

# 5TH EDITION CONVERSION



## GLOOM EVILS™

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Converted by badooga



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## FIFTH EDITION CONVERSION

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Discord - a lot of you guys on D&D discord servers like the  
Discord of Many Things helped me out with this conversion.  
Thanks for all the help!

### CONVERTER'S NOTE: WELCOME!

Welcome to *Elder Evils 5e*! I hope you enjoy this conversion. To view the statistics for all of the monsters referenced in this document, see the standalone document on [GM Binder](#). You can also download a PDF version of the bestiary document on [Google Drive](#). Also note that this book refers to content from the original *Elder Evils* book; as such, you will need to acquire your own copy of the book in order to use it alongside this one.

Please feel free to use the content of this book however you'd like, as long as credit is given as appropriate. Have fun!

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Additionally, plenty of the stat blocks in this book were built off of official stat blocks like the star spawn larva mage (MTF), the atropal (ToA), the ixitxachitl (OotA), and plenty of others. I do not take credit for creating these monsters; I only used them as foundations for my own content.

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# INTRODUCTION

When elder evils stir, the world groans; when they awaken, the world weeps. Buried in the deepest bowels of the Underdark, hidden in the farthest reaches of the multiverse, or lost in the gulfs between realities are terrible things that exist only to destroy or horribly remake creation. So mighty are these ancient beings that even the gods think twice about standing against them. Mortals who are aware of their existence viciously suppress that knowledge and destroy any who would serve such things. Even if an elder evil can be forced back to whence it came, its mere presence changes the world forever. In short, it is a campaign ender.

## EVIL TO CHALLENGE THE GODS

The *Elder Evils* supplement presents a catalog of some of the most infamous and terrible creatures ever to plague the multiverse. From an undead world "born" at the moment of creation, to terrifying monstrosities that clawed their way out of the Abyss, to unthinkable entities from beyond the planes, these beings exemplify horrors that can destroy not just a kingdom but entire worlds or even existence itself.

Most elder evils have been imprisoned by great heroes, deities, or other powerful beings who fear their release. Yet they are not so easily forgotten: Whispers of their existence seduce the mad and villainous, promising great power in exchange for release. Thus, each elder evil presented here has one or more servants, also described in detail.

**Chapter 1. Evil Does Not Sleep:** This section provides suggestions for introducing an elder evil into the campaign as well as signs that bring the end times to your world. New cult features and malefic properties add horror and power to elder evils and their servants.

**Chapter 2. Atropus:** This moonlike orb is the stillborn afterbirth of the world's creation, an undead entity that designs nothing less than the end of the entire multiverse.

**Chapter 3. Father Llymic:** Although his body lies frozen in a prison of ice, the mind of this utterly alien being is glacially aware. His corrosive form slowly infects his surroundings, reaching gradually to make the world a part of himself. His corrupt Brood roams free, spreading evil in preparation for their master's awakening.

**Chapter 4. Hulks of Zoretha:** Left behind in the wake of a world-shaking storm a century past, these enigmatic monoliths hold a secret known by only a few. The Hulks are the seeds of a monstrous colonization project, awaiting a signal from a parallel plane. Once it is received, they will animate to carve a path of destruction.

**Chapter 5. Leviathan:** Leviathan is a creature of bestial intelligence whose enormous coils wrap the world. It sleeps in the deepest trenches of the seas, spawning tsunamis, whirlpools, and earthquakes as it restlessly shifts. Now mad cultists seek to wake the beast and submerge all the lands.

**Chapter 6. Pandorym:** Pandorym is a doomsday weapon, an entity from beyond the multiverse. Ancient wizards summoned it as a deterrent to defend their empire from vengeful deities. However, the raging gods ended the kingdom's reign before it could release the weapon. Pandorym now lingers, its essence split and imprisoned, waiting for release—and vengeance.

**Chapter 7. Ragnorra:** Arising in a time before creation, Ragnorra is a force of perverted life that births monstrosities from her swollen body. The deities cast her into the sky, but she reappears as a blood-red comet every 500 years. Dreadful seed and falling stars produce monstrous offspring in worlds Ragnorra approaches—and now she smashes into worlds to remake them directly.

**Chapter 8. Sertrous:** Sertrous began as a demon, one of the obyriths—a remnant demonic race shuddering toward extinction. With the rise of the tanar'ri, Sertrous was exiled from the Abyss and took the form of a monstrous serpent, granting vile powers to the yuan-ti in exchange for their service. Even though he was slain, Sertrous lingers in spirit and continues to corrupt the snake people. His followers, the Vanguard of Sertrous, employ intrigue and magic to gain influence and ultimately bring about the end of the world.

**Chapter 9. The Worm that Walks:** This elder evil is the memory of a slain corporeal god. Its essence transferred itself to the worms and maggots that devoured the deity's corpse, forming a hideous but vaguely humanoid shape. The horror was sealed away in an obelisk by heroes of a previous age. It seeks ever to escape and eat its way to world domination, one writhing victim at a time.

**Chapter 10. Zargon:** According to legend, Zargon cannot be killed unless his horn is severed from his body, and if his horn is not destroyed, he will inevitably return to claim it. The immortals could not discover a means of destroying his horn, and thus they entombed Zargon and a whole city of his mad worshipers in a place now lost to history.





# EVIL DOES NOT SLEEP

*"And I looked upon the Thing and I wept tears of blood, for I knew my land, my people, my very world was dead."*

— Ancient scroll recovered from the Valley of Death

The following pages present incomprehensible horrors, threats to the campaign setting so powerful as to bring it to an end. These beings have nothing less in mind than the utter destruction of a world or even existence itself. Even if their genocidal plans are not completely realized, they can leave the world unrecognizable.

Elder evils are not just monsters with impressive Challenge Ratings. They are campaign capstones. Their abilities outstrip those of even the most powerful player characters. In some cases, the party does not confront the elder evil itself, but only a mighty extension of its foul will. It might be possible to fight and even defeat such creatures, but their very existence unalterably changes the world.

If ending the world isn't on your horizon just yet, the foes described in the following chapters make exciting challenges for your campaign's high-level adventurers. They and their powerful minions are the basis for grand story arcs that pit the characters against the greatest threats facing their existence. As an individual challenge, any of the monsters presented here offers a memorable confrontation. An adventure need not conclude with encountering the elder evil itself; the party might thwart the plans of villains early enough to prevent an apocalyptic outcome.

If you are ready to bring your campaign to a close, though, start with this chapter. It sets out the basics of incorporating these beings into your world's history. As well, it provides some advice on ending it all in a way that is not only memorable and exciting, but satisfying too.

## THE END TIMES

*"The shrieks, the laughter, the wailing! We were going mad. We knew not why or how, but delusions and hallucinations ruled our feverish minds."*

You might be wondering why you should ever end your campaign: Things are going fine, and you're having fun.

To cite a cliché, all good things must come to an end. Even if you're not ready to stop now, one day you will be. At some point, the party ascends the heady heights of the fourth tier of play, and fewer and fewer foes can challenge them.

When player characters own castles and lands, command continent-spanning organizations, lead entire religious movements, or are generals of armies no longer content with mortal wars, your campaign is approaching a natural close. You could forge on, having the party challenge the gods themselves, but even then, the tale has to end someday.

Ending a campaign is a significant achievement. It is a natural conclusion to all the stories you and your players have told together, and it gives everyone a feeling of accomplishment after years of play. In addition, bringing your campaign to a close lets you embark on something different, exploring new worlds and possibilities—in short, death leads to rebirth.

## INCORPORATING ELDER EVILS

Elder evils lurk on the fringes of existence. They have always been and always will be. Although they can be as powerful as demigods—sometimes more so—they are not deities. They aren't interested in mortals except to wipe them out. Gods create and attend their creations; elder evils unravel them.

The mere presence of an elder evil threatens reality. Such power is difficult to conceal. If the party hasn't heard even a whisper of the entity to date, why and how has it masked its presence? Uncovering this mystery can be as thrilling a challenge as the final confrontation itself.

The secrecy of an elder evil depends on your needs as the Dungeon Master. If you're starting a new campaign and plan to end it in a confrontation with a world-threatening entity, plant the seeds early and drop hints over time. If you've decided recently to bring things to a head, there's nothing wrong with suddenly revealing the elder evil.

When introducing these terrifying entities into an established campaign, use what you already have. Recurring villains or their minions work well when the party already has an inkling of the nemesis. For example, when the nefarious high priest of Nerull reveals that she is in fact an accomplice of the Worm that Walks (see Chapter 9), the revelation is as logical as it is horrifying. On the other hand, a major campaign villain might turn out to be the elder evil itself. Faceless, recurring villains hide their identities behind several masks; as the campaign develops, the party exposes (or believe they expose) their true enemy again and again until you're ready to reveal the ultimate truth.

## READING THE ENTRIES

Each of the chapters of the original book describes an elder evil, its motivations and servants, and signs of its approach, as well as providing a sample story arc to help you introduce the threat into your campaign. A given entry uses the format below.

To respect the intellectual property of the original creators, this document only notes changes with respect to the source material. It also includes Signs of Apocalypse that are rebuilt to fit 5th Edition design philosophies.

### BACKGROUND

This section opens with a paragraph of common knowledge and continues with several paragraphs of specialized knowledge. Learning one of these pieces of information about an elder evil requires an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check, as listed in the original book. While the DC of each check remains up to the DM, they should range from Moderate (DC 15) to Nearly Impossible (DC 30). Alternatively, the DM may decide that this information cannot be acquired except through certain methods of research or interaction with the campaign world.

### GOAL

This section follows the same format as the Background entry, but the lore entries reveal ever more secret details of the elder evil's ultimate purpose.



# THE ELDER EVIL IN THE CAMPAIGN

This section sets out a sample story arc with increasingly difficult challenges, culminating in the final confrontation with the elder evil. The Suggested Level of these challenges correspond with strengthening signs of the apocalypse, as detailed later in this chapter. Each chapter includes a section that describes the game effects of that elder evil's sign.

Two subsections suggest ways to adapt the elder evil to the *Forgotten Realms*® and *Eberron*™ campaign settings.

**Variant Usage.** This subsection presents an original variant on how an elder evil might fit in a unique campaign setting, or it may present alternate plot hooks or story details to be used as appropriate.

You can adapt any of the example elder evils in this book so that they fit better into your setting's history. For example, planar campaigns or campaigns that use Spelljammers might wish to change the default locations given in the original book to better fit the setting they are a part of.

## DESCRIPTION

Here follow physical details of the elder evil. Important servants and minions are also presented in this section. Statistics for these creatures can be found in a separate document, linked [here](#).

## ENCOUNTER INFORMATION

Each entry has an overview map of the area in which the final confrontation occurs. Specific encounter areas are described in narrative, some with suggested Encounter Levels, and a few are tied to tactical encounters at the end of the chapter.

Each tactical encounter includes a map of the room or area in which it takes place. The information includes creature statistics and tactics, initial positions of combatants, the locations of traps or other hazards, and other details important to the encounter.

# SIGNS OF APOCALYPSE

An elder evil, or its mortal minions, might be active through the life of the campaign, but only when the horror awakens, arrives, or sets its plans in motion does the world know of it. This awakening manifests as a sign: the physical, magical, or psychological imprint of the elder evil. A sign reflects an aspect of the being's purpose and nature, and it influences the entire campaign setting. Sometimes it appears not by the will of the entity itself (which would rather not tip its hand), but as a warning from the gods, who are often constrained from direct involvement.

## INTRODUCING SIGNS

When adjudicating a sign's influence, describe in flavorful narrative how it alters the world around the party. (Refer to the quotations that introduce each sign for inspiration to guide your story.)

After a sign appears and gains strength, its effect can be nearly as devastating as the elder evil itself; even if the threat is dealt with, this lingering influence leaves the world a much different place. Since signs have such widespread effects, handling them within the context of the game can be daunting. The sample story arcs in the following chapters suggest ways to heighten a given sign gradually over time. When it finally becomes overwhelming—heralding the imminent arrival of the threat—the party's average level should be high enough to resist all but the worst effects.

## IDENTIFYING SIGNS

To ordinary mortals, the appearance of a sign is a mysterious phenomenon—foreboding and sinister, to be sure, but without obvious significance. Only individuals who have the proper training and experience, who are steeped in ancient or forbidden knowledge, have any chance to recognize its grim implications.

To identify a sign for what it is, a character must succeed on an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check, as appropriate. The check DC depends on the sign's intensity, as set out in the following table. As the effect of the sign becomes more pervasive, its meaning grows ever more clear. A faint sign might be simply unsettling, but at its height, its influence is inescapable.

| Intensity    | DC |
|--------------|----|
| Faint        | 23 |
| Moderate     | 19 |
| Strong       | 15 |
| Overwhelming | 11 |

By succeeding on this check, a character knows the sign is an evil omen. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, the character can identify the sign's strength, and succeeding by 10 or more reveals all the ramifications of its effect (including the identity of the elder evil).

## SIGNS REVEALED

The following signs are examples of those that could accompany an elder evil's approach; you might prefer to design your own, taking inspiration from these entries. Each section describes the effect of the sign at the four intensities listed above.

Some entries suggest ways of varying the sign's influence to better suit the needs of the campaign.

### BLOOD MOON

*"And the moon shone crimson, drenching the lands with the color of blood. In its ill-omened light, people went mad with rage and turned on each other in hate."*

The pale disk of silver hanging in the night sky transforms, assuming a ghastly hue. At first, it darkens to an orange tone like that of a harvest moon, but as the sign approaches its peak, it turns the color of blood.

**Effect:** The sign of the blood moon sets tempers on edge, making living creatures irritable and aggressive. Ultimately, they are consumed by involuntary rage.



**Details:** The Hulks of Zoretha are associated with this sign. See Chapter 4 for more information.

## DEAD SUN

*"The sun did not rise. Hours turned into days, days into weeks, and still the blanket of darkness shrouded all. A cruel, dark winter was upon us, freezing the warmth of our blood."*

When this sign appears, the light dies. The days grow shorter, and temperatures drop until finally the sun vanishes from the sky, plunging the world into perpetual night.

**Effect:** Natural and magical lighting diminish as the sign strengthens, until the sun no longer rises.

**Details:** Father Llymic is associated with this sign. See Chapter 3 for more information.

**Variants:** Instead of the sun disappearing completely, planetary rotation slows so that, ultimately, one side of the world is bathed in perpetual light while the other is plunged into eternal darkness. The effects of the sign on the dark side function as normal. On the light side, the effects are reversed: The range of natural light sources doubles; sunrise occurs earlier and sunset later; spells that produce darkness are impeded and light-producing spells are enhanced. Finally, global average temperatures climb rather than drop. The glaring light and heat are as great a disaster as endless dark, ultimately rendering the light side a lifeless ruin.

## EERIE WEATHER

*"Frogs fell from the sky for hours. The next day, flaming stones showered us, killing all they touched. Then it snowed for three weeks. Who knows what's next?"*

This sign alters the weather in drastic and unnatural ways. Snow in the summer and sweltering heat in the winter are just the beginning. Hurricanes lash the coastlines, destroy villages, or flood entire cities; tornadoes rip apart the countryside; and bizarre weather effects become commonplace. All the while, sickening green clouds form, and violet lightning dances between them.

**Effect:** When this sign manifests, it creates strange and random meteorological effects. The intensity of the sign determines the extent, duration, and frequency of the unusual weather.

**Details:** The Leviathan and Zargon are associated with this sign. See Chapters 5 and 10 for more information.

## INFESTATION

*"Do you hear that? That terrible sound! The scratching, the endless scratching in the wall—and the rats! They're everywhere, choking us, drowning us!"*

The world shudders beneath a flood of loathsome creatures birthed from the depths of the seas or the dankest pits of the Underdark. Armies of hideous monsters march to the pulse of the lurid sign. The infestation sweeps across the lands, devouring everything in its path.

**Effect:** The type of infestation depends on the nature of the elder evil. Aberrations, animals, plants, oozes, undead, and vermin are typical choices, though some magical beasts, outsiders, and even humanoids could work too. As the sign grows in strength, so too do the numbers, increasing the challenge of the encounter. The creatures spread throughout the campaign setting as the sign grows stronger, and encounters range from single fights to desperate stands against vast armies.

**Details:** Sertrous and the Worm that Walks are associated with this sign. See Chapters 8 and 9 for more information.

**Variants:** Infestations need not be combat encounters. Swarms serve well in this role: Clouds of locusts devour crops, numberless rats spread disease, and creeping spiders drape entire cities in webbing.

## RESTLESS DEAD

*"Too long have we reveled in our wickedness, too long have we sampled the forbidden—now the gods shun us, sealing the gates to heaven and leaving us lost among the dead."*

When this sign appears, the demarcation between life and death grows ever more blurry. After souls depart, their bodies stir in a wretched existence neither alive nor dead. The sign of the restless dead first makes itself known by isolated occurrences of zombies and skeletons in the community. As it strengthens, the undead plague increases. Corpses pull themselves free from graves, slaughtering former friends and lovers and swelling their ranks until only the shuffling dead remain.

**Effect:** In the early stages of this sign, only a few of the dead spontaneously animate. Necromancy magic becomes more efficacious, while healing magic is suppressed. As the sign intensifies, more and more corpses rise, growing stronger all the while.

**Details:** Atropus is associated with this sign. See Chapter 2 for more information.

## SEAL OF BINDING

*"Unnatural things walk the streets, horrors spewed up from the pits of hell. How did they get here? Will they ever depart?"*

A fiery glyph appears in the sky, casting dim light. Aside from its sudden and unusual appearance, the symbol seems to be harmless, but those who communicate with planar beings or use magical methods of travel feel its effect at once. As the sign intensifies, the glyph grows more complex, spreading like a weird stain across the heavens.

**Effect:** The seal of binding interferes with most conjuration spells and many divination spells by closing off the avenues that enable mortals to interact with the planes. Clerics' connections with the divine are severed, summoned creatures do not return to their home planes, and dimensional travel ceases to function.

**Details:** Pandorym is associated with this sign. See Chapter 6 for more information.



## TWISTED LIFE

*"We argued about which deity had granted us the boon and blamed harmful effects on infernal forces. When we should have taken action, we instead wasted time on pointless wrangling. Only now can we see the hideous truth."*

This sign first manifests with accelerated healing. Soon, though, living creatures and inanimate objects become covered with festering boils, which burst to expel swarms of pests. Not long after this boon comes a light rain of spores, dotting the landscape with foul growths that spawn horrid abominations and spread corruption across the land. As the sign strengthens, wounds close almost instantly, but flesh grows pustulent and bones distend as life becomes corrupted. At its peak, all undead but the most powerful and hidden are obliterated. The dead rise as gibbering aberrations, and the living mutate into twisted progeny.

**Effect:** This sign manifests as a surge of corrupt positive energy that resculpts life on an entire world.

**Details:** Ragnorra is associated with this sign. See Chapter 7 for more information.

## ADDITIONAL SIGNS

When creating your own elder evil, use the following signs as inspiration. Alter the effects to fit the theme of your elder evil when necessary.

### ALIEN SKIES

*"I peered into the heavens, searching for familiar sights, but found nothing I knew. All was strange and disquieting, as though we were adrift in alien seas."*

After the sun sets, the stars twinkle in the heavens as always—but they are strange. They glow luridly with weird colors, spreading fear and wonder in all who behold them. Familiar constellations vanish, re-form, or shift to new locations. As the sign reaches its peak, distorting the arcane energies of the world, unsettling auroras and intense meteor showers illuminate the night skies.

**Faint:** The DC for any saving throw made to maintain concentration on a spell is increased by 2.

**Moderate:** As faint, but whenever a creature deals damage with a spell, the damage of the spell is randomly changed to one of the following damage types (roll a d10 to determine the damage type): acid, cold, fire, force, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, radiant, or thunder.

**Strong:** As moderate, but the DC for saving throws made to maintain concentration on a spell is increased by 5 (from 2). Additionally, all creatures gain a +2 bonus to saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Overwhelming:** As strong, but whenever a creature casts a spell, roll a d20. On a 20, the creature must roll on the Wild Magic Surge table to create a random magical effect.

## APPALLING FECUNDITY

*"The peasants believed they had been blessed: Their crops grew quickly, women bore healthy children in weeks rather than months, and the harvest was the best ever. At first, life was good. But the growth never slowed. Everything birthed and died with such speed that we could hear Nature suffering. Disease was rampant, and vermin spread it everywhere; there was no end to the screams of the afflicted."*

Growth and healing are accelerated. At first crops and animals grow and reproduce with unnatural swiftness, and injuries vanish overnight. As the sign intensifies, these early benefits run out of control. Fruit bursts and rots on the vine before it can be harvested. Weeds crack pavement and damage buildings. Clouds of vermin boil up from the earth, laying eggs that hatch and spawn new life in moments, and with them come equally virulent disease.

**Faint:** Ordinary plants are enhanced as if by the *plant growth* spell. Crops benefit from the enrichment effect, while other vegetation suffers from overgrowth and chokes open spaces.

**Moderate:** As faint, but each week at dawn, living creatures are cured as if by the *lesser restoration* spell. Additionally, all plants grow hard spikes and thorns, as the *spike growth* spell.

**Strong:** As moderate, but living creatures that require sleep begin to lose the ability to do so, as their bodies fidget and their thoughts race. Whenever a creature finishes a long rest, it must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or gain no benefit from its rest.

**Overwhelming:** As strong, but the DC of the Constitution saving throw increases to 16. Additionally, flesh grows and heals with terrible speed. Living creatures regain 1 hit point each minute, and severed body parts regrow daily at dawn. Each week at dawn, living creatures must make a DC 11 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature ages by  $1d4 \times 10$  years, but it suffers none of the frailty of old age. Finally, creatures that die due to old age from this effect explode in a shower of gore.

## DRY WINDS

*"From the north came a hot wind, scouring the clouds from the skies. It leached the water from our rivers and lakes, and the mighty oceans receded with each gust."*

Unnaturally warm winds blow from an atypical direction, growing hotter as the sign intensifies and carrying away all moisture.

**Variant:** The inverse of the dry winds sign is dreadful flooding. Clouds pile up overhead, darkening the sky, and they unleash torrents that drench the world. As the sign intensifies, water levels rise by the listed amount rather than fall. Global temperatures cool somewhat: When the sign grows strong, they drop 1d3 degrees, and when it is overwhelming, a further 1d6 degrees. The winds increase as described above but do not deal fire damage.

**Faint:** Natural precipitation stops. Average global temperatures increase by 1d3 degrees, and all bodies and streams of water lose 1d4 feet of depth each week.



**Moderate:** Average global temperatures increase by 1d6 degrees, and all bodies and streams of water lose 1d10 feet of depth each week.

**Strong:** Average global temperatures increase by 2d10 degrees, and all bodies and streams of water lose 1d20 feet of depth each week. Additionally, the dry wind begins to strengthen; calm air becomes a light wind, while a light wind has a 50% chance of becoming a strong wind (see DMG 110 for details).

**Overwhelming:** Average global temperatures increase by 4d10 degrees, and all bodies and streams of water lose 1d100 feet of depth each week. Additionally, the wind strengthens further; all wind becomes a Strong Wind (DMG 110), and wind that was already strong now literally burns. Such wind deals 1d4 points of fire damage to creatures and objects caught in it per hour.

## HORRID BLIGHT

*"Before my very eyes, the waters darkened to the color of coagulated blood. One by one, white shapes bobbed to the surface: fish slain by the tainted sea. And the smell—the air reeked of a slaughterhouse."*

This sign slowly kills the world. Creatures become barren, no longer producing offspring. Animals sicken and die. Plants wither or rot, while disease runs rampant, corrupting all with its horrid touch.

**Faint:** The save DC to resist any disease increases by 2.

**Moderate:** Ordinary plants begin to wither and die. Dead animals and plants become carriers of all manners of contagion and disease, and plant-based food begins to become unsafe to eat.

**Strong:** The save DC to resist any disease increases to 5 (from 2), and living creatures that are suffering from a disease also have disadvantage on death saving throws. Famine is widespread as all forms of organic food are riddled with disease.

**Overwhelming:** Each day at dawn, living creatures must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 8 hours.

## SERVING ELDER EVILS

*"That the Beast shall awaken is inevitable. I'm working to ensure I am the first to die when it does."*

—William von Dreichart, mad cultist

Elder evils do not attract many mortal servants, for their nature is opposed to all living things. A few wretches who despise everything, whether they be nihilists or lunatics, do bow to an elder evil. Annihilation is the only reward for such service. But for those driven by insanity, an unquenchable thirst for vengeance, or myriad other strange and sinister motivations, the utter finality of death is sweet. Aiding an elder evil is the surest means of embracing that much desired end.

Any intelligent and evil creature can swear service to an elder evil if the creature knows of its existence. They may gain a cult feature based on the elder evil they serve, or they may gain a vile feat of their choice.

## ELDER EVIL CULTS

Through generations of study and grim practice, the disciples of certain Elder Evils have mastered the ability to bestow supernatural gifts on minions they select for the privilege. Any creature that serves a cult of Elder Evil can be given one of these rewards - usually as compensation for faithful service, but sometimes as a chance for a creature that breached the cult's laws to redeem itself. The following powers are unique to specific cults, and typically a creature is part of only one elder evil cult at a time.

### ATROPUS THE WORLD BORN DEAD

**Typical Cultists:** Alhoon, archmage, cult fanatic, cultist, lich, mage, mummy, necromancer, any undead

**Signature Spells:** *Toll the dead* (cantrip), *inflict wounds* (1st level), *ray of enfeeblement* (2nd level), *animate dead* (3rd level)

While most of Atropus' heralds are undead who seek to destroy the living, there are some mortals who are wretched enough to give the World Born Dead their undying service. Cultists of Atropus typically act in isolation to advance their master's goals, but cabals of undead or those that associate with undead can also act in Atropus' name, such as the cult headed by the foul ur-priest Cairax Xasten.

Cultists of Atropus often uncover necromantic secrets on their own, but may also be granted powers by the World Born Dead as its arrival draws near. Rank-and-file cultists typically obtain the Gaze of Corruption action option, and cult leaders obtain the Anti-Heal trait through the mastery of negative energy manipulation.

**Gaze of Corruption (Recharge 6).** The cultist targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or take 16 (3d10) necrotic damage and be poisoned for 1 minute. The poisoned target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Anti-Heal** The cultist can activate or deactivate this feature as a bonus action. While active, creatures within 30 feet of the cultist can't magically regain hit points. A creature that were to magically regain hit points must instead make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes necrotic damage equal to the hit points it would have regained.

### FATHER LLYMIC THE ALIEN THOUGHT GIVEN FLESH

**Typical Cultists:** Acolyte, berserker, any brood spawn, cultist, cult fanatic, frost giant, white dragon

**Signature Spells:** *Ray of frost* (cantrip), *ice knife* (1st level), *darkness* (2nd level), *sleet storm* (3rd level)

There is a tribe of barbarians that lives on and near the mountain that houses Father Llymic's tomb. These barbarians worship the Alien Thought Given Flesh and perform alien rituals in his name. Sooner or later, these cultists transform into brood spawn, either by willing self-corruption or by corruption from the brood spawn they consort with.



Most of the time, a creature that encounters the Alien Thought Given Flesh or his minions is transformed into a savage brood spawn. However, there are rumors of creatures that are able to preserve their minds after the transformation, allowing for the existence of shadowy organizations of brood spawn that enact their plans from behind the scenes.

Cultists of Father Llymic perform unholy rituals that transform them into inhuman monsters, eventually turning them into brood spawn. The most devoted of his cultists may even have a chance to interact with Father Llymic's illusory projections, who may reveal to them methods of manipulating ice and becoming icy abominations. These cultists may gain the Icy Touch action option and/or the Chilled Flesh trait.

**Chilled Flesh.** The cultist has resistance to cold damage, and a creature that touches the cultist or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 5 (1d10) cold damage.

**Icy Touch.** *Melee Spell Attack:* bonus to hit equal to the cultist's proficiency bonus plus its Charisma modifier, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) cold damage.

## THE HULKS OF ZORETHA

**Typical Cultists:** Acolyte, berserker, cultist, cult fanatic, ogre, troll

**Signature Spells:** *Vicious mockery* (cantrip), *Tasha's hideous laughter* (1st level), *blindness/deafness* (2nd level), *enemies abound* (3rd level)

Janwulf the Soulbiter rules the cultists of Zoretha with an iron fist, leading them on raids of surrounding settlements and actively recruiting new members. Janwulf himself is not faithful, instead abusing the low intelligence of many berserkers, ogres, and trolls in order to retain his power over them. There are also devotees that act alone, perhaps because they went mad reading the Zoretha Scrolls or were exposed to the Hulks themselves for too long.

Cultists of the Hulks of Zoretha embrace their madness, allowing them to resist mental manipulation or control via the Madness of Zoretha trait. Some cultists can also impose madness onto others via the Mental Overload action option.

**Madness of Zoretha.** The cultist is immune to any spell or effect that would read its thoughts, determine if it is lying, charm or frighten it, or magically influence its thoughts or behavior, unless the spell or effect comes from the Hulks of Zoretha.

**Mental Overload (2/Day).** One creature that can see or hear the cultist must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or experience long-term madness for 8 hours. Consult the Long-Term Madness table (see "Madness Effects" in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) to determine the form of the madness. The affected creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each hour, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## THE LEVIATHAN

**Typical Cultists:** Acolyte, brine cultist, cultist, cult fanatic, any elemental, ixitxachitl, kraken priest, mage, sea spawn

**Signature Spells:** *Shape water* (cantrip), *chaos bolt* (1st level), *enlarge/reduce* (2nd level), *water breathing* (3rd level)

Cultists of The Leviathan are categorized by one interest: chaos. While some cultists pledge their loyalty to a demon lord, others might be ambitious spellcasters who wish to channel chaotic energy in the pursuit of power. With that in mind, chaotic evil cultists are more likely to be Cultists of The Leviathan, as they are more likely to seek The Leviathan's power despite the potential loss of life it may cause.

Cultists of The Leviathan are capable of manipulating the forces of chaos, granting them the Conduit of Chaos trait. Some cultists can also channel chaotic energies directly via the Innate Spellcasting trait.

**Conduit of Chaos.** When the cultist casts a spell that deals damage, it can change the spell's damage type to cold, fire, force, lightning, or thunder.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The cultist's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *chaos bolt*, *create or destroy water*  
2/day each: *misty step*, *protection from energy*  
1/day each: *call lightning*, *watery sphere*

## PANDORYM THE UTTER ANNIHILATION

**Typical Cultists:** Any aberration, acolyte, cultist, cult fanatic, quell

**Signature Spells:** *Encode thoughts* (cantrip), *detect evil and good* (1st level), *detect thoughts* (2nd level), *fly* (3rd level)

Despite Pandorym's attempts to manipulate mortals into freeing him, any attempt to serve the Utter Annihilation typically ends in the death or undeath of the cultist. Most who encounter Pandorym's mind usually have their minds collapse into madness or savagery, but there may be some, like Lucather Majii, that retain enough sanity to act on his behalf.

Whether or not its mind is completely shattered, the influence of Pandorym monopolizes a cultist's mind and psyche, granting it the Stained Psyche trait. You may also choose to have cultists of Pandorym gain psionic abilities via the Innate Spellcasting (Psionics) trait, depending on the context of the cultists' worship and the campaign setting you wish to insert Pandorym into.

**Stained Psyche.** The cultist is immune to any spell or effect that would read its thoughts, determine if it is lying, charm or frighten it, or magically influence its thoughts or behavior, unless the spell or effect comes from Pandorym.

**Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** The cultist's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence. It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:

At will: *jump*, *mage hand* (the hand is invisible)  
2/day each: *command*, *misty step*  
1/day each: *haste* (self only), *telekinesis*



## RAGNORRA THE MOTHER OF MONSTERS

**Typical Cultists:** Aboleth sarcoma, acolyte, cultist, cult fanatic, any malshaper

**Signature Spells:** *Guidance* (cantrip), *cure wounds* (1st level), *alter self* (2nd level), *spirit guardians* (3rd level)

Ragnorra has twisted life not just on the Material Plane, but also on the Ethereal Plane and Plane of Shadow. A handful of refugees from her prior ravages on these planes formed the Malshapers, a cultlike group dedicated to helping the Mother of Monsters perform her grotesque art. These fanatics believe they have a duty to guide Ragnorra to every suitable world. Scholars note, though, that they never target worlds on their home planes.

The Malshapers watch the Astral Plane for signs of Ragnorra's ascent. Once they detect movement, they scout out a suitable location. They strew samples of native life along her likely path, then redraw the astral runes to lure Ragnorra to the target world.

While some standalone cultists or groups who pledge themselves to Ragnorra may exist, most cultists of Ragnorra are sought out by the Malshapers in order to join their ranks.

**Warped Flesh.** The cultist has advantage on saving throws against poison, and it is immune to disease. Additionally, any critical hit against the cultist becomes a normal hit.

**Sculpt Flesh (Recharge 6).** The cultist touches one creature within 5 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or have its flesh warped by unnatural growth, covering it in blisters and tumors. While its flesh is warped in this way, the target is poisoned, its speed is reduced by 10 feet, and it can't use reactions. This effect lasts for 1 minute. The poisoned target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## SERTRIOUS THE PRINCE OF HERETICS

**Typical Cultists:** Acolyte, cultist, cult fanatic, any demon, any yuan-ti

**Signature Spells:** *Sacred flame* (cantrip), *command* (1st level), *spiritual weapon* (2nd level), *bestow curse* (3rd level)

The Vanguard of Sertrous is made up of yuan-ti cultists whose teachings are secretly passed down by the decapitated head of their demonic patron. However, as Sertrous' teachings become more widespread, independent heretics may begin to spread the Prince of Heretic's words throughout normal civilization in the campaign world.

Followers of the teachings of Sertrous are granted the Disciple of Sertrous trait for their loyalty. Additionally, those that do not fear death and do not wish to be revived by their allies may have the Testament of Faith trait.

**Disciple of Sertrous.** The cultist has advantage on saving throws against divine spells, which are spells cast by clerics, paladins, druids, rangers, celestials, and other sources the DM deems appropriate.

**Testament of Faith.** When the cultist is reduced to 0 hit points, it explodes in a burst of divine energy. Each creature within 10 feet of the cultist must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) radiant damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The cultist and everything it is wearing and carrying, except magic items, is reduced to a pile of fine gray dust by this explosion. The cultist's soul then passes into Sertrous' realm in the Abyss; the cultist can't become undead or be brought back to life by any means short of a *wish* spell.

## KYUSS THE WORM THAT WALKS

**Typical Cultists:** Acolyte, avolakia, cultist, cult fanatic, star spawn larva mage, any undead

**Signature Spells:** *Chill touch* (cantrip), *false life* (1st level), *hold person* (2nd level), *vampiric touch* (3rd level)

Many followers of the Worm That Walks also serve or sympathize with Orcus, the Demon Prince of Undead, due to Kyuss' worship of Orcus before his transformation. Unlike other cults of undeath, followers of the Worm That Walks often seek to spread disease and parasites, weakening those that would oppose Kyuss so that his undead can squash them without opposition.

Many cultists of the Worm That Walks learn to raise undead as spawns of Kyuss via the Worm Necromancer trait below. Others learn to channel dark magic in order to replicate the Plague of Worms action option that Kyuss and his servants often use against their opponents.

**Worm Necromancer.** When the cultist casts a spell that animates or creates undead, up to two of the undead can be turned into spawns of Kyuss.

**Plague of Worms (Recharge 6).** Each creature of the cultist's choice within 10 feet of the cultist must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw against this magic. On a failure the target takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage and is restrained by masses of swarming worms. The affected creature takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage at the start of each of the cultist's turns. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

## ZARGON THE RETURNER

**Typical Cultists:** Acolyte, cultist, cult fanatic, oozeblade, slime shaman

**Signature Spells:** *Acid splash* (cantrip), *bane* (1st level), *Melf's acid arrow* (2nd level), *fireball* (3rd level)

After being driven from the Nine Hells, Zargon turned his attention to the Material Plane. It took centuries, but he crawled up from the depths of the earth and set upon the soft mortals dwelling in the Cynidicean Kingdom above. To spare themselves extinction, the people of the kingdom raised up Zargon as their god and fed him endless sacrifices to appease his need to kill. While the descendants of these original cultists are still instilled with the fear of being devoured by Zargon, make no mistake - many of these cultists are dedicated to Zargon and would sacrifice their lives in his name.

Cultists that are corrupted by Zargon's influence sometimes gain the Corrosive Form or Foul traits below.



**Corrosive Form.** A creature that touches the cultist or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 4 (1d8) acid damage.

**Foul.** Any creature, other than an ooze or another creature that has this trait, that starts its turn within 10 feet of the cultist must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of the creature's next turn.

## VILE FEATS

Vile feats are powerful boons available to intelligent NPCs of evil alignments. Those that are associated with an Elder Evil will pursue such boons at any cost, even resorting to self-mutilation and deformation as a method of acquisition. The following abilities are available to cultists that are associated with Elder Evils; these abilities are not specific to any one Elder Evil, and a creature can have more than one vile feat at a time.

### ABOMINABLE FORM

The cultist revels in the ruination of its flesh, drawing power from its disturbing deformities.

**Deformity: Mutilated Flesh.** In order to obtain this vile feat, the cultist flayed, burned, or otherwise mutilated its flesh, turning them into a grotesque shadow of their former self. At least one of their body parts (such as a limb or their face) have been mutilated in this way; this mutilation can only be undone by *heal* or another disease-curing spell of 6th level or higher.

**Disgusting Visage.** Creatures that can see the cultist have disadvantage on saving throws against being frightened. Additionally, once per turn when the cultist hits a creature with a melee attack, they can force the target to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the target is frightened of the cultist until the end of the cultist's next turn.

**Unsilently Figure.** The cultist gains proficiency in the Intimidation skill, and its proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check made using the Intimidation skill.

### APOSTATE

The cultist's hatred of the gods cloaks it with potent resistance against their works.

**Divine Resilience.** When the cultist makes a saving throw to resist the effects of a spell cast by a cleric, paladin, druid, ranger, celestial, or some other divine source, it can add its proficiency bonus to the saving throw if it isn't proficient in the save.

**Inquisition Defier.** The cultist is immune to effects that allows other creatures to read its thoughts, determine whether it is lying, or know its alignment.

### CHOSEN OF EVIL

The cultist's naked devotion to wickedness causes dark powers to take an interest in its success and well-being.

**Commander of Evil.** The cultist can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of the cultist makes an attack roll or a saving throw (no reaction required). The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the cultist. This trait doesn't function while the cultist is incapacitated.

**Unholy Protection.** The cultist can use its reaction to halve the damage that it takes from an attack, spell, or other effect.

## DARK KNOWLEDGE

The cultist uncovers a piece of forbidden lore or knowledge that allows it to tap into ancient powers of evil.

**Ancient Secrets.** If the cultist has the Spellcasting trait, it can choose one spell of 3rd level or lower. The cultist can cast that spell at its lowest level without using a spell slot.

**Dark Indulgence.** After the cultist makes an attack roll, ability check, or saving throw, but before the outcome is determined, an additional d20 can be rolled. The cultist chooses which of the d20s rolled is used to determine the outcome. When it does so, it takes 12 (5d4) necrotic damage, which can't be reduced or prevented in any way.

## DARK SPEECH

The cultist learns a smattering of the language of truly dark power.

**Beguiling Influence.** The cultist gains proficiency in the Deception and Persuasion skills, and its proficiency bonus is doubled for any ability check made using these skills.

**Harbringer of Destruction.** The cultist can use its action to force each creature within 60 feet of it that can hear the cultist to make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is charmed or frightened (cultist's choice) for 1 minute. A charmed or frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After using this action, the cultist takes 13 (2d12) psychic damage.

## DARK WHISPERS

By whispering foul utterances in the Dark Speech, the cultist can drive its enemies insane.

**Prerequisite.** The cultist must possess the Dark Speech vile feat in order to obtain this vile feat.

**Distorted Visions (Recharge 5-6).** As an action, the cultist can whisper words of incredible wickedness to form grotesque visions in the minds of those who hear it. Each creature within 30 feet of the cultist that can hear the cultist must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be blinded for 1 minute. While blinded, a creature is also incapacitated. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After using this action, the cultist takes 13 (2d12) psychic damage, which can't be reduced or prevented in any way.

## FILTHY OUTBURST

The cultist shrieks a phrase in the Dark Speech to deafen those around it.

**Prerequisite.** The cultist must possess the Dark Speech vile feat in order to obtain this vile feat.

**Booming Voice.** When the cultist speaks, its voice can boom up to five times louder than normal.



**Foul Scream (Recharge 5-6).** As an action, the cultist can loose a blistering torrent of foul curses and wicked insults in the Dark Speech. Each creature within 60 feet of the cultist that can hear the cultist must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be deafened for 1 minute. While deafened, a creature suffers disadvantage on all ability checks and saving throws for 1 minute. A target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. After using this action, the cultist takes 13 (2d12) psychic damage, which can't be reduced or prevented in any way.

## HARVESTER OF SOULS

When the cultist delivers a killing blow, it destroys both the flesh and the soul.

**Steal Life.** When the cultist reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it regains an amount of hit points equal to the cultist's Challenge Rating.

**Obliviation of Spirit.** When a creature within 60 feet of it dies, the cultist can use its reaction to annihilate its soul. That creature can't be revived by any means short of a *wish* spell.

## INSANE DEFIANCE

The cultist adopts insanity as a shield to turn effects that target its mind against those around it.

**Defense of Madness.** The cultist is immune to being charmed or frightened.

**Mind Shield.** In response to being targeted by an effect that would magically influence the cultist's mind, the cultist can use its reaction to retarget the effect to another creature of its choice, other than the caster or source of the ability, within the effect's range.

## LICHLOVED

By repeatedly consorting with the undead, the cultist gains dread powers.

**Undead Consortium.** Mindless undead see the cultist as an undead creature. Becoming more and more like an actual undead creature, the cultist gains immunity to necrotic and poison damage, as well as the poisoned and paralyzed conditions.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the cultist to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the cultist drops to 1 hit point instead.

## MURDEROUS INTENT

The cultist's enemies fear its savagery and inhumanity.

**Demoralize.** When the cultist scores a critical hit or reduces a creature to 0 hit points with a melee attack on its turn, each ally of the creature that can see the cultist must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened of the cultist for 1 minute. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

**Improved Critical.** The cultist's weapon attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.

## OTHERWORLDLY SIGHT

The cultist has mutilated its eyes or forehead in an attempt to see that which must remain unseen.

**Deformity: Eyes.** The cultist has either drilled a hole in its forehead trying to add a third eye, or it has supernaturally scarred one of its regular eyes.

**Third Eye.** The cultist has truesight out to a range of 60 feet.

**Ghostly Gaze.** The cultist can see through solid objects to a range of 30 feet; when it does so, it perceives objects as ghostly, transparent images.

## PARASITIC HOST

The cultist invites parasites into its body in exchange for a greater hardiness against diseases and poisons.

**Deformity: Parasites.** Parasites use the cultist's body as a nesting ground, creating holes and burrows on its skin and in its flesh as they feed and multiply. When the cultist dies, its body breaks apart into a *swarm of insects* in the same space.

**Disease Immunity.** The cultist is immune to disease, poison damage, and the poisoned condition.

**Exude Parasites (Recharge 6).** As a bonus action, the cultist can summon a *swarm of insects* or a *swarm of rot grubs* (cultist's choice), which exits its body and occupies its space. The swarm acts on its own initiative, and follows the cultist's verbal commands to the best of its ability.

## ELDER EVIL TRAITS

All elder evils have the following characteristics:

**Languages.** Elder evils have telepathy out to 1000 feet.

**Senses.** Elder evils have truesight out to 120 feet and blindsight out to 500 feet.

**Damage Resistances.** Elder evils are resistant to cold damage and fire damage.

**Damage Immunities.** Elder evils are immune to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks.

**Condition Immunities.** Elder evils can't be charmed, frightened, petrified, or knocked unconscious. They also don't suffer from exhaustion.

**Anathematic Secrecy.** Elder evils can't be targeted by any divination magic or perceived through magical scrying sensors.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Elder evils don't get innate spellcasting by default. However, those that do have it require no components to innately cast a spell.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If an elder evil fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Elder evils have advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Magic Weapons.** An elder evil's weapon attacks are magical.

**Unyielding Essence.** Elder evils are immune to any spells or effects that would alter their forms, as well as those that would read their thoughts, determine if they are lying, or magically influence their thoughts or behavior.



## MALEFIC PROPERTIES

Elder evils are capable of incredible destruction. They wield devastating magic and possess an arsenal of potent attacks to work their wickedness. But such power alone offers little defense against the gods and their servants. Malefic properties are their safeguard against divine interference.

A malefic property is a supernatural ability, intrinsic to the very nature of an elder evil. *Dispel magic* and *antimagic field* have no effect against a malefic property.

A malefic property affects an enormous area and might influence an entire region of the world, depending on the nature of the elder evil.

All elder evils have Anathematic Secrecy (see Elder Evil Traits), which shields them from divination spells and scrying sensors. Each elder evil has one additional malefic property, chosen from the list that follows, as appropriate to its nature. The sample elder evils provided in this book can guide you in deciding on a suitable malefic property for one of your own design.

### DARK VISITING

An elder evil that has this property projects terrifying nightmares into the dreams of living creatures.

**Dark Visiting.** Any living creature that sleeps within 100 miles of the elder evil must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be afflicted with a random form of short-term madness. If a creature fails this saving throw by 5 or more, it is instead afflicted with a random form of long-term madness. If a creature rolls a 1 on the d20 roll, it is instead afflicted with a random form of indefinite madness. The Short-Term Madness, Long-Term Madness, and Indefinite Madness tables can be found in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### DISCORD AND WOE

The presence of an elder evil that has this property can use its action to incite violence and suffering.

**Discord and Woe (Recharge 5-6)** A creature within 100 miles of the elder evil that the elder evil is aware of must make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. A creature automatically succeeds if it is immune to being charmed. On a failed save, the target must target its allies with attacks and other damaging effects for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the elder evil's Discord and Woe for the next 24 hours.

### DIVINE SCOURGE

An elder evil that has this property can punish deities' servants with a powerful surge of profane energy.

**Divine Scourge (1/Day).** As a bonus action, each creature within 100 miles of the elder evil that is a celestial or a user of divine magic (a cleric, paladin, druid, ranger, or some other class the DM deems appropriate) must make a DC 23 Constitution saving throw. A target takes 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. On a failed save, a target also suffers one level of exhaustion.

### GOD SLAYER

An elder evil that has this property can directly combat and kill deities and their servants.

**God Slayer.** The elder evil deals double damage to gods and celestials, bypassing their resistances and immunities. If the elder evil reduces a god or celestial to 0 hit points, it kills them instantly.

### IMPERVIOUS TO THE DIVINE

An elder evil that has this property cannot be affected by divine magic of any kind, regardless of the source.

**Impervious to the Divine.** The elder evil is unaffected by divine spells, which are spells cast by clerics, paladins, druids, rangers, celestials, and other sources the DM deems appropriate.

### TRUE DEATH

The presence of an elder evil that has this property weakens the souls of living creatures so that they are lost on death.

**True Death.** Any creature that dies within 100 miles of the elder evil can't be resurrected or raised as undead.

#### CONVERTER'S NOTE: IMPERVIOUS TO THE DIVINE

Both Ragnorra and the Aspect of Sertrous are immune to divine spells. While I'm keeping this in as it's a Malefic Property from the original book, some DMs might find it to be a bit unfair towards divine spellcasters in the party. If you wish to get around this, consider informing your players of this trait ahead of time so that they can come up with a plan to get around it.

You may want to roll with what they come up with, or you can devise your own method for the party to get around it, such as an artifact that converts divine magic into arcane magic when wielded by a divine spellcaster. Or perhaps you want to just remove the trait, either replacing it with a different malefic property or just excluding it altogether. This is completely fine, and won't affect encounter difficulty too much—the stat blocks in this book that have this are not specifically balanced around its presence.



# ATROPUS

*"Behold the death of your world. There, cresting the horizon. Yes, that faint body is he, and he comes for me... for us all. Rejoice, for the end is near, and all life, all pain, all suffering shall be silenced in the perfect eternity of undeath."*

— Cairaxasten, mad astronomer and ur-priest

Atropus, the World Born Dead, drifts through the gulfs of space, searching for worlds to consume and, when it finds them, erasing all life with its gruesome touch. As the afterbirth of creation, it is committed to unmaking all things. Nothing, not even the gods, can halt its relentless progress.

## BACKGROUND

Atropus' background is unchanged.

## GOALS

Atropus' goals are unchanged.

## ATROPUS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Atropus dwells in the emptiness between worlds. As it drifts, it casts out with its senses, sampling the emptiness for signs of life. Once it detects a living thing, it moves toward the source. Since it is such a distant threat, you can assume the elder evil has been around for as long as your campaign setting has existed, and has been traveling toward your world for any number of years. Once Atropus takes an interest in your world, place it in the heavens. It is indistinguishable from the other celestial bodies at the start, and as it comes closer it reveals its sinister character to coincide with the intensifying sign.

### SIGN: RESTLESS DEAD

Atropus' presence in the sky causes the dead to rise from their graves.

**Consecration:** If a *forbiddance*, *hallow*, or *temple of the gods* spell is cast and is made to affect undead, the effects of this Sign are negated within the area while the spell or spells persist. However, these spells cannot negate the spontaneous animation of undead within the area.

**Faint:** Spells that raise undead can animate or target twice as many creatures and take effect for twice their normal duration. Additionally, whenever a living creature dies, there is a 20% chance that it will spontaneously rise as a zombie in 1d4 rounds.

**Moderate:** As faint, but the chance of spontaneous animation increases to 40%. In addition, undead gain 5 temporary hit points at the start of each of their turns throughout the world.

**Strong:** As moderate, but the chance of spontaneous animation increases to 80%. Even creatures that died before this sign manifested begin to rise as skeletons or zombies, depending on the condition of their corpses. In addition, all undead in the campaign world gain resistance to radiant damage, and the amount of hit points restored via magical healing is halved throughout the world.

**Overwhelming:** As strong, but any creature that dies automatically rises as a zombie 1 round after death. Previously dead creatures automatically animate as skeletons or zombies. Additionally, all undead in the campaign world gain advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects, and are immune to effects that turn undead.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline given in the original book is unchanged. Consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the original outline.

### SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| None         | 5           |
| Faint        | 10          |
| Moderate     | 15          |
| Strong       | 17          |
| Overwhelming | 19-20       |

The *apocalypse from the sky* spell, as detailed in the original book, can only be learned via the *book of vile darkness*. Its material component, alongside the self-damage it deals and the 9th-level spell slot it requires, makes it a very costly spell to cast.

### APOCALYPSE FROM THE SKY

9th-level necromancy

**Casting Time:** 24 hours

**Range:** Self (100-mile radius)

**Components:** V, S, M (a bottle of angel tears, which the spell consumes)

**Duration:** Instantaneous

You use part of your own life force to perform this vile ritual. You take 20d6 necrotic damage that can't be prevented or reduced in any way. Then, each non-undead creature other than you within 100 miles of you takes 10d6 necrotic damage.

## ATROPUS IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

## ATROPUS IN FAERÛN

In addition to the information given in the original book, a DM may wish to alter the lore of the Forgotten Realms at their table. Instead of constraining Atropus to be a leftover creation of the overgod Ao, they may wish to relate Atropus to Ao in a more equal manner, or they may wish to remove Ao from the setting altogether. In the latter case, use the default lore provided in the Background section to explain Atropus' origins.



## VARIANT USAGE

Rather than being free to roam the Material Plane, Atropus could languish in stasis on the Negative Energy Plane. Once released, it might seek to transform all the Outer Planes into a mass graveyard. In this case, the Restless Dead sign could represent Atropus drawing nearer to a given plane, intensifying until Atropus is able to enter the plane.

The default Sign of Apocalypse for Atropus is certainly a major effect in your campaign world, but some may find it unsatisfying that the Sign is a passive effect that is simply a byproduct of Atropus' approach. If you wish to make Atropus feel more like an active threat, allow more powerful undead in service to Atropus to descend from the moonlet to your campaign setting. For example, you can take advantage of Atropus' connection to Atropals to make them effective heralds of the moonlet's approach. As stillborn creatures from the Negative Energy plane, atropals also serve as effective heralds in planar campaigns, acting as forerunners for the much larger threat to come.

You can also consider other threats to act as villains in anticipation of Atropus' arrival. For example, while the original outline suggests that Orcus be involved in an interplanar war, you may wish for Orcus himself to beckon Atropus' arrival. In this case, the Bleak General might be a loyal servant of Orcus, rather than betraying him in favor of Atropus. Other villains include Acererak, Lady Illmarrow (and the Order of the Emerald Claw), an aspiring lich or mummy lord, a god of undeath, or a fallen angel or undead celestial. Perhaps even the Worm That Walks (chapter 9) has taken an interest in Atropus, and has decided to ally with the World Born Dead so that it may rule the dead world that Atropus leaves behind.

Additionally, feel free to alter the details as to how Atropus is summoned. The suggested campaign outline gives two ways for Atropus to be summoned: the *apocalypse from the sky* spell, obtained through the *book of vile darkness*, or the massacre of a major city by demonic forces. Below are additional possibilities for how Atropus might be summoned:

- Perhaps a certain artifact or magical object must be destroyed in order to summon Atropus. For example, maybe the *book of exalted deeds* can be temporarily destroyed using a *talisman of ultimate evil*, the act of which awakens Atropus and draws it towards the setting. Alternatively, perhaps a dimensional seal or a planar barrier prevents Atropus from entering a given plane or approaching a given planet, and if destroyed, the World Born Dead will be free to approach and annihilate it.
- In Eberron, an eldritch machine, as detailed in *Eberron: Rising from the Last War*, may be used to channel large amounts of negative energy in order to cause mass death, or it may simply be used as a homing beacon that entices Atropus to approach the setting.
- In a planar setting, cultists of the World Born Dead might perform a ritual to break down the barriers that separate the planes, allowing Atropus to pass through a large planar portal into the target plane.
- In a Spelljammer campaign, Atropus might be on a set path through the cosmos. If it isn't stopped in time, Atropus might destroy a major planetary hub or a capital of a large civilization.

Lastly, feel free to use the Aspect of Atropus in new and creative ways. For example, perhaps cultists seek to summon the Aspect of Atropus directly to the setting; if they succeed, the aspect will annihilate them and every other creature in the setting. Perhaps a villain seeks to take advantage of the aspect for their own gain. If they absorb or take control of the aspect somehow, they may gain control of the moonlet, or their consciousness might be merged with the moonlet itself. Any villain will recognize that the World Born Dead holds the ultimate power over death and undeath, and that if taken advantage of, they will be unstoppable.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding the Aspect of Atropus, Caira Xasten, and Gorguth and its mount Skyshadow.

## THE MOONLET

Atropus is the moonlet, the location where the player characters confront the elder evil and drive it from their world. The moonlet is spheroid, 700 miles in diameter.

When the moonlet approaches close to the home world of your campaign setting (assuming Earth as the default), it takes up an orbit just outside the moon's orbit, about 250,000 miles from the surface of the world. (If your campaign setting features multiple moons, it begins its orbit outside the orbit of the most distant satellite.)

Once in position, the moonlet begins to circle the planet, entering a deteriorating orbit and picking up speed as it loses altitude. The rate of fall is up to you, but it should correspond with the progress of your campaign, the intensity of the sign, and the pace that best fits your needs. (Remember, this is a floating head in space, not an astrophysics project; don't worry too much about the time it takes for the moonlet to descend.)





## KEY FEATURES

The moonlet of Atropus is a barren, unforgiving wasteland of dread and despair, littered with undead, star spawn aberrations, and debris picked up from the countless worlds it annihilated. The following effects take place on and within 60 feet of the moonlet:

- The moonlet remains on the dark side of the world, keeping the planet between it and the sun. As such, the moonlet is in total darkness.
- The moonlet has a thin atmosphere permeated by a field of negative energy. It is not breathable, and creatures that suffocate in it are overwhelmed by the stench of rotting flesh.
- Due to the moonlet's low gravity, creatures have their walking speed increased by 5 feet, only take 1d4 bludgeoning damage for each 10 feet they fall, and have their carrying capacities doubled.
- Creatures take 1 necrotic damage for each minute that they spend on the moonlet. This damage cannot be reduced by resistance to necrotic damage. Constructs, star spawn, and undead are immune to this effect.
- A creature that isn't a construct, star spawn, or undead that reaches 0 hit points dies instantly, rising as a zombie after 1 minute if nothing raises it beforehand. Such a creature cannot be restored to life by any means.
- The amount of hit points restored by magical healing is halved.
- Spells and effects that attempt to restore life to dead creatures have no effect.
- Spells that raise undead can animate or target twice as many creatures and take effect for twice their normal duration.

## DEFENSES

The moonlet has few defenses. The dangers of the void are enough to keep enemies at bay. Unless the moonlet is approached when it has already entered the atmosphere—at which point it is almost too late—characters must contend with the hazardous environment. After 3 rounds of exposure, and at the start of each of its turns thereafter, a creature that is holding its breath must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature runs out of breath and is suffocating. On a failed save of 5 or more, the creature is also stunned until it can breathe again.

If the characters set foot on or fly above the moonlet, the undead infesting its surface spill forth. Each hour the characters remain within 60 feet of the surface, there's a 20% chance for a random encounter, as shown on the table below. If an encounter features a creature from a book you don't have, pick a result from a book you do have. If the source column lists the source "EdE", it is referring to the accompanying [bestiary](#) for this book.

| d100  | Encounter           | Source  |
|-------|---------------------|---------|
| 01-10 | 1d4 nightwalkers    | MTF 216 |
| 11-20 | 4d12 ogre zombies   | MM 316  |
| 21-30 | 1d6 atropals        | ToA 214 |
| 31-40 | 1d8 angels of decay | EdE 3   |
| 41-50 | 1d3 famine spirits  | EdE 6   |
| 51-60 | 6d12 ghastrs        | MM 148  |
| 61-70 | 4d12 wraiths        | MM 302  |
| 71-80 | 1d8 atropal hulks   | EdE 7   |
| 81-90 | 2d12 dread wraiths  | EdE 27  |
| 91-00 | 20d6 zombies        | MM 316  |

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

Given the moonlet's size, it could take an entire book to describe every location on its surface. The following are just a few of the locations appear on the vast "face" of Atropus. For a map of these locations, see the original book.

### A. THE ICHOR SEA

The two areas marked A on the map are part of a large sea of necromantic sludge formed from the decaying afterbirth of creation. The fluid about 200 feet deep a short distance away from the shoreline. The sea emits an aura of negative energy. All undead within 20 feet of the shore gain advantage on saving throws.

Any non-undead creature that come in contact with the Ichor Sea or starts its turn in the seatakes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage and must make a DC 23 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature suffers one level of exhaustion. If a creature dies to this effect, it rises as an **angel of decay** (EdE 3) after 1d4 rounds.

### B. THE GREAT DEPTH

Piercing the side of the moonlet is an enormous pit 70 miles across with no visible bottom. Creatures coming within 20 feet begin to hear the susurrus of Atropus's hate. Each creature that enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must make a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature suffers from a random form of Short-Term Madness, determined by rolling on the Short-Term Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Creatures falling into the pit descend 300 feet until they hit an underground offshoot of the Ichor Sea (area A). Such characters take 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall in addition to the effects of the Ichor Sea.

### C. CRATER

Craters created by meteors and other debris pock the moonlet's surface. The craters vary depending on the size of the object that struck the moonlet. A typical crater is 10 feet in diameter, 4 feet deep, and has a 1-foot-tall rim around the impact area. Loose rock (counting as difficult terrain) spreads out 10 feet in all directions.

Much larger craters, such as the ones marked on the map, are especially dangerous and usually inhabited by undead.







## D. INKY TEARS

Welling up from one of the Eyes of Death (see area H) is a bubbling torrent of hideous slime. This fluid has the same properties as the Ichor Sea.

## E. BUBBLING CRATER

This crater is similar to all the other craters marring the moonlet's surface, except that from its depth rises a fetid black ooze—the bilious blood of Atropus. A random undead creature (or creatures) always attends this place.

Undead within 20 feet of the crater have advantage on saving throws, and they gain 10 temporary hit points whenever they start their turn there.

Non-undead creatures touching the foulness at the bottom of the crater are affected as if they had come into contact with the Ichor Sea (see area A).

## F. THE TRENCH

The ground drops away, forming a deep trench between the Ichor Sea and the Great Depth. It extends some 30 feet down. Haunting the depths is twenty **star spawn manglers** (MTF 236). They crawl forth from the trench wall and attacks any creatures they encounter. If you do not have access to the statistics of a star spawn mangler, you can replace them with 11 **beholder zombies** (MM 316).

## G. VENTS

Spewing from 6-inch-diameter pits are streams of poisonous air. Creatures who require air can breathe here, but whenever a non-undead creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 23 Constitution saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. On a failed save of 5 or more, the creature is also poisoned until the end of its next turn. Creatures slain by the poisonous air rise as **wraiths** (MM 302) 1d4 rounds after death.

## H. THE EYES OF DEATH

Each spanning 40 miles across, these glossy black stones reflect no light, seeming to drink in everything shining on their surfaces. These black expanses are in fact the eyes of Atropus and, for as long as the party lingers here, Atropus is aware of their presence. There is also a 10% chance each minute for the aspect of Atropus to lumber toward the characters from a random direction, 140 (4d6 × 10) feet away.

Undead in the area gain advantage on all saving throws, and they also gain immunity to effects that turn undead. Additionally, creatures in the area can't benefit from resistance to necrotic damage, and they suffer disadvantage on saving throws made against effects that deal necrotic damage.

## FACING THE ASPECT OF ATROPUS

The **aspect of Atropus** (EdE 2) can appear at any time you like once the player characters arrive at the moonlet. Atropus is no fool, and it generally won't send its minions against the party until it is prepared. However, the Focus might come on its own. Each time the party rolls initiative, there's a 10% chance that after 1 minute, the Aspect of Atropus approaches the characters from random direction, 140 (4d6 × 10) feet away.

## ENCOUNTER 1: BONE FIELD

This encounter is unchanged, except that the **dread boneyard** is only capable of summoning one **young red bone dragon** (see EdE 5).

## TACTICS

The dread boneyard hides in the field of bones, requiring a DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot it. Once a creature comes within 15 feet of the boneyard, it emerges, and initiative is rolled; if the party didn't spot it before it emerged, the boneyard gains surprise over the party.

During the first round of combat, the boneyard uses **Summon Bone Dragon** and **Summon Skeletons** to summon as many minions as possible. The skeletons will attempt to spread out and attack every party member if possible, while the bone dragon will take to the skies and swoop in only when its **Breath Weapon** has recharged. The boneyard will act as the main combatant, attempting to draw the party's fire and engage in melee when possible.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### ALTAR

This altar is dedicated to Atropus, erected eons ago by an undead servitor. The altar emits a *hallow* spell in a 60 foot radius, targeting celestials, elementals, and fey. Such creatures can't enter the area, nor can such creatures charm, frighten, or possess creatures within it. Additionally, undead in the area gain resistance to radiant damage, and whenever they make a saving throw, they can roll a d6 and add the result to the total.

### BONES

Any space with bones in it is difficult terrain, and creatures that move through it have disadvantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks unless they can avoid rattling the bones when they move.

### TREASURE

Every minute that a creature searches through the area allows the creature to make a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check. On a success, the creature finds a random item from the list below:

- An assortment of coins worth 5,000 gp
- A silver comb with strange glowing gemstones worth 7,500 gp
- A signet ring depicting an alien crest worth 3,500 gp
- A *potion of radiant resistance* (DMG 188)
- A *potion of flying* (DMG 187)
- An *amulet of health* (DMG 150)



## ENCOUNTER 2: DEEP CRATER

This encounter is unchanged, although it is worth noting that the **evolved atropal scion** (EdE 6) is now CR 17 and that **famine spirits** (EdE 6) are now CR 11.

### TACTICS

The famine spirits work together against the closest foe they can see. At the start of combat, they are within range of the atropal's Turn Resistance Aura, which they will stay within range of unless they determine the party cannot use Turn Undead.

Meanwhile, the atropal will cast its innate spells from range, using *hold monster* on any party member the famine spirits are attacking. It then has several options: it might use *negative energy flood* to give a famine spirit temporary hit points (if you don't own XGE: if the target of the spell is undead, roll 5d12 and give it half as many temporary hit points), or it might use *circle of death* and *cone of cold* to attack as much of the party as possible without affecting its allies. If attacked, the atropal will use *misty step* to exit melee and will use its Ray of Cold on the target if needed.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

#### DEBRIS

Area with debris in it is difficult terrain until cleared.

#### DEEP CRATER

This crater emanates a field of negative energy. Non-undead creatures within 5 feet of the crater can't benefit from resistance to necrotic damage.

#### ICHOR SEA

The sea emits an aura of negative energy. All undead within 20 feet of the shore gain advantage on saving throws. Additionally, any non-undead creature that come in contact with the Ichor Sea or starts its turn in the seatakes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage and must make a DC 23 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature suffers one level of exhaustion. If a creature dies to this effect, it rises as an angel of decay (EdE 3) after 1d4 rounds.

#### SMALL CRATER

Creatures that fit inside of the small crater gain half-cover, but it costs an additional 5 feet of movement to enter and exit the crater.

## ENCOUNTER 3: ANGELS OF ATROPUS

This encounter is unchanged, although it is worth noting that the **angel of decay** (EdE 3) is now CR 7.

### TACTICS

After descending, the angels of decay attack split up to attack as many party members as they can. If possible, they stick close to one another so that they may heal from each other's Rotting Auras via their Feed on Decay traits.

When the **aspect of Atropus** (EdE 2) arrives, it makes its entrance by using Divine Scourge followed by casting *meteor swarm*, with no concern for the subsequent incineration of the remaining angels of decay. It uses its first lair action to create an *earthquake* effect, and it uses its next one to forcibly teleport the party members: it teleports melee opponents into newly formed fissures, and it teleports ranged opponents into its melee range. It consistently uses Waves of Exhaustion to decimate as many party members as it can, but it will favor its Life Drain or Slam if it finds itself to be taking large amounts of damage.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

#### EYES OF DEATH

This entire encounter takes place on one of the Eyes of Death. Undead in the area gain advantage on all saving throws, and they also gain immunity to effects that turn undead. Additionally, creatures in the area can't benefit from resistance to necrotic damage, and they suffer disadvantage on saving throws made against effects that deal necrotic damage.

#### SMALL CRATER

Creatures that fit inside of the small crater gain half-cover, but it costs an additional 5 feet of movement to enter and exit the crater.

#### VEINS OF ATROPUS

A creature standing entirely on one of these cracks is unaffected by the effects of the Eyes of Death. Fissures created by the Aspect of Atropus' *earthquake* spell also count as veins of Atropus.

### CONCLUSION

The moonlet's surface rumbles as if under the effects of an *earthquake* spell, requiring all creatures on the ground to succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone. Fissures tear open, and all creatures on the ground have a 25% chance of falling into one; a creature can make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw to avoid falling into one of these new fissures. The tremors last for 1d6 rounds, at which point the whole moonlet seems to contract—killing anyone or anything still trapped in a fissure.

Then the moonlet rockets away from the world, moving at a speed of 40,000 feet. Characters still on the surface are carried with the moonlet. As it moves away from the world, the Restless Dead sign ends, and creatures animated by its effects collapse, lifeless.



# FATHER LLYMIC

*"Madness dwells on the mountaintop, where feral tribesfolk feast on human flesh and dance in worship of the darkness. Their song can be heard even now, calling out to their father to bring the eternal cold, the endless darkness of death."*

— From the bloodstained journal of an unnamed traveler

A mote of alien thought given form and flesh, Father Llymic is not of this world. He dwells in an icy prison, awaiting a time when the world will be right for his coming. As his age of freezing darkness draws near, his brood begins to appear, stalking the wastes in preparation for his reign. If he is released from his prison, the entire world will be covered in a deadly glacier, removed from light and hope for all time.

## BACKGROUND

Father Llymic's background is unchanged.

## GOALS

Father Llymic's goals are unchanged.

## FATHER LLYMIC IN THE CAMPAIGN

Father Llymic sleeps in an icy prison atop one of the world's tallest mountains. Locked away inside a glacier, he beckons any who draw near to his form so that they might be transformed into his servants. With each new servant, he gains more of the strength needed to fully rouse.

Since he lurks in such an inhospitable place, this elder evil is easy to add to any campaign. Only when Father Llymic approaches his full might does the effect become noticeable, as the sun begins to lose the power to contain him. The terrain easily hides his brood, and travelers and remote mountain clans go missing all the time. Only the most thorough chronicler might notice that one mountain in particular is full of strange tales regarding missing travelers and reclusive natives. The obvious sign of Father Llymic's coming—the darkening of the sun—means that it is almost too late to stop him from waking.

## SIGN: DEAD SUN

The dead sun diminishes natural and magical lighting until the sun no longer rises.

**Faint:** The radius of illumination from natural light sources (both bright light and shadowy illumination) drops to half normal, to a minimum of 5 feet. Sunrise occurs 1 hour later than normal, and sunset occurs 1 hour earlier than normal.

**Moderate:** Spells and other effects that create magical darkness take effect for twice their normal duration. The radius of illumination from natural light sources drops to 5 feet. Sunrise occurs 2 hours later than normal, and sunset occurs 2 hours earlier. Finally, average temperatures drop by 2 degrees all over the world.

**Strong:** Spells and other effects that create magical darkness have their size doubled in all dimensions and take effect for twice their normal duration. Light produced by spells or other magical effects has its size halved in all dimensions and no longer dispels *darkness* spells of any level. Natural light sources do not illuminate any area at all, appearing only as dim spots. The sun rises for just 1 hour each day, and global temperatures drop by an additional 4 degrees.

**Overwhelming:** The sun vanishes altogether. Spells, magic items, and other effects that generate light cease to do so. Spells and other effects that create magical darkness continue to be enhanced as under the strong sign. The average temperature plunges another 10 degrees and drops by 1 degree further every day thereafter.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline given in the original book is unchanged. Consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the original outline.

### SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| None         | 6           |
| Faint        | 10          |
| Moderate     | 13          |
| Strong       | 16          |
| Overwhelming | 18-20       |

## FATHER LLYMIC IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

## FATHER LLYMIC IN FAERÛN

This section is unchanged.

## VARIANT USAGE

Rather than have Father Llymic be imprisoned upon a block of ice, he may be banished to another plane or some other extradimensional prison for all eternity. As his Brood Spawn spread across the campaign setting, the binds that hold him in his prison weaken, culminating with his arrival in the setting.

Or perhaps Father Llymic isn't imprisoned at all. He might be in the Far Realm or one of the other planes of existence, or in the case of a Spelljammer campaign, he might be on another planet in a distant sphere. In the former case, perhaps Father Llymic has already claimed one of the Outer Planes as his own icy domain. In the latter case, he might reside in a frozen crystal sphere whose sun has permanently gone dark. Either way, such a campaign would pose Father Llymic as an evil outsider whose Brood Spawn have invaded the setting, and the arrival of Father Llymic himself would spell doom for mortal life altogether.



Additionally, you may wish to alter Father Llymic's Sign of Apocalypse if you feel its default effects are not appropriate for your campaign. Instead of causing the sun to disappear, Father Llymic might simply cause the setting to experience an unnatural winter as his influence spreads. Temperatures fall as normal, but permafrost spreads from the mountain housing Father Llymic's tomb to envelop the entire world as the campaign goes on. In this case, you may wish to remove the Light Torpor and Light Weakness traits from Father Llymic and his Brood Spawn, instead relying on the very absence of heat to be that which awakens the Alien Thought Given Flesh.

Lastly, some may find the default campaign timeline to lack the intrigue and variety that they seek in an elder evils campaign. If so, consider the following changes and additions:

- Associate Father Llymic with the other denizens of the Far Realm. While the brood spawn are certainly interesting creatures to fight, other aberrations such as mind flayers and daelkyr might serve Father Llymic's interests as well.
- Brood spawn do not suffer reductions to their Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma scores; in fact, their Wisdom and Charisma are each increased by 2 compared to that of the base creature. As such, rather than using them as mindless aliens, you are capable of running them as an intelligent faction that has its own unique NPCs, sub-groups, and society, although such elements are obviously warped by the brood's alien nature.
- Run a more active or intelligent Cult of Father Llymic. While the original timeline speaks of savage barbarians that perform strange rituals that transform them into Brood Spawn, you may wish to alter this existing cult or add new ones as you see fit. Perhaps a humanoid-esque brood spawn has figured out how to blend into society and to spread Brood Fever without getting caught. Maybe a vampire or some other creature of the night seeks to black out the sun, knowingly or unknowingly allowing Father Llymic to emerge from his prison sooner than expected. Keep in mind that this document provides cult features for NPCs that serve Father Llymic, as well as general Vile Feats for such NPCs to take as appropriate; use these features to create NPCs that fit your campaign as you see fit.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding Father Llymic and his Brood Spawn.

## GLACIAL TOMB

An imposing mountain holds Father Llymic's tomb. Surrounded by jagged hills, the mountain is studded with icy crags, treacherous ice bridges, and perilous cliffs. Few paths make their way to the summit; all of them are home to dangerous mountain predators and, as the time of Father Llymic's wakening draws near, swarms of alien brood spawn.

As the light of the sun begins to dim and the cold increases, great sheets of ice cover the mountain and the surrounding hills. Eventually, this glacier begins to move across the surrounding countryside at an accelerated rate. The mountain becomes home to cascades of deadly ice spears, thunderous avalanches, and strange vistas of unnatural ice formations. Some areas begin to exhibit odd geometric patterns in the ice, many of which defy logic or reason.

### KEY FEATURES

When planning for activity around the glacial tomb, be sure to familiarize yourself with the rules for Wilderness Survival (DMG 109). These rules include mechanics for hazards such as Extreme Cold, Strong Wind, Slippery and Thin Ice, and Heavy Precipitation that you may find useful.

Snow and ice cover the mountain. Temperatures hover just above freezing during the day and plummet to well below at night (the exact temperature varies depending on the time of the year and the power of the Dead Sun sign). The environment is severe cold, progressing to extreme cold as Father Llymic begins to stir.

The surface of the mountain consists of three primary materials.

- **Stone:** Small patches remain where snow and ice have not found purchase. These areas are rough, but otherwise easy to traverse.
- **Snow:** Although most of the snow is only a foot or so deep and is simple enough to traverse, other areas contain deep snowdrifts. These areas are difficult terrain, and they might hold other hazards as well, such as pockets of empty space beneath the snow that act as large pits.
- **Ice:** Great smooth ice floes make their way down every side of the mountain. Traversing these floes requires a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid falling prone. Failing by 5 or more results in a fall that, depending on the slope, might carry a character far away from their companions. Other areas are merely slick and level and follow the normal rules for Slippery Ice (DMG 110).

Aside from these effects, the weather itself makes traveling the mountain extremely difficult. Snow, hail, and lightning constantly assault its slopes. This weather can limit vision and obscure trails.



## DEFENSES

As long as Father Llymic remains imprisoned, defense of the glacial tomb falls to his minions—the crazed cultists and the brood spawn—and the harsh environment.

Cultists and insane individuals prowl the lower reaches of the mountain, incapable of surviving the higher summits. These groups all succumb to brood fever eventually, joining the spawn up above, while new groups and individuals constantly arrive to take their place. The cultist groups might have an order among themselves, but none of them work together toward any sort of common defense. These maniacs attack anyone bearing natural or artificial light. Characters who are not carrying such illumination might be able to bypass these groups with the use of the Deception and Persuasion skills.

When the party reaches the mountainside, the environment changes dramatically and brood spawn become common. Encountering a single creature precipitates a much greater conflict as all nearby brood move in to investigate the disturbance. The concentration and power of the brood increases the higher up one goes.

Those hoping to fly to reach the peak find it to be a nearly impossible task. Fierce, driving snow and hail assault any who ascend to more than 30 feet above the mountain's surface. This constantly roiling storm limits visibility to 5 feet, slows movement by half, and deals 14 (4d6) points of cold damage per round of exposure. As an added hazard, the storm is home to flying brood spawn that have no difficulty navigating it.

Additionally, those hoping to bypass the dangers of the mountainside by teleporting directly to the top find themselves out of luck. Due to the magical wards created by the ancient elves that imprisoned Father Llymic, it is impossible to make it to the summit, or to any other location on the mountain, via teleportation or by extradimensional or interplanar means.

Anyone reaching the summit with a functioning light source provokes the wrath of all the brood spawn within 1 mile, who quickly make their way to the peak to destroy the intruders.

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

The mountain that holds Father Llymic's tomb is huge, covering many square miles. Although numerous threats and dangers plague the ascent, only the peak is detailed here. Feel free to add groups of cultists, wandering packs of brood spawn, dangerous terrain, and other hazards during the approach. Unless otherwise noted, all these areas are sites of intense weather, as noted in the previous section.



### A. GARDEN OF ALIEN ICE

As travelers ascend the peak, they encounter a large plain of relatively flat ground. Dotting this landscape are strange statues made out of ice. Odd shapes and alien forms make up most of the sculptures, including titanic spheres of ice balanced atop slender stalagmites, perfect spirals of ice that seem to tighten to infinity, and grotesque images of beasts that cannot be. Those wandering through this eerily quiet garden must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw for every minute that they spend there. On a failed save, a creature suffers from a random form of Short-Term Madness, determined by rolling on the Short-Term Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### B. KEEP OF THE FROST GIANTS

This ruined structure is carved from large slabs of pure white rock and covered in a thick layer of frost and ice. It was the home of a small tribe of frost giants who long ago succumbed to brood fever. Although most left to spread the plague of Father Llymic across the land, three of the terrible behemoths remain. See Encounter 1 for more information.

### C. ICE BRIDGE

The path leading up to the summit is broken at this point. Only a sheet of ice bridges the 60-foot gap, which is 100 feet deep and has a plain of snow at the bottom. Brood spawn creatures have laired in this area in the past, and a pack of them might be here when the party arrives. Typical creatures include brood spawn trolls, ogres, and even purple worms. The ice bridge is 15 feet wide and has the following statistics.

**Ice Bridge:** Each 5-foot square of the bridge has 100 hit points, has an AC of 16, is immune to cold, poison, and psychic damage, and is vulnerable to fire and thunder damage. The bridge is Slippery Ice (DMG 110), which may prevent creatures from crossing the bridge in a timely manner.

If the bridge is broken into two halves on each side of the gap, the bridge collapses and falls to the plain below. Each 5-foot square of the bridge has a weight tolerance of 500 pounds. Whenever this weight is exceeded, the ice in that area breaks, and all creatures standing above it must make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. On a failure, a creature plummets to the bottom of the gap. On a success, a creature manages to prevent themselves from falling by grabbing onto the bridge or onto another creature, as appropriate.

### D. BLACK ICE SPIRE

The winding path meets up with a towering spire of ice at this location. This spear reaches 200 feet above the level of the path, making its tip all but invisible to those at its base. Only during lightning flashes can the pinnacle be seen. Flying brood spawn use this location to roost and wait for the arrival of their master. These creatures do not bother those on the path unless they see light of any kind, in which case they swoop down to attack. The brood spawn white dragon that resides in area E can be found here, clinging to the side of the spire. Although numerous rings and gouges are carved into the spire, the slick ice requires a successful DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to climb it.







## E. CAVE OF THE WYRM

This cave is the home of a brood spawn white dragon. See Encounter 2 for more information.

## F. ICE FALLS

A great cascade of black glacial ice pours down the mountainside at this spot. Its numerous crevasses and cracks make it easier to climb than most ice surfaces, requiring only a DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. Being this close to Father Llymic, however, adds another danger to the 60-foot ascent: A creature that is touching the ice at the start of its turn must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of soul chill.

## G. PLAIN OF DARKNESS

This vast sheet of pure black ice is mirror-smooth and difficult to traverse. Not only is this ice considered Slippery Ice (DMG 110), but black vapor also seeps from the ice, acting as an inhaled poison. Whenever a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or take 11 (2d10) poison damage and one level of exhaustion. Those who breathe in the vapor suffer visions of a frozen alien world covered in darkness that are forever burned into their minds. If a creature would die to this exhaustion, its Wisdom score is instead reduced to 0, and the creature becomes motionless, as if in prayer, and is effectively unconscious. Brood spawn can be found here, but they are comatose due to the effects of the vapor.

## H. FATHER LLYMIC'S PRISON

Atop the mountain, near its highest peak, Father Llymic is entombed in a thick sheet of glacial ice. Seven pillars humming with eldritch power, each bearing ancient Elven runes, surround the crack that contains him. By the time the party reaches this point, the sun is extinguished and the time of Father Llymic's awakening is at hand. One by one, the seven pillars of ice shatter as the last bonds of his imprisonment fail. When the final one crumbles, Father Llymic's great alien bulk crawls up from below, surveying his new world. See the "Father Llymic" encounter for more information.

# ENCOUNTER 1: GIANT BROOD

This encounter is changed to consist of two **brood spawn frost giants** (EdE 11) and two **brood spawn worgs** (EdE 10). The positioning of these creatures can be determined based on the possible locations given in the original encounter map. Additionally, the suggested party level for this encounter is increased to 16, from 14.

## TACTICS

Both brood spawn frost giants rush out of the keep on the first round to engage the party members out in the open. They target their attacks against creatures bearing a functioning light source, whether it's natural or magical in nature. If kept at range, they use their innate spells to hamper and damage the party by obscuring their vision with *darkness* and *sleet storm*.

The worgs wait 1 round before revealing their presence. They might wait for a good opportunity to strike before moving into a closer position. In the following round, the worgs attack the most injured party member, if possible. The worgs do not use their breath weapons unless sorely pressed.

These creatures use their innate spells and breath weapons without regard to their companions, relying on their immunities to negate the damage. These brood spawn fight to the death.

Prolonged combat here attracts other brood spawn to assist in holding the path. After 10 rounds, 2 (1d4) brood spawn ogres (EdE 10) come to investigate from a nearby encampment.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### RUBBLE

The ground in certain places is strewn with large chunks of rubble, which acts as difficult terrain. A brood spawn frost giant can throw pieces of rubble from these piles. Each 5-foot square of rubble has two usable rocks that they can throw at a creature, as described in their statistics.

### STRUCTURES

The walls of the keep are all roughly 40 feet tall and covered in frost and ice. Due to the damage, however, scaling the structures requires only a DC 15 Strength (Acrobatics) check.

### DOORS

The two gigantic doors of the keep lie in ruin before it. A brood spawn frost giant can throw one of these doors as if it were a rock.

# ENCOUNTER 2: ICE WYRM

This encounter is unchanged, except that the suggested party level is increased to 18, from 15.

## TACTICS

The **brood spawn white dragon** (EdE 12) is a cunning opponent, using its surroundings to its best advantage. It moves out from its cave only close enough to unleash its Cold Breath and does not fly unless cornered. It instead waits for the party to approach it before using its powerful tail to collapse the thin ice underfoot. If any characters fall in, its next action is to cast *wall of ice* in order to seal the hole, trapping them in the freezing water below.

Once reduced to half of its hit points or fewer, the brood spawn dragon Disengages and flies up above the party, hiding in the howling storm. From there, it uses its spells to assault any creatures who were causing it harm in melee. After crippling these foes, it returns to the ground, focusing on spellcasters and other support characters before returning to that combat. The white dragon fights to the death.

If the characters bypass this brood spawn white dragon, it flies up to join the fight with Father Llymic the moment he is freed.



## FEATURES OF THE AREA

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This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### FREEZING WATER

This water is considered Frigid Water (DMG 110). Those trapped beneath the ice have no air and can't breathe.

### THICK ICE

This ice is considered Slippery Ice (DMG 110).

### THIN ICE

This ice is considered Thin Ice (DMG 110). If destroyed, creatures above it plummet 40 feet into the Freezing Water below.

### TREASURE

The ice cave of this dragon is full of treasure, including 18,400 gp, 12,900 sp, a set of *adamantine plate armor* (DMG 150), a *potion of storm giant strength* (DMG 187), a *potion of vitality* (DMG 188) and a *robe of stars* (DMG 194).

## ENCOUNTER 3: FATHER LLYMIC

This encounter is unchanged, except that the suggested party level is increased to 20, from 18.

### TACTICS

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**Father Llymic** (EdE 8) opens combat by using his Discord and Woe malefic property. He then calls forth three brood spawn barbarians from the surrounding caves. These brood spawn charge and attack the nearest enemy. In the following rounds, Father Llymic uses his abilities to their best effect, targeting any character that has a functioning light source before all others. If no light source presents itself (which is likely considering the overwhelming Dead Sun sign), Father Llymic instead closes with the nearest enemy to use his melee attacks while exposing as many party members as possible to his Deadly Chill aura. He also casts *cone of cold* whenever he can catch multiple party members in the blast. If the party proves resistant to cold, he casts *maddening darkness* and uses melee attacks in hopes of minimizing the effects of this resistance. If facing only a single foe in melee, Father Llymic tries to implant his Brood Seed.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

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This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### CREVASSE

This opening drops down 100 feet, and anyone falling into it takes 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage. In addition, the hole radiates a terrible chill. Any creature within 10 feet of the hole at the start of its turn suffer one level of soul chill.

## CRUMBLED PILLARS

Each one of these pillars counts as difficult terrain. Although ruined, each one radiates overwhelming abjuration magic. More important, the runes on the pillars amplify light-creating spells and effects. Although the true power no longer functions, some residual magic remains. Anyone using a piece of one of these pillars as a material component for a spell that creates magical light can cast it normally, despite the current level of the Dead Sun sign. Each piece of stone is consumed in the casting of the spell and each pile of rubble contains only one piece of stone that can be used for this purpose. A piece of stone can be found with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check (no action required) by any character that is capable of seeing the stone's magical auras or is otherwise aware of this property.

### DARK ICE

The entire top of the mountain is a sheet of smooth, Slippery Ice (DMG 110). This ice generates a field that enhances the effects of cold damage in the area; spells and effects that deal cold damage can't deal less than their average cold damage.

Father Llymic has been imprisoned for too long to accept defeat and fights to the death. The moment Father Llymic is reduced to half of his hit points or fewer, he lets out a terrifying screech that calls all brood spawn within a 10-mile radius. Although most do not arrive for some time, any creatures not slain in previous encounters come to his aid after 2 to 3 rounds. In addition, other flying brood spawn might arrive within a few rounds, if the party is having an easy time with the fight.

## CONCLUSION

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The moment Father Llymic is destroyed, a faint flicker of light appears in the sky as the sun returns. Although it takes a few days for the light to return to full strength, this event causes fear in the hearts of all brood spawn, who quickly flee the area. Within a week, all the brood spawn die, melting into pools of ichor that forever stain the landscape. The arctic conditions slowly subside, but the effect on the world is devastating. Entire towns are emptied, crops are ruined, countless animals slain, and the landscape is scarred and ruined. With time, things might return to some semblance of normalcy, but nothing is ever again as it was.



# THE HULKS OF ZORETHA

*"And the Five shall awaken to cleanse the world of living vileness, and when all is purified unto emptiness the Children of Zoretha shall arise to fill creation with their glory. Therefore tremble in thy home, o mortal, for thou standeth between this earth and grim salvation."*

— The Zoretha Scrolls, chap. 13, verses 23-25

The Hulks of Zoretha are five stone monoliths that have stood still and silent for as long as history records. Deep within their stone hearts pulse five malevolent intelligences determined to destroy all life on this plane. If awakened, the Hulks will destroy the world to make a nest for their own foul brood.

## BACKGROUND

The Hulks' background is unchanged.

## GOALS

The Hulks' goals are unchanged.

## THE HULKS OF ZORETHA IN THE CAMPAIGN

The cults that worship the Hulks of Zoretha have been working for years to raise their strange stone gods to life. Since the Five are preparing to finally awaken, it seems as if they are about to succeed.

### SIGN: BLOOD MOON

The blood moon sets tempers on edge, making people aggressive and angry.

**Attitudes:** This sign refers to multiple steps of NPC attitudes as per the table below. These steps are used for the purposes of description brevity, and need not be used as a mechanical descriptor in play.

**Excluding Player Characters:** To preserve party integrity, a DM may wish to exclude the player characters from the direct mechanical detriments of this sign (as per the Strong and Overwhelming effects). Rather, a DM may wish to describe how the temper of each character shortens and how their anger becomes more volatile as the sign intensifies; this method requires cooperation from the players so that they can properly roleplay these effects over the course of the campaign. This may also be done with NPCs that are powerful enough to resist entering a rage or frenzy on a regular basis.

### NPC ATTITUDES

| Attitude    | Means                       | Possible Actions                                   |
|-------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Hostile     | Will take risks to hurt you | Attack, interfere, berate, flee                    |
| Unfriendly  | Wishes you ill              | Mislead, gossip, avoid, watch suspiciously, insult |
| Indifferent | Doesn't much care           | Socially expected interaction                      |
| Friendly    | Wishes you well             | Chat, advise, offer limited help, advocate         |
| Helpful     | Will take risks to help you | Protect, back up, heal, aid                        |

**Faint:** The starting attitudes of all living creatures are reduced by one step. If a creature's attitude drops to hostile, it immediately attacks the closest living creature until it deals damage. At that point, it reverts to its normal starting attitude.

**Moderate:** As faint, but starting attitudes drop by two steps.

**Strong:** As moderate, but living creatures also risk flying into an uncontrollable rage. Each day when it awakens (or at the beginning of the day if it does not require sleep), a creature must succeed on a DC 11 Wisdom saving throw or go berserk. On each of its turns while berserk, a creature attacks the nearest creature it can see. If no creature is near enough to move to and attack, the creature attacks an object, with preference for an object smaller than itself. Once the creature goes berserk, it continues to do so until it kills another creature or is itself killed. At the end of the rage, the creature (if it survives) suffers one level of exhaustion.

**Overwhelming:** As strong, but the DC of the Wisdom saving throw increases to 16. The rage intensifies to an insane frenzy, granting an affected creature advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened, as well as allowing it to make one weapon attack as a bonus action on each of its turn.

### THE ZORETHA SCROLLS

Scribed on an unidentifiable material that has somehow endured the millennia intact, the now-crumbling Zoretha Scrolls are not inherently magical and are thus not detected as such by spells like *detect magic* and *identify*. The words contained within the scrolls have a magical effect that occurs when they are read.

Only one or two copies (in addition to the original scrolls) should exist in a given game world, since making a copy requires a scribe to voluntarily and permanently give up her sanity. Copies are usually in book form. No written translation has ever been completed.



## READING THE SCROLLS

The scrolls are written in an archaic dialect of Dwarven that can be read only by someone who can read Dwarven; the reader then must find a way to translate this dialect to modern Dwarvish (e.g. a *comprehend languages* spell), or they can make a DC 18 Intelligence (History) check in an attempt to understand it directly. Even then, the insane ramblings cannot be correctly deciphered without a DC 23 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check; this check must be made at the beginning of every 5 hours of reading.

Readers who maintain their sanity can learn from the Zoretha Scrolls. On a successful check to decipher the ramblings as above, the first 5 hours of reading hours of reading reveals all the information contained in the Background and Goals sections from the original book. For each additional 5 hours of reading that is accompanied by a successful check, a reader learns one of the following facts:

### d8 Result

- 1 The five Hulks are connected with the elements: acid, cold, fire, and lightning.

The colors and basic appearance of the Hulks, as

- 2 described in the "Description" section of the original book.

- 3 One of the three chants needed to awaken the Hulks.

- 4 One of the six material components of the awakening ritual. All are rare and expensive and can be clues to help the party find the whereabouts of NPCs if necessary.

- 5 How to conduct the ritual, excluding the required chants.

- 6 The Hulks have breath weapons.

- 7 One Hulk is faster than the others and flies.

- 8 The location of the Hulks.

## MADNESS OF THE SCROLLS

Every five hours spent reading the Zoretha Scrolls forces the reader to make a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. The scrolls don't need to be understood to take effect; simply reading them is enough. On a failed save, the creature's Wisdom score is reduced by 1d4, to a minimum of 1 (-5). On a failed save of 5 or more, the target also suffers from a random form of Indefinite Madness, determined by rolling on the Indefinite Madness table in chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The reduction to a target's Wisdom score lasts until the target finishes a long rest without reading the scrolls during the rest. However, if the target's Wisdom score is reduced to 1, the reduction becomes permanent and can't be cured by any means.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline given in the original book is unchanged. Consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the original outline.

## SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| None         | 5           |
| Faint        | 10          |
| Moderate     | 15          |
| Strong       | 18          |
| Overwhelming | 20          |

## THE HULKS OF ZORETHA IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

## THE HULKS OF ZORETHA IN FAERÛN

This section is unchanged.

## VARIANT USAGE

When compared to the other eight Elder Evils here, the Hulks of Zoretha could be considered the most underwhelming. One reason for this is that each individual Hulk is much weaker than many of the monsters out there. Even Soelma and Janwulf are higher in CR than an individual Hulk. Rather, the global threat posed by the Hulks' Blood Moon sign makes them a world-ending threat; additionally, the five Hulks are designed to be a challenge even for high level characters when fought all at once.

The second reason for this is that there is so much missed potential for their story. The original Elder Evils book describes that the Hulks are part of an alien race that sent them to colonize the campaign setting; once they awaken and eradicate all sapient life on the planet, they will give birth to the "Children of Zoretha". Such children were not given statistics nor descriptions in the original book, as it is assumed that the players will defeat the Hulks before they have a chance to give birth to them.

However, what if a DM wanted to change up the story? Perhaps the Children of Zoretha have begun to bring chaos and destruction to the setting, in an effort to awaken their dormant parents. Perhaps the Hulks and their now matured Children have already colonized a different world and have now begun to invade the campaign setting. It is unfortunate that the original book did not provide the tools necessary in order to facilitate such stories.

As mentioned, the Hulks of Zoretha are underwhelming because they are required to individually be weak in order to be a group encounter for high level players. Thus, DMs that feel the Hulks are boring as a group may run them as one colossal Elder Evil that I dubbed the "Titan of Zoretha".

A five-headed monolith big enough to tackle a tarrasque, the Titan of Zoretha can be used as a replacement of the five Hulks in a standard campaign. However, if a DM makes the Hulks and Children of Zoretha non-unique (i.e. a reoccurring monster type throughout the campaign), the Titan of Zoretha would instead be used as their leader. This way, the aliens of Zoretha can be used as an entire faction of enemies, rather than relying on cultists and the Hulks' Blood Moon sign to create conflict throughout the campaign.



Thus, I included statistics for the Children of Zoretha and the variant Titan of Zoretha in the accompanying [bestiary](#). They are simply my imagining of these concepts, which I do not claim to have a definitive monopoly over or understanding of.

In addition to the above content, consider the following changes and additions:

- Associate the Hulks with the Far Realm. The Hulks are easily associated with the Far Realm due to their madness-inducing traits. Perhaps Zoretha is a layer of the Far Realm, and the Hulks' Innate Spellcasting traits are actually psionic in nature. Throughout the campaign, more and more aberrations might threaten the world in preparation for the Hulks' awakening.
- Elaborate upon the mysterious place called Zoretha. In a Spelljammer campaign, perhaps Zoretha is a distant crystal sphere that the other denizens of Zoretha call home. In a planar campaign, perhaps Zoretha is a new plane of existence from outside the Great Wheel, or it is a small crevasse between two planes that has been undetected by mortal civilization.
- Change the motivation of the Hulks as you see fit. As alien colonizers, the Hulks might seek to enslave the mortal races instead, using what is left of civilization when they awaken to construct a new society for their Children to live in. Or perhaps the Hulks seek to open a portal to Zoretha, allowing the rest of their kind to flood into their new colony. You can also change the motivations of the Cult of Zoretha. Perhaps they can perform sacrificial rituals in order to create or summon the Children of Zoretha, or maybe their desire to spread madness to all has allowed them to create the Blood Moon sign themselves.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding the Hulks, Soelma Nilaenish, and Janwulf the Soulbiter. Additionally, reference the [bestiary](#) for information on the optional Children and Titan of Zoretha as described in the previous section.

## THE TEMPLE OF ZORETHA

The Hulks of Zoretha have no true temple, but the five of them have stood in one place for thousands upon thousands of years. In this location, cultists have carved out a lair that they call the Temple of Zoretha.

The rock and ice of this "temple" have been hollowed out by hand to form a vast cavern with a permanent roof of ice hundreds of feet thick and a warren of tunnels and chambers leading off it. Cultists make their homes, such as they are, in these smaller chambers. Fire pits with crude chimneys cut into the rock allow cultists to keep themselves warm despite the year-round freezing temperatures. A nearby coal deposit provides fuel in the treeless wasteland they inhabit.

All life in the temple centers around the great cavern where the uncaring monoliths have stood since far past the reach of mortal memory. Vast, echoing, and largely empty, the cavern nevertheless swarms with indistinct whispers and eerie shadows. During the day, sunlight filters thinly through the frozen roof, casting strange ripples and prisms of dim light. At night, torchlight glimmers against the ice ceiling, and the weird markings on the Hulks' bodies produce a shimmering effect.

## KEY FEATURES

Mad cultists with little knowledge of architecture designed the temple of Zoretha. It was intended to be a cathedral and resting place grand enough for gods. What is most remarkable is how well the cultists succeeded at their goal, for the main cavern of the temple is nothing if not awesome.

At its highest point, right above the Hulks, the ceiling of the cavern is 150 feet in height, and a roughly 90-foot-radius circle of it is ice. Large fires are never burned in the great cavern, so it is always very cold there.

The ice ceiling allows for illumination throughout the chamber during daylight hours, though the light is blue and the room is lit no better than it would be with candles and torches. The cultists leave the place dark at night, except when they perform rituals. During rituals they use torches and fire pits similar to those in the cultists' sleeping quarters. Any light causes strange shimmers and tricks of the eye.

Other ceilings in the temple complex are stone, and most are 20 feet tall or lower. Some are as small as 5 feet tall. The exception to this is the main entry hall, which at 40 feet in height is designed to be a comfortable space for the 20-foot-tall monoliths once they awaken. All light outside the main cavern comes from fire pits left burning for warmth.

## DEFENSES

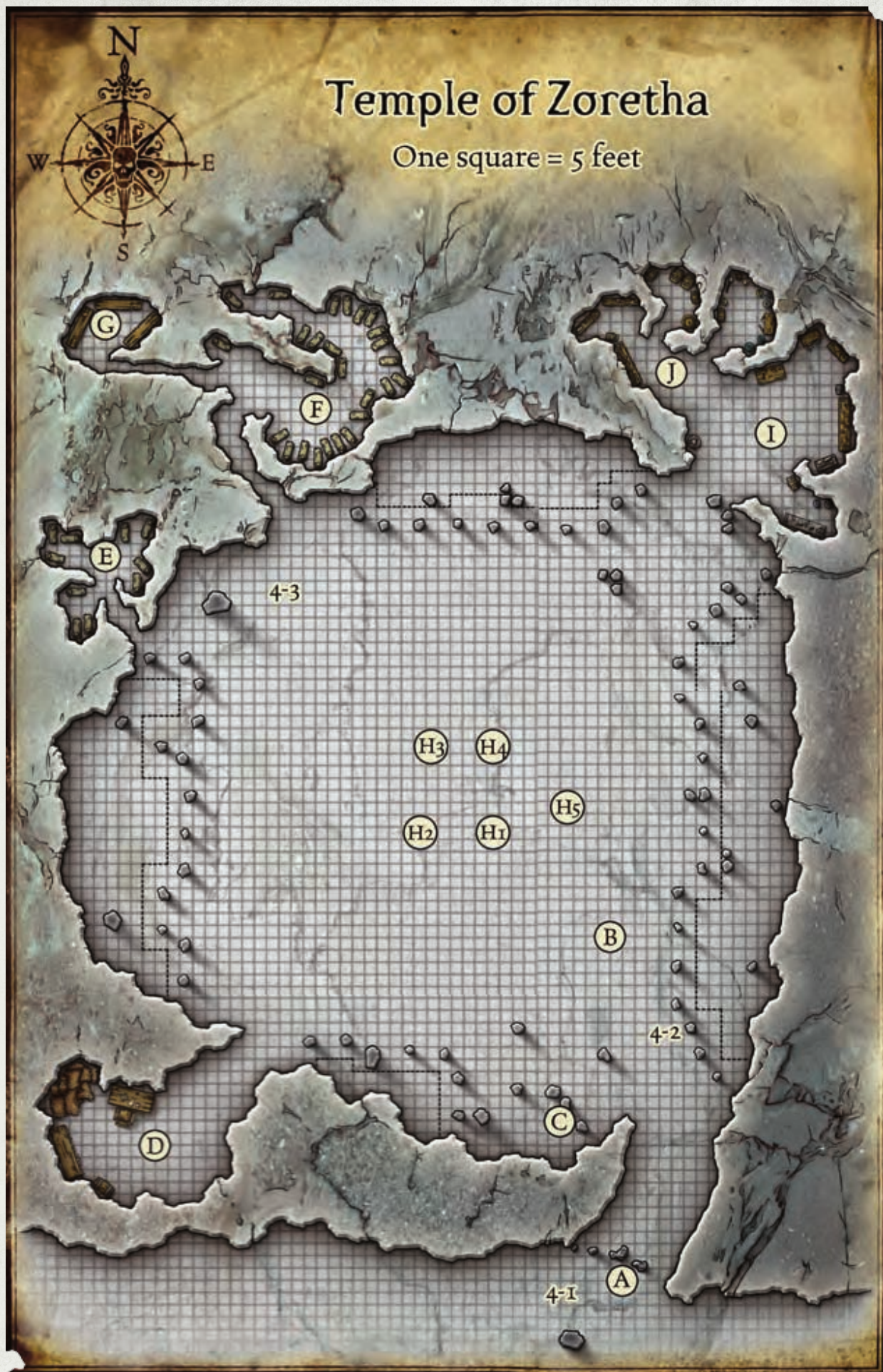
The Temple of Zoretha is well defended by the cultists who live there. Even when the majority are out raiding or hunting, a substantial guard is left behind to defend their gods' resting place. Surviving the harsh climate and the cult's internal squabbles make cultists tougher and better fighters than average folk. Defenders of less than CR 3 are rare.

After the main gate, the next line of defense is the great hall itself. Intruders are ambushed upon entry if possible. Cultists know that their monoliths are invulnerable, and those retaining the slightest shred of sanity do not defend the main cavern to the death.

The twists and turns of the smaller chambers and tunnels provide useful ambush spots or defensible last stands. If faced with particularly powerful intruders, the strongest Medium and Small warriors have instructions to defend the library, which can be accessed only by Medium or smaller creatures. Defenders of the library fight to their last breath.

Once the Hulks' Blood Moon sign reaches the strong or overwhelming stage, cultists of Zoretha can voluntarily enter a frenzy as noted in the sign's description.







## ENCOUNTER AREAS

The following locations correspond to those indicated on the Temple of Zoretha map.

### A. THE ENTRANCE TUNNEL

Set into an icy cliff face, this enormous tunnel is obscured by huge, fanglike icicles and large piles of packed snow; it takes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) to notice the entrance before entering bowshot range. The entrance tunnel is guarded by ten to twelve cultists who gain cover from the ice and snow in the opening. Guards attack anyone they do not know as soon as they are in range. There is no password, and they cannot be reasoned with or bribed. Encounter 1 provides an example of entrance guards who are prepared for powerful opponents.

### B. THE CAVERN

Any cultists in the cavern attack intruders on sight. In combat, keep in mind the huge scale of the room. Most Medium cultists worshiping among the monoliths, for example, need at least 2 rounds to reach melee fighting range of the entrance. All ranged fighters should have little trouble finding cover among the support pillars along the edge of the hall or behind the monoliths themselves. If a leader is present, cultists attempt to surround and trap intruders in the central area, so that they can be picked off by archers. Encounter 2 portrays the final fight with Soelma Nilaenish and the cultists in this area.

### C. AMBUSH SPOT

This alcove just inside the main entrance makes a perfect ambush spot to surprise those coming up the entrance tunnel. Stone formations and a well-placed support pillar grant anyone crouching here advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks in all but full daylight. If cultists are prepared for the party's arrival, four to five Medium cultists are hidden here when the party enters. Once the male Hulk awakens, he uses this ambush spot if given an opportunity to do so.

### D. JANWULF'S HOME

The back half of this smaller room has been turned into a tidy and comfortable personal quarters for a Huge-size creature, with a magically everburning fireplace, piles of cured animal hide blankets forming a bed, a well-made wooden writing desk and chair, neatly organized shelves, and a large chest. Janwulf's wealth and remaining possessions can be found in this chamber. Janwulf used every magic trap he was able to pay for to keep intruders from rifling through his things, and the spells are still in place. The doorway, shelves, chest, and a secret panel in the chest are all rigged with explosive *glyphs of warding* (save DC 17).

Treasure in the room includes four silk tapestries on the walls that depict scenes of violent horror (1,000 gp each), a large crystal wine glass with an ornate gold base (3,000 gp), a silver ice bucket for chilling wine (2,000 gp), candlesticks (100 gp each), fine fabric on the mantelpiece (300 gp), and furs on the bed (350 gp total). The large desk and chair are made of darkwood and worth 500 gp each. The shelves (carved into the wall) contain only the works of a frost giant poet, worth 500 gp if the party can find a collector of depressing love poetry written in Giant.

The chest holds 4,000 gp and 500 pp. The chest is embroidered on the inside with nine bloodstones worth 50 gp each adorning a velvet cloth (worth 300 gp). If the party removes the velvet lining they find a secret panel and a tiny compartment holding five gemstones, each worth 1,000 gp: one diamond, one ruby, one topaz, one sapphire, and one black pearl.

### E. SMALL SLEEPING AREA

Some Small and Medium cultists sleep here. The area is filthy and smells of unwashed bodies. Any cultists hiding here will probably be terrified of the characters, but being crazy and trapped, they still attempt to fight their way out.

### F. LARGE SLEEPING AREA

Much like area J, this room is filthy and smelly, full of poorly tanned animal hides and little else. A few starved and sickly noncombatant cultists lie in the filth.

A second tunnel leads to area L, but it is small and difficult to notice in the shadows. Unless someone fully enters the chamber, it cannot be seen at all. If the party searches the room, a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check allows them to see the second tunnel.

### G. LIBRARY

Here the cultists keep their stash of manuscripts referencing the Hulks of Zoretha as well as any other texts the cultists have decided allude to the Hulks. The original Zoretha Scrolls are not present. Other books and scrolls here include fairy tales and fiction, manuals describing the methods through which one can obtain Vile Feats (see Chapter 1), and spell scrolls of *animate dead*, *eyebite*, *hallow*, and *move earth*. Several cultists (minimum CR 8 each) make a stand here. They fight to the death to protect their precious books.

### H1. FIRE HULK

Before awakening, the red and orange mottled fire Hulk stands here, facing the acid Hulk.

### H2. ICE HULK

The quiescent gray ice Hulk stands here, facing the lightning hulk. Pale blue lines that look like veins in the stone monolith glimmer wetly in torchlight.

### H3. ACID HULK

Until the Hulks are raised, the brown acid Hulk stands here, splotted randomly with sickly green patches that resemble lichen. The acid Hulk faces the fire hulk.

### H4. LIGHTNING HULK

Before awakening, the dark blue lightning Hulk stands here, facing the ice Hulk. Torchlight sparkles brightly in the white crystal lines that run through the apparently stone Hulk.

### H5. MALE HULK

The fifth Hulk stands here, facing the entrance. Though he is made of a black stonelike substance, his eyes follow observers.



## I. RITUAL ROOM

The cultists keep their pseudo-religious paraphernalia here, including costumes and props for bizarre rites; many of the items are blood-soaked, and nearly all are poorly made. A few minor magic items are scattered in the mix, such as a *shortsword of wounding* (DMG 207) that has obviously been used for blood sacrifices, an *eversmoking bottle* (DMG 168), and a flask of *sovereign glue* (DMG 200). The cult leaders keep the best acquisitions for themselves.

## J. STORAGE

The three smaller back chambers of the ritual room serve the cultists as storage areas. They keep food in one area, torches, fuel, and other supplies in a second, and weapons and armor in the third. All of it is filthy, mundane, and poorly organized.

# ENCOUNTER 1: INTO THE TEMPLE

This encounter is unchanged.

## TACTICS

In the first round, the guards at the gate sound the alarm to the rest of the temple, then do their best to pick off the party members with ranged attacks while they retain their cover behind the snow and icicles. They will not be drawn out of their tunnel. The creatures outside the tunnel keep the party from advancing quickly to allow their allies to fire.

Since the guards sounded the alarm during the first rounds, the longer this fight takes, the better prepared the cultists are when the party finally enters the main cavern. After the fifth round, consider one main cavern cultist per round to be hidden (DC 18 to detect) to ambush the party.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### ICE SLICK

A flat patch of very slick Slippery Ice (DMG 110) lies in front of the entrance, extending outward 10 feet from the northern snow pile.

### ICICLES

As well as providing cover for the trolls, the icicles at the tunnel mouth act as a barricade against intruders. A DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals an easy path through the hanging icicles, along the eastern side of the entrance. Otherwise, Medium and Large creatures that move through the area must move as if the area was difficult terrain.

### SNOW PILES

Steep slopes of packed snow lead up to the entrance. The slope and the unsure footing of the deep snow causes the snow piles to be difficult terrain.

# ENCOUNTER 2: STOP THE RITUAL

This encounter is changed to consist of one **cave troll** (EdE 18), two **skindancers** (EdE 18), three **greathorn minotaurs** (EdE 18), and **Soelma Nilaenish** (EdE 16). The positioning of these creatures can be determined based on the possible locations given in the original encounter map. Additionally, the suggested party level for this encounter is increased to 18, from 17.

## TACTICS

As the party makes its presence known, Soelma Nilaenish sends a few particular combatants to keep the party busy while she finishes her ritual.

The cave troll and the skindancers charge to attack as quickly as they can, while the greathorn minotaurs use their earth glide ability to circle behind the characters and surround them. Once the party is surrounded, the creatures try to herd them farther into the cavern, thus exposing them to more ranged attacks.

Obedient to Nilaenish's instructions, the creatures try to keep the party members in a group and away from the ritual if they possibly can. Nilaenish herself, even if attacked at range, does not join in the fight until her ritual is interrupted. She cast several defensive spells on herself before combat, however, and she is capable of casting *counterspell* and *shield* using her reaction without interrupting the ritual.

Once joined in the battle, Soelma attempts to stay out of melee with the party, taking cover behind a monolith and casting spells to support her allies. If she runs out of spells, Soelma—who is by now completely insane—voluntarily goes into a Blood Moon frenzy and fights to the death in melee with her *staff of power*.

If the party does not stop Soelma Nilaenish's ritual after 10 rounds of fighting, the Hulks awaken. However, if a party member attacks Soelma in melee or otherwise disturbs her ritual before a minute has passed, she angrily devotes her full energy to the battle. When Soelma falls, the remaining creatures flee into other parts of the temple.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### AMBUSH SPOT

Just to the left of the party as they enter the cavern is a perfect ambush spot. This alcove is not in line of sight to those coming up the entrance tunnel until they have fully entered the cavern by at least 10 feet. Stone formations and support pillars grant anyone crouching here advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks in all but full daylight.

### LOW CEILING

Though 150 feet tall at its highest, the ceiling in the great cavern arches down to 20 feet tall at the walls, which is slightly shorter than the Hulks themselves. The enemies will not enter the low-ceiling area indicated on the map unless they need to fight the party.



## SLEEPING HULKS

The Hulks of Zoretha serve as little more than terrain features during this battle. Keep in mind that since they are not really stone, the earth glide ability of the greathorn minotaurs does not work for passing through them.

## SUPPORT COLUMNS

The columns around the outer edge of the cavern are wide enough to provide total cover for creatures of Medium size or smaller.

# ENCOUNTER 3: THE HULKS AWAKEN

This encounter is unchanged.

## TACTICS

The **Hulks of Zoretha** (EdE 13) are aware of the party's approach no matter how stealthy they are. The black Hulk has circled around to the ambush spot, hoping to use his sneak attack. The other Hulks spread out to surround the party and to avoid being caught in area spells. The black Hulk specifically targets spellcasters.

All four female Hulks cast *conjure minor elementals* before the combat is engaged, summoning mephits or other elemental creatures as appropriate. The summoned creatures attempt to keep the party together so the female Hulks can make better use of their breath weapons.

The five Hulks are mates and breeding partners. They become angry if one of the females is killed, and all the females are extremely protective of the male, since he is irreplaceable.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

## AMBUSH SPOT

Just to the left of the party as they enter the cavern is a perfect ambush spot. This alcove is not in line of sight to those coming up the entrance tunnel until they have fully entered the cavern by at least 10 feet. Stone formations and support pillars grant the male hulk advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks made to hide here.

## LOW CEILING

Though 150 feet tall at its highest, the ceiling in the great cavern arches down to 20 feet tall at the walls, which is slightly shorter than the Hulks themselves. This area is considered difficult terrain for the hulks, as they must crouch in order to move through the area properly.

## SUPPORT COLUMNS

Each support column has 300 HP and an AC of 12. They provide total cover to Huge or smaller creatures behind them. When a column is broken, a portion of the ceiling collapses. Each creature within 10 feet of the column must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The space where the column was and the 10-foot-radius area of rubble around it then becomes difficult terrain until cleared.

## VARIANT: TITAN OF ZORETHA

If you choose to use the Titan of Zoretha variant discussed earlier in this chapter, place it in the center of the room. The Titan is 60 feet tall, and it isn't able to enter the low ceiling area unless it drops prone on its knees.

## TACTICS

The **Titan of Zoretha** (EdE 15) summons an elemental of its choice before combat. This elemental has been directed to hide in the ambush spot and to target spellcasters that are exposed from the rear.

The Titan starts combat by casting *earthquake*; the fissures created by the spell are too small for the Titan to get stuck in, and the Titan is able to support itself on the ceiling, preventing it from having to make a saving throw against falling prone or losing concentration on the spell. It then attempts to use *dominate monster* on the party member it determines is the strongest physically, and proceeds to attack the rest of the party with its Multiattack.

If the target of the Titan's *dominate monster* succeeds on its initial saving throw or the spell ends, it uses its next action or legendary action to unleash its Breath Weapon on as many party members as it can, and then proceeds to bombard the party with weapon attacks and spells as normal.



# THE LEVIATHAN

*"Dread Leviathan, who spawned monster serpents,  
Their bodies filled with poison instead of blood.  
Fierce beasts of land and sea who wore their glory  
like gods, all bedecked in splendor.  
Terror overcame whoever beheld Leviathan,  
From its dread body sprang vipers and dragons,  
And hurricanes, and mighty tempests,  
And fearsome shaking of the earth,  
And such abominations as even the gods could not  
comprehend.  
So did the world shudder at the stirring of Leviathan.  
Gods grant that it lie in peace in the depths for all eternity."*  
— An ancient tablet carved in Draconic, origin unknown

Spawned by the raw and undiluted chaos of creation, the world-spanning creature called the Leviathan slumbers deep beneath the waves, its dreams and stirrings producing monsters and disaster in the world above. Few on the surface are aware of the terrible threat that the Leviathan represents, but in the depths of the ocean, a creature of unspeakable evil seeks to use the mighty creature for his own nefarious purposes.

## BACKGROUND

The Leviathan's background is unchanged.

## GOALS

The Leviathan's goals are unchanged.

## THE LEVIATHAN IN THE CAMPAIGN

Everyone has heard legends about the Leviathan, ranging from wild sailors' tales of giant fish or whales to scholars' suggestions that the Leviathan is a real creature that has yet to be discovered. Few tales hint at the Leviathan's true power, and most of these are buried in the obscure dragon legends. Most scholars consider the Leviathan to be little more than an entertaining myth.

## SIGN: EERIE WEATHER

The impending awakening of the Leviathan is heralded by abnormal weather that becomes more and more widespread as the sign becomes stronger.

**Faint:** Eerie weather occurs once every 2 weeks and affects an area of 21 (2d20) square miles in a place of the DM's choice. The effects last for 3 (1d4 + 1) hours.

**Moderate:** Eerie weather occurs once a week and affects an area of 101 (2d100) square miles. The effects last for 7 (2d4 + 2) hours.

**Strong:** Eerie weather occurs once a day and affects an entire continent or large surface of the planet. The effects last for 14 (4d4 + 4) hours.

**Overwhelming:** Eerie weather occurs once an hour and affects the entire world. The effects last for 2 (1d4) hours (because the duration can be longer than the frequency, the effects often overlap).

Each time eerie weather occurs, consult the following tables and roll a d20 three times to determine the exact effect. See DMG 109 for details on severe weather conditions and their effects.

### TEMPERATURE

#### d20 Temperature

- 01- Heat wave; temperature rises by 1d4 × 10 degrees Fahrenheit
- 08- Cold snap; temperature falls by 1d4 × 10 degrees Fahrenheit
- 17- Invert season: summer becomes winter, spring becomes fall, and visa versa

### WIND

#### d20 Wind

- 01-08 Strong wind
- 09-16 Strong wind and fog (heavily obscuring the area)
- 17-20 1d6 tornados

### PRECIPITATION

#### d20 Precipitation

- 01-10 No precipitation
- 11-12 Storm: heavy rain or heavy snowfall (temperature-based)
- 13-14 As storm, plus heavy lightning (rain) or blizzard (snow)
- 15-16 As storm, plus hurricane (rain) or hail (snow)
- 17-18 As storm, plus blood rain (rain) or rain of fish or frogs (snow)
- 19-20 As storm, plus acid rain (rain) or flaming hail (snow)

**Tornado.** Use the *whirlwind* spell (XGE 171) as the effect of the storm (with the actual tornado being much larger than the size of the spell), with a save DC of 20.

**Blizzard.** The area of the blizzard is heavily obscured. Additionally, ground that has heavy snow on it is difficult terrain until cleared.

**Blood Rain.** A creature that ends its turn in the rain must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.



**Rain of Fish or Frogs.** Instead of snowing, fish and/or frogs fall from the sky, splattering when they hit the ground. Exposed creatures and objects take 1 point of bludgeoning damage at the start of each of their turns. Additionally, the ground becomes slick with gore and is difficult terrain until 2 (1d4) hours after the storm ends.

**Acid Rain.** Exposed creatures and objects take 2 acid damage at the start of each of their turns.

**Flaming Hail.** Exposed creatures and objects take 1 bludgeoning damage plus 1 fire damage at the start of each of their turns. Every 5 (1d10) rounds, a flaming hailstone explodes on impact in a random spot. Each creature within 20 feet of the impact must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The explosion covers the ground with fragments, making it difficult terrain until cleared.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline given in the original book is unchanged. Consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the original outline.

### SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| None         | 5           |
| Faint        | 10          |
| Moderate     | 15          |
| Strong       | 17          |
| Overwhelming | 20          |

## THE LEVIATHAN IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

## THE LEVIATHAN IN FAERÛN

This section is unchanged.

## VARIANT USAGE

The Leviathan's nature of being a sleeping serpent that wraps around the world limits its usage in different campaign settings. However, with enough creativity, it is possible to include The Leviathan in a Spelljammer or planar campaign.

In a Spelljammer campaign, The Leviathan can still be ran as normal; its body wraps around a given planet, and if roused, it will reduce that planet to rubble. However, you may also wish to have The Leviathan be a space serpent, laying dormant as its unconscious body drifts through wildspace. Perhaps it is even as big as a planet itself, and if awakened, it will smash each and every crystal sphere it comes across until the Material Plane has been completely destroyed.

In a planar campaign, perhaps The Leviathan's body spans multiple planes as the River Styx does. The forces of evil may wish to take advantage of this interplanar connection as their plans unfold, or they may wish to partially awaken The Leviathan in order to destroy a particular plane or two. If fully awakened, The Leviathan would eviscerate every plane it can before destroying itself.

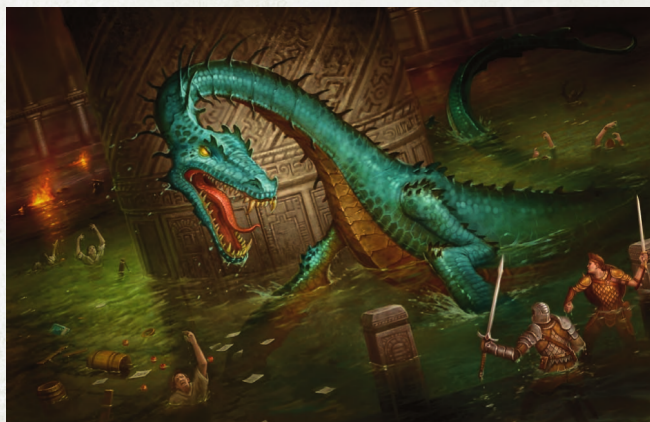
Beyond that, consider the following changes and additions:

- Add additional cults or factions that wish to take advantage of The Leviathan or that otherwise compete with the Cult of the Leviathan. By having multiple evil factions in this manner, it allows the players to ally with certain factions or to pit them against each other in order to prevent The Leviathan from bringing about an apocalypse. Here are a few examples:
  - An archdevil or devilish cult that receives word of Axithuatl's actions seeks to stop their demonic rivals from succeeding in their plans.
  - The forces of Elemental Evil (see *Princes of the Apocalypse*) do not care for the campaign setting and wish to fully awaken The Leviathan, taking advantage of or infiltrating Axithuatl's cult in order to acquire the *abyssal shard*.
  - Two different Cults of the Dragon Below disagree on how to use The Leviathan and whether or not it should be fully awakened.
- By default, the *abyssal shard* is in Axithuatl's possession for the entirety of the campaign. However, perhaps Axithuatl does not have it, and the party must race against Marcus Hape in order to obtain the *abyssal shard* from its current location.
- You may wish to use water-based campaign elements beyond just Mytus' Dwarven Diving Machine. Perhaps an underwater city of storm giants enlists the party's help in stopping aquatic aberrations from destroying their civilization. Maybe the party gains access to a seafaring vehicle (see *Ghosts of Saltmarsh* for ship rules), and they must navigate the high seas in order to travel between island nations or to fight threats just off the coast of a port city.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding aspects of the Leviathan, Axithuatl, and Marcus Hape.

Additionally, a description of the *abyssal shard* magic item is given below. Statistics for the sage Mytus are given in the [bestiary](#), and his Dwarven Diving Machine is given statistics below.





## DWARVEN DIVING MACHINE

*Gargantuan vehicle, (25 ft. by 25 ft.)*

**Creature Capacity** 2 crew, 8 passengers

**Cargo Capacity** 0.5 tons

**Travel Pace** 3 miles per hour (72 miles per day)

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT | WIS | CHA |
|---------|---------|---------|-----|-----|-----|
| 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 13 (+1) | 0   | 0   | 0   |

**Damage Immunities** cold, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, incapacitated, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, stunned, unconscious

### Actions

On its turn, the diving machine can take both the Move and Light actions below. It can't take these actions if it has no crew.

**Move.** The diving machine can use its helm to move with its magical propulsion unit.

**Light.** The diving machine's flashlight can emit bright light in a 60-foot cone and dim light for an additional 60 feet, or it can be turned off to emit no light. It can't use this action if the Helm or Magical Propulsion Unit is destroyed.

### Hull

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 100

### Control: Helm

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 100

Move up to the speed of its magical propulsion unit, with one 90-degree turn. If the helm is destroyed, the diving machine can't move.

### Movement: Magical Propulsion Unit

**Armor Class** 12

**Hit Points** 75; -5 ft. speed per 25 damage taken

**Speed (water or underwater).** 25 ft; 15 ft. while swimming against a current; 35 ft. while swimming with a current.

## SPINE TEMPLE

Rituals to awaken the Leviathan take place at a secret temple located in one of the mountainous spines that bristle along the great beast's back. The spine, positioned not far behind the Leviathan's head, rises from the water several miles off the coast. It is entirely featureless, leaving sailors and scholars alike utterly puzzled as to its origin and purpose.

Originally used by chaos-worshiping spellcasters to recharge their arcane energy, the temple has long been abandoned. Axihuatl learned of its existence during his research on the Leviathan and intends to use the temple to awaken the creature, then return the Leviathan to sleep once it has done its work.

### KEY FEATURES

The spine is ideal for Axihuatl's purposes, since part of it rises above the water, part of it is below, and the lowest level contains an opening to the swirling heart of chaos inside the Leviathan's body. A single entrance on the surface provides access to the upper temple.

The upper level of the temple at the tip of the Leviathan's great spine is above water, but the remainder is submerged beneath the waves. Long, dark, and perilous tubes provide access between levels.

Be sure to reference pages 182 and 198 of the *Player's Handbook* for rules on Swimming and Underwater Combat, respectively.

### ABYSSAL SHARD

*Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)*

A fragment of elemental chaos, the *abyssal shard* is a key element in Axihuatl's ritual to awaken the Leviathan. As chaos calls to chaos, the presence of this chunk of living disorder draws the great beast from its slumber just far enough for Axihuatl to influence its actions. Once the Leviathan's task is complete, Axihuatl intends to have Marcus Hape or another minion cast the shard into the Leviathan's heart, where it will be absorbed, sending the creature back to its slumbers.

When you use an action to toss the shard into the air, the shard orbits your head at a distance of 1d3 feet and confers a benefit to you. Thereafter, another creature must use an action to grasp or net the shard to separate it from you, either by making a successful attack roll against AC 24 or a successful DC 24 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. You can use an action to seize and stow the shard, ending its effect.

The shard has AC 24, 50 hit points, and resistance to all damage. It is considered to be an object that is being worn while it orbits your head.

You have advantage on all saving throws while the shard orbits your head.

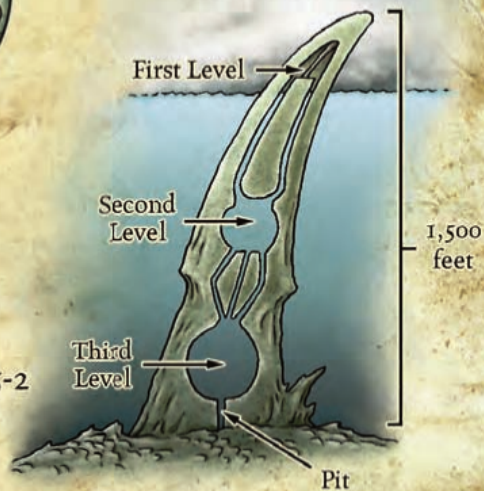




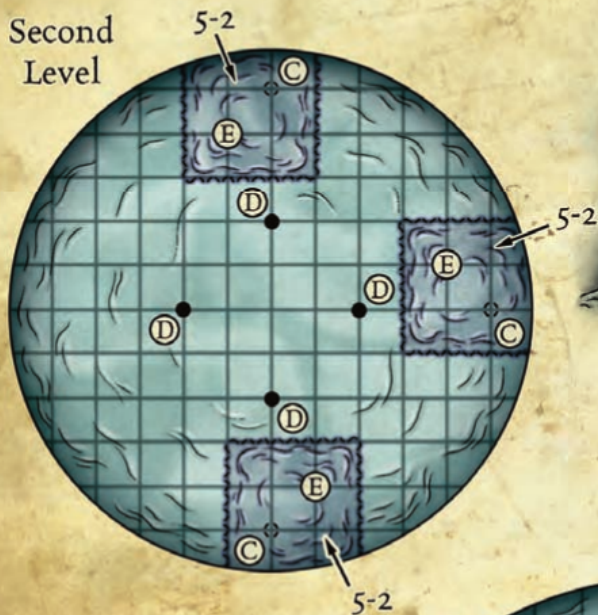
First Level



Side View



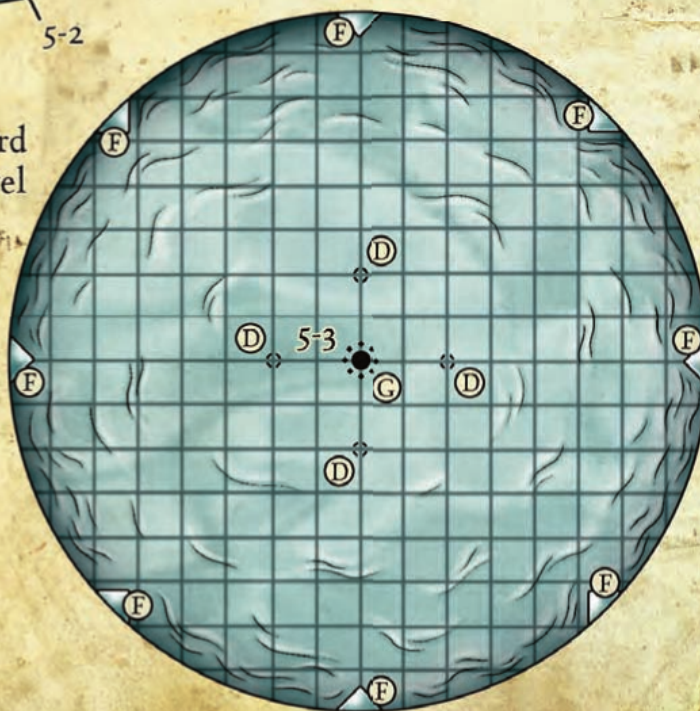
Second Level



## Spine Temple

One square = 50 feet

Third Level





## DEFENSES

The temple is a baffling and alarming place for outsiders (see Encounter Areas, below, for details), and Axihuatl relies on secrecy to defend it. He does not venture into the lower levels of the temple very often, remaining content to let the various chaotic obstacles of the lower levels keep the place safe from intruders.

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

The following locations correspond to those indicated on the map.

### FIRST LEVEL

The uppermost level of the temple is a roughly conical chamber where surface-dwelling cultists perform their rituals. A massive shaft of bone, elaborately carved and fluted, supports the arched ceiling. At the base of the central pillar is the ritual space where Axihuatl (in human form) leads his air-breathing followers.

#### A. ENTRANCE

This tube is dry and leads to an entrance on the surface (the other three on the level are filled with water after about 20 feet and lead to the next lower level). The cultists have fixed a rope ladder to enable easier access. The exterior door is located about 10 feet above the surface of the water and requires a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check to locate.

#### B. CEREMONIAL PILLAR

The central pillar narrows down here, where a ritual circle is inscribed in the floor, surrounded by incomprehensible runes. If cast correctly, Axihuatl's ritual will in theory wake the Leviathan for a time so it can smash the lands and sink most of the continents, and then send it back to sleep, leaving the world (in the ixitxachtli's mind, anyway) a far better place. See Encounter 1 for more details.

#### C. ASCENDING TRANSPORT TUBES

#### D. DESCENDING TRANSPORT TUBES

These tubes are about 10 feet in diameter and were used for access between levels when the temple was submerged. Warm water rises through the tubes, heated by the mass of the Leviathan below, so swimming down is somewhat more difficult than swimming up. Descending one level through a tube requires 10 minutes and for a swimmer to make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a swimmer suffers one level of exhaustion.

Swimming up to the next higher level is easier, since the warm water carries the swimmer along. Doing this only takes 5 minutes and doesn't require a saving throw.

### SECOND LEVEL

This level is a squat cylinder, its walls, floor, and ceiling completely covered in intricately carved runes similar to those that surround the ceremonial circle on the first level. An eerie glow emanates from the runes, suffusing the area with dim light.

Chaos energy from the Leviathan slowly leaches from these runes, and small bioluminescent creatures swarm through the water, tiny manifestations of the Leviathan's dreams.

### E. RUNIC ZONE

These zones exist as cubes of chaotically charged water about 150 feet square, each centered on one of the transport tubes from above. Here, chaos energy is focused, manifesting several unusual effects. Anyone exiting the tubes into the level encounters the runic zone and its effects. See Encounter 2 for further details on these zones.

### THIRD LEVEL

The lowest level of the temple is a great spherical chamber over 800 feet across. It too is covered in carved runes that provide shadowy illumination as described on the previous level.

### F. CHAOS DOORWAY

The builders of the temple used these portals to transport themselves to and from the temple, entering and exiting without the need for physical doors. Now they serve as conduits to the Leviathan, manifesting creatures from its dreams and transporting them from the temple to elsewhere in the world. If the party approaches within 50 feet of one of these doorways, roll on the following table to see what type of creature manifests.

If an encounter features a creature from a book you don't have, pick a result from a book you do have. If the source column lists the source "EdE", it is referring to the accompanying [bestiary](#) for this book.

| d100  | Encounter                    | Source |
|-------|------------------------------|--------|
| 01-10 | 1d4 aspects of the Leviathan | EdE 19 |
| 11-20 | 1d6 chaos spawns             | EdE 22 |
| 21-30 | 2d8 deep lurkers             | EdE 22 |
| 31-40 | 1d4 juvenile krakens         | GoS 14 |
| 41-50 | 1 kraken                     | MM 197 |

### G. THE PIT

At the bottom of the sphere is a round pit that leads into the very heart of the Leviathan's chaotic essence. See encounter 5-3 for more details on this area.

## ENCOUNTER 1: UPPER TEMPLE

This encounter is changed to include 16 **brine cultists** (EdE 21) instead of normal cultists, as well as a **wastrilith** (MTF 139) that is summoned alongside the **waterveiled assassin** (EdE 21) in order to guard **Axithuatl** (EdE 20) against the party.

### TACTICS

Initially, the waterveiled assassin and the wastrilith move to defend Axihuatl. Their priority is protecting him, so they move toward any characters who attack him. Cultists likewise move to stop the party while Axihuatl completes the ritual, but they are more likely to be nuisances than any real threat. The focus initially is simply to slow the party down and buy Axihuatl some time.



When one or more characters break through and attack Axihuatl, he turns and fights while the *abyssal shard* begins to orbit the central column and the runes grow brighter and brighter. He casts all possible protective spells on himself before combat if he has time, and once in combat uses his corrupt inflict spells, starting with the most damaging and working down. He falls back toward the central column as he fights.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### RITUAL CIRCLE

The cultists stand around the edge of these carved runes. A permanent *hallow* spell (save DC 16) is in effect inside the circle. The spell prevents celestials and fey from entering the area, and it inflicts the "Fear" effect (see the original spell) on creatures of lawful alignment.

### INNER CIRCLE

The *hallow* spell continues to target lawful creatures within the inner circle, but it also targets creatures of good alignment in this area.

### CENTRAL COLUMN

Any creature of chaotic alignment that starts its turn within 10 feet of the column gains 7 (2d6) temporary hit points, and such creatures have advantage on ability checks and saving throws while in the area.

## CONCLUSION

The combat continues until Axihuatl has lost half his hit points. At this point, he staggers and accidentally strikes the orbiting *abyssal shard*. The entire chamber is rocked by a massive tremor equivalent to an *earthquake* spell (save DC 15) for 1 round. This tremor also starts early if a party member attempts to grab or attack the *abyssal shard* while it is orbiting.

After the tremor, all the tubes in the floor of the chamber shoot geysers of seawater into the air, and the chamber immediately begins to fill with water at a rate of about 5 feet per round (rising on initiative count 20, losing initiative ties). The cultists begin to scream and take no further actions other than trying to save themselves. Once the water is 15 feet deep, or if he is in danger of reaching 0 hit points, Axihuatl transforms into his *ixitxachtli* form.

Before the party can react to "Enshaddon's" transformation, the water pushes the party up to 15 feet away from Axihuatl, and they must each make a DC 15 Strength saving throw to avoid being knocked prone. Moments later, huge waves ripple through the chamber and smash open one of the walls. The sea comes rushing in, and the party is swept out of the chamber, carried along by a titanic wave.

## ENCOUNTER 2: RUNIC ZONES

This encounter is changed to have a total of three **aspects of the Leviathan** (EdE 19) by default; if this encounter is too easy for the party, have one or two more aspects enter the battle at the start of round 2.

## TACTICS

The aspects of the Leviathan attack the party members to keep them apart and prevent them from leaving the encounter area. The aspects attempt to use their Chaotic Surge abilities to deliberate the party, then bite and restrain any victims that are incapacitated.

The aspects continue to pursue the party members if they move out of the runic zones. If the characters can reach the exits, the aspects break off pursuit.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

This underwater battlefield includes a number of areas affected by the swirling random energy of the level. These zones are columns of water that extend from the top of the battlefield to the bottom and affect any individuals moving through them regardless of their relative depth. They can also be moved by the DM to present the party with greater challenges, if a character is leaving the battlefield too quickly or is otherwise having too easy a time of it. The aspects of the Leviathan are immune to the zones' effects.

## CHAOS EFFECTS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties) of each round, a random effect occurs, determined by rolling on the table below. General effects are assumed to affect the entire encounter area except when noted otherwise. Effects that aren't instantaneous last until initiative count 20 of the next round, and any saving throw made has a DC of 15. Additionally, the aspects are unaffected by chaotic effects that don't benefit them.

|       | Effect         |                                                                                                                     |
|-------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| d100  | Name           | Effect Description                                                                                                  |
| 01-20 | Antimagic Wave | All spells that are taking place in the area immediately end.                                                       |
| 21-40 | Darkness       | Magical darkness fills the area, and no light can illuminate the area.                                              |
| 41-60 | Flash Bomb     | Each creature in the area must succeed on a Constitution saving throw or be blinded.                                |
| 61-80 | Whirlpool      | Each creature in the area must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be hurled 2d6 × 10 feet in a random direction. |
| 81-00 | Surge of Speed | Each creature in the area can swim 2 feet for every 1 feet of movement they spend.                                  |



## CREATURES

The water seems alive with many different small creatures: iridescent glowing shrimp, tiny jellyfish, spiralshaped worms, and fluttering fan-shaped creatures. They are harmless but numerous enough to cling to anyone who enters, slowing movement and obscuring vision. A creature that enters such a column in it must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the creature is blinded and has its speed halved until the start of its next turn.

## ENERGY COLUMNS

These columns contain concentrated chaos energy. Creatures within such a column have disadvantage on saving throws made against Chaos Effects (see above).

## THICK ZONES

The water here is thick and sluggish, so moving through this area is like swimming through pudding. A creature that enters the column for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or have its speed be reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

## TURBULENCE

The water swirls about madly here. A creature that enters the column for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be thrown 1d6 × 10 feet in a random direction. A creature that is willing to be thrown can choose to fail the saving throw automatically.

# ENCOUNTER 3: THE PIT

This encounter is changed to have three **deep lurkers** (EdE 22) instead of three krakens.

## TACTICS

The **advanced aspect of the Leviathan** (EdE 19) is drawn to the character who has the *abyssal shard*. It attacks this individual whenever possible and uses its Chaotic Surge ability as soon as it is in range. It then attempts to swallow the shard-carrier whole. If the shard-carrier perishes in the aspect's gizzard, see possible outcomes under the Conclusion section of the original book.

The deep lurkers attack the other party members and attempt to keep them from helping the shard-carrier.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

## OBELISKS

These polished black columns rise 100 feet from the edge of the pit.

## THE PIT

If a creature that was not spawned by The Leviathan enters more than 20 feet into the pit, it must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or die, reducing its body and every nonmagical item on its person to dust.

## THICK ZONE

The water here is thick and sluggish, so moving through this area is like swimming through pudding. A creature that enters the column for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or have its speed be reduced to 0 until the start of its next turn.

## TURBULENCE

The water swirls about madly here. A creature that enters the column for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be thrown 1d6 × 10 feet in a random direction. A creature that is willing to be thrown can choose to fail the saving throw automatically.



# PANDORYM

*"They brought it. They brought it and trapped it, though many gave their lives to do so. They brought it to threaten the gods, which they did. And the gods responded. But the evil remains, imprisoned. Biding. Planning. Seething."*

— Tune Majii, arcane investigator

Lured to the Material Plane by an ancient civilization hoping to protect itself from the vengeance of deities, Pandorym personifies the emotionless void of utter annihilation. It was imprisoned by its summoners millennia ago as a deterrent but never released. Now, hidden in a forgotten prison, the godslaying weapon awaits the arrival of a being powerful enough to reunite its awesome mind with its potent body. Pandorym seeks freedom—and with it, mass deicide.

## BACKGROUND

Pandorym's background is unchanged.

## GOALS

Pandorym's goals are unchanged.

## PANDORYM IN THE CAMPAIGN

Either the mind or the body of Pandorym alone is powerful enough to end a campaign. If the two are brought together, the alien weapon would be unstoppable. A reunited Pandorym should lead to the end of the campaign world.

### SIGN: SEAL OF BINDING

This sign manifests as a glyph that spreads across the sky and increasingly interferes with planar communication and transportation.

**Faint:** When a creature casts a conjuration spell or uses an ability that summons a creature or multiple creatures, it must make an ability check using its spellcasting ability (DC 12). On a failure, the creature suffers one level of exhaustion. In addition, spells that forcibly return creatures to their native plane, such as *banishment*, automatically fail.

**Moderate:** As faint, but in addition, summoned creatures no longer return to their native planes. When a summoning spell or effect's duration expires, the summoned creature is no longer under the summoner's control. Additionally, any spell or effect that involves teleportation has a 20% chance of a mishap. On a mishap, the teleportation fails, and each teleporting creature or object takes 16 (3d10) force damage.

**Strong:** As moderate, but the chance of a mishap when teleporting increases to 40%. In addition, spells and other effects that contact extraplanar beings (such as the *contact other plane* spell and the Divine Intervention feature) cease to function.

**Overwhelming:** All summoning and teleportation spells and effects cease to function.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline given in the original book is mostly unchanged. However, as Pandorym's Sign of Apocalypse has been altered, some of the descriptions given by the timeline have been rendered obsolete.

Additionally, consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the original outline.

### SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| None         | 5           |
| Faint        | 10          |
| Moderate     | 15          |
| Strong       | 17          |
| Overwhelming | 20          |

## PANDORYM IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

## PANDORYM IN FAERÛN

This section is unchanged.

## VARIANT USAGE

Due to the planar nature of Obligatum VII and Pandorym's Seal of Binding sign, it would be very easy to run a Pandorym campaign in a planar setting such as Planescape. As the sign intensifies, planar travel becomes harder and harder, requiring Obligatum and the party to rely on pre-existing portals (such as those in the city of Sigil) in order to traverse the planes before even they cease to function. In such a campaign, Pandorym's prison might be on a secret demiplane created by its summoners, or it could be found in a remote location on one of the known planes of existence.

In a Spelljammer campaign, perhaps the Seal of Binding sign extends to travel between crystal spheres as well. When the sign becomes overwhelming, portals to other spheres cease to function altogether, causing each sphere to be isolated from one another. In this case, Pandorym's prison would reside in some unknown sphere, perhaps on an abandoned planet or in an isolated space station in wildspace where Pandorym's summoners once resided.

Beyond that, consider the following changes and additions:

- Elaborate on the method through which Pandorym's prison is discovered; after all, the original timeline left this purposefully vague as to allow DMs to come up with their own process. Perhaps certain artifacts are scattered throughout the setting, and each one gives a clue as to where Pandorym's mind (or body) is located. Anyone that wields all of these artifacts would instantly discover the location of Pandorym's mind (or body), making them highly desirable for Obligatum VII and any other faction out there.



- Add additional restrictions as to how Pandorym's mind can be freed. By default, the crystalline prison can be attacked via any adamantine or magical weapon, and is protected mostly by its secret location and hostile guardians. However, you may wish to create a specific weapon, spell, or other object or process that acts as the only way to destroy the prison. Whatever the requirement is, the story would involve Obligatum's quest to satisfy it, as well as the party's attempts to stop it from succeeding.
- Use Pandorym's body as part of the story. While Pandorym's sphere of annihilation-esque body normally can't be controlled, perhaps a special talisman was created by its summoners in order to move it to its current hiding place. With this talisman, any entity or faction could use Pandorym's body as an unstoppable weapon, assuming that they can find the body in the first place. Maybe Obligatum itself seeks Pandorym's body so that it may destroy the crystalline prison that houses Pandorym's mind, allowing Pandorym to become whole again much sooner than anticipated.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding Pandorym, Lucather Majii, and Obligatum VII.

Additionally, see below for an updated description of Pandorym's body.

### PANDORYM'S BODY

Pandorym's physical component does not truly exist as a body in the multiverse but is a conduit to the incomprehensible reality of its home. It manifests as a 30-foot-diameter black sphere that hovers in space, similar to a *sphere of annihilation*.

The sphere obliterates all matter it passes through and all matter that passes through it, except for deities. Anything else that touches the sphere but isn't wholly engulfed and obliterated by it takes 10d10 force damage.

No being—not even a deity—can control it, even using a *talisman of the sphere*. Any attempt to control the Gargantuan sphere instead causes it to slide 90 feet toward the creature. When this happens, each creature in its path can attempt a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the sphere passes through the creature, either destroying or heavily damaging it as described above. On a successful save, a creature can use its reaction to move barely out of the way of the sphere.

The ancient wizards hid Pandorym's body in a secret location far from the crystalline prison that holds its mind.

## THE CRYSTALLINE PRISON COMPLEX

The lost empire's wizards and artisans constructed a magic crystalline prison to ensnare Pandorym's mind. When the deities obliterated the kingdom, they dared not destroy the crystal and release their doom. Instead they sealed the prison away and eliminated all records of its existence. Still, the deities knew they could not keep the prison secret forever, so they created defenses around its location. Over time, the influence of Pandorym's mind has created undead guardians, the maddened remnants of those who failed to release it.

### KEY FEATURES

Every mortal being that dies in the frightful complex surrounding the crystalline prison later serves in some way as a defender of the site. And every mortal being foolish enough to enter the complex so far has breathed its last within.

### PHYSICAL HAZARDS

The prison holding Pandorym's mind lies hidden beneath crumbling ruins and extensive catacombs. The ravages of time have created cave-ins and blockages intermittently throughout the complex. Excavations have attempted to link areas separated by collapsed sections. Not all those efforts succeeded, resulting in even more labyrinthine passages. To further confuse intruders, the deities established decoys throughout the catacombs: false prisons within completed but unused circles of binding.

In addition to the natural hazards it presents, the prison complex has active and dedicated guardians. Original defenders remain, in the form of constructs. Intruders fell to the ancient guardians, perished in traps or cave-ins, or were destroyed by Pandorym's oppressive mind, and now patrol the complex as undead. They oppose any living creatures they encounter, whether in search of final rest, out of an abiding hatred for life, or simply as a release from boredom.

Many defenses were overcome by Lucather Majii and his band of mercenaries. They deliberately bypassed some wards or guardians, ran from others, and luckily avoided a few. Ultimately, though, they succumbed to the awesome might of Pandorym's mind or to its near-impenetrable prison.

### AURA OF ENTROPY

An aura of entropy fills the underground cavern complex and all the surrounding ruins. The deities established this aura to deter intruders and to strengthen existing defenders. It has the following effects.

- Food instantly molds and water instantly evaporates when brought into the area. Other non-magical drinks are spoiled - wine turning to vinegar, for instance.
- Conjuraton and divination spells cast in the area immediately fail, as well as those that target the area and the region within 10 miles of it.
- Undead in the area are immune to effects that turn undead.
- Constructs and undead in the area have advantage on all saving throws.



- Any living creature that dies in the area rises as an undead after 1 minute. Nonsentient beings become **zombies** or **skeletons**, while creatures with an Intelligence score of 6 or higher return as intelligent undead such as **wights** or **ghouls**. There's a 10% chance that an intelligent being's mind and body separate. Its consciousness rises as an incorporeal undead, such as a **quell** or **wraith**, and its body animates as a corporeal horror as normal.

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

The ruins above the crystalline prison are filled with the dire challenges and opponents typical of a high-level dungeon setting. Their extent and salient features are left to you to design as you see fit. The complex can be dropped into the deepest part of any suitable dungeon.

### A. CHAMBER OF SUMMONING

In this room the ancient wizards first contacted and lured Pandorym to this reality. The chamber barely survived its arrival: The annihilating body of the ultraplanar being instantly blew a 30-foot-wide sphere out of existence, along with several of its summoners. In a last act of freedom as the survivors strove to divert it into its prison, Pandorym lashed out at its betrayers. It utterly destroyed the bodies of a handful of mages and their assistants, leaving their suddenly insatiable souls intact. Panic ensued. A few summoners managed to escape, sealing the chamber against dimensional travel. The ghostly remnants of the rest fed on their former allies and coconspirators, bolstering their numbers. Now a dozen angry **shadows** (MM 269) remain trapped within.

### B. OUTER CIRCLE OF BINDING

The lines and symbols of a massive calling diagram cover the floor of this circular hallway. Passing over the lines toward the center of the circle shifts a corporeal creature's body to the "perpendicular" reality of Pandorym's home for a brief moment. The sudden disorientation causes any non-undead creature that passes over the lines to have disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws for 1d4 rounds.

Necromancy spells cast within the circle (including adjacent rooms and passages) do not require concentration and take effect for twice their normal duration.

Several groups of constructs and undead patrol the hall.

### C. INNER CIRCLE OF BINDING

A second great circle of binding covers the floor of this circular hallway, enclosed entirely within the outer circle. Passing over its engraved lines shifts a corporeal creature's body to Pandorym's native reality for a few seconds. The wrenching shift forces any non-undead creature that passes over the lines to make a DC 23 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature suffers one level of exhaustion.

Necromancy spells cast within the circle (including other rooms and passages) do not require concentration and take effect for four times their normal duration. If such a spell makes an attack roll, it has advantage to hit. If such a spell forces a saving throw, any victim of the spell has disadvantage on the save.

Additionally, undead in the area have advantage on all attack rolls and ability checks, and they regain 5 hit points whenever they start their turn there.

This inner circle defines the limit of Pandorym's power while its mind is trapped within the crystalline prison. If Pandorym's mind escapes, the floor holding the calling diagram cracks, and the entire hallway collapses.

## THE CRYSTALLINE PRISON

At the heart of the complex is a 20-foot-diameter circular room covered with sigils, runes, and incomprehensible glyphs of arcane design. A dark, oppressive chill leaks from the frigid void beyond the world, freezing the room's interior. The temperature never rises above Extreme Cold (DMG 110). Creatures in the area have resistance to fire damage. Nonmagical open flames are snuffed out the instant they enter the chamber and cannot be relit within its walls. Light sources provide half normal illumination.

At the chamber's center floats a violet crystal 15 feet tall and 8 feet across. It pulses with an unholy darkness that seems to suck in whatever light enters the room. It does not shimmer, nor does it reflect or refract any light other than hues of purple, casting a sickly violet pall over everything. The mind of Pandorym is trapped within.

**Prismatic Barrier.** The "crystal" is actually a permanent, modified, solidified form of the *prismatic wall* spell (PHB 267, save DC 23), six layers deep (it does not include the violet layer). The normal magical counters to the layers' effects don't function. Any creature that touches the crystal (even if wearing a glove or other protective clothing) is subject to the effect of one color layer per round, in consecutive order, for 6 rounds of contact. A creature still in contact with the crystal for a seventh round is drawn into the prison and blotted from existence.

A creature drawn into the prison cannot be revived by any means as long as the crystal remains intact, since it no longer truly exists in this reality. If the crystal is shattered (which releases Pandorym's mind), a creature destroyed by entering it can be returned to life with a *true resurrection* or *wish* spell.

Held items touching the crystalline prison do not put their wielders at risk, but an intelligent magic item is affected as a creature would be.

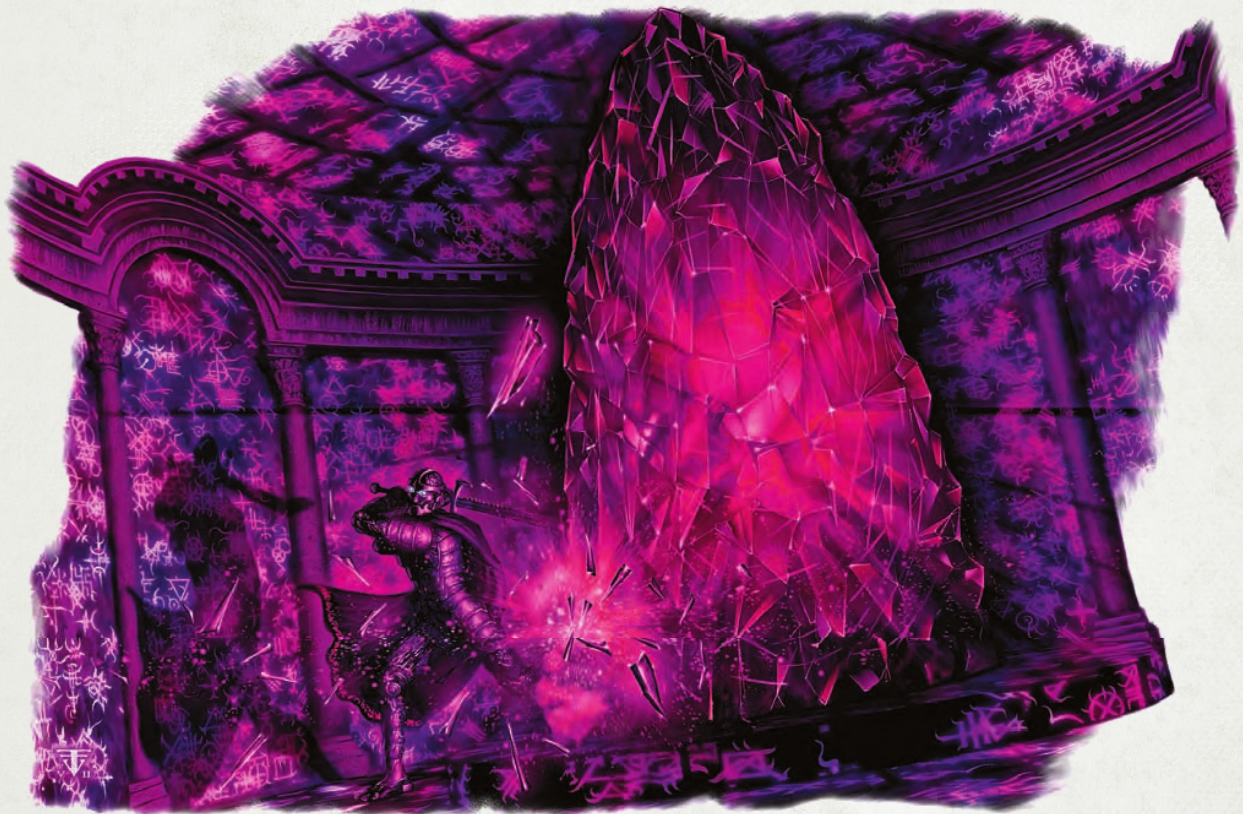
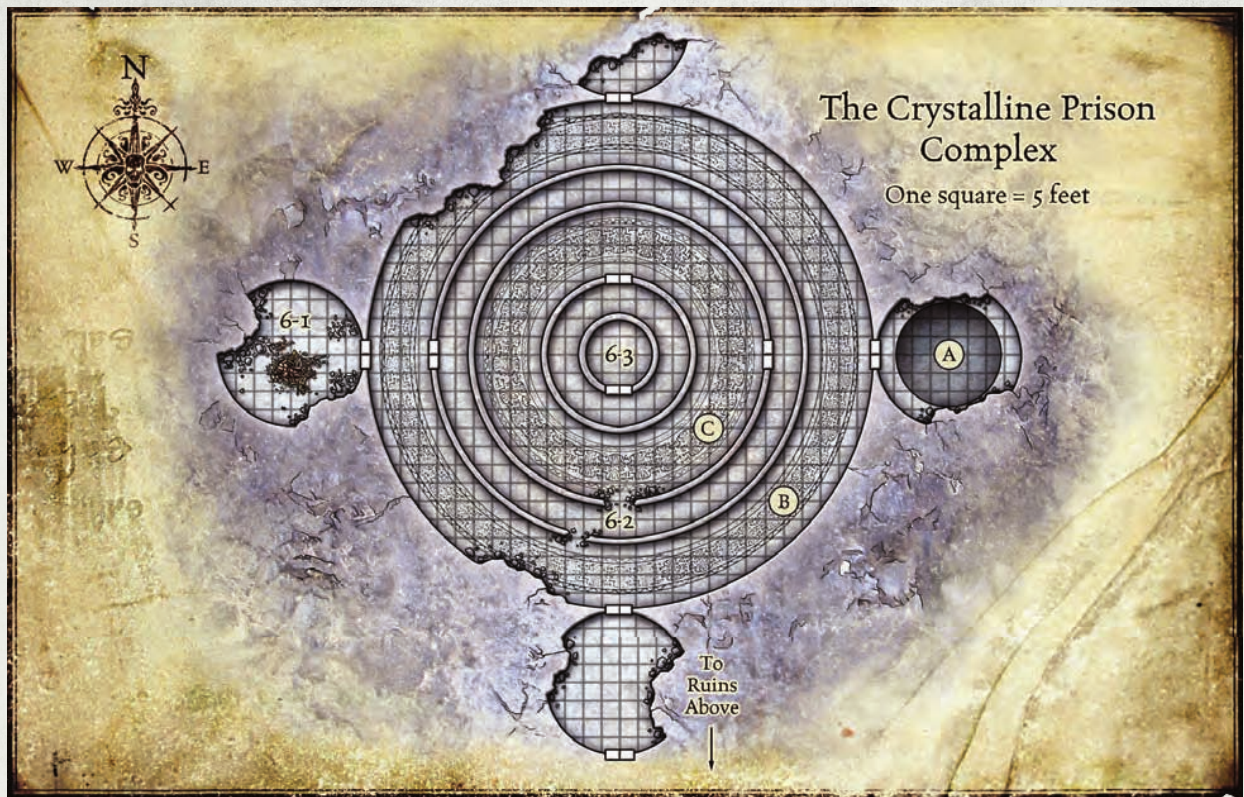
**Physical Properties.** The crystalline prison has an AC of 15 and 1,000 hit points. It regenerates 15 hit points at the start of every round, and it is immune to acid, cold, fire, lightning, necrotic, poison, psychic, and radiant damage; it is also immune to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't made with adamantite weapons. It is also vulnerable to thunder damage.

The prison has a damage threshold of 15, meaning that any effect that deals 14 damage or less is considered superficial and doesn't reduce the prison's hit points. It otherwise takes damage as normal.

**Pandorym's Escape.** If the crystalline prison takes 100 damage or more on a single turn for two rounds in a row, or if it takes 200 or more damage in a single round, it cracks and sends forth a mind shard of Pandorym. Only one mind shard can exist at a time, meaning that you only need to keep track of this condition while no mind shard is on the battlefield.

If the crystalline prison is reduced to 0 hit points, it crumbles into a pile of slivers and dust. At that moment, the full mind of Pandorym is released.







## ENCOUNTER 1: GUARD ROOM

This encounter is changed to consist of one **grisgol** (EdE 26) and one **deathshrieker** (EdE 26).

### TACTICS

The grisgol moves to attack living creatures it sees entering the room, attempting to paralyze as many as it can. It does not stop fighting until it is destroyed or its opponents are.

As soon as a party member becomes paralyzed, the deathshrieker enters the fight to take advantage of helpless prey. It works in concert with the grisgol, attempting to paralyze more opponents and draining Charisma from those affected.

Once more than half the opponents have been paralyzed at least once (even if they are no longer so), the deathshrieker flies to the top of the chamber and lets loose its *Scream of the Dying*. If it can, it uses this ability twice in a row in order to inflict short-term madness on the party.

If the deathshrieker is reduced to half of its hit points or fewer, or if an opponent casts the *silence* spell, it flees into the chamber's floor. It waits there for several minutes, then attempts to follow the party members and catch them in the midst of another fight. If the grisgol is destroyed, the deathshrieker uses its *Scream of the Dying* ability.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

#### DESTROYED GRISGOL

The pile of detritus in the center of the room is the remains of a grisgol destroyed by Lucather Majii's group. The space it covers is considered difficult terrain.

#### FALLEN STATUES

These depict heavily armored guards from the ancient kingdom. The spaces they occupy are considered difficult terrain.

#### RUBBLE

A wall section has collapsed, filling the northwest corner with dense rubble, which is difficult terrain for creatures attempting to walk through it.

### CONCLUSION

The party can find the following treasure among the three corpses:

- A *cloak of protection* (DMG 159)
- A *potion of invulnerability* (DMG 188)
- A *potion of superior healing* (DMG 187)
- A *ring of mind shielding* (DMG 191)

## ENCOUNTER 2: THE SHATTERED HALL

This encounter is changed to consist of **caryatid columns** (EdE 27), rather than advanced caryatid columns.

### TACTICS

The first seven caryatid columns work together tactically to eliminate one opponent at a time. They focus first on any party member wielding a two-handed weapon, hoping for the opponent to attack a column and to have the weapon break against their bodies.

The sounds of combat attract the attention of **Lucather Majii** (EdE 24), who appears 2 rounds after the party engages the patrol. When he arrives, he first uses his *Intercession* ability to weaken divine spellcasters. He then begins casting spells, beginning with appropriate high-level ones. When the second wave of patrollers arrives, the caryatid columns (along with any surviving from the first wave) defend Lucather with a defensive line or semicircle.

This fight is intended to delay and weaken intruders. If the party defeats all seven caryatid columns of the first wave within 2 rounds, Lucather waits for the second wave. The next seven caryatid columns arrive 4 rounds after combat begins, regardless of whether the first wave survived or whether the party is still in the area.

Lucather flees to the chamber of the crystalline prison (see Encounter 3) if both waves of caryatid columns are destroyed or if he is reduced to 40 hit points or fewer. In addition, his arrival notifies Obligatum VII of the party's approach and nullifies any chance of their surprising it.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

#### OUTER CIRCLE OF BINDING

This area falls within the outer circle of binding. The lines and symbols of a massive calling diagram cover the floor of this circular hallway. Passing over the lines toward the center of the circle shifts a corporeal creature's body to the "perpendicular" reality of Pandorym's home for a brief moment. The sudden disorientation causes any non-undead creature that passes over the lines to have disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws for 1d4 rounds.

Necromancy spells cast within the circle (including adjacent rooms and passages) do not require concentration and take effect for twice their normal duration.

#### RUBBLE

Two wall sections have collapsed, filling parts of the area with dense rubble, which is difficult terrain for creatures attempting to walk through it.



## ENCOUNTER 3: CRYSTALLINE PRISON

This encounter is changed to consist of **Obligatum VII** (EdE 25) and a **dread wraith** (EdE 27), as well as **Lucather Majii** (EdE 24) if he survived or avoided Encounter 2. The positioning of the dread wraith can be determined based on the possible locations given in the original encounter map. You may wish to add additional dread wraiths, or to replace the dread wraith with multiple normal **wraiths** (MM 302), if you think your party can handle the challenge (bearing in mind the presence of Lucather Majii and the terrain features affecting the area).

### TACTICS

With his Obligatum VII is focused on releasing Pandorym's imprisoned mind. The kolyarut's adamantite longsword allows it to deal an average of about 100 damage to the crystalline prison per round, assuming that it hits all four of its attacks. By the time the party arrives, it has already dealt 50 points of damage to the prison, meaning that it requires two more rounds before a mind shard of Pandorym has the potential to emerge.

If the crystalline prison takes 100 damage or more on a single turn for two rounds in a row, or if it takes 200 or more damage in a single round, it cracks and sends forth a mind shard of Pandorym. If you want to present a more difficult challenge for the party, change this encounter so that Obligatum VII has already dealt 200 damage to the prison and released a mind shard, and that it is well on its way to shattering the crystal.

The kolyarut is single-minded in its task, but it takes steps to defend itself if it is reduced to half of its hit points or fewer. Even then, if allies protect the inevitable it continues its assault on the crystalline prison regardless of its injuries.

The wraiths work with one another and Lucather (if he still exists) to defend the inevitable, but they do not necessarily cooperate with Obligatum VII or a mind shard. They focus on one or two physically weak foes, using their Life Drain attacks to kill their opponents and swell their own numbers.

If a mind shard forms, it immediately defends Obligatum VII or any other creatures attacking the prison. It concentrates on heavily armored foes (such as fighters or other combat specialists), leaving physically weaker opponents to the dread wraiths and Lucather. Keep in mind that its Intelligence and Wisdom scores are both 30, meaning that it is smart enough to determine the best course of action against the party, just as the DM is familiar enough with their party and players to metagame against them.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### INNER CIRCLE OF BINDING

A great circle of binding covers the floor of this circular hallway, enclosed entirely within the outer circle. Passing over its engraved lines shifts a corporeal creature's body to Pandorym's native reality for a few seconds. The wrenching shift forces any non-undead creature that passes over the lines to make a DC 23 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature suffers one level of exhaustion.

Necromancy spells cast within the circle (including other rooms and passages) do not require concentration and take effect for four times their normal duration. If such a spell makes an attack roll, it has advantage to hit. If such a spell forces a saving throw, any victim of the spell has disadvantage on the save.

Additionally, undead in the area have advantage on all attack rolls and ability checks, and they regain 5 hit points whenever they start their turn there.

### THE CRYSTALLINE PRISON

Floating over a 10-foot-diameter dais in the chamber's centermost room looms a violet crystal 10 feet tall and 5 feet across. The crystalline prison is nearly impervious to most attempts to damage it. It is affixed to its location and can't be moved or teleported by any means. See the "Encounter Areas" section of this chapter for information on this prison.

If the crystal is reduced to 0 hit points, it crumbles into a pile of 2d10 slivers (see below) and worthless dust. At that moment, the mind of Pandorym is released.

Whenever the crystalline prison takes 50 or more damage on a single turn, a sliver breaks off. Each sliver provides has a market value of 500 gp and can contribute that much value in gold to any spell that requires a costly material component.



# RAGNORRA

*"Hush, hush now; screams will not dull your pain. Your life has been a lie shouted by gods, but She whispers what is truly right for the flesh. The shape of your life, of all life, is her highest art. We can only pray we are Her last, brightest, and most terrible canvas."*

— Irthicax Vane, Malshaper

Ragnorra, Mother of Monsters, is a primeval source of life eternally corrupted. Bloated, hideous, and filled with a terrible love for her children, this elder evil wanders the planes searching for new worlds to remake in her image.

## BACKGROUND

Ragnorra's background is unchanged.

## GOALS

Ragnorra's goals are unchanged.

## RAGNORRA IN THE CAMPAIGN

Ragnorra's path is extraplanar, a twisted loop with one end anchored in the Positive Energy Plane. It curves through the Astral Plane and intersects with the Ethereal Plane, the Material Plane, or the Plane of Shadow before returning to its starting point. Each loop takes approximately 500 years. Ragnorra was exiled long before the deities created the mortal races, so the elder evil has been a potential threat for as long as the campaign setting has existed. Her current path is taking her toward the campaign world as the result of the Malshapers' actions to lead her there. This process can take anywhere from a few months to many years of game time, depending on the needs of the campaign.

Once Ragnorra emerges on the Material Plane, astrologers and astronomers quickly detect a fiery red comet where none had previously been recorded. The faint effect of her sign appears. Soon she is visible to the naked eye, dominating the night sky while the sign's effect strengthens. Ultimately, she crashes into the world, and the sign reaches its peak. At that point, the party has only a short time to deal with the threat.

Sometimes Ragnorra's target is another, nearby world. Her close passage leaves spores and corrupting influence in its wake, producing the effect of a moderate or strong sign, but does not culminate in a collision.

## SIGN: TWISTED LIFE

This sign manifests as a surge of corrupt positive energy that resculpts life on an entire world.

**Faint:** When a creature magically regains hit points, it regains 5 additional hit points.

**Moderate:** As faint, but in addition, warts and blemishes appear on living targets of those that magically regain hit points. These unsightly growths impose a -2 penalty on Charisma checks. Once per day, an affected creature can attempt a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a successful save, the blemishes disappear, and the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Additionally, spores fall to earth, taking root in rock, roofs, and the soil. Over time, such spores turn into cysts, abscesses, tumors, and other foul growths that dot the landscape. These features are identical to those of Ragnorra's Worldskin (see the Worldskin section later in this chapter). In particular, Spawning Spores will churn out progeny of Ragnorra who use these spores to birth even more horrible aberrations. If left unchecked, these worldskin features will overrun the landscape and will remake the environment as Ragnorra intended it to be.

**Strong:** As moderate, but the DC to remove blemishes increases to 18. Additionally, the surge of positive energy repairs flesh. Once per day, injured living creatures can use their action to magically regain 19 (2d8 + 10) hit points. Any creature that benefits from this healing must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of positive energy corruption.

**Overwhelming:** As strong, but the DC of saving throws to remove blemishes or to avoid corruption increases to 20. Dead creatures rise 2 (1d4) days after death, becoming progeny of Ragnorra (EdE 30) upon resurrection.

The overwhelming aura of positive energy is anathema to undead. Once per day, exposed undead must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 24 hours. When an undead of CR 3 or lower fails this saving throw, it is instead instantly destroyed. Undead can avoid this effect by remaining underground (minimum 15 feet depth) or within a stone or metallic vault whose walls are at least 15 feet thick, provided all entrances to the chamber are sealed.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline given in the original book is unchanged except as described below. Note that Ragnorra's Twisted Life sign has been altered, and that the progeny of Ragnorra template no longer has an Intelligence score requirement.

**Strong Sign:** The fiery comet is now easily visible at night and can even be discerned during daylight. The undead are leaving the cities for unknown destinations. Civil authorities want the party to monitor this exodus and learn if the creatures are preparing for a major assault.

Meanwhile, Irthicax Vane makes his first move against the party, sending Malshaper agents against them while they are on this spying mission. The agents (typically generic humanoids such as thugs and mages) are no match for the party, though their numbers increase with every attack. They are disturbingly disfigured, with distended jaws, prominent or horned brows, protruding teeth, or extra tongues. After each attack, more of the strange rain falls. Greater swarms appear, along with ravaged corpses, some seemingly fallen from a great height.

After the last attack, the rains begin again. Then, an object falls from the sky, forming a small crater nearby. Malshaper corpses twitch with life, becoming aberrations that slither to the crater's edge. A few moments thereafter, an impossible horror emerges: an **aboleth sarcoma** (EdE 34), a corrupted aboleth that has fused with the risen Malshapers and uses their enslaved bodies as "legs".



Additionally, consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the updated outline.

### SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| None         | 5           |
| Faint        | 10          |
| Moderate     | 15          |
| Strong       | 17          |
| Overwhelming | 20          |

### RAGNORRA IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

### RAGNORRA IN FAERÛN

This section is unchanged.

### VARIANT USAGE

Ragnorra corrupts countless worlds as she makes her way through the planes, guided by the planeswalking Malshaper cult. As such, she makes a great villain in a planar campaign, where the party must track down the Malshapers across multiple planes of existence in order to stop the elder evil from destroying their home world.

In a Spelljammer campaign, Ragnorra's path might take her through the vast reaches of wildspace. She smashes into each crystal sphere she comes across, leaving behind a trail of spores and corruption as she goes along. If left unchecked, Ragnorra will twist life on countless worlds across the Material Plane.

Additionally, consider changing Ragnorra's extraterrestrial nature to fit your campaign setting. For example, you could change Ragnorra to be a dormant entity deep below the earth, hibernating until she can draw enough energy from the planet to awaken once more. Her worldskin would extend from underground to the immediate area above her, constantly drawing nourishing energy from the environment to be fed to Ragnorra via the True Mother Chord.

Beyond that, consider the following changes and additions:

- Undead are significantly harmed by Ragnorra's Twisted Life sign. As such, some powerful undead might seek to ally with the party against the elder evil. Just as corrupt positive energy harms undead, the use of negative energy might be effective against Ragnorra's influence.
- When applying the progeny of Ragnorra template to a monster, feel free to customize the monster as you see fit. For example, if you apply the template to the Death Kiss (VGM 124), you might wish to swap its lightning immunity for radiant immunity, and then reskin instances of lightning damage to radiant damage. You could then add saving throws against positive energy corruption as you see fit.

- Due to Ragnorra's Twisted Life sign, worldskin features will be present constantly throughout the campaign. The worldskin system is designed to add extra depth to encounters via terrain interactions and mechanics. As such, be sure to have your monsters use tactics that involve the activation and regeneration of these features, even if these monsters otherwise would be mindless due to low Intelligence scores. Additionally, feel free to come up with your own worldskin features, such as Gargantuan tumors of flesh that constantly spew out aberrations (without needing to be regenerated) or flesh growths that attack nearby creatures with tentacles or acidic fluids. The difference between "worldskin feature" and "terrifying monster" needn't be so black and white, after all.

### DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding Ragnorra, her True Mother form, and Irthicax Vane and his ring Gutterang. Note that the accompanying [bestiary](#) for this book contains updated statistics for Ragnorra and for the progeny of Ragnorra template, as well as a reprint of the Worldskin information below.

### THE WORLDSKIN

Ragnorra is corrupting the essence of the world's life. After she crashes into the planet, all living things eventually become connected to her through a massive network known as the Worldskin. Pulsing veins run through the earth, branching neural fibers lace the skies, and gelatinous tendrils arc through the oceans. Cysts, abscesses, spores and tumors dot this foul growth, extensions of the elder evil's power that create a variety of magical effects. Such growths should be familiar to the party, as Ragnorra's Twisted Life sign has created identical growths in preparation for Ragnorra's arrival.

Because Ragnorra does not smash into the world until the very end of the campaign, the worldskin does not get a chance to spread very far yet. The membrane stretches across the crater floor, and the elder evil can activate any feature on its surface if she feels threatened. The party must contend with its many hazards in addition to Ragnorra, who lurks at its heart. She is unlikely to take notice of them unless they enter the neurotangle. However, her guardian progeny can also activate the skin's features and regenerate them for repeated use.

Worldskin features and their locations are marked on the original battle maps for each encounter. In an encounter, you can mark the various worldskin features with coins: heads indicates a growth ready for use, and tails marks one that must be regenerated. Remove coins from features that are destroyed. Progeny of Ragnorra and blistered souls can use their actions to activate these growths, and aboleth sarcomata and Ragnorra use legendary actions to do the same.

All worldskin features are immune to poison, psychic, and radiant damage. They each have a Constitution score equal to their AC, they automatically fail Strength and Dexterity saving throws, and they are immune to effects that require Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saves.



**Bioenergy Cyst.** Hard, mineral-laced mounds jut from the surface, thrumming with energy. On activation, a cyst generates a 5 foot wide line of lightning between itself and another cyst within 100 feet of it. Each creature in the line must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Alternatively, the cyst explodes with fire on activation. Each creature within 20 feet of the cyst must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

A bioenergy cyst is Medium, has 40 hit points, and has an AC of 13. Once activated, a bioenergy cyst cannot be activated again until it is regenerated and is not missing any hit points. Regenerating a bioenergy cyst causes it to regain 10 hit points.

**Healing Spore.** This fleshy lump heals injuries to creatures in contact with the worldskin. On activation, a random creature within 5 feet of the spore regains 30 hit points and suffers one level of positive energy corruption. Any healing that is in excess of the creature's maximum hit points is granted as temporary hit points instead. For example, a creature that is missing 10 hit points that is healed by a healing spore is healed to its maximum hit points and also gains 20 temporary hit points.

An unwilling creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw to avoid this healing and corruption. A creature that gains temporary hit points from a healing spore equal to or exceeding its maximum hit points is instantly corrupted and becomes a progeny of Ragnorra.

A healing spore is Large, has 50 hit points, and has an AC of 10. Once activated, a healing spore cannot be activated again until it is regenerated. Regenerating a healing spore causes it to regain 15 hit points. If the spore takes cold or lightning damage, it cannot be regenerated until the start of the next round.

**Spawning Spore.** This mass of tissue, when activated, spontaneously births aberrations to serve Ragnorra or her minions. The creature spawned depends on the Constitution modifier of the creature activating the source, as set out in the following table.

| Modifier      | Creature(s) Spawned                        |
|---------------|--------------------------------------------|
| -1 or less    | 1 star spawn grue (progeny of Ragnorra)    |
| +0 or +1      | 1 ankheg (progeny of Ragnorra)             |
| +2 or +3      | 1 hook horror (progeny of Ragnorra)        |
| +4 or +5      | 1 star spawn mangler (progeny of Ragnorra) |
| +6 or greater | 1d4 blistered souls                        |

A spawning spore is Large, has 75 hit points, and has an AC of 10. Once activated, a spawning spore cannot be activated again until it is regenerated. Regenerating a spawning spore causes it to regain 25 hit points, and temporarily links it to the life force of the one who regenerated it to the spore. When the spawning spore takes damage within 3 rounds of being regenerated, the one who regenerated it must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the spawning spore takes half the damage (rounded down), and the target takes the remaining damage.

**Tentacular Boil.** Dark, swollen pustules bubble from the worldskin, and squirming growths wriggle within. On activation, a tentacular boil produces an *Evard's black tentacles* effect (DC 16), as the spell, for one minute.

A tentacular boil is Large, has 75 hit points, and has an AC of 8. Once activated, a tentacular boil automatically regenerates after 1 minute. Manually regenerating a tentacular boil causes it to regain 30 hit points. If the boil takes acid or fire damage, it cannot be regenerated until the start of the next round.

**Vaporous Abscess.** This pus-filled lesion releases a fog of acid when activated, which dissipates at the end of the round. This fog of acid fills a 10-foot-radius sphere centered on the abscess, heavily obscuring the area. A creature that enters the fog's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 22 (5d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

A vaporous abscess is Medium, has 30 hit points, has an AC of 13, and is difficult terrain when walked on (no cover provided). Once activated, a vaporous abscess automatically regenerates after 2 rounds, unless it is regenerated by a creature before then. Regenerating a vaporous abscess causes it to regain 10 hit points. If the abscess takes fire or lightning damage, it cannot be regenerated until the start of the next round.

## THE HEART OF THE CRATER

The tactical encounters in this chapter occur after Ragnorra has plummeted to earth in the campaign world. At the center of a 30-mile-wide pit of scalded wasteland lie her remains. The heart of the crater is shattered by cracks and fissures, and walls of obsidian have been thrown up by the impact.

Corrupted life is already teeming here, impossibly springing from the seared rock. This is the sign of things to come: Ragnorra's new world order.

### KEY FEATURES

Ragnorra has started the process of regrowth, during which she will increase from her current Gargantuan fragment to a monstrosity a mile or more across.

### THE NEUROTANGLE

The visible evidence of Ragnorra's growth is the neurotangle, a thick canopy of twisted, thorny fibers blanketing the crater. This network extends Ragnorra's senses and grows thicker as she regains her strength.

The neurotangle canopy forms a dome rising about 80 feet above the crater. It is at least 30 feet thick, extending to the floor in many places, and it spreads out past the crater edges in a thin mat. At the heart of the crater, it forms a ceiling resting on the obsidian walls caused by Ragnorra's impact. An eerie twilight fills the space beneath the canopy, whose matted fibers block many of the sun's rays; the area below the canopy is thus filled with dim light.

### THE WORLDSKIN

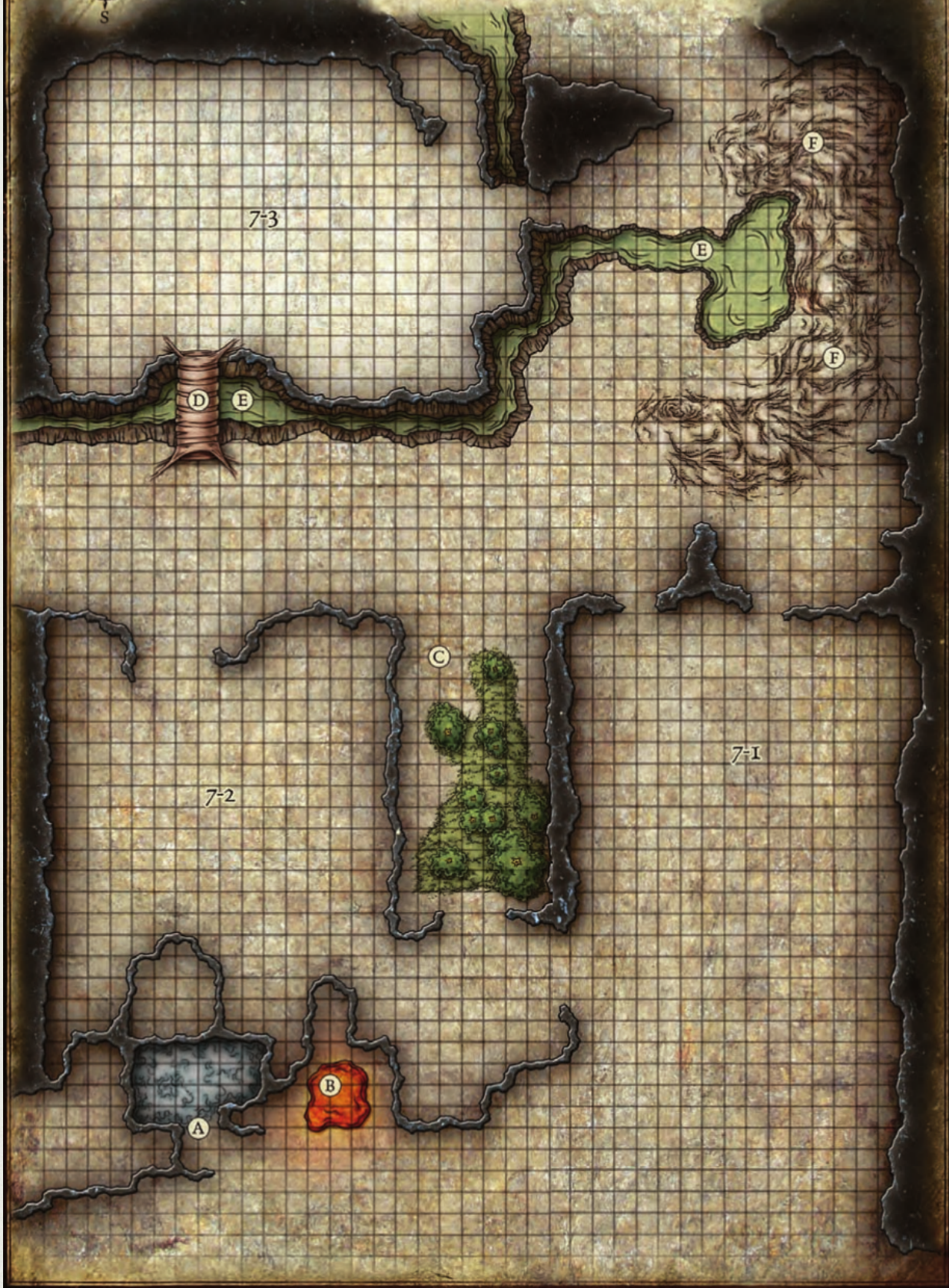
See the Description section of this chapter for details regarding the Worldskin.





# The Heart of the Crater

One square = 5 feet





## OBSIDIAN WALLS

These glassy walls stretch from the ground to the neurotangle. Their smooth surface is difficult to scale, causing them to be difficult terrain for climbers.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

In addition to the aberrations created by Ragnorra, monstrous beings are strangely attracted to her corrupt energy, and some are twisted into unearthly horrors due to exposure to Ragnorra's energies. For every 10 minutes characters spend in the heart of the crater, they have a 20% chance of encountering wandering monsters. If a random encounter occurs, roll d100 and consult the table below. If an encounter features a creature from a book you don't have, pick a result from a book you do have. If the source column lists the source "EdE", it is referring to the accompanying [bestiary](#) for this book.

| d100  | Encounter           | Source  |
|-------|---------------------|---------|
| 01-10 | 2d4 ropers          | MM 261  |
| 11-20 | 1d4 dire trolls     | MTF 243 |
| 21-30 | 2d10 otyughs        | MM 248  |
| 31-40 | 2d8 umber hulks     | MM 292  |
| 41-50 | 2d4 chimeras        | MM 39   |
| 51-60 | 1 purple worm       | MM 255  |
| 61-70 | 1d4 neothelids      | VGM 181 |
| 71-80 | 1 hydra (10 heads)  | MM 190  |
| 81-90 | 1d6 mind flayers    | MM 222  |
| 91-00 | 2 aboleth sarcomata | EdE 34  |

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

In addition to the above hazards, Ragnorra's crater challenges explorers with unnatural terrain and bizarre creations.

### A. GEYSER CAVE

The cave is hissing with live steam erupting from a pool covering the cave floor. The pool's water has been superheated by the living lava in area B. The steam subjects creatures within to extreme heat, dealing 2 fire damage every minute a creature stays here, in addition to other effects (DMG 110).

The scorched rock is charged with elemental power, which acts as a barrier against the corrupt positive energy of the crater and repels the crater's twisted denizens. The chance of a random encounter drops to 5% while the party remains within the cave. If the party defeats the living lava, the cave cools to habitable temperatures and forms a useful shelter.

The pool in this area is charged with life-giving energy; one disease or condition afflicting a creature ends for every 5 minutes immersed in the pool.

### B. LIVING LAVA

Ragnorra's energy animated a pool of lava to create a Huge elemental creature of living lava, which now resides within this cave. This being is a **lava elemental** (EdE 34), except that it is bound to the cave. Each round it spends away from its cave cools and slows it, reducing its speed by 5 feet. For every 30 points of cold damage dealt to it, the living lava's speed drops by an additional 5 feet. If its speed falls to zero, the life force animating it disperses, and the living lava collapses into a pile of rock.

### C. MAGE GARDEN

This preternaturally still area is not a true garden but a confusion of luxuriant plant growth. Odd, bulbous fruit grows from the tangle of strange-looking trees. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that many of the plants are transformed creatures, including mind flayers and at least one aboleth.

Consuming a fruit from this garden restores one spell slot of 8th level or lower, but at great risk. Anyone eating the fruit must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or be immediately transformed into an immobile plant that reflects that creature's form. The creature is effectively petrified, but its weight remains the same.

A transformed creature can be returned to its normal form by an *antimagic field* or *dispel magic* spell; the petrification effect is considered a 7th level spell for the purposes of *dispel magic*. If the effect is not dispelled within that time, nothing short of a *wish* spell can restore the unfortunate being.

### D. BREATHING TUBE

Regenerating Ragnorra's body requires an immense metabolic effort. To fuel this regrowth, she needs to breathe, so a respiratory system is the first part of her new form to appear. An 18-foot-wide tube has sprouted from the growing mass, connecting to what will eventually be lunglike structures. This pipe stretches across a wide crevasse that separates the Vile Home (see Encounter 3) from the rest of the crater's heart. The neurotangle extends to its upper surface, making passage difficult and hazardous.

The breathing tube protrudes from the worldskin and allows relatively safe access to Ragnorra's lair. Creatures can enter the pipe, though the inner surface is slippery and sensitive. The pipe is difficult terrain, and when a creature moves on the pipe for the first time on a turn, it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone. Failing this check by 5 or more causes the tube to reflexively twitch, pulling the tube opening inward and dumping the intruders into the crevasse below (area E). When this happens, a successful DC 15 Dexterity saving throw allows a creature to brace itself against the tube walls and remain inside.

### E. ERUPTIVE ABSCESS

The churning, tearing, and regrowth of the Scramble (see area F) has torn a gash in the worldskin. An acidic suppuration bubbles from it, spilling into a deep fissure surrounding Ragnorra's lair. The acid-filled crevasse forms an effective moat, with only a patch of land to the east and the breathing tube (see area D) offering access.



Although its outflow is restrained by this natural channel, acid spurts from the abscess. A creature that moves within 30 feet of its edge or starts its turn there must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 20 (8d4) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Creatures that are between 15 and 30 feet away from the edge have advantage on this save. A creature that enters the acid for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there instantly takes 30 (12d4) acid damage. Creatures that swim in the acid find that the liquid is difficult terrain.

## F. THE SCRAMBLE

This is the epicenter of the worldskin's explosive growth. Here the surface churns, cracks, oozes, is subsumed, and regenerates at a fast pace. Wrinkles the size of hills rise, fall, and shift. Great wounds open, spouting noxious liquids over the slopes, and quickly close again. Thus, travel across the Scramble is a difficult challenge.

Creatures who attempt to cross the Scramble must first deal with its stink, which becomes apparent within 20 feet of its edge. A creature that moves within 20 feet of its edge for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the end of its next turn.

The Scramble itself is difficult terrain. When a creature moves on the Scramble for the first time on a turn, it must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or fall prone. If this check fails by 5 or more, the character stumbles and must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is pitched into the acid-filled crevasse below (see area E).

## ENCOUNTER 1: SKIN CRAWL

This encounter is changed to include a **neothelid** (VGM 181) in addition to the three **blistered souls** (EdE 33). If you do not own *Volo's Guide to Monsters*, or if you wish to reduce the difficulty of the encounter, you can substitute the neothelid for a **behir** (MM 25). The neothelid (or behir) is a progeny of Ragnorra, as per the progeny of Ragnorra template (EdE 30), and is placed directly north of the healing spore marked on the map in the original book.

## TACTICS

The blistered souls want to draw the party farther into the area to expose the intruders to more worldskin features. The charging one attacks the party for a round, then retreats toward the center where the other awaits them. These two blistered souls engage the party. Typically, one of them uses its melee or ranged attacks while the other activates or regenerates a nearby worldskin feature. The third remains hidden, using Regenerate Worldskin and Skincasting to aid its fellows.

The neothelid is the first to detect the party's approach via its Creature Sense, and its reaction alerts the blistered souls. It stays back, using its breath and superior reach to batter the party once the blistered souls lure them there. Once engaged in melee, the neothelid acts as the "tank" and fights until slain. It doesn't use Regenerate Worldskin or Skincasting during the fight.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### SHUDDERING WORLDSKIN

The worldskin is highly sensitive both to Ragnorra's dreamlike thoughts and to violent events (such as combat) on its surface. Each round the party is in this area, a 40% chance exists that the skin twitches in response, which takes place at initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties). If a worldskin feature is destroyed, such a twitch happens immediately.

When the worldskin twitches, ripples up to 2 feet high race across its surface, accompanied by a high-pitched keening. Each creature on the worldskin must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

### WORLDSKIN FEATURES

This area contains Bioenergy Cysts, Vaporous Abscesses, and a Healing Spore. See the Description section earlier in this chapter for their statistics and usage.

### WRITING PLANT RIDGE

Corrupt positive energy flows along these cracks in the worldskin, causing plants to rapidly grow, die, and regrow. The ridges of plant growth average about 40 feet in height. Crossing or traveling along the ridge requires a DC 15 Strength check. On a failure, the ridge prevents a creature from moving through it. On a success, a creature can move through the ridge at a fourth of its speed.

## TREASURE

The blistered souls collect their victims' possessions and embed them within the worldskin as offerings to Ragnorra. Digging into the worldskin is possible, though disquieting, and takes 10 minutes per hole. Such activity is likely to make the skin shudder (see above), but that event does not present a problem unless combat is occurring.

A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers one of the following items in a hole:

- A circlet adorned with rubies worth 3,300 gp
- A *potion of climbing* (DMG 187)
- A letter that scorns the idea of Ragnorra's minions breaching the defenses of an aristocrat's home, in the pocket of a bejeweled smoking jacket worth 2,700 gp
- A *periapt of health* (DMG 184)



## ENCOUNTER 2: VANE

### ENGAGEMENT

This encounter is unchanged.

### TACTICS

Though he speaks scornfully, **Irthicax Vane** (EdE 31) harbors deep admiration for these individuals who are unwilling to abandon their world. He would rather avoid violence and tries to convince the party to forgo their hopeless quest. If they do not, he regretfully takes steps to deal with them.

Vane waits for one of the party members to come within reach of his hiding place and strikes with his Multiattack, attempting to frighten them at first in order to scare them off. He then uses the *far step* spell, cast via Gutterang, to teleport away and to withdraw into a tunnel.

He is accomplished at hit-and-run tactics, using his superior speed and the terrain to full advantage. He moves through the tunnels to new attack positions on the surface, and he never fights for more than two consecutive rounds before retreating to a membranous opening and repositioning for another attack.

Vane keeps up a running dialogue with the party during this combat to keep them off guard and confused. While in the tunnels, he projects his voice from other openings by causing his voice to echo across the tunnels.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### MEMBRANOUS OPENINGS

These are areas of inflamed tissue growing over wounds left by Two-and-a-Half-Brains as she burrowed her tunnels. The skin has almost healed, leaving small openings for access.

### RAGNORRA

Ragnorra is now dimly aware of the presence of the party and is beginning to sense a threat, though she has difficulty telling creatures apart. Beginning in the third round of the encounter, she acts randomly in self-defense. As her Regenerate Worldskin and Skincasting legendary actions do not have a range limitation, Ragnorra activates one random worldskin feature in the area and then regenerates it immediately after. This takes place on initiative count 10 (losing initiative ties).

### TUNNELS

The bulette's burrows have healed since they were dug. They are now wide and high enough to accommodate one Medium creature. Any new tunnels the creature creates are large enough to accommodate a Huge creature.

### VANE'S HIDEOUT

Vane's simple camp consists of dried plant growth for firewood, a cooking pot, a sleeping mat, and scrolls of poetry describing his world before the arrival of Ragnorra.

The southern wall is porous volcanic rock and abuts the geyser cave (area A). Water and steam slowly filter through the stone to create a shallow, warm pool. A living creature immersed in its waters heals 1 hit point every minute.

### WORLDKIN FEATURES

This area contains Bioenergy Cysts, and Tentacular Boils. See the Description section earlier in this chapter for their statistics and usage.

### CONCLUSION

Irthicax Vane fights until he drives the party away or is defeated. However, if the party can convince him that they stand a chance against Ragnorra, he can offer limited help. He makes it clear that he will not directly engage Ragnorra for any reason.

Vane can tell the party about the Mage Garden (area C) if they are not aware of it, as well as inform them of its uses and pitfalls. He has also observed a potential weakness of the Mother of Monsters: when a creature destroys a spawning spore, she seems to become angry, focusing her attacks at the destroyer for a time.

### TWO-AND-A-HALF-BRAINS

Two-and-a-Half Brains is a **bulette** (MM 34) who until recently was in predator heaven: a crater full of rapidly multiplying food. But consuming Ragnorra's corrupted growth transformed her, growing two new brains, so that she now has an Intelligence score of 10. With sentience came awareness, and with awareness came the fear that something terribly wrong is happening.

The bulette is looking for a way out of this frightening place, and she needs help to do that. She is cowering beneath the surface in a burrow (marked with B on the encounter map) and does not attack the party except in self-defense. Attempts to rationally communicate with her or to calm her down have advantage, due to her increased Intelligence and her eagerness to escape. She doesn't speak Common, but simple ideas can be communicated back and forth through sounds and gestures if the party manages to calm her down.

If the party can establish a friendly relationship with Two-and-a-Half Brains, she can assist them in at least two ways.

- She can burrow tunnels within or under the worldskin, bypassing surface hazards and possibly giving the party an advantage when they confront Ragnorra.
- She can eat worldskin features from below. Unlike attacks against features on the surface, such feeding goes unnoticed by Ragnorra.

### TREASURE

The party can dig into the worldskin here, using their action to open a hole wide enough to enter. At the DM's discretion, the bulette's digging might have already unearthed some items (discarded by Two-and-a-Half-Brains as inedible). A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check uncovers one of the following items per hole:

- An *arrow of aberration slaying* (DMG 152) with the inscription "May your aim be as true as our love"
- A *potion of radiant resistance* (DMG 188)
- A gilded altar centerpiece with three large rubies from a temple of St. Cuthbert worth 10,000 gp



## ENCOUNTER 3: VILE HOME

This encounter is unchanged.

### TACTICS

**Ragnorra** (EdE 28) is preparing for the next stage of her regrowth. She moves toward the True Mother Chord to finish her preparations, rolling like a wave of sludge over spawn, worldskin features, and party with equal unconcern.

If the party deals damage to Ragnorra, she does not retaliate directly at first; instead, she births aberrations from a nearby Spawning Spore and regenerates it. She might also cast *dominate monster* on the attacker, using them as a minion to weaken and distract the party. After 1 or 2 rounds, she directly attacks creatures who damaged her, striking and making use of worldskin features as appropriate.

If a creature destroys one of her Spawning Spores, Ragnorra retaliates against the creature, focusing her attacks on them for 1 or 2 rounds.

### BLISTERED SOULS

Any **blistered souls** (EdE 33) that were spawned in response to the party's intrusion (at locations 3 and 4 on the map) attempt to defend Ragnorra. They activate worldskin features to support other blistered souls in combat.

Blistered souls that escaped here from Encounter 1 remain hidden in the corner labeled 2 and use their Regenerate Worldskin ability to heal and support Ragnorra and the others.

### IRTHICAX VANE

Even if the party persuades Vane to their cause, the monk will not engage Ragnorra. However, he does attack blistered souls, distracting his target and preventing it from activating worldskin features. If Ragnorra transforms into her True Mother form, Vane immediately attempts to flee through the eastern entrance.

### TWO-AND-A-HALF-BRAINS

The bulette does not want to be here and would rather not fight. The might be able to persuade her to attack worldskin features, but otherwise she is content to huddle in her tunnel.

### TRUE MOTHER TRANSFORMATION

After 5 rounds, or after Ragnorra has been reduced to half of her hit points or fewer, whichever comes first, she transfers her life energy into her **True Mother form** (EdE 29).

Thick, twisting strands descend from the neurotangle, closing access to the eastern and southern entrances. If Two-and-a-Half-Brains has burrowed into the area, the tunnel opening is not affected.

Ragnorra's consciousness now resides wholly in the neurotangle. Her torpor has ended. She is eager to rid herself of the pests burrowing in her flesh and to recycle the material of her former lair into a new generation of creations. She attacks any creature within the area, even her own progeny, using her devastating spells and Beam of Corruption action.

Once she has assumed her new form, Ragnorra is both stronger and weaker. She gains access to new abilities, but she can no longer move or use Regenerate Worldskin. She uses her skincasting sparingly. The process of maturation requires some time, so she focuses first on any threat to the True Mother Chord.

If any blistered souls remain, they give in to their pain and attack the nearest creature, including one another.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

#### NEUROTANGLE

If the party attempts to escape through the blocked entrances, they must deal with the neurotangle barrier, as described earlier in this chapter.

#### PUSTULE POOL

As bubbles rise and burst from this thick, tarry pool, they release a stink of bile and infected flesh. But in the center of each bubble, a clear liquid appears. Corrupt positive energy infuses the fluid and can confer a temporary benefit on a creature immersed in the pool. You might hint at this property by mentioning that the liquid resembles the healing waters of the geyser cave or Vane's hideout, or by calling for a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check.

When a living creature enters the pool for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there, it gains 20 temporary hit points per level of positive energy corruption it chooses to suffer from (minimum of 1).

#### WORLDSKIN FEATURES

This area contains Bioenergy Cysts, Healing Spores, Spawning Spores, and Tentacular Boils. See the Description section earlier in this chapter for their statistics and usage.

Once Ragnorra transforms into the True Mother, intact Healing Spores start to flow toward the True Mother Chord at the rate of 5 feet per round at the start of every round. Once they move as close to the True Mother Chord as they can, Ragnorra's regeneration increases by 5 hit points per adjacent Healing Spore.



# SERTROUS

*"Today, few question the fact that a priest need not worship a god to work divine magic—he needs only faith in an idea. Yet what of the source of this discovery? Who was the first to draw upon divinity without the guidance of a god? Who knows the truth of the first heretic, and of the serpent who exposed a secret no god wished revealed?"*

— From the *Demonomicon of Iggrwilv*

Members of the Vanguard of Sertrous hold that their demonic patron is the true father of the yuan-ti, yet this ancient and exiled—and deceased—demon lord is far more than that. If the dead demon rises, he intends to retake his throne in the Abyss and spread his heretical words across the planes.

## BACKGROUND

Sertrous' background is unchanged.

## GOALS

Sertrous' goals are unchanged.

## SERTROUS IN THE CAMPAIGN

Avamerin remains hidden, a shadow leader of the Vanguard. When one army is defeated, he waits for a few centuries to start again, choosing a new champion to woo followers away from the yuan-ti gods and to lead an army against the world. As a result, the latest Vanguard can come from anywhere in the campaign world where the yuan-ti are active. The Serpent Reliquary itself, where Avamerin dwells and Sertrous' head is kept, exists in its own dimension accessed by a portal placed in a remote location in the campaign world.

## SIGN: INFESTATION

The earth vomits torrents of snakes and serpentine creatures. At first these infestations consist of normal snakes, but as the infestation grows, monstrous creatures such as chaotic evil nagas, hydras, and even mariliths become more common. As the sign grows more potent, the infesting serpents become increasingly more deformed. Some might have multiple heads, others are inside out, and some might have no head or tail—they're simply a mass of coils with no end or beginning.

See the Scourge of Worlds section of Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes (page 24) for information regarding Demoniac Infestations, the process of which is mirrored by this Sign of Apocalypse.

**Faint:** The ecosystem is disrupted as snakes and other serpentine creatures begin to corrupt the environment. Bodies of water become tainted and sometimes poisonous. The food chain is toppled as both predator and prey alike are hunted by large swarms of snakes that consume all in their path. Farmers soon find their crops and livestock to be eviscerated by these snakes, disrupting trade and causing famine and disease as conditions worsen.

**Moderate:** The ecosystem continues to be corrupted by large numbers of powerful serpents. In untamed areas of the wilderness, the environment is completely warped into a sickened, Abyss-like haven of chaos and destruction. Often times, these untamed areas have some sort of apex predator that the rest of the serpents fear and/or follow. Some of these predators are impossibly large yet instinctual serpents such as a hydra or golothoma, and others are intelligent rulers such as demons and nagas that command legions of snakes to do their bidding.

**Strong:** The infestation rapidly explodes outwards from infested areas, enroaching on all but the most urban areas of the world. The colossal, apex serpents that were once rare bosses become common leaders, often leading swarms of serpents during assaults on civilization. Infected areas become almost completely identical to the wastes of the Abyss, and are unlivable for any non-serpentine creature. Portals may open up in the deep recesses of the wilderness, but instead of opening into the Abyss, thousands upon thousands of snakes pour into the surrounding area, ensuring that there is never a short supply of serpents in the world.

**Overwhelming:** Civilization is overrun except for the most fortified of settlements. Wandering serpents are found everywhere, and the serpents that were once considered the top of the new food chain have now become the most common life form in the world. Unless the source of this infestation can be stopped, the only options civilization has are to flee from this world or to pray for divine intervention.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline given in the original book is unchanged. Consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the original outline.

### SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| None         | 3           |
| Faint        | 9           |
| Moderate     | 13          |
| Strong       | 17          |
| Overwhelming | 20          |

## SERTROUS IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

## SERTROUS IN FAERÛN

This section is unchanged.



## VARIANT USAGE

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As an obyrith lord with an extradimensional lair, Sertrous fits well into both planar campaigns and Spelljammer campaigns. In a planar campaign, players might visit the various layers of the Abyss, encountering golothoma demons and the lost souls of Vanguard cultists in the process. In a Spelljammer campaign, worshiping an ideal might be an attractive option for clerics that would otherwise be restricted in spheres their gods do not have influence over, causing the Vanguard's heretical beliefs to spread faster than anticipated. In either case, the entrance to the Serpent Reliquary might reside in a particular plane or crystal sphere as appropriate, requiring the party to track it down before Sertrous' Infestation sign overwhelms the campaign setting.

In general, feel free to involve the spread of Sertrous' teachings in your campaign. You can use the Vanguard Cleric template (EdE 38) to create statistics for clerics that follow the ways of godless worship. While they might use their powers for good, over time, these godless clerics might be swayed to worship Sertrous after being exposed to more of his teachings.

Beyond that, consider the following changes and additions:

- The gods and their servants will adamantly oppose Sertrous' influence, but they ultimately cannot deny that his teachings are correct. They might ask the party to deal with certain godless heretics, or perhaps they send their own worshipers and angelic servants to slay them, for better or for worse.
- The tanar'ri demons that control the Abyss today were slaves of the obyrith demons before they revolted against them. However, some demonic cults might be unaware of this distinction, and they might be convinced to join the Vanguard in their conquests. Additionally, any sane devil would oppose the rise of a cult that worships an obyrith lord, even if their demonic patron has long since been dead. Keep this in mind when determining which factions might oppose or ally with the Vanguard.
- The original book does not elaborate on how Sertrous learned specifically of godless worship, although him being an ancient obyrith makes it reasonable for him to discover this fact. You may wish to elaborate on how this revelation was discovered, or perhaps the players might discover it themselves somehow.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding Sertrous, Avamerin, Seghulerak, and the Golothoma demons.

## SERPENT RELIQUARY

The Serpent Reliquary is the heart of the Vanguard's presence in the multiverse. Built around an extradimensional cube trapped between the planes, the Reliquary was constructed by the fallen planetar Avamerin to serve as a place for him to rest between incursions and as a place to safely keep Sertrous' head secure from those who would attempt to destroy it.

### KEY FEATURES

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The layout of the rooms within the Serpent Reliquary disrupts most mapping attempts. This complex is constructed around a tesseract, a structure whose sides connect in ways that are unfathomable in a three-dimensional world.

The chambers within the complex are aligned to the different sides of the tesseract, producing seemingly impossible (at least, from a three-dimensional point of view) room connections within the complex. Arrows on the map show what other rooms can be reached from each area.

Each of the complex's sections is located on its own demiplane, separate from but contained wholly by the complex itself. The ranges of all divinations cast within the complex are limited to the area where the spell is cast.

### DEFENSES

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Although the walls inside of each complex are made of magically enhanced stone, they are still subject to effects and damage as normal. Where faces of the tesseract touch, door-shaped portals allow movement between them. Passage through these portals feels no different from moving through a doorway. Physical objects can pass with ease, and a creature in one area can observe events in an adjacent area by looking through an open portal.

Air within the complex constantly refreshes, and rooms are humid and warm.

### ENCOUNTER AREAS

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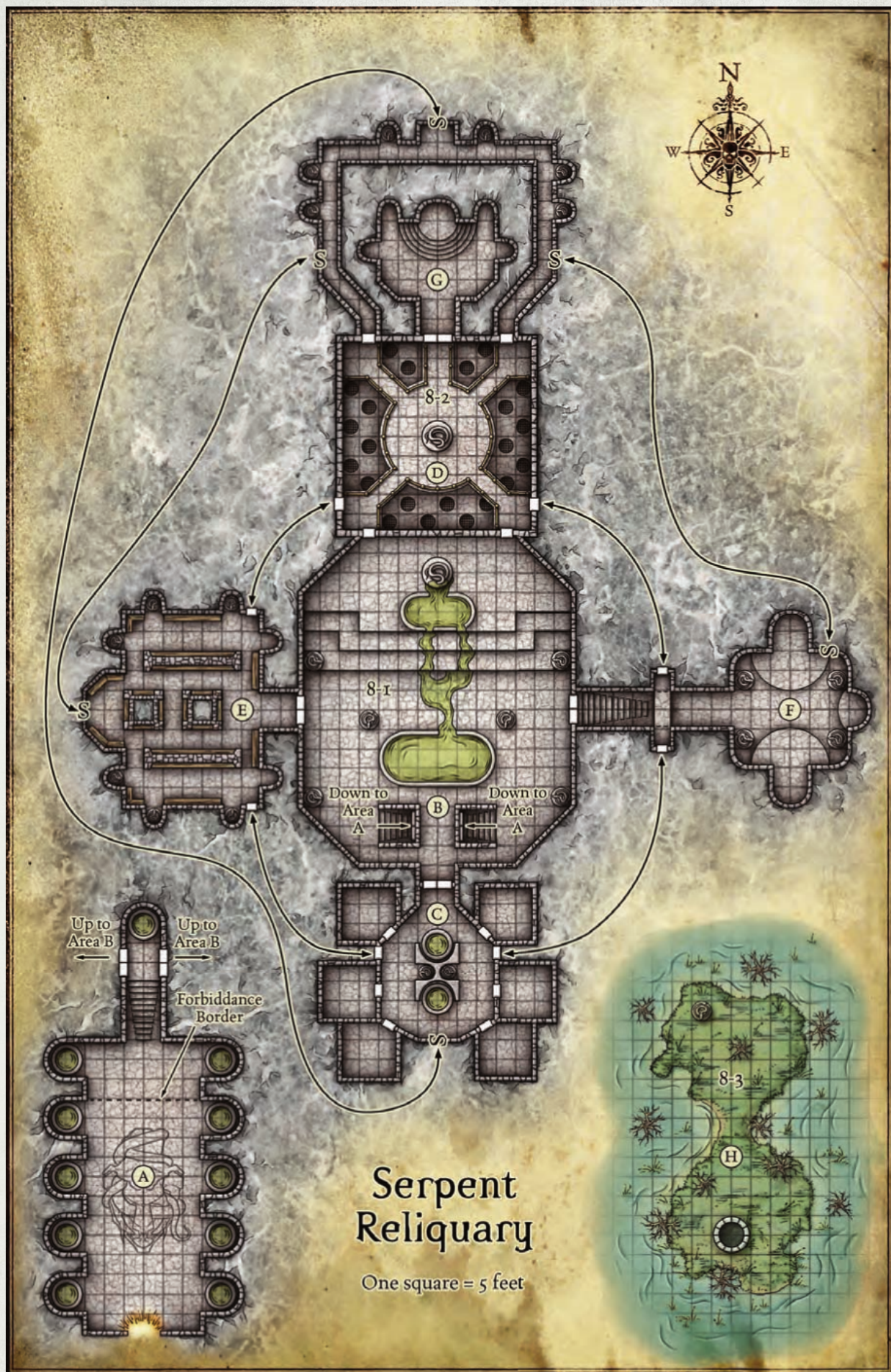
The following locations correspond to those indicated on the Reliquary map.

#### A. ENTRANCE

No matter how one travels to the Serpent Reliquary, the traveler finds himself stepping through a portal and emerging into this grandly appointed hall. The polished floor bears the symbol of Sertrous (a coiled but headless snake wrapped around and through a snake's skull), as do the immense tapestries and banners that hang from the hall's 100-foot-high ceiling.

The approach to the double doors that lead to area B is warded by divination magic. As soon as a creature of any alignment other than chaotic evil enters this area, the snake statues scattered throughout areas B through G begin hissing loudly in alarm, alerting the entire Reliquary to the presence of intruders.







## B. GRAND TEMPLE OF SERTROUS

The leaders of the Vanguard meet in this grand chamber to hear the teachings of their leader, to offer prayers and offerings to Sertrous, and to present captured treasures and religious texts. As the central chamber, it also serves as the primary point of defense. When the PCs reach this chamber, they are confronted with a band of Vanguard assassins and Seghulerak herself (see Encounter 1).

This room provides the only entrance to the Inmost Vault (area H), an entrance that normally doesn't even exist. Carved into the ceiling of the chamber is the visage of an immense serpent. It can be commanded to open through the use of Dark Speech, by a *wish* spell, or with a password that can be found in area E. When opened, the jaws reveal a stone shaft leading up through the ceiling. No stairs or other means of ascent is apparent: flight (such as through Seghulerak's *wings of flying*) is the standard method of travel up to area H above.

In this chamber and in areas C through G stand statues of coiled serpents. These statues function as an alarm system and as guardians. A statue can make one attack at the end of every round against a creature of any alignment other than chaotic evil that is within 5 feet of it, striking with a single bite attack. A statue has +7 to hit, and it deals 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage on a hit.

## C. ASSASSIN'S HOLD

The assassins who guard the Reliquary from intrusion sleep and eat in this chamber. If the party invades the Reliquary without Seghulerak having a chance to prepare for them, the six **vanguard assassins** (EdE 38) begin here instead of in area B.

The secret door that leads to area G can be discovered with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check and is protected by three *glyphs of warding* (save DC 18). The effects are all spell glyphs, unleashing three spells simultaneously when a creature that isn't chaotic evil touches the secret door: a *sunburst* spell, a *forcecage* spell in the shape of a box, and a 9th-level *cloudkill* spell that remains trapped within the box.

## D. PITS OF THE FORSAKEN

The most important prisoners are kept in these pits, hateful holes that remain perpetually half flooded and infested with snakes. The warden of this prison is Seghulerak's cohort, a powerful marilith demon named Zuvexus (see Encounter 2). Zuvexus wears *wings of flying* that allow her to move around the room with ease.

## E. HERETIC'S WALK

This towering chamber is lined with bookshelves, upon which rest the collected lore stolen during dozens of crusades against the mortal realm. Many books are badly damaged, but they all share one theme—they are religious works stolen from countless razed temples. Characters who spend enough time in research can uncover the solution to any remaining mysteries that still vex them about the Vanguard, Sertrous, and his history. The password for operating the portal in area B to the Inmost Vault can be found here with a DC 20 Intelligence (Religion) check made after 1d6 hours of research. As in area C, the secret door that leads to area G can be discovered with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check and is protected by three *glyphs of warding*.

## F. APOSTLE'S CHAMBERS

Seghulerak's chamber is decadent, with a haphazard decor of stolen artwork and furnishings from two dozen nations. Seghulerak spends increasingly little time here, kept busy with the work of leading the Vanguard to triumph. As in area C, the secret door that leads to area G can be discovered with a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check and is protected by three *glyphs of warding*.

## G. THE TREASURY

This room should represent the greatest single treasure that the party finds during their entire adventuring career. The wealth here has accumulated over dozens of crusades and consists of coins, gems, and all manner of artwork and magic items. It's not unlikely that an artifact or two languishes here as well. You should tailor this treasure to the campaign, but it should represent at least 1,500,000 gp in value.

## H1. PRAYER ROOM

Upon passing through the portal in the ceiling of area B, creatures find themselves in a non-descript room that is 20 feet in all dimensions. The only objects in this room are the skeleton of a long-dead yuan-ti cultist and a Medium sized bust depicting the five-jawed head of Sertrous. There is no entrance or exit to this room, and the walls are indestructible.

To leave this room, creatures must kneel, sit cross-legged, or otherwise stand or sit in a position as if they were praying silently. While doing so, they must concentrate on their destination: returning back to the Serpent Reliquary (area B), or moving ahead to whatever faces them next (area H2). After 1 minute, the creature teleports to its intended destination.

An Intelligence (Religion) check can be made to determine the nature of this bust. With a 15 or higher, a creature determines how to return to Area B. On a 20 or higher, a creature also figures out that they can also go to some sort of sacred vault (Area H2). Either piece of information can be shared with the other creatures in the room.



## H2. INMOST VAULT

After solving the puzzle of the Prayer Room, creatures emerge from a well up into a strange realm. Unlike the other seven chambers, the Inmost Vault (and the Prayer Room) lies in an area bordered below by the tesseract the Reliquary is built upon. One could fly forever into the boundless gray skies above, but after a day's journey along the steaming festering fens of the ground here (regardless of the speed of the journey), a traveler finds themselves in the Hungry Tarns of the Abyss.

Of more importance, however, is the stone altar about 50 feet from the well, for upon it rests the skull of Sertrous, and the final guardian and First Heretic Avamerin that stands next to it (see Encounter 3).

## ENCOUNTER 1: GRAND TEMPLE OF SERTROUS

This encounter is changed to exclude the summoned babau. Additionally, it is worth noting that **vanguard assassins** (EdE 38) are now CR 4.

### TACTICS

If forewarned, **Seghulerak** (EdE 36) casts *spiritual weapon* before combat (she always has a *death ward* spell on herself). She wastes no time with threats once she sees the first party member, but immediately uses the Dark Speech to attempt to frighten the party, hopefully buying herself some time. On her next turn, she summons a **fiendish anaconda** (EdE 38) using the *summon greater demon* spell; if you wish to increase the difficulty of the encounter, you can have her summon a more powerful demon instead. If the party still hasn't reached her in melee, she continues to fight using her ranged spells. If threatened in melee, Seghulerak either uses spells like *disintegrate* or *finger of death* that force saving throws, or she uses her Multiattack against the weakest melee combatant. She is fond of moving into a pool of poison while constricting foes.

Four assassins move up to engage the party, attempting to use their sneak attacks by attacking from the shadows and then moving to flank foes in the following rounds. The remaining two assassins hang back to observe the party's spellcasters, attempting to gang up on one of them three rounds later.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### LIGHTING

This area is bathed in dim light from the glowing poison.

### POISON

Any character that enters a space that contains the green fluid for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

## POOLS OF POISON

Both pools of poison are 5 feet deep; each has the same effect as the poison river above. A creature fully immersed in the poison that fails its saving throw is also poisoned until the end of its next turn.

### SERPENT STATUE

The statue of Sertrous is made of stone and can provide cover, but it is not dangerous. It is Large, has an AC of 12, has 70 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

### STATUE OF SERTROUS

The six smaller statues of Sertrous are all traps. A statue can make one attack at the end of every round against a creature of any alignment other than chaotic evil that is within 5 feet of it, striking with a single bite attack. A statue has +7 to hit, and it deals 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage on a hit. These statues are Medium, have an AC of 10, have 30 hit points, and are immune to poison and psychic damage.

## ENCOUNTER 2: PITS OF THE FORSAKEN

This encounter is changed to consist of **Zuvexus** (EdE 37) and 16 **swarms of poisonous snakes** (MM 338).

### TACTICS

The snake swarms should be little more than a nuisance to a high-level party, but the real menace is a considerable threat. Zuvexus is Seghulerak's cohort, and when her mistress is in the Reliquary, it is the marilith's duty to serve as warden.

She waits patiently, hidden inside the illusory statue of Sertrous in the middle of the room. She can see through the illusion with her truesight. When combat begins, she casts *spiritual weapon* and attempts to summon 1d4 hezrous (MM 60) using her Summon Demon ability. On her next turn, she uses *major image* to lure in the party's melee combatants, and then she casts *blade barrier* on the area they are in. When forced into melee, Zuvexus batters her opponents with a whirlwind of longswords. If she grapples an opponent with her tail, she will attempt to move them into her *blade barrier*.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### LIGHTING

This area is dark.

### BALCONIES AND BRIDGES

The balconies have no railings; a fall off one of them is a 30 foot drop and immediately exposes the victim to the carpet of snakes.



## ILLUSORY STATUE

The statue of Sertrous in the middle of the room is an illusion. Physical interaction with the image reveals it to be an illusion, because things can pass through it. A creature that uses its action to examine the image can determine that it is an illusion with a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If a creature discerns the illusion for what it is, the creature can see through the image. The statue is large enough for a Large or smaller creature to hide within.

## PRISON PITS

An adamantine grate seals the top of each pit. The grate cannot be opened; prisoners are placed in the pits using teleporation magic. The shaft of each pit drops 20 feet and is warded against teleportation magic and planar travel. At the base, each shaft opens into a cubical cell; most cells are 7 feet square, but three are larger (15-foot squares) for larger prisoners. Feel free to stock these prison cells with prominent NPCs that have been captured by the Vanguard in the campaign.

## ENCOUNTER 3: INMOST VAULT

This encounter is changed to consist of **Avamerin** (EdE 36) and two **golothomas** (EdE 37) in the first phase of the fight, and the **aspect of Sertrous** (EdE 35) and two golothomas in the second phase of the fight. Feel free to add or remove golothomas as you see fit.

## TACTICS

When Avamerin becomes aware of the party's arrival, he greets them with a friendly but tired welcome, congratulating them on achieving the Inmost Vault of the Serpent Reliquary. He then apologizes to the party, informing them that there is no Sertrous- there never was. The Vanguard was a sham, and the infestation of serpents is a trial placed upon the world by the gods as a test to mortal life. Avamerin proudly proclaims the party members the saviors of their world and congratulates them on proving to the gods that mortal life can indeed stand against such horror and peril. He then offers to send the party back to their homes; if they accept, he casts *gate* to open a portal for them.

Of course, these are all lies. Avamerin is merely attempting to convince the party to leave the Inmost Vault so that he can flee to somewhere else with the skull of Sertrous and rebuild his lair. Whether the gate actually leads back to the party's home or to a horrific layer of the Abyss cunningly disguised to look like their home is up to you. Due to Avamerin's Divine Awareness trait and his Aura of False Divinity, the party cannot use ability checks to influence this social encounter, and they must overcome Avamerin's extremely high Charisma (or his Shapechanger trait) if they are to see through his lies.

If the party attacks (as Avamerin expects), the fallen planetar does his best to slay them all, beckoning two golothomas to come to his aid and using his Dark Speech on his first turn in combat. As he attacks, his true nature slithers into being; he is not the handsome angel the party initially spoke to, but a hunchbacked creature with scaly skin and a partially serpentine face, complete with forked tongue. Although he has a large number of ranged spells, he prefers to fight in melee, resorting to spells only as a trump or to strike at foes beyond his immediate reach.

## SERTRIOUS' FINAL GAMBIT

When Avamerin is slain, Sertrous is forced to manifest to defend himself. The demon lord uses the body of his first and greatest minion to fuel the manifestation of his avatar, and he calls upon two golothomas to aid him in the battle as well. Sertrous uses his abilities freely, desperately attempting to get rid of the party as soon as possible. Sertrous might use his *Swat Away* legendary action to hurl opponents into the diseased trees to cause explosions of poisonous spores.

You may wish to force each creature that witnesses the manifestation of Sertrous' aspect to make a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature goes mad. Roll on the Madness of Sertrous table (EdE 35) to determine the nature of the madness, which is a character flaw that lasts until cured. See the *Dungeon Master's Guide* for more on madness.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### DISEASED TREE

These soaking and shuddersome trees can provide cover, but any attempt to climb them results in great swaths of diseased wood and bark coming away by the handful. This action or any solid blow struck against a tree unleashes a cloud of green spores in a 10-foot-radius spread. Each creature in the area that isn't immune to poison or disease must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is poisoned and suffers disadvantage on Constitution saving throws for 1 minute.

### DEEP BOG

This area is difficult terrain for creatures of Medium size or larger. Small and smaller creatures must swim to enter these spaces.

### SHALLOW BOG

This area is difficult terrain for all creatures.



# THE WORM THAT WALKS

*"The Worm that Walks is known by many names, though of them all, Kyuss is the one true name—the most common, the most reviled, and the most feared."*

— Edwin Tolstoff

The Worm that Walks is a shifting mass of maggots and worms filled with the psychic imprint of a demigod named Kyuss. Slain in another age, the Worm that Walks yearns to return and seize the world in its wriggling grasp, ushering in the world's last age.

## BACKGROUND

The Worm That Walks' background is unchanged.

## GOALS

The Worm That Walks' goals are unchanged.

## THE WORM THAT WALKS IN THE CAMPAIGN

The Worm that Walks is easy to incorporate into a campaign because of its association with several lesser creatures such as the spawn of Kyuss, the avolakia, and the ulgurstasta. Using these adversaries helps plant the seed of Kyuss in your players' minds so when you reveal the elder evil's true nature, it's a logical resolution for the campaign.

### SIGN: INFESTATION

Vermin swarm out from Wormcrawl Island under the influence of the obelisk.

**Faint:** The region immediately surrounding Wormcrawl Island becomes infected with worms, slowly spreading across the landscape. Nothing initially seems amiss, but swarms of insects and other creepy crawlies begin to pollute the environment. Such insects might also be found spilling out of the corpses of slayed beasts and other creatures in the area. While they do not immediately attack civilized areas, the diseases that these worms carry allow for the Worm That Walk's influence to taint places all across the world.

**Moderate:** As faint, but Kyuss' vermin begin to pervert the environment with undeath. Dead beasts periodically animate as undead mockeries of their former selves. These undead act as parasitic hosts, transforming into spawns of Kyuss and spreading their infection to any wildlife they kill or interact with. These worms and undead enroach onto farms and other rural communities, transforming them into lifeless havens of disease and infestation.

**Strong:** By now, the vermin have infested the countryside, wreaking havoc with smaller communities and besieging cities. Panic rules the land and people take desperate measures to protect themselves and their families from all sorts of worms and undead. The wilderness is desolated by creeping, worm-carried death, slowly transitioning the campaign world into the Age of Worms that Kyuss has foreseen.

**Overwhelming:** Parasites have infested even the most well-guarded settlements in the world. Life throughout the wilderness has been all but extinguished, replaced by vermin and worm-infested undead. Even necromancers have their own undead seized from them and turned against them; when unattended, these undead are infected by worms, and set out to fulfill the will of Kyuss. The Age of Worms is coming - all that stands in its way is Kyuss' imprisonment.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline incorporates information found in the third edition supplement *Exemplars of Evil*. If you do not have this supplement, you can substitute other characters and adventure hooks, or you can create your own backstory for Edwin Tolstoff. Otherwise, the timeline is unchanged.

Consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the original outline.

### SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| Faint        | 3, 6        |
| Moderate     | 9, 12       |
| Strong       | 15          |
| Overwhelming | 18          |

## WORM THAT WALKS IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

## WORM THAT WALKS IN FAERÛN

This section is unchanged.

## OTHER MATERIAL

Dungeon Magazine's *Age of Worms* adventure path describes Kyuss' emergence as heralding the start of a new age of despair. The material in this chapter was not written to contradict what's presented in this campaign, but certain elements are different. If you're running *Age of Worms*, you can make use of many of the plot elements provided in this chapter as well as the characters and locations to create even more adventure possibilities.

The same applies to the *Saga of the Worm*, three 5th edition Adventurers League modules (DDAL00-01, DDAL00-03, and DDAL00-10) surrounding Kyuss' presence in the Forgotten Realms. For example, you may wish to use the monster statistics provided in the accompanying [bestiary](#) for this book rather than the ones provided by the modules.



## VARIANT USAGE

If you find Kyuss' default Sign of Apocalypse to be underwhelming, you may wish to swap it out for the Restless Dead or Horrid Blight sign as described in Chapter 1.

Spawn of Kyuss are described on page 192 of *Volo's Guide to Monsters*. If you do not have this supplement, you can use zombies in their place, but give them the Burrowing Worm action of the blessed spawn of Kyuss (EdE 42) and adjust their Challenge Rating as you see fit.

The circumstances surrounding Kyuss' imprisonment make it very easy to incorporate the Worm That Walks into a planar or Spelljammer campaign. In the former case, consider placing the Obelisk in its own plane or demiplane. In the latter case, Kyuss' Infestation sign might take the form of worms contaminating certain spelljammers, spreading from sphere to sphere wherever these ships go.

In addition to the above content, consider the following changes and additions:

- By default, a creature infested by the Burrowing Worm action of a spawn of Kyuss eventually dies and rises as an undead. Perhaps your campaign could include other uses for these Burrowing Worms. For example, cultists of the Worm That Walks might be able to embed mind-controlling worms in politicians and other key NPCs in your world. Other worms might use their victims as long-term parasitic hosts; when these hosts die, a swarm of multiple worms or a single giant worm might emerge from their corpses.
- In life, Kyuss was a priest of Orcus. As such, Orcus might ally with the Worm That Walks in an attempt to replace the campaign setting with an undead, wormy wasteland. This would allow Kyuss' *planar ally* spell to summon demons that are in service of Orcus, and might also bring about the threat of a demonic incursion within the setting.
- Feel free to change the conditions required to free Kyuss from his imprisonment. Instead of a *sphere of annihilation* and *well of many worlds*, perhaps only a certain weapon or artifact can break the obelisk. Maybe the answer lies hidden in the *book of vile darkness*, or only the unstoppable body of Pandorym (see Chapter 6) is powerful enough to cut through the obelisk, or the presence of Atropus (see Chapter 2) provides an infusion of negative energy potent enough for Kyuss to break free himself. You could also create a ritual that allows Kyuss to be freed, such as a repeat of the massacre that allowed Kyuss to ascend in the first place, or the use of various magic items and spells found throughout the campaign setting as you see fit.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding Kyuss, Edwin Tolstoff, and the Herald of Kyuss.

## WORMCRAWL ISLAND

The Worm that Walks is imprisoned within an obelisk at the heart of Wormcrawl Island, a remote place not found on any nautical chart, forgotten by all but the wisest sages and most despicable cultists. This island is wild and deadly, filled with monsters of incalculable horror and might, infested with the worst sorts of creatures imaginable. The people who entombed Kyuss here chose wisely, for none but the most courageous (or foolish) would dare explore the haunted jungles, brave the swarms of biting vermin, or contend with the monstrous threats contaminating the place.

Through the ages, many have settled here, including savage humans, forest giants, and others. No settlement has survived the perils of the island, instead succumbing to beasts of the jungle, madness inspired by the obelisk, or violence committed against one another. Ruins filled with bones and rot testify to the carnage of the inhabitants' deaths.

## KEY FEATURES

To an outsider, the island is like any other tropical paradise, with high, mist-shrouded peaks and lush jungles buzzing with life. The forest canopy is home to several varieties of monkeys, birds whose plumage runs the spectrum, all sorts of crawling insects, and, of course, worms. Beneath its breathtaking exterior lies rot, decay, and pulsing evil.

Wormcrawl Island is about four miles in diameter. Two mountains dominate the terrain. The eastern mountain is older and covered by dense jungle, and the western peak is jagged, bare, and topped with a smoking crater.

Runoff from the mountains drains down to the interior and gathers in a large freshwater lake (see area C). The lake feeds a river that cuts a path to the ocean. Gathering on the shores of the river is dense foliage consisting of thorny bushes, tall grasses, and odd flowers.

The most notable feature of the island is at its center, where the Worm that Walks languishes in the prison of its obelisk. All around the 100-foot-tall spire is blood rock, stone infused with the blood of countless sacrifices. Spewing up from this stone are pools of slime infused with Kyuss's pestilence.

The islet rises in the center of a sea of hot tar. Great bubbles rise from its depths to burst and release poisonous fumes that waft across the shores and fill the air with toxins.







## DEFENSES

The island is home to numerous creatures—undead and aberrations mostly—but there are all sorts of vermin, magical beasts, and other predators as well. Although these threats are many and varied, characters of a level likely to be exploring this place should be more than a match for such creatures.

The party's arrival does not, however, go unnoticed, and a powerful guardian responds to their presence. Every 10 minutes the party explores the island, there is a 10% chance the characters attract a **century worm** (EdE 43) set here to ensure that no interlopers awaken the Worm that Walks.

Additionally, poisonous gas emitted by the island's volcano deter creatures that attempt to fly over any part of the island. Creatures flying above the treeline of the island or climbing the volcano must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw against the poisonous air each minute they remain in the area. A creature takes 28 (8d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. If the saving throw fails by 5 or more, a creature also falls unconscious for 1 minute or until another creature uses its action to make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check to awaken it.

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

The encounter map depicts one possible approach, placing the obelisk in the center of the island. If the party travels from a different direction, change the compass to a direction serving your needs or sketch out the rest of the island. The following encounter areas are but a sample of those that could take place here.

### A. GRUESOME GREETING

Skulls mounted on stained poles along the island's shores serve as warnings to drive off unwanted visitors. The skulls are all humanoid, and a DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals small holes riddling each.

### B. THE RIVER

The river is not deep enough for a seafaring vessel to navigate; characters equipped with rowboats can move upstream without a problem. The river is 100 feet wide on average. It is home to giant crocodiles, schools of flesh-eating fish, and a variety of water snakes. Swarms of biting insects carry Cackle Fever (DMG 257), and each hour of travel each party member must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or contract the disease.

### C. THE LAKE

Waterfalls spilling down from the mountain create a beautiful spectacle for those coming upon this place, masking the danger lurking beneath its waters. Three **hideous leechwalkers** (EdE 43) rise up and attack any who come too close.

### D. CAVES

A few caves and fissures pierce the slope of the volcano. Venting out from these gaps are plumes of poisonous gas. The DC for saving throws against the volcano's poisonous gas (see the Defenses section above) is increased to 20 in this area.

Each cave descends 1d4×100 feet into the volcano. In their depths, at least a dozen **blessed spawns of Kyuss** (EdE 42) work to breach the walls and flood the tunnels and the island with lava to destroy the obelisk and free their master.

### E. VOLCANO

A volcano towers over the island, rising above the lower slopes at a sharp climb up to 2,000 feet above sea level at the lip of the caldera. At the top, the ground gives way to a 500-foot-deep pit a thousand feet across. At the bottom is a churning soup of lava, spewing clouds of poisonous gas and the occasional spray of flaming rock into the air. The DC for saving throws against the volcano's poisonous gas (see the Defenses section above) is increased to 22 in this area. In addition, there's a 20% chance each minute that something belches forth from the flaming pit, striking a random character. The creature struck must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking 17 (5d6) bludgeoning damage plus 17 (5d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### F. THE UNQUIET JUNGLE

The jungle that covers much of the land west of the volcano is crawling with fierce insects and contaminated by parasites and diseases delivered by clouds of thirsty mosquitoes. Each hour the characters travel through the jungles forces them to make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature contracts Slimy Doom. 1d4 hours after being infected, the creature begins to bleed uncontrollably. The infected creature has disadvantage on Constitution checks and Constitution saving throws. In addition, whenever the creature takes damage, it is stunned until the end of its next turn.

### G. SHATTERED IDOL

Rising up like a crone's finger from the western mountain are the remains of a shattered idol. Little is left to testify to its original form, though it's clear the figure wore robes. Rubble litters the ground around the idol, and 50 feet down the slope lies the head, which is carved to look like a mass of worms.

### H. SACRED POOL

This pool served as a sacred meeting place. It is now black and corrupt, with a skin of green slime coating its surface. The water feeding the pool spills into the murk without disturbing the surface. The grass and underbrush all around is brown and slippery with rot. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check of the area turns up a few scraps of cloth, a shattered symbol of Obad-Hai, and a scattering of maggot-infested flesh.

### I. POLLUTED LAKE

The marsh is a mess of mud, pools of brown water, and dead reeds. In its center is a still, black pool of stinking water. Just beneath the surface are the rotting remains of the villagers who lived here. The salts of the water preserve their bodies, keeping them ready for animation. As long as no one drinks the water, the pool and its contents are harmless. Consuming or touching the water exposes the characters to the tiny green worms crawling through the muck.



These worms are identical to those launched by a blessed spawn of Kyuss' Burrowing Worm action (EdE 42). If someone touches the water, 1d4 worms latch onto the creature's skin. If someone consumes the water, 2d4 worms burrow inside of and infest the creature's body.

## J. TAR PIT

The islet that surrounds the obelisk is encircled by a sea of tar. The effects of the tar are described in Encounter 2.

## ENCOUNTER 1: RUINS

This encounter is unchanged.

### TACTICS

The **blessed spawns of Kyuss** (EdE 42) rush into melee combat as fast as possible, attempting to restrain as many enemies as they can with multiple Plagues of Worms. While the combat rages, the **gravecrawler** (EdE 44) moves back and uses its *chill touch* and *dispel magic* spells to negate the beneficial effects of any divine spellcaster in the party. It might also use its *transmute rock* spell to restrain the party in mud. If four or more blessed spawns are destroyed, the gravecrawler uses its *sickening radiance* spell on the party, hoping to reduce its remaining enemies to nothing via exhaustion. It relies on its Calcifying Aura to defend itself in melee if need be.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

#### CALCIFIED BONES

These areas are filled bones calcified by the gravecrawler, causing them to be difficult terrain for all creatures.

#### CRUMBLING WALLS

The walls, where present, are masonry, but are in bad shape. They are 1 foot thick and 10 feet tall. Each 10-foot-by-10-foot panel of the wall has an AC of 15, has 30 hit points, and is immune to poison and psychic damage.

#### DEEP BOG

This area is difficult terrain for creatures of Medium size or larger. Small and smaller creatures must swim to enter these spaces.

#### HEAVY UNDERGROWTH

Heavy undergrowth is difficult terrain for all creatures. It provides three-quarters cover and lightly obscures any creature inside it.

#### LIGHT UNDERGROWTH

Light undergrowth is difficult terrain for all creatures. It provides half cover and lightly obscures any creature inside it.

#### RUBBLE

Areas filled with collapsed walls are difficult terrain for all creatures.

#### SHALLOW BOG

This area is difficult terrain for all creatures.

## TREASURE

Searching through the rubble turns up an assortment of baubles. There is a total of 1,034 gp. A creature that succeeds on a DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check also finds 1d2 black pearls (worth 500 gp each) until a total of five have been found. A DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check in the western corner uncovers a *spellguard shield* (DMG 201).

## ENCOUNTER 2: TAR PIT

This encounter is unchanged, although it is worth noting that the **scion of Kyuss** (EdE 45) can only regurgitate one **forest giant skeleton** (EdE 44) per round.

### TACTICS

The scion of Kyuss lurches forward and swims through the tar to attack the party. It uses its Acid Breath to bombard as many creatures as it can, and then it regurgitates a forest giant skeleton to keep them busy. When one or more creatures are close enough, it uses its Tendrils to grapple as many creatures as possible. If it succeeds, the scion uses its Fling to throw a grappled creature deeper into the tar. It relies on the forest giant skeletons it regurgitates to keep the rest of the party busy while it uses its Tendrils to batter tar-submerged creatures, taking advantage of its 20 foot range and the immobilizing effect of the tar to attack without retaliation. It prefers to only re-emerge from the tar when it recharges its Acid Breath or when it wants to Bite and swallow an enemy that has half of its hit points or fewer.

Keep in mind that while the scion's Fling action has a range of 60 feet, actually throwing a player character that far into the tar might take them out of the fight completely. Be careful with removing melee characters from the fight completely, but feel free to use this maximum range on NPCs that are accompanying the party, as well as on spellcasters that have access to magical flight or teleportation that enables them to escape the tar.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

#### DEEP BOG

This area is difficult terrain for creatures of Medium size or larger. Small and smaller creatures must swim to enter these spaces.

#### HEAVY UNDERGROWTH

Heavy undergrowth is difficult terrain for all creatures. It provides three-quarters cover and lightly obscures any creature inside it.

#### LIGHT UNDERGROWTH

Light undergrowth is difficult terrain for all creatures. It provides half cover and lightly obscures any creature inside it.

#### SHALLOW BOG

This area is difficult terrain for all creatures.



## TAR

The depth of the tar starts at 5 feet by the shore, and increases by 10 feet in 5-foot increments away from the shore.

Any non-undead creature that starts its turn within 5 feet of this tar must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. Non-undead creatures that are sinking into the tar (see below) automatically fail this saving throw.

Huge and larger creatures can swim through the tar as if it was difficult terrain. Otherwise, the tar acts like Quicksand (DMG 110), restraining creatures that enter the area and causing them to sink.

## ENCOUNTER 3: THE OBELISK

This encounter is unchanged.

### TACTICS

**Edwin Tolstoff** (EdE 42) must direct the *sphere of annihilation* into the *well of many worlds*. If he possesses a *talisman of the sphere*, Edwin automatically succeeds at doing this; otherwise, he must make Intelligence (Arcana) checks as detailed in the *sphere of annihilation* item description.

Once he succeeds, Edwin then fights the party until his master emerges. He uses spells to cause trouble and to prevent the party from drawing too close to the shuddering well, using *dominate monster* or *hold person* to immobilize and distract them. Edwin casts *greater invisibility* and attempts to flee early if reduced to half of his hit points or fewer.

After 5 rounds, **Kyuss** (EdE 40) bursts free, erupting from the obelisk as a flood of worms and maggots that quickly assumes the form of a giant humanoid. As the obelisk shatters, Kyuss uses his Divine Scourge. He then begins combat by using his Plague of Worms to restrain as many party members as possible, and then he hammers at the characters with his Worm Smite.

Kyuss uses Quicken Spell to cast *animate dead* as a bonus action, creating multiple spawns of Kyuss to assault the party with. Kyuss then casts *dominate monster* on a melee combatant, instructing the character to turn against their comrades. Kyuss fills out the next few rounds by casting *spiritual weapon* at 6th level and any offensive spell of his choice, as well as using an 8th level spell slot to cast *spirit guardians* if his *dominate monster* spell ends. He returns to melee combat when his Plague of Worms or Worm Smite actions have recharged. Throughout the fight, he uses Bless Spawn to bolster his forces and Summon Spawn when they are depleted. He saves his 9th level spell slot for the use of *power word kill* later on in the fight.

When Kyuss is reduced to half of his hit points or fewer, he casts *divine word*. If you wish, Kyuss may then quicken *planar ally* to cast it using his bonus action, beseeching Orcus for aid. Orcus immediately sends a demon to his aid, such as a **glabrezu** (MM 58) or **maurezhi** (MTF 133). Orcus might also send an undead servant, such as a **famine spirit** (EdE 6), if he so desires.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book. Undead and aberrations are immune to any negative effects described below.

### BLOOD ROCK

Whenever a creature rolls a critical hit on a melee weapon attack while standing on this blood rock, the creature gains 10 temporary hit points.

### FISSURES

There are two types of fissures found on the battlefield. A space containing a small fissure is difficult terrain, while a wide fissure is a 30-foot-deep chasm. Any living creature that ends its turn on a small fissure or within 5 feet of a wide fissure suffers disadvantage on Constitution saving throws until the end of its next turn.

### OBELISK

Before Kyuss escapes the obelisk, the stone emits an aura of madness in a 20-foot radius. Whenever a creature ends its turn in the area, it suffers disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws until the end of its next turn. Once Kyuss escapes, the aura ceases.

### OBELISK'S SHADOW

Any creature that ends its turn in the Obelisk's shadow suffers disadvantage on Wisdom saving throws until the end of its next turn.

### WORMS

These spaces contain the worms of Kyuss. A character moving through one of these spaces has a worm latch onto its skin, as described by the Burrowing Worm action of the blessed spawn of Kyuss (EdE 42).

## CONCLUSION

Although the procedure Edwin uses to release the Worm that Walks should succeed, it has other unforeseen consequences. The sphere becomes a "black hole", annihilating everything near to it. If abandoned for more than 10 minutes, it picks up speed and power, drawing the island, the waters, the air and everything else on the Material Plane into its dimensional fissure, erasing all existence within 1 hour.

The bizarre circumstances of this ritual modify the usual effects that occur when someone attempts to destroy a sphere of annihilation. Casting a *gate* spell on the sphere catapults everything within a 180-foot radius into an alternate Material Plane. Touching the sphere with a *rod of absorption* causes the sphere to be absorbed and for the rod to explode, dealing 140 (40d6) force damage to everything in a 600-foot radius.

At your option, once the Worm that Walks has been dealt with or has left the island, a divine power can intervene to stop the catastrophe, or you can choose to lessen the severity of these consequences. For example, instead of becoming a black hole, the sphere might explode after 15 minutes, destroying Wormcrawl Island and everything on it.



# ZARGON

*"Who can stand against the might of Zargon the Returner? Surely, no man is strong enough of courage and skill to face my master in combat. No god would dare confront him, for he has brought low others before. Nay, when Zargon awakens, all shall tremble as the world is born anew in his foul image."*

— Dorn, Ascendant of Zargon

Despised by the baatezu, feared by the gods, and all but forgotten by mortals, Zargon the Returner struggles to escape his prison to once more conquer the earth and drown the world with rivers of his slime.

## BACKGROUND

Zargon's background is unchanged.

## GOALS

Zargon's goals are unchanged.

## ZARGON IN THE CAMPAIGN

The particulars of the Cynidicean Kingdom, such as placement and cultural specifics, are loose to make it easier for you to insert Zargon into the campaign. The ziggurat holding Zargon should lie in the middle of a large desert, but any wasteland can serve. Legends about the lost civilization are hard to come by, suppressed by religious groups hiding the fact that divine intercession failed and Asmodeus saved the day. If necessary, you can substitute any powerful evil force for Asmodeus and if you'd prefer the gods not be slain, substitute high-level wizards, clerics, or other adventurers.

## SIGN: EERIE WEATHER

The worship of Zargon causes unrest among the gods, which is made manifest with strange weather.

**Faint:** Eerie weather occurs once every 2 weeks and affects an area of 21 (2d20) square miles in a place of the DM's choice. The effects last for 3 (1d4 + 1) hours.

**Moderate:** Eerie weather occurs once a week and affects an area of 101 (2d100) square miles. The effects last for 7 (2d4 + 2) hours.

**Strong:** Eerie weather occurs once a day and affects an entire continent or large surface of the planet. The effects last for 14 (4d4 + 4) hours.

**Overwhelming:** Eerie weather occurs once an hour and affects the entire world. The effects last for 2 (1d4) hours (because the duration can be longer than the frequency, the effects often overlap).

Each time eerie weather occurs, consult the following tables and roll a d20 three times to determine the exact effect. See DMG 109 for details on severe weather conditions and their effects.

## TEMPERATURE

### d20 Temperature

- 1-8 Heat wave; temperature rises by 1d4 × 10 degrees Fahrenheit
- 9-16 Cold snap; temperature falls by 1d4 × 10 degrees Fahrenheit
- 17-20 Invert season: summer becomes winter, spring becomes fall, and visa versa

## PRECIPITATION

### d20 Precipitation

- 1-10 No precipitation
- 11-12 Storm: heavy rain or heavy snowfall (temperature-based)
- 13-14 As storm, plus heavy lightning (rain) or blizzard (snow)
- 15-16 As storm, plus hurricane (rain) or hail (snow)
- 17-18 As storm, plus blood rain (rain) or slime rain (snow)
- 19-20 As storm, plus acid rain (rain) or flaming hail (snow)

## OTHER EFFECTS

### d20 Effect

- 1-8 Slime covering (area becomes difficult terrain)
- 9-16 Fog (heavily obscures the area)
- 17-20 1d4 earthquakes (as the spell, save DC 20)

**Blizzard.** The area of the blizzard is heavily obscured. Additionally, ground that has heavy snow on it is difficult terrain until cleared.

**Blood Rain.** A creature that ends its turn in the rain must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. A poisoned creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

**Slime Rain.** Instead of snowing, large globs of slime fall from the sky. Every 5 (1d10) rounds, a colossal glob of slime explodes on impact in a random spot. Each creature within 15 feet of the impact must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The explosion covers the ground with viscous slime, preventing creatures from moving across it until cleared.

This rain also contaminates all exposed water sources. Any creature that drinks the water or enters a contaminated water source for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there takes 7 (2d6) acid damage.

**Acid Rain.** Exposed creatures and objects take 2 acid damage at the start of each of their turns.



**Flaming Hail** Exposed creatures and objects take 1 bludgeoning damage plus 1 fire damage at the start of each of their turns. Every 5 (1d10) rounds, a flaming hailstone explodes on impact in a random spot. Each creature within 20 feet of the impact must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The explosion covers the ground with fragments, making it difficult terrain until cleared.

## TIMELINE

The possible campaign outline given in the original book is unchanged. Consult the following table for the suggested level of your party for each section of the original outline.

### SUGGESTED PARTY LEVEL CHART

| Intensity    | Party Level |
|--------------|-------------|
| None         | 2           |
| Faint        | 5           |
| Moderate     | 10          |
| Strong       | 15          |
| Overwhelming | 20          |

## ZARGON IN EBERRON

This section is unchanged.

## ZARGON IN FAERÛN

This section is unchanged.

## VARIANT USAGE

In a planar campaign, Zargon might seek to claim control over planes other than the Material Plane. For example, in the adventure *Baldur's Gate: Descent into Avernus*, Zargon might be free, acting as a warlord that seeks control over Avernus and the rest of the Nine Hells. If the party makes a deal with his cultists, Zargon might be willing to break Elturel's chains using his nigh indestructible horn.

Regardless of the setting and the dominion he has set his eyes on, Zargon has one goal: to corrupt every creature he can with slime. As such, Zargon works well as written in a Spelljammer campaign, although his connection with the Nine Hells adds for another layer of intrigue in a planar campaign.

In addition to his whelps, you may also wish to create statistics for other baatorian devils spawned by Zargon. An easy way to do this is to apply the whelp of Zargon template to baatezu devils of your choice, or to come up with your own ideas as to what the original denizens of the Nine Hells used to be.

Beyond that, consider the following changes and additions:

- If you have a setting that lacks deities, or at least has a rather small pantheon compared to other settings, consider using Zargon to explain why this is. Perhaps Zargon managed to kill all of the gods in the setting, or only a majority of them. In a setting such as *Dark Sun*, perhaps Zargon slew the gods but then himself was slain. This would allow for an explanation of why the gods are missing without requiring Zargon to be in the setting anymore.
- While Juiblex may support Zargon's conquests, other demons may be divided on the subject. Some demons might find the notion of an ancient archdevil conquering the Material Plane unsettling to them. Other demons might believe Zargon will attempt to retake the Nine Hells after conquering his current target, which would divide the devils among themselves and allow for a successful invasion of the Nine Hells.
  - Enemies of Juiblex in particular, such as Zugtmoy, are committed to preventing the Faceless Lord from gaining more power and would attack Zargon once discovering their alliance. Others might be threatened by this alliance; if successful, Juiblex could potentially gain enough power to rival Demogorgon for the title of King of Demons.
  - The obyrith lord Pazuzu might oppose Zargon due to the demon's secret alliance with Asmodeus. It is reasonable to assume that Pazuzu, having been the one to corrupt Asmodeus in the first place, would be aware of his past conflict with Zargon and the threat he poses. Pazuzu could potentially work with the party against the elder evil, disguising himself as a benevolent entity in order to manipulate them to his advantage. See the *Demonomicon* from 4th Edition for more information on Pazuzu.
  - Particularly cunning demon lords might attempt to use Zargon to their advantage. Rather than openly allying with him, they might use manipulation to sic him against the gods once more. If successful, Zargon would kill all of the gods, leaving their celestial realms free to be conquered and converted into another layer of the Abyss.
- If you find Zargon's default sign to be underwhelming, you may wish to swap it out for the Blood Moon or Alien Skies sign described in Chapter 1. You could also use the Infestation sign, in which Zargon's brown slime rapidly spreads across the landscape until it threatens to engulf the entire setting.

## DESCRIPTION

This section is unchanged. Reference the original book if you are interested in lore and details regarding Zargon and his whelps, Dorn, and Vanessa Mackelroy.



# THE ZIGGURAT

Hidden in the Valley of Death are the ruins of Cynidicea. Little remains of the city, and if not for the imposing ziggurat in the center of the ruins, one might overlook the few exposed stone blocks and crumbling walls. In spite of the site's condition, the ziggurat is more or less intact. Its walls have crumbled somewhat and a few breaches reach to the dark secrets within, but the massive structure stands defiant of time and the harsh terrain. The ziggurat is a stepped pyramid, with each level rising 20 feet high. Sand conceals most of the bottom tier. Mounted on the top of the ziggurat are three statues. One depicts a strong, bearded man holding a balance and a javelin. Another depicts a winged child with two snakes wrapped around its body, and the third is of a beautiful woman. Over the centuries, the wind has erased all the statues' fine detail.

## KEY FEATURES

Each tier of the ziggurat (there are five in all) serves as a discrete level and connects to lower and higher levels by carved staircases cut into the stone. Ceiling heights reach 18 feet except in the hallways, where the ceiling drops to 10 feet high. The upper levels can be developed in extensive detail if desired, but by the time the party reaches the ziggurat, Zargon should soon be freed, and there's neither time nor need to detail every inch of this place.

Before Zargon was sealed in the floor, lower levels provided access to the Lost City far below. Whether these levels remain or the Lost City can still be accessed is up to you.

## ENTRANCES

Unless you wish to expand this adventure site to include the upper levels, the party has to enter through the front doors leading to area A. However, 20 feet of sand prevents this. Characters might attempt to use teleportation to circumvent this barrier, but ancient wards prevent such effects from breaching into the ziggurat. It takes 20 hours to clear out a passage by hand (or five hours each for four creatures), although magic can be used to speed up this process considerably.

## LIGHTING

Lamps that burn human fat for fuel illuminate the main level. The fuel is poor and gives off more smoke than light. Each lamp sheds shadowy illumination in a 10-foot radius. The lamps hang from hooks every 20 feet in the corridors and might or might not be lit in individual rooms, depending on the occupants.

## DOORS

Doors throughout are closed and locked. All locks use the same keys, and each cultist carries a key on their person. The cultists shut and lock any door they pass through—to leave one open warns that intruders are inside.

## WALLS

The walls between rooms are reinforced masonry, and thicker walls count as magically treated hewn stone. Lead sheets have been buried within all walls, ruining certain divination spells such as *locate object*.

## FLOORS

The floors are flagstone. In breached areas, light rubble might impose difficult terrain to creatures walking through it.

## DEFENSES

The cult is ready for an attack, so three sets of guards monitor the corridors. Each group consists of four **oozeblades** (EdE 50) and one **slime shaman** (EdE 50).

If combat breaks out, the closest guards can make DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) checks. Those who succeed go to investigate. Guards in room 12 respond to sounds of fighting in Encounter 3.

Dorn and Vanessa will investigate if they hear combat break out within 90 feet of them. Otherwise, they move to Encounter 3 to make their stand alongside Zargon.

## ENCOUNTER AREAS

The following locations correspond to those indicated on the ziggurat map.

### A. MAIN ENTRY CHAMBER

Two rows of statues depicting animal-headed people support the high ceiling of this massive chamber. Mosaics recounting the rise and fall of Cynidicea adorn the walls behind the statues. Bright light fills the corridor to the south, revealing more mosaics. The wide corridor ends at a T intersection.

A character who examines the northwest corner of the room and succeeds on a DC 25 Search check discover a hidden trapdoor. Lifting the lid reveals a ladder descending into the darkness. This passage leads the subterranean city.

A character who examines the northwest corner of the room and succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check discover a hidden trapdoor. Lifting the lid reveals a ladder descending into the darkness. This passage leads into the subterranean city.

The southern passage ends at an illusory wall. Creatures with truesight can see through the wall, and physical interaction with the image reveals it to be an illusion, because things can pass through it. Otherwise, examination of the wall does not reveal it to be an illusion.

### B. EMPTY ROOM

The floor of this chamber drops 6 feet. At the bottom is a shattered stone box. An acrid stench fills the air.

### C. STORAGE ROOM

Wine racks cover the north and east walls and casks cover the west, as do the remains of several shattered casks. The floor here is black and sticky.

### D. CRUSHING WALL TRAP

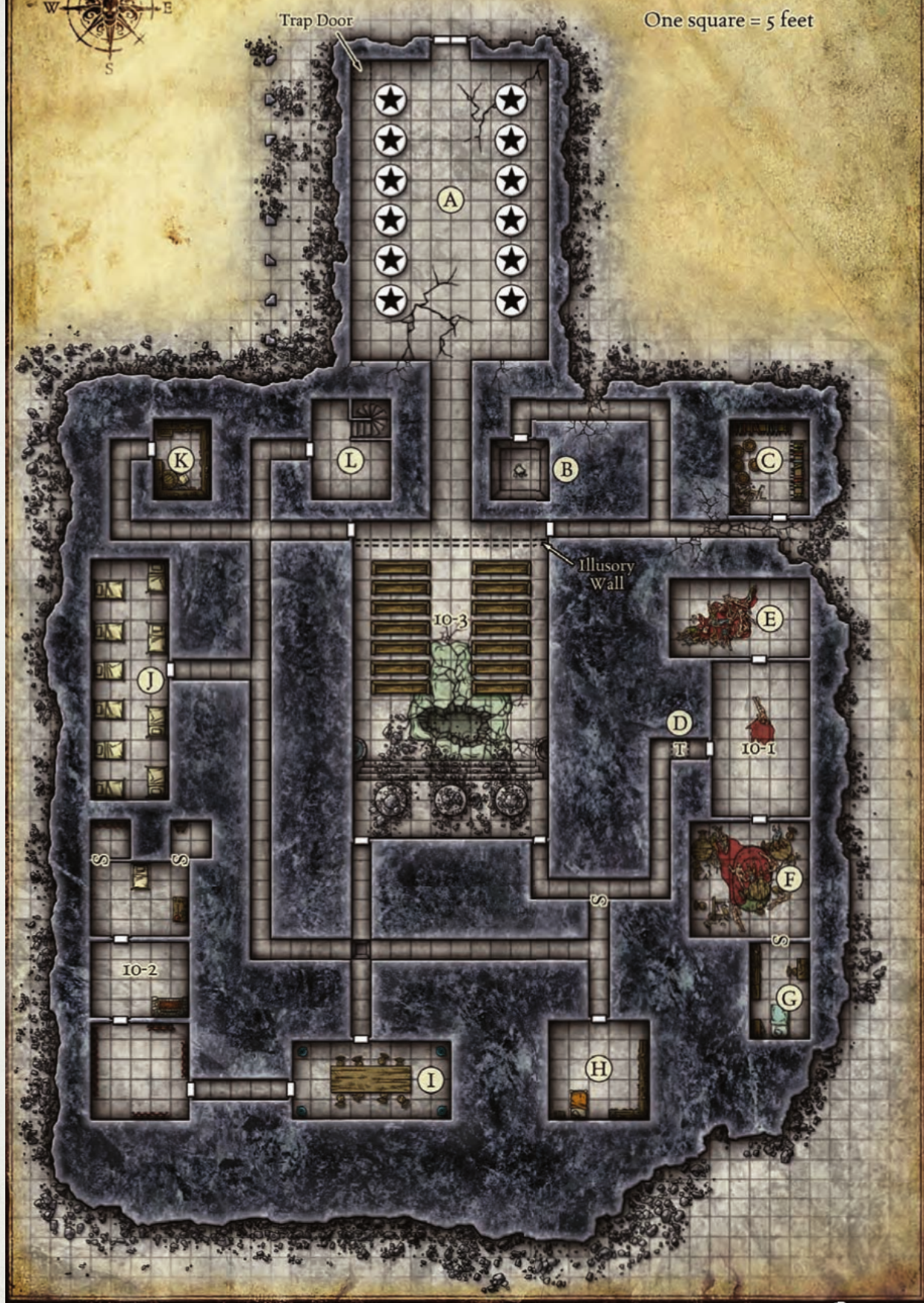
This passage is trapped. Creating pressure (e.g. walking, or pressing with a 10-foot pole) anywhere in the indicated area causes the entire stretch of corridor to slam shut, pulping anyone caught between the walls.





# The Ziggurat

One square = 5 feet





The trap can be discovered by a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check. A creature in the trapped area when it slams shut must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, it can use its reaction to move up to its speed so that it is no longer in the way of the trap. Otherwise, a creature in the area takes 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage. Unsecured objects in the area take the same damage automatically.

### E. KILLING FLOOR

This room holds piles of corpses, butchered by Dorn (see Encounter 1). Aside from a collection of animal masks, the bodies have nothing of value.

### F. GAMBLING HALL

This room was once a gaming hall, as evidenced by the toppled tables, cards, dice, and scattered coins. Blood soaks the carpet in the center of the room. The dead are everywhere.

A secret door stands on the south wall. A creature who succeeds on a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check finds a hidden pressure plate that causes it to open, leading into area G.

### G. CULTIST'S CHAMBERS

This room was once the private quarters for the high cultist Darius—Dorn's father. The room holds a bed, dresser, writing desk, and other ordinary furniture. Painted on the east wall is a grotesque illustration depicting Zargon.

Characters searching the high priest's belongings find little of value, but a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check turns up two *pearls of power* (DMG 184) lying under the bed.

If **Vanessa Mackelroy** (EdE 47) has not yet been encountered, she is here.

### H. ABANDONED CULTIST'S QUARTERS

A moist odor fills the air of this damp room. Aside from a sagging bed, shelves, and a small chest, this room is empty.

### I. CONSULTATION ROOM

A massive table dominates the center of this wood-paneled room. Six chairs are pushed up to the table on either side. In each corner stands a gaudy painted urn, and there is a **gargoyle** (MM 140) in each corner of the room.

If **Vanessa Mackelroy** (EdE 47) has not yet been encountered, she is here.

### J. BARRACKS

This wide room houses the guards patrolling the corridors. At any given time, there are eight **oozeblades** (EdE 50) and two **slime shamans** (EdE 50) here reclining and relaxing. Although off duty, they wear animal masks depicting two each of the following: boar, rat, ant, eagle, and wolf.

The guards store their possessions here. The party can find 550 gp and three *potions of superior healing* (DMG 187) in footlockers.

### K. STOREROOM

This chamber holds the cult's spare vestments, masks, incense, general goods, and three months' worth of rations and water. There are five masks (tiger, ape, rat, rhino, and boar) and accompanying vestments. Assume that the room holds at least one piece of any mundane equipment (excluding alchemical items, weapons, and armor) the party could want or need.

### L. GUARDROOM

Four **slime shamans** (EdE 50) wearing rat masks and red robes over mail protect this room. They make sure none of the denizens from below come up to disturb the cult's activities. If you are not expanding this adventure site to the lower levels, have the stairs end at a bricked-up wall.

## ENCOUNTER 1: HALL OF WHELPS

This encounter is changed to consist of **Dorn** (EdE 47), three **humanoid whelps of Zargon** (EdE 49), and one **alkilith** (MTF 130) summoned by Dorn. If you wish, you can substitute the alkilith with a **roper whelp of Zargon** (EdE 49). The suggested party level of this encounter is increased to 17.

### TACTICS

If Dorn is here and the trap was not sprung, he first uses his Summon Demon action to summon an alkilith. It and the humanoid whelps then ooze forward, attempting to engage the party in melee. The whelps are all immune to the alkilith's Foment Madness, and they attempt to use their Whelm actions to immobilize the party.

Once the party is engaged in melee, Dorn uses his Corrosive Spew on as many of them as he can. He uses his Cunning Action to weave in and out of combat, targeting the most injured enemy with his Sneak Attack when possible.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### CORPSES

The bloody corpses are difficult terrain for any creature without the Amorphous trait or Liquid Movement action.

### DOORS

The doors here are made out of lead. They have an AC of 14, 50 hit points, and immunity to poison and psychic damage.

### POOLS OF BLOOD

The blood in this area has been mixed with corrosive acid, dealing 5 (2d4) acid damage to any creature that enters its space for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there.



## ENCOUNTER 2: DEN OF EXCESS

This encounter is changed to consist of **Vanessa Mackelroy** (EdE 47) if she is present, two **oozeblades** (EdE 50), two **thralls of Juiblex** (EdE 49), and one **slime shaman** (EdE 50). If Vanessa isn't present, feel free to add an additional slime shaman instead. The suggested party level of this encounter is increased to 17.

### TACTICS

The oozeblades sound the alarm and charge the party on their turn. They start off by using their Slimy Curse before entering melee. If they need to retreat, one of them casts the *darkness* spell before they flee.

One round later, the thralls of Juiblex join the fight and charge the party.

One round after that, Vanessa (if present) and the slime shaman arrive. The slime shaman targets spellcasters with *blindness/deafness*, and then follows up with a variety of damaging spells.

Vanessa supports the melee combatants with spells, casting *hold person* followed by *flaming sphere*. If she faces spellcasters, she makes sure to save her reaction for *counterspell* or *Insane Defiance*.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

#### LIGHTING

All rooms except the secret chambers are filled with dim light.

#### BED

The bed is a stained feather mattress. There is nothing of interest on the bed, but searching it exposes the characters to disease. A creature must succeed on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw or be infected by *Sewer Plague* (DMG 257).

#### DESK

The desk is a simple wooden writing desk that stands 4 feet off the ground.

#### LADDER

In the eastern secret room, there is an iron ladder bolted against the north wall. If your adventure includes the upper levels, this ladder leads there. If not, the exit is bricked up. Characters descending from the upper levels enter this level from here.

#### SECRET DOORS

Two secret doors lead to concealed chambers. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check in the area reveals them and their opening mechanisms.

#### STOVE

This is a simple stove. A fire burns inside. Once per turn when a creature comes in contact with this fire, it takes 5 (2d4) fire damage.

### TAPESTRIES

Tapestries depicting grotesque scenes of human sacrifice hang in one of the secret rooms and in southern room. A creature standing behind a tapestry gains half cover, but once it is attacked or takes damage, it is destroyed.

### TREASURE HOARD

The western secret room contains the cult's accumulated wealth, which is made up of the following treasure:

- Coins and gemstones worth a total of 7,500 gp
- A *ring of telekinesis* (DMG 193)
- A *potion of invisibility* (DMG 188)
- An *animated shield* (DMG 151)

## ENCOUNTER 3: CHAPEL OF ZARGON

This encounter is changed to consist of **Zargon** (EdE 46), one **corrupture** (EdE 50), and three **humanoid whelps of Zargon** (EdE 49). The positioning of these the corrupture can be determined based on the possible locations given in the original encounter map. The suggested party level of this encounter is increased to 20.

If the party arrives before Zargon's sign of apocalypse becomes *Overwhelming*, it instead contains six **slime shamans** and six **oozeblades** working to extract their master.

### TACTICS

When not ordered by Zargon, the whelps attempt to use *Whelm* on the closest party members they can see. The corrupture rushes into melee as well, attempting to catch as many enemies as it can in its *Acid Burst*.

Zargon starts by using his *Spew Slime* action, blanketing the area with the awful stuff. While the ooze attend to the party, Zargon stays back, using his *Multiattack* to make two attacks with his barbed tentacles from 30 feet away, preferably against the spellcasters of the party. If a party member does a large amount of damage to Zargon, he might choose to grapple the opponent and to *Fling* it into the pit below him. In general, Zargon uses his superior reach to assault the party while still avoiding their melee combatants.

If the other ooze die, Zargon uses his *Tentacle Swarm* legendary action to immobilize as many party members as he can. He then rushes into melee, using his *Gore* attack (preferably boosted by his *Charge* trait) on the most damaged party member he can see. Afterwards, Zargon uses his muscled tendrils to knock grappled creatures prone, and he uses *Spew Slime* whenever it recharges. When not provoking opportunity attacks, Zargon climbs around the room, spreading his *Slime Trail* wherever he goes. Zargon fights until destroyed, knowing he will rise once more in a few days.

Sounds of combat in this room attract the attention of guards throughout the complex. If they are still alive, the cult guards from area L start moving in the second round of combat, while any remaining guards in the halls head toward this room starting in round 3. If Vanessa and Dorn have not been encountered elsewhere, they begin moving starting in round 5.



## FEATURES OF THE AREA

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This area contains a variety of features, as pictured in the original book.

### LIGHTING

This room has no light sources in it.

### BROKEN STATUE

Three massive statues once stood at the end of the chapel, but the cultists of Zargon have defaced and shattered them; the rubble covers the floor around them. Each statue stands 10 feet high and ends in a jagged break, but can still be climbed if a creature wants to do so.

### DENSE RUBBLE

Areas with dense rubble in it are difficult terrain for creatures that walk through them.

### ILLUSORY WALL

Illusory walls stretch across the north edge of the room.

### PIT

Zargon emerges from a deep pit dug by his cultists, who were rewarded for their labor by being transformed into whelps. The pit is 40 feet deep, and the bottom is covered with slime. A character falling in the pit takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall and must contend with the slime at the bottom (see below). The pit's walls are covered in a thin layer of slime, but can be climbed with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check.

### SLIME

This slime was created by Zargon's Slime Trail trait. A creature that moves into the slime's space for the first time on a turn or ends its turn there must succeed on a DC 27 Constitution saving throw or take 14 (4d6) acid damage. This slime dissipates 1 minute after being excreted.

## CONCLUSION

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Even if the characters "kill" Zargon, the elder evil regrows in a matter of days unless they destroy the horn as well. The way to destroy this elder evil is to drop the horn in the smoking crater called the Eye of Zargon. This volcanic crater lies far below the earth in the cave housing the lost city of Cynidicea, on the far shores of Lake Moldvay. Such a quest is the subject of another adventure...