

CODEX OF THE INFINITE PLANES

VOLUME XI: INFINITE LAYERS OF THE ABYSS

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE PLANES OF EXISTENCE



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VOLUME XI:

INFINITE LAYERS OF THE ABYSS

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VOLUME XI: INFINITE LAYERS OF THE ABYSS

“There is no greater realm in all the multiverse for wanton murder, unchecked aggression, or unbridled chaos than the infinite layers of the Abyss. Even clueless mortals across the Material Plane have heard of it and the horrors that it holds, and those stories pale in comparison to the truth. If anything seems safe in any of the layers of the Abyss, it’s only to lure a traveler into a false sense of security. And while the demons that spawn continually from the depths of the plane itself are a howling horde of gibbering monsters dredged from the darkest nightmares of dreaming gods, the true powers to watch are the lords that crawl over each other to rule. Graz’zt, Juiblex, Orcus, Yeenoghu, and others, these are the real dangers. And everything else, really.”

Emirikol the Chaotic

Across many Material Planes, evil is an abstract concept, a description of vile acts performed with depraved purpose but generally understood. Evil creatures exist, and some seem irredeemable, but they still tend to be relatable on some level – orcs hunt and kill, but usually out of some twisted sense of honor, pride, or simple hunger.

In the Abyss, evil is a manifest energy that permeates the very fabric of the plane. This is the evil of demons and other fiends, creatures born of pure hatred, bile, disgust, wrath, and other foul thoughts pushed to the extreme, and the layers of their plane spin into infinity. How many layers are truly in the Abyss? Some planar scholars point to the number 666 as having special significance, but deeper layers have been discovered.

Each layer of the Abyss offers a unique twist on death, pain, torment, suffering, and so much more. Some layers are filled with lakes of acid, while others are endless wastes of black or red sand that strip flesh from bone. Layers with skies filled with burning fire, toxic fumes, plumes of rancid smoke, or flesh-stripping fog have been documented, along with jungles of living vipers, salt bogs that bake under a relentless heat, and jagged mountains of living hate-filled ice.

If there’s a home for chaos and evil in the Outer Planes, it lives in the Abyss.

The natives of the Abyss are the demons, known far and wide across the multiverse for their endless taste for savagery, conquest, and blood. These creatures are spawned seemingly at random across all layers of the Abyss in a great cosmic game of chance – a demon spawned is that demon forever. Some are created as titanic engines of abyssal fury, while others form the lowest mobs of gibbering monstrous hordes.

Ruling over the teeming demonic masses are the demon lords. These beings have clawed, fought, killed, and maimed their way to rule one or more layers, attaining some level of control and fealty over the chaotic realm. Many of these demon lords are remnants of some primordial order buried deep in the twisted pits of the Abyss’ foulest layers, while still others have come to the Abyss to rule. Many more are simple bestial aspects of

the demons’ own depraved nature, offering little in terms of strategy or decision-making and focusing instead of insatiable desires.

Ancient sorcery and the foulest of blood magic rites can be learned from the right demons, so it is not uncommon for a spellcaster to summon one of these creatures from the Abyss to serve as teacher or spy. Adding to certain planar barriers enacted around many Material Plane worlds preventing direct demonic incursion and the result is a whole host of creatures that have learned the ways of mortal beings. Some twist and manipulate, others corrupt and destroy, but their goal is always the same – to break free and spill chaos and death across the multiverse.

This desire has put the demons and their masters into direct conflict with an unlikely source – the devils of the Nine Hells. Waging what has become known as the Blood War, the devils and infernal princes have actually managed to contain much of the demonic rage to the Abyss itself. They do not do it out of a sense of honor, however, as the devils have as much to lose as everyone else if the demonic horde is loosed fully upon the multiverse.

LAY OF THE LAND

There are infinite layers of the Abyss, and each offers a different perspective on the manifestation of evil. The Random Abyssal Layer generator found later can help create unique horrors for each plane, but there are some constants even in such a chaotic and unstable plane.

The first layer of the Abyss is known as the Plain of Infinite Portals. This is a broken, endless landscape of blasted red stone baked under a bloated crimson sun that never sets. Innumerable pits lead into darkness, many offering one-way portals to random layers of the Abyss. The sky in the first layer is ruled by an ancient demon lord named Pazuzu, a remnant of an older order, and he commands hosts of flying demons. His fortress is the Skeleton Tree with twisted bleached branches stretching up to the sky.

The River Styx winds through the Plain of Infinite Portals as well, its brackish waters splitting off into many tributaries through the broken terrain. Some channels lead into pits, sending an endless cascade of Styx water tumbling down across the Abyss.

There are few cities in the Abyss that offer any haven for non-demons, but the succubus sorceress Red Shroud runs the outpost of Broken Reach in the crumbled remnants of an ancient fortress on the first layer as a welcome spot for travelers of all kind. She is a canny creature and always looking for the upper hand, but with the right price mortal travelers can find respite in one of the ruined houses inside Broken Reach.

The Lakes of Molten Iron offer the demonic hordes a source to craft weapons for use in their endless war against the multiverse. Numerous forge-fortresses run by powerful demons squat along the banks of the lakes, but given its importance in the Blood War, infernal legions of the Nine Hells often target the area in planar raids.

The highlights of the Plain of Infinite Portals are not wholly unique in the Abyss, but its position as the first

layer and its access to the River Styx makes it better charted and mapped by planar scholars. Further down the layers, details become less reliable. Many are home to powerful demon lords that have taken on aspects of their plane, while others are endless chaotic realms of pure terror and darkness.

CYCLE OF TIME

Time passes normally across the Abyss, but for most layers it is not marked by the rising or setting of a sun. Some layers have a sun, some have a moon, and these vary in color and intensity as much as anything else on the plane. Travelers to the Abyss should be prepared to manage their own cycle of time as the plane offers little assistance.

SURVIVING

Survival on the Abyss is one of the few things not guaranteed to travelers. Each layer offers new and unique ways to kill, maim, or grievously injure mortal creatures (and some fiends as well!). Refer to the Hazards & Phenomena section for more details on specific hazards that can be encountered across the plane.

GETTING THERE

Perhaps unsurprising considering its many layers, the Abyss boasts more portals and gates across the multiverse than any other plane known. It is thought by some planar scholars that the Abyss forms portals spontaneously as the whim of the demonic horde itself, but if there is some intelligent design behind the portals it has not revealed itself yet.

The top layer, the Plain of Infinite Portals, is the most easily accessed. The River Styx winds through the Lower Planes and connects to the Abyss there, offering easy transportation for those seeking a leisurely journey. Gates are known to exist across the multiverse, in cities and in dark secluded forests, leading to random locations within the Abyss. Some are stable, while others fluctuate, and some can only be opened under certain conditions.

For gates to the Abyss, triggering conditions usually involve some unsavory act or possession – a tongue, a certain quantity of spilled blood, the flayed hide of a paladin, the heart of a mother, and other such terrible objects. These keys are often documented in unsavory tomes of a dubious nature, though they're common enough to be found in many Material Plane libraries focusing on planar travel and lore. The Black Cult of Ahm is known to possess a great number of tomes with this level of detail in their secret storehouses across the multiverse.

TRAVELING AROUND

There are so many ways for the Abyss to hinder travel that it's difficult to document here. For the most part, hazards to travel equate to hazards to life. For example, water is rarely just water in the Abyss. It could be acidic, freezing cold, boiling hot, toxic, gelatinous, life-leeching, soul-sucking, screaming, or all of these things at once. The same goes for the air or the land.

Travelers need to be wary and learn as much about their abyssal destination as possible before traveling. Sometimes, however, this isn't possible, especially if thrown into the Infinite Layers or when falling into a pit on the Plain of Infinite Portals.

Refer to the Random Abyssal Threat generator under Hazards & Phenomena for examples and details of travel hazards and concerns.

THE POWERFUL AND MIGHTY

Demons are the most common inhabitants of the Abyss and their number is incalculable. They are ruled nominally at least by demon lords, and these monstrously evil foes offer the most tangible obstacle to completing goals in the Abyss. However, they are not the only ones with a vested interest in these infinite realms of chaos and evil.

BLACK CULT OF AHM

No creature of any kind across the multiverse has written more about demons and the Abyss than the mortal scholar Tulket nor Ahm. Little is known about the man himself, though from his extensive writings on abyssal and demonic lore it is surmised that he was not only a powerful wizard but also an accomplished priest. He wrote more than a hundred volumes of lore collectively referred to as the Black Scrolls of Ahm, and his teachings and philosophy spawned a shadowy cabal in his name.

The Black Cult of Ahm is known by many names across the multiverse, and they operate in secret with a single goal – to amass as much knowledge about demons and the Abyss as possible. Some seek the knowledge as a path to ultimate power, while others wish to right some wrong in their past. Their lore deals with the darkest depravities of the multiverse, and it is of little wonder why they hide themselves from the eyes of the world. In the wrong hands, the information gathered by the Black Cult can do irreparable damage.

Unfortunately, though, the wrong hands is sometimes the leadership within the Black Cult itself. Tulket nor Ahm was no saint but he stared into the literal Abyss and wrote down what he saw, and that kind of corruption can taint even the brightest of hearts. Others that have followed in his footsteps have fallen harder and deeper into that well of darkness, and terrible atrocities have been performed in Ahm's name.

But still they operate, usually as small sects in larger organizations dedicated to lore and knowledge. The secretive bardic college of Ahm seeks to redeem their

namesake and take their knowledge to the larger multiverse, but this is not the prevailing philosophy among most black cultists.

The Black Scrolls of Ahm form the basis for the organization and in these writings many secrets can be gleaned. Tulket nor Ahm penned each one of the true Black Scrolls, and though each is unique in form and detail they all contain a wealth of demonic and abyssal information. A member of the Black Cult must have read at least one of the scrolls penned by Ahm, leading them down a dark path to seek more and more knowledge.

DEMON LORDS

Demons can be found on every layer of the Abyss, a great teeming horde of monsters out of the darkest pit or blackest nightmare. From the sludge-like manes to the vulture-like vrock, demons take the form of twisted Material Plane creatures often, though some have been transformed so completely they lack any basic commonality between known beasts.

And towering over the demonic horde are the demon lords. Each is a unique expression of evil made manifest in the Abyss. Some planar scholars argue that they are actually the physical manifestation of the Abyss itself, an explanation that offers justification behind their uniqueness. Most are ambitious as well, and some, like the Dark Prince Graz'zt, has moved to take over multiple layers, offering a different take on the nature of the demon lords – that they are simply the top of a chaotic chain that operates under no obvious rule or direct whim.

Each demon lord holds god-like power on their layer, and it is thought that in their place of greatest strength a demon lord is immortal. Outside of that, however, and they lose this trait, and some demon lords have been destroyed over the countless centuries. Others have been deposed, their influence waning with the loss of their layer.

Additionally, many demon lords hold sway over a specific aspect of the multiverse, though almost all cases they are not the sole divine claimant over such matters – while Orcus stylizes himself as the Demon Lord of the Undead, he clashes on the cosmic scale with other powerful entities that hold dominion over the undead.

While theoretically there are infinite demon lords in the Abyss, only finite number have shown themselves on the multiversal stage. The list below represents the most common, the ones that have vested interests in affecting the Material Plane and the rest of the Outer Planes with their schemes and desires. Most of them carry a title proclaiming themselves the prince, king, queen, or other epithet for rulership over their demonic kind. Many identify as male or female, though most can assume multiple forms especially in their home realm, but others are simply monstrous manifestations of the wild and chaotic nature of the Abyss itself.

Baphomet. The demon lord of minotaurs is known as the Prince of Beasts. Baphomet is an ultraviolent being who relishes physical combat whenever possible and is known to incite insatiable bloodlust in his followers. His realm in the Abyss is the Endless Maze, the 600th layer, and there he encourages the many ruthless tribes of

savage minotaurs to hunt and kill in his name. Baphomet has an intense rivalry with Yeenoghu, and the forces of the two clash constantly.

Dagon. In the lightless caverns of the Shadowsea, Dagon dwells and schemes as the Prince of the Darkened Depths. It is a massive creature that harkens back to an ancient primordial era of the Abyss, and some scholars say that Dagon is the oldest of the known demon lords. For its incredible age, Dagon is renown for its insight, and other demons often seek it out in the Shadowsea to consult with the demon lord. The true motivations of the enigmatic creature may never be known.

Demogorgon. Primal rage and unfiltered chaos define Demogorgon, who stylizes himself as the Prince of Demons, and few argue that claim. Physically powerful and incredibly cunning, Demogorgon fights everyone and everything, including himself – the demon lord's twin heads are possessed of two distinct minds that often war against one another. He commands legions of demons from his home on Gaping Maw, the 88th layer of the Abyss, and he has had long standing feuds with Orcus and Graz'zt.

Fraz-Urb'luu. Illusions and trickery are the primary tools of Fraz-Urb'luu, the Prince of Deception. He is a powerful, conniving demon lord with great magical powers at his command, and his realm of Hollow's Heart obeys his every whim. As befitting his title, Fraz-Urb'luu counts no ally among his demonic kind, but he only recently was returned to his rightful place in the Abyss after an extended and unwanted stay on the Material Plane.

Graz'zt. One of the most ambitious demon lords on the Abyssal stage, Graz'zt is the Dark Prince and patron of tyrants across the multiverse. He holds more territory on the Abyss than any other demon lord, stitching together three layers to form Azzagrat, but the ever-scheming Graz'zt always seeks more. He fights with every other demon lord whenever it's convenient, but his feud with Demogorgon has become legendary. The symbol holding the Dark Prince's six-fingered hand is used by his agents across the multiverse in his quest for ultimate conquest.

Juiblex. Slimy, amorphous, and grotesque nearly beyond description, Juiblex is the Faceless Lord and commands a great many oozes from his home realm of Shedaklah. He actually shares the layer with Zuggtmoy, Lady of Fungi, and the two face off against one another in a never-ending tug-of-war for the layer's total control. Unlike some other demon lords, the Faceless Lord has no guile and holds little intelligence, instead moving with brute force on his enemies whenever he sees an opportunity.

Lolth. The Queen of Spiders is more than a simple demon lord on the Abyss – she is a full-fledged goddess, a divine being that stands at the head of the drow elf pantheon. Lolth's home in the Demonweb Pits is an endless black pit crisscrossed with titanic strands of webbing, and through these the Queen of Spiders can spy on and access many places across the multiverse. She

rarely engages in the politics of the Abyss, focusing instead on her drow children on the Material Plane and elsewhere, but she is manipulative and cunning when confronted.

Nocticula. Shadows cling to this demon lord like a cloak, and Nocticula is known as the Undeniable for a good reason. Her realm of Darklight, the 72nd layer of the Abyss, is a vast landscape of jagged mountain peaks under a bloated black sun that never sets. Nocticula is often associated with vampires, and while she counts many among her most ardent supporters, she also commands legions of hideous bats that do her bidding. She has a honeyed voice that drips with promise, but her physical appearance is that of a true monsters.

Orcus. The Prince of the Undead is one of the most active demon lords in the Abyss and holds one of the most feared artifacts in the multiverse, the wand that bears his name. Orcus is a brutish force with necromantic powers unsurpassed among his demon lord peers (none of which he considers his equal), and his legions on Thanatos, the 113th layer, are more monstrously-fused undead than typical demon. He hates Demogorgon more than any other demon lord, but his fury and sheer willpower has driven more than one demon lord to be crushed beneath his goat hooves.

Pazuzu. The first layer of the Abyss holds no true ruler, but Pazuzu, the Prince of the Lower Aerial Kingdoms, is the undisputed master of the blood-red skies on the Plain of Infinite Portals. He is a screeching bird-like demon, a creature nearly as old as Dagon, and he has kept his position by being cowardly and opportunistic. From the massive fortress of Skeleton Tree, Pazuzu observes the happenings around him and sells the information to other interested parties, including other demon lords, gods, and rumors persist that he has a line to the devil lords of the Nine Hells as well.

Sess'Innek. The Emperor Lizard is a reclusive demon lord who dwells on the 7th layer of the Abyss, in a fog-enshrouded swamp and jungle known as the Phantom Plane. Sess'Innek's realm is populated with the crumbling ruins of the previous inhabitants, but now it crawls with the fiendish lizards and lizardfolk that owe fealty to the layer's current ruler. He appears as a massive humanoid lizard, much like a lizardfolk, with six arms in which he expertly wields longswords against opponents. Through some magical power, Sess'Innek has managed to seal the Phantom Plane from most outsiders, but in the Abyss there's always a way in.

Ugudenk. Forever burrowing, the Squirring King is a colossal demonic worm that seems possessed of no unique intelligence. Its sheer size and voracity ranks it among the more powerful demon lords of the Abyss, but Ugudenk has no goal or thought save satiating its monstrous appetite. The Writhing Realm, the 177th layer of the Abyss, is a labyrinthine network of tunnels created by the Squirring King's passing, and it is populated by no end of scavengers that follow in Ugudenk's wake.

Yeenoghu. The Prince of Gnolls is a master hunter and savage, bloodthirsty foe. It is widely accepted that the gnolls that populated the multiverse originated in Yeenoghu's wake, a horrendous transformation that created a race of monsters as ruthless as their demon lord progenitor. In the Death Dells, the 422nd layer of the Abyss, Yeenoghu hunts through the endless canyons and crags attended by great packs of demonic servants and powerful fiendish gnolls. The Prince of Gnolls holds a never-ending grudge against Baphomet, though the original cause is unknown, and the two send wave after wave of their followers against one another in pitched battles.

Zuggtmoy. One of the more active demon lords outside of the Abyss is the Lady of Fungi, Zuggtmoy. She maintains strong cults on the Material Plane, though she has learned to disguise her true nature and hide behind religious facades in order to facilitate more worship. She was the chief architect behind the infamous Temples of Elemental Evil, an act that actually imprisoned her on the Material Plane for a period of time. Zuggtmoy eventually was freed and returned to her realm, Shedaklah, and worked to bring the Faceless Lord Juiblex under heel once again.

IGNASHENDRE, FLAME OF THE RIFT

Dragons are powerful creatures, and the very oldest can stand against demon lords and even some gods. Ignashendre is one such powerful wyrm. A red dragon of incredible age and size with magical capabilities to rival the strongest wizards, she dwells in the Rift of Ash, the 103rd layer of the Abyss, in the deepest caves of the canyon's walls above and below the bubbling magma lake at the bottom. She claims the title Flame of the Rift as a reference to her Abyssal lair.

Ignashendre has an insatiable curiosity that is currently bent towards understanding how demons function within the larger ecosystem of the Abyss. She does this for two purposes. One, to better understand the implacable foes that surround her in her chosen home. The other is much more secretive, and it is to enhance her own mighty powers with demonic traits. Thus far, Ignashendre has managed to gain some of the resistances common to demons through infusion of their blood, but she believes this is only the beginning.

The great dragon's experiments have yielded interesting results, some of which she has applied to her mindless golem-like servants. But Ignashendre lacks a vital component to push her experiments to the next level. That vital component she believes is the essence of a demon lord. She has remained quiet on the Abyssal stage, but she has not been idle, and her legion of demonflesh servants grows ever larger in the deepest bowels of the Rift of Ash. It is only a matter of time before she makes a move against one of them.

RIGHTEOUS ARMY OF THE WHITE FLAME

Evil sits at the core of the Abyss, the kind of evil that seeps into other planes and poisons minds. For some paladins and knights, the very idea of this kind of evil existing is revolting, but for the Righteous Army of the White Flame it has become a clarion call for action. This holy order of knights originated when its leader, a fierce human woman named Lady Tyranna Dawn, was given a vision of a piercing white flame that could consume darkness and evil.

Gathering a small cadre of loyal followers, Lady Tyranna Dawn pursued that dream across the planes and eventually found the White Flame. Suffused with pure yellow light, this massive crystal called out to the paladin and her followers and extracted a great oath. In exchange for powers to push back and dispel evil, the White Flame demanded that the Abyss be cleansed of all its demonic inhabitants in order to stop the tide of evil from washing over the multiverse.

Lady Tyranna Dawn took up the White Flame's call and through her actions she gathered a massive force from across the planes. With the intelligent crystal at the lead, they pushed through a gate and spilled out onto the 196th layer of the Abyss. No demon lord stood watch over that particular layer, but the plane itself rebelled against the presence of the Righteous Army.

Now entrenched in a war without end, the Righteous Army of the White Flame will not stop until they see their mission fulfilled. They have made great strides on the 196th layer, creating hospitable zones, but often times the evil grows just as quickly as it is cut down. Some members of the order have taken to less direct methods of exterminating evil, and to date the White Flame seems content as long as the main military force remains engaged in the Abyss.

CREATURES & DENIZENS

Without a doubt, the most common creatures encountered in the Abyss are the innumerable demons. From quasits to vrocks to nalfeshnee and even worse, demons stand at the top of the Abyssal food chain. However, infinite layers spawns infinite possibilities, and other creatures have sprung up. Most of them are animalistic, never challenging the demons but instead picking off weak members and serving as food for other creatures.

BLACKHIDE

Blackhides are massive, ebon-skinned boar-like creatures that roam the blasted mountains and broken steppes of the various layers of the Abyss. Their skin is thick and armor-plated, giving the creatures their name, and their jagged tusks are capable of rending flesh from bone in an instant. The blackhide's tail ends with a serrated edge stronger than any sword, but the monster's true threat lies in its magic-draining bile.

Magic Hunters. Blackhides have a nose for magic and those that wield it. Some demons, notably nalfeshnee, are fond of training the great beasts to hunt down magical foes. When one such target is found, the blackhides are released to use their anti-magic bile to great effect while the masters swoop in for the kill. In the wilds of the Abyss, herds of blackhides can follow the smell of magic for days, seeking out their favored prey.

Running of the Blackhides. A common occurrence on the Plain of Infinite Portals is the running of the blackhides, a great stampede of the monsters. It occurs when one of the manu pits on the layer expels a great plume of magic from somewhere lower in the Abyss. The resulting black cloud drives the blackhides to frenzy, and they rush about in herds seeking to destroy everything they can. Pazuzu and his flying ilk are fond of dropping travelers into the fray, taking bets on how long a victim lasts before they are trampled, gored, or slashed to death by the rampaging horde.

BLACKHIDE

Large beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 105 (10d10+50)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	7 (-2)	10 (+0)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Int +1, Wis +3

Damage Resistances cold, psychic

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses Passive Perception 10

Languages understands Abyssal but doesn't speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Charge. If the blackhide moves at least 20 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a tusk attack on the same turn, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 17 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Magic Resistance. The blackhide has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Relentless. If the blackhide takes 10 damage or less that would reduce it to 0 hit points, it is reduced to 1 hit point instead.

Sense Magic. The blackhide can sense the presence of a magical creature or one capable of casting spells within 1 mile.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The blackhide attacks with its tusk and bladed tail.

Tusk. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d6+7) slashing damage.

Bladed Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 21 (4d6+7) slashing damage.

Anti-Magic Bile (Recharge 5-6). The blackhide spits tar-like bile in a 60-foot line. Every creature in the line must succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they are coated with the tar and suffer 27 (6d8) psychic damage. In addition, if the target has any spell slots available, they lose the 3 highest level spell slots. On a successful save, the target suffers half psychic damage and loses no spell slots.

BLOODBLOAT

In the Abyss, few things are as they seem. Blood pools in many layers, running in great rivers and creating lakes in others, and sometimes these grotesque liquids give rise to bloodbloats. A bloodbloat is a walking, vaguely humanoid oozing blood pile. It is intelligent, but the creature is driven by an all-consuming hunger for fresh blood from living victims. It speaks Abyssal in a gurgling, drowned voice, taunting its blood-filled foes. A bloodbloat can be of almost any color given the number of living creatures in the multiverse that have blood, and on the Abyss variations of green, black, and yellow are not uncommon. Red is the most commonly encountered color however.

In the Wake of the Blood War. When demons and devils clash in the eternal battlefields of the Blood War, bloodbloats are often born as a result of the wild and chaotic energies leftover. Fiendish blood is often black or sickly green, and the ooze monstrosities bear the same likeness when they pull themselves up from the blasted ground. Scavengers of such battles often have to fight packs of bloodbloats as they all squabble over the discarded remnants of the skirmish.

Geysers of the Crimson Canyons. Bloodbloats can appear on any Abyssal layer that features blood in its geography or makeup, but they are famous on the 34th layer known as the Crimson Canyons. There, the deep red rocks of the broken landscape are littered with spontaneous geysers that erupt in huge plumes of crimson blood pulled from somewhere deeper in the plane. Bloodbloats are drawn to this layer and revel in the spilled blood.

BLOODBLOAT

Medium ooze, chaotic evil

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 90 (12d8+36)

Speed 30 ft., swim 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	7 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning and piercing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison, slashing

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, prone

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Amorphous. The ooze can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Spider Climb. The bloodbloat can climb difficult surfaces, including upside down on ceilings, without needing to make an ability check.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The bloodbloat attacks twice with its slam.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

Pull the Blood (Recharge 5-6). The bloodbloat draws out the blood from living creatures in a 30-foot radius around it. Each living creature in the radius must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, suffering 28 (8d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. The bloodbloat regains hp equal to 10 + the number of targets affected. Bloodbloats and other oozes are immune to this effect.

MAULER

Demons are the most common inhabitant of the Abyssal layers, but the chaotic nature of the plane spawns creatures that even they fear. The maulers are such beasts. The mauler is a solitary fiend that resembles a massive bear, with heavily muscled forearms and a bulky body that moves surprisingly quick across the blasted landscapes. They hunt and eat anything they can find, mostly demons but a mauler is not picky as long as the meat is fresh. There are three known varieties of the fearsome monsters, but others may exist across the infinite layers.

GAZER MAULER

Less muscled than its cousins, the gazer mauler appears nearly emaciated, its crimson fur thin and patchy across its body. The gazer mauler's eyes glow with a fierce ruby intensity, and it is capable of delivering a beam of boiling magma that burns even demon flesh. It otherwise attacks with its fearsome bite and mighty claws in combat.

IRON MAULER

The greatest of the known maulers is the iron mauler. Covered in heavy black plates of crude natural iron, the creature is tough to hit and difficult to bring down. Its claws are capable of rending armor worn by foes in moments, and its legendary bite can chew through the most magical armor. Iron maulers are the slowest of the maulers in the Abyss but they are the most feared.

TENTACLED MAULER

The shoulder blades of the tentacled mauler end in a pair of long, sinewy appendages topped with a pad filled with razor claws. These distinct features give the mauler its name, and also allow it to strike quickly against foes further away than one might expect. Tentacled maulers are not afraid to take on opponents much larger than they, relying on the extended reach of their tentacles to win the day (which they often do!).

GAZER MAULER

Huge fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 138 (12d12+60)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages understands Abyssal but doesn't speak

Challenge 9 (5,000 XP)

Keen Smell. The mauler has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Magic Resistance. The mauler has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mauler makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 24 (4d8+6) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 16 (3d6+6) slashing damage.

Magma Beam (Recharge 5-6). The mauler shoots extremely hot fire from its eyes in a 60 feet long line. Creatures caught in the line must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 35 (10d6) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Against this attack, targets immune to fire are instead to be treated as resistant to fire, and targets normally resistant to fire are treated as having no protection.

IRON MAULER

Huge fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 184 (16d12+80)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	6 (-2)	14 (+2)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +6

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages understands Abyssal but doesn't speak

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

Keen Smell. The mauler has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Magic Resistance. The mauler has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mauler makes three attacks: two with its claws and one with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (6d8+8) piercing damage. In addition, nonmagical or magical armor worn by the target is shredded and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d6+8) slashing damage. In addition, nonmagical armor worn by the target is shredded and takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. The armor is destroyed if the penalty reduces its AC to 10.

TENTACLED MAULER

Huge fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 161 (14d12+70)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	8 (-1)

Skills Perception +6

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages understands Abyssal but doesn't speak

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

Keen Smell. The mauler has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Magic Resistance. The mauler has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The mauler makes three attacks: two with its tentacles and one with its bite.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d8+8) piercing damage.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d6+8) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) piercing damage.

ROGREZEN

Vermin are common across the multiverse, and the Abyss is no exception. The vermin there, however, have developed into thinking, calculating monsters known as rogrezen. Hunchbacked, covered in patchy black or darkly colored stringy fur, these man-sized rodents resemble rats with exaggerated humanoid features. Their eyes shine with malevolent green light, a sign of their cunning, and they travel in packs beneath the feet of the demons. Rogrezen rarely wield weapons, preferring their poison-tipped claws in combat, and are capable of delivering a noxious breath to weaken enemies.

Information Network. While not true demons, rogrezen often serve them out of cowardice and fear. They have a knack for getting into hidden places, and many demon lords keep troupes of rogrezen spies across the layers of the Abyss to report the doings of their enemies. The rat fiends in turn share this information with one another, selling it for souls to interested parties, including devil princes seeking an upper hand in the never-ending Blood War.

Plague Father and Mother of Teeth. Rogrezen pay homage to a pair of mythical figures called the Plague Father and Mother of Claws. Below gods and even the demon lords, these creatures are powerful rogrezen nonetheless that have survived countless years in the Abyss. The Plague Father has been known to deliver rogrezen to the Material Plane to spread disease and decimate entire kingdoms with demonic spores, while the Mother of Teeth urges her brethren to cut all that oppose them with their savage weapons. The two bicker and argue amongst each other, rarely working together, and much to the chagrin of the demon lords finding them across the Abyss can be an impossible task when they do not wish to be found.

ROGREZEN

Medium fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)

Skills Perception +4, Stealth +8

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Cunning Action. The rogrezen can take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action as a bonus action on each of its turns.

Evasion. If the rogrezen is subject to an effect that allows it to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, the rogrezen instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

Keen Smell. The rogrezen has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

Pack Tactics. The rogrezen has advantage on an attack roll against a creature if at least one of the rogrezen's allies is within 5 feet of the creature and the ally isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rogrezen attacks twice with its claws.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 8 (1d6+5) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Poison Breath (Recharge 5-6). The rogrezen exhales a cone of poisonous gas out to 30 feet. Creatures caught in the cone must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 hour.

SWARM OF ABYSSAL INSECTS

In the Abyss, insects are nasty, voracious creatures that fear no demon or stranger. They gather in larger swarms and move across the layers, eating indiscriminately and leaving nothing living in their wake. Abyssal insects come in a variety of forms, each having their own special characteristics that match those of their Material Plane brethren. You can use the sidebar in the *Monster Manual* for variant insect swarms on the statistics for the swarm of abyssal insects, creating beetles, centipedes, spiders, or wasps.

SWARM OF ABYSSAL INSECTS

Large swarm of Tiny beasts, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 78 (12d10+12)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	19 (+4)	12 (+1)	3 (-4)	7 (-2)	1 (-5)

Damage Resistances acid, bludgeoning, cold, fire, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 8

Languages --

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Chaos Field. Any spell of 1st-level or higher cast by a creature in the swarm's space triggers a Wild Magic surge. Roll on the Wild Magic Surge table under the Wild Magic sorcerer in the *Player's Handbook* after the spell resolves.

Magic Resistance. The swarm has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Tiny insect. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The swarm makes one attack against every creature in its space.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 0 ft., one target in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 21 (6d6) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) acid damage, or 10 (3d6) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) acid damage if the swarm has half of its hit points or fewer.

VARRANGOIN

Varrangoin are intelligent bat-like fiends native to the Abyss. They appear as skull-headed giant bats, with rotten flesh hanging from their skeletal wings and a long wickedly barbed tail. There are several known varieties of varrangoin, but the most common are the energy affiliated creatures. Each is indistinguishable from another, however, at least until the creature unleashes its breath weapon on unsuspecting foes.

Chaotic Flocks. Cruel and ruthless, varrangoin are nevertheless cowardly scavengers that prefer to pick the bones of the fallen than face a worthwhile foe in combat. They are rarely seen outside of a sizable flock, though they do not recognize any individual leader, giving such gatherings a wild and chaotic appearance. While the fiends can speak, they do not take names for fear of binding themselves to a secret – communicating with a varrangoin can be a confusing and duplicitous effort.

Winged Servants of the Night. Varrangoin are often conscripted as servants to more powerful denizens. The demon lord Noctacula is known to breed the creatures in the gloomy depths of her realm and uses them as scouts and servants across the Abyss. She has an unnatural connection to these varrangoin and is able to communicate with them directly nearly anywhere they travel across the Abyss. It is known that Noctacula holds a few greater varrangoin as servants as well in her Cave of Glooms.

VARRANGOIN

Medium fiend, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 32 (5d8+10)

Speed 10 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
7 (-2)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +3, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison, special (see below)

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Abyssal

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Energy Affinity. The varrangoin has an affinity to a specific energy type – acid, cold, fire, or lightning. They are immune to damage from that energy type, and their breath weapon takes on a different form based on their affinity.

Magic Resistance. The varrangoin has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Sunlight Sensitivity. While in sunlight, the varrangoin has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The varrangoin makes two attacks: one with its claws and one with its tail stinger.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) slashing damage.

Tail Stinger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d10+4) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) poison damage.

Breath Weapon (Recharge 5-6). The varrangoin releases a breath weapon based on its energy affinity. Creatures in the radius of the breath weapon must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, suffering 21 (6d6) damage of the listed type on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one. For acid and lightning varrangoin, the radius is a 50-foot line. For cold and fire varrangoin, the radius is a 30-foot cone.

ZRINTOR WALKER

Cultivated originally by Graz'zt the Dark Prince from the Viper Forest of Zrintor on the 45th layer of the Abyss, zrintor walkers resemble emaciated treants. Its thick bark-like hide oozes yellow and crimson ichor, and what passes as its face is twisted in a howling demoniac scowl. Zrintor walkers feed on blood of any kind, which they leech from victims grasped in their long vines that each resemble viper heads.

Abyssal Seeds. The Viper Forest dominates much of the 45th layer, which forms one third of Graz'zt's domain of Azzagrat. The Dark Prince has long sought to spread his influence across the Abyss, and one of the many schemes he has in motion are the seeds of the zrintor walkers. Each seed resembles a blood-red wooden heart the size of a melon and when planted in the ground and nourished with blood it can grow into a tree from the viper forest. If the blood is from a single good-aligned creature, the tree sprouts instead into a zrintor walker, capable of wreaking more havoc and destruction than the barely mobile viper tree.

Heart of Zrintor. The deepest depth of the Viper Forest of Zrintor holds a stand of mighty, black demonic living trees. These creatures are known as the Heart of Zrintor and are the progenitors of Graz'zt's zrintor walkers, though whether he created them deliberately or stumbled upon them accidentally is a matter of debate among planar scholars. What is known is that these original creatures are larger, tougher, and more vile than their seed spawn, and the Dark Prince has been known to consult them on matters of Abyssal politics from time to time.

ZRINTOR WALKER

Huge plant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 119 (14d12+28)

Speed 20 ft., climb 10 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 10

Languages understands Abyssal but doesn't speak

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

Drain Blood. At the start of its turn, the zrintor walker drains the blood from grappled targets. Grappled targets have their Constitution score reduced by 1d4. The target dies if this reduces its Constitution to 0. Otherwise, the reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest.

Magic Resistance. The zrintor walker has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Rejuvenation. When the zrintor walker deals damage, it regains 10 hit points up to its normal maximum.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The zrintor walker makes four vine lash attacks. For each target grappled by the zrintor walker, it loses a vine lash attack.

Vine Lash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8+6) piercing damage and the target must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled by the zrintor walker (escape DC 16).

HAZARDS & PHENOMENA

Every one of the infinite layers of the Abyss offers a hazard for travelers, whether it be in the terrain, a freak storm, or the very air itself.

ABYSSAL THREATS

The tables below are provided as inspiration for you to generate key threats for layers of the Abyss. As you roll on them, you may notice some of the results don't make initial sense. You are encouraged to keep them, though, and puzzle through how the random rolls can be used together. In the Abyss, chaos is an omnipresent force, and that force doesn't always have to obey commonly understood laws. Snow and ice may be present in hot environments, creating the sort of juxtaposition the Abyss is known for.

You can roll on the Threat Source table two or three times for each layer to create some abyssal threats that cause problems for travelers. Demons and other native creatures are generally immune to the effects of an abyssal threat. The Threat Type table contains a great number of nasty options with suggestions on how to implement each, but they are simply suggestions. Some of the Threat Types are simply meant to be unsettling and may not actually cause damage to travelers. Use your best judgement.

1D20	THREAT SOURCE
1-10	Terrain. Roll for Terrain, Unusual Color, and 1 or 2 Threat Types. These threats are generally persistent and affect travelers of all kind passing through them.
11-13	Air. Roll for Climate and 1 or 2 Threat Types. These threats are generally persistent and affect travelers of all kind on the layer.
14-20	Storm. Roll for Climate, Unusual Color, and 1 or 2 Threat Types. These threats are intermittent but generally more potent.

1D20	TERRAIN
1-3	Wasteland, desert, or tundra depending on climate
4-6	Forests
7-8	Plains
9-10	Mountains
11-12	Underground
13-14	Swamps
15-16	Aquatic
17	Lakes, roll again to determine what type of terrain the lakes appear in.
18	Rivers, roll again to determine what type of terrain the rivers cut through.
19	Unstable
20	Massive creature
1D20	UNUSUAL COLOR
1-2	Blood red
3-4	Scaly green
5-6	Pure black
7-8	Bone white
9-10	Ash gray
11-12	Dull blue
13-14	Bruised purple
15-16	Fiery orange
17-18	Bloated yellow
19-20	Roll again but the color is lush
1D20	CLIMATE
1-3	Blazing hot
4-8	Uncomfortably hot
9-10	Warm
11-12	Cool
13-17	Uncomfortably cold
18-20	Icy cold

1D100	THREAT TYPE
1-2	Acidic. The threat deals periodic acid damage.
3-4	Fiery. The threat deals periodic fire damage.
5-6	Icy. The threat deals periodic cold damage.
7-8	Poisonous. The threat deals periodic poison damage.
9-10	Drowning. The threat drowns travelers.
11-12	Lightning. The threat deals periodic lightning damage.
13-14	Exhausting. The threat inflicts exhaustion levels.
15-16	Life-leeching. The threat inflicts temporary Constitution damage.
17-18	Soul-draining. The threat inflicts temporary Wisdom damage.
19-20	Strength-sapping. The threat inflicts temporary Strength damage.
21-22	Mind-numbing. The threat inflicts temporary Intelligence damage.
23-24	Emotion-dulling. The threat inflicts temporary Charisma damage.
25-26	Reflex-slowng. The threat inflicts temporary Dexterity damage.
27-28	Fear-inducing. The threat causes travelers to become afraid.
29-30	Necrotic. The threat deals periodic necrotic damage.
31-32	Forceful. The threat deals periodic force damage.
33-34	Salty. The threat spoils food and ruins provisions.
35-36	Cacophonous. The threat causes madness.
37-38	Screaming. The threat prevents short or long rests.
39-40	Paralyzing. The threat seeks to slow travelers.
41-42	Imprisoning. The threat seeks to stop travelers.
43-44	Darkness. The threat creates impenetrable darkness.
45-46	Souls. The threat is born of mortal souls.
47-48	Zombies. The threat is zombie-like (hard to kill).
49-50	Skeletons. The threat is skeletal (bony).
51-52	Beetles. The threat is comprised of beetles.
53-54	Spiders. The threat is comprised of spiders.
55-56	Worms. The threat is comprised of worms.
57-58	Maggots. The threat is comprised of maggots.

1D100	THREAT TYPE
59-60	Rats. The threat is comprised of ravenous rats.
61-62	Bats. The threat is comprised of vicious bats.
63-64	Snakes. The threat is comprised of snakes or vipers.
65-66	Vultures. The threat is comprised of hungry vultures.
67-68	Lizards. The threat is comprised of lizards.
69-70	Leeches. The threat is comprised of leeches.
71-72	Steam. The threat involves poor visibility.
73-74	Ash. The threat involves smoke and fire.
75-76	Flies. The threat is comprised of fly swarms.
77-78	Blood. The threat involves blood.
79-80	Gnashing. The threat involves biting or chewing.
81-82	Snowy. The threat involves snow and ice.
83-84	Devouring. The threat involves eating or swallowing.
85-86	Dreaming. The threat involves invading dreams and nightmares.
87-88	Slimy. The threat is thick and slows travelers.
89-90	Fungal. The threat is plant-based.
91-92	Chaotic. The threat involves wild magic surges.
93-94	Sleep-inducing. The threat puts travelers to sleep.
95-96	Bleeding. The threat deals regular slashing or piercing damage.
97-98	Diseased. The threat inflicts a disease.
99-00	Styxian. The threat involves stealing memories.

MYSTERIOUS SITES & TREASURES

The Infinite Layers of the Abyss hold more terrors and horror than any other plane. Each layer hides secret knowledge beneath grime, death, and decay, along with a wide variety of ways to kill and maim intruders. However, many of the layers are described in other products available, so this section focuses on the interesting sites and treasures that could draw a party of adventurers into the Abyss.

ABYSM

The twin towers of Abysm rise from the Brine Flats on the Gaping Maw, the 88th layer of the Abyss, and serve as the palace of Demogorgon, Prince of Demons. Each of the towers is tall and topped by a massive fanged skull, with multiple bridges spanning the distance between them. Demogorgon's twin nature is reflected physically in Abysm, and the contents of each spire reflect the demon lord's schemes and plots being wrought by each of his individual minds.

Abysm is constructed of salt-encrusted coral as strong as stone, and its depths go far below the Brine Flats. The many levels of each tower contain numerous experiments on the nature of demonkind, methods to craft new horrific diseases and poisons, and records of Demogorgon's numerous enemies across the multiverse. The Prince of Demons himself can usually be found wandering Abysm's many chambers and rooms, checking on the results of experiments and plots.

BLACK SCROLLS OF AHM

Tulket nor Ahm was a famous scholar who spent his life in pursuit of one thing – knowledge over demons and the Abyss they call home. He traveled more layers of the Abyss than has been recorded by any other mortal, and he wrote his findings down in hundreds of journals, notes, and papers. Collectively, his writings are referred to as the Black Scrolls of Ahm and they form the basis for the Black Cult that bears his name.

Some of the Black Scrolls contain magical knowledge Ahm discovered in his travels, and these are the most prized, but even his non-magical scripts contain worthwhile information on the nature of demons, the Blood War, and the Abyss itself. Individual chapter houses of the Black Cult hold individual collections, and the cult's hidden library in Sigil holds fragments from the *Abyssal Mundus*, Ahm's ultimate work.

One maddening aspect of Ahm's varied work is a magical enchantment placed on the most important pieces, which sends the scroll to a random location across the planes when its power is utilized. And some of them contain secrets of binding major demons, the hidden names of ancient demon lords, gates and passages to sealed layers, and other esoteric lore not found written anywhere else. The Black Cult only utilizes such magic in dire emergencies, instead relying on the knowledge of their individual members, but on occasion the full power of a Black Scroll of Ahm has been unleashed.

BROKEN REACH

The Plain of Infinite Portals is the most visited of the layers of the Abyss, not only because it's the first layer but also because of its gate-like nature. Visitors are not uncommon, nor rampaging armies fighting the Blood War, but all travelers know that the fortress of Broken Reach is neutral ground. The succubus Red Shroud runs the place like a tavern and brooks no violence within the grounds – more than one demon has been utterly destroyed by Red Shroud's power for disobeying this simple rule.

Yugoloth mercenaries, planar merchants, demon warriors, and adventurers are all welcome in Broken Reach, and there are dozens of visitors onsite at any given time. Red Shroud deals in secrets only, the bigger the better, but she is still the undisputed mistress of the fortress – crossing her is a sure sign of a death sentence. Her fondness and knowledge of poisons, including ones capable of rendering demons and devils low, is well documented as well. She is also an accomplished sorceress and it is widely believed she crafted the powerful enchantments over Broken Reach that trigger when violence occurs.

CAVE OF GLOOMS

The 72nd layer of the Abyss is known as Darklight, where the demon lord Noctacula the Undeniable reign supreme. Her realm is cloaked in perpetual darkness over jagged mountains of jet-black stone, and she can often be found winging through the night sky attended by great flocks of demonic bats. Noctacula's personal home is the Cave of Glooms, a massive cavern in the heart of the Midnight Mountain.

There, the demon lord rests and plays out her countless plots, using bats of all kind as spies and messengers across the Abyss. Noctacula is subtler than many demon lords, and most mortals on the Material Plane do not know of her existence – but that doesn't mean she has no eyes or ears there. It is known that daylight is shunned by the demon lord, but she seeks some treasure across the planes. Her bat minions are innocuous and fly silently through the multiverse. What does Noctacula seek?

DEMONWING

In the distant past as part of some larger scheme, Demogorgon set his demonic smiths to a seemingly impossible task – take a layer of the Abyss and bind it into a mobile vessel. After much research, magical study, and willpower, the ship Demonwing was born. A massive, triple-mast sailing ship that actually contains the folded contents of an infinite layer of the Abyss below its black wooden decks. As part of its legendary enchantments, the ship sailed not on water but on the winds of the planes.

The command of Demonwing was given over to an ambitious balor demon in Demogorgon's service, and the ship sailed on many scouting journeys across the Abyss, the Nine Hells, and other battlefields of the Blood War. The balor was eventually overthrown, and the new captain took the ship to plunder the Material Plane but was thwarted by the legendary mage Emirikol the Chaotic. Emirikol

took possession of Demonwing but rarely used it, and eventually he gave it over to a group of adventurers. The current location of Demonwing is not known.

The lower decks of the Abyssal ship contain unending halls and chambers, exactly as if it were a layer of the Abyss, and it is filled with demons of all kind along with the plundered loot from hundreds of battles. The original balor captain is said to be below decks as well, plotting a return against whomever controls Demonwing, and Demogorgon himself has never forgotten about the useful vessel.

DESICCATED GARDEN OF DHALMARN

Lolth's spider-web choked home in the Demonweb Pits holds a dizzying array of individual caves and cocoons. The Desiccated Garden is one of them, tended by a drow lich named Dhalmar. When a victim dies in the Demonweb Pits as a result of spider venom, the body is brought to Dhalmar where he and his attendant servants string up the corpse and preserve it in its dried husk state for all eternity. Countless bodies hang in the garden by silken threads of delicate spider webbing, and the drow lich has gone quite insane over the centuries, talking to the bodies as if they were alive.

Dhalmar's instability is tolerated by Lolth and her priestesses because the lich commands a great deal of knowledge about undead and the process for preserving bodies. His laboratory in the Desiccated Garden contains hundreds upon hundreds of jars of fluid, the remnants of the victims that now hang, though for what purpose is not yet known.

LAKES OF MOLTEN IRON

The demonic armies that clash in the Blood War have a never-ending appetite for forged items, weapons and armor that can give them an edge against their foes. This appetite is insatiable, but it is partially fed by the furnaces and forges that sit along the banks of the Lakes of Molten Iron on the Plain of Infinite Portals. The lakes are literally boiling iron belched up from the depths of the Abyss itself, which are then funneled into dozens of forges.

The region's importance in the Blood War makes the area one of the least stable on the 1st layer of the Abyss as devilish forces and yugoloth mercenaries clash for control over the vital fortresses. Each carries its own master, though a few stand out as noteworthy.

Razorforge was the victim of a chaotic eruption that drove the demons away, and in their wake magma mephits moved in and restarted the forges. They keep their operation small and thus far have remained mostly anonymous, especially since demons trigger latent magical surges that can destroy them when they approach.

Ferrug is an imposing iron fortress run by a marilith with an eye towards selling to the highest demonic bidder. Her forges are run by manes, vrock, and goristros and the entire fortress has been attacked multiple times by the armies of the Nine Hells. Each time, the superior craftsmanship of Ferrug weapons and armor have won the day.

Bonepot is a curious forge that focuses on reinforcing skeletons with iron plating. Its master, an especially intelligent vrock, works its teams of smiths to churn out armored undead monsters. It is rumored that the forces of Orcus keep Bonepot operating, but its iron-bodied skeletons have been seen marching in multiple demonic armies.

MAZE OF THE BONE EATERS

Baphomet's realm is the Endless Maze, the 600th layer of the Abyss, and it is as its name suggests. Endless corridors of worked stone fill the layer, and the Prince of Beasts maintains absolute control over much of the region. But he is not the only inhabitant. Tribes of savage, demonic minotaurs also roam the maze, serving Baphomet in their own cruel and sadistic way.

The Bone Eaters are a tribe of minotaurs who have served the Prince of Beasts for centuries. Their fur is the color of bleached bone and they have carved out a section of their master's domain for their own purposes. The Maze of the Bone Eaters is adorned with hundreds upon hundreds of bones, the only remnants of the minotaurs' foes, and they are all scarred with vicious bite marks. The Bone Eaters are fond of capturing and torturing their foes, cooking them slowly and enjoying the screams which echo through their maze.

The leader of the Bone Eaters is a gargantuan minotaur that traces her lineage directly to Baphomet. Known as Bonecruncher, she is a terribly savage foe with a cruel streak to match her master's.

NARATYR

For a period of time in recent memory, the demon lord Orcus was presumed dead. His spirit departed the Abyss and his realm of Thanatos was left empty, a void that did not last long. The drow goddess Kiaransalee stepped in and filled that void, and her domain of death overlapped nicely with Orcus' own. She built up the city of Naratyr as her winter palace, attracting hundreds of intelligent undead seeking to curry the goddess' favor.

Then Orcus returned, pushed Kiaransalee out, and reclaimed Thanatos as his own realm once again. Servants of the drow goddess were given two options – serve the Prince of the Undead or be destroyed. Most chose to switch allegiances, and in Naratyr the inhabitants feared Orcus would make a permanent home. He has not, leaving the undead sycophants to fight over each other to win the demon lords favor, and Naratyr has become a frozen city of the dead.

RIFT OF ASH

The 103rd layer of the Abyss is the Rift of Ash, where the entire realm is a massive scar in the black and red stone surroundings. The top of the rift is nothing but howling winds pushing everything out of the depths with plumes of thick smoke choking the air, making breathing near impossible. Numerous spontaneous fires dot the walls of the rift, burning the stone itself, and the bottom holds nothing but agitated magma.

No demon lord claims the Rift of Ash, but it is not uncontested. The colossal red dragon Ignashendre keeps her lair in the lowest section of the rift, and she is the undisputed mistress of the layer. She is older than some demon lords and has gained incredible knowledge and power in her time, but she thus far shows no inclination toward conquest. The hoard of Ignashendre stretches into the caves just above the lava pool at the bottom of the rift, gathered from demons and mortals alike from her years of conquest.

Fire and magma elementals are common servants of the ancient red dragon, and though she eschews demonic servants the power of the demons has long fascinated Ignashendre. She has tinkered with extracting demonic essence and has infused herself with such stolen power, but she seeks more subjects. And while she has thus far not moved against any of the demon lords, her impatience suggests it is only a matter of time before she puts her skills to the test and faces off against a more potent foe in the search for claiming greater and greater power for herself. Ignashendre is a force to be reckoned with and one to watch on the Abyssal stage.

SCREAMING PEAKS

Breaking up the endless savannah of the Death Dells, Yeenoghu's realm on the 422nd layer, are the jagged mountains of the Screaming Peaks. Like everyone on the layer, gnolls dominate the mountains, but they clash with advanced ghouls hiding among the caves and valleys. These ghouls pay homage to Doresain, King of the Ghouls, who is himself a vassal of Yeenoghu. The two offer aid to one another on occasion, but the savage ferocity of the gnoll tribes of the Screaming Peaks makes the ghouls a common enemy.

The Screaming Peaks hold numerous secret valleys that are older than the Prince of Gnolls. The ghouls hold several of these, but greater beings are said to sleep in dark caves hidden far away from prying eyes. The mountains earn their name from the mournful howl echoing through the tall peaks, but gnoll legends say that the screaming is punctuated by the hoarse cry of Yeenoghu's original kin. Now nothing but bones amid the stone valleys, these forgotten entities of hunger, thirst, and madness wait to reawaken once more.

SKELETON TREE

Pazuzu claims the skies above the Plain of Infinite Portals as his entire realm, and he watches over it all from the stretched-out arms of his fortress, Skeleton Tree. Thin spires of bone-white stone stretch up over the blasted pitted landscape, piercing the bloated crimson sky. It is surrounded by vrockes and other flying demons of all kinds who act as Pazuzu's eyes and ears across the layer.

Pazuzu hails from an older class of demon lords, and though he shares his fellows' bloodthirsty nature, a streak of cowardice and selfishness runs strong through him. He rarely engages in the Blood War, preferring instead to bargain with the devils and mercenaries, and his stance has garnered him no allies among the demon lords. This suits Pazuzu just fine, and it is said Skeleton Tree is impregnable by any force on the ground. The secrets contained in the twisted branches and ivory vaults have been gathered over many centuries.

SPIRE OF THE DECEIVED

Fraz-Urb'luu's realm of Hollow's Heart is a masterwork of illusion and deception. Nothing is what it seems at first glance, from the trees of the Drooling Jungle that hide the souls of bound servants to the mountain lakes of the Demon's Teeth range that lure travelers to a watery grave. The Prince of Deception dwells in a sprawling city of corkscrew towers, but his secret vault in a titanic building of adamantine called the Spire of the Deceived.

In Hollow's Heart, the Spire of the Deceived moves around seemingly at random. Inside its twisted walls, Fraz-Urb'luu hides fabulous treasure and knowledge gathered from his time conquering the Abyss and collecting tithes from his many cults. The site is guarded by the bound ghosts of former thralls whose bodies still remain pinned to the outside of the grim spire.

Of course, given Fraz-Urb'luu's nature, the Spire of the Deceived could itself simply be a trap to lure travelers seeking wealth to a painful life of servitude. No one has ever returned from it, but rumors among certain planar scholars say that a great relic from a time before the demons rests in the deepest vault of the twisted tower.

WHITE FLAME

The Blood War is fought by the devils of the Nine Hells to keep the demons from spilling out across the multiverse (and invading their own plane in the process). The archdevils and princes that serve Asmodeus have crafted numerous weapons to fight the demonic hordes, but few are so clever as the White Flame. It is a 5-foot wide crystal in the shape of an immobile fire suffused with brilliant white light, and into its heart was bound the soul of a solar angel.

The White Flame was built specifically to draw paladins and other mortals into the Blood War, albeit as unwitting pawns, in order to fight the demons with power the devils could not possess. The archdevils crafted it and pushed it out to the Material Plane, where it eventually ensnared a warrior-knight named Lady Tyranna Dawn. Drawn to the words of the White Flame, Lady Tyranna became

intoxicated on the holy power provided by the crystal and she summoned up a host to destroy the demons of the Abyss.

The Righteous Army of the White Flame was born, and they stormed the 196th layer from a gate torn open by the crystal itself. The knights and paladins fought their way through hordes of demons, but managed to establish a stronghold on the layer. Fort Dawn was built, where Lady Tyranna and the White Flame stand today, sending troops to stamp out the demonic presence.

The power granted by the White Flame is real, and it is very effective against demons. Does Lady Tyranna know about the relic's devilish origin? Would it matter if she did? If a tool crafted by an archdevil is useful in fighting true evil, do the ends justify the means? The White Flame seems holy, but one should never trust an item wrought in the bowels of the Nine Hells.

ZELATAR

Graz'zt the Dark Prince commands the most physical territory in the Abyss out of any demon lord. His triple realm is known as Azzagrat, but his seat of power is the confounding city of Zelatar. Zelatar extends across all three layers of Graz'zt's domain, and the streets can and do wind between all three of them. The Dark Prince's abode, the Argent Palace, defies the laws of reality even in the Abyss by existing simultaneously on all three, not just a reflection but the actual same physical site co-existing in three separate locations.

By ancient decree, Graz'zt allows merchants of all kind to enter Zelatar where his demonic thirst for conquest is somewhat muted. Assassins, poisoners, necromancers, and other dark purveyors of illicit goods can be found among the districts of the city, plying their trade and seeking employment. One exception to this leniency are servants of Graz'zt's hated demon lord foes, Demogorgon and Orcus, who are hunted down and killed publicly for sport.

Each of the three layers that hold Zelatar provide a different district for the demonic city. Fogtown is the upper borough, where slaves of all kind toil in great mushroom fields around the city and the ever-present fog robs travelers of their memory. Gallenghast is filled with the villas and manors of Zelatar's nobles, and the Dark Prince favors half-demons and tieflings above all others. Tournaments and festivals are often held in the district, drawing attention from across the multiverse. The lowest layer holds Darkflame, a strange place where flames are cold and ice is hot. The shadow-haunted streets of Darkflame are filled with blue and purple flames, chilling the air and driving travelers into the close-knit buildings.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The Abyss is a dangerous place, but for travelers with access to a way home it offers a vast array of adventure opportunities. While some layers are inhospitable, not every one is so forward in its threats, and even low-levelled characters can survive the trip – assuming they don't rile the native demons and keep their noses clean.

Demons also have a way of worming their interests into the hearts and cities of mortals in their never-ending path of multiversal conquest. Often times, adventurers face off against a demon on the Material Plane are unwitting acting as agents in the Blood War, in their own small way.

TIER 1 (LEVELS 1-4)

Scattered remnants of demonic influence can be found across the Material Plane, placed deliberately by insidious forces or accidentally by the whims of chaos. Low tier adventurers are not encouraged to seek out the Abyss itself as the threats contained therein can quickly overwhelm them, but that doesn't mean that they can't take the fight to the demons and the powers of the Abyss in other ways.

... A librarian comes to the characters asking for assistance. Days ago, a strange item showed up in the small library, a sealed scroll bearing the mark of a scholar named Ahm. The librarian does not wish to keep the relic, fearing the Black Cult would silence them, and asks the party to take it to another scholar who has dealings with the infamous organization. Is the scholar a black cultist? What is the nature of this Black Scroll? Who else seeks it?

... Thieves in the city are no mystery, but lately one guild has been making a name for itself using ruthless and cunning tactics. The characters can get involved in any number of ways, but it is quickly discovered the guild is led by a rogrezen. The rat fiend was sent to the Material Plane as part of a spy network and sends regular reports back to its Abyssal lair, but in the meantime it intends to live as well as possible.

... The characters are approached by a druid who needs some outside help. The druid's forested enclave has become home to a particularly nasty viper tree, and the demon tree's roots have sunk down deep into the sacred ground. The roots must be cut from beneath and in short order, so the druid turns to the characters for help, but larger questions remain. Who planted the seed of the viper tree? What force moves against the druids?

TIER 2 (LEVELS 5-10)

Tier 2 characters have enough resources to start traveling to the Abyss itself, avoiding some of the more outright dangers but powerful enough to not be destroyed outright by most of the threats of the plane. Intrigue, demonic invasions, monstrous revelations, and more await curious groups of characters throughout the Abyss.

... A temple needs answers about a mystery, and it is revealed that the succubus sorceress Red Shroud may know them. The characters are asked to travel into the Plain of Infinite Portals, find Broken Reach, and negotiate with Red Shroud for the secret. Just getting to the safe haven in the Abyss should prove challenging, but once there the succubus has a little job for the characters to perform in exchange for the secret. Is it evicting an unruly tenant from the fortress? Stopping a messenger across the Abyss? Red Shroud's missions are rarely straightforward and never without danger.

... Large quantities of bats have been seen around the city, and during investigation the characters find varrangoin among their numbers in the nearby caves. An unstable gate to Darklight stands in the depths of the cavern, a channel through which Nocticula has been pouring resources and time into. What does she hope to find in the Material Plane city? How does it link to a series of statues on the slopes of Midnight Mountain in Darklight?

... The characters receive an urgent summons from an ally that has taken up the call of the White Flame. An offensive by the Righteous Army in the Abyss needs some scouting assistance and the characters make the perfect team. Lady Tyranna herself greets the party and introduces them to the White Flame, after which the characters head out into the Abyssal layer to provide advance information on the terrain. What does a small team of devil infiltrators have to do with the Righteous Army? What awaits them truly in their military objective?

TIERS 3 AND 4 (LEVELS 11+)

It is not uncommon for higher level characters to take on adventures deeper into the Abyss. Such forays facing off directly against demon lords requires planning and capabilities only high level adventurers can muster, but even then those efforts are often hit and run strikes.

... Demogorgon's palace of Abysm holds treasures and experiments, and the key to a mystery plaguing the characters is uncovered to be in one of the twin towers in Gaping Maw. The characters must try to sneak into Abysm and steal the experiment results and get out without being detected by the Prince of Demons. Demogorgon leaves nothing unguarded, however, so trouble is bound to happen.

... Under a dark and stormy night sky, the harbor city the characters find themselves in receives a haunted ship visitor out of nowhere. The sleek black wood of the massive sailing ship bears no marks in a common language, but planar scholars identify it as Demonwing. What brings the legendary ship to port? What captain does it sail under currently? And why does it seem deserted?

... The Blood War spills out into the characters' backyard when mercenary bands equipped with demonically forged weapons and armor arrive on the scene. The magic of the armor on the Material Plane is linked back to the forge on the banks of the Lakes of Molten Iron, and in order to unravel the power the forge must be destroyed. The characters must head into the Abyss into a fiercely contested region of the Plain of Infinite Portals and sabotage the forge that powers the magical weapons and armor. Which demon lord commands the forge?

PLAYER OPTIONS

The Abyss holds great power within its infinite layers, and this power attracts all types. From the deranged thralls of the demon lords, hoping to please their distant masters with offers of sacrifice and acts of debased worship, to the wizards who summon demons to do their bidding, the power draws the wicked and noble alike.

Demons are formidable powers in the multiverse, individually more capable than most veteran soldiers but drawing their greatest strength from their unlimited horde, and the demon lords that stand above them stand at near god-like status. They often whisper to mortals, offering abilities and influence to chosen individuals in exchange for their devotion, and these warlocks walk a dangerous line. Straying from that line drops them into the clutches of fiends capable of rewriting the laws of the Abyss itself.

Where great power sits, there are always those who seek to understand it, to emulate it, and to destroy it. The Black Cult of Ahm is an organization that seeks to understand the demons and the Abyss, albeit secretly, but a splinter group of bards try to release that knowledge from its cloistered keepers.

A dangerous sect of rangers known as demonskins work to harness demonic power for their own through dangerous rites and practices. They gain power, yes, but at what cost? When does the power take over and the humanity leave?

The classic paladin is a foe of both evil and chaos, and nowhere in the multiverse is his foe personified more than in the Abyss. The White Flame, despite its dubious origin, offers paladins an oath dedicated to stamping out demons from the multiverse.

The new class options include the College of Ahm for bards, the Oath of the White Flame for paladins, and the Demonskin archetype for rangers, along with the Black Cultist and Former Thrall backgrounds.

BARD: COLLEGE OF AHM

The Black Cult of Ahm is a powerful, secret organization dedicated to studying and understanding demons and denizens of the Abyss. Its founder, Tulket nor Ahm, wrote extensively in a collection of notes, tomes, and journals collectively referred to as the Black Scrolls. The cult keeps these pages hidden away, hoarding the information contained within, but everyone who has studied Ahm's writings believes it should be locked away.

A few rogue bards, exploring an abandoned library, uncovered potent pieces of the Black Scrolls. Fascinated by Ahm's writings on demons and the Abyss, they studied it together and vowed to spread its knowledge for the safety of common people. Demons can be a real threat especially to the unprepared, and thus the secret scholar's words formed the foundation for the College of Ahm.

The bards of this college do not see eye to eye with the Black Cult, and though they rarely come to direct confrontation, they often find themselves chasing after the same targets. But whereas many members of the Black Cult seek the knowledge of Ahm for their own personal gain, the bards tend to have a more practical use for it – facing off against demonic threats requires a prepared mind and soul.

RESEARCH SAVANT

When you join the College of Ahm at 3rd level, your skill at research and lore increases. Whenever you make an Intelligence ability check that uses your proficiency bonus and you roll below 10, you can treat the check as if you rolled 10.

DARK SECRETS

Also at 3rd level, you learn to tap into Ahm's secret knowledge to weaken your opponents. As a bonus action, spend a Bardic Inspiration die to choose a creature within 30 feet that you can see and name a damage type. If the target has resistance to that damage type, it loses that resistance until the start of your next turn.

TELEPATHY

At 6th level, your continued studying of Ahm's writings unlocks secrets of non-verbal communication used by demons. As an action you gain telepathy with a range of 60 feet for 1 minute.

You must complete a short or long rest before you can use this feature again.

GREATER DARK SECRETS

Starting at 14th level, your knowledge of the black secrets contained in Ahm's scrolls increases. When you use the Dark Secrets feature, if the target was immune to the damage type named, it loses its immunity until the start of your next turn.

PALADIN: OATH OF THE WHITE FLAME

Evil festers in the Abyss. Not just the evil of petty tyrants or wicked bandits, but the truest form of evil and chaos. Demons and other fiends are creatures born of evil and chaos, and the White Flame calls to the righteous paladins to take up arms against them in a great crusade. The Righteous Army has established a beachhead on the Abyss, fighting with every ounce of power they have, and much of that power stems from the White Flame, the magical crystal that sends a siren song across the planes.

TENETS OF THE WHITE FLAME

The White Flame is a relatively new oath and its tenets reflect the dedication and ferocity necessary to drive out demons and their kind.

Stand No Demon to Live. All demons are evil incarnate and none should be left to terrorize another day.

Know the Work of Demons. Always demons seek to corrupt the hearts and minds of mortals. Learn to recognize this corruption.

A Pure Soul Blinds Demons. Keep your body and mind clean of all foulness, for the first weapon in the war on demonkind is a pure soul.

Law Breaks Demon Chaos. As creatures of chaos and evil, demons cannot stand simple order and lawfulness. A regimented life leaves no opportunity for demonic influence.

OATH SPELLS

You gain oath spells at the paladin levels listed.

OATH OF THE WHITE FLAME SPELLS

PALADIN LEVEL	SPELLS
3rd	<i>protection from evil and good, wrathful smite</i>
5th	<i>lesser restoration, magic weapon</i>
9th	<i>magic circle, protection from energy</i>
13th	<i>banishment, locate creature</i>
17th	<i>banishing smite, dispel evil and good</i>

CHANNEL DIVINITY

When you take this oath at 3rd level, you gain the following two Channel Divinity options.

Censure Fiend. As an action, you use your Channel Divinity to call down the power of the White Flame against a fiend. Choose a fiend within 30 feet of you. The target must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against your spell save DC or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

Fury of the White Flame. You can use your Channel Divinity to imbue your weapon with the fires of the White Flame. As an action, one weapon you are holding becomes sheathed in brilliant white flames for 1 minute, shedding light in a 60-foot radius. It is considered a magical weapon for the duration if it was not already. Your next attack that hits a fiend within the duration using the chosen weapon inflicts extra radiant damage equal to 2d8 + your paladin level. Once used, the white flame loses its radiance and power as the duration immediately ends.

AURA OF THE WHITE FLAME

Starting at 7th level, you and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you have resistance to damage from fiends while you are conscious.

At 18th level, the range of this aura increases to 30 feet.

PURITY OF THE WHITE FLAME

Beginning at 15th level, you are always under the effects of a protection from evil and good spell.

BEACON OF THE WHITE FLAME

At 20th level, you gain the ability to summon the power of the White Flame to envelop you with its blinding radiance. As an action, you become a beacon of the White Flame, gaining the following benefits for 1 minute:

- You have advantage on all saving throws.
- Whenever a creature hits you with an attack, it takes radiant damage equal to your paladin level.
- If a fiend starts its turn within 30 feet of you, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or be blinded until the start of your next turn.

Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a long rest.

RANGER: DEMONSKIN

For some, demons and other fiends are creatures to be admired. They are tough, often smart, and imbued with natural resistances to elemental attacks and magic. It is no wonder that some would seek to emulate them, and a demonskin ranger works to hone that emulation to perfection.

Many are troubled wanderers, traveling the multiverse and trying to use their demonic powers for the betterment of their fellows. They hunt demons and other fiends wherever they hide, learning their tricks and turning their own tools against them. Some fall victim to the corruption they dabble in, becoming dark and terrible foes in the darkness.

The process used by a demonskin ranger is a mixture of gory hunting practices, alchemical reagents, and sheer willpower. Some study the Black Scrolls of Ahm, unlocking terrible powers from the pages of the secret texts, while others stumbled upon the power by accident.

DEMONSKIN MAGIC

Starting at 3rd level, you learn an additional spell when you reach certain levels in this class, as shown in the table below. The spell counts as a ranger spell for you, but it doesn't count against the number of ranger spells you know.

DEMONSKIN SPELLS

RANGER LEVEL	SPELLS
3rd	<i>armor of Agathys</i>
5th	<i>misty step</i>
9th	<i>fly</i>
13th	<i>stoneskin</i>
17th	<i>hold monster</i>

SKIN OF THE DRETCH

At 3rd level, you can call upon the defensive skin of the dretch, one of the lowest forms of demonkind on the Abyss, to protect yourself. As a bonus action, you gain resistance to cold, fire, and lightning until the start of your next turn.

You must complete a short or long rest before you can use this feature again.

RAGE OF THE BARLGURA

Also at 3rd level, you learn to channel the reckless rage of the bargura demon. At the start of your turn, you can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls you make that turn, but attack rolls against you have advantage until the start of your next turn.

SPEED OF THE MARILITH

At 7th level, you have learned the speed of the marilith to block attacks with lightning speed. As a reaction, add 4 to your AC against one melee attack that would hit. To do this, you must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

SCREECH OF THE VROCK

At 11th level, you are able to unleash a sound similar to that of a vrock. As an action, you emit a horrific screech. Each creature within 20 feet of you that can hear it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against your spell save DC or be stunned until the end of your next turn.

You must complete a long rest before you can use this feature again.

AURA OF THE BALOR

At 15th level, the power of the mighty balor becomes yours to command. At the start of your turn, each creature within 5 feet of you takes fire damage equal to 3d6 + your Dexterity modifier, and flammable objects in the aura that aren't being worn or carried ignite. You can suppress or ignite the aura with a bonus action.

NEW BACKGROUNDS

BLACK CULTIST

Tulket nor Ahm was a prolific writer who spent his life traveling and studying everything about the Abyss. His life was spent in pursuit of knowledge of the darkest kind, and though his ultimate motivations remain a mystery, his words formed the basis for the Black Cult of Ahm years after his death. Secretive and manipulative, the Black Cult has survived by collecting the works of Ahm, studying his teachings, and applying them in various ways.

You were a member of the Black Cult, charged with safeguarding Ahm's knowledge from the eyes of the world. Perhaps you are a greedy scholar drawn to the cult for personal gain, or perhaps you were raised by a chapterhouse and taught its ways with no knowledge of other options. As a member of the Black Cult you learned that knowledge is powerful, and the knowledge held in the scrolls of Ahm hold true potential to unleash evil and chaos. Should it be safeguarded? Or should it set loose?

Skill Proficiencies: History, Religion

Languages: Abyssal, Infernal

Equipment: A simple pair of black robes, a journal containing your notes of Ahm's writings, a clay figurine of a demon, a belt pouch, and 17 gp.

FEATURE: ABYSSAL INSIGHT

You studied one or more of Ahm's fabled Black Scrolls, and gained insight into the workings of demons and the Abyss. You can recall uncommon information about the Abyss and its inhabitants, including some strengths and weaknesses of demons. You also know the location of a Black Cult chapterhouse and can request access to Ahm's writings directly.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Black cultists blur the line between scholar and acolyte, believing the words of Ahm to be powerful dogma while also seeking greater truths of demns, the Abyss, and the multiverse itself. Curosity is a strong trait for these types of characters, along with a ruthless sense of authority and a slightly bent world view.

d8 PERSONALITY TRAIT

- 1 I keep my secrets to myself.
- 2 I'm very superstitious.
- 3 I have to know everything about a person before I can trust them.
- 4 I prefer a book to the company of others.
- 5 I can relate any conversation to demons and the Abyss.
- 6 Brooding is my passion.
- 7 I am relentless and never give up when I set my mind to a task.
- 8 I never laugh. Never.

d6 IDEAL

- 1 **Trust No One.** Anyone could be a demon in a disguise. Paranoia is safety. (Chaotic)
- 2 **Why Bother?** With an infinite number of demons, what point is there? (Neutral)
- 3 **Against the Dark.** I know what lurks in the Abyss, and I can help stop it from growing. (Good)
- 4 **Abyssal Power.** By learning the secrets of the Abyss I can use them for my own gain. (Evil)
- 5 **Better Left Secret.** The things I know are best kept out of the public. It's too frightening for normal people. (Any)
- 6 **Spread the Word.** Knowledge, especially dark knowledge, should be shared so that everyone knows what could happen. (Lawful)

d6 BOND

- 1 My mentor in the Black Cult taught me everything I know.
- 2 The scrap of Tulket nor Ahm's writing I keep is my most treasured possession.
- 3 I write everything down in my journal, it is more sacred to me than my friends.
- 4 The members of my chapter showed me the true knowledge.
- 5 I saved the life of a paladin with my knowledge and they owe me their life now.
- 6 I got out of the Black Cult with the help of an old friend.

d6 FLAW

- 1 I see demons everywhere.
- 2 I have been described as a "loner" by many people.
- 3 People find me inscrutable, which makes it hard to make friends.
- 4 I always have my nose in a book.
- 5 My apocalyptic predictions get on peoples' nerves.
- 6 My arrogance hides my fear that I don't know enough.

FORMER THRALL

Demon lords rival gods in their power (and more than one of them grant powers and spells just like a god), so it is no wonder some people see them as the solution to life's hardships. Referred to collectively as thralls, you were one such person. Many form small sects, while others worship on their own, but all worship and pay homage to one of the demon lords - Demogorgon, Orcus, Graz'zt, even formless Juiblex holds a number of mortal creatures as thralls.

The deeds demanded by demon lords of their thralls are unspeakable, and something finally drove you out of that life. Leaving behind such a life is rarely clean, however, and demon lords have long memories. How did you walk away from the path of the thrall? What finally turned you away to a better route? What about the people or family you left behind?

Skill Proficiencies: Arcana, Persuasion

Languages: Abyssal and one of your choosing

Equipment: Backpack, scarred symbol of your demon lord, ritualistic fetish (lock of hair from a beast, the bone of a prophet, or the claw of a demon), belt pouch, and 12 gp.

FEATURE: WAYS OF THE DEMON LORDS

You spent time as a thrall to a demon lord, and in that time you learned the ways of such worshippers. You can recognize the work of other thralls and cultists, and you know the symbols and names for the demon lords.

SUGGESTED CHARACTERISTICS

Few thralls live stable lives, and many turn to the demon lords in times of great personal crisis. Such individuals rarely regret their choice, seeing little options in their life, but you found a way out. What drove you to the worship of a demon lord in the first place? How does it still affect you?

d8 PERSONALITY TRAIT

- 1 I solve all of my problems with anger and fury.
- 2 I'm always trying to convince others to join my causes.
- 3 I'm a little too eager when it comes to battles.
- 4 I occasionally let slip praises to the demon lords.
- 5 I'm always looking over my shoulder for servants of the demon lord I left behind.
- 6 I take chances whenever possible.
- 7 If there's a plan, I'm definitely not going to follow it.
- 8 I think the gods trick mortals into worshipping them, and I won't get tricked again.

d6 IDEAL

- 1 **Redemption.** I turned away from a life of chaos and evil, and I know it's possible for others to do the same. (Good)
- 2 **Trust Myself.** At the end of the day, I'm the only one I can really trust. (Any)
- 3 **Fall From Grace.** I may be on the outs with a demon lord, but I'm looking for ways to get back in. (Evil)
- 4 **Random Chance.** Life is nothing but random chance, so roll the dice and see what happens. (Chaotic)
- 5 **Simple Life.** When I turned my back on the demon lord, I just wanted a simple life of quiet and peace. (Lawful)
- 6 **Stronger Together.** I know that the chain is strongest when all links stand as one. (Neutral)

d6 BOND

- 1 I was rescued from the clutches of the demon lord by a mysterious stranger.
- 2 My family still worships the demon lord but they're still important to me.
- 3 I got out of the demon lord's service with my best friend.
- 4 As much as it pains me, the symbol of my demon lord still gives me strength.
- 5 I saved an innocent life when I escaped the demon lord's service.
- 6 I keep a fetish from my days as a thrall to remind myself why I left.

d6 FLAW

- 1 I am too unpredictable.
- 2 The smallest thing can set me off; I'm always on edge and angry.
- 3 I love gambling, maybe a little too much.
- 4 I'm always trying to charm my way into the life of strangers.
- 5 I make snap judgments about people based on too little information.
- 6 I don't trust any priest.