial that fell into the Abyss.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Fathomals hunt in groups made up of others of their own kind, as well as alongside powerful demons.

Level 28 Encounter (XP 74,250)

- ♦ 5 fathomal blights (level 28 minion)
- ♦ 1 fathomal scream (level 29 controller)
- ♦ 1 fathomal clasp (level 29 elite brute)
- ♦ 1 fathomal gnaw (level 28 lurker)

Level 29 Encounter (XP 80,500)

- ♦ 1 balor (level 27 elite brute; *Monster Manual*, page 53)
- ♦ 10 fathomal blights (level 28 minion)
- ♦ 2 fathomal gnaw (level 28 lurker)

FORGEBORN ABOMINATIONS

Created by the long vanished architects of the Forge of Four Worlds, the forgeborn are immortals pulsing with elemental fury capable of shredding foes in a frenzy of chaos, fire, lightning, and all the other energies of creation and destruction.

Forgeborn Chaos Skulk

Large immortal magical beast

Level 27 Lurker

XP 11,000

Initiative +26 **Senses** Perception +22; darkvision

darkvision, blindsight 10

HP 193; **Bloodied** 96; see also *fury of the forge*

AC 41; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 39

Immune charm, fear, sleep

Speed 8, climb 8

④ **Soul Slam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Reach 2; +30 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 9 psychic damage, and the chaos skulk becomes invisible to the target until the end of the chaos skulk's next turn; see also *subtle strike*.

↳ **Fury of the Forge** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Cold, Fire, Lightning**

Close burst 3; +30 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. **Miss:** Half damage.

↳ **Soul Shroud** (standard; recharge ②) ♦ **Psychic**

Close burst 2; +30 vs. Will; 5d10 + 9 psychic damage, the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage, and the chaos skulk becomes invisible to the target (save ends both); see also *subtle strike*.

Subtle Strike

The chaos skulk deals 3d8 extra damage on attacks when it is invisible to its target.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)

Str 21 (+18)

Dex 28 (+22)

Wis 19 (+17)

Con 25 (+20)

Int 19 (+17)

Cha 25 (+20)

Forgeborn Darkslayer

Large immortal magical beast

Level 28 Brute

XP 13,000

Initiative +22 **Senses** Perception +22; darkvision

HP 315; **Bloodied** 157; see also *fury of the forge*

AC 40; **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 40, **Will** 40

Immune charm, fear, sleep

Speed 6

④ **Shadow Sword** (standard; usable only while wielding a greatsword; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Reach 3; +31 vs. AC; 3d10 + 10 necrotic damage, plus ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).

↳ **Fury of the Forge** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Cold, Fire, Lightning**

Close burst 3; +29 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. **Miss:** Half damage.

↳ **Shadow Frenzy** (standard; usable only while wielding a greatsword; recharge ②) ♦ **Necrotic**

Close burst 3; +29 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned

Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)

Str 30 (+24)

Dex 27 (+22)

Wis 27 (+22)

Con 25 (+21)

Int 18 (+18)

Cha 20 (+19)

Equipment greatsword

Forgeborn Firelasher

Medium immortal magical beast

Level 28 Artillery

XP 13,000

Initiative +23

Senses Perception +22; darkvision

HP 200; **Bloodied** 100

AC 42; **Fortitude** 40, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 40; see also *fury of the forge*

Immune charm, fear, sleep; **Resist** 15 fire

Speed 8, fly 6 (clumsy)

④ **Darkfire Slash** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 fire damage, and the target is dazed until the start of its next turn.

⑤ **Flame Pulse** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

Ranged 10; +31 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 fire damage.

↓ **Defensive Flare** (immediate reaction, when the firelasher is hit by a melee attack; at-will) ♦ **Charm**

Reach 2; +31 vs. Reflex; the target is dazed until the end of its next turn. A target already dazed is also weakened until the end of its next turn.

↗ **Lash of Fire** (standard; recharge ②) ♦ **Fire, Psychic**

Ranged 10; +31 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 10 fire and psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

↖ **Fury of the Forge** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Cold, Fire, Lightning**

Close burst 3; +31 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. **Miss:** Half damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)

Str 21 (+19)

Dex 29 (+23)

Wis 26 (+22)

Con 26 (+22)

Int 23 (+20)

Cha 18 (+18)

Forgeborn Fury

Medium elemental beast (demon)

Level 30 Minion

XP 4,750

Initiative +23

Senses Perception +20; darkvision

Elemental Fury aura 1; each allied forgeborn within the aura gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 44; **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 43, **Will** 42

Immune charm, fear, sleep

Speed 8

④ **Furious Slam** (standard; at-will)

+35 vs. AC; 14 damage, and the target loses any resistances (save ends).

↖ **Fury of the Forge** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Cold, Fire, Lightning**

Close burst 3; +33 vs. Reflex; 14 cold, fire, and lightning damage. **Miss:** Half damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)

Str 20 (+20)

Dex 26 (+23)

Wis 20 (+20)

Con 24 (+22)

Int 18 (+19)

Cha 18 (+19)

Forgeborn Stormstriker	Level 31 Controller (Leader)	
Large immortal magical beast	XP 23,000	
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +28; darkvision, blindsight 10	
Defenders of the Forge (Cold, Fire, Healing, Lightning) aura 5; each immortal ally that starts its turn within the aura regains 20 hit points, while each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 15 cold, fire, and lightning damage.		
HP 281; Bloodied 140; see also <i>fury of the forge</i>		
AC 45; Fortitude 43, Reflex 41, Will 41		
Immune charm, fear, sleep; Resist 15 cold, 15 fire, 15 lightning		
Speed 8, teleport 8		
④ Touch of Chaos (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic		
Reach 2; +35 vs. Will; 4d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the stormstriker's next turn.		
↗ Arc Lightning (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning		
Ranged 20; +35 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 lightning damage plus ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends), the target is dazed until the end of its next turn, and the stormstriker makes a secondary attack against two new targets within 5 squares of the initial target. Secondary Attack: +35 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 lightning damage, and ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends).		
↖ Fury of the Forge (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Cold, Fire, Lightning		
Close burst 3; +33 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. Miss: Half damage.		
✿ Coldfire Orb (standard; recharge ☰ ☱) ♦ Cold, Fire		
Burst 5 within 10; +33 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 10 cold and fire damage, and crystalline growths make the area of the burst difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)	
Str 30 (+25)	Dex 22 (+21)	Wis 27 (+23)
Con 25 (+22)	Int 27 (+23)	Cha 23 (+21)

FORGEBORN LORE

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

DC 30: Like abominations, the forgeborn were created during the ancient war between the gods and the primordials. They are tasked with guarding the Forge of Four Worlds, and are rarely encountered outside the specific location.

DC 35: The relentless energy seething within the Forge of Four Worlds drives many forgeborn mad over their eons-long servitude. Such creatures escape the Forge to wreak havoc across other planes.

ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Although they sometimes fight alongside other creatures against a common foe, the forgeborn are seldom allies and are never controlled by other creatures.

Level 30 Encounter (95,000 XP)

- ♦ 3 forgeborn chaos skulks (level 27 lurker)
- ♦ 1 forgeborn darkslayer (level 28 brute)
- ♦ 2 forgeborn firelashers (level 28 artillery)
- ♦ 1 forgeborn stormstriker (level 31 controller)



MAGIC ITEMS AND ARTIFACTS

Anarch Sphere

Level 30

The essence of the Elemental Chaos boils and churns in this massive sphere. The condensed power inside this unwieldy 10-foot diameter globe can be siphoned in many ways, though only a few have been discovered.

Wondrous Item Priceless

Property, Unmounted: All creatures adjacent to an unmounted anarch sphere gain resistance 15 variable, with a few differences to standard variable resistance: As a minor action, the subject chooses a type of damage from the following list: acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. The subject gains the specified amount of resistance to the chosen damage type for the rest of the encounter (even if they move away from the sphere), and this replaces any resistance the subject already had against that damage type. Each time the subject spends a minor action, it can gain a new resistance, but it can resist only one type of damage from this ability at any one time. A subject can't use this ability to resist a damage type to which it has vulnerability.
Property, Mounted: When an anarch sphere is properly installed in an appropriate cradle on a chaos ship, the bottled essence trapped within provides motive power for the ship (the larger the ship, the more anarch spheres required). Anarch spheres require a specific series of actions for proper activation (see "Commanding Shevaithan" on page 30 of Adventure Book Two).

Property, Mounted: Any creature without the elemental origin engaged in combat within 5 squares of a mounted anarch sphere is subject to a ranged attack at the beginning of its turn: +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is dazed (save ends both).

Power, Unmounted (Daily): Minor Action. This power allows a creature adjacent to an unmounted anarch sphere to regain the use of any power of 1st to 30th level.

Shard of Evil

Level 33

A shard of the Heart of the Abyss is concentrated corruption.

Wondrous Item Priceless

Property: Every round a creature other than a demon touches or holds the naked crystal, it must make a saving throw. On an unsuccessful saving throw it loses 1d4 healing surges and is dominated (save ends, -2 penalty to saving throws). While dominated, the creature takes on demonic features such as wings, horns, scales, burning eyes, claws, mandibles, or similar features. On its turn, it attacks its closest former ally. It continues to do so each turn until it saves against the domination. If the creature fails three saving throws, it is permanently corrupted, and becomes a demonic version of its former self.

Power (Daily): Standard Action. In conjunction with the proper ritual, the shard has the ability to kill a god and transfer some amount of that god's power and influence into another creature. The time required and the amount of power transferred is highly variable. When the process is complete, the god dies, and the shard makes a saving throw; on a failed saving throw, the shard disintegrates.

WAND OF ORCUS

The Wand is appropriate for epic-level characters.

Wand of Orcus

Epic Level

Orcus carries a heavy mace tipped with an enormous skull. Its haft is smooth obsidian studded with blood rubies. This weapon transforms those it slays into undead horrors.

The Wand of Orcus is a +6 lifedrinker heavy mace with the following additional properties and powers.

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +6d6

Property: This weapon deals ongoing 10 damage (save ends) to creatures that are not undead.

Property: You can speak and understand the Abyssal language and read the Barazhad script.

Power (Daily ♦ Arcane, Psychic): Standard Action. You can use legion's hold (wizard 29).

Power (Encounter ♦ Necrotic): Free Action. You can use this power when you attack an enemy with the Wand. On a miss, the target takes necrotic damage equal to its bloodied value. When you hit, the target is reduced to 0 hit points (resistance or immunity to necrotic damage does not apply).

GOALS OF THE WAND OF ORCUS

- ♦ Be reunited with Orcus.
- ♦ If Orcus is destroyed, raise or animate him.
- ♦ Spread undeath everywhere.

ROLEPLAYING THE WAND OF ORCUS

The Wand communicates silently with its wielder, in Abyssal, using brutal and gory imagery to highlight its blood-soaked ends.

CONCORDANCE

Starting score	5
Owner gains a level	+1d10
Owner worships Orcus	+2
Owner kills a Raven Queen worshiper	+2
Owner kills a good and/or innocent humanoid	+2
Owner animates or creates an undead (max 1/day)	+1
Owner or ally destroys an undead creature	-1
Owner doesn't give the Wand to Orcus (max 1/day)	-1

PLEASED (16-20)

"Orcus is near! Let the world scream in terror once more!"

The Wand believes its return to Orcus is nigh.

The Wand's enhancement bonus increases to +7.

Critical: +7d6 damage

Property: This weapon deals ongoing 15 damage (save ends) to creatures that are not undead.

Property: You take a -5 penalty to Diplomacy checks.

Property: At the start of your turn, any creature killed by the Wand of Orcus that is still dead rises as a dread wraith (Monster Manual, page 267) under your command.

SATISFIED (12-15)

"Let the bloodclotted song of the animated dead commence!"

The wielder has proved to be a worthy acolyte of Orcus in the demon prince's absence.

Property: You take a -2 penalty to Diplomacy checks.

Power (Encounter): Minor Action. While you are bloodied, use the wand to gain resist 15 to all damage until the end of your next turn.

NORMAL (5-11)

"Will you do the will of Orcus, or will you suffer my wrath?"

The Wand tries to gauge its new wielder's devotion to Orcus.

UNSATISFIED (1-4)

"If you do not change, it'll be your skull on the end of the obsidian rod!"

The wielder is not spreading undeath. If the wielder doesn't change his ways, the Wand begins to punish the wielder.

Special: Once per day at any time, the skull in the Wand flares with necrotic power. The Wand makes a burst 3 attack against your Fortitude (and all allies in range), rolling 1d20 + your level. If this attack hits, you are weakened (save ends).

ANGERED (0 OR LOWER)

"Your life is close to an agonizing conclusion."

The wielder is coming perilously close to being rejected by the Wand.

Special: Once per day at any time, the skull in the Wand flares with necrotic power. The Wand makes a burst 3 attack against your Fortitude (and all allies in range), rolling 1d20 + your level. If this attack hits, you are weakened and dazed (save ends both).

Special: If you drop to 0 hit points or fewer and are not healed before the start of your next turn, you rise as a dread wraith under the Wand's command.

**MOVING ON**

"You have failed Orcus."

The Wand of Orcus makes an attack against the wielder's AC, rolling 1d20 + 5 + your level. If this attack hits, you are reduced to 0 hit points (resistance or immunity to necrotic damage does not apply). If you rise as a dread wraith a round later (see above), you take the Wand and seek to deliver it to a wielder more likely to meet the Wand's goals. If the attack misses, you fall unconscious (save ends) and the Wand is summoned to the Abyss, there to find a new demon wielder.

View of Shevaithan



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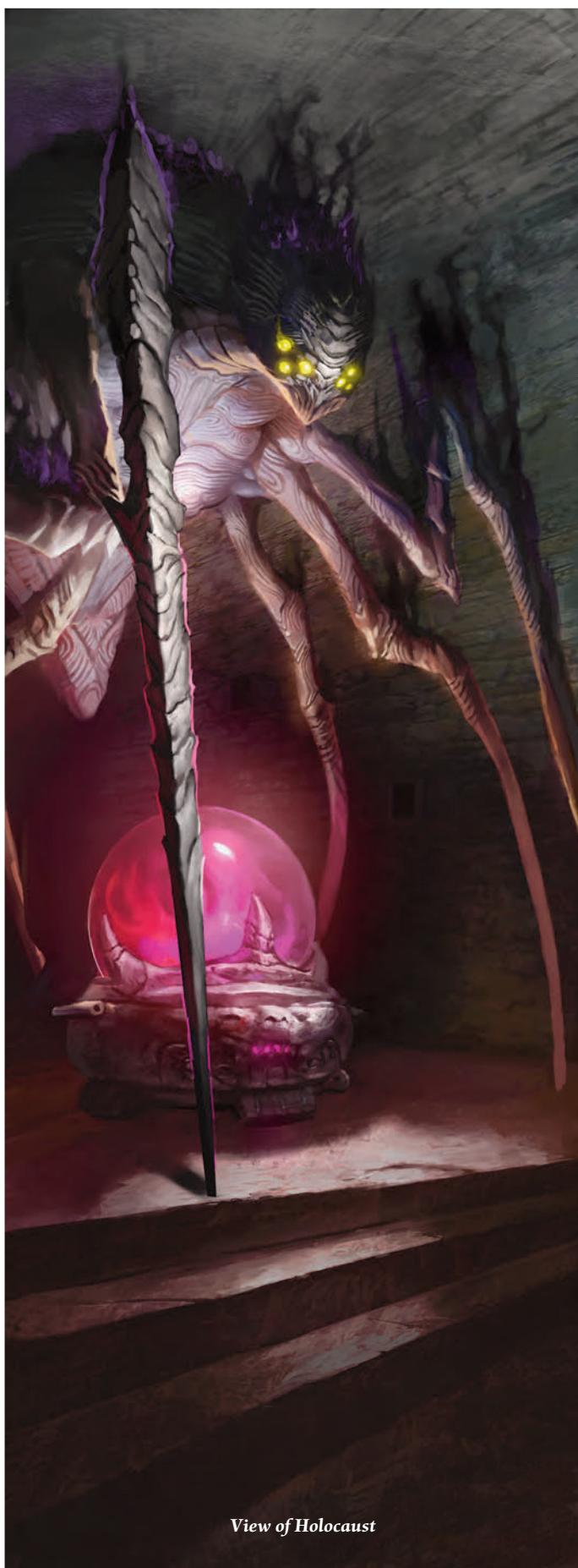
View of the Death Gate



ADAM GILLESPIE (2)



ADAM GILLESPIE / MATIAS STAPIA





View of Descent to the Forge

WILLIAM O'CONNOR



View of Demon Defenders

View of the Soulfire Furnace





View of Timesus

MATIAS TAPIA



WILLIAM O'CONNOR

View of the Death's Throne



ADVENTURE BOOK TWO



PRINCE OF UNDEATH™

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RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Within the tower of the Red Hold, the adventurers must evade the patrols and servants of Orcus. In the Forge of Four Worlds, the adventurers find themselves caught up in a battle between the demons that have claimed the Forge, the devils assaulting it, and the forgeborn that have defended the site since the dawn of time.

Use these random encounters as noted in the descriptions of the Red Hold and the Forge of Four Worlds (*Adventure Book One*, pages 8 and 12), or if you want to expand the encounters while the adventurers travel on board Shevaithan or while they explore the Abyssal Nadir. If the adventurers have not reached 27th level before beginning this adventure, consider adding a few lower-level encounters to bolster their experience before they enter the Red Hold.

Some of these encounters are suitable only to the Red Hold or the Forge of Four Worlds, but most can be used in any location in this adventure.

BEHIND THE LINES

Level 26 Encounter (XP 50,000)

- ◆ 1 aspect of Demogorgon (level 25 elite controller, *Monster Manual* 2, page 44)
- ◆ 2 thunderblast cyclones (level 26 elite artillery, *Monster Manual*, page 105)

Orcus's archenemy Demogorgon knows that the Demon Prince is away from the Red Hold and Everlost. A group of commandos has made its way into Orcus's sanctum in an attempt to destroy the throne in the Great Hall (see Location 8). The thunderblast cyclones spread out to create an area of elemental fury with their attacks, while the aspect of Demogorgon lays into foes with its double melee attacks and *dominating glare*.

RED HOLD TRACKERS

Level 26 Encounter (XP 47,000)

- ◆ 1 glabrezu gatewarder (level 25 elite brute, page 8)
- ◆ 1 retriever (level 27 soldier, page 18)
- ◆ 8 mezzodemon throne guards (level 27 minion soldier, page 25)

Alerted to the party's presence within the Red Hold, this pack of hunters follows the adventurers from the site of one of their previous combat encounters to ambush them when they least expect it. If the retriever gains a glimpse of the party (or if the adventurers left any previous foes alive to describe them), it uses *unerring accuracy* to teleport into combat. The glabrezu and the throne guards enter the fray in subsequent rounds, seeking to subdue and capture the intruders.

SHADOWFELL ENVOY

Level 27 Encounter (XP 58,600)

- ◆ 1 death titan (level 25 elite brute, *Monster Manual*, page 120)
- ◆ 4 death giants (level 22 brute, *Monster Manual*, page 120)
- ◆ 4 sorrowsworn soulrippers (level 25 skirmisher, *Monster Manual*, page 242)

A death titan and its entourage have journeyed from the Shadowfell to the Red Hold to support Orcus in his plots against the Raven Queen. Craving battle with mortal foes, the death titan makes repeated *soul devourer* attacks against the strongest-looking melee combatants. Both it and the death giants expend their soul shards early to give them an edge over the PCs' superior level. The sorrowsworn soulripper bodyguards stay between any foes and their titan master.

BLOOD FEUD

Level 29 Encounter (XP 76,500)

- ◆ 1 balor (level 27 elite brute, *Monster Manual*, page 53)
- ◆ 10 canoloth trackers (level 28 minion, page 18)
- ◆ 2 mezzodemon watchguards (level 27 soldier, page 26)

The prestige of serving within the Red Hold inspires intense rivalries between demon factions hoping to prove themselves worthy of Orcus's favor. After finding the dead guardians at the Death Gate (see Location 1), this group enters the Red Hold with the intent of slaying the intruders and winning a place in the Demon Prince's court. Alternatively, these demons are among those who have seized the Forge of Four Worlds, and who now search for the devils that have infiltrated the Forge.

DEVIL STRIKE TEAM

Level 29 Encounter (XP 82,200)

- ◆ 1 brazen devil (level 30 soldier, page 34)
- ◆ 4 assassin devils (level 24 lurker, *Monster Manual* 2, page 64)
- ◆ 3 war devil spearfighters (level 28 brute, page 42)

This force of devils is one of the teams charged with breaking the defenses of the demons that have taken over the Forge of Four Worlds. Alternatively, these warriors could be servants of an archdevil attempting to kidnap Orcus's most favored servants from the Red Hold. The brazen devil and the war devil spearfighters take the fight to the adventurers, focusing melee attacks on defenders and strikers. The assassin devils stay on the sidelines to incapacitate ranged attackers and controllers.

ROVING EYES

Level 28 Encounter (XP 66,000)

- ◆ 1 beholder eye of despair ritualist (level 27 elite artillery, page 20)
- ◆ 2 beholder eyes of despair (level 27 elite artillery, page 9)

These beholders make up specialized patrols within the Red Hold, taking on intruders with defenses or powers that specifically target Orcus's demon servants. Alternatively, the arcane energy that surges within the Forge of Four Worlds opens a temporary gate to the Far Realm that transports these mad creatures into the path of the adventurers. The eyes of chaos fight with no strategy or thought to their own survival.

UNDEAD PATROL

Level 27 Encounter (XP 64,500)

- ◆ 1 death knight, dragonborn paladin (level 25 elite soldier, *Monster Manual*, page 51)
- ◆ 2 slaughter wight overlords (level 27 brute, page 13)
- ◆ 1 abyssal rotfiend (level 26 elite controller, *Monster Manual 2*, page 52)
- ◆ 6 rot harbinger reavers (level 28 minion soldier, page 20)

These servants of the vampire lord Birik (see Location 3) patrol the Red Hold on a mission for their master. Alternatively, an adventuring party that attempted to infiltrate the Forge of Four Worlds centuries ago were laid low by forgeborn defenders, then raised as undead by the latent energy of the Forge. The death knight focuses its wrath on a paladin or cleric, while its slaughter wight allies flank with groups of two or three rot harbinger reavers.

CROSSFIRE

Level 30 Encounter (XP 98,000)

- ◆ 4 forgeborn firelashers (level 28 artillery, *Adventure Book One*, page 22)
- ◆ 2 forgeborn stormstrikers (level 31 controller, *Adventure Book One*, page 23)

A pair of wandering forgeborn assault teams trap the adventurers between them in the Forge of Four Worlds. Two of the firelashers and one stormstriker approach from one direction, while the others approach from the other side of the adventurers in the following round. The two groups attempt to limit the movement of their enemies. The stormstrikers create difficult terrain with *coldfire orb* as the firelashers let their defensive powers daze and weaken melee combatants. The forgeborn assault teams fight to the death.

FORGEBORN AMBUSH

Level 29 Encounter (XP 83,000)

- ◆ 4 forgeborn chaos skulks (level 27 lurker, *Adventure Book One*, page 22)
- ◆ 3 forgeborn darkslayers (level 28 brute, *Adventure Book One*, page 22)

This pack of forgeborn defenders lies in wait for the adventurers, attacking with surprise if they can. They attempt to hem the party in, the darkslayers focusing on melee strikers and defenders while the chaos skulks take out controllers and ranged combatants. To increase the level of this encounter, add a forgesong trap (level 28 warder; see **Encounter F2: Forgeborn Assault** on page 36) to the area.

FOUR WORLDS SHOWDOWN

Level 29 Encounter (XP 88,000)

- ◆ 1 balor (level 27 elite brute, *Monster Manual*, page 53)
- ◆ 1 pit fiend (level 26 elite soldier, *Monster Manual*, page 65)
- ◆ 2 forgeborn firelashers (level 28 artillery, *Adventure Book One*, page 22)
- ◆ 2 forgeborn chaos skulks (level 27 lurker, *Adventure Book One*, page 22)

In the Forge of Four Worlds, the adventurers stumble upon a battle just beginning between forgeborn defenders and a pair of demon and devil captains. The pit fiend and the balor each assume that the party is in league with the other, but there is a 50 percent chance each round that one of their attacks targets the opposite captain rather than the adventurers. The forgeborn focus their attacks on the adventurers, though they catch the devil and the demon with their close or area attacks if they can.

ABYSSAL ATTACK

Level 29 Encounter (XP 76,250)

- ◆ 2 achree (level 27 skirmisher, *Adventure Book One*, page 18)
- ◆ 5 achree spawn (level 26 minion brute, *Adventure Book One*, page 18)
- ◆ 1 fathomal clasp (level 29 elite brute, *Adventure Book One*, page 20)
- ◆ 1 fathomal gnaw (level 28 lurker, *Adventure Book One*, page 21)

In the deadly depths of the Abyssal Nadir, foul creatures emerge from the elemental storm to assault the adventurers before they reach the extraction tower.

ENCOUNTER S1: BOARDING THE SHIP

Encounter Level 27 (64,500 XP)

SETUP

- 1 abyssal rotfiend (R)
3 nycademon repellers (N)
10 abyssal horde ghouls (G)

The chaos ship called Shevaithan hovers within the Abyssal void, deeper than most mortals ever go, but not yet so deep that teleportation and portal travel is impossible. The ship is moored just beyond the bounds of the White Kingdom, where it was recently loaded with the last of the crates containing the in-stasis pieces of the primordial Timesus. As the adventure begins, the ship is waiting for the arrival of Doresain, king of the ghouls. The ship's captain doesn't yet know that Doresain was destroyed (either by the adventurers or some other agency of good, as described in E2: *Kingdom of the Ghouls*).

One of three ships that make up Orcus's fleet, Shevaithan remained behind when the other two chaos ships plunged deeper into the Abyss, filled to bursting with the pieces of Timesus the Black Star. The Shevaithan contains a few crates of the black stone, but these are just morsels compared to the tons of rock already transported downward.

Shevaithan's crew, however, remains active, waiting for the arrival of Doresain. When the adventurers arrive, they find a full complement ready to resist their boarding attempt.

The captain of Shevaithan, an abyssal rotfiend named Xur, spends most of her time at the wheel on top of the sterncastle.

Audaviator (or a Planar Portal scroll) provides transport to the magic circle on Shevaithan closest to the sterncastle.

When the adventurers arrive in the magic circle closest to the sterncastle, show the players "View of Shevaithan" on page 26 of Adventure Book One, and read:

A ship hangs suspended in eye of a vortex. The swirling walls of the vortex fluctuate and writhe, but seem miles away. It's as if you have entered a funnel composed of red clouds and terrain caught in an inescapable downward spiral.

The ship hangs unmoving, untouched, in the central void.

Two large demons rippling with muscles, thick tendons, and prominent leathery wings are perched on the upper sterncastle of the ship, while a third is perched on the railing near the ship's bow.

Emaciated humanoids shuffle around the deck, some polishing the floorboards, others moving crates, while a few stand idle.

What might have once been a human woman stands atop the sterncastle behind the wheel, her flesh split and darkened, revealing demonic scales beneath. She wears a tattered hat, and madness dances in her eyes. The creature behind the wheel screams, "Repel the boarders! In Orcus's name, scrub these worms from my ship!"

Abyssal Rotfiend (R)	Level 26 Controller
Large elemental humanoid (demon, undead)	XP 9,000
Initiative +20 Senses Perception +20; truesight 20	
Abyssal Fields aura 5; each enemy within the aura cannot teleport.	
HP 245; Bloodied 122	
AC 40; Fortitude 38, Reflex 36, Will 40	
Immune fear; Resist 20 fire, 10 necrotic, 20 variable (3/encounter)	
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)	
④ Skullsplitter (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
Reach 2; +28 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 8 psychic damage, or 2d8 + 8 psychic damage against a bloodied target.	
④ Conjure Abscess (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
Ranged 10; +29 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 psychic damage, and if the target moves more than 2 squares on its turn, it takes 2d8 extra damage (save ends). If the abyssal rotfiend is bloodied, the target takes the damage for moving 1 or more squares.	
• Floating Despair (standard; encounter) ♦ Psychic, Zone	
Area burst 2 within 10; the burst creates a zone of dark miasma that lasts until the end of the abyssal rotfiend's next turn. Any enemy that starts its turn within the zone takes 10 psychic damage and grants combat advantage to the rotfiend until the end of its next turn. <i>Sustain Minor</i> : The zone persists, and the rotfiend can move it 5 squares.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Str 26 (+21) Dex 25 (+20) Wis 25 (+20)	
Con 29 (+22) Int 20 (+18) Cha 32 (+24)	

3 Nycademon Repellers (N)	Level 27 Skirmisher
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 11,000 each
Initiative +23 Senses Perception +19	
HP 250; Bloodied 125	
AC 41; Fortitude 40, Reflex 40, Will 37	
Resist 20 variable (2/encounter)	
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)	
④ Wicked Axe (standard; at-will)	
+32 vs. AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
† Wicked Edges (standard; at-will)	
The nycademon makes two wicked axe attacks.	
† Repelling Flight (standard; recharge ☰ ☱)	
The nycademon flies up to 6 squares. This flight does not provoke opportunity attacks. During the flight, the nycademon can make up to three attacks, each at a different target. +32 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
Combat Advantage	
The nycademon deals an extra 2d8 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Intimidate +23, Perception +19	
Str 25 (+20) Dex 26 (+21) Wis 13 (+14)	
Con 26 (+21) Int 8 (+12) Cha 21 (+18)	
Equipment greataxe	

10 Abyssal Horde Ghouls (G)	Level 26 Minion	
Medium elemental humanoid (undead)	XP 2,250 each	
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +17; darkvision	
Unending Hunger aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 damage.		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 40; Fortitude 38, Reflex 39, Will 36		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic		
Speed 8, climb 4		
④ Claws (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+31 vs. AC; 14 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Stealth +25		
Str 21 (+18)	Dex 24 (+20)	Wis 18 (+17)
Con 22 (+19)	Int 14 (+15)	Cha 16 (+16)

TACTICS

Captain Xur, the abyssal rotfiend, unleashes *floating despair*, moving it around the battlefield to cover as many of the adventurers as possible.

The nycademons swoop down and use *repelling flight* against as many as three different targets at a time. They resort to *wicked edges* when they can't fly, or when they want to deal more damage to a single target.

The abyssal horde ghouls swarm in from all sides, hoping to overwhelm the adventurers. If they can immobilize a few of them in the process, even better.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Anarch Spheres: Always temperamental, anarch spheres resonate with nearby conflict. This tendency was harnessed to create a secondary defense for Shevaithan. Any creature without the elemental origin engaged in combat within 3 squares of an active anarch sphere is subject to a ranged attack at the beginning of its turn: +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is slowed (save ends both).

Magic Circles: These teleportation circles are keyed to specific locations and only active when they get within range. Currently, only the sterncastle circle glows with active energy. See Adventure Book One, page 7 for additional details.

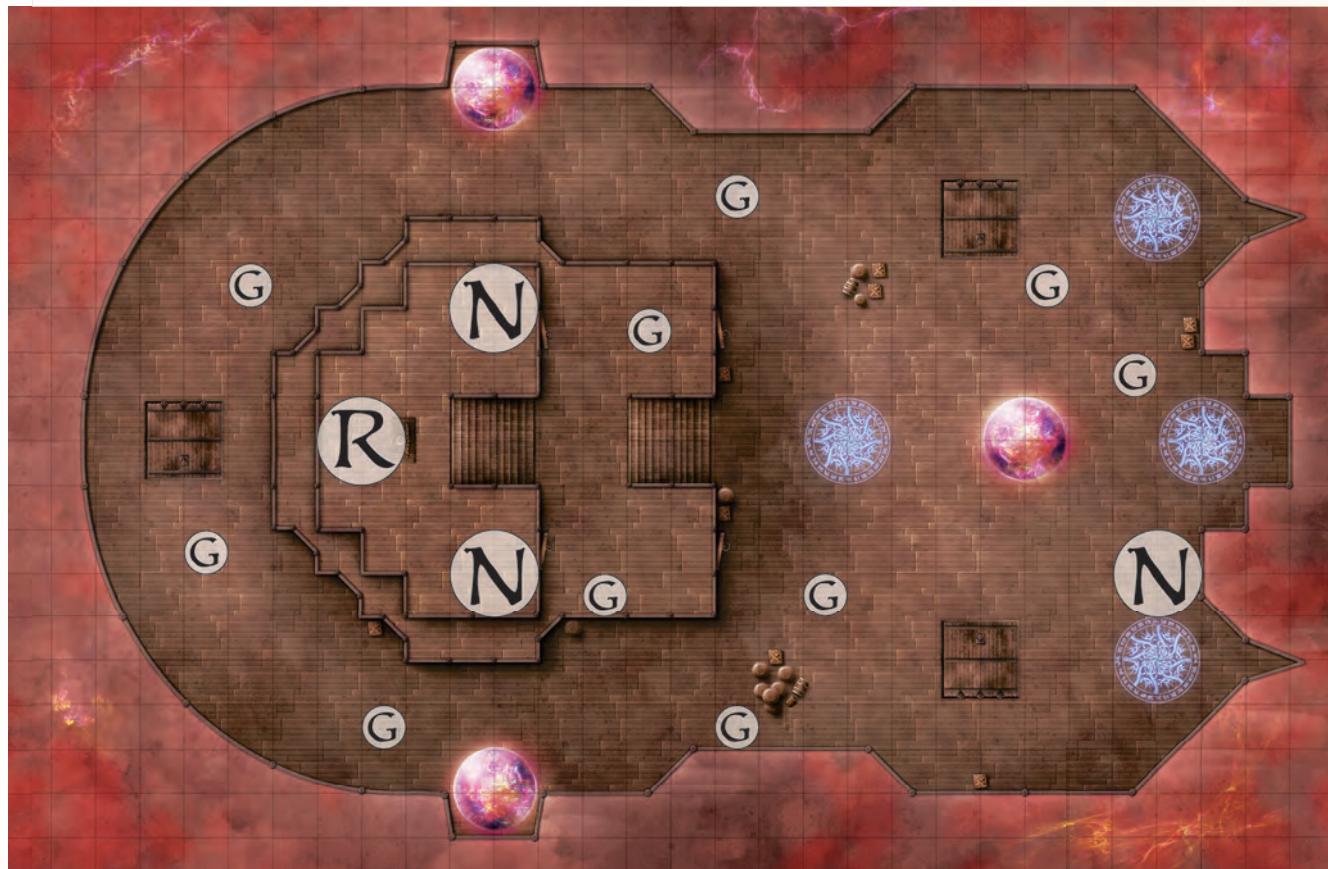
Hatches: Opening any of the three hatches triggers

Encounter S2: Ship Second Wave on page 6.

Crates: The crates on the deck are filled with black rock and are difficult terrain.

Treasure: The upper portion of the sterncastle contains 6,250 pp hidden amid the nesting.

Document: Captain Xur carries a leather document case. Inside is a letter written in Abyssal that demands that the captain wait for the arrival of Doresain, King of the Ghouls. Once Doresain is aboard, Xur is to follow the other two *chaos ships* to the Forge of Four Worlds, where Timesus's restoration is underway. The document is signed, "In the name of the Prince of Undeath, Castellan Harthoon."



ENCOUNTER S2: SHIP SECOND WAVE

Encounter Level 28 (66,500 XP)

SETUP

1 larva warlord

1 blackstar knight-commander

1 nycademon repeller

10 abyssal horde ghouls

Following the initial encounter, the crew belowdecks, led by the first mate, swarm topside from the three hatches (marked "A," "B," and "C"). This attack is triggered if the adventurers open one of the hatches to the lower decks, even if the initial battle rages on, or after they take a short rest.

The space beneath the deck is composed of two large spaces separated by a wall pierced by a wide opening that can be closed to make two holds. For all practical purposes, when the wall is open, the space is contiguous.

When any one of the deck hatches is opened, read:

Hatches around the deck bang open, and demonic and undead creatures boil out, ready to repel any intruders.

TACTICS

Each round, roll 1d12 to determine which creatures emerge and from which hatch.

1-2: Hatch A; 3 abyssal horde ghouls

3-4: Hatch B; 1 nycademon repeller

5-6: Hatch C; 1 blackstar knight-commander

Blackstar Knight-Commander

Medium elemental animate

Level 27 Soldier

XP 11,000

Initiative +22 Senses Perception +21; darkvision

HP 246; Bloodied 123

AC 43; Fortitude 39 Reflex 38, Will 39

Resist 15 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant

Speed 7

④ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+34 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blackstar knight-commander's next turn.

† Deathsword (standard; recharge [] []) ♦ Weapon

Requires greatsword; +34 vs. AC; 4d10 + 9 damage, and if the target is marked by the blackstar knight-commander it takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

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

The blackstar knight-commander explodes; close burst 2; targets enemies; +32 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 9 damage; marked targets take an additional 2d10 + 9 damage.

No Escape (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation

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

Alignment Evil Languages Primordial

Str 26 (+21) Dex 24 (+20) Wis 26 (+21)

Con 22 (+19) Int 12 (+14) Cha 11 (+13)

Equipment greatsword

7-8: Hatch A; 1 larva warlord, 2 horde ghouls

9-10: Hatch B; 1 blackstar knight-commander

11-12: Hatch C; 3 abyssal horde ghouls

If the creature rolled has already appeared, then 1d4 abyssal horde ghouls emerge instead. When all of the creatures have appeared, stop rolling for the hatches.

The larva warlord plunges into the thick of combat, making as many enemies as possible suffer from its *tactical feedback* aura. It uses *punishing beetle* on a bloodied enemy that has just been healed. The other creatures fight to support the warlord (or the captain, if she is still active). They fight to the death.

DEVELOPMENT

When Captain Xur is defeated, an arcane failsafe activates to protect the ship from theft. Mystic bindings immediately spring into existence, mooring the *chaos ship* in place. The ship cannot be moved until those bindings are removed. When this occurs, the magic circle in the bowsprit (the front of the ship) glows, showing that a new portal connection has been made. This circle now connects to a circle in the Red Hold, the citadel of Orcus. The adventurers can see the darkly glowing ropes of arcane energy that wrap around the ship. They twist and merge into four distinct ropes that disappear into the void of the Abyss.

10 Abyssal Horde Ghouls

Medium elemental humanoid (undead)

Level 26 Minion

XP 2,250 each

Initiative +20 Senses Perception +17; darkvision

Unending Hunger aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 damage.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 40; Fortitude 38, Reflex 39, Will 36

Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic

Speed 8, climb 4

④ Claws (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

+31 vs. AC; 14 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common

Skills Stealth +25

Str 21 (+18) Dex 24 (+20) Wis 18 (+17)

Con 22 (+19) Int 14 (+15) Cha 16 (+16)

FALLING INTO THE ABYSS

Those who fall into the Abyss fall forever through the void unless they are saved or can save themselves. Since long-range teleportation doesn't work in the lower portions of the Abyss, rescues involving such effects must occur within the first 5 rounds of a fall to be effective. Falling creatures are attacked by flying demons on a regular basis. It's possible such attackers could be clutched and forced to wing the dropped victim upward, possibly requiring a skill challenge to succeed.

Larva Warlord	Level 27 Elite Brute	
Medium natural magical beast (undead)		XP 22,000
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +17	
Tactical Feedback (Psychic) aura 6; enemies within the aura take 10 psychic damage when they shift.		
HP 608; Bloodied 304		
AC 39; Fortitude 39, Reflex 38, Will 37		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; takes half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 radiant, 10 against close and area attacks		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 5; see also <i>squeezing swarm</i>		
Action Points 1		
④ Mandible Blade (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic +29 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 10 necrotic damage.		
† Double Attack (standard; at-will) The larva war master makes two mandible blade attacks.		
↗ Punishing Beetle (immediate reaction, when a creature regains hit points; encounter) ♦ Poison Ranged 20; targets the triggering creature; +29 vs. Fortitude; 5d10 + 14 poison damage. <i>Miss:</i> Half damage.		
Squeezing Swarm By altering its shape, a larva warlord can squeeze through small openings as if it were a Tiny creature.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Acrobatics +26, Athletics +27, Intimidate +25		
Str 28 (+22)	Dex 26 (+21)	Wis 18 (+17)
Con 24 (+20)	Int 20 (+18)	Cha 24 (+20)

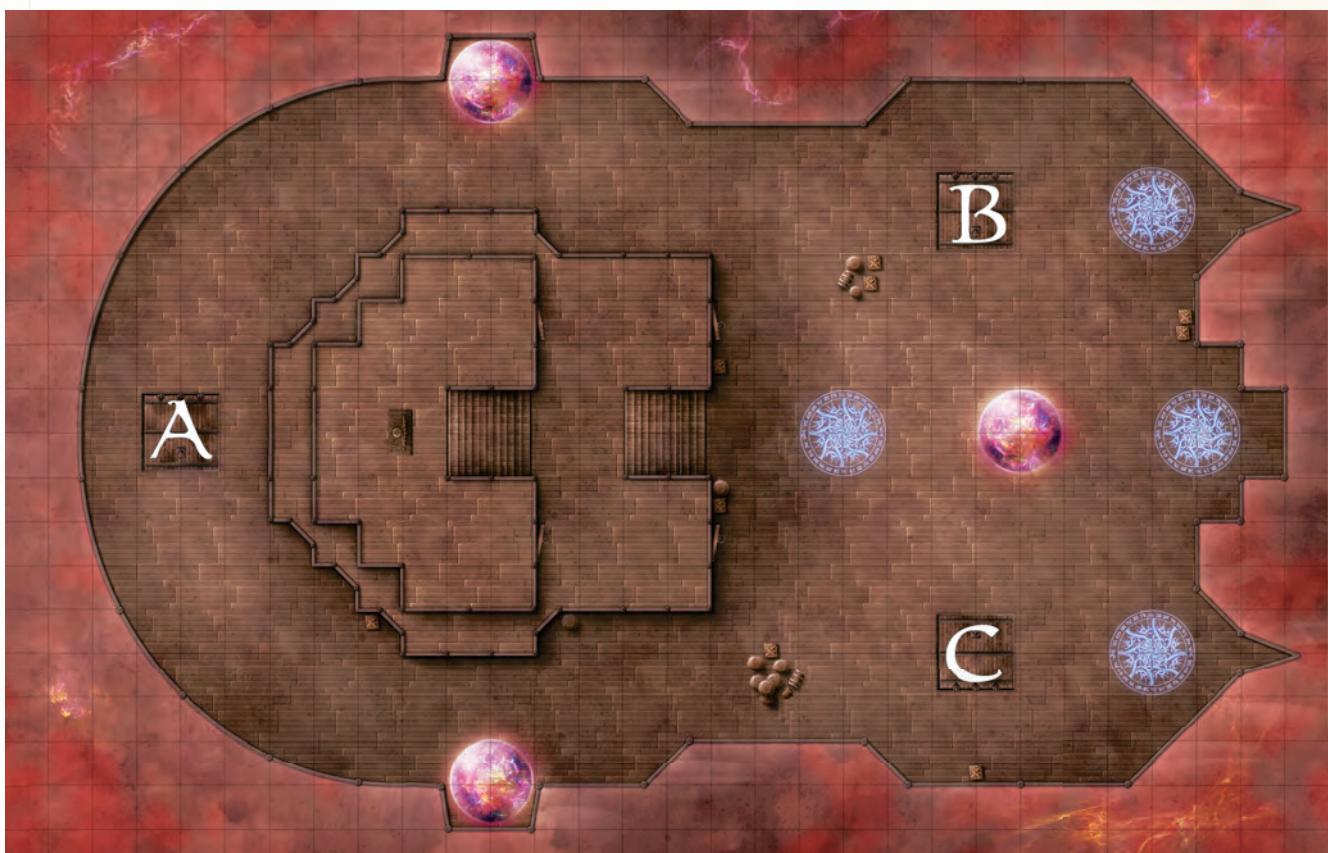
Nycademon Repeller	Level 27 Skirmisher	
Large elemental humanoid (demon)		XP 11,000
Initiative +23	Senses Perception +19	
HP 250; Bloodied 125		
AC 41; Fortitude 40, Reflex 40, Will 37		
Resist 20 variable (2/encounter)		
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)		
④ Wicked Axe (standard; at-will) +32 vs. AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
† Wicked Edges (standard; at-will) The nycademon makes two wicked axe attacks.		
† Repelling Flight (standard; recharge ☰ ☱) The nycademon flies up to 6 squares. This flight does not provoke opportunity attacks. During the flight, the nycademon can make up to three attacks, each at a different target. +32 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
Combat Advantage The nycademon deals an extra 2d8 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Intimidate +23, Perception +19		
Str 25 (+20)	Dex 26 (+21)	Wis 13 (+14)
Con 26 (+21)	Int 8 (+12)	Cha 21 (+18)
Equipment greataxe		

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Crates: The dozen or so crates below deck are filled with inanimate black rock.

Treasure: A search through the nests strew along the hold walls turns up 25 ad, one potion of recovery, and one 5,000 gp gem.



ENCOUNTER R1: DEATH GATE

Encounter Level 27 (62,000 XP)

SETUP

1 glabrezu gatewarder (G)

2 beholder eyes of despair (B)

As the adventurers step through the bowsprit circle portal and into the central teleport circle in this chamber, show the players “View of the Death Gate” on page 26 of Adventure Book One, then read:

The deck of the ship blurs to reveal a wide courtyard, with a windowless bastion of blood-red stone rising in the distance. A hulking glabrezu slouches before a 30-foot-high wall, a great gate of bronze set within it. Close by, a magic portal opens a tunnel through the wall, a wide flight of steps beyond leading down. Two beholders float before the tunnel, their central eyes gleaming in your direction.

If the adventurers do not attack immediately, read:

The glabrezu lurches forward, a thick leather cord around its neck strung with skulls, jewelry, and weapons. “You stand at the gate of the Red Hold. State your petition, and quickly.”

Perception Check

DC 31: The glabrezu’s lower arms are set with dozens of black bracelets, all pulsing with a dull red glow.

Allow the adventurers to make Bluff or Diplomacy checks if they want, but Orcus’s guards see through any subterfuge. If the adventurers are truthful with the demon, the glabrezu appreciates the position they find themselves in. In fact, he finds it extremely amusing that the *chaos ship* is bound in place. In his laughter, the demon reveals: “Yes, the only way to free the bindings can be found within the Red Hold, but to enter the place, you need to get past me and the Death Gate.” For some reason, the glabrezu finds this to be even funnier, and his laughter increases.

TACTICS

The glabrezu opens with *blasphemous word*, then targets the strongest-looking melee combatants with *double attacks*. While it has a target grabbed, it stays in the thick of combat to use *chaos word*, making *abyssal bolt* attacks while that power recharges.

A beholder eye of despair targets a different foe each round. It uses forced movement from its *eye rays* to place targets adjacent to the Death Gate.

DEVELOPMENT

A DC 30 or 35 Arcana check reveals the details of Everlost and the Red Hold noted on page 8 of Adventure Book One.

The walls of the Red Hold cannot be passed or breached by any means available to the adventurers, leaving the Death Gate as the only way in. The adventurers

must defeat the guardians before they can direct their full attention to the Death Gate.

OPENING THE DEATH GATE

The great bronze gate glows molten red, arcane glyphs flaring blue and white across its face.

Creatures possessing inactivated *bloodward* bracelets can remain adjacent to the gate without taking damage (see “Features of the Area”), but they must overcome its potent wards to gain access to the Red Hold.

Level: 24 (XP 12,100).

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Athletics, Arcana, Religion.

Athletics (DC 24, standard action): The character weakens the wards of the Death Gate using brute force.

Arcana or Religion (DC 29, standard action): The character draws on knowledge of Orcus’s foul magic to sense the operation of the gate and its wards.

Secondary Skills: Perception.

Perception (DC 24, standard action): The character notices weaknesses in the Death Gate’s defenses. This doesn’t count as a success or failure in the challenge, but instead provides a +2 bonus or -2 penalty to the next Arcana or Religion check made in the challenge.

Glabrezu Gatewarder (G)

Level 26 Elite Brute

XP 18,000

Initiative +17 Senses Perception +20; truesight 6

HP 580; Bloodied 290; see also *arcane fury*

AC 38; Fortitude 38, Reflex 37, Will 36

Resist 20 fire, 20 lightning, 20 thunder

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, fly 8

Action Points 1

⊕ **Pincer Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +29 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 damage.

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

The glabrezu makes two pincer claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the target is grabbed if the glabrezu so chooses.

↗ **Abyssal Bolt** (minor; at-will)

Ranged 10; +28 vs. Reflex; 4d4 + 8 damage.

↖ **Blasphemous Word** (minor; encounter) ♦ **Psychic**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +28 vs. Will; 2d12 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the glabrezu’s next turn.

↖ **Chaos Word** (minor; recharge ☰)

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +28 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 8 damage. This damage bypasses all resistances.

Arcane Fury (free, when first bloodied; encounter)

The glabrezu teleports 8 squares, recharges its *blasphemous word* and *chaos word* powers, and makes an *abyssal bolt*, *blasphemous word*, or *chaos word* attack.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Skills Arcana +26, Bluff +21, Intimidate +21

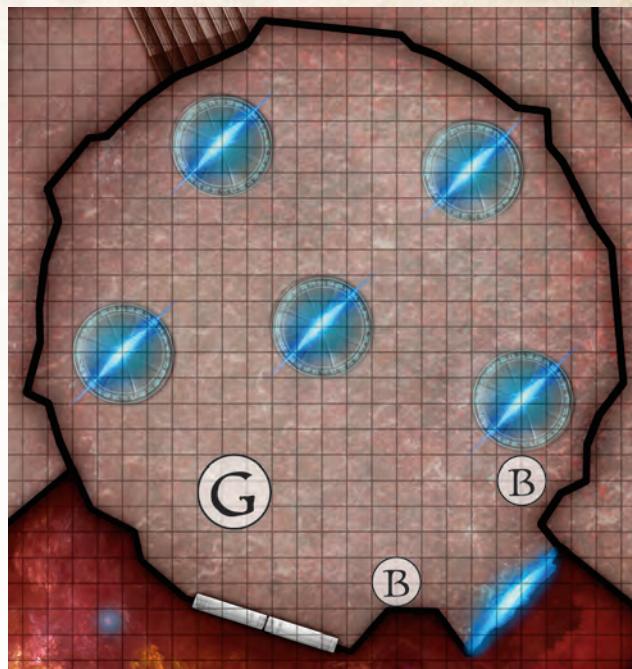
Str 28 (+22) **Dex** 19 (+17) **Wis** 25 (+20)

Con 20 (+18) **Int** 26 (+21) **Cha** 16 (+16)

2 Beholder Eyes of Despair (B)		Level 27 Elite Artillery
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 22,000 each
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +17; all-around vision, darkvision	
HP 388; Bloodied 194; see also <i>ripple of chaos</i>		
AC 39; Fortitude 39, Reflex 39, Will 40		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed fly 8 (hover)		
Action Points 1		
① Bite (standard; at-will) +34 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage.		
↗ Central Eye (minor 1/round; at-will) Ranged 20; +32 vs. Fortitude, and the target cannot use encounter attack powers or daily attack powers until the end of the beholder eye of despair's next turn.		
↗ Eyes of the Beholder (free, when an enemy starts its turn within 5 squares of the beholder eye of despair; at-will) The eye of despair uses <i>eye ray</i> against the triggering enemy.		
↗ Eye Rays (standard; at-will) ♦ see text The beholder eye of despair uses one <i>eye ray</i> power chosen from the list below. Using <i>eye rays</i> does not provoke opportunity attacks.		
1— Telekinesis Ray : Ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 7 damage, and the eye of despair slides the target 6 squares.		
2— Weakening Ray : Ranged 10; +32 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 7 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).		
3— Despair Ray (Psychic) : Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls (save ends).		
4— Maddening Ray (Charm, Psychic) : Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dominated until the end of the eye of despair's next turn.		
5— Confusing Ray (Psychic) : Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target uses a move action at the start of each turn to move its speed in a random direction (save ends).		
6— Teleporting Ray (Teleportation) : Ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 7 damage, and the eye of despair teleports the target 10 squares.		
↗ Ripple of Despair (when first bloodied; encounter) Each enemy within 5 squares of the beholder eye of despair is targeted by a random <i>eye ray</i> power as a free action and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends). The eye of despair then teleports 6 squares as a free action.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Deep Speech	
Str 18 (+17)	Dex 26 (+21)	Wis 18 (+17)
Con 26 (+21)	Int 21 (+18)	Cha 28 (+22)

Success: The adventurers open the gate to reveal the Bloodstorm beyond. Go to **Encounter R2** on page 10.

Failure: The Death Gate is overloaded with a crippling blast of arcane power. Each adventurer loses one healing surge and takes a -2 penalty to Endurance checks until the party takes an extended rest. In its weakened state, the gate can be opened with a DC 31 Strength check. Up to four characters can aid in this check.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light.

Teleportation Circles: Arcane energy surges within these powerful circles even when they are inactive. A creature that enters a portal or begins its turn within one takes 2d10 damage.

The Death Gate: These great gates of bronze are carved with Abyssal runes that offer up foul prayers to Orcus. Any living creature that starts its turn adjacent to the Death Gate takes 2d8 + 8 damage. This includes the beholders, though the glabre zu (who wears the *bloodward bracelets*) is immune to this effect.

Inactivated Bloodward Bracelets: These large magic bracelets of leather and black ivory are wearable as belts by the adventurers. Inactivated *bloodward bracelets* allow creatures to stand adjacent to the Death Gate without taking damage.

Portal Tunnel: A portal passes through the stone conduit of the Bloodstorm, leading to crumbling steps that descend to Everlost. This area is beyond the scope of this adventure.

Treasure: The glabre zu's necklace is slung with the treasure of intruders it has slain—two level 30 magic items, a level 29 magic item, a level 28 magic item, a *potion of life*, and thirty rings, amulets, and other pieces of fine jewelry worth 15,000 gp each.

ENCOUNTER R2: BLOODSTORM

Encounter Level 27 (63,000 XP)

SETUP

2 kazrith sentinels (K)

1 achree (A)

12 achree spawn

Bloodstorm hazard

Beyond the Death Gate lies the Red Hold's most potent defense: the Bloodstorm.

When the adventurers open the Death Gate, read:

The gate swings wide with a blast of red-tinged steam and a foul taint of decay. Beyond the gate surges a wall of boiling blood whose heat can be felt at a distance. Motes of elemental fire and lightning surge within this Bloodstorm, flaring as blistering pockets of superheated steam.

The guardians on patrol are drawn by the presence within the Bloodstorm of creatures not wearing activated bloodward bracelets. Roll initiative for the elemental motes (see "Features of the Area"). The kazrith sentinels and the achree become active in the second round after the first adventurer steps into the Bloodstorm. Four achree spawn enter the fray in the third round, with additional waves of four each round thereafter. They enter the map from any of the various streams and move to close the distance and attack.

2 Kazrith Sentinels (K)

Large elemental magical beast (aquatic, demon) **Level 26 Lurker** XP 9,000 each

Initiative +26 Senses Perception +20; tremorsense 20

HP 183; **Bleeding** 91; see also *acidic seepage*

AC 40; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 39, **Will** 37

Immune acid; **Resist** 20 cold, 20 fire

Speed 6, swim 8

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid**

Reach 2; +31 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

↔ **Acidic Retreat** (standard; recharge ☰ ☱) ♦ **Acid**

Close burst 2; +29 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 damage, and ongoing 15 acid damage (save ends). **Effect:** The kazrith swims its speed.

Acidic Seepage (usable only while bleeding) ♦ **Acid**

The kazrith gains a +4 bonus to its swim speed, and at the start of its turn creatures adjacent to it take 10 acid damage.

Slippery

A kazrith makes saving throws against immobilized, restrained, and slowed conditions at the start of its turn as well as at the end of its turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal, Primordial

Skills Stealth +27

Str 26 (+21)

Dex 29 (+22)

Wis 25 (+20)

Con 21 (+18)

Int 18 (+17)

Cha 12 (+14)

Achree (A)

Large elemental beast (aquatic, demon)

Level 27 Skirmisher

XP 11,000

Initiative +24

Senses Perception +26; blindsight 10

HP 250; **Bleeding** 125; see also *jaws of death*

AC 41; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 40, **Will** 39

Resist 20 fire

Speed 4, swim 10; see also *relentless attack*

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 4d8 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed.

The achree cannot make bite attacks while it has a creature grabbed, but it can use its *vicious rend*.

† **Vicious Rend** (standard; at-will)

If an achree begins its turn with a target grabbed in its jaws, it makes an attack against the grabbed creature: +30 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 10 damage, and the target slides 5 squares, is knocked prone, and is no longer grabbed. **Miss:** Half damage, no slide, still grabbed.

† **Relentless Attack** (standard; at-will)

The achree moves its speed and can enter enemies' spaces. This movement provokes opportunity attacks, and the achree must end its move in an unoccupied space. When it enters an enemy's space, the achree makes a bite attack. Once after a successful bite attack, the achree can end its movement within reach of the same target and make a *vicious rend* attack against the target.

↔ **Jaws of Death** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Close burst 1; the achree makes a bite attack against all enemies in the burst.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Str 23 (+19)

Dex 29 (+22)

Languages – (understands Abyssal)

Con 26 (+21)

Int 2 (+9)

Wis 26 (+21)

Cha 20 (+18)

12 Achree Spawn

Medium elemental beast (aquatic, demon)

XP 2,250 each

Initiative +22

Senses Perception +20; blindsight 10

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see also *jaws of death*

AC 38; **Fortitude** 36, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 36

Resist 20 fire

Speed 4, swim 10

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 16 damage. **Miss:** 8 damage.

↔ **Jaws of Death** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Close burst 1; the achree spawn makes a bite attack against all enemies in the burst.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Str 20 (+18)

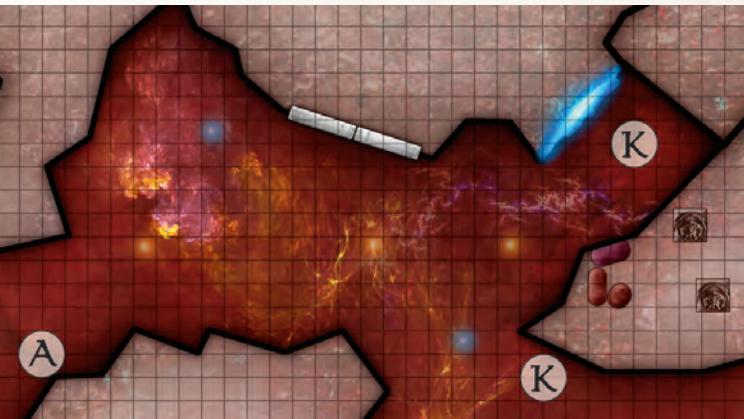
Dex 28 (+22)

Wis 25 (+20)

Con 25 (+20)

Int 2 (+9)

Cha 17 (+16)



TACTICS

The kazrith sentinels make bite attacks against lightly armored foes, using their *acidic retreat* the first time they take damage. Swimming deeper into the Bloodstorm, they emerge from the murky depths beside a different foe to set up their next attack.

The achree stays in constant motion, hitting as many targets as possible with its *relentless attack*. If forced into one-on-one melee, it alternates bite and *vicious rend* attacks, flanking with one of its achree spawn.

The achree spawn focus bite attacks on lightly armored foes, swarming a single target to maintain combat advantage.

DEVELOPMENT

If the kazrith sentinels are defeated, the adventurers can enter the Red Hold without alerting its residents to their presence. A surviving kazrith does not pursue the adventurers beyond the Bloodstorm and into the Red Hold, but it sounds a silent alert that gives the party an automatic encounter the first time a random encounter is checked for (see *Adventure Book One*, page 10). The achrees do not raise any alarm if they are left alive.

Once the adventurers pass through the Bloodstorm, they emerge in the Red Hold soaked and reeking from the foul ichor of that horrid moat.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light.

The Bloodstorm (hazard): This deadly moat of boiling blood surrounds the Red Hold and blocks all access to its eight entrances. Where it opens up into the interior and the Death Gate courtyard, the Bloodstorm hangs suspended in open air. Elsewhere, it is constrained within a sealed conduit of impenetrable stone 30 feet high and varying from 30 to 50 feet wide.

Fighting within the Bloodstorm incurs the normal penalties for fighting underwater (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 45), except that powers with the fire keyword do not take a penalty to attack rolls.

The thick ichor of the Bloodstorm limits line of sight to 4 squares, and it grants concealment.

Any creature that starts its turn within the Bloodstorm takes 20 fire damage. Additionally, the powerful magic of the Bloodstorm negates the magical effect of the Water Breathing ritual and similar effects (though aquatic creatures can breathe within it). A creature within the Bloodstorm can hold its breath, but horrific heat and pressure force it to make Endurance checks after 3 rounds rather than 3 minutes (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 159).

A creature within the Bloodstorm takes a -2 penalty to its speed. This penalty applies to all the creature's movement modes, but it does not apply to teleportation or to a pull, a push, or a slide.

Dispel magic and similar effects have no effect on the Bloodstorm.

Elemental Motes: Floating motes of elemental energy fuel the boiling heat of the Bloodstorm. On its initiative count, $1d4 + 1$ motes float out of the thick ichor to randomly target one or two adventurers. They float up adjacent to the target and let loose a burst of energy. Close burst 1; +30 vs. Reflex; $2d10 + 8$ fire and lightning damage, and the target slides $1d4$ squares.

Inner Gateways: Within the Red Hold, open doorways hold the boiling Bloodstorm magically suspended. Each gateway can be seen by a creature within 4 squares of it, and a gateway can be passed through freely.

ENCOUNTER R3: FORBIDDEN COURT

Encounter Level 27 (58,000 XP)

SETUP

Birik, vampire lord (V)

1 slaughter wight overlord (W)

3 bonecrusher skeleton hulks (S)

Unless the adventurers have light sources in hand, they can approach this area undetected. The doors have a narrow gap between them that allows a character to see through into the chamber beyond, and the membrane that separates the chamber from the Bloodstorm appears as a hazy glow.

As the adventurers approach the door, read:

A set of stone double doors is closed ahead, both faces carved with rough writing in Abyssal. The scrawl offers up benedictions to Orcus, and states that by his orders, all access is forbidden to what lies beyond.

Perception Check

DC 26: *The haunting music of a set of pipes can be heard through the doors (or opening) ahead.*

If the adventurers enter this area through the Bloodstorm, their presence is noted and the guardians here attack at once.

When the adventurers can see into the forbidden court, read:

Beyond the doors stands a dimly lit hall. Tapestries line the walls before demonic statues carved of jet and basalt, all depicting horrific scenes. Oversized silk cushions are scattered across the floor, and a pale humanoid figure sits at the center of the room with his back to the door. Pipes in hand, the figure plays a haunting, unearthly melody.

The wight and the skeletons stand along the outside walls and cannot immediately be seen through the doors. Do not place the monsters until the doors are opened.

This is the antechamber to Orcus's private sanctum, and the rooms where the arcane moorings holding the *chaos ship* can be found. The demon prince has forbidden access to this wing of the Red Hold and stationed undead guards here. The guardians here attack at the first sign of any intrusion.

The door is set with a complex magic lock (DC 31 Thievery check to open). If the adventurers unlock the door without being noticed (DC 27 Stealth check), they gain surprise on the guardians beyond. If the adventurers' attempts to unlock the door are noticed, the skeletons fling the doors open and attack immediately.

Vampire Lord (Human Fighter) (V) Level 28 Elite Soldier

Medium natural humanoid (undead)

XP 26,000

Initiative +25 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision

HP 408; **Bloodied** 204

Regeneration 15 (regeneration does not function while the vampire lord is exposed to direct sunlight)

AC 44; **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 40

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

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, climb 4 (spider climb)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Broadsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+35 vs. AC; 3d10 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the vampire lord's next turn.

† **Double Strike** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

The vampire lord makes two broadsword attacks.

† **Blood Drain** (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; recharges when an adjacent creature becomes bloodied)

♦ **Healing**

+33 vs. Fortitude; 4d12 + 8 damage, the target is weakened (save ends), and the vampire lord regains 102 hit points; see also *combat advantage*.

↗ **Dominating Gaze** (minor; recharge []) ♦ **Charm**

Ranged 5; +33 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends, with a -2 penalty to the saving throw). **Aftereffect:** The target is dazed (save ends). The vampire lord can dominate only one creature at a time.

Combat Advantage

The vampire lord deals 2d6 extra damage with its attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Vampire Lord's Mark

The vampire lord deals 2d10 extra damage with its attacks against any target it has marked.

Mist Form (standard; encounter) ♦ **Polymorph**

The vampire lord becomes insubstantial and gains a fly speed of 12, but cannot make attacks. The vampire lord can remain in mist form for up to 1 hour or end the effect as a minor action.

Second Wind (standard; encounter) ♦ **Healing**

The vampire lord spends a healing surge and regains 102 hit points. The vampire lord gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Skills Acrobatics +28, Athletics +29, Intimidate +27

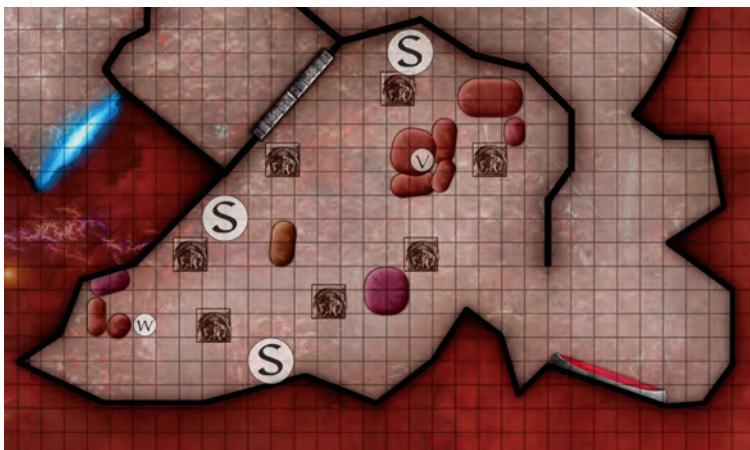
Str 30 (+24) **Dex** 28 (+23) **Wis** 20 (+19)

Con 22 (+20) **Int** 18 (+18) **Cha** 26 (+22)

Equipment chain armor, broadsword

3 Bonecrusher Skeleton Hulks (S)	Level 25 Soldier
Large natural animate (undead)	XP 7,000 each
Initiative +22 Senses Perception +19; darkvision	
HP 232; Bloodied 116	
AC 41; Fortitude 38, Reflex 37, Will 36	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 25 necrotic; Vulnerable 15 radiant	
Speed 8	
④ Crushing Blow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 4d10 + 9 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
† Swift Retribution (opportunity action; whenever an enemy moves into or out of a square within reach of the bonecrusher skeleton)	
♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Threatening Reach	
A bonecrusher skeleton can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Str 28 (+21) Dex 26 (+20) Wis 24 (+19)	
Con 24 (+19) Int 3 (+8) Cha 8 (+11)	
Equipment greatclub	

Slaughter Wight Overlord (W)	Level 27 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 11,000
Initiative +21 Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 304; Bloodied 152; see also death wail	
AC 39; Fortitude 41, Reflex 40, Will 39	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 25 necrotic; Vulnerable 15 radiant	
Speed 7	
④ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Healing, Necrotic	
+30 vs. AC; 5d6 + 9 necrotic damage, the target loses a healing surge and is weakened (save ends), and the slaughter wight regains 20 hit points.	
↔ Bloodied Burst (when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Necrotic	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +28 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 9 necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and immobilized (save ends).	
↔ Death Wail (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Necrotic	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +28 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 9 necrotic damage. Undead allies in the burst can make a basic attack as a free action.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Str 29 (+22) Dex 26 (+21) Wis 11 (+13)	
Con 24 (+20) Int 17 (+16) Cha 24 (+20)	



TACTICS

Birik hangs back, using his *dominating gaze* against the strongest-looking melee combatant. He then forces that character to attack a lightly armored adventurer, moving into flanking position against the same target. When his domination is broken, Birik falls back to repeat the same tactic.

The slaughter wight overlord wades into melee against lightly armored foes with claw attacks, staying close to the skeletons to flank and maximize the effect of its *bloodied burst* and *death wail*.

The skeletons make *crushing blow* attacks against the closest targets, watching for chances to make *swift retribution* opportunity attacks.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light from hazy everburning torches.

Ceiling: 40 feet high.

Bloodstorm Gateway: Magic holds the Bloodstorm within the bounds of this gateway. Creatures can pass through the gateway without restrictions.

Statues: Carved of jet and basalt, each statue stands 15 to 20 feet high and depicts demonic creatures in horrific poses. A statue provides cover and can be climbed with a DC 20 Athletics check.

The statues are imbued with vile magic. All good and unaligned creatures take a -2 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws while adjacent to a statue.

Cushions: Heavy silk cushions are set in piles across the chamber. These areas are difficult terrain.

Treasure: A locked strongbox beneath a cushion in the southwest corner of the chamber (DC 26 Perception check to discover, DC 31 Thievery check to unlock) conceals Birik's treasure—10,700 pp and 35 astral diamonds, plus four mithral rings, an adamantine amulet set with diamonds, and a platinum torc studded with rubies and emeralds. Each of the jewelry items is worth 50,000 gp.

ENCOUNTER R4: FIRSTWARDS

Encounter Level 26 (47,156 XP)

SETUP

Kaasneva, marilith ward keeper (K)

12 lich vestiges (V)

1 gulari (G)

Kaasneva is used to the sounds of battle coming from the Forbidden Court, and she ignores any combat there. As long as the adventurers are not carrying light, they can approach unseen along the open balcony overlooking the wards chamber.

Perception Check

DC 17: *The sound of flowing water can be heard from beyond the edge of the balcony, along with numerous voices.*

When the adventurers can see over the balcony, read:

A nightmarish courtyard opens up below, occupied by a horde of liches and a gulari pacing slowly along the wall. A marilith sits atop a low throne. She appears preoccupied, gazing into the bubbling font of red-black ichor spilling over in the center of the lower chamber. Four glowing gems, set into the rim of the fountain, send streams of energy into the air that twist and form a single rope of arcane power that disappears just before reaching the ceiling of the chamber.

This is where the first of the four arcane moorings holding the *chaos ship* is bound. The adventurers must defeat the guardians and deactivate the gems to disconnect the first wards.

There are four such ward stations scattered throughout the Red Hold. The adventurers must deactivate all four stations to release the *chaos ship* from its arcane moorings so that they can dive deeper into the Abyss.

TACTICS

Kaasneva uses her *hypnotic dance* to draw foes close, pulling them into the effluent channels if possible. She targets the most powerful-looking foes with *keeper strike*, reserving *stunning steel* until she has at least two foes within reach.

The gulari stays in the thick of combat, alternating bite and slam attacks against lightly armored targets, and using *shifting assault* to stay close to its foes.

Half of the lich vestiges flank for combat advantage with their *death's touch*. The other half remain back to use *shadow ray* or *orb of obliteration*.

Marilith Ward Keeper (K)	Level 27 Elite Controller
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 22,000
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +23; darkvision
Keeper's Aura (Charm) aura 5; each ally within the aura gains a +2 bonus to AC. While the marilith ward keeper is bloodied, the bonus is gained on all defenses.	
HP 494; Bloodied 247	
AC 41; Fortitude 39, Reflex 37, Will 37	
Resist 20 acid, 20 cold, 20 fire	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 8	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 3d10 + 5 damage (crit 3d10 + 35).	
† Keeper Strike (standard; usable only while wielding a scimitar; at-will) ♦ Weapon Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 3d10 + 5 damage (crit 3d10 + 35), and the target is dazed until the end of the keeper's next turn.	
† Hacking Blades (free, when an adjacent enemy misses the marilith with a melee attack; usable only while wielding a scimitar; at-will) ♦ Weapon The marilith ward keeper makes a scimitar attack against the triggering creature. If the triggering creature is dazed, the marilith makes two scimitar attacks.	
† Stunning Steel (standard; recharge [] []) ♦ Weapon The marilith makes six scimitar attacks. If two or more attacks hit a single target, that target is knocked prone and stunned (save ends).	
✿ Hypnotic Dance (standard; at-will) ♦ Charm, Psychic Area burst 5 within 10; targets enemies; +33 vs. Will; the target is pulled 6 squares and immobilized (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common Str 29 (+22) Dex 26 (+21) Wis 20 (+18) Con 23 (+23) Int 18 (+17) Cha 26 (+21)	
Equipment 6 scimitars	

DEVELOPMENT

To disengage the first wards, the adventurers must engage in a minor skill challenge or simply smash the warding gems (although this is actually more dangerous than the skill challenge).

Level: 27 (XP 11,000).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Religion, Thievery.

Arcana (DC 31, standard action): The character studies the wards and determines that there are four such stations in place throughout the Red Hold. All four must be disengaged to free the *chaos ship*.

Arcana (DC 26, standard action): The character removes one of the gems from the ward matrix.

Thievery (DC 31, standard action): The character removes one of the gems from the ward matrix.

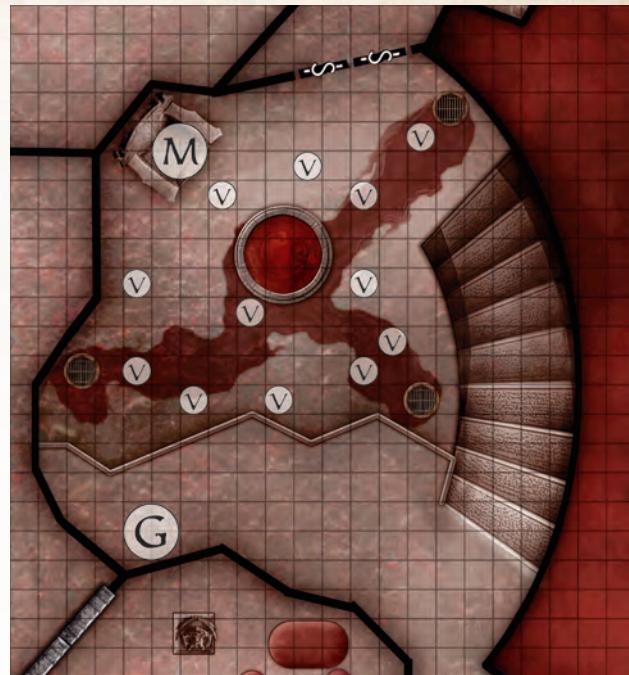
Success: The adventurers disengage this set of wards, releasing one of the four mystic moorings binding the *chaos ship*.

12 Lich Vestiges (V)	Level 26 Minion
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 2,250 each
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +19; darkvision
Necromantic Aura (Necrotic) aura 2; any living creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 5 necrotic damage.	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 40; Fortitude 36, Reflex 40, Will 38	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic	
Speed 6	
④ Death's Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
+30 vs. AC; 10 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).	
⑤ Shadow Ray (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
Ranged 20; +30 vs. Reflex; 10 necrotic damage, or 15 necrotic damage if the target is an arcane power user (such as a wizard).	
★ Orb of Obliteration (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire, Necrotic	
Two, three, or four lich vestiges acting on the same initiative count can use their standard actions to hurl a single orb of black fire that detonates on impact. Make one attack roll: Area burst 5 within 10 of one of the lich vestiges; +30 vs. Reflex; 5 fire and necrotic damage per lich vestige making the attack, and ongoing fire and necrotic damage equal to 5 per lich vestige making the attack (save ends).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Arcana +24	
Str 11 (+13)	Dex 12 (+14)
Con 14 (+15)	Wis 13 (+14)
	Int 22 (+19)
	Cha 18 (+17)

Gulari (G)	Level 25 Soldier
Large elemental beast (demon)	XP 7,000
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +24; truesight 6
HP 236; Bloodied 118	
AC 41; Fortitude 38, Reflex 36, Will 36	
Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb); see also shifting assault	
④ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison	
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 4d6 + 6 poison damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.	
④ Slam (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
† Shifting Assault (immediate reaction, when an enemy within 2 squares of the gulari shifts; at-will)	
The gulari shifts to within 2 squares of the triggering creature and makes a bite attack and a slam attack against the triggering creature.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages – (understands Abyssal)
Skills Athletics +23, Acrobatics +24	
Str 22 (+18)	Dex 25 (+19)
Con 28 (+21)	Wis 25 (+19)
	Int 2 (+8)
	Cha 20 (+17)

Failure: The ward matrix unleashes a burst of necrotic energy, and each character in the chamber loses one healing surge. If this occurs, the gems must be smashed to break the wards.

Alternately, a gem can be smashed by any melee strike. When a gem explodes, characters within two squares lose one healing surge. All four gems must be destroyed to disable this set of wards.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light in the lower chamber. The balcony is dark.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 30 feet high along the walls, arching to a height of 50 feet at the center of the chamber.

Fountain: This fountain provides cover. It features a wide base of obsidian and a central spire sculpted as a chaotic eruption of mottled red, green, and black stone. Each of its dozen steaming jets vents blood and black ichor into the air.

Any living creature that ends its turn adjacent to the fountain or an effluent channel is weakened until the beginning of its next turn. Any living creature entering the fountain or a channel (including the drains) is weakened (save ends).

Balcony: The balcony overlooking the lower chamber stands 20 feet above the floor and has no railing. A creature falling from the balcony takes 2d10 damage.

Secret Door: Only Orcus and his ward keeper use this concealed door (DC 31 Perception check to spot, DC 31 Thievery check to open).

Treasure: At the bottom of the throne is a secret compartment (DC 26 Perception check to spot) that contains Kaasneva's treasure, which consists of 500 pp and 50 astral diamonds.

ENCOUNTER R5: GHOST DOOR

Encounter Level 27 (61,000 XP)

SETUP

1 iron golem juggernaut

The adventurers discover that they are not the only agents operating within the heart of Orcus's stronghold.

As the adventurers enter this area, show the players "View of the Ghost Door" on page 27 of Adventure Book One, then read:

This large common area is empty, but the ever-present stench of the Red Hold suddenly clears as a shimmering veil of silver light fills the air. A massive 20-foot-high door appears within the veil, set in a stone frame. The ghostly door is translucent, but on its face is set a bas-relief silhouette of a raven's head wreathed in white flame.

The ghost door activates in the presence of the Raven Queen's most trusted servants—a role the adventurers took on when they became her heralds in E1: Death's Reach. (If you are not using that backstory, the magic of the ghost door simply conceals it from demons and creatures loyal to Orcus.) After 2 rounds, or as soon as any of the adventurers enters the area of silver light, the door's wards activate.

The haze of silver light suddenly flares as a huge form takes shape within it—a great golem emerging from the door itself. Another golem begins to take shape within the light even as the first lurches forward to attack.

TACTICS

The iron golem juggernaut takes on the closest foes with its cleave, falling back on iron blade attack if the adventurers spread out. It concentrates melee attacks on two targets at a time, but uses its breath weapon whenever it can target three or more foes.

A new iron golem juggernaut is conjured by the magic of the door every 5 rounds. Even if the adventurers leave the area, the ghost door continues to conjure iron golems until a total of five have been created. The golems pursue the party into any area of the Red Hold.

EXPERIENCE

The XP allotted for this encounter assumes that the ghost door conjures two iron golems before the adventurers disable it. Adjust the XP total depending on how many iron golems the adventurers face.

Iron Golem Juggernaut	Level 26 Elite Soldier
Huge natural animate (construct)	XP 18,000
Initiative +19	Senses Perception +15; darkvision
Noxious Fumes aura 3; while the iron golem juggernaut is bloodied, any creature that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 10 poison damage.	
HP 488; Bloodied 244; see also <i>toxic death</i>	
AC 42; Fortitude 43, Reflex 38, Will 36	
Immune disease, poison, sleep	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6 (cannot shift)	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Iron Blade (standard; at-will) Reach 3; +33 vs. AC; 3d10 + 5 damage, and the target is marked (save ends).	
† Cleave (standard; at-will) The iron golem juggernaut makes two <i>iron blade</i> attacks, each against a different target.	
† Dazing Fist (immediate interrupt, when a creature marked by the iron golem juggernaut and within its reach moves or shifts; at-will) Reach 3; targets the triggering creature; +31 vs. Fortitude; the target is dazed (save ends).	
↔ Breath Weapon (standard; recharge ♦ Poison Close blast 5; +31 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 9 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
↔ Toxic Death (when first bloodied and again when the iron golem juggernaut drops to 0 hit points) ♦ Poison Close burst 5; +31 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 6 poison damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Str 30 (+23)	Dex 18 (+17)
Con 28 (+22)	Int 3 (+9)
Equipment longsword	Wis 14 (+15)
	Cha 3 (+9)

DISABLING THE GHOST DOOR

The protective wards of the ghost door attempt to destroy those who inadvertently discover it.

The ghost door's magical wards blast the adventurers with arcane power and disgorge deadly constructs set on destroying them. Some of the skill checks in the challenge require the adventurers to be within the field of silver light, as indicated.

Level: 26 (XP 18,000).

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Heal, Religion.

Arcana (DC 26, standard action): The character taps into the field of silver light, disrupting its flow. The character making this check must be within the field of silver light.

Heal (DC 26, standard action): The power of the Raven Queen threads the thin line between life and death. By making a Heal check, a character can manipulate the subtle flow of protective energy within the ghost door. The character making this check must be within the field of silver light.

The Ghost Door

Trap

Level 25 Blaster

XP 7,000

The haze of silver light surrounding the door suddenly erupts in a blast of arcane power.

Hazard: The wards of the ghost door lash out at intruders.

Perception

No check is necessary to notice the ghost door.

Initiative +19

Trigger

The ghost door manifests in response to the approach of those who serve the Raven Queen. However, unless the door is opened within 2 rounds, the trap attacks.

Attack

Standard Action Close burst 3

Target: All enemies in burst

Attack: +28 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d10 radiant damage, and the target is pulled 3 squares and dazed (save ends).

Special: Any creature that ends its turn within the field of silver light (whether pulled by the trap or not) is subject to an attack as above.

On its initiative, the door activates. Every 5 rounds thereafter, the door conjures an iron golem juggernaut. The golem attacks the creature that activated the wards of the ghost door and any of its allies. A total of five iron golem juggernauts can be conjured by the ghost door.

Countermeasures

- ◆ The wards of the ghost door are disabled by a skill challenge (see text).

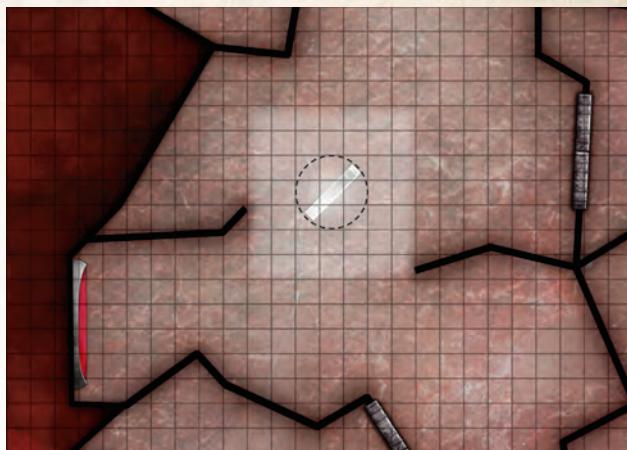
Religion (DC 31, standard action): The character draws on knowledge of the Raven Queen's most powerful rituals to manipulate the energy within the ghost door.

Success: The adventurers disable the magical wards on the ghost door. Though the door still cannot be opened (see **Encounter R8** on page 24), the field of silver light disappears and no additional iron golems are conjured. Iron golems already conjured continue to fight until destroyed.

Failure: The adventurers overload the magical wards on the ghost door. A burst of silver light fills the chamber, dealing $3d8 + 5$ radiant damage to all creatures within it. Additionally, one last iron golem is conjured by the failing wards. It immediately attacks.

DEVELOPMENT

The adventurers should realize that the manifestation of the ghost door is not a part of the Red Hold. The bas-relief symbol is clearly a sign of the Raven Queen, but the meaning of the aura of white flame is unknown. The Order of White Fire are operatives of the Raven Queen working within the Red Hold (see **Encounter R8** on page 24).



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Darkness before the ghost door manifests. Bright light after the ghost door appears.

Ceiling: 40 feet high.

The Ghost Door: This portal is the entrance to the extradimensional lair of the Order of White Fire (see **Encounter R8** on page 24). The portal shifts from place to place, appearing as a massive glowing door, translucent but solid, set within a freestanding stone frame. Each side features bas-relief carvings of a black raven's head set within a corona of white flame.

A DC 26 Arcana check reveals that the raven's head relief is the magical seal that locks the door, and that it is opened by a magic key (one of the crystal rods wielded by members of the order). The door cannot be opened or damaged by any power or magic available to the adventurers.

Silver Light: A zone of protective silver light surrounds the ghost door in the area indicated on the map. The zone cannot be damaged or affected by any power or magic available to the adventurers.

ENCOUNTER R6: DARK GARDEN

Encounter Level 28 (67,500 XP)

SETUP

1 immolith seeker (I)

2 retrievers (R)

10 canoloth trackers (C)

The manifestation of the ghost door has been felt within the Red Hold. As the adventurers seek the wards holding the mystic bindings of *Shevaithan*, Orcus's servants stalk them.

When the adventurers can see into this area, read:

This enormous chamber has the appearance of a underground garden, tainted by the energies of the Abyss. A foul reek rises from a half-dozen vents torn in the ground like gaping wounds. Crystalline black trees hang with blood-red fruit, lining paths that lead to another entrance opposite.

When the adventurers move into the garden, read:

Firelight suddenly flares at the far entrance, and a horrid howling fills the air. Two retrievers lumber into the dark garden, a pack of armored canoloths at their side. As the torrent of flame advances, it takes the form of an immolith. "Mortal wretches!" it shrieks. "You thought to go unnoticed? In the name of Orcus, you will pay for your folly!"

Immolith Seeker (I)

Level 28 Controller

Large elemental magical beast (demon, fire, undead) XP 13,000

Initiative +22 Senses Perception +19; darkvision

Flaming Aura (Fire) aura 1; each creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 15 fire damage.

HP 262; Bloodied 131

AC 42; Fortitude 40, Reflex 38, Will 38

Immune disease, fire, poison; Resist 20 fire, 20 force; Vulnerable 15 radiant

Speed 6

⊕ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire

Reach 4; +33 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

† Fiery Grab (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire

The immolith makes a claw attack (see above) against a Large or smaller target. On a hit, the target slides into a square adjacent to the immolith and is grabbed. While grabbed, the target loses any resistance it has to fire. An immolith can hold up to five grabbed creatures using this power.

⊗ Deathfire Curse (minor; at-will) ♦ Fire

Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends). After-effect: The target takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

Vigor of the Grave (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Healing

Close burst 5; undead in the burst (including the immolith) regain 15 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common

Str 28 (+23) Dex 27 (+22) Wis 20 (+19)

Con 30 (+24) Int 18 (+18) Cha 27 (+22)

2 Retrievers (R)

Huge immortal animate

Initiative +24 Senses Perception +20; darkvision, truesight 10

HP 248; Bloodied 124

AC 43; Fortitude 39, Reflex 40, Will 38

Immune charm, fear; Resist 5 to all damage

Speed 8

⊕ Claws (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +34 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage.

⊕ Retrieve (standard; usable only while the retriever does not have a creature grabbed; at-will)

Reach 3; +30 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 damage, and the target is grabbed. The retriever can move a creature it has grabbed without making a Strength attack.

↗ Eye Rays (standard; one ray recharges each round—roll a d4 to determine which) ♦ Acid, Cold, Fire, Thunder

The retriever fires all the rays as a single standard action, but each must target a different creature: ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex.

1—Acid Ray: 2d10 + 9 acid damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

2—Cold Ray: 2d10 + 9 cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

3—Fire Ray: 2d10 + 9 fire damage, and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).

4—Thunder Ray: 2d10 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Self-Repair (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Healing

The retriever regains 20 hit points and gains a +4 bonus to AC until the start of its next turn.

Unerring Accuracy (standard; daily) ♦ Teleportation

The retriever senses the general location of the target or nearest creature of the type it was commanded to locate. The retriever teleports to a space that is within 10 squares of the target. The target need not be on the same plane as the retriever when it uses this power.

Alignment Unaligned

Str 26 (+21) Dex 29 (+22) Wis 25 (+20)

Con 24 (+20) Int 2 (+9) Cha 10 (+13)

10 Canoloth Trackers (C)

Level 28 Minion

Medium elemental beast (demon)

XP 3,250 each

Initiative +22 Senses Perception +21; blindsight 10

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 42; Fortitude 41, Reflex 39, Will 38

Resist 25 poison

Speed 7

⊕ Tongue Lash (standard; at-will)

Reach 4; +18 vs. AC; 11 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). If the target is already dazed, it takes an extra 5 damage instead.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Str 31 (+24) Dex 27 (+22) Wis 25 (+21)

Con 24 (+21) Int 10 (+14) Cha 12 (+15)



TACTICS

The immolith seeker lashes out at range with *deathfire curse* to harry targets engaging the retrievers and canoloths. At the same time, it uses *fiery grab* to thwart adventurers attempting to engage it in melee. Once it or one of the retrievers is bloodied, it forgoes *deathfire curse* and moves into the thick of battle to heal itself and the retrievers with *vigor of the grave*.

A retriever uses its *eye rays* against heavily armored targets, then attacks the closest adventurer with claw and retrieve attacks while its *eye rays* recharge.

The canoloth trackers swarm single targets or adventurers fighting back to back, flanking for combat advantage. Once a target is dazed, they focus their tongue lash attacks on that foe to deal extra damage.

DEVELOPMENT

Orcus's servants are as self-serving as all demons. If the adventurers break off the fight, the immolith and the canoloths send the retrievers to finish the job, counting on their *unerring accuracy* to let them pursue and destroy the intruders. If both retrievers are slain before the adventurers retreat, the immolith judges the party as too powerful to face alone, and he retreats to send out other search parties. Any subsequent checks for random encounters are successful on a roll of 1 or 2 on 1d8 from this point forward.

Whatever the outcome of this fight, the adventurers know that the forces of the Red Hold have been alerted to their presence. Orcus's servants will catch up to them again in **Encounter R8** (see page 24).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Darkness initially, then bright light when the immolith appears.

Ceiling: The domed ceiling stands 30 feet high along the walls, rising to 60 feet at the center of the garden.

Crystal Trees: Twisted trees of black crystal are spread throughout the dark garden, their branches dripping black ichor and hanging with glistening fruitlike orbs of congealed blood.

Squares containing crystal trees are difficult terrain and provide concealment to anyone standing in them. A crystal tree's trunk provides cover to anyone standing adjacent to it. However, the trees' demonic taint is toxic to mortal life. Any creature with the natural origin that begins its turn in an area of crystal trees takes 2d8 damage plus ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

Elemental Vents: These rough vents channel the raw energy of the elemental chaos in random bursts. If any creature begins its turn adjacent to an elemental vent, the vent has a 50 percent chance of erupting in a burst 2: +28 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 cold, fire, or lightning damage (determine randomly), and the target takes 10 ongoing damage (of the same type) and is dazed until the end of its next turn.

Sodden Ground: The ichor of the crystal trees spreads to create a foul muck. These areas are difficult terrain. Any creature that runs or makes a double move at a walk through an area of sodden ground must make a DC 27 Acrobatics check or end its movement and fall prone.

Treasure: Orcus's elite hunters flaunt their superiority over lesser demons with displays of wealth. Each canoloth tracker has its armored hide studded with 8 astral diamonds that can be pried free with a few minutes' work. The immolith seeker wears an adamantine belt set with astral diamonds (worth 250,000 gp) and a *headband of intellect*. If this magic item cannot be used by the adventurers, replace it with another level 30 item from the players' wish lists.

ENCOUNTER R7A: SPHERE NEXUS

Encounter Level 30 (95,500 XP)

SETUP

2 beholder eyes of despair (B)

10 rot harbinger reavers (R)

Malfunctioning anarch sphere (hazard) [M]

Use the poster map when running this encounter.

As the adventurers approach this chamber, read:

Elemental energy crackles loudly ahead, but a horrid shriek momentarily drowns out the sound.

Two more of the mystic wards binding the adventurers' *chaos ship* can be found in this area. Unfortunately, one of the stored anarch spheres has malfunctioned, and it threatens to destroy the *chaos ship* that is mystically anchored to this chamber.

When the adventurers can see into this area, read:

This huge chamber is lined with the corpses of enormous demons, their charred bodies fused into the walls. Seven anarch spheres across the chamber are locked within elaborate cradles of mottled stone. Tendrils of arcane energy rise from two of the far spheres, forming mystic ropes that disappear as they reach toward the ceiling—just like the silvery cords binding your vessel. One of the spheres flares with uncontrolled power. Two beholders perform a ritual over the broken sphere, while a horde of rot harbingers back away from the destructive energy. The mystic ropes seem to be tangled in the storm of energy raging above the malfunctioning sphere, and shudders of destructive power sporadically travel up the cords—perhaps even toward your ship.

Since discovering the power surge, the beholder eyes of despair has been attempting to control it. The creatures in this chamber are distracted, and the adventurers gain surprise if they attack at once. If they wait in the hope that the malfunctioning sphere will finish these defenders off, they are noticed after 1 round. That's when one of the beholders and the rot harbingers move in to attack.

Arcana Check

DC 28: *If the malfunctioning sphere isn't disabled, or if the mystic bindings attached to your ship aren't cut, then the building storm of energy could severely damage or destroy the chaos ship you have commandeered. Time isn't on your side in this particular situation.*

2 Beholder Eyes of Despair (B) Level 27 Elite Artillery

Large aberrant magical beast XP 22,000 each

Initiative +21 Senses Perception +17; all-around vision, darkvision

HP 388; Bloodied 194; see also *ripple of chaos*

AC 39; Fortitude 39, Reflex 39, Will 40

Saving Throws +2

Speed fly 8 (hover)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+34 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage.

↗ **Central Eye** (minor 1/round; at-will)

Ranged 20; +32 vs. Fortitude, and the target cannot use encounter attack powers or daily attack powers until the end of the beholder eye of despair's next turn.

↗ **Eyes of the Beholder** (free, when an enemy starts its turn within 5 squares of the beholder eye of despair; at-will)

The eye of despair uses *eye ray* against the triggering enemy.

↗ **Eye Rays** (standard; at-will) ♦ see text

The beholder eye of despair uses one *eye ray* power chosen from the list below. Using *eye rays* does not provoke opportunity attacks.

1—Telekinesis Ray: Ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 7 damage, and the eye of despair slides the target 6 squares.

2—Weakening Ray: Ranged 10; +32 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 7 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

3—Despair Ray (Psychic): Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls (save ends).

4—Maddening Ray (Charm, Psychic): Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dominated until the end of the eye of despair's next turn.

5—Confusing Ray (Psychic): Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target uses a move action at the start of each turn to move its speed in a random direction (save ends).

6—Teleporting Ray (Teleportation): Ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 7 damage, and the eye of despair teleports the target 10 squares.

↗ **Ripple of Despair** (when first bloodied; encounter)

Each enemy within 5 squares of the beholder eye of despair is targeted by a random *eye ray* power as a free action and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends). The eye of despair then teleports 6 squares as a free action.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Deep Speech

Str 18 (+17) Dex 26 (+21) Wis 18 (+17)

Con 26 (+21) Int 21 (+18) Cha 28 (+22)

10 Rot Harbinger Reavers (R) Level 28 Minion Soldier

Medium elemental humanoid (undead) XP 3,250 each

Initiative +24 Senses Perception +22

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 44; Fortitude 39, Reflex 41, Will 39

Immune disease, poison, necrotic

Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)

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

+35 vs. AC; 12 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the rot harbinger's next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal

Str 24 (+21) Dex 30 (+24) Wis 27 (+22)

Con 27 (+22) Int 21 (+19) Cha 19 (+18)

Malfunctioning Anarch Sphere**Hazard****Level 30 Blaster**

XP 19,000

One of the anarch spheres within the chamber erupts with raw elemental power.

Hazard: The damaged anarch sphere attacks everything in the chamber.

Perception

No check is required to notice the malfunctioning sphere.

Initiative +8**Trigger**

The anarch sphere malfunctions when the adventurers enter the chamber.

Attack**Standard Action** **Ranged 10****Target:** Three creatures within range (chosen randomly)**Attack:** +33 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + 10 cold, fire, and lightning damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 cold, fire, and lightning damage and is dazed (save ends).

Countermeasures

- ◆ The malfunctioning anarch sphere can be disabled by one or more characters adjacent to it making three successful DC 33 Arcana or Thievery checks (each check is a standard action). A failed check deals 3d6 + 8 cold, fire, and lightning damage to the character.

TACTICS

The eyes of despair break off trying to stop the anarch sphere and use their eye rays against random adventurers, moving into the thick of combat to gain extra attacks from its *eyes of the beholder* aura. When their attacks create forced movement, they move PCs into range of the malfunctioning anarch sphere's attack.

The rot harbinger reavers swarm the closest adventurers, flanking to make *rotting claw* attacks.

DISENGAGING THEWARDS

To disengage the second and third wards, the adventurers must engage in a minor skill challenge or simply smash the warding gems (although this is actually more dangerous than the skill challenge). This challenge must be completed twice to disengage the wards.

Note that the wards are set into the frames of the two anarch spheres farthest from the entrance to this chamber.

Level: 27 (XP 11,000).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

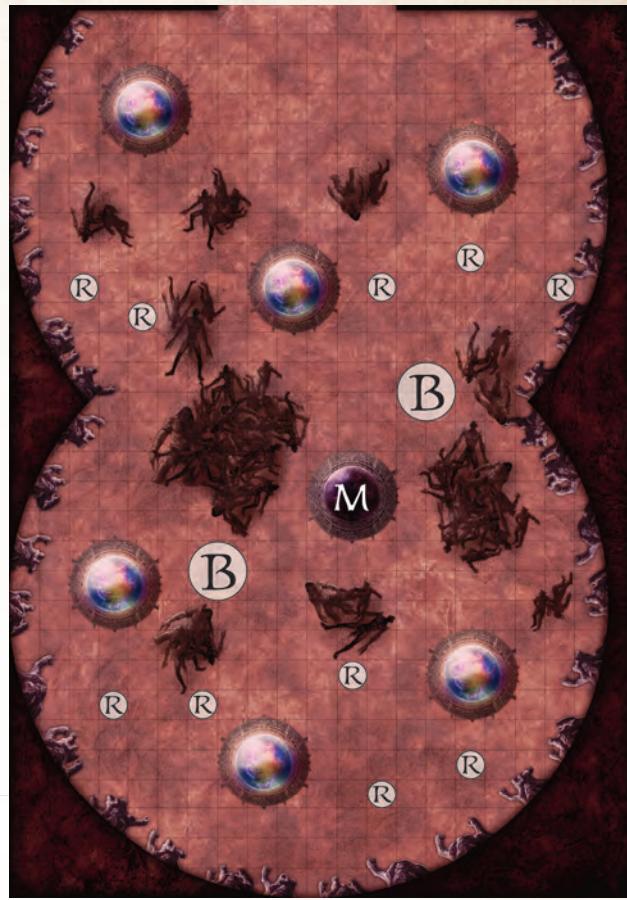
Primary Skills: Arcana, Religion, Thievery.

Arcana (DC 31, standard action): The character studies the wards and determines that there are four such stations in place throughout the Red Hold. All four must be disengaged to free the chaos ship.

Arcana (DC 26, standard action): The character removes one of the gems from the ward matrix.

Thievery (DC 31, standard action): The character removes one of the gems from the ward matrix.

Success: The adventurers disengage this set of wards, releasing one of the four mystic moorings binding the chaos ship.



Failure: The ward matrix unleashes a burst of necrotic energy, and each character in the chamber loses one healing surge. If this occurs, the gems must be smashed to break the wards.

Alternately, a gem can be smashed by any melee strike. When a gem explodes, characters within two squares lose one healing surge. All four gems must be destroyed to disable this set of wards.

DEVELOPMENT

Give the adventurers time to take a short rest after they complete this encounter. Afterward, or if they attempt to leave without taking a rest, go to the next encounter.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Ceiling: 40 feet high.

Anarch Spheres: The massive anarch spheres in their cradles provide cover to any Large or smaller creature.

Bodies: A host of rot harbingers and demon minions have already fallen to the power of the malfunctioning anarch sphere. Areas containing bodies are difficult terrain. Areas containing piled bodies are challenging terrain, and can be crossed only with a DC 18 Acrobatics or Athletics check.

ENCOUNTER R7B: HOLOCAUST

Encounter Level 30 (95,000 XP)

SETUP

1 retriever holocaust

When the forces the adventurers fought in the Dark Garden failed to report back to their posts, the most feared hunter in Orcus's arsenal was recalled to the Red Hold—a retriever holocaust. This ancient abomination once served the primordials, but now it answers to Orcus and his top commanders.

Use the poster map when running this encounter.

When the adventurers have taken a short rest, or if they attempt to leave the sphere nexus, show the players “View of Holocaust” on page 27 of Adventure Book One, then read:

The pulsing light of the anarch spheres suddenly flickers as if disrupted by some unseen force. At the head of the chamber, an explosion of black fire unleashes a huge spider-like construct that shrieks as it attacks.

Place the retriever holocaust on the poster map within the entrance to the chamber. If the adventurers attempt to flee from the retriever, it teleports ahead of them into whatever corridor they move down, using its size to force them back into the open space of the chamber if it can.

TACTICS

The retriever holocaust attacks in a mad fury, alternating claw flurry and holocaust rays attacks. It stays in the thick of combat to maximize the effect of its holocaust aura and shield of fire, teleporting each round to unleash its path of flame.

DEVELOPMENT

After the retriever holocaust has been defeated, the Order of White Fire appears to offer aid to the adventurers. Go on to the Interlude on the facing page for details and information regarding the Order and what they can offer to the adventurers.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Ceiling: 40 feet high.

Anarch Spheres: The massive anarch spheres in their cradles provide cover to any Large or smaller creature.

Bodies: A host of rot harbingers and demon minions have already fallen to the power of the malfunctioning anarch sphere. Areas containing bodies are difficult

Retriever Holocaust	Level 30 Solo Soldier
Huge immortal animate	XP 95,000
Initiative +27	Senses Perception +24; darkvision, truesight 10
Holocaust Aura (Fire) aura 5; each creature that starts its turn within the aura takes 15 fire damage. See also <i>shield offire</i> .	
HP 1,104; Bleeding 552; see also <i>self repair</i>	
AC 46; Fortitude 44, Reflex 43, Will 42	
Immune charm, fear; Resist 10 all	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 10; teleport 10	
Action Points 2	
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will) Reach 3; +37 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 damage.	
† Claw Flurry (standard; at-will) The retriever holocaust makes four claw attacks, less one claw for each creature it has grabbed.	
† Great Retrieve (standard; at-will) Reach 3; targets up to four creatures, less one for each creature the retriever already has grabbed; +35 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is grabbed. The retriever can move a creature it has grabbed without making a Strength attack.	
⊕ Shield of Fire (immediate interrupt, when a creature within the retriever's <i>holocaust aura</i> makes an attack roll; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic +35 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 9 fire and necrotic damage, and the triggering attack takes a -2 penalty to the attack roll.	
† Holocaust Rays (standard; recharge ☰ ☱) ♦ Fire, Necrotic Ranged 10; three attacks at three different targets; +35 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 9 fire and necrotic damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 fire and necrotic damage and is dazed (save ends both). A creature already dazed is stunned (save ends).	
Path of Flame	
Each time the retriever holocaust teleports, it unleashes a storm of fire at its destination in a close burst 3: +35 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 9 fire damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).	
Self-Repair (standard; recharges when first bled) ♦ Healing The retriever regains 100 hit points and gains a +4 bonus to AC until the start of its next turn.	
Unerring Accuracy (standard; daily) ♦ Teleportation	
The retriever senses the general location of the target or nearest creature of the type it was commanded to locate. The retriever teleports to within 10 squares of the target. The target need not be on the same plane as the retriever.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages –
Str 32 (+26)	Dex 30 (+25)
Con 28 (+24)	Int 18 (+19)
	Wis 28 (+24)
	Cha 14 (+17)

terrain. Areas containing piled bodies are challenging terrain, and can be crossed only with a DC 18 Acrobatics or Athletics check.

Any squares containing bodies or piled bodies that the retriever holocaust moves through are ignited by its holocaust aura, and remain burning until the end of the encounter. Any creature that moves into or begins its turn adjacent to or within a burning square takes 15 fire damage.

INTERLUDE: THE ORDER OF WHITE FIRE

In the aftermath of the battle with the retriever, the adventurers find themselves in the company of unexpected allies—servants of the Raven Queen hidden within Orcus's sanctum.

When the retriever holocaust is defeated, read:

Even as the retriever holocaust falls, footsteps echo from nearby. Eight figures appear, well armed and ready to fight—but these are no demons. A force of angels stares in amazement, their swords blazing white, armor embossed with the sigil seen on the ghost door—the raven's head crowned with white fire.

One angel steps forward. “I am Ebantar, lord of the White Fire and servant of the Raven Queen. You are in grave peril. Follow us if you wish to live.”

If the adventurers balk at accompanying the angels, any Insight check reveals that Ebantar’s desire to help the party is genuine.

When the adventurers follow the angels, read:

Ebantar leads the group to an empty chamber north of the sphere nexus, where the ghost door appears once more. The field of silver light flares, but Ebantar carries a crystal rod that he touches to the raven’s head sigil. With a pulse of shadow, the door disappears to reveal a vast extradimensional space beyond. A courtyard of golden-gray marble is fronted by tall archways and hanging gardens, all bathed in silver light.

Ebantar beckons within. “Welcome to Talaberel.”

Orcus’s servants are scouring the Red Hold in the aftermath of the battles in the Sphere Nexus, but the adventurers are safe within Talaberel for as long as they want to stay. At the very least, the party should take an extended rest within the safe location.

The host of the Order of White Fire includes angels of vengeance (*Monster Manual*, page 17), authority (*Monster Manual* 2, page 8), and supremacy (*Monster Manual* 2, page 10). Ebantar is an angel of supremacy with the archangel template (*Monster Manual* 2, page 10). The angels answer any questions the adventurers have, even as they ask about the party’s purpose in coming to the Red Hold. Adjust the responses below if you are not playing this adventure as a sequel to adventures E1 and E2.

Q: Who are you?

“We are the Leara—the Order of White Fire. We are the Raven Queen’s servants, though our mission has long separated us from her. We will endure and die here until Orcus’s plots against our mistress are undone.”

Q: What is this place? How did you get here?

“Talaberel is an extradimensional space whose entrance opens to those blessed by the Raven Queen. Millennia ago, an angel gave her life to see a seed of the Shadowfell secreted here. From that seed, Talaberel was grown. Our force is a dozen strong now, but many more have died in service to our cause. However, as long as the Raven Queen’s power endures, our sanctum is safe.”

Q: What do you do here?

“We engage in skirmish and sabotage operations against the servants of the demon prince, disrupting their plans and corrupting their intelligence. We have been at large in Everlost of late, but the activation of the ghost door’s wards and the disruption within the sphere nexus drew us back to the Red Hold.”

Q: What have you learned regarding Orcus’s plots?

“The demon prince has not dwelled within his sanctum for long months, and his castellan Harthoon is abroad in Everlost. The lich has coordinated the launch of two great chaos ships that even now drop downward to the Forge of Four Worlds, but for what reason, we do not know.”

Q: What is the Forge of Four Worlds?

“The Forge is an ancient island-mote hanging in the abyssal depths. It acts as a conduit for elemental and arcane energy, focusing and strengthening the raw chaos of the Abyss to generate power beyond imagination.”

The angels are no match for a direct confrontation with Orcus’s forces, and they cannot fight alongside the adventurers. However, they can help the party escape.

“The last of the wards you need to disable can be found in the Great Hall. From there, the safest route back to the Bloodstorm and then to the Death Gate is down the pit of fire and through the kitchens of the Red Hold. We will keep the servants of Orcus occupied within the fortress while you make your way. Good luck, chosen of Death and friend of Fate.”

If the adventurers take the route through the Great Hall suggested by Ebantar, make no further checks for random encounters.

Ebantar has the means to send a one-way message to the Raven Queen with any information the adventurers share with him. The adventurers should feel confident that the Raven Queen will be warned of and well guarded against any imminent threat while they follow the other chaos ships down to the Forge of Four Worlds. In addition to providing the adventurers with directions to the Forge, the angels offer a level 29 magic item and two potions of life to aid them in their journey.

ENCOUNTER R8: GREAT HALL

Encounter Level 29 (79,500 XP)

SETUP

1 high aspect of Orcus (O)

2 storm devil thralls (S)

10 mezzodemon throne guards (M)

Ebantar and his angels escort the adventurers to the bronze doors of the Great Hall, site of the vile revels and foul banquets that entertain Orcus and his most loyal servitors. The fourth set of wards binding the *chaos ship* can also be found here.

As the adventurers approach the doors, read:

At the top of the stairs, a set of half-open bronze doors are wreathed in flame. Flickering white light comes from beyond, accompanied by shouted voices and frenzied shrieks.

Unless they have a light source in hand, the adventurers can approach the open doors unseen.

When the adventurers can see into the area, read:

Broad tables of black onyx are scattered across a cavernous great hall. Ten mezzodemons clamber along the rough walls of the chamber, shouting and cursing as they hang tapestries depicting foul demonic revelries. Two storm devils are shackled to opposite walls, lighting dancing along their blackened chains as they shriek in pain. Between them, a vast fire pit rages with white-hot flame. Tendrils of arcane power form into a single rope of energy that disappears as it reaches toward the ceiling.

A massive black throne rises against the far wall. Atop his high seat sits Orcus, piles of gleaming treasure and bodies set at his feet.

The high aspect of Orcus is larger than others of its kind, though it is likely that the adventurers will see it for the shadow of the demon prince that it is.

Perception Check

DC 33: Though the demon atop the throne appears to be Orcus, it carries an iron mace rather than the demon lord's usual skull-topped wand.

The sole task of the high aspect of Orcus is to sit on Orcus's throne when the demon lord is not in attendance, and to defend the Great Hall against the occasional challenger.

Storm devils are universally reviled by the demons for their use of elemental power. The two devils here were captured and corrupted by Orcus, and serve him now as deranged but faithful guards.

If the adventurers attack immediately, they gain surprise. If they linger, the mezzodemons notice them in the following round.

High Aspect of Orcus (O) Huge elemental humanoid (demon)

Level 29 Elite Brute XP 30,000

Initiative +18	Senses Perception +23; low-light vision, darkvision	
Lesser Aura of Death (Necrotic) aura 10; each enemy that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 10 necrotic damage (20 necrotic damage while the high aspect of Orcus is bloodied).		
HP 664; Bloodied 332		
AC 41; Fortitude 43, Reflex 39, Will 40		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic, 10 fire, 10 force, 10 radiant		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Skull Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon	Reach 3; +32 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).	
⊕ Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon	The high aspect of Orcus makes two <i>skull mace</i> attacks.	
⊕ Tail Lash (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves or shifts within 3 squares of the aspect of Orcus; at-will)	Reach 3; +30 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 12 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Arcana +26, History +26, Intimidate +27, Religion +26		
Str 30 (+24)	Dex 18 (+18)	Wis 19 (+18)
Con 32 (+25)	Int 24 (+21)	Cha 27 (+22)
Equipment skull mace		

2 Storm Devil Thralls (S)

Level 27 Artillery

Medium immortal humanoid (devil) XP 11,000 each

Initiative +21	Senses Perception +20; darkvision	
HP 195; Bloodied 97		
AC 39; Fortitude 39, Reflex 39, Will 38		
Resist 20 fire, 20 lightning, 20 thunder		
Speed 7, fly 7 (clumsy)		
⊕ Trident (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning, Weapon	+32 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 9 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 lightning damage and is dazed (save ends both).	
⊕ Lightning Fork (standard; usable only while wielding a trident; at-will) ♦ Lightning, Weapon	Ranged 20; +32 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 lightning damage.	
⊕ Infernal Thunderclap (standard; recharge ☰ ☱) ♦ Lightning, Thunder	Area burst 2 within 20; +30 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 9 lightning and thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and dazed until the end of its next turn.	
Cyclone (free, when first bloodied; encounter)		
The storm devil shifts 3 squares, and any Medium or smaller enemy adjacent to the storm devil at the start of the move is knocked prone.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Supernal	
Skills Stealth +26		
Str 21 (+18)	Dex 27 (+21)	Wis 24 (+20)
Con 27 (+21)	Int 16 (+16)	Cha 15 (+15)
Equipment trident		

10 Mezzodemon	Level 27 Minion Soldier	
Throne Guards (M)		
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 2,750 each	
Initiative +23	Senses Perception +21; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 43; Fortitude 40, Reflex 39, Will 39		
Resist 25 poison, 15 lightning, 15 thunder		
Speed 6		
⊕ Trident (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +34 vs. AC; 11 damage.		
↔ Restraining Breath (standard; encounter)		
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +32 vs. Fortitude; 11 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal	
Str 29 (+22)	Dex 26 (+21)	Wis 26 (+21)
Con 23 (+19)	Int 14 (+15)	Cha 16 (+16)

TACTICS

The high aspect of Orcus throws itself at the strongest-looking melee combatant, counting on its tail lash and lesser aura of death to hold off other attackers.

The storm devil thralls have their movement limited by the chains that bind them to the walls (3 squares). They try to push foes into contact with the throne.

The mezzodemons swarm the closest intruders and attack with restraining breath, then set flanks.

DEVELOPMENT

The angels show the adventurers where the Great Hall is, and then they depart to engage other demon hunting parties to give the adventurers time to deal with the wards and then make their escape.

DISENGAGING THE WARDS

To disengage the fourth set of wards, the adventurers must engage in a minor skill challenge or simply smash the warding gems (although this is actually more dangerous than the skill challenge).

Note that the wards are set into the stone lip of the fire pit.

Level: 27 (XP 11,000).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Religion, Thievery.

Arcana (DC 31, standard action): The character studies the wards and determines that there are four such stations in place throughout the Red Hold. All four must be disengaged to free the chaos ship.

Arcana (DC 26, standard action): The character removes one of the gems from the ward matrix.

Thievery (DC 31, standard action): The character removes one of the gems from the ward matrix.

Success: The adventurers disengage this set of wards, releasing one of the four mystic moorings binding the chaos ship.

Failure: The ward matrix unleashes a burst of necrotic energy, and each character in the chamber loses one heal-



ing surge. If this occurs, the gems must be smashed to break the wards.

Alternately, a gem can be smashed by any melee strike. When a gem explodes, characters within two squares lose one healing surge. All four gems must be destroyed to disable this set of wards.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Ceiling: 50 feet high.

Bronze Doors: Each flame-shrouded door is 3 feet thick and stands 30 feet high and 15 feet wide. A creature touching a door takes 20 fire damage.

Fire Pit: This elemental vent serves as the entrance to the kitchens 100 feet below (see Encounter R9). Characters can descend by flying or levitating, or can climb the walls of the pit with a DC 26 Athletics check. However, any character that enters or starts a turn in the white-hot flames takes 20 fire damage. A creature that falls down the pit also takes 10d10 falling damage.

Throne of Orcus: The high seat of the demon lord is carved of a single slab of black onyx. Any creature that starts its turn within 5 squares of the throne takes 10 necrotic damage.

Treasure: These offerings to Orcus consist of eight onyx carvings set with adamantine and precious gems (worth 50,000 gp each), 1,500 gems (worth 1,000 gp each), 60 astral diamonds, and 13,000 pp of ancient vintage. The treasure pile is difficult terrain.

ENCOUNTER R9: SLAVE KITCHENS

Encounter Level 28 (70,000 XP)

SETUP

- 1 goristro slavemaster (G)**
2 mezzodemon watchguards (M)
8 rot harbinger reavers (R)

To reach the slave kitchens beneath the Great Hall, the adventurers must descend through an open pit of elemental fire and climb, fall, or fly 100 feet to the level below. See **Encounter R8** on page 24 for details.

When the adventurers have descended into the kitchen, read:

The stench of filth and rot hits like a hammer blow beyond the blazing elemental vent that fills the tunnel above. A multilevel cavern surrounds the vent, divided by what appear to be high walls of glowing black stone from which a keening wail rises and falls. On the tier below, a goristro wielding a flaming brand is whipping a quartet of rot harbingers, who in turn are tending large vats hanging over the fire. Suddenly, a mezzodemon rears up on the cliff above, shrieking out an alarm.

The goristro slavemaster, the closest mezzodemon watchguard, and the four rot harbinger reavers attack as soon as the first adventurer appears at the bottom of the elemental vent. The second mezzodemon watchguard and the other four rot harbinger reavers (currently watching over slaves in the pens to the south) move to enter combat in the second round.

2 Mezzodemon Watchguards (M)	Level 27 Soldier
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 11,000 each
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +19; darkvision
HP 245; Bloodied 122	
AC 43; Fortitude 39, Reflex 37, Will 37	
Resist 25 poison, 15 fire, 15 force	
Speed 6	
④ Trident (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +34 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 damage.	
④ Skewering Tines (standard; usable only while wielding a trident; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Reach 2; +34 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 damage and is restrained (save ends both).	
↔ Poison Breath (standard; recharge [] []) ♦ Poison	
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +32 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 9 poison damage, and ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal
Str 28 (+22)	Dex 24 (+20)
Con 21 (+18)	Int 12 (+14)
Equipment trident	Wis 25 (+20)
	Cha 16 (+16)

Goristro Slavemaster (G)

Huge elemental humanoid (demon)

Level 27 Elite Bruté

XP 22,000

Initiative +21 Senses Perception +25; darkvision

HP 610; Bloodied 305; see also *raging frenzy*

AC 39; Fortitude 41, Reflex 39, Will 38

Resist 25 variable (2/encounter; see *Monster Manual* glossary)

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

④ Flame Whip (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Weapon

 Reach 3; +30 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 fire damage.

④ Double Attack (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Weapon

 The goristro makes two *flame whip* attacks.

④ Goristro Stomp (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent to the goristro; at-will)

 The goristro makes an attack against the enemy: +30 vs. AC; 4d10 + 10 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

④ Goring Charge (standard; at-will)

 The goristro makes a charge attack: +30 vs. AC; 3d10 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

④ Raging Frenzy (immediate reaction, when attacked by an adjacent enemy while bloodied; at-will)

 The goristro makes a frenzied gore attack against the enemy: +30 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal

Str 30 (+23) Dex 26 (+21) Wis 25 (+20)

Con 25 (+20) Int 12 (+14) Cha 17 (+16)

8 Rot Harbinger Reavers (R)

Level 28 Minion Soldier

Medium elemental humanoid (undead)

XP 3,250 each

Initiative +24 Senses Perception +22

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 44; Fortitude 39, Reflex 41, Will 39

Immune disease, poison, necrotic

Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)

④ Rotting Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

 +35 vs. AC; 12 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the rot harbinger's next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal

Str 24 (+21) Dex 30 (+24) Wis 27 (+22)

Con 27 (+22) Int 21 (+19) Cha 19 (+18)

TACTICS

The goristro slavemaster makes double attacks with its *flame whip* against lightly armored targets, using its reach and its *goristro stomp* to keep adventurers from getting adjacent to it if it can. If it needs to move to engage, it makes a *goring charge* (against a striker or defender if possible), knocking the target prone and leaving it to its allies.

The mezzodemon watchguards make *poison breath* and *skewering tines* attacks against the closest adventurers.

The rot harbinger reavers mob lightly armored targets, making *rotting claw* attacks with combat advantage whenever they can.

All of these monsters try to force the intruders into the fire pit in the center of the chamber (see “Features of the Area”). They fight to the death.



DEVELOPMENT

When the guardians of this area have been destroyed, the adventurers can get an expanded look at the horror of these caverns. Read:

Within the expanse of slave corrals can be seen what appear to be males and females of all the mortal races, including humans, dwarves, eladrin, elves, and dragonborn, among others. They all appear battered, hungry, and dirty.

Although the adventurers might be inclined to inspire the slaves to defend themselves or escape their dark captivity, these wretches have been tortured and terrified beyond the point of speech or understanding. They show no sign of recognition if the adventurers attempt to communicate with them, and are even beyond asking for aid. However, see the “None Left Behind” sidebar.

From here, the adventurers can reach a gateway into the Bloodstorm without further incident.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light in the lower part of the chamber. Dim light in the upper cavern.

Ceiling: The rough ceilings of the caverns are an average of 50 feet above the uneven floor.

Vats: Three iron vats hang over the central fire vent. The vats contain a foul liquid known as essence of demon. The adventurers can use the liquid to mask their mortal natures. Once administered, the masking agent lasts for three days, fading after a third extended rest.

Elemental Vent: A jet of white fire blasts upward to fill the tunnel leading to the great hall above. The PCs start the encounter in this area, and must move out of it immediately to avoid the vent’s deadly heat. The fire is hotter here than above, and any creature that enters the elemental vent or starts its turn within it takes 30 fire damage.

Cliffs: These steep slopes rise to a height of 20 feet, dividing the cavern into tiers. Scaling a crumbling slope requires a DC 26 Athletics check. A creature that drops down from above takes 2d10 falling damage.

Slave Pens: Rough 8-foot-high fences hem in the hundreds of slaves kept captive within this foul kitchen.

Slaves within the pens are malnourished and filthy, huddling together in a haze of babbling voices punctuated by terrified wailing.

Burning Vents: The smaller elemental vents are difficult terrain. A creature that enters a burning vent takes 10 fire damage and is weakened (save ends).

Treasure: The goristro slavemaster carries a belt pouch containing 45 astral diamonds.

NONE LEFT BEHIND

Depending on the moral bent of party and players, some of the adventurers might want to rescue the slaves. A DC 27 Arcana or Heal check determines that the slaves of the Red Hold are not beyond the reach of powerful healing rituals such as Remove Affliction. However, the sheer number of slaves makes it impossible to undertake such healing here.

Although the angels of the Order of White Fire are fully aware of the sad fate of the Red Hold’s slaves, the servants of the Raven Queen are indifferent to the horrors of this place. However, the adventurers can convince—or threaten—Ebantar and the others to aid the slaves.

Have the angels show up in the aftermath of this encounter, coming through the Bloodstorm to warn the adventurers that Harthoon is at the Soul Gate (see the next encounter). Roleplay attempts to obtain the angels’ aid, or create a skill challenge. The extradimensional realm of Talaberel has plenty of living space and the resources to create food and water to keep the refugees alive. Additionally, the angels have enough ritual casters among them that they can restore the slaves to health one by one.

If the adventurers convince the angels to help the slaves, they can return to the Red Hold after the adventure. The former slaves can be transported by chaos ship to Sigil, and from there to the natural world.

ENCOUNTER R10: WARDEN OF EVERLOST

Encounter Level 31 (129,000 XP)

SETUP

Harthoon, lich castellan of Everlost (L)

2 beholder eyes of death (B)

12 rot harbinger reavers (R)

The lich Harthoon is Orcus's right hand and the castellan of Everlost. The lich has been away from the bastion overseeing the descent of the *chaos* ships to the Forge of Four Worlds. However, word of the incursion into the Red Hold has reached him, and he returns in time to face the adventurers as they attempt to leave.

When the adventurers emerge from the Bloodstorm, read:

The boiling Bloodstorm parts like a veil as the Death Gate swings wide. The portal that leads back to Shevaithan is active, but a horde of rot harbingers swarms around it, flanking a humanoid figure in the midst of a ritual directed at the portal itself. The beholders slain here have been raised as undead, letting out a keening wail of alarm.

The figure wheels, its ritual forgotten. "The defilers of the Red Hold save me the trouble of finding them, I see. Hoping for mercy perhaps? You have caused much grief for my lord, but consuming your souls will sate his wrath. I am Harthoon, voice of Orcus and castellan of Everlost. I am your doom!"

TACTICS

Harthoon moves within 5 squares of the closest melee combatant, using *gaze of command* as he unleashes a *lightning storm* against the other adventurers, then uses *staff of storms*. Any adventurer that falls under his domination is directed to attack his or her closest ally, focusing on PCs engaging the lich in combat.

In subsequent rounds, Harthoon uses a minor action to sustain the *lightning storm* as long as PCs are in the area, using *shadow storm* to make double attacks and shift foes into the *lightning storm* or his *necrotic aura*. If repeatedly pressed, he allows the zone to end in order to teleport a foe with Harthoon's disdain. If not sustaining his *lightning storm*, Harthoon continues to make *gaze of command* attacks. When first bloodied, he spends his action point to use his *second wind*.

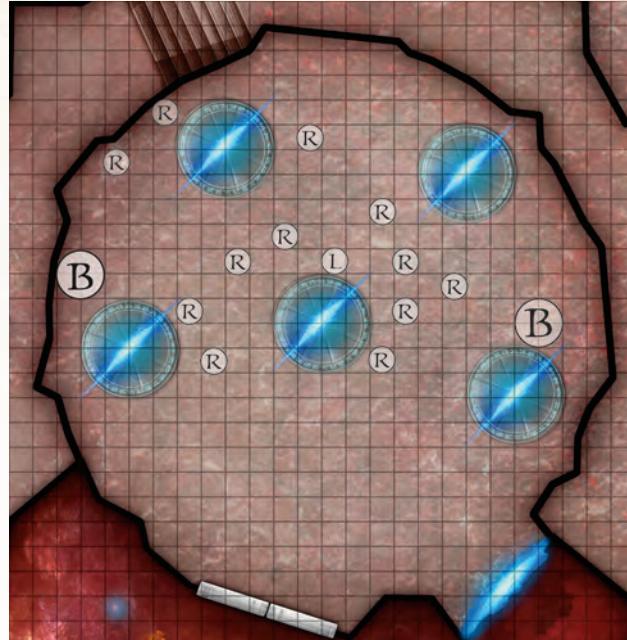
The beholder eyes of death stay in the thick of combat to gain extra attacks from their *eye of the beholder* auras.

The rot harbinger reavers flank the adventurers, attacking in pairs or trios with combat advantage and marking foes to hinder attacks against Harthoon.

Lich Castellan (Wizard) (L)	Level 30 Elite Controller	
Medium natural humanoid (human, undead)	XP 38,000	
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +27; darkvision	
Necrotic Aura (Necrotic) aura 5; each living creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 10 necrotic damage.		
HP 556; Bloodied 278; see also <i>indestructible, second wind</i>		
Regeneration 15 (if the lich takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)		
AC 44; Fortitude 42, Reflex 43, Will 41; see also <i>second wind</i>		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 necrotic		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8		
Action Points 1		
➊ Death Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic +34 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
➋ Lightning Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning Ranged 20; +34 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 lightning damage, and the target slides 3 squares and is dazed (save ends).		
➌ Orb of Shadow (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic Ranged 20; +34 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target slides 3 squares and is blinded (save ends).		
➍ Shadow Storm (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning, Necrotic Harthoon makes <i>lightning bolt</i> and <i>orb of shadow</i> attacks against two different targets.		
➎ Gaze of Command (minor; recharge ☰ ☱) ♦ Gaze, Psychic Ranged 5; +34 vs. Will; 5d10 + 9 psychic damage and the target is dominated (save ends).		
➏ Harthoon's Disdain (minor; at-will) ♦ Psychic, Teleportation Ranged 5; +34 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is teleported 20 feet above any unoccupied space within 20 squares. A creature that falls takes 2d10 damage.		
➐ Lightning Storm (standard; sustain minor; recharge ☰ ☱) ♦ Lightning, Necrotic, Zone Area burst 2 within 20; +32 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 10 lightning and necrotic damage. The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of the lich's next turn. The zone is considered difficult terrain. Any creature that starts its turn within the zone takes 20 lightning and necrotic damage. The lich can sustain or dismiss the zone as a minor action.		
Indestructible		
When the lich is reduced to 0 hit points, its body and possessions crumble into dust, but the lich is not destroyed. It reappears (along with its possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of its phylactery, unless the phylactery is also found and destroyed. (The lich's phylactery is hidden in a secret temple in Everlost.)		
Second Wind (standard; encounter) ♦ Healing		
The lich spends a healing surge and regains 139 hit points. The lich gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.		
Staff of Storms (free; encounter)		
After making an attack that deals lightning damage, the lich deals 3d8 + 10 lightning and thunder damage to every creature in a close blast 3.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal	
Skills Arcana +31, History +31, Insight +29		
Str 21 (+20)	Dex 22 (+21)	Wis 25 (+22)
Con 30 (+25)	Int 33 (+26)	Cha 28 (+24)
Equipment staff of storms		

2 Beholder Eyes of Death (B) Large aberrant magical beast (undead)	Level 28 Elite Brute XP 26,000 each
Initiative +21 Senses Perception +18; all-around vision, darkvision	
Eyes of the Beholder aura 5; the beholder eye of death uses one random eye ray as a free action against any enemy that starts its turn within the aura.	
HP 632; Bleeding 316	
AC 40; Fortitude 38, Reflex 38, Will 40	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 25 necrotic; Vulnerable 25 radiant	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed fly 4 (hover)	
Action Points 1	
④ Bite (standard; at-will) +31 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 damage.	
↗ Central Eye (minor; at-will) Ranged 20; +29 vs. Will; the target is slowed and loses necrotic resistance until the end of the beholder eye of death's next turn.	
↗ Eye Ray (standard; at-will) ♦ see text The beholder eye of death uses up to two different eye ray powers (chosen from the list below). Each ray must target a different creature, and using eye ray does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
1, 2, 3, 4—Withering Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +29 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).	
5, 6—Grave Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +29 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 necrotic damage.	
7, 8—Entombing Ray: Ranged 10; +29 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). First Failed Saving Throw: The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is petrified (no save).	
9, 10—Death Ray (Necrotic): Ranged 10; +29 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 necrotic damage, and if the target is bloodied it is dazed (save ends). First Failed Saving Throw: The target is dazed and weakened (save ends). Second Failed Saving Throw: The target is reduced to 0 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages – (understands Abyssal, Deep Speech)	
Str 18 (+17) Dex 26 (+21) Wis 20 (+18)	
Con 26 (+21) Int 5 (+10) Cha 30 (+23)	

12 Rot Harbinger Reavers (R) Medium elemental humanoid (undead)	Level 28 Minion XP 3,250 each
Initiative +24 Senses Perception +22	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 44; Fortitude 39, Reflex 41, Will 39	
Immune disease, poison, necrotic	
Speed 6, fly 8 (clumsy)	
④ Rotting Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic +35 vs. AC; 12 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the rot harbinger's next turn.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal	
Str 24 (+21) Dex 30 (+24) Wis 27 (+22)	
Con 27 (+22) Int 21 (+19) Cha 19 (+18)	



DEVELOPMENT

A DC 26 Arcana check made at the portal indicates that Harthoon was attempting to shut down the connection to Shevaithan. With the lich interrupted in his efforts, and with the mystic moorings severed, the adventurers can return to the *chaos ship* without incident and continue on their travels.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light.

Teleportation Circles: Arcane energy surges within these powerful circles even when they are inactive. A creature that enters a portal or begins its turn within one takes 2d10 damage.

The Death Gate: These great gates of bronze are carved with Abyssal runes that offer up foul prayers to Orcus. Any living creature that starts its turn adjacent to the Death Gate takes 2d8 + 8 damage.

Portal Tunnel: A portal passes through the stone conduit of the Bloodstorm, leading to crumbling steps that descend to Everlost. This area is beyond the scope of this adventure.

Treasure: Harthoon carries a *staff of storms* (Adventurer's Vault, page 242) and a small amount of his total wealth on his person—two *potions of life*, 55 astral diamonds, and 1,250 pp. If you do not have access to Adventurer's Vault, or if this magic item cannot be used by the adventurers, replace it with another level 30 item from the players' wish lists.

ENCOUNTER S3: COMMANDING SHEVAITHAN

Encounter Level 29 (75,000 XP)

SETUP

2 thunderblast cyclones (C)

Once the adventurers have disengaged the mystic moorings in the Red Hold of Everlost, they can take full control of Shevaithan. However, it isn't as simple as stepping up to the wheel and steering. Taking command of the *chaos ship* involves a skill challenge whose difficulty is exacerbated by the appearance of elementals attracted by activity on the vessel.

When the adventurers enter the bridge atop the sterncastle and attempt to make the *chaos ship* fly, the Abyss around them seems to react in anticipation.

Perception Check

DC 26: *The wind and distant rumbles that always echo through the central void of the Abyss fall silent.*

When the adventurers try to activate the *chaos ship*, read:

The central wheel atop the sterncastle is surrounded by a panel of black stone in which three softly glowing orbs that appear as small versions of the anarch spheres embedded in the deck of the ship pulse. A streak of lightning suddenly plunges out of the void, striking one of the large anarch spheres. Black and red clouds begin to boil out of empty air, forming a crashing ring of churning chaos around the ship. The temperature plunges, and wind begins to shriek. Ribbons of fire streak overhead as snow and black dust begin to fall. Arcane glyphs and symbols begin to flash and shimmer on the surface of the black-stone panel. They seem to require some sort of response.

TAKING CONTROL

Images begin to flash upon the surface of the black-stone panel, with matching images appearing in the larger anarch spheres. Some are arcane symbols, but others depict demons, strange creatures, and stranger locations. The increasingly frantic scroll of images seems to be roiling up the surrounding chaos of the Abyss.

The adventurers must decipher the images to link themselves to Shevaithan, which in turns allows them to control the ship and move it deeper into the Abyss. Successfully identifying the images allows the adventurers to take the steps indicated to finalize their connection to the vessel.

Level: 28 (XP 39,000).

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Special: As soon as the adventurers begin this skill challenge, the two thunderblast cyclones appear out of the building storm and move toward the ship. The adventurers

must deal with the elementals while engaging with the skill challenge.

Primary Skills: Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Intimidate.

Arcana (DC 28, standard action): The character recognizes a specific magical key phrase among the flashing symbols and can speak it aloud, beginning the process of aligning the adventurers with the ship.

This skill can be used to gain 3 successes in this challenge.

Bluff (DC 33, standard action): The *chaos ship*, thanks to the anarch spheres, is partially sentient, and the character manages to fool it about why the adventurers seek to take control of it. The character might try to convince it that they seek to aid Orcus in some fashion, or some similar bluff.

If the adventurers obtained and used the *essence of demon* from Encounter R9 (see page 27), they receive a +4 bonus to this check.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

Diplomacy (DC 33, standard action): The character points out to the ship that, regardless of everything else, its ultimate purpose is to fly through the Abyss, and the adventurers are here to fly it.

If the adventurers obtained and used the *essence of demon* from Encounter R9 (see page 27), they receive a +4 bonus to this check.

This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in this challenge.

History (DC 28, standard action): The character correctly identifies the flashing images, which begins to align his or her thought patterns with the ship.

This skill can be used to gain 3 successes in this challenge.

Intimidate (DC 28, standard action): The *chaos ship* is used to being bullied by its captain, so trying to cow the vessel with threats actually works.

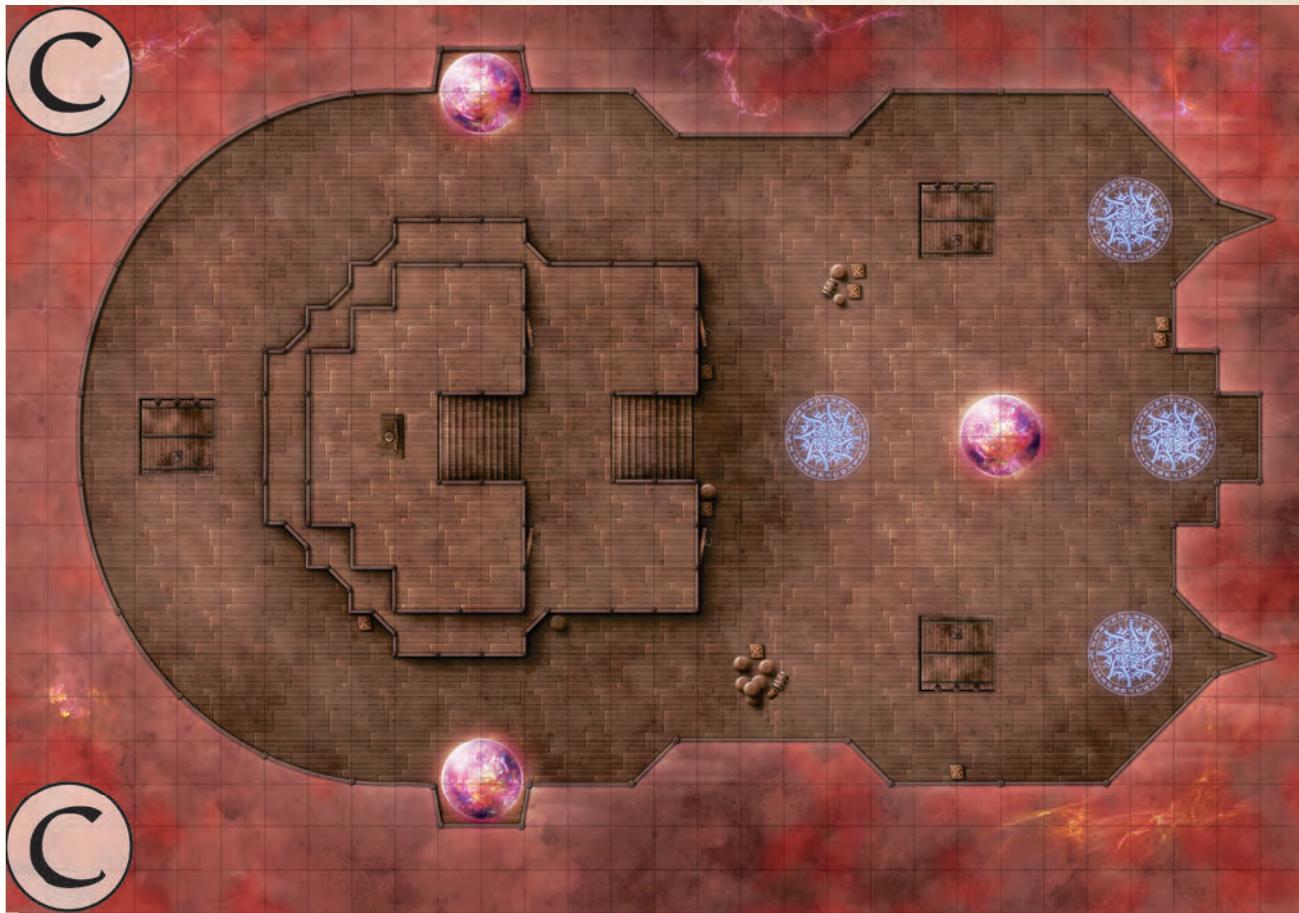
This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

Secondary Skills: Insight.

Insight (DC 19, standard action): The character determines that the *chaos ship* is semisentient and wants to be flown, even though its chaotic nature seems to work against the effort of captain and crew. A successful Insight check doesn't count as a success or failure in the challenge, but it does provide either a +2 bonus or -2 penalty to other checks made in the challenge.

Success: The adventurers gain command of the *chaos ship*, and Shevaithan is ready to fly.

Failure: Three more thunderblast cyclones appear and attack, and the ship is damaged. The adventurers finally gain limited control of the *chaos ship*, but the reluctant vessel flies at half speed and attempts to thwart the will of the adventurers at every opportunity.



2 Thunderblast Cyclones (C)	Level 26 Elite Artillery
Huge elemental magical beast (air, water)	XP 18,000 each
Initiative +24	Senses Perception +16
HP 382; Bloodied 191	
AC 42; Fortitude 40, Reflex 42, Will 35	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 30 lightning, 30 thunder	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed fly 10 (hover)	
Action Points 1	
① Lightning Arc (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning Reach 3; +29 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 11 lightning damage.	
② Lightning Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning Ranged 10; +29 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 11 lightning damage.	
↔ Thunderclap (standard; at-will) ♦ Thunder Close burst 2; +28 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 9 thunder damage.	
↔ Charged Mist (standard; recharge [] []) ♦ Lightning Close burst 3; automatic hit; 1d10 + 9 lightning damage, and the thunderblast cyclone becomes insubstantial until the end of its next turn.	
* Lightning Storm (standard; begins uncharged; recharges when the thunderblast cyclone uses charged mist) ♦ Lightning, Thunder Area burst 3 within 20; +29 vs. Reflex; 6d8 + 9 lightning and thunder damage. Miss: Half damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Primordial
Str 25 (+20)	Dex 32 (+24)
Con 29 (+22)	Int 8 (+12)
	Wis 17 (+16)
	Cha 15 (+15)

TACTICS

The thunderblast cyclones emerge from the boiling clouds to make *lightning bolt* attacks. One hangs back and continues to throw lightning; the other advances to use its *charged mist*. The first time it does so, it spends an action point to unleash *lightning storm*.

The thunderblast cyclones are most interested in disrupting the adventurers trying to conduct the skill challenge to take control of the chaos ship.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Anarch Spheres: Always temperamental, anarch spheres resonate with nearby conflict. This tendency was harnessed to create a secondary defense for *Shevaithan*. Any creature without the elemental origin engaged in combat within 3 squares of a mounted anarch sphere is subject to a ranged attack at the beginning of its turn: +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is slowed (save ends both).

Magic Circles: These teleportation circles are keyed to specific locations and only active when they get within range. Currently, only the sterncastle circle glows with active energy. See *Adventure Book One*, page 7 for additional details.

Crates: The crates on the deck are filled with black rock and are difficult terrain.

ENCOUNTER S4: SHEVAITHAN'S TOLL

Encounter Level 29 (77,000 XP)

SETUP

- 1 glabrezu gatewarder (G)
 3 hezrou rippers (H)
 2 immolith seekers (I)

Many demon lords inhabit the Abyss. Orcus is just the most well known, possibly because of his almost undemon-like ambitions for ultimate power. But the Prince of Undeath must deal with the vicious, fickle nature of the other demons that swarm and feed in the Abyss.

Orcus's fleet of *chaos ships* are regularly accosted by enemy demonic forces that patrol the borders of their own stagnant realms. Shevaithan's descent through the central Abyssal void draws one such band who hail from the Abyssal realm of Kharthon, ruled by the demon lord Tulumarth the Torturer. Tulumarth is a newly arisen demon lord, and no sage or lorekeeper has yet learned anything of this creature or his realm, other than it lies deep in the Abyss.

This encounter occurs somewhere between the adventurers' initial descent and their arrival in the portion of the void containing the Forge of Four Worlds. The encounter begins as a toll-gathering exercise on the part of the demons of Kharthon. The demons expect a ship captained by Xur, servitor of Orcus, not mortal adventurers.

Place the glabrezu first. The other demons appear only if the glabrezu summons them (see below).

As the *chaos ship* plunges deeper into the Abyss, demons swarm onto the deck. Read:

A jolt shivers through the Shevaithan. The craft groans, and a jackal-headed monstrosity rides a line onto deck. It has two massive arms that end in pincers, and two smaller human-size arms, one of which holds a burning black skull. The creature screams, "You pass the realm of Kharthon! Pay the toll your liege Orcus agreed to deliver to Tulumarth the Torturer!" The demon waves the burning skull around as if it poses some kind of threat.

The skull serves as the trigger for an already-cast ritual of summoning. Give the adventurers a chance to parley with the glabrezu. If the negotiations go badly, roll initiative. The glabrezu crushes, drops, or dashes the skull to the deck, instantly revealing the remainder of the toll-gathering demonic force. The hezrou and immoliths appear in the spots marked on the map at this time.

The glabrezu speaks in Common. The toll required by the demons is three living mortal creatures. If adventurers cannot or will not provide the toll, the glabrezu rejects other diplomatic solutions.

If negotiations go poorly, read:

The burning black skull explodes! Purple fire flares, and as the fire fades away, demonic creatures appear on the ship.

Glabrezu Gatewarder (G)	Level 26 Elite Brute
Huge elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 18,000
Initiative +17 Senses Perception +20; truesight 6	
HP 580; Bloodied 290; see also <i>arcane fury</i>	
AC 38; Fortitude 38, Reflex 37, Will 36	
Resist 20 fire, 20 lightning, 20 thunder	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 8, fly 8	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Pincer Claw (standard; at-will) Reach 3; +29 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 damage.	
† Double Attack (standard; at-will) The glabrezu makes two pincer claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the target is grabbed if the glabrezu so chooses.	
↗ Abyssal Bolt (minor; at-will) Ranged 10; +28 vs. Reflex; 4d4 + 8 damage.	
↖ Blasphemous Word (minor; encounter) ♦ Psychic Close burst 5; targets enemies; +28 vs. Will; 2d12 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the glabrezu's next turn.	
↖ Chaos Word (minor; recharge []) Close burst 5; targets enemies; +28 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 8 damage. This damage bypasses all resistances.	
Arcane Fury (free, when first bloodied; encounter) The glabrezu teleports 8 squares, recharges its <i>blasphemous word</i> and <i>chaos word</i> powers, and makes an <i>abyssal bolt</i> , <i>blasphemous word</i> , or <i>chaos word</i> attack.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Arcana +26, Bluff +21, Intimidate +21	
Str 28 (+22) Dex 19 (+17) Wis 25 (+20)	
Con 20 (+18) Int 26 (+21) Cha 16 (+16)	

3 Hezrou Rippers (H)	Level 27 Brute
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 11,000 each
Initiative +18 Senses Perception +18; darkvision	
Noxious Stench (Poison) aura 2; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. While the hezrou is bloodied, enemies within its aura are also weakened.	
HP 305; Bloodied 152	
AC 39; Fortitude 39, Reflex 35, Will 35	
Resist 20 force, 20 necrotic	
Speed 6; see also <i>demonic step</i> below	
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will) Reach 2; +30 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage.	
† Bite (standard; at-will) Reach 2; +30 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 damage.	
† Combination Attack (standard; at-will) The hezrou makes one slam attack and one bite attack.	
Demonic Step The hezrou ignores difficult terrain, seeming to phase through it.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal	
Skills Intimidate +21, Stealth +23	
Str 28 (+22) Dex 20 (+18) Wis 20 (+18)	
Con 25 (+20) Int 8 (+12) Cha 16 (+16)	

2 Immolith Seekers (I)	Level 28 Controller
Large elemental magical beast (demon, fire, undead)XP 13,000 each	
Initiative +22	Senses Perception +19; darkvision
Flaming Aura (Fire) aura 1; each creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 15 fire damage.	
HP 262; Bloodied 131	
AC 42; Fortitude 40, Reflex 38, Will 38	
Immune disease, fire, poison; Resist 20 fire, 20 force; Vulnerable 15 radiant	
Speed 6	
④ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
Reach 4; +33 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
† Fiery Grab (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
The immolith makes a claw attack (see above) against a Large or smaller target. On a hit, the target slides into a square adjacent to the immolith and is grabbed. While grabbed, the target loses any resistance it has to fire. An immolith can hold up to five grabbed creatures using this power.	
↗ Deathfire Curse (minor; at-will) ♦ Fire	
Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends). After-effect: The target takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).	
Vigor of the Grave (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Healing	
Close burst 5; undead in the burst (including the immolith) regain 15 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common
Str 28 (+23)	Dex 27 (+22)
Con 30 (+24)	Int 18 (+18)
	Wis 20 (+19)
	Cha 27 (+22)

TACTICS

The glabrezu breaks the skull, then unleashes *blasphemous word*. Then it wades in to deal with the character that refused to pay the toll.

The hezrou makes *combination attacks* against targets not in direct combat with the glabrezu. They team up against a single target, if possible.

The immolith issues a *deathfire curse* each round, then *fiery grab* to drag an enemy into its flaming aura.

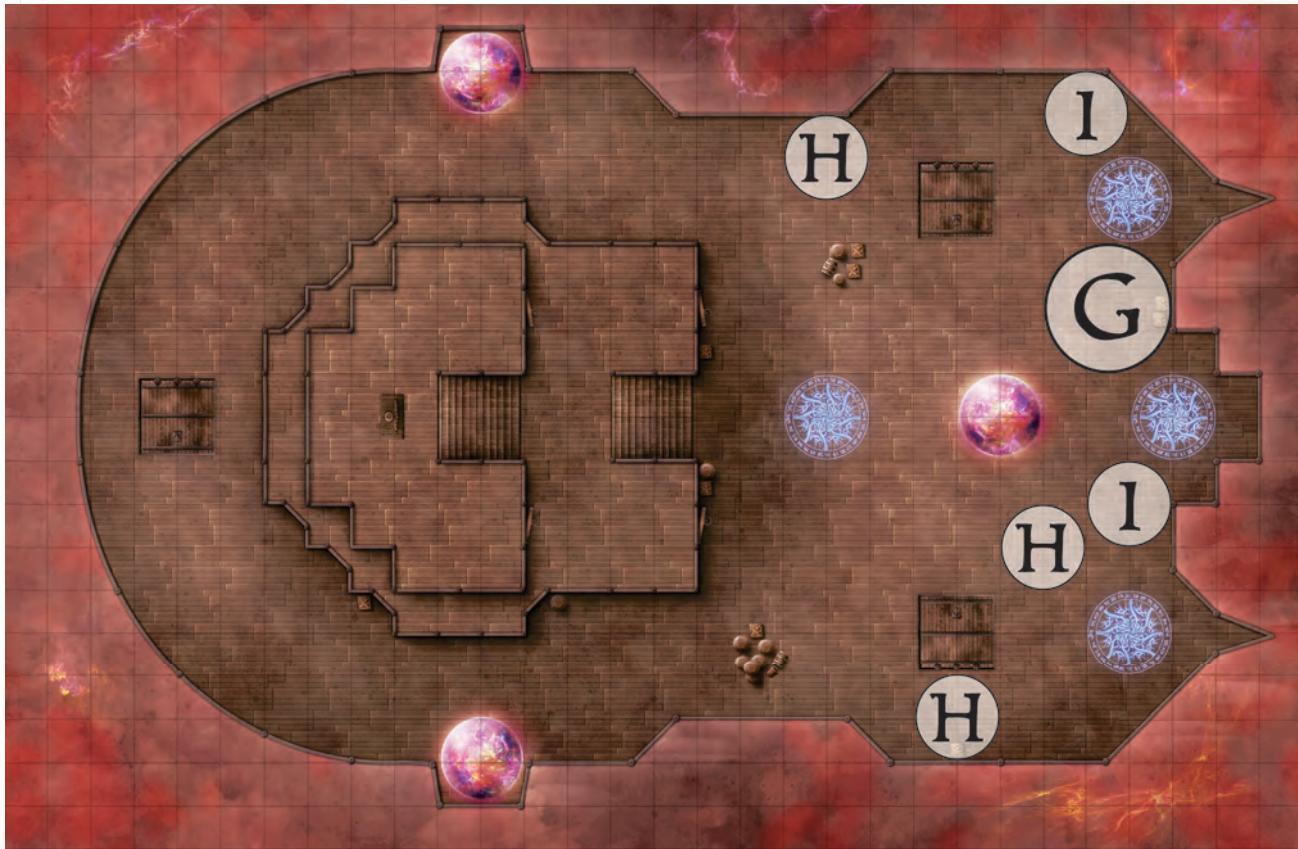
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Anarch Spheres: Always temperamental, *anarch spheres* resonate with nearby conflict. This tendency was harnessed to create a secondary defense for Shevaithan. Any creature without the elemental origin engaged in combat within 3 squares of a mounted *anarch sphere* is subject to a ranged attack at the beginning of its turn: +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is slowed (save ends both).

Magic Circles: These teleportation circles are keyed to specific locations and only active when they get within range. Currently, only the sterncastle circle glows with active energy. See *Adventure Book One*, page 7 for additional details.

Treasure: Each demon wears a ring studded with 3 astral diamonds (for a total of 18 ad). The rings are each inscribed in Abyssal with, “Sworn to the service of Tulumarth the Torturer.”



ENCOUNTER F1: PORTAL CHAMBER

Encounter Level 30 (96,500 XP)

DESCENT TO THE FORGE

After fending off attacks by the tollseekers of the abyssal depths, the adventurers complete the days-long voyage to the Forge of Four Worlds. This ancient site strikes a dramatic appearance when first seen—made even more so by the siege in progress.

As the chaos ship approaches the Forge of Four Worlds, read:

A shudder slams through the ship, which lurches as its descent begins to slow. Outside, the tight confines of the abyssal well are shrouded in darkness. But within that darkness, a star shines—a crystalline orb rapidly increasing in size as the chaos ship approaches.

The Forge of Four Worlds hangs suspended in the abyssal darkness. A crystalline sphere pulsing with raw elemental and arcane energy, its surface rises up as splintered shards of red and black. But above its fractured face, a shadow moves, coming into sharper focus as Shevaithan plunges closer.

The Forge is under attack. Devils beyond number are swarming the blazing sphere, throwing themselves against a demonic host defending the ancient site.

Show the players “View of Descent to the Forge” on page 28 of *Adventure Book One*.

SETUP

2 brazen devils (B)

10 legion devil vanguards (L)

Black door hazard

As the adventurers take in the scene before them, Shevaithan crosses the proximity threshold that activates the portal between the ship and the Forge.

Suddenly, the inactive starboard portal circle flares, pulsing in time to the gentle ebb and flow of the Forge’s light.

A DC 19 Arcana check confirms that the portal has connected to the Forge of Four Worlds. Still far enough from the fray to avoid detection, the ship can be left in a holding position as the adventurers cross over.

When the adventurers step through, read:

A foul stench hangs heavy within a rough-walled stone chamber, the floor around the teleportation circle slick with red-black blood. The dismembered bodies of a dozen or more demons cover both sides of a low slope dividing the chamber.

Below, two enormous gear wheels flank a wide stone door. The surface of the door is sealed behind a shimmering curtain of

2 Brazen Devils (B)

Large immortal humanoid (devil)

Level 30 Soldier

XP 19,000 each

Initiative +21 Senses Perception +27; darkvision

Cloying Hellfire (Fire) aura 2; each creature that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 fire damage. Nondevils cannot use powers with the teleport keyword within the aura.

HP 273; Bloodied 136

AC 46; Fortitude 45, Reflex 42, Will 42

Resist 30 fire

Speed 7, fly 7 (clumsy)

⊕ Halberd (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon

Reach 2; +37 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 damage, and the target slides 1 square.

⊖ Hellfire Gout (standard; recharge) ♦ Fire

Close blast 3; +33 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 fire damage.

† Furious Assault (standard; encounter) ♦ Teleportation, Weapon

+35 vs. Fortitude; 5d12 + 9 damage, and the target slides 3 squares. In addition, the brazen devil teleports into a space adjacent to the target after the target slides.

† Fiendish Opportunist (immediate reaction, when an enemy is pushed, pulled, or slid into a square adjacent to the brazen devil; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+35 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Infernal Assault (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation

The brazen devil teleports 20 squares and gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the beginning of its next turn. The brazen devil can teleport into occupied squares, sliding any creatures occupying those squares into the nearest unoccupied squares.

Alignment Evil Languages Supernal

Skills Intimidate +26

Str 28 (+24) Dex 18 (+19) Wis 25 (+22)

Con 25 (+22) Int 23 (+21) Cha 22 (+21)

Equipment hellforged plate armor (destroyed if the brazen devil is slain), halberd

10 Legion Devil Vanguards (L)

Medium immortal humanoid (devil)

Level 28 Minion

XP 3,250 each

Initiative +11 Senses Perception +11; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 44; Fortitude 40, Reflex 38, Will 38; see also *squad defense*

Resist 15 fire

Speed 7, teleport 3

⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+35 vs. AC; 12 damage.

Squad Defense

The legion devil vanguard gains a +2 bonus to its defenses when adjacent to at least one other legion devil.

Alignment Evil Languages Supernal

Str 28 (+23) Dex 25 (+21) Wis 18 (+18)

Con 22 (+20) Int 12 (+15) Cha 25 (+21)

Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword

black energy through which you can see glyphs pulsing with pale light. Ten armored legion devils hammer away at the wheels and the door, their brazen devil leaders cursing their inability to open the portal. As the glow of the circle fades, four of the legion devils turn back, shrieking in alarm.

This force slaughtered the demons guarding the chamber, and now seeks access to the Forge. However, the damage the devils have done to the door has created an instability in its protective wards. At the end of the first round of combat, the black door hazard activates.

TACTICS

The brazen devil uses *infernal assault* to teleport into the midst of the adventurers, forcing some over the ledge if possible, then attacking with *hellfire gout*. It makes halberd attacks while it waits for *hellfire gout* to recharge, saving its *furious assault* for a striker or defender.

The legion devil vanguards swarm the adventurers in groups of three, flanking for combat advantage.

The black door targets random creatures with bolts of black shadow.

Black Door

Hazard

Level 28 Elite Warder

XP 26,000

The haze of black energy shielding the door suddenly erupts into tendrils of psychic force.

Hazard: The devils' attempts to break through the door's protective field with brute force have caused the door's wards to flare up with deadly results.

Perception

No Perception check is necessary to see the black door hazard activate.

Trigger

In the second round of combat, at the start of the round, the wards on the door attack.

Attack

Standard Action Ranged 10

Attack: +31 vs. Fortitude; two attacks against two different random targets.

Hit: 3d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). **Aftereffect:** Ongoing 10 psychic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends both).

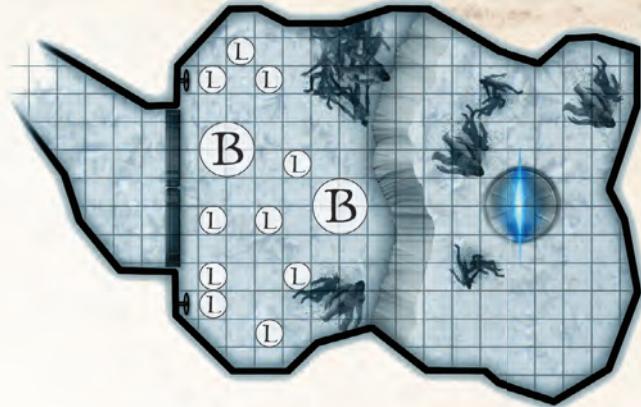
Countermeasures

- ♦ The wards of the black door can be deactivated by one or more characters adjacent to it making three successful DC 28 Arcana or DC 33 Thievery checks as standard actions.

DEVELOPMENT

The glyphs on the door are figures in an ancient dialect of Supernal. Once the ward has been disabled, the adventurers can be read the glyphs with a DC 28 History check. The glyphs detail an overview of the Forge of Four Worlds, paraphrasing the general information on page 12 of *Adventure Book One*.

Any adventurer investigating the teleportation circle determines that it is inactive. A DC 28 Arcana check confirms that a surge of energy from the black door's protective wards has permanently disabled the portal, requiring the adventurers to find another way to leave the Forge.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light from the glow of the black door.

Ceiling: 30 feet high.

Bodies: Demons defending this area fell to the devils when the devils invaded. Squares containing bodies are difficult terrain.

Ledge: The uneven floor slopes down 5 feet from the portal platform. It takes a move action to climb up the smooth slope. Jumping down can be done as part of a move action. Creatures more than 2 squares from opposite sides of the ledge have cover against each other.

Door: The door that exits the portal chamber is sealed behind ancient and powerful wards. Once the wards are disabled, the gear wheels can be turned to open the door.

Gear Wheels: These great iron wheels are set into the stone wall. Turning both wheels at once allows the black doors to be open (simultaneous DC 28 Strength checks), but they cannot be turned while the wards protecting the door are active.

ENCOUNTER F2: FORGEBOORN ASSAULT

Encounter Level 30 (106,000 XP)

SETUP

- 1 forgeborn stormstriker (S)
- 2 forgeborn darkslayers (D)
- 4 forgeborn chaos skulks (C)

Beyond the portal chamber, the adventurers get their first sense of the size of the Forge of Four Worlds.

When the adventurers enter this area, read:

A huge chamber opens up beyond the dark passageway from the portal chamber, its walls, floors, and ceiling a lattice of blazing, diamond-bright crystal. The uneven surfaces of the chamber seem to shift and shimmer, crystalline patterns fading and flaring like frost on glass. At random intervals, great blasts of lightning and white fire twist within the depths of the walls, the power pulsing like elemental blood through clear crystal veins. A half-dozen passages lead off into shadow, but the floor of the chamber is strewn with skeletal remains.

A DC 33 Arcana check recognizes that the Forge of Four Worlds is composed of a lattice of raw elemental and arcane energy, congealed and crystallized to solid matter. The enormous chambers within it are not natural, however, but were carved out by unknown hands eons ago. Give the adventurers time to look around, claim the treasure here, and take a short rest if necessary.

When the adventurers prepare to leave the area, read:

From the twisting corridors all around, a great moaning rises, echoing off the crystal. Pounding footfalls follow as seven forgeborn—the ancient abominations that guard this place—surge forward to attack.

TACTICS

The stormstriker uses *coldfire orb* as often as possible, laying down patches of difficult terrain. It makes *arc lightning* attacks while *coldfire orb* recharges, staying in close combat to take advantage of its aura.

The darkslayers target melee combatants with *shadow sword* attacks, unleashing *shadow frenzy* whenever they can target two or more foes.

The chaos skulks stay at the edge of the fray, targeting groups with *soul shroud* or single targets with *soul slam* attacks. The chaos skulks specifically target adventurers attempting to deactivate the Forgesong.

Forgeborn Stormstriker (S) Level 31 Controller (Leader) Large immortal magical beast

XP 23,000

Initiative +21	Senses Perception +28; darkvision, blindsight 10	
Defenders of the Forge (Cold, Fire, Healing, Lightning) aura 5; each immortal ally that starts its turn within the aura regains 20 hit points, while each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 15 cold, fire, and lightning damage.		
HP 281; Bloodied 140; see also <i>fury of the forge</i>		
AC 45; Fortitude 43, Reflex 41, Will 41		
Immune charm, fear, sleep; Resist 15 cold, 15 fire, 15 lightning		
Speed 8, teleport 8		
⊕ Touch of Chaos (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic Reach 2; +35 vs. Will; 4d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the stormstriker's next turn.		
↗ Arc Lightning (standard; at-will) ♦ Lightning Ranged 20; +35 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 lightning damage plus ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends), the target is dazed until the end of its next turn, and the stormstriker makes a secondary attack against two new targets within 5 squares of the initial target. Secondary Attack: +35 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 lightning damage and ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends).		
↖ Fury of the Forge (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Cold, Fire, Lightning Close burst 3; +33 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. Miss: Half damage.		
✿ Coldfire Orb (standard; recharge [] []) ♦ Cold, Fire Burst 5 within 10; +33 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 10 cold and fire damage, and crystalline growths make the area of the burst difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)	
Str 30 (+25)	Dex 22 (+21)	Wis 27 (+23)
Con 25 (+22)	Int 27 (+23)	Cha 23 (+21)

2 Forgeborn Darkslayers (D)

Large immortal magical beast

Level 28 Brute

XP 13,000 each

Initiative +22	Senses Perception +22; darkvision	
HP 315; Bloodied 157; see also <i>fury of the forge</i>		
AC 40; Fortitude 42, Reflex 40, Will 40		
Immune charm, fear, sleep		
Speed 6		
⊕ Shadow Sword (standard; usable only while wielding a greatsword; at-will) ♦ Necrotic Reach 3; +31 vs. AC; 3d10 + 10 necrotic damage, plus ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).		
↖ Fury of the Forge (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Cold, Fire, Lightning Close burst 3; +29 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. Miss: Half damage.		
✿ Shadow Frenzy (standard; usable only while wielding a greatsword; recharge [] []) ♦ Necrotic Close burst 3; +29 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)	
Str 30 (+24)	Dex 27 (+22)	Wis 27 (+22)
Con 25 (+21)	Int 18 (+18)	Cha 20 (+19)
Equipment greatsword		

4 Forgeborens Chaos Skulks (C)	Level 27 Lurker
Large immortal magical beast	XP 11,000 each
Initiative +26	Senses Perception +22; darkvision, blindsight 10
HP 193; Bloodied 96; see also fury of the forge	
AC 41; Fortitude 39, Reflex 41, Will 39	
Immune charm, fear, sleep	
Speed 8, climb 8	
④ Soul Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
Reach 2; +30 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 9 psychic damage, and the chaos skulk becomes invisible to the target until the end of the chaos skulk's next turn; see also subtle strike.	
↔ Fury of the Forge (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Cold, Fire, Lightning	
Close burst 3; +30 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. Miss: Half damage.	
↔ Soul Shroud (standard; recharge ②) ♦ Psychic	
Close burst 2; +30 vs. Will; 5d10 + 9 psychic damage, the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage, and the chaos skulk becomes invisible to the target (save ends both); see also subtle strike	
Subtle Strike	
The chaos skulk deals 3d8 extra damage on attacks when it is invisible to its target.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)
Str 21 (+18)	Dex 28 (+22)
Con 25 (+20)	Wis 19 (+17)
	Int 19 (+17)
	Cha 25 (+20)

Forgesong	Level 28 Warder
Trap	XP 13,000

The glowing walls of the Forge of Four Worlds emit a sonorous field that debilitates intruders.

Trap: The Forge of Four Worlds channels arcane power to aid its immortal guardians.

Perception

♦ DC 28: The character notices that the light within the walls pulses in time to the steady ebb and flow of the moaning that preceded the arrival of the forgeborn.

Trigger

The trap is triggered when the forgeborn guardians first appear. When any creature except a forgeborn subsequently moves within 2 squares of any wall (the active area), the trap attacks. Once a creature has entered the active area, it can remain in the area without suffering further attacks. The trap attacks again when another creature enters the area, or if a creature leaves and reenters the area.

Attack

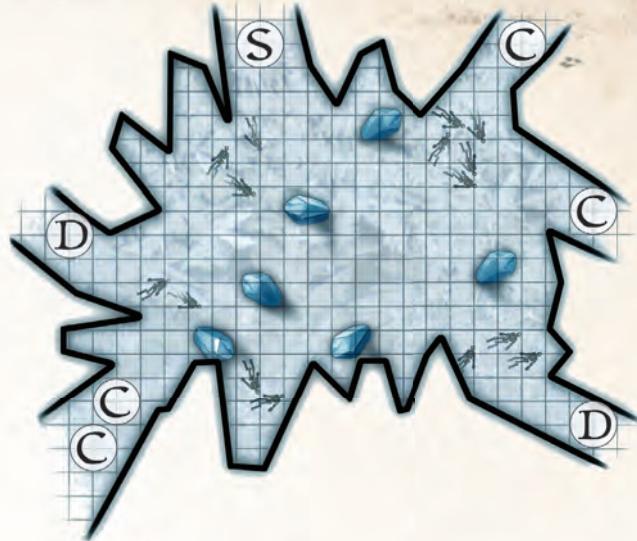
Opportunity Action **Close burst 5 around the triggering creature**

Attack: +31 vs. Will

Hit: 3d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 psychic damage and is slowed and weakened (save ends both). **Aftereffect:** The target is slowed (save ends).

Countermeasures

♦ One or more characters adjacent to the wall can disable the trap with a successful DC 33 Thievery check and a successful DC 28 Arcana check. The two checks must be made within 1 round of each other.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light, emanating from the crystal walls.

Ceiling: 30 feet high.

Crystal Pillars: These enormous shards of crystal thrust up from the floor of the chamber. A crystal pillar provides cover but does not block line of sight. It can be climbed with a DC 28 Athletics check, but it takes a DC 19 Acrobatics check (a minor action) to remain standing on the uneven top of a pillar.

Skeletal Remains: Over untold centuries, a host of intruders have been slain here by the guardians of the Forge. The remains include an incredible range of creatures—devils, demons, elementals, mortals—but are little more than bones, shattered exoskeletons, and the oxidized remains of weapons and armor. Areas containing skeletal remains are difficult terrain.

Treasure: Any search of the skeletal remains turns up a few items untouched by the ravages of time with a DC 28 Perception check—two potions of life, three potions of recovery, four adamantine amulets (worth 50,000 gp each), 2,500 pp, and 40 astral diamonds.

ENCOUNTER F3: HOLD THE LINE

Encounter Level 30 (110,000 XP)

SETUP

- 1 immolith seeker (I)
- 1 shadow demon assassin (A)
- 2 solamith hunters (S)
- Lightning spire hazard

A squad of demons charged with repelling the devil invasion have withdrawn to this cavern. Here, they make a stand against the incursion, determined to prevent intruders from advancing deeper into the Forge.

When the adventurers can see into this area, read:

The passageway opens upon a misty chamber whose uneven floor has been carved into crystal cliffs. White fog hangs over the area like a veil, obscuring the bodies of a small army devils. In the center of the chamber, a black spire extends from the floor and the ceiling above, arcs of dark lightning roiling around it. Shadowed passageways open in the far walls.

The demons here are in hiding. Do not place their minatures until they are spotted or unless they attack. The shadow demon assassin has total cover against the adventurers when they enter, and counts on its larger allies to draw the attention of any intruders.

Perception Check

DC 28: *The mist around the black spire shimmers with a haze of elemental energy.*

DC 33: *In the shadows of the bluff, three demons hide.*

The demons here have already taken out two squads of devils. They assume the adventurers are allies of the invaders and attack at once.

TACTICS

The immolith seeker uses *deathfire curse* against a different target each round, staying in the thick of melee to make *fiery grab* attacks. When first bloodied, it uses *vigor of the grave* to regain hit points.

The shadow demon attempts to attack with surprise, then flanks with its allies to maintain combat advantage, making claws attacks every round. It saves both uses of its *abyssal void* until it can target three or more enemies in each burst.

The solamith hunters stay atop the cliffs to target enemies with *soulfire*. Each makes burst 3 attacks for maximum damage as long as two or more foes can be targeted, but uses only the burst 1 version of the power if the adventurers spread out.

Immolith Seeker (I)

Large elemental magical beast (demon, fire, undead) XP 13,000

Initiative +22 **Senses** Perception +19; darkvision

Flaming Aura (Fire) aura 1; each creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 15 fire damage.

HP 262; **Bloodied** 131

AC 42; **Fortitude** 40, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 38

Immune disease, fire, poison; **Resist** 20 fire, 20 force; **Vulnerable** 15 radiant

Speed 6

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire

Reach 4; +33 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

† **Fiery Grab** (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire

The immolith makes a claw attack (see above) against a Large or smaller target. On a hit, the target slides into a square adjacent to the immolith and is grabbed. While grabbed, the target loses any resistance it has to fire. An immolith can hold up to five grabbed creatures using this power.

↗ **Deathfire Curse** (minor; at-will) ♦ Fire

Ranged 10; +32 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends). **Aftereffect:** The target takes ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

Vigor of the Grave (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Healing

Close burst 5; undead in the burst (including the immolith) regain 15 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Str 28 (+23) **Dex** 27 (+22) **Wis** 20 (+19)

Con 30 (+24) **Int** 18 (+18) **Cha** 27 (+22)

Lightning Spire

Level 28 Blaster

XP 13,000

A spire of black onyx rises from the fractured crystal floor of the cavern, elemental lightning arcing around it.

Hazard: This cavern is a conduit for elemental energy, which erupts periodically from the onyx spire.

Perception

No check is necessary to see the lightning arcing around the spire.

Trigger

When a creature moves within 5 squares of a lightning spire, it attacks.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Close burst** 2, centered on the triggering creature

Target: All creatures in burst

Attack: +33 vs. Fortitude

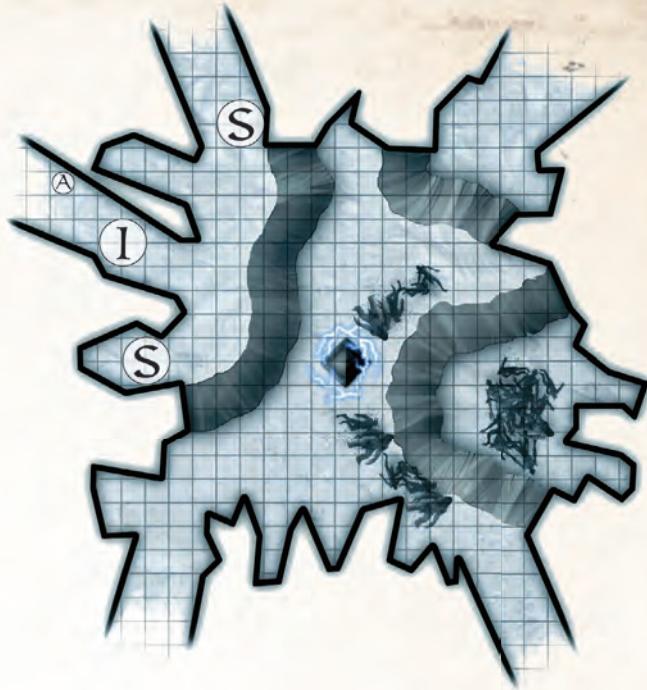
Hit: 3d8 + 10 lightning damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Countermeasures

♦ A character adjacent to the spire can disable it with a DC 33 Arcana check. A failed check causes the spire to attack the character trying to disable it.

Shadow Demon Assassin (A)	Level 31 Elite Lurker
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 46,000
Initiative +29 Senses Perception +23; darkvision	
HP 436; Bleeding 218	
AC 45; Fortitude 41, Reflex 43, Will 42	
Resist 25 necrotic, 20 cold, 20 lightning, insubstantial; Vulnerable radiant (if the shadow demon takes 25 or more radiant damage in a single attack, it loses phasing and insubstantial until the end of the attacker's next turn)	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed fly 8 (hover); phasing	
Action Points 1	
④ Claws (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic Two attacks; +34 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 necrotic damage; see also <i>combat advantage</i> .	
† Void Rake (minor; requires combat advantage against the target; at-will) ♦ Necrotic The shadow demon makes a single claw attack.	
↔ Abyssal Void (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Necrotic, Zone Close burst 3; +32 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 10 necrotic damage. The burst creates a zone of darkness that lasts until the end of the shadow demon's next turn. The zone of darkness cannot be illuminated, and it blocks line of sight for all creatures that cannot see in darkness. A creature that starts its turn within the zone takes 2d8 + 10 necrotic damage.	
Combat Advantage When the shadow demon uses a claw attack to damage a target it has combat advantage against, the target cannot spend healing surges until the end of the shadow demon's next turn.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal	
Skills Arcana + 26, Bluff +29, Stealth +30	
Str 18 (+19) Dex 30 (+25) Wis 17 (+18)	
Con 26 (+23) Int 22 (+21) Cha 28 (+24)	

2 Solamith Hunters (S)	Level 30 Artillery
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 19,000 each
Initiative +24 Senses Perception +23	
HP 208; Bleeding 104	
Regeneration 20 (if the solamith takes cold damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)	
AC 42; Fortitude 41, Reflex 42, Will 41	
Resist 20 fire, 20 force, 20 thunder	
Speed 8	
④ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire Reach 2; +37 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 fire damage.	
↔ Soulfire (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic The solamith chooses one of the following attacks, taking damage as it hurls parts of itself at enemies. The solamith cannot reduce itself to 0 hit points or fewer in this fashion.	
♦ Area burst 1 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 8 damage.	
♦ Area burst 2 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 16 damage.	
♦ Area burst 3 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 32 damage.	
↔ Soulfire Retort (immediate reaction, when the solamith takes damage from a melee attack; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Fire, Necrotic Close blast 3; +33 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal	
Skills Arcana + 26, Bluff +29, Stealth +30	
Str 26 (+23) Dex 29 (+24) Wis 26 (+23)	
Con 22 (+21) Int 12 (+16) Cha 10 (+15)	



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Ceiling: 50 feet high.

Cliffs: These steep slopes rise to a height of 20 feet, dividing the cavern into tiers. Scaling a crumbling slope requires a DC 28 Athletics check. A creature that drops from the cliff takes 2d10 falling damage.

Lightning Spire: A 20-foot-high black onyx spire rises from the center of the chamber. Lightning crackles constantly around the spire, charging the surrounding area with elemental energy.

Bodies: A host of devils have fallen to the demons making their stand here. Areas containing bodies are difficult terrain.

Treasure: Any search of the devil remains turns up a few items not yet claimed by the demons with a DC 28 Perception check—a level 30 magic item and 35 astral diamonds.

ENCOUNTER F4: DEMON DEFENDERS

Encounter Level 30 (100,500 XP)

TIMESUS RISING

Even as the adventurers make their way through the passages of the Forge of Four Worlds, the demons that have seized the complex rush to complete the restoration of Timesus before the devils' assault overwhelms them.

As the adventurers approach this chamber, read:

The ever-present light coursing through the crystal walls of the passageway suddenly flickers and dims. An unearthly, eerie silence falls over the area. Without warning, a massive tremor slams through the Forge of Four Worlds, the ceiling and walls shattering in a burst of crystal shards.

Each adventurer must make a DC 28 Acrobatics check or fall prone beneath the worst of the collapse, taking $3d10 + 5$ damage.

As quickly as it comes, the tremor passes, but the light emanating from the walls seems dimmer even as it pulses faster than before.

SETUP

1 balor champion (B)

6 mezzodemon shocktroops (M)

8 evistro devastators (E)

A balor champion led the force of lesser demons charged with unloading Timesus's pieces from the chaos ships to the Soulfire Furnace at the heart of the Forge of Four Worlds. They abandoned the furnace to stand guard in this chamber.

As the adventurers enter this chamber, read:

The translucent crystal of this chamber is obscured by a dark stain of shadow. The smell of ozone hangs heavy, the walls, floor, and ceiling charred black by some incredible heat. The elemental power pulsing within the walls of the Forge still burns here, forced through hairline cracks that score the surface of the blackened crystal like spiderwebs.

The demons hide on top of the cliff, lying prone as they wait to spring.

Perception Check

DC 33: On the high cliff ahead, shifting shadows betray the presence of creatures lying in wait.

Balor Champion (B)

Huge elemental humanoid (demon)

Level 27 Solo Brute

XP 55,000

Initiative +21 **Senses Perception +21; truesight 6**

Flaming Body (Fire) aura 2 (aura 3 while the balor is bloodied); enemies that start their turns in the aura takes 20 fire damage (30 fire damage while the balor is bloodied).

HP 1,248; Bloodied 624; see also death burst

AC 39; Fortitude 41, Reflex 38, Will 38

Immune fear; Resist 40 fire, 20 acid, 20 cold, 20 thunder

Saving Throws +5

Speed 8, fly 12 (clumsy)

Action Points 2

⊕ **Lightning Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Lightning, Weapon**

Reach 3; +32 vs. AC; $3d10 + 10$ lightning damage, or $3d10 + 40$ lightning damage on a critical hit.

⊕ **Flame Whip** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Weapon**

Reach 5; +30 vs. Reflex; $3d8 + 5$ fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends). Also, the target is pulled into an unoccupied space adjacent to the balor.

⊖ **Balor Fury** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Lightning, Weapon**

Close burst 3; +31 vs. Reflex; $5d10 + 15$ fire and lightning damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

Demonic Accuracy (free, when the balor misses with an attack; encounter)

The balor rerolls the attack and gains a +5 bonus to the roll.

⊖ **Fireburst Step** (move; recharge ☰ ☱) ♦ **Fire, Teleportation**

Close burst 1; +30 vs. Fortitude; $2d10 + 10$ fire damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). The balor teleports 5 squares.

⊖ **Death Burst** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Fire**

The balor explodes in a burst of flame: close burst 10; +29 vs. Reflex; $10d10$ fire damage. Miss: Half damage. The balor and its weapons are completely destroyed.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages Abyssal, Common**

Skills Bluff +22, Insight +26, Intimidate +22

Str 30 (+23) **Dex 26 (+21)** **Wis 27 (+21)**

Con 32 (+24) **Int 17 (+16)** **Cha 19 (+17)**

6 Mezzodemon Shocktroops (M) Level 28 Minion Soldier

Medium elemental humanoid (demon)

XP 3,250 each

Initiative +24 **Senses Perception +22; darkvision**

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see also *demon's curse*.

AC 44; Fortitude 40, Reflex 39, Will 39

Resist 20 poison, 10 necrotic, 10 thunder

Speed 6

⊕ **Trident** (standard; usable only while wielding a trident; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 2; +35 vs. AC; 12 damage.

⊖ **Demon's Curse** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Close burst 1; enemies in the burst take 10 damage.

⊖ **Restraining Breath** (standard; encounter)

Close blast 3; targets enemies; +33 vs. Fortitude; 15 damage and the target is restrained (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages Abyssal**

Skills Stealth +27

Str 29 (+23) **Dex 26 (+22)** **Wis 26 (+22)**

Con 23 (+20) **Int 19 (+18)** **Cha 13 (+15)**

8 Evistro Devastators (E)	Level 28 Minion Brute	
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 3,250 each	
Initiative +23	Senses Perception +22; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 40; Fortitude 39, Reflex 40, Will 39		
Resist 10 necrotic		
Speed 6		
(Claws (standard; at-will) +31 vs. AC; 13 damage.)		
(Devastating Bite (minor; against bloodied targets only; at-will) +31 vs. AC; 18 damage.)		
Carnage		
The evistro devastator gains a +2 bonus to melee attacks if it has one or more allies adjacent to its target. This bonus stacks with combat advantage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal	
Skills Stealth +28		
Str 22 (+20)	Dex 29 (+23)	Wis 26 (+22)
Con 26 (+22)	Int 19 (+18)	Cha 16 (+17)

When the demons attack, show the players “View of the Demon Defenders” on page 29 of *Adventure Book One*, then read:

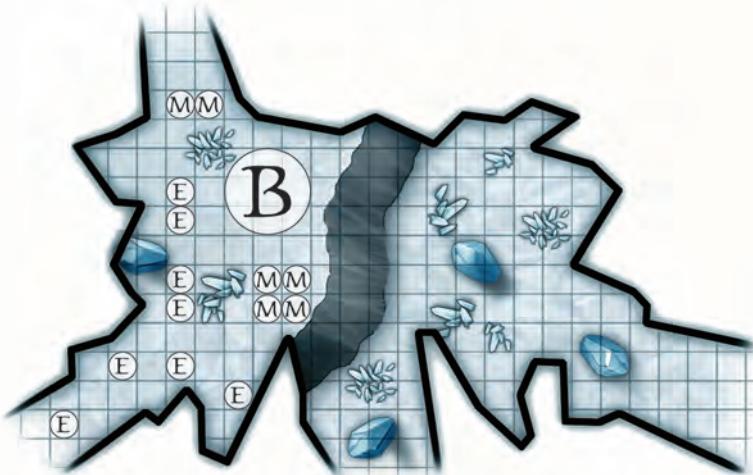
A dozen demons are spread across the cliff. Behind them, a balor raises its weapons with a howl of challenge.

TACTICS

The balor champion uses *balor fury* to attack as many adventurers as it can reach. If pressed in melee, it uses *fireburst step* to teleport to a more advantageous location. As the balor champion's hit points drop toward 0, it moves into position to catch as many enemies as possible in its *death burst*.

The mezzodemon shocktroops make trident attacks against ranged combatants targeting the balor champion. They flank whenever possible, using *restraining breath* when surrounded.

The evistro devastators swarm targets in groups of two or three to maintain combat advantage and to best utilize their *carnage* power.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light from the glow of the charred walls.

Ceiling: 50 feet high.

Cliff: This steep slope rises to a height of 20 feet. Scaling the slope requires a DC 19 Athletics check. A creature that drops from the cliffside takes 2d10 falling damage.

Fractured Crystal: Patches of fractured crystal scattered across the chamber vent an excess of elemental power. These areas are difficult terrain. A creature entering a square containing fractured crystal takes 10 cold and fire damage.

Crystal Pillars: These enormous shards of crystal thrust up from the floor of the chamber. A crystal pillar provides cover but does not block line of sight. It can be climbed with a DC 28 Athletics check, but it takes a DC 19 Acrobatics check (a minor action) to remain standing on the uneven top of a pillar.

Treasure: These demons looted the minor treasures of the Soulfire Furnace (see Encounter F7) before fleeing that area. Any search of the chamber reveals fifteen adamantine bracelets (worth 50,000 gp each) and 65 astral diamonds.

ENCOUNTER F5: DEAL WITH THE DEVILS

Encounter Level 30 (111,500 XP)

SETUP

Utarla, pit fiend captain (P)
3 war devil spearfighters (W)
6 legion devil vanguards (L)

When the demons activated the Soulfire Furnace, the devils' hopes of stopping Orcus's plots were dashed. A pit fiend captain named Utarla survived the conflagration and now seeks revenge.

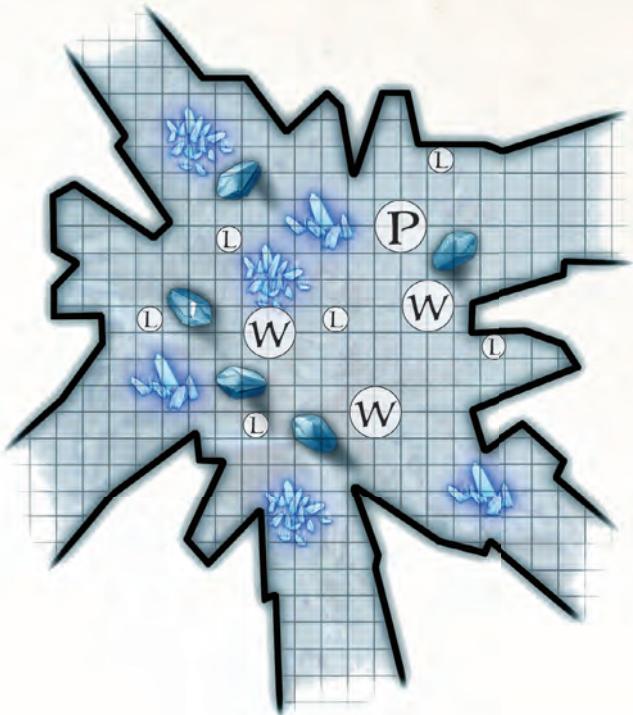
When the adventurers enter this chamber, read:

Patches of shattered crystal burn white hot within this blackened cavern. A squadron of devils occupies the chamber, led by a great pit fiend whose eyes burn red with rage. "Demon ilk!" she shrieks. "Thralls of Orcus! You shall die just as your masters have fallen before you!"

Pit Fiend Captain (P)	Level 30 Elite Soldier (Leader)	
Large immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 38,000	
Initiative +24	Senses Perception +26; darkvision	
Aura of Fear (Fear) aura 5; each enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.		
Aura of Fire (Fire) aura 5; each enemy that enters or starts its turns in the aura takes 15 fire damage.		
HP 550; Bloodied 275		
AC 46; Fortitude 43, Reflex 39, Will 41		
Resist 30 fire, 15 poison		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 12, fly 12 (clumsy), teleport 10		
Action Points 1		
① Flametouched Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Weapon		
Reach 2; +37 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).		
④ Tail Sting (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Reach 2; +37 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage, and the pit fiend makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +35 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 15 poison damage and is weakened (save ends both).		
④ Pit Fiend Frenzy (standard; at-will)		
The pit fiend makes a flametouched mace attack and a tail sting attack.		
④ Point of Terror (minor; at-will) ♦ Fear		
Ranged 5; +35 vs. Will; the target takes a -5 penalty to all defenses until the end of the pit fiend's next turn.		
Tactical Teleport (standard; recharge 3/3; ♦ Teleportation)		
The pit fiend can teleport up to 2 allies within 10 squares of it. The targets appear in any unoccupied squares within 10 squares of the pit fiend.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Supernal	
Skills Bluff +29, Insight +26, Intimidate +29, Religion +26		
Str 33 (+26)	Dex 25 (+22)	Wis 23 (+21)
Con 27 (+23)	Int 22 (+21)	Cha 29 (+24)
Equipment flametouched mace		

3 War Devil Spearfighters (W)	Level 28 Brute (Leader)	
Large immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 13,000 each	
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +19; darkvision	
HP 316; Bloodied 158		
AC 40; Fortitude 40, Reflex 38, Will 36		
Immune fire		
Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy)		
① Longspear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 3; +31 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage.		
④ Savage Spear (standard; usable only while wielding a longspear; recharge 3/3; ♦ Weapon)		
Reach 3; +31 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is knocked prone and takes ongoing 10 damage and is dazed (save ends both).		
④ Besieged Foe (minor; at-will)		
Ranged sight; automatic hit; the target is marked; allies of the war devil gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls made against the marked target until the end of the encounter or the war devil marks a new target.		
④ Devilish Transposition (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation		
Ranged 20; the war devil and an allied devil within range swap positions.		
④ Fiendish Tactics (minor; recharge 3/3)		
Ranged 10; affects up to two allied devils of the war devil's level or lower; each target can take a move action or make a basic attack.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Supernal	
Skills Intimidate +23		
Str 29 (+23)	Dex 25 (+21)	Wis 21 (+19)
Con 26 (+22)	Int 17 (+17)	Cha 18 (+18)
Equipment trident		

6 Legion Devil Vanguards (L)	Level 28 Minion	
Medium immortal humanoid (devil)	XP 3,250 each	
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +11; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 44; Fortitude 40, Reflex 38, Will 38; see also <i>squad defense</i>		
Resist 15 fire		
Speed 7, teleport 3		
① Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+35 vs. AC; 12 damage.		
Squad Defense		
The legion devil vanguard gains a +2 bonus to its defenses when adjacent to at least one other legion devil.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Supernal	
Skills Bluff +29, Insight +26, Intimidate +29, Religion +26		
Str 28 (+23)	Dex 25 (+21)	Wis 18 (+18)
Con 22 (+20)	Int 12 (+15)	Cha 25 (+21)
Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, longsword		



TACTICS

Utarla, the pit fiend captain, uses *pit fiend frenzy* to make double attacks while applying *point of terror* against nearby enemies. She stays in the thick of combat to maximize the effects of her auras.

The war devil spearfighters attack lightly armored targets, using *besieged foe* to mark targets. They use *fiendish tactics* as often as possible to grant additional attacks to legion devil allies.

The legion devil vanguards split into groups of two, each fighting alongside a war devil. They flank to maintain combat advantage and their *squad defense*.

IMPRESSING UTARLA

Utarla's opening rant should tell the adventurers that the devil has information they need. A savvy party can cut the combat short by negotiating a truce with the devils.

Level: 29 (XP 15,000).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate, Insight, Religion.

Diplomacy (DC 28, standard action): The character attempts to convince Utarla that the party is opposed to Orcus and his demonic horde.

This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in the challenge.

Intimidate (DC 33, standard action): The character humbles Utarla with a display of sheer bravado.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success in the challenge.

Insight (DC 19, standard action): The character gleans insight into Utarla's failure to prevent the demons from activating the power of the Forge, inspiring the pit fiend to find common cause with the party's goals.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success in the challenge.

Religion (DC 28, standard action): The character draws on his or her knowledge of devilish traditions to inspire Utarla to trust the party.

This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in the challenge.

Special: All skill checks in this challenge become minor actions if they are made in the same round that the character makes a melee attack against Utarla.

Utarla fights to the best of her abilities during the challenge, and the adventurers must do likewise.

Success: The adventurers convince Utarla to order her forces to stand down. Award full XP for the devils as if they had been defeated in combat.

Failure: Utarla rebuffs the overtures at diplomacy made by the adventurers. She orders her devils to fight to the death and won't assist the adventurers in **Encounter F6: Forgestorm Bridge** on page 44.

DEVELOPMENT

If the adventurers convince Utarla to stand down, the pit fiend is interested to find out whatever the adventurers can tell her about Orcus's plans, as the devils do not yet have a full understanding of what Orcus is doing at the Forge of Four Worlds. The pit fiend's master is Asmodeus, who fears that Orcus's plans have something to do with the Heart of the Abyss. Utarla knows that the demons have transported tons of black rock to the Soulfire Furnace, and she provides an overview of that location (see *Adventure Book One*, page 12). If the adventurers have not already done so, they should be able to deduce that restoring Timesus is Orcus's goal.

If the adventurers tell Utarla that they mean to stop the demon prince, the pit fiend offers an alliance of sorts. She will escort the party to the forgestorm bridge (see the next encounter), running interference against the forgeboreen guardians there while the adventurers make for the Soulfire Furnace.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Darkness.

Ceiling: 30 feet high.

Fractured Crystal: Patches of fractured crystal scattered across the chamber vent an excess of elemental power. These areas are difficult terrain. A creature entering a square containing fractured crystal takes 10 fire and lightning damage.

Crystal Pillars: These enormous shards of crystal thrust up from the floor of the chamber. A crystal pillar provides cover but does not block line of sight. It can be climbed with a DC 28 Athletics check, but it takes a DC 19 Acrobatics check (a minor action) to remain standing on the uneven top of a pillar.

ENCOUNTER F6: FORGESTORM BRIDGE

Encounter Level 29 (77,000 XP)

SETUP

1 forgeborn stormstriker (S)

3 forgeborn fireflashers (F)

Forgestorm hazard

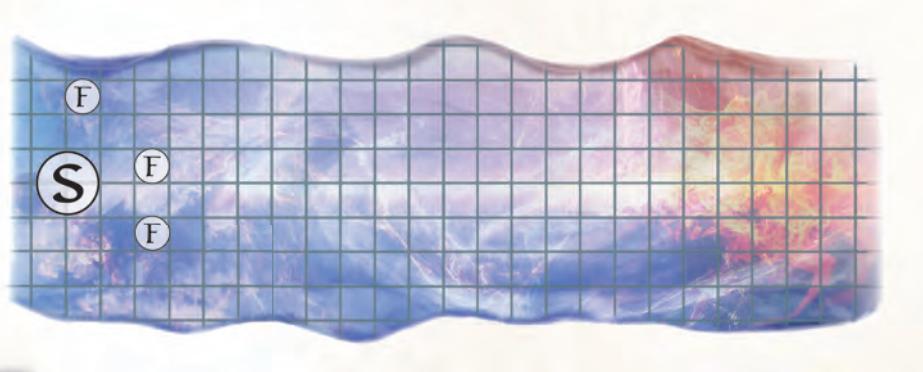
Deep in the heart of the Forge of Four Worlds, a great bridge stretches across a storm-chasm roiling with raw elemental energy. This dangerous crossing provides the only access to the Soulfire Furnace.

When the adventurers can see into this area, read:

A fractured span of crystal-flecked grey stone twists out into the midst of a storm of raw elemental chaos—a vortex of lightning, ice, and blue-white fire that shrieks with the voice of a hundred hurricanes. Barely heard over the maelstrom, the footfalls of the forgeborn rise in the passageway behind, even as more appear on the bridge ahead. The defenders of the Forge of Four Worlds move in for a final assault.

The setup of this encounter assumes that the adventurers successfully completed the skill challenge in **Encounter F5: Deal with the Devils** on page 42, and that Utarla and her surviving devils are with them. Utarla's forces keep the forgeborn behind the adventurers occupied while the party advances on the defenders guarding the forgestorm bridge (as described in "Setup" above). "Do what you have come to accomplish, mortals," Utarla shouts, "we shall keep the rearguard occupied." The devils stay behind to guard the adventurers' backs. Neither they nor the forgeborn rearguard play any further part in the encounter, though you should periodically describe how one of the forgeborn rearguard or one of Utarla's devils falls to the heavy fighting going on at the mouth of the forgestorm bridge.

If the adventurers failed the skill challenge and defeated the devils, they must deal with the larger force of forgeborn. This increases the level of the encounter and the XP to Encounter Level 32 (138,000 XP). Place the following creatures in the passageway behind the party:



Forgeborn Stormstriker (S) Level 31 Controller (Leader)

Large immortal magical beast

XP 23,000

Initiative +21 **Senses** Perception +28;
darkvision, blindsight 10
Defenders of the Forge (Cold, Fire, Healing, Lightning) aura 5;
each immortal ally that starts its turn within the aura regains 20 hit points, while each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 15 cold, fire, and lightning damage.

HP 281; **Bloodied** 140; see also *fury of the forge*

AC 45; **Fortitude** 43, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 41

Immune charm, fear, sleep; **Resist** 15 cold, 15 fire, 15 lightning

Speed 8, teleport 8

⊕ **Touch of Chaos** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Reach 2; +35 vs. Will; 4d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the stormstriker's next turn.

↗ **Arc Lightning** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Lightning**

Ranged 20; +35 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 lightning damage plus ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends), the target is dazed until the end of its next turn, and the stormstriker makes a secondary attack against two new targets within 5 squares of the initial target. **Secondary Attack:** +35 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 lightning damage and ongoing 10 lightning damage (save ends).

↖ **Fury of the Forge** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Cold, Fire, Lightning**

Close burst 3; +33 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. **Miss:** Half damage.

↗ **Coldfire Orb** (standard; recharge ☰ ☱) ♦ **Cold, Fire**

Burst 5 within 10; +33 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 10 cold and fire damage, and crystalline growths make the area of the burst difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)

Str 30 (+25) **Dex** 22 (+21) **Wis** 27 (+23)
Con 25 (+22) **Int** 27 (+23) **Cha** 23 (+21)

1 forgeborn stormstriker

8 forgeborn furies

Whether the adventurers fight alone or in conjunction with Utarla and the devils, the forgestorm hazard activates when the first adventurer steps onto the bridge. It attacks once per round, on its count in the initiative, targeting one of the adventurers on the bridge.

3 Forgebore Firelashers (F)	Level 28 Artillery	
Medium immortal magical beast	XP 13,000 each	
Initiative +23 Senses Perception +22; darkvision		
HP 200; Bleeding 100		
AC 42; Fortitude 40, Reflex 41, Will 40; see also <i>fury of the forge</i>		
Immune charm, fear, sleep; Resist 15 fire		
Speed 8, fly 6 (clumsy)		
④ Darkfire Slash (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire		
Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 3d8 + 10 fire damage, and the target is dazed until the beginning of its next turn.		
⑤ Flame Pulse (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire		
Ranged 10; +31 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 fire damage.		
† Defensive Flare (immediate reaction, when the firelasher is hit by a melee attack; at-will) ♦ Charm		
Reach 2; +31 vs. Reflex; the target is dazed until the end of its next turn. A target already dazed is also weakened until the end of its next turn.		
↗ Lash of Fire (standard; recharge 3/6/9) ♦ Fire, Psychic		
Ranged 10; +31 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 10 fire and psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).		
↖ Fury of the Forge (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Cold, Fire, Lightning		
Close burst 3; +31 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 9 cold, fire, and lightning damage. Miss: Half damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages – (understands Abyssal, Primordial, and Supernal)	
Str 21 (+19)	Dex 29 (+23)	Wis 26 (+22)
Con 26 (+22)	Int 23 (+20)	Cha 18 (+18)

TACTICS

The forgebore stormstriker attempts to remain behind the firelashers, making *arc lightning* and *coldfire orb* attacks while its *defenders of the forge* aura heals its allies and hinders any adventurers rushing into melee.

The forgebore firelashers make *lash of fire* attacks against a ranged combatant each time that power recharges, hitting closer foes with *flame pulse*.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Bridge: This uneven span is built of vast chunks of crystal-flecked stone held together with no visible mortar or means of support. The bridge has no edge or railing. Creatures knocked off the bridge are allowed a saving throw to catch themselves, as normal. Those who fail their saving throws are swept up into the forgestorm.

Forgestorm: The storm swirls in a cylinder whose surface is 20 feet from the bridge in all directions, obscuring the walls of the cavern 30 feet beyond. A creature that falls into the roiling storm is swept up, circling the bridge at one revolution per round. A creature that starts its turn in the forgestorm takes 3d10 + 10 cold, fire, and lightning damage and is dazed (save ends).

Creatures can fly or teleport to flee the forgestorm, but the speed of their movement within makes it impossible to grab a rope or any other item dropped from above. A creature attempting to fly or teleport to a creature trapped in the forgestorm must make a successful DC 28 Acrobatics check or miss the target.

Forgestorm	Level 29 Blaster
Hazard	XP 15,000
A raging storm of elemental energy swirls around the bridge.	
Hazard: As the adventurers advance across the bridge, the forgestorm lashes out.	
Perception	No check is required to note the threat of the forgestorm.
Initiative +22	
Trigger	The forgestorm rolls initiative when any creature (excluding forgebore) steps onto the bridge.
Attack	
Standard Action	
Targets: One creature on the bridge, excluding forgebore	
Attack: +32 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 3d10 + 10 cold, fire, and lightning damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
Secondary Attack: Close burst 2 centered on the initial target; targets all creatures in the burst except the initial target; +30 vs. Fortitude	
Hit: 1d10 cold, fire, and lightning damage, the target takes ongoing 10 cold, fire, and lightning damage (save ends), and the target is pushed 1 square.	
Countermeasures	

- ♦ A character can make a DC 28 Arcana check each round as a minor action to gain advance warning of the forgestorm's next attack. If a character making a successful check is targeted by the storm's primary attack, he or she takes half damage, and the storm does not make its secondary attack.
- ♦ A character targeted by the forgestorm's secondary attack can make a DC 28 Acrobatics check as an immediate interrupt to lessen its effects. With a successful check, the character takes half damage if the secondary attack hits and no damage if it misses.

ENCOUNTER F7: SOULFIRE FURNACE

Encounter Level 31 (124,250 XP)

SETUP

2 shards of Timesus (T)
3 blackstar decimators (D)
9 blackstar battlepawns (B)

In the heart of the Forge of Four Worlds, the adventurers find that Timesus has already been restored and has departed for the Heart of the Abyss. However, the Black Star has left behind two fragments of his restored form, along with a cadre of blackstar host to help defend against the adventurers.

When the adventurers enter this area, read:

A multilayered cavern wraps around the core of the Forge of Four Worlds. Vast pools of raw arcane and elemental power seethe in volcanic fury. Storms of ice and fire erupt to consume each other, while a constant haze of lightning flashes in their depths. A platform of stone floats 10 feet above the large central pool. Atop the platform, a pulsing magic circle is surrounded by piles of black slag and the charred bodies of dozens of demons. Additional chunks of black rock are spread across the chamber.

On the lower tiers stand empty racks that once must have held countless weapons and other items. A red crystal dais on the farthest tier seems unaffected by whatever transpired here.

When a player character approaches the central essence pool, show the players “View of the Soulfire Furnace” on page 29 of Adventure Book One, then read:

A pulse of black fire spreads across the surface of the central pool, the ground shaking as the piles of black slag begin to coalesce. Two great figures rise from the remnants of the stone. At the same time, the smaller chunks of rock rise as well, flaring with black fire.

TACTICS

A shard of Timesus makes a focused gravity attack against the closest adventurer each round, hoping to gain combat advantage for amok rage. It saves meteor slam until it can force a target into an essence pool.

The blackstar battlepawns focus claw attacks on adventurers attempting to bypass combat to get to the teleport circle. Whenever one of the battlepawns falls, others within 5 squares utilize blackstar ricochet to attack nearby enemies.

The blackstar decimators avoid melee combat if they can, targeting meteor bolt attacks against adventurers at the edge of the fray and those attempting to get to the teleport circle. The decimators save blackstar fall for use when they can catch two or more adventurers in the burst.

2 Shards of Timesus (T)

Large elemental animate

Level 30 Elite Brute

XP 38,000 each

Initiative +23 Senses Perception +22; darkvision, truesight 6
Blackstar Gravity aura 3; each enemy within the aura at the start of the shard's turn is pulled 2 squares.

HP 670; **Bloodied** 335

AC 42; **Fortitude** 44, **Reflex** 42, **Will** 41

Resist 20 fire

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy)

Action Points 1

⊕ **Blackstar Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 damage.

† **Amok Rage** (standard; at-will)

The shard of Timesus makes *blackstar slam* attacks against two different targets.

↔ **Meteor Slam** (standard; recharge 2) ♦ Force

Close blast 5; +31 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 force damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares and knocked prone.

↗ **Focused Gravity** (minor; 1/round; at-will) ♦ Force

Ranged sight; +31 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 force damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Starquake (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Close burst 3; targets enemies; +31 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 damage.

Alignment Evil Languages Primordial

Str 30 (+25) Dex 27 (+23) Wis 24 (+22)

Con 25 (+22) Int 8 (+14) Cha 18 (+19)

9 Blackstar Battlepawns (B)

Medium elemental animate

Level 28 Minion

XP 3,250 each

Initiative +21 Senses Perception +18; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 42; **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 38

Resist 20 fire

Speed 7

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+31 vs. AC; 15 damage (crit 20 damage).

⊕ **Blackstar Ricochet** (immediate reaction, when a blackstar battle-pawn within 5 squares is reduced to 0 hit points; at-will)

The blackstar battlepawn shifts 3 squares and collides with an enemy; +29 vs. Fortitude; 10 damage.

Alignment Evil Languages –

Str 26 (+22) Dex 24 (+21) Wis 18 (+18)

Con 18 (+18) Int 3 (+10) Cha 3 (+10)

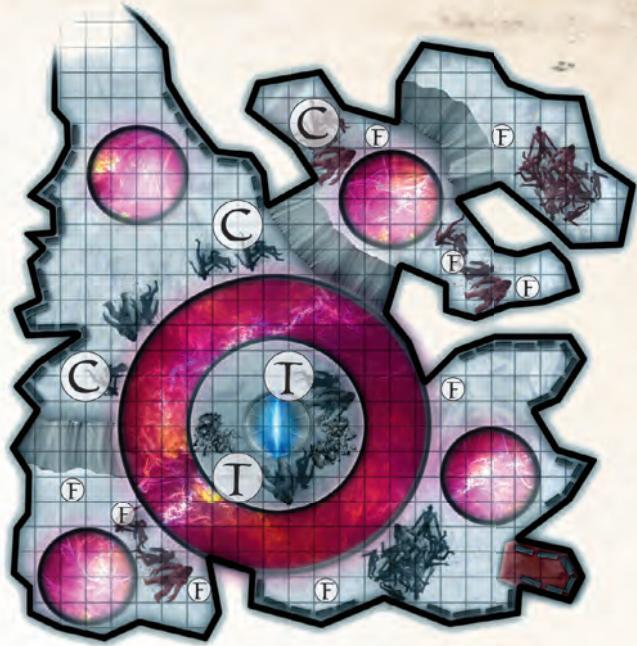
3 Blackstar Decimators (D)	Level 30 Artillery
Medium elemental animate	XP 19,000 each
Initiative +24	Senses Perception +27; darkvision
HP 210; Bloodied 105	
AC 42; Fortitude 42, Reflex 44, Will 42	
Resist 20 fire	
Speed 5, fly 8 (clumsy)	
④ Slam (standard; at-will)	+37 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).
⑤ Meteor Bolt (standard; at-will)	Ranged 10; +35 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to saving throws and ongoing 10 damage (save ends both).
Blackstar Fall (standard; encounter)	The blackstar decimator can fly 8 squares and enter an enemy's space; +35 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 9 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. Miss: The target is pushed 1 square. If the target cannot be pushed, the blackstar decimator ends its move in an unoccupied square adjacent to the target.
	Secondary Attack: When it lands, the blackstar decimator attacks: close burst 3; targets enemies; +33 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone. The burst area becomes difficult terrain.
Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial
Str 18 (+19)	Dex 28 (+24)
Con 24 (+22)	Int 8 (+14)
	Wis 24 (+22)
	Cha 7 (+13)

FLEEING THE FORGE

With the other chaos ships already departed from the Forge, the teleportation circle on the floating platform has established a link to the closest working portal—the starboard magic circle aboard *Shevaithan*. It takes a DC 33 Arcana check to activate the portal, but arcane feedback deals 2d10 damage to the character making the check. However, that arcane feedback also bestows the knowledge of Timesus's whereabouts.

In your mind, the purpose of the restored primordial burns like black fire. The demon prince's chaos ships are already descending with Timesus into the Abyssal Nadir—the deepest part of this dark realm, and home to the crystal shard known as the Heart of the Abyss.

The adventurers can attempt to fight their way to the circle and cross over without defeating these final guardians. However, if either of the shards of Timesus survive, it follows the adventurers through the portal to fight to the death aboard the chaos ship.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from the essence pools.

Ceiling: The rocky roof of the chamber is 20 feet above the highest tier; 60 feet above the central pool.

Cliffs: These steep slopes rise to a height of 20 feet.

Scaling the cliff requires a DC 20 Athletics check. A creature that drops from the cliffs takes 2d10 falling damage.

Essence Pools: Raw elemental and arcane energy power the Soulfire Furnace. There are four small pools and one large, central pool. A creature that begins its turn adjacent to an essence pool or on the floating platform takes 2d10 + 5 cold, fire, and lightning damage. A creature that enters a pool or begins its turn there takes 4d10 + 5 cold, fire, and lightning damage.

Demon Bodies and Forgebore Remains: The demons charged with transporting the remains of Timesus and the forgebore who fought them all perished when the Soulfire Furnace was activated. Areas containing bodies are difficult terrain.

Weapon Racks: The armories on the lower tiers once held magic items and treasures dating back to the Dawn War. The energy that restored Timesus destroyed all items on these racks.

Red Dais: A raised platform of magically resonant red crystal holds and protects the most valuable treasures of the Forge of Four Worlds.

Treasure: On the racks of the red dais, the adventurers find the last relics of the war between the gods and the primordials—five level 30 magic items, one *potion of life*, three *potions of recovery*, six amulets forged of crystallized elemental essence (worth 50,000 gp each), four platinum rings (2,500 gp each), and 60 astral diamonds.

ENCOUNTER S5: FATHOMALS BELOW

Encounter Level 28 (74,250 XP)

SETUP

- 5 fathomal blights (B)**
1 fathomal scream (S)
1 fathomal clasp (C)
1 fathomal gnaw (G)

Demonic monstrosities that few ever see prowl the Abyssal depths. Fathomals number among the most terrible of these horrors. Embodied annihilation, fathomals were born from the corrupted remains of defeated primordials.

The adventurers plunge to the bottom of the multiverse, directly into a region where fathomals swarm. The size of the *chaos ship* attracts a hunting pack of fathomals just prior to arriving at the Abyssal Nadir.

As the *chaos ship* plunges deeper, read:

The walls of the churning vortex have narrowed. Once miles distant, they now press close, perhaps hundreds of feet away. The reddish light that suffuses everything has begun to slowly pulse, not unlike some massive heartbeat.

When the fathomals appear, read:

Horrors emerge from the churning walls. Demonic strands of fanged muscle reach for the ship. Several are human-sized tangles of teeth, horns, and scales. One appears insubstantial, and flickers between nightmare images from moment to moment. Another appears to be a cascade of twining hair shorn from a giant. The last is a serpent composed of corruption with an appalling hand-like head.

Fathomal Gnaw (G)

Large elemental beast (demon)

Level 28 Lurker

XP 13,000

Initiative +31 Senses Perception +26; truesight 6

Self-Inflicted Wounds (Psychic) aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 psychic damage and 10 poison damage.

HP 205; Bloodied 102

AC 42; Fortitude 38, Reflex 41, Will 38

Immune fear; Resist insubstantial; 25 fire, 25 force, 25 lightning
Speed teleport 12

④ **Lash** (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Psychic

Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 poison and psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends)

† **Blink and Strike** (standard; recharge ☰ ☱ ☲) ♦ Poison, Psychic

The fathomal gnaw teleports up to 6 squares and makes an attack. Reach 2; +31 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 poison and psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). Then the fathomal gnaw teleports up to 12 squares.

Alignment Evil Languages –

Skills Stealth +32

Str 29 (+23) Dex 36 (+27) Wis 24 (+21)

Con 31 (+24) Int 24 (+21) Cha 30 (+24)

5 Fathomal Blights (B)

Medium elemental beast (demon)

Level 28 Minion

XP 3,250 each

Initiative +15 Senses Perception +20; darkvision

Demonic Aura aura 1; each allied demon that starts its turn within the aura gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls until the end of its turn.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 42; Fortitude 38, Reflex 42, Will 40

Immune fear; Resist 25 cold, 25 fire, 25 thunder

Speed fly 8

④ **Abyssal Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic

+33 vs. AC; 10 psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

↔ **Death Burst** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Psychic

The fathomal explodes in a scream of psychic annihilation. Close burst 10; targets enemies; +31 vs. Reflex; 16 psychic damage.
Miss: Half damage.

Alignment Evil

Languages –

Str 10 (+14)

Dex 13 (+16)

Wis 12 (+15)

Con 14 (+16)

Int 22 (+20)

Cha 18 (+18)

Fathomal Clasp (C)

Huge elemental beast (demon)

Level 29 Elite Brute

XP 30,000

Initiative +19 Senses Perception +26; truesight 6

Grip of Chaos (Psychic) aura 5; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 20 psychic damage.

HP 660; Bloodied 330

AC 41; Fortitude 43, Reflex 37, Will 40

Immune fear; Resist 25 fire, 25 lightning, 25 thunder

Saving Throws +2

Speed fly 10

Action Points 1

④ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +32 vs. AC; 4d10 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed. A target trying to escape the grab takes a -4 penalty to the check. A fathomal clasp can grab only one creature at a time, and only creatures that are Large or smaller.

† **Grab and Hurl** (standard; at-will)

The fathomal clasp can make a slam attack. If the slam attack hits, it makes an *ally missile* attack. If the slam attack misses, or if the *ally missile* attack would provoke an opportunity attack, the fathomal's instead makes a second slam attack.

† **Filch Foe** (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent to the fathomal clasp while no creature is grabbed; recharge ☰ ☱) The fathomal clasp makes a slam attack.

↗ **Ally Missile** (standard; at-will, while the fathomal clasp has a creature grabbed)

The fathomal clasp hurls the grabbed creature at another foe. Ranged 20; +30 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 9 damage to the target and the hurled foe, and the target is pushed 2 squares (the hurled foe falls prone in the target's vacated square). The fathomal clasp can throw the grabbed creature at any open space in range if it has no other targets.

↔ **Cry of Anarchy** (standard; encounter) ♦ Psychic

Close burst 10; targets enemies; +29 vs. Will; 4d8 + 10 psychic damage, ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends), and the target is dazed until the end of the fathomal clasp's next turn.

Alignment Evil

Languages –

Str 41 (+29)

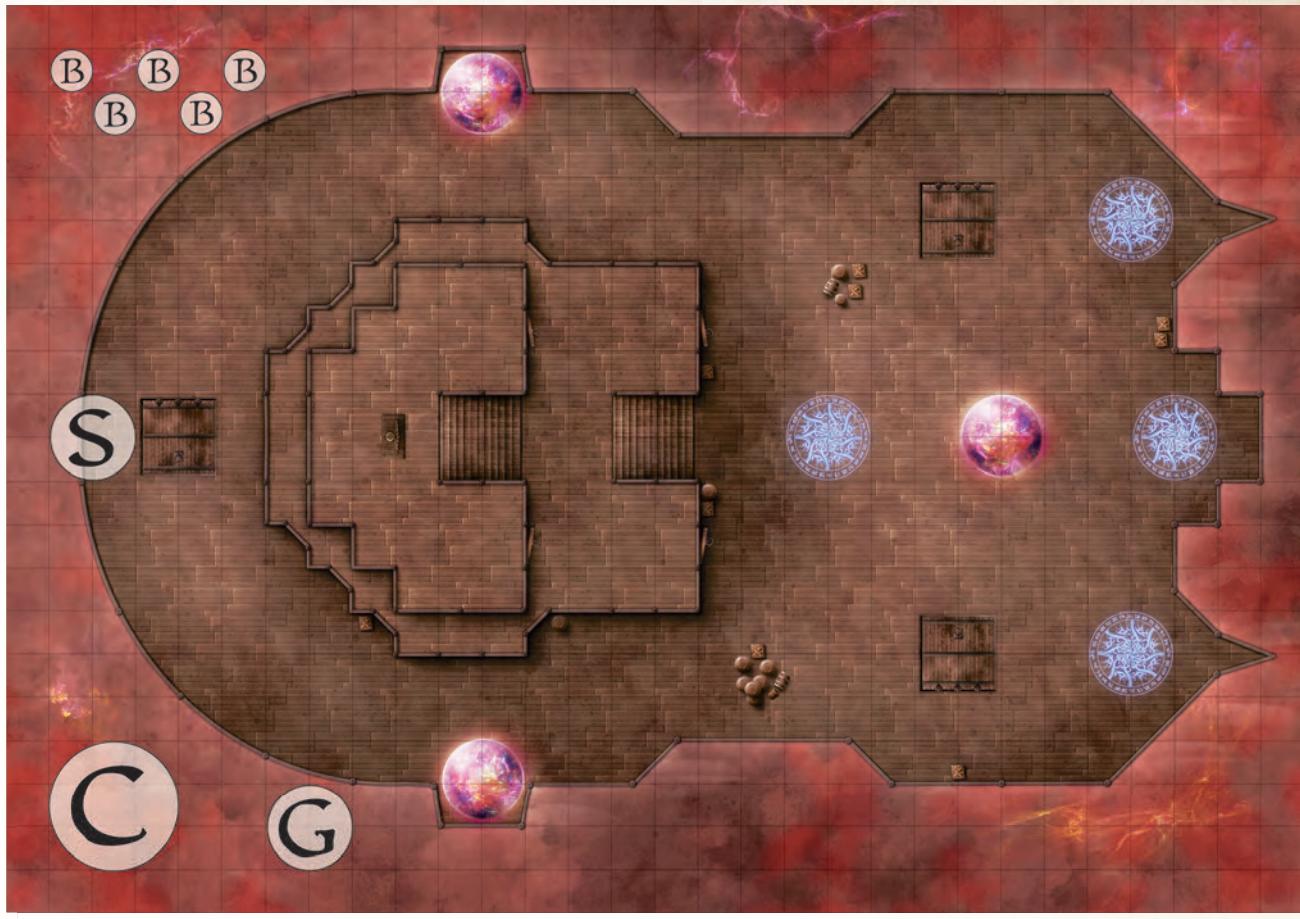
Dex 20 (+19)

Wis 35 (+26)

Con 30 (+24)

Int 5 (+11)

Cha 16 (+17)

**Fathomal Scream (S)**

Large elemental beast (demon)

Level 29 Controller

XP 15,000

Initiative +22 Senses Perception +18; truesight 6

Darkest Memory (Psychic) aura 1; each creature within the aura taking ongoing psychic damage takes 5 extra psychic damage.

HP 265; Bloodied 132

AC 43; Fortitude 41, Reflex 40, Will 40

Immune fear; Resist insubstantial; 25 acid, 25 force, 25 necrotic
Speed fly 10, phasing⊕ **Dreadful Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Reach 2; +33 vs. Will; 2d10 + 10 damage (crit 6d10 + 30), and ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).

↔ **Nightmare Dredge** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Close burst 10; targets enemies; +31 vs. Will; 2d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target slides 3 squares, takes ongoing 10 psychic damage, and is immobilized (save ends both). When the target fails a saving throw, it slides 3 squares.

✖ **Mote of Dread** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Psychic, Fear, Zone**

Area burst 3 within 20; the fathomal scream fashions a phantasmal mote of churning mist. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the zone takes 15 psychic damage. The mote blocks line of sight. It remains in place until the end of the encounter.

Alignment Evil Languages –

Str 29 (+23) Dex 26 (+22)

Con 25 (+21) Int 5 (+11)

Wis 18 (+18)

Cha 26 (+22)

TACTICS

The fathomal clasp begins its turn with a *cry of anarchy*. Its wide aura allows it to affect several adventurers while using its reach to slam and grab foes at will.

The fathomal scream's aura increases the amount of ongoing psychic damage the adventurers must deal with. It uses its *nightmare dredge* to slide foes around.

The fathomal gnaw appears suddenly before its foes, lashes, then teleports away, leaving a potentially slowed foe behind.

The fathomal blights aid their demonic allies, granting them power bonuses to their attack rolls and damage rolls with their aura. (Since power bonuses don't stack, only one blight can affect a given demonic ally at a time.)

FEATURES OF THE AREA**Illumination:** Bright light.

Anarch Spheres: Always temperamental, anarch spheres resonate with nearby conflict. This tendency was harnessed to create a secondary defense for Shevaithan. Any creature without the elemental origin engaged in combat within 3 squares of a mounted anarch sphere is subject to a ranged attack at the beginning of its turn: +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is slowed (save ends both).

Magic Circles: Currently, none of the circles glow.

Crates: The crates on the deck are filled with black rock and are difficult terrain.

ENCOUNTER H1: BOARDING LEVEL

Encounter Level 29 (82,000 XP)

SETUP

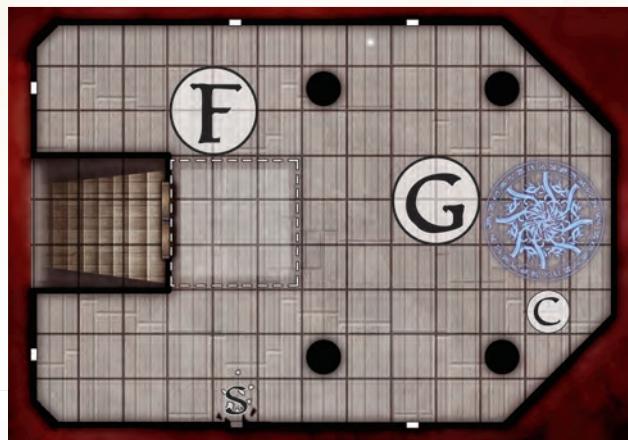
- 1 fathomal scream (F)
- 1 fathomal gnaw (G)
- 1 corruption shard (C)
- 1 corruption storm hazard [S]

The Extraction Tower is a temporary structure. It will soon lose its battle against the power of the Heart and collapse into the Abyss. Orcus left behind a skeleton crew of powerful servitors to tend the site, in case the greater portion of the restored Timesus manages to break off a second shard from the Abyssal Heart before either it or the entire tower is destroyed.

The boarding level of the tower contains a permanent magic circle that is keyed as a portal to one of the inscribed magic circles on Shevaithan. It lights up when Shevaithan moves to within 1,000 feet of the tower's apex, indicating that a portal connection has been made. At the same time, the circle aboard the chaos ship also glows.

Adventurers arrive on the boarding level that is rapidly disintegrating around them. One of the portholes has recently shattered, allowing a churning corruption storm into the tower. The storm sweeps across the boarding level, creating a danger for demons, undead, and adventurers alike. The only thing apparently immune to the effects of the corruption storm are fathomals, a few of which have taken up residence in this level of the tower.

Orcus's servitors have closed off the level, and they remain on the support level even if combat breaks out here. Unless the adventurers manage to give away their presence, the demons and undead in the support level believe the sounds of conflict above are merely the sounds of the corruption storm growing more fierce.



When adventurers arrive on the boarding level, read:

This wide chamber resembles the mid-level deck of a large sailing vessel, complete with portholes. However, one of the portholes is smashed, and convulsing tongues of raw corruption sweeps into the chamber. Where the corruption touches, the wood briefly fluctuates, shivers, and seems to take on a random hue before slowly returning to its former consistency.

Great iron double doors stand closed opposite the magic circle.

Perception Check

DC 28: A wide hatch in the ceiling is bolted closed from the inside.

Corruption Storm (S)

Hazard

Level 32 Blaster

XP 27,000

Churning tendrils of corruption lash across the deck, changing whatever they touch into something foul.

Hazard: A swirling mass of multicolored energy fills a single square but its tendrils reach into every square within 3 squares of the central mass.

Perception

No Perception check is necessary. The effects of a corruption storm are obvious.

Initiative +20

Attack

No Action **Close burst 3**

Effect: Each round on its turn, the corruption storm sends out a burst of elemental energy.

Target: All creatures in the burst. Fathomals are immune to the storm's effects.

Attack: +35 vs. Will

Hit: Roll 1d6. Target is randomly affected by the burst of energy the storm releases.

♦ 1: 2d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target teleports 3 squares.

♦ 2-3: 2d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

♦ 4-5: 3d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is pulled 2 squares and is immobilized (save ends).

♦ 6: 4d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and is stunned (save ends).

TACTICS

The creatures inhabiting the boarding level regard anything that enters the area as food. They attack immediately, hoping to gain a fresh meal. They won't fight to the death, but if they are winning they will follow the adventurers to the next level of the tower. If severely injured, the fathomals attempt to flee the tower.

Fathomal Gnaw (G) Large elemental beast (demon)	Level 28 Lurker XP 13,000	
Initiative +31 Senses Perception +26; truesight 6		
Self-Inflicted Wounds (Psychic) aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes ongoing 10 psychic damage and ongoing 10 poison damage.		
HP 205; Bloodied 102		
AC 42; Fortitude 38, Reflex 41, Will 38		
Immune fear; Resist insubstantial; 25 fire, 25 force, 25 lightning		
Speed teleport 12		
④ Lash (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Psychic Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 poison and psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends)		
† Blink and Strike (standard; recharge ☽☒☒) ♦ Poison, Psychic The fathomal gnaw teleports up to 6 squares and makes an attack. Reach 2; +31 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 poison and psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). Then the fathomal gnaw teleports up to 12 squares.		
Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Skills Stealth +32		
Str 29 (+23)	Dex 36 (+27)	Wis 24 (+21)
Con 31 (+24)	Int 24 (+21)	Cha 30 (+24)

Fathomal Scream (F) Large elemental beast (demon)	Level 29 Controller XP 15,000	
Initiative +22 Senses Perception +18; truesight 6		
Darkest Memory (Psychic) aura 1; each creature within the aura taking ongoing psychic damage takes 5 extra psychic damage.		
HP 265; Bloodied 132		
AC 43; Fortitude 41, Reflex 40, Will 40		
Immune fear; Resist insubstantial; 25 acid, 25 force, 25 necrotic		
Speed fly 10, phasing		
④ Dreadful Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic Reach 2; +33 vs. Will; 2d10 + 10 damage (crit 6d10 + 30), and ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).		
↔ Nightmare Dredge (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic Close burst 10; targets enemies; +31 vs. Will; 2d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target slides 3 squares, takes ongoing 10 psychic damage, and is immobilized (save ends both). When the target fails a save, it slides 3 squares.		
✿ Mote of Dread (standard; encounter) ♦ Psychic, Fear, Zone Area burst 3 within 20; the fathomal scream fashions a phantasmal mote of churning mist. Any creature that enters or begins its turn in the zone takes 15 psychic damage. The mote blocks line of sight. It remains in place until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Evil	Languages –	
Str 29 (+23)	Dex 26 (+22)	Wis 18 (+18)
Con 25 (+21)	Int 5 (+11)	Cha 26 (+22)

Corruption Shard (C) Medium elemental magical beast	Level 32 Artillery XP 27,000	
Initiative +21 Senses Perception +17, darkvision		
Corruption Corona aura 2; each enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 20 damage and is slowed.		
HP 219; Bloodied 109		
AC 44; Fortitude 43, Reflex 43, Will 45		
Immune disease, poison, radiant; Resist 20 cold, 20 force, 20 lightning, 20 thunder		
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)		
④ Corruption Flare (standard; at-will) +37 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 12 damage.		
↗ Corruption Bolt (standard; at-will) Ranged 20; +37 vs. Will; 3d10 + 12 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the corruption shard's next turn.		
↔ Nauseous Form (minor; recharge ☽☒) Close burst 3; targets enemies; +35 vs Fortitude; the target is dazed (save ends).		
↔ Seed of Corruption (when the corruption shard drops to 0 hit points; encounter) Close burst 2; +35 vs. Will; 2d10 + 12 damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 damage and is blinded (save ends both).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal	
Str 19 (+20)	Dex 20 (+21)	Wis 13 (+17)
Con 21 (+21)	Int 7 (+14)	Cha 24 (+23)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Broken Porthole: The area visibly swirls with chaotic energy, as the corruption storm rages in through the broken porthole. See the hazard for details on the effects of the corruption storm.

Magic Circle: The permanent magic circle inscribed on the floor of this chamber forms a teleportation connection with the adventurers' chaos ship.

Ceiling Hatch: A hatch in the ceiling opens onto the roof of the tower. It is barred from the inside, but can easily be opened as a minor action.

Double Doors: These iron doors are locked (DC 33 Thievery check to unlock the doors). They are also barred from the other side (DC 28 Strength check to break open). A staircase beyond the doors leads down to the support level of the tower (see **Encounter H2: Support Level** on page 52).

ENCOUNTER H2: SUPPORT LEVEL

Encounter Level 30 (99,000 XP)

SETUP

- 2 solamith hunters (S)**
1 deathpriest necromancer (D)
1 dread wraith assassin (W)

The skeleton crew Orcus left behind to tend the extraction site resides on this level of the tower. The demons and undead, under the command of the deathpriest necromancer, keep tabs on the portion of the restored Timesus that labors at the bottom of the tower's central shaft. If Timesus succeeds in breaking off another piece of the Abyssal Heart, the deathpriest is under orders to take the shard to Everlost, using one of the two lifeboats on this level of the tower.

If the adventurers make it past the locked double doors in a stealthy manner, they find that the chamber initially appears to be empty (note the placement of Orcus's servitors in the side chambers and lifeboats). However, if the adventurers make any noise while on the stairs, the creatures begin the encounter in the main chamber, each adjacent to the door through which it came to investigate the unexpected noise.

When adventurers first see the chamber, read:

This wide chamber somewhat resembles the middle deck of a large sailing vessel, complete with portholes through which the fury of the Abyssal Nadir can be seen. A square shaft opens in the center of the floor, dropping down into darkness. Sounds like a blacksmith in a frenzy of hammering echo up from below. Four doors lead out of the chamber. On the far side of the chamber, an anarch sphere is fitted into a cradle mount.

When the adventurers first glimpse this area's guardians, read:

Solamith Hunters: A corpulent demon with a bulging belly of wailing, decomposing faces tears off chunks of itself and hurls them toward you.

Deathpriest Necromancer: A priest of Orcus incants foul prayers as he prepares to attack.

Dread Wraith Assassin: A large wraith, engulfed in corruption and fire, glides toward you.

TACTICS

The deathpriest necromancer knows that Timesus has already broken off a shard of the Heart and that Orcus has taken it. He recognizes the adventurers as a potent force, perhaps Fate's soldiers intent on stopping Orcus's plans. He knows that he must stop the adventurers here, or die in the trying.

The deathpriest uses *vision of death* to keep enemies off-balance while confronting other enemies. He invokes *word of Orcus* as often as he can.

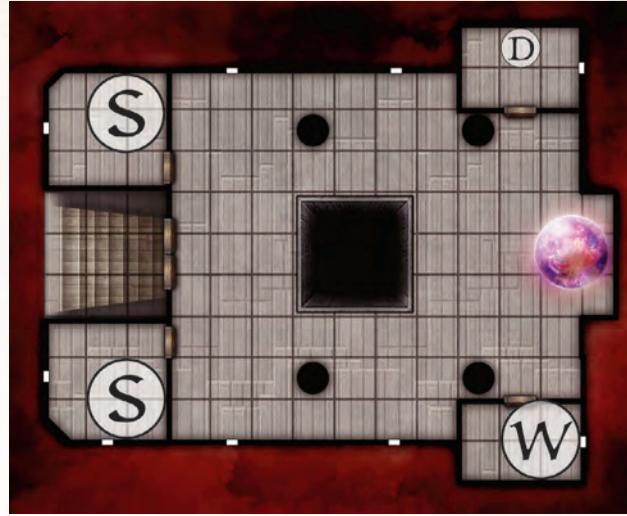
The solamith hunters emerge through the doors, spending an extra move action to squeeze into the main chamber. They prefer to keep their distance, using *soulfire* against available targets.

The dread wraith assassin attempts to flank using *shadow glide* or phasing to maneuver into position. If it takes radiant damage, it angrily attacks the source of that damage above all other targets.

2 Solamith Hunters (S)	Level 30 Artillery
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 19,000 each
Initiative +24	Senses Perception +23
HP 208; Bloodied 104	
Regeneration 20 (if the solamith takes cold damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)	
AC 42; Fortitude 41, Reflex 42, Will 41	
Resist 20 fire, 20 force, 20 thunder	
Speed 8	
④ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire	
Reach 2; +37 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 fire damage.	
❖ Soulfire (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic	
The solamith chooses one of the following attacks, taking damage as it hurls parts of itself at enemies. The solamith cannot reduce itself to 0 hit points in this fashion.	
♦ Area burst 1 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 8 damage.	
♦ Area burst 2 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 16 damage.	
♦ Area burst 3 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 32 damage.	
↳ Soulfire Retort (immediate reaction, when the solamith takes damage from a melee attack; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Fire, Necrotic	
Close blast 3; +33 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal
Str 26 (+23)	Dex 29 (+24)
Con 22 (+21)	Int 12 (+16)
	Wis 26 (+23)
	Cha 10 (+15)

Deathpriest Necromancer (D)		Level 30 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 38,000
Initiative +16	Senses Perception +19	
Aura of Decay (Necrotic) aura 5; living enemies within the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.		
HP 532; Bleeding 266		
AC 44; Fortitude 42, Reflex 41, Will 44		
Resist 25 necrotic		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 5		
Action Points 1		
④ Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon +35 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage, and ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends).		
↳ Spirit Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic Spectral forms appear to batter the deathpriest's enemies. Close blast 3; +32 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and immobilized (save ends).		
↗ Vision of Death (standard; recharge ☰ ☱ ☲) ♦ Psychic Ranged 10; +34 vs. Will; 3d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
↳ Word of Orcus (standard; recharge ☳) ♦ Healing, Necrotic Close burst 5; targets enemies; +32 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). Undead in the burst regain 25 hit points.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Religion +24		
Str 20 (+20)	Dex 13 (+16)	Wis 18 (+19)
Con 18 (+19)	Int 18 (+19)	Cha 24 (+22)
Equipment plate armor, mace, censer		

Dread Wraith Assassin (W)		Level 31 Lurker
Large shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 23,000
Initiative +28	Senses Perception +21; darkvision	
Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.		
HP 206; Bleeding 103; see also <i>death strike</i>		
Regeneration 20 (if the dread wraith lord takes radiant damage, regeneration is negated until the end of the wraith's next turn)		
AC 45; Fortitude 41, Reflex 43, Will 43		
Immune disease, fear, poison; Resist 30 necrotic, insubstantial; Vulnerable 20 radiant (see also <i>regeneration</i> above)		
Speed fly 10 (hover); phasing; see also <i>shadow glide</i>		
④ Dread Blade (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic Reach 2; +34 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).		
↳ Death Shriek (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Psychic Close blast 3; targets enemies; +32 vs. Will; 4d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Miss: Half damage.		
Combat Advantage ♦ Necrotic The dread wraith assassin deals 4d6 extra necrotic damage against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Shadow Glide (move; encounter) The dread wraith assassin shifts 6 squares.		
Spawn Wraith Any humanoid killed by a dread wraith assassin rises as a free-willed dread wraith at the start of its creator's next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space). Raising the slain creature (using the <i>Raise Dead</i> ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +29		
Str 24 (+22)	Dex 28 (+24)	Wis 12 (+16)
Con 20 (+20)	Int 14 (+17)	Cha 28 (+24)



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Anarch Sphere: Any creature without the elemental origin engaged in combat within 3 squares of a mounted *anarch sphere* is subject to a ranged attack at the beginning of its turn: +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is dazed (save ends both).

If this *anarch sphere* is removed from its cradle or destroyed, the entire Extraction Tower collapses twenty rounds later, subjecting all creatures in the tower to the undiluted conditions of the Abyssal Nadir.

Lifeboats: The two chambers opposite the *anarch sphere* are actually detachable lifeboats. When one is activated, it breaks away from the Extraction Tower and rises with ever increasing velocity up out of the whirling throat of the Abyssal Nadir, higher and higher until it eventually reaches Everlost. This journey takes 10 hours. About 8 hours into this journey, the craft rises high enough out of the Abyss's throat that long distance teleportation becomes possible once again.

A lifeboat is activated in two steps. First, pull a lever near the door that seals the pod away from the rest of the structure. Next, place a limb in the center of a miniature magic circle beneath the single porthole and make a successful DC 25 Arcana check. This launches the lifeboat.

Double Doors: These iron doors are locked (DC 33 Thievery check to unlock the doors). A staircase beyond the doors leads up to the boarding level of the tower (see **Encounter H1: Boarding Level** on page 50).

Shaft: The shaft is smooth wood and descends 210 feet to the Extraction Level. The sound of constant hammering rings up from the darkness below.

ENCOUNTER H3: EXTRACTION LEVEL

Encounter Level 33 (154,500 XP)

SETUP

Timesus (T)

6 blackstar battlepawns (B)

Orcus distracted the Raven Queen's attention through various ploys. He recovered the primordial named Timesus from a region of the Shadowfell called Death's Reach. He kept his direct involvement hidden by transferring the primordial in pieces (as its elemental nature made such transfer feasible) through Sigil and on to Doresain the Ghoul King. Finally, Timesus was restored to full power in the Forge of Four Worlds. From there, Timesus was transported down to the Abyssal Nadir, to the very Heart of the Abyss itself. Here.

This is where Orcus's ultimate plan succeeded. Timesus harvested a shard from the Heart, and presented it to Orcus. Now the Demon Prince is on his way to the Raven Queen's realm to use the shard against Death.

But Timesus remains, still subordinate to the will of the Demon Prince, and still hammering at the Heart of the Abyss with its uniquely resistant body. With each shard Timesus breaks off, another deity faces potential destruction at the hands of Orcus.

If the adventurers drop down from level 2 of the tower, they find Timesus situated as shown on the tactical map. The blackstar battlepawns appear in the second round of combat.

When the adventurers enter this chamber, show the players "View of Timesus" on page 30 of Adventure Book One, and read:

A massive creature hammers at a blazing red crystal in the floor. Earsplitting crashes result, each so loud the air in the chamber seems to ripple.

The crystal is a mass of scarlet spikes that pulse with blood-like light. The light corrupts everything it touches.

The creature hammering at the crystal is a nightmare of ebony stone. Its body ripples with fissures and cracks. Though headless, the creature has three arms, each ending in a clenched spiked fist. Its lower body is a coil of crushed stone.

Every time the creature strikes the crystal, it shudders as if on the verge of detonating. However, the beast holds on to its cohesion, and a moment later, strikes again.

Perception Check

DC 25: Dust and chunks of black stone constantly fall from the creature, though it never seems to lose any size. Some of the larger chunks that break away appear to spontaneously animate into vaguely wolflike shapes composed of fused dust and rock.

Timesus, the Black Star (T)

Huge elemental animate (undead)

Level 32 Solo Brute

XP 135,000

Initiative +25 **Senses Perception +29; darkvision, truesight 10**

Blackstar Gravity aura 5; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura slides 2 squares.

HP 1,432; Bloodied 716; see also *starquake nova*

AC 44; Fortitude 45, Reflex 44, Will 43

Resist 20 fire, 20 force, 20 lightning; Vulnerable 10 radiant

Saving Throws +5

Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy)

Action Points 2

⊕ **Blackstar Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +35 vs. AC; 4d8 + 11 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

† **Amok Rage** (standard; at-will)

Timesus makes a *blackstar slam* attack against three different targets.

↔ **Life Eclipse** (immediate reaction, when Timesus is damaged by an attack; recharges when first bloodied)

Close burst 6; targets enemies; +32 vs. Fortitude; 7d8 + 11 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

↔ **Meteoric Shockwave** (standard; recharge ☰ ☱ ☲) ♦ Force

Close burst 3; +32 vs. Fortitude; 5d12 + 12 force damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares and knocked prone.

If the target hits a wall or other unmovable object as a result of the push, the target stops in the last unoccupied square and takes an additional 3d10 + 12 force damage from impacting against the wall or unmovable object.

✿ **Mindquake** (standard; recharge ☱ ☲) ♦ Psychic

Area burst 3 within 20; targets enemies; +32 vs. Will; 6d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Dust of Days

At the end of each of Timesus's turns, 1d4 + 2 bits of Timesus violently break away and animate as blackstar battlepawns.

Each blackstar battlepawn begins in any empty square up to 10 squares from Timesus.

Alignment Evil

Str 31 (+26)

Con 28 (+25)

Languages Primordial

Dex 28 (+25)

Int 9 (+15)

Wis 26 (+24)

Cha 22 (+22)

6 Blackstar Battlepawns (B)

Medium elemental animate

Level 28 Minion

XP 3,250 each

Initiative +21 **Senses Perception +18; darkvision**

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 42; Fortitude 42, Reflex 41, Will 38

Resist 20 fire

Speed 7

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+31 vs. AC; 15 damage (crit 20 damage).

⊕ **Blackstar Ricochet** (immediate reaction, when a blackstar battle-pawn within 5 squares is reduced to 0 hit points; at-will)

The blackstar battlepawn shifts 3 squares and collides with an enemy; +29 vs. Fortitude; 10 damage.

Alignment Evil

Str 26 (+22)

Con 18 (+18)

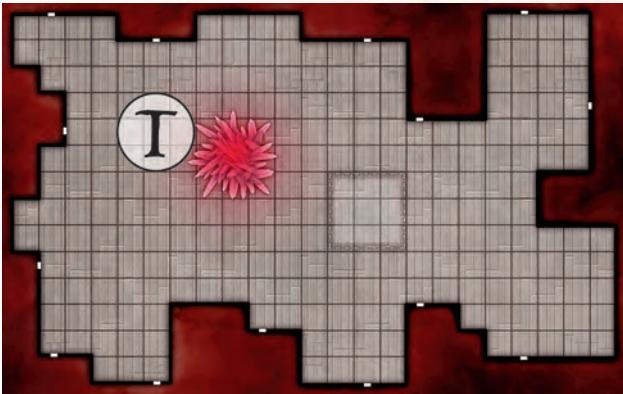
Languages –

Dex 24 (+21)

Int 3 (+10)

Wis 18 (+18)

Cha 3 (+10)



TACTICS

Timesus continues to hammer away at the Heart of the Abyss until attacked. Its first (automatic) response is *life eclipse*.

Once attacked, Timesus ceases its attempt to violently extract another shard, and answers its new foes with *meteoric shockwave*. Anytime Timesus pushes or slides someone with an attack, it pushes toward a wall or the Heart of the Abyss, whichever is closer. Both the Heart and the walls are dangerous things to be adjacent to for those that are not primordials of dissolution.

Timesus uses *life eclipse* one more time (after being first bloodied), but mostly uses *amok rage* on foes except when it can recharge *meteoric shockwave* or *mindquake*. It spends both action points, one after the next, if it senses it has a foe on the ropes and it can drop it with another couple of attacks.

At the end of each of its turns of combat, Timesus sheds 1d4 + 2 human-sized fragments of rock, which animate as blackstar battlepawns.

If Timesus is reduced to 0 hit points, it says (in Primordial):

"You have prevented the liberation of a second shard; the first is already on its way to Letherena. It is destined to pierce Fate's heart. The Raven Queen will die."

Newly spawned blackstar battlepawns take the initiative of blackstar battlepawns already present in the combat.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Heart of the Abyss: The Heart of the Abyss is manifest Evil, likely the single fossil remnant of a demolished universe overcome by some unspeakable apocalypse. Its mere existence spawned the Abyss and all demons. Standing next to it is not healthy.

A creature that begins its turn in a square adjacent to the Heart is subject to an attack : +35 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 6 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

A creature who ends its turn in a square adjacent to the Heart makes a saving throw. On an unsuccessful saving throw, it loses 1d4 healing surges and is dominated (save ends). While dominated, the creature takes on demonic features such as wings, horns, scales, burning eyes, claws, mandibles, or similar features. On its turn, it attacks its closest ally. It continues to do so each turn until it saves against the domination.

Timesus and members of its blackstar host (such as the battlepawns) are immune to this effect.

Walls: Literal chaos whirls around the Extraction Tower's exterior, chaos infused with the corruption of the Heart of the Abyss. Under such extreme conditions, reality is less than certain. This is most noticeable along the boundaries of this level, which are no longer four simple walls, but a scribbling, meandering line. Indeed, closer examination reveals that the walls shiver and pulse, in and out, revealing brief glimpses of the Abyssal Nadir beyond.

Large or smaller creatures who begin their turn adjacent to a wall must succeed on a saving throw, or find themselves suddenly standing outside the walls, in the Abyssal Nadir (see the "Conditions Outside the Tower" sidebar on page 15 of Adventure Book One). In addition to any methods the player characters can come up with, standing adjacent to the outside wall at the beginning of a turn gives the same chance to transfer inside. Also, adventurers who can teleport with line of sight can do so through a porthole.

A MESSAGE

Following Timesus's defeat, the adventurers receive a message conveyed through an artifact they carry (preferably one associated with Vecna, though any artifact will do). A grainy, distorted image of an old man with one eye appears projected from the artifact. It says only, "All this was a distraction! Orcus attacks Death in Letherenal!" The figure is replaced by a sequence of sigils. A DC 28 Arcana check recognizes them as sigils associated with a permanent teleportation circle. In this case, a circle in the Raven Queen's palace.

ENCOUNTER LI: THRONE COURTYARD

Encounter Level 31 (121,500 XP)

SETUP

- 1 solamith hunter (S)
- 2 blackstar knight-commanders (K)
- 1 nycademon repeller (N)
- 1 goristo ripper (G)
- 10 abyssal madness ghouls (A)

The sequence of sigils provided by the image of Vecna or an avatar of the same allows a Planar Portal ritual to link to a permanent teleportation circle in the courtyard outside the Raven Queen's throne room. In addition, the sigils provide the adventurers with a one-time benefit—passing through the portal also provides the benefits of an extended rest.

When the adventurers arrive in the courtyard, read:
A maelstrom of souls swirls above this grand courtyard, screaming like a cyclone. Two reflecting pools tainted with blood stretch to either side. Rubble from marble statues mars the courtyard floor. More than a dozen creatures, undead and demons, cavort about the wide space, feeding on the corpses of marut and sorrowsworn that lay unmoving everywhere.

Solamith Hunter (S)	Level 30 Artillery	
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 19,000	
Initiative +24	Senses Perception +23	
HP 208; Bloodied 104		
Regeneration 20 (if the solamith takes cold damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)		
AC 42; Fortitude 41, Reflex 42, Will 41		
Resist 20 fire, 20 force, 20 thunder		
Speed 8		
◆ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire		
Reach 2; +37 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 fire damage.		
◆ Soulfire (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic		
The solamith chooses one of the following attacks, taking damage as it hurls parts of itself at enemies. The solamith cannot reduce itself to 0 hit points in this fashion.		
◆ Area burst 1 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 8 damage.		
◆ Area burst 2 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 16 damage.		
◆ Area burst 3 within 20; +33 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 fire and necrotic damage. The solamith takes 32 damage.		
◆ Soulfire Retort (immediate reaction, when the solamith takes damage from a melee attack; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Fire, Necrotic		
Close blast 3; +33 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 fire and necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal	
Str 26 (+23)	Dex 29 (+24)	Wis 26 (+23)
Con 22 (+21)	Int 12 (+16)	Cha 10 (+15)

2 Blackstar Knight-Commanders (K)	Level 27 Soldier	
Medium elemental animate	XP 11,000 each	
Initiative +22	Senses Perception +21; darkvision	
HP 246; Bloodied 123		
AC 43; Fortitude 39, Reflex 38, Will 39		
Resist 15 fire; Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed 7		
◆ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+34 vs. AC; 3d10 + 9 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the blackstar knight-commander's next turn.		
◆ Deathsword (standard; recharge [] []) ♦ Weapon		
Requires greatsword; +34 vs. AC; 4d10 + 9 damage, and if the target is marked by the blackstar knight-commander it takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).		
◆ Soldier's Duty (when reduced to 0 hit points)		
The blackstar knight-commander explodes; close burst 2; targets enemies; +32 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 9 damage; marked targets take an additional 2d10 + 9 damage.		
No Escape (move; at-will) ♦ Teleportation		
The blackstar knight-commander can teleport 10 squares as long as it ends in a square adjacent to an enemy marked by the blackstar knight-commander.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Primordial	
Str 26 (+21)	Dex 24 (+20)	Wis 26 (+21)
Con 22 (+19)	Int 12 (+14)	Cha 11 (+13)
Equipment greatsword		

Goristro Ripper (G)	Level 27 Elite Brute	
Huge elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 22,000	
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +21; darkvision	
HP 610; Bloodied 305; see also <i>raging frenzy</i>		
AC 39; Fortitude 42, Reflex 38, Will 39		
Resist 20 variable (2/encounter)		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8		
Action Points 1		
◆ Slam (standard; at-will)		
Reach 3; +31 vs. AC; 2d10 + 12 damage.		
◆ Double Attack (standard; at-will)		
The goristro makes two slam attacks.		
◆ Goristro Stomp (immediate reaction, when a nonadjacent enemy moves adjacent to the goristro; recharge [] []) ♦		
The goristro makes an attack against the enemy: +31 vs. AC; 4d8 + 12 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
◆ Goring Charge (standard; at-will)		
The goristro makes a charge attack: +31 vs. AC; 3d10 + 12 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.		
◆ Raging Frenzy (immediate reaction, when attacked by an adjacent enemy while bloodied; at-will)		
The goristro makes a frenzied gore attack against the enemy: +30 vs. AC; 2d8 + 12 damage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal	
Str 27 (+21)	Dex 12 (+14)	Wis 17 (+16)
Con 25 (+20)	Int 6 (+11)	Cha 12 (+14)

10 Abyssal Madness Ghouls (A)	Level 30 Minion	
Medium elemental humanoid (undead)	XP 4,750 each	
Initiative +22	Senses Perception +19; darkvision	
Unending Hunger aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 damage.		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 44; Fortitude 41, Reflex 42, Will 39		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic		
Speed 8, climb 4		
④ Claws (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+35 vs. AC; 16 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
↳ Maddening Shriek (when the madness ghoul drops to 0 hit points)		
♦ Necrotic		
Close burst 1; +33 vs. Reflex; 12 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Stealth +25		
Str 21 (+20)	Dex 24 (+22)	Wis 18 (+19)
Con 22 (+21)	Int 14 (+17)	Cha 16 (+18)

TACTICS

If any creature not pledged to Orcus enters the courtyard, the demons and undead stop feasting on the corpses and attack. They have been ordered to keep the adventurers from reaching the throne room beyond.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

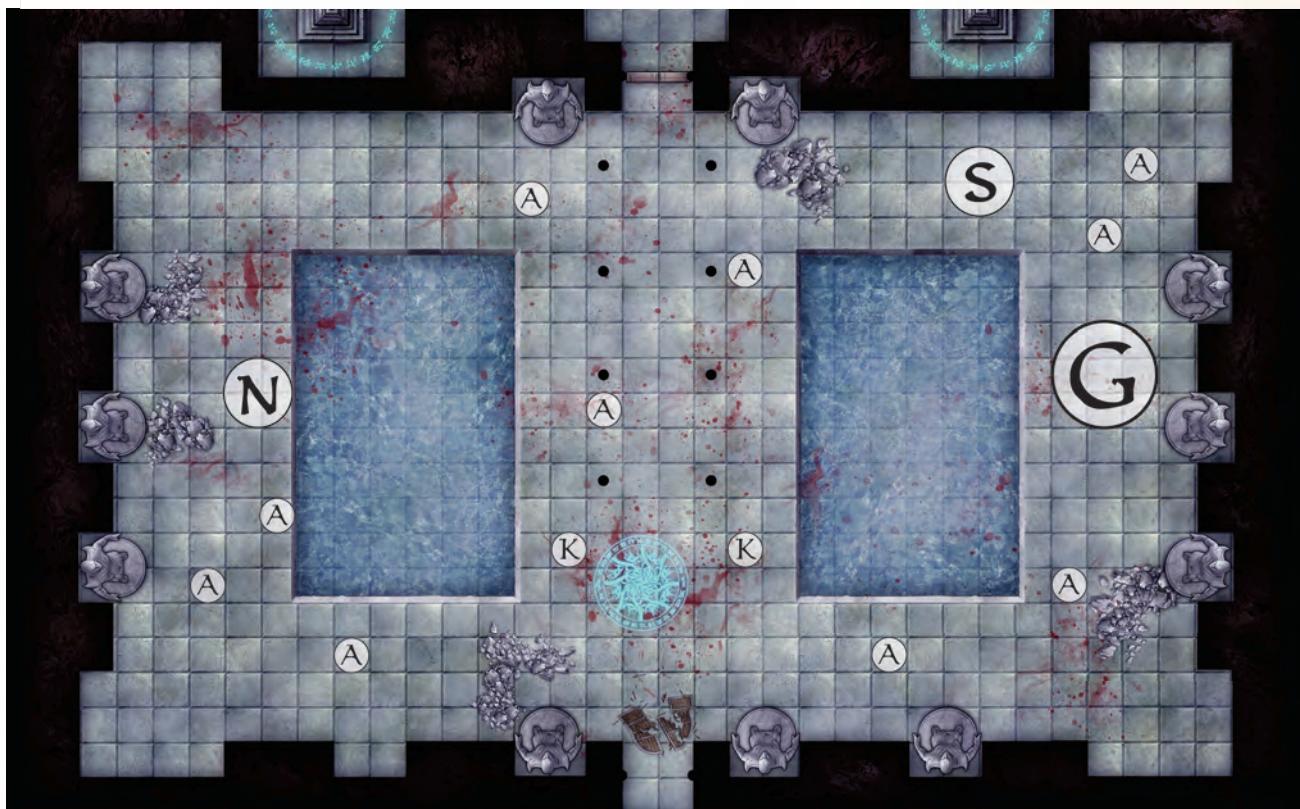
Illumination: Dim light.

Magic Circle: This serves as a permanent magic circle and can be used as the endpoint of Planar Portal rituals for those who know the sequence of sigils.

Nycademon Repeller (N)	Level 27 Skirmisher	
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 11,000	
Initiative +23	Senses Perception +19	
HP 250; Bloodied 125		
AC 41; Fortitude 40, Reflex 40, Will 37		
Resist 20 variable (2/encounter)		
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)		
④ Wicked Axe (standard; at-will)		
+32 vs. AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
↳ Wicked Edges (standard; at-will)		
The nycademon makes two wicked axe attacks.		
↳ Repelling Flight (standard; recharge [] [])		
The nycademon flies up to 6 squares. This flight does not provoke opportunity attacks. During the flight, the nycademon can make up to three attacks, each at a different target. +32 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
Combat Advantage		
The nycademon deals an extra 2d8 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Intimidate +23, Perception +19		
Str 25 (+20)	Dex 26 (+21)	Wis 13 (+14)
Con 26 (+21)	Int 8 (+12)	Cha 21 (+18)
Equipment greataxe		

Reflecting Pools: The pools are 3 feet deep and stained with the blood. Creatures who start their turns in a pool take 10 necrotic damage.

Double Doors, Northern: These doors lead to the Raven Queen's throne room. They are not locked—characters could burst into the next chamber and trigger the next encounter, but the demons and undead in this chamber follow and add their strength to the battle if the adventurers do so.



ENCOUNTER L2: THRONE ROOM, BATTLE ONE

Encounter Level 31 (116,500 XP)

SETUP

Orcus (O)

The Raven Queen (R)

3 dread wraith assassins (W)

10 abyssal madness ghouls (A)

From the courtyard, the adventurers can enter this chamber through the unlocked double doors (from inside, there appears to be no ceiling in the throne room, but from the outside a normal stone roof prevents aerial access).

Here, the adventurers finally face the ultimate author of the plot against the Raven Queen. This encounter is divided into three parts. Each part provides a wave of monsters and other hazards as the adventurers fight their way to the throne and the Raven Queen's side.

Place all of the creatures in the chamber. In the first battle, only these creatures participate: 3 dread wraith assassins and 10 abyssal madness ghouls.

The throne room features three encounters that build toward the climax: a battle with Orcus's servants, two skill challenges, and the final battle against Orcus.

When the adventurers enter the chamber, show the players “View of Death’s Throne” on page 31 of Adventure Book One, and read:

Across this vast chamber, large braziers burn with blue-white fire. Between them, at the top of a wide set of stairs, is a smashed throne. Before the throne stands Orcus, Demon Prince of the Undead.

A regal woman with raven hair lies unmoving at Orcus’s feet. Her eyes and lips are black and glossy, her skin pale. A flashing red shard of crystal pierces her chest and fixes her to floor. A line of silvery radiance connects the shard to Orcus.

The room appears to be open to the sky, in which swirls a storm of light—the souls of the dead waiting their turn for judgment.

An obelisk, about 20 feet high, stands in the center of the chamber. Others like it stand in recesses in each of the room’s four corners. Sigils carved on the floor surround each of the obelisks. Observation platforms, supported by pillars, line the walls. Several wraiths and ghouls stand on the platforms, watching their lord absorb the life and power of Death.

Religion Check

DC 33: The line of radiance is the visible manifestation of the shard sucking the power of the Raven Queen and bequeathing divinity and Death’s power to Orcus.

DC 35: In only minutes, the process will be complete, and Orcus will have subsumed the power of the Raven Queen.

3 Dread Wraith Assassins (W)

Large shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 31 Lurker

XP 23,000 each

Initiative +28 Senses Perception +21; darkvision

Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.

HP 206; Bloodied 103; see also death strike

Regeneration 20 (if the dread wraith lord takes radiant damage, regeneration is negated until the end of the wraith’s next turn)

AC 45; Fortitude 41, Reflex 43, Will 43

Immune disease, fear, poison; **Resist** 30 necrotic, insubstantial;

Vulnerable 20 radiant (see also regeneration above)

Speed fly 10 (hover); phasing; see also shadow glide

⊕ **Dread Blade** (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

Reach 2; +34 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 10 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

↔ **Death Shriek** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Psychic

Close blast 3; targets enemies; +32 vs. Will; 4d8 + 10 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). Miss: Half damage.

Combat Advantage ♦ Necrotic

The dread wraith assassin deals 4d6 extra necrotic damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Shadow Glide (move; encounter)

The dread wraith assassin shifts 6 squares.

Spawn Wraith

Any humanoid killed by a dread wraith assassin rises as a free-willed dread wraith at the start of its creator’s next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space). Raising the slain creature (using the Raise Dead ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Stealth +29

Str 24 (+22) **Dex** 28 (+24) **Wis** 12 (+16)

Con 20 (+20) **Int** 14 (+17) **Cha** 28 (+24)

When Orcus sees the adventurers, read:

The Demon Prince of the Undead roars with surprise. He screams (in Abyssal), “How? Neither mortal nor god should have been able to learn my plans until it was much too late! No matter. Now that the transfer is mostly complete, you pose no threat to me. Indeed, your souls shall be the first to be judged by Orcus, God of Death!”

RUNNING THE BATTLE

The moment the adventurers arrive, Orcus orders his servants to attack. Note that Orcus doesn’t enter the battle until the adventurers get past the apathy obelisks (see

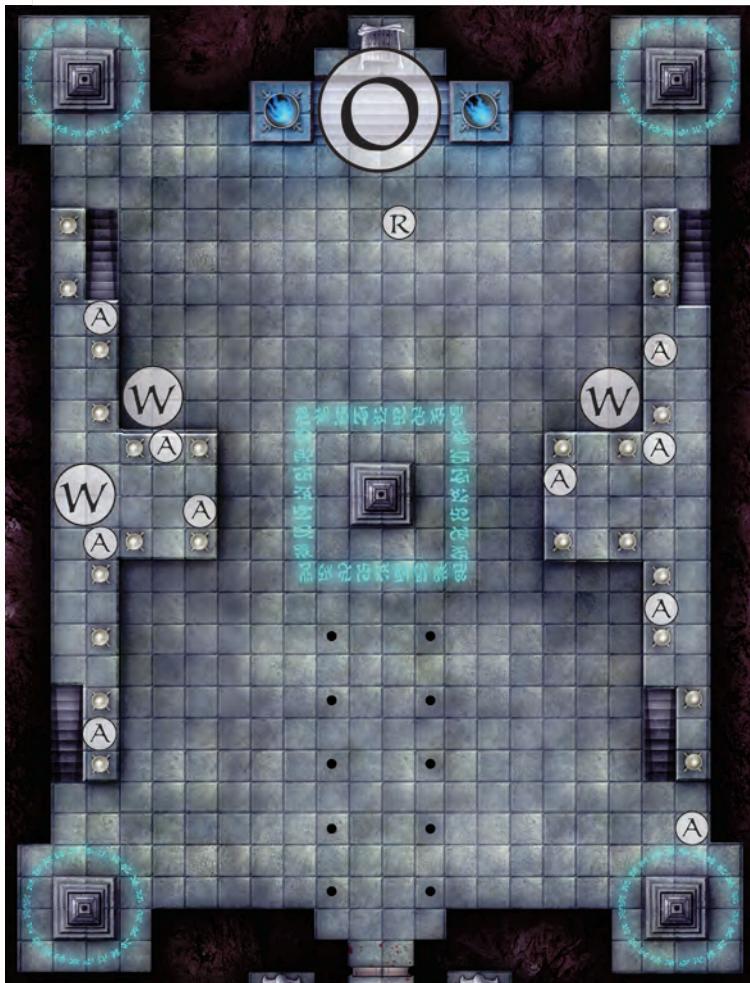
Encounter L3: Throne Room Skill Challenge on page 60).

The suggested way to approach this encounter and the linked encounters that follow (**Encounters L3 and L4**) is as follows. Run **Encounter L2** first, adding the alluring obelisks from **Encounter L3** as the adventurers get close to them. Segue into the two skill challenges in **Encounter L3** as appropriate, adding the battle from **Encounter L4** as the adventurers work to save the Raven Queen.

10 Abyssal Madness Ghouls (A)	Level 30 Minion
Medium elemental humanoid (undead)	XP 4,750 each
Initiative +22	Senses Perception +19; darkvision
Unending Hunger aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 damage.	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 44; Fortitude 41, Reflex 42, Will 39	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic	
Speed 8, climb 4	
④ Claws (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic	
+35 vs. AC; 16 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).	
↳ Maddening Shriek (when the madness ghoul drops to 0 hit points)	
♦ Necrotic	
Close burst 1; +33 vs. Reflex; 12 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Stealth +25	
Str 21 (+20)	Dex 24 (+22)
Con 22 (+21)	Int 14 (+17)
	Wis 18 (+19)
	Cha 16 (+18)

TACTICS

Orcus, initially surprised that his secret has been discovered before he has finished draining the Raven Queen's life and divinity, rallies quickly. He orders his servants to deal with the adventurers while he continues the process of absorbing the Raven Queen's power.



The abyssal madness ghouls swarm the adventurers, attempting to gain flanks and deal damage as they fall to the intruders.

The dread wraith assassins glide out of the shadows to attack with *dread blade* strikes. They work to set up flanks with the abyssal madness ghouls to make the most of their combat advantage benefit.

The abyssal ghouls and the dread wraith assassins fight to the death for the greater glory of Orcus, the Demon Prince of Undeath.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light. The braziers burn eternally with blue-black spirit fires that are cold and harmless. They, and the glowing souls in the sky above, fully illuminate this area. Note that the dread wraith assassins reduce the light to dim light due to their shroud of night auras when they draw near.

Raven Queen: The senseless body of the Raven Queen is staked to the floor by a shard of the Heart of the Abyss.

Ceiling: To someone inside the chamber, there is no ceiling; however, once a creature flies more than 40 feet up, they discover that they have left the building and that a roof has appeared below them.

Dais and Throne: Stairs (difficult terrain) lead to a throne of carved bone (DC 35 Religion check to identify them as the dead god Nerull's bones).

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

Obelisks: The five obelisks are 20 feet tall. See **Encounter L3: Throne Room Skill Challenge** on page 60.

ENCOUNTER L3: THRONE ROOM SKILL CHALLENGE

Encounter Level 32 (152,000 XP)

The adventurers have two skill challenges available to them in the throne room of the Raven Queen. The first involves the obelisks that fill the chamber, as Orcus has turned them into a defense to protect him as he finishes with the Raven Queen. In order to reach Orcus, the adventurers must disable the magic of the obelisks so that they can proceed deeper into the throne room.

The second skill challenge involves the shard of the Heart of the Abyss that has pierced the Raven Queen and is draining her life and divinity into Orcus. To remove the shard and save the Raven Queen, the adventurers must successfully complete a skill challenge.

Each of these skill challenges are described, in turn, on this encounter spread.

ALLURING OBELISKS SKILL CHALLENGE

The five obelisks—one in the center of the chamber, and one in each corner—have been commandeered by Orcus to create a defensive shield to protect the Demon Prince as he works to complete the destruction of the Raven Queen. Necrotic energy now infuses the obelisks, energy keyed to Orcus and designed to hinder, trap, or even destroy any would-be rescuers come to save the Raven Queen.

As soon as an adventurer moves within 4 squares of any obelisk, read:

The obelisk suddenly pulses with dark energy, striking out at you with tendrils as cold as undeath.

Level: 30 (XP 19,000)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Special: Each obelisk must be defeated using a separate skill challenge. The trap loses potency with each obelisk that is disabled.

Skills Used in this Challenge: Arcana, Athletics, Religion, Thievery.

Arcana (DC 30, standard action): The character uses arcane knowledge to begin to disrupt the flow of magic through the obelisk.

Athletics (DC 21, standard action): The character uses strength and physical power to damage the obelisk. This effort also results in a backlash of necrotic energy; the character takes 10 necrotic damage.

Religion (DC 35, standard action): The character uses knowledge of religious ceremonies and his or her personal faith to disrupt the necrotic energy flowing through the obelisk.

Thievery (DC 30, standard action): The character uses skill and specialized tools to disable the magical trap imbued within the obelisk.

Alluring Obelisks

Trap

Five 20-foot-tall obelisks are positioned around the throne room. Glowing runes surround each one.

Trap: Anytime a living creature enters a square within 4 squares of an obelisk, it is attacked by Orcus's trap.

Perception

No check is required to see the obelisks.

Additional Skill: Arcana

♦ DC 35: The character recognizes the obelisks form some sort of necrotic trap.

Trigger

When a living creature moves into a square within 4 squares of an obelisk, the obelisk attacks.

Special: Orcus is immune to this trap, but can use the obelisks to teleport from one to another as part of his move action. When he teleports, he is not immobilized.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Ranged 4**

Target: One creature

Attack: +35 vs. Fortitude

Hit: $5d10 + 9$ necrotic damage, and the target is pulled to an open square adjacent to the obelisk. While the target is adjacent to the obelisk, it is immobilized, and at the start of the target's turn it takes 20 necrotic damage. The only way to end the immobilization is by disabling the trap using the skill challenge described on this page.

Miss: Half damage and immobilized (save ends).

Countermeasures

♦ See the skill challenge for details.

Success: If the character or characters adjacent to an obelisk earn 4 successes before 3 failures, this necrotic magic flowing through the obelisk is disrupted and this portion of the trap is disabled.

From this point on, this obelisk no longer functions as a trap. Any characters that were immobilized by the obelisk are no longer affected by that condition. Further, the remaining obelisks in the necrotic web have the damage they deal on a hit reduced by $1d10$. For example, if one obelisk trap is defeated, then the remaining four obelisks deal $4d10 + 9$ necrotic damage instead of $5d10 + 9$ necrotic damage.

Failure: If the characters get 3 failures while attempting to disable one of the obelisk traps, the necrotic energy flowing through that obelisk is released in a single rush of power. Close burst 3; +33 vs. Fortitude; $3d10 + 9$ necrotic damage. In addition, any characters that were adjacent to the obelisk when it exploded are randomly teleported to an empty square adjacent to any still-active obelisk traps. The obelisk that exploded is no longer considered to be an active trap for the rest of this adventure.

Level 30 Lurker

XP 19,000

MOVING THE SHARD

SKILL CHALLENGE

A splinter of raw, solidified evil punctures the Raven Queen's chest and pins her to the floor of the throne room. The Raven Queen is not dead yet, but her energy is being channeled by the shard into Orcus, filling him with the power of the God of Death.

The adventurers must remove the shard of the Heart of the Abyss without killing the Raven Queen.

Level: 30 (XP 57,000)

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Athletics, Endurance, Heal, Nature, Religion.

Arcana (DC 28, standard action): The fabric of magic is altered in the presence of the shard in lethal and corrupting ways. Incanting a basic magical formula helps calm the roil of disrupted essence.

This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in this challenge.

Heal (DC 33, standard action): The shard deals a severe shock to the divine physiology of the Raven Queen. To keep her alive as the characters work to free the shard, all possible healing lore must be brought to bear.

This skill can be used to gain 3 successes in this challenge.

Nature (DC 19, standard action): The shard is not part of this reality, and its presence warps the Shadowfell. By concentrating on the proper cycle of life and death, the influence of the shard is lessened that much more.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

Religion (DC 28, standard action): The perquisites of godhood are being transferred in a slow but steady fashion from Death to Orcus. Intoning special prayers sacred to the Raven Queen helps nullify this connection and bolster the failing God of Death.

This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in this challenge.

Endurance (DC 19, standard action): Touching the shard is difficult to do without suffering searing pain. A success allows the character to resist this effect long enough to make an Athletics check (see below).

The use of this skill doesn't count as a success or failure toward the completion of the challenge, but a success opens up the use of the Athletics skill.

Athletics (DC 28, standard action, after gaining a success with an Endurance check): The shard doesn't want to be removed. A success muscles the shard partially out of the Raven Queen.

This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in this challenge, but can only be employed by a character that first succeeds at an Endurance check.

Secondary Skills: Insight, Perception.

Insight (DC 25, minor action): The Raven Queen might seem senseless and on the verge of death, but her mind watches all that goes on. If one keeps her name at the forefront of their mind while attempting to pull out the shard, her presence aids the effort.

Succeeding on this check provides no success in this challenge, but grants the character a +2 bonus to subsequent skill Athletics and Religion checks made during this challenge.

Perception (DC 28, minor action): The shard stinks of corruption, but handling it just so will allow whoever tries to do so to keep the corruption at bay, and be less likely to accidentally worsen the wound.

Succeeding on this check provides no success in this challenge, but grants the character a +2 bonus to subsequent Endurance and Heal checks made during this challenge.

Success: If the adventurers earn 8 successes, they manage to remove the shard without killing the Raven Queen. When the shard pulls free, Orcus takes 100 damage. Unless Orcus gets his hand on the shard again during this encounter, his plan for seizing Death's power fails. Once the shard is removed, the Raven Queen doesn't revive until the encounter ends. See "Conclusion" on page 63 for additional details.

Failure: If the adventurers get 3 failures, the Raven Queen dies. Her power is transferred to Orcus. It takes time for him to digest his new divinity, but in the short term he is fully healed and gains a +10 bonus to damage rolls, a +2 bonus to all defenses, and 400 additional hit points. See "Conclusion" on page 63 for additional details.

ENCOUNTER L4: THRONE ROOM, BATTLE TWO

Encounter Level 32 (152,000 XP)

SETUP

Orcus (O)

The Raven Queen (R)

10 demonic skeleton defilades

Orcus stays out of the fight until the adventurers manage to get past the obelisk traps or once they begin to try to remove the shard from the Raven Queen (see Encounter L3). Conversely, he joins the battle as soon as the adventurers attack him. When Orcus prepares to enter the fray, read:

The Demon Prince reaches into a pouch hanging from his belt and pulls a handful of something from it. With a wave of his hand, he scatters the handful before him. The small objects clatter across the stone floor, and you see that they are small bones. As the bones come to rest, a strange metamorphosis takes place. Each bone immediately grows into a human-sized skeleton, complete with a sword and shield. The skeletons have a demonic caste to the structure of their bones, all jagged and slightly misshapen.

Place the skeletons within 5 squares of Orcus. These demonic skeletons serve as defenders for the mighty Orcus, wading forward to attack the adventurers. As the skeletons advance, Orcus personally enters the battle. He starts out by advancing on the adventurers closest to the fallen Raven Queen. Read:

"I am close to my goal, and godhood is within my grasp," Orcus roars. "I will not be hindered by the likes of you. Not ever again!"

10 Demonic Skeleton Defilades

Medium elemental humanoid (undead)

Level 30 Minion

XP 4,750 each

Initiative +25 Senses Perception +22; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 46; Fortitude 42, Reflex 43, Will 42

Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic

Speed 6

⊕ Demon Blade (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Necrotic

+37 vs. AC; 15 poison and necrotic damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton's next turn and slowed (save ends).

Speed of the Dead

Whenever an adjacent enemy performs any action, the skeleton makes an immediate *demon blade* attack and deals an extra 1d8 damage on a hit.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal

Str 25 (+22)

Dex 27 (+23)

Wis 24 (+22)

Con 23 (+21)

Int 13 (+16)

Cha 13 (+16)

Orcus Empowered (O)

Gargantuan elemental humanoid (demon)

Level 34 Solo Brute (Leader)

XP 195,000

Initiative +23

Senses Perception +29; darkvision

Aura of Death (Necrotic) aura 20; each enemy that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes 10 necrotic damage (20 necrotic damage while Orcus is bloodied).

The Dead Rise aura 6; enemies (including flying ones) treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain, and any dead creature within the aura at the start of Orcus's turn (except those killed by the *Wand of Orcus*) rises as an abyssal madness ghoul to fight at Orcus's command.

HP 1,525; Bloodied 762

AC 48; Fortitude 51, Reflex 46, Will 49

Immune disease, poison, necrotic; Resist 20 acid, 20 cold, 20 radiant
Saving Throws +5

Speed 6, fly 10 (clumsy), teleport 6

Action Points 2

⊕ Wand of Orcus (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon

Reach 4; +38 vs. AC; 3d12 + 12 damage plus 1d12 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends); see also master of undeath.

↳ Sweeping Blow (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon

Close blast 4; +36 vs. AC; 2d12 + 12 damage plus 1d12 necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone; see also master of undeath.

⊕ Touch of Death (standard; recharge []) ♦ Necrotic

Reach 4; +34 vs. Fortitude; the target is reduced to 0 hit points (resistance or immunity to necrotic damage does not apply). Miss: The target takes necrotic damage equal to its bloodied value.

⊕ Tail Lash (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves or shifts into a square adjacent to Orcus; at-will)

+37 vs. AC; 2d8 + 12 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of Orcus's next turn and is knocked prone.

↳ Necrotic Burst (standard; recharge []) ♦ Healing, Necrotic

Close burst 10; +38 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 12 necrotic damage, and all undead in the burst regain 20 hit points.

Master of Undeath

At the start of Orcus's turn, any creature killed by the *Wand of Orcus* that is still dead rises as a dread wraith under Orcus's command.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Abyssal, Common

Skills Arcana +29, History +29, Intimidate +32, Religion +29

Str 35 (+29) Dex 22 (+23) Wis 25 (+24)

Con 33 (+28) Int 25 (+24) Cha 30 (+27)

Equipment Wand of Orcus

TACTICS

Orcus readies an action to use his *touch of death* attack (at reach 4) when any creature moves within 4 squares of him. He uses *touch of death* again as soon as it recharges. He doesn't have to remain beside the Raven Queen, but if the adventurers gain 4 or more successes in the Removing the Shard skill challenge, he turns his attention to those continuing to try to remove the shard.

Orcus normally would not fight to the bitter end. However, he has spent many centuries seeing this particular plan to unseat the Raven Queen through to fruition. The Demon Prince of Undeath takes more chances with his

own safety, and lingers to fight on if things still seem touch and go all the way to the end. He won't even reserve an action point for escape—he'll use both offensively, in hopes of bringing down the PCs.

However, if it becomes clear that the adventurers will succeed in their task to thwart Orcus, the Demon Prince recognizes that discretion is the better part of valor. He flies up out of the throne room, and then down into the courtyard beyond, trying to make for the magic circle inscribed there. If he can reach it, he triggers a pre-cast ritual which opens a temporary portal between the circle and his fortress Everlost.

Other allies of Orcus in the chamber are not concerned about PCs attempting to remove the shard from the Raven Queen. They focus their attention on adventurers who threaten Orcus.

CONCLUSION

If the adventurers are victorious, Orcus and his allies are slain or chased away, and the shard is successfully removed from the Raven Queen. When the Raven Queen revives, she addresses the adventurers:

"You've proven yourselves Fate's true champions. Heed my words. The fulcrum of the future rested on your shoulders. And you did not disappoint!"

"The souls of every mortal creature and not a few immortal ones as well are in your debt. Had Orcus achieved his goal, even the worst depredations of Nerull and the primordials before him who consumed souls for energy would have paled. Orcus planned on nothing less than reanimating every soul as an undead soldier. All dead would become undead, and with an army of servitors whose size swelled by a thousand-thousand each day, Orcus would have one day stormed all the domains of the gods, perhaps becoming the sole divine being."

"Perhaps. But you prevented this. And for that, the multiverse is eternally grateful."

A HERO'S REWARD

The Raven Queen can offer the adventurers a treasure of incredible value, beginning with a level 30 magic item of each character's choice, as well as a chest containing 160 astral diamonds.

DESTROY THE WAND

The Raven Queen is saved, Orcus is destroyed, and the last adventure is concluded—unless the adventurers are up for one final challenge as 30th-level heroes in full possession of their epic destiny powers. They can pledge to destroy the *Wand of Orcus* in order to make sure the Demon Prince of the Undead can never return again.

Destroying the *Wand* requires an extraordinary effort, and can take whatever form you desire. Check out www.dndinsider.com for some suggestions.

If the adventurers are interested, they might also claim the *Shard of Evil* and the *Wand of Orcus*. Of course, these are both items of evil. Adventurers are best served destroying them (especially the *Wand*, lest Orcus one day return), but it might be that they can find a short use for them as they seek the immortality each of their epic destinies promise.

After the initial thrill of victory, the adventurers should relish their accomplishments. They've saved the world from a dark age under Orcus.

The time has come for the adventurers to wrap up their careers, to seek the immortality their epic destinies promise. The achievement of their destinies could play off events that occurred during their play in the epic tier.

For instance, gods might well invite characters who have the demigod epic destiny to join their court. Archmages might look back on all the incredible places they've adventured and decide to choose one as their sanctum sanctorum.

The adventurers are now among the most powerful mortal creatures in existence. They will be counted as heroes now and forever.

FAILURE

Somewhere during the adventure, the player characters were distracted, killed off, or corrupted. If the PCs fail early enough, perhaps they can roll up new characters and attempt the final few encounters to stop Orcus's ultimate victory in the Raven Queen's throne room.

However, if failure comes at the adventure's end, then Orcus succeeds in his ghastly plan. The Raven Queen is killed, and in your campaign Orcus grabs control of the power and kingdom of Death.

As promised, this ushers in a terrible era. Rather than sending souls to their final fate, Orcus hoards them as animate undead in an army of ever-swelling numbers. If allowed to continue, the number of undead soon outnumber the living, and Orcus moves forward with this vast force to become the most powerful divine being in the multiverse!

Opportunities for roleplaying within this new, darker campaign are extensive, and potentials for redemption would be abundant, should you wish it.

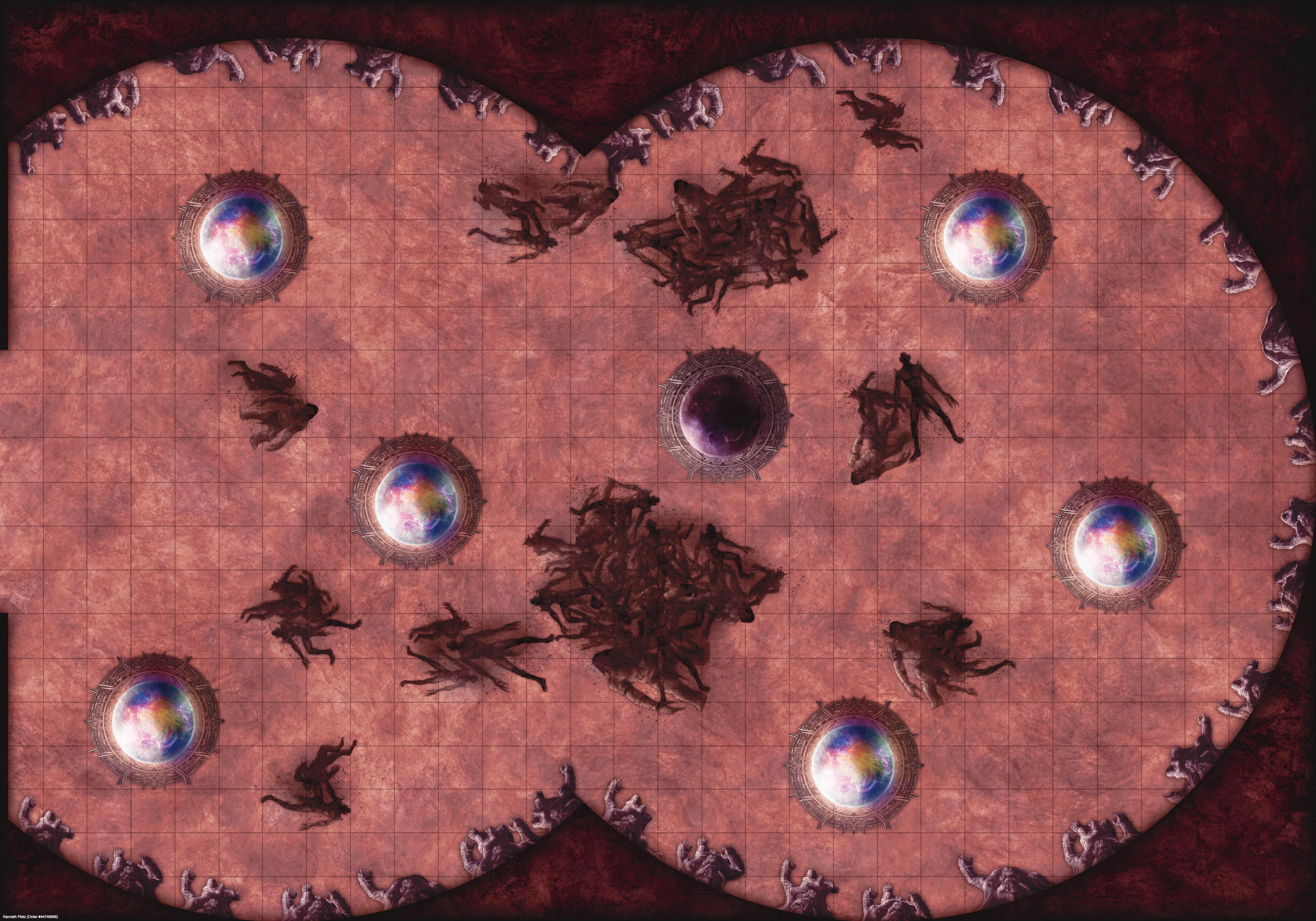
WHAT IF THE PCS KILL ORCUS?

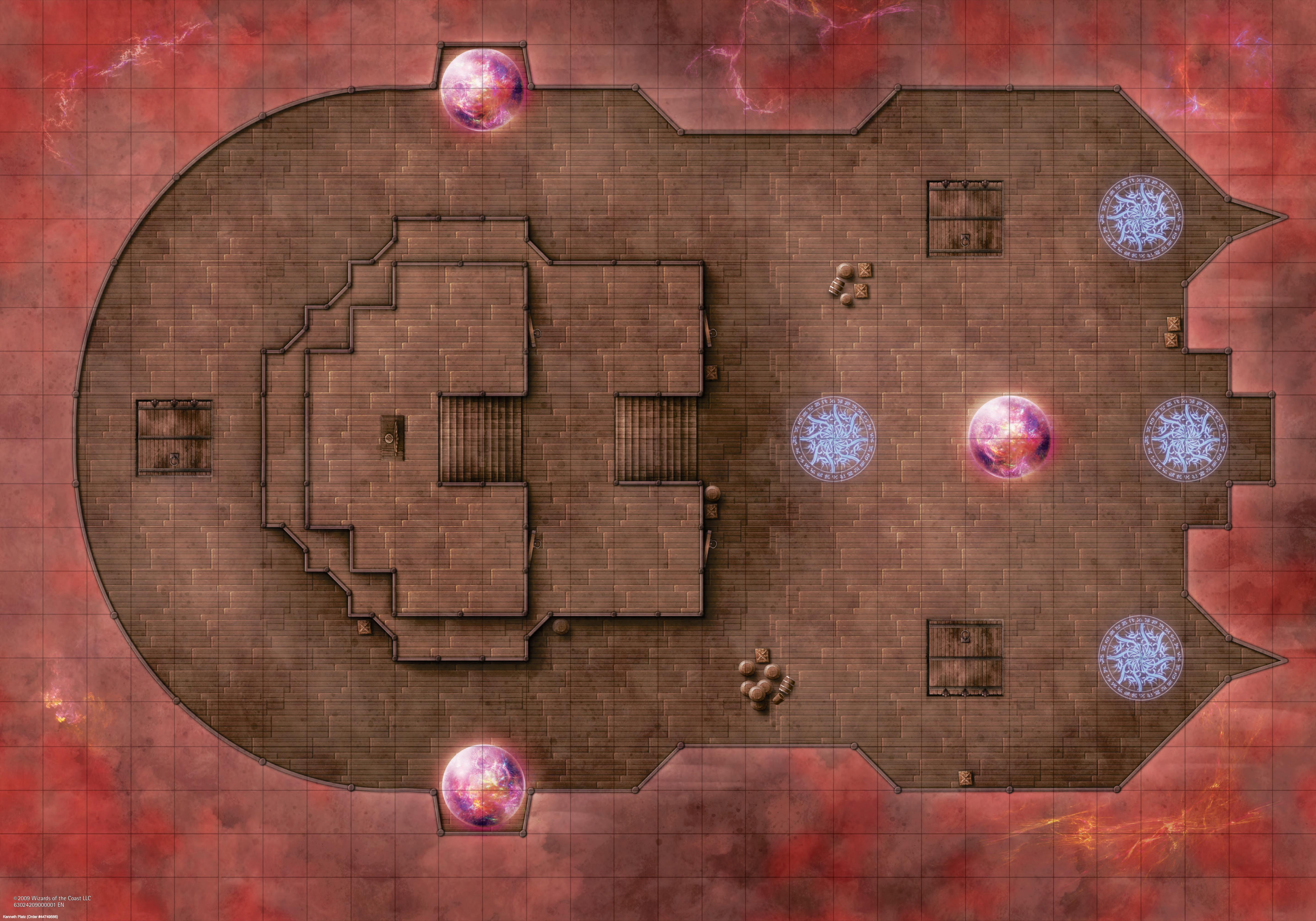
If the adventurers succeed, it is possible that they killed Orcus in the process.

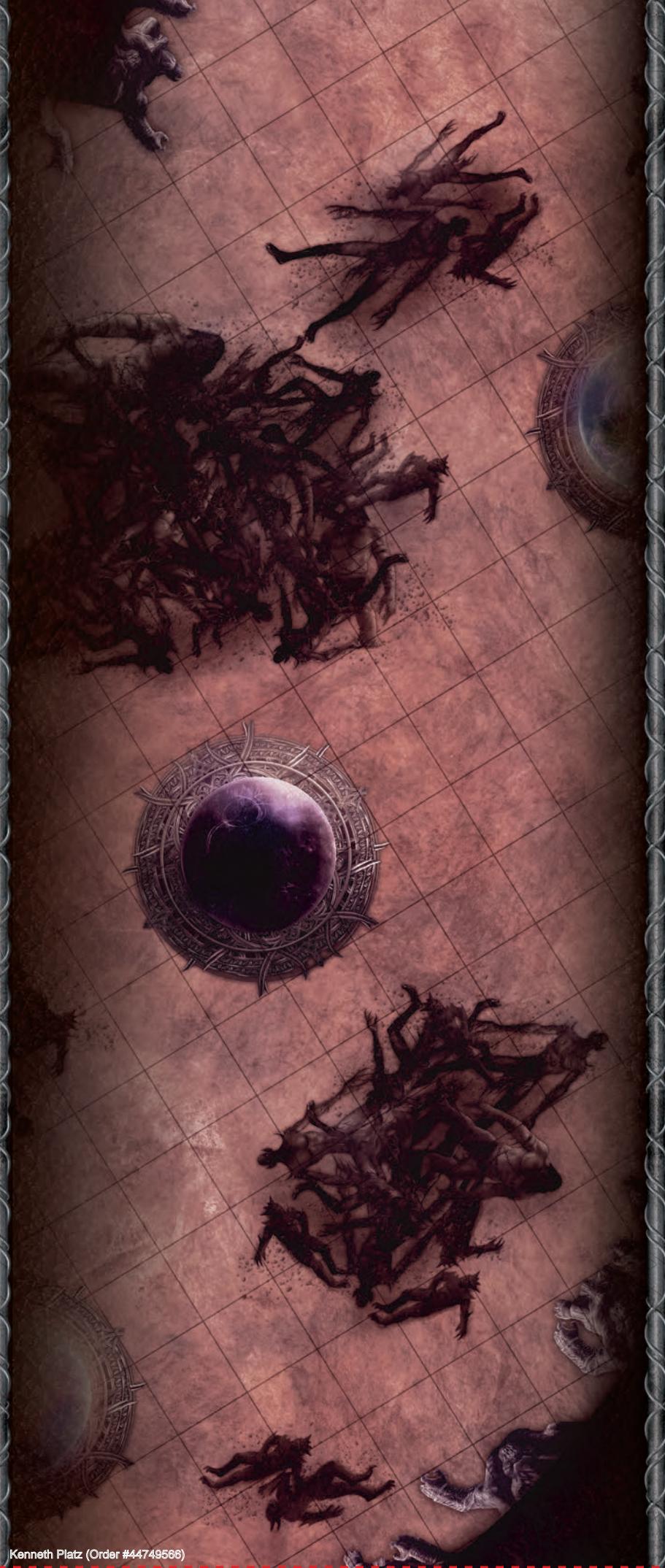
If Orcus is slain, it is local to your campaign—the cosmology of the D&D world does not change. The greater story of the world of D&D as published in our books and online articles will continue to assume that Orcus remains an active threat.

However, in your own campaign, Orcus's death creates an incredible power vacuum in the Abyss. Even gods are likely to take note, especially Vecna, who has desired to discover the last few secrets the Demon Prince kept from him. For you, Orcus's death offers many possibilities for your next D&D campaign—who shall rise to claim the throne of Orcus?









FACE THE ULTIMATE EVIL

Orcus, the Demon Prince of Undeath, craves the power of the Raven Queen and mastery of death's domain. The key to his ascension—and the secret to his destruction—lies buried in the heart of the Abyss. As heroes chase Orcus into the abyssal depths, evil opposes them at every turn, and each victory brings them closer to their final fate.

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