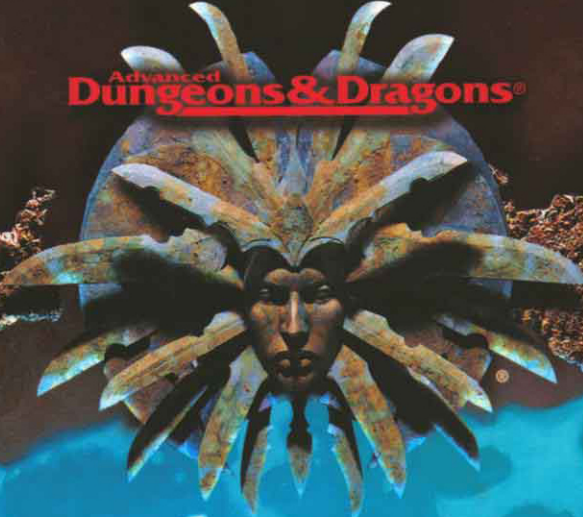


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P L A N E

S C A P E

CAMPAIGN EXPANSION



THE INNER PLANES



by Monte Cook

with William W. Connors

◆ THE INNER PLANES ◆

*Being a Guide to the planes of the Elements,
including Conditions, Entities, Features,
and Methods of Survival Thereupon.*

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Folks like to think about centers. Cagers in Sigil think that they're at the center of the multiverse. Lots of berks on the Prime think that their world is the focus of everything (although a body could

INTRODUCTION

argue that such belief's not really their fault, since they don't know any better). Show a cutter a "map" of the Great Ring, and he'll probably think that the Outlands lie at the center. Then show him a representation of the whole cosmos (with all the planes, not just the Ring), and he'll likely realize his error. "No," he'll admit, "it appears that the Inner Planes are the center of the multiverse."

The real dark, to those who know the ways of the planes, is that there *isn't* a center—not really. In a space without bounds, any spot can be the center. Still, somebody who picks the Inner Planes as the core of the multiverse really isn't all that far from the truth. They're not the center as far as location goes, but they're a good choice as a center for *existence*.

Existence is what the Inner Planes are all about. While the substance of the Outer Planes is belief, the Inner Planes are immutable reality. The surreal, intangible thought-realms of the metaphysical Outer Planes may change, giving rise to beings shaped from belief and faith (powers, fiends, celestials, and the like). But the real, tangible, material worlds of the utterly physical Inner

Planes never change, no matter what a body thinks or holds dear. As inner-planar natives say, "Believe what you want—fire still burns and wind still blows."

THE
INNER PLANES'
RULE OF THREES?
YEAH—

+RY +
STAY ALIVE.

DON'T FORGET
TO BREATHE, AND

+RY +
STAY ALIVE.

—VEERAN+H
MUNNICAS
OF THE
CITY OF GLASS

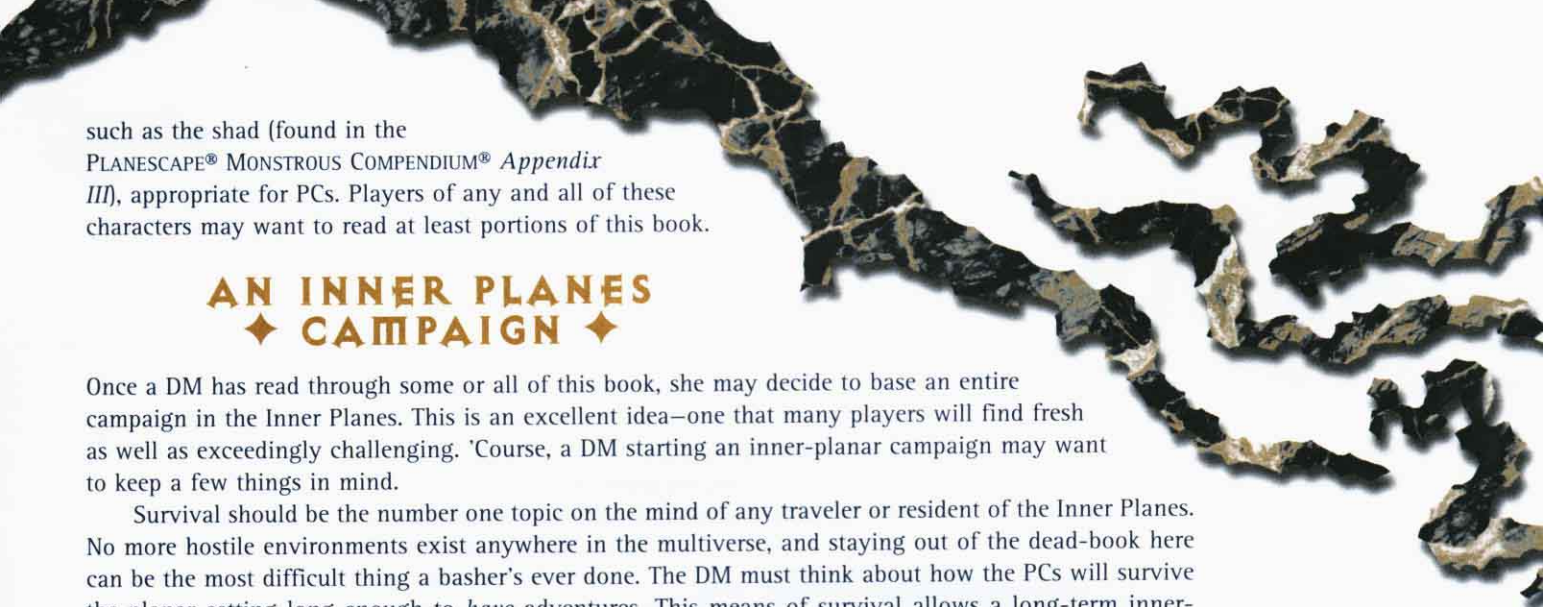
◆ ABOUT THIS BOOK ◆

In the course of compiling the dark of the Inner Planes, the Editor consulted a vast number of sources. Facts were checked in the Great Library of Sigil, amid the stacks of records kept by the Fraternity of Order, and in the libraries of both Thoth and Yrrkol, powers devoted to knowledge (though gaining access to these collections are stories unto themselves, and provided many delays in this book's publication). For the most part, however, the chant in this tome comes from direct sources—folks either native to or extremely familiar with the Inner Planes. Each section detailing a different plane was written primarily by a single author most familiar with that plane. These authors were chosen on the basis of knowledge and honesty, in that order. When possible, the Editor picked a true native of the plane to write a particular section (although in some cases, no native was found, and in others no *honest* native was found).

Readers may notice that the point of view of some of the narrators contains slightly biased information and unfamiliar mannerisms—particularly those who're used to the cant of Sigil and the ways of the Outer Planes. On the other hand, bashers of the Inner Planes get right to the point and don't mince words. Generally, they don't speak in esoteric terms or use much slang. The folks of the Inner Planes are a straightforward bunch.

◆ USING THIS BOOK ◆

This book is for Dungeon Masters, although players—particularly those with knowledge of one or more Inner Planes—might also have access to some or all of the chapters. Often, planar PCs originally hail from one of the Inner Planes. Genasi player characters in particular should be familiar with at least some of the information in this book, and various humans, elves, dwarves, and even tieflings and bariaur have been born in the Inner Planes. Some DMs may even find certain inner-planar races,



such as the shad (found in the PLANESCAPE® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® *Appendix III*), appropriate for PCs. Players of any and all of these characters may want to read at least portions of this book.

AN INNER PLANES ◆ CAMPAIGN ◆

Once a DM has read through some or all of this book, she may decide to base an entire campaign in the Inner Planes. This is an excellent idea—one that many players will find fresh as well as exceedingly challenging. 'Course, a DM starting an inner-planar campaign may want to keep a few things in mind.

Survival should be the number one topic on the mind of any traveler or resident of the Inner Planes. No more hostile environments exist anywhere in the multiverse, and staying out of the dead-book here can be the most difficult thing a basher's ever done. The DM must think about how the PCs will survive the planar setting long enough to *have* adventures. This means of survival allows a long-term inner-planar stay by nonnative characters, and it's the key that unlocks the gate to inner-planar adventuring.

One solution for the survival problem: The DM can wait until the PCs reach at least 6th or 7th level, or she can have the players create new heroes already at that level. Cutters with such power can cast spells to protect themselves against the hostile environments of the Inner Planes. On the other hand, some Inner Planes don't require that the planewalkers have any great might. For instance, the Elemental Plane of Air presents few immediate dangers to its inhabitants, and some areas of other Inner Planes are likewise "safe."

Another solution: The PCs can rely on magical items for survival. Many items found in the *DUNGEON MASTER® Guide* let a body weather the harsh realities of fire (*ring of fire resistance*), cold (*ring of warmth*), or water (*potion of water breathing*)—at least for a while. The DM can also create magical items of her own, even tailoring them for lower-level campaigns so they don't unbalance game play. For instance, rather than give a character a cloak that protects him from all fire and heat, the DM could create a *cloak of elemental magma survival*. With this item, the wearer would be able to survive in the Paraelemental Plane of Magma, but he'd still be vulnerable to *fireballs*, red dragon breath, and even magma paraelementals. Likewise, a *ring of elemental earth travel* might let a cutter move through the substance of the plane of Earth, but not through normal stone walls in any other plane. Thus, special items provide the opportunity to adventure in the Inner Planes without giving the PCs too much magical power.

Once the DM has determined how the PCs can survive in the Inner Planes, she can extrapolate that means to communities of NPCs. This is important for an inner-planar campaign, as player characters always need someplace safe, secure, and familiar to rest between adventures. Inner-planar campaigns should (but don't have to) postulate that whole settlements of prime or planar humans (or other races) have been established here. This book details all of the Inner Planes, so the DM simply needs to decide which one she wants the PCs to call "home."

Finally, the DM can always get around the problem of survival and safe havens by simply letting the players create characters using races that're native to the Inner Planes. Depending on the power level of the campaign, creatures like shad, salamanders, sylphs, pech, shockers, or even geniekind or elementals could make interesting PC races. Of course, this choice presents new (but very interesting) difficulties. For example, while an azer PC might be fine in the planes of Fire or Magma, he faces perhaps even greater challenges than a human would in planes such as Water or Ice. And a dao and an air elemental—creatures that represent opposed primal forces—might never work together without a really good reason.

◆ OTHER SOURCES ◆

The DM may find several other sources useful in planning an inner-planar adventure or campaign. Elementals and some elemental-kin can be found in the *MONSTROUS MANUAL™* and *PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix I*. *PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix III*, in particular, is almost entirely devoted to inner-planar creatures. Other creatures may be found in the sources listed in the Index on page 126. Also, the AL-QADIM® sourcebox *Secrets of the Lamp* [TSR 9433] holds a wealth of material on genies and their societies within the Elemental Planes.

AN ELEMENTAL PRIMER

When folks think of the Inner Planes, they often think of *just* the four core Elemental Planes. They picture the endless azure skies of the Elemental Plane of Air and the hellish blaze of the plane of Fire. They envision the eternal tides of Water and the oppressive depths of Elemental Earth. Such thinking, however, results in a limited scope. There's a lot more to the Inner Planes than this.

Even cutters experienced in planar travel—those who've explored one or more of the Outer Planes (or even hail from one of them)—find the Inner Planes as absolutely different from what they've seen before as they can possibly imagine. They come away awed by the sheer fundamental, tangible reality, something they can't find even on the Prime, let alone the belief-based Outer Planes. Everything in the Inner Planes feels more real, appears more vivid, and affects them more deeply.

Raw, powerful, deadly, and passionate (yet paradoxically detached), the Inner Planes seethe and roil, caring not how the rest of the multiverse fares. Sigil, the Prime, the Blood War, modrons on the march—none of these mean

anything to the Inner Planes or to those who live here. And that's ironic, considering that the Inner Planes're the soil and nutrients from which the rest of the multiverse grows.

The Inner Planes comprise six major planes and a dozen lesser ones. The former include the four Elemental Planes and the two Energy Planes. The latter are divided into four Paraelemental Planes and eight Quasielemental Planes. Each of these regions is described in brief below and in more detail later in this book.

◆ THE ELEMENTAL PLANES ◆

Most people think of the Elemental Planes as the fundamental building blocks of the cosmos. Just as a builder uses raw materials to construct a house, so to does the multiverse use the primal elemental matter of the Inner Planes to form not only the Para- and Quasielemental Planes, but every other plane as well. All of existence can trace its very being back to the four elements, and any bit from any other plane can be broken down into elemental properties, assuming a cutter's got the skill to do it—it's no mean feat, to say the least. ('Course, a body shouldn't forget the importance of the two energy planes or the role of belief in the composition of the Outer Planes, but that's getting too far ahead. More on that later.)

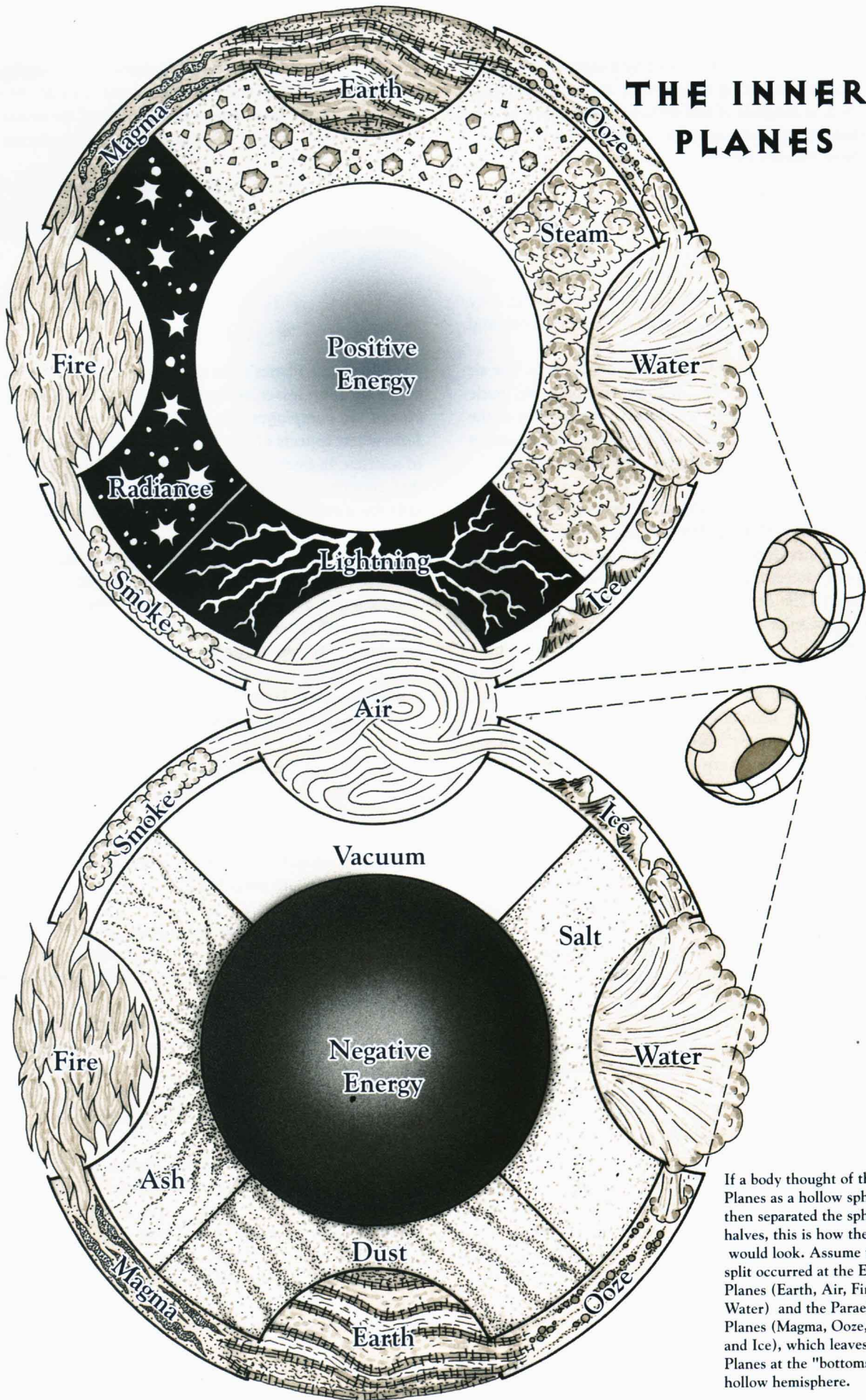
AIR. The source of all things gaseous, this plane is a limitless expanse of crisp, sweet air. The sky above, below, and to the sides stretches into infinity with a brilliant azure hue, dotted with occasional clouds and flying creatures.

The conditions of the Elemental Plane of Air make it one of the safest of the Inner Planes. A body can breathe here and needn't worry about things like being slowly ground to death by pressing stones or instantly consumed by relentless flames.

EARTH. The realm of solid matter, the Elemental Plane of Earth is an eternal mass of steadfast stone and uncontaminated soil laced with veins of metal ores and pockets of mineral deposits. Those who travel here must beware of the plane's oppressive weight, for it strives to crush everything that's not a part of it. Many folks call this place "the Anvil," and the reasons for that nickname are manifold.

I NEVER
SØDDING CARED
MUCH FØR
ALL +HA+ SØDDING
GRAVI+Y
ANYWAY.
—UCÆC ØRDELL

THE INNER PLANES



If a body thought of the Inner Planes as a hollow sphere, and then separated the sphere into halves, this is how the planes would look. Assume that the split occurred at the Elemental Planes (Earth, Air, Fire, and Water) and the Paraelemental Planes (Magma, Ooze, Smoke, and Ice), which leaves the Energy Planes at the "bottoms" of each hollow hemisphere.

The two greatest difficulties faced by a visitor to Earth are the simple acts of breathing and moving. After all, few creatures can suck in lungfuls of soil without finding their way to the dead-book. And as for movement, well, it takes a tough basher to bore through even the softest regions of the plane.

FIRE. All that is heat, radiance, and raw motion comes originally from this plane. Fire is the plane of change, just as Earth is unmoving, immutable, and dependable. Some call Fire the hottest place in the multiverse, and they may well be right. The blazing flames here consume everything they touch, which is why so many folks refer to the Elemental Plane of Fire as “the Crematorium.”

A body can survive in this plane, but it's not easy. The air here isn't really air, but a thin mixture of flammable, toxic chemicals that're only slightly less deadly than the rest of the plane. And then, of course, there's the endlessly blazing ocean of fire, which, in due time, destroys everything it touches.

WATER. The source of all liquid substances and of fluidity itself, the Elemental Plane of Water is commonly referred to as “the Bottomless Deep.” It's an endless mass of water, not too warm, not too cold, and utterly free of the crushing pressure that marks the depths of terrestrial oceans. The whole place is infused with a soft blue-green light that shimmers over everything.

The greatest hazards that a body faces while exploring the Bottomless Deep are the currents and the lack of air. Usually, the latter problem can be overcome with some minor magic. The former problem, however, is more difficult to counter. A sod never knows when a deadly riptide will grab him and drag him along.

◆ THE ENERGY PLANES ◆

Air, Earth, Fire, and Water are four of the major Inner Planes, but a body who wants to understand the whole picture can't ignore two other critical realms: the Energy Planes. As their name implies, they're composed not of matter, but of energy. Both places are difficult to define, but their effects are inescapable.

POSITIVE ENERGY. The plane of Positive Energy is said to be the mother of all life. That's because the radiation of this bright realm gives animation to all living things. Despite this service to the multiverse, however, Positive Energy is an empty void. Physical matter has no place here.

There are few bashers strong enough to survive in this plane. The natural life-giving properties of positive energy can quickly overwhelm any creature, destroying it utterly. Many graybeards speculate that creatures annihilated in this fashion are actually elevated to a new status of being, but there's no easy way to test that theory—at least, not safely.

NEGATIVE ENERGY. The plane of Negative Energy is an ever-hungering maw that seeks to quench the fires of life wherever they burn. It gives power to the ranks of the undead and other such mockeries of life, but the place is anathema to all normal creatures.

Survival in the Negative Energy Plane is difficult indeed. A visitor must deal with the complete absence of matter, including air, as well as the plane's natural life-draining properties.

THE PARAELEMENTAL ◆ PLANES ◆

The Elemental Planes're held apart from one another by a series of four lesser realms known as the Paraelemental Planes (or *paraplanes*, for short). These intermediary areas form where aspects of one Elemental Plane mingle with those of another. In essence, they're elemental alloys. The materials that comprise these planes aren't unique, but instead represent the purest combinations of the core four elements.

ICE. The Paraelemental Plane of Ice forms where the chilling winds of Air brush across the surface of Water. This place is often referred to as “the Floating Plane,” for it acts as though it were adrift upon the Bottomless Deep with the endless expanse of Elemental Air spreading out above it.

Most of the paraplane of Ice is a frozen mass, rather like a giant glacier. Travelers to this place discover that it's unbearably cold and as difficult to tunnel through as Earth.

MAGMA. Where the Elemental Plane of Earth nears its fiery counterpart, the stone heats, glows brightly, and then runs like water. This is the paraplane of Magma, a realm that's just as deadly as the Crematorium itself.

Many dangerous bashers live in Magma, including lava paraelementals and magmen.

OOZE. Perhaps the most offensive place in the multiverse, the paraplane of Ooze forms where Water comes into contact with Earth. It's a region of filth and disease, of caustic sludge and living slime.

A body can survive here well enough—a simple *water breathing* spell is sufficient to allow normal respiration—but that doesn't mean he'd ever want to visit the place. The paraplane of Ooze is home to all manner of revolting creatures, none of whom are particularly friendly folk.

SMOKE. The last of the paraplanes, Smoke, forms at the intersection of Air and Fire. The atmosphere here not only roils with heat, but it's also highly toxic. A body who comes to Smoke'd better be ready to deal with both hazards.

A handful of dangerous creatures dwell in this realm, including the hot-tempered smoke mephits. Denizens of both Air and Fire drift into Smoke from time to time, adding to the perils a body can expect to encounter.

THE POSITIVE QUASIELEMENTAL ◆ PLANES ◆

The four positive Quasielemental Planes (also known as *quasiplanes*) hang suspended between the Elemental Planes and the Positive Energy Plane. They combine matter and energy to form vivid, dynamic realms unlike those found anywhere else in the multiverse. Here, matter takes on an energetic quality that most folks think of as being...well, positive.

LIGHTNING. The quasiplane of Lightning, also known as the plane of Storms or the Vengeful Land, is a place of turbulent clouds, endless thunder, and (of course) vast arcs of lightning. If it weren't for the fact that a body can get himself fried in a second here, this would be a pretty nice place to sit back and admire the impressive scenery.

The hazards of this quasiplane are more or less self-evident. Even though a sod can breathe here, he's got to deal with tremendous winds and deadly electrical discharges. Toss in the lightning quasielementals who populate the quasiplane, and the plane ends up as deadly as it is beautiful.

MINERAL. Where the Elemental Plane of Earth is saturated by the radiance of the Positive Energy Plane, the quasiplane of Mineral is born. This is the multiverse's treasure trove, filled with jewels, gems, and all manner of valuable crystals.

Many leatherheads think they can pack some big bags, set sail for the quasiplane of Mineral, and strike it rich. What they forget, though, is that the realm's inhabited by some very nasty creatures who don't like a lot of claim-jumpers and cross-traders showing up and trying to cart off the very essence of their home.

RADIANCE. The Quasielemental Plane of Radiance is a place of incredible light born of the union between Fire and Positive Energy. Although it's one of the most beautiful sights a body could ever behold, it's also overwhelming. Those who aren't careful find themselves dazed and eventually blinded by the bombardment of light.

Reports, rumors, and outright tall tales sometimes make mention of the wondrous creatures that live in Radiance. The only problem is that no one really knows what's true and what ain't. It's difficult to look around in a place so blinding. A body can bet, though, that all manner of miracles wait to be seen by those who can master the endless glare.

STEAM. At the juncture of Water and Positive Energy, a cutter finds himself swept up in the rolling white mists of the quasiplane of Steam. These vapors are the stuff of clouds and fog. They can be breathed safely and feel refreshing against the skin.

As always, though, a body's got to take care. It's not that Steam has more dangerous creatures than any other plane, but simply that a visitor seldom knows what's lurking behind the next bank of clouds.

THE NEGATIVE QUASIELEMENTAL ◆ PLANES ◆

Just as there are quasiplanes fueled by the power of the Positive Energy Plane, so too are there regions dominated by the darkness of its opposite, the plane of Negative Energy. Markedly different than their positive counterparts, these are generally grim places that break down matter. Undead are common in these quasiplanes, tortured spirits invigorated by the negative energy that infuses everything.

ASH. The quasiplane of Ash is an accumulation of burnt matter pressed into a solid mass. In most areas, the quasiplane has the consistency of hard-packed soil, though some regions are much less dense. This place is born of the union between Fire and the life-draining power of Negative Energy.

Those who travel to the quasiplane of Ash find it an amazingly inhospitable place. Its very nature is such that it siphons the heat from all living (and unliving) things.

DUST. When Earth is infused with Negative Energy, it breaks down and forms the Quasielemental Plane of Dust. Unlike Ash or Earth, Dust isn't a solid mass. Instead, it's an expanse of tenuous atmosphere filled with swirling particles of granular matter.

The greatest threat a body faces from the quasiplane of Dust is disintegration. Eventually, even the most powerful basher will be taken apart. Little can be done to resist this effect, which extends even to portals and gates that lead here.

SALT. There are few who'd argue that water is not the lifeblood of the multiverse. But even so vital a fluid can be stripped of its nurturing value by the influence of the Negative Energy Plane. This is exactly the process that has spawned the quasiplane of Salt.

Here, in an endless world of crystalline structures, a visitor can expect to have the moisture drained right out of his body. Not long after reaching the quasiplane, he'll become parched and thirsty. In the end, even the toughest planewalker will collapse and be consumed by Salt. When that happens, all that's left is a withered corpse that looks as if it'd been mummified a thousand years before.

VACUUM. The quasiplane of Vacuum is a region of utter nothingness. Formed at the junction of Air and Negative Energy, it has no light and very little matter. Few creatures can endure such surroundings.

'Course, those who *do* manage to survive in Vacuum are bound to be tough. That means that any cutter with a mind to travel to the quasiplane should plan to stay on the good side of the inhabitants. There's no sense in making all manner of magical preparations against the deadly nature of Vacuum only to be sent to the dead-book by an angry native.

◆ PHILOSOPHY ◆

Earlier, it was mentioned that philosophy has little to do with the Inner Planes—that belief just doesn't seem to matter in the face of pure reality. It's true that faith won't move mountains here, but that doesn't stop folks from concocting various ideas and theories to explain the mysteries of the Inner Planes.

ALCHEMY

The study of alchemy owes its entire conceptual basis to the Elemental Planes. In the dim recesses of time, graybeards spoke of these planes as the sole components of matter. Interestingly enough, they discovered the elements (air, earth, fire, and water) first, and only later realized that each had its own physical plane of existence.

Later, of course, folks learned of the paraelements and quasialements. Unlike the Elemental Planes, the para- and quasialemental planes were discovered long before anyone included those substances into a cohesive philosophy of the nature of matter. In other words, folks knew about Ash before they knew about ash—they didn't work those components into their theories until after learning of the associated para- and quasialemental planes. Chant has it that the quasialemental plane of Lightning was the first to be discovered, though it was originally thought to be a demiplane. Other graybeards say that the paraplanel of Ice was the first inner-planar find after the discovery of the four basic Elemental Planes.

'Course, it's a little barmy to talk about "discovering" any of the Inner Planes. Long before primes trod elemental ground, natives of those planes lived and died here. The histories of races like the djinn and the efreet extend much farther into the past of the multiverse than do those of most, if not all, prime peoples. Surely the elementals existed as long as the Elemental Planes themselves—and if the Inner Planes provide the rest of the multiverse with its building materials, the elementals may be the oldest intelligent beings of all.

In any case, alchemy's a study that really only serves a purpose on the Prime, so this book doesn't give it much attention. Still, many bashers might benefit from realizing that all matter's composed of the elements (along with the appropriate measures of negative and positive energy and—if the matter's found on the Outer Planes—belief). For example, a spellslinger might find it useful to know that wood in a living tree is part earth and part water imbued with the resonance of positive energy (as are all living things). Once cut, the wood retains a little of that positive energy, but ever so slowly the spark fades away. Wood that's particularly light* has a little air to it, which replaces the solid, dense earth.

Truth is, a body can look at anything this way. A diamond is earth mixed with positive energy, glass is earth and air, and poison gas is air with a little water and negative energy. All the different materials that comprise the multiverse are just different combinations of these elements.

PARALLELISM

The cutters who wigwag about which Inner Plane was discovered first are also the folks who rattle their bone-boxes about parallelism. This belief expresses the idea that all aspects of an Elemental Plane (and perhaps all Inner Planes) share an equivalent counterpart in the other Elemental Planes. Simply put, if a body runs afoul of a fire bat in the plane of Fire, as sure as Sigil there's a water bat in the plane of Water, an earth bat in Earth, and so on.

Certainly, a good deal of evidence supports this theory. Air, Earth, Fire, and Water each have a type of elemental, fundamental, genie race, genasi, mephitis, elemental grue, and even archomental ruler. A body might observe that various spells, substances, and magical essences from the Elemental Planes also appear to exist in parallel. For their part, the graybeards point out that while not all of these sets of counterparts're identical, enough similarities exist to carry the point (though the frost and fire salamanders may be a bit of a stretch).

Opponents of parallelism claim that while some similarities may exist, a canny basher won't always assume that *everything's* got an equivalent on another plane. Plenty of things, from the xorn of Earth to the tshala of Fire, appear to have no parallels. What's more, the Paraelemental and Quasialemental Planes don't seem to possess all the qualities and components of the Elemental Planes, let alone one another's.

Still, the theory's useful, even if it doesn't always hold true. It can't hurt for a planewalker to remember that each Inner Plane (except, perhaps, for the Energy Planes—and that depends on who a body asks) has its own basic "elemental" native, that each serves as home to a type of mephitis, and that each often requires some sort of magic for long-term survival. In other words, a smart cutter'll let the graybeards spout the philosophy and just learn the facts needed to get by.

OPPOSITES AND FOURS

The so-called inner-planar experts tend to claim other truisms specific to such places. For instance, they say that supposedly multiversal laws like the Rule of Threes and the Unity of Rings don't hold true in the Inner Planes. To support this theory, they stress the differences between the Inner Planes and the Outer—differences as pronounced as belief and cold, hard reality (but aren't both just different sides of the same coin—alternating views of truth?).

In any event, these folks point out that in the Inner Planes, the Unity of Rings gives way to the Law of Opposites. Each Inner Plane has its opposite: Water and Fire, Earth and Air, Magma and Ice, Negative Energy and Positive Energy, and so on. The importance of opposites and the harmony that comes from a balance between them can't be overlooked. An elemental force can struggle against its opposite all it wants, but in the end it's still defined by that opposite—at least partially. What would Air be without Earth, or hot without cold?

That said, some of the opposites found in the Inner Planes just don't seem intuitive. What makes Lightning the opposite of Dust? Why would the multiverse put Mineral and Vacuum on different sides? The answer, of course, is that they're positive and negative aspects of opposing core elements, but that doesn't really help a leatherhead understand it. An easier thing to remember is the idea that each element (or para- or quasidelement) embodies its own unique aspects, and is as opposed to all other elements as are any of the rest. None of the creatures of an Inner Plane seem to get along with

those from any other Inner Plane—of that a body can be sure. In reality, then, all of these planes are in opposition.

Some of the same folks who hold to the Law of Opposites also dismiss the Rule of Threes as having any bearing in the Inner Planes. They claim that it's replaced by the Rule of Fours, and as proof point to four Elemental Planes, four Paraelemental Planes, eight (four doubled) Quasielemental Planes, and two (four halved) Energy Planes. Everything comes in fours in the Inner Planes, they say, which to their critics sounds like little more than a different take on parallelism.

By the way: It should be mentioned that true innerplanar natives don't give a mephit's backside about any of this. They don't care about the Rule of Threes or Fours. To them, the Inner Planes simply are what they are—home.

ELEMENTAL EVOLUTION

Some scholars have noted that as time passes, it seems that more and more elemental creatures, locations, and specific nuances appear. At one time, for example, it was thought that nothing lived in the quasiplane of Vacuum, or that the paraplane of Ice was the same wherever a body looked. Both statements are now known to be false. While most explain this by saying that as outsiders spend more time in the Inner Planes, they learn and discover more about them, others have postulated that, in fact, the Inner Planes are evolving.

These theorists put forth the idea that as time passes, the primal and simplistic nature of the Inner Planes fades, and the planes become more and more sophisticated and complex. Many graybeards believe that it's actually the increasing presence of nonnatives that "corrupts" the Inner Planes, infecting them with the intricacies of the Prime Material and Outer Planes. Ironically, they point out, such a change in the Inner Planes could lead to their dissolution. If correct, this theory would indicate that as primes and nonnative planars travel to and settle in the Inner Planes, they destroy those realms conceptually. And the destruction of the foundation planes could only mean an eventual end of the multiverse.

◆ GETTING AROUND ◆

Naturally, the immediate concern for any innerplanar traveler is survival. But once a cutter's figured out how to keep himself alive, he's got to learn how to move around in his new environment with getting lost (in either sense of the word).





NORTH IS NORTH, AIN'T IT?

The concepts of “north and south” or “east and west” don’t mean anything in the Inner Planes. A body won’t be able to tell one direction from another without help from a native source.

Chant is that an item called an *elemental compass* lets a traveler find his way around the Inner Planes. While it doesn’t indicate “north” or anything like that, the *compass* points toward the various elemental frontiers. Thus, a body in the plane of Air can use such a device to determine which direction will lead him to the paraplane of Smoke or the quasiplane of Lightning.

These widgets can be found in Sigil’s Great Bazaar or in many of the markets of larger outer-planar burgs—particularly those with known portals leading to an Inner Plane. Buyers should be careful, however, because many a swindler has left a gullible sod stranded in the Inner Planes with a compass so useless that it might as *well* say “north” and “south.”

Planewalkers can also try to hire a native to lead them safely and surely (as detailed below), but without a guide or a *compass*, it’s almost impossible to get around the Inner Planes. Many sods’re used to some of the Outer Planes or the Astral, where they just need to think about their destination and they get there one way or another. Not here. No matter what a body thinks, believes, or feels, it won’t move him an inch closer to his goal. Maps can be useful, but only in planes like Earth where there’s a path to follow or recognizable landmarks to spot. For example, the fabled obsidian maps of the plane of Fire are helpful only if a basher can tell where the Plain of Burnt Dreams ends and the Sea of Searing Waves begins—and of course, it all looks like fire, even to the best planewalkers.

Sometimes, folks living in the Inner Planes create minor magical charms called *beacon seeds*. When swallowed, these pebblelike seeds guide the swallower to a particular destination on a particular plane. No matter where he is in the plane, the eater always knows how to get to the keyed location. Natives often give these to newcomers or visitors so the sods can find their way back when they invariably get lost. Occasionally, the high-ups of an inner-planar burg, seeking to attract new merchants or wealthy tourists, mass-produce the *seeds* and distribute them freely in places like Sigil.

And then there’s the story of the berk who took the name *beacon seed* literally and planted one in the ground. Chant is the *seed* either grew into a magical bush that literally sprouted golden leaves, or gave rise to a creature like a shambling mound that eventually devoured the poor planter. One or both tales’re probably screed, but that’s the way of the chant.

ELEMENTAL GUIDES

All of the Inner Planes are infinite worlds unto themselves. Traveling within or between them can be a difficult and time-consuming endeavor. Guidelines for getting around a given plane appear in that plane’s chapter, later in this book. Still, certain considerations apply to the Inner Planes as a whole. The most important of these regards the hiring or use of elemental guides.

An elemental guide is a native of a particular Inner Plane—usually an honest-to-goodness elemental, mephit, or other such creature. Some, however, are humans or other nonnatives who’ve called kip in the plane for most or even all of their lives (after all, few Inner Planes lack communities of displaced planars who’ve learned to live in the environment). A group of travelers can hire one of these guides to lead them to a given destination in the plane, though the advantages of securing such a guide can extend far beyond mere direction.

Movement with the aid of an elemental guide is far swifter and more accurate than independent travel. Because the Inner Planes are infinite, a lone planewalker can journey forever without reaching his destination. An elemental guide, on the other hand, can bring a body to any given point in its home plane in 100 to 1,000 (10d100) hours. It can also lead a basher to the border with another plane even more swiftly—such a trip lasts only 10 to 100 (10d10) hours.

At the DM’s discretion, some of the more powerful native guides can confer a certain level of protection to a traveler. While a body is in physical contact with the guide, he’s unaffected by the natural environment of any plane in which the guide can survive. Thus, a cutter who’s hired an elemental guide from the plane of Fire can move about there without feeling the searing kiss of its deadly flames, and he’s safe in Magma and Radiance as well.

Naturally, the cost of hiring an elemental guide can be quite high. And to make matters worse, few of these creatures have any interest in gold or the like. Exactly what type of payment an elemental creature expects is determined by its nature. For example, an air elemental might demand fragrances and perfumes, while a fire elemental might insist upon rare fuels it can consume. In all cases, however, the value of such payments will not be less than 100 gold pieces per hour of service.

SAFE HAVENS

Wherever a cutter goes, it seems that someone’s been there before him. Now, that impression obviously isn’t always true—if there’s any doubt, just look up the definition of “infinite”—but it sure can *feel* that way. The Inner Planes’re no different. Even in the most hostile of environments, some basher’s long ago tumbled to a way to survive there and call it home.

Sure, this can be unsatisfying to the intrepid planar

explorer who wants to get everywhere first, but it can also save his life. Where a basher finds other planewalkers or nonnative residents, he's sure to find what he himself needs to survive, whether it's clear air, fresh water, or some sort of protection against the harsh surroundings.

Throughout the Inner Planes, a traveler might find anything from humble waystations to entire cities of humans, elves, dwarves, githyanki, or just about anything else the DM can imagine. Some of the more interesting sites include Hoard, a reputed city of dragons in the quasiplane of Mineral; Yuhnmoag, a mind flayer fortress in the paraplane of Ooze; Slaan, a glass-covered lizard man burg in the paraplane of Smoke (chant says it was built by something other than lizard men, but no one knows what); Xigg Mannaric, a secret gehreleth outpost/laboratory floating through the quasiplane of Lightning; and Deathdelve, a fantastically large orcish mine dug out of a portion of the Elemental Plane of Earth.

'Course, while a cutter might hope to find solace in these and other places, he'll hit the blinds if he expects to get help for free. The Inner Planes exemplify survival and harsh reality, and those who call it their home, whether by birth or by choice, usually adopt the same ideal. A body who needs aid or refuge should expect to pay far more than he would just about anywhere else in the multiverse (except, perhaps, the Lower Planes, but who goes looking for aid there?).

An interesting example of potential assistance is a blood named Captain Soot (Pl/♂ human/F12/N), who pilots a magical ship, the *Ebony Queen*. Soot sails the Inner Planes like eighteen individual seas and knows each like a well-seasoned sailor on the Prime knows the waters of his own world. He's respected among even geniekind, all of whom have pledged him safe passage through their realms. Soot's not a guide as such, but he does carry passengers, at a cost of 200 gold pieces per person and 300 gp per 100 cubic feet of cargo—and that's just to go from one neighboring plane to the next.

THE ETHEREAL PLANE

The Ethereal Plane extends its noncorporeal borders to each and every Inner Plane (as well as to the Prime Material). Thus, it's one of the best ways to travel to the Inner Planes in general, or to move from one Inner Plane to another. Fact is, numerous intelligent elemental creatures use the Ethereal as a neutral ground upon which to meet or parlay.

The Ethereal Plane has two parts: the Border Ethereal and the Deep Ethereal. The Deep Ethereal is a place far removed from any of the planes that the Ethereal touches, with its own qualities and parameters. But on the Border Ethereal, which intersects by each Inner Plane in turn, a planewalker can experience a fraction of the environmental dangers associated with each plane. For example, bashers traveling through the Border Ethereal where it touches the paraplane of Magma find movement a little slower and may suffer a slight amount of heat damage. (For more informa-

tion, refer to the PLANESCAPE accessory *A Guide to the Ethereal Plane* [2633].)

Bloods can use the Ethereal to move "through" an Inner Plane without suffering its severe environmental dangers by crossing required distances on the Border Ethereal rather than in the plane itself. This can be tricky, but those accustomed to becoming ethereal on the Prime Material Plane can do it with relative ease.

It's not completely safe, of course. Most inner-planar creatures aren't aware of ethereal objects or travelers, but some—including some genies, powerful elementals, and other beings—can see into the Ethereal and won't allow an ethereal planewalker to trod through their territory unchallenged. For the most part, however, being ethereal's a good way to avoid notice and conflict.

Speaking of conflict, many creatures in the Ethereal usually avoid the elemental border areas, since the crossover environments cause damage or at least difficulty. Devourers, phase spiders, terithran, and others stick to the Deep Ethereal or the Prime part of the Border. However, some beings, such as the ghosts of those killed in the Inner Planes, certain nathri tribes, plasms, and various genie races frequent the border areas that intersect the Inner Planes.

◆ ELEMENTAL POCKETS ◆

Most people think of the Elemental Planes (and the Para- and Quasielemental Planes, for that matter) as bastions of absolute purity. Ask a body what's in the plane of Air and he'll say "air." And, of course, he's pretty much right.

From time to time, however, bits of material leak from one plane to another. In the plane of Air, for instance, a body may encounter floating pockets of elemental Water drifting about on the winds. Similarly, a lucky planewalker moving through the endless expanses of Vacuum might come upon a floating cloud of breathable air. An elemental pocket can allow for a safe campsite, the replenishing of supplies, and a chance to stretch cramped limbs. 'Course, they can also lead to a sod being eaten, incinerated, drowned, or otherwise lost.

Following the Law of Opposites, elemental pockets fall into two different types. The first is the pure, unadulterated pocket of elemental material—what most bashers think of when they think of pockets. These are the floating blobs of ooze in the plane of Air or the solid chunks of earth suspended in the endless sea of the plane of Water. The two elements don't interact at all.

The other type is the corrupted or mixed pocket, where the foreign elemental material has mixed with or been altered by the environment in which it now rests. Water pockets in the plane of Earth become huge muddy pools, and fire pockets in Ice melt their surroundings to create temporary open areas of water. Most corrupted pockets don't last long. For example, vacuum pockets in the quasiplane of Lightning cause a momentary implosion and then disappear,

dust pockets in Air blow about and scatter, and magma pockets cool and harden in most nonfiery realms.

Many graybeards claim that all pockets begin as pure specimens and eventually lose their elemental singularity (whatever that means), decaying into mixed pockets. On the other hand, many's the experienced planewalker who can remember seeing a brand-new pocket corrupt immediately or an ancient one retain its purity. Go figure.

The DM can use the following table to calculate the size of an elemental pocket. First, roll 1d8 to determine what type of die to use, and then roll 1d8 again to determine the multiplier applied to that die.

1D8 ROLL	TYPE OF DIE	MULTIPLIER
1	1d3	10 yards
2	1d4	100 yards
3	1d6	1,000 yards
4	1d8	1 mile
5	1d10	5 miles
6	1d12	10 miles
7	1d20	25 miles
8	1d100	100 miles

Thus, a roll of 6 followed by a roll of 3 indicates a pocket that is $1d12 \times 1,000$ yards across. Most elemental pockets are more or less spherical in shape.

Generally, a 25% chance exists that any such pocket houses 1d4 elementals, quasiaelementals, or paraelementals of the proper type. Some pockets can serve as lairs for other creatures as well, depending on their type and location (for example, an Earth pocket in the plane of Air offers a roost for natives of the plane, if they choose to use it). Naturally, some pockets are more or less likely to contain life, as noted in the individual sections below.

The following descriptions provide the DM with the dark of each type of pocket. However, she should tailor the information based on the plane where the pocket is encountered and on whether the pocket is pure, corrupt, or somewhere in between.

AIR. After any length of time spent in the claustrophobic depths of the solid planes, the unbreathable murk of the liquid planes, or even the choking atmosphere of a place like Smoke or Dust, a body who comes upon a pocket of elemental Air should give thanks to whatever gods she reveres. Air pockets appear as great open areas, which, although they often lack water or light, are as hospitable a place as can be found in many Inner Planes. Because of this, however, they tend to be inhabited. Fact is, an air pocket is devoid of life only 10% to 30% of the time, depending on the severity of the larger plane's environment. If an air pocket is inhabited, the creatures that dwell there may be from the plane of Air (30% chance), the plane upon which the pocket is located (30% chance), or another plane altogether (40% chance).

A body can move about in an air pocket just as if she

were in the plane of Air. Anyone who decides that a given direction is down, however, had better be ready to change her mind fast—or find out just how small the pocket really is.

ASH. To an outside observer, a pocket of elemental Ash may look like a dust storm. A berk who enters one, however, finds the air choking and painful to breathe. In other places, an ash pocket might appear to be a mass of solid cinders, which means that a body's less likely to rush into it. Either way, with every passing second, the pocket drains heat from anyone in contact with it, inflicting 1d6 points of damage per round. An ash pocket is quite flammable, too, and an open flame causes it to ignite, forcing everyone in the pocket or within 10 feet of it to make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer 5d6 points of damage. Such an explosion converts the pocket into a cloud of elemental Smoke.

DUST. Depending on where it's found, a dust pocket can take the form of a swirling storm of powdery motes and sand; a patch of thin, dry, quicksandlike particles; or a thick morass of murky liquid. Dust pockets obscure vision and threaten to choke sods caught within them. What's more, they can be very abrasive and inflict 1d4 points of damage per round to those inside them.

EARTH. Pockets of elemental Earth take the shape of floating mountains, tumbling asteroids, or simple chunks of stone. There's a 50% chance that an earth pocket is the lair of one or more creatures. However, the biggest danger associated with an earth pocket comes from smacking into it while moving around in more open planes.

FIRE. A pocket of elemental Fire appears as a glowing orb of scintillating flame. There's a 50% chance that any fire pocket houses an elemental creature. An unprotected berk who enters one of these burning pockets suffers 1d20 points of damage per round.

ICE. Pockets of elemental Ice take the form of giant icebergs or snowballs tumbling through the sky, floating in liquid, or just embedded in another solid. They're so cold that an unprotected sod who explores one suffers 1d4 points of damage per round. Ice pockets offer a thirsty traveler an opportunity to obtain water while passing through planes where the commodity is scarce.

LIGHTNING. A lightning pocket takes the form of a vast electrical storm, though an addle-cove might mistake it for a pocket of air. The greatest danger here is, of course, lightning. Anyone venturing into such a region must make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer 1d20 points of damage each round.

MAGMA. Pockets of magma may appear almost as volcanic vents or lakes. As a planewalker draws nearer to such places,

the ground becomes warmer and warmer until it finally glows red-hot, liquefies, and runs like water. Alternatively, in an environment without gravity, the pocket can exist for a short time as an orb of glowing, rippling lava until it cools and becomes similar to an earth pocket. A sod who gets too close to a magma pocket while it's still hot suffers 1d12 points of damage per round. Once a pocket's cooled, a 25% chance exists that some creature will make its lair on (or in) the hardened rock.

MINERAL. Finding a mineral pocket can be the best thing that ever happens to a basher, if he doesn't get himself lost doing it. Not only are these places full of valuable gems and priceless crystals, they also tend to be riddled with pockets of air and occasionally dotted with pools of water. Fragments of the quasiplane of Mineral appear as sharply angled crystalline clusters. They're inhabited more often than are other pockets (75% chance), since mines sunk into them can produce valuable stones in large quantities. In most cases, those busy mining a mineral pocket won't be too keen on having visitors.

OOZE. Pockets of elemental Ooze appear as wobbling bubbles of slime that look like giant amoebas moving without gravity, or as pools of muck that slowly and endlessly gurgle and drip. They're rare in planes like Air, for the winds of the Boundless Blue generally tear them apart in short order. Pockets of ooze can become deadly traps to sods foolish enough to tread upon them. They're very sticky and anyone who touches them has a tough time pulling free (doing so requires a successful bend bars/lift gates roll).

RADIANCE. A pocket of elemental Radiance appears as a glowing orb that, from a distance, looks like the sun around

which many typical prime-material worlds circle. Those who look directly at a radiance pocket must make a successful saving throw vs. polymorph or be blinded. This has the same effect as a *cause blindness* spell.

Anyone touching the surface of a radiance pocket is affected as if they'd come into contact with a random color of a *prismatic sphere*. Any leatherhead dim enough to pierce one of these pockets finds the conditions within identical to those in the quasiplane of Radiance itself.

SALT. When elemental Salt pockets come into being in the airy planes, they take the form of swirling storms of crystalline hail. These abrasive and painful particles cause 1d4 points of damage per round. They also sting exposed eyes, cutting visibility by half.

In more solid environments, a pocket of elemental Salt appears as a vein of white crystals that sparkle and scintillate if a light is put upon them. At first glance, it's possible to mistake such a place for a mineral pocket. There's only a 5% chance that a salt pocket serves as something's lair.

A berk who tries to inhabit or move through a salt pocket finds the moisture slowly drawn from his flesh, which causes 1d4 points of damage per round. What's more, anyone carrying fresh water into a salt pocket must keep it tightly stoppered. Otherwise, the water must make a successful saving throw vs. acid (as a potion) or become so tainted with salt as to be undrinkable.

SMOKE. A pocket of hot elemental Smoke chokes those moving through it just as one of elemental Ash does. It's not flammable, but anyone who enters such a place suffers the effects of a *stinking cloud* spell unless he makes a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon. If he stays in the pocket for



some reason, he must make another saving throw each round or suffer 1d6 points of choking damage per round. Visibility in a smoke pocket is cut in half, and infravision doesn't function at all.

STEAM. A pocket of elemental Steam usually takes the form of nothing more than an expanse of cool, white vapor. Most primes mistake them for clouds as they drift lazily along through the surrounding environment. Steam pockets cut down on visibility, reducing the range of sight by 75%, but a body need not fear choking on these harmless fumes.

VACUUM. These are perhaps the most deadly of all the elemental pockets. For one thing, they're invisible. A body usually has no warning before he stumbles into one. The edge of a pocket of vacuum is identical to that of a globe created by *Otiluke's resilient sphere*, so a sod's likely to think he's come across a barrier keeping him out of a safe haven.

Anyone who manages to enter a vacuum pocket must make a saving throw vs. polymorph or be killed instantly by the harsh environment. Those who succeed must make another saving throw each round until they leave the pocket. 'Course, a blood equipped to travel in a vacuum need not make the roll, though the DM may apply modifiers as she sees fit.

WATER. Pockets of elemental Water found in environments without gravity are called *orb seas*, and they float about on the winds like giant soap bubbles. There is a 75% chance that any given orb sea is inhabited by aquatic creatures. While the smaller pockets are usually broken apart by winds, effectively becoming pockets of steam, large orb seas may linger for years.

On solid planes with gravity, pockets of elemental Water form vast lakes and seas. Again, there's a 75% chance that a pocket is filled with life, containing anything from simple fish to creatures from the Elemental Plane of Water itself. These pockets can serve as good places for a body to net a meal, refill canteens, and escape the grind of travel.

Apart from drowning, there's no great danger associated with entering water pockets—unless a sod irritates the animals, monsters, and folk that live in and around them. Canny planewalkers remember that water is a valuable resource in most planes and make note of the fact that those who've claimed it for themselves will be loath to share it with anyone else.

◆ ELEMENTALS AND ◆ OTHER NATIVES ◆

Many among the Clueless think they know all there is to know about elementals. Truth is, they don't know anything until they've been to the home of the creatures. See, elementals—when summoned to the Prime—appear to be mindless brutes. On their home planes, though, they're intelligent beings with cultures, societies, and lives.

Elementals (and, for that matter, quasi- and paraelementals) usually organize into small bands led by one member chosen because of its strength and intelligence. This tribal organization varies greatly by plane and even by group. Although the members of an elemental band are sexless and don't reproduce, they function much like humanoid families, displaying fierce loyalty and affection for one another.

To figure the statistics for elementals in their home plane, the DM can start with the numbers from the *MONSTROUS MANUAL* and then increase the Intelligence score to Average to High (10–14) or better. The number of beings encountered can rise to 1d6 or more. Most elementals are true neutral in alignment, but once in a great while, a neutral good or neutral evil elemental will be encountered in its home plane (10% chance). These good or evil elementals usually serve an archomental—an elemental of great power, unique to each plane—and travel alone or in smaller groups (1d4 individuals).

Elementals swayed toward chaos and law also exist, but they've actually become slightly different beings due to this influence. Eolians, erdeen, kryst, hydrax, and other creatures have been transformed into beings focused on order or chaos. Even in the Elemental Planes, they're quite rare, and no known quasi- or paraelemental examples exist.

Fundamentals are minor elemental creatures, virtually two-dimensional in nature, while elemental-kin are creatures close in nature to elementals, but which cannot truly take the name. Examples of elemental-kin include salamanders, sylphs, crysmals, water weirds, sandlings, aerial servants, and azer.

'Course, the Inner Planes are home to plenty of creatures that aren't elementals or even their kin. Frost salamanders (Ice), fire bats (Fire), thoquua (Magma), vacuous (Vacuum), and bzastra (Water), for example, are all inner-planar natives. It comes as a surprise to many, but the Inner Planes teem with life, much like any prime-material world. Confusion sets in because narrow-minded bashers wouldn't recognize it as life at all—at least, not as they define the term. A listing of inner-planar inhabitants by plane can be found in the Index, beginning on page 126.

THE POWERS

The Outer Planes serve as the stomping grounds of the gods. Powers that come to the Inner Planes to make a home are few in number and usually very specialized. Most are, unsurprisingly, gods of the elements.

In any case, few folks think of the Inner Planes as godly realms, and they're often surprised to find that any powers live here at all. Others can't really tell one earth god from another, and may even be surprised to learn that there's more than one. Such clueless don't last long in the Inner Planes, even if they're prepared for the elemental conditions. It's just as important for a body to know who lives where he'll be heading.

Mentioned briefly above, the archomentals—also known

as the Elemental Princes of Good and Evil—aren't quite gods, but they are singular, powerful elemental beings that equal almost any Abyssal lord in sheer power. What they lack in worshipers, they make up for in influence among their kind. Simply put, every single creature native to the Elemental Planes fears the Elemental Princes of Evil. The Elemental Princes of Good struggle against their wicked counterparts, but they're not quite up to the challenge. Perhaps simply because they've been around longer, the masters of elemental Evil have greater strength and influence in their home planes, not to mention a greater reputation elsewhere in the multiverse. Most earth-related creatures on the Prime, for example, have heard the name Ogmoch spoken in hushed tones.

When worshipers across the cosmos die, they go to the realm of their power. It's no different for those who pledge themselves to an elemental god. Petitioners in the Inner Planes usually take a form indistinguishable from the plane around them. For example, the spirits of fallen Fire worshipers might become inseparable parts of the flames crackling all around, a final fate that suits most of them just fine. Some addle-coves suggest that the petitioners actually become elementals, but that hardly seems likely. The elementals are too primal to be nothing more than dead folks.

◆ COMBAT ◆

The varying nature of the Inner Planes makes combat a little (or a lot) different in each one. While in the Elemental Plane of Water, for example, a body's subject to the normal restrictions that apply to any aquatic environment. Still, a few rules extend throughout the Inner Planes.

ELEMENTAL IMMUNITIES

Almost by definition, the natives of an Inner Plane are immune to the element, energy, paraelement, or quasialement of that plane. This should tell a body two things. First, using that same element as any sort of attack is the move of a complete leatherhead. Second, and more importantly, a basher should expect an elemental creature in its home plane to use a different sort of attack.

For example, a fire elemental doesn't really burn anything in the plane of Fire (it does, but not much more than the environment itself). Instead, it alters its attack to a physical, forceful strike, inflicting about the same amount of damage, though it can do this only while in its own plane. Thus, complete immunity to flames won't always protect a planewalker from Fire's inhabitants. What's more, other creatures in the plane that have elemental attacks are canny enough not to use them in battle. For example, winter wolves engaged in combat in the paraplane of Ice won't rely on their breath weapon.

The DM might rule that certain elemental creatures' attacks or very special magic actually supercedes the planar environment, which means that protection against the environment isn't enough to protect against the attack. To use

the example of the plane of Fire again, chant is there're things in the plane that're so hot that they actually scorch fire elementals themselves. Fire so hot that it burns fire—that's just one of those concepts that takes a bit of getting used to. Naturally, these sorts of attacks should be incredibly rare, since each Inner Plane's environment represents the ultimate, purest form of its element. Something smokier than the paraplane of Smoke or drier than the quasiplane of Dust should be the stuff of legends (though, truth is, most primes feel that way about the Inner Planes in general).

NO GRAVITY

In planes without gravity, like the Elemental Plane of Air or the Quasielemental Plane of Vacuum, it's possible for a sod to be attacked from many directions at once. To simplify combat of this type, the DM can use the following guidelines.

A body who's attacked from above loses the benefits of a shield—at least, he does under normal circumstances. If he holds his shield over his head, he regains the protective bonus. Of course, in so doing he loses the advantage of a shield against straight-on attacks.

Attacks from below are assumed to be identical to those from behind. This applies to all aspects of combat, even the ability of thieves to backstab. However, since a basher can change his orientation very quickly, someone who attacks from behind or below in one round may find himself face to face with his enemy in the next.

A large number of opponents can attack a body who's floating in the air. The following table indicates how many foes of a particular size can attack an enemy of a given size in any round. The DM can adjust these numbers to reflect blocked facings and the like.

TARGET SIZE	MAXIMUM NUMBER OF ATTACKERS					
	T	S	M	L	H	G
Tiny	8	6	3	2	1	1
Small	12	8	6	3	2	1
Man-sized	18	12	8	6	3	2
Large	27	18	12	8	6	3
Huge	44	27	18	12	8	6
Gargantuan	66	44	27	18	12	8

Thus, a man-sized creature can be attacked by as many as eighteen tiny creatures at once. In such a fray, the attackers're normally assumed to be more or less evenly divided around the target. A gargantuan creature (such as a dragon) would be vulnerable to attacks by as many as sixty-six such creatures. 'Course, a dragon could probably take it—but that's a topic for another day.

◆ MAGIC USE ◆

Magic's a fickle thing, ain't it? It's a wonder anybody puts any stock in it at all. Still, most spells and such can be used more or less normally in the Inner Planes, although certain alterations and restrictions must be taken into account. A few specific rules for individual planes may be found in later chapters, but this section covers most of the general guidelines a DM should keep in mind.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

Both wizards and priests must contend with a number of restrictions and special situations when it comes to inner-planar spellcasting.

ABSOLUTE PROHIBITIONS

Due to their fundamental opposition, certain schools or spheres of spells cannot be cast within some planes. Spell or power keys cannot overcome these limitations; the basic nature of the plane itself supercedes any such attempt. These prohibitions are listed on the first page of each following chapter.

ELEMENTAL FUSION

Certain spells, like *fireball* or *create water*, summon elemental material into being. When a spellslinger casts such magic in the Inner Planes, the substance that's created will mingle with the element that makes up the plane he's in.

As an example, consider a body casting a *create water* spell while exploring the Elemental Plane of Earth. Instead of the sparkling fluid he hopes to get, the poor sod is likely to end up with something that resembles a mud puddle. The same sort of thing happens to anyone who uses a *wall of stone* in the undersea kingdom of the Elemental Plane of Water. And fire spells on the plane of Ice product explosions of steam rather than fire.

There's not a whole lot a planewalker can do about this. The careful use of spell keys'll improve matters a bit, but other than that, a cutter just has to take what he gets.

PLANAR NATIVES

As noted above, creatures on their home planes aren't subject to magical effects that mimic the substance of the plane. There's no sense attacking an ice paraelemental with a *cone of cold*. Logical, right?

This concept extends a bit farther than that when it comes to magic. Simply put, a creature on its home plane ain't extraplanar. What's that mean for a spellslinger? Well, spells like *banishment*, *binding*, *dispel evil*, *holy word*, and *protection from evil* cannot affect creatures in their home. (In the case of *protection from evil*, only the "extraplanar creature" ward fails to function; the spell's other protective qualities remain in effect.) An efreeti might be as evil as sin, but trying to banish her from her own plane just won't work.

SPELL VARIANTS

A little snooping on the part of a wizard (or directed prayers from a priest) can turn up some useful spells. Anyone kicking around an important burg like Sigil or one of the gate-towns of the Outlands should be able to find spell variants like *breathe radiance* or *airy ice*. These variations can be purchased for a fairly moderate price, considering their limited versatility. Therefore, a cutter planning a trip to the Inner Planes should make sure that his spellbook is fairly full of such magic.

The *Planewalker's Handbook* (TSR 2620) includes spells such as *breathe smoke*, *dust*, or *ash* (W3); *transmute fire to smoke* (W4); *breathe earth* (W5); *breathe fire or magma* (W5); *airy earth* (W6); *no breath* (W6); *breath of the elements* (P4); *elemental breach* (P7); *sphere of survival* (P7); and the incredibly useful *elemental protection* (P5). A DM without that resource may choose to allow player characters to develop such spells on their own, using the standard *water breathing* and *airy water* spells found in the *Player's Handbook* as reference.

SUMMONING CREATURES

Summoning spells call forth only those creatures native either to the caster's current plane or to one that borders it. Thus, a wizard in the plane of Air could call forth a sylph or a lightning quasiaelemental, but not a lava mephitis. The DM should always remember that the Ethereal Plane borders all Inner Planes. Adjoining planes can be determined from the diagram on page 7.

There's another twist, though. A creature native to the caster's current plane might be summoned, but it's not bound by the magic. That means the spellslinger must find some other way to control the subject once it arrives. More than one poor sod's gotten himself lost by forgetting that little detail.

WIZARD RESTRICTIONS

The Ethereal Plane connects the Inner Planes to the Prime Material Plane, and the Astral likewise connects the Prime to the Outer Planes. But there's no direct connection between the Inner Planes and the Astral or Outer Planes, and that fact makes certain kinds of spellcasting difficult.

Wizards must also deal with the fact that their spells are subject to alterations by school. Most such changes can be overcome with the proper spell key, although in some cases the physical nature of the plane simply does not allow the spell's effects to function correctly.

ASTRAL SPELLS

The nature of the Inner Planes prevents wizard magic that taps into the Astral Plane from functioning. Even spell keys can't overcome this effect—it's woven into the fabric of the multiverse. This prohibition applies to *astral spell*, *duo-dimension*, and *find familiar* (if attempting to summon a creature through planar pathways).

PATHWAY SPELLS

Several spells may or may not function, depending on where the spell is cast. For example, if *contact other plane* was cast on the plane of Steam, it would function normally to contact any other Inner Plane or the Ethereal. Attempting to use such a spell to reach the Outer Planes, however, fails utterly. Such potentially plane-crossing spells include *banishment*, *contact other plane*, *demand*, *dismissal*, *Drawmij's instant summons*, *ensnarement*, *Hornung's random dispatcher*, *magic mirror*, *reincarnation*, *sending*, *succor*, and *vision*.

SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

As noted above, *conjunction/summoning* spells are limited by the planes they can draw upon; otherwise, they function normally. Bear in mind, however, that if a summoned creature cannot endure the general condition of the plane it will swiftly perish.

Invocation/evocation spells are generally unchanged save for the fact that many are elemental in nature, and therefore must abide by the elemental alteration rules as described below. The ever-popular *fireball*, for example, is both an evocation and an Elemental Fire spell.

The following conditions apply to elemental wizard spells cast in the Inner Planes. All can be overcome to one degree or another with the use of spell keys. In the case of diminished or enhanced spells, if modifying the level of the caster doesn't affect the spell in any way, the DM can reduce or increase (depending on the effect on the spell) the target's saving throw instead. If the spell doesn't require or allow a saving throw, the DM can just reduce or increase the magic's range, duration, or casting time by 25% (or so). These alterations are listed on the first page of each following chapter.

NULL SPELLS (∴). Spells of these schools simply don't work on the listed plane without a key.

DIMINISHED SPELLS (<). True to the Law of Opposites, a spell cast in the plane whose element opposes that of the spell is reduced in power. Thus, the spell functions as though cast by a wizard of one level lower than the caster's actual level. In addition, spells higher than 4th level cannot be cast at all except with the aid of a spell key.

ENHANCED SPELLS (+). Again following the Law of Opposites, spells *involving* the element of the plane function as though cast by a spellslinger of one level higher. The target of such a spell must make his saving throw with a -1 penalty.

ALTERED SPELLS (♦). Spells altered by inner-planar conditions vary widely, requiring adjudication on the part of the DM. Common sense can help determine these elemental alterations. Some examples are provided in the following chapters.

PRIEST+ RESTRICTIONS

Considering all the constraints on their wizardly brothers, a priest's inner-planar restrictions look mild in comparison. They don't have to worry about elemental alterations, except as noted under "Absolute Prohibitions" above; they can even cast spells such as the *astral spell* despite the lack of a planar connection to the Astral. Such is the power of the gods they serve, but such power has a price.

For every plane between a priest and his deity's home plane, he loses spellcasting levels. The cleric does not lose hit points, weapon, or nonweapon proficiencies, or suffer a reduction in THACO or the ability to turn undead; but many priests find the loss of spellcasting power troublesome enough.

The following chart indicates the number of levels a priest loses, depending on the location of his power.

PRIEST'S PLANE	POWER'S HOME PLANE	LEVEL LOSS
Inner Plane	Outer Plane	-3
Inner Plane	Astral	-2
Inner Plane	Prime	-1
Inner Plane	Ethereal	0
Inner Plane	adjacent Inner Plane	0
Inner Plane	other Inner Plane	varies (-1 to -3)

To determine level loss for priests with powers in the Inner Planes, consult the diagram on page 7. Every plane in between the two in question (by the shortest route) indicates a one-step level loss.

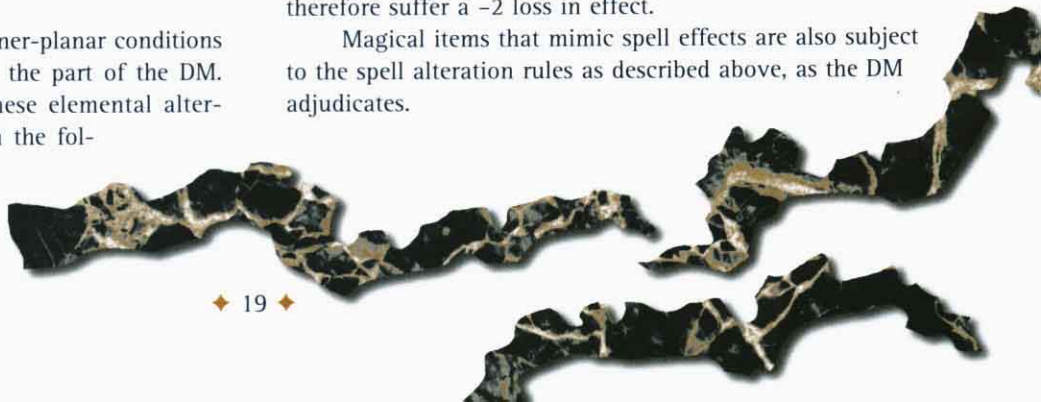
MAGICAL ITEMS

Magical items can also suffer a reduction in effect, depending on where they were forged. For every plane removed, they lose one "plus" of magical power. Thus, a +3 sword forged on the Outer Planes loses all bonuses when brought to the Inner Planes.

WHERE USED	WHERE FORGED	LOSS
Inner Plane	Outer Plane (or Sigil)	-4
Inner Plane	Astral	-3
Inner Plane	Prime	-2
Inner Plane	Ethereal	-1
Inner Plane	adjacent Inner Plane	-1
Inner Plane	other Inner Plane	-2

Again, consult the diagram on page 7 to determine magical item loss for items forged in the Inner Planes. Non-adjacent planes trace a path through the Ethereal Plane and therefore suffer a -2 loss in effect.

Magical items that mimic spell effects are also subject to the spell alteration rules as described above, as the DM adjudicates.



(Gaunt Hohn, originally of Sigil, provided the information in this chapter.—the Editor)

Most readers were probably expecting a djinni or someone like that to tell them about the Elemental Plane of Air. (I heard they got an honest-to-gods efreeti to give the

THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF AIR: THE BOUNDLESS BLUE

chant on the plane of Fire—a blood'll watch *that* basher for screed or a peel, if she's smart.) Thing is, I'm about as close to a native of the plane of Air as I could be without wings on my back. Now, a wind duke or an air elemental might be able to pass on some secret that I don't know, but it's doubtful. (Not that I know all the chant there is to know, but if I don't know it, a native probably wouldn't put it in this book—the dark is, the air elementals and their like are pretty elitist.)

This plane's always full of bashers who come thinking Air's the safe

one of the

Inner

Planes.

They're

probably right,

but that don't mean

a body shouldn't listen to

someone who knows what's what—like me. So listen up. Of all the Inner Planes, none is more frequently visited than the Elemental Plane of Air. Graybeards give a dozen reasons for this, but it really boils down to two important facts.

First, none of the Inner Planes are as easy to survive as the Boundless Blue. After all, a body certainly doesn't have to worry about breathing here (something that can be a real problem in most of the other Inner Planes). If she can avoid getting swept up in a gale, taking the eternal plunge (as described later in this chapter), or getting on the wrong side of a local basher, even the most clueless planewalker will have to go out of her way to get killed here.

The second and perhaps more obvious reason for Air's popularity is the scenery. Even the most poetic souls have difficulty finding the words to describe the endless blue skies that stretch off forever and the seas of white clouds that drift lazily through them. Any sod who isn't moved to just lie back and watch the Boundless Blue for a few hours is lacking something inside.

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

The Elemental Plane of Air is an infinite vista of brilliant blue sky clearer and sweeter than any expanse of earthly air. It's so pristine that a body's vision (whether standard or infravision) extends twice as far as normal.

GETTING HERE

Getting to the Boundless Blue isn't as difficult as reaching some of the other Inner Planes. With so many folks interested in traveling here, a great many routes have been established over the years.

First off, a number of portals are known to exist between the Elemental Plane of Air and the rest of the multiverse. With the exception of those found in Sigil, these are often in remote and difficult-to-reach places. Sometimes, however, even a prime world'll have a portal to one of the cities that floats through this plane.

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Earth, Fire, Water	<
Air	+

Chant is that a portal to Air can be found atop the highest branch of Yggdrasil, the World Ash. A steady wind ripples from the portal, keeping the green leaves of the greatest of all trees tossing happily to and fro. Supposedly, the portal allows two-way passage, placing it among the more friendly rips in the fabric of the multiverse.

High above the endless landscape of Arborea stand the great pillars and towers of the Greek pantheon. It's said that among these structures, a body can find not one but two portals to the Elemental Plane of Air. Each is opened with a different key, and the portals are linked so that both must be opened at the same time. Of course, since they're located many miles apart, it takes great coordination (and a bit of luck) to open both doorways at once.

Mount Celestia also hides several portals to the Boundless Blue. At the heart of Jovar, the Glittering Heaven, sits a massive stone ziggurat. While those who ascend this structure find themselves entering the seventh layer of the Mount, there is another secret here. Buried deep in the ziggurat is a portal to Air, its existence kept dark by the Jovian archons who dwell there. Well, *somewhat* dark, anyway. Actually, the portal's a poorly kept secret. Still, its exact location isn't known, and what key might open the doorway—and just why the archons wish to keep it to themselves—is anyone's guess.

There's another portal (sort of) in Mercuria, home of Bahamut, the Draco Paladin. In this layer, the greatest of all dragons dwells in an immense palace, the scope of which few primes can imagine. When he wishes, Bahamut can command one section of his fortress to fade away, carrying all within it to the Elemental Plane of Air. Once adrift in the Boundless Blue, the floating citadel travels wherever its

master wishes. Bahamut can order the structure to come and go at will, even if he's not aboard it.

'Course, a body can't forget that one important way to reach the plane of Air—as is the case with all Elemental Planes—is through a vortex from the Prime. Vortices that lead to Air aren't as uncommon as those leading to many of the other Inner Planes. They are, however, often more difficult to use, as they tend to drift about, blowing back and forth in the wind. So even after a spiv manages to find one of these handy little doorways, it can take all his skills to catch up to it.



Vortices to the Elemental Plane of Air are most commonly found in one of two places. Those that appear high in the atmosphere are called *floating vortices*. As a rule, they can be reached only by creatures that have some magical ability to fly—a powerful *fly* spell, an enchanted carpet, or some other such device. Animals, monsters, and others who depend on wings, gas bags, or similarly mundane methods of flight generally can't ascend to the height at which these vortices are found.



In addition to being very high in the air, floating vortices appear only at the center of great expanses of clear blue sky. A basher won't see a cloud mass or mountain peak anywhere in the vicinity. And since they're almost invisible, these vortices don't

stand out very well from the air around them (which is, of course, more or less invisible to the average sod). It's a good thing that they're permanent—despite the fact that they tend to wander just a bit in the breeze. I'd guess that two or three floating vortices exist on any prime-material world, but who can safely say for sure?

The other common type of vortex linking the Prime with the plane of Air is generally referred to as a *whirling vortex*. The reason for this is obvious: They're found at the heart of a tornado or whirlwind. Some folks'll tell you that every twister has a vortex at its core, and they may be right. The problem with this theory, though, is that whirlwinds move so fast and are so difficult to explore that no one's ever been able to answer the question one way or the other.

Even getting to a whirling vortex is a problem. After all, graybeards have estimated that the winds of a tornado can reach 300 miles per hour—only a fool or a titan would get in their way. Some people believe that a lot of the junk that floats through the Boundless Blue got yanked in through whirling vortices. They contend that these great maws sweep across the countryside and suck everything they roll directly over into the plane of Air. And whatever they don't roll *directly* over just gets ripped to pieces.

Whirling vortices aren't like most vortices. While they're more or less fixed in the plane of Air, they tend to wink in and out of existence on the Prime Material. For proof, just look at the tornadoes created by these channels—after all, they don't usually last for more than a few minutes, do they?

HAZARDS

Compared to the other Inner Planes, the Elemental Plane of Air is about as safe as a mother's arms. There aren't any gey-sers of magma or jets of flame waiting to incinerate an unsuspecting sod. In fact, most of the dangers a plane-

walker'll encounter in the Boundless Blue are likely to be imported from other realms. But this isn't to say that a body can't get himself lost by the hazards of the plane itself.

STORMS IN AIR

Without a doubt, the greatest hazard of the Elemental Plane of Air is the wind. Now, it's virtually impossible to find a place in this realm that isn't subject to a continual breeze, but that's not usually a threat to life and limb. From time to time, however, a breeze builds into a wind, a wind into a gale, and a gale into a tempest. When this happens, a body can get thrown off course and any conveyance he's using can be torn apart rather quickly. It doesn't take long for one of these storms to whip up, and they often dissipate just as fast. They can linger for a long time, however, sometimes moving along and sometimes staying in one place.

The DM can use the following table to determine the wind velocity at a given location.

1D20 ROLL	FORCE	VELOCITY (MPH)	ADJ.
1–2	calm	below 2	+3
3–4	light breeze	3 to 7	+2
5–6	moderate breeze	8 to 18	+1
7–8	strong breeze	19 to 31	0
9–10	light gale	32 to 39	–1
11–12	moderate gale	40 to 47	–2
13	strong gale	48 to 54	–3
14	light storm	55 to 60	–4
15	moderate storm	61 to 66	–5
16	strong storm	67 to 72	–6
17	hurricane	73 to 176	–7
18	whirlwind	177 to 238	–8
19	cyclone	239 to 299	–9
20	tornado	300+	–10

This table indicates the die roll (on 1d20) to produce a given velocity of wind. The force and velocity columns are primarily intended to provide reference points for the DM. The last column indicates an adjustment that can be applied to saving throws (for beings or items), attack rolls, proficiency and ability checks, or anything else that the DM feels is in order based upon the situation. Sharp-eyed bloods'll notice that the calm areas of the table actually provide bonuses, which the DM can use to reflect the calm, soothing nature of the plane.

Weather conditions in the Elemental Plane of Air are far less predictable than patterns on the Prime Material. As such, a storm may last for only minutes, or it may continue to howl for weeks, months, or even years. Changes in wind speed (when they do come) generally occur very rapidly. As a rule, the shift in velocities takes place over the course of a single turn. Thus, a given place can jump from a light breeze to a full force gale or hurricane in only ten minutes. The DM can use the following table to determine the duration of a given wind condition.

1D20 ROLL	DURATION OF CURRENT CONDITIONS
1-2	1d6 rounds
3-4	1d6 turns
5-6	1d6 hours
7-8	1d6 days
9-10	1d6 weeks
11-12	1d6 fortnights
13-14	1d6 months
15-16	1d6 years
17-18	1d6 decades
19-20	1d6 centuries

MAELSTROMS

Maelstroms are related to the winds, gales, and storms described above, but they deserve special mention. A maelstrom is a whirling vortex of air, possibly created when a small crack opens between the Elemental Plane of Air and the Quasielemental Plane of Vacuum. Most primes describe a maelstrom as looking like a great circular tornado that has turned on itself and is trying to devour its own tail.

Anything or anyone that drifts into the fringe of a maelstrom must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or be drawn in. A berk caught in a maelstrom suffers damage each round until he either escapes (by means of a bend bars/lift gates roll) or is rescued by those outside the vortex. Folks trapped in a maelstrom are unable to cast spells or attempt similar actions due to the churning of air and collisions with other items trapped in the vortex.

The DM can use the following table to determine the size of a maelstrom, as well as the damage that it inflicts each round.

1D10 ROLL	DIAMETER	DAMAGE PER ROUND
1	1d10 × 10 yards	1d10
2-3	1d10 × 100 yards	2d10
4-5	1d10 × 1,000 yards	4d10
6-7	1d10 × 1 mile	8d10
8-9	1d10 × 10 miles	16d10
10	1d10 × 100 miles	32d10

Chant has it that there's a single Great Maelstrom, thousands of miles across, at the exact center of the Elemental Plane of Air. 'Course, since the plane is infinite, it can hardly be said to have a center. Thus, if such a titanic maelstrom really does exist, it could be located almost anywhere. Odds are that any poor sod who finds this thing will be hard-pressed to get away with his skin intact.

MOVING ABOUT

Once a body's made it to the plane of Air, he's got to figure out how to get from one place to another. If he can fly, that's not such a problem—he can just pick a direction and start flapping. But for those who don't have any way of moving about in the air, things can be a little harder.

There's no gravity in the Elemental Plane of Air. That doesn't mean, however, that a body can just float about in midair, carried on the winds. When a traveler arrives in the plane, the first thing he usually does is convince himself that a certain direction is "down." He can't help it. Thus, he'll start to fall in that direction if he doesn't have something to grab onto or can't think of another direction as down (though the latter solution's really just a temporary one, of course...). If a body can't control his impressions of up and down, this can spell disaster (see below).

So how's it done? Well, in order to convince himself that a new direction is down, a body must roll a successful Wisdom check. (Natives to the plane—or those similar—need not make this roll. To them, up and down are disposable concepts that can be abandoned and redefined from round to round.) The DM should apply a modifier to the roll, based on the individual's familiarity with the plane of Air.

FAMILIARITY WITH AIR*	MODIFIER
None at all	-6
No firsthand experience	-4
Research, but no experience	-2
Brief firsthand experience	0
Some firsthand experience	+2
Extensive firsthand experience	+4
Practically a native	+6

* or another Inner Plane with similar physical laws.

Once a body begins to fall in a certain direction, he keeps going until he either hits something or changes his mind about which way is down (with another Wisdom check). Bloods call this "taking the eternal plunge," because a person could theoretically fall forever, as there is no ground for him to strike. Anyone taking the plunge falls at a rate of 1,000 feet per round. If he hits another object, he suffers 1d6 points of damage for every 10 feet he fell, to a maximum of 20d6 points. This is extremely dangerous, of course, but a clever cutter can use it to his advantage—as long as he doesn't hit anything, it's a pretty snappy way to get around.

When a falling sod begins to near his destination, he needs to consider the problem of landing. If he's got a little warning, this isn't a problem—he just changes his opinion of down a minute or so before landing, bleeds off his current speed, and touches down as lightly as a feather.

For example, suppose that a being is falling at a rate of 1,000 feet per round. As he nears his target, he decides that what was down is up and what was up is now down. For the first round, this acts as a breaking force, because his speed in the original direction is being countered by the pull of gravity. 'Course, if the sod makes his change a little too late, he can still hit the ground at a fair speed, since it requires a full round to come to a stop. Conversely, if he tries to stop too early, he'll come to a halt above the ground, hang there for a second, and then start to fall away from his destination.

As tricky as this sounds, it quickly becomes second nature to inner-planar travelers. An experienced planewalker can do this sort of thing without much chance of mishap. The actual landing can be ticklish, however, and novice flyers are required to make a Dexterity check to avoid a crash landing. Here's a good rule of thumb: A body is required to make a Dexterity check to land safely only until he manages to do it successfully twice in a row. Once this happens, the DM can assume that the basher can "fall" where he wants to fairly safely. The whole thing's pretty unnerving, though, so most folks simply use a spell, a magical item (*flying carpets* are very popular), or a mount.

The real top-shelf bloods know that a body can just convince himself that there's no down at all. This requires extensive experience in moving around in the plane (DM's discretion) and a Wisdom check made at a -6 penalty. Chant is, some folks've developed a means of training bashers to do this, in effect creating a one-slot nonweapon proficiency based on Wisdom that lets a basher float in the plane, fall where he wants, and stop safely. But even with all that, it's still not nearly as maneuverable or as easy as a nice, handy *fly* spell.

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

The Elemental Plane of Air is home to some of the multiverse's most wondrous creatures. While the majority of them are natives of the plane, others have simply moved in and made themselves at home. The realm is, after all, beautiful to behold and relatively safe. A planewalker might even run into prime elementalist wizards and priests.

ELEMENTALS

The air elementals are perhaps the best-known denizens of the Boundless Blue. Most folks use the term "elemental" to include not only the creatures properly called by that name, but also mephits, fundamentals, archomental, vortices, air walkers, spirits of the air, tempests, skriaxits, and air plasms. Some of the plane's elemental creatures, like aerial servants, invisible stalkers, and sylphs, are known even on the Prime Material. Others, like the mihstu and the sislan, are almost never encountered anywhere but the plane of Air.

ANIMALS

Over the millennia, almost every manner of bird has found its way to the Elemental Plane of Air. Some of them were drawn into the place through vortices, but most were brought to the Boundless Blue by other beings who fancied their colors, songs, or hunting prowess. Other flying animals, like bats and insects, are also common enough in the plane.

What's more, a number of large birds (and birdlike creatures) ride the eternal winds. These include rocs, giant hawks, giant owls, giant bats, pteranodons, and the like.

Most of them have been brought here to serve as mounts for nonflying folk.

MONSTERS

Creatures like pegasi, hippogriffs, and griffons can be found winging their way from floating island to floating island. In some cases, these majestic beasts have been brought to Air to serve as mounts. Just as often, however, they came here of their own accord, seeking a realm where they could fly free and escape the bonds of gravity.

A few planewalkers have returned from the deepest recesses of the Boundless Blue, claiming to have encountered a mighty, double-winged, 50-foot-long androsphinx whose every word dealt mind-splitting pain to all around it. This beast matches the description of a legendary creature of old that, chant has it, has the secrets of every wizard spell ever created etched on the underside of its wing feathers.

DJINN

Without a doubt, the most commonly encountered nonelemental race in the plane of Air is the wondrous djinn. These magnificent, magical creatures, regarded with awe and fear by prime and planar alike, have built numerous strongholds here. The greatest of all such dwellings is the Citadel of Ice and Steel (described later in this chapter).

Most djinn live in fairly independent freeholds ruled by caliphs, sheiks, sheriffs, and maliks. A typical estate is usually built on a fragment of elemental Earth ranging in size from 1,000 to 12,000 (1d12 × 1,000) yards in diameter. The buildings rise in elegant majesty, often spun from glass or fine, curving stones. From six to sixty (6d10) djinn fill out the population of the freehold, along with a number of jann (equal to about one-third the djinn population). A large staff of less intelligent elemental creatures acts as servants, soldiers, and laborers, tending to the routine of daily affairs. Often, djinn train birds and other winged creatures to serve as messengers, allowing the freeholds to remain in contact (albeit infrequent).

The djinn war against the cloud and storm giants found in the Boundless Blue, and they don't get on with the elementals well either (most folks point to djinni arrogance as the cause). Mostly, however, the djinn battle the efreet of the Elemental Plane of Fire. Legions of efreet (often supplemented by conscripted salamanders, elementals, and other creatures) launch attacks upon the djinn caliphate through Jabal Turab, a smoldering volcano that serves as a vortex connecting the two planes.

Great Caliph Husam al-Balil ben Nafhat al-Yugayyim, Master of the Clouds and Son of the Breezes, rules over all djinn, but he rarely leaves the Citadel of Ice and Steel. Chant has it that the djinn search throughout the Inner Planes for a magical seal said to have the power to command any of their kind—even their ruler. They fear it falling into the wrong hands.

SYLVAN RACES

When most sods think of the sylvan races, they see images of slender elves moving through forests and tending the groves of the multiverse. Despite this largely accurate stereotype, the fair folk are well represented beneath the azure vault. Mostly, the faerie races found here are flyers like atomies, pixies, and sprites. Some of the floating mountains of Air are well forested, however, and other elven races can sometimes be found dwelling among the trees. All respect the court of the Grand Caliph of All Djinn, and many of the faerie serve him in one way or another.

Chant is that one or more of these stone islands is laced with tunnels hewn by the drow or a sister race. But if anyone has ever found a drow city in the plane of Air, he got himself lost before he could reveal its location.

OTHER RACES

A few other intelligent races live in the plane of Air as well. These include humanoid flyers like the aarakocra and pteramen, as well as more unusual creatures like couatl, beholders, and nyth. Isolated colonies of cloud and storm giants can also be found here. For the most part, they like their privacy, and anyone who hopes to put a few more years behind him abides by their wishes.

POWERS

In addition to the lesser creatures described above, several very powerful beings make their home in the Elemental Plane of Air. Some, like the Great and Mighty Akadi, Queen of the Air Elementals, hail from the plane. Others, like Shu, are gods native to other planes who have chosen to make their homes here.

AKADI, QUEEN OF THE AIR ELEMENTALS. Akadi is by far the most mighty of all the free-willed air elementals. In the scope of things, she rates right up there with the rest of the greater powers. In recent decades, the upstart Yan-C-Bin, an archomental, has challenged her power.

Akadi dwells within a great whirlwind—called, predictably enough, the Great Funnel—that is large enough to swallow whole planets. This impressive force drifts about, moving where she wills it, and all the winds that sweep the plane are said to spiral outward from it. Those whom Akadi wishes to see can pass through the tornado-force winds without harm.

Those who would visit the Elemental Queen uninvited risk being torn apart.

Akadi is neither good nor evil. She is the mistress of air and has little or no interest in things that don't affect her realm. Despite her centralist outlook on the multiverse, however, Akadi is noted for her stormy temper and changeable disposition.

Over the years, the Queen of Air has gathered around her a dozen female warriors, all air genasi. These women comprise her Azure Guard (described below), and a body who crosses them is liable to get himself lost in a big way.

CHAN. Like Yan-C-Bin, her evil foe, Chan is an invisible entity of softly churning air. The Princess of Good Air Creatures is the master of calm breezes and gentle sounds, though she can rage like a harsh wind or even a violent tornado when she must. Her steady surveillance of Yan-C-Bin often forces him to curb his activities for fear of her intervention. Chan must also have a care in regard to what she does, for Yan-C-Bin could just as easily stick his nose into her business. This war of quiet threats has gone on for years, and will most likely continue for many more.



Chan spends some of her time in the Palace of Unseen Contemplation, her floating stronghold made of purest glass. Otherwise, she wanders the Elemental Plane of Air, watching Yan-C-Bin and attempting to further the cause of good.

Although not an actual power, as an archomental Chan boasts a large contingent of loyal elementals, sylphs, faerie folk, and winged creatures of all types. She rules more by reputation than by word, her servants doing what they know she would want them to do rather than obeying actual orders. Often called the Silent One, Chan can be a gracious host within her palace, but she's not one to give a body the lost secrets of the plane.

SHU. Brother and husband to Tefnut, Shu the Upholder is an intermediate power of the Egyptian pantheon. He has been charged by Ra, his father, with keeping the would-be lovers Geb (the ground) and Nut (the sky) apart. His efforts so far have been quite admirable.

He makes his home in the Elemental Plane of Air, in a place known as Desert Wind. This area of warm, swirling breezes lies near the border between Air and the paraplane of Smoke. Golden flecks drift to and fro in the wind like desert sands being kicked up by a looming sirocco. Shafts of sunlight lance through the realm, warming those they fall upon even further. The breezes, golden motes, and radiant beams are all aspects of Shu's petitioners. All were of good alignment, but the first were chaotic in life, the last lawful, and the golden sparkles neutral.

Those who reach the edge of Shu's domain can enter it only with the deity's blessing. If he desires visitors, the way is open and inviting. If he does not, the breezes become scalding, the motes sting like smoldering embers, and the beams of sunlight burn hot enough to melt armor.

YAN-C-BIN. Yan-C-Bin, the Master of Evil Air, is naturally invisible. Only a slight disturbance in the air marks the passing of this archomental. He lives in a palace of solid air similar to Akadi's, but spends much of his time wandering the plane (not to mention several others, particularly the Prime Material). All creatures that soar the skies of any plane or realm know of Yan-C-Bin and fear him. The power doesn't amass troops, but merely gathers together small groups of evil air elementals (and similar creatures) as needed.

His greatest foe is Chan, though their conflict is not an open, physical war but one of silent intimidation and covert chant-gathering. Truth is, the two have never even met. Neither puts much stock in amassing armies, but it's said that someday these wandering beings will meet, and that only one will survive the day.

PROXIES

Visitors to the Elemental Plane of Air should be aware that the powers here tend to like their privacy. Thus, the proxies do their best to make sure no one disturbs their masters.

THE AZURE GUARD. The Azure Guard is a collection of twelve warriors (PI/♀ air genasi/F20+/N), each specially trained for battle in the Elemental Plane of Air. All members of the Guard are female and utterly devoted to Akadi. They wear magical armor, the deep blue color of which gives them their name. Chant is that Akadi forges the stuff from the wind itself, which explains its lack of encumbrance and how it provides its wearer with an Armor Class of 0. Each warrior of the Guard is said to have reached at least 20th level, far surpassing any of their kind in martial training. Akadi's power grants them each the strength of cloud giants.

At any given time, six to eight members of the Azure Guard remain in Akadi's whirlwind. The rest of the Guard moves elsewhere, seeing to the business of the Wind Queen.

KHEREHUTY. The affairs of Shu are tended to by Khrehuty (Px/♂ human/M14/Harmonium/LG), a talented magician. Those who have business with Shu would be well advised to speak to Khrehuty, who handles virtually all of his master's worldly dealings.

Khrehuty is known for both his temper and his attention to detail. This latter trait is best reflected in the perfect schedule that he keeps. Every element of Shu's daily schedule is checked and double-checked to make sure that absolute precision is maintained. However, it's hard to say whether Shu takes much interest in this. It may be that only Khrehuty notices how well he does his job.

When the schedules become fouled or other aspects of life in Desert Wind are disrupted, Khrehuty's temper gets the better of him. At these times, all should pity the poor sod who caused the error, because he'll have to answer for the matter.

◆ THE SITES ◆

A visitor to the Boundless Blue will probably want to pass near the many fascinating locales of the plane, if only to see such splendor for himself. Some of the following sites are places of sanctuary, while others are dangerous and should be avoided by anyone without a good reason for going there.

BOREALIS

Borealis is a magnificent spherical structure built around a vortex that links it with the Quasielemental Plane of Radiance. Extending from the core of this glowing palace (which is itself several hundred yards across) are nearly a hundred spires. These reach heights of over 1,000 yards and make the whole of Borealis look like a spiny sea urchin or dandelion seed. No two spires are identical in color, and the whole of the spectrum is represented.

The palace appears to be made of stained glass, but the chant is that the panels are actually *solid light*. No one knows exactly what magic might have been employed in the creation of this mysterious stuff. At the same time, no one's

ever been able to put so much as a crack in the place, so there's clearly more to it than just glass.

From a distance, Borealis lights up the sky with a blaze of shimmering colors. These ripple and scintillate, producing a spectacle more wondrous than any display of fireworks or pyrotechnics. As a body draws closer, the glory of the place becomes even more impressive.

The inhabitants of Borealis are not natives of the Elemental Plane of Air. They're a race known to primes as nyth, radiant creatures similar to the deadly will o' wisp. Normally, these scintillating beings are solitary hunters that roam their domain looking for living prey. Here, however, at this point where the plane of Air meets that of Radiance, a large number of nyth have gathered.

It is said that others dwell at the heart of Borealis, that the nyth are little more than guardians. This may or may not be true, but even planewalkers who've banged around the place for a while have seen no sign of any keepers other than the nyth.

Visitors to Borealis are neither welcomed nor turned away. As long as they keep to the tops of the spires and do not attempt to make their way into the heart of the palace, the nyth leave them alone. At the first transgression, however, a sod finds himself surrounded and attacked by the glowing guardians. Troublemakers don't live long when the defenders of this place turn against them.

THE CITADEL OF ICE AND STEEL

Planewalkers often marvel at the fabulous floating cities of the djinn, which are spoken of with wonder throughout the multiverse. By far the greatest of these is the Citadel of Ice and Steel. It's here that the Grand Caliph of all Djinn lives, along with his council of six times six advisors.

The Citadel is an immense, wind-sculpted oval several miles across, forever hurtling through the plane of Air. The constant motion fills the entire Citadel with a permanent rush of air. Since the structure is perpetually falling, no gravity can be imposed upon it by any will other than that of the Caliph. Only flying creatures can move through the Citadel, due to the rushing winds and the fact that the place has no stairs connecting the various levels. An escort always accompanies nonnatives (in other words, nonfliers).

The Citadel of Ice and Steel draws its name from the wondrous substances from which it is crafted. One such material—known as *eternal* or *unmelting ice*—is a transparent substance mined in the paraplane of Ice and transported here specifically for the construction of the Citadel. What's more, fabulous, multihued steel plied from the quasiplane of Mineral makes for graceful archways and elegant buttresses throughout the egg of glacial rock.

Within the Citadel, numerous fountains feed a delicate lattice of canals that crisscross the strange structure, bubbling musically at all times. Galleries of fantastic art are

scattered about, each dedicated to the work of a single djinni artisan. The pieces on display range from traditional paintings and statuary to more exotic flame-sculptures and chromatic-symphonies.

Smaller spheres of rock and chunks of ice orbit the Citadel, housing various visiting djinni nobles or the Caliph's own court. Towers rise up from the gardens that cover these slowly rotating globes.

Secreted away in the Citadel of Ice and Steel is the mysterious Invisible College, a group of sorcerous djinn who use deception and illusion to help defend the Citadel—and the entire caliphate—against its enemies. Chant has it that these bloods possess magic unknown to the rest of the multiverse, but an enlightened soul might learn the dark of it should he somehow infiltrate their ranks. Be warned, however, that a secretive group like the Invisible College's fairly suspicious. No one's on the watch for a trick like a trickster.

Rumors speak of a flying castle owned by Sardior, the ruby king of all gem dragons, which comes to the Citadel for lavish banquets. These same rumors mention the Grand Caliph's displeasure at the approach of the castle, for the ruby king demands much of his time and treasure. Nonetheless, Sardior's too important an ally to make an enemy.

One other bit of chant about the Citadel says that it can apparently do more than plummet—it can move about in other ways as well. The structure's said to have been spotted in entirely different planes, in fact. No one knows the dark of it, though.

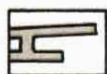
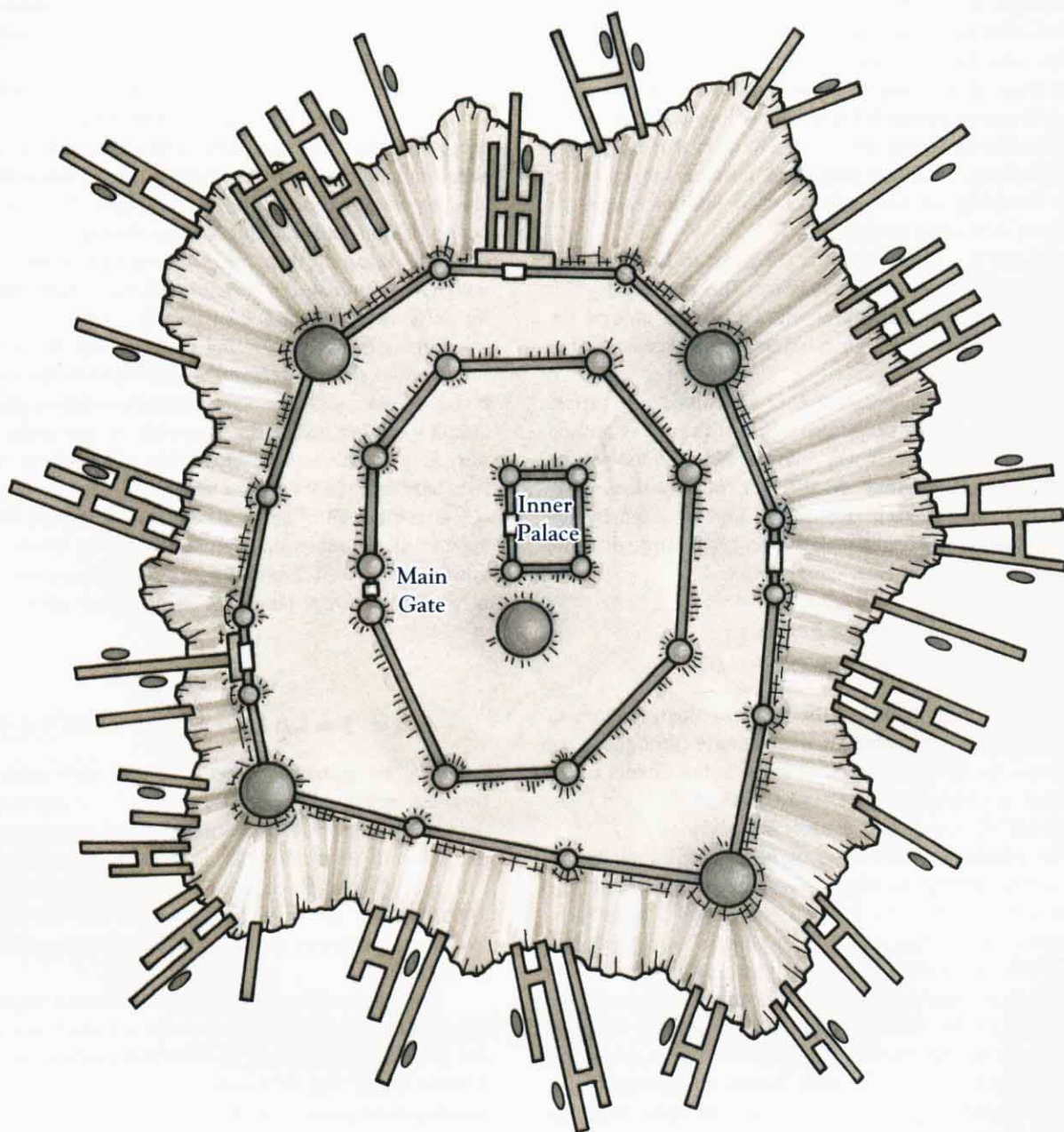
TAIFUN, THE PALACE OF TEMPESTS

Taifun is an immense palace of stone built upon a great floating mountain near the border of Air and Lightning. Here, where the air lashes constantly at travelers, this citadel looms like a warrior's worst nightmare. The shipyards that surround it make the sight of Taifun even more impressive. Spreading out in every direction from the towering stone walls is a spiderweb of docks, and tied to these are dozens of airships.

Both the aerial armada and the fortress about which they gather are ruled by a tremendous basher named Haalifith (Pl/♂ air genasi/F18/CN). Most folks refer to Haalifith as a "wind duke," and he's certainly that. But the fact that his nonelemental parent was obviously a storm giant makes him a creature of exceptional power and intelligence.

From the shelter of Taifun, Haalifith sends out his fleet of airships, each of which is suspended beneath a great bag of lifting gases. Chant is that Haalifith has decided that he is the only true wind duke and has set about the task of destroying all other air genasi. At first, most bashers considered him a bit barmy, but in recent years he has been recognized as an extremely dangerous blood.

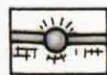
TAIFUN, THE PALACE OF TEMPESTS



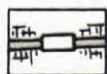
Docks



Airship



Tower



Gate



Lightning Tower



Floating Mountain
Edge

Unauthorized flyers suffer 10d6 hp electrical damage if within 1,000 yards of a tower, although a successful saving throw versus spell reduces damage by half.

0 400
Yards

THE WATERSPOUT

Not far from the Citadel of Ice and Steel is a magnificent place known as the Waterspout. This structure is unique in the multiverse, at least so far as anyone knows, and is a subject of many debates among the lanned and the learned alike.

The Waterspout is a pair of vortices, both of which open into the Elemental Plane of Water. A great torrent of water cascades out of one, thunders through 500 yards of intervening space, and then disappears into the other. Ripples of mist roll out from both vortices, so the Waterspout appears to hang between two billowing clouds.

As fascinating a sight as this is, however, its very existence poses a number of questions. Perhaps the greatest is simply this: Why does the water move from one vortex to another? The plane of Water has no gravity, and thus no pressure, so the liquid shouldn't be forced into the Boundless Blue. But the plane of Air has no gravity either, so the water shouldn't just fall from one vortex to the other.

The fact that the vortices exist in such close proximity and seem to be tied together in some fashion is also a mystery. Some graybeards claim that the Waterspout is nothing more than an amazing natural phenomenon. Others insist that it must be a construct of some sort, though they don't offer any explanations for the thing's origin.

The truth about the Waterspout may never be known, but that hasn't stopped berks from trying to exploit it. A warrior-wizard of elven and elemental descent named Brahmas Pulivuín (Pl/♂ air genasi/F9,M9/LN) is in the midst of building a series of giant water-wheels that wrap all the way around the Waterspout. He hopes to use them to generate power, which he plans to store in a magical energy accumulator called the *inverted sphere*. Brahmas employs natives and nonnatives alike in the construction, even including a few water elementals that can dwell safely within the spout itself.

The cost of the project's said to be enormous, but no one's seen a hint to the end of Brahmas' jink yet. Fact is, no one knows the source of the cutter's money or even his ultimate goal. Some folks see the whole undertaking as sinister, while others dismiss it as merely self-serving. Despite the fact that no one really seems concerned enough to try to stop him, Brahmas has hired a good number of minders to protect and watch over the operation. Marids and djinn come and go, using the Waterspout as a transport between their two planes as they have for countless eons, but Brahmas and his servants respect them and don't hinder their passage. Chant has it that the construction crew has suffered from a few hostile attacks, but the problem doesn't seem to be a serious one—at least, not according to Brahmas.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN AIR ◆

A visitor to the plane of Air can count on a large number of safe havens. Fact is, a body can spend time in plenty of different burgs and never even know he's in an Elemental

Plane—that's how well shielded the towns are against the climate. He'd just think he's in a prime-material city (until he reached the edge, of course). But, in the end, what's the point of that? Planewalkers coming to the Boundless Blue ought to experience the eternal plunge and other unique aspects of the plane. A body who plans to spend some time here should learn how to get around by falling as soon as possible.

The Elemental Plane of Air's often thought of as the center for commerce in the Inner Planes, since the environment is so benign—relatively speaking. (Chant is that innerplanars also go to secret trading burgs in the Ethereal Plane, but few know their locations.) The merchants of Air constantly keep an eye peeled for escorts and minders, especially when they're coming or going. In particular demand are bloods who know how to ride a flying mount or cast a spell of flight. 'Course, for those who don't know either, the plane of Air's the place to learn.

The djinn, as noble and aloof as they can be, often seek bashers willing to help them in their war against the efreet. They particularly appreciate (and reward) cutters willing to go to the City of Brass to spy on their enemies.

Naturally, not all planewalkers come to Air looking for employment; many desire only leisure, entertainment, or information. Sislan are said to produce flutes and horns that make music so lovely a mortal can't bear to hear it. The cloud giants of Zephyrhome maintain complex but thorough catalogs of all races in the multiverse and a secret about each. They'll share this knowledge, but only in exchange for a bit of a sod's memory—a strange and hefty price to pay. More than one connoisseur has come to the Boundless Blue to search for the plane's invisible vineyards, where ephemeral vines bear transparent grapes that produce wine that puts even most elven vintages to shame.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

It's possible for a wizard to find his way around some of the plane's magical restrictions, especially those involving spells from the schools of Elemental Fire and Water. In most cases, spell keys for the plane of Air take the form of unusual verbal components. Wizards who know the dark of the Boundless Blue speak their spells while inhaling instead of exhaling, thus overcoming some of the natural properties of the plane.

For a considerable price (at least 500 gold pieces), a basher can buy a winged harness that was invented by the Floating Sorcerers of Ktll—a city of displaced primes and planars who've long since adapted to living on the winds. This contraption, known as a glidewing, lets a nonwinged person ride the breezes like a soaring bird, as long as he's got the skill to use it (the airborne riding proficiency).

Although the orb seas of the plane provide most folks with drinking water, a canny body'll bring along an extra skin or two to store it in. The endless desert of Air can stretch for many days' fall between oases.

My name is Tiv, and I am of the shad. My folk are not native to the plane of Earth, like the living stone that outsiders call “elementals”

or the masters of rock you call “galeb duhr,” but we have dwelled here long enough to have forgotten

any other place. This endless stretch of stone is now home to the shad, and that gladdens us and gives us identity.

Some outsiders say that the plane of Fire is the most inhospitable of the Elemental Planes. While it might be the most dangerous, it is not nearly as difficult a place as the plane of Earth. Many travelers call this plane the

Anvil, and there are a good many reasons for that.

First of all, outsiders cannot breathe here. There are occasional pockets of air, places where anyone with sense rests for a while and give thanks, but these often become the lairs of dangerous and hungry monsters. We

shad have little need for air, but even we cannot survive within the solid earth. Travelers

should be prepared for such obstacles.

Another challenge here is the matter of mobility. Getting from place to place in the plane of Earth can require endless effort, a very strong back, and a pick that would do great Dumathoin proud. We dig and burrow—that is our life. The shad do not follow the set paths. Instead, we make our own. The plane of Earth is both our lord and our adversary. It provides for us, yet presents itself as our greatest challenge. All told, if one does not fear being buried alive—a fear shared by many outsiders, I am told—one may like our realm and our way of living.

THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF EARTH: THE ANVIL

A+ LEAS+
IN CARCER+
I DIDN'+
HAVE +@ DIG
+@ GE+
AR@UND.
—BEDISS
S+INGLO@K

◆ PHYSICAL C@NDITI@NS ◆

While most of Earth consists of hard, unyielding rock, it is not without variation. Every manner of stone can be found here, from delectable gypsum to trustworthy granite to lustrous marble to soothing graphite. Beyond that, a fortunate explorer can find rich veins of metal—everything from silver and gold to iron and copper. It is small wonder that dwarves and similar folk talk about the plane of Earth as if it were one step removed from paradise. To others who have a fondness for things such as air and water, however, there are nicer places in the multiverse (and as I understand it, most places fit this description).

GE++ING HERE

Making one's way to or from the Elemental Plane of Earth is not an easy thing. Portals to this place are rare and vortices that open into this realm are difficult both to discover and reach. Still, those determined enough can manage—with effort. I, myself, have traveled to a few other planes, though that was when I served as a slave of the dao, many years ago.

Only a few portals are known to link the Elemental Plane of Earth with the rest of the multiverse. Some are found in the strange and mysterious city called Sigil, but others appear throughout the Outer Planes.

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Air, Fire, Water <
Earth +

Perhaps the most interesting portal to the Anvil can be found on the clockwork plane of Mechanus. Those familiar with that realm of perfect order insist that the portal is merely a side effect. According to their tale, an ancient and long-forgotten race built a vast machine, one larger than many prime-material worlds. To power this device, the elder beings opened a portal to the Elemental Plane of Earth and tapped into the agonizingly slow continental drift of our realm. The machine still stands on Mechanus, its clockwork ticking ever so slowly in harmony with the plane of Earth. What this device is supposed to do is a secret that I believe no one has yet discovered. However, the portal is always open, since the machine acts as an eternal key. Those who step through it should be aware, however, that their trip will be a one-way journey.

The dismal depths of Baator hold another well-documented portal to Earth. It lies in Phlegethos, the fourth layer, near the center of the city called Abriymoch, and it provides convenient passage between Baator and the evil fortress of Stonemire. The portal allows the pit fiend that rules the accursed city easy access to great and fearful Oghremoch, the Prince of Evil Earth Elementals. While it remains clear that these two conspire together for some diabolical purpose, the nature of their alliance is still a matter for nervous guesswork.

In order to use this portal, which transports travelers both ways, one must have a large diamond. While this can be a frighteningly valuable key (especially considering the fact that it turns to powder in its use), there is an even harder trick to using the portal. Both of the gatekeepers consider themselves its sole master. As such, each has surrounded his end with guards, traps, and wards. The odds of a traveler nearing the portal, let alone making use of it, are fairly slim.

Vortices that lead to the Elemental Plane of Earth are found only among large concentrations of natural stone. Typically, this means the heart of a mountain (but not a volcano) or far beneath the surface of a prime-material world. From time to time, an unlucky group of primes stumbles upon such a gateway while mining or exploring—almost always getting themselves killed in the process.



The most commonly encountered vortices to the plane of Earth are found deep underground, in areas prone to earthquakes. Are the vortices byproducts of the tremors, or vice versa? Even shad wise men cannot answer that question. The dark of the matter, however, is that these gateways tend to move around a lot, always in conjunction with an earthquake. The stronger the quake, the farther the vortex shifts. Again, no one knows whether the vortex moves because of the tremor or whether the presence of the vortex causes the tremor to break out.

It is said that the greatest of mountains have at their hearts a concentration of pure elemental Earth. In some cases, this takes the form of a vortex to the Anvil, which may be known to dwarves and other races that dwell beneath the surface of prime-material worlds. Unlike most other vortices, these are anchored in place. Once discovered, they can be used for years, decades, or even centuries to come. In some cases, they become the center of subterranean communities that recognize their importance and potential value.

HAZARDS

Let me point out that many of the problems I am about to describe can be solved easily if a traveler is willing and able to tunnel—or, at least, to follow the tunnel systems created by other creatures (dao, pech, or even the humble shad). For such a traveler, moving through the plane of Earth is not unlike journeying underground on a prime-material world.

PRESSURE

When one first appears in the Anvil, he will almost certainly find himself entombed within solid earth. One who manages to take in air (the difficulty of which is described below) finds that the plane resents intruders. It naturally tries to fill in the space they occupy, crushing the invading body. This inflicts 1d2 points of damage per turn to anyone trapped here.

Those who move through Earth by tunneling discover this same phenomenon filling in the passages they have worked so hard to make. A man-sized opening in the Anvil heals itself over the course of 1d6 days, with larger or smaller passages taking more or less time to seal shut. The shad (along with others who have learned the secrets of the plane) know ways by which tunnels, chambers, and other constructions can be made permanent. It would be of little value to present the details here, but for those inclined to learn, the plane of Earth provides opportunities to do so. Unfortunately, most of them lie within the slave-worked mines of the dao.

BREA+HING

With the exception of scattered pockets of air, mist, and the like, the plane of Earth has no air to breathe. One must hold his breath, use a magical means of respiration such as the spell *airy earth*, or leave the Anvil—or die—before very long.

The DM can resolve such matters by using the standard rules for holding one's breath as presented in the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*.

One other option exists as well. An outsider who moves through the plane of Earth with the help of a native guide can often manage to breathe normally. Why does this occur? Outsider thinkers have argued about that question for years. But for us, there is no mystery. It is the way of things.

VISION AND HEARING

Unless one is gifted with x-ray vision or a similarly remarkable sense, he cannot see at all in the depths of the Elemental Plane of Earth. Those who employ sonar or another means of echolocation *can* "see," though it takes time for them to adjust to the way sound travels through stone and earth. An outsider traveling with an elemental guide usually shares that creature's senses, allowing him to see through the endless miles of solid earth (or, at least, the minute portion of it nearest to him).

Sound travels very well through the plane of Earth. Indeed, the average person can detect even the passing of an ethereal or phased creature. Such events produce a hissing sound that can be heard at a distance of 60 feet. For outsiders with exceptionally keen hearing (including those with the skill to detect noises), this range is increased to 90 feet. One can be sure that we who have dwelt in these lightless realms for our entire lives have learned to hone our sense of hearing to incredible levels.

GRAVITY

There is a great deal of debate (among those who feel the need to debate such things) about whether or not the plane of Earth has gravity. Some say that my home is like the plane of Air, free from the encumbering chains of such a force. Others, however, insist that gravity does exist here, but that it comes from every direction at once, effectively canceling itself out.

The truth of the matter is that no one knows, and it does not make any difference. The end result is the same. It may be important to remember, however, that one cannot count on using conventional means to move around. Crossing a big open area, such as a pocket of elemental Air, requires some other method. This can be as simple (and inefficient) as flapping one's arms or as speedy and expedient as a *fly* spell. Of course, one can always crawl along the ground—this method always works, and that is the reason we shad rely upon it.

FOSSILS

Scattered throughout the plane of Earth are the bodies of creatures that died while in the clutches of the Anvil. In some cases, they were poor souls whose travel plans did not turn out the way they had intended. Others were imprisoned here by wicked tyrants who knew that the punishment would be a death sentence.

Those two kinds are the most common. But a third type of fossil, more hazardous and rare than the rest, is that of a prisoner who yet lives. Over the untold centuries since the creation of the multiverse, many powerful creatures from other planes have been entombed in the Elemental Plane of Earth. As a rule, they were put here because they were too potent to destroy or contain in any other way. Travelers who stumble upon such fossils are in grave danger, for these relics are just sleeping and often awake if freed or disturbed.

The DM can use the following table to determine the nature of a fossil, then add further details as desired.

1D10 ROLL	TYPE OF FOSSIL
1–2	Prime-material creature
3–5	Planewalker/adventurer
6–8	Outer-planar creature
9–10	Inner-planar creature

EARTHQUAKES

When most folk think of earth or rock, they picture a dependable, faithful material that they can stand on with assuredness or build things from with a guarantee of durability. If that held true throughout the entire plane of Earth, the place would not change much. But as I have already said, that is not the way of things. The so-called Anvil constantly tries to close up tunnels and crush elemental pockets out of existence. Such movements are not swift, but they are inexorable.

Every so often, however, the slow crawl of the plane of Earth becomes a sudden jump. When that happens, a great tremor ripples through the endless stone. Such quakes are not common, but they can be quite severe. To determine the area affected by a tremor, the DM can use the table that determines the size of an elemental pocket (presented on page 14).

To determine the intensity of a quake and its effects on those caught in it, the DM can use the following table. An earthquake lasts for 1d10 rounds and inflicts the stated amount of damage each round upon creatures in its clutches.

1D10 ROLL	INTENSITY	SAVE ADJ.	DAMAGE
1–3	Tremor	+4	2d6
4–6	Minor	+2	4d6
7–8	Moderate	0	6d6
9	Major	–2	8d6
10	Catastrophic	–4	10d6

In order to escape serious injury from any number of sources (including falling rocks, fractures in the fabric of the plane, and so on), each being caught in a quake must make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon once for every two rounds the quake persists. The adjustment indicated on the table above is applied to this roll. If the being fails the save, he suffers the damage shown on the table. If he makes

the save, he suffers only half that damage. Furthermore, a being traveling with an elemental guide is thrown free of the guide if he fails his saving throw. This may leave him stranded in the heart of rock, unless his guide opts to rescue him.

GAS POCKETS

Another danger—one greatly feared by the shad—comes in the form of pockets of gas. Though similar in some ways to elemental pockets, gas pockets are natural features of the plane created by any number of causes. Three major types exist: *explosive*, *noxious*, and *toxic*.

In order to determine the size of a gas pocket, the DM can roll on the table for elemental pockets (on page 14). The result should be halved, though, for gas pockets are generally smaller than elemental pockets.

EXPLOSIVE GAS. Pockets of explosive gas generally have the same effect as either noxious or toxic pockets (but not both). In addition, however, they combust if an open flame is brought into their area. Such a blast requires everyone in the pocket to make a successful saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer 8d8 points of damage. The explosion also has a 30% chance of triggering an earthquake twice the size of the gas pocket in the immediate area.

More than a few outsiders have gone to pieces when they discovered one of these natural traps. Shad, however, rarely carry flame. Fire consumes valuable air and provides only uncomfortable, even dangerous heat. I, for one, see no value in it.

NOXIOUS GAS. A pocket of noxious gas has the same effect as a *stinking cloud* spell. It can bring even a shad to his knees before he knows what has hit him. While it may not kill an outsider, it will make him feel like something that just clawed its way out of the dao slave pits. Over the years, we shad have developed a resistance to all forms of poison due to exposure to such horrid surprises.

TOXIC GAS. These pockets of gas do more than cause sickness. They can kill. A traveler who enters a place filled with toxic gas is affected as if a wizard had cast a *cloudkill* spell upon him.

MOVING ABOUT

As if reaching the Elemental Plane of Earth were not hard enough, upon arrival an outsider must then find a way to move around. An individual of sufficient strength can travel through the infinite expanse of earth without suffering any damage due to the pressure (which remains a concern for most, as discussed earlier). As I have stated, this is the way of the shad. We make our own paths.

The DM can use the following table to determine the type of rock comprising a given region of the Anvil. For the

sake of simplicity, the table uses general descriptions in lieu of specific types of stone or minerals.

ID10 ROLL	TYPE OF EARTH	MINIMUM STRENGTH
1-3	Packed soil	15
4-6	Very soft rock	17
7-8	Soft rock	19
9	Hard rock	21
10	Very hard rock	23

This table also indicates the minimum Strength score required to move through such a region. A being with exactly the indicated score can move through the rock at a rate of one foot every 10 minutes. For every point of Strength a being has above the minimum, he can move one additional foot in 10 minutes. Thus, a creature with an 18 Strength score can tunnel through packed soil at a rate of 4 feet per turn or through very soft rock at a rate of 2 feet per turn.

Tools obviously make tunneling much easier. One who employs the proper digging implements, such as picks, shovels, chisels, and hammers, decreases his needed Strength score by 8. *(It's a whole lot easier for a basher to get where he's going if he can make use of magical spells. A stone shape or passwall can be of great help.—the Editor)*

The very best way to move through the Anvil is with the aid of an elemental guide. Creatures such as the mysterious xorn are able to travel freely through even the densest stone and can extend this ability to anyone who touches them. Xorn, however, can be trusted only so far—and not at all if their hunger for metals or gems gets the best of them. A word to the wise: An outsider should not ask a xorn to guide him anywhere near a vein of mineral, or he will never get where he is going.

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

Many powerful and dangerous creatures share my home. An outsider who crosses them had better know what he faces, or he may find himself a permanent part of the unyielding stone around him.

ELEMENTALS

Most of the beings that dwell in the plane of Earth are, obviously, what outsiders call elementals. We shad call them the *heartfolk*. Usually, they are our allies, and we revere them as lords of the plane, for that is what they are. *(The term "heartfolk" includes not only common elementals—those big, walking hunks of stone and earth that spellcasters love to unleash on their enemies—but also mephits, fundamentals, archomental, pech, earth weirds, and the like.—the Editor)*

Almost all heartfolk are of neutral alignment, and therefore peaceful and easy to live with—at least, from a shad's point of view. However, the influence of the great and

mighty Sunnis and the terrible but equally mighty Ogmoch, the Princes of Elemental Good and Evil, constantly tempt them to act in ways contrary to their nature. Much to our chagrin, the heartfolk who serve these fanatical lords do not look or sound any different from those who stay on the neutral path.

When elemental creatures choose not to move, they generally blend in with the plane. After all, an earth elemental does not stand out when resting against a wall of stone and dirt. Thus, any such creature is effectively *invisible* so long as it remains motionless. In addition, these beings are immune to the effects of spells like *earthquake* or *stone shape* while in their own plane.

Most creatures native to the plane of Earth (as well as those of Magma, Ooze, Mineral, and Dust) have the ability to move effortlessly through the solid stone of the Anvil. This effect is similar to a *passwall* spell. In addition, they can extend this skill to any other creature that they are touching. In this way, a native guide can enable visitors to move swiftly indeed. We shad are not so blessed. We dig.

Most primes, I am told, generally perceive creatures of Elemental Earth to be slow and ponderous. This notion often grows into a belief that such beings think as slowly as they move. As usual, outsiders are ignorant of the truth. The reality is that the Anvil's natives live at a slower pace than the rest of the multiverse. We think in terms of years and centuries—not hours, days, and weeks. One can rest assured that anything we do will be well thought out and carefully considered.

ANIMALS

Few animals live in the Elemental Plane of Earth. We shad have encountered only giant ants, many species of worms, moles, mice, and other burrowing creatures. Many originate from other planes.

MONSTERS

I have heard that wise adventurers around the multiverse agree that some of the most dangerous creatures one may encounter call the Elemental Plane of Earth home. These include such beings as xorn, xaren, and galeb duhr. Though not always monsters in the sense that shad would use the word, such beings can be terrifying in combat if one is so foolish as to anger them.

Perhaps the most dangerous creatures of the Anvil, at least in terms of sheer destructiveness, are the hordes. These insectlike things swarm over the plane, destroying everything in their path. They are the enemies of all else that dwells in Earth, especially the kryst, a race of lawful good elementals.

Other monstrous creatures are found throughout the plane as well. Schools of khargra swim through the earth itself, often hunted by pech and chaggrin grue, as well as by

my own people. Of course, when they do not hunt khargra, pech tribes often wage wars among themselves. These clashes may involve sandlings, earth weirds, and others.

DAO

The race known as the dao makes its home in the Elemental Plane of Earth. The dao live in huge cities that flaunt their great wealth and power. Curiously, the majority of the people who live in these places are not dao. Rather, they are slaves gathered from every corner of the multiverse.

Dao are evil creatures and mean-tempered in the extreme. They delight in the

accumulation of wealth and care nothing for the harm and suffering this causes others. Proof of this can be seen in the opulence of their dwellings. Shad hate dao, for they capture and enslave us to put to work in their mines, cities, and homes. They even use us to help capture other slaves. Most shad slaves die in captivity, for we cannot take such a life for long. The dao do not care.

A great many dao citadels lie within the plane of Earth, each located at the heart of a vast mazework. The typical dao mazework is home to 4d10 dao and 8d10 slaves, most of whom are elementals or elemental-kin of some sort (but often include humans, dwarves, drow, gargoyles, goblins, gorgons, jann, minotaurs, umber hulks, and many, many more). At the head of these folk is a dao ataman or hetman, who is aided by a seneschal of great wisdom. Dao warriors often ride greater basilisks into battle and utilize xorn, stone giant, and sandmen mercenaries.

Each mazework is associated with one or more elemental pockets, and the nature of that resource greatly affects the flavor of the place's architecture and life. A classic example of this is the Fiery Cascade. This stronghold is located between two pockets of elemental Fire, which have been tapped to create a vast, three-dimensional network of flaming moats. The technique proves most effective at keeping unwanted visitors out.

The dao live in a realm known as the Great Dismal Delve, which I shall describe later.



DWARVEN RACES

One should expect to find dwarves, gnomes, and the like in the Elemental Plane of Earth. There are those who say that dwarves originated here, but most agree that this is untrue. Even if the theory is false, these subterranean races are quite at home in the endless depths of the Anvil. They may even have coined that term for the plane.

If any dwarflike race clings to the plane of Earth more than the dwarves themselves, it is the *svirfneblin*, also called deep gnomes. These wise beings hold a tight alliance with the heartfolk and defend themselves (and even others) against the *dao*. My people enjoy the company of the *svirfneblin*, but I do not believe that they truly give us the respect that we give them. Still, they come to our aid if the need arises, for we have many mutual enemies.

Although the deep gnomes are thought by outsiders to keep their homes mainly on the Prime Material Plane, their secret is that their *real* cities are here—fabulous, gigantic complexes that rival even those of the *dao* (who resent them for it).

OTHER RACES

Cyclopes and giants of all types live in secretive tribes or alone in the hidden caverns of the Elemental Plane of Earth. Similarly reclusive bands of *fomorian*s have also been found in the depths of the Anvil. Like their kin, these creatures are fairly content if left alone.

Dragons, basilisks, cockatrices, and medusae (and their *maedar* mates) can all be found scattered throughout the plane. In addition, at least one large community of *neogi* lurks here. These horrible creatures are the bane of those around them. Countless tribes of *pech* and the like have tried to destroy the *neogi*, only to be eaten in the process. The fact that the colony has a fair-sized army of *umber hulk* slaves defending it is more than enough to convince most outsiders to avoid this part of the Elemental Plane of Earth.

Lastly, a few powerful creatures from other planes have made their home in the Anvil. Stone giants, for example, are found in surprisingly large numbers. The *ruvoka* are also well represented in the depths of the plane, as are the tribes of my people.

POWERS

The gods have not shied from making their homes in the depths of the Elemental Plane of Earth. In addition to Geb, the earth god of the Egyptian pantheon, the plane offers a home to *Sunnis*, *Grumbar*, and *Ogremoch*. These lords of variously aligned elemental beings struggle constantly for supremacy, although most of the battles are waged between the followers of the evil *Ogremoch* and his good counterpart *Sunnis*. *Grumbar* tends to sit back and watch with

some amusement as the two rivals weaken each other in battles that do not involve him.

GEB. Unlike most of the members of the Egyptian pantheon, Geb has chosen to live outside the realm of Heliopolis on Arcadia. Instead, he makes his home in a vast series of caverns hidden away at the heart of the plane of Earth. Geb's labyrinthine realm is known as the Caverns Under the Stars. Rumor has it that a portal to Elysium (where his wife and sister Nut resides) lies at the center of Geb's caverns. (For more information about the Caverns, refer to "The Sites," later in this chapter.)

Geb is a good-natured fellow who takes an unusually keen interest in the affairs of his worshipers and petitioners. He does not object to outsiders paying a visit to his home, and provided visitors behave themselves, his petitioners prove good hosts.

Those who die after serving the interests of Geb in life take up residence in the Caverns. The most worthy of them take the form of the stars that twinkle above it while others are seen in the flashing gems that line the walls. The majority of the spirits, however, make up the dark-skinned, black-haired citizens who dwell in the Caverns. They are a friendly crowd, generally willing to help an outsider as long as he is not rude, offensive, or disrespectful.

The greatest problem facing Geb is the fact that *Shu*, another of the Egyptian powers, has been commanded to keep the earth god away from his bride. Although the two have never openly battled, there is a constant struggle between them. An outsider who can bring Geb news of Nut, his beloved sister-wife, is likely to be treated as an honored guest in the home of this most cordial power.

GRUMBAR. *Grumbar* is by far the largest and most powerful earth elemental one will ever meet. He is known to my people (and to some other races) as the Living Mountain and Earth Father. A greater power, *Grumbar* is the master of all neutrally aligned earth elementals.

Few outsiders have had the honor of standing in the presence of *Grumbar*. Heartfolk and others lucky enough to have met with the god report that they were guided into a large pocket of air (or other suitable elemental material) for the encounter. One side of the pocket was a vast wall of stone, in the center of which was what they presumed to be the gigantic face of *Grumbar*. When their meeting concluded, the face melted away into the rock and the heartfolk were free to go about their business. It is possible, of course, that the face was not that of *Grumbar* but one of his proxies, and that no one has ever seen the true power.

As *Sunnis* and *Ogremoch* wage their endless battle for supremacy and ultimate domination of the plane of Earth, *Grumbar* just sits by and watches. From time to time, he lends aid to one side or the other, but only when the balance of power is about to tilt too far in either direction. The hand



of Grumbar may be suspected at these junctures, but it is never visible.

OGREMOC. Ogremoch is an archomental, one of the Princes of Elemental Evil. He appears as a rocky humanoid standing 10 feet tall. His eyes gleam like chipped obsidian, and his body sparkles with flecks of mica.

His home, an immense fortress known as Stonemire, stands upon a giant plateau inside an immense cavern near the border with the paraplane of Magma. The temperature here is so great that few living things can tolerate it. Fountains of molten stone, clouds of searing hot smoke, and geysers of scalding steam are scattered about as decorations. The plateau upon which Stonemire rests is said to contain the bodies of countless sods who ran afoul of the god. Whether they were slain and then buried or imprisoned by means of a powerful *entomb* spell is difficult to say.

Ogremoch has earned the nicknames Stone Tyrant and Master of Black Earth. When he is not planning a fresh scheme of evil, he often wanders the Anvil looking for new subjects to intimidate, new slaves to command, or new opponents to challenge. Fear of his sudden appearance pervades all of Earth, though few can actually claim to have seen the Stone Tyrant.

It is said that Ogremoch constantly watches for the rise of a truly mighty villain. Should he ever find a creature of sufficient wickedness and energy, he will supposedly carve that being into a juggernaut of evil the likes of which the Anvil has never seen. This is the plan, wise men say, by which Ogremoch ultimately hopes to destroy his hated rival, Sunnis.

SUNNIS. Sunnis, the Princess of Good Earth Creatures, takes the form of a tall, muscular woman with features chiseled out of stone. Mercy and understanding shine in the deep blue of her scintillating sapphire eyes. Also known as the True Stone or Lode Mother, Sunnis does not really concern herself with amassing followers. This does not mean that she lives an isolated existence, however, for a number of earth elementals, galeb duhr, xorn, and other creatures serve her at all times.

The Princess makes her home in the Sandfall, a fortress built within a cavern underneath a perpetually falling column of sand. The sand eventually drains down into what appears to be a bottomless pit not far away from Sunnis' stronghold. (Some heartfolk say that she plans to lay a trap one day for her greatest enemy, Ogremoch, and hurl him into that eternal abyss.) Many folk have likened the Sandfall's area to the bottom half of a great hourglass. Some say the earthy cascade flows eternally from the quasiplane of Dust—a gift from a suitor from Dust to the one he loves. Is this true? Who can say? While countless beings covet the hand of this powerful matriarch, her own feelings in such matters remain hidden.

Rumor has it that the heart of Sandfall is built around a gleaming crystal some 50 feet across. Those who have seen

it—or claim to have seen it, at any rate—say that it gives off a blinding light. It has been variously stated that this treasure is either the heart of a star, the finest gem ever gleaned from the quasiplane of Mineral, or the source of all earthly magical power.

When she is not in her home, Sunnis travels the Anvil in search of exotic treasures, worthy heroes, and other items of great value. It is said that anyone who brings her a truly unique treasure will find a special place in her heart and win a mysterious boon. The exact nature of this reward is a subject of much speculation, but considering the power Sunnis commands, it could be quite magnificent.

PROXIES

As one might imagine, any realm that includes powers also hosts their proxies as well. This place has its own number of those most powerful of mortals.

QUEEN HAPSHEPSUT. Hapshepsut (Px/♀ half-elf/F12/NG) is Geb's loyal servant and agent in the world of mortals. She is as fierce a defender of her lord as a body is ever likely to encounter. Hapshepsut is said to have been the first mortal to ever find her way to the Elemental Plane of Earth. As a reward for her efforts, Geb transformed the lovely half-elf into the powerful creature she is today.

Anyone who fancies himself worthy enough to challenge this slender, almost frail-looking woman quickly learns that he has made a terrible mistake. In combat, the queen wields a magical flail that unleashes an *earthquake* spell each time it strikes, and her dusky skin is as hard as granite.

KAYLEF. Whispered tales tell of a powerful creature named Kaylef that wanders the Anvil in an endless odyssey of destruction and carnage. Most relate that Kaylef was a dwarf warrior/priest from a world of earth and fire. His loyalty and ferocity won him the attention of Ogremoch. The Stone Tyrant tested Kaylef, believing that the dwarf might be the instrument of evil he had long sought. To his disgrace, Kaylef was found wanting.

The testing procedure left the dwarf with powers so great that it is impossible not to classify him as a proxy. The truth of it, however, is that he has been cast aside and long since forgotten by Ogremoch. Kaylef blames no one but himself for his failure, seeking solace in unending violence and destruction.

◆ THE SITES ◆

A number of magnificent structures are hidden away in the plane of Earth. Although the best known of them are associated with the powers of the plane, they are certainly not the only points of interest of which a traveler should make note.

THE AVIARY

Anyone who has ever dreamed of flying through the air like a bird will love this place. The Aviary is a large pocket of air 15 miles in diameter and populated by a colony of avariel. The winged elves have built a wonderful city here so open and airy that it is easy for a visitor to forget that he is in nothing more than a giant cave.

A visitor to the Aviary can purchase or rent a pair of wings, allowing him to fly about like a bird. It takes some getting used to, but a skilled flyer can maneuver as gracefully and elegantly as any naturally feathered creature. The pressures of the plane and the pull of gravity in all directions make the Aviary, in effect, without any gravity at all.

The shad do not care for these winged creatures and their strange ways. I am told, however, that the Aviary offers an interesting diversion for outsiders weary of the "oppressive stone," as some call it. Mine is not to understand, but simply to report.

THE CAVERNS UNDER THE STARS

Geb's labyrinthine realm is known as the Caverns Under the Stars. A portal to Elysium (where his wife and sister Nut resides) stands at the center of the Caverns, but Geb has never let its location be discovered. It may be that Shu discovered and destroyed the portal long ago.

The realm is a vast pyramidal chamber, 30 miles on a side. The shape of the chamber is not apparent, however, for the upper half of the place is shrouded by the night sky. (This expanse of twinkling stars and midnight blue is a gift to Geb from his estranged wife.) A sprawling city of magnificent stone buildings and temples, similar to those found in Heliopolis, covers the bottom of the cavern. Geb's palace stands at the exact center of the realm, surrounded by a circular river of pure, sweet water.

A visitor to this place finds everything that he might want in the open-air market, although those who are not skillful bargainers may pay more than they should. However, Geb does not tolerate outright swindlers in his realm. Hospitality and friendship are the order of the day.

THE GREAT DISMAL DELVE

All dao live within the area of the plane of Earth called the Great Dismal Delve. This region is filled with mazes of citadels ruled by minor nobles, with the Great Khan—the leader of the entire realm and race—living in a maze of his own. The dao population is unknown, but it is certainly large. Much larger, however, is the vast number of earth elementals and elemental-kin who serve them, and the nonnative slaves who toil ceaselessly to increase the size of their domains.

At the heart of the Delve is a vast center of commerce and trade—a veritable city that surrounds the palace of the Great Khan of All Dao, Kabril Ali al-Sara al-Zalazil, the Fountain of Wealth, the Perfect Compass, Atamen of the Mountain's Roots, the Stone Sultan (and so on, and so on, and so on).

This place is called the Sevenfold Maze-work.



Few words are majestic enough to describe the central court of the dao. In addition to being a truly immense fortress in its own right, it is said that this place connects to each and every mazework within the Great Dismal Delve. The linking tunnels allow the dao to move freely about the khanate with their slaves, who often cannot pass through the stone. In addition, pockets of every conceivable elemental, paraelemental, or quasialemental material can be found somewhere in the Delve, with connecting tunnels to the great market and fabulous forges of the Sevenfold Mazework. With all of these resources at his command, the Great Khan of the dao is one of the most powerful beings in the plane.

The Great Khan lives within the Hidden Fulcrum of the Dao, a secretive palace where the ruler of these evil people plots his twisted schemes and lusts after treasures he has not yet acquired or stolen. Rumors speak of a magical rune that secretly marks all objects in the Sevenfold Mazework, particularly gemstones, as property of the Great Khan. The dao punish thieves who try to steal from their ruler with death.

The so-called Free Market (good luck finding anything free here) offers virtually all goods that can be purchased anywhere in the multiverse, but it mostly teems with slave traders and their living wares. For the right price, one can lay hands on any manner of creature, magical or otherwise, as well as a means of commanding it to do his bidding. The dao are slavers, plain and simple. They make no bones about it and do not seem to understand why some find that to be offensive or evil. They simply cannot fathom the concept of sympathy or mercy and use others to further their own ends if they can. I have heard that some outsiders who call themselves the Fated cling to a similar belief system, but I doubt that they are so cruel.

Near the Sevenfold Mazework lies a fiery mountain of molten metal called the Iron Crucible. This place serves as a link to the Elemental Plane of Fire. The efreet and dao both use this to trade with each other, the efreet usually looking for slaves and the dao looking for precious metals, gems, or magic.

PLANEWALKERS ◆ IN EARTH ◆

Those traveling to the Elemental Plane of Earth usually plan for a long stay. Rarely do the vortices or portals that bring one here or take him away lie near his final destination. Instead, he must follow a long, winding, and often indirect path of tunnels, or, in some cases, dig his own passages to reach what he seeks.

The dao, villainous slave-traders that they are, cannot be trusted. They often snatch those who come to them, even humble messengers, and throw them into slave-pits. Wise people avoid dealing with the dao altogether. If one must meet them, it should be in battle. At least, that is how the shad feel. (The dao have enslaved many of us through feigned kindness as well as strength of arms.)

Although the quasiplane of Mineral holds much of the multiverse's treasures, the plane of Earth hides great wealth in its heart as well. Much of it is secret, still awaiting discovery. Dogged explorers—many of whom now guard their spoils or have hidden them in such a way as to keep them from others—have found some of this fortune. Treasure-seekers are not unknown in the Anvil, and they sometimes walk away with great wealth.

Some outsiders use the endless imperviousness of Earth to hide things they never want found, not because of their value, but because of their danger. Horrible beasts, cursed artifacts, and banes of all sorts rest within tombs of stone. The powerful dwellers of other planes often hire adventurers to bring a dreaded thing here and bury it. Of course, *other* powerful individuals often hire *other* adventurers to come here and dig it up again.

Surprisingly, a few great cities lie within huge caverns in the Elemental Plane of Earth. Rianttyr Na-Mecas and Totholia, very different sorts of places, boast populations in the thousands, mostly of outsiders. The former city is full of humans, generally, though it contains a number of mixed races, while the latter city is home primarily to dwarves and gnomes. Those not native to this plane find it comforting to congregate with others of their kind. The plane of Earth is many things, and lonely can be chief among them.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

Although I know little of such things, I have been told that it is possible for a wizard to use spell keys to overcome the restrictions that the Anvil imposes upon his magic, especially that involving the schools of Elemental Air and Fire. In most cases, spell keys for the plane of Earth are physical objects added to material components normally needed for the spell. Almost without exception, these are types of ore, minerals, or elements related to the effect of the spell. For example, a spell key to improve the effect of a *fireball* might take the form of a fire opal.

If I might make another suggestion for visitors bound for a long-term stay in the plane: Bring tools, light sources, food, water, and anything that might allow one to reinforce stone construction, such as wooden or iron beams or supports. This last suggestion allows an outsider to dig out a place to live and dwell within it without fear of it collapsing right away. In short, I suppose, the same supplies needed for an underground expedition on a prime-material world are needed here, perhaps to an even greater degree.

I hope that my words provide some assistance.

Greetings, honored readers! I am Riddel im-Bashadiel, Commander of the Melted Wing, a dedicated legion of the finest soldiers ever given life in the flames of a mother's womb. I have been chosen above all others to instruct those unfortunates not native to the Elemental Plane of Fire about the realm of my heart

THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF FIRE: THE CREMATORIUM

and home. This I do gladly. My great Sultan, Lord of Flame, the Potentate Incandescent, the Tempering and Eternal Flame of Truth, the Most Puissant of Hunters, Marshall of the Order of the Fiery Heart, the Smoldering Dictator, and the Crimson Firebrand wishes me to encourage those who come to our realm to do so with greater education. The more a

"cutter" knows, the more likely it is that he may avoid roasting in the Pit of Slow-Burning Flame for angering my people, the great and noble Efreet.

Filiag Highthumbs of the cold and dark city of Sigil once wrote this of the plane of Elemental Fire in his *Planes and Travel* journals, which were published posthumously many years ago:

"If there's a more hostile place than the Elemental Plane of Fire anywhere in the multiverse, it's being kept in the dark. From start to finish, this plane is nothing short of destruction incarnate. Nothing, either animate or inanimate, that finds its way here lasts for long without a good deal of magical protection. That's why folks call it the Crematorium."

"When most primes, especially the clueless ones, think of Hell, they think of a place that looks a lot like the plane of Fire. The lowest regions of the plane appear as a giant sea of living fire. Occasionally, plumes of flame leap into the air, becoming vast blazing clouds of oily incineration. In time, these rolling firestorms slowly settle down to the surface again, frying everything they touch."

"If a body hasn't tumbled to the idea yet, it's really, really hot here."

The honored master Highthumbs obviously has—or I should say, *had*—a poor opinion of my home. Actually, that does not surprise me. To those from the frigid realms beyond the plane of Fire, the glory that is true flame must be more than they can comprehend. My sympathies. His description of the plane is not entirely inaccurate, however. The Sea of Scorching Waves washes upon the shores of the Lands of Fire while the Scalding Skies rise above, filled with firestorms and rippling waves of pure, invisible heat. Thus, unlike the natives of some of the inferior Elemental Planes, we can identify such simple concepts as "up" and "down" here. But I will not linger overlong on the misfortunes of the lesser born.

Most physical objects from elsewhere simply burst into flames the moment they arrive in the Elemental Plane of Fire. Some do not even last that long, being instantly and utterly consumed too fast for their owner to notice. In most cases, things burn so thoroughly that no ash or other residue is left behind. The weakness of flammability becomes apparent here more than in the cold realms outside the plane. Even objects that do not burn on the frozen wastes of the Prime Material or most of the Outer Planes catch fire or melt here. While a pleasant thing for my kind (and the elementals and their kin), this can cause hardship for an outsider. However, magical items forged elsewhere have a chance of surviving the hungry flames.

I+'S N⊕+
+HE HEAT,
I+'S +HE...
HMM.
N⊕.
I+'S +HE HEAT.
—HAIMICH
TALLSHINS,
A HALFLING
PLANEWALKER

ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION: Water
WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS
Air, Earth <
Fire +

Perhaps you should come to our plane bearing a great number of magical items....

Ahem. In any event, volcanic stone is not subject to the heat of the inferno. Thus, a traveler can sometimes find islands of obsidian or basalt and even scattered, extensive deserts of pumice floating in the endless sea of fire. Such places may offer respite from the searing flames, but they do nothing to lessen the heat.

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

Those from the worlds of diluted elements must learn a number of things if they are to survive in the Elemental Planes. In the lifeless, boring expanse of the plane of Stone (*Earth—the Editor*), for instance, explorers who do not possess a plan for moving through solid stone will be lost the minute they arrive. Of course, the biggest obstacle to traveling the realm of Fire should seem obvious to even the most inexperienced traveler: They must discover a way to resist the heat and flames that their too-frail cold bodies cannot tolerate.

Many assume, for reasons which I do not fully understand, that the plane of Elemental Fire is an evil place. Perhaps the answer lies in the concept many races have regarding Hell, or perhaps it is because fire can be a destructive, ever-hungering force. Some even call my plane the Crematorium, which seems quite rude to me, truth be told. Do not assume that just because our environment is so hostile to your cool flesh, that we—the inhabitants of this realm—are all evil.

(It must be said, for all our good narrator's protestations, that many of the inhabitants of the plane of Fire are evil in nature. Of course, many inner-planar natives tend toward evil, just as a fair portion are dedicated to the cause of good. And it should be said that unlike the fiends of the Lower Planes, efreet, salamanders, and other inner-planar bashers aren't inherently, irrevocably evil. Good, or at least neutral, efreeti—for example—are more common than a body might think.—the Editor)



GETTING HERE

The plane of Fire is not only dangerous to nonnatives, but, I am told, it can very hard to reach. Few gateways lead here and even fewer lead out. Still, those who possess the determination can find their way into this vast, insatiable blaze. I leave mention of the well-documented portals of Sigil to others; instead, I will reveal a few of the lesser-known means of ingress that I have learned of from planar travelers.

In the tortured wastes of Carceri's lowest sphere there is an immense portal bound within a great ring of jumbled bones. Every one of these bones comes from an intelligent creature of some sort.

In order to open this magical conduit and thus travel to Fire, a creature must press a bone against the ring. This bone must be from some manner of intelligent creature. Further, it must be from a type of creature whose bones have never before been used to open the portal. If the bone is new to the gate, it is absorbed into the structure of the portal and the doorway opens. If this type of bone has already been used to open the gate, nothing happens.

So just how likely is it that any given type of bone works? Well, don't expect anything common to open the portal. The following chart indicates the chance that a specific type of bone causes the gate to open.

FREQUENCY RATING	CHANCE TO OPEN GATE
Common	1%
Uncommon	2%
Rare	3%
Very Rare	5%

The *Frequency Rating* on the above table refers to the MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM entry describing the creature. Certain unique beings, like the dread Tarrasque, may provide a greater chance of success (as the DM wishes).

It is said that the yugoloths of Gehenna have their own gateway to the domain of Elemental Fire. This basalt-framed portal, if it does indeed exist, is rumored to stand within the dread Tower of the Arcanaloths. Unlocking this gate is very easy, one need only have a black heart (*that is, be of evil alignment—the Editor*) and carry an open flame.

The real problem, of course, is reaching it. Rumors claim that anyone foolish enough to enter the Tower finds either untold magical power or death. The latter seems to be the case far more often than not. After all, how many beings have *you* met with unlimited magical power?

Vortices to the plane of Fire are far more common than portals, though even these are few and far between. While expanses of water, air, and earth are common enough on the Prime Material and other planes,

such concentrations of fire are, sadly, almost unknown. Still, when a great blaze erupts (a vast forest fire or suchlike), the heart of the inferno sometimes creates a vortex to the plane of Fire.

Further, there are those who say that the magical fire that spews from the maws of legendary red dragons is drawn directly from the Elemental Plane of Fire. If this is true, it might be possible to use such a torrent of flame to make the journey. Whether it works or not, however, most agree that a flammable being would have to "barmy" to try it. I, on the other hand, would love to attempt the experiment—if only the flames of such beasts were their only threat....

HAZARDS

Just how intense is the substance of the plane of Fire? Well, here is "the dark of it."

FIRE, FIRE, AND MORE FIRE

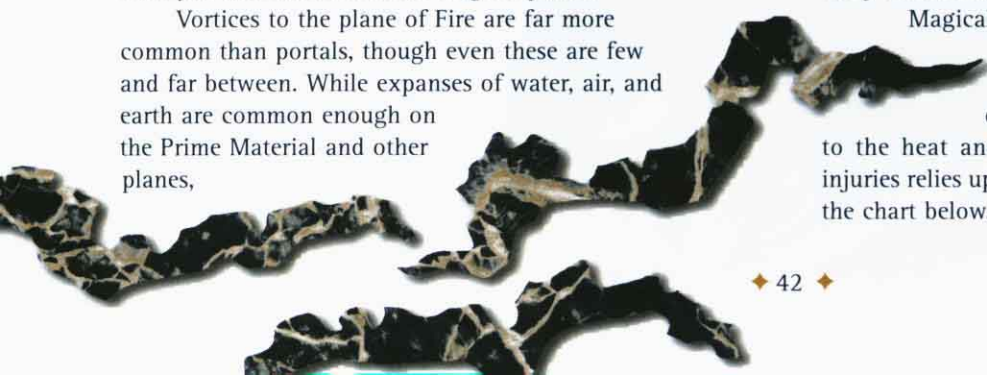
Any nonmagical or unprotected flammable material like wood, paper, cloth, and so forth instantly bursts into flames when it arrives here. Nothing like this lasts for more than a round. Anyone wearing items made of such material suffers 1d10 points of damage if they are not already shielded from injury by heat or flame. Magical items like spells scrolls or a *cloak of elvenkind* or such are allowed a saving throw vs. magical fire at a -6 penalty to escape such destruction.

Unprotected water and other fluids instantly boil away into vapor. Those exposed to these boiling liquids or the cloud of superheated steam they release suffers 2d10 points of damage. Magical fluids (which do not include holy water) may make a saving throw vs. magical fire, although a -4 penalty is applied to this check. Water of any type, including ice, may never be conjured to this plane.

Nonmagical or unprotected nonvolcanic stone melts into magma in 2 rounds and then boils away into vapor 2 rounds after that. This inflicts 3d10 points of damage on anyone in close contact with such material. Living creatures made of stone, such as earth elementals or golems, suffer 1d10 points of damage from the heat each round. Volcanic stone, which includes basalt, obsidian, and pumice, is immune to the heat of this plane. Magical stone of any type can survive with a successful saving throw vs. magical fire (with a -2 penalty).

Unprotected or nonmagical metal items heat to the melting point in only 2 rounds. This causes 4d10 points of damage to those in contact with the metal, and may potentially disable limbs and the like (as per the *heat metal* spell).

Magical metal items can escape this fate with an unmodified saving throw vs. magical fire. Creatures of flesh and blood suffer damage each round that they spend exposed to the heat and fire of this plane. The severity of their injuries relies upon their natural Armor Class as indicated on the chart below.



NATURAL AC	DAMAGE PER ROUND
10 to 8	6d10
7 to 5	5d10
4 to 2	4d10
1 to -1	3d10
-2 to -4	2d10
-5 to -7	1d10
-8 to -10	Nil

Magic is, without a doubt, the best protection a nonnative can have. Spells like *protection from fire* or magical trinkets like a *ring of fire protection* are nothing short of necessities here. Of course, a fragile, flammable outsider has to be careful, because the minute his protection expires, he likely to do the same.

BREATHING

Again, I turn to the opinionated Filiag Highthumbs for the nonnative's point of view:

"What passes for an atmosphere in the plane of Fire isn't really fit for man or beast. Forget the fact that it's superheated. If you've lived long enough to be worried about breathing, then you've obviously got something to protect yourself from the fires.

"The problem with breathing in the plane of Fire is that the air here a mixture of toxic gases (many of which are flammable and in the process of burning). Beyond that, the stuff is very thin and chock-full of poisonous vapors. The net effect of all this is that a body must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon each round or suffer 1d10 points of damage. This saving throw can be avoided by holding your breath, but that's only a delaying tactic at best. And when your lungs give out and you have to start gasping in breaths, this imposes a -2 penalty on your saving throw.

"A body can protect himself from this danger in any number of ways. Anything that slows or prevents poisoning retards or negates the effects of this danger. Spells such as breathe fire or magma or airy fire are sure protections. Likewise, a planewalker who doesn't need to breathe doesn't need to worry about it."

Of course, when I travel to a nonburning plane, I can breathe normally (perhaps with a little discomfort), but it is probably improper to boast....

VISION AND SENSES

No one lacks for light in the plane of Fire. The blaze here provides all manner of beautiful illumination in almost any conceivable color, from the yellow of a campfire to the blue of an eternal flame. Despite all this illumination, though, flame is much harder to see through than air for those not blessed with flamesight.

Creatures not native to this plane find the range of their vision reduced to only 120 feet. Native creatures can see twice as far in most cases. At the market in the glorious

City of Brass (see below—the Editor), a nonnative can acquire special glasses that improve vision. These spectacles have lenses fashioned from smoky quartz, giving nonnative creatures vision to a range of 240 feet.

Needless to say, infravision doesn't work in the plane of Fire. The whole plane is so awash with heat that the difference between one place and another is insignificant.

ELEMENTAL POCKETS

In many of the Inner Planes, elemental seepage is a dangerous phenomenon. In the plane of Fire, these pockets can offer flammable explorers a refuge from the relentless inferno that surrounds them. The problem, however, is that such pockets are generally only slightly more resistant to the realm than the average "planewalker." Thus, these refuges are fleeting things at best. We of the plane do not care for these pockets and do not mourn their passing. They dilute the purity of Fire—although the pockets of magma and smoke are more tolerable than say, those of earth and water. Of course, showing the true superiority of flame, earth and water become magma and steam here!

And, of course, explorers are not the only people—or things—looking for respite from the heat. Countless predators (salamanders, fire snakes, flame spirits, hell hounds, phantom stalkers, fire giants, and so on) watch any safe haven the way a lion watches a water hole in the Beastlands.

But Fire does not tolerate other substances, and so these pockets tend to be consumed in time. On the average, an elemental pocket is consumed at a rate of 20 yards per day. Thus, a pocket 400 yards in diameter gradually dwindles in size until it is utterly consumed in 20 days, while a pocket 1 mile across (that's 1,760 yards) lasts 88 days.

What does that mean for the very large pockets? Well, a pocket 10,000 miles across (or 17.6 million yards) lingers for 880,000 days. That's just shy of 2,410 years. To the average human, that might seem an eternity. In the scope of the multiverse's eternal fires, however, it is but a blink of an eye.

Pockets of ash, magma, smoke, and radiance are consumed at slower rates than normal. Because of their close relationship to elemental Fire, they burn away at a rate of only 10 yards per day. The reverse is true of those elements tied to water. Elemental pockets of water, ice, steam, ooze, and salt are consumed at a rate of 40 yards per day.

OTHER DANGERS

Once you poor, frail mortals have dealt with the basic difficulties of simple survival, you may wish to consider two unique hazards found within the plane of Fire.

DETONATION. From time to time, a cloud of deadly, explosive vapors manages to coalesce before ignition. When something finally triggers the blast, a powerful explosion rips through the area. To determine the size of the blast area, the Dungeon Master should use the table presented on page 14 for elemental pockets, dividing the results from that table in half.

These events can pose a threat even to creatures like myself, although true fire elementals, it is said, do not fear even these eruptions. An explosion like this requires everyone in the area to make a saving throw vs. breath weapon. A failed save results in 2d10 points of damage while a successful one cuts this by half. Creatures not naturally immune to or somehow protected from heat and flame suffer twice the normal damage from this blast.

SHADOW FIRE. Shadow fire is a strange and deadly phenomenon found only in the Elemental Plane of Fire. To the naked eye, regions of shadow fire look just like the rest of the plane. However, a closer examination with magic like *true seeing* indicates that something is amiss. The size of a shadow fire pocket can be determined just as for elemental pockets.

Regions of shadow fire are far cooler than those flames surrounding them. To those of us who are physically adapted to existence in the plane of Fire, they are dangerously cold. Indeed, even creatures that are magically protected from flame and heat are vulnerable to the chilling effects of shadow fire.

Creatures native to this plane, like a salamander or fire elemental, suffer 2d10 points of damage for every round spent in a region of shadow fire. Nonnative beings that have been magically or otherwise protected from fire and heat suffer 1d10 points of damage each round. Ironically, creatures without any protection from heat and flame find regions of the cursed shadow fire to be cool sanctuaries that cause them no harm at all, although it is doubtful that they would survive the rest of the plane long enough to reach such safety.

MOVING ABOUT

Traveling from one place to another in the Elemental Plane of Fire should be fairly simple. After all, a definite up and down exists here, although nonnatives may find wading through a boundless region of flame very unsettling.

The "surface" of this plane is composed of highly compressed fire. In appearance, it is rather like a brightly burning coal, although its consistency is about the same as that of water. It is therefore possible to swim through this sea of flame just as one would paddle through some distastefully cool mountain lake. Some enterprising souls have even created sailing ships that ply the flames as more common ships might sail atop water.

This layer of liquid flame is only about 15 feet deep. Beneath it lies a layer of even more highly condensed fire. This has the appearance of white-hot metal and is as smooth as glass to the touch. Beings heavy enough to sink beneath the layer of liquid fire may walk upon this surface.

Flying through the atmosphere above our blazing sea is not as easy, however. The atmosphere is so thin that wings, gas bags, and the like cannot provide enough lift to raise a heavy body above the surface. Of course, magical means of flight still function, and creatures such as fire bats,

elementals, and we efreet can move wherever we like throughout any of the plane's environments.

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

"The natives of the Elemental Plane of Fire are as diverse as they are dangerous. Some of the most well known and feared supernatural menaces originate on this plane.

"There're some folks who say that natives of this plane are all hot tempered and aggressive. That may or may not be true, but there sure seems to be plenty of evidence for it. The Crematorium has more than its share of powerful, warlike creatures. These include not only the native elementals, but also demonic beasts like hell hounds and the dreaded efreet."

—Filiag Highthumbs, *Planes and Travel*

Dreaded, indeed. Demonic. Hrumph. I wish master Highthumbs was still alive so that I could...well, never mind.

ELEMENTALS

Strict racial segregation and rigid social structures generally mark the Inner Planes. Earth elementals stay in the company of earth elementals, steam mephits only associate with other steam mephits, and so on. This is not always the case in the plane of Fire, however. Here, diverse races form tiny kingdoms and principalities, each ruled by a leader who commands a variety of creatures. The typical citizens of such realms include not only elementals, but also fire minions, mephits, harginn, gen, plasms, giants, drakes, hell hounds, and flame spirits.

The salamanders are the one notable exception to this standard. This evil race lives in vast nations ruled by their own powerful nobles. While other races sometimes live among them, there is never any doubt that a salamander community is a salamander community. They generally maintain an alliance with we efreet and often war with the azer. Despite these common characteristics, salamanders often battle among themselves. It is said that the greatest enemy of the salamanders is the salamanders.

A race of chaotic evil elementals known as pyrophor fight endlessly against the helions, their lawful good counterparts. These battles are of such epic scale that any general would be well advised to study them. I find them fascinating.

ANIMALS

Our plane hosts a few types of black flies and glowing hornets as well as crawling bugs, the largest of which is, of course, the fire beetle. A common little creature called the waiveras, more a pest than anything, feeds on these tiny insects and fire snake eggs. The waiveras, a black lizard with eight legs, makes a fine stew. Likewise, the scape, a teleporting rodent that feeds upon carrion, can be made into many fine dishes. Unfortunately, my tastes tend toward the cooked

meats, and neither of these creatures can be seared like the meat of animals from other planes—as natives they possess an immunity to heat.

Elemental versions of many so-called “normal” animals known as animentals also dwell in the plane of Fire. These include birds made of nothing but fire, which waft about on winds too thin to support their mortal peers; and blazing sharks that swim within the scalding fluid of the Blazing Sea and the Sea of Burning Waves (where one begins and the other ends no nonnative can truly comprehend).

MONSTERS

The diverse creatures of Fire include flamelings, lava worms, fire bats, fire elemental beasts, and other predators. These brute beasts form their own packs, preying upon anything that wanders by.

Firetails and tshala lead a more peaceful existence and avoid conflicts. Reclusive by nature, they shun contact with other creatures.

At the same time, vast armies of firenewts struggle to claim any and all territory on the more “solid” firelands. Riding great striders, these deadly creatures challenge anyone foolish enough to cross into their domains.

EFREET+

The noble efreet, eternal enemies of the hated djinn, call the Elemental Plane of Fire our home. We are such an integral part of this plane that our bodies are composed of basalt, bronze, and flame itself. Although we efreet are not so simple as to wholly be labeled “evil” as if we were all forged of the same flame, there are a few among us who one might call self-serving and arrogant, I will admit.

The center of our insurmountable power is the awesome City of Brass, which is described below. In addition to this magnificent

fortress, we have spread our keeps and outposts throughout the plane of Fire to keep it secure. Our dominance is only for the good of the plane. The typical efreet outpost houses 4d10 of us, and there is a fair chance that 1d4 jann or 1d4 dao may also be found there. The Grand Sultan of the Efreet and his inner council of six high pashas rule the City of Brass, while a variety of deys, amirs, and maliks oversee the outposts.

We also have built grand fortresses to secure our power throughout the outlying provinces stretching away from the City of Brass. We build these great structures from obsidian or submerge them within liquid metal or flaming oil pits. Each serves as a bastion for a thousand or more of our greatest soldiers. I, myself, command a fortress called the Black Fist, which floats upon the Sea of Scorching Waves. It lies near the Isles of Scorched Bones, where rumor has it the bones of some long-dead race rest above the flaming sea. These islands now provide a home to hundreds of thousands of fire bats (and a great many fire mephits), which I and those in my command take great sport in hunting.

We efreet often utilize slave labor traded to us from the dao of Earth in exchange for magic or iron-wrought work. We despise the djinn of Air and the marids of Water (cursed fire-extinguishing water!) for their opposition to our most glorious of elements. Most of the intelligent races of Fire resent our power and lust after our position as masters of this plane. Still, the salamanders, the azer, the firenewts, and even the elementals themselves eventually find their way to efreeti citadels or the City of Brass. In short—they need us more than they hate us.



AZER

The azer are a dwarflike race of honorable creatures who dwell upon the Elemental Plane of Fire. They reside upon and within the elemental pockets of earth that stand in the Blazing Sea. These master metalworkers make their homes in towers of iron, brass, and steel. Foolish rumor says that they laid the foundations of the City of Brass, but this is nought but a cold and baseless lie. *(The azer won't comment on the matter.—the Editor)* A typical tower serves as a residence for 5d6 azer. Beneath it one finds a catacomb of tunnels and mines dug through the fire in which the azer work.

The azer swear fealty to Amaimon, the master of their kind. His government has no seat, however, for Amaimon and his host of advisers travel throughout the Elemental Plane of Fire. They visit each azer tower for a brief time, then move on to the next.

POWERS

Few powers inhabit the Elemental Plane of Fire. Perhaps they find this place as uncomfortable as mortals do. Still, there are three very powerful creatures—the Elemental Princes of the realm—that must be considered by anyone who would travel here.

IMIX. Great and powerful Imix, the Prince of Evil Fire Creatures, rules over his domain from a mighty fortress within the heart of a powerful volcano. Supposedly, his home contains vortices leading to the planes of Earth and Magma. This may be true, for the archomental is said to have powerful allies in those planes.

A vast army of fire elementals, efreet, and salamanders call Imix master, but this is not enough for him. The Prince of Evil Fire Creatures constantly strives to destroy everyone who refuses to bow down to him. This often includes his allies, whom he sees merely as passing conveniences.

Zaaman Rul (see below) recently launched a great war against Imix. Despite the naive belief that good always triumphs over evil, this battle was clearly won by the forces of evil. Imix continues to press this advantage, routing Zaaman Rul's forces wherever he finds them. Some have said that his great success in these battles has tipped the scales of the entire plane of Fire toward evil. That, I suppose, remains to be seen.

It has been suggested that Imix might even be able to sweep Zaaman Rul and his followers out of existence, but for one important fact: The Prince of Evil Fire Creatures is also engaged in an endless war with foul Olhydra, the Princess of Evil Water Creatures. As he is unable to allocate his full attention to Zaaman Rul, it seems likely that the Prince of Good Fire Creatures will be able to survive, if not prosper, for some time to come.

Imix appears as an 18-foot-tall column of flame, radiating powerful waves of heat at all times. At will, he can

send forth tendrils of flame to manipulate objects or attack his enemies. A continuous crackling and hissing fills the air around Imix.

KOSSUTH. Kossuth, the Tyrant-King of Fire Elementals, is easily the most powerful creature dwelling in the plane—except of course, for the Great Sultan himself *(whose entry I had to remove from this section since he clearly is not a power, despite our narrator's suggestions to the contrary—the Editor)*. Kossuth remains wary of Imix, however, for the Evil Prince constantly schemes to undermine Kossuth's authority and destroy him. Despite Imix's efforts, however, Kossuth remains a greater power and the ultimate master of all flames.

Kossuth's home is an immense globe of elemental Fire that burns brightly at the heart of this plane. This orb shines a brilliant blue-white in color and throws off heat so great that the rest of the Elemental Plane seems chill in comparison. This fortress, known as the Crimson Pillar, is described more fully below.

While Imix, Zaaman Rul, and the other masters of this realm battle each other for supremacy, Kossuth has more important duties to attend to. The Tyrant-King oversees the protection of the plane of Fire as a whole. Any who would dare invade this place must be ready to deal with him and the dread forces at his command.

ZAAMAN RUL. The azer and the salamanders agree on at least one thing: that Zaaman Rul, the Prince of Good Fire Creatures, is the bastard son of none other than Imix, his arch-enemy. No one knows for sure except for Imix and Zaaman Rul, of course.

Being of a very different temperament than his supposed sire, Zaaman Rul gathered together a great army of his brethren, including such diverse creatures as azer, firetails, and even a few renegade efreet. On the Plain of Burnt Dreams, his army attacked the fortress of Imix in a battle of a magnitude that the plane of Fire had rarely seen.

But Zaaman Rul grossly underestimated the might of his foe. The army of good was all but swept out of existence. As a result of this defeat, Zaaman Rul has gone into hiding. His supporters claim that he's biding his time, working to rebuild his army that he might again challenge his father.

Zaaman Rul is a 10-foot-tall, red-skinned humanoid with long black hair and black eyes. At will, he can conjure forth the great flaming sword that has become his symbol. He is aware that he is probably the weakest of the Princes of Elemental Good. He has vowed to never again overestimate his own prowess, or to underestimate those of his enemies.

PROXIES

None of the powers noted above actually make use of proxies in the traditional sense of the word. Still, they have attracted some very powerful followers who serve their masters as diligently as any proxy.

ASGEROTH. The evil Imix has searched the multiverse for creatures of great power and evil to help him in his battles against Zaaman Rul and Olhydra. The greatest of his finds is the dread Asgeroth, a pit fiend drawn from the dire depths of the Nine Hells (*Baator, to our planar readers—the Editor*).

On his own plane, Asgeroth was a minor general. He hungered for greater power, but the might of his peers was always just a bit too much for him to match. When Imix contacted him, the pit fiend eagerly jumped at the chance to assume an important role in the army of evil fire creatures.

Asgeroth recognizes his debt to Imix and so he is a most loyal servant to his blazing master. It was Asgeroth himself who led the final charge that shattered the armies of Zaaman Rul on the Plain of Burnt Dreams. Indeed, Imix has placed Asgeroth in command of his efforts to find and destroy the Prince of Good Fire Creatures, leaving the Evil Prince to focus his attention on Olhydra.

GARN. A powerful and intelligent salamander, Garn serves the cause of neutrality and its ultimate master, Kossuth. While he appears to have had his natural powers greatly enhanced by the power he serves, Garn does not seem to have any real contact with his master. Whether or not some mystical bond exists between them is a matter of debate. The truth is, no one knows and no one is likely to find out.

Garn is nothing short of an assassin. He does not negotiate with Kossuth's enemies or lead his armies. When someone begins to cause the Tyrant-King too much trouble, Garn sees to it that the difficulty comes to an abrupt end.

◆ THE SITES ◆

Of all the Inner Planes, none are more changeable than Fire. As such, few sites endure for very long. Still, some resist the eternal burning and become places of which any visitor to this realm had best be aware.

THE CITY OF BRASS

Perhaps the most well-known place in the plane of Fire is the legendary City of Brass, and rightly so. This magnificent fortress of towers, domes, spires, and minarets stands upon a great hemisphere of solid brass fully 40 miles across. The whole of the city glows hotly at all times, a constant reminder that only the power of the efreet keeps the place from being consumed. Rivers of magma and boiling, black ooze spread out like spider webs from the base of the city. All in all, the effect is rather like that of a river delta on a prime world, if one must make such a comparison. A shining brass wall surrounds the entire city, broken only for eight well-guarded gates.

Near the City of Brass lies the Obsidian Fields, where our slaves tend the crops that sustain us. Qamh, habbat, verdobba, umbellin, and tergamit, which I believe you call fire fruit, all grow here in abundance. (*The first four are grasses, grains,*

tubers, and beans all native to the plane. Fire fruit is in fact deadly to nonnatives, something of which the narrator is no doubt aware.—the Editor) Near these fields lies the Sable Forest, where the serpent trees sustain themselves on nothing more than heat. Here, our nobles relax and experience the joys of the hunt with their hell hound packs and fiery mounts.

No one knows exactly how many efreet fill the City of Brass, except perhaps the Grand Sultan himself. At the very least, however, the place has a population twice that of any city known to exist on the Prime Material Plane. The huge number of elemental beings that live and work among us further increases this total. Not all of those that dwell within the city are even natives. Why, Jamina al-Mubarak al-Kamal is one of you (Pr/♀ human/Ele(F)15/N). She serves as an ambassador for a prime group called the Brotherhood of the True Flame. And there are others—so feel welcome!

At the center of the City of Brass stands the Sultan's Charcoal Palace. This structure towers above the rest of the city, and from its uppermost spires the Grand Sultan of the Efreet can look down upon the whole of his domain. The palace's spires rise near a fountain of fire called the Breath of the Sultan, which can be seen from any quarter of the city.

Untold riches, the wealth of multiple worlds, lie below, cached deep within the heart of this magnificent palace. Few know for sure exactly how much treasure there is or what forms it might take. The only thing known for certain about the Sultan's hoard is that it must be very well guarded. In fact, the public executions of those who have tried to sneak into the palace are truly staggering in their brutality, even to me.

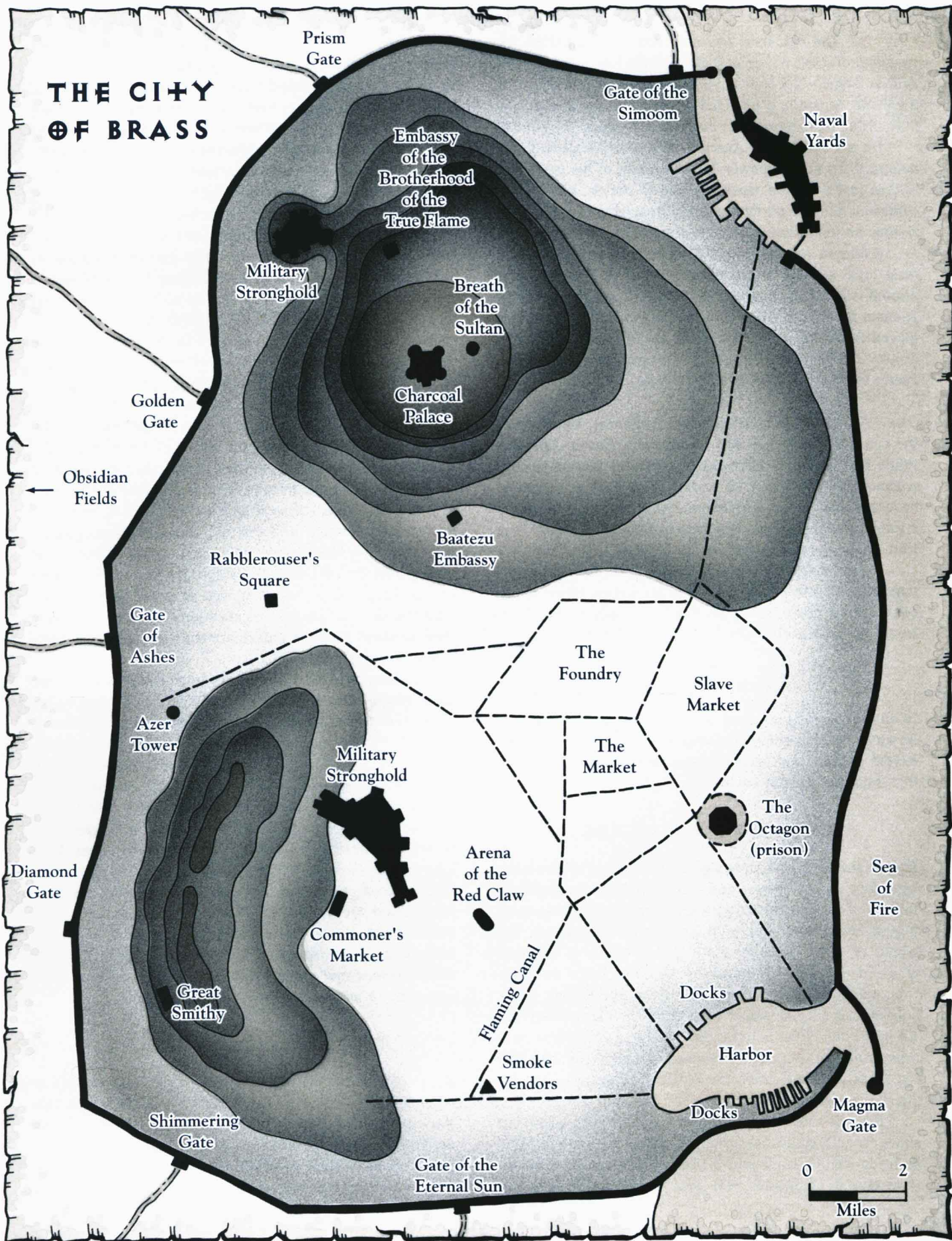
(*Although Riddel would never or could never relate such things, there're a few more things that a planewalker might need to know about the City of Brass—a few thousand, really, but there's only so much space between these covers. First of all, the efreet work hand-in-hand with the baatezu. Portals between the city and various spots in Baator abound. They trade servants and slaves as well as information. It's not all that uncommon to spy an osyluth or a cornugon roaming about in the company of efreet here—and some have even rattled their bone-boxes about seeing a pit fiend hobnobbing with the nobles. Second, a planewalker ought to know about the Wormhole. This is a secret section of the undercity that even the efreet haven't tumbled to. It's a hidey-hole for salamanders, but perhaps a diplomatic and silver-tongued soul could convince those within to allow him sanctuary—a word to the wise.—the Editor*)

THE CRIMSON PILLAR

If one part of the plane can be said to be hotter than any other, it must certainly be the Crimson Pillar of Kossuth. This great orb, which is not less than 10 miles in diameter, hangs high above the fiery surface of the sea.

This blue-white sphere throws off so much heat that those who draw near to it, even creatures native to the plane

THE CITY OF BRASS



of Fire, burn. The closer a body gets, the more dangerous the rays of the citadel become. The following chart indicates how much damage a traveler suffers at a given distance.

DISTANCE FROM THE PILLAR	DAMAGE PER ROUND
100 miles	1d4
50 miles	1d6
25 miles	1d8
10 miles	1d10
5 miles	1d12
1 mile	1d20

The above numbers assume that the body is naturally immune to or otherwise protected from the normal heat of the plane of Fire. If this is not the case, then the damage indicated above is doubled and added to the normal injuries inflicted by the burning of the plane.

Within the Pillar of Kossuth the great power holds court, providing protection from the damaging heat to those he wishes to see (and taking it away if they displease him). A few (including some of those who revere him) see Kossuth as the neutralizing force between the warring archomental of the plane, but that far oversimplifies the role of the Tyrant-King of Elementals. More accurately, he serves only his own needs as the master of Fire and those creatures associated with it. Surely, if he wished to destroy both Imix and Zaaman Rul, he would (and perhaps, such is his plan).

THE CRUCIBLE

The largest of the azer towers is known as the Crucible. It rests on an island of obsidian ringed by a vast sea of molten, bubbling platinum. Whether this metal ocean is natural or was created by the azer is unknown. It may, in fact, serve as a vortex of some sort linking this place with the plane of Earth. The island itself is covered with a forest of treelike plants whose bark and leaves consist of pure metals.

The master of the Crucible is named Shanmakeen (PI/♂ azer/F16,W16/NG) and his skill with hammer and anvil is legendary. It is said that he can and will fashion any manner of magical weapon for those who meet his price.

PLAIN OF BURN+ DREAMS

In the vast region of the Plain of Burnt Dreams, the solid fire that forms the base of this plane rises above the liquid flames of the Blazing Sea. The Plain is highly uneven in shape but looks as much like a great octagon as anything else.

The Plain is noted for two things. The first of these is the Temple of Ultimate Consumption, from which Imix rules his legions of evil. Built in the shape of a great pyramid and fashioned from gleaming blocks of pure obsidian, it is a breathtaking sight. A legion of powerful fire elementals

and similar beings constantly patrols the Plain of Burnt Dreams to protect the temple from unwanted visitors.

Second, and perhaps more important, is of course the great battle between Imix and Zaaman Rul which was recently fought here. There are those who say that a great artifact of untold good was supposed to be used to decide that battle. During this conflict, the story goes, the artifact was lost and vanished beneath the waves of the Blazing Sea before Zaaman Rul could bring it into play. If this is true, anyone who procures the relic could name his own price, selling it to either of the Elemental Princes.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN FIRE ◆

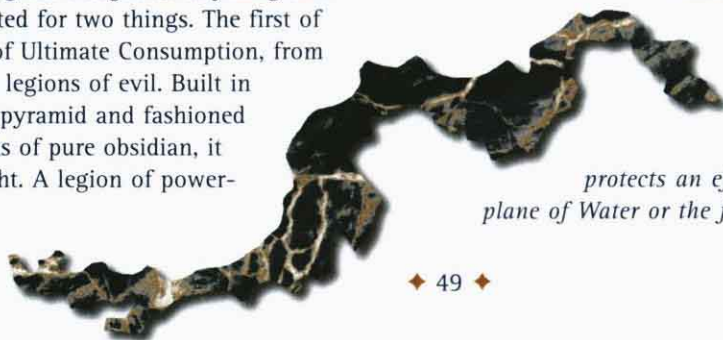
The plane of Fire possesses a reputation unmatched by any other plane in the multiverse. It is feared as much as the Abyss or Baator, and rightfully so. Considering the environmental conditions alone, only the strong can survive here. Still, these kinds of hazards sometimes attract rather than repel mortal adventurers and explorers.

They come to the plane of Fire not only to challenge its reputation (and earn one of their own), but because they know, deep within the primal essence of their being, that fire is power. Nonnatives come to the plane of Elemental Fire to discover power or to learn how to master it. And there is power to be had. We efreet reward those mortals who choose to serve us or work with us. The azer can offer a "planewalker" a finely crafted item for the right price. Sometimes wizards come (or send others) to siphon a tiny fraction of the plane's energy to power a magical item or even a spell.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

(Spell keys in the Elemental Plane of Fire always take the form of fluid dancelike movements. These mimic the leaping flames and enable the caster to attune his own magical energies to those of the plane around him. Remember, though, that magical effects must themselves be able to endure the heat to be useful. [Summoning a creature that dies instantly upon entering the plane of Fire does neither spellcaster nor creature any good.] No key has ever been discovered that permits a wizard to cast spells from the school of Elemental Water in this plane.

A powerful mage named Hynthamis Ruh developed a special sort of homunculus that a nonnative can actually wear that protects the wearer from heat and flame. A little-known secret of these homunculi is that they can only be created using efreeti skins, so it may not be wise to visit the City of Brass bearing such a creature. Similarly, the efreet have created a homunculus that protects an efreet who travels to the depths of the plane of Water or the frigid cold of Ice.—the Editor)



(I found it necessary to compile the information in this section myself. Although I explored many different avenues in attempting to find an appropriate researcher or narrator for this chapter, none could be found. A triton [who shall remain nameless]

promised to deliver a manuscript, but I never heard from him again. The nereid and the water genasi replacements likewise never came

through. It almost makes one a little peery that somebody out there doesn't want the dark of this plane revealed. Is there a secret out there in those murky depths? Almost certainly. In fact, there're probably far more than just one.—the Editor)

THE ELEMENTAL PLANE OF WATER: THE BOTTOMLESS DEEP

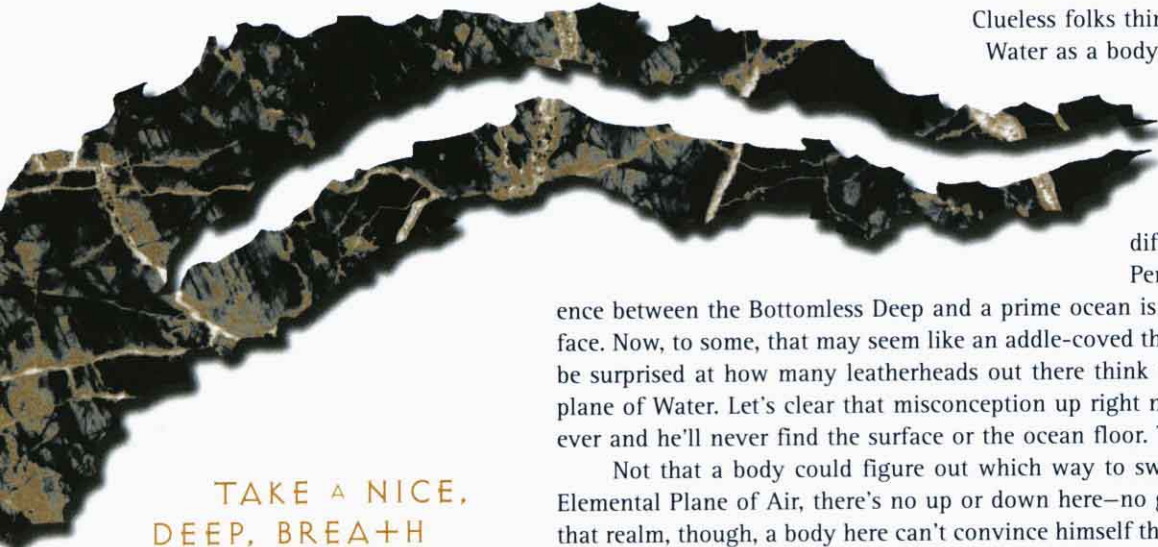
Clueless folks think of the Elemental Plane of Water as a body of water that's more or less like a giant ocean. In some ways, that's true enough. In other regards, though, there are some very important differences.

Perhaps the most telling difference between the Bottomless Deep and a prime ocean is the fact that there's no surface. Now, to some, that may seem like an addle-coved thing to say, but a body might be surprised at how many leatherheads out there think that ships sail on *top* of the plane of Water. Let's clear that misconception up right now—a basher can swim forever and he'll never find the surface or the ocean floor. This endless sea has neither.

Not that a body could figure out which way to swim to even try it. As in the Elemental Plane of Air, there's no up or down here—no gravity at all, in fact. Unlike that realm, though, a body here can't convince himself that a given direction is down. Well, actually, he *can*, it just doesn't have any effect. This lack of gravity means that the hazards of water pressure aren't present. No matter how deep you swim (and “deep” is a truly relative term here), the crushing weight of a terrestrial ocean never materializes.

There's also a soft light—a rippling blue-green glow—infusing the whole plane. Exactly what causes this is unknown, but it's fairly constant throughout the place. Thus, no matter how far a body goes, he'll never want for light.

Most people assume that a really large body of water, like an ocean, will be laced with salt. That's not the case here, save for elemental pockets of salt (see below). Curiously, however, this doesn't matter to the creatures of Water. All manner of aquatic life, denizens of both fresh and salt water, survive comfortably here. Indeed, the nurturing quality of this realm allows creatures native to arctic oceans to mingle with those from the tropics.



TAKE A NICE,
DEEP, BREA+H
OF FRESH WATER.
Y@U'LL FEEL
BE++ER.
—WIEN+AUGH,
A +RIT@N

ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION: Fire*

* Unless the spell is cast within an elemental pocket or protected environment such as the City of Glass (page 59).

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Air, Earth	<
Water	+

◆ PHYSICAL C@NDITI@NS ◆

Of all the Elemental Planes, only the plane of Air is less hostile—at least environmentally. Anybody with an *airy water* or similar spell at her disposal can cope just fine here. For the most part, the water of the Bottomless Deep is sweet tasting, crystal clear, and neither too warm nor too cold. For aquatic races like the locathah, tritons, sahuagin, kuo-toa, and many others, this is nothing short of heaven (literally, in the case of those races' watery petitioners).

GETTING HERE

Given that the Elemental Plane of Water has one of the least-hostile environments among the Inner Planes (at least to primes and other mortal folk), it should come as no surprise that it's one of the most frequently visited. It's also fairly easy to reach, as there are probably more portals connected to the plane of Water than to any other Inner Plane except Air.

A canny blood'll remember one important fact about portals and such leading to the plane of Water: If the gate isn't already underwater, a body opening it up *must* know if it's going to let in water or not. More than a few otherwise-intelligent people have drowned after opening a portal to Elemental Water within a building that quickly flooded.

In Muspelheim, the realm of the Ysgardian giants, lies a vast, shimmering pool known as the Silver Eye. While it is said that anybody who looks into the Eye catches a glimpse of what the future holds for him, those who know the dark recognize that the Eye conceals another secret. Anyone who wades out to the middle of the pool (it's only about 3 feet deep) carrying a staff made of yew wood can open a gate to and from the plane of Water. Naturally, the giants who call kip here aren't keen on sharing this secret with outsiders.

Now, the Eye's quite large, about 100 yards in diameter. Once it's open, the gate remains passable for a full hour. Because of this, a sizable force can be moved through the Eye into the plane of Water. This fact isn't lost on those who dwell on either side of the gate.

It's said that the river Oceanus, which joins the four layers of Elysium, flows with the purest water outside of the Elemental Planes. Is it any wonder, then, that this great river harbors a portal link to the plane of Water?

Only the guardinals of Elysium know the exact location of the Oceanus Gate. They make sure that no creature of evil alignment ever finds it. Why they bother with this is something of a mystery, however, for only someone whose heart is pure can open the portal.

In addition, a powerful individual named Ahlic (Pl/♂ water genasi/Ele(W)17/NG) watches over this gate. The son of a nereid and a mariner from the Prime Material Plane, Ahlic is said to be able to unleash strokes of lightning from his eyes and exhale gusts of tornado wind. Whether or not this is true, he certainly has done a fine job of controlling access to the Oceanus Gate.

It may be easy to guess at the location of vortices to the plane of Water, but they're generally hard to reach. Many prime worlds are covered with large, ever-churning oceans. Deep beneath their surfaces, when the tide is right and the energies of the multiverse come into alignment, magical channels open. For those clever enough to find these (or unlucky enough to be swept up by them), such vortices provide quick transit to the Elemental Plane of Water. Of course, most surface-dwelling creatures can't hope to survive the pressures found so deep in the ocean. However, two prominent, more accessible types of vortex link the Prime Material Plane with the Bottomless Deep: storm surges and whirlpools. Both hold dangers for the unwary.



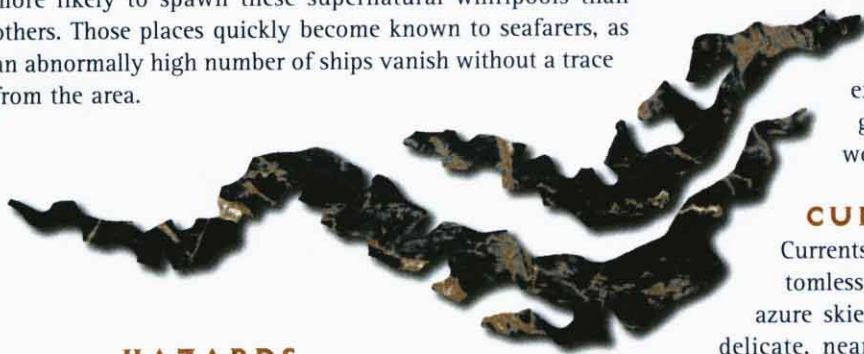
STORM SURGES. When great storms arise, they drive the sea madly before them. This buildup of water, which can be far more devastating than the tempest itself, is called a storm surge. When the volume of water and energy forced before a hurricane or typhoon becomes great enough, it creates a temporary connection to the Elemental Plane of Water.

While these vortices are more common than the whirlpools described below, they are far less easy to access. Even the strongest ship stands a good chance of being destroyed before it reaches the heart of a storm surge. And even if a body can maneuver his vessel near the vortex, fighting the winds and currents to actually reach it can be almost impossible.

Most folks who make use of a storm surge vortex do so by accident. They're the hapless victims of shipwrecks or other disasters at sea. When the storm bears down on them, they're consumed by the vortex and drawn away from their own world. No one on their world ever really knows what becomes of them, writing them off as lost at sea.

WHIRLPOOLS. Plenty of primes, and not a few planars, have seen whirlpools at one time or another. Most often, these aquatic cyclones are caused when two currents flowing in opposite directions abrade each other. They're also frequently created when the waters of a lake or river are drawn through a fissure into an underground chamber. These simple phenomenon are interesting curiosities and, if large enough, can even be dangerous.

From time to time, however, a far more useful type of whirlpool forms. When tidal forces align with other sources of mystical energy, they open a conduit that leads directly into the Elemental Plane of Water. These channels can be quite large, drawing ships, sailors, and sea life into their deadly maws. For one reason or another, some regions are more likely to spawn these supernatural whirlpools than others. Those places quickly become known to seafarers, as an abnormally high number of ships vanish without a trace from the area.



HAZARDS

Those who travel the plane of Water find it fairly safe. Still, every plane has its hazards to consider, and the Bottomless Deep is no exception.

BREA+HING

Of course, the Bottomless Deep is most hospitable to those who are naturally able to breathe water. Others have to hold their breath (as described in the AD&D® rules) or find some

other means of survival—magical means, most commonly. Spells like *airy water* or *water breathing* do the trick nicely. Any number of magical items, such as a *ring of water breathing*, will do the same. Elemental guides can also bestow the same power upon their charges.

Sages have also proposed technological solutions to the problem of breathing in the plane of Water. The noted artificer Shun Leng (who vanished from his home on Mechanus several years ago) was said to have created a mechanical device which allowed a body to extract air from the water just like a fish. Whether this device even exists, let alone works as promised, is the subject of some speculation.

SIGH+S AND SOUNDS

Despite the fact that the water of the Bottomless Deep is lit and very clear, it still isn't as easy to see through as air. As a rule, visibility is limited to no more than 60 feet. Creatures native to watery environs are somewhat better off, being able to see twice as far. Infravision, although still useful in the plane of Water, generally functions at half its normal range (30 feet for most humanoids). In no case can this distance exceed 60 feet, even for aquatic creatures.

On the other hand, sound carries much farther. Unfortunately, it's also almost impossible for nonnatives to discern in which direction a sound originates due to the way it moves through water.

COMBA+

Those used to doing battle in air-filled environments often find underwater combat difficult and dangerous. Such sods had best keep this in mind, because nearly every battle on the plane of Water takes place in the depths.

All of the normal rules governing underwater combat as described in the "Underwater Combat" section of the *DMG* apply to battles in the Bottomless Deep. The nature of this environment mandates only a few exceptions, such as the fact that the lack of gravity means that net-snared prisoners won't sink to the nonexistent bottom.

CURREN+S

Currents forever caress the endless seas of the Bottomless Deep. Like the winds that sweep across the azure skies of the Boundless Blue, these range from delicate, nearly undetectable flows to savage torrents strong enough to carry away the strongest basher.

Currents present the greatest hazard to navigation. It's quite possible for a body to be slowly edged away from his original course when he crosses an unknown current. As a rule, natives of this plane can sense such hazards as they move through them and are able to compensate for the drift. Planewalkers, however, must check (usually on a proficiency or Ability Score) in order to keep themselves on course.

Use the following chart to determine the ferocity of the current in a given area.

1D20	STRENGTH OF CURRENT	ADJUSTMENT
1-2	still	+3
3-4	light current	+2
5-6	moderate current	+1
7-8	strong current	0
9-10	light bore	-1
11-12	moderate bore	-2
13	strong bore	-3
14	light flow	-4
15	moderate flow	-5
16	strong flow	-6
17	light tide	-7
18	moderate tide	-8
19	strong tide	-9
20	doom tide	-10

The "Strength of Current" column primarily exists to give the Dungeon Master a descriptive reference. The last column indicates an adjustment applied to saving throws (for beings or items), attack rolls, proficiency and ability checks, or anything else that the DM might feel is required based upon the situation. For example, a body swimming in a light current receives a +2 bonus to his proficiency check. In a doom tide, however, he suffers a -10 penalty.

From time to time, currents change, tides shift, and flows reverse. These changes tend to occur quite quickly, far more swiftly than in Prime oceans. Thus, a given current may last for only a few seconds or might linger for decades.

The following chart can be used to determine the duration of a given current. Bear in mind that while a visiting planewalker probably has no need to know whether a particular current might last for centuries, such information is valuable to the natives of the plane.

1D20	CURRENT LASTS:
1-2	1d6 rounds
3-4	1d6 turns
5-6	1d6 hours
7-8	1d6 days
9-10	1d6 weeks
11-12	1d6 fortnights
13-14	1d6 months
15-16	1d6 years
17-18	1d6 decades
19-20	1d6 centuries

To calculate the area affected by the above rolls, a DM can use the table that determines the size of an elemental pocket (page 14).

WHIRLPOOLS

As noted above, whirlpools form where two powerful currents brush against each other. To determine the outermost limits of

a whirlpool within the plane of Water, DMs can use the size chart associated with elemental pockets. The result obtained from this table indicates the distance from the center of the vortex to the point where it begins to become dangerous. When a being enters this region, he must attempt a saving throw vs. breath weapon or be pulled into the whirlpool's fringe.

Anyone who has been so captured must succeed at a second saving throw or be sucked into the heart of the whirlpool. The period of time between these two saving throws must be determined by the DM based upon the size of the whirlpool. With a successful saving throw, the being manages to fight his way out of the whirlpool.

Those trapped in the heart of the whirlpool are battered by the other flotsam and jetsam sucked into the tempest and wracked by the tremendous currents, suffering 1d6 points of damage per round. A being must succeed at a bend bars/lift gates roll to claw his way back to the whirlpool's fringe.

A whirlpool is a fleeting phenomenon. It eventually breaks up, although it may linger for years before doing so. To determine how long a whirlpool survives, the DM can use the second table presented under "Currents," above.

Some 30% of all whirlpools contain a vortex to another part of the plane (or the Prime Material Plane) at their center. A body sucked into the heart of such a storm may find that his troubles are only beginning—if he manages to survive the whirlpool in the first place.

OTHER DANGERS

Two rarer hazards may also threaten visitors to this otherwise-hospitable plane.

BURN WATER. Despite its name, "burn water" is not actually hot. Burn water forms when a pocket of elemental Mineral or Ooze dissolves in the plane of Water. The water eventually dilutes the pocket but becomes tainted and acidic in turn. Such areas are generally twice the size of the elemental pocket from which they were spawned.

Anyone entering an area of burn water must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon. Failure indicates that the victim suffers 2d10 points of damage; a successful saving throw cuts this in half. Objects brought into such areas must make successful saving throws vs. acid or be destroyed.

RED TIDES. A red tide is a torrent of fast-moving water that has become infected with a dangerous disease or microscopic parasite. These flows should be treated as "moderate tides" (see "Currents," above).

Anyone who enters a red tide is instantly affected as if by a *cause disease* spell. If the creature is not a water breather or is not using magic that allows him to breathe water (instead depending on spells like *no breath*), then the disease is merely debilitating. If the victim breathes water (or otherwise takes the water into his body), the disease manifests as a deadly one.

Those with the power to direct currents have used red tides as deadly weapons. Shunting one of these poisoned

torrents into an enemy city or stronghold can annihilate or cripple a foe without the risks inherent in a direct attack.

MOVING ABOUT

Getting about in the Elemental Plane of Water is no great trick. All a body has to do is flap his arms, stroke his fins, or otherwise make some effort to propel himself. In a plane where sinking isn't a danger and the risk of drowning has (hopefully) been overcome, just about any sod can manage to swim. Of course, this doesn't mean he'll be fast. The normal rules for swimming apply to such movement (found in the "Time and Movement" chapter of the *Player's Handbook*).

Natural swimmers find that the Elemental Plane of Water rewards its own kind. Any creature whose description normally includes a movement rate for swimming can travel at twice its normal speed. This does not apply to those who make use of magical items like a *ring of free action*.

Many explorers make use of mounts when traveling through the Bottomless Deep. These include but are not limited to giant sea horses, hippocampi, manta rays, and various water elementals. If the creature being ridden is a natural swimmer, the doubled movement rate applies even with a passenger.

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

It's said among many races and on many planes that water is the giver of life. The Bottomless Deep certainly reflects this, for a tremendous number and variety of creatures make their homes here.

In most cases, life here is very similar to that found in any large, terrestrial ocean. Plankton, seaweed, and other basic life forms are eaten by larger creatures that are themselves devoured by their betters. The natural glow of this plane seems to be well suited for photosynthesis, as creatures that thrive only in sunlight survive here without difficulty.

Observant cutters notice one exception to a "normal" ocean scene, however. Those aquatic creatures dependent on air—whales, dolphins, and the like—can no more survive here than air-breathing folks, unless they find a large air pocket to sustain themselves. Such areas are not unknown, but their rarity and the delicate balance of their ecosystems ensure that the watery natives who value these unique domains keep them well guarded against intrusion.

ELEMENTALS

The most common creatures found in the plane of Water are, of course, water elementals. These creatures vary greatly in size, power, and intelligence, the wisest or more powerful ruling over vast kingdoms. They're very territorial, however, so a body can usually spot a water elemental nation by the absence of other creatures. Water elementals don't tolerate anything so large as a minnow in their realms, so plane-

walkers're well advised to avoid these places.

The most powerful of all these creatures is Istishia, who rules all neutral elementals. But because his kingdom is diffuse and scattered throughout the plane, many look upon the united nation ruled by Olhydra, the Princess of Evil Water Elementals, as the more potent realm.

ANIMALS

While it's easy enough for the primes to think of the Elemental Plane of Water as nothing more than a giant ocean, this is a tremendous oversimplification. If one must think in these terms, then the Bottomless Deep must at least be recognized as a *superocean*.

What does this mean? Well, the plane of Water is home to sharks and salmon, whitefish and walleyes, it is not a natural sea. For many reasons, the absence of gravity among them, the Bottomless Deep has spawned more than its share of giant sea creatures. These range from normal animals like large squid to oversized titans like the giant nautilus. With all the room offered to its inhabitants (unlike the finite seas of other planes), there's little limit on how big some of the creatures can grow. Chant has it that there're sharks and octopi (to name just two) that reach hundreds, if not thousands of feet in length.

And as you marvel at that, the true magnitude of this fact must be reinforced with one simple statement: The vast majority of all fish (even giant ones) are carnivores.

MONSTERS

The best known of this plane's monsters is probably the water weirds. While they're technically elementals, most folk, including other elementals, think of them as dangerous monsters. Water weirds form in the regions bordering the quasilane of Salt, where the foul radiations of the Negative Energy Plane seep into the water. These creatures are the bane of all who dwell in the Bottomless Deep.

Many species of aquatic monsters have made their way into the plane over the years. These range from the murderous beholderlike eyes of the deep to the passive zaratan. Mottled worms, an aquatic version of the purple worm, lurk in pockets of elemental Ooze or Earth, waiting to strike at the unwary. Deadly vodyanoi hunger constantly for the taste of sentient flesh.

MARIDS

The Elemental Plane of Water is home to the marids, a powerful race of genies. They're a reclusive folk who live in scattered burgs throughout the plane. Their greatest city is the Citadel of Ten Thousand Pearls (described below), in which the ruling Padisha resides. Most other strongholds house 2d10 marids and are built in close proximity to one or more coral masses or, more rarely, an elemental pocket. They don't

like to live out in the open.

Marids are known for their pride and egos. All claim to be of noble lineage, with the most lowly of them employing titles like shah, atabeg, or mufti. They look down on all other races but tolerate the presence of jann and djinn. They bear a great hatred for the dao, efreet, and all other such opposed elemental races. Lesser creatures, including humans, elves, and just about everything else in the multiverse, are considered rabble. As such, the marids generally ignore them—unless they become a nuisance.

Out of necessity, the marids established loose alliances with the nereids, water mephits, and undine. At the same time, they display open hostility toward the hydrax, spitters, and varrdig. And when they encounter the fiendish hydrolths and wastriliths, the marid set aside all other matters to destroy them.

How do marids react to planewalkers? Well, that usually depends on how well the bloods can entertain the genies. If they can keep these master storytellers amused for a time, the outsiders will probably be allowed to go on their way. A truly gifted group might even persuade the marids to aid them in some way. Those who fail to amuse their captors need not worry about future audiences.

Canny bloods remember that marids have the power to bestow the ability to breathe water for days at a time. They also keep in mind that these genies have the ability to take such temporary water breathing capabilities away, regardless of their source....

⊕+HER RACES

The Elemental Plane of Water virtually teems with aquatic races. These include tritons, sahuagin, mermen, ixitxachitl, and even reef giants, among others. While these races work well enough together within their own societies, often building magnificent cities and splendid palaces, they don't tend to get along well with their neighbors. Warfare and feuds between these various folk is the standard state of affairs. A leader who united some or all of these bickering races under her own banner would become a dangerous warlord in very short order.

P⊕WERS

Perhaps mirroring the variety of races and creatures of Water, the powers of the plane outnumber those in the other Inner Planes. They include the majestic rulers of elemental Water, the patrons of several aquatic races, and even a reclusive sea god.

AHTO. Many folk think of sea gods as stormy and violent deities who whip up a typhoon or two whenever they're in a bad mood. While this may describe some such powers, it doesn't reflect the character of Ahto, a power of the Finnish pantheon.

Ahto is a greater power known to his worshipers as "the King of the Seas." His symbol is a rippling wave of water, and this icon often appears throughout his aquatic

kingdom, the Curling Wave.

Most of Ahto's time is spent in contemplation of the sea and in the protection of its creatures. He's served by a loyal cadre of warriors, all reef giants, who defend the Curling Wave. Ahto's most important proxies, a clever bard named Alanoin (Px/♂ human/B16/Free League/NG) and a most fascinating creature known only as the Water Dwarf (see "Proxies," below) reside in the city as well. From time to time, Ahto sends them forth to do his bidding, but they are generally assigned duties that keep them near their lord and master.

BEN-HADAR. Ben-hadar rules his kingdom of good-aligned water elementals from a hidden fortress in the coral reef of Ssesurgass. Those who have met him describe Ben-hadar as rude and boorish. His arrogance, they say, is second only to that of the evil fire prince Imix. To say the least, he pushes the limits of what might be considered "good."

Still, he does occasionally battle the evil water elementals commanded by Olhydra. Further, he seems to be at least somewhat interested in the well being of his followers. He's caught up in long-running feuds with both Chan and Zaaman Rul, who find him personally repugnant. They accuse him (quite rightfully) of being both narrow minded and having no interest in the fate of good-aligned forces outside of the Elemental Plane of Water.

Ben-hadar appears as a tall humanoid figure made of sparkling blue-green water. His massive hands resemble the claws of a lobster or crab and his eyes scintillate like the sun on a breaking wave.

BLIPDOOLPOOLP. Blipdoolpoolp, the matron of the kuo-toa, makes her home in an expanse of gloomy water known as the Murky Depths. This region stretches across several hundred miles and mimics the properties of a smoke pocket. At will, she can cause the entire place to become infused with the toxic qualities of a red tide (see above). When this happens, however, only those she wishes to harm suffer the tides' effects.

The Murky Depths possesses a solid, sandy "bottom" and actually has gravity (unlike the rest of the plane). Along this unusual sea floor, her petitioners have built a twisted city of coral and stone. Most say that the strange look of this place mirrors the even stranger mind of Blipdoolpoolp.

It is generally conceded that Blipdoolpoolp is a tad on the barmy side and would rather avoid all contact with the agents of her enemies (the drow and illithids). Despite this, she is quick to act when her own realm is intruded upon. Chant is that no one who enters the Murky Depths emerges again unless they can offer the Sea Mother some new secret of magical power. Even then, of course, there are no guarantees.

Those petitioners who serve Blipdoolpoolp are said to sometimes take the form of evil or chaotic thoughts that drift about in the Murky Depths, haunting and tormenting unwanted visitors along with Blipdoolpoolp's more substantial agents. Her most prominent solid agent is Priest-Prince Va-Guulgh (Px/♂ kuo-toa/P10,T10/NE), who's said to be

more than half in love with the barmy power he serves.

EADRO. Most of the multiverse's locathah and merfolk pay homage to Eadro, the greatest of their kind. Although his exact origins are lost to history, his kingdom of Shelluria is a bountiful and pleasant place to live. Here, living locathah and merfolk mingle freely with the spirits of Eadro's petitioners, who take the form of insubstantial, brightly colored fish. These gossamer creatures radiate all the colors of the rainbow and fill the place with a natural sense of peace and tranquillity.

All this serenity hides the fact that Eadro is missing. Just over a decade ago, this power left his home behind. He left a council of three proxies to rule in his absence, saying that he would return once a certain important matter was resolved. What that might have been or what has become of Eadro remains unknown. In recent months his proxies' granted abilities have begun to wane, hinting at the worst.

ISTISHIA. Istishia's followers believe that the whole of the Elemental Plane of Water forms his body. Every drop of water everywhere in the universe, they say, marks a place where his tears have fallen or his blood has been spilled. Of course, the Elemental Princes dispute this, but what would you expect?

When Istishia has dealings with his subjects or others, he manifests a smaller form. Whether this is truly him or just some manner of emissary, no one can say. In any case, those who claim to have seen Istishia personally describe him as a towering waterspout. His face is difficult to discern, but those who look closely see two pinpoints of light set above the whirlpool of his mouth.

Istishia looks upon the battle between good and evil as a passing fancy. In time, all such things are worn away just as the river's edge gradually consumes the land it abrades. He's a patient power, one who recognizes that even the highest mountain can be destroyed one pebble at a time.

Presumably, Istishia would enter the theoretical clash between Olhydra and Ben-hadar if one side or the other were about to seize control of the plane. Because those two seem more interested in battling extraplanar enemies, however, it seems unlikely that Istishia will ever need to intervene.

OLHYDRA. Olhydra may be the Princess of Evil Water Elementals, but she isn't particular about those who worship her. As such, she counts among her followers a great diversity of evil aquatic creatures. These include such deadly races as sahuagin, vodyanoi, seawolves, eyes of the deep, and even (it is rumored) a renegade sect of hezrou tanar'ri. Of all the archomental, Olhydra is probably the closest to becoming a true power.

Olhydra dwells in a coral castle guarded by an army of water weirds. She spends a great deal of time hidden away within the confines of her palace, presumably plotting her next attack against Imix, the Prince of Evil Fire Creatures. Indeed, she considers him her greatest enemy and almost ignores Ben-hadar, who would seem to be a much more

obvious enemy.

The princess usually takes the form of an endlessly breaking wave of water some 20 feet across. She is said to have other forms, but this is the guise in which she greets all visitors to her realm.

There are those who say that the spirits of Olhydra's most faithful become the animating force that drives the evil water weirds, but this seems unlikely. In truth, it's more probable that the Princess of Evil Water Creatures absorbs her petitioners in an attempt to increase her own power (and the fact that she has petitioners at all puts her above her brethren archomental).

PERSANA. The patron power of the tritons, Persana is a being of great intelligence and an artisan's eye. He is a masterful sculptor, but his talent truly shines when he turns his efforts to architecture. Chant is that no structure designed with his help ever falls unless he wills it to do so.

For many centuries, Persana was a nomadic power. He wandered the plane of Water, lending his influence to those building the various magnificent structures that dot this plane. It is said that he himself laid the cornerstone of the Citadel of Ten Thousand Pearls.

Persana's recently taken up residence in Shelluria, the citadel home of Eadro. He came in answer to a summons from the council of proxies who rule in the absence of their own patron. Chant is that Persana is making ready to mount an expedition to locate Eadro and return him to his home.

PROXIES

With all the powers that make their home in this plane, it's no wonder that there're an equal or greater number of powerful proxies. Though only two are noted below, rest assured several others wander the plane on missions of their respective powers' bidding.

THE BLUE COVEN. Hidden away in the depths of Olhydra's coral fortress is a dark chamber of corrupted magic and terrible secrets. Here lives the Blue Coven, a trio of sea hags who serve Olhydra loyally and without question.

Chant is, the Blue Coven once tried to summon and command Olhydra. Although the Princess of Evil Water Elementals was more than able to resist their efforts, she admired the guile and courage of these creatures. Instead of destroying them instantly, she embraced the hags as worshipers.

The three members of the Coven long ago lost their individual identities. Their personalities have merged to such an extent that they now can only be considered one hideously evil entity with three distinct bodies. This has enhanced their spellcasting ability and made them among the most powerful examples of their kind anywhere in the multiverse. These hags are said to have access to dark magical lore unknown elsewhere in the cosmos.

It's also believed that Cegilune, the patron power of



hags, is very resentful over this whole affair. She sees the members of the Blue Coven as dangerous renegades and has vowed to see them destroyed.

THE WATER DWARF. The Water Dwarf (Px/♂ dwarf/F16/LG), whose real name is unknown, serves Ahto. It is said that he was once the king of a great dwarven nation. When his people mined too deeply into the earth, they found an immense underground ocean. The Water Dwarf mounted an expedition across this great expanse but was lost when his drakkar was swallowed by a vortex to the Elemental Plane of Water.

Although he died soon after arriving in the Bottomless Deep, Ahto found the dwarf king's body. Amazed to find a dwarf in the plane of Water, the god decided to restore the poor creature to life. In doing so, the King of the Seas replaced the whole of the dwarf's physical form with water. In essence, he became a water elemental with the spirit of a dwarf trapped inside.

The Water Dwarf is Ahto's primary proxy. When a body offends the King of the Seas, the Water Dwarf is dispatched to set matters straight.

◆ THE SITES ◆

Some of the splendidly impressive places of the Elemental Plane of Water stand upon drifting fragments of elemental Earth or Ice, but most are free-floating or built atop coral masses. Normally, a coral reef is built up over the years with a foundation on the ocean floor (or something resting upon the floor). Although there's no floor to be found in Elemental Water, masses of unsecured coral stretch through the plane, often extending miles in length. Most often, they take on a winding, snaky appearance, with their length twenty or more times their width.

All manner of creatures from noble tritons to ordinary fish make their homes in these coral spans. Whole cities lie atop or within these natural living islands. Sea kings and watery lords use them as anchors for their citadels and courts. Sometimes, an air-breather with potent magic holes up inside a coral mass, hollowing it out, sealing it up, and filling it with air. One such place, the Undinerealm, has become a gigantic city for sea elves who enjoy both watery and air-filled environments. Other amphibious races, from bullywugs to yuan-ti, are rumored to have similar habitats throughout the plane.

THE AVENGER

Although not actually a site, no description of this plane would be complete without mention of the *Avenger*. This mechanical creation is shaped more or less like a giant, dark gray manta ray. It was supposedly built by a great artificer, possibly a mysterious individual known as Lum the Mad.

The *Avenger* measures roughly 30 yards long (not counting its "tail") and twice that across. It can travel very

swiftly thanks to a battery of rotating screws along the trailing edge of its vast "wings." The long whiplike tail that trails behind it appears to serve as a rudder.

Folks who speculate about the *Avenger* offer two possible theories. The first states that the thing is an automaton that wanders about the Bottomless Deep on some unguessed-at mission. Another possibility, however, is that the *Avenger* is actually some manner of craft. If this is the case, no one has ever seen its crew or home base (if it has one).

If attacked, the *Avenger* defends itself with powerful bolts of lightning. Rumors abound that it has other weapons at its disposal as well, although no two reports seem to agree about their nature.

THE CITADEL OF TEN THOUSAND PEARLS

The splendid palace of the marid Padisha is built atop a circular, free-floating coral reef that spreads over several dozen miles. This buildings of the city are a collection of domes, most of which have scalloped roofs and resemble great clamshells. Others curl in lines that look very much like elegant snail-shells. Air-fountains, curtains and carpets of kelp, and carefully selected schools of fish all serve as decoration in the citadel, creating a multicolored rhapsody of movement and fluidity. The entire citadel's brightly lit by strings of glowing orbs some 12 inches across. These gleaming spheres, as well as the bountiful beds of giant oysters, give the Citadel of Ten Thousand Pearls its name.

The citadel provides a home for about two hundred marids and one thousand servants. 'Course, most people discount all of the fish that swim in and out of the chambers of the citadel, but that's to their peril. The fish serve as watchmen and even guards (in the case of barracuda, piranha, and eels).

I can only advise visitors to the Citadel to use extreme care in all actions. The marid tolerate outsiders, but only as long as they behave themselves. Even the slightest misstep or social gaffe might offend the aquatic genies—and offending a marid is a capital offense.

The Citadel of Ten Thousand Pearls holds the court of Kalbari al-Durra al-Amwaj ibn Jari, Great Padishah of the Marids, the Keeper of the Empire, the Pearl of the Sea, the Mother of Foam, the Maharaja of the Oceans, Emir of All Currents, etcetera, etcetera. She loves elaborate spectacles and maintains a vast repertoire of displays to impress and intimidate visitors, including schools of fish that move about her in incomprehensible (but carefully choreographed) patterns, delicate but powerful manipulations of the currents within the citadel, and winding mazes of multicolored coral. She appears to govern by whim, but those who watch her carefully see that she's as skillful as a baatezu in her political maneuvering and manipulation.

One of the most interesting places in the citadel is its vast library/theater complex. This immense structure is shaped like a giant sea urchin, with spines jutting out over

the surrounding structures. Inside, one finds countless ways to pass the hours. The marid are masterful storytellers and have assembled a collection of entertainers from around the multiverse. Most are even here by choice.

In addition, every manner of story can be found on the shelves of this great library. In fact, a planewalker can earn the tolerance of the marids by contributing a tome to their library. Of course, offering them a book that already adorns the shelves is highly insulting, and the penalty for insulting a marid is far worse than that for offending one.

Chant has it that at certain seasons, the marids all leave their citadel and travel elsewhere, perhaps to another location in the plane or perhaps to the prime worlds where they are revered. In their absence, a water mage named Haitm al-Rakal sometimes seizes the place for his own with an army of water creatures at his command. Occasionally, this basher even uses illusions to pose as the Padishah herself. When the marids return, they oust the usurper and banish him from the realm. Chant has it, though, that the marid ruler is actually quite amused by this prime wizard and allows him to live, knowing that he'll return the next time she and her people take leave of the citadel.

THE CITY OF GLASS

Though communities abound in the Inner Planes, few reach the scale of cities on the Prime. Without a doubt, the greatest metropolis to be found among the elements is the City of Glass. Anyone who wants to brush shoulders with marids, tritons, nereids, kuo-toa, sahuagin, and sea elves finds them here. Indeed, so many different races coexist within the City of Glass that it's impossible to say which is actually the most numerous. The point would be moot anyway, because an elected assembly of fifteen individuals, no two of whom can be of the same race, rules the city.

Although its name might imply otherwise, the City of Glass is not built of that gleaming substance. The city earned its name from the majestic dome that covers it. This dome, which the inhabitants cleverly call "the Dome," stands atop a giant disc of eternal ice (as described in the chapter on the Paraelemental Plane of Ice). Trapped between the glass shell and its frozen base is an immense air bubble. Thus, the City of Glass an ideal place for air breathers who wish to explore the plane.

Not only is this cosmopolitan city a haven for those wishing to immerse themselves in the cultures of other races,

it's a great place to shop. So many merchants have established themselves around the City of Glass that a body would be hard-pressed *not* to find something that demands he own it, immediately.

The City of Glass serves as an important nexus for inner-planar travel. The dozens of gates and vortices that a body finds in this sprawling burg has earned it the nickname "Sigil of the Elements." Indeed, it is said that body can reach any of the Inner Planes from this city.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN WATER ◆

Most folks end up in the City of Glass when they first come to Elemental Water. It's an interplanar hub as cosmopolitan as any gate-town on the Outlands, although most of the inhabitants are amphibious or natural air-breathers. Merchants here make a fine bit of jink selling water-breathing aids to the air-breathers and air-breathing aids to the water-breathers.

Recent chant in the plane of Water includes the fact that dao slavers have stepped up their habit of raiding the settlements of the plane's intelligent races. This fact implies two things: that the dao have a new access into the plane, and that there's a demand somewhere for water-breathing slaves. Some believe that a powerful wastrilith in the Abyss has offered the slavers some great prize if they'll provide it with a sea-borne army to fight Demogorgon's *ixitxachtli* hordes. In any event, planewalkers experienced in finding hidden planar routes are being sought by the natives of Water to find how the dao are making their new incursions.

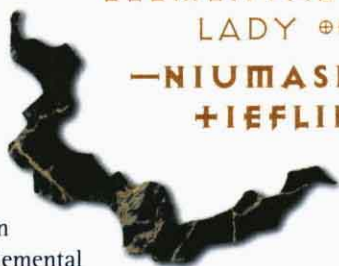
SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

Some spells suffer odd alterations due to the physical nature of the plane. Physical conjurations (such as an *ice storm*) tend to simply drift rather than raining down on an opponent. *Lightning bolt* becomes an electrical globe that functions as an underwater *fireball*. Little can be done about such physical limitations, but spell keys allow a wizard to overcome most of the restrictions placed upon her by the nature of this plane, especially those involving the schools of Elemental Air and Earth.

Spell keys created for use in the plane of Water are physical objects, just as those used in the plane of Earth. They always take the form of a magical inscription carved upon the tooth or bone of an aquatic creature. The delicate patterns required can be fashioned only by masterful artisans. Even if they were not valuable for their magical powers, these keys would be highly desired for their artistic beauty.

Such keys need not be large. Water genasi (and other) wizards native to the plane commonly carry a number of them on a necklace or charm bracelet.

IF THE
CITY OF GLASS
IS THE SIGIL OF THE
INNER PLANES,
THEN WHO'S THE
ELEMENTAL
LADY OF PAIN?
—NIUMASDED,
TIEFLING



If you're expecting a native of this plane to tell you the ins and outs, think again, berk. There's nobody indigenous to Positive Energy to give you the chant, so you'll have to settle for me, Kansmaath Hugh, a planewalker who knows about as much of the place as anyone. I've actually been there, which is more than most planewalkers can say. I'll give you the chant on the plane so you can avoid some of the dangers that just about got me lost.

THE POSITIVE ENERGY PLANE

But before I lann you, I gotta ask—why were you planning on going here in the first place? Are you sure you don't want to think it over?

Why do I ask? Well, let me begin....

◆ PHYSICAL CON+DITIONS ◆

The Positive Energy Plane is the plane of life. It's also called vim, vigor, life-energy, the soul, spirit, chi, chakra, or kundalini (and many more names as well). It's the plane of creation from which all things acquire their inherent beauty, value, and very existence.

That's why planewalkers always get this plane all wrong. They don't think they have to worry about survival in a place like this. It's probably the most peaceful, nurturing place in all the multiverse, right? Nope. See, the plane's filled with so much of this vibrant, energizing force that anybody coming here gets quickly overwhelmed and overloaded. Too much energy, even energy bursting and seething with life, is just as bad as none at all. The fragile physical bodies of most berks just can't handle the influx of energy and quickly explode.

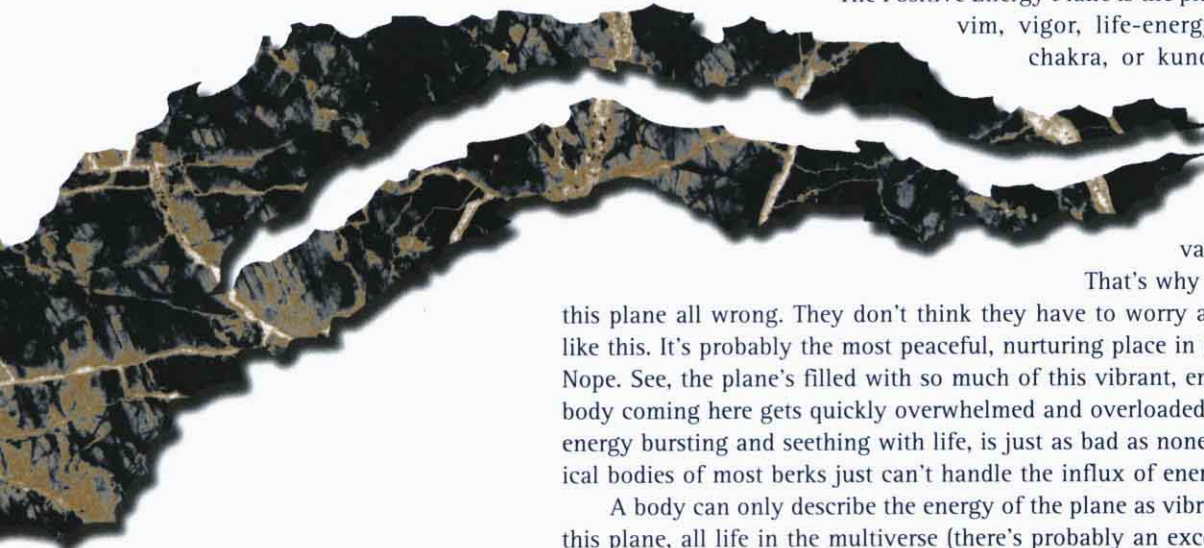
A body can only describe the energy of the plane as vibrant and full of life. From this plane, all life in the multiverse (there's probably an exception, but I don't know about it) gets its spark. When a newborn comes into the multiverse, the fragile beginning of life originates here. When a wizard or priest creates a magical automaton and brings it to life, he gets the power from here. The tiny germ at the center of a seed that'll grow into a mighty oak originally came from here.

Like the name implies, this entire plane's one big (*that is to say, infinitely so—the Editor*) mass of energy. There's no terrain, no water, no sky—nothing but energy. There's no ground upon which to stand or build a shelter. Even pockets of other elements are blasted into tiny particles as soon as they arrive in the plane, so there're no handy spheres of air or chunks of earth to use as a resting place. The plane has no gravity, so there's nothing to orient a basher at all.

'Course, getting from place to place on a plane where the places don't really matter (there really aren't any) doesn't mean much. Moving around's not really a body's main concern in the plane of Positive Energy. Survival is.

GE++ING HERE

Getting to this plane's probably about the hardest thing a body'll ever do. Oh, a cutter reads now and again about some place that doesn't have many portals or paths leading to it, but the real dark is that they don't have a thing on the plane of Positive Energy. There just aren't many ways to get here. No one's going to intentionally set up a means to come to the plane (there's not much reason to, a body's got to admit), and those who find a "natural" portal leading here probably won't consider it valuable enough to even make note of it.



LIFE IS LIKE
ANY+HING, BERK.
T++ MUCH IS JUST
AS BAD AS
++ LI++LE.
—KANSMAA+H
HUGH

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Fire, Wild magic +
Earth, Water, Necromancy ◆

Lots of top-shelf planewalkers don't know this, but most plane-traveling magical items like *cubic gates*, *staves of the magi*, *amulets of the planes*, and whatnot have specific fail-safes built in that make it impossible to wind up in this plane (and probably the Negative Energy Plane as well).

The only real way to reach this plane is by a spell such as *plane shift* or by the really hard way—traveling all the way through one of the positive quasiplanes until a body hits the border—and who *knows* how long that could take?

HAZARDS

The energy that makes up the entirety of the plane is the chief hazard, though it takes some leatherheads a while to tumble to that. "Positive energy can't be bad," they say. Wrong. A traveler gains 2d6 hit points per round spent unprotected within the plane. For the wounded, it's free and quick healing. Even those folks fit and fine gain the hit points as extra vigor that's added to their normal total lasts 2d10 turns if he leaves the plane. This becomes a problem when adding on the additional hp doubles the berk's total.

Then, as quick as a sword stroke, the sod's blasted into invisible gobbets of pulverized flesh as his soul flames, overloaded with positive energy, consuming him from within. It's not a pretty sight, believe me.

Equipment and all manner of physical objects face the same fate if taken to this plane. Everything taken to this plane, unless it's magical, must make a saving throw vs. disintegration or be dispersed into its component elements.

Fortunately, there's protection available. A version of the spell *negative plane protection* called, ingeniously, *positive plane protection* keeps a body's soul from being overwhelmed by the influx of energy by shielding the cutter and his belongings from the plane's energy altogether.

BREA+HING

Breathing in this Energy Plane, where there's no air at all, can be a major difficulty. Now, I say "can" because sometimes it ain't. The dark of it is that an unprotected cutter, while she's absorbing the ambient energy of the plane, doesn't need to worry about suffocation.

Even though she's unable to breathe, the plane's energy repairs any damage suffered by her lungs, brain, and whatnot from a lack of air.

The plane's energy's enough to sustain her (food and water aren't really necessary, either, for the same reasons). Now, she might still *feel* like she can't breathe, and that takes some getting used to....



While under the influence of a spell that protects a body from the energy of the plane, a blood's suddenly got to worry about breathing. Spells based on the *water breathing* model (change a traveler's body so he can breathe whatever makes up the environment) or the *airy water* model (change whatever the environment is to something a body can breathe) don't work here, 'cause the energy can't be changed into anything. Thus, a traveler who likes breathing might be wise to bring along his own air or do without.

VISION AND SENSES

Once you're protected against the energy and have figured out how to breathe, now you've got to worry about the havoc the plane's energy can play upon a visitor's senses. The brilliant miasma of power here'll blind a sod's eyes instantly if they're not protected. The best way to protect your eyes is the simple, trusty blindfold. Darkness magic's snuffed out right quick by the power of the plane. Those who can somehow still see through the blinding light or while blindfolded still can't perceive much beyond 100 feet since the energy's so intense. Hearing's not affected much, but most folks tell tales of being able to sense more by touch than usual. An experienced blood can use such a heightened sense to make up for his lost vision (a Wisdom check at -6 allows a cutter to sense movement within 25 feet of him while in this plane by sense of touch alone). Unfortunately, spells inflicting sensations (like a *symbol of pain*) double in effectiveness in the Positive Energy Plane due to enhanced sense of touch.

COMBAT

Combat can be really interesting here. First off, the plane heals all wounds—some folks say it's time that does that, but I know it's positive energy (that's a joke, berk). Anyhow, it's true that a body that gets nicked finds himself flooded with positive energy and suddenly he's as good as new. Now, if a blood's got himself protected from the normal energy surge of the plane, he'll find himself without this particular advantage. That's why some canny basher figured out a way to lower the protection momentarily to let healing energy in when he got wounded. Here's how it's done:

A protected basher makes a Dexterity ability check. If successful, that means he's quick enough to give it a try (quickness is important, because if the protection's down for more than just a moment, it's gone for good). Next, he makes a Wisdom ability check to maintain control over the protection while it's down—like making sure the dam doesn't break when the gates are temporarily opened. If both checks are successful, the sod gains 2d6 hp, doesn't lose his protection, and the whole thing takes only a single round. If the first check fails, nothing happens at all and the time's wasted. If the second check fails, the protection fails, overwhelmed by the onslaught of energy, and then the sod's subject to the full power of the plane.

MOVING ABOUT

The only way to move around is to literally "swim" through the energy, which doesn't let a body get anywhere very fast (half normal swimming movement rate). The *real* way to get anywhere is to just think of a location. That's it. Just think of a location in the plane and before he knows it, a basher's there. Instant teleportation. Walls and whatnot don't mean much in this plane.

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

For a plane of life, there's not much living here. Nevertheless, life always finds a way (they say), and so a couple of creatures call the Positive Energy Plane their home.

There's chant going around that the Positive and Negative Energy Planes have elemental creatures linked with them just like the Elemental Planes. I'll let somebody else rattle their bone-box about Negative Energy, but I can tell you that the idea of a positive energy elemental's just screed. Think about it a minute, berk. This ain't no Elemental Plane. Why'd you expect there to be elementals here? No one expects Arcadian elementals or Baatorian elementals, right?

ENERGY BEINGS

The closest thing to an elemental in this plane's a creature called a xag-ya. It's an energy being of unknown origins with a negative counterpart called a xeg-yi. These entities're so foreign to the minds of most cutters that a body just can't understand them at all—not what they do or why they do it. A planewalker's got a better chance of reasoning with a slaad than communicating with a xag-ya. Here's some valuable advice, though: Don't assume that because it's a creature of life energy that it's good-natured or helpful. These things're so far beyond understanding that they might kill a body before they even realize he's there.

RAVIDS

Like the xag-ya, the ravid lives in this plane and is composed entirely of positive energy. The ravid really carries this to an extreme, however, because rather than destroying matter it comes in contact with (although it can do that too), it imbues lifeless objects with life. A canny basher'll avoid these creatures (even though they don't seem to consciously inflict their power on the things they come across), or else his sword'll start acting on its own and his shoes'll go where they please.

POWERS

Now, while a body can't swing a dead tiefling without hitting a power that supposedly rules over the force of life and creation, a body won't find any of them living here. Why? Same reason I don't live here—the energy's just too much. Even gods can't handle it.

Here's an interesting piece of chant, however. The powers do visit this plane. When the gods create something living (and they're always doing that, it seems), they come to the plane of Positive Energy to gather up the necessary power to pour it into the creature. Supposedly, they call this plane the Life Well (though any berk who claims to have gotten this from a god's barmy for sure). Some mortal bloods do the same thing to create certain magical beings—the ones a step above golems and other automatons.

◆ THE SITES ◆

There's only one site here, but the fact that one exists at all is really something in and of itself, if you think about it. I've really gotta admire the tenacity of a cutter named Feadal Didam-Hurus (Pl/♀ human/C10/ Transcendent Order/N), who finally finished her citadel, the Fortress of Life, here in the plane of Positive Energy.

Feadal used powerful spells and magical items gathered from the farthest corners of the planes to keep her fortress intact against the onrush of positive energy. Anyone within this structure, which includes three towers and a central keep, gains protection from all aspects of the plane. Even normal vision is possible and safe within its walls, although most visitors still find the place overwhelmingly bright.

In the Fortress of Life, Feadal keeps the *lifepearls* she's gathered. To hear her tell the tale, there're places within the plane where the chakra energy gathers more closely than in other spots. In these far-flung locales, positive energy com-

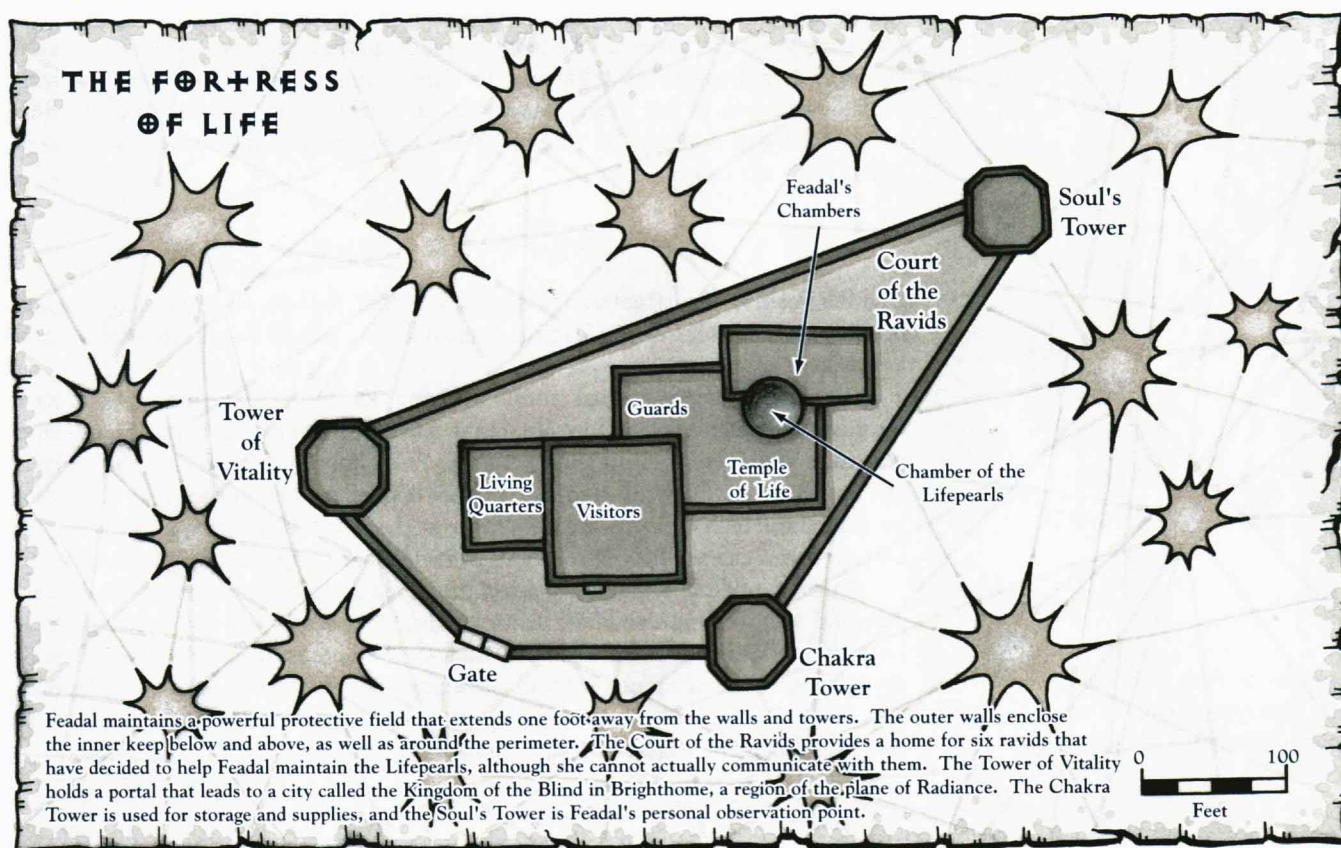
presses into concentrated a focal point like sand and grit in an oyster compress into a pearl. She calls these round, translucent bits of concentrated life energy *lifepearls*.

Lifepearls can be taken off the plane and used to heal the hurt and sick and even restore the dead. Each has the powers of a *staff of curing* and a *rod of resurrection* with 4d10 charges (but the *lifepearl* shatters in a 5d6 fireball upon the expenditure of all its "charges"). Feadal believes them to be much more than simple healing trinkets, and instead the seeds from which entire races, species, worlds, and even possibly planes are born. She likes to call them "concentrated creation." Thus, Feadal believes them to be the most potent objects in all the multiverse, and she guards them well. Chant has it that both the xag-ya and the ravidis appear to value the *lifepearls* as well.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN POSITIVE ENERGY ◆

As far as spellcasting goes, spells that cause damage of any type cause the minimum amount possible. No spell key can rectify this, simply because mages haven't spent enough time on the plane to create one!

If a body needs great healing or a magical item recharged (usually, magical items involving healing), he can come to the Positive Energy Plane—as long as it's a real short trip. Even then, coming here's a big risk and there's probably a better means of accomplishing the task somewhere else (it's a big multiverse).



THE NEGATIVE ENERGY PLANE

Kansmaath may think that the Positive Energy Plane is bad, but he's a clueless addle-cove if he thinks it's worse than its opposite number. The Negative Energy Plane is the most terrible place there is, bar none. Don't give me "Baator," don't give me "the Abyss." Even the fiends won't come here, my friend—'cause they're afraid.

Me? My name is Tarsheva Longreach. But who I am doesn't matter. Convincing you to avoid this most terrible place does. Don't worry. It won't take me long.

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

You've heard of the dead-book. This is it. The plane of death. Life-sucking, soul-destroying, wish-you-were-anywhere-else plane of Death. Everything that is contrary, antithetical to life, antiexistence, or just plain destructive ultimately comes from here. You can

save the philosophical discussions for the Outer Planes. This isn't a matter of good or evil. It doesn't reflect the realms of order or

chaos. It's a matter of life

vs. death. Existence vs. annihilation. Being vs. nonbeing. If a body accepts that things exist (and yes, I know there're some whose philosophy claims that nothing does, but let that lie for the nonce), she's sure to understand that whatever creative force brought them into being has an opposite number. That's the Negative Energy Plane. The Doomguard love this place.

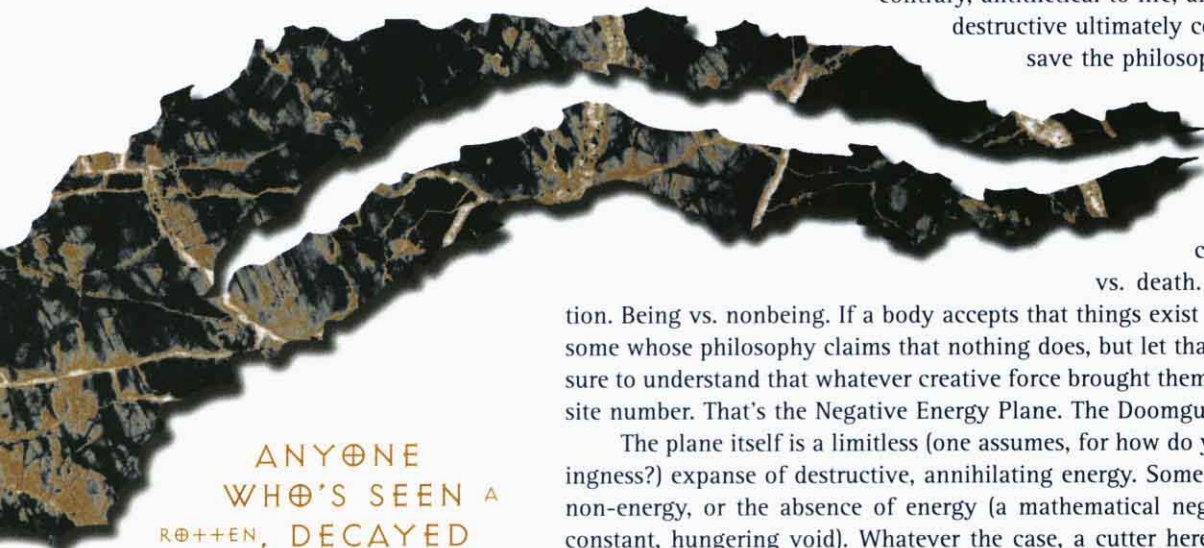
The plane itself is a limitless (one assumes, for how do you place limits on nothingness?) expanse of destructive, annihilating energy. Some folks think of it even as non-energy, or the absence of energy (a mathematical negative effect becoming a constant, hungering void). Whatever the case, a cutter here throws herself into the heart of oblivion. In this plane, a creature—any creature—is a shining beacon of life in an infinity of nonlife. The absence of life is so strong that a sod's own life-force drains right out of her body.

GETTING HERE

Like the Positive, the Negative Energy Plane's been blocked off in as many ways as possible to keep folks away. Magical items allowing planar travel often fail to offer access here.

However, because undead sustain a strong link to the plane, portals leading to the plane spring into being more often than most top-shelf bloods would like. Assume that each and every undead wandering the Prime Material Plane (and the Ethereal, and anywhere else they're found) has a tether that extends to the Negative Plane. Now imagine those tethers slowly wearing away at the fabric of reality until they create a hole, and you can see how portals and paths leading to the plane come about.

Further, undead beings often wield great power. Liches, demiliches, dracoliches, powerful spellslinging vampires, death knights, and others use this power to create temporary or permanent gates leading from their homes to Negative Energy. Usually, the intention of such a portal's not to allow physical travel (although sometimes that's possible and intended too), but to allow negative energy to flow toward the creator and his minions in a more efficient manner, thus granting them greater power.



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—TARSHEVA
LONGREACH

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Air, Fire, Wild magic <
Earth, Water, Necromancy ◆

HAZARDS

The soul-rending energy of the plane is hazard enough for anyone, in my opinion. Each round that a living creature spends in this plane, she suffers physical damage as the plane leeches away her life. Living beings suffer 2d6 points of damage per round while exposed to the Negative Energy Plane until they reach 0 hit points—at which time they wither and die, only to be instantly transformed into a random sort of undead creature (wraiths and spectres

being the most common kinds). Matter conjured here crumbles to nothingness in 1 round.

Alternately, a DM may choose to reflect the life-draining nature of the plane of Negative Energy by having living travelers lose levels much in the same way that undead creatures linked with this plane drain them. This obviously presents an even harsher threat to the well-being of travelers that dare come to the plane, which may or may not be a desirable effect. With this option, an unprotected planewalker must make a saving throw vs. death magic each round she spends in the plane. If this saving throw fails, the poor sod loses one level. Loss of all experience levels results in the victim becoming an undead creature.

Whatever the effect of the draining of life energy, planewalkers can avoid such losses by means of a *negative plane protection* spell.

BREA+HING AND SENSES

A body'll find breathing negative energy as difficult as breathing stone. Canny travelers bring an air supply along. Personally, I never leave my case without my *bottled breath*, but not everyone's fortunate enough to own such utilitarian equipment. Spells like *no breath* are virtual necessities since there's no matter to transform into breathable air like an *airy earth* spell does in the plane of Earth.

Negative energy's not very generous to a traveler's senses, either. In fact, the blackness of this plane's blacker than the deepest pit in Baator...at night...within a spell of *darkness*...well, you get the idea. It's dark. Moreover, the negative energy's so thick that it prevents most sound from traveling far. Even a cutter's sense of touch grows numb in this life-draining plane. Assume that an outsider's vision is completely negated, and that hearing and touch function only half as well as normal. Trouble is, there's not much the traveler can do about these setbacks. Some spells increase a body's senses, and those might help, but nothing banishes the darkness here. Light spells disappear in a fraction of a moment, the plane greedily consuming them like a desert steals moisture.

MØVING ABØU+

Assuming a cutter survives long enough to try, she'll find that movement around the plane of Negative Energy's not terribly difficult, although not as easy as in the Positive Plane. A planewalker can physically move through the plane by sheer force of will alone, at a speed equal to her normal movement rate averaged with her Wisdom score.



◆ INHABITANTS ◆

How's this for a grand planar irony: There're more types of creatures "living" in the plane of Negative Energy than in the Positive. Since many of the inhabitants're actually undead, however, it all seems more easily reconciled.

ENERGY BEINGS

Like their positive counterparts, the xeg-yi probably come as close to a "negative energy elemental" as a body's ever going to find. These mysterious creatures roam the plane, only occasionally leaving and always attacking anything they come across (perhaps more out of curiosity than malice, but who can tell?).

Adventurers report having recently seen negative elementals and fundamentals, but the dark is that they're just creatures shaped from negative energy by powerful magic—sort of energy golems, really. However, beings truly native to the Negative Energy Plane include nightshades and blackballs. These creatures, as near as anyone can tell, exist only to spread death and destruction when off the plane and revel in the barren antilife environment of negative energy while in the plane—if such humanlike emotions or motives can be attributed to them at all.

UNDEAD

Undead creatures, particularly those of the noncorporeal type (spectres, wraiths, ghosts, apparitions, and so on), thrive

amid the life-hungering energies of the Negative Energy Plane. Many in fact owe their existence, at least in part, to the essence of the plane. Lesser undead such as skeletons and zombies react to the abundance of negative energy in the same way as living beings in the plane of Positive Energy: They can't take the overwhelming surge of energy and explode.

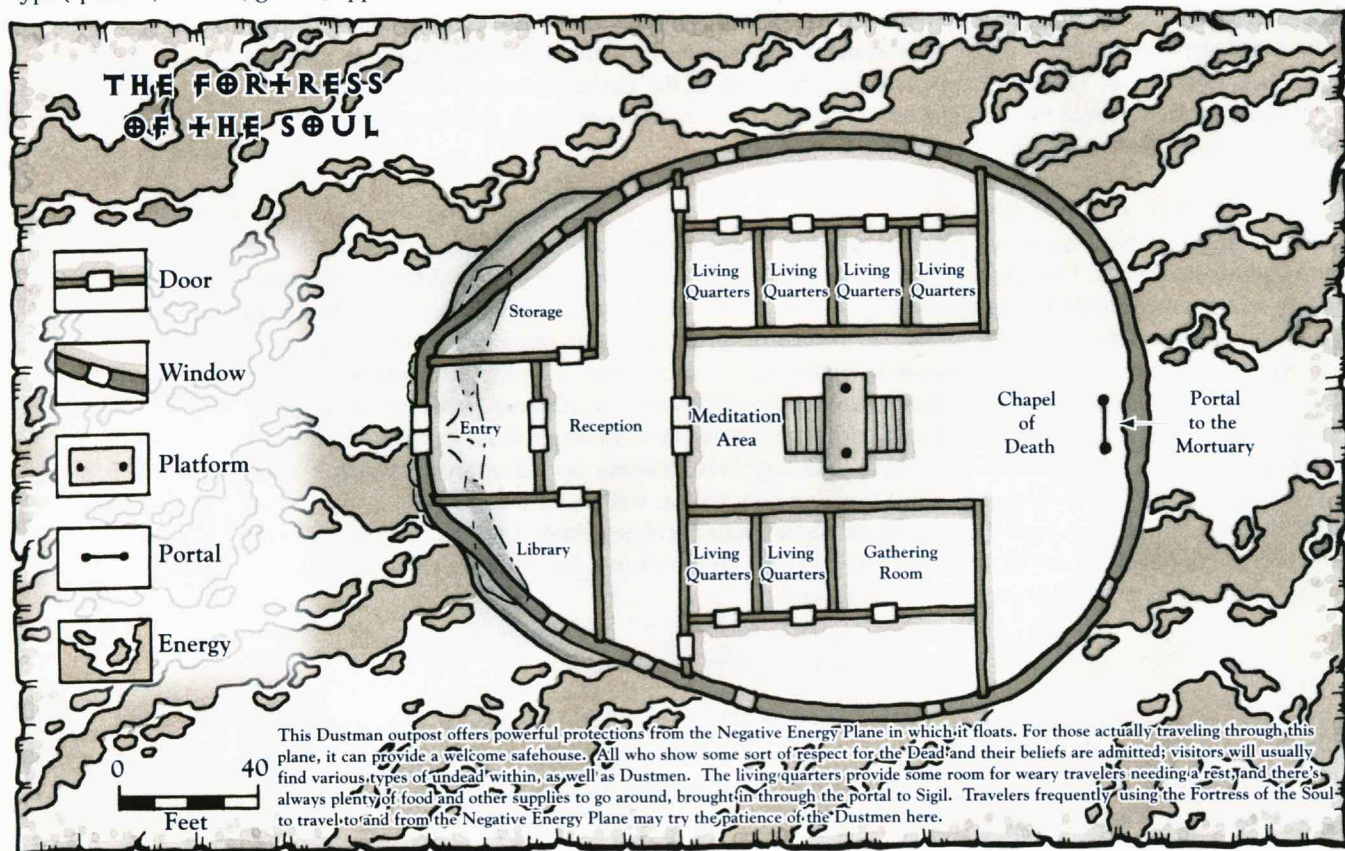
Occasionally, vampires, lichs, and other undead creatures can be found here, either in secret magical fortresses or as temporary visitors. If any undead creature comes upon a living being in this plane somehow surviving the onslaught of the plane's natural attacks, they savagely assail the living interloper as an abomination. Undead utterly ignore xeg-yi and other natives of the plane.

POWERS

Even the powers devoted to death and destruction harbor a good, healthy fear of this plane's all-consuming power. A few come occasionally to renew their link with the forces of ravenous destruction, death, and undeath. Thus, these aren't good deities we're discussing here.

Only one power calls this plane home, and he's not one a sod can expect to visit.

SIVA. The force of destruction incarnate, Siva is not considered evil by his worshipers or the rest of his pantheon. He's merely the avatar of ultimate annihilation who seeks to destroy the multiverse to make way for a vision of perfect



nothingness. Within his realm, the Vortex, Siva meditates upon the best way to accomplish his goals and occasionally acts to protect the multiverse as it now exists—for any extreme change might disturb his own plan.

Anything that enters the Vortex is utterly destroyed, and therefore no accurate account of his domain exists. Many Doomguard revere this power, but even they don't tempt their own obliteration by seeking him out.

◆ THE SITES ◆

Chant has it that various wizards, as they escape the dead-book and become undead (mostly in the form of liches), become enthralled with the plane of Negative Energy. Lots of wizards get fairly barmy in life, so it's not terribly surprising that they go well past that in death.

It's thanks to these twisted creatures that there're a few places scattered about the dark, unyielding void. A few undead spellslingers've set up a base of operations or link to their real kips, probably located on the Prime or perhaps in a demiplane. Chant has it wizards with names like Acererak and Vecna have or once had such secreted, magical foci in this plane. They also say that Tenebrous, a powerful entity that may or may not be an undead god—and who may or may not have once been the Abyssal lord Orcus—hid a tiny fortress here that he called Tcian Sumere.

DEATHHEART (OF THE VOID)

Once called the Heart of the Void, this secluded settlement's now just called Deathheart. It's reputedly a failed attempt at some barmy's idea of a colony he wanted to establish in the Negative Energy Plane. A metal sphere approximately 1 mile in diameter, Deathheart holds a Prime-type city within its rounded interior. This orb, which contains towers, buildings, fountains, squares, and streets, serves now as home to a host of undead.

Chant has it that Deathheart's home to many of the most foul creatures of the multiverse, each with its own agenda and dark secrets. Whatever the truth, Deathheart's a nexus of evil and undeath. Although the plane's energy does not reach inside the city, even the Dustmen and the Doomguard fear this place and never explore the sphere.

FORTRESS OF THE SOUL

The recent war on the streets of Sigil brought about many changes within the city, but folks in the Inner Planes don't care about such things. What do faction conflicts and upheavals have to do with *them*? Not much, unless they happen to belong to one of those groups. And the Dustmen faction, less passionate about faction politics to begin with, simply accepted the Lady of Pain's edict with a shrug and went on as usual. (See *Faction War* [TSR 2629] for more information.)

With great effort, the Dustmen maintain a citadel here, at the focal point of all that they hold dear. As their philosophy surrounds the potency and value of True Death, the Negative Energy Plane exemplifies their most holy of places. A trip to the fortress is one of the greatest rewards a Dustman can imagine. The citadel's mostly empty except for the ascetic accommodations provided for the Dead who come here to contemplate, well, death.

The Fortress of the Soul serves as a place of quiet contemplation for about fifty Dustmen at a time, although more have taken refuge here now after the faction war. They're nominally lead by Komosahl Trevant (Pl/♂ human/M12/Dustmen/NE), a former Dustmen factor who's making plans in anticipation of the day when the faction can return to the City of Doors.

The Dustmen in the Fortress of the Soul are surprisingly helpful to those bashers lost in the plane and in need of shelter. However, rather than harboring visitors for long, the Dead send them through a portal to Sigil. This portal only opens once a week and exits in what was once the Hall of Speakers.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN NEGATIVE ENERGY ◆

I still haven't convinced you? Fine. If you must go, here's what you need to know. Listen up, I'm only saying this once. I know better than to waste too much time talking to a berk who's already lost.

There's more in the way of shelter here than a basher might think at first. Canny folks find it quick if they want to survive. Sometimes, even laying low in a hive of evil like Deathheart's preferable to wading through the soul-drinking energy that comprises the plane. There're spells and such that make a cutter invisible to undead, or make her look like one. These can help. Wise priests won't go waving their holy symbols around trying to drive off the undead. That only serves to draw them—believe me, I've seen it.

Despite all the dangers, negative energy can actually be a valuable commodity. If a blood can tumble to a way to contain and transport it, many's the cutter who'll pay good jink for it. Necromancers and other magical researchers need it as part of experiments, operations, or item creation. Of course, some folks might have moral or ethical objections to selling such a dangerous substance to such bashers, but even a few well-intentioned souls seek samples of the energy to determine how to overcome it. Remember, though, negative energy's not in and of itself evil—destruction and death are as much part of the multiverse as creation and life, even if we don't like to admit it.

A last dark: Spells that cause damage cause the maximum possible harm in this plane, but healing spells always function as poorly as they can. No known spell keys exist to correct this, but top-shelf spellslingers're working on it.

THE PARAELEMENTAL PLANE OF ICE

Hello, mortals. I shall be your narrator—your unfailing guide, if you will. My name is Sanctimarín, Master of the Frozen Breeze. Your sages would name me a mephít, but I am nothing like the creatures of fire or steam that share that distinction. Referring to my glorious race by that appellation proves more than anything else how badly you need my help.

Let's start with the basics. The Paraelemental Plane of Ice is very, very, very cold.

Got that? Good. Now try to keep up.

The paraplane of Ice is so cold that anything brought here freezes. I know that in cold regions of other planes most liquids freeze, but that's not really what I'm talking about. Here, flesh freezes. Blood freezes.

Stone freezes. The air freezes. Spoken words freeze. Thoughts freeze. Even ice freezes.

Ice is a meeting of Elemental Air and Water. Unlike some of the other paraelements, however, ice shares little with the materials that merge to form its essence. It has none of the fluidity, flexibility, and resilience of father Water, nor the speed, lightness, and loftiness of mother Air.

On the other hand, the paraplane itself shows a definite relationship to its two parent Elemental Planes—as well as to the other realms with which it shares borders. As you move away from the heart of my home in an upward direction, the climate undergoes a gradual change. In time, the ice breaks up to become the howling blizzards that form the border with the Elemental Plane of Air. Here, it is possible to walk along the edge of the paraplane, with snow all around you and the plane

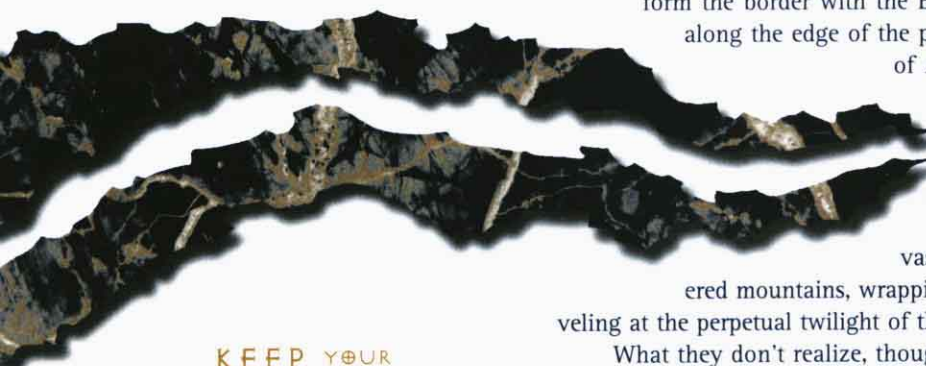
of Air spreading out above. This region is called the Precipice, and many people think of it as the surface of Ice. In fact, because the paraplane has gravity, some foreigners mistakenly think the Precipice is the whole paraplane. It's easy to see why, really. They trudge along through the vast expanse of ice and snow, staring at the ice-covered mountains, wrapping up tightly against the howling winds, and marveling at the perpetual twilight of the dim, whitish-blue illumination.

What they don't realize, though, is that the majority of the paraplane lies *below* the surface in the mostly solid, icy heart. If you move downward from the Precipice, the ice slowly becomes more and more watery. This water is horribly cold, but it's still slightly warmer than the paraplane's ice. Eventually, you'll reach a frigid place called the Sea of Frozen Lives, a surfaceless ocean of suspended ice chunks. Beyond this chilling wash is the Elemental Plane of Water. (Because of the way the paraplane of Ice seems to rest on top of the Bottomless Deep, it's sometimes called the Floating Plane or even the Bobbing Plane—and no, you readers from Sigil, that doesn't mean that there are a lot of thieves here.)

That takes care of up and down. Now, if you begin to make the long and draining journey laterally toward the plane of Negative Energy, the nature of the ice undergoes yet another transformation. In one direction, it slowly becomes an endless hail of acrid salt-water ice before giving way to the deadly quasiplane of Salt. This eternally raging tempest of salty crystals is known to most as the Stinging Storm.

Listing toward the plane of Air brings you to a region that's free of ice and snow but gripped in the horrid fingers of absolute cold and total darkness. This place is known as the Frigid Void, and beyond it lies the unending emptiness of the quasiplane of Vacuum.

Don't like those choices? If you travel in the other direction—toward the plane of Positive Energy—the nature of the ice changes yet again. Set your course for the quasiplane of Steam and you'll come upon the Fog of Unyielding Frost, a place of churning, super-cold vapors. These mists are breathable, but they'll freeze your lungs solid if you don't have some manner of protection from the cold.



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WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS
Fire, Earth <

Move toward the quasiplane of Lightning and you'll find that the ice breaks up to become a field of softly blowing snow, which, on the surface, seems almost pleasant. In truth, however, these powdery flakes are infused with a dangerous energy. Although the force doesn't cause physical damage, it can have a terrible effect upon the mind. At the start of each turn spent among the Shimmering Drifts, a traveler must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or lose his wits (as if he were the victim of a *confusion* spell).

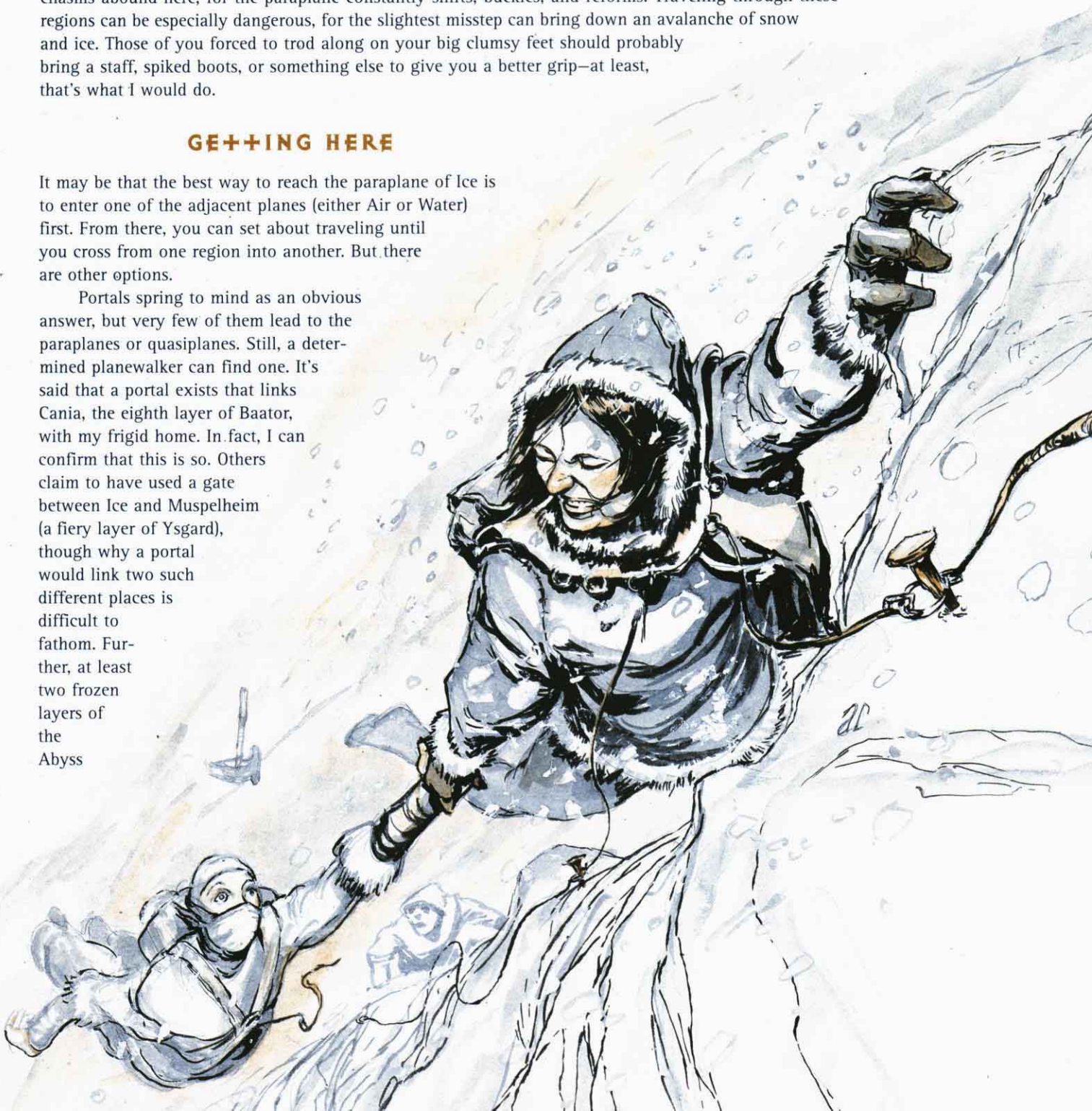
◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

At its heart, the Paraelemental Plane of Ice is an immense glacier without base or surface. It is a region of incredible cold and darkness. In many ways, it combines the excessive pressure of the plane of Earth with the torturous extremes of temperature found in the plane of Fire. Numerous cracks, fissures, and chasms abound here, for the paraplane constantly shifts, buckles, and reforms. Traveling through these regions can be especially dangerous, for the slightest misstep can bring down an avalanche of snow and ice. Those of you forced to trod along on your big clumsy feet should probably bring a staff, spiked boots, or something else to give you a better grip—at least, that's what I would do.

GETTING HERE

It may be that the best way to reach the paraplane of Ice is to enter one of the adjacent planes (either Air or Water) first. From there, you can set about traveling until you cross from one region into another. But there are other options.

Portals spring to mind as an obvious answer, but very few of them lead to the paraplans or quasiplanes. Still, a determined planewalker can find one. It's said that a portal exists that links Cania, the eighth layer of Baator, with my frigid home. In fact, I can confirm that this is so. Others claim to have used a gate between Ice and Muspelheim (a fiery layer of Ysgard), though why a portal would link two such different places is difficult to fathom. Further, at least two frozen layers of the Abyss



supposedly offer portals leading to the paraplane of Ice. One of these layers—I believe it's the 566th, known to many as Soulfreeze—is thought to have a two-way portal, though the key to activate it is a mortal soul, which is destroyed in the process.

Occasionally, a great enough concentration of ice opens a vortex that connects a location on the Prime Material Plane with the paraplane of Ice. In most cases, these are found in glacial or arctic regions. Once in a very long while, such a vortex opens at the heart of particularly ferocious blizzard or deep beneath a frigid sea.

HAZARDS

Survival in the paraplane of Ice is not easy, particularly for you mortals. Numerous hazards, both organic and inorganic, can slay a newcomer before he knows what's hit him.

FREEZING

My home paraplane is amazingly cold. There's really no other way to put it. Travelers who come here had best be ready to deal with this, or they won't last long. Those without an immunity to cold or magical protection from the temperature suffer 1d6 points of damage per round. By using nonmagical protection from cold—such as wearing clothing made to withstand extremely cold weather, covering all exposed skin, and keeping out of winds or open water—smart folks can reduce their pain to a mere 1d6 points of damage per turn.

Worse yet, the temperature doesn't remain steady, so some areas of Ice are much colder than others. In fact, certain spots are so cold that no amount of nonmagical protection staves off damage from the environment, and that damage is twice normal for those without protective gear and clothing.

And it gets colder still. Deep within the paraplane, some areas are so cold that energy, even light, freezes. Vision becomes impossible, for light doesn't travel to meet your eyes. As I mentioned before, words and thoughts can also freeze, meaning that trying to speak or think clearly requires a successful saving throw vs. petrification. Go far enough into the paraplane and eventually even ice freezes. Here, even those immune to cold suffer 1d6 points of damage per round. Furthermore, new ice forms at the rate of about a foot per minute, making the "ground" extremely unstable as the ice grows and grows.

BREA+HING

On the Precipice, the air is plentiful, if cold. Below the surface, the paraplane is a solid block of ice, so breathing can be a problem. The only ways to get around this are by using magic or by holding your breath—and the latter is a short-term solution, to say the least.

Of course, elemental pockets of air can provide relief. Fissures, cracks, and other openings in the ice often have a

thin atmosphere as well. This gradually leaks out of the ice itself and has a 75% chance of being thick enough to sustain life like yours. Still, many creatures native to the paraplane—like, say, members of *my* race—have no weakness such as a need for air.

VISION

Unless you have some manner of special eyesight, like a *ring of infravision*, you won't be able to see a lot in the paraplane of Ice. Like the Elemental Plane of Earth, the place is a vast mass of solid matter. Of course, you can see normally in fissures, caverns, and the like if you carry a source of light. However, items like lanterns and torches work only in spots where the atmosphere is thick enough to breathe. Further, while fire might seem an obvious boon, it presents two possible problems.

First of all, fire melts ice and snow. (If you need me to tell you that, stay home.) Under the surface of the paraplane, this can invite trouble. Even a torch can create an icefall—or at least douse the bearer with frigid water that refreezes almost instantly.

Secondly, in the coldest portions of the paraplane, fire freezes. When this happens, there is a 50% chance that the flame becomes a solid chunk of cold, icelike fire, and a 50% chance that it becomes *coldfire*—a black-burning flame that radiates powerful cold instead of heat and provides little or no light.

Rumors speak of special lenses made in the frozen city of Teliggin that allow their wearers to see sounds while in the paraplane, since the cold makes noise itself move more slowly.

PRESSURE

Just like the plane of Earth, the paraplane of Ice constantly tries to fill in voids (whether there's something else in them or not). Thus, the rules presented on that subject in the chapter on Earth apply here as well. Briefly, those entombed within the solid ice below the surface suffer 1d2 points of damage per turn. Constructed passages seal within 1d6 days, although Ice certainly has more natural open areas than does the plane of Earth.

⊕+HER DANGERS

The greatest dangers of the paraplane of Ice are the cold and the lack of air. If you can deal with those problems, you're generally doing all right. Still, you should plan for the following potential troubles.

AVALANCHES. You've got to be careful when moving through the many fissures and cracks that lace the paraplane, or near the precarious frozen cliffs on the surface. Any sudden and loud noise, like an explosion or the casting of a *lightning bolt*, can cause a dangerous shower of ice and snow to fall from the walls and ceiling or from the peaks high above. Anyone caught in such a collapse must make a saving throw

vs. breath weapon or suffer 4d6 points of damage. A successful saving throw cuts the damage in half.

SINKHOLES. From time to time, an area of ice thaws slightly until it becomes a mire of slush. To the untrained eye, it looks just like the rest of the ice all around it. But anyone who steps into the mire plunges beneath the surface. These sinkholes can be very difficult to escape from, for their edges are nothing but wet ice and, thus, terribly slippery. Victims wearing heavy winter clothes are likely to drown (as the weight of their gear pulls them under) or freeze (if they shed some clothing to stay afloat).

TRUE COLD. A "true cold" area of the paraplane is a region in which more than just water or flesh can freeze. A substance, energy, word, thought, or even a concept like "goodness" or "nearness" can freeze solid, taking on the form of a strange ice crystal. While frozen, the item, thought, or whatever it is has no power or meaning.

Some outsiders enjoy scouring the true cold areas of Ice for frozen ideas, which they take back with them. Once removed from the frigid temperatures of the paraplane, the prizes thaw, usually within a specially prepared container. Then, they might be used somehow to power a magical item or an esoteric scheme, or simply sold for profit. I've heard that Sigil's Great Bazaar offers anything a buyer might want, but I'll wager that even some of the most jaded planars are surprised to find distilled "chaos," bottled "sadness," or liquid "left" for sale.

MOVING ABOUT

On the Precipice, travelers may employ their mountain-climbing skills on the icy peaks. Within the depths of the plane, conditions mirror those of the plane of Earth. The majority of the ice has the consistency of soft rock and presents the same difficulty as described on page 34.

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

None of the paraplanes or quasiplanes is as well populated as the Elemental Planes are. This having been said, however, it would be wrong to think of them as utterly desolate.

PARAELEMENTALS

Many varieties of ice paraelemental wander the paraplane. For the most part, these creatures resemble walking ice sculptures. Many of them obey the will of Cryonax, the Prince of Evil Ice Creatures, though most do so out of fear instead of respect. Others resist the tyrant's domination by hiding in small conclaves in icy caverns on the surface or deep within the frozen heart of the paraplane.

Kingdoms of ice paraelementals usually aren't very friendly to other beings, though they get along well with my people. In fact, we dwell together in joint cities and realms, some of which have existed for longer than most prime-material worlds.

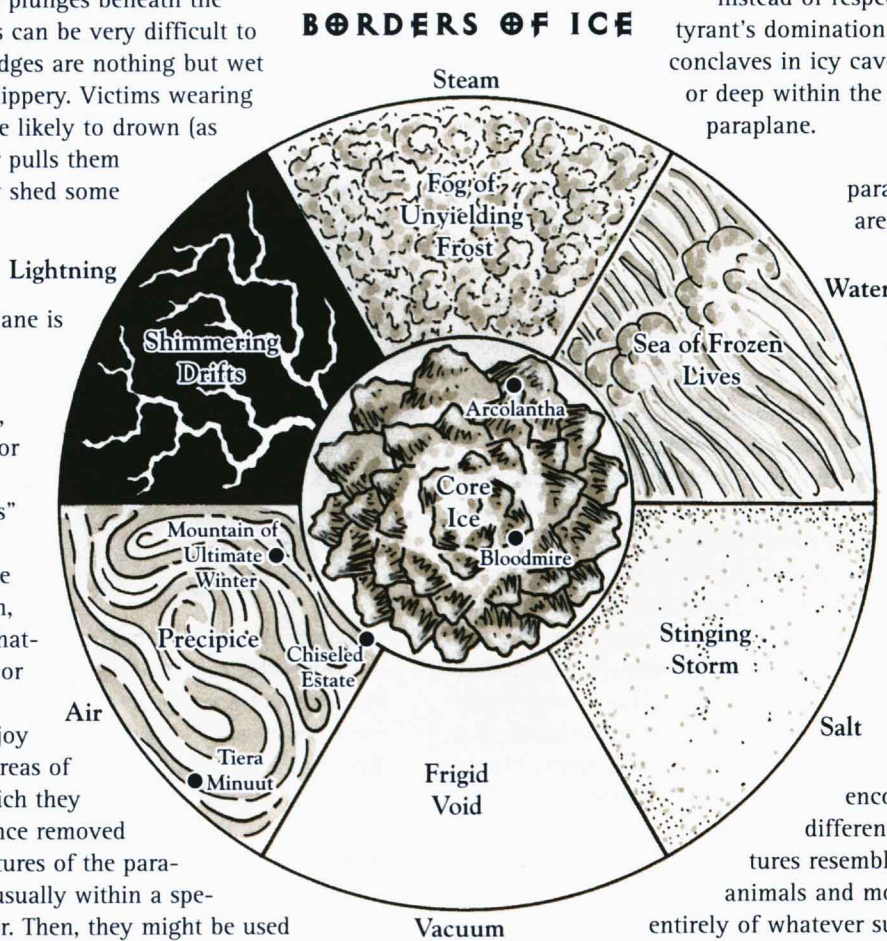
ANIMALS

Visitors to Ice will no doubt encounter a number of different animentials—creatures resembling prime-material animals and monsters, but formed entirely of whatever substance is at hand (in this case, ice). But many "ordinary" arctic beasts such as polar bears and penguins also share my home.

Don't be surprised, either, by the large number of insects that crawl along the surface of the paraplane or burrow through the ice. One such bug, the frostmite, feeds upon whatever heat it can find—often in the flesh of travelers, or even in that of the frost giants and yeti that live here permanently.

MONSTERS

A number of white dragons make their home in the paraplane of Ice. The greatest of these, Albrathanilar, appears to be positioning herself for a battle against Cryonax. No one can predict the outcome of such a fray, but even if the dragon does manage to defeat the reigning archomental, it seems unlikely that the paraelementals of Ice will accept her as their new leader. Still, Albrathanilar, who is also a cunning and powerful wizard, uses her spells to charm and conjure forth



more and more allies in preparation for what surely will be a conflict of major proportions. For now, however, Cryonax and Albrathanilar use spies and saboteurs against each other in what can only be called a "cold war." (*My apologies for the bad pun; Sanctimarin insisted that it remain.—the Editor*)

Other creatures—like winter wolves, frost salamanders, ice crabs, remorhaz, yeti, and ice toads—thrive in this chill realm, avoiding only the coldest of areas. Most of these beasts prefer the Precipice, though some dwell in the rifts and crevices below the surface. To give credence to the idea of parallelism, some folks have reportedly seen ice bulettes plying their way through the ice seeking prey. Others claim that huge frozen worms resembling the fiery thoqqua make tunnels through the ice, though this seems unlikely.

⊕+HER RACES

The immoths generally resist the rule of Cryonax. For the most part, they do this simply by living in isolated areas and ignoring his mandates. Occasionally, they have been known to aid the enemies of the frigid archomental.

The paraplane of Ice is also home to large communities of frost giants and an equally great number of ice and frost trolls. All three of these races dislike each other intensely. Thus, feuds between troll and troll or troll and giant are never-ending. One such battle, fought in a region called Ytharior, created a frozen lake of blood and weapons that remains to this day. Those who have come upon the Bloodmire, as it is referred to, describe it as a place of utter horror and grisly beauty. Many of the combatants froze before they fell in battle, and now they're part of a strange, eternal ballet, dancing within the lake of frozen blood.

MAJ⊕R PLAYERS

No true powers reside in the paraplane of Ice, though one up and coming basher—Cryonax—fancies himself such. He's a fur-covered humanoid about 15 feet tall, powerfully built and said to resemble a yeti or similar creature. His most unusual features are two long tentacles that sprout where you might expect to see arms.

It's little wonder that Cryonax considers himself a deity. He's the only paraelemental entity ever to have risen through the ranks to become a full-fledged archomental. (This fact is contested, I understand, by those who say that other beings have done the same, and by those who argue that Cryonax is no archomental at all.)

It may be this background, and the fact that Cryonax claims to be a son of the Elder Elemental God, that has made him into the powerful force he is today. While some might dismiss him as a lesser creature, not the equal of the other Elemental Princes, they'd be wise not to do it where he could hear them.

Cryonax has plans—big plans. It's his desire to bring the whole of the paraplane of Ice under his rule. As no force

strong enough to oppose him has surfaced, he eventually may accomplish this lofty goal. That success, however, will only be the starting point. Cryonax plans to then raise the power of Ice until my home becomes a true Elemental Plane. Whether he intends for Ice to replace one of the four existing planes or simply join them as a fifth element is unclear.

What will happen to the Inner Planes if Cryonax is successful? No one can say. Most people don't think that his goal is possible. The nature of the multiverse is fixed and can't be disrupted, they argue. On the other hand, others claim that the archomental could potentially freeze one or more of the Elemental Planes, expanding the boundaries of Ice throughout Water and Air, and even freezing Earth and Fire. Faced with the possibility of such incredible chaos, it's probably best for us to believe the folks who insist that it can't happen.

But even this isn't his ultimate goal. In the end, Cryonax has vowed to see his own power increase beyond that of the other archomentials. When this happens, he believes, Ice will become the one true element and all other things will be considered lesser forms of matter. Eventually, he wishes to see the entire multiverse frozen and under his command. No small dreamer, this Cryonax.

THE SLEEPING ⊕NES

It is said by some, particularly the kuo-toa, that an ancient and venerable race roamed the planes long before any other species were born. Indeed, a few even speculate that these creatures caused the multiverse itself to come into existence. Eventually, for a reason that none can guess at, this forgotten race decided to end their contact with the cosmos. According to the stories of the kuo-toa (and other races), they sealed themselves in the depths of the paraplane of Ice.

Now, some people will tell you that the so-called Sleeping Ones—if they ever did exist—are long gone. Others, however, insist that they're simply awaiting a time when their incredible powers are needed again. Those who claim to have actually seen the monumental creatures frozen within the ice usually make this argument. But then again, such explorers are difficult to believe. You see, the Sleeping Ones apparently inspire a sort of brain-shattering awe, and the sight of their numbing graveyard is supposed to rip a weak-minded fool of his sensibilities—literally. Still, if these beings are truly as big as some claim (many, many miles long), it could be that plenty of travelers have seen them from a distance but mistook them for oddly shaped mountain peaks.

◆ THE SITES ◆

The paraplane of Ice is generally as bleak and dismal a place as a mortal could ever see. True, it has numerous faults and chasms, but to the undiscerning eye, they all start to look alike after a while. However, there's one spot that every visitor to Ice should see: Arcolantha.

ARCOLAN+HA

Far beneath the surface of the paraplane lies a pocket of elemental Air several miles in diameter. The walls of this round chamber have been polished until the ice is as smooth as glass. At the center of the sphere is a glowing orb that spreads an even, white light over everything.

If that's all there were to it, Arcolantha would still be an impressive place to visit. But there's much more. Frozen inside the icy walls of the chamber are countless animals gathered from across the multiverse. Although these beasts are frozen solid, they're not truly dead. If one is removed from the ice and thawed, it returns to life. Thus, it's hard to say whether Arcolantha is more a museum or a zoo.

THE CHISELED ES+ATE

The Chiseled Estate is the icy fortress of Cryonax. This colossal structure rises well over a mile above the surface of the frozen plain, and it extends down into the cold heart of the paraplane at least four times that far. Nestled within the deepest chamber of the shimmering crystalline palace, Cryonax broods. Rumor has it that he has enslaved a coven of mortal wizards and priests—supposedly, many of them water or ice genasi—who labor endlessly to produce new cold-based monsters to add to their master's armies. Stories of frost-covered umber hulks, snowy roperlike beings, and even giant, razor-winged birds made entirely of ice have come out of the Chiseled Estate for years.

The fortress is colder than most regions of the paraplane, inflicting an additional 1d6 points of damage per round to visitors who aren't immune to cold. The site inflicts still another 1d6 points of damage per round to those foolish enough to travel there with no special protection whatsoever, not even warm clothing.

MOUNTAIN OF ULTIMATE WINTER

This oft-mentioned location sits upon the Precipice, amid a number of other icy mountains. Cold winds whip around the jagged peaks of this white monstrosity, which sparkles with icy crystals. Although most outlanders say that the Chiseled Estate is the coldest spot in the paraplane, they're wrong. That distinction belongs to the Mountain of Ultimate Winter, which suggests that it's actually the coldest place in the multiverse.

Nonnatives who come to the Mountain must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or freeze utterly solid in 1d4 rounds. Nonnative creatures that are immune to cold (such as ice toads or winter wolves) suffer 1d6 points of damage per round while here.

An area of true cold, the Mountain of Ultimate Winter freezes everything from words to concepts. These things become tiny crystals worth anywhere from 100 to 5,000 gold

pieces, depending on the item and the buyer. The Mountain is also home to immoths and paraelementals, who like to capture explorers and store them—frozen solid, of course—in the Caves of Folly. (The collection isn't nearly as pristine or as elegant as that in Arcolantha.)

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN ICE ◆

My editor tells me that you readers may wish to know a little of the comings and going of your kind in my plane. Floating high above the paraplane, among the chilling winds and icy tempests, a city surrounded by a magical bubble floats and bobs about the cloudless sky. Tiera Minuut, a place constructed by priests of a now-forgotten wind goddess, somehow slipped from the plane of Air to the paraplane of Ice. No one really knows how this happened, but it's obvious that it did.

Tiera Minuut is used as a rest stop by intelligent travelers who come to the paraplane. Within its glassy shield, the city is cold by mortal standards, but not dangerously so. Those like myself find the place uncomfortable and prefer not to stay in its overly warm climate.

A council of nine men and women rules the city, and it offers an open door to all who come seeking shelter from the cold. Tiera Minuut serves as a trading post and even offers access to a few portals leading to other parts of the multiverse. Those looking for work can find it with the city's merchants, who seek out brave souls to search the paraplane for frozen ideas or concepts, or even for the valuable material known as *eternal ice*.

Believe me, eternal ice isn't easy to find. It looks and reacts like normal ice in every way but one: It never melts. Outsiders lucky enough to discover a chunk usually take it back with them as an intriguing curiosity, but eternal ice also serves a real purpose. Never melting but always cold, it can safely store food or chill drinks even in the hottest clime.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

Cold-weather clothing such as thick wool, tight leather wraps, and furs and skins offer some protection against the environment, but only a fool trusts his life to such crude measures. You mortals should obtain magical protection from cold before venturing to my home paraplane. I myself might be able to offer you that service, should you find me and bring enough payment along with you. Then again, a simple *ring of warmth* can sustain a nonnative for a long time.

It's possible for a wizard to overcome the magical restrictions for the schools of Elemental Fire and Earth through the use of various spell keys. Almost universally, they take the shape of physical objects cut from fine glass or crystal. These must be designed for the individual using them as well as for the spell to be cast, however, so no two spell keys are ever alike.

THE PARAELEMENTAL PLANE OF MAGMA

The Paraelemental Plane of Magma is a bubbling, churning mass of molten stone, volcanic rock, sulfurous fumes, and searing heat. It is not a place that most outsiders—or even other inner-planar natives—would ever want to visit, but it does have a few defenders. The magmen, for instance, happily call it home. While not a member of

their race, I know a good deal about them. My name is Flaasam ki'Alifir, and I am of the fire spirits. *(He's a fire genasi.—the Editor)* My heart lies within the Elemental Plane of Fire, but I have spent a good deal of time in our sister paraplane as well.

To understand what Magma is like, imagine a vast sea of boiling rock. Plumes of smoky fire rise from the glowing surface of the morass to create an atmosphere primarily composed of a thick fog of molten stone laced with deadly fumes. Here and there, islands of basalt or obsidian resist the naturally destructive nature of the realm, but most everything is consumed by the glorious heat and flames very quickly.

As one travels toward the Elemental Plane of Earth, the magma becomes thicker and flows more slowly. The rising plumes of fire become less frequent, although a haze of volcanic ash gradually begins to fill the air. The juncture of the two realms is an area of basalt cliffs and spires rising above rivers and lakes of molten lava. This region is known to most as the Scorched Wastes. Apart from the occasional fire elemental or hermetic salamander, practically nothing lives here.

Moving away from the center of Magma in the other direction eventually brings a traveler to the beautiful Elemental Plane of Fire. As his journey progresses, he sees the magma growing blissfully hotter and more fluid. The nearer he draws to the Blazing Sea, the more frequent the fiery eruptions that dot the paraplane. In the end, at the point where the two regions meet, the atmosphere is awash with a haze made wholly from searing droplets of molten stone. This deadly place is known as the Searing Mists, and it supports no more population than the Scorched Wastes.

A traveler heading in the direction of the Positive Energy Plane can move toward the quasiplanes of Mineral or Radiance. Both routes are marked by dangerous terrain.

In the former case, the surface of the lava gradually cools until it forms a smooth plain of hard obsidian. Spires of volcanic glass and geodelike crystal soon rise out of the wasteland to form what the sages call the Obsidian Forest. The place is infested by evil stone creatures who, for one reason or another, have fled from their would-be ruler, the archomental known as Ogremoch. They enjoy privacy—quite so, in fact. It would be my recommendation to avoid these displaced fugitives.

If a traveler opts to change course just a bit, he eventually reaches the quasiplane of Radiance. Before he does, however, he passes through one of the deadliest places in all the Inner Planes: the Glowing Dunes. This is a region of rolling hills at first made up of volcanic ash. Nearer the quasiplane of Radiance, the dust becomes more metallic and gradually begins to radiate light and energy. Whatever the nature of these magical emanations, they present a deadly threat to every living thing. Those who travel through the area must make a saving throw vs. death magic each day. Any poor creature who fails this roll becomes afflicted with a horrible disease or curse (no one knows which for sure). Before long, nausea sets in. This is followed by blistering skin, hair loss, bleeding gums, blindness, and countless other nasty symptoms before the victim dies in 3d20 painful days. All in all, a more unpleasant death would be difficult to imagine.

ARE YOU
SURE
WE DIDN'T
+ TAKE A
WRONG TURN
IN BAA+OR?
—A NERVOUS
PLANEWALKER

ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION: Water
WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS
Air <

No cure, not even a magical one, is known to help, though rumor has it that a loam found in the plane of Earth or a plant growing deep within the plane of Water may alleviate the condition before the victim dies.

In the other direction, toward the Negative Energy Plane, the structure of the magma gradually breaks up. Near the quasiplane of Dust, it slowly cools and forms a vast, desertlike expanse known as the Sands. Although this place is cooler than the rest of Magma, it wreaks havoc on metal items and mechanical devices. As one moves through the Sands toward Dust, the particles become more and more powdery. They creep into everything and tend to promote rust and other corrosion.

Traveling instead toward the quasiplane of Ash, a similar transformation occurs. At the point where Magma and Ash truly come together lies a vast collection of chalky islands with streams of magma running between them. This is a difficult place to explore, however, for the islands are deadly stretches of frigid ash (for details on the conditions of such places, refer to the chapter on the Quasielemental Plane of Ash), while the rivers are hot, blistering channels of magma. This produces a checkerboard effect where regions of extreme heat abut those of numbing cold. A traveler will be hard-pressed to protect himself against both hazards.

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

Many primes believe that the Elemental Plane of Fire mirrors their version of Hell, but the moment they experience Magma that opinion changes to encompass this plane. Fire itself is bad enough (in their opinion, which I find shortsighted at best), but fire that *sticks* somehow conjures an even greater terror in their minds. I am only sorry they cannot comprehend the subtle glories of the paraplane.

GETTING HERE

Reaching the paraplane of Magma is easier than entering most of the other paraelemental realms. Vortices leading here are fairly common (as such things go). However, few portals provide access to Magma. Whether this is because of some difficulty in breaching the boundaries of the paraplane or whether it reflects the fact that not many people want to come here is a question yet unanswered.

The only portal I can speak of with accuracy, in fact, is a basalt gate found in an isolated, untended area of the Outlands. Exactly who built the portal is a subject of some debate, for the opening is quite small. Man-sized creatures

have to squeeze to pass through it, and larger folk simply cannot make use of the thing at all. Halflings, dwarves, and other such races have



no problem with the portal, and they generally find it amusing to watch their larger cousins try to contort their way through.

The portal key is a simple glass lens, but a traveler should think twice before opening the gate. It's a one-way journey from the Outlands directly into the fortress of Chilimba, a powerful tyrant who's the closest thing Magma has to a ruler. Chilimba is more than a little paranoid, too, and tends to have people killed as soon as they step through the gate. If a planewalker isn't ready to present his case in a speedy and convincing manner, he might wish to find another way to the paraplane.

There are more vortices to Magma than to any other such realm. One exists at the heart of almost every active volcano. Of course, reaching such places may be a chore in itself, but if an outsider plans to survive in the paraplane of Magma, he really ought to have no trouble with a little volcano.

HAZARDS

Those who dislike heat find it difficult to survive in the paraplane of Magma. From the point of view of many, the environment combines the worst features of the Elemental Planes of Fire and Earth.

BREATHING AND VISION

As a substance, magma is no easier to breathe than earth. Without magic, a visitor who journeys below the surface of the paraplane survives only as long as he can hold his breath. Of course, some might try to travel atop the magma instead, in which case they discover an atmosphere quite toxic. Anyone who breathes it without some manner of filter or magical protection must make a saving throw vs. poison or die instantly.

When moving through the blazing regions above the magma, creatures not native to the paraplane find the range of their vision reduced to only 120 feet. In most cases, native creatures can see twice as far. Below the surface, vision is impossible without magical assistance—a *ring of x-ray vision*, for example. In either case, the heat of the paraplane makes infravision useless.

TEMPERATURE

The heat here is nearly as great as that of the beautiful plane of Fire. Any nonmagical or unprotected flammable substances, such as wood, paper, or cloth, burst into flames within 1 round. When this happens, anyone wearing items made of such material suffers 1d10 points of damage unless shielded from injury by heat or flame. Magical items, like scrolls or cloaks, are allowed a saving throw vs. magical fire (at a penalty of -2) to escape destruction.

Unprotected water and other fluids instantly boil away into vapor. Anyone exposed to these boiling liquids or their clouds of superheated steam suffers 2d10 points of damage. Magical fluids (a category that does *not* include holy water)

are allowed a saving throw vs. magical fire at a -1 penalty.

Nonvolcanic stone that is not magical or protected in some way melts into magma in 5 rounds. This causes 3d10 points of damage to any unprotected traveler wearing or in close contact with the stone. Living creatures made of stone, such as earth elementals or golems, suffer 1d6 points of damage from the heat each round. Volcanic stone, which includes basalt, obsidian, and pumice, is virtually immune to the heat of the paraplane. Magical stone can survive as well, with a successful saving throw vs. magical fire.

Unprotected or nonmagical metal items heat to the melting point in 4 rounds. This sudden increase in temperature causes 4d4 points of damage to anyone in contact with the metal and also might disable their limbs (as per the *heat metal* spell). Magical metal items can escape this fate by making a saving throw vs. magical fire with a +2 bonus.

It goes without saying that creatures of flesh and blood suffer damage each round that they're exposed to the heat of Magma. The severity of their injuries depends on their natural Armor Class, as indicated by the chart below.

NATURAL AC	DAMAGE PER ROUND
10 to 8	6d8
7 to 5	5d8
4 to 2	4d8
1 to -1	3d8
-2 to -4	2d8
-5 to -7	1d8
-8 to -10	Nil

Those above the surface of the lava suffer only half of the indicated damage, but they must be careful of bursting lava bubbles and erupting geysers (as described in "Other Dangers," below). The best advice I can give to a nonnative is this: Bring as much magical protection as possible. Spells like *protection from magma* are best, though the more common *protection from fire* or items like a *ring of fire protection* reduce the damage to 10 points per round.

OTHER DANGERS

Outsiders may think it odd to discuss the "special perils" of a realm where the air is acidic and poisonous, the surface is an endless sea of boiling lava, and the entire place is hotter than Vulcan's forge. But for nonnatives, even more dangers exist.

BLAZING CLOUDS. On most prime-material worlds, the sight of a cloud drifting lazily across the sky is a peaceful one. In the paraplane of Magma, however, such things are extremely dangerous. Here, clouds are often composed of burning, acidic vapors and raw, elemental Fire.

Anyone who enters a blazing cloud must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer 2d10 points of damage. Creatures immune to or protected from either fire or acid are allowed a +4 bonus to their rolls. (Those immune to both fire *and* acid are safe from the cloud and need not make a saving throw at all.) A successful saving throw cuts

the damage sustained in half. Those who remain inside a blazing cloud must make a new saving throw every turn.

BUBBLES AND GEYSERS. While on or above the surface of the paraplane, a traveler must be mindful of the roiling, seething nature of the magma. Each turn, there is a 10% chance that a bubble of magma explodes near him, or that a geyser of magma blasts up in his vicinity. Even a person immune to the heat of the molten rock sprayed all over him must make a successful saving throw vs. petrification or be flung up to 3d10 feet away by the force of the blast or pressure.

MOVING ABOUT

The fact that gravity exists in the paraplane makes getting from one place to another rather difficult. Unless one has some means of flying through the deadly atmosphere, he must navigate the lava sea. In order to do this, he must secure some manner of ship that can withstand the heat.

In most cases, this requires a magical conveyance of some sort, but some artificers insist that technology can also fill the need. Indeed, the fact that more than a few travelers claim to have sighted the *Avenger* (as described in the chapter on the Elemental Plane of Water) speeding through the liquid stone of the paraplane supports that assertion.

It is possible, too, to travel beneath the magma rather than above it, thanks to one of the great secrets of the paraplane. A network of hardened lava tubes extends throughout the bubbling, still-liquid magma. While the temperature inside the tubes is extraordinarily hot, a nonnative can usually travel through the linked passageways more easily than through the magma itself. The tubes even contain air, though it's just as toxic as the rest of the paraplane's atmosphere.

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

The paraplane of Magma is not heavily populated. The most common creatures here are, of course, paraelementals and mephits, but an unwary sod still can find trouble with any number of hot-blooded folk.

PARAELEMENTALS

The rulers of the paraplane are, without a doubt, the vicious magma mephits. While other races, including fire mephits, wage endless battles with them, their vast numbers seldom permit defeat. It is no wonder that their leader, Chilimba (who likes to be called the Searing Emperor, the First General of the Cauldron, or the Master of All Mephits), is the most powerful basher in the paraplane.

Magma paraelementals, along with their cousins from the planes of Earth and Fire, are not uncommon. In the interest of survival, though, they generally avoid the reigning mephits. When these races do come into contact with each other, battle almost always erupts.

ANIMALS

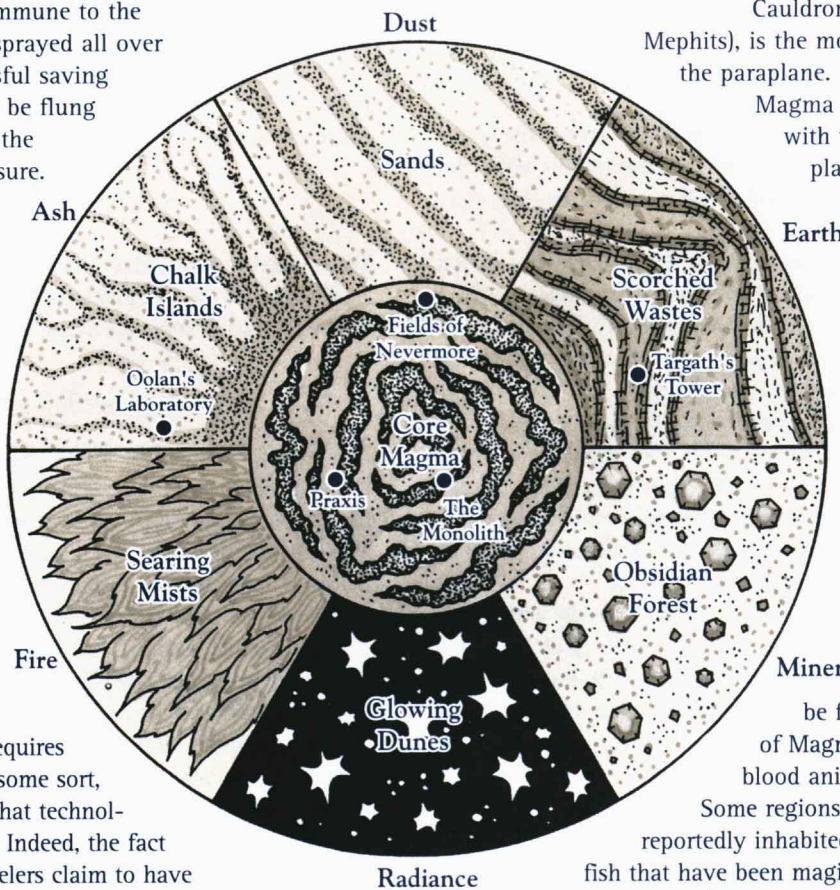
A large number of animals can be found in the paraplane of Magma, but few flesh-and-blood animals can survive here.

Some regions of the magma sea are reportedly inhabited by schools of deadly fish that have been magically altered to enable them to thrive in lava, but no one seems to know the truth of this. Gelterfish, on the other hand, pose a threat to no one, even as they swim powerfully through the dense molten rock. They're immune to the heat, and no one knows what, if anything, they eat.

Perhaps the reports of dangerous fish are actually thoqqua sightings. These beasts aren't really animals, but they do swim through the magma and they do sometimes attack others (natives and outsiders alike). It is said that the thoqqua seek only to reach the Elemental Plane of Earth where they can burrow through stone, so the specimens sighted here may simply be migrating.

Blazons are small, animate, burning rocks. Efreet come to the paraplane to collect them as pets or watchdogs. Mephits and paraelementals domesticate them as well, though curiously, the blazons hate and fear magmen. Some have suggested that blazons are larval magmen, but this seems like a bit of a stretch.

BORDERS OF MAGMA



MONSTERS

Most of the monsters found in the paraplane of Magma are those that also can survive in the wondrous plane of Fire. After all, even creatures like xorn and galeb duhr—powerful monsters indeed, but, in my opinion, inferior to the beings of Fire—are not immune to the glorious heat. Still, the creatures of elemental Fire find it annoyingly difficult to cope with the density of the magma here.

OTHER RACES

Numerous nations of magmen spread out across the paraplane of Magma. These folk often strike bargains with elementals, paraelementals, and similar creatures, but they have no love of mephits.

In addition to the magmen, a great many fire giants have settled in the paraplane over the years. Most of them dwell in a vast fortress-city known as Thermax, which sits at the nexus of a number of lava tubes, but a few scattered strongholds can be found in other places.

When the dao of the plane of Earth come here looking for slaves, they sail in obsidian ships atop the surface of the magma. They usually seek out magmen or mephits to take back with them. The efreet also make their way to the paraplane from time to time, and many stories tell of secret dealings held here between the two genie races.

Other rumors tell of a race of humanoids with blue-black skin that lives amid the steam that rises up from the magma. They speak not forward or backward, but sideways, so no one has ever been able to communicate with them, not even through magical means.

MAJOR PLAYERS

No known powers reside in the paraplane of Magma. However, a traveler should be familiar with at least two very mighty beings, just in case he ever bumps into them.

CHILIMBA. Master of the lava mephits, Chilimba is as cruel and evil a tyrant as any that ever lived. Indeed, rumor has it that he studied the art of torture under the guidance of a particularly nasty pit fiend. By the end of his training, it is said, he was teaching that fiend new ways to inflict pain and suffering.

A great deal of confusion exists regarding Chilimba's true nature. While he claims to be an archomental, there can be no doubt that he is of lava mephit stock. In all likelihood, Chilimba is a crossbreed, rather like a paraelemental genasi.

Chilimba makes his home in a fortress of basalt known as Caldera. Carved in the image of an immense red dragon, the structure is protected by all manner of conventional and magical defenses. This is as much a tribute to Chilimba's paranoia as anything else.

KORLAND REDBLAZE. Towering even above the rest of his kin, Korland Redblaze (Pl/♂ fire giant/HD 18/LE) is the bravest of the paraplane's fire giants. Although aggressive and somewhat brutal, Redblaze is not unreasonable. It is said that he grants an audience to anyone who desires it, but those who waste his time will know the full extent of his considerable anger.

Redblaze is the commander of a large mercenary company of fire giants known as the Flaming Axe. He has augmented the natural might and fury of his followers with extensive training and top-notch equipment. Although the price of their service is high, no one could ask for a better cadre of troops.

◆ THE SITES ◆

The naturally destructive essence of the paraplane of Magma makes short work of most structures. There are a few places, however, that deserve mention.

THE FIELDS OF NEVERMORE

In one area of the surface of the paraplane, a crust of stone has hardened atop the magma. The crust is thin in many places, so a man-sized creature standing on top of it has a 10% chance per turn of breaking through into the magma below. (Those larger than man-sized have a 20% chance, and those smaller than man-sized have only a 5% chance.) The place is known as the Fields of Nevermore. It's roughly circular with a diameter of about 60 miles, and the crust at the edges sometimes extends further into the molten sea in arms of stone that can stretch for miles.

At the center of the Fields, travelers from the Prime Material Plane have constructed a city—Nevermore—around a device called the *chillsword*. The weapon is a cursed artifact of great power that emanates an aura of cold in a 500-foot radius. About forty years ago, the great hero Vhans of Lostcrag thrust the *chillsword* into the crust, creating a habitable spot in the paraplane. The natural heat of the magma and the sword's chilling curse canceled each other out. (This sort of thing doesn't always work, but in this case, the magic compromised.)

Of course, the air still contains harmful toxins and is dangerous to breathe without protection, but that wasn't enough to stop the ambitious primes from building a small city within the cool, livable area. The buildings of Nevermore are mostly towers, many of them as tall as the sphere of protective coolness allows. In addition, the city has a more stable foundation than the rest of the Fields, since the *chillsword*'s power reaches down into the magma and cools it until it hardens in a hemisphere with a radius of 200 feet.

The people of Nevermore charge exorbitant fees to those who wish to enter their city, and more money still for a breathing apparatus that lets a visitor inhale the toxic fumes of the paraplane—a device worn constantly by all the

inhabitants. The population's largest concern is one of defense, since they have experienced attacks from magmen and even raiding efreet. The folk of Nevermore look for a way to establish a peaceful agreement with the magmen, but no one knows if such a thing is even possible.

THE MONOLITH

If any single structure in the paraplane of Magma confounds the scholars of the multiverse, it is the Monolith. Although this gleaming black object is some 90 feet high and 30 feet across, it is only 10 feet thick. Many have remarked that it looks uncomfortably like a tombstone.

The Monolith is constructed of a black material that seems to be as much metal as it is stone, and as much glass as it is metal. In other words, no one quite understands what it's made of. In addition, the Monolith seems to be completely impervious to harm. Rumors say that even the powers cannot destroy or damage it, though perhaps that's because none of them have actually tried. Some suggest that the Monolith exists outside of time, which might explain why it never appears to change. Others think it could be a number of identical structures, all existing in the same place at the same time (or perhaps different times—or both).

The general consensus around the multiverse is that the monolith is a relic of the Sleeping Ones (as discussed in the chapter on the paraplane of Ice). The truth of the matter, however, is that no one has any clue as to the origin or purpose of the structure.

OOLAN'S LABORATORY

One of the most unusual beings in the Inner Planes is a fiendish creature named Oolan. Born centuries ago on the prime-material world of Oerth, Oolan is a Suel lich. Although most of his kind try to hide their true nature from the outside world, Oolan takes no such precautions.

His laboratory is small, but it is said that this undead creature knows more about magic than some lesser deities. Whether or not this statement contains truth, a wise man would probably not challenge him on the matter. After all, even the least-powerful Suel lich is still a mighty foe.

The exact nature of Oolan's research is unknown. Apparently, he plans to keep it that way, for his laboratory is guarded by no fewer than a dozen burning men. These smoldering golems are relentless in their duty to keep out all intruders—by any means necessary.

TARGATH'S TOWER

The rogue Targath Renium (Pl/♂ human/T12/Free League/N) commissioned a number of powerful wizards to construct a tower for him in the paraplane of Magma, paying them with the loot of a fabulous theft (some say it was the *moaning dia-*

mond taken from the minotaur lord Guyn). The wizards made the entire tower out of permanent, invisible *walls of force*.

The structure rises from the sea of molten rock, with a number of levels below the surface. The whole thing anchors upon a huge chunk of submerged basalt, and it connects to the lava tube network. The magical walls keep out the heat and the toxic gases so Targath can rest otherwise unprotected within his abode.

For a thief, Targath extends a great deal of generosity toward travelers seeking shelter—particularly to planars who share his faction-related views. (*Thus, he's not too friendly to the Harmonium. Also, the fact that the Free League has recently officially disbanded means little to him.—the Editor*) For a bit of news, he provides a night's rest away from the heat, and even a fine meal. However, since the fabulous food and furnishings of the tower must come from somewhere, most folks agree that Targath possesses a secret planar travel device. It could just be that the tower's built around a natural portal or two, but more than likely, the thief has acquired a *cubic gate* or something similar.

One fact is for certain: The pleasant, relaxed atmosphere within the tower presents a strange counterpoint to its bubbling, boiling surroundings, which are visible through the transparent walls.

PLANEWALKERS ◆ IN MAGMA ◆

Brave explorers who come to the paraplane of Magma often do so to collect the glistening leaves of the *tandersol*, a magical plant with a stem of pure fire. Its golden, metallic leaves hold a great deal of value to armorers, for they can be used to make scale armor enchanted with protective qualities (+3 bonus to Armor Class) and resistance to heat and flame (the wearer suffers half damage from fire or magma).

For those who need to pass through the magma below the surface of the paraplane, traveling through the system of lava tube tunnels is the best bet. Without a guide or an *elemental compass*, however, even a native can quickly become lost in the three-dimensional maze of virtually identical tubes.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

Spell keys for the paraplane of Magma are physical objects that must be carved from basalt, obsidian, or some other volcanic rock. These needle-thin trinkets are contorted so as to resemble wisps of flame. Their craftsmanship is extraordinary and very delicate, so care must be taken in transporting them. No key can help either a priest or a mage conjure water in the plane, however, as the ambient heat alone forbids it.

THE PARAELEMENTAL PLANE OF ⊕⊕ZE

Presumably, there must be one place in the multiverse that's more revolting and loathsome than any other. Well, anyone who's ever visited the Paraelemental Plane of Ooze won't have to think too hard when asked where that might be. I've been there, and it ain't pretty.

My name's Thomese Ervo, and I know a lot of jokes about the paraplane of Ooze. The reason so many jokes exist is that without 'em, a visitor to the paraplane is likely

to lose his lunch. 'Course, that's how some tell the place originated in the first place (*as Ervo said: lots of jokes—the Editor*).

At its heart, the paraplane of Ooze is a noisome mass of slime. This disgusting realm ranges from clear, gelatinous goo to putrid, green sludge. In some places, it's almost thick enough to be solid, and in others, it's runny and watery. The ooze teems with worms, insects, grubs, and disgusting bits of...well, *things* too disturbing to think about. While the look and feel of the place is horrible, it's the smell of the ooze that's really bad. It can literally knock a newcomer off her feet.

When a body starts to move away from the paraplane—and most folks do that the first chance they get—the muck undergoes a gradual transformation. Moving toward the

plane of Earth, it gradually thickens until it has the color and consistency of molasses. In this revolting region, which is known as the Muckmire, the ooze has a natural tendency to harden around living

beings, trapping them very literally like flies in amber. Chant is, a berk who digs around in the mire can find interesting things hardened in the goop—but who'd want to do that?

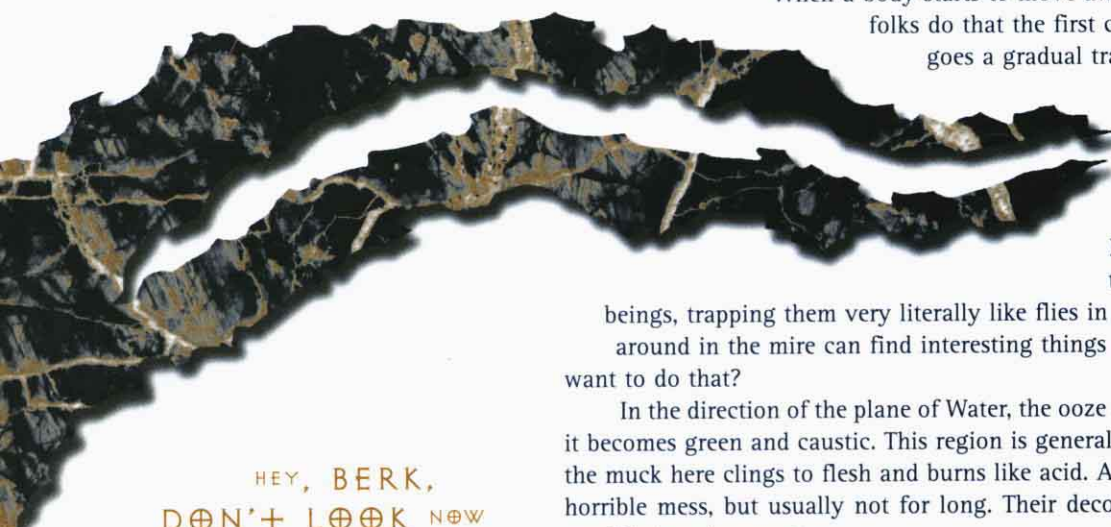
In the direction of the plane of Water, the ooze starts to thin out. Before too long, it becomes green and caustic. This region is generally referred to as the Bile Sea, and the muck here clings to flesh and burns like acid. A few sickly fish flop about in this horrible mess, but usually not for long. Their decomposing bodies only worsen the revolting environment.

If a body heads toward the Positive Energy Plane in the direction of the quasiplane of Mineral, the ooze begins to congeal as various ore residues collect in it. In time it forms the Slag Marshes, a morass of heavy, metallic paste with an airy atmosphere over the top of it. Silvery, pussy weeds called *ioungis* grow throughout this region, and most creatures find them poisonous to the touch.

In the other direction—toward the quasiplane of Steam—the ooze grows thinner and thinner. At the same time, strong winds begin to kick up an oily spray. This quickly forms rolling clouds of toxic vapor that're carried along by brutal winds. No living thing, not even bloods normally immune to poisons, can survive the Choking Gale for long. Even if a body gets out alive, it'll be weeks before she can really wash the residue from the vapor out of her skin and hair.

Moving toward the Negative Energy Plane, a planewalker can head in the direction of Salt or Dust. If she chooses the quasiplane of Salt, the ooze becomes thick and briny, eventually growing caustic enough to corrode metal. Even magical weapons and armor rust away at the touch of the noxious chemical soup (known as the Stagnant Sea).

Those who decide to head toward the quasiplane of Dust won't find the going much more pleasant. In this direction, the slime grows thicker and, if possible, even more disgusting. It leads to a region most folks call the Oasis of Filth. This half-congealed place is almost organic and is so thick with disease that any sod who comes



HEY, BERK,
D⊕N'+ L⊕OK N⊕W
BU+ +HA+ S+UFF
S+UCK +⊕
Y⊕UR SH⊕E'S
+RYING +⊕
+ALK +⊕ Y⊕U.
—VALD IMMARIN,
A +RAVELER
+⊕ ⊕⊕ZE

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS
Air, Fire <

here'd better be on good terms with a *cure disease* spell. Even bloods who're normally immune to diseases, like paladins, contract all sorts of fevers and illnesses here.

◆ PHYSICAL CØNDITIØNS ◆

It's just disgusting. Oh, you want details? Well, you asked for it....

GETTING HERE

Why in the multiverse anyone'd ever want to make her way to the paraplane of Ooze is beyond explanation. Fact is, Ooze is gradually being depopulated as any berk who can flee to a more respectable place does so.

'Course, a planewalker who really wants to reach Ooze can probably find a portal in Sigil that'll do the job. The odds are, however, that it won't be found anywhere she'd care to look for it. Most folks figure that such portals must exist in the sewers or some other similarly revolting place—and they're right.

Not all gates leading to Ooze are in Sigil. There's one deep in Shedaklah, the 222nd layer of the Abyss, in the kingdom of a tanar'ri basher named Juiblex. He calls himself the Faceless Lord and claims to be the master of all slime and ooze (though it's a safe bet that no one's ever challenged him for the title). Anyway, at the heart of Shedaklah is a gelatinous orb some 30 feet across. Its outer surface is thick enough to hold a round shape, but still viscous enough for a body to push through with effort. The key to open this portal is a platinum disc, which must be pressed against the outside of the sphere. Because of the unusual way in which the gate is triggered, the person activating it—that is, the one who stands there and holds the disc against the orb—gets left behind. Lucky sod.

Vortices to the paraplane of Ooze are rare things. They're found only at the heart of primordial prime-material worlds where life has yet to fully emerge, or in vast concentrations of filth and debris. The former type of vortex is more common, but that isn't saying much.



In order for a vortex of the latter type to exist, a truly staggering volume of garbage, filth, and offal must be packed into a very small area. In times of plague, when refuse and slain victims often pile high, a vortex can form at the decaying, liquefying base of such heaps—but is any planar travel worth crawling into such a place?

HAZARDS

Repugnant as the thought may be, it's possible for a sod to survive in the paraplane of Ooze. In fact, it's actually one of the more hospitable parts of the Inner Planes.

BREA+HING

Even though it's a good deal thicker, the goo that makes up the paraplane of Ooze is a lot like water. In fact, it's enough like water that magical items designed to let a cutter breathe while submerged work fine. Thus, a body can make reliable use of a *ring of water breathing*. Spells, however, must be slightly modified to account for the concentrated mass, as with an *airy ooze* spell.

Creatures who are naturally able to breathe water, like fish or merfolk, can't survive in the paraplane without some manner of magical aid. The primordial slime of Ooze is too thick to be processed by gills or similar organs.

VISION

Although the color of elemental Ooze varies, it's generally translucent. As such, a body can see a few feet even without the help of magic. In general, a planewalker can make out objects as far as 15 feet away—assuming that she has a light source, of course. Normal flames won't burn here, so torches and lanterns aren't any use. Magical or biochemical illumination, on the other hand, works normally.

ELEMENTAL POC+ES

Elemental pockets may be more or less common in the paraplane of Ooze than they are throughout the rest of the Inner Planes. It's difficult to say. See, with so many types of muck and sludge pressing in on a sod from every side, who can say whether the revolting goo she's just stepped in is a natural part of the paraplane or has been tracked here on the boots of an unexplained cosmic force?

Elemental pockets in Ooze tend to resemble those found in the plane of Earth (in regions where the muck is thicker) or the plane of Water (in spots where it's thinner). The most common pockets in the paraplane are those that drift in from Earth and Water. Bubbles of air tend to form hollow cysts in which a body can seek shelter and find a breathable (if foul-smelling) atmos-

phere. Earth pockets provide solid matter upon which a traveler can firmly plant her feet, though many of them have been hollowed out or laced with traps.

OTHER DANGERS

A number of very dangerous things wait to smother a sod who comes to Ooze. Because of the nature of these hazards, a planewalker seldom even sees them before she walks right into them. In game terms, any of the following hazards can be assumed to be 90% invisible to a casual traveler, or 50% invisible if a cutter's watching out for them.

ACID. Caustic chemicals form and concentrate at certain points in the endless mire of the paraplane. In time, they become so potent that they can eat quickly through almost all living matter. These acid pools can be very large. To determine their size, the DM can roll on the table for elemental pockets (found on page 14) and then cut the result in half.

Once the size is determined, the DM can use the following chart to find the strength of the pool's acid.

1D6 ROLL	ACID STRENGTH	SAVE ADJ.	DAMAGE
1	Very diluted	+4	1d4
2	Diluted	+2	1d6
3	Weak	none	1d8
4	Strong	none	1d10
5	Concentrated	-2	1d12
6	Very concentrated	-4	1d20

A berk who moves into the area of an acid pool must make an immediate saving throw vs. breath weapon. This roll is adjusted as indicated on the chart, so a victim who stumbles into concentrated acid makes the save with a -2 penalty. Anyone who fails her save suffers the damage shown on the chart; a successful saving throw cuts the damage in half. A new saving throw is required at the start of each round spent in the acid pool. (Bloods who are immune to acid are unaffected and don't need to make a roll.)

Objects exposed to the acid must make a saving throw as well. Failure indicates that they've been utterly consumed by the fluid. The acid formed on the paraplane is so caustic that it can eat through glass and other such materials. A cutter who manages to collect some of this powerful acid (usually through magical means) finds that it's very valuable in other parts of the multiverse.

DISEASE. Pockets of disease and illness are not uncommon in the paraplane of Ooze. As before, the DM can find the size of such places by using the elemental pockets table and cutting the result in half.

When a sod enters an infectious zone, she's instantly affected as if by a *cause disease* spell, and she must make an immediate Constitution check. If the roll is successful, she develops a disease that is merely debilitating. If she fails the roll, she contracts a deadly illness.



POISON. Just as chemicals can concentrate and become deadly corrosives, so too can they form toxic fluids. A sod who stumbles into a poisoned area might grow sick or even fall straight into the dead-book.

The DM should first determine the size of a toxic region by rolling on the table for elemental pockets and then halving the result. Then he can use the following chart to determine the type of poison encountered (the entries are drawn from the *DUNGEON MASTER Guide*).

1D8 ROLL	CLASS	ONSET TIME	STRENGTH
1	G	2d6 hours	20/10
2	H	1d4 hours	20/10
3	I	2d6 minutes	30/15
4	J	1d4 minutes	Death/20
5	K	2d4 minutes	5/0
6	L	2d4 minutes	10/0
7	M	1d4 minutes	20/5
8	N	1 minute	Death/25

Class K, L, M, and N poisons act on contact. The others on the table must be ingested (which includes inhaling them while using *ooze breathing* and similar spells).

When an explorer moves into one of these areas, she must make a saving throw vs. poison. This roll is adjusted as shown on the table for determining acid strength (above). A sod who fails her save suffers the damage indicated before the slash in the "Strength" column. A successful saving throw results in the damage shown after the slash. Cutters who're immune to poisons are unaffected.

Unfortunately, about 25% of all toxic areas in the paraplane are also acidic, which means that they have the effects described in that section as well.

MOVING ABOUT

The paraplane of Ooze has no gravity (except in the area known as the Slag Marshes, which is a strange exception). Because of this, a body can simply remain still and drift along wherever the languid currents carry her. With a little effort, she can even swim in the stuff. All in all, it's about the same as moving in the Elemental Plane of Water. Due to the thick medium, though, progress is slowed by one-third.

INHABITANTS

There aren't too many creatures living in the Paraelemental Plane of Ooze. And, really, that's not surprising. After all, who'd want to call kip in a giant pool of slime? Well, believe it or not, a few things'd like nothing better than to live out their days in an endless swamp of sludge and waste.

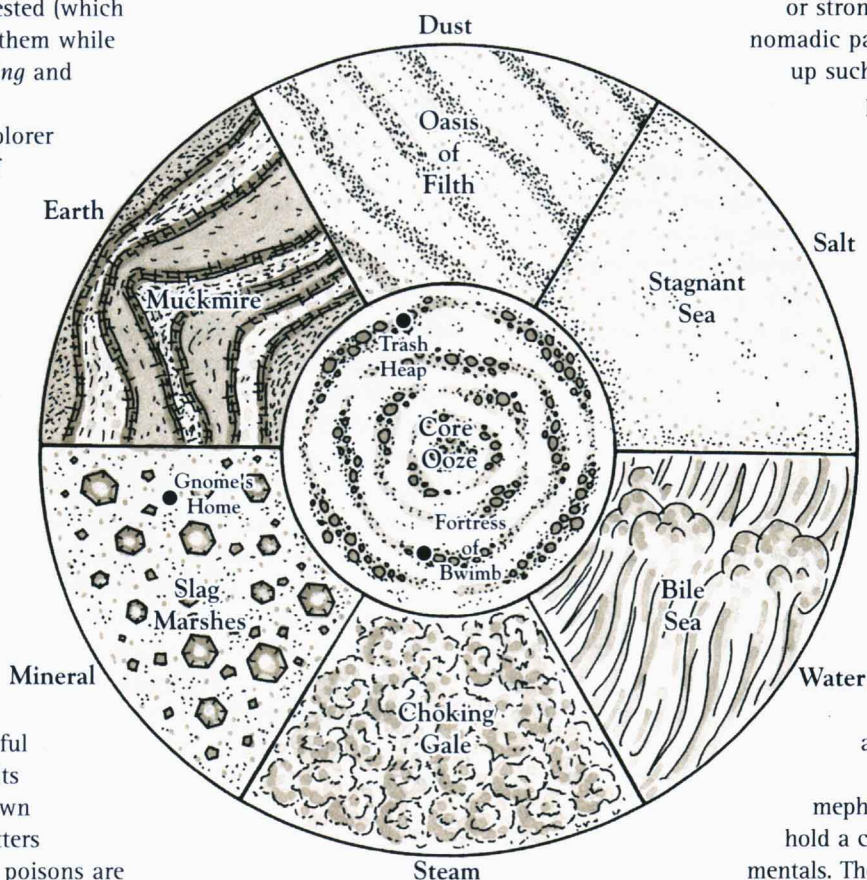
PARAELEMENTALS

Ooze mephits are the most plentiful race in the paraplane. They don't build cities or strongholds, but instead live in nomadic packs. These creatures make up such a large percentage of the population that most folks believe there's no one else here at all. The mephits can't stand the ooze sprites (as described below), but they're generally forced to do as those creatures command. Ooze mephits are often as pathetic as they are disgusting, and a common joke told about them says that they beg for jink so they can pay spellslingers to polymorph them into something—anything—else.

As revolting as the mephits are, however, they can't hold a candle to true ooze paraelementals. These stomach-turning beasts are walking masses of slime, foul-tempered and quick to attack just about anyone they see.

Chant is they do this because they disgust even themselves and can't stand the idea of being seen by others.

BORDERS OF OOZE



ANIMALS

Think of the most disgusting animal known to the multiverse, and odds are, it'll be found here. Leeches, bloated maggots (that never seem to grow into flies), electric eels, jellyfish—if it's slimy, foul-smelling, or thick with disease, it probably lives in the paraplane of Ooze.

In addition to these organic creatures, the paraplane has a healthy (or unhealthy) number of animentials as well. These beasts are no more pleasant than the other natives of Ooze. Unfortunately, some of 'em seem to think they're cute and cuddly, which makes it even worse. There are few things as revolting as having an ooze cat hop into a sod's lap or a slime dog lick her face.

MONSTERS

Every form of deadly pudding, carnivorous jelly, or killer slime can be found (often in large numbers) in the paraplane. Fact is, these monsters seem to be greatly empowered here. Not only do they have maximum hit points, but their Intelligence is increased by one step. Thus, gray or crystal oozes, stun jelly, and olive slimes are semi-intelligent here. While this might not seem especially important, it becomes more worrisome when a body considers that mustard jelly and slithering trackers are considered to be *very* intelligent.

Otyughs and neo-otyughs, if they're lucky, find their way here as well. Although not true natives, these creatures sometimes hear about the paraplane of Ooze and assume that the speaker's talking about paradise. They use whatever means possible to try to reach the place, and once they arrive, they fiercely defend their new home as they wallow in the infinite filth.

OTHER RACES

Ooze sprites, misnamed creatures if ever there were any (*the name may have originated as a joke—the Editor*), lead solitary existences and hate almost everything they find. Fact is, they usually assume that whatever they meet isn't intelligent. They see nothing wrong with forcing the mephits to do their bidding, as the sprites consider themselves the only sentient race in the whole paraplane. Even if they were right, it's doubtful that anyone'd want to trade places with them.

At any given time, a visitor to Ooze'll encounter only a handful of nonnatives. For the most part, these folks are here against their will. In some corners, the paraplane of Ooze is known as the "House of Chambered Madness." Want to know why? Just pike off a powerful wizard, berk. The really unpleasant bloods exile their foes to Ooze, leaving them entombed here until the weight of the muck drives 'em barmy.

MAJOR PLAYERS

Most folks figure that nothing or no one of any importance lives in the paraplane of Ooze. That's simply not the case. True, there aren't nearly as many such creatures as might be found in the other Inner Planes, but there are still a few bashers a body ought to know about.

BWIMB II. This revolting creature is the closest thing a berk'll find to a Paraelemental Princess of Ooze. While Bwimb II is, in fact, an archomental in the loosest sense of the word, she is among the weakest of that group. She inherited the position from her father, who was recently slain. Some folks say that Bwimb II was formed from the remains of her father's sludgelike corpse, but this seems more like morbid gossip than fact.

While the true paraelementals of Ooze obey her, most of the other beings that dwell in the endless slime have no interest in Bwimb II at all. Chant is that she's looked beyond the borders of her realm for allies, recognizing that she'll never be anything more than a minor archomental at best. Now, a body might think that an undulating mass of splotchy, violet sludge would have difficulty in finding friends. Bwimb II has proven herself to be very resourceful, however, and it appears that she's come to an understanding with the tanar'ri lord Juiblex. Although the exact nature of their relationship and shared goals remains as dark as can be, it doesn't take a graybeard to realize that it can't be pleasant.

THE WARLOCK OF OOZE. Word around Sigil is that this berk (Pr/♂ human/El[Ooze]14/N) is the living definition of barmy. He's said to have been a wizard of only moderate importance on the prime-material world of Krynn. That realm was the site of a great battle known locally as the Chaos War. The Warlock, whose name even he doesn't remember, tried to play a part in the conflict, but instead he somehow wound up infused with the essence of chaos. While this made his magic far more powerful than it had been before, it also left his brain a few components shy of a spell.

The berk was catapulted to the paraplane of Ooze and has lived here ever since. He's used his magic to survive, and he's grown into a unique kind of specialist wizard, having whipped up such spells as *wall of mould*, *gelatinous servant*, and *flesh to slime*. More than one spellslinger's journeyed into the muck in search of the Warlock, hoping to learn a few new tricks to confound (or at least disgust) her enemies.

◆ THE SITES ◆

There are no major structures in the Paraelemental Plane of Ooze. Here and there, a clan of ooze sprites, paraelementals, or mephits have set up some kind of fortification, but these are seldom of any great importance.

THE CYSTS

Scattered throughout the paraplane are pockets of congealed, coagulated matter. They form when a sod gets trapped here with a *sink* spell. The victims stuck in the cysts are perfectly preserved, just like the living fossils in the Elemental Plane of Earth.

Although it's impossible to tell what type of creature is trapped within a particular cyst, the size of the cyst can provide a clue. After all, a cutter's not likely to find a kobold buried in a cyst 60 feet across or a giant sealed inside a 5-foot sphere.

From time to time, a cyst ruptures, freeing its prisoner. In most cases, the poor creature quickly drowns on the filth in which it's embedded. Those who are able to survive in the muck, however, generally set about tracking down the blood responsible for their incarceration.

It's also possible for a careless planewalker to accidentally rupture a cyst. 'Course, since the creature within is likely to come forth in a very bad mood, it's not an action to be taken lightly. A body can get herself lost before she convinces the newly liberated prisoner whose side she's on.

GNOME'S HOME

Speaking of unfortunates, a few years back a bevy of gnomish miners toiling in the quasiplane of Mineral broke through a cavern wall. They were hoping to make their way toward a rich new vein, but they ended up pushing themselves right into the paraplane of Ooze, specifically into the Slag Marshes. The sods have never tumbled to how this happened, exactly, but they really regret that it did.

Resourceful in the extreme, the gnomes took what they had—tools, rope, ore carts, mine shaft supports, and the like—and made a gigantic raft. It looks terrible, but it functions well as a place to live. Once they realized that they couldn't get back to the quasiplane of Mineral, they learned to hunt worms, eels, rays, and other creatures for food. They made allies with the ooze paraelementals and mephits when they could and fought them off when they couldn't. In short, they survived.

Chant has it that these hardy bloods hold more than one secret about the paraplane of Ooze. (*In fact, the gnomes contributed to this chapter by adding to Ervo's original text.—the Editor*) The misplaced sods have adapted fully to their new environment, and they've taken to calling Ooze their new home. Their raft has grown considerably over the years, and it now stretches out to a radius of at least 500 feet, providing shelter (of a sort) to forty gnomes, some of whom were born in the paraplane. The group's current leader is Hundais Jeweleye (Pl/♀ gnome/F9/LN).

THE TRASH HEAP

Sigil produces a lot of waste material. All of its garbage, sewage, and refuse needs to go somewhere. So take three guesses where—and the first two don't count. That's right:

The paraplane of Ooze gets all the waste of the City of Doors. It ain't fair, but then, what is?

Stretching out for unbelievable miles, the trash heap grows each day, with more and more of the Cage's junk flowing in from a portal in the city's sewers. Decaying food, discarded materials, broken tools and weapons, and a great deal of organic waste products pass into the paraplane under the guidance of the Lady of Pain's dabus. Very, very rarely, these bloods briefly step through into Ooze as well, in order to maintain the portal or unclog a jam in the flow.

The surrounding area's sometimes called the Sargasso Sludge, wherein trapped bits of all sorts of debris float in the muck. Sometimes, these pieces of flotsam take on the appearance of ships trapped in a Sargasso Sea—hence the name.

Don't think for a moment that the trash heap's uninhabited. Some of the unwanted refuse that Sigil throws away is the living, breathing kind. Generally, these sods are unsavory, to say the least—how bad does a berk have to be to get tossed out of Sigil? Most of them end up in the dead-book right quick, drowning in the ooze. Some don't have to breathe, though, or manage to find air pockets among the junk, often wearing and wielding whatever they find as clothing and equipment. A cutter's got to say one thing for these bashers—they're usually quite resourceful with what they find and what they do with it.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN OOOZE ◆

It's worth repeating: Why would any planewalker willingly travel to the paraplane of Ooze? The dark of it, however, is that the House of Chambered Madness holds many secrets and the objects of many quests. Things too powerful to destroy but too dangerous to keep often end up buried in the muck. The natives might run into them from time to time, but they don't care, and outsiders have a devil of a time finding *anything*.

Second, call them diamonds in the rough or pearls before swine, but deep in the central portion of the paraplane, the oppressive pressures of the slime and ooze compress minerals (and who knows what else?) into gems unlike any found elsewhere in the multiverse. Ironically, these stones—which are usually blue, for some reason—sparkle with a breathtaking beauty. They're called *quiila*, and they're worth up to 1,000 gp or more to collectors (less to folks who find out where they came from).

SPELL KEYS AND O+HER NECESS+IES

Without a key, fire spells cast in Ooze generally cause half or no damage due to the plane's high fluid content. Spell keys designed for use in the paraplane of Ooze take the form of various elixirs, tinctures, and oils. These are, without exception, thick and revolting concoctions that smell as bad as they look. And the chant is they taste even worse, but there's not much a body can do about that. If a cutter wants to use one of these keys, she's got to drink it down—and *keep* it down. Bottoms up!

(Whenever a djinni warrior attempts to gain the rank of Master Warlord, he must submit a complete report on the potential battlefields upon which his army may fight. The paraplane of Smoke, a common battleground for the djinn and the efreet, thus becomes the subject of many such reports. Most contain the same details as the others, but sometimes an observant reporter marks something new or sees something with a fresh perspective. The following is an excerpt from one such report, filed very recently and provided with the permission of Grand Vizier Kali al-Baren.—the Editor)

THE PARAELEMENTAL PLANE OF SMOKE

Honored Ones:

The most mysterious of the Paraelemental Planes, that of Smoke, is formed by the fusion of our own plane of Air and the hated Hell of Fire. It embodies all of the qualities of superheated air and wind-blown fire. An endless realm of hot, choking vapors, all of which are

foul smelling and occasionally quite toxic, this paraplane serves as an important buffer against the ever-present threat of the evil efreet (may the Maker curse their bones!). In many ways, the paraplane of

Smoke is quite like the Elemental Plane of Air, with no limiting gravity and with solid ground a rare and valuable thing—and usually nothing more than a floating cinder of gigantic proportions.

When a brave soul moves away from the heart of this paraplane in the

direction of Elemental Fire, the temperature grows greater and greater. In time, when the sojourner enters a region known simply as Scald, the paraplane is as hot as the horrid plane of Fire itself, but without the licking flames. An explorer here suffers 1d10 points of damage per round, with no chance of a saving throw.

Nearer our own beautiful plane of Air (blessed be the djinn, for our home is greatest among all elements), the temperature drops off just as markedly. Before a traveler actually comes into the clean and pure plane of Air, he must pass through a region of thick, offensive gloom known as the Eternal Haze. While the heat presents no threat here, a wise djinni is aware that these vapors are utterly poisonous and more than a little caustic (though somewhat diffused from the rest of the paraplane). Here, one must make a saving throw vs. poison each round, with success indicating 1d10 points of damage and failure meaning that the poor unfortunate suffocates from the unhealthy vapors.

Heading in the direction of the quasiplane of Ash, one enters an area of swirling flakes known as the Embers. These flakes glow hotly, just like the particles carried into the night sky from a blazing campfire. Although it is possible to survive here without being consumed by the heat, flesh sears and blisters if grazed by one of the falling pinpoints of fire.

Angling toward Quasielemental Vacuum, an area of thin, tainted air known as the Gray Way presents a similar face to that of the Eternal Haze. However, the air here is not actually toxic. Neither, though, is it safe to breathe. The vapors of the Gray Way prey upon the minds of those who draw them in. Gradually, they consume a being's intelligence, bring about hallucinations, and finally usher in absolutely violent madness. Gray mind is a terrible condition, as the victim no longer recognizes the difference between living and nonliving, good and evil, kindness and brutality. Only a restoration or similar spell can relieve the ailment.

Closer to the quasiplane of Radiance, a vast expanse of darkness in which flakes of light and energy drift about like fireflies stretches out as far as the eye can see. This place, where darkness and light mingle so closely, is called the Sea of Stars.



ALL THAT
COUGHING'S
JUST NATURE'S
WAY OF SAYING
YOU'VE GOT
MUCH
LUNG TISSUE.
—DOSS GEWAR+,
A SMOKE MEPHI+

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS
Earth, Water <

An even more impressive region, the Aurora, lies in the direction of Quasielemental Lightning. Here, the world darkens as it does in the Sea of Stars. Before long, however, waves of brilliant colors break across the sky. This sight is one of the most beautiful in all the multiverse and something no traveler to this realm should miss.

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

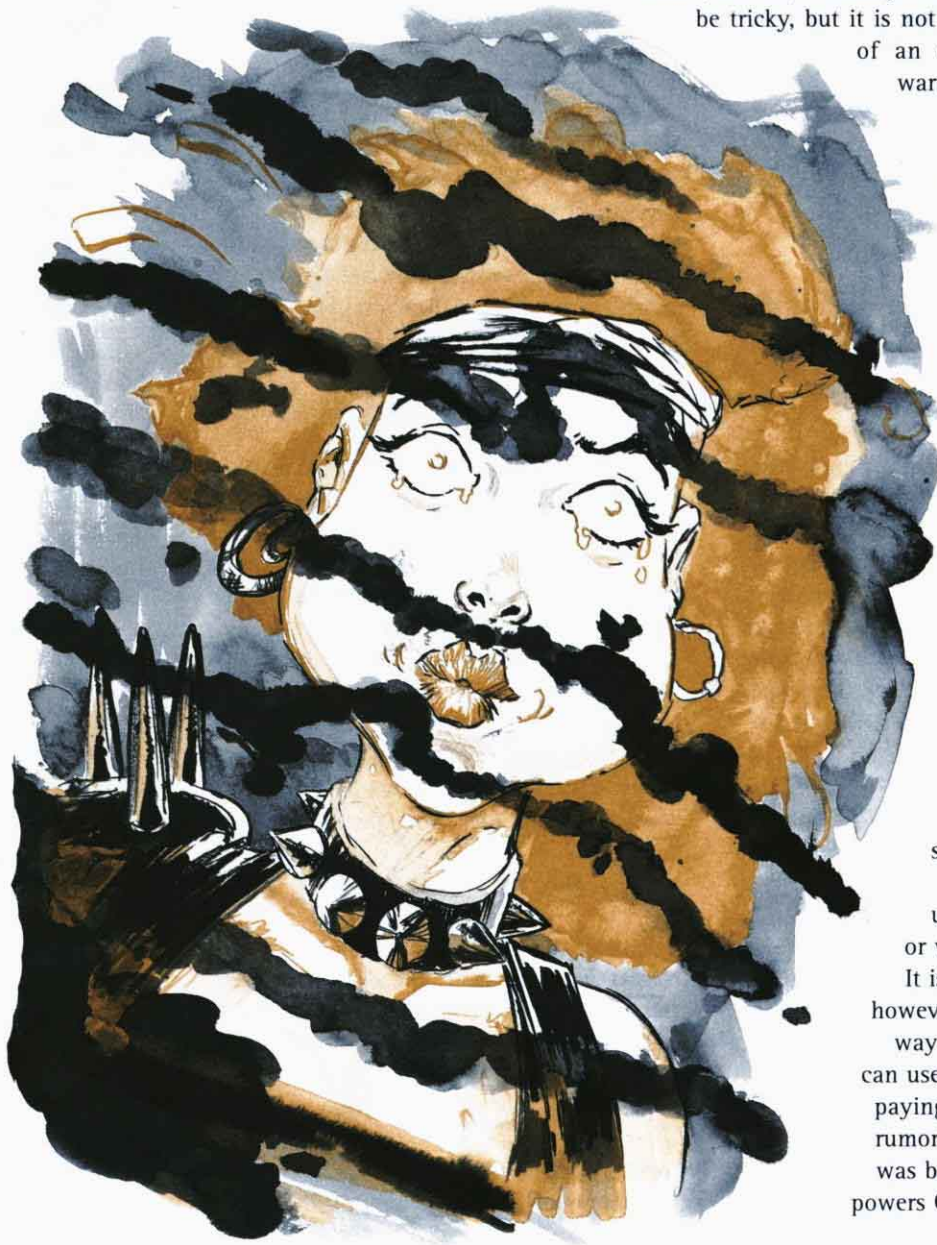
On the whole, the paraplane of Smoke is not the most dangerous of the Inner Planes. While the atmosphere is not fit to breathe (a curse upon the choking smoke!), at least our warriors will not be burned to a cinder or entombed alive the moment they arrive.

GETTING HERE

In our use of the Paraelemental Plane of Smoke as a field upon which we meet our foes in battle, we should keep in mind that there exist more direct methods of reaching the realm than simply marching to the border. Those not native to the Inner Planes use portals, vortices, and other means of getting to Smoke, and so, I humbly submit, can we. It can be tricky, but it is not beyond the powers of an experienced djinni warrior.

The hard-working folk of Bytopia watch over a portal that ties their plane to Smoke. It is available for use by any planewalker who can convince the locals that he is of good character and can meet their price. Both feats can usually be accomplished at once, for the cost of using the gate is the completion of a task. The nature of this endeavor is always such that only those who are worthy of using the gate could or would attempt it.

It is important to note, however, that there is one way in which a traveler can use this portal without paying the going price. A rumor holds that the gate was built by the gnomish powers Garl Glittergold and



Flandal Steelskin. On the off chance that this rumor is true, the council that oversees the portal allows gnomes to use it free of charge and with no questions asked. (The fact that the key needed to activate the gate is nothing more than gnome's breath does hint that this might be a wise policy.) Needless to say, it is not difficult for a djinni warrior to assume the shape of a gnome.

As if he could not stand the thought of being outdone by the gnomes of Bytopia, the great Moradin, patron of dwarf smiths, built his own portal to Smoke on Mount Celestia. Known as the Smoke Ring, this is a magnificent construct of solid iron carved in the shape of rippling smoke wisps. So delicate is the construction of the gate that a visitor has to look twice to see that it isn't actually smoke.

The gate opens only at the touch of Moradin, one of his proxies, or the most powerful of his priests. No other key seems to be required, but the touch must be bestowed willingly. Trying to force one of the required individuals to open the gate against his wishes will not work.

On the Prime Material Plane, one can find a vortex to the paraplane of Smoke in regions choked with such vapors. These are occasionally associated with volcanic vents, even those on the sea floor, or with the skies above raging fires.

HAZARDS

Survival in the Paraelemental Plane of Smoke is not as difficult as in some of the other planes. At the same time, however, the realm itself is far less nurturing.

BREA+HING

The paraplane of Smoke is an eternal example of what would happen to our lovely home in Air should the insidious evil of the efreet and their air-consuming, polluting fire win our eternal war. Although the air is uncomfortably hot and thick, the real hazard lies in the fact that it is also highly toxic. An unprotected visitor would die immediately should he inhale the terrible fumes. It remains dangerous to bring mortal allies or creatures to Smoke if they lack the proper breathing protection—a simple *breathe smoke* spell will do.

VISION

The thick, curling vapors of Smoke are not only toxic but also difficult to see through. A soldier cannot see more than 30 feet before him, even under the best of conditions. This assumes, of course, that he has some manner of light. Natives see at least twice that distance, if not three times in the case of the paraelementals and mephits. Most of Smoke is as dark as the Abyss, making combat difficult and underscoring the importance of surprise in battle.

Infravision doesn't function well at all here, for the background heat washes out all lesser sources. Only the hottest objects are visible to those depending on infravision. This may be useful in spotting the efreet, who shine brightly in heat-sight.

EXPLOSIVE POC+KETS

The air of the paraplane may not be breathable, but it can support flames. Thus, the efreet can illuminate their way through Smoke with torch and lantern. Since no natural light exists here, this is often a necessity for our own brave warriors—but it is also a danger.

In some places, the nature of Smoke causes the accumulation of gases that are not only toxic but also highly explosive. To determine the size of a cloud of these vapors, the DM can use the table for elemental pockets (on page 14) and halve the result. When an open flame enters such a region, it triggers an explosion that generally consumes the gases and everything within them. Everyone caught in such a blast must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon or suffer 2d20 points of damage. A successful saving throw cuts this damage in half.

Knowing the whereabouts of these pockets can give us a decisive advantage over our heat-loving efreet enemies.

HOT SPOTS

Here and there, a traveler comes upon an area of smoke that has only just manifested. Their extreme heat (residue of the plane of Fire) marks these regions. The DM can determine the size of one of these hot spots by rolling on the table for elemental pockets and cutting the result in half. Anyone who enters one of these infernal clouds is instantly subjected to the searing heat of Elemental Fire (as detailed in the chapter describing that plane).

MOVING ABOUT

Travel in the Paraelemental Plane of Smoke is virtually identical to that in the Elemental Plane of Air. There is no gravity, and a traveler who decides that a certain direction is down falls that way endlessly. Intelligent and well-adjusted persons can use this trick to travel around the paraplane, just as they might in the plane of Air.

We must remember, though, that nonnatives cannot see nearly as well here. It is frighteningly easy to begin moving at a good speed only to have something materialize out of the smoke before you—something we rarely encounter at home, except perhaps in fog banks or clouds. Our warriors must make sure that their reactions are very fast!

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

The most common creatures in the Paraelemental Plane of Smoke are, obviously, the natives. However, an unusually large number of aerial creatures have made their way here and have adapted to life among the toxic clouds of haze.

PARAELEMENTALS

Smoke mephits are probably the most numerous creatures in the paraplane, though the paraelementals come close to

matching their number. The mephits generally obey a being called Ekhahk, who claims to be an Elemental Prince even though he could not possibly hold his own against a real archomental such as Yan-C-Bin or Chan (or, of course, our own great and wondrous Caliph Husam al-Balil ben Nafhat al-Yugayyim, Master of the Clouds and Son of the Breezes, who is greater than any Elemental Prince).

Smoke paraelementals, on the other hand, ignore the self-proclaimed lord of the mephits. Instead, they form their own kingdoms and follow their own nobility—the Smoke Dukes. In many cases, paraelemental rulers and mephit leaders claim the same or overlapping regions. This does not cause too much trouble, however, for these races seem to coexist with peace and respect. Both carry great enmity for the evil efreet and even for our own djinn forces that come to the paraplane. We can find no allies among them.

ANIMALS

A number of birds and other natural flying creatures live in Smoke. Somehow, either through magic or evolution, the beasts have adapted to the toxic fumes of the paraplane. These animals tend to be very large (or even giant) examples of their species.

A djinni might also encounter a great many animentials and fundamentals of smoke. For the most part, these creatures are content to be left to themselves as they drift through the roiling blackness.

MONSTERS

The most dangerous monsters native to Smoke are the belkers, vapor rats, and sootbeasts (which some claim to be merely animals).

Belkers hate mephits, paraelementals, and just about everything else in existence. They are dangerous predators and a wise traveler keeps well away from them.

The more powerful and important denizens of the paraplane often keep vapor rats as pets. This is particularly true of the smoke mephits, who prize the creatures the way that some other races treasure cats.

As for sootbeasts, the best advice—in my humble opinion—is simply to stay out of their way. Everything else in the paraplane does.

OTHER RACES

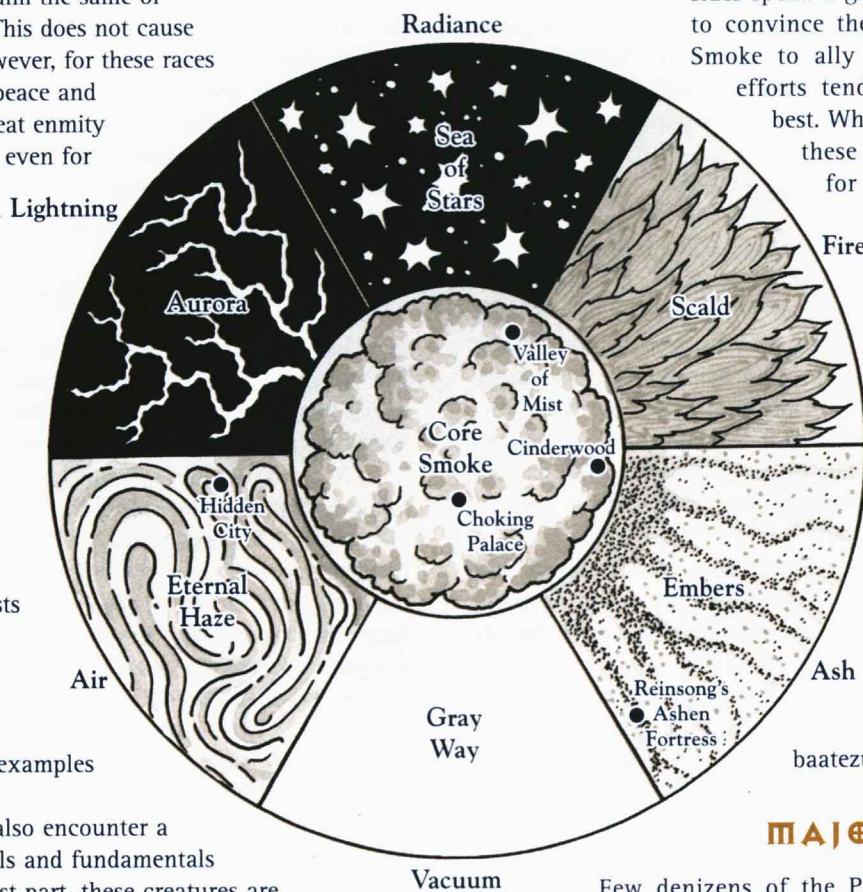
Renegade groups of efreet and djinn have chosen to establish small kingdoms in the paraplane of Smoke. Although they no longer serve the masters of their respective races (cursed be the djinni who fails to honor the Great Caliph!),

they still make war on each other. Both sides spend a great deal of time trying to convince the other inhabitants of Smoke to ally with them, but their efforts tend to be ineffective at best. While we cannot count on these traitors and outcasts

for help, neither need we worry about the renegade efreet—at least not until the Sultan's forces are driven from the paraplane of Smoke forever.

Rumors abound that a race of drow lurks amid the endless clouds of smoke. It is said that these creatures are winged, like the avariel, and that their hearts are as black as the tanar'ri or baatezu of the Lower Planes.

BORDERS OF SMOKE



MAJOR PLAYERS

Few denizens of the Paraelemental Plane of Smoke can be classed as individuals of real power. To be sure, no actual powers dwell here, though at least one proxy keeps his eye trained upon the plane.

EKHAHK. The creature known as Ekhahk, the Smoldering Duke, is a smoke mephit of considerable intelligence and charisma. Although not markedly more powerful than his peers, his keen mind has enabled him to persuade a great many others—including paraelementals and even a few efreet and djinn—to take up his banner.

Ekhahk's ultimate goals, if any, are unknown. He seems to be interested in expanding his influence in the paraplane, but he doesn't appear to be in any real hurry to do so. Further, he shows no apparent interest in events that do not take place in Smoke.

JAY BURNING-HAND. This fire genasi is a proxy of the fire god Hastsezini. He sports the head of a hawk and skin as black as coal. His eyes burn with a white-hot glow, and it is said that his gaze can cause any object to burst into flames.

Hastsezini seems to have sent Burning-Hand to this realm to observe the inhabitants of Smoke. It is not known whether the deity has far-reaching plans that involve the paraplane of Smoke. My own ears have heard, however, that Burning-Hand actually operates on his own.

◆ THE SITES ◆

Only a very few important structures are known to exist in the paraplane of Smoke. This is not to say that rumors do not abound of more, but I can neither confirm nor deny such things and thus leave them from my report.

THE CHOKING PALACE

This is the seat of Ekhahk's power. The diminutive tyrant rules from a floating castle constructed of gray-black iron. Each room, chamber, and hall holds a large brazier that fills the already naturally smoky palace with semimagical fumes. The smoke from these burners renders the smoke inside the palace utterly transparent to those who sincerely serve Ekhahk, and completely opaque to all others. Further, those within the enchanted smoke, no matter where they stand in the palace, are always within view of the Duke himself.

The Choking Palace's central keep holds a vast library of all manner of lore. Ekhahk values knowledge greatly, and he always seeks more books—or more information for his scribes to record.

The Smoldering Duke rarely leaves his castle, choosing to spend most of his time writing his own voluminous journal-like works. Only the unwise disturb Ekhahk while he writes (or while he *claims* to write—a few of his servants have noticed that Great Ekhahk, of late, has taken to falling asleep during his studies).

Those who bring the Duke gifts and flattery quickly gain his favor. He particularly values *eversmoking bottles* and *braziers of sleep smoke*. It comes as little surprise to most that Ekhahk has perhaps the greatest collection of pipeweed and smoking implements in the multiverse. He and all of his minions continually partake of some sort of inhalant, incense, or smoked substance.

CINDERWOOD

Horribly misnamed (it resembles no forest and offers no wood), this place is more akin to an archipelago of islands on a terrestrial world. Here, however, the islands are cinders ranging in size from that of a man's fingernail to that of a small mountain. They float through the vapors and number in the thousands.

Many of the inhabitants of Smoke—including belkers (creatures as untrustworthy as any that ever drew breath, if indeed they do), paraelementals, and mephits—live in and among the cinders. A being standing on one of the islands cannot see most of the others floating around it, but he can often hear the sounds of creatures moving, talking, and working on a nearby cinder. Occasionally, the islands collide as they drift, which often pulverizes the small to medium-sized specimens.

Making a lair within a cinder is tricky business. Digging into one is nothing like digging into earth or stone. Instead, it is flaky, brittle, and fairly soft. Only a skilled hand (or claw) can shape this substance into a cave, a tunnel, or a foundation for a more conventional dwelling.

The efreet once invaded the Cinderwood, attempting to take it all for themselves. The inhabitants drove them off, using the hated efreet's lack of vision against them. I suggest that we djinn learn from this and steer clear of this location—unless we seek to parlay with those who dwell here already.

THE HIDDEN CITY

Long have rumors and caravan tales told of a magnificent city lost within the paraplane's eternal clouds of smoke. I am pleased to tell you, my lords and masters, that the stories are true. I myself have beheld its soot-covered walls and lofty towers.

A group of mortals—mostly human—constructed this floating city after the manner of many found in our own plane of Air. Seeking privacy in the extreme, they built the magical town in the paraplane of Smoke, where it would remain hidden forever in the choking fumes. (Enchantments keep out the dangerous vapors, but the paraplane still taints everything in the city with soot and smoke damage.)

The Hidden City is ruled by a family that has produced twin heirs in each of its last eight generations. These twins always rule together and, apparently, without internecine conflict. Their blackened palace floats magically above the center of the city.

The town opens its gates to those who seek sanctuary from oppression or merely a place to rest. Travelers can find food and shelter here for a reasonable price, assuming that they can find the city at all. Even water is available, which is a great accomplishment in the paraplane of Smoke. As strange as it sounds, the Hidden City is built atop a natural spring. In my understanding, such a thing should not exist in a place like Smoke, unless perhaps it is actually a portal to (or a pocket from) the plane of Water. Great and wondrous are the Maker's mysteries!

According to the inhabitants of the Hidden City, Ekhahk's forces scour the paraplane looking for them. Apparently, the Smoldering Duke wants control of the town, or perhaps he just resents the idea that an entire city can be hidden from him. The enchantments surrounding the city allow the rulers to decide who finds them and who does not. Thus, Ekhahk stands little chance of gaining entry—unless he

dispatches spies and infiltrators to sneak in and reveal the city's location to him. Contrary to some rumors, the Hidden City does not move.

REINSONG'S ASHEN FORTRESS

Reinsong, a powerful cloud giant, has created a huge fortress out of solid ash and smoke (perhaps he is also part fire giant?). Within this vast, strange structure, the giant keeps a veritable army of tentacled creatures called grell. These beasts are mostly unknown in the Inner Planes, but in truth, they are quite well adapted to Smoke. They float of their own accord and seem to be unhindered by the fumes, both in respiration and in vision.

Reinsong maintains a policy of aggression with virtually any being that he comes upon. He has ordered his grell servants to attack and kill any who dare to approach the fortress, and sometimes the ill-tempered giant wanders the paraplane of Smoke with no apparent purpose other than to attack and destroy whatever he finds.

Stories say that, long ago, Reinsong was a giant of good (or at least fair) temper who dwelled in the quasiplane of Steam. He lived in a small community of his own kind, and fell in love with a giantess named Glasyl. Glasyl, however, was the mate of another, and when her husband (whose name I do not know) discovered that Reinsong desired his wife, he unleashed a powerful and potent curse. This curse not only cast Reinsong into the paraplane of Smoke for all eternity, but it placed an evil spirit within the giant's own flesh.

And so Reinsong struggled not only with his harsh new environment, but also with his own body for control of his actions. While he eventually regained absolute mastery of his flesh, he can never let his guard down or the spirit within him will use the giant's own body against him. Thus, Reinsong is a bitter and nearly insane prisoner, forced to live with this horrible curse for the rest of his days.

The Ashen Fortress is rumored to contain the treasures of everyone Reinsong has slain, as well as the tributes given him by natives in vain attempts to persuade the giant to call off his unprovoked attacks. Magic and wealth beyond reckoning supposedly lie within the magical walls of the fortress, waiting for a thief bold enough to challenge the grell and the nefarious traps.

THE VALLEY OF BLINDING MIST

The most important of all sites discussed in my report, my honored and glorious superiors, is that of the Valley of Blinding Mist. This region of Smoke serves as the staging ground for our foes, the efreet, when they arrive from their camps outside the City of Brass.

Efreeti commanders, arrogant and foolish, do not consider themselves vulnerable in this area of the paraplane, where the smoke becomes so thick as to be impassible except through the valley. Our foes think that their power here is

supreme, and that this path to their home plane cannot be threatened.

Ah, honored masters, they are quite wrong. In my vision, I have seen a secret pass through the solid smoke that leads to the midpoint in the valley. The efreet know not of this pass, and leave it unguarded. A quiet and skillful army could sneak into their midst and catch them unawares. Our victory would be swift!

(While the pass does indeed exist, the efreet know all about it. When the djinn followed the advice contained in this portion of the report, their foes ambushed them and the air genies were decimated. Readers may consider it poetic justice to hear that the djinni who compiled this report was leading the charge.—the Editor)

PLANEWALKERS ◆ IN SMOKE ◆

(The report ended there. A few additional comments have been added courtesy of experienced planewalkers.—the Editor) Aside from preparing for the obvious dangers of the choking fumes, anyone interesting in coming to the paraplane of Smoke should be ready to wigwag with the locals. Most of them aren't outright hostile to outsiders, but many are quick to take advantage of addle-coves or put troublemakers in the dead-book.

Many folks who've come to Smoke recently have done so to serve as mercenaries in the constant wars between the djinn and the efreet. Chant has it that the efreet pay better, but that the djinn are better to work with. Some have said that joining up with the efreet often ends in a...lifetime commitment, let's say.

Surprisingly enough, some people come here for the smoke. Just as a lucky basher might uncover valuable stones and minerals in the plane of Earth, so might he find rare vapors in the paraplane of Smoke. These fumes impart magical powers, curative or antidotal properties, or just pleasant effects. Of course, it's no easy feat to catch smoke—especially rare smoke—so a top-shelf blood created a device called the *smoke box*, which can capture and hold any gaseous vapor. Chant is that these small boxes'll even hold a mist vampire or a vapor rat.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

Wizards in the paraplane of Smoke can often overcome the detrimental nature of the place through the use of spell keys. Here, such magical aids take the form of vapors that must be inhaled during spellcasting.

Now, it's possible to carry spell keys around in little glass vials or the like, but it's a good deal easier to create magical incense which, when lit, gives off the desired fumes. Other wizards have laced their spell keys into pipeweed or even created fluids which, when mixed, produce a cloud of magical vapors.

(Ti'adel the Never Forgotten, a Guvner scholar of planar mechanics, provided this chapter.—the Editor)

LIGHTNING, QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF: One of the so-called positive Quasielemental Planes (due to its proximity to the plane of Positive Energy), this Inner Plane exists as an extension of the primary Elemental Plane of Air infused with energy. The interaction between the fundamental material of air and positive energy creates the visible

phenomenon of lightning. This Quasielemental Plane exhibits the entire broad spectrum of the phenomenon, including billowing storm clouds, churning winds, brilliant electrical discharges, and deafening thunder. See "Elemental Interrelations: Quasi-

plane Creation" for more information.

— *The Dictionary of Planar Composition*, 17th edition (abridged)

THE QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF LIGHTNING



In appearance, this quasiplane resembles the Elemental Plane of Air that sired it, but rather than endless blue skies, it holds nothing

but black storm clouds that rumble with thunder and flash with inner fires (heat lightning). Janison's treatise *Planar Energies* describes "bolts of lightning and balls of energy dancing amid the billowing, threatening clouds."

Like all of the Quasielemental Planes, Lightning exists as a border between many other Inner Planes, changing in physical conditions as it nears the essence of one of its neighbors, adopting an amalgamated existence between its own unique nature and that of the other plane. For example, near the plane of Air, the storms lighten and the spaces between storm clouds grow. Some refer to this area as the Subdued Cacophony. Where the quasiplane of Lightning meets the plane of Positive Energy, a wall of cascading energy stands as a permanent barrier.

Where Lightning meets Smoke or Steam, the clouds become thicker and blacker. Confusingly, both of these areas are called the Dark Land. The mephits from Smoke and Steam do not get along with those from Lightning, and these areas often host great conflicts between the creatures. Lightning also borders the quasiplane of Radiance, however, and this region carries the opposite name: the Bright Land. It resembles the rest of the quasiplane of Lightning, except that the storm clouds all glow brightly, carrying the blinding danger of Radiance.

Lastly, a strange, cold realm called the Glistening Crystal lies at the junction between the incongruous border of Ice and Lightning. The storm clouds here are filled with huge floating icebergs, all of which glow with the unnerving electrical light found throughout Lightning. *Bright ice*, a substance found only in this area, keeps its tremendous magical shine until it melts. Naturally, it carries great value off the quasiplane—that is, if a merchant can find the means to safely transport and store it. Often, ice mephits are hired to help achieve such ends.

ALL +HE
QUASIELEMENTAL
PLANES
ARE EQUALLY
DANGERΘUS.
SΘME ARE
JUST + MORE EQUAL
+HAN Θ+HERS.
—A LIGHTNING
QUASIELEMENTAL

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Earth	<
Air	+
Water	◆

◆ PHYSICAL CΘNDITIΘNS ◆

The sheer display of raw energy inherent in this quasiplane makes a trip here well worth the effort. Few places in the multiverse outside the Positive or Negative Energy Planes exhibit such visible shows of primal force.

GETTING HERE

The Grand Archives of the Fraternity of Order list a total of 143 portals leading to and from the Quasi-elemental Plane of Lightning, although surely many more exist. Evidence indicates that those who discover portals to this and other quasiplanes are 46% less likely to divulge their knowledge than are those who find portals to better-known planes such as Fire or one of the Outer Planes.

Portal Number 22 lies on Arcadia. Known as the Storm King's Gate, it offers easy access to the quasiplane of Lightning. However, the portal is well guarded by the Storm King's servants, and the key is a blast of cold wind.

Portals Number 81 through 85 lie on Mount Olympus, where at least four storm deities claim to rule over two-way portals to Lightning.

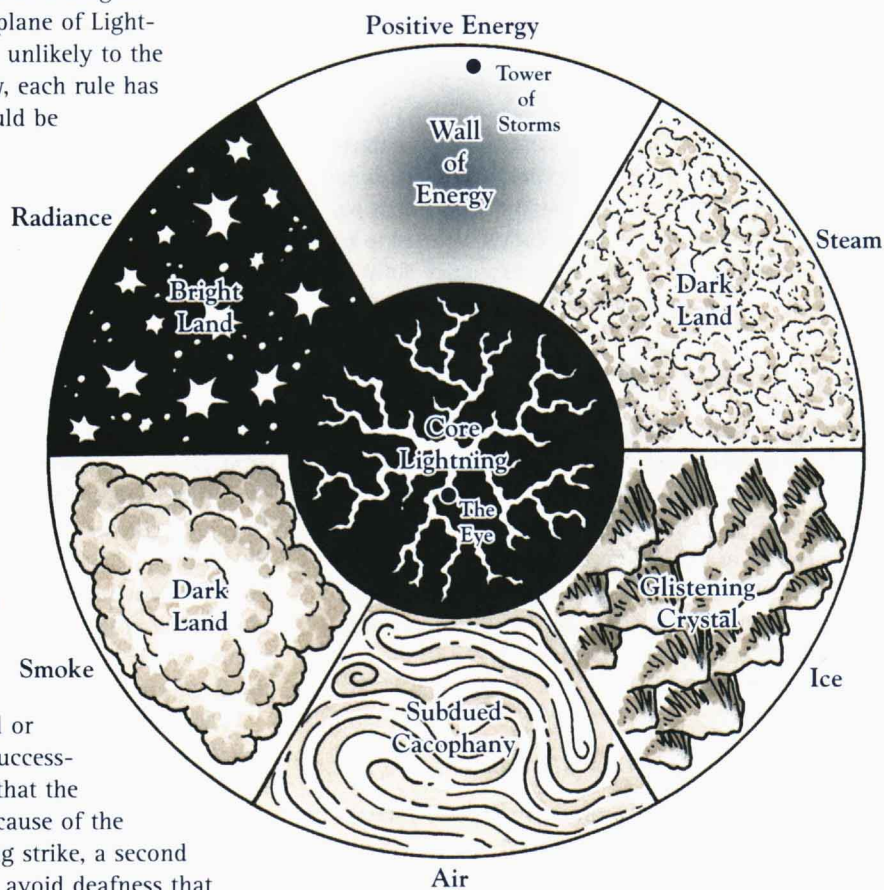
Great and powerful storms on the Prime Material Plane often contain vortices that lead to the quasiplane of Lightning. Common tempests are usually short-lived. Some scholars believe that *every* storm of sufficient power holds a vortex.

Rumors speak of individuals struck by powerful discharges of lightning—whether from a storm, a magical item or spell, or the breath of a dragon—who were transported to the quasiplane of Lightning as a result. This seems highly unlikely to the scientific mind, but as we all know, each rule has exceptions and loopholes, so it could be possible.

HAZARDS

Staying alive in the quasiplane of Lightning is not as difficult as one might think. In fact, the realm can be as safe as the plane of Air, as long as one has no fear of lightning strikes. During each round spent in the quasiplane, any non-native has a 10% chance of attracting a lightning bolt. A being who carries more metal than a dagger automatically draws a bolt. These lightning bolts inflict $1d8 \times 10$ points of damage; they're more powerful than similar discharges (natural or magical) found anywhere else. A successful saving throw vs. rod indicates that the blast inflicts only half damage. Because of the thunderclap that follows a lightning strike, a second saving throw vs. rod is required to avoid deafness that lasts 2d4 hours. *Protection from lightning* and similar spells render the target immune to the electricity (but not the thunder).

BORDERS OF LIGHTNING



BREA+HING AND VISION

The air of the quasiplane is crisp and pure, easily inhaled by any being. According to most texts, however, it carries with it a smell of ozone and an almost metallic taste from its electrical charge.

Due to the ever-present storm clouds that blow about on violent winds, one's range of vision varies from a few feet to perhaps a few hundred. Fortunately, a light electrical halo quickly appears around any matter in the quasiplane, providing a small natural illumination—there's no need for torches or magical light here. Those who value stealth might wish to know that this aura makes *invisibility* utterly useless.

⊕+HER DANGERS

Aside from the common bolts of lightning, one should be aware of other hazards within the quasiplane.

LIGHTNING BALLS. Tiny dancing constructs of energy, these rare, chaotic formations strike as lightning bolts, but a successful saving throw indicates that the target creature dodges the ball and suffers no damage. However, lightning balls have an annoying tendency to follow a target, striking every round until they finally discharge.

PLASMA POCKETS. Sometimes the energy of the quasiplane gathers within a cloud until it carries a horrible potency. These pockets of plasma are the same size as normal elemental pockets (as determined by the table on page 14), and those who stumble into one instantly suffer 20d10 points of damage. The flash-frying effect spells doom for most any being. Even those immune to electricity suffer 2d10 points of damage.

MOVING ABOUT+

Just as in the plane of Air or within a prime-material atmosphere, one can use any means of flight to propel oneself about in Lightning. Further, if one masters the knack of doing so, one can alter orientation such that the direction believed to be “down” changes. (This means of travel is explained fully in the chapter devoted to the Elemental Plane of Air.)

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

Although the quasiplane of Lightning is not without life, most of it is difficult to discern, since it resembles the lightning of the realm itself. Some theorists have speculated, in fact, that all lightning in the quasiplane is alive somehow, probably in the form of shockers, mephits, or quasiaelementals. This is far from being proved true, however, and most still assume that the majority of the lightning seen here is nothing more than it seems (which makes it no less incredible or worthy of study).

QUASIELEMENTALS

Lightning quasiaelementals are playful creatures who take the form of lightning and whose laughter is said to be the thunder of the quasiplane. Such whimsical trivialities aside, these spherical energy beings travel about the quasiplane in a distressingly chaotic manner and have no known organization or society. Occasionally, they gather together in a conflagration of electrical energy, but no one knows exactly why.

Lightning mephits, for all their frenetic activity, have established tiny kingdoms amid the storm clouds. Rarely, in fact, is one of these creatures encountered alone. They get along well with the quasiaelementals and shockers—for some reason, the natives of the Thundering Realm rarely conflict at all.

ANIMALS AND MONSTERS

The classification of animal, as distinguished from monster, is a difficult one at best. In the Thundering Realm, creatures known as mrebbe live amid the clouds. These tentacled, orb-like beings never attract lightning, but they often grab anything that approaches them and throw it into the energy bolts. Some scholars put forth the fanciful notion that by making such “sacrifices” to the lightning, the mrebbe buy their own safety—a theory that foolishly implies the intelligence of both mrebbe and lightning.

Insects called uun live within the lightning itself. An observer finds it extraordinarily difficult to study these fauna, however, since their life spans range from four to sixteen milliseconds. An uun’s entire existence lasts no longer than the bolt of lightning upon which it lives. When the uun dies, it leaves behind tiny eggs that hatch with the blast of yet another bolt of lightning.

Xag-ya from the Positive Energy Plane visit the quasiplane of Lightning frequently (and sometimes pass through a vortex into the Prime Material Plane). In addition, some blue dragons from prime-material worlds gain the ability to travel to Lightning as they mature. These creatures think of the Thundering Realm as a sort of heavenly paradise and retire here for long periods of relaxation, flying slowly amid the clouds and allowing the storm winds to blow them about. Disturbing dragons in such a restful state can be hazardous.

⊕+HER RACES

A race of beings known as shockers lives throughout the quasiplane of Lightning. They exhibit a complex culture involving two different classes: *sojourners* (who like to travel the cosmos) and *contented ones* (who prefer to remain in Lightning). Thus, visitors to the quasiplane are much more likely to encounter contented ones. These shockers are always peaceful, have no concept of time, and spend a large portion of their existence in the form of lightning bolts that arc from place to place.

The djinn are not unknown here. Somewhere amid the clouds, near the border with the Elemental Plane of Air, they maintain a city called Stormfront. From here, noble djinn gather in hunting parties and scour the quasiplane looking for quasiaelementals, mephits, and shockers. Obviously, this practice does little to endear them to the other residents of the realm.

MAJOR PLAYERS

For all their somewhat chaotic nature, the creatures that populate Lightning do not seem to value individuality, as few single beings stand out from the proverbial crowd. Likewise, no deities dwell in the quasiplane, though many storm gods visit here frequently. Some may even have secret castles or other abodes not recorded in any text.

◆ THE SITES ◆

The vast majority of the quasiplane is little but one storm-cloud after another. A few areas, however, stand out as curiosities.

THE EYE

Although reports usually place this spot at the “center” of the quasiplane, such a concept is, of course, fallacious. It is instead named for the core areas of prime-material storms, where conditions are usually calmer. As with those tempests, the Eye is free of torrents of wind and bolts of lightning. Most likely, it was created through potent enchantments; the entire area radiates a magic level of 4.35 on the Derithrex scale.

It's possible that the creating spellcaster—if indeed such a being exists—lives in the Eye itself, on a small pocket of elemental Earth that was probably towed somehow to this location. Upon the floating chunk of stone, a small village has been built. This place offers shelter and services to those traveling to Lightning.

THE TOWER OF STORMS

A structure of mysterious origin and purpose, this ancient tower literally projects out of the wall of energy that marks the absolute border with the plane of Positive Energy. The glistening, electric blue structure—which is composed of an unknown element—offers no egress within. The natives of the quasiplane, particularly the mephits, have no doubt that someone or something dwells within the tower.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN LIGHTNING ◆

Records of travelers journeying to the quasiplane of Lightning are extensive, but they provide little indication of a consistent explanation as to the nature of their stay.

Some come to charge magical items, some to mine *vividium*—an extraordinarily rare substance found amid the storm clouds (essentially, it's solid lightning)—and some to deal with the natives, whom many believe to possess secrets regarding the manipulation of energy for useful purposes.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

The detrimental effects of the quasiplane on certain types of spells can be overcome through the use of spell keys. The keys here take on unique forms: bursts of energy. To produce specifically controlled blasts of power, a spellcaster needs a device called an *accumulator*. This small magical storage cell draws in ambient energy and then allows the energy to be expelled. A typical burst released by an *accumulator* is too small to inflict damage on a creature or object, but large enough to serve as a spell key. Of course, the spellcaster must know the specific amount of energy and the type of burst required in order to fashion the desired key.

Interestingly, an *accumulator* functions only in the quasiplane of Lightning. In most other planes, it simply fails to work at all, while in the Positive Energy Plane, it overloads almost immediately and explodes, causing 2d10 points of damage to the person holding it.



(This blunt and simplistic narrator is Gaddin Hammerhome, a prime dwarf miner who's been to the quasiplane of Mineral a number of times. It may not seem like it, but he really likes it there.—the Editor)

THE QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF MINERAL

The plane of Mineral is a rocky place full of precious gems and metals, right? That's all a fellah really needs to know, but I gotta fill pages to earn my pay, so I'll go on.

Some folks call it the Treasure Trove of the Multiverse. It is that, I suppose. Every sort of valuable rock a fellah can think of lies in the plane of Mineral. There's gold, silver, mithril, diamonds, and more. You can't just go in and take whatever you want, though. Most of the time, something'll stop you.

The plane of Mineral is really big. (*Infinite, of course, like the rest of the Inner Planes.*—the Editor) Most of it's completely solid. When folks go there, they dig around to move. In some places, there's tunnels dug already. Sometimes there's natural caves.

So there are all these big planes made of pure elements, and sometimes they mix together. Where the plane of Earth and the energy from the Positive Energy Plane meet,

they produce the plane of Mineral. That's because the valuable minerals are some sort of positive aspect of the earth. Makes sense, I suppose. The way I see it, the plane of Mineral is all that's good in the earth. It's got the best in high-quality gemstones, plenty of rich silver and pure gold, and a whole lot of other precious minerals and metals. If there's anything bad about the place at all, it's that a dwarf don't hardly need to work at all to find and extract what he needs. I wouldn't want to train young miners here—they'd get lazy.

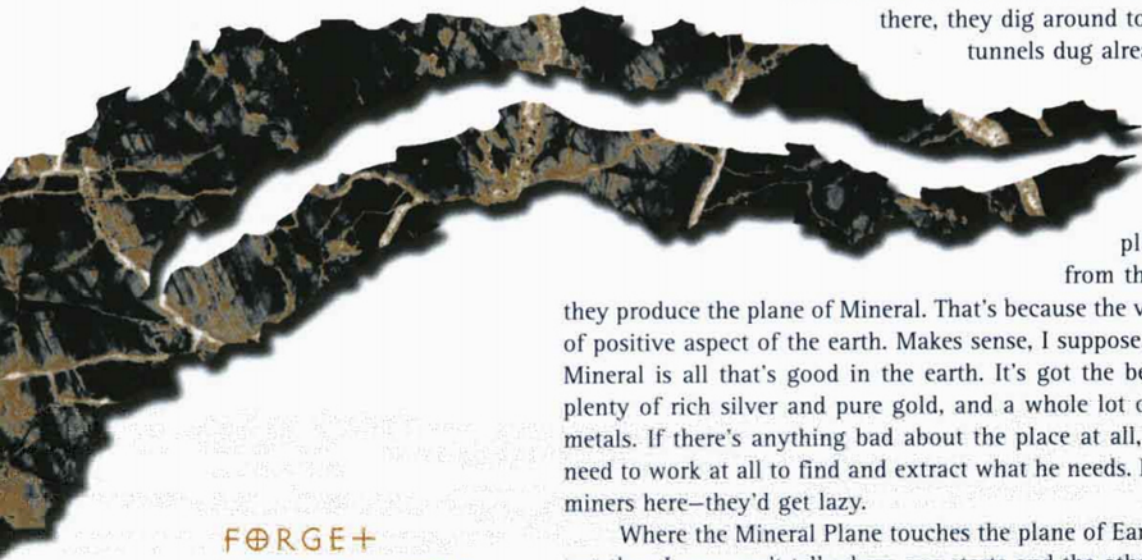
Where the Mineral Plane touches the plane of Earth, both planes just meld right together. I sure can't tell where one starts and the other stops. As you move through the plane of Mineral toward the Positive Energy Plane, the gemstones become even more prevalent, if that's possible, and they glow like little stars. The closer you get, the more they glow, until the gems go away and there's only glow. This area's called the Gemfield by folks that feel like everything's gotta have a name. Other folks call it loun, but I sure don't know why.

There's the Misty Caverns, where the plane borders the plane of Steam. That place's just like what it sounds like, right?

The boundary between Mineral and the plane of Radiance is pretty much the same as the Gemfield, but it's called Brighthome. A fair number of my people make their homes right on the edge, where the minerals take on just a bit of a glow.

There's a spot called Diddanauch in our tongue, but some call it the Natural Forge. This place is full of precious metals, but most of them are molten ore, right? If you can survive in such heat, it's a good place to work with those metals to fashion some fine craftwork. (*The Natural Forge is where Mineral borders Magma.*—the Editor)

Sparklemire's an odd place. Seems that there's a plane of Mud (*Ooze*—the Editor) between Earth and Water, and where the plane of Mineral meets up with it there's a big underground sea of mud with crystals and sparkling gems floating in it. It's not as great as it sounds, though, since those crystals'll cut a fellah up if he tries to wade or swim through the mud. I sure don't understand why the gods made such a disgusting, useless place, but it's not for me to judge, I guess.



FØRGE+
+THE UPPER PLANES—
+HIS IS HEAVEN.
—A WIDE-EYED
DWARF

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Air, Fire	<
Earth	+
Water	◆

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

The whole place is underground. There's no surface here, right? That means no sun to blind you and no wind to chill your bones on your way home from a night's work in the mine—so that's fine by me. But most of the rock around as you tunnel isn't granite or limestone, though—it's all good usable ore. Like I said before, a miner's likely to get lazy here real fast.

GETTING HERE

Getting to another plane's always difficult. Those real familiar with planar travel know about all sorts of doorways that take a traveler from plane to plane, and they call them portals. I only know about the doorway that I used, which took me from a cavern deep in the Underdark to the plane of Concordant Opposition (*the Outlands—the Editor*). From there, I met up with a bunch of level-headed goat men, who showed me a portal to the plane of Mineral in a deep chasm called the Gemgate. They used a jewel as a sort of key to open up the door that looked like a cave to me, right?

I've heard, but never seen, that places on the Prime Material with a real thick concentration of valuable ores can sometimes form a natural doorway called a vortex that'll take a fellah—willing or not—to the plane of Mineral if he steps into it.

HAZARDS

Things here are pretty much like they'd be underground, if you're familiar with mining at all. If you're not, what in perdition are you thinking going to the plane of Mineral for? Durn fools.

BREATHING AND SENSES

With the exception of scattered pockets of air, mist, and such, there isn't any air to breathe in the plane of Mineral, right? This means most miners have to use some blasted magical means of respiration. Myself, I stick to the natural air pockets and tunnels made by other creatures. There's no need to get greedy, I say. That's a good way to get yourself dead.

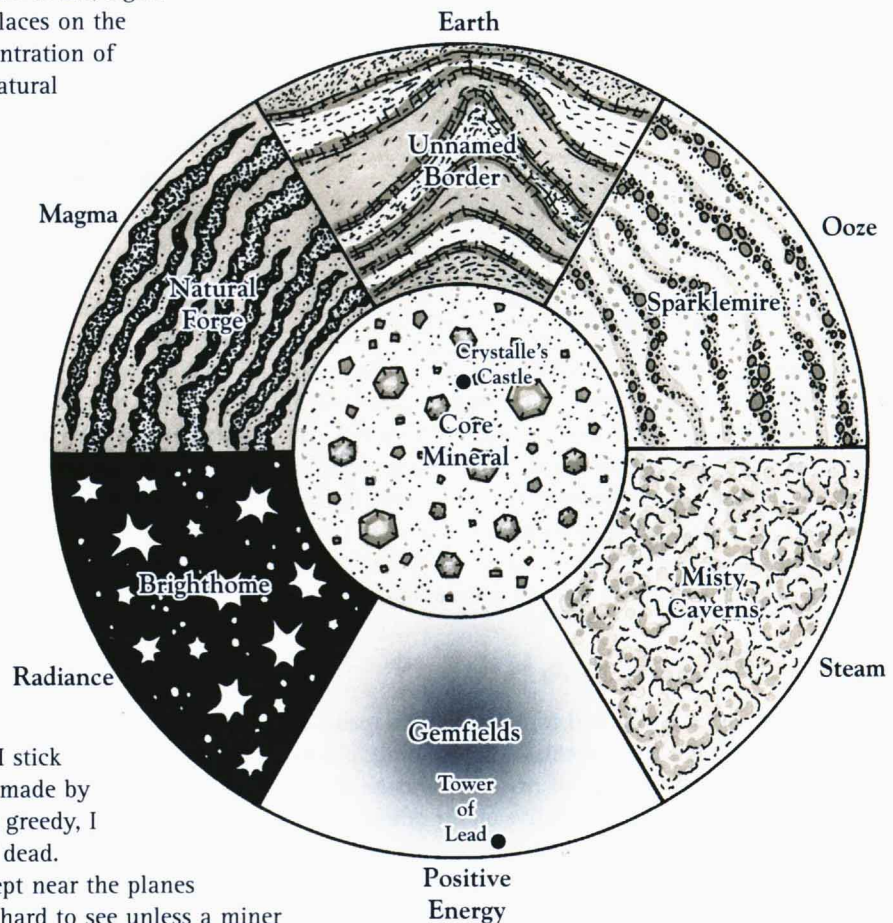
Further, there's no light here, except near the planes of Radiance or Positive Energy, so it's hard to see unless a miner brings his own light to help him while he digs.

Sound travels very well through the plane of Mineral. The average fellah can even hear the passing of ethereal or phased creatures, right? They produce a hissing sound that can be heard at a distance of 60 feet. For those with keen hearing (including folks with the hear noise ability) this range is increased to 90 feet. Any dwarf'll tell ya that when you're mining, sound's more important than sight.

FOSSILIZATION

It turns out it ain't too safe to spend much time here, which's what keeps folks from coming to this plane and mining it clean. Anyone not from the plane must make a saving throw vs. petrification each day or slowly grind to a halt and turn to stone.

BORDERS OF MINERAL



That means some of the minerals that a fellah finds might have once been living creatures, right? Who wants to mine their friends, or see them get worked into jewelry or whatnot? Not me. Don't let anyone who's not real sturdy and stalwart tag along.

MOVING ABOUT

To move about, you've gotta dig, unless you find an existing tunnel or a natural fissure. I hear tell that these natural caverns are more common here than in the plane of Earth, and that most are filled with breathable air, so in that way things are easier here. On the other hand, the stone's real hard to dig through, right? It's great to find hard gemstones and metal ore, but they're tough to move through.

The following table determines the type of rock comprising a given region of the plane of Mineral. To keep it simple, the table gives general descriptions instead of specific types of stone and minerals. (*The rate of movement is otherwise as in the plane of Earth.—the Editor*)

1D10 ROLL	TYPE OF EARTH	MINIMUM STRENGTH
1	Packed Soil	15
2-3	Very Soft Rock	17
4-6	Soft Rock	19
7-8	Hard Rock	21
9-10	Very Hard Rock	23

But don't dig too fast! The crystalline formations and mineral deposits tend to extend sharp edges and wicked points from their jagged unworked surfaces. These can cut through a clumsy traveler real quick, right? Each round a fellah moves through a narrow, gem-encrusted area in this plane, he suffers 1d4 hit points of damage. Each +1 of magical protection the traveler carries reduces this damage by 1 point (in increments of 1d3, 1d2, and 1 [minimum]).

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

Some folks might be real surprised to hear that this realm of ores and gems is so populated. It seems *all* these strange planes got their own inhabitants. Stands to reason, I suppose. If we live on our plane, something's sure to live on the others, right?

QUASIELEMENTALS

Now, what kind of blasted fool would give anything a name like that? Some human, I'd wager my gold teeth. Anyhow, these folks don't take too well to folks coming to the plane of Mineral and carting off their goodies. I guess I can't blame 'em. We'd do the same thing if it were our claim, right?

These quasi-folk don't even much like the xorn or the khargra who come here from the plane of Earth. These creatures eat minerals, so they're not too popular among the whatchacallit-mentals that try to defend the place. They're organized like a military, and real tough in a fight.

ANIMALS AND MONSTERS

Now, if you ask me, an animal is a squirrel or a bird or something like that. Anything else is a monster, right? That, they tell me, makes me a "clueless berk." Well, they can stick it right up their own "berks!" Folks on the planes got their weird ways of talking and strange ways of thinking—goes to show that when a fellah's done with the planes he ought to go home to his kith and kin and forget all that "planewalking" business. Ain't healthy.

This plane is lousy with critters that'll eat you as soon as look at you. Crysmals, xorn, khargra, and even a thoqqua or two lair here. Don't go to the Mineral plane without a good, sharp axe, I say.

OTHER RACES

There's some native creatures in Mineral that you'll never see anywhere else. I've sure never seen their like. One kind go by the name tassingg or some blasted thing (*tsnng—the Editor*). These folks look like they're made right out of crystals, right? They're not friendly to miners and they really like magic, so there's two strikes against them right there.

Mineral mephits are some strange little critters, I must say. Selfish, greedy, and self-important, they not only hate those that try to take valuable materials from the plane of Mineral, but they demand that a fellah give them whatever he might have brought with them as well. Like I said, a good axe....

The dao from Earth come here from time to time, and I've seen pech too, by the gods. Neither's friendly to dwarves, so I don't have much good to say about them neither. The dao worked out a pact with the quasi-whosits, so they're free to go where they please and take what they want. Blasted genies!

MAJOR PLAYERS

Apparently, to hear some tell it, each Inner Plane's got itself a king or two. Stands to reason, right? Well, there's a fellah here in Mineral who calls himself the king (*actually, he claims to be an archomental—the Editor*), but most folks off the plane of Mineral don't pay him no heed.

CRYSTALLE. This powerful creature looks like one of those quasi-fellahs and maintains a huge castle defended by crysmals, quasi-ele-whatevers, and golems made of gold, silver, and even mithril. His rule's a fairly peaceful one, and he seems to be a good and kind ruler for the most part. He doesn't have any plans to invade the Material Plane or anything like that, as far as I know, anyway.

◆ THE SITES ◆

There's plenty of important sites in Mineral, most of them defined by the type of ore that a fellah can find there. Veins of ore



run through this place the way forests run across the surface of a normal world. (*"Normal" meaning "Prime," of course.—the Editor*)

The quasi-creatures maintain a number of fortress-cities in the plane, and Crystalle's got a mighty castle. There's some secret dwarven mines too, but I ain't gonna tell you where they are, right? Anyway, you should definitely know about a place called the Tower of Lead.

THE TOWER OF LEAD

This place is a real mystery. It's a big, gray tower that juts up right out of the ground in the region they call the Gem-field. I've heard tell it's some sort of special link to the Positive Energy Plane, right?

The thing is, inside the tower lies about the best forge a dwarf's ever seen short of Moradin's own. Nobody knows

who built it originally, but those that have worked it say that the work done here is twice as good as anyplace else. There's a catch, though, right? Nobody knows how or why, but folks that spend much time here disappear. I figure that they get drawn into the Positive Plane, but I don't know how. I guess the trick is to come here when you got something real special to work on, and then get out while the getting's good.

I've also heard tell that there's tools inside that no one knows how to use or what they're for. It's as though the place was equipped to work materials we don't even know about. And I don't know why these or any of the other tools have never been stolen out of the tower, but there must be a reason.

PLANEWALKERS ♦ IN MINERAL ♦

I ain't no "planewalker." Just a humble miner from the house of Hammerhome, right? Still, I first went to the plane of Mineral for the obvious reason—to get rich! Once I realized that it wasn't as easy as I'd heard tell, I still came back, but always with a particular goal in mind. For example, there's some healing loams to be found in the Glittermire that I went to fetch when a disease threatened to wipe out my clan. Another time, I went to Mineral because I heard that some of the dwarves that live here full-time were looking for guards and military men to help protect against attacks from the natives (minders, they called us).

Speaking of which, those travelers here ought to visit to a place called Durast, where a number of dwarves have established a well-defended homestead. Our priests have even blessed it so that nobody inside petrifies due to the plane's power. The only thing that you'll have to remember (other than being on your best behavior—they don't abide any foolishness) is to keep the location a secret. Remember, plenty of the plane's natives want to see anyone else killed or driven off.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

What in the Hells' a spell key?

(*The spell keys for the plane of Mineral, it turns out, are particular sounds produced by vibrating crystals. The tssng have mastered these and have even shared some of the secrets with those able to use magical means to communicate with them.—the Editor*)

(Radiance Quasielementals are philosophical creatures. Normally solitary, two were queried to assemble the data in this chapter. While the creatures themselves were similar, their debate revealed slightly different outlooks, proving that even beings that exemplify elemental forces are not all of one mind.—the Editor)

THE QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF RADIANCE

VARIR, A RADIANCE QUASIELEMENTAL: What is light? Is it the simply the absence of darkness, or is it something more? Light is the revealer, the solver of mysteries and the key to finding what is lost. Light is goodness, truth, and the banisher of evil. Light gives sight, and sight brings understanding. Likewise, too much light can blind, taking sight away. Thus, light can bestow or banish understanding.

TEMMYUS, ANOTHER RADIANCE QUASIELEMENTAL: Radiance embodies both aspects of light: illumination and heat. Light is nothing more than these two qualities, although it is possible to manipulate and change them both. Different types of illumination produce different colors, and temperature can vary from object to object, creature to creature—even the air can bring a change in temperature. All of existence stems from illumination and heat—the senses we use to perceive the multiverse tell us that.

VARIR: Light is truth; it shows us existence.

TEMMYUS: Light is existence.

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

VARIR: Arguably, the conditions in this plane are similar to those found in the planes of Air, Fire, and even Positive Energy. Nevertheless, Radiance has its own utterly distinctive nature, realized only when a traveler actually arrives in the plane as opposed to just reading about it.

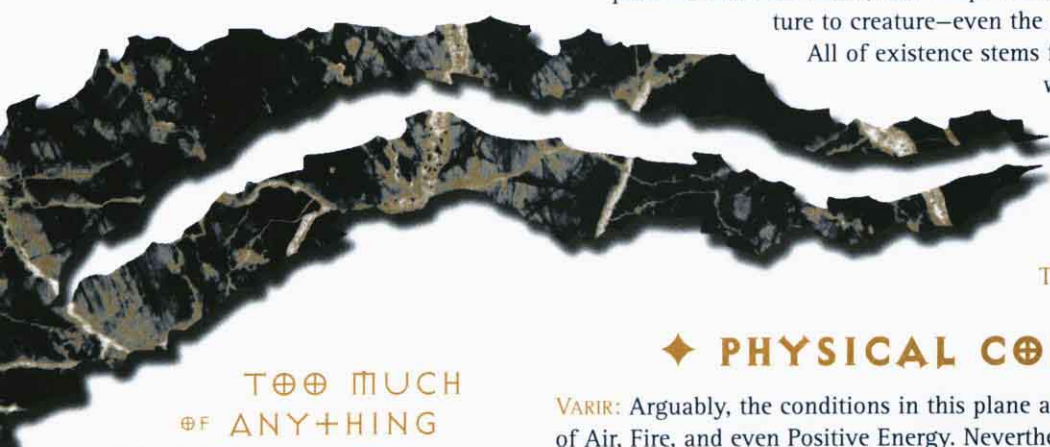
GETTING HERE

TEMMYUS: Few creatures not native to the plane of Radiance wish to come here. This is a good thing. They cannot handle the glory of the plane, and their presence dilutes the beauty in distasteful ways.

That said, portals do exist that allow planar travel to and from Radiance. Most of them, at least on this side, are only briefly extant. For example, one portal, located near the Manticore's Breach on the Outlands, brings a traveler to the plane of Radiance but deposits a traveler in a different part of the plane from moment to moment. Radiance portals, being temporary circular rings of color that shimmer in and out of the required shape, rarely last even long enough for a small group of travelers to pass through at the same time.

A number of these transient portals connect the Upper Planes with the plane of Radiance. The inhabitants of the Upper Planes recognize and revere the majesty found in Radiance more than other outsiders and thus have earned a great deal of respect in our eyes. They are most welcome here.

Vortices leading to the glory of Radiance last much longer, but they lie in places most outsiders find inaccessible, such as within the glorious shining heart of a prime-material sun.



TΘΘ MUCH
ΘF ANYTHING
IS BAD FΘR YΘU.
EVEN SIGH+.
—YIN+HAH REED,
FORMER SENSATH

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Water	<
Fire	+

HAZARDS

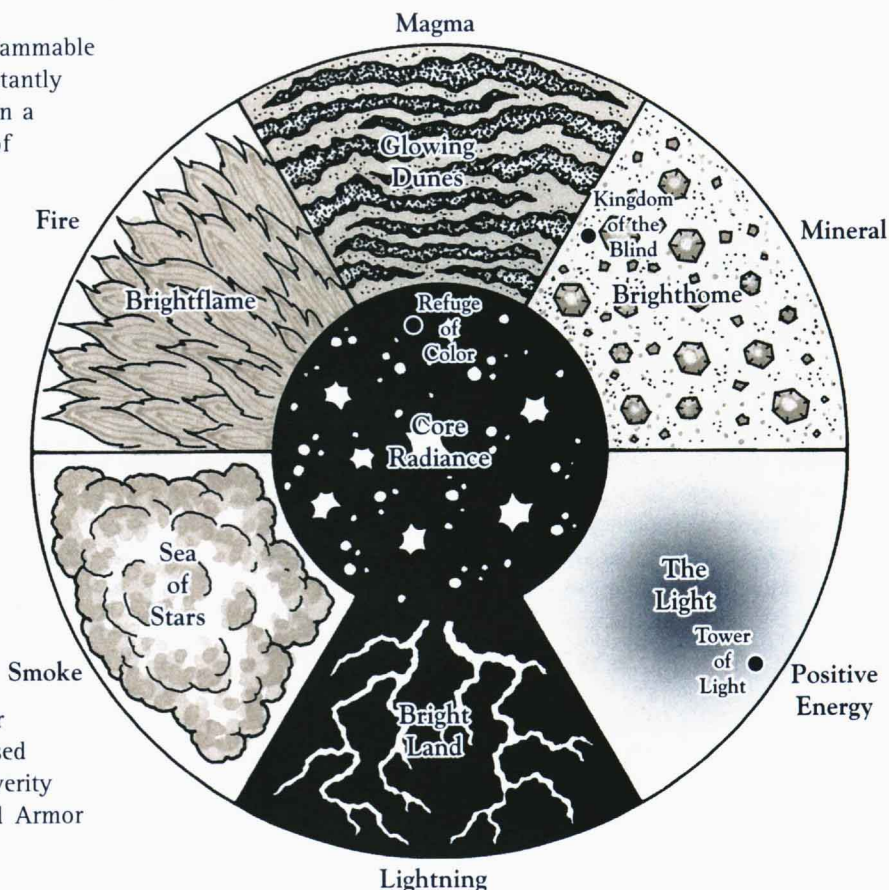
TEMMYUS: The colors and light of the plane, in all their glory, are far too much for nonnatives to handle. Those without some sort of protection for their eyes are blinded even as the beauty overwhelms them. Only thick blindfolds or cursed magical darkness block out the majesty of the plane to protect the lesser eyes of outsiders. *Darkness* creates only a weak shade, but this is apparently enough to protect fragile mortal eyes.

BORDERS OF RADIANCE

VARIR: Nonmagical or unprotected flammable materials like wood, paper, and cloth instantly burst into flames and are destroyed within a round when they arrive in the plane of Radiance. Anyone wearing items made of such materials suffers 1d6 points of damage if they are not protected from heat or flame. Magical items are allowed a saving throw vs. magical fire with a -2 penalty to escape such destruction.

Unprotected water and other fluids, including frozen fluids, instantly boil away into vapor. Anyone exposed to these boiling liquids or the cloud of superheated steam they release suffers 2d6 points of damage. Magical fluids (which do not include holy water) may make a saving throw vs. magical fire to avoid boiling away.

Creatures of flesh and blood suffer damage each round that they spend exposed to the heat and fire of this plane. The severity of their injuries relies upon their natural Armor Class as indicated on the chart below.



NATURAL AC	DAMAGE PER ROUND
10 to 8	6d6
7 to 5	5d6
4 to 2	4d6
1 to -1	3d6
-2 to -4	2d6
-5 to -7	1d6
-8 to -10	Nil

Magic provides the best protection against such harm. Spells like *protection from fire* or magical items like a *ring of fire resistance* are nothing short of necessities for nonnatives.

TEMMYUS: That which can burn deserves to burn.

VARIR: The atmosphere of the plane of Radiance is safe for any creature to breathe. Although the heat is great, unlike the planes of Fire or Magma, Radiance contains no dangerous or noxious fumes, and no smoke.

Throughout the Quasielemental Plane of Radiance, particularly near the plane of Lightning, strange storms ravage the endless atmosphere, churning the radiance and stirring the colors. Even natives fear these color storms, which can throw creatures to a distant area of the plane, often miles and miles away. Those failing a saving throw vs. paralyzation are hurled 1d100 miles away in a swirling morass of color

and garish light. This is one time when the color of illumination of the plane carries no beauty. No one knows exactly what causes these ugly storms.

MOVING ABOUT

(Neither of our narrators could detail this section, since they simply could not understand how nonnative creatures might have difficulty traveling in their home. In any case, moving around this plane is identical in all respects to moving in the plane of Air.—the Editor)

INHABITANTS

TEMMYUS: The number of creatures able to withstand the beauty of Radiance is small. The following discusses the few that exist.

QUASIELEMENTALS

VARIR: Of course, we do not name ourselves quasi-elementals—outsiders gave us that cumbersome name. We have no racial name, for we all operate independently. Radiance quasiaelementals generally live solitary, acetic lives. We like to think of ourselves as philosophers, but is there not an irony in thinking oneself a thinker?

ANIMALS AND MONSTERS

TEMMYUS: Brilliantly colored birds of light called varisoh fly about the plane. These creatures roost in the Refuge of Color, which we will describe later.

VARIR: The scile are tiny motelike creatures that devour color. Radiance natives hate these vermin and they can prove to be hazardous even to nonnatives who are robbed of all color. Likewise, the undead darklights threaten all that live in the plane, and they are feared by all but the scile, with whom they sometimes hunt.

OTHER RACES

TEMMYUS: The only other intelligent creatures native to the plane are the mephits, and only then if one stretches the definition of intelligence to make it quite broad. They are more of an annoyance than a race.

VARIR: Sometimes efreet come to the plane of Radiance, but such occurrences are rare for they find no allies among the natives nor the upper-planar beings who visit the plane. Radiance offers celestial creatures such as devas, planetars, and the glorious solars a welcoming home in the Inner Planes. We of Radiance care little about their morality or politics, but we cherish their own respect and admiration for light.

MAJOR PLAYERS

TEMMYUS: No true powers have established realms here. The quasiaelementals and mephits serve no masters. The only beings that stand out among others are King Black and Queen White, rulers of the Refuge of Color.

THE SITES

TEMMYUS: The ignorant think of Radiance as one of the most formless and featureless of the Quasiaelemental Planes, but there are a few areas of distinction within the splendor of our plane.

THE KINGDOM OF THE BLIND

VARIR: The only place in the plane really hospitable to outsiders, the Kingdom of the Blind is actually a city rather than a kingdom. Floating amid the swirling colors, the city was built within a huge mineral pocket comprised mostly of reflective crystals. This fact makes the pocket, and thus the Kingdom itself, difficult to find. It also means that the interior of the pocket, in which the city lies, is protected from the blinding light.

The Kingdom of the Blind is ruled by the self-appointed king and founder of the city, Nillinar Baskinol, a tiefling whose mind was long ago implanted within the body of a clay golem (Pl/♂ golem/T9, 11 HD/LN). Travelers can find a safe place to lodge and stores from which to replenish their supplies, although prices are reportedly quite steep.

THE REFUGE OF COLOR

TEMMYUS: The only naturally occurring “solid ground” in the plane of Radiance, the Refuge of Color is an island of solid colors, appearing more like a swirling, prismatic display than a kingdom.

The enigmatic rulers of this place are King Black and Queen White, mysterious beings unique in the multiverse and apparently almost godlike in power. Their loyal subjects are the varisoh, who teem throughout the Refuge in the thousands.

The king and queen appear as regal, birdlike humanoids, standing 10 feet tall. Cold and aloof, they rarely take the time to notice visitors, let alone grant them audience.

THE HEART OF LIGHT

VARIR: Also occasionally called the Tower of Healing, this site is known mostly as a place where wounds and injuries heal faster and more completely than normal, where diseases fade and afflictions disappear. More than just these things make the Heart of Light remarkable. First of all, no one knows the true origins of the structure. Second, the tower's creators fashioned the structure from blue light and nothing more.



◆ PLANEWALKERS IN RADIANCE ◆

TEMMYUS: As stated previously, nonnatives rarely come here. Radiance is not for those who cannot endure its glory. Those that do come usually seek to investigate (or utilize) the Heart of Light.

Items forged in the plane of Radiance take on interesting and useful qualities. Metal worked here absorbs light and glows thereafter. Blades retain a keener edge (+1 bonus to attack and damage). Mirrors gain the ability to reflect more than is usually seen by mortal eyes. These factors bring some outsiders here, but they find the conditions so difficult to work within that the number is less than one might think. Which, as I have also said before, is a good thing.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

VARIR: Outsiders find that the nature and cosmological positioning of the plane of Radiance alter some of their magical spells and abilities. Spell keys, taking the form of specific colors, can reverse this. Those who know the nature of these keys know which color to associate with each sort of spell. All that matters is that the color must be present at the time of the casting.

(It is my pleasure to disseminate the following spell, which can be extremely useful in Radiance as well as on many other planes.—the Editor)

SIGHT WITHOUT VISION (Alteration) 2nd-Level Cleric Spell

Sphere: Protection

Range: Touch

Duration: 1 hour/level

Area of Effect: 1 creature

Components: V,S

Casting Time: 5

Saving Throw: None

This spell allows the recipient to “see”—that is, to perceive—the world around him as with normal vision without actually using his eyes. *Sight without vision* allows a being to operate as though he could see in environments hazardous to his eyesight, such as in blinding light (as in the planes of Radiance or Positive Energy). This capability functions to a range of 60 feet, as though he were actually using his eyes. Even reading is possible through use of this spell. Objects that would normally block sight, such as walls or other barriers, still cannot be overcome by the use of this spell.

This spell also provides immunity to sight-based threats such as gaze attacks, *eyebite*, *eyes of petrification*, and so on. Vision-enhancing affects, such as *eyes of the eagle*, do not function for the recipient while the spell is in effect.

Currently, the Heart of Light has no permanent occupants. Those that have attempted to stake a claim and set up permanent residence here have either disappeared or left, never to return for reasons unknown to me.

For a short-term stay, however, the tower may prove incredibly helpful and valuable. Within, all healers (*individuals capable of healing, such as paladins or clerics—the Editor*) function at *twice* their level in regard to healing spells or abilities they can use and how effective such things are. Natural healing occurs ten times faster within the tower as it does without, and those willing to stay at least a week are purified of any disease or affliction.

(The response to this rather...unique narrator's report in the book entitled "Faces of Evil" was so overwhelming that I felt compelled to call upon him to detail a section of this volume. Though his mannerisms are often odd, his information is always reliable.—the Editor)

THE QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF STEAM

Hello, mortals! It is time now for you to learn about the plane of Steam from Xanxost. Xanxost is a slaad. What is a slaad doing in the Inner Planes? No one knows.

Wait, Xanxost knows! Hunting mephits! Mmmm...mephits.

After many trips to the Inner Planes, Xanxost knows all there is to know about the Inner Planes. First, there is the plane of Fire, where...wait. Xanxost is only to speak of the plane of Steam.

Steam is the Quasielemental Plane between the Elemental Plane of Water and the Positive Energy Plane. This open, airy void is filled entirely with wisps and clouds of mist and steam. Most people think that Steam

is hot, but that is wrong—it is cool, like mist. Cold, clammy mist that clings to the skin of someone traveling through the plane of Steam, seeping into everything and making it damp and wet.

Xanxost has traveled all over the plane of Steam, even to where it touches other planes.

Near the plane of Water, the misty air gets so thick with liquid that the plane really seems more like bubbly water. As Xanxost moved across the plane toward Positive Energy, the water droplets became smaller and smaller, forming clouds of mist, and finally just wisps. Nearest the plane of Positive Energy, the tiny droplets of water sparkle with a radiance all their own.

The Quasielemental Plane of Mineral shares a border with the plane of Steam in a region called the Shard Forest. Here, crystals float among the clammy clouds of steam and mist, ranging in size from miniscule to gargantuan. Travelers must beware the tiny crystals the most, for these can cut even a slaad's tough hide as it passes through the "forest." (Xanxost put quotation marks around that word because it's not really a forest. That's just what they call it. Don't get confused like Xanxost was at first.)

On the other side of the plane, the boundary with Lightning forms a region that has the frightening name of the Death Cloud. This realm's steamy banks of clouds carry electrical charges that blast a traveler as he passes through them (inflicting 3d6 points of damage, half if a saving throw vs. rod is successful).

Lastly, the Realm of Cloying Fear lies where Steam meets Ooze. It comes right up and says, "Hello, Ooze!" This nasty place offers nothing but a thick atmosphere of gag-inducing stench or a thin oily paste—a traveler can pick the descriptions, but either way, it's bad.

One more border. The quasiplane of Steam abuts the paraplane of Ice, forming a realm called Hoarfrost where everything becomes coated in a thin layer of frozen mist (1d4 points of cold damage per round). Colder even than the rest of the chill plane of Steam, this region is the site of many battles between ice mephits and steam mephits. Mmm...mephits.

Some historians believe that the plane of Steam once stood between the planes of Water and Fire, when the Inner Planes were configured differently. This theory states that Fire and Water were once positioned so that they shared a border, which was the paraplane of Steam. This plane was hot and steamy, giving it the name—which remains today, even with the planes being switched around. Xanxost finds this confusing and pointless to think about. It's hard enough to keep it all straight the way it is now. Who can move planes anyway? Even Xanxost can't do that.



HEY!
THE PLACE
IS CALLED "+THE
PLANE OF STEAM."
SO WHERE'S
+THE HEAT?
—GARRULIS,
A FIRE GENASI

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Water +
Fire ◆

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

Xanxost will now tell you all you need to know about the plane of Steam, so that you can visit it even if you aren't a slaad.

GETTING HERE

There are many ways to reach the plane of Steam. If there weren't, how could Xanxost get here? Portals lead from Sigil, the Outlands, and even Limbo, Xanxost's home. Ah, home.

Limbo is a wonderful place, where everything—

Portals to the plane of Steam. One portal lies in caverns deep below the surface of the first of Gehenna's furnaces. The Cloudy Path is an always open, two-way portal that the quasiaelementals of this plane and some of the fiends of Gehenna use to remain in contact with each other. Oho! Perhaps the fiends use the steam creatures as spies. That would be just like the baatezu. The cursed lawful baatezu. The hated—

Vortices connecting the Prime and the plane of Steam resemble geysers, cloudbanks, and other naturally occurring masses of steam or mist. These, Xanxost has heard, are among the rarer of the vortices that lead to the Inner Planes. If someone hopes to travel to another plane by exploring mists, he might just end up in someplace called the Demiplane of Dread, and even Xanxost wouldn't like that.

HAZARDS

Fire burns, water drowns, smoke chokes, but steam doesn't hurt anyone. The thick moisture in the atmosphere does slow breathing beings down a little (as a *slow* spell). A *water breathing* spell removes even this limitation. Simple!

Seeing through the clouds in this plane presents a much greater obstacle. Range of sight in this plane varies from 10 to 100 feet, but never more. Sometimes, even such vision is only a shape moving through the steam, with no details other than size and general shape revealed until whatever it is comes very close. This is a hunter's paradise.

STEAM POCKETS

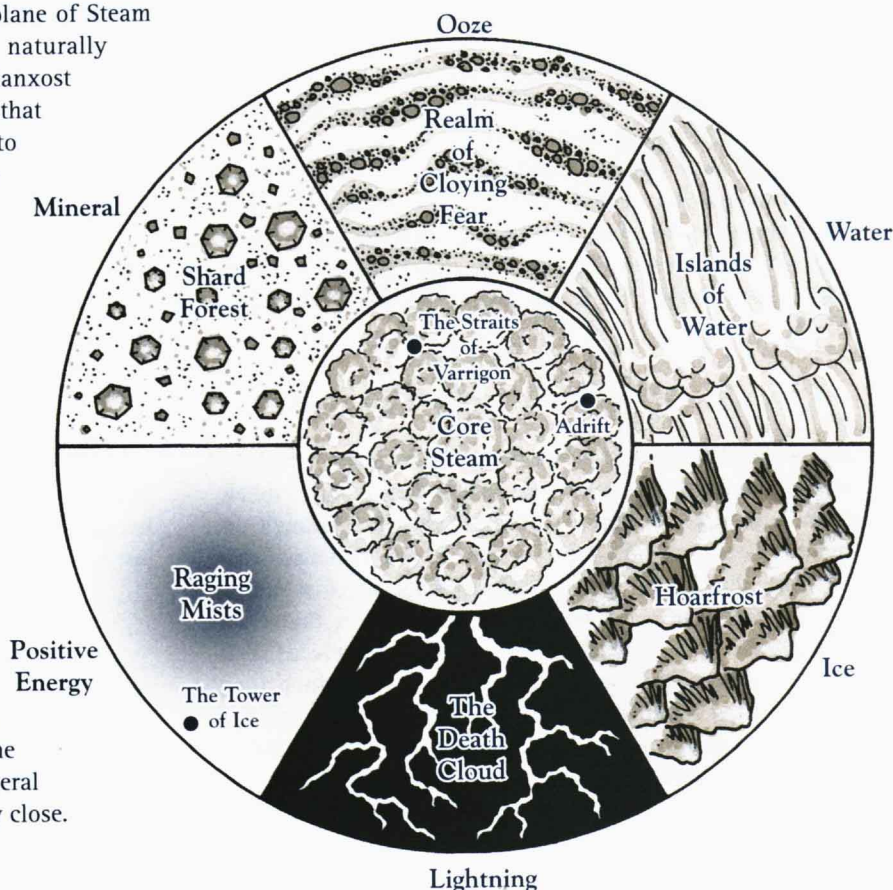
Most people think that Steam is hot, but that is wrong—it is cool, like mist. Cold, clammy mist that clings to the skin of someone traveling—

That has been said. But oho! A few areas of hot vapor hide among the chilling mists. These tricky pockets of heated steam inflict 2d6 points of damage upon anyone not immune to heat (saving throw vs. rod reduces this damage by half). An area of scalding steam is the same size as elemental pockets in other planes. Xanxost does not have pockets. Do you?

MOVING ABOUT

Moving about in this plane is very similar to moving in the plane of Air, except that anyone can swim through the mists—a traveler doesn't have to fall. He can if he wants to, though.

BORDERS OF STEAM



Many nonnatives use a form of transport called a steamship. These are airshiplike vehicles with gas-filled balloons suspending a carriage of some sort. Steamships employ steam mephits to fill the balloon and then expel some of the gas to propel them at great speeds through the air. Sometimes, living *fabere* (see *below—the Editor*) are used instead, trained to carry the attached carriage where commanded.

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

Six main types of creatures live in the plane of Steam: quasiaelementals, klyndesi, wavefires, mist mephits, and steam mephits. Five types.

They might be others, but who really needs more?

QUASIELEMENTALS

Xanxost does not care for misty creatures. Xanxost likes foes and friends he can touch, or bash if need be. Steam quasiaelementals sneak amid the clouds (and who can tell them apart from these clouds?) spying on other creatures and manipulating events. They have a strange secretive order among themselves, but no one understands it. Some say their influence extends even to other planes, and they might be in league with the dao, from whom they buy slaves.

ANIMALS AND MONSTERS

The plane of Steam provides a home for creatures called the *fabere*. These gigantic gas-filled, balloonlike creatures inhale steam and exhale it again to propel themselves through the endless clammy clouds. Xanxost tried to propel himself that way, but inhaling that much steam just made Xanxost sneeze.

Javoose are spiky octopoidal insectivores that float through the plane. Calden and other insects serve as their primary source of food. Calden are flying, six-inch long bugs with flat roundish bodies.

Although Xanxost does not believe it to be an animal, Xanxost must not forget to mention the *feggis*. *Feggis* is a mold or a moss (Xanxost does not know which—nor does Xanxost care) that grows over virtually everything in this damp, cool climate. This bluish growth covers any nonliving object within one or two days and even living creatures sport patches of it after a similar time if they don't wash themselves. *Feggis* tastes very bad.

Aside from the quasiaelementals, there are only four kinds of Steam monsters, klyndesi and wavefires. Two kinds.

The klyndesi are solitary, misty creatures that hunt *fabere* (and nonnative travelers) for food, coming without warning out of the mist to attack.

Wavefires are strange creatures that roam the plane looking for dry air to consume. These beings ignore most of the plane's other natives.

Neither type of creature is good to eat.

OTHER RACES

There are three kinds of mephits that live in this plane: steam mephits and mist mephits. Two kinds. Xanxost is hungry again.

Mist and steam mephits do not get along. This rivalry and on-again, off-again war has existed for millennia, or perhaps even since these races were created from their primordial elemental essences.

Mephits are best uncooked.

Sometimes, the marids from the plane of Water come to the plane of Steam in order to explore and hunt. Some say that they seek out klyndes to conscript as assassins and guardians. They also seek to thwart the alliance between the steam quasiaelementals and the dao, often coming into direct conflict with one or the other or both.

MAJOR PLAYERS

The lords of the quasiaelementals keep themselves secreted away from the eyes of all others. No powers live in the plane of Steam. There is only one major player in the whole plane.

XANXOST. Xanxost is a slaad. What is a slaad doing in the Inner Planes? No one knows.

Wait, that has been said.

No major players.

◆ THE SITES ◆

The Quasiaelemental Plane of Steam is nothing but a big cloud. Except for the fact that there's more to it than that. It's not just a big cloud. There are important sites. Xanxost knows.

ADRIFT

Adrift is a city in the plane of Steam, created by people from other places. So the city's population is about half nonnatives (humans, genasi, bariaur, tieflings, elves, and other things) and half mephits. Are there such things as half-mephits? Xanxost does not know. The two groups get along surprisingly well—better than the two types of mephits get along with each other. Thus, the nonnatives in Adrift keep the peace among the mephits. They might even keep the mephits in pieces. That is a joke, mortal!

This city, shaped like a great ring with a diameter of a mile, spins endlessly. Most visitors can find needed food, supplies, and information here.

At the center of the city's ring are the Floating Statues. These huge stone sculptures of human men and women once apparently stood at least 1,000 feet tall. Now they float in pieces, but their parts remain in a vague semblance of their original arrangement. A few are relatively intact, with only a broken arm or head floating nearby. Others float in many fragments, all covered with *feggis*.

Xanxost has two—no, one—last thing to say about Adrift. For some reason, slaadi are not too welcome there. Xanxost didn't eat *that* many mephits.

THE STRAITS OF VARRIGON

Amid the clouds and banks of mist and steam, there is a valley of clear air called the Straits of Varrigon. Varrigon is a funny name, especially because Xanxost first thought the valley was full of varrangoin (*Abyssal bats, which our narrator also no doubt finds very tasty—the Editor*). This clear path stretches for miles and miles and has become an important area to control, at least for those nonnatives whose visibility is limited by the steam. It serves as a wonderful place to sail steamships very fast, or fly in a more conventional means (swimming in this open area is impossible).

So this commonly used passage provides the setting for occasional enemies that want to prevent others from using it, or for pirates and brigands to waylay travelers.

THE TOWER OF ICE

What Xanxost has heard is that this mysterious structure has existed for longer than even the quasiaelementals can remember. It stands near the border with the Positive Energy Plane, but at the same time near the region called Hoarfrost.

The tower is made entirely of ice. Xanxost knew that from the name! Those who can gain entry (there's a trick, and no one will tell Xanxost what it is) find that creation of certain substances, like potions and poisons, becomes much easier in the arcane laboratories within.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN STEAM ◆

Mephits are also good steamed, although here it is hard to tell when they're done.

Many planewalkers come to Steam, since it presents little in the way of danger and it's a little easier to get around than in the plane of Air (but the weather's not as nice).

Some planewalkers come to this plane to work on the cloud farms. These places literally seed the clouds of steam with various plants that hover in the mist, finding purchase there. The plants take root and grow in the clouds, until flying steamships called harvesters come along and collect the crops and gather them into bins. This work can be dangerous with the klyndesi and wavefires about, so most of the farmhands and harvester crews are secretly well-armed warriors and mages. Additionally, since the crops are so valuable (these rare plants grow nowhere else), raiders and bandits plague the workers.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

Xanxost thinks it's funny that sometimes wizards' spells don't work. For some reason, however, the wizards usually don't laugh. The spell keys that enable a wizard to cast his spells normally in the plane of Steam are gurgling sounds made in the throat of the caster, adding verbal components to each spell (if they didn't have that component already). These complex sounds add a casting time of 1 per spell level to each spell. Casting times of more than 10 become one full round.



Ash's what's left over when the fire's done, right? Well, there's a might more to it than that, my friends. There's a whole plane of it, and I'm here to tell you all about it. You can call me ol' Derris M'Gollog, and I've been through most of the Inner Planes in my day, looking for a fortune any way I could find it. Never did get enough jink to get ahead, but I tumbled to enough of the true dark to share it with you, if you're interested.

THE QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF ASH

The Quasielemental Plane of Ash's located at the junction of Fire and Negative Energy. It's a region of right curious contrasts—a place of incredible cold born in the crucible of Elemental Fire. (Them fancy poets got nothing on me.)

At its heart, the quasiplane of Ash's an immense block of gray-white flakes pressed together like a big ol' mess of dry powder. It's thick, but not so's that the average berk can't dig his way through it. Here and there it thins out, becoming a haze of floating particles like the clouds that rain down around rumbling volcanoes. No

matter what form it takes, though, elemental Ash draws the heat right out of everything within it.

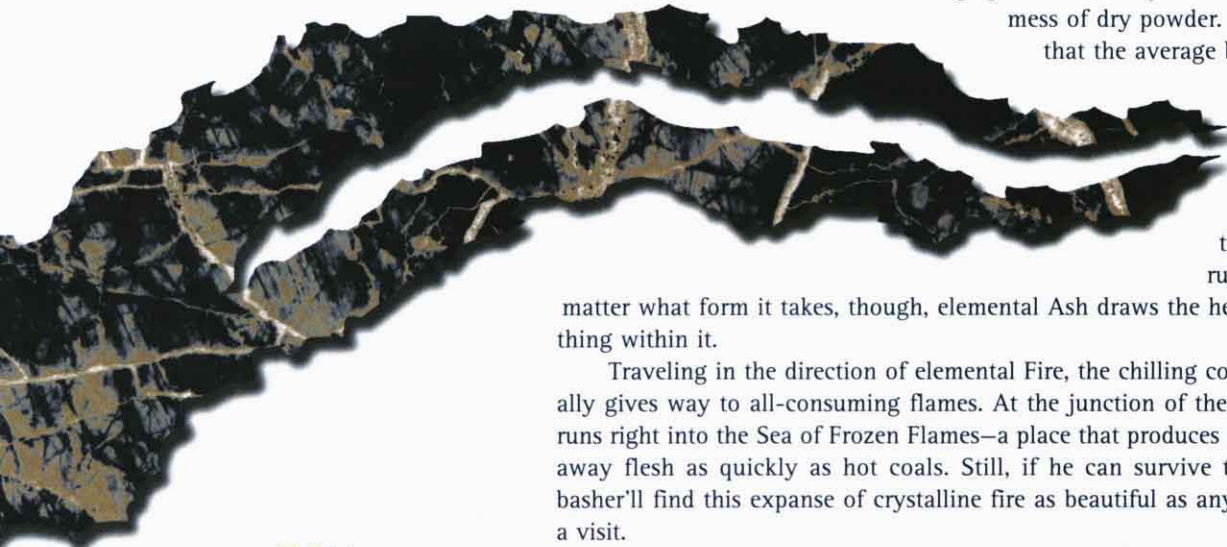
Traveling in the direction of elemental Fire, the chilling cold of the place gradually gives way to all-consuming flames. At the junction of these two planes, a body runs right into the Sea of Frozen Flames—a place that produces no heat but still burns away flesh as quickly as hot coals. Still, if he can survive the harsh environs, a basher'll find this expanse of crystalline fire as beautiful as anything and well worth a visit.

In the other direction, at the border between Ash and Negative Energy itself, a body enters a place known to some as the Empty Winter. This here's a region of extreme cold marked by occasional diffuse clouds of drifting flakes. Not only does the Empty Winter drain a body's heat, it also bleeds away vitality as surely, though not as swiftly, as a vampire's kiss.

As a body moves toward the paraplanes of Smoke and Magma, he finds the regions known as the Embers and the Cinder Wells. The former's a swirling cloud of hot, stinging ashes that have not yet given up their heat. Frigid patches of volcanic ash and rivers of glowing magma mark the latter. Both're places where arctic cold endlessly battles blistering heat. Harsh? Hells, yes.

The quasiplane of Ash borders similar regions of Dust and Vacuum. The boundary with Dust's tenuous, difficult to precisely define because of the similarities between the two quasielements. It's a hostile place, combining both the frigid cold of Ash and the gradual disintegration of Dust. This junction's so terrible and mysterious that it's called only the Wasting Place.

On the other border, the ash gradually gives way to the utter emptiness of Vacuum. Before it does, though, a planewalker comes upon a region of gritty residue much like splintered glass. This unhealthy place's known as the Sparkling Vast. The fragments here sparkle and gleam brilliantly when exposed to light. Beautiful as it is, though, this airless place absorbs the heat from living things and has a detrimental effect on folk's bodies. The longer a sod remains here, the harder it becomes to move. In the end, even those immune to the cold end up as motionless as a statue in The Lady's Ward.



HEY,
IS IT
GETTING COLD OR
IS THAT JUST ME?
—RIGOI
TIMBERLOST,
A
PRIME EXPLORER

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Fire ⚡
Air, Water ♦

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

It takes a right cunning cutter to survive in any of the negative quasiplanes. Each one's as dangerous as a baatezu in church and twice as sneaky. A body can get himself killed any number of ways before he stumbles upon a means of survival, unless he's got a knowledgeable guide like me.

GETTING HERE

Not too many folks'll actually go out of their way to reach the quasiplane of Ash (or any of the quasiplanes, for that matter). A body's more likely to find himself transported here accidentally or through the actions of a vengeful enemy.

With the obvious exception of the City of Doors, only a few gates provide access to this realm. For example, there's a strange little gate in the plane of Limbo that links that realm with the quasiplane of Ash. It's fairly easy to use, being large enough for three or four folks to pass through at once. The key's simply the smothering of a flame against the side of the portal's stone frame.

The trick to using this gate, however, is reaching it. Known as the Wandering Way, it never seems to stay in the same place for more than a day or two. Beyond that, there's no apparent pattern to its movements. One day, it might be in the city of Shra'kt'lor, and the next it might be clear on the other side of the plane. There's probably a way to anchor the gate so that it won't wander about like that; problem is, no one seems to have any idea how to do it.

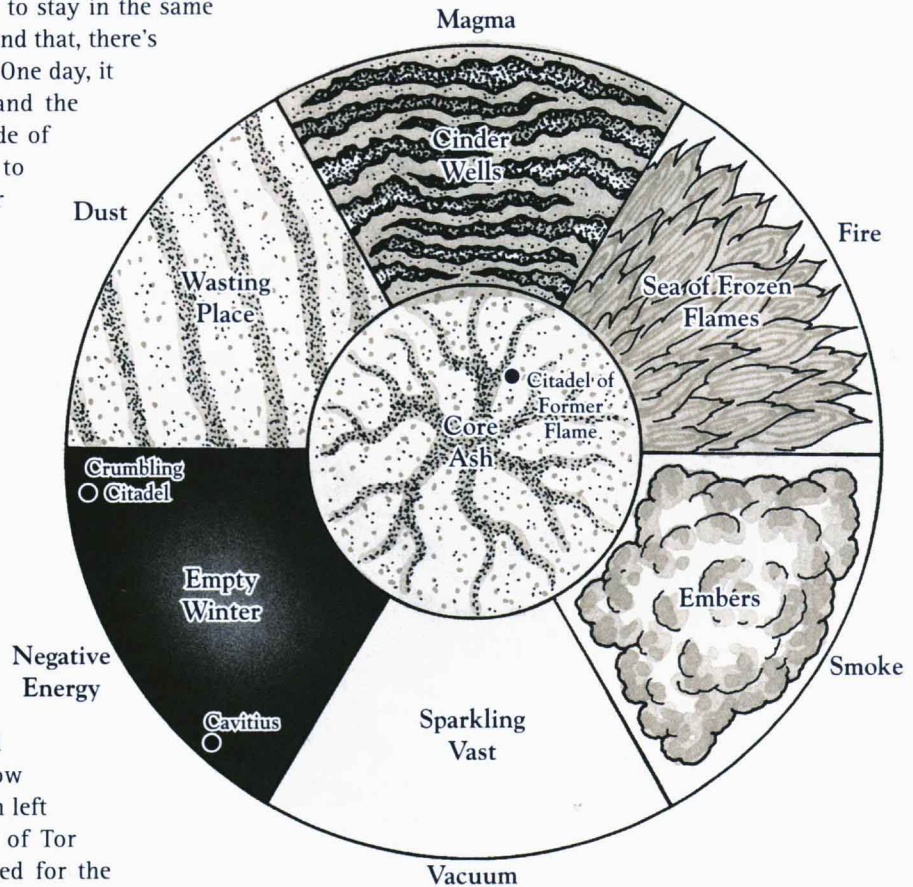
Hidden away in a secluded corner of the Prime Material Plane's a little world named Athas that circles a bloated red star. The priests of this world worship the elements themselves, hoping to one day become embodiments of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. Most of them're barmier than a Bleaker but right tough nonetheless.

Some time ago, a lesser sect of Athasian priests dedicated to the Quasielemental Plane of Ash emerged. Although their faith earned them few followers and they've now vanished without trace, these holy men left behind one relic: the Obsidian Gate of Tor Gaylen. Supposedly this thing's named for the head of their order, but no one can say for sure.

In order to activate this portal, it must be heated until the stone it's cut from glows red-hot. When the temperature's high enough, a dim grayness becomes apparent at the center of the gate and a body can walk through into the quasiplane of Ash. Just be careful not to touch the side of the gate on your way through, friend.

Although not common, vortices to the quasiplane of Ash do exist. For the most part, these're found in only two places: in the heart of a dormant or extinct volcano, or where a raging fire has razed everything. This might be the result of a natural conflagration like a forest fire, or the direct outcome of some supernatural force like the flaming breath of a red dragon.

BORDERS OF ASH



HAZARDS

'Course, there's many a danger waiting to confront planewalkers as they explore the Inner Planes. In this particular quasiplane, the greatest problem's the way the plane siphons heat from living things.

TEMPERATURE

The neighboring plane of Fire has long since consumed the heat of this place. As if trying to regain the warmth that's been lost, the plane of Ash absorbs heat from everything within it, living or inanimate.

If a body ain't magically protected from the cold, he suffers 2d6 points of damage per turn. All living things, even those that're normally immune to cold, are affected.

Creatures from the Elemental Plane of Fire, the paraplanes of Smoke and Magma, or otherwise accustomed to extreme heat suffer 1 HD of damage each round from this effect. Normal heat sources, even magical ones, won't do much to counter this effect.

BREATHING AND VISION

For the most part, the Quasielemental Plane of Ash's a solid mass of gray-white flakes. Even in places where the ash loosens up and the place becomes a thick, powdery cloud, it ain't fit for anything but choking on and there's no light at all to see by. Breathing and seeing just aren't possible here without magical help.

And it's got to be magic—natural open flames won't ignite. They can't survive without air any more than a living thing can. Magical light's still hampered by the thick clouds of ash, limiting visibility to about 10 yards at best. Infravision don't work here, either. Even if away from the solid parts of the quasiplane, residual heat's gobbled up almost instantly.

OTHER DANGERS

As if the heat-draining weren't enough, Ash holds a couple of unique problems for a planewalker.

MAGE POWDER. Certain regions of the quasiplane of Ash're sensitive to the use of magic. When a spellcaster (either a wizard or a priest) starts tossing around spells in such places, the ash absorbs the magical energy just as it does body heat. Fortunately, this doesn't affect magical items or spells that were in effect prior to entering the mage powder.

Not only does the mage powder prevent any newly cast spell from taking effect, it can also absorb energies directly from the caster, making it impossible for him to use other spells for a time. Whenever a spell's cast in a region of mage powder the caster must make a saving throw vs. spell. If this roll's successful, there's no ill effect (other than the predestined failure of the spell, that is).

If the roll fails, however, the caster's unable to work magic for at least an hour. This effect lasts 1 hour per point by which the saving throw was missed. Thus, if a 14 is needed and the wizard's die roll came up a 10, the difference of 4 points would indicate a loss of magical ability for 4 full hours. Watch out, spellslingers!



To determine the size of such a place, use the table presented for elemental pockets.

NEGATIVE POCKETS. Very rarely, a traveler in the quasiplane of Ash encounters a pocket of negative energy. These're as deadly as they are rare, for anyone who enters such a place loses one experience level or Hit Die each round. About the only thing that can protect a body from such a fate's a spell like *negative plane protection*.

SLUDGE. Once in a great while, some leatherhead'll bring a large quantity of water into this otherwise bone-dry realm. When that happens, the water mixes with the ash to form a mass of real vicious, er...*viscous* slime. For the most part, this goop just sits there and looks revolting. When a warm-blooded creature wanders into the stuff, however, a deadly trap's sprung.

The liquefied ash still absorbs heat from the area around it, but instead of just sucking the life out of a body, it instantly hardens into stone. A sod becomes entombed just as if he'd been dipped into quick-drying plaster.

The best way to escape such a prison's with the help of friends, if a body's got some. A few picks or other tools free a trapped sod from the dried sludge fairly easily. Trying to break out yourself is much harder, however, requiring a bend bars/lift gates roll. Fail, and you can kiss your plane-hoppin' rear goodbye, berk.

To determine the size of a sludge deposit, use the table provided for elemental pockets. The dimensions indicated on that table should be cut by 50%.

MOVING ABOUT

Getting from place to place in the quasiplane of Ash ain't quite as difficult as traveling in the plane of Earth, but it's real close. As such, the guidelines for travel in Earth can be used here. Because ash isn't as thick as stone, however, travelers're always able to move as if they were surrounded by nothing denser than packed soil. The ash's also twice as likely to collapse in around a cutter's head since it isn't as tightly packed as earth.

There's gravity in this plane, so a body's got to do his own walking around as well. If a blood finds an open area where the ash forms clouds instead of solid matter, he can't fall from place to place like he might in the more open planes.

INHABITANTS

Very few critters can survive the heat draining effects of the quasiplane of Ash. Those creatures that're able to exist and even thrive in this hostile realm're presented below.

QUASIELEMENTALS

Of the handful of races known to exist in this plane, only ash mephits and quasiaelementals're found in any large numbers.

While the mephits live in scattered communities, their quasiaelemental brothers have built a substantial empire. Based around a large fortification known as the Citadel of Former Flame, they direct their forces against intruders. The ultimate goal of the quasiaelementals seems to be the destruction of the Elemental Plane of Fire. After all, in the wake of Fire, you'll find only Ash. Seems a might ambitious, but more power to them, I say (never had much use for a whole plane of fire, myself).

ANIMALS AND MONSTERS

There's a few animentials found in this plane, generally ashen duplicates of polar creatures. There's also a curious little critter called a descariat with fur like a beaver and a bill like a duck—and what's more, it's hot as a furnace (they make for good eating, though). A traveler might also come upon a school of ulish swimming through the ash—they're not as tasty, but at least they're harmless. Sootsnakes're the only other sort of mostly harmless critter I can think of. Canny bloods'll watch where they walk, as the snakes often lair in elemental pockets of various types.

The most dangerous creatures found in the quasiplane of Ash're the aforementioned quasiaelementals. Most other creatures, even hardy monsters, simply can't survive here. 'Course, there're always exceptions to this, and they always turn out to be dangerous, like the rasts.

Rasts're a bunch of bloodthirsty monsters if there ever were any. Always on the hunt, these vicious creatures work together in deadly packs, tearing apart whatever they can catch with their paralyzing stare. Here's a tip, though: Rasts're real afraid of loud noises. A body can use that to his advantage to scare them off or distract them for a few valuable seconds while he gives them the laugh.

Also, an unusual race of xorn wanders the quasiplane of Ash. These creatures're much the same as their cousins in the Elemental Plane of Earth, but for some reason, they're not subject to the heat draining effects of Ash. Ash xorns're somewhat brighter than their kin but usually less powerful (–1 on each HD). Rumors persist that some of these creatures've actually developed the ability to work magic, but no one knows if this's true chant or just screed.

Many undead creatures lurk around the quasiplane of Ash as well. These horrors seem to find the negative energy that saturates this place comforting, and they don't suffer in the least from the heat-draining flakes swirling around. Well, you probably don't need me to warn you off getting too near these rotting monstrosities.

OTHER RACES

Though plenty of reports speak of scattered ruins indicating the one-time presence of lost races, there're no major civilizations *now* apart from that of the quasiaelementals. Records recovered from an abandoned citadel on the world of Oerth hint that a community of dwarves may've tried to

establish a colony here long ago. Whether or not they succeeded remains a mystery, since no one's yet found any trace of these folks in the plane.

They ain't alive, but the closest thing to another society in the quasiplane of Ash's a large, nomadic army of ghouls and ghosts known as the Flesh Renders. These creatures number in the hundreds and may've once been commanded by the Lich King Vecna (see below). Because these undead often go for very long periods of time without eating, they're particularly savage when food presents itself.

MAJOR PLAYERS

No true powers live in the quasiplane of Ash (at least, not anymore). But a few bashers've become important enough to be mentioned here, including one demigod who left the plane behind for unknown reasons.

HADJENN. Hadjenn (Pl/♂ genasi/F9/N) tells me he's the only known ash genasi in existence. He has no idea who or what his elemental sire was, but he's sworn to find out. Ol' Hadjenn now travels the quasiplane in search of his unknown ancestor. Along the way, he's gathered a fair collection of magical weapons and items that make him a most formidable opponent.

Hadjenn's only real friend's a white dragon named Shackrilag. This monster survives in the quasiplane thanks to a magical necklace given to her by Hadjenn.

VECNA. The most powerful being ever to have lived in the Quasielemental Plane of Ash's almost certainly the one-eyed, one-handed Lich God Vecna. Originally a native of the prime world Oerth, this ancient creature spent the whole of his existence searching for greater and greater power. At the same time, however, he became more and more evil. Eventually, he acquired sufficient power and enough followers to become a demipower himself.

Vecna migrated to the quasiplane of Ash many years ago (exactly how many, no one knows). Once here, he drove a bunch of Doomguard bashers out of their fortress and set himself up in the great, skull-shaped citadel known as Cavitius. He populated his new realm with followers and imprisoned enemies, though who could tell the two apart?

Within Cavitius, Vecna continued to research dark magic with the ultimate goal of overthrowing the other powers of Oerth. In time, he planned to become the patron power of all evil undead. A tall order, true, but a body'd be wrong to underestimate Vecna's determination.

Not long ago, Vecna and all of his followers vanished. They left behind the dismal territory of Cavitius, although chant's that this place's still full of evil spirits. Considering the dark experiments Vecna's known to have conducted here, this seems like a right safe bet.

◆ THE SITES ◆

Only a few places of any real importance stand in the quasiplane of Ash. It fits the nature of this realm that two of these places're in ruins.

CAVITIUS

This vast place might even be more evil and ominous now than it was when Vecna and his minions lurked within its shadowy walls, if rumors're to be believed. The whole place looks like a giant skull, and it's as old as, well, it's older than Vecna—and *that's old*. Some tell tales that it's older than the Doomguard that originally lived here, built by some long-lost race of bloods who worshiped death in a way that even the Dustmen could never understand. There's even said to be places within Cavitius that Vecna was afraid to go, but that sounds like nothing but screed, if I ever heard any.

Only a fool would enter this place, given its history. For one thing, there're bound to be ghosts, spectres, and other incorporeal creatures lurking within. Chant is, though, that some very powerful spirit has come to power in this place. Far more powerful than other ghosts, it supposedly has somehow managed to tap directly into the power of the Negative Energy Plane. Whether this creature has ties to Vecna, or even knows what has become of that dread lich, is unknown.

Maybe it's got ties to Acererak, another old lich from Oerth who's said to be looking for a major connection with the Negative Energy Plane. You ask me, it sounds like that Oerth world's full of liches. You won't catch me there!

THE CITADEL OF FORMER FLAME

This structure has been carved from the very ash of the plane and then magically fused together. The citadel constantly alters its form very slowly, raising a tower here, moving a wall there, obeying some whim or perhaps unseen, unfelt forces in the plane itself. One thing's for sure—the place never looks the same way twice. It's the capital of the ash quasielemental empire and the home of Gazra, the Shifting Emperor. While Gazra's not yet powerful enough to claim archomental status, his might is growing. In time, who knows how powerful he'll become? Not a basher like me, that's for sure.

Gazra uses undead guardians around the citadel in addition to his own quasielemental kin. Ghouls, wraiths, and spectres've been spied around this terrible ever-changing place. Me, I don't care for spooks, and I won't go near the citadel again.

Visitors to the Citadel of Former Flame find that it's not only devoid of heat, but also of light. No manner of illumination, either magical or mundane, functions within this structure. It's said that the quasielementals can see normally within the Citadel, but no one knows how they do it.

Other rumors insist that anyone who does manage to see the inside of this place would be instantly driven barmy.

THE CRUMBLING CITADEL

The Doomguard maintain a stronghold in the quasiplane of Ash, just as they do on all the negative quasiplanes. Why would anyone want to live near the Negative Energy Plane, a body might ask—and a good question it is, really. The Inner Planes, in general, aren't really all that pleasant to spend any time in, and these dark planes're probably among the worst of the lot. Well, if folks liked living only in the nice places, they'd all live in Elysium, right? Or some prime world in temperate lands with cool breezes in the summer and mild winters. But it don't work like that.

The Doomguard think that these planes—Ash, Dust, Salt, and Vacuum—represent what they base their whole belief system on, namely, decay and decomposition. If anyone ever wanted to prove that all things decay as a part of the natural order, they'd only need to visit these planes for proof. It's no wonder that so many of the bashers're willing to withstand the tribulations of these planes—each one, in its own way, shows the Sinkers that they're right.

Now, you've heard about the big war in Sigil, right? So I don't need to tell you the whole story, just the bit about the Doomguard. Seems their headquarters, the Armory, was totally destroyed during the fighting. Lots of Sinkers abandoned the place before the big crash. Even more took a roundabout route and came here later, after the Lady of Pain outlawed all the factions. The Sinkers were already hurting with their losses during the fighting, and the Lady's decree really hit them where it hurt. Faction members're in an uproar, unsure of their future, and the messages between the four quasiaelemental fortresses are flying fast and furious. Most of the Doomguard here are of the faction subgroup that believes everything's falling apart too *fast*, and they take steps to slow the rate of decay so that the multiverse doesn't fall apart ahead of time. Devland (Pl/♂ half-elf/F14/Doomguard/LN), the reclusive Doomlord of Ash and nominal master of the citadel, agrees with this point of view.

Anyway, originally the Doomguard in Ash lived in Citadel Cavitius, but the arch-lich Vecna drove 'em out. As a body might imagine, this didn't make the Sinkers too happy. Nevertheless, what can a bunch of sods do against a power like Vecna? First, they just sulked; eventually, they built the Crumbling Citadel.

Now here's a piece of work. And I mean, constant *work*. The place's constantly breaking apart and falling down—a body'd think it was built in the plane of Dust. Nobody knows exactly why the place continually crumbles, unless of course the original architects and builders meant for it to be that way (which is a possibility). 'Course, while the Doomguard like things to fall apart, if they didn't do something about it they wouldn't have a place to call kip right quick. So, they

constantly rebuild sections and fortify others. They actually seem to enjoy to it, really.

The Crumbling Citadel's a vast structure that holds about four hundred souls. The Doomguard maintain a fair relationship with the paraelementals and even the undead here, and a body'll find them along with the obvious Cager types who've come through a portal to join their faction brothers amid the crumbling ruins. Only the rasts and the ash xorn aren't welcome—they just don't mix well with others.

There's a small group of Doomguard based solely within the Crumbling Citadel called the Sifters. These bashers search tirelessly through the ash for tiny bits of useful or valuable materials. See, these bashers believe that the ash of the plane is what remains of things already destroyed by fire. They think that the plane of Fire is slowly burning away all of existence, consuming it as it does. The plane of Ash, then, is what's left over. The Sifters look for anything not entirely consumed and destroyed.

Surprisingly, the Sifters actually find things of value. Occasionally a bit of valuable metal or gemstone turns up among the ash. Furthermore, they've become adept at distinguishing the different sorts of ash and cinder formed by the burning of different materials. Not only is this useful for collecting the needed requirements for various spell keys, but it can be right handy for creating other things too—magical potions unlike any found anywhere else, for example. Chant has it that some of the more enthusiastic Sifters, when they find organic ash, have the creature *resurrected* so that they can see what it once was.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN ASH ◆

Even if a body's not a Doomguard, there're still a few reasons to pay this plane a visit, if only for a short while. Plenty of high-ups (particularly in the Inner Planes) pay top jink to hear the latest chant regarding Gazra and his doings. Similarly, a number of upper-planar beings like to keep a quiet eye on Cavitius, considering the history of the place and its most infamous master. These cutters pay *real* well.

I can't really lann a planewalker to a good place to call kip here, although the Doomguard in the Crumbling Citadel aren't as hostile to visitors as a body might think. Steer clear of the Citadel of Former Flame—the folk that live there don't take kindly to intruders.

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

Spell keys in Ash take the form of cinders collected from the burning of various things. For example, a body might be able to cast a *fireball* spell here (even though magic of this type doesn't work here normally) if he added the ash of a sunflower to the normal components. Long-term fire spells like *wall of fire* still don't work, though. There's no air to sustain 'em, and even a spell key can't solve that problem.

(When I found a native of the plane of Dust—a rather bitter sandman whose name I never discovered—he gave the following speech, which I recorded as closely as I could.—the Editor)

THE QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF DUST

Silence! Listen now, and I shall tell you of the hell that is my home.

The quasiplane of Dust is an expanse of darkness awash with minute particles. These are carried through the most tenuous of atmospheres on winds so frail that you cannot even feel their caress. The negative energy coursing through the plane causes all matter to decay, eventually destroying everything.

Toward the Elemental Plane of Earth, a traveler finds the dust growing thicker and thicker. In time, drifting clouds of matter begin to coalesce and form solid bodies. Here, in a place known as the Tumbling Rocks, masses of stone crash into each other with tremendous force.

In the direction of the quasiplane of Ash, the scattered currents of dust begin to form thicker and thicker clouds. Eventually, in a region known

as the Wasting Place, dust and ash merge in a choking cloud. Those who travel here risk being torn apart by the natural abrasion of dust or drained of all heat by the warmth-hungry ash.

Circling toward the quasiplane of Salt, the character of the dust becomes more and more crystalline. Where these two universes meet lies the Consumption, a dangerous realm in which all fluids transform into scintillating granules. Obviously, such an alteration proves fatal to almost any living thing. Death comes in many forms in the plane of Dust.

Without a doubt, the most dangerous of this plane's border zones is the Storm of Annihilation. Here, where the quasiplane of Dust merges with the plane of Negative Energy, winds of deadly elemental force whip up storms of highly destructive particles. Here, the negative energy not only breaks matter up, but literally causes it to violently explode. Those foolish enough to come here deserve to die.

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

The Quasielemental Plane of Dust is an open, empty place swept by howling winds and stinging fragments of particulate matter. Those who hope to survive in this plane must address numerous concerns.

GETTING HERE

Apart from the Doomguard, few nonnatives are insane or self-loathing enough to make their way into the quasiplane of Dust. After all, what sane person seeks out a land where ultimate disintegration is the only sure fate?

No one is certain just how many portals allow a body to reach the quasiplane of Dust. The only thing that can be said absolutely is that there are fewer today than there were yesterday. These structures seem to be subject to the natural decay of the quasiplane to which they lead.

It is widely believed that the Doomguard maintain a number of portals that only they can access. Whether or not this is true is difficult to say, but convincing evidence supports such claims.

EVERYTHING
DECAYS

AND

FALLS APART
HERE—

PARTICULARLY
HOPE.

—A SANDMAN

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS

Water	<
Air	◆

A large gate fashioned from a mysterious, crumbling structure stands in a remote corner of Elysium. It is abandoned and almost forgotten, although the portal still works. The problem is, no one knows what type of key might open the gate. Numerous theories have been put forward, but none have panned out. Some say that the key to this gate is no key at all.

In the midst of the vast battlefield of Oinos on the Gray Waste rests a large iron ring. It is old, rusted, and looks as if it might crumble into dust at any moment. Depending upon the current status of the Blood War, this gate may or may not be approachable. As often as not, it lies in the middle of a battle ranging from a skirmish to an epic clash of armies. To trigger the magical portal, an individual only need break an enemy's sword over his knee. This can be problematic for creatures without knees, but most others find this requirement simple enough.

Only rarely do vortices lead to the Quasi-elemental Plane of Dust. They're most commonly found at the heart of great deserts, ringed by unending siroccos. Other large collections of sand or gritty soil can sometimes spawn such vortices. On the grim prime-material world of Athas, for example, vast seas of powdery silt lie waiting to consume travelers. More than one conduit to the Quasi-elemental Plane of Dust exists within those desiccated wastes.

HAZARDS

The quasiplane of Dust is indeed a dangerous place. After all, the very nature of the plane causes matter to gradually break apart.

DISINTEGRATION

With each passing hour, the detrimental nature of this realm erodes all nonnative living and unliving matter. This process begins the instant an individual arrives in the quasiplane and continues until magically halted or the poor soul's complete destruction occurs.

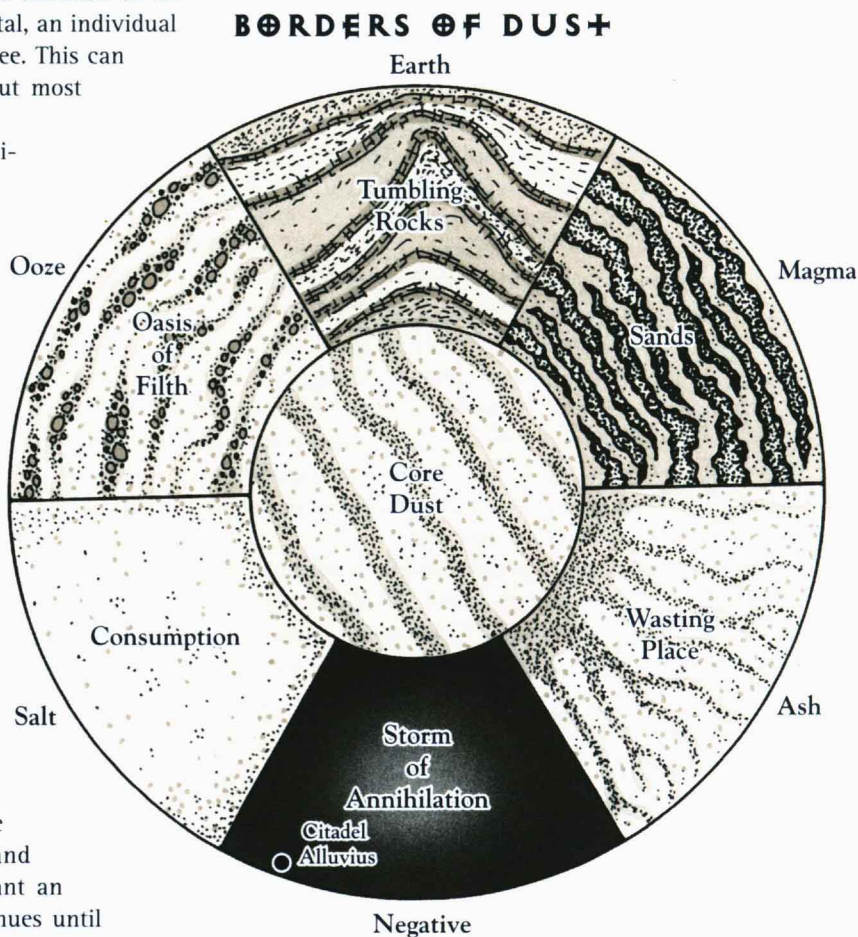
At the end of each turn spent in the quasiplane of Dust, a nonnative must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon. Failure inflicts 2d6 points of damage, while success halves that. When a visitor's hit points fall to 0, she breaks up just as if she had been annihilated by a *disintegration* spell. Likewise, nonliving objects must also save vs. disintegration or crumble to dust.

While on the plane, normal healing magic does not restore hit points lost to this process unless accompanied by *restoration*, *negative plane protection*, or similar spell.

BREATHING AND SENSES

While there is a very thin atmosphere here, nonnatives cannot breathe it without magical aid. Indeed, it's so thin that nonmagical flames won't burn. Even if a fire could ignite in the plane of Dust, surely it too would decay and crumble—like everything else here.

While no natural light exists and flames won't stay lit long enough to be of any help, little else prevents one from seeing well enough here. With some manner of magical illumination, vision works more or less normally to a distance of about 90 feet. Beyond that, however, the drifting dusts make vision impossible. Infravision functions normally, although it is limited to a maximum range of 60 feet.



⊕+HER DANGERS

But now you say, "I have magics to protect me from the disintegrating dusts and the lack of air, so the quasiplane lies before me open to exploration." Well, then, you are a fool and more than a fool. The plane of Dust has destroyed countless mortals who thought just that.

COBWEBS. Here and there, floating particles of dust collide and stick together. Occasionally, these form into strands or strings and then into structures that greatly resemble cobwebs clinging to dusty corners.

Cobwebs composed of quasiaelemental Dust are very sturdy, held together by the negative energy that saturates this place. As such, no physical force can break them apart. Powerful spells like *disintegrate* can destroy the web, but anything less fails to have any effect.

When a creature comes into contact with a cobweb, an immediate saving throw vs. paralysis is required. Failure of this roll indicates that the web has snared its victim. Once this happens, only a spell that breaks up the energy of the web, like *negative plane protection*, frees the trapped explorer. *Disintegration* can also be used to destroy the web at this point, but it stands a good chance of injuring or killing the ensnared individual (only a saving throw vs. death magic can save the poor creature).

Once a being is caught in the cobweb, it begins to feed on his energy. At the end of each round, the imprisoned body will be diminished in some way. The following chart can be used to determine the effect of the web minute by minute.

DIE ROLL	ENSNARED BEING:
1	loses 1 point of Strength
2	loses 1 point of Dexterity
3	loses 1 point of Constitution
4	loses 1 point of Intelligence
5	loses 1 point of Wisdom
6	loses 1 point of Charisma
7	loses 1 experience level
8	ages 10 years

DUST DEVILS. As the thin winds drift through this realm, they engender frail storms of elemental Dust. From time to time, these currents feed on each other to become stronger and stronger, building until they become a swirling vortex.

Once formed, dust devils wander randomly about the quasiplane. Sometimes they drift slowly, matching only the pace of a walking man. Occasionally, they pick up speed and race along with the pace of a galloping horse.

When a dust devil comes into contact with solid matter, either living or unliving, it instantly bombards the material with the concentrated destructive power of this place. This acts exactly as a *disintegration* spell.

NEGATIVE POCKETS. In addition to the other sorts of elemental pockets found elsewhere, a traveler can stumble upon a pocket that has drifted from the plane of Negative Energy.

These black vortices are all but invisible against the darkness of the quasiplane. Those who enter such pockets have their lives drained away just as if they had surrendered to the embrace of a vampire.

MOVING ABOUT

Gravity loses all will in the Quasiaelemental Plane of Dust, although a foolhardy traveler falls toward the plane of Earth if he moves into the Tumbling Rocks. For the most part, however, an explorer just floats around unless he has something to push off of or can cast some manner of flight spell.

(A cutter can also move around by taking the eternal plunge, as detailed under the description of the Elemental Plane of Air.—the Editor)

◆ INHABITANTS ◆

Many creatures dwell in the quasiplane of Dust, some natural and some paranormal. Such creatures obviously have extraordinary tolerance for pain and misery, or are simply trapped, unable to leave.

QUASIELEMENTALS

The fragmentation of matter is also evident in the society of the plane's most numerous inhabitants, the quasiaelementals. These creatures form no social groups larger than small bands and build no strongholds for themselves. Instead, they wander about the plane, seeking something—anything—to destroy. Such random slaughter is the meat and drink of these terrible creatures.

Given this, it is easy to understand why no other race in this plane can stand the quasiaelementals. Dust mephits, dune stalkers, sandlings, sandmen, and all the other inhabitants attack them on sight, or flee. Some of these other elemental creatures have created large empires that provide them protection from the rampaging packs of quasiaelementals.

ANIMALS AND MONSTERS

Dust animals are not unknown, although they are not especially common. The most frequently encountered of these creatures are the dust wolves, which prowl about in deadly packs. Biting flies and crawling insects swarm amid the dust while the multiverse slowly decays around them and collects here.

Probably the most dangerous creatures are those beasts who have made their way here from the Elemental Plane of Earth—xorn, sandlings, silt weirds, dao, and more.

The magic-devouring hakeashar can be found in large numbers in this plane. They drift about, a nomadic community that seeks out those able to wield magic. They have little to do with the other natives of this plane but are a menace to any planewalker who makes his way here.

MAJOR PLAYERS

While a good many braying fools might claim to be major players in this quasiplane, they are nothing more than brutal thugs whose claim to greatness is based only upon their physical might. In time, even their power withers before the inevitability of Dust. Only one has proved himself more determined than the rest.

ALU KAHN SANG. Alu Kahn Sang (PI/Ø quasidelemental/HD 16/CE) describes itself as the High General or the Wind of Destruction, and these are fair enough terms. This quasidelemental warlord has managed to assemble a legion of its peers under a banner of ultimate chaos and carnage. Sang appeals to nothing more than a desire for absolute destruction and violence, but its followers find that motivation enough.

◆ THE SITES ◆

Few structures can resist the destructive swirling, stinging particles of this plane. In fact, only one important structure stands in the quasiplane of Dust.

CITADEL ALLUVIUS

The Doomguard have forged a great fortress here known as Citadel Alluvius. It stands upon a slowly rotating disc of ele-

mental Earth and is insulated from the consuming nature of the plane by a continual, potent *wall of force* spell. Of all the Doomguard citadels constructed in the Inner Planes, none is so heavily populated as this immense fortress. A Doomlord named Pereid (Pr/♀ human/T19/Doomguard/LN) seemingly rules over the place and welcomes visitors of all kinds.

Apparently, the plane of Dust exemplifies these blustering fools' philosophy. I have no patience for them. To live here by choice is the action of a madman.

◆ PLANEWALKERS IN DUST ◆

This plane of loneliness and deterioration offers visitors nothing. That said, some outsiders believe they have reasons to come here. For one, they seek the magic dusts (*dust of disappearance*, *dust of sleep*, and the like) that blow and collect amid the other choking clouds. For another, the Doomguard has apparently discovered some ancient city in the Wasting Place, not yet consumed by the forces of the plane. Rumors tell of strange flying vehicles within the ruins, with wheels that do not require ground to roll upon. The same stories indicate that the inhabitants of the city—apparently a race of multibraind fugue entities—may not be entirely gone from the place. This is probably just a Doomguard lie to entice others to their doom. *(That last is so blatantly prejudiced that I feel compelled to refute it. The Sinkers here are no more bloody minded than those of their kind on other planes. Perhaps less.—the Editor)*

SPELL KEYS AND OTHER NECESSITIES

Travelers in the quasiplane of Dust have learned that all spell keys here take the form of hollow, whispered lamentations. These breathless calls seem to have a special power, enabling magic normally diminished in this quasiplane to function normally.



(The following is a translated account of the plane of Salt from the point of view of a particularly intelligent native quasiaelemental. It has been somewhat redrafted for clarity.—the Editor)

THE QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF SALT

The quasideplane of Salt is a limitless block of solid, crystal alkaline matter. It is devoid of light, but those who live here feel the endless pull of gravity. Salt is insatiably thirsty, drawing the moisture from everything and leaving only desiccated corpses behind. Our plane is the plane of endless need. We hunger for your water.

We always thirst. Near our plane lies a realm of endless water. It will one day be ours. Near this Elemental Plane of Water, the solid mass of our quasideplane becomes more and more fluid. In time, it forms a vast ocean known as

the Saline Sea. The waves here lap against the fringes of the quasideplane, drawing so much salt into the water that no mortal creature can live within it. Indeed, even touching this toxic ocean is said to bring with it the risk of deadly blood poisoning even to those who normally need not worry about such things. All fluid must fear the touch of Salt.

In the direction of Ice, a blizzard of acrid hail fills the environment. Where these frozen pellets strike flesh, painful welts form and produce ghastly white scars. This is called the Stinging Storm.

In the direction of Paraelemental Ooze, the boundless mass of salt begins to crumble into a thick bog of brackish water. Before long, it becomes caustic sludge powerful enough to eat through metal. This wretched morass, known as the Stagnant Sea, is not a place to be traveled carelessly even by our kind.

Where the quasideplane of Salt meets that of Dust, a deadly region known as the Consumption stands. This place resembles an immeasurable sandstorm in which dust and salt swirl swiftly around each other. Those who enter the Consumption feel the negative effects of both Salt and Dust—breaking apart even as their moisture is leached away. Nothing lives there.

Moving in the other direction, a body eventually enters the Quasiaelemental Plane of Vacuum. Before reaching this eternal void, however, one must pass through the Flats. This vast plain of hard-packed salt ranges in texture from smooth and glassy to brittle and dusty. In the Flats one is subject not only to the fluid-draining effects of Salt but also the harsh conditions of Vacuum. Many quasiaelementals live here, for neither danger presents a threat to us.

Where the quasideplane of Salt comes into contact with the deadly radiance of Negative Energy, a chain of barren mountains known as the Crystal Range has formed. Exactly how these came to be is a secret I cannot tell, but even a casual glance at the landscape gives the impression that some force gradually draws the quasiaelemental material into the black sky. The normal moisture-draining property of the quasideplane accelerates here. A living body can be bled of all liquids in virtually no time, leaving the Crystal Range dotted with beautiful salt statues of those visitors who died here.

IT'S NOT
+ + + BAD.

I MEAN,

WE'RE MAKING
DECENT+ PROGRESS
WITH OUR SHOVELS,
RIGHT?

SURE IS
+HIRSY WORK,
+HOUGH.

—UINMAR CORREK,
PRIME

WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS
Water

◆ PHYSICAL CØNDITIØNS ◆

We have heard that the quasiplanes are considered “inhospitable” and the inhabitants “unfriendly.” Mortals, we would gladly see you in our plane of Salt. Come bearing your precious fluids, and we will welcome you most pleasantly. *(Ever heard the saying, “Come into my parlor”? I trust I need say nothing more.—the Editor)*

GE++ING HERE

We understand that it is not difficult to reach our quasiplane. A number of gates exist in the faraway city of Sigil and other places, used by miners who make their living harvesting our plane’s bounty. Pure elemental Salt is potent *(but those who grace their tables with it proclaim their wealth and influence to everyone—the Editor)*.

An important portal links a place called Pelion with the quasiplane of Salt. In Pelion, a land of blowing snow and sand, one may not see the so-called Crystal Triangle right away—it is likewise almost invisible within the Salt side as well. This gate has been cut from what appears to be a solid piece of glass. Its true composition remains a mystery. Attempts to chip or otherwise mark it have always failed. The Crystal Triangle is 30 feet on a side and gleams as if the light of a sun were always playing across its smooth surface.

An elven village known as Coriandor has sprung into existence on both sides of the gate. On both sides they maintain a perimeter of magical protection inside which lies a perfectly manicured lawn that spreads out to form an island of green in a sea of white, 100 yards in diameter. Nothing unusual about this place suggests itself (aside from its very existence), unless one tries to use the gate against the wishes of the elves. Apparently the grassy field can come to life, grabbing even the strongest creatures and dragging them beneath the surface to an early grave.

If the elves do not have reason to prevent it, the gate opens with the scattering of a handful of flower seeds around its base. The brilliant array of blooms that have arisen from this practice has earned the Crystal Triangle its other nickname, the Garden Gate.

Additionally, a vortex to the quasiplane of Salt opens from time to time at the center of a dead sea or great salt flat. Similarly, they are reported to exist where large deposits of salt are found beneath the earth.

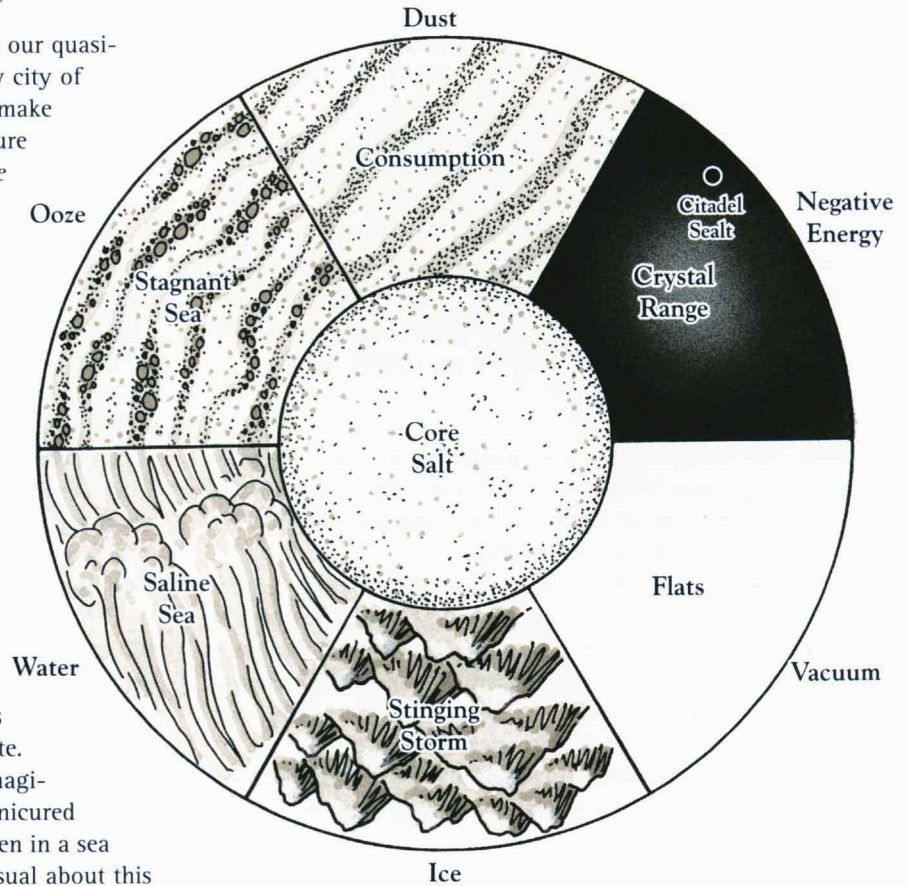
HAZARDS

Many dangerous creatures lurk within the endless depths of our saline world. But these are not the greatest threats to an explorer in the quasiplane.

DEHYDRATIØN

This plane draws the life-giving fluids from a visitor from the first moment spent here. Without magical protection, this inflicts 2d6 points of damage per round. Creatures aquatic in nature, like mermen or

BØRDERS ØF SALT+



mereids, suffer twice the normal damage. An elemental creature from the plane of Water, or a paraplane like Ooze or Ice, loses 1 Hit Die or level per round until it is consumed to feed our plane's insatiable thirst. This damage cannot be healed while on our plane.

Water and other fluids are quickly contaminated and destroyed in this place. At the start of each hour, such things must make a saving throw vs. acid or become so tainted with salt that they are rendered poisonous even before they are absorbed by the plane itself.

BREA+HING AND VISION

The quasiplane of Salt is primarily a solid mass. Because of this, a nonnative cannot breathe without magical help. Of course, cracks and fissures exist within the structure of the plane, as well as the occasional pocket of Elemental Air, where breathing might be a little easier. Also, portions of the plane are not solid salt, such as the border areas described above.

Also like other primarily solid planes, there is no light and scarce little open space, preventing normal vision.

CRYST+AL VEINS

While traveling through the quasiplane of Salt, a plane-walker must keep a wary eye for crystal veins. These glisten like spun glass and lace their way through the salt just like veins of metal in the plane of Earth.

Although beautiful to look upon, they present a very dangerous hazard to anything moving through the plane. Even travel by means of a *passwall* spell cannot navigate safely past these veins. Crystal veins act like deadly knives, cleaving the traveler in twain before he even sees them and bleeding his water into the hungry ground.

Having accidentally stumbled into an area laced with crystal veins, a traveler must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon. The outcome of this die roll indicates which of the following tables is consulted to determine the creature's fate.

SUCCESSFUL SAVING THROW TABLE

DIE ROLL	INJURY SUSTAINED
1	None
2	Minor cut (1d4 points of damage)
3	Major cut (1d6 points of damage)
4	Minor laceration (1d8 points of damage)
5	Major laceration (1d10 points of damage)
6	Severe injury (2d8 points of damage)

FAILED SAVING THROW TABLE

DIE ROLL	INJURY SUSTAINED
1	Right arm severed (2d10 points, -2 Dex)
2	Left arm severed (2d10 points, -2 Dex)
3	Right leg severed (2d10 points, -2 Dex)
4	Left leg severed (2d10 points, -2 Dex)
5	Bisection (instantly slain)
6	Decapitation (instantly slain)

MOVING ABOUT

Nonnatives do not find it a simple thing to travel in the quasiplane of Salt. Call upon us and we may guide you to places of safety. *(Travel here is handled just like digging through the depths of the plane of Earth. However, the consistency of this place is never denser than soft rock.—the Editor)*

◆ INHABIT+ANTS ◆

The creatures that dwell here reflect the nature of the quasiplane they inhabit. Some are very unusual, unlike those found anywhere else in the multiverse.

QUASIELEMENT+ALS

Two dominant forms of elemental creatures thrive in this plane. The most widespread of these are we salt quasiaelementals, ourselves. Throughout the plane, our loose series of minor kingdoms stand testament to our longevity and power. I can tell you little else without betraying important and ancient secrets.

The other race is known as facets. While they physically outnumber we quasiaelementals, their numbers are concentrated along the border of elemental Water. While facets can survive anywhere in the plane, they are most comfortable in this place.

A third race, less significant, is the salt mephits. They seldom form large communities, instead scattering themselves around our quasiplane. Salt mephits get along well with their quasiaelemental brothers, often living freely among us. They dislike facets, however, for those creatures hold many of their kin in slavery.

ANIMALS AND MONS+TERS

Numerous animentials can be found here. Almost all of these creatures are reflections of those animals that make their homes in desert environs. Perhaps the most dangerous of these are the scorpions, which can grow to be the size of elephants, and snakes, whose toxins instantly transform a mortal body into moistureless crystal statues.

While the dehydrating effects of this plane destroy most creatures very quickly, we know of many minor creatures that thrive in our home plane. Sloggosh are wide-mouthed quadrupeds that inhabit the same areas as the facets, feeding upon salt and creatures that have swam in from the Elemental Plane of Water. They offer us no threat, but my people fear the hlach, a near-invisible, energy-draining parasite.

Most types of monster are no better able to withstand the harsh conditions of this plane than the average human visitor. Monsters encountered here are almost always some form of crystalline or mineral life like galeb duhr or crysmal.

⊕+HER RACES

Various undead races have formed small necropoli in the quasiplane of Salt. They tend to be reclusive, basking in the proximity of the Negative Energy Plane without feeling the need to channel their hostilities toward the living. Indeed, I have heard that nonnatives who can cope with the fact that everyone around him is nothing more than an animated corpse may even be able to seek shelter among these undead.

MAJ⊕R PLAYERS

There are no powers in the quasiplane of Salt, nor even an archomental. Only one creature has made its name known outside the plane.

TOR SALINUS. Perhaps the most powerful creature in the quasiplane of Salt is Tor Salinus, a gigantic brine dragon. He appears to be immune to the normal dehydration of the plane, but whether this is a natural resistance or a magical one is known only to him.

Tor Salinus appears to be determined to rule the whole of the plane, but not in the manner most would anticipate. The dragon does not desire power over others, wealth, or even knowledge. He desires instead to be the only living creature in the quasiplane of Salt. Indeed, his hatred of the living extends also to the walking dead. As such, he makes no peace with the various undead communities that dot the quasiplane.

Although dragons were generally unknown to my people and my home, we now know from experience that a homicidal, maniacal dragon is not something to be taken lightly.

◆ THE SITES ◆

None of the races native to this quasiplane build cities or other large structures. The nature of the plane and the creatures it gives life to do not permit it. The scattered communities of quasiaementals and undead generally do not grow very large. Although the dragon Tor Salinus gradually carves himself a large lair, it is not the kind of place a traveler can visit, so there is little point in describing it.

CITADEL SEAL+

The Doomguard maintain an impressive fortress in the quasiplane of Salt (as they do one each of the negative quasiplanes). Carved from the very substance of the plane itself, it is nothing less than a giant sculpture. Every room, every turret, every archway, is an integral part of the whole object. There are no bricks or other components that stand upon each other, only the material of Salt itself. Citadel Seal+ is nothing short of an architectural and artistic masterpiece.

The Doomlord Roth (Pl/♂ tiefling/F14/Doomguard/CN) oversees this place. We have heard that many members of

the Doomguard who would like to accelerate the entropic death of the multiverse have taken refuge here. This is not surprising, because Citadel Seal+ also welcomes lower-planar visitors. The Doomguard here have sold weapons and information to both the tanar'ri and baatezu in an attempt to intensify the Blood War.

THE MINES

As mentioned earlier, an assortment of nonnative races have established mining colonies in the quasiplane of Salt. Each and every one of them has found some unnatural means of blocking the fundamental effects of the quasiplane.

Races comfortable with life underground maintain the majority of these outposts. This includes dwarves, gnomes, goblins, and kobolds. At least one of these sites is owned and operated by a tribe of unfriendly stone giants.

PLANEWALKERS ◆ IN SALT+ ◆

Aside from working in the mines or guarding them from hostile creatures found in this plane, there may be little reason for a traveler to make his way to the plane of Salt. One option, however, includes joining forces with one side or the other of the coming war that will pit the facets of Salt against the entirety of the plane of Water. Since facets multiply when they encounter water, it may very well be a struggle as eternal as the infamous Blood War.

(The current chant also claims that a power-mad illithid has stolen a powerful psionic object called ecstasy's death and taken it to the plane of Salt. There, reportedly, he's buried himself in a dungeon-like abode surrounded by mind-controlled Salt natives. A bounty rests on his tentacled head from both a tribe of githzerai and a kingdom of dwarves on the Outlands, who he's apparently wronged.—the Editor)



SPELL KEYS AND ⊕+HER NECESSITIES

It is possible to overcome some or all of the plane's magic-warping effects through the use of spell keys. In this plane, they take the form of various fluids that must be added to the normal material components associated with a given spell. These liquids are quickly absorbed by the quasiplane and lost, but the caster's spell functions normally. The most common of these elixirs are extracts of rare plants or spices, but fluids drawn from living animals have been known to be efficacious as well.

(Fallis Kyll Thummam, a Doomguard priest, has the following to say about the plane of Vacuum.—the Editor)

THE QUASIELEMENTAL PLANE OF VACUUM

Everything dies, fades, or decays.

In the end, even the greatest of “somethings” becomes a part of nothing. The End always wins. The plane of Vacuum is The End.

We, the Doomguard, see that as the wheel of time turns, the multiverse slowly wanes. The Inner Planes bordering the Negative Energy Plane exemplify our belief. While Ash, Dust, and Salt manifest the slow disintegration of matter and moisture, the plane of Vacuum demonstrates the utter lack of everything. When time is over and the universe has decayed into nothingness, all will be as the plane of Vacuum. We call it the Empty Reach, or sometimes, as I’ve already stated, simply The End.

This plane has no differing border areas—it’s all the same endless void stretching to the limits of eternity. Likewise, it lacks the hidden areas or subtle dangers of other planes. There’s just nothing. The plane of Vacuum spits in the face of Parallelists, for just about everything that a body might find in the other Inner Planes fails to appear here—with just a few exceptions, nothing shows up here.

That’s the whole point.

◆ PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ◆

The Quasielemental Plane of Vacuum lacks light, air, or water. It is completely without heat and has so little matter that it might as well be a blank slate. Its beauty lies in its simplicity.

GETTING HERE

Almost no one seeks the quasiplane of Vacuum. After all, there isn’t a whole lot here for a body to see, and even fewer resources to exploit.

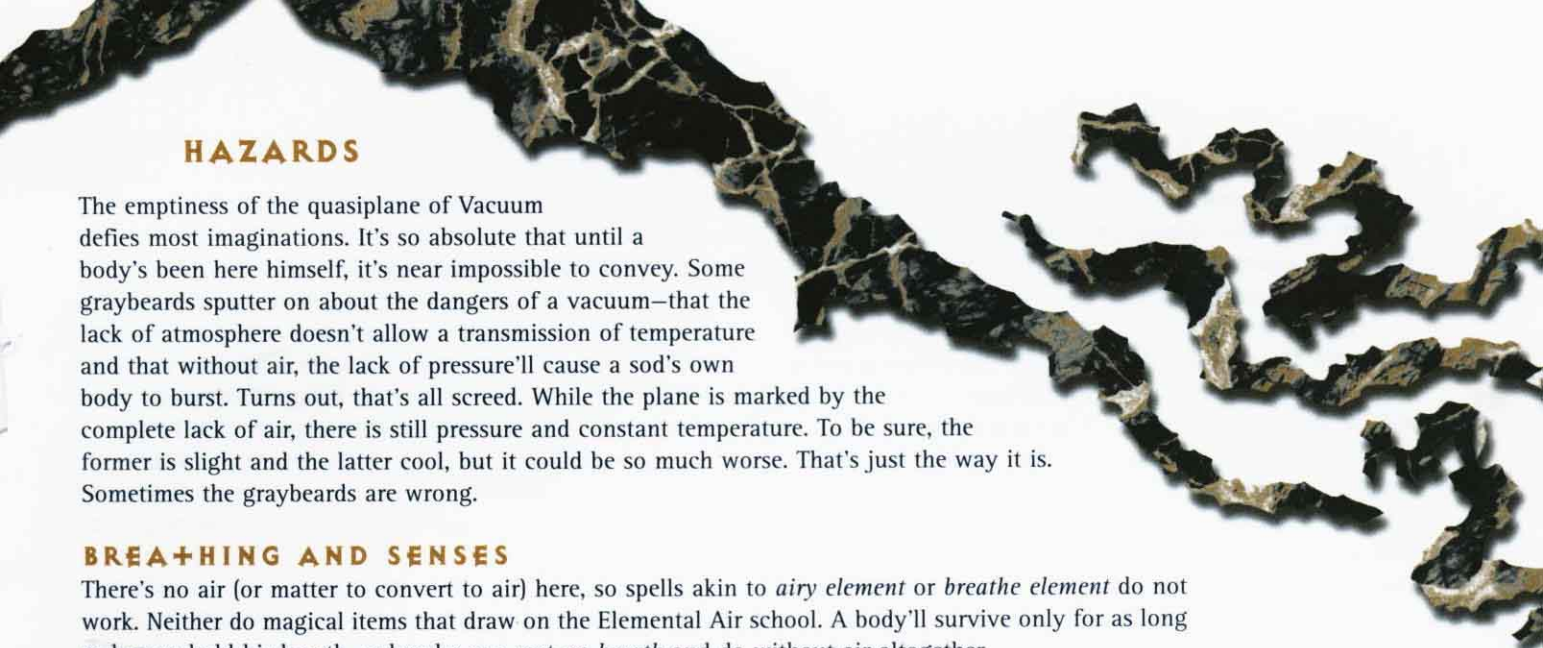
Chant is that very few portals to the quasiplane of Vacuum are to be found even in Sigil. Other than the one that vanished with our now-lost Armory, most berks can’t think of even one.

A small portal called the Howling Gate links the barmy realms of Pandemonium with the quasiplane of Vacuum. The key to its use is simply contact with air. As the winds of Pandemonium whip around it, the gate remains forever open and a steady draft of air rushes into the emptiness of Vacuum beyond the gate. This wind gusts with the force of a summer’s gale, threatening to yank a careless traveler through into the suffocating abyss beyond.

It is believed that vortices to the quasiplane of Vacuum may hang in the emptiness between prime-material worlds. Certainly such conduits might be a hazard to those spelljammers who ply such spaces, but they are hardly likely to be encountered by average folk. (Speaking of spelljammers, those cutters often rattle their bone-boxes about something called the phlogiston—that’s fine, but phlogiston isn’t vacuum and vice versa.)

NOW THAT
I HAVE BEEN TO
VACUUM,
THE PLANE OF ICE
NO LONGER
SEEMS COLD.
—DIVACC’IMAR,
GI+HZERAI
EXPLORER

ABSOLUTE PROHIBITION: Air
WIZARD SCHOOL ALTERATIONS
Fire



HAZARDS

The emptiness of the quasiplane of Vacuum defies most imaginations. It's so absolute that until a body's been here himself, it's near impossible to convey. Some graybeards sputter on about the dangers of a vacuum—that the lack of atmosphere doesn't allow a transmission of temperature and that without air, the lack of pressure'll cause a sod's own body to burst. Turns out, that's all screed. While the plane is marked by the complete lack of air, there is still pressure and constant temperature. To be sure, the former is slight and the latter cool, but it could be so much worse. That's just the way it is. Sometimes the graybeards are wrong.

BREA+HING AND SENSES

There's no air (or matter to convert to air) here, so spells akin to *airy element* or *breathe element* do not work. Neither do magical items that draw on the Elemental Air school. A body'll survive only for as long as he can hold his breath, unless he can cast *no breath* and do without air altogether.

This lack of air is deadly to certain forms of elemental creature. Gaseous elemental creatures like smoke paraelementals lose 1 Hit Die or level per round of exposure to quasidelemental Vacuum.

Without any air to get in the way, one would think that a body could see an awfully long way. And, indeed, this is true enough, if he has his own light source. There's no natural illumination here, and no air for things like lanterns or torches. Any other light source, including magical spells, illuminates twice the normal range.

Infravision works well enough in the quasiplane of Vacuum. The same increase in range applies to this sight as well, so a creature whose infravision normally allows it to see as far as 90 feet would be able to see heat sources at a distance of 180 feet.

VACUUM WELDING

The nature of Vacuum has a terrible effect on inanimate things as well, which becomes most apparent in the case of articulated mechanisms. Vacuum welding affects anything from the joints in a suit of plate armor to the mechanical limbs of a clockwork horror.

For each hour that an articulated mechanism of any complexity spends in the quasiplane of Vacuum, a saving throw vs. acid is required. If the device is simple (like the knee-joint on a suit of armor), a +4 bonus is applied to the roll. Complex devices such as clockwork mechanisms suffer a -4 penalty to the roll. Other adjustments may be substituted or added as desired by the DM. Failure at this saving throw indicates that the object in question has frozen up and is no longer able to move. Repairs are possible, but only after the object is removed to a place with a breathable atmosphere.

M⊕VING AB⊕+

A body in the quasiplane of Vacuum can travel from place to place just as he might in the Elemental Plane of Air. Thus, he need only choose a direction as "down" and begin to fall that way.

Creatures who use wings or other such means to fly find themselves unable to get about in the quasiplane of Vacuum. After all, such things function only when there is air (or some related medium) for them to beat upon.

Magical means of propulsion function well enough. A *fly* spell, for example, permits a body to travel at a fair speed. Magical items like a *broom of flying* or a *flying carpet* function as well. However, magical items that mimic wings do not operate.

◆ INHABI+AN+S ◆

While many think that the quasiplane of Vacuum is devoid of life, this is far from the truth. To be sure, it's not overflowing with animals or even elementals, but some tough creatures dwell here and a body has to know what to watch out for if he's going to spend much time in the plane.

QUASIELEMENTALS

A good many quasiaelementals strut about amid the vacuum. They're aggressive things, destroying anyone or anything they come across in their desire to eliminate all matter from their virtually pristine home.

There's no such thing as a vacuum mephit—at least, not any more. Chant is that these creatures were once found all over the quasiplane, until they got themselves on the wrong side of the quasiaelementals. A genocidal war followed in which the void mephits (as they were properly called) were swept out of existence.

That's the way of Vacuum—when one battles here, it's over such basic concepts as existence or nonexistence. A canny planewalker leaves anything less basic or primal behind.

ANIMALS AND MONSTERS

No natural animals live in the quasiplane of Vacuum. Occasionally a body comes upon a pocket of air in which a flock of birds or other aerial creatures lair, but that's the extent of it.

There are such things as vacuum animentals, even though a lot of leatherheads might tell you otherwise. The misconception is unsurprising, because there are very few of them and they tend to be about as reclusive a bunch of creatures as a body will find anywhere.

Few monsters drift in the open space of Quasiaelemental Vacuum. As a body might imagine, though, they're generally exceedingly tough. After all, anything less won't survive for very long. A handful of the monsters found here are similar to those which spelljammers have reported encountering in the great voids between worlds.

Another hazard of this plane is the egarus fungus that thrives on nothingness itself. Because of its need for the absence of matter, it reacts badly to material objects and creatures—even energy. Only the foolish remain around the fungal growth long enough to find out what it can do to rectify their existence. Quite simply, the egarus can take it away.

OTHER RACES

A fair number of undead creatures, ghosts and the like mostly, swoop around near the junction with Negative Energy. They share this region with spectral deaths, who generally avoid all contact with anything.

Undead creatures known as vacuous hunt the empty wastes, looking for stragglers to destroy. The quasiaelementals hate them, however, and war between these two races rages eternally.

MAJOR PLAYERS

Two creatures living the quasiplane of Vacuum merit special discussion. Both of them are evil, a trait which seems only to be amplified by the proximity of the Negative Energy Plane.

SUN SING. Sun Sing is a mysterious creature that lives at the heart of a negative energy pocket. Exactly how he survives in such a place is a mystery that many folk would love to unravel.

No one knows for sure who or what Sun Sing is. Chant in some circles is that he's the last surviving void mephit, having survived by becoming nearly as powerful as an archomental. Others say that he's a lich or demilich who retreated here to escape all contact with the living. Whatever the dark of it is, no one seems likely to find out in the near future.

Chant-mongers claim that Sun Sing has a handful of undead agents moving through the multiverse. Numerous stories indicate that Sing's agents are hard at work gathering the pieces of some puzzle. These might be physical things or bits of information; no one knows. A body can only be certain of one thing: Sun Sing's agents (if they exist) must certainly be as evil as he, and any operation to which they have committed themselves must be dire indeed.

ZAL THE DESTROYER. Without a doubt, the most terrible *known* creature that a body might encounter while exploring the quasiplane of Vacuum is Zal the Destroyer (Pr/♂ beholder/140 hp/CE). Zal is not native to this realm, but appears to have adapted to life here as well as anything may.

Zal is a giant beholder, fully twice the size of his normal kin. Any saving throw made to resist his powers suffers a -4 penalty and the range of all his abilities is doubled. Zal is immune to vacuum, as are the three dozen normal beholders who act as his guards.

This terrible creature earned his name through wanton violence and unchecked annihilation. From his fortress (which stands on a tumbling fragment of elemental Ice) he commands the actions of a deadly army of quasiaelementals. Even the Doomguard recognize that Zal is a force to be reckoned with in this plane, and we keep a close watch on the Destroyer's movements.

◆ THE SITES ◆

While a few minor structures stand in the quasiplane of Vacuum, the inhabitants of this place are not generally builders. A body might consider Zal's fortress or the sanctuary of Sun Sing to be important, but they really don't merit descriptions as places a sod might visit. Still, a body needs to know about one highly important site in the quasiplane of Vacuum before he travels here.

CITADEL EXHALUS

The Doomguard have fashioned an impressive fortress in this quasiplane. We call it Citadel Exhalus, or the Portal of the Last Breath. Built around a special gate, Exhalus allows us to commune directly with the ultimate Destroyer—the Negative Energy Plane. Many here, including the Doomlord Nagaul (Pl/♀ dwarf/P10 [Siva]/Doomguard/NG), believe that

the disintegration of the multiverse proceeds on schedule and see no reason to hurry things along.

Sometimes, the Dustmen come here to revere the plane of Negative Energy from the safety of the Citadel. That suits us just fine. The Dead make surprisingly polite and trustworthy guests.

The Citadel provides a home to about two hundred Sinkers, and holds a portal not only to Sigil but to five or six other places in the multiverse—all places where we hold a bit of influence, not coincidentally.

'Course, there are those that say we've actually maintain a temple here dedicated to literally worshipping the plane of Negative Energy and the concept of utter annihilation. They further assert that our collection of *spheres of annihilation* were not completely lost at the recent Battle at the Armory in Sigil.

We Doomguard just smile knowingly when asked about it.

PLANEWALKERS ◆ IN VACUUM ◆

Planewalkers come to the plane of Vacuum to deal with the Doomguard, or to run a fool's errand looking for the Lost Tomb of S'sarkth. S'sarkth, they say, was a powerful king utterly consumed with the idea of keeping his wealth with him after his death. So obsessed was he that he bade his sorcerous lieutenants to cast his entire sealed, treasure-laden tomb into the plane of Vacuum after he died. Most folks believe this to be a foolish tale meant to send only the most addle-coved bashers to their dooms looking for a tomb in the void.

SPELL KEYS AND ⊕+HER NECESSITIES

Spell keys for this plane are difficult to employ, for they all take the form of vapors that must be offered up to the endless void of Vacuum. The difficulty in using these fumes, beyond storing and transporting them, lies in the fact that they must be exhaled to take effect. This wouldn't be much of a handicap save for the fact that the vast majority of them are at the least noxious and often toxic.



Even with keys, conditions remain difficult. There is little point in summoning creatures, since most die immediately, drowning in vacuum. Only those fire spells that have instant effect work, since long-term ones cannot sustain themselves. If one must travel here, remember this last bit of advice: Though spells of Elemental Air cannot be cast in Vacuum at all, such enchantments can be cast *before* one arrives in the plane.

INDEX

This index lists, by plane, monsters that originate in or frequent the Inner Planes, and notes where to find the main entry (including statistics, if any). It includes all monsters created or revised specifically for PLANESCAPE as well as planar creatures found in other sources (some of which are out of print but listed for the sake of completeness). If a monster first appeared in an earlier product but has since been re-presented, only the more recent entry is noted. Sources are abbreviated as follows:

DS = DARK SUN® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® *Appendix II* (2433)
 FF = FIEND FOLIO® tome (2012)*
 GA = *Greyhawk Adventures* hardcover (2023)
 MA1 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Annual Volume One* (2145)*
 MA2 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Annual Volume Two* (2158)*
 MA3 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Annual Volume Three* (2166)
 MC4 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *DRAGONLANCE® Appendix* (2105)*
 MC5 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *GREYHAWK® Appendix* (2107)*

MC6 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Kara-Tur Appendix* (2116)
 MC12 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *DARK SUN Appendix* (2405)*
 MC13 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *AL-QADIM® Appendix* (2129)*
 MC14 = MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *FIEND FOLIO Appendix* (2132)*
 MM = MONSTROUS MANUAL™ tome (2140)
 MMII = *Monster Manual II* tome (2016)*
 Mys = MYSTARA® MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendix* (2501)
 PH = *Planewalker's Handbook* (2620)
 PS1 = PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendix I* (2602)
 PS2 = PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendix II* (2613)
 PS3 = PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendix III* (2635)
 RL = RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendices I & II* (2162)
 RL3 = RAVENLOFT MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendix III* (2153)
 RTH = *Return to the Tomb of Horrors* boxed set (1162)
 Set = *Monstrous Supplement* in *PLANESCAPE Campaign Setting* boxed set (2600)

* = out of print

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Quasielemental Plane of Lightning

lightning mephit (PS1, "Mephit,
Lightning/Mineral")
lightning quasielemental (PS3,
"Quasielemental, Positive")
mrebb (PS3, in Appendix)
nimbus (GA)
shocker (PS3)
thunder children (MC14)

Quasielemental Plane of Mineral

crystal (MA1, "Elemental Kin, Earth")
dao (MM, "Genie")
mineral mephit (PS1, "Mephit,
Lightning/Mineral")
mineral quasielemental (PS3,
"Quasielemental, Positive")
pech (MM)
tsnng (PS3)
xaren (MM, "Xorn")
xorn (MM)

Quasielemental Plane of Radiance

darklight (PS3)
radiant mephit (PS1, "Mephit,
Fire/Radiant")
radiance quasielemental (PS3,
"Quasielemental, Positive")
scile (PS3)
varisoh (PS3, in Appendix)

Quasielemental Plane of Salt

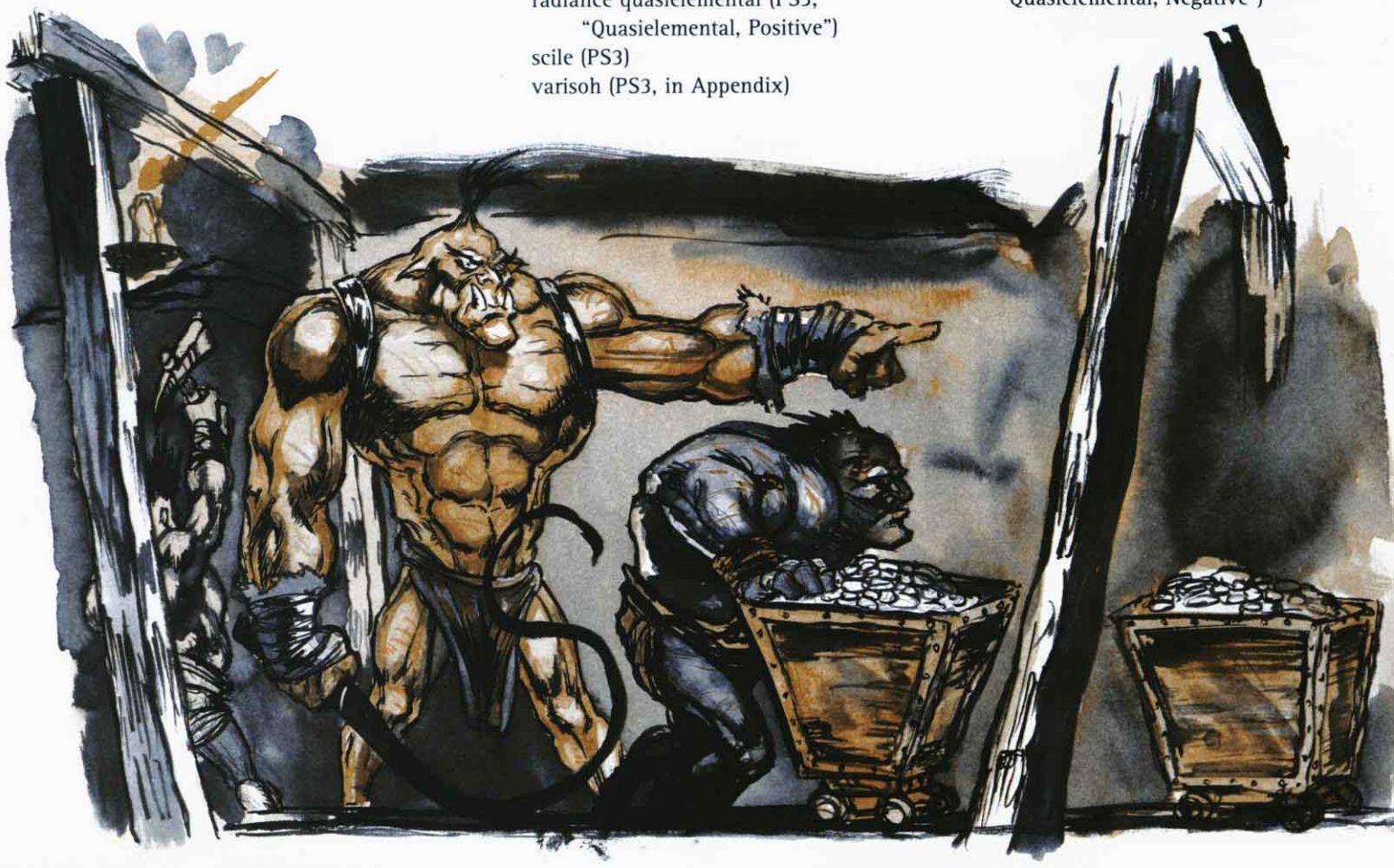
facet (PS3)
hlach (PS3, in Appendix)
salt mephit (PS1, "Mephit, Dust/Salt")
salt quasielemental (PS3,
"Quasielemental, Negative")
sloggosh (PS3, in Appendix)

Quasielemental Plane of Steam

fabere (PS3, in Appendix)
javoose (PS3, in Appendix)
klyndes (PS3)
marid (MM, "Genie")
mist mephit (PS1, "Mephit,
Mist/Steam")
steam mephit (PS1, "Mephit,
Mist/Steam")
steam quasielemental (PS3,
"Quasielemental, Positive")
wavefire (PS3)

Quasielemental Plane of Vacuum

egarus (PS3)
spectral death (Mys)
vacuous (PS3)
vacuum quasielemental (PS3,
"Quasielemental, Negative")



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CAMPAIGN EXPANSION

THE INNER PLANES

by **Monte Cook**
with **William W. Connors**

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