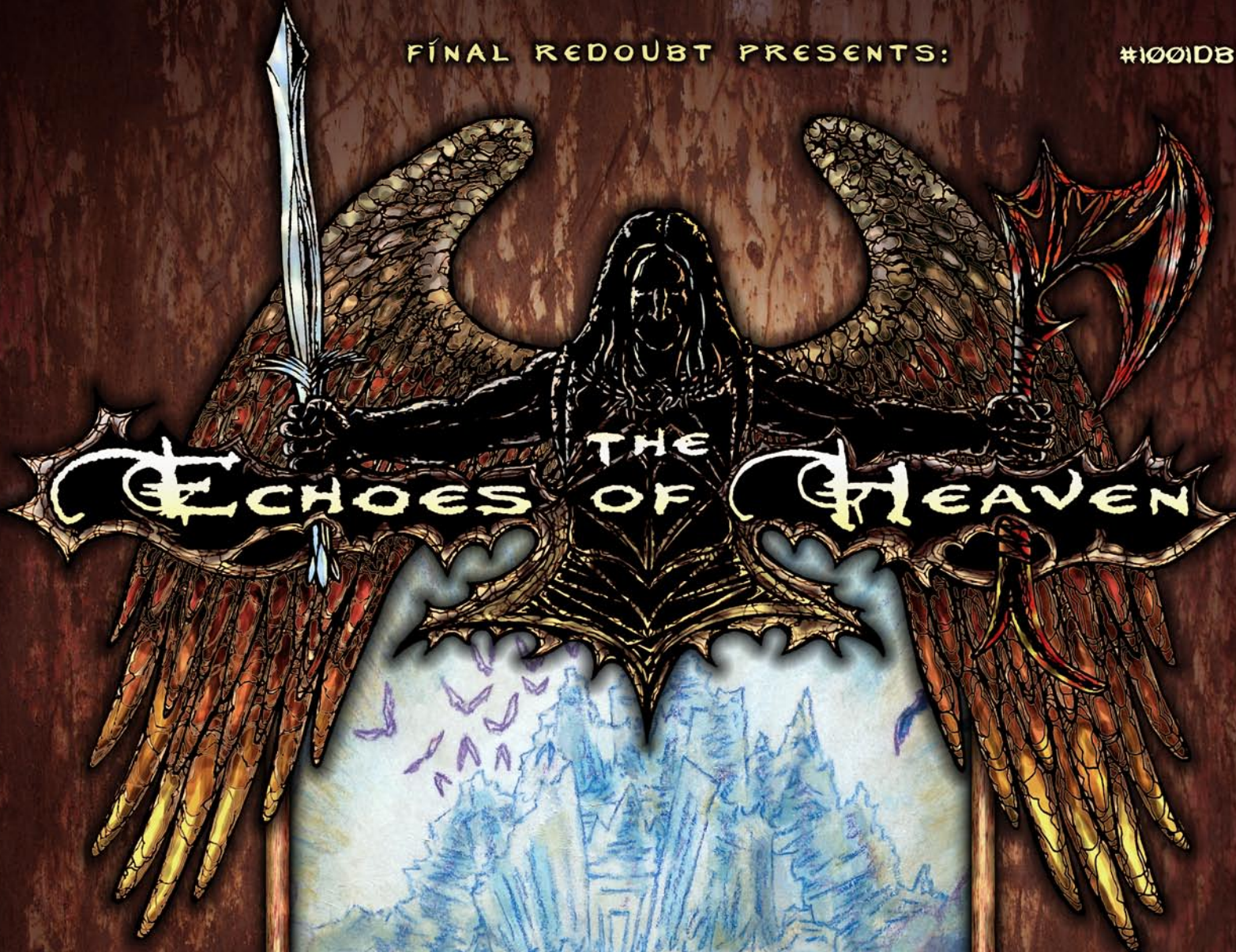


FINAL REDOUBT PRESENTS:

#1001DB



Requires the use of the
Dungeons & Dragons
Player's Handbook, Third
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This product utilizes
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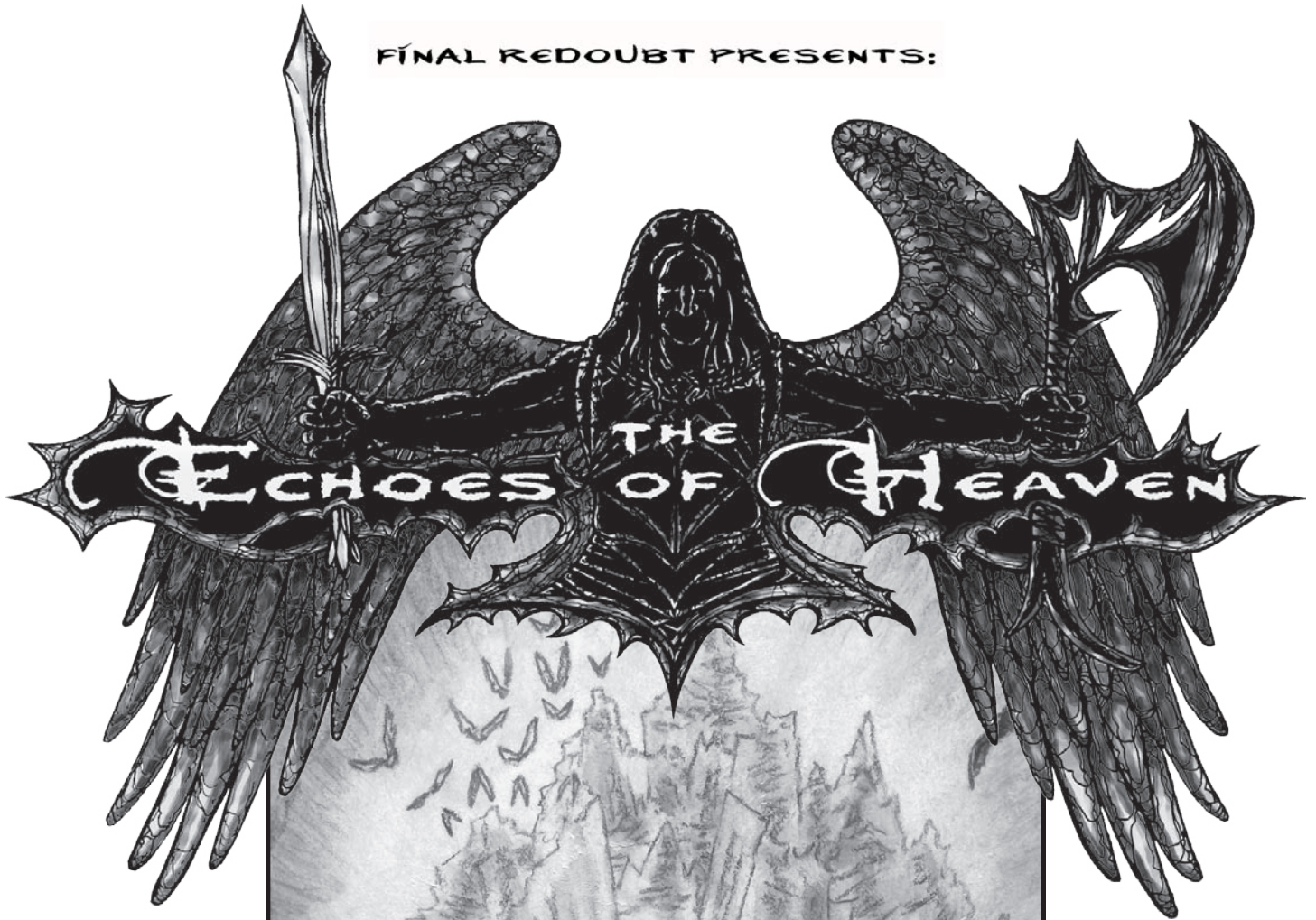
Part One in the
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For 2nd level
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The Throne of God

by Robert J Defendi

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The Throne of God

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*But for the actions of a select few, Heaven would have
fallen on that day.
-Tarsidius 2:48*

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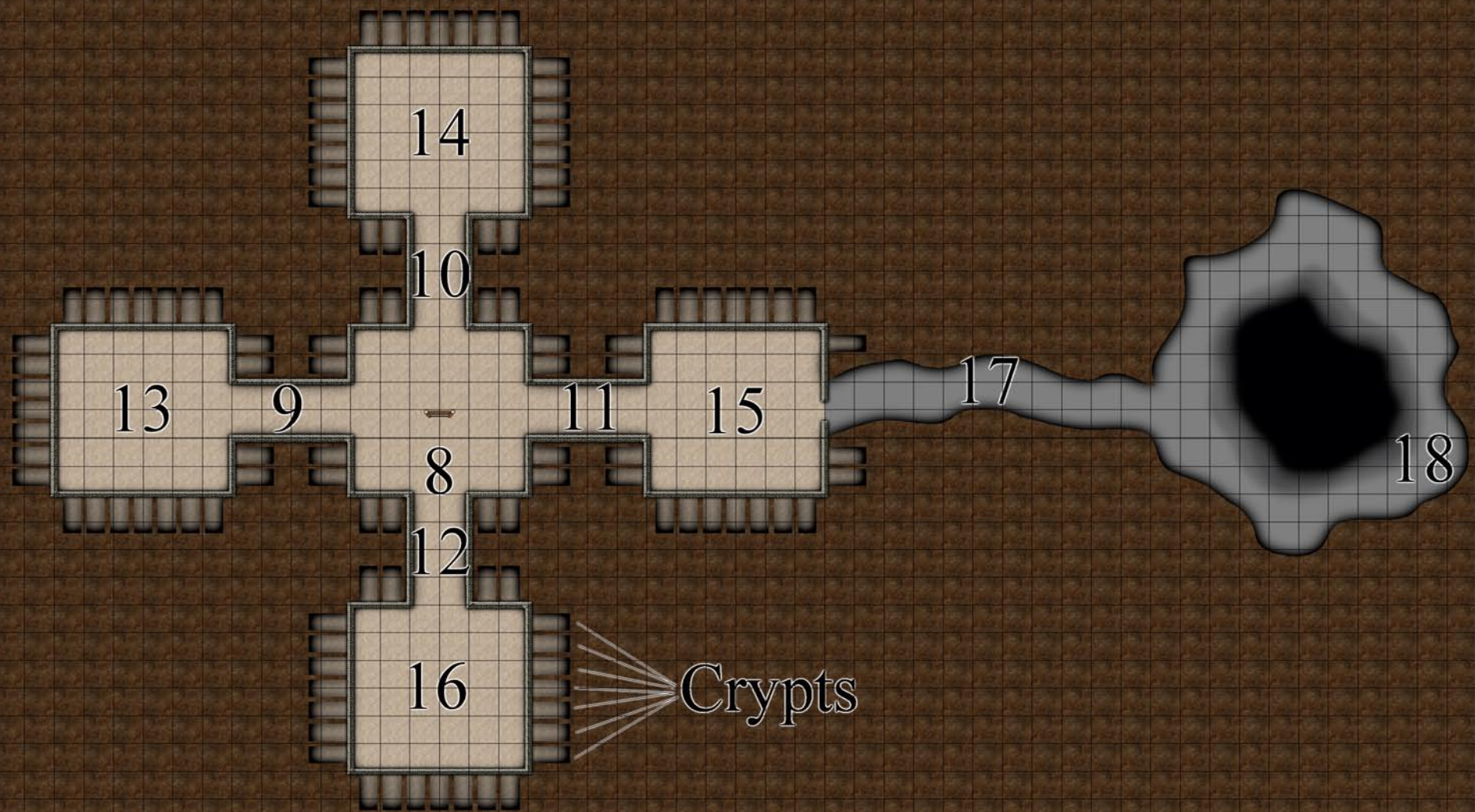
Stanor Monastery



Surface Level

One Square = 5'

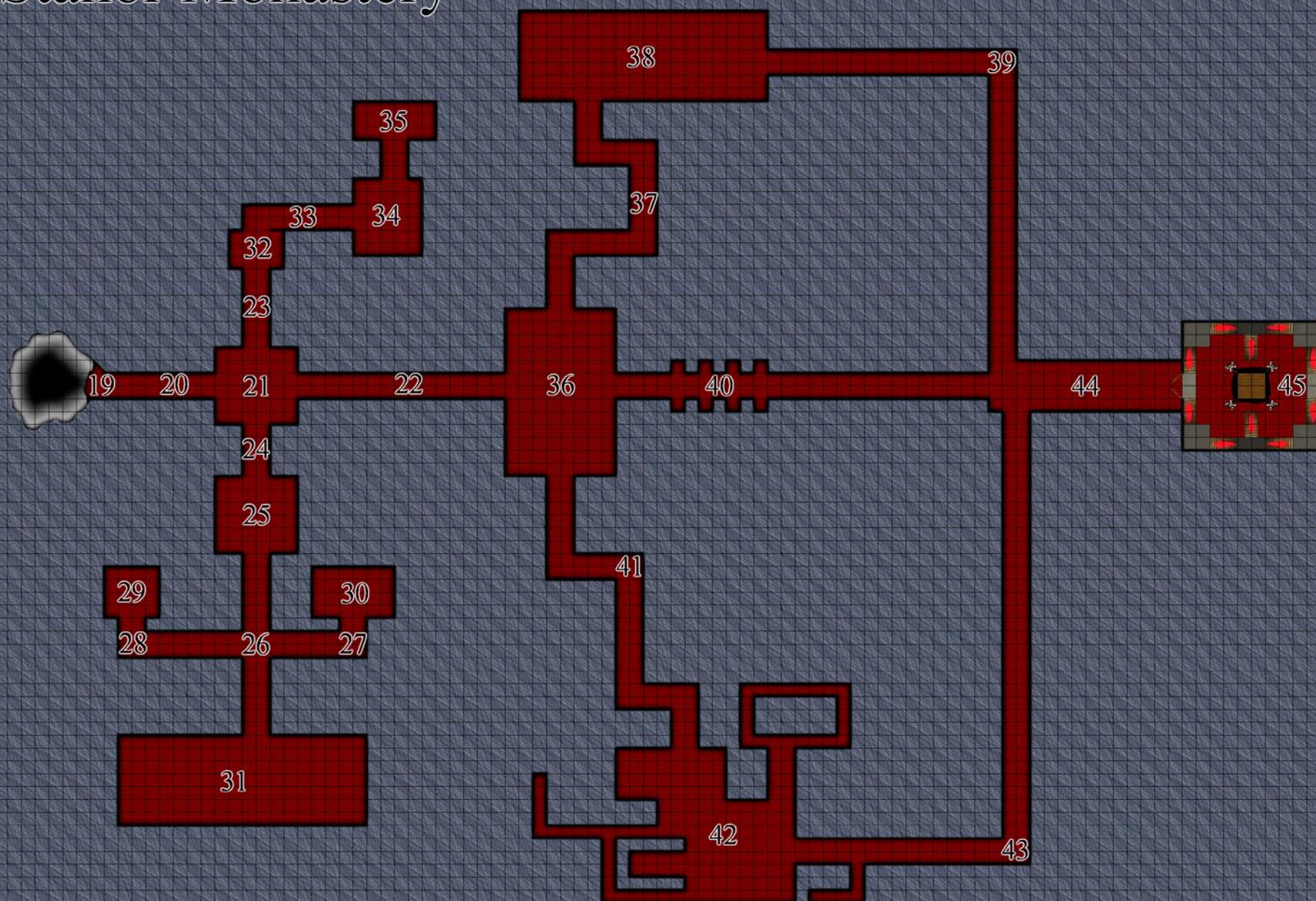
Stanor Monastery



Catacomb Level

One Square = 5'

Stanor Monastery



Ulcer Level

One Square = 5'

Teaser

Introduction

Welcome to the first adventure in the *Moving Shadow* campaign. This adventure, *The Throne of God*, is the first of a ten-part series that will take a group of characters through the Mortal Realm. Starting at 2nd level and taking the party to 20th, these adventures are a part of a campaign that will take the world to the brink of destruction. The actions of a few may save the many, and a band of heroes will stand between civilization and apocalypse.

Each adventure in the Moving Shadow campaign comes with a sourcebook. Included with *The Throne of God* is *The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting*, wherein the reader can explore the Mortal Realm and—in a bonus section—the country of Ludremon.

These adventures are statted with versions for four different games: the *d20 System* game, *HARP*, *HERO*, and *Rolemaster*. This version of *The Throne of God* is statted for the *d20 System* game.

To continue, you must first decide whether to run these adventures in the Mortal Realm or in another game world entirely. If you intend to run in the Mortal Realm, you should begin by reading *The Echoes of Heaven Campaign Setting*, paying special attention to the sections on culture and the Church, as well as the kingdom of Ludremon. Then you should read this adventure and carefully note the power level of the encounters. Some of these are meant to be difficult—nearly fatal—and you should be careful to make sure they are not too tough or too easy for your game table. Even in two groups who use identical rules the level of powers in the respective characters will vary, if only because of the way the GM adjudicates rule calls.

This adventure is the first in a series, but it's intended for characters at the 2nd level of play. If you intend to run the Teaser, then you should have each player make a character and raise him to 2nd, but keep a record of the 1st level version. These will be used in a future Teaser. The Teaser is probably most interesting if the players make their character without knowing that they will be fighting in Heaven.

If you intend to start the characters without the Teaser, you may want to run the characters for a while until they reach the appropriate level of power. This will give them a shared history within the game. In the Teasers, this shared history is revealed bit by bit, in flashbacks during future adventures. Without the Teasers, that shared history can be achieved through a series of preludes.

One final note. We've written these adventures with the novice GM in mind. Because of this, we take a bit of time to explain how to handle certain in-game issues, such as story construction and player free will. If you are not a novice GM, feel free to skip these sections.

Adventure Background

Three months ago, an Ulcer began to form underneath Stanor Monastery. The monks didn't detect it until it was too late. When the Ulcer burst through into the catacombs, Cambions led by the Búmak—a Demon of Deceit—stormed the Monastery, killing everyone inside.

With Hobgoblins in place as the monks, Búmak built an army, harvested the dead in the catacombs, and allowed the Ulcer to grow and solidify. His plan was to bide his time, to allow the Ulcer to become permanent before he made a move.

Characters

At first blush, it might seem like characters designed for the Teaser would be saintly creatures, people too good for this world—people without faults. This is wrong. The Fall of Heaven wasn't as cut and dried as one might think. The second fall of Angels is symptomatic of a greater problem, a terrible gloom that fell over Heaven after one-thousand years of war. Post traumatic stress, survivor's guilt, and terrible phobias are just some of the symptoms many of the mortals carried by the end. In other words, the characters can be as flawed as the players want. If, when given the choice between good and evil, they would eventually choose good . . . that is enough.

Teaser

The rest of this background happens during the adventure, between *Party Meets Man and Daughter* and *Daughter Disappears*. Since it happens off-screen, we will describe it here.

A young girl wandered off from her father's supply wagon, and discovered one of the Hobgoblins. Búmak acted quickly, seizing the girl and having his Hobgoblins—cloaked in illusion, of course—pretend to search for her. When the search yielded nothing, he sent the father on his way.

Búmak had been planning this for years. Decades ago he had the Holy relic in the nearby cathedral stolen and replaced with a corrupted, unholy version. Powerful illusions kept the corruptions hidden and for years it has lain in place, waiting for Búmak to create his Ulcer. He waited for the plan to come to fruition, hoping that the Ulcer would have formed fully enough that the relic was never needed.

When the little girl went missing, he knew someone would try to use the relic to close the Ulcer. This was part of his plan. He knew that he could accelerate the formation of the Ulcer with two ritual elements, the sacrifice of an innocent and the use of the relic itself. The only question was how fast the final formation would take. He discovered that the purer the heart of the person who killed the innocent, the more potent the effect would be.

He had minions in place at the nearest village, an innocent targeted when the little girl wandered into his grasp. Astonished by his own luck, he pulled back his forces and prepared for coming of the heroes who would try to abort his fledgling empire.

Adventure Summary

The following is an overview of how an average adventuring party might move through this adventure. We've broken the adventure into a Teaser and three Acts, and each is listed below.

TEASER

The story begins during the Fall of Heaven. Here, a group of characters fight a holding action on the walls of the Holy City, the home of God. It is the fi-

nal push of the Fallen Angels, their Mortal minions, and the new force rising in Heaven . . . the undead.

As the party fights, the unthinkable happens, and a second third of the Heavenly Host betrays those loyal to God. The Fallen Angels now outnumber the Faithful two to one, and the lines crumble. The party receives orders to fall back to the Holy See and protect the Five Prophets of Mortality.

The party falls back through a rain of Angel-dropped debris until they reach the Holy See, the diamond castle in which God lives, where his light shines out upon all of Heaven. The party should be able to make it through to the Five Prophets (one for each race) and there they find the Prophets casting a mighty ritual. Realizing that the Prophets are at their most vulnerable, the party sets up defensive positions in one of the main halls.

Only then does the Fallen Angel appear. The fight is hopeless, but the party fights. They don't need to win, though, only to delay. At the last possible moment, the Prophets finish their spell and a brilliant light overtakes everything.

ACT ONE

Ten thousand years later, the world has changed. The Five Prophets have split it into Heaven, Hell, and the Mortal Realm. If the party played the Teaser, they awaken here, confused and alone. This is a horrible, brutal place, and they feel very lost.

Whether or not they've been in Heaven, they stumble upon a young priest, out in the countryside, singing a hymn and lost in his thoughts. As they watch, he is attacked by a group of Hobgoblins. They rescue him and he insists the party return with him to Belm—the capital of Ludremon—as his guests. If they tell outlandish stories of the War in Heaven, they've found one of the few people who will believe them.

The party and the priest go to the Cathedral at Belm. There the priest—his name is Cathon—leaves them to meet with the Cardinal. As they wait, they meet a young father and his little girl. They also meet a priest named Weracy, who is abused and tormented by his fellow priests.

After they've roleplayed the previous encounters, Cathon will reemerge and bring them to meet

Teaser

the Cardinal, who will also believe their tales (he knows Cathon has prophetic visions, and he listens to the Priest's feelings on these matters). During this meeting, they might have their first exposure to the concepts of Ulcers and Holy Wars. The Cardinal finds them rooms in the city.

During the next day, the party has an opportunity to meet and roleplay with several different people. All this comes to an end when events begin to move very quickly. The young father is issued in to see the Cardinal—the father is in tears. The party discovers the reasons the other priests torment Weracy: he has a young girlfriend in the city and might give up his hope of a career to marry her. Then the father returns and the party discovers that his daughter went missing this morning when he delivered goods to a monastery to the saint Sepinus. While the party is trying to process that, someone steals the Holy relic that was kept in the altar—supposedly a splinter of the Throne of God. Finally, the party discovers that Weracy is missing.

The Cardinal is distraught. He likes Weracy and doesn't want the boy to throw his life away, but the monastery is off limits to anyone of Weracy's order. He asks the party to track the boy down and stop him from entering the monastery grounds. Hoping to find the little girl as well, the party leaves.

Act Two

Tracking Weracy isn't very difficult, and the party knows exactly where he's going. They arrive at Stanor Monastery after a few hours, just in time to see Weracy sneaking into the chapel. Thinking they can still get him out with no one the wiser, they approach, only to discover that the monks are actually Hobgoblins. They kill the Hobgoblins and investigate the surface level of the Monastery, finding snippets of the teachings of Sepinus and the three Paths of Life among the ruins of the monastic life. It isn't a large leap to realize that the monastery is actually an Ulcer.

A trap door in the chapel leads down to the catacombs. Here they find the tombs mostly harvested, but further investigation leads them to the easternmost room, where Hobgoblins labor to widen the opening into the Ulcer. After a brief fight the party

manages to get into the Ulcer proper. Here, above a bottomless pit, they find a Wind Wraith torturing Weracy. The party defeats the creature and climbs down, entering the Ulcer level of the adventure.

But when they talk to Weracy they realize that he has had a plan all along. He stole the relic to close the Ulcer. Now all that the party has to do is deliver him to it.

Below the party finds preparation and storage rooms for the undead. Fighting their way through, they eventually make it to the Ulcer's second to last line of defense, a manifestation of the Life Paths of Sepinus. Little does the party know, however, that Búmak the Demon has managed to twist the paths. The paths are not labeled for the qualities the characters should use to get by, but rather the qualities *they shouldn't* use to get by. Unwittingly, the party members each enter the path of their weakness, not their strength.

After braving the paths, the party is met with one final temptation, and they must weather their greatest desires to fight through to the final room. Here they will face Búmak, and his final deceit.

ACT THREE

When the party casts the relic into the maw of the Ulcer, it makes the Ulcer stronger, not weaker. Worse yet, Búmak has used his illusions to switch places with the little girl. It is his intention to make the *party* kill her, completing the ritual and bringing the Ulcer to full glory. The party fights a hard battle, but in the end, Búmak falls.

The party gathers up the girl and Weracy and they limp back to Belm. There, the Cardinal congratulates them and Weracy decides to marry his sweetheart, sacrificing a career in the Church. The party has succeeded.

For now.

Troubleshooting

The most important element in any adventure is free will. You cannot railroad a party into doing what you want and still produce an ideal adventure. Therefore

Teaser

it's very important that you never try to force the party along the adventure path described above.

So what do you do if they strike off on their own?

It takes a gentle hand to keep a party and a storyline on the same path. The primary thing to remember is not to try to force them back along the way, that is the intention of the Dramatic Purpose descriptions, outlined below.

If a party decides to go the wrong way, the easiest way to kick them back on path is to have someone talk to them. Perhaps they've chosen so wrongly that the Cardinal meets them and begs them to do the right thing. Perhaps they've wandered off the path and they meet a local who can tell them how to get where they are going. Perhaps they've become confused after meeting Weracy and Weracy can simply remind them what they need to know. Just because a character is an NPC doesn't mean he's stupid.

If that doesn't work, try to entice them back. Smoke on the horizon always gets a party's attention. A destroyed caravan with the treasure carted off is an eye-opener as well.

If the party insists on doing their own thing, let them. It can take a while to get them back on track but don't let that stop you. Bring them back gently, in stages.

The worst thing you can do is say, "Because the adventure says so." If the party catches Weracy too early, so be it. If they leave without all the clues, let

them. Never put them in a situation where the plot of the story is more frustrating than interesting. Above all, let them have fun. If they figure out a way to kill the Demon early, don't force the climax as written. Think of this entire adventure as a guideline, not as a script.

Dramatic Purpose

Every major event in this adventure has a Dramatic Purpose. These are explained so that the GM can better determine what to do if the party goes off-book. If an encounter's Dramatic Purpose is critical (like the Act Two twist) then the GM will know that it *has* to happen somehow. If it's less important, he'll know he can skip it.

One thing to remember about Dramatic Purposes is that not only are the big ones important. If you run an adventure with no easy combats, the players will feel exhausted, maybe even desperate, and they might stop enjoying the game.

If a group diverges wildly from the written adventure, let them. Take the Dramatic Purposes of the encounters they skip and invent new encounters that serve the same ends. If the party has somehow skipped all the easy fights, or Heaven forbid messed them up so badly they weren't easy anymore, invent some *new* easy fights and drop them in the party's path.

The Dirty Little Secret of Good Story Telling

Not many people will admit to it, but most GMs have done it. We lie. We fudge a dice roll, we influence a result. There's nothing wrong with that, as long as it makes the adventure more—and not less—enjoyable. For instance, in one of the play tests of this adventure, the characters saw Weracy sneaking into the chapel. Instead of following, one of the characters forgot the primary rule of weapons use (never point a weapon at something you don't intend to destroy). He shot an arrow at Weracy, got a critical and killed the man dead. Now, the GM didn't tell him he couldn't do that and he didn't let Weracy die, because the man had vital information the party still needed, and he felt that it would be more enjoyable if Weracy lived than if he died. Instead, he fudged the combat results slightly so that the group's healer was able to save the man. Now this added the new problem that Weracy wouldn't be in the room he was supposed to be in the Act Two twist. Still, the GM decided that the free will of the players was more important than the storyline and he let them find out what was going on before they even entered the Ulcer. He trusted the characters to do what was right and push on, and in the end, none of the players knew that they had done things out of order (although they did learn not to shoot weapons at people they didn't mean to kill).

Teaser

Maybe the party abandons the adventure entirely and refuses to go back. If so, who are we to say they did wrong? Take the remaining dramatic events and create new ones for the party, following their path. It might not be this adventure, but it will be *an* adventure, and it will be a lot more fun than arguing about whether the party is ruining the GM's plans.

As long as all the purposes are served, you will have a workable story, probably even a good one. It doesn't matter if it isn't the story you set out to tell. Gaming is a collaborative effort, after all.

Running the Campaign

This adventure is part one in a ten-part ongoing campaign. This brings up some issues one wouldn't have in a stand-alone adventure.

DOWN TIME

It's very possible that someone will want to run these adventurers before the entire series has been released. It's likely that a game group may therefore finish an adventure before the next one is available.

We've taken this into consideration. You can't run a ten-part adventure and not expect to take some side trips. Don't worry if you need to—we've built downtime into the story between each adventure. Near the end, it might be nice to run the adventures concurrently, but there's no point in this series where you *must* play one adventure directly after the one before.

Playing in Another Game World

If you wish to run this adventure in another world, whether your own or one produced by another company, that's okay as well. It might take a touch more work, however.

Changing the name of Belm to be a major city in your world should be easy. As for the Church, try to

find a mostly good or neutral church. A little corruption wouldn't hurt the flavor of the adventure. The idea of a Holy relic can't be a foreign one, and evil must be able to hide corruption from the magic of good.

The same thing is true for the Order of Sepinus. Either find a second church to fit this bill (it would explain why they are touchy about Weracy entering the grounds) or find or build an order within the main church that could have monks dedicated to silence and inner contemplation.

Those are the hard parts, because they are what the party must interact with most often.

What would seem, at the first, to be the most difficult issue is the easiest. Ulcers are an every day occurrence in the Mortal Realm, but in another world, they might be alien. If that's the case, all you need to do is come up with a way for the church to know this might be coming. Cathon has prophetic visions . . . maybe he foresaw it. Weracy could have put much thought into how to close one of these, and that's why he's ready to act suddenly when he finds the rotting fruit in Act One. All that leaves is the root cause of the Ulcer.

But in the over-arching swoop of the story, the characters will come to realize that Búmak is not the one behind all this. With a Duke of Hell (or whatever plane you would like) working behind the scenes, it isn't hard to imagine the ultimate nemesis hatching a plan that would begin with this little piece of Hell on earth. Perhaps he's the only one to figure out a way to make an Ulcer. Perhaps he's even done it before, and no one has ever noticed. There is much evil in most game worlds. It might take some time to recognize an Ulcer for what it is.

To Tease or not to Tease

If you've decided to run this adventure in the Mortal Realm, you must decide whether to run the Teaser. The Teaser is optional. Each adventure comes with one, and through them, you will play out a mini-story that maps out the characters' adventures in Heaven.

So you must decide, is the Teaser right for your group?

Teaser

By running the Teaser, you have placed your characters in a different frame of reference than anyone else in the world. They will have a unique perspective on events, on customs and on the nature of the Church. They won't know anything others don't (except for irrelevant details, like the street names in the Holy City). The Teaser will not make them any more powerful.

But for those who would like this Teaser, there is a powerful element of wish fulfillment. These people are veterans of the greatest war ever fought. They've known Angels personally. They've witnessed one of the greatest eras of history.

It all boils down to that. If you think your game group would find those wish-fulfillment aspects appealing, then run the Teaser. If you think it's not their thing, then it will probably come off as a silly gimmick. Let your group be your compass.

There is one last note about the Teasers. While it's true that characters should always have the option of going off-book, there are elements of later Teasers where things will happen to the characters the players might not like. Most notably, characters will be charmed into working for the evil side. While certain players will enjoy that roleplaying experience, others will feel like they've been robbed of their free will. If playing this kind of capture, redemption, and revenge story isn't something your players will like, don't run any Teaser after the one in this adventure.

Assorted Names

In any adventure, the party will run across people who aren't listed in the adventure. The GM might have to come up with several names in a single locale. Because of this we've provided a list of some general Ludremonian names. Feel free to use them on characters the party meets along the way.

Male names: Ackim, Alucy, Argel, Chrayn, Cress, Daley, Dan, Dird, Garley, Granther, Ian, Jatón, Jurin, Kenneth, Lair, Lary, Lerlan, Naye, Penever, Phinald, Pielyn, Ran, Ren, Reson, Scoralie, Scossamin, Viles, Wentholas.

Female Names: Calotte, Coline, Dierre, Donna, Gela, Gienie, Gwen, Gwenet, Heneresa, Jalie, Jele-sa, Jinsey, Jonna, Jurovina, Karry, Katie, Leanne,

Louise, Nissa, Remy, Stacey, Venessea, Vicola, Vin-
gonia, Wermma.

The family names of Ludremonians probably sound like the first names above in their own language, but Ludremonian is the default language of the setting (meaning it's the one translated most directly into English). So it's fine to give them names that have English or slightly-distorted English meanings such as Smith, Allred, and Atwell.

Adventure Difficulty

As we said before, the power level of every game table is just a little different. So although this adventure has been play tested, it's impossible to test the difficulty of the adventure against the exact power level of every table.

It's difficult to change the challenge level of an encounter in the middle. However, a *great deal* can be done between battles. A GM should adjust encounters if he feels they've been too easy or too hard. As long as the game remains fair, a little adjustment on the fly can be a good thing.

One final note. It's generally best to let the final battle run once it's started. This is usually the most dangerous part of the adventure and players *need* to feel like they can die. So although some fast and loose play can be a good thing during most of play, if they are in trouble and it's your fault, when the climax comes, the GM should probably let the chips fall where they may.

Campaign Cartographer

All maps in this adventure were designed using Profantasy's Campaign Cartographer. You will find versions of the maps built with both Campaign Cartographer 2 and 3 included with the PDF version of this product and some on our web site (www.FinalRedoubt.com) as well. This will allow you to print these maps at any scale, including 1"=5' for miniature use. If you don't own the program, Profantasy provides printing and viewing software on their website that you can use to print these maps. Go to www.Profantasy.com.

Teaser

Teaser

The Teaser begins ten-thousand years before the rest of the adventure. The War in Heaven has raged for a thousand years and the forces of Heaven believe they're winning. Only the Five Prophets and God Himself know that a second Fall looms on the horizon, and when it comes, Heaven will fall with it.

The player characters have known one another for some time. They're all veterans of the War, although they're young veterans. When the adventure opens, they're standing on the walls of the Holy City, preparing for the final battle.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of the Teaser is to draw the players in, hopefully before a single die is thrown. In a television show, the Teaser is the part of the episode that comes before the credits, lasting anywhere from thirty seconds (for shows like the long defunct *Enterprise*) to more than ten minutes (for shows like the recently defunct *Alias*). The Teaser is (relatively) short, to the point, and usually set up to end in a cliff hanger to keep the viewer from changing channels.

Our Teaser serves much the same purpose. In it, the characters start in a unique environment . . . the final days of the War in Heaven. This will be a brief and violent opening that will hopefully set a tone for the rest of the campaign . . . if it's used. The Teaser of this adventure (and the upcoming Teasers in the same series) create a story line, not quite chronological, of the characters and their battles in the last days. The Teaser is optional.

THE INITIAL BATTLE

The adventure opens moments before the final battle. Read or paraphrase the following:

And God wept.

It was the last days of the War in Heaven.

One thousand years had passed since a third of the Host fell, and in that time, your families stood on the parapets of Heaven, fighting beside Angel and Mortal alike. It was a long and painful war, and on this day, it ended.

But the Fallen Angels didn't fight alone. Slowly the mortals of Heaven—Humans, Elves, Gnomes, Halflings . . . even the Dwarves—defected to the other side. Worse yet, somehow the Fallen Host commanded not only the living, but the dead . . . creatures who walked about in direct defiance of God's laws.

But the battle went poorly for the Fallen Host and on this day they made a last, desperate attempt to take the Holy City of Heaven, the location of the Holy See, the seat of God's Throne. After this battle, Heaven would stand or fall.

You stand on the walls of the Holy City as the enemies of God array on the field below. Around you, Mortals and Angels flex limbs and wings, adjust armor and limber weapons. The light of God shines from the Holy See behind you, illuminating the walls, the fields, all of Heaven. The sky arches high above, fluffy white clouds reflecting God's radiance back down on the world below.

Then a rumble builds in the army amassed below. Creatures tense in blackened armor, brandishing vicious weapons. A pulsing sound rises above the rumble, a thousand weapons beating against a thousand shields. Your mouth goes dry. The pounding fills your ears until you're afraid they'll burst. The sound mounts and mounts and mounts.

And then they charge.

Since this opening should probably be a surprise, the players might have several questions at this point. Answer them briefly, but force the events to the fore. It's important here to make the players feel that things are rushing forward whether they're ready or not.

The hordes of the Fallen Host charge the wall. Angels fly into the air, the Mortal and Undead creatures of the enemy army crash into the walls. Play up the chaos, the confusion, the terror of the battle.

Teaser

The enemy skeletons are ready for a siege. Altered so they can climb like spiders, they scurry up the walls. The defenders manage to smash them down by the score, but the first wave forces its way onto the battlements.

Several skeletons crest the wall equal in number to the party. The party must destroy them to hold the wall.

Dramatic Purpose

This fight serves dual purposes. First, it's an easy, fun fight. It's usually good to start with an easy battle (especially at the beginning of the campaign). There's a strong wish-fulfillment element to role-playing and you satisfy that by letting the players feel competent, powerful. Once a player feels like their character is unbeatable they begin to strongly identify with them, and only then does threatening the character make the player feel the proper level of excitement.

The second purpose is more mechanical. This being the first adventure in a campaign, it's likely there are players who've either never role-played before or who've never played in a *d20 System* game. Starting with a nice, easy battle allows everyone to get a handle on things like initiative, attack resolution, and house rules on actions, and table chatter.

One final note: whereas above we advised to push things forward, that is only true from a storytelling aspect. Once combat starts, be aware of any new players and their frustrations. It's acceptable for a player to feel like they're in over their heads story-wise. It's *not* acceptable for them to feel the same way about role-playing or the rules of the system. If a player gets confused or frustrated, stop everything and make sure to address that player's concern. Sometimes, a more experienced player can help out, explaining everything slowly while the GM pounds on the adrenaline in the other aspects of the battle.

Human Warrior Skeletons: CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12; hp 6; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20,

scimitar) or 2 +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA –; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

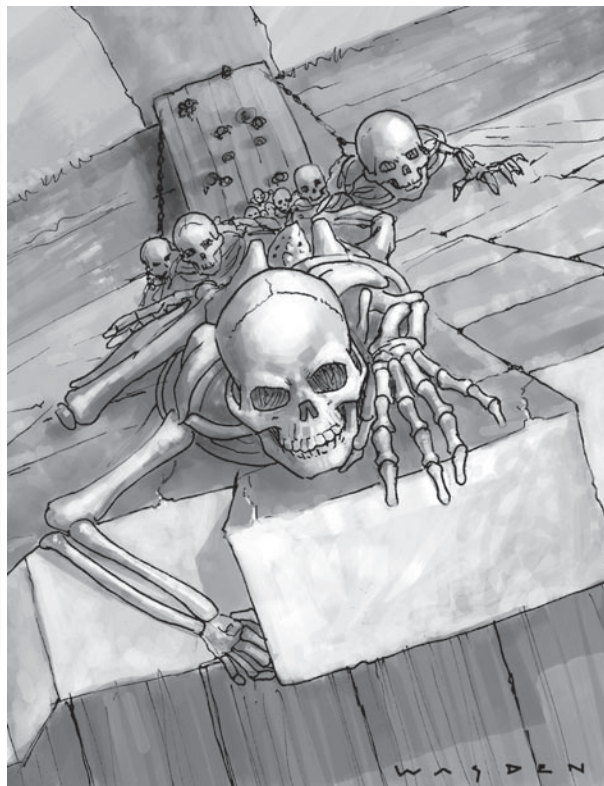
Skills and Feats: No skills; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Rusty weapons.

THE SECOND FALLING

As soon as the players win the battle, allow some time for more questions. Make sure they realize little details that will be different between Heaven and the Mortal Realm . . . for instance, the only light source is the light of God himself, in his diamond palace of the Holy See (behind them). Details like this allow the players to react properly later when everything changes.

As soon as the momentum of the game seems to drop, read or paraphrase the following:



Teaser

For a moment, the battle around you lulls and you have a moment to breathe. You watch the hordes of the Fallen crash against the walls, sudden and brutal, animal in a way that makes you shiver. You're watching the Unholy, the blasphemous, something dark and feral.

Then a cry goes up in the air above you, the sound of hundreds of Angels crying out in pain and rage. You look around and see that half the remaining Host has turned against the other half. Angel fights Angel, and tumults of feathers, sweat and blood hang above you in the sky.

Only the Mortals remain ready to defend the walls. With the Host fallen upon itself, there is only you and those like you to defend against the horde of Mortal and Angel alike. The defenses are falling.

And there's nothing you can do about it.

As the party braces for attack, the first Humans reach the top of the wall. The number of attackers should equal the party's numbers.

Heretic Soldiers: human fighter 2; CR 2; Medium humanoid; HD 2d10; hp 19; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Base Atk/Grp +4/+4; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20, longsword); SA –; SQ –; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills and Feats: Climb -2, Jump -2; Power Attack, Weapon Focus (Long Sword), Cleave.

Possessions: Half Plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of this encounter is the same as the first. The battle is slightly tougher to force the party to stretch their abilities a bit.

THE SUMMONING

After the party has dispatched the Fallen Soldiers, give them a moment to regroup and heal if necessary. Once they're ready, read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, a voice blasts through all your minds, gentle but compelling. It brooks no denial.

"The Holy City has fallen. Defend the prophets, protect the Holy See."

The battle rages and surges around you. Nearby, stairs lead down from the wall, but around you, all the remaining troops are locked in deadly combat. You don't think anyone can get free.

Anyone but you.

The party should probably make a dash for the Holy See now. It's easy to spot: a great glowing palace made of one unbroken piece of diamond. Around them, chaos, but the streets are starting to clear as Fallen Angels fly overhead.

If the party wishes to commandeer horses, they can find several in a corral nearby. They are unguarded. This is Heaven after all.

If the party makes a dash through the city, have them make a reflex save (DC 10). If they ride, have them make riding check (DC 20). As they travel, a group of Fallen Angels drop large boulders onto the streets near them.

A reflex save or riding check (if mounted) can help them dodge the falling boulders. Their roll determines the damage of the attack as debris flies through the streets. Less than five = 1d10 damage. A 5 or better = 1d8 damage. A 10 or better = 1d6 damage. A 15 or better = 1d4 damage. A 20 or better = no damage.

Describe the run through the city. As much as possible try to build a sense of excitement with words and body language. When the characters near the Holy See, read or paraphrase the following:

As you round the corner, the Holy See comes into sight: a huge fortress comprised of a single piece of cut blue diamond. It shines with the constant light of God towering, magnificent.

The party sees little in the way of people as they enter the Holy See, they are missing, probably fighting about the See, trying to keep the Fallen Angels from reaching the door. The light of God is the most comforting here, but it can't alleviate their fear.

Something is strange, though. A second light builds elsewhere in the Holy See. If the players don't clue in that this is where they should look for the prophets, keep

Teaser

coming back to it. The characters will know this is an unusual event, and they don't need to make any rolls to think it strange, but the players might take a while to come around on their own (and that's most satisfying).

The characters can work their way through the maze of diamond halls. It isn't hard to make it to the source of the new light.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a basic chase scene, and a brief one at that. The purpose is to build excitement. The purpose of the falling boulders is to give the players something tangible to fear as they run.

MEET THE PROPHETS

When the characters arrive at the light, read or paraphrase the following:

You stumble into a room filled with light. In the center, a growing beacon of yellow radiance shines, reflecting and refracting off the diamond of the walls. Around this light five people stand, the Prophet of each of the Mortal races. They all chant in unison, each a part of some ritual too vast and complicated for you to understand.

What they are doing is far beyond your skill and understanding, but as you watch them, you can hear troops entering the Holy See. The Prophets are defenseless.

What do you do?

The party should leave and find a defensible place. There are a few corridors leading off this room (there need to be a few in case you need to run a similar opening for other characters later in the campaign.) One of the corridors is obviously the most direct route from the front door. The characters can hear something down that hall. They should probably move to defend it. If they do, they will have to make their . . .

FINAL STAND

Read or paraphrase the following:

A Fallen Angel comes through the halls, some nine to ten feet tall, grasping both walls at the same time. It hurtles forward like some four-legged thing, its skin darkened by blasphemy, its feathers covered in thick gore. It sees you and screeches like a predatory bird, drawing a massive sword and preparing to attack.

The Fallen Angel is a powerful foe, and the party should not be able to win this fight without a lot of luck.

Fallen Caraphim: CR 8; Large Outsider (Angel, Extraplanar, Evil); HD 7d8+7; hp 48; Init +6; Spd 50 ft, fly 100 ft. (good); AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base Atk/Grp +7/+13; Atk +15 melee (2d6+7/19-20, large longsword) or +13 melee (1d10+7, slam); Full Atk +15/+10 melee (2d6+7/19-20, large longsword) or +13 melee (1d10+7, slam); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ damage reduction 5/good, spell resistance 30, uncanny dodge; AL LE; SV Fort +6 (+10 against poison), Ref +7, Will +7; Str 25, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +12, Diplomacy +15, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +15, Listen +15, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +13, Spot +15, Use Rope +13 (+15 with bindings); Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: Large masterwork longsword.

The Caraphim has Fallen, and all powers that work against evil work against good instead. For instance, the Caraphim deals +2d6 damage against players with the Divine Spark (High Men, High Elves, and Dwarves) instead of characters who bear corruption.

The party will hopefully do the heroic thing and stand and fight. This encounter is *not* won by beating the Angel (although that would qualify for the victory conditions.) This encounter is won by holding the hall long enough for the Prophets to finish the ritual. That is, five rounds. The characters succeed or fail by not backing down, even when they realize that can't win.

If the party is completely killed, but they stood and fought, they win as well. Still, that's not likely in time allotted. If the party runs, the Angel will follow them, so while they failed on a personal level, Heaven still survives.

Teaser

If the party runs or holds out or beats the Angel, read or paraphrase the following:

The Prophets have done it. They've foreseen the end of Heaven and they've realized that only by Sundering it can they save God's Divine plan. The spell is over. Heaven, as it was, is no more.

Dramatic Purpose

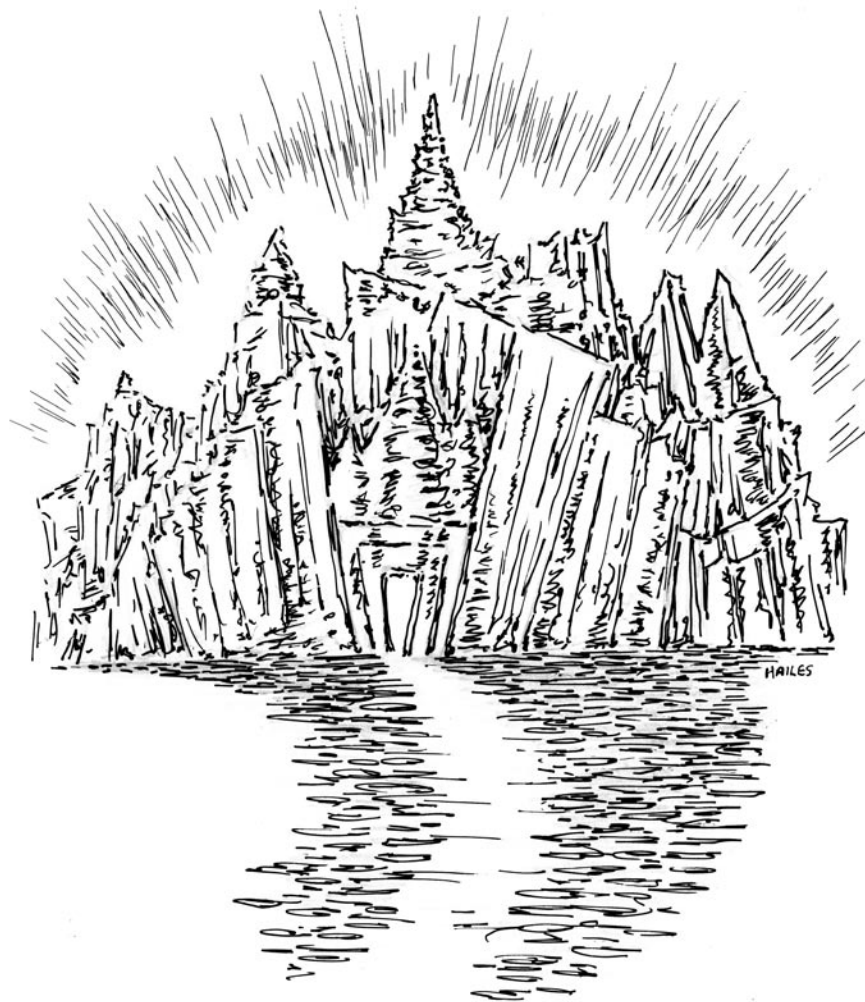
The purpose of this scene is to let the characters get in over their heads but mainly to prove they're heroic. This isn't about a battle being winnable or unwinnable, but about courage in the face of terror and proving their mettle.

The light behind you continues to build until it drowns out even the light of God. The Sea rumbles and seems to blur into a dozen, a hundred separate images. The Fallen Angel in front of you screams in fury and impotence. You feel yourself drifting sideways . . . drifting . . . drifting . . .

The light becomes brighter and brighter until you can see nothing else, until you can *feel* the rays sleeting through your bodies, your minds, your soul.

Then you can no longer tell where the light begins and you end.

And after that, there is only darkness.



Act One

Act One

Ten Thousand years have come and gone. The Prophets succeeded. They saved Heaven by splitting it into three realms: Heaven, Hell, and the Mortal Realm. Now the endless march of time has wrought a world laboring under the myopic guidance of monolithic racial churches and feudal brutality. Mortals have fallen far since the days they rubbed elbow-to-knee with the greatest Angels in Heaven.

How Act One begins depends on whether you've run the Teaser, but the events are generally the same. The real difference lies in the opening and in the role-playing of certain scenes.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of the first Act is to introduce the major characters, plot, and setting elements. Act One can be difficult to handle because it often gets a bit ho hum if the GM isn't careful. The Act should end with the characters entering a "new world," meaning they're going out to take care of some problem or to fulfill some new role.

This is an adventure, though, not a movie. A GM should make sure they don't use this idea of movie structure to railroad characters.



IF THE PARTY PLAYED THE TEASER

Take a break after the Teaser. Let people stretch and get drinks. This is a good time to go to the bathroom or restock snacks. If the Teaser went well, the players should be able to handle a break here without any loss of momentum.

When everyone's ready to continue, read or paraphrase the following:

You awaken slowly, sprawled in a depression in the high grass. Your bodies tingle; your heads swim.

The grass around you lies splayed outward, as if a great wind blew from the center. You feel itchy and filthy, unwashed and aching. You're not sure you've ever felt this way before. Your head pounds. Your teeth throb. You feel as if a thousand dirty things crawl under your skin.

You notice this first. Second, you notice the light.

The light of God no longer shines on you from across the land. It's now in the sky, as if the entire Holy See had been torn from the ground and thrown aloft. On top of that, it's a harsh, painful light, baking hot and difficult to look at. The light of God is supposed to be soft, gentle, moderate at any distance and comforting to the eyes.

Everything is wrong, and you don't understand why.

All wounds from the Teaser are healed. Any dead characters still live.

If the players get into character, they'll likely treat this as if it were the end of the world. In a way, it is. Let them get this initial role-playing out of their system. Play up how they're too weak to move, how a film coats the inside of their mouths and their



Act One

clothes smell. After things have played out, read or paraphrase the following:

Then the unthinkable happens. God abandons you.

You've been watching the light of God move across the sky for a while now. Then, in a flaming brilliance of red and gold, it falls below the horizon.

Only those who have traveled in the lands of the Fallen Host have ever seen land without the illumination of God's glory. But now, you're cast into darkness.

A thousand pinpricks of light appear in the sky like the embers of a dying fire. They are your only light.

Again, let the players roleplay this. The only lands in Heaven where the light of God didn't reach were the deep Elven woods, underground, and in the dark lands of the Fallen Host. The idea there is no light and nothing is blocking it (as with the woods and the Dwarven kingdoms), is foreign to them. To them, this only happens when God has *refused* to shine his light on mortals.

When things wind down, read or paraphrase the following:

A couple of hours later, something else rises into the sky. It's a great round face, pale and unnatural. Light and darkness play across its surface and it looks, if anything, like a skull.

It's the moon, of course. At dawn, read or paraphrase the following:

After a long, bitter night, the horizon brightens. Slowly, the great orb of light rises again, from the opposite horizon this time. The glaring light is a welcome sight.

By now, the party has recovered enough to move. When they start to gather themselves and prepare to explore, move on to the Ambush.

Dramatic Purpose

This encounter is meant to establish how strange the new world is for the party. It's mainly an opportunity for them to practice role-playing their new situation before NPCs show up and it really "counts."

IF THE PARTY DID NOT PLAY THE TEASER

This opening is to be played if the party comes from this time and place. It's designed assuming the characters already know one another. If you wish to run some prelude adventures, do so, but keep the party poor, if possible, so they find the offer of free room and board enticing.

Read or paraphrase the following:

You've been traveling through the country of Ludremon for many weeks now without work or financial gain. The grind of day-to-day living has begun to wear on your purses and you find yourself seeking humbler accommodations with each passing town. In a final attempt to find gainful employment, you're pushing for the capital of Belm. While you've heard the competition there is fierce, it's your last real hope.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is merely to set up a general need among the party.



Act One

THE AMBUSH

Once you've established the party's situation and they're on the move, read or paraphrase the following:

Slowly, a sound grows in the distance. It's a man's voice singing, vibrant and full of life. The tune is clear.

As you continue, the voice grows stronger and you make out the shape of a man in the distance. He sways back and forth on a mule, his bags laden with supplies.

Suddenly, a flurry of movement surrounds him. Five creatures burst out of ambush positions in the tall grass and charge the fellow. They are man sized, with twisted visages and horns. They wear mail and carry swords and it's apparent this man is in way over his head.

If the characters played the Teaser, they don't understand the words of the song. They recognize the tune, however. To them it's a hymn about the love of God. It's changed a bit over the years.

To the priest, it's a bawdy song.

The foes are Hobgoblins, and if the party played the Teaser, they have never seen anything even remotely like these creatures. The fight should be straightforward, but if the Hobgoblins are alien to the characters, play up the horror.

5 Hobgoblins: hobgoblin; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 3, 4, 6, 7, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); SA –; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Scimitar, studded leather, light shield. 9 GP, 3 PP between them.

If the party played the Teaser, the priest . . . his name is Cathon . . . will introduce himself to the party after some fumbling with language. Cathon speaks the Divine Tongue, and although his accent may seem ri-

diculous at first, he will adjust to the characters' way of speaking quickly. He's skilled with accents.

He's prone to prophetic visions and he came here following one of these prophecies (which essentially just told him to come out here). This makes him open to any wild stories the characters tell about living in Heaven 10,000 years ago.

It's a dangerous world now, and Cathon will explain this to the party. More than anything, he'll stress that most people will consider their story heresy, and that they burn people for heresy. He'll stress this until he's sure the party understands.

Cathon has a theory, if the party asks. He's studied the Five Prophets (they're the Savior and the Four Prophets to him) and how they split the world. He once put forth the supposition that anyone too close to the spell itself might not have landed in the Mortal Realm with other people. They might have taken years, if not centuries (or millennia) to land, carried forward on a wave of creative force. He'll suggest this as an explanation for what happened to the party.

If the following subjects don't come up naturally as the party acclimates, he will think to mention them:

- The Sun.
- The Moon.
- Day and Night.
- Demons. Devils.
- Cambions.
- The Mortal Realm, Heaven, and Hell.
- The Modern Church.
- The Savior.
- The languages and nations of the modern world.
- The Noferatus.

He'll suggest the party return with him to Belm, the capital of Ludremon. He says he'll try to help them find a place in society.

If the party didn't play the Teaser, he will ask them to come back to Belm as his guests. A few days' room and board is the least he can do for them.



Act One

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of the fight is simple, it allows the party to reestablish their confidence if they just had a beating at the hand of a Fallen Angel. If not, it serves the same purposes as the first fight of the Teaser.

The roleplaying encounter with the priest serves two purposes. If the party played the Teaser, they desperately need information and a place to belong. If not, they need three hots and a cot. This encounter fulfills all those needs.

contain the crypts of cardinals and stained glass fills the place with pools of dappled light. Cathon leaves them here to go talk to the Cardinal.

Dramatic Purpose

This encounter is designed mainly to give new players a feel for the world.

THE CITY OF BELM

It takes three hours to get to Belm. When the party arrives, read or paraphrase the following:

Belm is a city of maybe 38,000 souls, nearly stacked on one another in leaning wooden houses packed around largely unpaved streets. Most of the roads are narrow enough that people on opposite sides could lean out and shake hands. The exception is the Church Road, a wider paved street large enough for two wagons to pass side by side.

As you walk up the Church Road, the smell of thousands of unwashed bodies assails you. Animals and children run wild on the street, and after watching at least one chamber pot thrown out a window, you can only hope it's mud that covers the children to the knees.

Cathon leads you up this road and through the throngs of people. Finally, you arrive at a large stone building with stained glass in the windows and spires that reach hundreds of feet into the air. At the top is the symbol of a twisted circle surrounding a stylized diamond.

The symbol is the holy symbol of the Church. Contemporaries will know this, while those from the Teaser might need to ask questions. The circle represents the circle of magic the Savior and the Prophets formed while Sundering Heaven. The diamond is the symbol of the Human Savior, Angenus.

Cathon leads the party inside the Cathedral, which is mostly a large, open area. Side passages

PARTY MEETS MAN AND DAUGHTER

While the party waits, people file in and out of the Cathedral. After a short while, read or paraphrase the following:



Act One

A man enters the Cathedral, carrying a young girl, perhaps four years old. The man wears what are probably his finest clothes and shoes that look almost new. His hair is neat and combed, an oddity among the people you've seen.

The little girl wears a pretty brown dress. She leaps from his arms as soon as they're inside and rushes toward the altar. The man calls after her, seemingly shocked by her lack of respect, but from his manner, you'd guess that this is an everyday occurrence.

The little girl veers off before reaching the altar and rushes for a smaller worship area on the right. There she falls to her knees and assumes the aspect of serious prayer. When the father gets to her, he just sighs and kneels by her side, lighting a candle.

After they finish praying, the little girl will begin to wander the Cathedral. She'll instantly fixate on the characters. She'll play with the hair of women and swing from the hands of men. Her name is Karry. The father's name is Dalen. If the party needs a translator, they can find one.

Dramatic Purpose

It is an old truism of fiction that if the reader doesn't love a character, they won't feel another character's love for them either. The purpose of this scene is to give the party time with the little girl who will later be in jeopardy. If she is cute and lovable and the party enjoys playing with her, then they'll feel Dalen's loss more poignantly later.



YOUNG PRIEST IS HARASSED BY COMPANIONS

After Karry and Dalen leave, read or paraphrase the following:

After the man and his daughter leave, you hear a sudden ruckus outside. Through the door you can see a young man . . . a priest by his garb . . . trying to make it up the stairs to the Cathedral. Three other priests follow him, pushing him back and forth and making him stumble on the steps. The look on the young priest's face is one of long-suffering.

The three priests are simple bullies. Since they're priests, they can all speak the Divine Tongue. Getting them to back down is a simple matter and the party should be able to deal with this without any bloodshed. If necessary, the stats of the priests are as follows:

Young Priests: human expert 1; CR 1/3; Medium humanoid; HD 1d6; hp 3; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base Atk/Grp +0/+0; Atk +0 melee (1d3, fists); Full Atk +0 melee (1d3, fists); SA –; SQ –; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis10, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Appraise +4, Concentration +4, Diplomacy +4, Knowledge (Religion) +4, Listen+6, Profession (Priest) +4, Spot +6; Alertness, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Clothes. 35 GP between them.

The priest who was picked on is named Weracy. If the party asks, he'll explain the other priests think he won't make good clerical material and that they tease him constantly. He won't elaborate on why.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the introduction of the subplot involving Weracy and his love interest. It will become important later.

Act One

MEET THE CARDINAL

After the characters have had some time to drill Weracy, read or paraphrase the following:

After a while, Cathon walks back into the Cathedral proper. He gestures for you to follow and leads you outside through a small door and into an enclosed area. Statues of learned men in robes stand watch in the corners and benches line the walls. You wind through a small garden rich in fragrances. Although the cacophony of the city still breaks over the walls, here it seems almost calming.

Cathon leads you through another door and into a grand house. Red carpets cover the floors and stained panels decorate the walls. He leads you up a sweeping stairway and down another hall lined with smaller statues, these on pedestals. At the end, Cathon eases open a door.

On the other side a man stands wearing long robes and a jeweled skullcap . . . more a lattice than a hat. He seems at home among the paintings and the tapestries, among statues and frescoes. He takes one hand from a writing table and holds it out as if he expects you to kiss it. All the while, he seems to drain all the tension out of the room, out of you. Out of the entire house.

"The Cardinal Gleann," Cathon says.

The cardinal is an open-minded man and Cathon has already briefed him on the party's situation, whether it is needing a place to stay or the loss of 10,000 years. In fact, he'll take anything they say in stride. If the players ran through the Teaser, he'll even accept denouncement of the Church. He knows they can't possibly understand the state of the current world, and is forgiving.

If the party ran the Teaser and *does* denounce the Church, he'll calmly show them how both their beliefs and Church doctrine can be right. The nature of the Savior was revealed after their time, after all, and many of the modern teachings are scripture written by prophets who dealt with an existence different from theirs, an existence that contains much more insidious evil than they've ever had to confront.

He speaks freely about holy wars, if the subject comes up. He thinks they're natural. He also speaks of Ulcers, if the party is unaware of them.

If the party asks after Weracy, the Cardinal will beg off speaking on the matter. He'll talk in generalities, saying that Weracy doesn't fit in. He'll tell the party that it's Weracy's place to explain why, not his.

When the conversation runs down, he'll invite them into his own home as guests. After they're situated, he all but disappears on Church business.

Dramatic Purpose

This scene serves two purposes. First, it allows the players to learn more about the world . . . the previous information dump might have been too much for it all to stick. Also, it allows the players to build a feeling of friendship with the Cardinal. They've saved his priest and he's taking care of them in his own house and that should make it more likely for them to offer to help later without any offer of reward. It also keeps them from wandering away from the site of the adventure seed.

INTERLUDE

Nothing happens until the next day. If the party is the sort that has a problem with down time (or they just don't need any right now), then go straight to the Disappearance.

Otherwise, let the party take care of business. If they want to explore the city, let them. If they want to meet people in the Cathedral, let them do that as well.

It might stretch credulity for everything the players witness to feed directly into the adventure. Therefore, we've provided a few roleplaying ideas to flush out the interim.

Ideas:

A woman who lost her husband to an Ulcer shows up in the Cathedral. This is the fifth anniversary of the man's death. She comes to light a candle. Her name is Nianne. The man's name was Meryl.

A soldier who comes to pray before going off to guard a caravan. His name is Dirthon.

A young priest keeps praying at the altar. He seeks blessing from the relic there (a Splinter of the Throne of God). His name is Sorindean.

Act One

A young urchin tries to steal from the poor box. His name is Midd.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of this scene is solely to allow the players to explore the world a bit. If they don't feel the need, cut it.

THE DISAPPEARANCE

The next day, while one or more characters loiter around the Cathedral, read or paraphrase the following:

You contemplate one of the statues in the cloister the next day when Weracy comes bustling through, escorting Dalen, the young father from the day before. Dalen's eyes glisten with tears and his face is puffy from crying. Weracy leads him straight through to the Cardinal's house.

Weracy comes back after a time. He won't tell why Dalen is so upset, he says it's the man's personal business, but he'll chat with any characters around.

Dramatic Purpose

This encounter launches everything. The players should become too curious to let things go. By withholding the information of why he's upset, the curiosity *should* build. In general, withholding information is a powerful tool.

RYANIE

A short while later, read or paraphrase the following:

As Weracy chats amiably about the history of the saints depicted in the cloister, you see the face of a young woman, hardly more than a girl, peeking through the doorway into the cloister. She's pretty, slight, and wears a look of apprehension. Weracy follows your gaze and the blood drains from his face. He rushes to her, dragging her away to a corner of the Cathedral.

She starts to cry. If the party asks him later, he explains that they're in love, but although priests can marry, doing so destroys their ability to advance within the Church. He's dedicated his life to this calling, and the idea of throwing it away crushes him. Her name is Ryanie.

Dramatic Purpose

We've withheld information twice now, once with Weracy's beating and once with the disappearance of Karry. Now we give the first reveal, showing Weracy's Achilles' heel. This sets up the clue chain for later, but also establishes setting and most important, shows Weracy's character. He is not a man who allows convention and peer pressure to dictate his actions.

DALEN RETURNS

After a time, Dalen returns from his time with the Cardinal. If the party asks what the matter is he explains the following:

"I deliver supplies to the Monastery outside town. I always take Karry with me—it's a pleasant enough ride, and she's always anxious to go. Yesterday, I was handing off the supplies to the monks when Karry disappeared. One moment she was playing in the flowers nearby, the next she was . . . gone. I don't know what to do."

He suspects that she wandered into the Monastery, but no one is allowed inside except members of the Order. They're of the Order of Sepinus and after problems with a particularly interfering cardinal a few generations back, the Faerarch issued a writ banning everyone but residents at the Monastery from entrance. They've promised to investigate, but that's all.

If the party asks about the monks themselves, he'll explain they seemed earnest and honest men. They don't seem to be hiding anything.

The party might rush off at this point. If they try, accelerate the next events. If not, allow a few hours between this event and the next.

Act One

Dramatic Purpose

Here is the second reveal, and the seeds we planted in previous scenes should bear fruit now. With this, the party should be straining at the leash. If they're a law-abiding group, they might seek out permission to go after the girl. If not, events can rush on without them.

THEFT OF THE RELIC

When the game either stalls or begins to race away, read or paraphrase the following:

Suddenly, a priest bursts through the door. "It's gone!" he shouts. "Someone stole it!"

It's the priest who always prays at the altar because of the Splinter. His name is Sorindean. He often sneaks peeks at the relic and he was startled to find it gone.

He'll rush off to tell the Cardinal. If the party investigates the altar, they find the shroud thrown back. There is a hollow in the altar seemingly built to hold a small item. It's empty.

The Cardinal comes shortly. He inspects the altar himself, and the party probably sees the hollow now if they haven't already.

Meanwhile, anyone who goes out front will see Dalen's wagon. One crate's lid has been pushed aside and the fruits inside are infested with maggots.

Here is what happened:

It might not be obvious to the players at this point, but Weracy went outside after leaving the party. Opening the crate in the back of the wagon, he found the rotting fruit. It didn't take long for him to realize the wagon had probably been inside an Ulcer today. The coincidence is just too great. He realized the little girl is probably inside the Ulcer as well and the monks of Sepinus have likely fallen. He's not a fighting type so he can't just kill everything in the Ulcer, so thinking he could use the Splinter to save the day, he stole it and left while the party was wrapped up talking to Dalen.

But the party doesn't have enough information to put this together yet. If they try to take an attendance

of the priests, more than half aren't at the Cathedral right now, but there isn't a single priest missing who's supposed to be there. At this point, all they can conclude is that someone either off duty or not affiliated with the Cathedral stole the relic. Just in case, the Cardinal begins to search the priests.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to delay the party a bit and build even more tension, even chaos. Things should feel like they are spiraling out of control here.

THE THIEF REVEALED

This scene has no set location. When the theft of the relic looks to turn into a witch-hunt, one of the players will find Ryanie. She might be lurking around outside the Cathedral or crying behind the cloister wall. When a character starts asking her questions, she'll explain that she's been stood up.

Weracy was supposed to meet her just a short while ago. He's punctual and the only time he's ever late is when he's detained here, so she came here looking for him. She doesn't understand what's going on in the Cathedral and she's afraid something has happened to him.

This should be the last clue the party needs. Between the theft, the cart, and the disappearance, they should be able to put together enough information to report the thief to the Cardinal.

Dramatic Purpose

With this scene, the party should complete the clue chain. They might not have figured out everything Weracy knows at this point, but they know that all roads lead to the Monastery.

DESTINY

When the last pieces are in place, read or paraphrase the following:

Act One

The Cardinal turns to you. He looks old and weak without the lattice of jewels on his head. Sweat springs across his brow. Light glistens pale and sickly off his bald pate. His eyes find a spot hundreds of yards away.

"I thought God was looking out for you," the Cardinal says. "I thought His Divinity put us in your path because *you* were in need. Now I think the opposite might be true."

He sighs and rubs his eyes with his hands. "I don't know what Weracy is thinking. Breaking the decree of the Faerarch is a burning offense. Stealing a relic of God is as well. He's throwing away everything. *Everything*."

The Cardinal shakes his head. "No. God put you here for a reason. Weracy *needs* you. Find him. Bring him back. I can cover for him on the missing Splinter. I seem to recall that I asked him to clean it today. Yes, my dottering old mind just forgot. If he can bring it back soon . . . if he doesn't violate the Monastery grounds . . . please. He *needs* you."

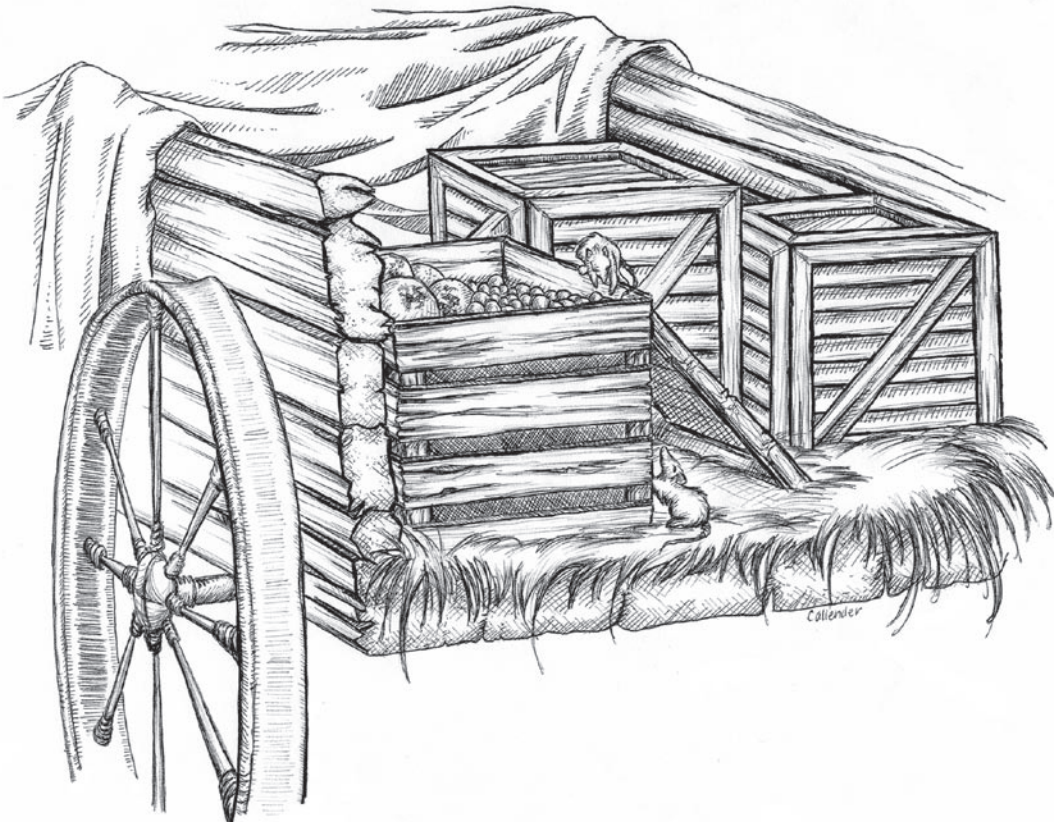


This is it, the moment of truth. At this point the party should be ready to rush off. At the least, they should be searching for Weracy, probably the little girl as well. If they are astute, they might even realize they're dealing with an Ulcer.

When the party leaves, move on to Act Two.

Dramatic Purpose

In most adventure fiction, the hero must leave and go out into the world. This scene serves that purpose and marks the end of Act One. The story is in place. It's time to see how it plays out.



Act Two

Act Two

Act Two begins when the characters leave to chase after Weracy. This Act contains everything that happens from that moment until just before the final fight in the Ulcer. Most of the adventure will probably take place in this Act.

Dramatic Purpose

Act Two is the confrontation of the story. It has also been called the “blue collar work” of storytelling. In Act Two we cover all the meat of the adventure, everything that happens from the actual beginning until the final climax. Act Two should start with a complication, early on, to make matters worse than the characters initially thought. Typically, there’s an Act Two twist at the halfway point. This carries the story in a new direction. Act Two usually ends with a disaster or a revelation, the purpose of which is to destroy the character’s carefully laid plans and take things to the edge of despair.

FOLLOWING WERACY

Weracy has access to a horse and has taken off ahead of the characters. If the characters ask, the Cardinal will supply them with horses as well. Weracy’s a good rider and unless the characters can come up with something *truly* innovative, they don’t have a chance of catching him. The best they can hope to do is find him sniffing around the Monastery before entering.

Run the chase as best you see fit. This will most likely be more of a tracking-style chase than hard-riding. If the players take a little time, let Weracy lag a bit too. While you shouldn’t alter the game to let him escape if they catch him, there’s nothing

wrong with slowing him down if the players are following more slowly.

Weracy has left town toward the Monastery, which is a two-hour ride. The characters will happen across several people along the way, and if they share a language, they can find out about his path. Alternately, they can make their best time for the Monastery and just trust that he’ll be there when they arrive.

The guards at the city gates know Weracy on sight. He left from the west gate and down the road. He was on horseback.

The party will meet four sets of travelers on the road. They are:

- A guard patrol. They saw Weracy heading down the road. He didn’t speak to them, but he rode hard enough they almost pursued him. They don’t speak the Divine Tongue.
- A merchant who was recently robbed by bandits. He’s alone and a pauper, traveling home to Belm to lick his financial wounds. He hasn’t paid attention to anything but his own stewing thoughts and he didn’t notice Weracy rocket by him on a horse. He speaks the Divine Tongue.
- A caravan. The guards noted Weracy as they passed. The caravan master speaks the Divine Tongue.
- A journeyman smith running errands for his master. He shared a brief conversation with Weracy as the man rested his horse a moment. He speaks the Divine Tongue.

If the party has basher-type players that get eager at all this talking (especially if you didn’t run the Teaser), insert the following encounter.

As the sun begins to set in the west, you hear the clang of metal ahead. In the distance, you see an old warrior, grizzled and limping, fighting off six man-sized Cambions. He looks hard pressed.

Running a Chase

It isn’t fair to the party for you to make sure that Weracy cannot be caught. Just the way events are set up *should* make it impossible for the characters to catch the priest—after all, he has a head start and a horse, but if a player comes up with some unforeseen plan, let them catch the man. Sure this puts the Act Two twist at the beginning of the Act, but that’s better than railroading the characters or taking away their free will. “It says so in the module” is not a good excuse.

Act Two

6 Hobgoblins: hobgoblin; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 3, 4, 6, 7, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); SA –; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Scimitar, studded leather, light shield.

If the characters save the old warrior, he'll thank them and after pleasantries, be on his way.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of the fight is to alleviate the boredom for certain types of players. The purpose of the rest of this scene is to give the party a path to follow and an interesting journey if they wish to roleplay their way from point A to point B.

FINDING THE MONASTERY

When the characters approach the Monastery, read or paraphrase the following:

You come to a side path in the road. This should be about the right place for the Monastery. The path seems to be well used, and there's evidence of recent passage.

Following the path, you come over a rise and see two low buildings. One is L-shaped and a good lead roof protects it from the rain. On one end, you can make out stained glass windows that someone has boarded up instead of repairing.

The second building is simpler, almost barn like if not for the low height. It's covered by a thatch roof and stands perpendicular to the long line of the other structure.

Between the two, an orchard stands, paths winding between trees. You can make out the cassocks of monks quietly tending the trees, not a word passing between them.

The monks are Hobgoblins, but they pretend to be monks and their Order has a vow of silence. Under normal circumstances, the Demon protects them with cloaks of illusion, but these are not in place at the moment.

As the party watches, Weracy is sneaking into the chapel. Allow them a spot check (DC 10). If they succeed, read or paraphrase the following:

You see a man in priest robes, moving quietly. None of the monks seem to have seen him and he slinks forward, sliding in through a small door into the chapel of the monastery.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is only to give the characters an overview of the grounds and to introduce the first part of the complication, which is that they must go *inside* to get Weracy. This isn't much of a complication, however, and it should be played more factually.

STANOR MONASTERY

Stanor Monastery is a simple place, with a spartan living area and a slightly nicer building containing the hall, chapel, and food areas.

The Monastery is three centuries old and the monks of Sepinus built it to have a quiet and reserved area near Belm where they can liaise with the city and Church officials there. Monks and traveling heads of the Order came here for visits to the city. It's close to the city and much quieter.

This all ended about one-hundred years ago when the then-Cardinal of Belm tried to annex the Monastery into his demesne. His interference became so bad that the Abbot had to send a plea to the Faerarch of the Church. The Faerarch replied with an injunction that forbade anyone but members of the Order from setting foot on Order grounds anywhere in Ludremon.

Since then, the relationship between the Order of Sepinus and the rest of the Church in Ludremon has strained. While some negotiations still happen, they are reserved and rare. For the most part, the monks of the Monastery have had a quiet and sedate life.

Act Two

Until the Ulcer opened, and the Demon slaughtered them all.

Stanor Monastery is dedicated to the teachings of Saint Sepinus, the foremost of these being the Three Paths of Life. These three paths show how men choose to lead their lives and what stands to oppose them. The clues to these teachings will be important. They began to manifest in the Ulcer, but the Demon has corrupted them to his own purposes.

Arrival

Under normal circumstances the Demon Búmak uses his power of illusion—which the Ulcer has enhanced in certain ways—to hide the Cambions, making them look like the original monks. Now that his plan has accelerated, Búmak has dropped these illusions. The characters will likely think they have caught the place off guard, but in reality, Búmak *wants* them to kill everything and fight their way in. Certain aspects, like the paths, are set and he can't lower them. Still, the Demon is looking to draw the characters in and has dropped the rest of the defenses as much as he thinks he can.

The characters, now that they've arrived, must decide what to do next. If they approach, allow them to make a spot check DC 20. They'll notice the bad guys are Cambions if they succeed. They might also use spells to detect the Ulcer. Whatever the case, play it by ear.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is just to get the characters onto the location for the final adventure.

The Surface Level

The Hobgoblins have been hyperalert for trouble since they found the little girl wandering their grounds. They have no idea that visitors now see them for what they are.

Have the party make move silently checks for everything they do. If the Hobgoblins notice, they approach the party to shoo them off. If a fight starts, unless everyone is silent, all remaining move silently checks by those in the fight receive a -6 penalty. There are sixteen Hobgoblins masquerading

as monks. If one Hobgoblin hears a fight, the alarm goes off and the rest arrive four per round for the rest of combat.

In addition, the color of demonic blood is important in this adventure. This is a good time to reveal or reinforce Cambion blood is black, not red.

Dramatic Purpose

In too many adventures, the monsters wait quietly in their rooms for the party to come. There will be enough of that later, so this encounter is here to show that if a later creature stays in its room, there's good reason. Essentially, the mass combat allows the GM to build up a little tactical credibility with the players.

This is the Dramatic Purpose of almost every encounter on the surface level.

1) The Orchard

When the players enter or observe this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This orchard appears to contain apple trees. Three cowed monks work silently among the trees, tending the roots and examining the leaves for bugs. The scene should be peaceful . . . welcoming. Instead, it's strangely unsettling.

These are three Hobgoblins. They are the most articulate of the Hobgoblins as they're usually the ones who interact with visitors. They'll be a bit startled if the party just attacks (they don't know their illusion is down).



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3 Hobgoblins: hobgoblin; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 3, 4, 6, 7, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); SA –; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Scimitar, studded leather, light shield. 1 CP, 75 GP between them.

2) The Lesser Hall

When the players enter this room, read or paraphrase the following.

This room brims with heat and steam. The ceiling seems to hang low. The shutters are tight. The light comes from several lamps. A large brick oven stands against one wall. Wood stoves line up on either side. On the opposite wall, a table creaks under the heavy preparations for tonight's supper. A door leads out the south wall and another out the west. Flimsier doors stand on the east walls.

If the alarm hasn't sounded, continue with:

Three heavily robed monks stand among the sweltering heat, their hoods still tight over their head. They work in eerie silence.

4 Hobgoblins: hobgoblin; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 3, 4, 6, 7, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); SA –; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Scimitar, studded leather, light shield.. 75 SP, 55 GP between them.

3) The Great Hall

When the characters enter this room, read or paraphrase the following:

This room is large and airy, the shutters thrown open to the air, letting light stream in. A large table dominates the room, surrounded by benches that could seat more than a dozen. The table seems to strain under the weight of years of wax and layers of dust, a golden patina in the shafts of light.

Double doors lead out to the east and a smaller door stands in the same wall, south of that. To the north, a single door leads out.

Written on the ceiling is one of the teachings of Sepinus and the Three Paths: "The truth is always hidden."

If the alarm hasn't sounded, continue with:

Four monks work in this room. Two of them sweep while the other two clean the benches. Strangely, none of them seem to have noticed the dust on the table.

4 Hobgoblins: hobgoblin; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 3, 4, 6, 7, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); SA –; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Scimitar, studded leather, light shield. 10 CP, 35 SP, 31 GP between them.

4) The Chapel

When the characters enter the room, read or paraphrase the following:

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This small room has a strange sense of space to it, as if the calm it carries belies the nearness of the walls. Light streams in through broken stained glass and between boards, falling in dappled pools of color. An altar stands on the north wall, the rest of the space is open for the congregation to stand or sit on the floor. The twisted gold of the circle and diamond above the altar shines even though no light falls on it. The double doors to the east and the single one to the south are solid and old, a seemingly perfect barrier against the noises of the outside world.

If you ran the Teaser:

This might not be the Church you remember and these might not be the symbols that held your faith, but there is still a power here. You can only guess these people have forgotten how to know God, but there is no doubt in your mind that God has not forgotten how to know them.

Above the altar is inscribed: "Seek the hidden meaning in all things."

The trapdoor in the corner is not obvious, but the most cursory search will find it.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this room is to give the characters who played the Teaser a sense there is still something worth fighting for in this world. For others, it is to show that even an Ulcer takes time to overpower the touch of God.

5) Cells

When the characters enter this barn like building, read or paraphrase the following:

Curtains line this long, dark hall. The air here hangs stale and oppressive; the thatch roof seems to crowd in from above.

5 Hobgoblins sleep in these cells unless the alarm has gone off. Determine which cells randomly.

5 Hobgoblins: hobgoblin; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 3, 4, 6, 7, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); SA -; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Scimitar, studded leather, light shield. 35 SP between them.

A search of the cells will reveal a stash of treasure wrapped in rags stiff with dried blood. This is found in the third cell from the northeast corner. Inside are 75 SP, 120 GP silver ring with brown anixite stone.

Also in that cell is a book. It looks like it has been used for privy rags. If a character has the moral courage to examine the book they can find remnants of certain teachings of Sepinus:

"The paths of life:

"The Path of Subtly is the path of quiet, the path of the least force, the quiet path of seeking and finding, of humility and questing. Of peace.

Act Two

“The Path of Force is the path of strength and aggression, of forthrightness. It is the path of combat and glory. It is the path of the most resistance.

“The Path of Guile is the path of wit and intellect, the path of twists and turns. The path of knowledge and learning. The path of wisdom.”

Elsewhere in the book:

“The truth turns.

Life turns.

The world turns.

But most of all . . .

. . . the paths turn.”

6) Pantry

This room is filled with the foodstuffs of the monks. The entire supply has become infested with maggots.

7) Buttery

This room holds all the drinks for the Monastery. All the drinks have turned.

The Catacombs

The catacombs hold the bodies of all the monks who have died during the life of the Monastery. Originally, this consisted of the center room, the four branch rooms, and complexes of crypts beyond that. When the far sections filled, the monks sealed up those sections. Since then, they had to hollow out crypts in the walls of the passages. When those were filled, they were going to excavate the sealed sections and do the same with the tunnels there, but no one has gotten that far yet.

Since the formation of the Ulcer, the Hobgoblins have been using these tunnels as an undead farm. They’ve pulled out all the dead who’ve animated from the effects of the Ulcer alone and they’ve tried to prepare others to become greater forms of undead, with some success.

This is the middle ground between the tunnels which were created by the Ulcer and the undisturbed surface. This makes the catacombs a sort of war zone between the natural and the infernal.

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of this section is to give the players a warm up for things to come. The fights aren’t too challenging and yet the characters should break a sweat. This section also gives the Ulcer a story purpose. This isn’t just a random bit of evil. Búmak is using his resources wisely, harvesting an army from the bodies in this crypt.

8) Catacomb Center

It’s dark down here. If the characters produce a light source, read or paraphrase the following:

You come down the ladder into a room ripe with age and mildewed rot. The air chokes at your lungs, heavy, full of dust and the only illumination is your swaying light. The floor and ceiling are dirt. The walls are old fieldstone. In the walls, four rows high, are rank on rank of arched tombs. They look like each was designed to hold a body, but all the tombs appear empty.

You hear a clicking sound, like metal on stone. It seems to echo from all directions at once. You can’t pin it down.

The sound comes from the east, but it’s impossible to tell that by listening alone. Only by moving down tunnels and listening to how the echoing sounds grow or recede can the characters determine the direction.

9-12) Hallway

When the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

This dark hallway creeps back into the gloom, and with your light sources, it almost seems more like you’re looking down a well than through a corridor. The dust swirls in your light as if the illumination alone is enough to disturb it.

13) Zombie Crypt

When the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

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This room seems slightly less ancient than the rest of the areas, or maybe it was just rebuilt recently. The stone is smoother, the cracks fewer. The air here isn't quite so oppressive. In the center of the far wall, an archway stands. Someone has filled it with neatly mortared bricks.

A moment after your light hits the chamber, arms reach from the tombs, flailing about, the flesh tattered and rotting, breaking off in little globs to splash about the room.

The Zombies here are only partially animated. They can't do much more than disgust the party.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this encounter is merely to show that this is a situation "in progress." It gives the characters one more reason to act fast. Things are getting worse over time.

14) Empty Room

When the characters enter, read or paraphrase the following:

The dust in this room has settled into deep tracks of skeletal feet. This room seems quieter, as if it sucks up all your sound, and as you play your light around this room, you can see the tombs are all empty.

The Hobgoblins have harvested all the Skeletons in this room.

15) Excavation Room

As the party approaches, announce the metal on stone sound is getting louder. If they extinguish their light source and can still see, read the following:

You creep into a room lined with empty tombs. On the far side, six Hobgoblins tear the bricks out of the wall, widening what appears to be a once-sealed archway. A trickle of light from a candle is all that illuminates this room.

Conduct normal checks for surprise.

6 Hobgoblins: hobgoblin; CR 1/2; Medium humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 3, 4, 6, 7, 7; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d8+1/19-20, longsword); SA—; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Hide +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Spot +2; Alertness.

Possessions: Scimitar, studded leather, light shield. 120 GP and a 90 GP honey yellow anixite stone between them.

If the party doesn't put out their light, the Hobgoblins set down their weapons and prepare for battle. They put out the candle.

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you walk into this room, you can see no immediate cause for the noise, only empty tombs and discarded tools.

In this situation, the Hobgoblins have pressed up against the walls on either side of the doorway. They might just get the drop on the party.

The Hobgoblins here are trying to expand the tunnel into the Ulcer. There *should* be more crypts on the other side, but with the Ulcer intruding on the world, access to those crypts has been lost.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straightforward fight. It's meant to stretch the characters' abilities.



Act Two

16) Skeleton Room

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach this room, you see six skeletal shapes milling about, stirring up dust and looking lost in the tattered remains of their funeral robes.

The moment they see you, they spring to attack.

6 Human Warrior Skeletons: CR 1/3; Medium undead; HD 1d12; hp 3, 9, 9, 9, 11, 12; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk 2 +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA –; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: No skills; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Burial robes.

One of the Skeletons was buried with 9 PP sewn into his burial robe. Why? The only people who might remember are dead. In reality, it was just a quirk of that one Monk. He didn't want to be buried without a little wine money.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straightforward challenging fight. It's meant to stretch the characters' abilities.

17) Snaking Corridor

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This tunnel winds through the solid bedrock as if formed by a giant snake. And yet as you travel down this choking, confining space, you can see no evidence of tools and none of the normal look of worked stone. It's as if this tunnel appeared, unnaturally and all at once, in the living stone.

They are now entering the Ulcer proper. The characters are shifting into another place in space and time. A place close to Hell.

18) Bottomless Pit

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The tunnel opens into a wide, low room. The air here is choking and your light sources barely seem able to beat back the darkness. In the center of the room, a pit descends into the ground. The edges crumble and ooze slightly. The ground here seems to give off a brown-black fluid, as if the earth here leaked pus or some kind of corrupted blood. A rope hangs down into the darkness.

But the room isn't empty. On the far side of the room you see the priest Weracy, cowering before a tall man in armor. His black hood is thrown back from his head and his face seems red and raw, as if something had abraded his face. He seems to sense you. Turning slowly, a grin spreads across his face.

"Ah," he says. "We've been waiting for you."

The Wind Wraith is ready for the group. Despite the Demon's tricks to allow the characters in, the Wind Wraith will try his best to kill them. He figures that if the party dies here, the Ulcer has more time to peacefully develop. A sacrifice when the Ulcer is more powerful would, after all, be more effective than one now.

Wind wraith: wind wraith; CR 5; Medium undead; HD 5d12; hp 44; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24; Base Atk/Grp +2/+4; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20, magic longsword); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20, magic longsword); SA Spell-like abilities; SQ Undead traits; AL LE; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 13, Con –, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +8, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Listen +9, Spot +9; Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Longsword).

Possessions : +1 full plate armor, +1 longsword, +1 heavy steel shield, boots of striding and springing, masterwork morningstar, 120 sp, 24 gp.

If the party rescues Weracy by killing the Wind Wraith or driving him off, he will explain how he

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put together that this was an Ulcer. He will explain that he stole the relic knowing that if he were to find the crux of the Ulcer, the holiness of the Splinter could help close it. He will beg the party to continue this journey with them.

Ideally, the party will take him up on this offer.

To exit, the party must climb down the pit. If they look, they can see the ledge down there. Climbing down the rope is a climbing check (DC 5).

Dramatic Purpose

This is what is known as an Act Two twist. To date, the party has been on the trail of Weracy and the little girl with the intention of getting them out. Now they know (if they haven't figured it out yet) that this is bigger than that, an Ulcer is involved. They're offered an alternative, destroy the Ulcer completely. In an Act Two twist, the characters' goals should change and evolve, sometimes radically.

This is also a challenging fight. It's slightly different from the normal fare, however, because of the single, powerful opponent.

Ulcer Level

Technically, the party is now officially in Hell. These corridors developed spontaneously, by a mixture of the Demon's will and the philosophies of the monks of Sepinus. What is left is a dungeon level where the Demon has tried to keep intruders from penetrating to the core, but the teachings of Sepinus have imposed themselves on the structure, giving an attentive party a fighting chance.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this scene is to allow the characters to experience their own private version of Hell. While the fights are mostly challenging, the real goal here is mood and drama. Hopefully, the characters will see this as a place of evil, and not just a dungeon crawl.

19) Down the Pit

As the characters climb down, read or paraphrase the following:

You climb down the oozing, crumbling slope until you find a ledge, jutting out from the east side. Below you, the pit descends to the darkness and you can't see the bottom. Does it have a bottom, or does it open into the air, high above the burning fires of Hell? You don't know. All you can do is push on.

The air here is hot and dry. It smells of burned fungus and charred hair. Wispy voices, too soft to make out, play just at the edge of your awareness.

20) Hallway

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This hallway seems to have melted straight from the rock, as if all the stone were solid wax. Streams and rivulets of stone line the walls and the ground seems slightly uneven under your feet.

21) Nexus Room

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room seems low and close, even though there's plenty of headroom. The walls still have the melted wax look and the smell and the sounds haven't subsided. Passages exit from each wall.

22-24) Hallway

These halls are just like the others.

25) Skeleton Storage

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room has the same melted wax look. Around the edge Skeletons stand, as if at attention. There is another exit on the far side of the room.

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There are as many Skeletons here as party members. The undead mill through the various rooms in this section of the Ulcer.

Human Warrior Skeletons: CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or 2 +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA –; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: No skills; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Rusty weapons.

26-28) Hallways

These halls are just like the others.

29) More Skeleton Storage

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This dead end room smells of mushroom and root cellars. Against the far wall, Skeletons stand ready.

There are as many Skeletons here as party members.

Human Warrior Skeletons: CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or 2 +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA –; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: No skills; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Rusty weapons.

30) Still More Skeleton Storage

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room seems slightly more melted than the rest. Against the far wall, next to a wall that has patterns that look like a waterfall, stand more Skeletons.

There are as many skeletons here as party members.

Human Warrior Skeletons: CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or 2 +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA –; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: No skills; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Rusty weapons.

Dramatic Purpose

All off these skeleton storage rooms are straightforward challenging fights. They're meant to stretch the characters' abilities.

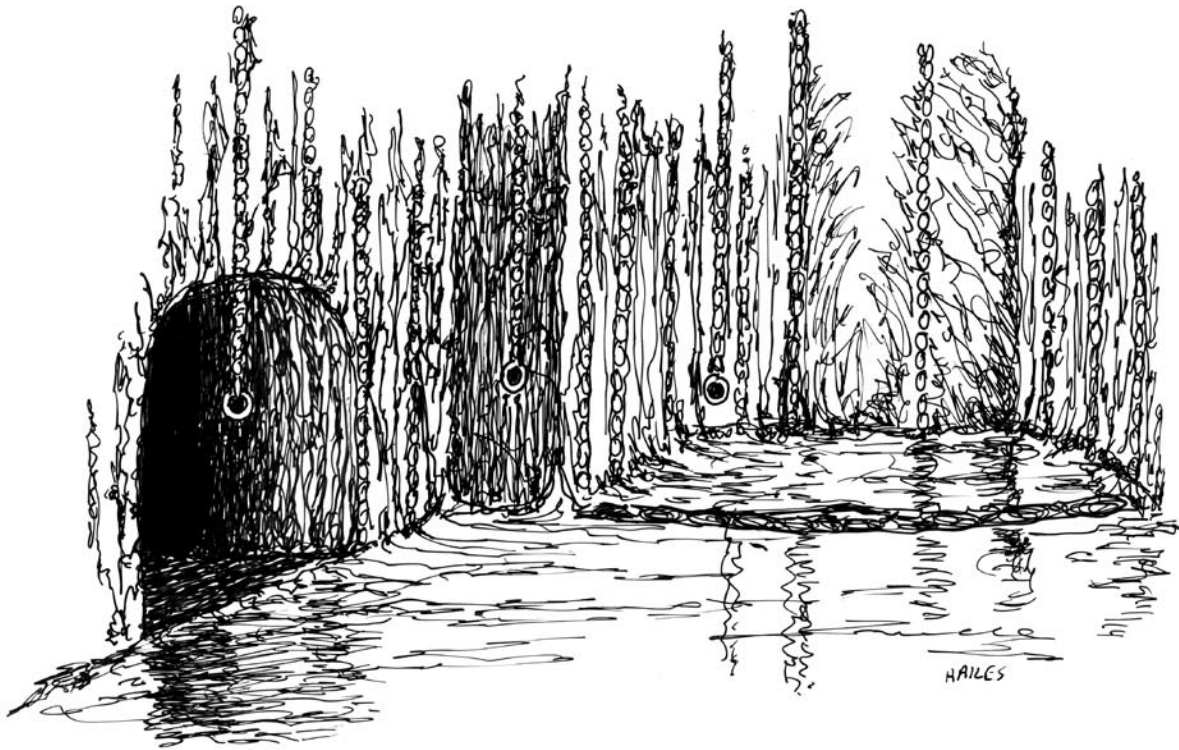
31) The Final Storeroom

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room stretches off to the left and right. Many Skeletons stand against the far wall, looking more permanent than those in the other rooms. More disturbing though is the implications. Is the room this large by design? Just how many Skeletons *do* they intend to harvest? How long until this army is ready?

There are three times as many skeletons as party members.

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Human Warrior Skeletons: CR 1; Medium undead; HD 2d12; hp 13; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +1 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or 2 +1 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA –; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: No skills; Improved Initiative.

Possessions: Rusty weapons.

Dramatic Purpose

This is another difficult fight. It's meant to stretch the party's abilities.

32) New Preparation Room

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

Preparation tables rest against the left and right walls stained with chemicals and rotted fluids. On the each table, a Skeleton rests. These look bigger than the others somehow, more menacing. They are, however, still.

When the party enters, the Skeletons will try to attack. However, they are only animated from the waist up. The party can just run by.

This is a newer room intended to prepare more powerful undead. The old room (35) was abandoned when it started to develop an unexplained undead force.

2 Fortified Human Skeletons: CR 3; Medium undead; HD 5d12; hp 43, 42; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +2/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or +3 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar) or 2 +3 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA –; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort

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+0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: No skills; Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Possessions: None.

Dramatic Purpose

This fight could be quite difficult if the characters just charge in. If they ignore it or use more clever tactics, it poses no threat whatsoever. With this encounter we are rewarding character intelligence over brute force.

33) Hallway

This hall is just like the others.

34) Prison

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this room seem to have re-formed after the creation. They have melted and then chains slid into the molten stone. Now manacles hang from the walls and the area around these chains have waves, as if someone dropped a pebble into the water and froze the fluid at the moment the waves rippled outward.

There's a passageway leading out the left wall. Except for the dangling manacles, the room is empty.



35) Old Preparation Room

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room seems to have been abandoned. Metal brackets, once melted into the walls, now protrude only slightly, broken off. Great scrapes show where someone has dragged large furniture toward the door.

On the far side of the room, the air seems darker. A pulsing sphere of energy, or perhaps a point of dark light with a spherical nimbus, floats at chest height for a Human. Rays seem to shimmer out of it and although the light is somewhat bright . . . it is *cold*.

This is a sphere of undead energy (if you use *Fire and Ice*, it's *Nether*), the residue of the other undead, now turning into something more. The party would be best to leave it alone.

This acts as the *vampiric touch* spell. As the relic is evil, putting the relic into it makes it flair brilliantly, causing an *enervation* attack.

This is a relatively permanent fixture, but if the characters come up with a clever way of damaging it (such as finding a way to feed it aether), let them see some small effect. This should give them a sense of accomplishment and reassure them the thing *can* be destroyed without removing the effect itself.

36) Hell Room

When the characters enter this area, read or paraphrase the following:

This room radiates a great heat from deep inside. The floor is a reddish sand, the melted walls seem to have the faces of damned souls imbedded in the walls. The air shimmers with heat and images in the melted wax seem to move, slightly.

On the far side of the room, a tall Skeleton stands. Its eyes flicker with red flame and it brandishes a large ax. As it comes into view, it moves suddenly spinning the ax around its head, falling into a battle stance.

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This room is the nexus for the three paths of Sepinus. It starts with a straightforward fight.

Skeleton of Fire: CR 3; Medium undead; HD 5d12; hp 33; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base Atk/Grp +2/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar+1d6 fire) or +3 melee (1d4+1, claw); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18-20, scimitar+1d6 fire) or 2 +3 melee (1d4+1, claw); SA –; SQ Damage reduction 5/bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits; AL NE; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 12, Con –, Int –, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Skills and Feats: No skills; Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Possessions: Rusty Weapon.

Above the doors the different paths are marked in the Divine Tongue. From here, the characters must decide how to proceed.

If Weracy is present, he says:

“I’ve heard of this. The Ulcer doesn’t want us to get past this point, but it can’t actually stop us. That would be a violation of free will, and we aren’t in Hell yet . . . at least not entirely. No, it’s trying to keep us out, but the best it can do is this. These things often manifest according to the personalities of their former owners. A fellow who likes mazes might find a maze developing under his house . . . one who likes fighting might find a battle arena. All of these are symptoms that an Ulcer is growing, and it’s using the nature of the people who lived here as a building block for its terrors.

“I wouldn’t expect whatever comes next to be easy.”

These paths are a strange mix of the Demon’s will and the teachings of the monks. The paths are straight out of the teachings of Sepinus, but Búmak, being a Demon of Deceit, managed to label them misleadingly. In the teachings of Sepinus, the Saint outlined the three paths that all men follow. He also explained each path’s strengths and weaknesses. For instance, he noted that people who walked the Path

of Guile were often fooled by those who walked the Path of Subtlety.

So the paths are *not* labeled by the approach that a character should use to defeat them. They are labeled by the approach the tests will be using to defeat the *characters*. Unfortunately, the characters probably won’t figure this out right away.

The characters will probably split up for this, each to their abilities. That’s all right. It should even be encouraged.

Dramatic Purpose

This is a straightforward challenging fight. It’s meant to stretch the characters’ abilities. What comes next, however. . .

37) Hallway

This hall is just like the others.

38) Path of Guile (Actually Subtlety)

When the characters enter this path, read or paraphrase the following:

As you round the corner into this room, you see figures appear, one for each person who entered. These are tall men, almost featureless, unbelievably bland. Their hands wave in the air in front of them and a network of light appears—a tangled, writhing mess of bands which discharge violently when they twist near the ceiling, floor or wall. You might be able to dodge through these . . . if only you can figure out the pattern.

This is actually the Path of Subtlety, as that’s what the characters should use to overcome it. It is possible to master out the pattern, but it’s not likely. The character would have to make it through in a series of leaps, each of them an Int check (DC 20). Four total are necessary. Each failure delivers 1d6 electricity damage and hurls the character back to the starting place, no save.

The trick here is the men controlling the bands are predicting the characters’ movements. If the character can get lost, become invisible, create a feint

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or otherwise trick the opponent, then they can get through with one Int check (DC 5).

Once the characters have hit on this idea, be generous with what works to get them through. This isn't about being exceptionally subtle. This is about figuring out the characters are *supposed* to be subtle.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this encounter is to allow the character to beat an unbeatable challenge by outsmarting it. The characters have been bashing their way through this entire adventure so far. It's time for Búmak to start showing why he's a Demon of *Deceit*.

39) Hallway

This hall is just like the others.

40) The Path of Force (Actually Guile)

When the characters enter this path, read or paraphrase the following:

As you step into this hallway, you see a series of alcoves along the walls, opposite one another, in four sets of two. As you step forward, the first two alcoves flicker with a purple/red light and warriors step out, bedecked in demonically inscribed plate armor. There is one for each person who entered. They brandish swords and set against your charge.

This is actually the path of Guile. Attacking with force would be foolhardy at best. Each time a foe is defeated or takes half his hit points, the next set of alcoves belch out a new set of enemies. They increase in strength as shown below.

The best way to beat them is to trick them. They are dumb as rocks.

Once the characters have hit on this idea, be generous with what works to get them through. This isn't about being exceptionally intelligent. This is about figuring out the characters are *supposed* to be intelligent.

First Alcove: human fighter 3; CR 3; Medium humanoids; HD 3d10+6; hp 27; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk/Grp +3/+5; Atk +6 melee (1d10+2/19-20, bastard sword); Full Atk +6 melee (1d10+2/19-20, bastard sword); SA –; SQ –; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +2, Jump +2; Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword).

Possessions: full plate, heavy steel shield, bastard sword..

Second Alcove: human fighter 7; CR 7; Medium humanoids; HD 7d10+14; hp 57; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk/Grp +7/+10; Atk +11 melee (1d10+5/19-20, bastard sword); Full Atk +11/+6 melee (1d10+5/19-20, bastard sword); SA –; SQ –; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Jump +7; Cleave, Great Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: full plate, heavy steel shield, bastard sword..

Third Alcove: human fighter 10; CR 10; Medium humanoids; HD 10d10+20; hp 79; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk/Grp +10/+13; Atk +14 melee (1d10+5/19-20, bastard sword); Full Atk +14/+6 melee (1d10+5/19-20, bastard sword); SA –; SQ –; AL N; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +10, Jump +10; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: full plate, heavy steel shield, bastard sword..

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Fourth Alcove: human fighter 13; CR 13; Medium humanoids; HD 13d10+26; hp 102; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20; Base Atk/Grp +13/+17; Atk +18 melee (1d10+6/19-20, bastard sword); Full Atk +18/+13/+8 melee (1d10+6/19-20, bastard sword); SA –; SQ –; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Climb +14, Jump +14; Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Die Hard, Dodge, Great Cleave, Endurance, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: full plate, heavy steel shield, bastard sword.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this encounter is the same as the other paths.

41) Hallway

This hall is just like the others.

42) The Path of Subtlety (Actually Force)

When the characters enter this path, read or paraphrase the following:

This area seems filled with twisting side passages and broken debris. As you step inside, you see men appear, clothed in black with masks. They salute you and step back, blending into the shadows as if by magic.

This is actually the Path of Force. The characters should be able to weather a single attack (or more) from these guys, but out-sneaking them is almost impossible. Still, they will probably try, so. . .

While a person could beat them in the type of sneak attack war they are trying to wage, it's unlikely. They can choose to do the minimum damage for their sneak attack and they will do this the first attack of combat (but roll the dice anyway, so the characters can be frightened by how many.)

The easiest way to beat them is to wait for one to attack and then just hack away. They are easy to beat in a straight fight.

Once the characters have hit on this idea, be generous with what works to get them through. This isn't about being exceptionally forceful. This is about figuring out the characters are *supposed* to be forceful.

Super Thieves: human rogue 1; CR 2; Medium humanoids; HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base Atk/Grp +0/+1; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19-20, shortsword); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1/19-20, shortsword); SA Sneak attack +5d6; SQ Trapfinding; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Climb +4, Decipher Script +6, Disable Device +6, Escape Artist +5, Hide +15, Listen +14, Move Silently +15, Search +16, Spot +14; Improved Initiative, Shield Proficiency.

Possessions: leather armor, short sword, buckler.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this encounter is the same as the other paths.

43) Hallway

This hall is just like the others.

44) Path of Sin

Allow the characters to meet back up after the three paths, then read or paraphrase the following:

This hallway is nondescript. At the far end, you see two giant double doors, made of a black metal. The way seems easy. *Too* easy.

Each character must weather his own temptations to pass through. The GM should tackle each character separately.

The best way to handle this encounter is to delve into the character's back story. Were their parents tortured to death by Fallen Angels? Maybe revenge

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is their Achilles' heel. Have they dedicated their lives to study? Maybe books are their Achilles' heels.

If this fails (possibly because they are more tactical gamers with sketchy back stories), look at their behavior. If they've attacked every problem with a straightforward charge, maybe glory in battle is their greatest temptation. If they've gone out of their ways to help the urchins in Belm, maybe they are tempted with being a great savior of orphans.

If there is nothing better to go on, fall back on the race's Deadly Sin. Below are example temptations. Make sure that no two characters get the same vision, even if they are being tempted by the same thing.

Dwarf (Greed)

You find yourself walking through great stone halls in a lavish mountain mansion. Finely worked stone fits together in the walls and floor, laid there by expert hands. Tapestries of cunning detail hang from the walls. Doors of perfect craftsmanship rest precisely in measured doorways.

At the end of the hall two double doors swing open soundlessly at the touch of your hand. As the way clears, you see a tremendous room filled with treasure. Gold lies in piles. Armor and weapons hang from the walls, gems lay strewn like pebbles.

And all of it's yours.

Elf (Pride)

You ride into your city, watching the rose petals and autumn leaves fall from tall, delicate towers, thrown by adoring children. Around, throngs of people rush forward, enchanted by the sight of you, reaching to touch a hem, a boot, anything just to have physical contact. Women weep with joy to see you. Men throw themselves prostrate to the ground.

You are the hero, returning in victory. They know you and they worship you. You know in your heart that this is your destiny.

Gnome (Deceit)

You stand in front of a throng of people, on a stage made of the finest sculpted and fitted woods. As you open your mouth, a hush falls over the audience and they lean perceptibly toward you. You can feel their awe, their anticipation.

And then you begin to speak. Your words ring out through the crowd, cunning tales that ring in the hearts of all who hear them. You can see their faces slack as they become one with your tale, everyone a willing listener, a willing participant. Eager for the next word, the next image, the next phrase.



Handling Long Description

This room contains some longer descriptions. These, if handled improperly, can frustrate players. The best way to handle these is to let the players know the information presented isn't going to interfere with their actions. If a player blurts out that they do something in the middle of description, make eye contact and nod. If they repeat or seem concerned that events will pass them by before they are allowed to act, say, "So noted," or, if that doesn't seem enough, say, "Great, let me finish describing this scene, then I'll describe what happens when you do that," or "Just let me finish this description, it all pretty much happens at once." The important thing is to make sure they know that they *can* act. Too many players have been railroaded by long descriptions in the past. If all else fails, interrupt the description to handle their actions, then finish the description in dribs and drabs while they act.

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Halfling (Gluttony)

You step into the greatest feast hall you've ever seen. Tables strain under the weight of succulent roasts and exquisite dishes. Breads lay by the dozens, the smell of the fresh loaves perfect and poignant in the air. The finest wines wait for tasting, the freshest fruits and vegetables.

All for you. Servants wait at your beck and call and you know that you need never leave, that this feast can go on forever. Forever.

Human (Wantonness)

You enter a raging party in a large, luxuriously decorated room. Men and women sing and laugh, alcohol pours by the bucket. There's dancing, storytelling, jokes, and ribaldry. There's something here for everyone, and you can tell the party is just getting into full swing. You are just in time.

You can't decide what to try first. The drinks range from fine to strong to plentiful. The music and dancing are first rate. The companionship is some of the finest you've seen. You are home here.

Once the visions kick in, the characters must fight their temptations or suffer the consequences. Those that fail repeatedly will wither away here, lost in a fantasy world that exists only in their heads.

The character must make a will save (DC 15). Every round they fail, the character takes 1d4 hit points damage.

Every round they remain inside, continue to describe events. If a loved one or someone they respect tries to call out to them, they receive a +2 circumstance bonus to their save.

Dramatic Purpose

The purpose of this encounter is to make the players overcome a personal threat. The more personal an encounter, the more the adventure will seem real and the less it will seem like store-bought fa re.

45) The Heart of Darkness

When the characters enter this final room, read or paraphrase the following:

You enter a large, wide room with high, vaulted ceilings. Torches on the walls cause shadows to dance and leap as you watch. In the center of the room a festering pit belches dark clouds of infernal energies. Above it, some thirty feet off the ground, hangs a wooden platform. Four statues of demons stand surrounding the pit and chains hang from the ceiling, swinging under the influence of the dark drafts from below.

Two staircases rise, one on the left and one on the right. They rise from near the pit to their respective walls, where they end in landings. Off these landings, stairs climb in either direction, skirting the wall to further landings in the corners. From here, stairs climb to a landing above the door, forty feet high, and one on the far wall.

On that far landing a Demon stands near eight feet tall, flickering with dark flames. His skin is composed of mauve, warty growths and horns grow back along his head, curling around behind where his ears should be and ending in points at either jaw hinge. He carries a dark sword and he points when you enter, roaring in anger.

On the platform above, a young girl weeps, suspended as if any moment she could drop as a sacrifice into this pit. You know at that moment that you've found it. This is the heart of the Ulcer, the source of all this evil. It's this you came here to destroy.

Weracy looks at the pit in front of you in horror. "That's it!" he cries out. "We have to close the pit. Throw the Splinter inside. Do it *now*!"

This is it, the final battle. This isn't quite Act Three, however. There is still one final reveal before the true climax begins.

The Ulcer will put up a token resistance. It can feel the Splinter's presence and it *wants* the party to throw it inside. Still, this Ulcer is bound to a Demon of Deceit. Much of what the party sees here is not quite as it seems.

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Balls of green fire will rise out of the pit and fly at anyone who tries to approach. A reflex save (DC 15) can have the damage. The balls strike as a +10 missile attack, causing 1d6 damage. If a character is hit, he will fly back to the closest wall. A strength check (DC 5) can reduce the distance traveled by five feet per point of success. If the push is reduced to negative numbers, the character can move forward that amount.

The Demon just laughs at the party's antics if they stay on the floor level. If not, go to Act Three for his actions.

At this point, one of three things is likely to happen.

One, the players start trying to rescue the girl and attack the Demon, making the Splinter a secondary goal in the fight. If this happens, go to Act Three and continue, coming back to this description when the Splinter eventually enters the pit.

Two, the characters have put together, from the appearance and reactions from the Hobgoblins top-side, that Búmak *wants* them to throw the Splinter in. They don't throw the Splinter at all. If that's the case, just proceed to Act Three. While this reveal would dramatically increase the tension of the next Act, it isn't crucial, and player intuition and deduction should be rewarded. While you'll need to improvise a bit to get the Splinter into the hands of the bad guys for the next adventure, don't railroad.

Three, the characters fight their way to the maw and throw the Splinter inside. If so, read or paraphrase the following:

As you cock back your arm, the Demon seems to see the Splinter for the first time. His eyes go wide and he screams something unintelligible in his foul tongue. With one hand, he reaches out as if to stop you.

You throw the Splinter.

The piece of diamond glitters in the air as it tumbles into the maw. You watch it fall, turning over and over again in the torchlight, then down and into the depths. For a moment, everything is silent.

Then the maw erupts in a blast of dark flames. Black fog wells up out of the maw and you can feel the unwholesome energies tearing at your soul. Something is wrong. Something is horribly wrong.

And then the Demon laughs.

As you watch the maw growing in power, Weracy falls to his knees, weeping. "No!" he screams. "That was supposed to be it. That was supposed to be the end!"

But it isn't, and suddenly you know the reason. The relic wasn't Holy after all. It was corrupted, and you've been playing the fools.

Still laughing, the Demon gestures at the platform above the maw, its attitude that of a final strike. Blasts of green light launch from his hands and strike the chains holding the platform aloft. The little girl screams but doesn't fall. The Demon looks at the platform annoyed, but the black flames of the maw lick around those chains now, seemingly strengthening them. With a look of desperation, the Demon prepares to attack again.

This ends Act Two. Continue with the next Act.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the end of Act reveal. Here, we learn something of the real truth behind this entire adventure. The end of Act reveal should change the nature of the story and rocket the characters into the final dramatic climax.



Act Three

Act Three

The stage is set. The players are in place. It's time for the final battle. But all is not as it seems. Búmak still has one deceit in-store for the characters.

Dramatic Purpose

Act Three contains the final climax of the story and any denouement. Act Three starts the moment the characters' plan collapses and the moment they begin the final battle, in whatever form it might take.

THE FINAL BATTLE

Now the forces will meet for the final fight. There are many tactical elements the characters will have to consider almost at once.

The Maw

The Maw will continue to shoot green fireballs throughout the fight. Each character can be targeted only once per round. The maw attacks anyone moving toward it, toward the stairs, or fighting the Demon (see above for effects). It also targets those swinging from the chains above (see below). Meanwhile, the entire maw will stretch and shudder as if preparing to widen suddenly.



Act Three

The Chains

The only way to get to the platform, short of flying, is by swinging from chain to chain across the intervening space. A character can grab a chain and start swinging from either Búmak's landing or the landing over the door.

It takes a climb check (DC 10) is required to swing from one chain to another across the gap. The Maw will continue to shoot green balls of fire at the characters as listed in Act Two. The blowback doesn't do much when the shots come from below, but the character must make a concentration check (DC 5) or they will lose their grip and fall 30 feet.

"The Demon"

Búmak will begin the attack the moment the characters go into action. His stats are:

Búmak: Demon of Deceit; CR 7; Large outsider (chaotic, extraplanar, evil); HD 7d8+7; hp 47; Init +6; Spd 50 ft.; AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 19; Base Atk/Grp +7/+11; Atk +12 melee (2d6+4/19-20, large masterwork longword); Full Atk +12 melee (2d6+4/19-20, large masterwork longsword); SA spell-like abilities; SQ damage reduction 5/good, spell resistance 15, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18.

Skills and Feats: concentration +12, diplomacy +15, escape artist +13, hide +13, intimidate +15, listen +15, move silently +13, sense motive +13, spot +15, use rope +13 (+15 with bindings); alertness, improved initiative, weapon focus (longsword)

Possessions: large masterwork longsword.

When the characters close to melee, "the Demon" on the landing will fight.

"The Girl"

Meanwhile "the little girl" screams and sobs hysterically, begging for help. "The little girl" appears to be on the hanging platform.

The Final Deceit

Búmak has one final trick.

Throwing the corrupt relic into the Maw was only half of the plan for opening the Ulcer. The other involves the sacrifice of the girl and the mixing of the blood with the blood of the person performing the sacrifice.

Búmak has realized the innocence of *both* sources of blood will grant the sacrifice power. While he could sacrifice the girl, he fears that won't be enough to fully form the Ulcer all at once.

So he switched places with her.

Lost in the illusions of the Demon, the girl thinks the party is trying to kill her (it's not a hard sell, since they probably are). She looks in all ways like the Demon and she stands on the Demon's landing. She will fight to the death when the party approaches, and she appears to cast spells (Búmak is casting them through her, through the trickery of the Ulcer). Worse, through the power of the Ulcer he's managed to boost her abilities so she fights with his power (otherwise, she wouldn't be likely to draw her killer's blood).

So since the "Demon" on the landing is the little girl, the "little girl" on the hanging platform is the Demon. He will scream and wail and look like a small, panicked child.

There is little way for the party to figure this out before the battle joins.

The Clue

There is one clue, something the Demon couldn't alter without invalidating the sacrifice: the girl's blood. When the characters draw blood from "the Demon" they will notice that it's red. The astute will remember that all other Demon blood is black.

If "the little girl" bleeds, she bleeds red as well. Búmak's blood isn't important to the sacrifice, so he can change its appearance.

Hopefully, the party will understand this switch before it's too late. Since "the Demon" only attacks when attacked first, the character's can stop fighting



Act Three

and attack “the little girl” without drawing undue attention from the rear.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the final battle. It should be difficult, dangerous and above all else, *exciting*. This is the last real chance to make the party work for their goals. This is, in short, the climax of the entire adventure. Make certain, in particular, the reveal of “the little girl” as the Demon as the maximum dramatic impact.

ENDGAME

If they save the real little girl and destroy the real Demon, the Ulcer will begin to react. All illusions drop. Then read or paraphrase the following:

You see a gout of energy blast out of the maw. Black flames and green lighting launch from deep inside, grounding onto the legs of the Demon. You can feel the energies between the two build, as if to some terrible climax.

The characters might realize at this point that leaving would be prudent. If they dump the body into the Maw, they need only get back into the man-made sections of the monastery before the Ulcer recedes. That takes five minutes. If they don’t, the entire monastery will fold in on itself, in ten minutes.

If they throw the Demon into the Maw, read or paraphrase the following:

The energies continue to reverberate back and forth between the Demon and the maw. As the Demon flies into the opening, you see all the flames and vapor leap back in as well, as if pursuing the falling body. Then with a rumble, the walls shake and the chains rattle. The maw begins to *shrink*.

With the fall of the illusions, the characters can now see an alcove behind where the fake Demon stood. Inside are 60 SP, 250 PP, +1 *pick of climbing*, and +1 *warhammer*.

Make the run out exciting, but there’s little chance of the characters not making it. The worst risk is one of them slipping and falling off the rope climbing out of the bottomless pit, but this isn’t any more dangerous because of the Ulcer.

If the party escapes back into area 16 and they threw the Demon in, read or paraphrase the following:

As you run out of the snakelike tunnel, you feel more than hear a great sucking sound. Turning, you look through the excavated doorway and you no longer see the hall. Instead, you can dimly make out ancient catacombs, long sealed from the light and air of the surface world. Quiet. Undisturbed.

The Ulcer has closed.

If they didn’t throw the demon in and escape the Monastery:

As you climb the hill away from the monastery, you hear a great rumble behind. Turning, you see the air around the monastery wavering, as if on a hot summer day. Then with a terrible twist that ties your stomach in knots, the entire place caves in on itself . . . not the building, but the very *space* that contains it. You shake your head and clear your vision, and when you can see properly, nothing remains but a crater of loamy, fertile soil. The Ulcer is gone.

Dramatic Purpose

This is the last little rush of adrenaline among the characters. Unfortunately, the players probably won’t believe that their lives are at risk here (unless one falls off the rope), so the rush is much less than the one that comes from fighting the Demon. Still, most players will join into the experience willingly, so play it up.

Act Three

DENOUEMENT

The denouement is the falling action of a story. In it, the bad guys are punished, the good guys receive their rewards and all loose ends are tied up.

Oh, and it's pronounced dā'nōō mǎn'

Dramatic Purpose

The Dramatic Purpose of the entire denouement is to give the characters a feeling of completion, to let the story wind down and wrap up naturally.

Father and Child Reunion

When the characters return the girl to Dalen, read or paraphrase the following:

As you climb the steps to the Cathedral, Karry suddenly rouses in your arms. Inside the large room Dalen stands staring at you in disbelief and wonder. Then Karry struggles out of your arms and runs to him, sobbing. He pulls her into his arms, tears streaming down his face and does nothing but hold her for a long time.

Dalen is, of course, happy and relieved to see his daughter. He's a simple man and he doesn't have much to give, but he pledges his eternal gratitude and makes the party promise that if they ever need help that he can give, they will come to him and ask.

The Cardinal

The Cardinal will listen to the party's accounts carefully, asking appropriate questions when necessary, but otherwise letting the entire thing play out. When they finish, read or paraphrase the following:



The Cardinal sighs.

"You have done a great service for the Church today. No, you've done a great service for all of Ludremon. I want you to know that you are always welcome here, that you will never want when my hospitality is available. Because of the violation of the Faerarch's orders, we can't officially reward you without putting you to death as well, but you have my thanks."

Weracy Married

A week after the completion of the adventure, Weracy gets married. It seems that fighting a Demon, however indirectly, has put his priorities in a new light for him.

When the party gathers, read or paraphrase the following:

The sun shines brightly the morning Weracy and Ryanie marry. The wedding is held at the Cathedral, and inside, under the light of a thousand, fractured multicolored rays, the Cardinal binds their hands together and declares them husband and wife.

You stand with the other guests out front as the bride and groom leave, the leather cords still binding their hands together. People cheer and holler good wishes. To one side Dalen and Karry stand in their finest clothes. The little girl reaches out and touches Weracy as he passes.

But he doesn't seem to notice.

Weracy and Ryanie head off to their new life together. The rest of the guests stand around and chat. Even the other young priests seem happy for him. No one wishes to sully this day.

There are a good deal of things to investigate in the world, but the Cardinal will be happy if they stayed around just a little while longer.

Playing the Next Adventure

If you intend to play *The Festering Earth*, how you proceed from here depends on when exactly you intend to get to it. If you wish a little time between adventures, allow the characters to get some play in

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around the City of Belm. Make one or two simple adventures for them there. Try to time the adventures so they will end when you are ready for *The Festering Earth* (If, for instance, you are waiting for it to release). Otherwise, just have fun and let the play continue.

The Festering Earth begins in Belm. It's possible to adjust the beginning to start elsewhere, but the Cardinal of Belm will be the one to tap the party, so it might be best to keep them within his reach. If not, putting them around the city-state Felric's Redoubt would leave them in the prime position to act.

Monsters

There are three new monsters in *The Throne of God*. They are as follows.

Angels

There are many types of Angels in Heaven, and while in the early days, no Angels found the need to go to war, since the first Fall, every Angel has learned to take up the sword and fight, whether it be for God, or against him.

Angels are all beautiful, although that beauty begins to fade the moment they betray God. They have large, feathery wings and in natural form stand much taller than men (typically ten feet or more).

All Angels have certain common traits.

–*Darkvision*: 60 ft.

–*Low-light Vision*

–Angels are immune to all acid, air, electricity, and transformation attacks.

–*Resistance*: fire 10, cold 10, and water 10.

–+4 Racial Save against poison.

–*Protective Aura (Su)*: Against attacks made or effects created by evil creatures, this ability provides a +4 deflection bonus to AC and a +4 resistance bonus on saving throws to anyone within 20 feet of the angel. Otherwise, it functions as a magic circle against evil effect and a lesser globe of invulnerability, both with a radius of 20 feet (caster level equals angel's HD). This aura can be dispelled, but the angel can create it again as a free action on its next turn. (The defensive benefits from the circle are not included in an angel's statistics block.)

–*Counterspell (SU)*: Angels can counterspell any incoming spell as a free action, once a round.

–*Bane (SU)*: Angels gain a +2 enchantment bonus and +2d6 damage vs. anything with the Infernal Taint.

–*Soul Sense (SU)*: Angels can sense any Mortal's most noble trait.

–*Tongues (Su)*: All Angels can speak with any creature that has a language, as though using a tongues spell (caster level equal to angel's Hit Dice). This ability is always active.

Angel (Caraphim)*

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | Large Outsider (Angel, Extraplanar, Good) |
| Hit Dice: | 7d8+7 (39 hp) |
| Initiative: | +6 |
| Speed: | 50 ft. (10 squares), fly 100 ft. (good) |
| Armor Class: | 23 (+2 Dex, +10 natural, +2 shield, size -1), touch 11, flat-footed 21 |
| Base Attack/Grapple: | +7/+13 |
| Attack: | Large masterwork longsword +15 melee (2d6+7/19-20) or slam +13 melee (1d10+7) |
| Full Attack: | Large masterwork longsword +15/+10 melee (2d6+7/19-20) or slam +13 melee (1d10+7) |
| Space/Reach: | 5 ft./10 ft. |
| Special Attacks: | Spell-like abilities |
| Special Qualities: | Damage reduction 5/evil, spell resistance 30, uncanny dodge |
| Saves: | Fort +6 (+10 against poison), Ref +7, Will +7 |
| Abilities: | Str 25, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18 |
| Skills: | Concentration +12, Diplomacy +15, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +15, Listen +15, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +13, Spot +15, Use Rope +13 (+15 with bindings) |
| Feats: | Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword) |
| Environment: | Heaven |
| Organization: | Solitary, pair, or squad (3-5) |

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| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Challenge Rating: | 8 |
| Treasure: | No coins; double goods; standard items |
| Alignment: | Neutral Good |
| Advancement: | 8-12 HD (Large); 13-20 HD (Huge) |
| Level Adjustment: | +4 |

*These stats show a Caraphim ten thousand years ago, at the fall of Heaven.

Background/History: The lowest form of Angel, the Caraphim were once the messengers of God. They carried His word throughout all of Heaven, by message, scripture, and deed. They gave sermons, helped the needy, and cleaned gutters. The Caraphim were the simplest and humblest of all Angels, and every one served the lowest of God's creatures.

When the first third of the Host fell, the Caraphim became the frontline troops in the army. They fleshed out the ranks of all Angel units and they fought alongside mortals. Angels sometimes took minor leadership roles among the mortal units, but always as a first among equals, never as an officer or noncommissioned officer.

After the Sundering, the living mortals of Heaven and the Fallen had all left. The Caraphim were left with no purpose of their own and many wept and wailed at the tragedy. The spirits of the dead still reside in Heaven, but now Archons of Merit serve these.

And so the Caraphim take their war abroad. They attack into Hell. They grant visions to young Paladins. Sometimes, they take Human form and join into mortal wars if they see one side as just. Most other Angels feel the Caraphim are lost now, adrift if not actually Fallen. They are looking for a place in a universe they cannot love, in a plan of God that has diverged from the true path.

They are looking and waiting.

Personality/Motivation: The Caraphim are a lost people. No longer grounded to the service of Mortals in Heaven, now they seek and fight and strive to find a purpose in a cold, empty universe. A Caraphim is so desperate to serve Mortality that many will break the law of God just to aid those in the Mortal Realm.

Powers/Tactics: The Caraphim's power centers around healing and combat. They tend to the injured and they mete out God's justice against the wicked. They will not willingly use their combat powers against the righteous (except to restrain and subdue), but they might be tricked, especially if the Angel's need to help is desperate enough. They will heal even the wicked.

Caraphim wade into battle, slaughtering their foes with their greatswords. While they do have spells, most of these augment their existing combat abilities and only the rarest Caraphim will know a spell that allows it to hold back and attack at a distance. Nor would they want to. The frontline is what they know, and they revel in it.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*bless* (DC 15), *bless water* (DC 15), *bless weapon* (DC 15), *detect poison* (DC 15), *detect undead* (DC 15), *polymorph* (self only) (DC 18), *protection from evil* (DC 15), *read magic* (DC 15); 4/day—*cure light wounds* (DC 15); 3/day—*cure moderate wounds* (DC 16); 2/day—*cure serious wounds* (DC 17); 1/day—*cure critical wounds* (DC 18), *divine favor* (DC 15), *magic weapon* (DC 15), *neutralize poison* (DC 18), *remove blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *remove curse* (DC 18), *remove disease* (DC 18), *remove paralysis* (DC 16), *restoration, lesser* (DC 16).

Campaign Use: Caraphim are borderline insane with want of purpose. If a character were to become the target of a Caraphim, the creature would hunt him relentlessly, like a bloodhound, but never tiring, never shirking.

The easiest way to adjust a Caraphim's power is by scaling his level up and down. A magical weapon could scale his power up as well.

Appearance: The Caraphim stand 9-10 feet tall and look like handsome young males. They come in all forms, from Gnomish to Halfling to Human to Elven to Dwarven although the Angelic Spark is always readily apparent in them.

The Caraphim have born the brunt of many attacks and many of them bear scars to show the horrors of their past. They tend to wear no armor and they carry a huge two-handed sword in one hand.

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Demons

There are many creatures in Hell, but the most numerous are Demons. All Demons except Demons of Damnation are the souls of dead Nephilim, taken form and unleashed back on the universe in general.

No Demon can take a fair form, although they may use illusions to make themselves appear fair. Their forms and appearances are many and varied, based on type. Some of them can even take on multiple forms within their type.

All Demons have the following abilities:

–*Darkvision*: 90 ft.

–*Low-light Vision*

–Demons are immune to all fire, cold, water and poison.

–*Resistance*: air 10, acid 10, and electricity 10.

–*Bane (SU)*: Demons gain a +2 enchantment bonus and +2d6 damage vs. anything with the Divine or Angelic Spark.

–*Soul Sense (SU)*: Demons can sense any Mortal's greatest temptation.

–*Tongues (Su)*: All Demons can speak with any creature that has a language, as though using a tongues spell (caster level equal to angel's Hit Dice). This ability is always active.

Galpharus (Demon of Deceit)

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | Large Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar, Evil) |
| Hit Dice: | 7d8+7 (39 hp) |
| Initiative: | +6 |
| Speed: | 50 ft. (10 squares) |
| Armor Class: | 21 (+2 Dex, +10 natural, –1 size), touch 9, flat-footed 19 |
| Base Attack/Grapple: | +7/+11 |
| Attack: | Large masterwork longsword +12 melee (3d6+4/19-20) or slam +10 melee (1d10+4) |
| Full Attack: | Large masterwork longsword +12/+7 melee (2d6+4/19-20) or slam +13 melee (1d10+4) |
| Space/Reach: | 5 ft./10 ft. |
| Special Attacks: | Spell-like abilities |
| Special Qualities: | Damage reduction 5/good, spell resistance 15, uncanny dodge |
| Saves: | Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7 |

Abilities:

Str 18, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 18

Skills:

Concentration +12, Diplomacy +15, Escape Artist +13, Hide +13, Intimidate +15, Listen +15, Move Silently +13, Sense Motive +13, Spot +15, Use Rope +13 (+15 with bindings)

Feats:

Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Gong-sword)

Environment:

Hell, Ulcers

Organization:

Solitary

Challenge Rating:

7

Treasure:

Standard coins; double goods; standard items

Alignment:

Chaotic Evil

Advancement:

8-12 HD (Large); 13-20 HD (Huge)

Level Adjustment:

+3

Background/History: The souls of dead Nephilim, Demons of Deceit thrive on that one Deadly Sin. They have tempted and tricked Mortals since the beginning of the Mortal Realm and they are the Demon that interfaces with Mortality most often.

Personality/Motivation: Demons of Deceit live on lies and terror. They love to torment the damned souls in Hell but they value lies to and from Mortals even more.

Powers/Tactics: Galpharus demons often appear to value a frontal assault, but that's rarely the case. They use their ingenuity and their illusions to stage traps, ambushes, and distractions. Many foes have fought hard battles against Galpharus Demons, only to discover, in the last moments of their life, that they never scored a single hit on the beast.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will – blur (DC 16), *darkness* (DC 15), *disguise self* (DC 15), *dispel magic* (DC 17), *protection from good* (DC 15), *see invisibility* (DC 16), *ventriloquism* (DC 15); 4/day – *color spray* (DC 15), *silent image* (DC 15); 3/day – *minor image* (DC 16); 2/day – *major image* (DC 17), 1/day – *desecrate* (DC 16), *displacement* (DC 17), *hallucinatory terrain* (DC 18), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 16), *invisibility* (DC 16), *mirror image* (DC 16), *magic aura* (DC 15), *unholy blight* (DC 18)

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Once per day, a Galpharus Demon can attempt to summon another Galpharus with a 40% chance of success.

Campaign Use: Demons of Deceit use their powers to lead Mortals to their doom. They are powerful in combat, but they save this until characters are trapped in their web, preferring to taunt and drive Mortals to destroy themselves.

To increase or decrease the Demon's Scaling, the best option is to increase or decrease his time to prepare. Demons of Deceit set up terrible traps, and by making these traps more or less effective you can scale the creature's power. Barring that, increasing or decreasing his level and hiding him from easy attack are the best ways to change their effectiveness.

Appearance: A Galpharus stands eight feet tall. Its skin is composed of mauve, warty growths and horns grow back along his head, curling around behind where his ears should be and ending in points at either jaw hinge.

The Galpharus demons rarely wear armor, but they almost always carry huge two-handed swords. Those of rank among the Deceit Demons decorate their skins with designs made by ritual scaring.

Elemental Wraiths

The Elemental Wraiths are the most valued soldiers of the Nopheratus. Whereas other undead are either mindless or possessing of their own agenda, Elemental Wraiths serve the will of the Nopheratus directly.

Elemental Wraiths are all Mortals who subjected themselves to the conversion process while still alive. There are six levels of Elemental Wraith and each requires a new ordeal of one-hundred-and-one days.

All Elemental Wraiths can command Undead at will. Mindless undead will respond automatically. Free-willed undead must make an RR vs. fear or obey.

Wind Wraith

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| | Medium Undead |
| Hit Dice: | 5d12 (32 hp) |
| Initiative: | +5 |
| Speed: | 20 ft. (4 squares) |
| Armor Class: | 25 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +9 armor, +3 shield), touch 11, flat-footed 24 |
| Base Attack/Grapple: | +2/+4 |
| Attack: | Magic longsword +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20) |
| Full Attack: | Magic longsword +6 melee (1d8+2/19-20) |
| Space/Reach: | 5 ft./5 ft. |
| Special Attacks: | Spell-like abilities |
| Special Qualities: | Undead Traits |
| Saves: | Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2 |
| Abilities: | Str 15, Dex 13, Con –, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12 |
| Skills: | Concentration +8, Diplomacy +9, Intimidate +9, Listen +9, Spot +9 |
| Feats: | Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (Longsword) |
| Environment: | Any |
| Organization: | Solitary |
| Challenge Rating: | 5 |
| Treasure: | +1 armor, +1 weapon, +1 shield, standard coins; standard goods; standard items |
| Alignment: | Lawful Evil |
| Advancement: | 5-12 HD (medium) |
| Level Adjustment: | +2 |

Background/History: A Wind Wraith is created by the Ordeal of Air. The Mortal in question is placed in a special necromantic vault for one-hundred-and-one days, where they are killed by a constant buffing of high-velocity winds. The vault eliminates the need for food or water and many subjects survive for weeks or even months. Even after death, the agony continues. At any time, the subject can beg for death and receive it. If they endure the entire one-hundred-and-one days, they emerge as the Undead Wind Wraith.

Personality/Motivation: Wind Wraiths are the lowest free-willed servants of the Nopheratus. They organize the Undead legions and they infest Ulcers. They are the sergeants in the war against Mortality.

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and are the most likely Elemental Wraith for a Mortal to encounter.

Powers/Tactics: Wind Wraiths like to use their Undead to protect themselves and their lairs. If a party manages to make it to the Wind Wraith itself, it will start by softening the group up with spells before closing and fighting hand to hand. They also try to raise fallen enemies as Undead, expecting this to demoralize enemy ranks.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will – *command undead* (DC 13); 3/day – *cause fear* (DC 12), *feather fall* (DC 12); 2/day – *gust of wind* (DC 13), *whispering wind* (DC 13); 1/day – *animate dead* (DC 14), *stinking cloud* (DC 14), *wind wall* (DC 14).

Campaign Use: When they are on crusade, a Wind Wraith spends its time building his power base and infiltrating Human organizations. As the only Elemental Wraith that can pass as a mortal (if a damaged one) they also are the only ones to routinely enter mortal settlements.

To scale a Wind Wraith, increase or decrease their level. This gives them better attacks and hit points. Adjust their spell like abilities accordingly.

Appearance: A Wind Wraith looks much like the mortal they were in life. The only exception is their skin, which is red and abraded, as if the Wraith had subjected itself to long exposure to a sandstorm (which isn't far from the truth).

Wind wraiths tend to wear full plate armor and carry a sword. They usually cloak themselves in heavy black cloth.

Father Weracy

CR 1

Male human expert 2

Age:16 Eyes: Brown. Hair: Brown. Build: Athletic. Height: 5'8". Race/Sex: Human/M. Skin: Pale. Demeanor: earnest. Dress: Simple novice robes. True Attitude: Loving and self sacrificing. Home: Belm.

NG medium humanoid

| | |
|----------------|----------------|
| Str: 12 | Int: 14 |
| Dex: 14 | Wis: 11 |
| Con: 9 | Cha: 11 |

Init: +6 **Senses:** Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages: Ludremonian, Divine Tongue

AC: 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10

hp: 5

Fort: -1, **Ref:** +2, **Will:** +2

Speed: 30 ft (6 squares)

Melee: dagger +2 (1d4+1/19-20)

Missile: sling +3 (1d4+1)

Base Attack: +1; **Grp** +2

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative

Skills: Concentration +4, Diplomacy +5, Hide +7, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Knowledge (the Planes) +7, Move Silently +7, Profession (Priest) +5, Ride +7, Spot +7.

Possessions: Robes, sling, dagger.

Background/History: Weracy is a young priest, newly invested. He was uninvolved romantically and dedicated to his lifestyle while a deacon. Since then, he has met and fallen in love with Ryanie. Now he's stuck with a difficult decision: marry her against the will of the Church and stop his priestly career or give up the love of his life to allow for his growth in the clergy.

Personality/Motivation: Weracy is an earnest and driven young man, impulsive and at the whim of his emotions. He acts before he thinks and rarely considers the consequences, even in hindsight. He has a fascination with Ulcers.

Quote: "You don't understand. I have to do something. *Now.*"

Powers/Tactics: Weracy has no real powers and he doesn't fight. He has the same rudimentary hide-and-seek skills as most city kids. He avoids confrontation at all costs.

Campaign Use: Weracy doesn't fight. He doesn't conflict with people. He never shouts. If captured, he surrenders immediately.

There is little need to scale Weracy. If you must, change his level and give him better weapons.

Appearance: Weracy is a young man with brown hair and brown eyes. He has good skin and he's pleasant enough to look at, but his real appeal is in his open expressions and honest looks. He wears the simple robes of a priest.

Act Three

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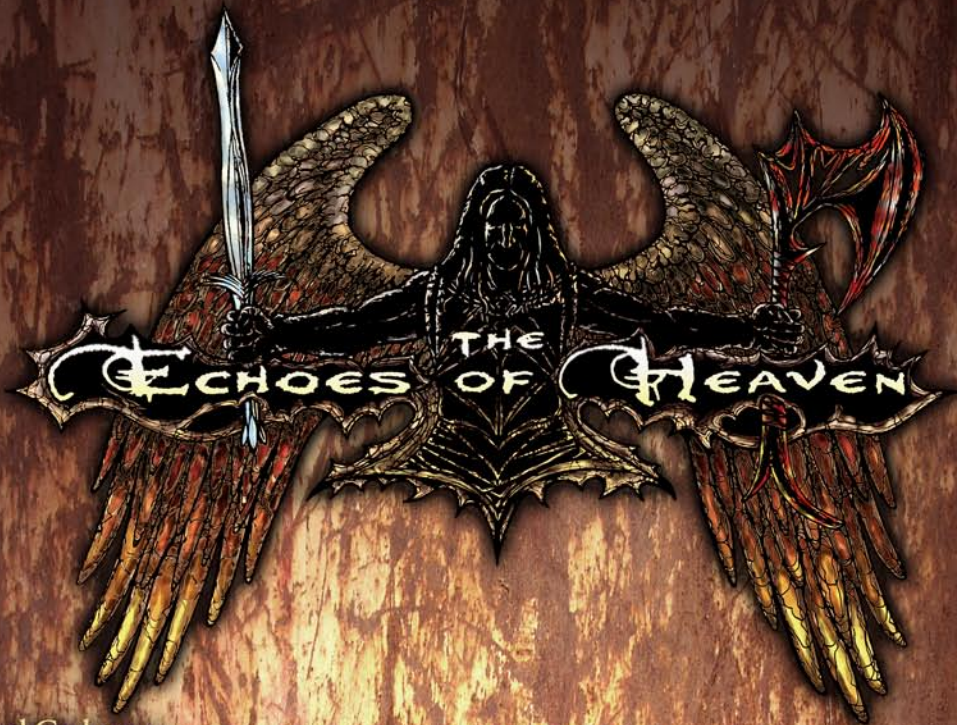
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And God wept.

It was the last days of the War in Heaven.

One thousand years had passed since a third of the Host fell, and in that time, your families stood on the parapets of Heaven, fighting beside Angel and Mortal alike. It was a long and painful war, and on this day, it ended.

But the Fallen Angels didn't fight alone. Slowly the mortals of Heaven—Humans, Elves, Gnomes, Halflings . . . even the Dwarves—defected to the other side. Worse yet, somehow the Fallen Host commanded not only the living, but the dead . . . creatures who walked about in direct defiance of God's laws.

But the battle went poorly for the Fallen Host and on this day they made a last, desperate attempt to take the Holy City of Heaven, the location of the Holy See, the seat of God's Throne. After this battle, Heaven would stand or fall. . . .

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