

IUZ05-01

The Portal of Hate

A One-Round D&D LIVING GREYHAWK[®] Iuz Metaregional Adventure

Version 1.0

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Nearly a year has gone by since the last sighting of the sword Hate has occurred. Now, an ogre chieftain, Gristletooth, appears to have it and is raiding the area of Torkeep in the Shield Lands! An adventure for characters levels 9-17.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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For questions specific to this document and your metaregion please e-mail your point of contact (POC) at dragotha@gmail.com; for LIVING GREYHAWK campaign questions email rpgahq@wizards.com.

RPGA SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table DM (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First it is an official game, and you can use the AR to advance your LIVING GREYHAWK character. Second player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth one (1) point.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2006.

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on

running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in Appendix 1.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.
2. If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.
3. Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round up to the nearest whole number.
4. If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard one-round metaregional adventure, set in Iuz's Border States. Characters native to Iuz's Border States pay one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this scenario.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a Survival check (DC 20), the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*.

Adventure Background

Rumors of the sword known only as Hate first appeared when a cult of Perrenlanders, known only as the Black Wave, were rumored to have attempted selling it to Iuzian forces in the occupied lands formerly known as the Shield Lands. In SHL03-06 A Chink in the Armor, the first rumors of this weapon surfaced. In that adventure, the Perrenlanders had found three weapons of power, Hate being one of them. It supposedly had special powers against casters. See IUZ04-01 Madness Falls, for the second rumor of this weapon. In this adventure, it

was rumored that a bugbear had the weapon and was unifying the bugbear tribes.

The sword is most likely the level of a minor artifact in power, yet very few substantial notes about it exist. The Perrenlanders swore they found it in the Sea of Dust.

In fact, the sword is linked to the Demi-Plane of Hate and can draw on its energies. A wizard, Zelad, has been tracking it for years and actually set up a residence on the plane of hate in order to study it. From there, she manipulated its powers to bring it to a nexus point on Oerth. Once at the nexus point, she was able to cast a spell that drew it to the Demi-Plane of Hate. Unfortunately for her...

At the same time as the sword was being activated, a word of power, so strong it reverberated across the planes, was spoken, disrupting the casting. As a result, the sword fell into the hands of the Sarkrith.

Adventure Summary

Introduction - Hate: Our adventure begins, once again, in search of the sword known only as Hate. The party learns of rumors linking it to a series of raids in the Shield Lands.

Encounter One - Torkeep: The party arrives at the border keep of Torkeep. Depending on where the party is from, the locals are more or less happy to see the adventurers. This is because there has been a series of mysterious events occurring in the area (merchants' caravans raided, cats and dogs living together, two-headed turtles being born, that sort of thing).

The locals are especially worried about an ogre chieftain known as Gristletooth who has been operating out of the region. Attempts to capture/kill him have failed. The pattern of his attacks is based on a series of ruins to the northwest. Coincidentally, this is also the direction that the weirdest of events has been occurring.

The party heads off to look into the matter...

Encounter Two - Gristletooth: The party makes it relatively unmolested to Gristletooth's lair. The ruins are a maddening array of the nonsensical. The walls whisper, the grass groans, the characters sweat blood, that sort of thing. Then the party notices it: there are ogre bodies everywhere. All of them are mangled in the most spectacularly gruesome of manners! Making their way to the epicenter they find Gristletooth's throne room. Sitting on a throne, in obvious pain, is Gristletooth! His body is normal sized, albeit fused with his throne. But his head has been stretched to grotesque proportions! It is open so wide that a human could enter through those craggy teeth...

Inside appears to be a room with a slab of stone in it. Buried into the stone is a black blade pulsing with an

obscene power. Obviously this is Hate, the source of all of the local's problems....

Gristletooth, although alive and in great pain, seems immune to any harm the party throws at him. The only way to get the matter solved is to clamber over his disjointed, craggy teeth, and go after the damn sword.

Encounter Three - Not QUITE what was expected....: Entering through the jaws brings the party to a blasted realm. This is the Demi-Plane of Hate. The party is in a valley, surrounded by cliffs, and there in front of them is a single black tower.

The party can really only go forward. They discover the tower is inhabited by a mighty wizard who discovered this realm ages ago and took it for her own.

Once here, she learned that it was created, in part, out of the forging of the sword Hate. To fully access the powers of this realm, she needs the sword. If she has it, she is willing to shut the portal and the chaos emissions will cease. Unfortunately she does not currently have the sword.

From her tower, she studied the prime material. Sending forth planar allies, she was able to direct the sword's passage through Oerth. Finally, she got it close to a location where she could manipulate it. Thus it fell into the hands of Gristletooth. He, through her eldritch manipulations, brought the sword to the proper location in the ruins for her to cast her magic spell that would allow her to bring the sword into this realm. As the very last words of her gate spell left her lips, she heard a single word spoken: A word that caused her great fear because it was a word spoken by a god, a word that was of such power it pierced the fabric of reality. That word was DOOM!

That very word altered her spell. It brought the sword in, but in the process warped the gate spell. Foul energies from this plane now bleed to the prime material. There is nothing she can do to stop it with out the sword. Unfortunately for her, when the sword passed into this realm, it was taken immediately by the only other inhabitants here: a tribe of Sarkrith. Because they are anti-magical in nature, she is powerless against them. She believes they are using the sword as a battery, feeding off of its very powers! The party must recover the sword for her use if they wish to save Oerth!

Encounters Four and Five- The Doom that Came to Sarkrith: The party can travel to the Sarkrith's lair. This is located in the next valley. It is a fortress carved from the very rock. The party must first get past the guards. Doing so will allow the guards a chance to set off a gong that will alert the fortress. Successfully bypassing it will allow safe entrance. Getting past the guards, the party will find a number of stone huts, mostly empty - it appears the Sarkrith have been leaving recently...

They can make their way to the shrine, facing a few opponents.

Encounter Six - The Face in the Blade: The party makes it into the final room. The sword is there with the stereotypical bad guy. However, that is not the REAL danger. The sword is on its own plane and radiates, well, hate (Think like a Symbol of Death, except a Symbol of Hate). The party has a real chance of having their base emotions over come them. If they do they could turn on themselves! Spells like "Calm Emotions" and the like become a very nifty way to temporarily abate disaster. When the party overcomes this obstacle and goes to pull the sword, they can see tiny shapes reflected in its surface.

Looking at the figures, they can see they are moving! The figures seem to be going through a portal of blood. Staring harder brings the figures closer and gives a better view of where they are coming from... it is clear the portal, on the planar side, is some abyssal landscape. But on the Oerth side... There is no doubting those black spires, those craggy skull-embedded walls, those ebon clouds of demons and worse hanging over head. Dorakka! As the party stares, the vision pulls through into the portal, into Dorakka, into a castle (not THE Castle!) into a hallway, into a room, where, in darkness sits a horrible figure, bloated with power. The vision gets closer to him and a passing torch (from an unseen bearer) nearly reveals the face. Mercifully, it is shrouded in shadows. Nonetheless, the party can see a yellowed pus-filled eye about to turn its foul gaze on the party itself. But then, the sword goes black.

Conclusion - All's Fair in Hate and War: The party can return the sword which is the proper ending. IF they do, the wizard uses the sword to return the party and close the portal. IF THEY DO NOT return it, then they must kill the wizard (and can EASILY do so). She is evil, but instead of Chaotic Evil, think of her as Crackpot-Evil for alignment. Upon her death and returning to Oerth, the sword, sensing far too much independence in such heroic adventures, fades from sight, to reappear another day (perhaps...)

Preparation for Play

This adventure contains information from various sources. Depending on the character's backgrounds, they may have more or less information.

If the character is from Perrenlands, they may make a Knowledge (Local – Iuz's Border States) check (DC 20) to learn the following: The sword Hate was, in fact located by the Black Wave. They, apparently, wrested it from the treasure-tomb of a lich who was interested in planar magic.

If the character is from the Shield Lands, they will automatically know that Torkeep barely survived a horrific assault by the forces of darkness (Iuz). Further, they will know that during the assault, Iuz simultaneously attacked South Keep and Gensal. At South Keep, his forces were repulsed, but at Gensal, they overran the keep and started marching on the capital! However, just as victory was in their grasp, the army turned around and marched back to the lands of Iuz. This coincided with the first reported sightings of Gristletooth near Gensal (he apparently has since moved North East).

The Black Breath of Iuz: The Shield Lands is currently under a vile plague, apparently created by the Old One. It is possible to contract the disease one of two ways: Either someone in the party has the Black Breath, or the party visits with the “plague colony” outside of Torkeep. If either event occurs, any character who has not had to save against the Black Breath in the past must make a Fortitude save at the end of the adventure, DC 14. Those who fail have contracted a minor case of the Black Breath. Characters immune to disease are immune to this disease. It can be cured by normal magical means, but it requires a caster level check DC 30 for any such magic to work. Characters subject to the disease must roll a D6 at the start of each adventure, with a 1 being Strength, 2 being Dexterity, and so on. That ability score is reduced by 2 for that adventure. After 6 adventures, the plague runs its course. Symptoms of the plague include a hacking cough, a general weakness, a paling of the skin, and dark skull-shaped blotches across the entire body.

NOTES ON TRAVEL: At the APLs for which this adventure is written, it is impossible to guess the manner in which a party might travel. The Dungeon Master should be prepared to alter much of the read aloud text to suit the nature of the party. For example, the adventure presumes pedestrian forms of transportation: ships, horses, walking, and the like. Players that use magic will be baffled by much of the wording in some of the earlier text. Feel free to alter the text to suit the nature and character of the party.

NOTES ON PARTY INTRODUCTIONS: As this is a meta-regional adventure, it is possible for characters from very diverse backgrounds to join up for the adventure. It is acceptable to paraphrase or alter the introduction in order to get all characters involved with the adventure.

Introduction

Depending on the party's make up, each character can have a similar introduction to the following, or the entire party can have a single introduction. For example, if everyone at the table is a Perrenlander, it may make sense to have this as an encounter for everyone at the same

time. On the other hand, if there are multiple regions represented, it may make sense to divide characters up into regions and have each go through this, or a similar encounter, separately. The Dungeon Master should feel free to modify this introduction to match the specific regional flavor. So, for example, a Dungeon Master in the Shield Lands would set this encounter in Critwall and instead of meeting ‘outside of town’ would advise party members to meet ‘at the west end of Tent Town, where the trade road comes in’. Read or paraphrase the following:

So there you were, walking about and minding your own business, perhaps just enjoying the day, perhaps on some minor errand, when you came upon a few too many merchant carts attempting to use the city street at the same time. As you passed by, one of the drivers – a wiry looking woman with sprouts of bristly hair on her upper lip and chin, hissed at you “Hate is in the world – Meet me at the south edge of town in an hour”. When you turned to reply, the woman refused to acknowledge you.

Players who do not want to meet the stranger in an hour at the edge of town end up having an amazingly average week. It was quite restful, really, but nothing else unusual occurred. This adventure is over for such overworked heroes!

Going to the south edge of town, you noticed the woman from the caravan. Her scrawny arms seem a poor match for the bundle of cut wood she is carrying, and her well-worn footwear is an equally poor match for the rough and rocky surface she is traveling.

Seeing you, she staggers your way saying “Help a woman with her burden?”

She identifies her self as ‘Ol’ Widder Genn’. She is actually not a local to the area and claims she’s on a pilgrimage for Pholtus. A close examination of her reveals she suffers from severe burn marks over much of her hands and lower arms. If pressed on this, she will admit she is a member of the ‘Flambis Morti’, a sub-cult of Pholtus that believes in self-purification through ritualistic burning. She has a camp nearby and was bringing wood to it. She asks characters to help her with her burden and walk with her. On the way to her camp, she reveals the following (feel free to either just relay the information, or to role-play it. If role-played, have Ol’ Widder Gen use lots of double-meaning words – like “help me with my burden”, “there’s a lot of HATE in the world these days”, etc.):

☛ She is a simple traveler.

- She had a “feeling” these adventurers would be interested in the sword Hate.
- Some vile Perrenlanders known as the Black Wave (kind of an organized crime syndicate dealing in evil magic items) offered a sword known as Hate for sale to the Iuzians about two years ago in the then Iuz occupied Shield Lands town of South Keep. The sale fell through when South Keep was invaded.
- Rumors of the sword have surfaced since then. A year ago, it was thought to have been in the hands of a bugbear tribe (See IUZ04-01 Madness Falls).
- The rumor turned out to be a dead end, but now the sword has been positively identified as being in the hands of an ogre chieftain known as Gristletooth. This ogre is rampaging in an area known as Torkeep on the Shield Lands/Iuzian border.
- It is believed the forces of Iuz seriously desire this sword or the Black Wave would not have braved the journey across the Nyr Dyv, entering into land under military conflict, two years ago.
- Nobody knows why Iuz wants it, but if he wants it, then those folks who oppose the Old One certainly will strive to keep it out of his hands.
- There is little known about the sword. It is a black longsword of exquisite make. It has a gold inlaid hilt and the grip is said to be wrapped in red dragon hide. It is theoretically supposed to have powers against arcane casters.
- It would behoove the characters to travel to Torkeep by any means necessary, investigate this ogre, Gristletooth, and recover or dispose of the sword if at all possible.

She has no other information and is on her way after being escorted to camp. Note that, in fact, she is under a *limited wish* spell placed on her by Zelad from the Demi-Plane of Hate. After the conversation is over, she no longer remembers anything of what she said.

Research by the characters can be done on the sword “Hate”. The following information uses these keys: Bardic Lore (B), Gather Information (G), Knowledge (Arcana) (A), Knowledge (History) (H), or Knowledge (Planes) (P) reveals the information shown below. The DC for each check follows the key, so B20 means a Bardic Lore check DC 20.

- B20/G25: The Shield Lands is currently affected by a horrific plague known as the Black Breath of Iuz. There does not appear to be a cure. *Note, this is actually automatically known by Shield Landers.

- B25: There are two other swords, Anger and Fury, with rumored powers against cavalry and devotees of good gods that were also offered for sale.
- B25/A30/H30/P30: Hate is an ancient blade, one that, until recently, had not been seen since the time of Keraptis.
- B30/A35/H35/P30: Hate was supposed to have powers of taking away reason, thus defeating those schooled in the arcane.
- P30: The Demi-Plane of Hate is one of countless demi-planes, itself being a fairly obscure one.
- P30: This is available only if the above check was made. There is no known access to the Demi-Plane of Hate. It is believed to not directly connect to the Prime, but does connect with the astral and the ethereal planes, as well as the lower planes (such as the Abyss). Supposedly, those who travel there lose the ability to reason and are overcome by their more base emotions.
- P30: For every five points over 30 on the skill check, a player learns one random piece of information shown about the Plane of Hate in the Appendix. A player can make this particular skill check more than once, but only if suitable research is done or is available.

Remember: The above information is not free. Characters should actually think about doing research on these subjects. If characters desire to do so, each bit of knowledge should take a day’s research at a major library/population center (except for bards – those lucky characters just pick up all KINDS of tidbits!). While this does not have a direct impact on the way the game goes (no extra TU expenditures, costs, etc.), it should have a role-playing impact on the characters (“Do we waste time on this?” etc.). Alternatively, characters can seek out bards or sages (at the cost of 2 gp per day per question per 5 points of DC. Thus a DC 30 check would cost 12 gp and take six days).

The party can get to Torkeep by any means they desire. If they travel by foot, passing through the Shield Lands should give them a view of utter destruction by war. Although the capital city, Critwall, is still well off and walled in, the populace looks battle-weary and tired. They have few possessions, but even most of the commoners look like they could do well in a fight. Plague warnings are on many of the buildings. The Dungeon Master should not over do this, but just give players a flavor of the region. The goal is to get the party to Torkeep so the real adventure can begin.

Encounter One: Torkeep

The lands belonging to Lord Franz Torkeep were, before the occupation by Iuz, known for being lush, rolling hills filled with life. Centered within was the small castle, also known as Torkeep. The Torkeep family was always known as devout Heironeans and possessing excellent military skills. The lands of Torkeep were lands of order.

As you travel the road from Critwall to Torkeep, you realize you are not traveling lands of order. The earth alternates between being blasted, as if by incredible fires, and pounded into nearly a rock-like state from the massive amount of armies that have recently traveled back and forth in this region. Even the merchant's road, formerly a well maintained route, is now little more than a series of worn ruts.

You have seen a number of merchant caravans, mostly hauling food and building supplies, going up and down the road. All have a number of guards with them. Idle chatter has revealed the merchants are nervous about raiding parties of goblins, orcs and ogres.

But now, the castle known as Torkeep appears over the last hill. Its mighty walls have been reduced in places to rubble, as if a giant had taken bites out. Everywhere is activity: carpenters and masons move over the structure like ants, hastily effecting repairs.

As you get closer, you see there is a camp of workers set outside the keep, bivouacked with soldiers from the army. Additionally, there constant troop movements going in and out of the keep. You estimate perhaps 250 armed troops, and maybe an equal amount of workers.

This encounter is designed to give the party some quick essential information and then move the party off to seek out Gristletooth. There are essentially three people for the party to seek and talk to. However, the Dungeon Master should not get hung up on form over substance. None of the information is secret or of a nature that the common person would not be willing to reveal. Depending on time available, it would be acceptable for the party to learn of much of this information from only one or two NPCs. Again, the point of this encounter is not to explore the Shield Lands but to move the party on to the real meat and potatoes of the adventure.

Depending on the region the party members are from, they will have more or less difficulties in dealing with the Shield Landers. Here are a few possible ideas (NOTE: In reading these notes, remember this author's underlying theme: *the players are heroes!* These notes are meant as gross generalities as possible ways to role-play some of the encounters. The Dungeon Master is

encouraged to alter the encounter to suit the personality and make up of the characters in the party):

Furyondians are viewed with a general suspicion. Any talk of annexing the Shield Lands results in a -4 circumstance modifier to all Charisma based skill checks!

Perrenlanders are viewed with a somewhat idealistic view point. They are seen as sturdy folk, although with an independent bent (although no one reason for this viewpoint can be specifically identified). (Think of it as being a place you always wanted to visit, but could never afford to travel to – many of the Shield Landers feel a bit like that about Perrenlanders).

Characters from the Bandit Kingdoms are viewed with an open, friendly attitude. This is because the local rumor is that travelers from the Bandit Kingdom are thieves. The Shield Landers are a bit nervous around them and tend to watch their possessions VERY carefully.

Residents of Highfolk are viewed as being good, sturdy folk who are hard working and willing to fight a good fight. Many Shield Landers have a somewhat idealized view of Highfolk.

That said, the party, as they approach, can identify three specific areas:

1) The Worker Tent region. This is a series of medium to large tents where the workers live. If the party investigates this area, most of the workers are very busy, but there is one middle aged man – Feztos, who is currently suffering from very early stages of the Black Breath (He does have a slight cough, and a Spot check (DC 15) reveals he looks a bit pale for a Suel and there are faint signs of skull like blotches starting to appear on the backs of his hands). He tries to attach himself to the party in the hopes they can cure him. However, none of the other workers in the area know he has the plague, yet...

The information available from Feztos (or any of the workers, really) is as follows:

- The workers here are well paid for the repairs on the keep. Apparently Lord Torkeep is paying for the repairs out of his own reserves.
- The Captain Ysaire died once, but got resurrected somehow.
- The workers only know a great battle took place here a few months ago. The details of it are unknown as they were in Critwall during the battle.
- The workers are all afraid of the wandering Iuzian raiders. The worst of the lot are the band of mercenary ogres run by the chieftain Gristletooth!
- The ogres try to leave no survivors (a few victims may escape) and tend to eat their victims.

- It is said that Gristletooth wields a mighty black sword that causes his foes to lose all sense of reason.
- For the past two months, there have been many odd events. These include: livestock giving birth to deformed young (two headed calves, turtles with wings, etc.). The moons appeared just last week bright red. It rained toadstools (feel free to insert other chaotic effects that are clearly the sign of an impending weirdness here).
- As one travels closer to Critwall, these effects lessen. As one travels closer to Torkeep, the effects increase!
- If the workers knew he had the plague, they might run him off, or worse, maybe kill him! Sadly, his family in Critwall needs the money...

2) The Standing Army of the Shield Lands. This is a series of 1-2 man tents and temporary wood shelters arranged in a VERY organized manner. It lies just behind the worker tents and before the keep itself. The army is under the command of Captain Ysairae. She's a small woman in her late twenties with long brown hair twisted in an elaborate, but functional braid. Her ears are slightly pointed betraying her half-elven heritage. She is a political appointment and is one of those people who follow the letter of the law to even ridiculous conclusions. If pressed, she can reluctantly admit to having been killed almost two years ago, but fortunately was resurrected. Being pressed on this information is an embarrassment to her and parties that do so suffer a -2 penalty to all Charisma based skill checks with her.

The information available from the Standing Army depends on if the party seeks out the commander (Ysairae). *The most important clue is Gristletooth's location.* Information only Ysairae can provide is marked with a *.

- There is constant Iuzian activity by raiders in the area. It is mostly bands of goblins and orcs, although a few gnolls and bugbears have been spotted.
- The real fear is this ogre chieftan, Gristletooth. He is a real savage and his one tactic: Charge into battle and smash stuff, is incredibly effective since his entire fighting force is ogres!
- There is an estimated 20-25 ogres under his command.
- The battle at Torkeep was vicious, with undead, goblinoid, demons and the like all assaulting the keep over a two day period. The battle ended when Waquonis was killed by a band of heroes ("right there in the courtyard it was...").

- Lord Torkeep is insisting on sweat and blood for rebuilding the keep, and not relying on something as 'airy' as magic.
- The ogres seem to be based about a days march to the north east. There are a series of old ruins up there.
- If the party knows of someone with the plague in the area, the soldiers will be VERY nervous and insist that person be revealed so they can be sent back to Critwall for isolation and treatment by the churches.
- * Gristletooth carries a sword that saps all reason from his foes. They will blindly charge into combat, leaving themselves more or less defenseless.
- * Lord Franz Torkeep is not here. He is in Critwall on Council business.
- * There simply are not the forces available to go out to attack the ogres or any other particular band of raiders. There is a real fear of another invasion...

3) The inner keep. This is an area of massive worker activity. There is a four story inner keep area that is mostly untouched. However, the bones from what must have been some sort of dragon (an old blue, actually), are stacked neatly to one side. In here, the construction efforts are under the assistance of a very excitable dwarf named Chisel Bladehome (a distant cousin of Lord Bladehome – the sole dwarf who sits on the Council of Lords).

- The supplies being used in the construction have to be shipped in from Critwall.
- There are plenty of mercenaries making a fine coin as caravan guards.
- The construction project is financed solely by Lord Torkeep, and not by the nation.
- Chisel has personally talked to a number of merchants, and actually talked to a few survivors of a raid by the ogre band led by Gristletooth. They said the ogre chieftain was enormous, and wielded a black as midnight sword with a gold handle. When the ogre pulled it out, everyone felt an overwhelming urge to drop everything and just attack whoever was nearest with a blinding, overwhelming hatred. As a result, the ogres were able to fall on them and easily dispatch them. The survivors said they managed to escape by literally being knocked unconscious and being left for dead.
- The ogres seem to be coming from (and returning to) the north east when they raid.

If the party wants, they can search around the area, but there are no maps of the Iuzian territory that are believed reliable. However, the soldiers, some of whom have acted as scouts, will give the party directions to the ruins that lie a two days to the north east.

Encounter Two: Gristletooth

When the party gets ready to travel, read or paraphrase the following:

As your party leaves the confines of the Shield Lands, it is as if they walked out of building into a storm. Inside was calm and warm. Outside is cruel and vicious. The sky is different: no more do you see white clouds against a blue sky. Instead the air is filled with a thick mist reducing visibility to a few hundred yards, barely allowing the sun's light to seep through. The ground you walk on no longer has life growing from it. The grass is brown and dry. Yet, where it brushes against bare skin it scrapes and cuts. The occasional shrub or tree is bare of most foliage and appears to be in true pain. The only sign of life are nasty looking black birds, perhaps ravens, with glowing red eyes. Even these, however, are few and far between.

Crossing from the Shield Lands to the lands of Iuz should literally be like walking through a curtain. On one side the sky is clear and the land very much alive. Crossing into the lands owned by Iuz result in being in a land of despair: a land that is dying and in pain.

Characters traveling by foot should be on edge. Random sounds (growls, stamping, shrieks, etc.) will occasionally be heard in the mists. Attempts to find the source of the sounds will be fruitless. The ground is more or less barren of any tracks. None-the-less, a character with Tracking can make a Survival check (DC 20) to locate the occasional humanoid bootprint, a wolf's paw print, etc. A Survival check (DC 30) will reveal an important clue: A set of ogre footprints, perhaps a dozen creatures in the party, moving to the north east.

There is not a set road in the area, but the terrain itself provides a natural route: hills seem to have formed on either side of an old river bed (dried up for at least 50 years) that continually winds to the north east. Following it leads directly to the ruins.

Parties might use magic to travel. Flying should be frustrating because the mists make vision difficult. Advise flying players that even though they can 'see' shapes at up to 500 feet (through the mist), to truly see anything they have to be about 150 feet off the ground.

Traveling by foot will take the party two days to reach the ruins. Traveling with flight will take the party

one day to reach the ruins. Traveling by mount (horses, etc.) will take the party about a day and a half to reach the ruins. The party should feel, during their travels, that they are being watched. They can never quite spot anyone, but there is always that constant prickle at the back of the neck that says "I am being watched". At night, there will be odd colored lights appearing randomly at the farthest edges of sight. Again, nothing will ever be found that created such effects. This, together with the noises at night, adds to the level of subconscious paranoia.

As a result, sleeping is difficult. Falling asleep under such conditions requires a Concentration check (DC 15) (a new check can be made once per hour). Spells such as *calm emotions* or the like easily defeat this. Essentially, any creative method the party might come up with for defeating this effect should be rewarded. For example: If they stuff cloth in their ears they might get a +2 circumstance modifier to their concentration check. Further, a *silence spell* might give a +4 circumstance modifier. Bards might try singing a soothing song or the like and in such a case their perform check could substitute for the concentration check. Failure to get proper sleep (at least 6 hours – 3 hours for elves) results in the party being exhausted the next day or possibly not getting back spells.

When the party reaches the ruins, read or paraphrase the following:

Cresting a large hill, the oppressive mist seems to lessen, although it does not truly go away. Sprawled across a large, flat hill, approximately 200 yards across, are the broken, jagged stones of a once mighty castle. Time and war have all but destroyed it. Only the skeleton of the outer walls are still here, while inside the grounds can be seen a few higher walls where the castle might have been. The only structure truly standing is a broken tower, perhaps 150 feet tall, pointing like a jagged finger into the sky.

The party can easily navigate the grounds to reach the tower. However, as they pass through the walls (or look through), they see that hunks of large boulders and bits of stone blocks stick out of the ground, almost like giant bits of bones. In fact, if the party stands at the far end and looks down towards the tower, the castle's ruins take on the shape of a laughing skull. The tower ends up looking (at this point) like a spear stuck through the skull's forehead! There are LOTS of places for the party to be ambushed in such a terrain! This area seems to be infused with Chaos. *Detect chaos* (or similar) reveals a moderate background of chaos everywhere. This is an emanation from the sword (see below). As the party gets closer and

closer to the portal, have weirder and weirder effects (no more than 2D6 total) take effect. Some of these can be:

- A boulder says “watch it” as a character climbs on it.
- A player wipes sweat from their brow, only to discover it is blood.
- A three bodied bird flies overhead.
- A small rock moves out of the way as a player almost steps on it.
- Someone notices their weapon scabbard (spell component pouch, etc.) is strapped to the opposite side.
- Other random chaotic effects as the Dungeon Master may determine.

The party will notice the following signs of life:

- With Track, a Survival check (DC 15) reveals LOTS of ogre tracks in the area, all leading towards/from the tower.
- There is a hint of smoke arising from the tower. It is difficult to see as it blends in with the mists. It requires a Spot check (DC 20) to notice it.
- The sounds of the party moving through the rubble echoes eerily. At first, the party may think it is someone or thing hiding in the rubble. A Listen check DC 20 will reveal the difference.

The remaining tower is approximately 35' across. There are 5 different levels that can be identified (from the open stone windows), however, in truth, only the lower two are complete. The rest are broken open, as if a giant hand grabbed hold of the top level and snapped off a piece. Thus, the uppermost level is barely there, whilst the third lowest is mostly there. All of the levels, except for the lowest, are empty and have been for at least a century. The upper two levels are not safe at all. Anyone entering these has a 10% chance of having the sections collapse, causing 6d6 of crushing damage from the rubble (Reflex save (DC 15) half).

The lowest level does not have any windows. Instead it has a set of doors on the inner (castle-side) wall. The doors are made of heavy iron and look as though they have recently been worked on (there is fresh grease in the pins, there are places where rust has obviously been chipped away, etc.).

As weak as the castle is, it has been further weakened by the energy escaping from the portal to the Demi-Plane of Hate (see below). As a result, as the door is opened, chunks of stone fall from the walls onto the party. These stone blocks have a chance to hit anyone within the 10-ft by 10-ft area in front of the door.

APL 10, 12 and 14 (EL 6)

↗ **Collapsing Rock (trap):** CR 6; mechanical; proximity trigger; no reset; Atk +20 melee (1d6, stone blocks); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. by 10-ft. area); Search DC 14; Disable Device 16.

APL 16 (EL 7)

↗ **Collapsing Rock (trap):** CR 6; mechanical; proximity trigger; no reset; Atk +20 melee (1d6, stone blocks); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft. by 10-ft. area); Search DC 14; Disable Device 16.

Note: Because the “trap” is less of a trap and more of a fault in the stone construction, Knowledge (Architecture and Engineering) can be used in place of a Search check. As multiple skills can be brought to bear, the EL of the encounter has been reduced by 1.

There will be no sound heard from inside the door. Opening it will reveal a horrible sight. The entrance room is about 35' across and takes up about half of the lower tower (nearly a semi-circle) with a door on the far side. In the room itself are eleven ogres, all dead. They look as if they killed each other. One will have his hand locked around another's throat, even as its victim gutted it with a nasty looking short sword. Another will look as though it cleaved through two of its fellows before he was stabbed from behind by a large longsword. The rest have been killed in a similarly cruel fashion. Characters that can *speak with dead* through one of a number of methods will get the following information:

- These ogres followed Gristletooth. They were mercenaries who received coin and slaves from Iuz's forces in exchange for their services in war.
- About 5 months ago, Gristletooth came across a bugbear who had claimed to have walked across the entire lands of Iuz! The bugbear was carrying a nasty looking black longsword with a golden hilt. He attacked Gristletooth in a fit of rage, but Gristletooth proved the better fighter. The ogre claimed the sword as his prize.
- Since then they have been operating independently of Iuz's forces. They instead raided everyone, but no longer for coin. Now they did it for fun and for the victims who they used as food.
- About a week ago, they came back here from a successful raid. As always, they were dividing up the food when one of the ogres claimed more than his share. This led to infighting and as a result all the ogres are now dead! (NOTE: This is actually a side effect of the sword's power.)

The door in the room is actually the floorboard of a wagon leaning against wall. Moving it aside reveals a darkened room. There is a bit of light coming from a fireplace on the right hand side, but the light is redder than it should be. The room has piles of junk on the left hand side: things the ogres thought were valuables: old blankets, lumber, old pots and pans, that sort of thing. Mysteriously, there are no actual valuables such as gold or gems or the like. One would think with all that raiding there would be something...

As to the fireplace: It is set into the wall and fills a 10 foot cavity. The fire is still going, although one would think the wood in the fireplace would have long ago been consumed. This is where the smoke seen from outside is coming from. There is a heavy iron pot swinging from some chains over the fire. It has a 5 foot diameter. The iron lid is slightly off. If a player just grabs the lid or the pot, they will discover it is very hot! They will take 4D6 damage from the heat (Reflex save DC 18 for half damage). Until the damage is healed, such a victim also takes one point of temporary Strength damage and Dexterity damage from the painful heat blisters that form. Inside the pot are the remains of some humans, boiled and cooked away to just bones. Whatever vile stew was being cooked in here has boiled away, and is now a burned mess on the bottom of the pot.

From the door to the far end of the room is a long carpet. It is actually made from crudely stitching together the skins of a number of humanoids: victims of the ogres' cruelty! The horrible carpet leads to a massive throne. Read or paraphrase the following:

Centered against the far wall is a throne, perhaps five feet across and equally tall. Red light from the fireplace flickers across its marble surface, illuminating as well a large figure sitting on the throne.

Before you is Gristletooth. He is an enormous ogre, over 11 feet tall. He is sitting on the throne with a hand tightly gripping each arm rest. His right leg is bent at the knee, as if trying to push up, but his left leg lies stretched straight away from him. His body is arched backwards as if in great pain. But it is not the fact that Gristletooth sits before you that truly draws your attention. It is not his midnight black boots, nor his leather clothes (suspiciously looking as if tanned and cut from humanoid flesh)... No, it is the ogre himself, or what has become of him. His head has become truly distorted: while his skull and neck are still of normal size, his mouth has been forced open and enlarged to almost 4 feet across! His nasty brown and yellow stained tusks jut from his jaw like a horrific bear-trap born in madness. A reddish glow is coming from within...

As the party gets closer, they can examine Gristletooth in greater detail. Basically, it looks as if this ogre is in incredible pain as he sits on this ivory throne. The jaws are open in mid-air, and grotesquely extended, nearly in a comic manner. One COULD actually crawl into his mouth... The party should notice two specific things as they get closer: First, deep inside his mouth, the party can see a black sword with a golden hilt, buried point first into a red stone altar. It looks to be about 20 feet away. Secondly, Gristletooth is still alive. His chest ever so slowly rises and falls. His eyes, blood shot and filled with dark malevolence, have just a hint of tears from the pain he must be in, and ever so slowly will follow the party's actions. However, what ever is causing Gristletooth to be in such a condition is also, to a limited extent, protecting him.

Due to foul magic (explained in the next encounter), Gristletooth has been turned into a living portal to the Demi-Plane of Hate. As a result, he is completely impervious to anything the party may try to do to him. Magic spells just seem to bounce off or have no effect. Blades of all makes and manner are turned aside if they are swung at him. This effect seems to extend to his throne, as well. Note that when the party comes back to the prime material, this effect will be broken and the throne can be tampered with. This is important because the throne, normally, can be swiveled aside to reveal a storage bin. In the bin is the serious loot the ogres stole from their many victims!

Attempting to grab, touch, or interfere with the sword by any means are fruitless. There is nothing for the party to do here except crawl through the ogre's mouth. There are, however, two knowledge skills that may be useful: Arcana and Planes. A Knowledge (Arcana) check (DC 24) reveals this is a version of the spell *gate*. A Knowledge (Planes) check (DC 30) reveals the sword may be creating the portal. A really good Knowledge (Planes) check (DC 35) reveals it is likely going through the ogre's mouth to this other plane will not take the party immediately to the scene presented.

Encounter Three: Not QUITE what was expected...

Stepping/crawling through the portal, the party finds themselves in the Demi-Plane of Hate. Refer to Appendix A for specific planar effects. Read or paraphrase the following to the party:

Going through the mouth of Gristletooth, you find yourself in a long, red, hot hallway. The walls are rounded above you and look organic, like bones

barely covered by a slick, fleshy film. Ahead of you, always ahead of you, stands the sword Hate, buried in its red stone altar. It never moves further away, but it does become more difficult to see. As you go forward, almost single-mindedly, your vision begins to blur. Then, without warning, there is a flash of red light, all consuming, warm and hateful. You have arrived.

The world is red and hot. You are standing on ground that has been baked and beaten into submission. It is hard and cracked and made of some reddish soil. To either side of you are cliff walls, formed from some reddish stone, stretching up hundreds of feet. The air is dry and hot and sweat trickles down the back of your neck. There is a buzzing in the air, at the lowest end of your ability to hear, pestering and persistent.

Behind you, the cliff walls join together. Ahead of you is a tower made from black stone. It is the only thing you have seen (other than you and your party) that is not red. The tower appears to be about a half a mile ahead. It is a craggy looking affair, with staggered levels. The tower looks like an angry child had slammed level on top of level. How it stays upright is impossible to guess.

The party can do what they want. If they fly, they cannot go over the top of the cliff walls. The floor gets further and further away, but the cliff tops remain the same distance.

Exploring the cliff walls does not reveal any caves or the like. However, there are runes carved in the wall, stretching 40 to 50 feet across, which are hateful oaths that seemed to be targeted towards this particular party. The runes are in draconic. The oaths are not overly mean, but do seem specific (if you can read draconic). Thus a wizard with a low strength score would see “You are weak”, while a ranger with a low charisma might see “you are friendless”.

Travel to the tower seems to take forever. Even though, rationally, the characters know it is only taking perhaps a half hour’s time to walk there, it feels as if it is at least an hour and a half of travel.

The tower itself is crudely carved of randomly sized bricks of obsidian. Describe them as appearing smashed together. As the party gets closer, they will see there are no windows, or apparently doors, on any of the levels. The tower’s various levels are NOT detailed in this adventure, as they are not intended as part of this adventure. If players insist on exploring, the Mistress of the Keep (see below), has standard wizardly possessions. There is a library, a kitchen, a laboratory, and a spell-practice / summoning room. Typical guardians would be a pair of Iron Golems as well monsters off the Summon

Monster 7, 8 and 9 lists. The planar effects do not extend inside the tower.

Once the party circles the tower, they find the only entrance is a door on the far side. The door, like the tower, is made of obsidian. There is writing in common, via use of *arcane mark* spells, reading: “A curse upon all who enter with love in their hearts. A blessing on those who hate.” The door is not locked or trapped, and opens easily. Describe the contents of the inside as follows:

The doorway opens to a corridor, blessedly not lit with a red glow. A cool breeze comes from within. The corridor is made of the same rough black stones as the exterior, and is lit by the occasional magically burning torch. The corridor is 40 feet long (or is it 60? No... it may be 35... Ah, 40 feet...) and 10 (15? 5?) feet wide. There is a black-oak door every 10 feet, and at the end there is an additional black-oak door. Soothing music, very faint, comes from within.

The corridor is, for all purposes, 40 feet long and 10 feet wide. However, this entire tower is not really a fixture of the plane of Hate and is consequently in a battle with the plane to stay here. As a result, the distances seem to shift and change before the eyes of the viewer. This has no “rules” effect on gameplay and is meant solely as a roleplaying device.

Each of the side doors opens easily. None are trapped. However, each one opens the door OPPOSITE from itself. Thus, literally, a person could go through the door on the left and come out the door on the right!

The door on the end appears to be in every respect made of a black oak wood. However, it is three times as durable. It is not locked, nor it is it trapped.

❖ **Black Oak Wooden Door:** 1 in. thick; hardness 15; hp 30; AC 5; Break DC 25.

Opening the door at the end reveals a square room, 30 feet on a side. There is a door on the right and left hand sides (that lead into the tower. See above.). The room is furnished with thick furry carpets of almost familiar animals (It looks like bear, but the feel is wrong. It looks like rabbit – but an 8 foot tall rabbit? Etc.). The room is nice and cool, and the room is lit via two permanent *dancing lights* spells, the lights slowly floating at random around the room. There are paintings on the walls of almost familiar scenes (“That’s Greyhawk! Oh, wait, no it isn’t...”). There are no other fixtures in this room.

Standing in the room, watching the party enter, is a tough looking old woman. She is perhaps 90 to 100 years old yet is not quite as hunched over as one would suspect. She stands perhaps 5 ½ feet tall. Her white hair is pulled back in an all too neat bun on the back of her head. It

seems to pull her skin back, giving her face an almost skull like appearance. She is wearing tiny spectacles on the end of her tiny nose. She wears a patchwork shirt over a pair of patched and re-patched trousers (tucked neatly into a pair of worn black boots). On her shoulders is a black knit shawl, apparently as ancient as she is. Neatly tucked in a belt is a pair of wands. On a nearby table swim a pair of goldfish in a crystal bowl (they watch the party with keen interest). Invisibly flitting in and out of the room is an imp. The goldfish are “Woz and Monda” They live in the fishbowl and have 1 hp each. They can actually speak (but won’t unless there is a reason) and have memorized the arcane formula to every spell in Zelad’s library. The imp is named Mitte Megaru and, when not needed by Zelad, tends to be locked in his room with the goldfish.

Zelad greets the party as they enter:

“Come in, come in. And shut the door. No sense letting any of that heat into my nice cool house! Now what brings such a fine looking bunch of adventurers to the Tower of Zelad?”

🧙 **Zelad:** Female human (diviner) Wiz 18.

Zelad should be run as friendly in a slightly creepy way. She is genuinely glad to see adventurers and is quite sincere in everything she is about to tell them. She is Neutral Evil in alignment, but mostly because she is normally selfish by nature. She is not into directly causing others pain or humiliation, but she is definitely not above stealing a person blind! If the party wants to attack her, she has virtually no defenses (other than her 52 hit points and imp familiar). She typically does not memorize spells each day but spends her time researching the mysteries of the universe.

She has the following information/questions for the party:

- She wants to know EVERYTHING about how the party got here. This is important information to her because of her studies.
- She reveals it is probably her fault the party is here. She has a penchant for studying obscure planes and came across the Plane of Hate. She came here and has been trapped here ever since.
- She is immune to its environmental effects because of the tower she created. She does not remember exactly HOW she made it, but “it’s a beauty, eh?” She knows she has the plans for this thing somewhere...
- She does not remember how long she has been trapped here, but its been at least 60 years.
- She only knows of one way out. Her research, which has been costly, has revealed this plane is

tied to a magic sword (she says “soh-red”) that incorporates as part of its power the very energies of this plane. That is the Sword Hate. (If the party is curious, she used lots of divination magic – such as *contact other plane* – to get this information.

- She does not know the origin of the sword, nor all of its properties. However, she does know the command words necessary to cause the sword to open a rift to the prime-material (Oerth) that would let her (and the party) escape.
- If the party asks about other methods of planar travel, she says those methods failed her. NOTE: There is nothing about the plane that prevents any other method of escaping, but Zelad is not dealing with a full deck...
- Recently, she was able to project some of her will onto the material plane, causing the Sword to seek out a magical power node on Oerth where she could cause it to open a portal.
- This led her to manipulate the sword to seek out, ultimately, Gristletooth the Ogre. He was already based out of the ruins that were perfect for opening a portal.
- Sadly, as she finally got the sword in exactly the right position, and as she was completing the final ritual, she heard a single word reverberate across the planes, a word that caused her to stumble in her wording. That word was DOOM.
- As a result, the sword was brought through to this plane but the rift it created is not suitable for travel. It is, however, sufficient to allow the chaos inherent in this plane to seep out to the prime material.
- She wants to recover the sword and use the ritual to close the current portal, then open a new one and escape.
- She is not the only resident of this plane. There was also a small village of lizard men trapped here. She believes they are the ones who recovered the sword when it came to this plane and are currently holding it. She has not gone to recover the sword as the lizard folk are too powerful and she fears them.

Remember; do not run Zelad as Machiavellian evil, but more of a coot. She does radiate evil but her evil is truly based more on her personal philosophy of being greedy. She is, well, eccentric, which does not prevent her from honoring a bargain. She does not take criticism well and responds with things like “Well, I know that NOW, don’t I!” or “Oh, so it’s simple is it. Ha! YOU try being a 748 year old wizard living by herself...” (she has no idea how

old she is, but as mentioned above is probably only 90 to 100 years old).

She offers to tell the party where they can find the lizard folk. In exchange, she expects them to recover the sword and bring it to her. She is not bluffing on any of this and is sincere. Again, if the party wants to kill her, they certainly can. If they want to rest or spend the night, they can do so in the hallway, and she will have an *unseen servant* bring them simple food and drink. If the party is reluctant to help (and she, because of her own background, believes they will be) she tells them that if they do this, she will try to find the magic formula she used to make this tower and give it to them as a reward.

She advises the party that the lizard men village is at the end of this valley, back in the direction they came from! She can also tell the party any of the effects of this plane (but not solutions to avoid the effects, such as the *calm emotions* spell).

Encounter Four: The Doom that came to Sarkrith

The party can leave Zelad's tower whenever they like. Leaving the tower immediately subjects them to the planar effects. Retracing their steps takes about four hours. As the party gets near the dead end of the canyon, structures come into view. See the map for details. All of the structures are carved from blocks of this reddish material.

This village is a Sarkrith outpost. In their various planar travels, the Sarkrith came here untold ages ago and became trapped. When the sword Hate came to this plane, they were fortunate enough to recover it first. They were able to handle it with little difficulties due to their highly anti-magical nature, and as a result were able to survive its more insidious effects. The leaders were able to decipher the sword's relation to this plane and consequently used it to form a portal that allowed most of the village to leave. A few guards were left behind to guard the sword in case the Sarkrith ever decided to return. Currently there are guards in two locations: The Outer Walls and The Temple of Hate.

The Outer Walls:

These walls are 25 feet tall and 20 feet thick. On top of that is a battlement 5 feet thick and 5 feet tall running around the edge of the village. The gate consists of two 10 foot by 10 foot doors made of the red stone and is barred. The stone is as hard as iron.

❖ **Red Planar Stone Door:** 4 in. thick; hardness 10; hp 120; AC 5; Break DC 28.

APL 10 (EL 11)

➤ **Sarkrith Thane (1):** hp 148; see Appendix Three.

APL 12 (EL 14)

➤ **Sarkrith Spelleater (1):** hp 202; see Appendix Three.

➤ **Sarkrith Thane (1):** hp 148; see Appendix Three.

APL 14 (EL 16)

➤ **Sarkrith Spelleater (2):** hp 202; see Appendix Three.

➤ **Sarkrith Thane (2):** hp 148; see Appendix Three.

APL 16 (EL 18)

➤ **Sarkrith Spelleater (2):** hp 202; see Appendix Three.

➤ **Sarkrith Thane Fighter (4):** hp 182; see Appendix One and Two.

Tactics: The Sarkrith are not stupid, and revel in frustrating the characters as much as possible. They will not open the gate, nor will they automatically expose themselves. They instead use the wall for cover to shoot at the party with their bows where possible. If the party seems overwhelming with their missile fire, the Sarkrith retreat to the ground, possibly one of the stone huts, where they can attack with strength. However, their job is to tirelessly guard the wall area. They will not necessarily abandon their post. It is possible if they are fighting a truly losing battle for them to perform a fighting withdrawal back towards the temple. If they can get into a position where they can use their improved bull rush to push a character off the ledge, they certainly do so.

Note also the position of the gong on the ground level behind the gate. If the Sarkrith are forced to go to the ground level, they strike the gong. This clearly alerts the temple guards to be ready for danger.

Finally, make sure to understand the Sarkrith's abilities. The thane can use the anti-magic shell to great effect (and this will really mess up magic item/spell enhanced fighters who love to charge in), but are not afraid of just using their spell resistance. Further, their adrenaline boost to "haste" themselves can be a real killer. Also, the spelleaters can surprise a wizard who is not familiar with them and gain some extra hit points. If the Sarkrith are lucky enough to get the opportunity to flank a character, they will certainly do so. Finally, note that APL 16, the Thane has two levels of fighter. This gives them Awesome Blow and Improved Critical Greatsword. They will use their Awesome Blow to set up situations where a person is subject to attacks of opportunity if they stand up, or, if they can use it to knock a person off the wall, will certainly do so.

Treasure:

APL 10: Loot – 240 gp.

APL 12: Loot – 376 gp.

APL 14: Loot – 752 gp.

APL 16: Loot – 1232 gp.

Development: The worst case for the party is if the Sarkrith withdraw fighting to the temple to advise the inner guard. Otherwise, all of the stone buildings, for combat purposes, should be treated as 20 foot cubes with a single 10 foot door. All the buildings are made of the same material. Note: All of the buildings are empty – floor to ceiling, wall to wall.

Encounter Five: The SECOND Doom that came to Sarkrith

Read or paraphrase the following to the party once they are able to see the inside of the village:

The lizard men of this realm have built for themselves about a dozen small stone huts, each about 20 feet across, out of red stone bricks. There is no movement anywhere in the village. No sand or dust blows anywhere in the village. Your footsteps echo eerily off the stone.

Then, you see it. Located at the far end of the village is a structure must larger than the others: while only 20 feet tall, it appears to be built directly into the cliff face, and may be as wide as 60 feet. The face of this building is carved with hateful looking runes.

The runes are carved in draconic and are words designed to inspire hate. Again, they seem specific to the party, but are even viler. It is recommended the Dungeon Master does not come up with “insults” for each of the party members. Instead, advise the party of the general nature of the words and let their imagination fill in the blanks.

The temple itself is set into the face of the cliff wall. It is 60 feet wide and has stone doors similar to those at the front gate to this village. If the gong was not sounded, the doors are not barred. Otherwise, the party has some serious rock smashing to do...

Inside are merely two rooms. The first is 60 feet by 60 feet square. There are a number of stone pillars in the room and the back door is a mere 10 foot wide door, unlocked. The room is lit by everburning torches permanently affixed to red stone slots in the pillars. The Sarkrith fight to the death to defend the final room.

APL 10 (EL 13)

🔥 **Sarkrith Spelleater (1):** hp 202; see Appendix Three.

APL 12 (EL 14)

🔥 **Sarkrith Spelleater (1):** hp 202; see Appendix Three.

🔥 **Sarkrith Thane (1):** hp 148; see Appendix Three.

APL 14 (EL 16)

🔥 **Sarkrith Spelleater (1):** hp 202; see Appendix Three.

🔥 **Sarkrith Thane (4):** hp 148; see Appendix Three.

APL 16 (EL 18)

🔥 **Sarkrith Spelleater (2):** hp 202; see Appendix Three.

🔥 **Sarkrith Thane Fighter (4):** hp 182; see Appendix One and Two.

Tactics: The Sarkrith are as subtle as a sledgehammer in their tactics. If alerted, they are ready for the party by hiding on either side of the doorway. Any extras shoot at party members running up on to the temple doorway.

Note also the position of the gong on the ground level behind the gate. If the Sarkrith are forced to go to the ground level, they strike the gong. This clearly alerts the temple guards to be ready for danger.

As mentioned above, make sure to understand the Sarkrith's abilities. The thane uses its anti-magic shell to great effect, but is not afraid of just using spell resistance. The adrenaline boost ability to “haste” themselves can be a real killer. Also, the spelleaters can surprise a wizard who is not familiar with them and gain some extra hit points. If the Sarkrith are lucky enough to get the opportunity to flank a character, they do so. Finally, note that APL 16, the Thane has two levels of fighter. This adds the feats Awesome Blow and Improved Critical Greatsword. The Thane Fighter uses its Awesome Blow to set up situations where a person is subject to attacks of opportunity if they stand up.

Treasure:

APL 10: Loot – 136 gp.

APL 12: Loot – 376 gp.

APL 14: Loot – 1066 gp.

APL 16: Loot – 1232 gp.

Encounter Six: The Face in the Blade

The final room of the temple is a 60 foot square, twenty feet high. It is light in a bloody red glow coming from a 10 foot circular altar at the rear of the room. Embedded into the stone is a black sword with a golden hilt: It is the sword Hate.

Once the door to the room is open, the radiating power of the sword, embedded into its home plane, will

seep into both rooms (It has a radius of 300 feet. As the door opens, read or paraphrase the following:

As the door is opened, you gain a glimpse of the sword Hate, buried point first into a red stone altar and then... there is a blinding flash of a hot red light. The power of it is so intense that everyone in its area of effect is staggered. As the light fades, you find yourself alone amongst enemies...

Opening the door releases the radiation of hatred flowing from the sword. This effect is represented by a trap. To be clear, there is no Search or Disable Device DC as the trap is already “sprung”, so to speak. The effect at each APL is as follows:

APL 10 (EL 6)

↗ **Heightened Confusion Trap:** CR 6; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; *confusion* (as 6th level spell); DC 19 Will save resists. As per caster level 12. Cannot be dispelled.

APL 12 (EL 8)

↗ **Mind Fog Trap:** CR 6; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; *mind fog* (as 6th level spell); DC 19 Will save resists. As per caster level 14. Cannot be dispelled.

↗ **Heightened Confusion Trap:** CR 6; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; *confusion* (as 6th level spell); DC 19 Will save resists. As per caster level 14. Cannot be dispelled.

APL 14 (EL 10)

↗ **Mind Fog Trap:** CR 9; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; heightened *mind fog* (as 9th level spell); DC 23 Will save resists. As per caster level 18. Cannot be dispelled.

↗ **Heightened Confusion Trap:** CR 7; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; heightened *confusion* (as 7th level spell); DC 20 Will save resists. As per caster level 16. Cannot be dispelled.

APL 16 (EL 11)

↗ **Mind Fog Trap:** CR 9; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; heightened *mind fog* (as 9th level spell); DC 23 Will save resists. As per caster level 20. Cannot be dispelled.

↗ **Heightened Confusion Trap:** CR 9; magical; proximity trigger; automatic reset; heightened *confusion* (as 9th level spell); DC 23 Will save resists. As per caster level 20. Cannot be dispelled.

Notes:

1) The *Mind Fog* trap has a special side effect instead of obscuring vision. It makes each player view themselves as being alone, and the other players as something they would most likely hate. Thus, if Tordek, Redgar and Mialee are all under the effect of the spell, in addition to any other effects, Tordek views Redgar and Mialee as some orcs. Redgar views Tordek and Mialee as some Hextorian cultists. Mialee views Tordek and Redgar as ghouls. Further, the sword and altar fade from sight (they are still there. It is just that the spell is affecting the ability to see them). PC's may disbelieve the illusions normally upon interacting with them, using the DC of the *Mind Fog* trap.

2) While the effects of the *Confusion* trap are mechanically identical to those listed in the Player's Handbook, the actual manifestation of those effects is slightly different to reflect the nature of the artifact.

01-10 Seek the source of your hatred (the sword) and attempt to claim it for your own.

11-20 Act normally.

21-50 Do nothing but berate and verbally attack anyone in sight.

51-70 Flee the chamber at top speed.

71-100 Attack nearest creature.

2) The phrase: “Cannot be dispelled” means the effect emanating from the sword cannot be dispelled. A character who fails the save can have the spell effect they are under dispelled using normal rules for dispelling.

The sword of Hate can be pulled from the stone with a Strength check (DC 20). Once held, it does not appear to be any differently than any other +3 *longsword*. A successful Use Magic Device check (DC 25) will allow the item to be activated blindly, creating a gate to Oerth that also seals the rift currently created. Due to the power of the sword's magic, there is a -10 penalty to the check. *Identify* will reveal only the +3 bonus. *Analyze dweomer* will reveal the information shown in the appendix.

When the party pulls the sword from the stone, read or paraphrase the following:

As the sword is freed from the red stone, the black blade seems to ripple. Looking closer, you can see tiny shapes reflected in its surface.

Looking at the figures, you can see they are moving! The figures seem to be passing onto a massive stone bridge through a portal of blood. Staring harder brings the figures into view and gives a better view of their location - an abyssal skyscape that disappears in all directions into a red horizon and which is criss-crossed at all angles by a variety of pillars and columns. Your view passes over the massive forms of dark metallic constructs led forth by demonic masters, while a stream of black winged androgynous children pass out of the blood gate.

Your vision blurs as the focus rapidly passes over the pillars, revealing dozens of similar gates and the massive horde that spills forth from them into the Abyss. Your focus turns directly towards one of the gates and just as it is about to pass through, you notice a human wizard in black robes staring back at you, the symbol of the Old One hanging from his neck.

For a moment nothing...then grey skies and rough ground surround you. Again the army marches, but now they are marching forth from their camps, abandoned in barren northern plains. You crest a hill and before you lies a dark city - there is no doubting those black spires, those craggy skull-embedded walls, those ebon clouds of demons and worse hanging over head. Dorakaa! As you stare, the vision quickly passes into the Old One's keep and into a room, where, in darkness sits a horrible figure bloated with power. A yellow pus-filled eye begins to turn its foul gaze towards you, but an instant before you would lock eyes, the sword goes black and the images disappear.

When the forces of Iuz opened the Blood Portal, the magic word "DOOM" was so powerful that it rippled across many levels of the planes. It interrupted Zelad's spell. As a result, the sword now, for a moment, shows a glimpse of the source of the interfering power.

A Knowledge (Planes) check can reveal the following from the vision.

- DC 20: The skyscape is likely one of the Abyssal layers, but which one you are uncertain.
- DC 25: The realm being invaded is Torremor, also known as the Lower Skies.
- DC 30: The ruler of Torremor is Pazrael, also known as Pazuzu, one of the Demon Princes of the Abyss.
- DC 35: Much like the Plain of Infinite Portals (the top-most layer of the Abyss), it contains gates and portals to other layers of the Abyss.

Conclusion:

All's Fair in Hate and War

The party can do what they like with the sword. If they return it to Zelad she will be uncharacteristically happy. With words like "a deal's a deal" she will produce a set of weird symbols and doodles scattered through a loose notebook (it is about an inch thick of papers, and some of the papers are always seeming to fall out).

She will then use the sword, say the word's "Love's Bane" and the sword will expand, making a portal from the Plane of Hate to the prime material. It will be like looking through red water. The gate opens into

Gristletooth's ruins. She will say "After you..." and let the party go through. She, and the sword, will not be seen again.

If the party knows how to use the sword (or activates it blindly), they can go back and kill Zelad if they so choose. Why they would do so is a bit of mystery, as her only crime seems to be an overwhelming greed. Nonetheless, as mentioned before, she focuses so heavily on her research that she tends not to memorize spells and she is easily killed. On her body is the above described notebook.

☛ **Zelad:** Female human (diviner) Wiz 18.

Treasure:

APL (all): Magic 200 gp, *The Notebook of Zelad*.

Notebook of Zelad. This is a loose leaf notebook consisting of about an inch thick stack of loose drawings, notes, symbols, and the like. Following these instructions will allow a person to craft a Daern's Instant Fortress, if they satisfy all other prerequisites (costs for crafting are unchanged). Alternatively, Zelad will craft it for you. If she crafts it, you have to pay full price (55,000 gp) for the finished product and the fortress looks as if it was hastily smashed together by an angry child, with each of the levels not quite aligning up quite right... Price: 1,200 gp.

Arriving back on the prime material, the party will find themselves back in Gristletooth's ruins. The ogre is gone, freed from his torment. If the party somehow has managed to return to the prime material on their own (using the sword, or without activating the sword but through some other method), they will find that as they materialize, the sword will dematerialize... Who knows where and when it will next appear.

Gristletooth's throne can be searched for clues to his whereabouts (there are none). It is simple to note that it appears just slightly off its center. Pushing it will reveal a crawspace beneath with some of the better treasure the ogres collected (In his pain, and relief at being freed, Gristletooth left it in his flight).

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 1,500 gp - *horseshoes of the zephyr* (500 gp), *pipes of pain* (1,000 gp).

APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2,000 gp - *amulet of mighty fists +1* (500 gp), *horseshoes of the zephyr* (500 gp), *pipes of pain* (1,000 gp).

APL 14: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 3,726 gp - *amulet of mighty fists +1* (500 gp), *flame tongue* (1,726 gp), *horseshoes of the zephyr* (500 gp), *pipes of pain* (1,000 gp).

APL 16: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 7,351 gp - *amulet of mighty fists +1* (500 gp), *flame tongue* (1,726 gp), *horseshoes of the zephyr* (500 gp), *pipes of pain* (1,000 gp), *susalian chainweave full plate* (3,625 gp).

A few days after you return from the plane of hate, you receive a note from Zelad. It says: Thank you for freeing me from Hate. Sadly, the sword has slipped away from me again. Perhaps we will meet another day. But let me leave you with a thought – as powerful as Hate may be, there is also Love in the world...

The End

Experience Point Summary

Encounter Two

Survive the crumbling castle walls

APL10 180 xp
APL12 180 xp
APL14 180 xp
APL16 210 xp

Encounter Four

Defeat the wall guards

APL10 330 xp
APL12 420 xp
APL14 480 xp
APL16 540 xp

Encounter Five

Defeat the Temple Guard

APL10 390 xp
APL12 420 xp
APL14 480 xp
APL16 540 xp

Encounter Six

Survive *Hate*

APL10 180 xp
APL12 240 xp
APL14 300 xp
APL16 330 xp

Story Award

Recover *Hate*

APL10 135 xp
APL12 157 xp
APL14 180 xp
APL16 202 xp

Discretionary roleplaying award

Especially for role-playing the planar effects of the Realm of Hate.

APL10 135 xp
APL12 158 xp

APL14 180 xp

APL16 203 xp

Total possible experience:

APL10 1350 xp

APL12 1575 xp

APL14 1800 xp

APL16 2025 xp

Treasure Summary

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a “treasure” section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter’s treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional scenario, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

L = Looted gear from enemy; C = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; M = Magic Items.

Encounter Four: Wall Guard

APL 10: L: 240 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp
APL 12: L: 376 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp
APL 14: L: 752 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp
APL 16: L: 1,232 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

Encounter Five: Temple Guard

APL 10: L: 136 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp
APL 12: L: 376 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp
APL 14: L: 1,066 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp
APL 16: L: 1,232 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

Conclusion: Zelad

APL All: L: 100 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 0 gp

Conclusion: Gristletooth's Hoard

APL 10: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2,193 gp - *+1 sizing greataxe* (693 gp), *horseshoes of the zephyr* (500 gp), *pipes of pain* (1,000 gp).
APL 12: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2,693 gp - *+1 sizing greataxe* (693 gp), *amulet of mighty fists +1* (500 gp), *horseshoes of the zephyr* (500 gp), *pipes of pain* (1,000 gp).
APL 14: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 5,876 gp - *+1 sizing adamantite greataxe* (943 gp), *amulet of mighty fists +1* (500 gp), *horseshoes of the zephyr* (500 gp), *pipes of pain* (1,000 gp), *susalian chainweave breastplate* (2,933 gp).
APL 16: L: 0 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 8,068 gp - *+1 sizing adamantite greataxe* (943 gp), *amulet of mighty fists +2* (2,000 gp), *horseshoes of the zephyr* (500 gp), *pipes of pain* (1,000 gp), *susalian chainweave full plate* (3,625 gp).

Total Possible Treasure

APL 10: L: 476 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2,193 gp - Total: 2,300 gp
APL 12: L: 852 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 2,693 gp - Total: 3,300 gp
APL 14: L: 1,604 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 5,876 gp - Total: 6,600 gp
APL 16: L: 2,564 gp; C: 0 gp; M: 8,068 gp - Total: 9,900 gp

Special

The Black Breath of Iuz: You have contracted a horrible disease. It can be cured by normal magical means, but it requires a caster level check DC 30 for any such magic to work. You must roll a D6 at the start of each adventure, with a 1 being Strength, 2 being Dexterity, and so on. That ability score is reduced by 2 for that adventure. After 6 adventures, the plague runs its course. Symptoms of the plague include a hacking cough, a general weakness, a paling of the skin, and dark skull-shaped blotches across the entire body.

Notebook of Zelad: This is a loose leaf notebook consisting of about an inch thick stack of loose drawings, notes, symbols, and the like. Following these instructions will allow a person to craft a Daern's Instant Fortress, if they satisfy all other prerequisites (costs for crafting are unchanged).. Alternatively, Zelad will craft it for you. If she crafts it, you have to pay full price (55,000 gp) for the finished product and the fortress looks as if it was hastily smashed together by an angry child, with each of the levels not quite aligning up quite right... Price: 1,200 gp.

Items for the Adventure Record

Item Access

APL 10:

- *+1 sizing greataxe* (Adventure, CA)
- *Horseshoes of the zephyr* (Adventure, DMG)
- Notebook of Zelad (Adventure, see above)
- *Pipes of pain* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 12 (All of APL 10 plus the following):

- *Amulet of mighty fists +1* (Adventure, DMG)

APL 14 (All of APL 10 to 12 plus the following):

- *+1 sizing adamantite greataxe* (Adventure, CA)
- Susalian chainweave breastplate (Adventure, CW)

APL 16 (All of APL 10 to 14 plus the following):

- *Amulet of mighty fists +2* (Adventure, DMG)
- Susalian chainweave full plate (Adventure, CW)

Appendix One – APL 16

Encounter Four

Thane Ftr2: CR 13; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 11d8+99 (Sarkrith) + 2d10+18 (Ftr); hp 182; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. (masterwork full plate) base 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 25 (-1 size, +8 full plate, +2 heavy shield, +6 natural); Base Atk/Grp: +13/+25; Atk +19 melee (2d6+8 [17-20/x2], longsword); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d6+8 [17-20/x2], longsword) and +15 melee (1d6+4, bite) or +13/+8/+3 ranged (1d8+4 [x3], composite longbow); Space / Reach: 10ft./10 ft.; SQ Adaptive resistance, adrenaline boost, antimagic field, darkvision 60 ft., mask scent, resist blows, scent; SR 23; AL LE; SV Fort +16, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +16, Jump +16, Survival +13; Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Natural Armor, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Possessions: Masterwork large longsword, masterwork full plate, masterwork large composite longbow (+4), heavy steel shield.

Encounter Five

Thane Ftr2: CR 13; Large Monstrous Humanoid; HD 11d8+99 (Sarkrith) + 2d10+18 (Ftr); hp 182; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. (masterwork full plate) base 40 ft.; AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 25 (-1 size, +8 full plate, +2 heavy shield, +6 natural); Base Atk/Grp: +13/+25; Atk +19 melee (2d6+8 [17-20/x2], longsword); Full Atk +21/+16/+11 melee (2d6+8 [17-20/x2], longsword) and +15 melee (1d6+4, bite) or +13/+8/+3 ranged (1d8+4 [x3], composite longbow); Space / Reach: 10ft./10 ft.; SQ Adaptive resistance, adrenaline boost, antimagic field, darkvision 60 ft., mask scent, resist blows, scent; SR 23; AL LE; SV Fort +16, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 26, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Skills and Feats: Climb +16, Jump +16, Survival +13; Awesome Blow, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Natural Armor, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Possessions: Masterwork large longsword, masterwork full plate, masterwork large composite longbow (+4), heavy steel shield.

Appendix Two: The Demi–Plane of Hate

The Demi-Plane of Hate is an obscure plane linked directly to the Astral and Ethereal planes, as well as the lower (evil) planes, such as the Abyss. It does not have a direct line to the Prime Material plane, however. Normally, access to this plane is not readily available to travelers from the Prime Material. However, the sword Hate channels the very essence of this plane. As a result, due to a gate spell cast the sword has opened a portal to the Prime Material! Through this portal, the energies of Chaos and Evil are seeping through.

Travelers in the Demi-Plane of Hate suffer the following effects:

1) General Animosity. Little things others do will just be a thorn under the skin. Imagine a road trip with children asking “are we there yet” every five minutes for 150 miles and you will get the general idea. The Dungeon Master can show this effect by mentioning things to the players: “Skene – you notice that Tanaka always seems to step in front of you, no matter where you go.” “Kori – you can’t help but notice that Doren really breaths loudly... over and over and over...” At any given time, the Dungeon Master can advise players that their answers to each other are becoming terser and less friendly. This has no other effects on the players.

2) Rage: Players that can go into a rage find this to be potentially dangerous. To LEAVE a state of rage, they must make a Concentration Check (DC 15). For every round after they should have stopped raging that they do not make the Concentration Check, they gain a temporary -1 penalty to their Wisdom score. If their Wisdom score would reach 0 as a result, it stays at 1 but the character passes out and the rage then stops. When the character recovers from the effects of the rage, they also recover any lost Wisdom. Spells and effects that would stop a rage, such as *calm emotions*, still work normally. Players not normally subject to Rage that enter into melee (meaning they either physically attack or are physically attacked) may find themselves entering into a rage (although they normally could not). This effect occurs only on the first round of entering a melee and allows a Will save (DC 15) to avoid.

3) Cleric Spells: Clerics may cast any spells prayed for normally. However, they cannot receive new spells while in the Demi-Plane of Hate unless their god is Chaotic.

4) Taking 10: In order to ‘take 10’ on a skill, a character must make a Concentration check (DC 15). This is because of the persistent anger and hatred that boils within all mortal visitors to the plane of Hate.

5) Concentration Checks: Similarly, Concentration checks, other than for leaving rage (See above), or attempting to take 10 (See above) have a -4 penalty on the plane of hate.

6) Chaos and Evil Spells: Spells with the Chaos or Evil descriptor are cast as if they were one level higher. Further, the DC to resist such spells is increased by 1. Spells with the Law or Good descriptor are cast if they were one level lower. Further, the DC to resist such spells is decreased by 1.

7) No need to eat or drink or sleep: One can eat food and drink liquids while here, and one, theoretically, could sleep. There is just no need for it. Instead, after time, a player will discover their hate is sufficient to sustain them. In fact, in order to recover spells and the like, a player would have to rest. Falling asleep requires a Concentration Check (DC 15) every hour until successful.

Appendix Three: Sarkrith

The sarkrith wage a war that few beings understand. Beings of logic and cold calculation, sarkriths cannot abide the unpredictable although undeniably powerful forces of magic. To the sarkrith, peace means control, and magic in the hands of anyone is a symbol that the sarkrith do not have control.

The regimented society of the sarkriths has room for other races aside from those tractable enough to be obedient citizen-slaves. Patient and deliberate, the long-lived sarkriths never send soldiers into battle without planning and forethought.

On most worlds, the sarkrith's have yet to come to real power. Their hidden subterranean city-states while powerful, do not yet hold the numbers of sarkrith necessary to put the magic-wielding races surrounding them to the sword.

Combat

Thanes and spelleaters have dramatically different combat tactics. However, both have the following abilities.

Mask Scent (Ex): Once per day, a sarkrith can mask its scent, which prevents it from being detected with the scent ability. This ability lasts for one hour.

Scent (Ex): A sarkrith can detect approaching enemies, sniff out hidden foes, and track by sense of smell.

SPELLEATER

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 15d8+135 (202 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 40 ft.

AC: 23 (-1 size, +4 Dex, +2 large steel shield, +4 masterwork chain shirt, +4 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 19

Base Attack/Grapple: +15/+27

Attack: Masterwork longsword +23 melee, or masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) +19 ranged

Full Attack: Masterwork longsword +23/+18/+13 and bite +17 melee, or masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) +19/+14/+9 ranged (+17/+17/+12/+7 with Rapid Shot feat)

Damage: Masterwork longsword 1d8+8, bite 1d6+4, masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) 1d8+8

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: -

Special Qualities: Darkvision 60 ft., dispelling ray, mask scent, scent, spell absorption, SR 25

Saves: Fort +18, Ref +13, Will +8

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 18, Con 29, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 7

Skills: Climb +17, Hide +5, Jump +24, Search +20, Spot +19, Survival +19 (+21 following tracks)

Feats: Dodge, Iron Will, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run (B)

Climate/Terrain: Warm forest and underground

Organization: Solitary or with a squad of thanes

Challenge Rating: 13

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: By character class

The heart of the sarkrith race, spelleaters drive the sarkrith's hatred of magic and its effects. Spelleaters rarely travel without a squad of thanes for protection. Like thanes, spelleaters are physically powerful, scaled humanoids with reptilian features, and they stand over 9 feet tall. Spelleaters have light blue skin that dulls almost to gray as they age.

Other creatures find it almost impossible to negotiate with spelleaters. Spelleaters expect obedience from other creatures and they have a difficult time even grasping the concept of an exchange of equals. One is simply stronger or weaker than another, and thus the chain of command is established. Since spelleaters are so obsessed with individual might, powerful creatures such as dragons sometimes attempt to establish dominion over groups of them, but spelleaters are never loyal to other races – in their eyes, all nonsarkriths are tainted by magic's foul touch.

Sarkriths speak Common, Draconic, and Infernal.

Combat

Spelleaters are as cold and calm about battle as they are about everything else. Never seeming hurried and never making decisions based on emotion, spell eaters always direct thanes and their own attacks against spellcasters or other individuals obviously using magic.

When fighting in groups, spelleaters coordinate their attacks: Half their number strips their foes of magic with their dispelling rays, while the others attack with their bows.

Dispelling Ray (Su): Spelleaters can generate a ray that cancels magical effects on anything it touches at will. The spelleater must make a ranged touch attack against the target. If the ray hits, it affects the target as a targeted *greater dispel magic* spell cast by a 20th level sorcerer. The range is 300 ft. (100 ft. + 10 ft. per level).

Spell Absorption (Ex): Anytime a spell fails to beat a spelleater's spell resistance, the spelleater gains hit points equal to the level of the spell. These hit points first heal damage that the spelleater has taken. Extra hit points

are treated as temporary hit points, and expire after 1 minute.

THANE

Large Monstrous Humanoid

Hit Dice: 11d8+99 (148 hp)

Initiative: +0

Speed: 30 ft. (masterwork full plate); base 40 ft.

AC: 24 (-1 size, +8 masterwork full plate, +2 masterwork large steel shield, +5 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 24

Base Attack/Grapple: +11/+23

Attack: Masterwork greatsword +19 melee, or large masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) +11 ranged

Full Attack: Masterwork greatsword +19/+14/+9 and bite +13 melee, or large masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) +11/+6/+1 ranged

Damage: Masterwork greatsword 2d6+8, bite 1d6+4, masterwork mighty composite longbow (+4 Str bonus) 1d8+4

Space/Reach: 10 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: -

Special Qualities: Adaptive resistance, adrenaline boost, antimagic field, darkvision 60 ft., mask scent, resist blows, scent, SR 23

Saves: Fort +16, Ref +7, Will +3

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 10, Con 28, Int 9, Wis 11, Cha 9

Skills: Climb +14, Jump +14, Survival +12

Feats: Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Warm forest and underground

Organization: Solitary or squad (10)

Challenge Rating: 11

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always lawful evil

Advancement: By character class

Thanes are tasked with guarding the sarkrith protectorates from physical attack. Like all sarkriths, thanes hate magic. Fierce, loyal, and cruel, thanes understand nothing but orders. When confronting those they deem less powerful, they speak only in the imperative, and when dealing with spelleaters and other they have been bred to obey, thanes respond with instant obedience.

Scaled humanoids with heavy, reptilian heads, sarkrith thanes stand 9 feet tall and weigh close to 800 pounds.

Sarkriths speak Common and Infernal.

Combat

Brutal and efficient in combat, sarkrith thanes use size and numbers to crush smaller foes. Unless an adept

orders otherwise, thanes pick one foe (usually the closest) and concentrate their attacks until that foe is down; then they move to the next foe. This simple tactic makes them predictable, if dangerous, adversaries.

Adaptive Resistance (Ex): Any time a thane takes damage from a spell or effect that deals energy damage, the thane gains resistance 10 against subsequent attacks involving the same energy type. This resistance lasts for one day.

Adrenaline Boost (Ex): A thane can take an extra move or attack action once during a round. A thane can use this ability a number of times a day equal to its Constitution bonus (9 for an average thane).

Antimagic Field (Su): Once per day as a free action, a thane can create an *antimagic field* around itself. The field is always centered on the thane and has a 5-foot radius around their bodies (essentially, each square touching the square the thane is in). The field lasts for a number of rounds equal to the thane's Constitution bonus (9 for an average thane).

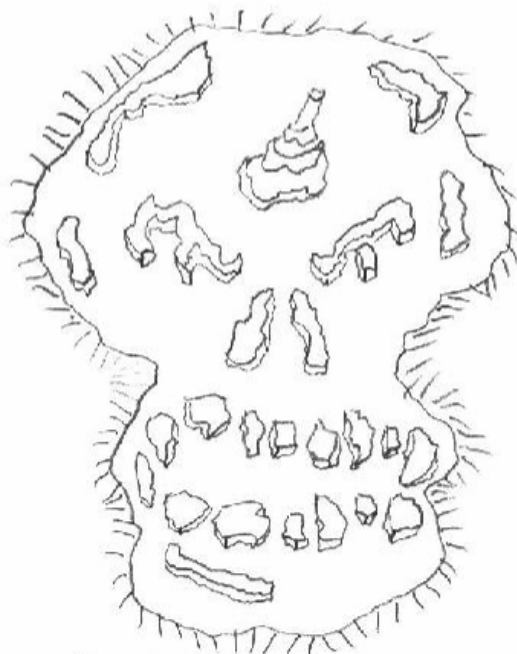
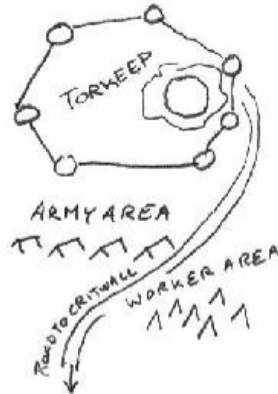
Resist Blows (Ex): Sarkrith thanes treat all damage dealt by bludgeoning weapons as subdual damage.

Appendix Four: The Sword Hate

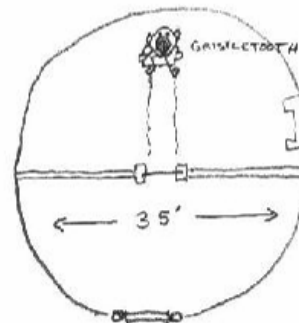
Hate is a *+3 longsword* crafted from black star-stone. It is the equivalent of an artifact. It has the following known powers:

- 1) Once per day, the wielder can cast a targeted *confusion* spell. Persons subject to the spell can only roll a natural 100 on the table. The spell is cast as if heightened to 6th level by a 20th level caster with a 24 intelligence and spell focus and greater spell focus (DC 23). The command word for this is "Spite".
- 2) Three times per day, the wielder can cast *rage*. The spell is cast as if heightened to 6th level by a 20th level caster with a 24 intelligence and spell focus and greater spell focus (DC 23). The command word for this is "Fury".
- 3) The wielder can rage twice per day, as if they were a barbarian. If they already have the ability to rage, then the duration of the rage is doubled and the number of times per day rage can be used is increased by two.
- 4) Finally, on the demi-plane of hate, it can be used to open a portal back to the prime-material. The command word for this is "Love's Bane".

DM's Aid #1: Maps of the Shield Lands and Gristletooth's Lair



GRISTLETOOTH'S RUINS ~
RUBBLE IS 5 TO 20' TALL (10x5)



GRISTLETOOTH'S
LAIR

• = DOOR

xxx = AREA OF
TRAP

⌈ = FIRE PLACE

DM's Aid #2: Map of the Sarkrith Keep

