



EN5ider Presents:

Crypta Hereticarum

A ZEITGEIST Side Quest

A 5E-Compatible Adventure for 6th-Level Characters



Crypta Hereticarum: The Vault of Heresies

EVIL LIES TRAPPED WITHIN THE CRYPTA HERETICARUM – the Vault of Heresies. The Clergy believes that true evil cannot be destroyed, and that killing an unholy disciple or destroying a cursed item will only free its malevolence to wreak havoc elsewhere in the world.

For centuries, whenever the priests and godhands of the Clergy collected dangerous items, captured evil acolytes, or rescued afflicted innocents whose curses they could not break, they placed them in the vault, built beneath the desolate isle of Odiem, off the coast of the city Sid Minos.

After the Great Malice, the Clergy fell into disarray for years, and those responsible for maintaining the vault had more pressing issues. They sealed it, tried to erase all knowledge of it, and used their divine power to compel all those who had drowned in the rocky seas nearby to rise up and slay any intruders.

Many still tried to plunder its treasures – indeed, in the default version of events, it’s already picked clean by the time the PCs arrive in Adventure Four of the ZEITGEIST campaign adventure path, *Always on Time*. But these dungeon delvers are drawn not only by the promise of rare riches and powerful magic, but by the mysterious temptation of the vault’s greatest prisoner, **Ashima-Shimtu**.

Known as the Lady of the Forked Tongue, the demoness Ashima-Shimtu has lived on this world for thousands of years. She served as seneschal to the rulers of the vile Demonocracy, which the Clergy overthrew in their liberation of the mortal races a millennium ago. The Clergy captured her, but dared not kill her, for she alone knew a secret that the Clergy feared could never be released.

Only a handful know even the nature of the secret Ashima-Shimtu holds fast, but once in the course of her nearly one thousand years of imprisonment, the Last of the High Fiends revealed the secret in full to two intruders. After she had done so, within a year one great civilization had collapsed, another had fallen into a chaos that would last for decades, and the world was forever changed.

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SPECIAL THANKS TO
the hundreds of gamers who backed the original release of ZEITGEIST on Kickstarter; and to the over one thousand generous patrons of EN WORLD ENSIDER whose support has made this Fifth Edition update possible.

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Using this Dungeon

Should you desire to give the party a full-fledged dungeon crawl during Adventure Four, *Always on Time*, we present this more-detailed version of the Vault of Heresies, one which has not been so thoroughly ransacked.

Alternately, you might run the dungeon as a stand-alone adventure for a party of 6th-level PCs. You might stage it as a group of priests heading in to fix things after some disaster breaks most of the trapped monsters loose, as a team of heretics determined to learn the most precious secret held by Ashima-Shimtu, or simply as a party of adventurers who have Clergy connections and who can provide the necessary spell to get them out after they swipe as much treasure as they can carry. Or you might make it so the only way to get out is to use a *water breathing* spell to go through the well beneath the final chamber.

Finally, the ZEITGEIST adventure path returns to the Crypta Hereticarum in Adventure Eight, *Diaspora*. In that adventure, the party will have the *Crown of the Lost Arc*, an artifact that can make events from the past manifest, the perfect excuse for introducing horrors that weren't here the first time around. If you want the characters to have a more harrowing experience, simply create new, more challenging encounters using the encounter building rules.

In any event, the nature of the dungeon prevents simply withdrawing to heal and regroup. The vault chambers become progressively more horrific and unfair the deeper the party progresses. Though we include sacred fonts as a way to keep an ill-prepared party from dying due to hit point attrition, careless PCs *will* stumble into traps or curses and die.

If you're afraid of killing your party mid-campaign, you can simply tone down the lethality so that instead of perishing, a PC who dies within the Vault of Heresies is instead possessed by a demon that keeps his body functional despite blood loss and broken bones. If the character manages to escape, the demon exits his body, leaving him at 0 hp but stable.

Forces at Work

Though Ashima-Shimtu is the most notable prisoner, two other figures hold power inside the vault. The first is **Giovanni the Painter**, a magic-using artist from the pre-Malice era who could create small pocket dimensions in his paintings. He was accused of debauched violence and sex in these worlds, which he ruled like a petty god. When the godhands came to arrest him he hid in a massive painting and refused to emerge. The painting was carted into the vault and bound so Giovanni could never escape.

Giovanni shared his knowledge over generations with the intruders who became stranded in the dungeon; over time, they converted many of the paintings in Giovanni's chamber into more pocket dimensions where they could find food and slake all their carnal thirsts. His chamber has effectively become a constant bacchanalia.

The other figure of note, in Chamber Seven, *Damned Souls*, is the bearded devil **Belcamp of the Golden Chain**, a squad leader in a long-forgotten devil army that tried to conquer this world ages ago. Belcamp joined with the Demonocracy and eventually rose to a modest position. He freed and gathered the various evil spirits in

Cursed Items Galore.

Many of the chambers of the vault have a cursed item the PCs can come across. Some might have niche uses, so don't be surprised if the players try to take lemons and make lemonade.

Golden Ward, Leaden Curse.

In ZEITGEIST, rings of gold block teleportation. This element is critical to the design of this dungeon. The stones in the walls are laced with gold, preventing creatures from teleporting out. But the dungeon relies on teleportation magic within to make the hallways a sort of infinite loop. Normally a creature wearing a gold ring could bypass this and just walk right out the front door, but the vault also has a special curse laid upon it, which causes gold on any creature that enters the vault to turn to lead (see page 4).

The leaden curse, which strikes in Chamber One, was only known to a few who crafted the vault, and none today are aware of it except those already trapped inside. Supremely cautious or prepared characters might dispel the magic along the threshold of the vault that turns lead to gold, or have the right magic to break the curse, but they likely fall prey and become trapped within.

Three ways out are likely: smuggle in gold rings inside an extradimensional space like a *bag of holding*, take the gold chain from Belcamp in Chamber Seven, or ignore the leaden curse altogether and exit by gaining Ashima-Shimtu's favor.

the dungeon, and occasionally recruits foolish treasure hunters to join his "legion." Mostly he just broods, since there is little to do other than squabble with Giovanni for turf.

Those who join Belcamp's legion wear chains of lead – Giovanni possesses the only gold in the entire vault. These chains take away both their free will and their daily need for food or rest.

Both figures wish to leave, but in several centuries none have. Only one intruder has ever made it into Ashima-Shimtu's final chamber: the lunatic godhand **Gene Javerto**. Gene went mad from a lifetime of facing evil and believed if he freed Ashima-Shimtu he could rule the Clergy. His assault on the vault killed dozens of priests and broke many of the seals that held the evil here in place.

He bargained with Belcamp, trading a spell that restored the devil's leaden chains to gold in exchange for a collection of lead sheets that had once been golden mirrors. Then he performed a blood rite to enter the final chamber and was never seen again.

With no prospects of escape, Belcamp and Giovanni are motivated by the wholly pointless and petty desire to overwhelm each other, and any new intruder is seen as a possible tipping point in their conflict.

Architecture of the Damned

Except where otherwise noted, the subterranean vault is unlit. The halls between chambers are fifteen feet wide and tall – wide enough for some of the massive cursed items to be carted in. Though depicted as straight on the map, they actually curve and split with numerous small cubbies and side rooms that contain minor heresies like piles of defaced holy symbols. These pose no threat, but were stored here for political reasons.



Religious carvings dot the stone walls, flecked with bits of gold dust that makes teleportation out of the vault impossible. *Stone shape, passwall*, and similar magic can work, but the layout of the vault makes such shortcuts of little use for escaping, though they can bypass the curses on the doors at the entrance of certain chambers.

The floors consist of a layer of thin concrete mixed with crushed bones from generations of priests who chose to be interred here. Beneath that is rusted iron grating, and under that a shallow channel of red-tinged seawater. Beneath that is bedrock, though centuries have caused the island to shift somewhat. Combined with the rust, in some places the floor has simply collapsed and flooded.

Heavy bronze doors mark the entrance and exit to the various chambers. All are unlocked, except the door to Chamber Nine, which is bound by a spell. Normally only someone who has passed the seven trials of virtue (see below) can open the door to the final chamber.

Skeletal Priests.

Throughout the vault, whenever blood is spilled on the ground, a sacred skeleton animates within 30 feet, rising up from the bones that make up the floor. Mechanically, whenever a living creature is first reduced to less than half its hit points in an encounter, or if someone intentionally spills blood, a skeleton arises and acts immediately. Normally these skeletons attack indiscriminately. Mark the space where the blood fell. Further bloodshed there will not animate more skeletons.

Sacred Skeleton

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 6 (1d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
15 (+2)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)	1 (-5)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning

Damage Immunities cold, poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception xxx

Languages understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Deathless. The skeleton is destroyed when reduced to 0 hit points, but it returns to unlife 1 hour later at 1 hit point. The skeleton can be permanently destroyed if it is destroyed by radiant damage, if it is reduced to 0 hit points in the area of a *hallow* spell, or if its remains are sprinkled with a vial of holy water.

Innate Spellcasting. The skeleton's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 12). It can innately cast *command* once each day.

Regeneration. The skeleton regains 1 hit point at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) slashing damage.

Infinite Hallways.

Chamber One leads south to Chamber Two. Once a person passes through the south door of Chamber One (Area I on the map), he is affected by the leaden curse. Subtle teleportation magic worked into the hallways cause them to feed back into each other. Trying to head north from Chamber Two leads to the southern doors of Chamber Eight, and vice versa. Likewise, heading east from Chamber Six leads to Chamber Four, and vice versa. Other scattered traps teleport explorers, which can cause groups to become scattered and dispersed among hostile areas.

When the leaden curse falls upon a character, any gold the character carries is transmuted to lead, leaving them vulnerable to the teleportation curses of the vault (priests would carry gold rings with them inside extradimensional spaces, then put those rings on after coming inside.) If the curse is removed from a character, the gold that character is carrying returns to normal, and he or she can then leave the vault by the exit in Chamber One.

Seven Trials of Virtue.

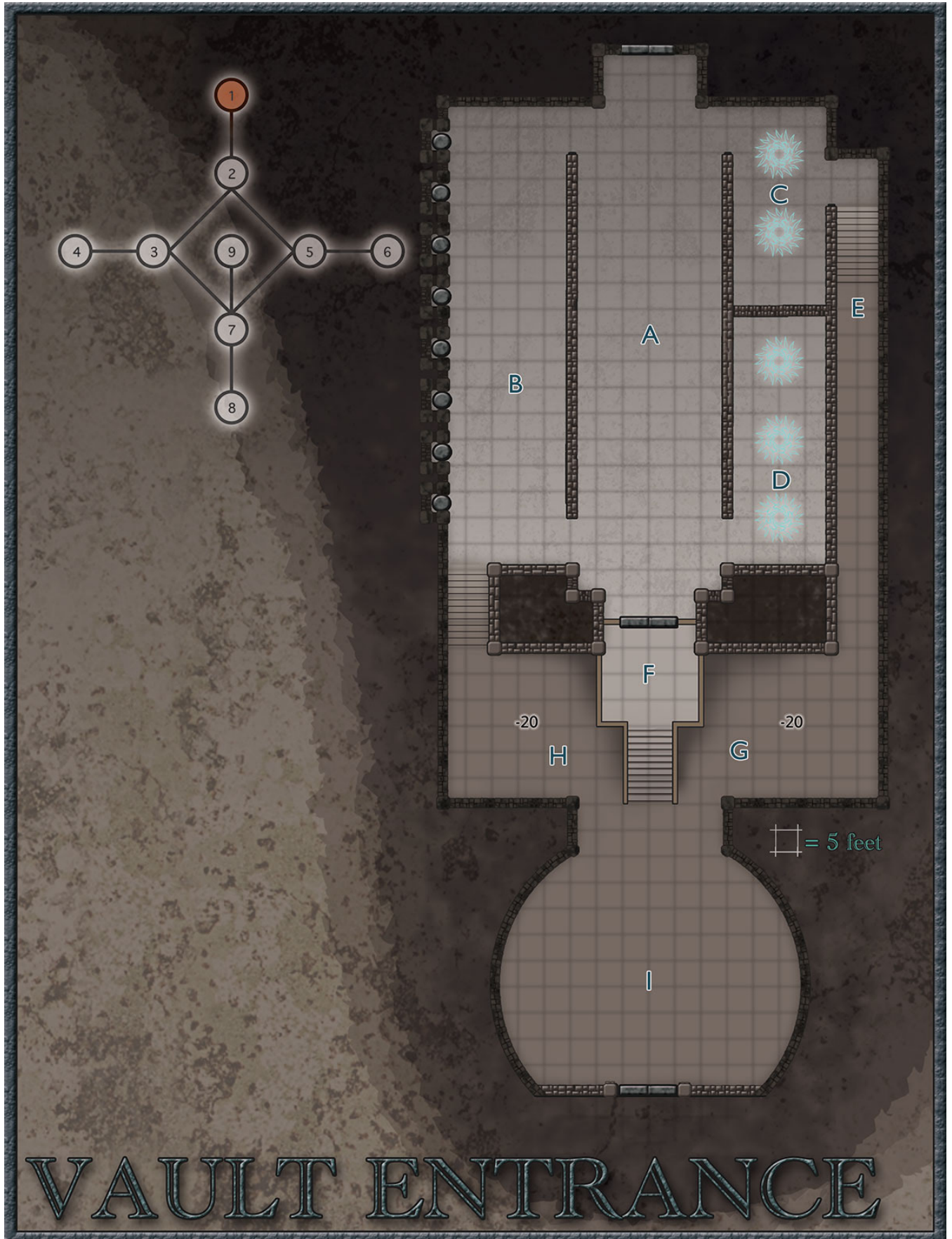
Short of casting *remove curse* using a spell slot of 6th level or higher (casting it with a lower level spell slot doesn't work), a character can be freed from the curse by "passing the seven trials of virtue." This is just a flowery way of saying that a character must drink from the holy water fonts in Chambers Two through Eight. At that point they can either open the door to Chamber Nine, or leave through Chamber One. In the eyes of the designers of the crypt, anyone who chooses to speak with Ashima-Shimtu must be corrupted and cannot be trusted to leave the dungeon. Once a character enters the Chamber Nine, none of the holy water fonts function for him anymore, and any holy water the character tries to drink evaporates on his lips.

Foyer

Stairs lead down from the Odiem lighthouse to the centuries-old vault. The foyer once provided a place of worship and reflection. Warnings in archaic language cover the walls, but most have been defaced. A pair of bronze doors hang open, their warding sigils scraped and melted off. A makeshift iron door-bar leans against the wall, formed from three swords melted together, sufficient to bar oneself inside the vault to keep out the drowned dead.

A feminine voice speaks into your minds. "Religious magic marks this crypt forbidden, but visitors may find shelter, wisdom, and wealth below, if such they seek. But more precious by far is the chance of escape, for at the center of the Vault of Heresies, its greatest prisoner offers freedom from the curse of the Isle of Odiem. These strangers are bidden to enter, lest in the grasp of the dead they shall drown by dawn."

This is the voice of Ashima-Shimtu. She has been trapped here for centuries, and the island's whole purpose was tied to her, so she has gained the ability to telepathically contact any creature within, though she does so sparingly. Her nature is reserved, and while she is prepared to find opportunities to escape, she is normally content to wait silently in her prison until someone interesting comes along.





Drinking Vessels.

When anyone steps through the doors to Chamber One, they hear a clatter behind them. Magic has conjured seven golden drinking vessels, but they fell to the floor because the stands meant to support them were long ago stolen. Each vessel can hold a pint. They only last until the next sunrise and then disappear.

One: Vault Entrance

Water drips in the darkness, and puddles splash as the party walks. The walls show signs of being slashed and burned long ago, but this evening nothing stirs.

This whole chamber is basically empty, but by exploring it the party can become familiar with the general layout of Chambers One through Eight, all of which are arranged similarly.

A. Main Gallery.

Inscriptions on the wall describe the purpose each chamber. Here all inscriptions are damaged and vandalized, but the general theme of the remaining pieces explains that this vault imprisons creatures, items, and people containing irredeemable evil. Rather than destroying them, which would, according to the traditions of the Clergy, release that evil back into the world, they were entombed here. The inscriptions warn that those who enter must be strong in the seven virtues, and that they must resist the temptations of the seven vices, for those who enter will be judged, and any who are impure will find themselves unable to leave.

The doors leading to Area F have bronze plating over a rotted wooden core. The bronze plates are resting on the ground, and a DC 18 Strength check is required to push them open with an ear-splitting screech. (Remember to grant advantage to a character who is getting help from another character.) They are embossed with the names of the nine chambers, as follows:

1. Entry Chamber
2. Heretical Texts
3. Unholy Arms & Armor
4. Blasphemous Artwork
5. Accursed Items
6. Afflicted Innocents
7. Damned Souls
8. Beasts of the Infernal Horde
9. The Prison of Ashima-Shimtu, Lady of the Forked Tongue, Last of the High Fiends, Seneschal of the Demonocracy, Keeper of the Secret Which Must Not Be Lost

B. Statuary.

Cracked and toppled statues here depict seven saints of the clergy who embodied the saintly virtues, as well as a statue of the hierarch who commissioned the vault.

C. Lesser Exhibits.

Two binding circles sit here, glowing dimly. If a creature enters one of these circles (or those like it throughout the dungeon), it must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check or else be trapped. Fiends make this ability check with disadvantage.

Virtues and Vices.

The walls briefly detail the Clergy's seven virtues.

- **Honesty.** Purity of word and thought.
- **Temperance.** Restraint and moderation.
- **Charity.** Generosity and self-sacrifice.
- **Diligence.** Zealous, steadfast, and careful work ethic.
- **Mercy.** Resolving conflicts with peace.
- **Humility.** Modest and selfless behavior.
- **Bravery.** Courage to undertake dangerous tasks for the good of others.

And then its seven vices.

- **Hubris.** Ambition and a sense of superiority.
- **Gluttony.** Obsession with physical pleasures.
- **Greed.** Rapacious want of material possessions.
- **Sloth.** Failure to do as one is required.
- **Wrath.** Uncontrolled hatred and anger.
- **Envy.** Bitter desire to deprive others and take what they have.
- **Melancholy.** Lack of joy toward life.

A trapped creature cannot leave the circle, affect the circle itself in any way, attack any creature outside the circle, or use any sort of magic that targets an area or creature outside the circle. A trapped creature can attempt another ability check at the start of its turn once per round to try to escape. The creature can be released if it is forced to move or if the circle itself is damaged.

Each circle in this chamber contains a pedestal supporting some item of note. One supports a book on a stand sitting open to a story about a cat that taught mankind fire. An illustration actually moves as if it is a portal into another world, showing a small cookfire next to a tiny house in the woods though there's no sign of the cat. Beside the pedestal lies a long-decayed human corpse that looks like it was mauled. The text, *The First Spellbook of Giovanni the Painter*, contains guidance for creating extradimensional spaces, and includes the spell *rope trick*.

However, anyone touching the book summons Agunn, Giovanni's vicious white house-cat familiar, which has the strength of a tiger (and its statistics with the exception of size). He attacks anyone who does not treat him properly but can tell of his master if sufficiently flattered. The PCs can meet Giovanni himself in Chamber Four, where is kept the most blasphemous of artwork.

The other circle contains an enchanted helm of ivory whose only power is to grant the wearer the ability to speak and understand Abyssal, the language of demons.

D. Greater Exhibits.

Three binding circles here contain the *Legex Diaboli* (a lawbook of the old Demonocracy), the *sword of remorse* (a sword with the property that if the wielder ever releases it, it will teleport to and stab the nearest other creature), and a simple length of gold chain (each link is inscribed with a holy verse asking for mercy).

E. Hall of Wisdom.

Down the side stairs, scripture and religious doctrine line both walls though most have been defaced.



F. Pious Mount.

This rise overlooks the Keystone Exhibit (Area I), and despite the best efforts of previous looters its hallowed enchantment remains. A mosaic similar to the flag of Crisillyir lies here, with a hand wrapped by a thread and fishhook. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Religion) check recalls a ritual that this set-up suggests.

A person who cups a bit of holy water from the nearby font (Area H) in one hand, then places their other hand upon the hand in the mosaic, then drinks the water, is affected a blessing. First, they heals 3d8+5 hit points. Second, they gains a +1 bonus to saving throws until they leaves the vault, or for 24 hours (whichever is sooner). The blessings from the other pious mounts in other chambers are cumulative. A character can only benefit from a given mount once per day (which includes the healing effect).

G. Trial Room.

Originally priests would come to the vault and undergo tests of their piety. Three skeletons in tattered priestly robes lie here, each burned with a single hand-print that seared cloth and bone.

H. Blessing Room.

Broken and rotted benches here face a podium once used for organized prayer. The bones of at least a dozen people have been arranged around the podium, some of them showing partially burnt hand-prints. In one wall, a cracked stone basin still drips holy water.

I. Keystone Exhibit.

The vaulted ceilings of this seemingly empty chamber rise up 40 feet. Magical darkness shrouds the ceiling, and the moment anyone crosses the middle of the room or attempts to examine the ceiling, this chamber's prisoner plummets, screaming. Then her descent snaps to a stop just at eye level, as she reaches the end of her chains. Six golden chains descend from the ceiling, ending in silver hooks that dig into her arms, legs, and back. Sinewy and starved, she thrashes and screams again, reaching out desperately. Blood stains her feathered wings the color of rust, and her eyes have sunken so deep they appear to be black pits.

The prisoner, **Linia**, has lived on this world for thousands of years after some magic prevented her from returning to her homeland of gods and angels. Long ago, she helped Triegenes defeat the Demonocracy and found the Clergy, but after his death she began to speak out against some of the decisions of the hierarchs, whom she felt were choosing personal profit over the welfare of all. For centuries she was a thorn in the side of the Clergy hierarchs until they finally staged her death and used it as an excuse to launch the First Victory.

Though as an angel she needs no food centuries of imprisonment have left Linia feeble and mad. All she can do is wail and beg for death but mighty enchantments on her chains render her immune to physical harm – weapons simply bounce off as if she were stone. The hierarchs feared in death she might somehow escape and report their betrayal.

She can offer the PCs only insane warnings, like the following:

"He travels in your breath, on your words, in the rustle of your hair in the breeze. You are not possessed. Don't believe the voices in your ears. Believe only the voice in your head. You have no torches. You'll go blind. You'll die of thirst, but drink with the left hand! Please leave now and beg them to cut me down. I'll agree to their lies. I'll call them gods. Please let me die."

There is nothing the party can do for Linia now, but she will be freed when the Obscurati complete their ritual at the end of Adventure Nine, which weakens the spells holding her.

The Leaden Curse.

Any character who passes through the doors to the south is affected by the leaden curse. The curse converts all their lead to gold, effectively trapping them here because of the teleportation traps. It also simultaneously teleports any of the exhibits that were in this room back to their pedestals, unless they were carried in an extradimensional space. (See also page 4.)

Try to find a way to make sure the PCs notice this soon. If they try to head back north into Chamber One, they end up entering Area I of Chamber Eight, where they're in for a nasty surprise.

Haunted Hallways

Encounter Level 9.

While the chambers themselves hold the majority of treasures, many of the greatest dangers lie in the hallways between them. Each hallway is roughly 400 feet long, with cubbies and side tunnels that just lead to minor chambers. The party encounters the following challenges as they go from chamber to chamber.

- **One to Two (or Two to Eight).** Radiant curtain and invisible stalker.
- **Two to Three.** Infinite hallway and möbius wind.
- **Three to Four.** All disabled.
- **Two to Five.** Flooded sump.
- **Five to Six.** Stone pillar drop.
- **Four to Six.** World's biggest *portable hole*.
- **Three to Seven.** Pacifism penance.
- **Five to Seven.** Spear fraises.
- **Seven to Eight.** Teleportation scatter trap.

Hall One to Two (or Two to Eight).

In this hallway lurks one of the vault's free-roaming prisoners, the invisible stalker **Maensha'il**. This wholly evil being derives joy only in causing mayhem and suffering. It prefers to gaslight intruders and make them fight each other rather than engage in combat, and so it tries to never make itself known (passive Stealth 25).

Maensha'il intervenes sparingly, when the party is already otherwise engaged, and almost always as part of a flyby attack. During a battle, it might disrupt the party's defensive line by grabbing and repositioning an unsuspecting PC. Victims of its silent *command* experience the compulsion as a hot breath whispered across an ear, speaking words they cannot hear.



When the PCs are 300 feet in – 100 feet from the next chamber – whoever is taking up the rear hears a voice whispering in some demonic tongue. Maensha'il speaks from just outside the area of the radiant cascade trap. It hopes to split the party up and confuse them when the trap triggers.

The last 100 feet of the hallway before the entrance to Chamber Two has a line of scripture carved into the ceiling. It reads, "In night the holy army held fast against the beasts of the infernal hordes. And lo the sun rose, and light did burn evil from one length of the world to the other." The door itself has a small section torn free thirteen feet up, big enough for a creature to wriggle through. A successful DC 17 Strength (Athletics) check is needed to climb up to reach the hole, followed by a DC 17 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check for a Medium creature to squeeze through. Small or smaller creatures can fit through the hole automatically.

Maensha'il, Invisible Stalker

Medium elemental, neutral

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 104 (16d8 + 32)

Speed 50 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +8, Stealth +10

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Auran, Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Invisibility. Maensha'il is invisible.

Faultless Tracker. Maensha'il can use a bonus action to choose a creature it can see to be its quarry. Maensha'il knows the direction and distance to its quarry as long as the two of them are on the same plane of existence.

Innate Spellcasting. Maensha'il's innate spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13). It can innately cast *command* at will, requiring no material or verbal components.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Maensha'il makes two slam attacks.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 10 (2d6 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Radiant Cascade Trap

Description Once a creature reaches the door, an *arcane lock* seals it shut, and a curtain of searing light appears down the hallway, 100 feet away. It advances 10 feet every round and when it touches a creature, the creature takes 27 (6d8) radiant damage (this otherwise functions as the *wall of fire* spell). Once it reaches the door, the trap resets. The *arcane lock* can be dealt with by normal means, or it can be dispelled with a cleric's or paladin's use of Channel Divinity.

After the party gets past this trap, Maensha'il waits for the curtain to finish its path, then flies easily through the hole in the top of the door. It continues to follow the party throughout the dungeon, whispering and occasionally causing them to strike each other during combat, or moving valuable objects nearby a particular PC, as if to imply that the character is unconsciously taking them himself. If detected, it might try to throw a PC into harm's way, but then it flees. The stalker is just an option available to the GM to make the dungeon eerie, and to make an easy encounter have a sudden spike of danger.

Hall Two to Three.

A malfunctioning teleportation trap makes this path seem impassible. About a 100 feet down the hallway, a beheaded statue of a priest lies at the juncture of a T-intersection which slopes uphill to the left and downhill to the right. As the party approaches, the severed stone head of the statue slowly rolls from left to right down the hall. If they wait about a minute it returns, rolling past again just as it has for centuries.

Either direction proceeds for an apparent distance of one hundred feet before returning back to the same T-intersection. Originally several mechanical traps filled these side halls – falling spears, scythes that slashed feet, and such – but previous tomb raiders disabled them, and their components lie shattered on the ground. The hall is now harmless, but a seeming dead end.

The statue at the T-juncture stands in front of a secret recessed handle (a DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice the handle). If pulled, the statue is supposed to animate and step aside, and then the T-intersection would transform into a straight hallway. While the statue is missing its head however, the conflux of teleportation magic goes awry if the handle is pulled.

Möbius Wind.

The walls rumble and the left hallway seals shut but the right one flickers, half closed and half open. The air of the room starts to stir in a sudden gust that spins in an ever-swifter loop through the malfunctioning portal. After 1 round the statue's head is picked up and carried with the hurricane force wind. Any creature within 15 feet of the statue is in danger.

Recursive Wind Hazard

Description Each creature in the area takes 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage and is pushed 10 feet toward the right hall. A successful DC 14 Strength damage reduces the by half the creature is not pushed. A creature pushed into the right hall is teleported back beside the statue and takes 7 (2d6) force damage from unstable shunting.

This recursive wind ends if the head is placed on the statue (a successful DC 16 Dexterity check catches it in mid-air), or if the handle behind the statue is pulled again.

Hall Three to Four.

Various traps once existed here, but Giovanni's people have disabled them all. Sitting in the middle of the hallway is a mock ironic "guard dog," a *cursed watchful hound*.

Cursed Watchful Hound

Wondrous item, uncommon (requires attunement)

Description This foot-tall magic statue depicts a wise hound carved from granite. Its eyes move to watch anyone who approaches. The owner of this item can say a command phrase ("buono cani") which familiarizes the statue to a given creature within line of sight. Otherwise, the statue barks at the sight of any creature it isn't familiar with (obnoxiously, it keeps barking even as you try to familiarize it). The statue has darkvision 60 feet. Several times each day, if no one is watching the statue, food within 30 feet disappears, leaving behind mysteriously torn and chewed containers or packs. Shortly thereafter, foul-smelling dog excrement appears beside the statue.

Hall Two to Five.

The stone here settled and cracked, flooding 200 feet of this tunnel. Its original trap has rusted away so now all the party needs to do is bypass the sunken area. Bear in mind that they probably cannot use light sources other than torches, forcing them to swim blindly.

Hall Five to Six.

At 20 spots along this 400 foot tunnel, stone pillars fall from the ceiling, possibly crushing intruders. Each pillar is five feet square, and falls either on the left, right, or middle of the hall.

Every 20 feet the character in the lead effectively has a 33% chance of picking the wrong spot. Have the lead character make Wisdom (Perception) checks every 20 feet until they succeed, and each time they fail roll 1d100 to see if a trap is triggered. Obviously once the character triggers a trap they can easily avoid it in the future, but if a character is running in a hurry the GM might call for a DC 11 Intelligence check to recall all their locations.

Falling Pillar Trap

Description This trap is triggered when an intruder steps on a hidden pressure plate, releasing the mechanisms holding aloft a heavy 5-foot square of stone. The DC is 21 to spot the pressure plate. A successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or a dagger wedged under the pressure plate prevents the trap from activating. A character without thieves' tools or a dagger can attempt this check with disadvantage using any edged weapon or edged tool. On a failed check, the trap triggers. When the trap is triggered, the pillar of stone falls. Any creature in the area beneath the unstable section must succeed on a DC 19 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Once the trap is triggered, after 5 minutes hidden contraptions replace the pillar and another 5-foot square stone falls until the passageway is blocked. A Medium-sized creature needs to make a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to squeeze past the obstruction (any Large creature or Medium creature wearing armor has disadvantage on the check and Small-sized creatures automatically succeed).

Hall Four to Six.

This hallway has a very simple trap easily bypassed by an intelligent creature. The floor is covered in an old tarp that has been painted to resemble a pit, as wide as the hallway and 30 feet long. Indeed, a creature that steps onto the apparently solid surface falls into the

tarp's painting, plummeting 50 feet (taking 5d6 damage, negated by a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw).

The solution to bypass this is to shift the tarp slightly to create a pathway. It's heavy, requiring an action to clear one 5-foot square. *Unseen servants* reset the trap 5 minutes later. Moving the whole tarp requires at least a dozen people.

Hall Three to Seven.

Every 5 feet a creature walks down this hallway, it takes 1 point of damage for every weapon it is carrying, feeling each strike it suddenly. The magic is precise however and doesn't hurt a creature that throws its weapons, walks a few feet, picks them up, and throws them again. Extradimensional spaces also work fine.

Hall Five to Seven.

The original traps here were disabled. Now Belcamp's legion has placed obvious and easily-avoided fraises of bone and stone spears pointing toward area five intended to deter incursions by the rust monsters there. A creature that enters one of these spaces takes 1d6 damage unless it treats the area as difficult terrain (moving at half speed). The rust monsters are too big and stupid to avoid the spears so they just don't come through here.

Hall Seven to Eight.

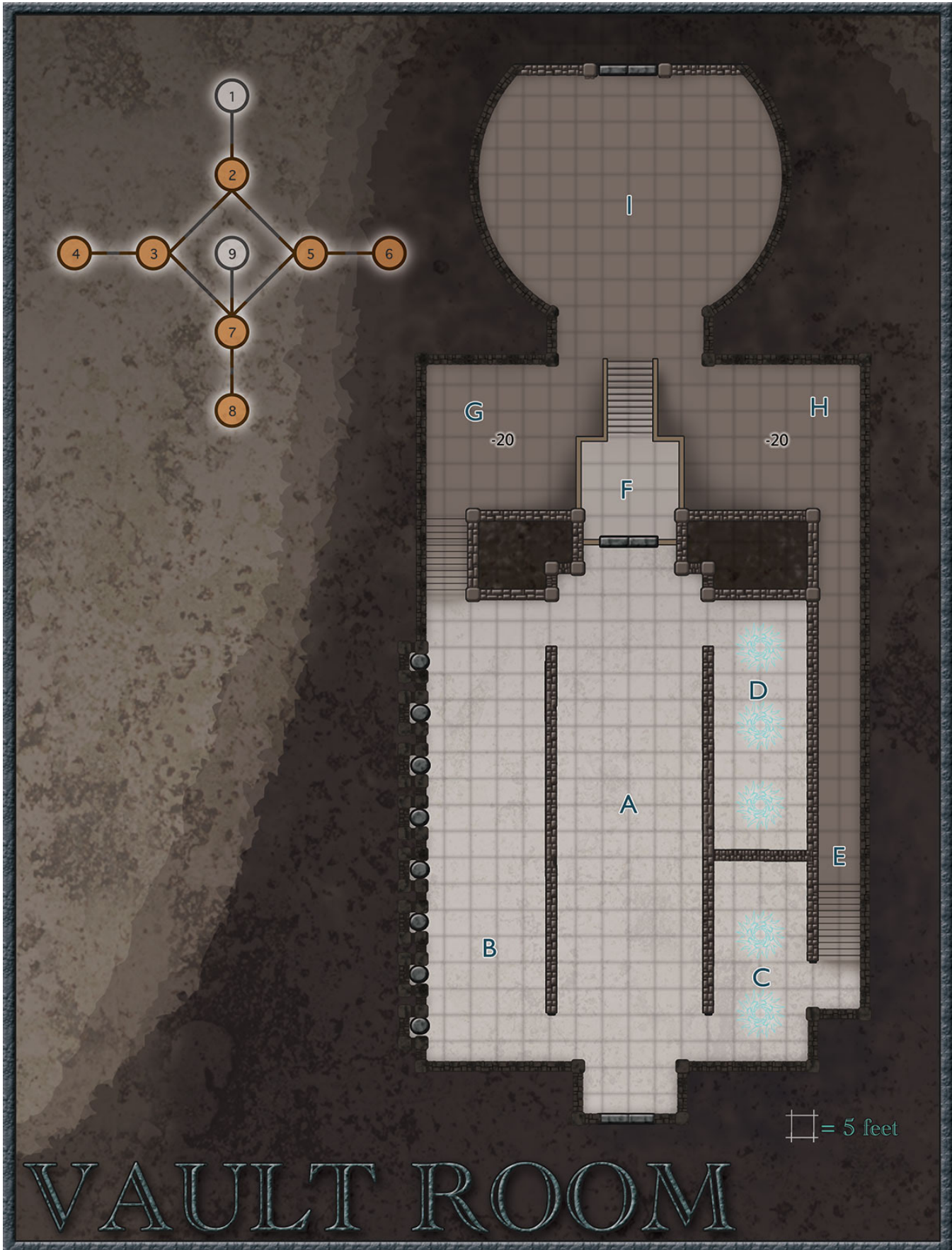
Belcamp's legionnaires keep their doors sealed tightly in case the beasts in Chamber Eight start roaming. The halfway point in this hallway is marked by a 30-foot stretch of carvings depicting priests facing each other along the walls. If a creature is in that stretch of hallway when another creature enters the same area, both of them must make DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. If they succeed they are teleported to the edges of the area. If either fails, each is teleported to the doorway of a random chamber in the vault (roll 1d8+1).

Hall Seven to Nine.

The approach to the final vault has no traps. Normally the only way to open the door to the final chamber is to perform a ritual atop the seven Pious Mounts throughout the dungeon, but if the GM wants to give the party another solution, allow them to use Gene's ritual instead (detailed in *ZEITGEIST* Adventure Four, *Always on Time*), which lets them place a hand in the center of a ritual circle, either expend a use of Channel Divinity or take damage equal to a quarter of their maximum hit points, and open the doors to Chamber Nine.

Two: Heretical Texts**Encounter Level 7.**

The first PC to enter this chamber has a moment to see that the layout is similar to Chamber One, and that creatures of some sort lurk in the dark. But then they are immediately teleported onto a pyre in Area I, where they arrive chained to an iron stake, standing upon a pile of books. The room is pitch black for a moment until fire kindles on all sides at the base of the pyre, threatening to consume them. Any cries for help do manage to carry all the way across the chamber, alerting the rest of the party of the danger.



A. Main Gallery.

Dozens of books that were stored in this area have been vandalized, torn apart, and scattered across the floor. Six minor demons – vault dretches – sit among the clutter, holding onto pieces of books like they’re reading them. At the sight of intruders they run for the greater exhibits where one reads a scrap of paper. The PCs hear a snarling voice recite, “And there was no light but *fire!*” For the next 24 hours no magical light sources of the party will function, forcing them to either rely on torches and lanterns or to walk in the dark.

Vault Dretch

Small fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (natural armor)

Hit Points 22 (4d6+8)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages Abyssal, telepathy 60 ft.

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Gorging Evil. When a vault dretch is reduced below 0 HP, its body collapses into smoke that attempts to enter the mouth of a nearby living creature within 30 feet. The creature makes a DC 12 Charisma saving throw or it is possessed by the vault dretch. Multiple vault dretches can possess the same creature and they focus on one victim because each vault dretch alone has trouble keeping control of a creature it has possessed. The first time each encounter a possessed creature is reduced below half of its maximum hit points, it must make a DC 12 Charisma saving or be dominated by the vault dretches (as *dominate person*). A dominated creature can attempt a DC 12 Charisma saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the domination effect and purge one vault dretch from its body. A possessed creature takes a –1 penalty to all saving throws to resist this effect for each vault dretch possessing it. When a vault dretch is purged from a creature’s body, the smoke flees to Chamber Eight and reforms into the vault dretch after 1d4 days. This possession effect can be blocked by spells like *protection from evil*.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vault dretch makes two attacks: one with its bite and one with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6+1) piercing damage.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (2d4+1) slashing damage.

Fetid Cloud (1/Day). A 10-foot radius of disgusting green gas extends out from the vault dretch. The gas spreads around corners, and its area is lightly obscured. It lasts for 1 minute or until a strong wind disperses it. Any creature that starts its turn in that area must succeed on a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned until the start of its next turn. While poisoned in this way, the target can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both, and can’t take reactions.

When a vault dretch is slain, its demonic essence flows like smoke into a nearby creature’s lungs, trying to possess it (see the *gorging evil* property in the vault dretch stat block). The demonic essence remains until the possessed creature dies, and a few days thereafter the dretch reforms in Chamber Eight. The essence can also be purged with spells like *protection from evil*, freeing the character of possession, but the dretch cannot be destroyed permanently.

Light from the trap outside might shine in for a bit and it should become obvious that there’s a fire brewing in Area I. Also the vault dretches’ eyes glow fiery red in the dark, so if the party has no torches handy they can still at least see well enough to stumble toward rescuing their friend.

B. Statuary.

The statues here, mostly toppled, depict people holding books in various unpleasant scenarios. Some plunge into toothy maws of hell. Others have their flesh peeled from their skulls for looking at a text. One is being eaten by his own book.

C. Lesser Exhibits.

The binding circles here have been destroyed. One cracked podium has a nameplate that reads, “Scroll of the Gods,” but it has gone missing.

D. Greater Exhibits.

These binding circles are also destroyed, but one noteworthy book page is tacked to the wall. This is a sheet from the *Book of Lorem*, which can tell no lies.

Scrap of the Book of Lorem

Wondrous item, uncommon

Description This sheet has a dramatic illustration, and it appears to have been torn from some old holy book. Text on one side reads, “And there was no light but fire.” The back says, “But that flame only strengthens his resolve.” Once per day you can use an action to read the front of the sheet aloud. All light sources other than fire within 100 feet are extinguished. Creatures within that area are prevented from creating light for 24 hours, except by using fire. Any non-fire light effect the creature tries to create last only a single round before ending. If while holding this *scrap of the book of Lorem* you are charmed or dominated, the page bursts into flame, ending the effect, and you are immune to being charmed or dominated for 3 minutes.

E. Hall of Wisdom.

This hall is thick with paper scraps, which are only dangerous if someone runs too fast. The walls that once held sacred wisdom have been carved with quotes from the heretical books the vault dretches tore to pieces.

F. Pious Mount.

The vault dretches applied accursed glue from elsewhere in the vault to the doors between areas A and F. A creature that touches the door is stuck fast (escape DC 11, 14, or 17 depending on how much contact it makes with the doors).



The mosaic at the top of the stairs functions the same as the mosaic in chamber one. It also affords an excellent view of a PC who might be burning alive on the pyre.

G. Trial Room.

This room is empty.

H. Blessing Room.

A seventh vault dretch normally waits here and as soon as it realizes they are intruders it flees out the doors of Area I to warn its master, Belcamp, in Chamber Seven. The holy water font works here but it doesn't produce nearly enough water to put out a campfire let alone a bonfire.

I. Keystone Exhibit.

The mound of books here is 20 feet across and 10 feet high. The first round a PC is trapped here, there are only harmless flames at the edge of the pyre. On the second round, the outer squares begin to burn, and any creature that enters or ends its turn there takes 1d6 fire damage. On the third round and onward, the whole pyre is burning. The captured character will likely burn alive in about a minute unless rescued.

Three options present themselves. First, the trapped character (or an ally) can use an action to attempt a DC 21 Strength check to break the chains holding the character to the iron stake. Second, an ally can attempt to break the chains by attacking them (the chains have AC 15 and 25 hp).

Third, the lashed character is oriented so that if they look up they can see the phrase, "I recant my heresy. I ask forgiveness. Let me burn in this life so I will not burn in the hereafter," carved into the walls above them. If the bound character says that phrase, the fire damage increases to 3d6 per round but it cannot reduce them below 1 hit point, and once the bound character is reduced to 1 hit point, the fire is suddenly extinguished.

Otherwise, the pyre continues to burn for half an hour, filling the chamber with choking smoke, making it impossible to rest here. However, enough scraps of books lie scattered about that the party can assemble torches before they press onward. Outside the south doors, the hallway splits into two paths. Right leads to Chamber Three, left to Chamber Five.

Three: Arms & Armor

Encounter Level 9.

A carving above the entrance door reads, "Let your labor aid your fellow man. Thy task is to create, not destroy."

This chamber is overseen by **Hilde**, an evil and intelligent suit of plate armor adorned with a wolf motif, who sees the world through a veined black eye in the center of her helm. She telekinetically controls weapons within a 30-foot radius and can be a deadly opponent if angered. Though evil and desiring of bloodshed, she loyally serves Giovanni the Painter, whose chamber she guards.

She lies inert against the wall in the statuary hall, able to listen to the PCs. If she suspects that they are agents of Belcamp, who

resides in chamber seven, or that they will try to harm her master, Giovanni (chamber four), she calls out, "Identify yourselves. Only friends of Giovanni may pass, and I know all of Giovanni's friends." Make sure to clarify that this woman's voice is not the same as the voice the party heard upon entering the vault.

She's willing to briefly talk with intruders but won't speak if anyone is within sight of the armor, yet clever parties can locate her if they figure out that they don't get responses while standing in the statuary. Hilde asks if they're willing to fight Giovanni's enemies, the legion of Belcamp. If they seem at least interested, she lets them pass. If they decline or hesitate, she rises up and attacks them, shouting that the only way they'll get out of this pit is if they give in to their bloodlust and show that they're true warriors.

Terrain.

Each area of this chamber has various scattered weapons which Hilde can animate and attack with. Whenever she animates a weapon, decide which of the weapon types it is (see the unholy animated weapon stat block, below).

- **A. Main Gallery.** Eight weapons.
- **B. Statuary.** Four weapons.
- **C. Lesser Exhibits.** Two weapons.
- **D. Greater Exhibits.** Two weapons. Hilde's helm was originally trapped here, and one of the binding circles is broken.
- **E. Hall of Wisdom.** Five weapons; all are daggers.
- **F. Pious Mount.** No weapons. Its magic functions like in the other chambers.
- **G. Trial Room.** Seven weapons.
- **H. Blessing Room.** One weapon.
- **I. Keystone Exhibit.** Twelve weapons. In addition, a boulder sits in the center of this area, with bent steel rings that once held in place a massive sword. When the Clergy was sealing the vault, the last entombed item was this item – one of the fallen swords of the slain goddess Srasama. Belcamp currently has it in his chamber (chamber seven), where he uses it as a torture rack.

Also present are discarded and broken implements and bits of armor, but these play no mechanical role in the battle. Most of the binding circles are active and shoving Hilde into one is the best way to defeat her quickly.

The doors beyond Area I lead to chamber four; as long as there's no battle or other loud noises in this chamber, it's easy to hear faint music coming from down the hall.

Tactics.

Hilde is linked to all the weapons throughout this chamber, able to telekinetically move and attack with any weapon within 30 feet. She can receive visual information through these weapons as if the weapon is an *arcane eye*. Attempting to harm her directly is somewhat futile because of how resilient she is, but attacks against the weapons injure her and lessen her arsenal. As she loses weapons she moves to other rooms to rearm. Once reduced to one-quarter her normal hit points she abandons her armored torso and limbs, and her helm flies away toward Chamber Four.

Hilde

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d8+50)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	11 (+0)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Skills Arcana +5, Intimidation +7, Perception +9, Stealth +6

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 19

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 8 (3,900 XP)

False Appearance. While Hilde remains motionless, she is indistinguishable from a normal suit of armor.

Helm Flight. When Hilde is reduced below 25 hit points, every part of her armor but her helm collapses to the ground. She becomes Tiny-sized (this does not change her hit dice) and she gains a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect), but she can no longer make Slam attacks.

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

Power Attack. When Hilde makes her first melee weapon attack in a turn, she can choose to take a -5 penalty to her melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, Hilde can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after she uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. Hilde can only use this feature on her turn.

Quick. Hilde has advantage on initiative checks.

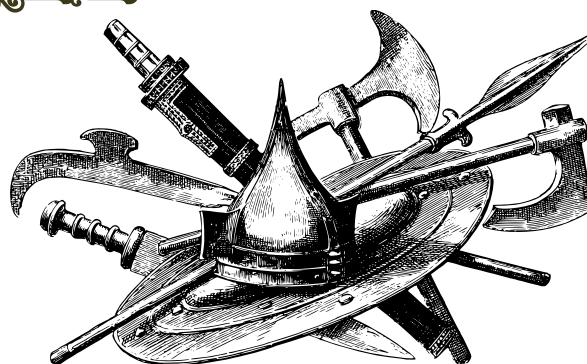
Unholy Steel. At the start of her turn each round, Hilde can animate unattended weapons within 30 feet of her. She can have up to four weapons animated at a time. They act independently of her on her initiative count and has a +6 bonus to hit. Any damage dealt to an animated weapon also deals half as much damage to Hilde. If Hilde moves more than 30 feet from an animated weapon it falls inert but she takes no damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Hilde attacks twice with her slam.

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

Blasphemous Eye. Hilde focuses the gaze of her helmet's eye on a living creature within 50 feet. The creature must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become convinced that its weapons will turn against it. The creature immediately drops any weapons or offensive items it is holding, such as scrolls or wands, and will not draw or use any such items while under this effect. The creature can attempt a new Wisdom saving throw the end of each of its turn to resist the eye's effects. If it fails its first saving throw against this effect, the creature further believes its clothing has come alive. It must spend a bonus action each round if possible to disrobe. If the creature is wearing armor, it takes a cumulative -1 penalty to AC each round, up to the maximum bonus granted by its armor, until it takes the time to don the armor properly again. A single saving throw ends both of the effects of the blasphemous eye. This is a mind-affecting charm effect.



Unholy Animated Weapon

Small construct, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 17 (5d6)

Speed 0 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	11 (+0)	1 (-5)	5 (-3)	1 (-5)

Saving Throws DEX +4

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Immunities poison, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 7

Languages —

Challenge —

Antimagic Susceptibility. The unholy animated weapon is incapacitated while in the area of an *antimagic field*. If targeted by *dispel magic*, it must succeed on a Constitution saving throw against the caster's spell save DC or fall unconscious for 1 minute.

False Appearance. While the unholy animated weapon remains motionless and isn't flying, it is indistinguishable from a normal sword.

Special Strike. Each unholy animated weapon has an additional effect from the list below. Most weapons here are swords. Do not reuse an effect until the whole set has cycled through.

- + **Abyssal Scourge.** The target makes a DC 13 Strength saving throw or is knocked prone.
- + **Hellspear.** The target makes a DC 13 Strength saving throw or is moved 10 feet backwards. If it is moved adjacent to a wall, it is automatically grappled by the weapon (escape DC 13). Each round the weapon maintains the grapple, it automatically deals 1d8 damage to the target.
- + **Maggot-Skull Mace.** The target makes a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or is blinded and takes 1d6 piercing damage at the end of each of its turn for 1d4 rounds.
- + **Sticky Shield.** The target is restrained (escape DC 13) until the weapon is destroyed.
- + **Stirge-Dagger Swarm.** For 1 round, any ally that starts or ends its turn next to the target takes 1d6 piercing damage.
- + **Unholy Sword.** The target takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls and saving throws for 1 round.

ACTIONS

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: Damage die and type determined by weapon (usually 1d8+3) plus a *special strike* effect.



Four: Blasphemous Art

Encounter Level 7.

Of all the chambers in the crypt only this one is well-tended and neat. The front door glides open with nary a creak. The statues all stand unbroken. Torches illuminate dozens of paintings that hang along the walls though a few along the Hall of Wisdom (Area E) are draped with tattered black cloth. Fiddle music and gay laughter filter through the air but at first glance there seems to be no one here – then the party can hear the distinct vigorous sounds of sex coming through the cracked doors to Area F.

Nearly every painting here is a portal to a small demi-plane where the images depicted in the painting come alive. Three dozen beings live in these paintings relying on the food within and only occasionally returning to the real world when they need to visit a different painting, or for the intermittent parties thrown in Area I in front of the grand painting of Giovanni. No one here is physically a threat to the party and if attacked they flee into paintings then seal them so no one can follow.

When sealed from within these paintings require a password to enter. Close examination of the frames reveal that they've been rubbed with numerous layers of blood and carved with ritual symbols pledging the souls of their creators to evil entities. Anyone who damages a painting or its frame is struck by lightning from Giovanni's painting (see below).

Every item of art here is somehow deeply offensive to the Clergy. Some of note:

- **A. Main Gallery.** A series of paintings depict six of the seven vices in lurid detail: sloth, for instance, shows a pile of bones in a farmer's outfit in the middle of a vineyard, with a copper nameplate reading, "Take from nature. Work not to fill your masters' coffers."
- **B. Statuary.** Statues depict numerous elaborate sexual positions, usually involving pairs of nuns, or elderly priests with young boys.
- **C. Lesser Exhibits.** A large painting here is alive with a constant orgy, including dozens of men and women among leashed beasts and a handful of devils.
- **D. Greater Exhibits.** A collection of jewelry and clothing with vulgar depictions of saints, or skulls impaled on fish-hooks (the Clergy's traditional icon), is stored here.
- **E. Hall of Wisdom.** Various paintings that were damaged or ruined are stored here. Some have torn canvas; others were just demi-planes that were plundered and burnt from within. One particular painting, that of the vice Melancholy, has a veil that flutters in a constant light breeze. A character that enters a space adjacent to the painting might be sucked in by a sudden vacuum. Every creature within 5 feet of the painting must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be pulled into a black void 20 feet across, falling prone and taking 5d6 damage each round it remains in the painting.
- **F. Pious Mount.** Giovanni has decreed that two people must have sex atop the Pious Mount constantly, even to the point of injury and exhaustion, so that he can watch. He calls this "performance art."

- **G. and H. Blessing Room and Trial Rooms.** The paintings that hang here depict cities burning, torture chambers filled with illusory angels, a skeletal orchestra playing a constant cycle of music, and a series of five island landscapes where stone monuments praise Giovanni as a god.
- **I. Keystone Exhibit.** In front of the exit door stands a 20-foot high painting of a stormy landscape. Standing boldly in the foreground is the aged but muscular Giovanni who towers over all who approach but never moves except to speak. None can enter his painting and he can never emerge. Invulnerable and omnipotent in his own domain, Giovanni is still trapped by old clergy spells.

Painting Defenses.

While a painting is sealed, anyone who attacks it or attempts to remove it from its mount takes 1d6 lightning damage, plus 2d6 more lightning damage each round it carries the painting. Giovanni can also unleash bolts of lightning from the front of his painting, though he can only strike targets he can see from his immobile position (he can see Areas F, G, H, and I). He can attack up to three creatures each round, dealing 4d6 electricity damage (a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw reduces this damage by half).

Festival of Endless Delights.

As long as the party isn't immediately hostile, when Giovanni sees them he invites them to rest and share wine with his people. Revelers emerge from paintings all around offering wine, fruit, and succulent meats. A naked woman dances by with a censer that releases floral incense, and the couple atop the Pious Mount call down for the PCs to join them.

The party is welcome to rest here, and Giovanni boisterously engages them in conversation, but if they dally for more than 10 minutes, the floral incense begins to have an effect on them all. After 10 minutes of exposure to the incense, each character must make a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw or be compelled to engage in acts of lust and gluttony for the next 2 hours. At the end of this time they fall unconscious for 6 hours, after which they wake with the benefits of a long rest and must immediately attempt the saving throw again.

The festival is *mostly* harmless, except to a character's sense of decency. Time is likely sensitive for the PCs, however, so any adventurer who resists the temptation can try to snap compatriots out of it by striking them. Any compelled PC that takes damage immediately makes a new DC 12 Wisdom saving throw to break free of the compulsion, with a bonus equal to the amount of damage dealt.

Dour Discussions.

If the PCs decline to party or if they attack the other revelers, Giovanni glowers but, seeing that they're capable warriors, he makes them an offer. He compliments them on their obvious prowess and he asks them to rescue one of his people, a lyre-playing celestial named **Somnia**, whom Belcamp has taken prisoner. In exchange he'll have his people prepare a "tame" meal, enough to heal their wounds without delaying them. Mechanically this meal grants the benefits of a long rest but only requires an hour of eating.



Alternately, if the party can capture Belcamp and bring him here so he can be tossed into one of the prison paintings, Giovanni will give them a whole painting of their own. Though hardly an easily-carried bit of adventuring gear, the possible value of a perpetual portable pocket dimension are vast. Each demi-plane painting is only about a 100 feet in diameter (anything outside that area is just an illusion on an invisible wall), but Giovanni will give them any from the chamber that they desire – other than his own of course.

Giovanni shares all he knows about Belcamp and the rest of the vault, and warns that there are numerous traps near Chamber Seven which change regularly but usually involve fire, acid, and steel. If they lose a fight he'll disavow having met them since he doesn't want open conflict with Belcamp's warriors.

Battle.

Should the party manage to get the drop on Giovanni's revelers the three dozen people try to flee to various paintings and seal themselves in. None are trained warriors but usually they have enough warning of approaching enemies to hide before a fight occurs.

Harming Giovanni is probably only possible if the party gets the *cursed rod of negation* from Chamber Five, then uses it on the painting. That expels Giovanni – he's actually just a normal man, not the titan depicted in his portrait. Agonized at being returned to flesh he cannot defend himself but when he dies, every painting in the chamber turns into a vacuous portal (like the one in the Hall of Wisdom above) and intense sucking air currents pull creatures toward the deadly traps.

Each round a creature must make a DC 13 Strength saving throw at the end of its turn or be pulled 10 feet toward the nearest vacuous painting. A creature that manages to exit the chamber is no longer in danger.

Cursed Item.

If a fight occurs, one of the many prisoners who can be slain is a fiddle-player. He drops this wretched item.

Obnoxious Fiddle

Wondrous item, uncommon

Description Someone stained this fine fiddle a ghastly bright pink and though it shows signs of having been stabbed and bashed, somehow it never broke. When you touch it, a childish voice chuckles and says, "You're not a good person." The fiddle itself grants no particular bonuses. Indeed, it telepathically talks to whoever owns it, encouraging them to be honest in all things, and getting upset if they don't adhere to a childish sense of right and wrong. The only real power of the fiddle is that it's nigh-indestructible (AC 22, 100 hit points). You can never dispose of the fiddle, and you cannot tell any lies while it is in your possession. The GM is encouraged to be as obnoxious as possible in roleplaying this thing.

Five: Accursed Items

Encounter Level 8.

This chamber has no doors any more, their metal having been rusted away and devoured. Nearly everything of value here has either been stolen by looters or destroyed by the two bear-sized rust monsters known as rust lords that lair here. Belcamp and his legion never come here since the monster's magical powers can dissolve any metal, even their leaden chains. This frustrates Belcamp because he believes a *rod of negation* made of bone still lies somewhere in this chamber – such an item would let him defeat the defenses of Giovanni's paintings and finally slay the painter's followers.

Terrain.

The whole floor is covered in a patina of rust with a few piles of silvery powder filling scattered squares (four dozen in the main gallery, one or two in each other room, and ten in the keystone exhibit room). These are remains of dissolved magic items that still crackle with unstable energy, filling the chamber with dim light. A creature that enters a space adjacent to this powder must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 cold, 1d6 electricity, and 1d6 fire damage. A creature that stays adjacent or moves away from a pile is safe – it only unleashes its dangerous energy when a creature comes close.

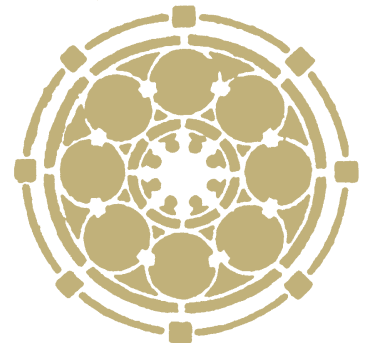
The binding circles in this chamber are all nonfunctional.

Tactics.

One rust lord lairs among the Statuary on a pile of broken sculptures. The other nests are in the Blessing Room. They sleep most of the time (passive Perception 14 while asleep), but if a PC comes within 50 feet while carrying metal items, they awaken and attack hungrily. If a metal item is thrown in front of one, it spends an action eating it as long as it hasn't been attacked in the past round. Getting through this chamber without a fight could be possible with a sufficient collection of metal items, such as the arsenal in Chamber Three.

Treasure.

Stashed in the blessing room under a pile of cracked and gnawed bones lies an unblemished rod, its ivory gleaming pristine and white. This *cursed rod of negation* was once the chamber's keystone exhibit because once used it is nearly impossible to be rid of – with deadly consequences.





Rust Lord

Large monstrosity, unaligned

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 95 (10d10+40)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)	2 (-4)	13 (+1)	9 (-1)

Skills Perception +7, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages —

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Iron Scent. The rust lord can pinpoint, by scent, the location of ferrous metal within 30 feet of it.

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

Rust Metal. Any nonmagical weapon made of metal that hits the rust lord corrodes. After dealing damage, the weapon takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to damage rolls. If its penalty drops to -5, the weapon is destroyed. Nonmagical ammunition made of metal that hits the rust monster is destroyed after dealing damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The rust lord attacks twice with its antennae and once with its bite.

Bloodrust. When the rust lord successfully uses an Antennae to hit a creature wearing nonmetal armor, iron and other minerals inside of its blood tear through the skin in a fine mist and the creature takes 18 (4d8) slashing damage.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8+4) piercing damage.

Antennae. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* A nonmagical ferrous metal object corrodes. If the object isn't being worn or carried, the touch destroys a 1-foot cube of it. If the object is being worn or carried by a creature, it corrodes more slowly. If the object touched is either metal armor or a metal shield being worn or carried, it takes a permanent and cumulative -1 penalty to the AC it offers. Armor reduced to an AC of 10 or a shield that drops to a +0 bonus is destroyed. If the object touched is a held metal weapon, it rusts as described in the Rust Metal trait.

Cursed Rod of Negation

Rod, very rare (requires attunement)

Description When you grasp this intricately carved 3-foot long ivory rod, you are acutely aware of your own pulse beating in the veins of your hand. Three times per day, you can use an action to point the rod at a magic item, creature, or spell effect. When pointed at a creature, any spells effecting the creature are dispelled. When pointed at a magic item, the target is temporarily turned into a mundane object for 1d4 rounds (the rod cannot negate artifacts). When pointed at a spell effect, the spell is negated. Once you activate the rod, you can never be the recipient of any beneficial magic. Hostile effects still function normally (unless you counter them with the rod), but you cannot be healed magically, granted any bonuses from spells, or even have this curse broken by magic. No other creature can use the rod's powers until you have died. Whenever you use the rod's powers, you take damage equal to ¼ your maximum hit points. The ivory of the rod is stained with brilliant crimson and spreads from the handle until it is completely red when you no longer have hit points. When you die, the rod returns to pristine white.

The rod itself can be destroyed by snapping it in half. This breaks the curse but unleashes all the magic the rod ever thwarted in a 30-foot-radius spread. All creatures and objects in the area take 42 (12d6) force damage (a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw halves this damage). There may be other consequences of the negated magic being restored, at the GM's discretion.

Additionally, when each rust lord dies it dissolves into a pile of crumbled metal, with a glowing golden egg in the center. These two eggs can briefly summon a new rust monster.

Rust Monster Egg

Wondrous item, rare

Description When you use an action to crush, smash, or break this golden egg, a rust monster appears and remains for 1 minute or until it is destroyed. The rust monster is friendly to you and your companions, and it acts on your turn. You can use a bonus action to command how the rust monster moves and what action it takes on its next turn, or to give it general orders, such as to attack your enemies. In the absence of such orders, the rust monster seeks out the nearest source of metal and tries to eat it.



Six: Afflicted Innocents

Encounter Level II.

Once this chamber contained dozens of people in magical stasis holding at bay various curses or possessions that the clergy were unable or unwilling to defeat. Most of those poor people were slaughtered or released and joined either Belcamp or Giovanni. Now only the keystone exhibit remains: **Ennio Adolini**, the architect of the crypt.

As the crypt's construction neared completion several chambers were yet unstocked, and the clergy hierarchs saw an opportunity to ensure the secrets of the traps and defenses were never spoiled. They arranged for Adolini to become possessed by an ice devil then held a swift trial and dragged him to the vault where he has remained – trapped in a pillar of fire – for nearly a thousand years.

Vestige Demons.

Carved into the lintel above the entrance door is the admonition, “Let none cause harm to these afflicted innocents. Show them mercy.”

A dessicated corpse lies just inside the doors, hands to its head as if it clawed at its face as it died. It wears a distinctive helmet, and if removed the PCs can see the man has only a single eye in the center of his forehead.

Cyclops Helmet

Wondrous item, rare

Description The ivory helmet is solid where eyes would need to look out but has an opening over the center of the forehead. When placed upon your, this item's curse immediately takes effect (a DC 12 Wisdom saving throw negates). On a failure, your head is agonizingly reshaped as your two normal eyes are replaced with a single red-iris central eye that throbs with black veins. Whenever you reduce a creature below 0 hit points, you must immediately use an action to mutilate the body and remove its eyes before you regain control of yourself.

A hush hangs over this chamber but fire light flickers under the doors at the end of the main gallery. As the party explores, small burning motes float like embers through the air and they seem to intentionally follow the adventurers. These are the remnants of demons that possessed people who were entombed here. Their hosts died and now they float seeking a new body to claim as their own. A use of Channel Divinity drives the motes away for 5 minutes but it's nearly impossible to destroy them.

If a creature causes any damage to another in this chamber, a mass of motes try to fly down its throat, punishing it for transgressing the commandment of mercy. The creature must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or become possessed by the demon, as per the vault dretches in Chamber Two (page 66).

This is of course an excellent place for Maensha'il the invisible stalker (see page 8) to ply his trade, doing his level best to goad a PC into attacking something – even a fellow PC – using his *command* spell and a little creativity.



Vault Architect.

Ennio Adolini has long since stopped screaming. A broken shell of a man, he whimpers at his plight as the fire perpetually burns his flesh but will not beg for release. He knows that the fiend within him would harm people and he does not wish to be complicit. If addressed he can talk though he cannot move or be moved from the pillar of fire in the center of Area I.

He warns people not to try to free him. Any creature that touches the flaming pillar takes 17 (5d6) fire damage and finds that Adolini's body will not budge.

Salving the Tortured Soul.

Speaking with friendship or pity to Adolini can earn the party his trust. He longs for human contact and though he knows he has been trapped far longer than a normal man's life, he still hopes that justice will punish those who imprisoned him. If the party convinces him that they are good people and if they agree to share his story when they get out, he asks them to prove their purity by undertaking the ritual atop the Pious Mount, drinking the holy water and being blessed. If they all do so he offers them the knowledge that will let the adventurers escape.

First he tells them the secret chant: “*Noli me tangere, fratris. Saepi cum fide, nobiles.*” When spoken or whispered it causes any of the skeletal priests who rise up in the vault to fight beside the party rather than against them.

Next he explains the nature of the leaden curse and the teleportation magic that makes the vault seem to have no borders. If they've met Belcamp and seen his golden chain, the PCs might realize they could take it from him and fashion it into gold rings so the teleportation wouldn't affect them, allowing them to leave by heading north through Chamber One.

Finally he explains that it might be possible to swim through the well beneath Ashima-Shimtu in the final chamber. Though the tunnel is nearly 500 feet long and specifically enchanted to dispel shapeshifting and water breathing magic, if they could make that distance they would emerge just off the coast of the island.

Counter-Offer.

When Adolini finishes sharing this knowledge or when it becomes clear the party isn't going to earn the man's trust, the ice devil takes over his body and growls out an offer of its own: in exchange for freedom it will carve a path to the exit for them.

If the pillar of fire is dispelled (such as with the *cursed rod of negation*), Adolini wails as the ice devil within him takes full control. Though he maintains his normal human body a shell of ice forms around him in the shape of the fiend. It is obliged to serve the party for a time, though its appreciation is fickle.

**Devil-Possessed Adolini**

Large fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)**Hit Points** 133 (14d10+56)**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws DEX +6, CON +8, WIS +6, CHA +8**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered**Damage Immunities** cold, fire, poison**Condition Immunities** poisoned**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12**Languages** Common, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)**Atrophied.** Centuries of imprisonment has significantly reduced the powers of the ice devil possessing Adolini and its feature are not as potent as a typical ice devil.**Devil's Sight.** Magical darkness doesn't impede Adolini's darkvision.**Magical Resistance.** Adolini has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** Adolini makes three attacks: one with his bite, one with his claws, and one with his tail.**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.*Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) cold damage.**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.*Hit:* 9 (2d4+4) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) cold damage.**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.*Hit:* 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) cold damage.**Wall of Ice (Recharge 6).** Adolini magically forms an opaque wall of ice on a solid surface he can see within 60 feet of him. The wall is 1 foot thick and up to 30 feet long and 10 feet high, or it's a hemispherical dome up to 20 feet in diameter.

When the wall appears, each creature in its space is pushed out of it by the shortest route. The creature chooses which side of the wall to end up on, unless the creature is incapacitated. The creature then makes a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 24 (7d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

The wall lasts for 1 minute or until the devil is incapacitated or dies. The wall can be damaged and breached; each 10-foot section has AC 5, 25 hit points, vulnerability to fire damage, and immunity to acid, cold, necrotic, poison, and psychic damage. If a section is destroyed, it leaves behind a sheet of frigid air in the space the wall occupied. Whenever a creature finishes moving through the frigid air on a turn, willingly or otherwise, the creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The frigid air dissipates when the rest of the wall vanishes.

Seven: Damned Souls

Encounter Level 11.

Two leaden legionnaires (*q.v.*) stand in front of both the front and back doors to this chamber. Leaden legionnaires are minor devils who wear leaden chains wrapped around their chests like double bandoliers, as well as various adornments of lead either worn or pierced through their flesh. They have no interest in socializing, and if addressed will direct visitors to speak with Belcamp. If attacked they roar to sound the alarm.

A total of twenty-three leaden legionnaires reside here – two each at the front and back, four each in the Main Gallery, Statuary, and atop the Pious Mount, two torturing the celestial Somnia in the Trial Room, and five in the Keystone Exhibit area, acting as a throne for Belcamp. Most were afflicted innocents or other damned souls though a few were adventurers who got stranded.

Three vault dretches (page 11) also live here, serving as jesters for Belcamp when he's in an excitable mood (when the PCs arrive, Belcamp isn't in the mood for entertainment, so the dretches are asleep, as they usually are when not serving Belcamp).

Door Traps.

The handles of all doors in this chamber have been shaped and sharpened so they have jagged teeth, then coated with a poison made from the residue of a highly toxic plant leaf. Noticing the poison requires a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check or DC 22 Wisdom (Perception) check. Touching the handle of one of these doors exposes a creature to the poison, forcing it to make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw once every minute for 6 minutes or until it succeeds. On a failure, the creature takes 13 (2d12) poison damage. If the creature fails a saving throw against the poison by 5 or more, the poison damage cannot be healed by magic.

The doors can be opened safely if an adventurer has thick enough gloves and knows to be careful.

Commander of the Leaden Legion.

The bearded devil Belcamp (his beard even larger than normal on account of his massive chin) once lead soldiers for the warlord Egal the Shimmering as he attempted to conquer this world thousands of years ago. When he was captured and brought here his golden regalia turned to lead but he eventually traded with the lunatic god-hand Gene to receive the only gold chain in the entire vault. It's only 3 feet long, a pale imitation of his former splendor, but it gives him some of the power he once wielded.

He tore apart a fellow prisoner – a chain devil – and uses the leaden chains to adorn his followers, freeing them from the need to eat, drink, or sleep.

Belcamp doesn't realize that he could simply walk out of the vault if he took his chain and fashioned a ring to protect himself from being teleported in an infinite loop. Instead he has convinced himself he's the ruler of the crypt, spending most of his time brooding and planning how to destroy Giovanni and his followers. Of late he has found some entertainment in torturing Somnia, a winged celestial with a serpentine tail whom he captured from Giovanni.

Belcamp the Bearded Devil

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 76 (8d8+2d10+20)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws STR +6, CON +5, WIS +3

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Action Surge (1/short rest). Once on his turn, Belcamp can take an additional action on top of his regular action and a possible bonus action.

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede Belcamp's darkvision.

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

Second Wind (1/short rest). On his turn, Belcamp can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+18 hit points.

Steadfast. Belcamp can't be frightened while it can see an allied creature within 30 feet of it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Belcamp attack three times: once with his beard and twice with his glaive.

Beard. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature.

Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for 1 minute. While poisoned in this way, the target can't regain hit points. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.

Hit: 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or lose 5 (1d10) hit points at the start of each of its turns due to an infernal wound. Each time the devil hits the wounded target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 5 (1d10). Any creature can take an action to stanch the wound with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Combat & Tactics

The legion – despite its name – has pitiful military training. If forced into a fight they just swarm and try to force PCs into the binding circles. Belcamp stays beside as many of his allies as possible to protect them. The sheer number of enemies here is probably too much for the party to handle.

Leaden Legionnaire

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 14 (natural armor)

Hit Points 6 (1d8+2)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	3 (-4)	11 (+0)	4 (-3)

Saving Throws DEX +2, WIS +2, CHA -1

Skills Acrobatics +2, Athletics +2

Damage Resistances acid, cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks not made with silver weapons

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception xxx

Languages Infernal

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2 (1d4) slashing damage plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage.

Spear. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) piercing damage or 4 (1d8) piercing damage if wielded with two hands, plus 2 (1d4) necrotic damage.

Hostile Negotiations.

Belcamp is willing to make a few offers. He'll let the party join his legion, which comes with a boon that grants them resistance to fire damage and an effect similar to a *ring of sustenance*. In exchange, however, they must follow his orders, taking 3 (1d6) damage every time they try to refuse. With extra forces he's willing to attack the rust lords in Chamber Five and recover the *cursed rod of negation*.

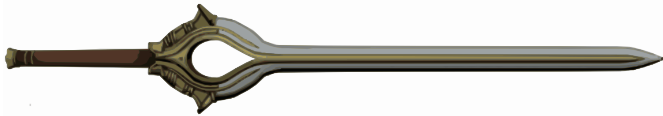
Alternatively, he'd be willing to trade Somnia for the rod, and let the PCs use the Pious Mount to receive their blessing. He claims he just wants the rod to defend his people, but within hours of getting it he launches an assault.

Finally, Belcamp might be convinced to hand over Somnia if the party threatens him with the summoned rust monster from their eggs. He doesn't realize the summoned creatures are so fragile and he's afraid of a fight.

Aftermath.

If the party rescues Somnia, she can perform a magical song that puts the rust lords or the beasts in Chamber Eight to sleep for 5 minutes. The song doesn't work on intelligent creatures.

The torture rack used for Somnia is a 15-foot long mithral blade that deals 1 fire damage each round to any creature that touches it. Though seemingly far too large to ever use in battle, it draws the attention of any eladrin or any Vekeshi Mystic who sees it. If an eladrin or Vekeshi Mystic grasps its hilt, it transforms into an appropriately-sized blade.



Somnia, Celestial Lyrst

Large celestial, chaotic good

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 68 (8d10+24)

Speed 30 ft., fly 70 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws DEX +6, WIS +6, CHA +7

Skills Deception +7, Insight +6, Nature +7, Perception +6, Performance +7, Persuade +7, Survival +6

Damage Resistances cold, fire

Damage Immunities lightning, poison

Condition Immunities diseased, poisoned, petrified

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal (tongues)

Challenge 6 (2,300 XP)

Bardic Inspiration 1d10 (20/short rest). As a bonus action on her turn, Somnia can choose one other creature within 60 feet who can hear her. That creature gains one Bardic Inspiration die, a d10. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Bardic Inspiration die, but must decide before the GM says whether the roll succeeds or fails.

Countercharm. As an action, Somnia can start a performance that lasts until the end of her next turn. During that time, Somnia and any friendly creatures within 30 feet of her have advantage on saving throws against being frightened or charmed. A creature must be able to hear her to gain this benefit. The performance ends early if she is incapacitated or silenced or if Somnia voluntarily ends it (no action required).

Innate Spellcasting. Somnia's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15; spell attack +7). She can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material or verbal components.

Constant: *tongues*

At will: *dancing lights, light, mage hand*

5/day: *charm person, cure wounds, detect magic, hold person, identify, invisibility, shatter, sleep, suggestion*

3/day: *charm monster, darkness, hallucinatory terrain, healing word, knock, speak with animals, speak with plants*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Somnia attacks three times: twice with her sword and once with her tail.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (1d10+6) magical slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (2d6+4) bludgeoning damage. The target is grappled (escape DC 15) if Somnia isn't already grappling a creature with its tail, and the target is restrained until this grapple ends.

First Blade of Srasama

Weapon, artifact (requires attunement)

Description In your hands you hold a sliver of a goddess. The gleaming mithral weapon transforms to a blade of fire or back at a thought. In your mind's eye you feel the presence of Srasama's first aspect, that of the warrior-maiden. This powerful mithral blade is typically only wielded by an eladrin or someone who follows eladrin philosophy and religion. You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon, and on a successful hit you deal an extra 3 (1d6) fire damage. Once you are attuned to it, you can use a bonus action to teleport the weapon into your hands from any distance across the world. While wielding it, you have advantage on Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks, and at the start of each of your turns you can choose to change its form into any other one-handed melee weapon or melee weapon with the versatile property. In addition, you know the status and location of all women within 1 mile, and if you have met them before, you also knows their identities. If this power is ever used to harm innocents you are immolated, taking 17 (5d6) fire damage at the start of each of your turns until the flames are extinguished (an action and successful DC 13 Dexterity check), after which the sword teleports away and will never serve you again.

If an eladrin matriarch who witnessed Srasama's destruction willingly plunges the blade into her heart, both she and the blade are incinerated, leaving behind nothing but ash.

Eight: Beasts of the Horde

Encounter Level 11.

The party only has one reason to be here: to perform the ritual on the Pious Mount. The monsters here are deadly but avoidable if the party has a few skeletons courtesy of Ennio Adolinidd, has the ice devil on their side, or can get Somnia to sing and put the beasts to sleep. If the party insists on fighting, they get what they deserve.

Treasure.

A steel decanter has been placed beneath the holy water font in the Blessing Room (Area H), and sits in an eternal flame created where the heartsblood of a hellhound was spilled. The decanter effectively serves as a tea kettle for the mixture of holy water and hellfire.

Cursed Tea

Wondrous item, uncommon

Description Despite the flames, this steel decanter is cool to the touch and the water within smells like fine tea. Upon speaking its command word, this decanter fills with either holy water or excellent tea. Each effect can be used only once per day. A creature that drinks the tea regains 2d8+5 hit points. Whenever a creature drinks the tea, they are filled with heartwarming memories of a friend or loved one, then feel a sudden chill and emptiness in their heart. That friend or loved one becomes unfriendly and uncaring toward the drinker, and spurns them for no discernible reason. It tends to affect people farther away first so that the drinker isn't aware of the effect immediately. Drinking enough of his cursed tea ultimately leaves the drinker bereft of any who care for them.

Vault Hell Hound

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 45 (7d8 + 14)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	6 (-2)	13 (+1)	6 (-2)

Skills Perception +5

Damage Immunities fire

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 15

Languages understands Infernal but can't speak it

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Keen Hearing and Smell. The hound has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on hearing or smell.

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

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6). The hound exhales fire in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Bloody Juggernaut

Huge giant, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 190 (20d8+100)

Speed 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	9 (-1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws STR +9, CON +9, WIS +4

Skills Athletics +9, Intimidation +7, Perception +8

Damage Vulnerabilities radiant

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages Abyssal, Giant (can't speak)

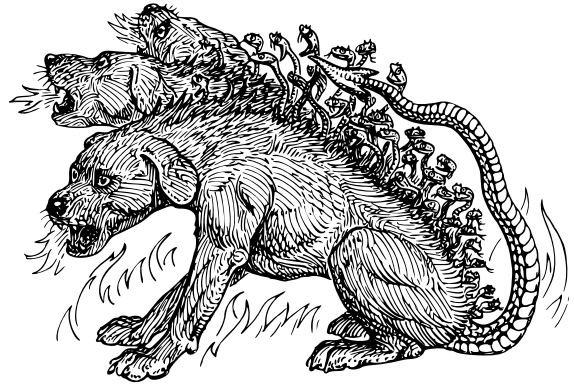
Challenge 11 (7,200 XP)

Blood Absorption. As long as the bloody juggernaut is within 30 feet of a foe suffering damage from a bleeding wound inflicted by its claw attacks, the blood that flows from the victim writhes through the air into the juggernaut's maw, healing the juggernaut by an amount equal to the damage caused by that round's bleed effect.

Flayed Man. The bloody juggernaut has had the flesh torn from its body and its feet removed. It crawls on hands and knees, constantly scraping its bloody muscles across the rough floors and walls. Four sacred skeletons follow the juggernaut and fight the creatures it targets. Any of these undead that are destroyed animate from the ground at the end of the juggernaut's turn (maximum 4). If commanded by Adolini's chant, the skeletons turn against the juggernaut.

ACTIONS

Action Name. The bloody juggernaut uses its frightful presence then attacks once with its bite and twice with its claws.



Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d8+5) piercing damage plus the target is grappled (escape DC 17).

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.

Hit: 12 (2d6+5) slashing damage. If the target is a creature other than an undead or a construct, it must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or lose 3 (1d6) hit points at the start of each of its turns due to a bloody wound. Each time the bloody juggernaut hits the wounded target with this attack, the damage dealt by the wound increases by 3 (1d6). Any creature can take an action to stanch the wound with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check. The wound also closes if the target receives magical healing.

Frightful Presence. Each creature of the bloody juggernaut's choice that is within 60 feet of it and aware of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the bloody juggernaut's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Swallow. The bloody juggernaut makes one bite attack against a Medium or smaller target it is grappling. If the attack hits, the target is also swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the target is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the bloody juggernaut, and it takes 23 (4d8+5) bludgeoning damage at the start of each of the bloody juggernaut's turns. A bloody juggernaut can have only one creature swallowed at a time. If the bloody juggernaut takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from the swallowed creature, the bloody juggernaut must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the bloody juggernaut. If the bloody juggernaut dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

Vomit Gore (3/day). The bloody juggernaut spits a blast of blood and gore in a 20-foot cone. Creatures in the area make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 21 (6d6) necrotic damage and fall prone. The slippery blood coats the ground in the area for 2d4 rounds, turning it into difficult terrain for the duration. A creature that enters the area or ends its turn there must also succeed on a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

REACTIONS

Rock Catching. With a successful DC 10 Dexterity saving throw, the bloody juggernaut can catch a rock or similar object is hurled at him and take no bludgeoning damage from it.



Nine: Final Vault

If you are using these chambers when the party returns in ZEITGEIST Adventure Eight, *Diaspora*, that occurs before Gene entered the vault, so they find this chamber empty save for relics detailing the history of the Demonocracy and the atrocities committed or directed by Ashima-Shimtu. The meeting with the Lady of the Forked Tongue is detailed in that adventure.

If you're running this as part of ZEITGEIST Adventure Four, *Always on Time*, or as part of a stand-alone dungeon crawl, the party must fight past Gene the lunatic godhand.

Golden Doppelganger

Medium construct, neutral evil

Armor Class same as target

Hit Points 1

Speed same as target

ABILITY SCORES

(same as target)

Saving Throws same as target

Skills same as target

Damage Resistances same as target

Damage Immunities same as target

Condition Immunities same as target

Senses same as target, passive Perception same as target

Challenge 0 (10 XP)

Features. The golden doppelganger does not possess any of the target's class features but otherwise has the same features as the target.

ACTIONS

Attacks. The golden doppelganger has the same melee and ranged weapon attacks as the target.

For a stand-alone adventure, what happens when the party defeats Gene and speaks with Ashima-Shimtu depends on how generous the GM is feeling. She most likely finds them unworthy of her attention and leaves them to their own devices, which means they probably drown trying to swim out or stay trapped here forever.

If the GM doesn't want a downer ending, she might direct them to a very specifically worded *wish* scroll Gene possesses that can break the leaden curse, allowing them to exit the way they came in (albeit with a chance the ritual itself kills them). Or if the party consists of priests sent in to set things right, Ashima-Shimtu asks only for a blessing that she might find forgiveness for her sins then allows them to leave.

We suggest having the bloody juggernaut chase the PCs menacingly from Chamber Eight to the Chamber Nine. When they open the doors they have to deal with Gene, the golden doppelgangers, and the juggernaut, but if they can get the juggernaut to the well beneath Ashima-Shimtu, they can goad it into charging and falling into the holy water, killing it.

Gene, Lunatic Godhand

Medium humanoid (human), lawful evil

Armor Class 19 (Wisdom, bracers of defense)

Hit Points 76 (8d8+40)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	17 (+3)	—	10 (+0)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws INT +3

Skills Acrobatics +6, Deception +11, Insight +10, Intimidation +8, Perception +10

Damage Resistances variable (see text); bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities aging, disease, poisoned

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Demon's Souls. Gene is possessed by various demonic spirits which have given him immortal life. In many respects, and as such, Gene does not possess a Constitution score, but relies on his Charisma score for all Constitution related statistics.

Evasion. When Gene is subjected to an effect that allows him to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage, he instead takes no damage if he succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if he fails.

Hands of Heaven and Hell (1/turn). When Gene hits a creature with his enchanted brass knuckles, he may pummel it or another adjacent target dealing 2 (1d4) lightning damage. Each time he deals lightning damage the brass knuckles gain one charge, which lasts until the end of the encounter. When the brass knuckles have at least six charge counters, the next attack Gene hits a creature with them he gains a number of temporary hit points equal to the damage the attack deals.

High Jump. Gene has advantage on checks made to jump.

Power Attack. When Gene makes his first melee weapon attack in a turn, he can choose to take a -5 penalty to his melee weapon attack rolls in exchange for a +10 bonus to melee weapon damage. In addition, Gene can use a bonus action to make one melee weapon attack after he uses a melee weapon to reduce a creature to 0 hit points or scores a critical hit with it. Gene can only use this feature on his turn.

Quick. Gene has advantage on initiative checks.

Regeneration. Gene regains 5 hit points at the start of his turn. Gene dies only if he starts his turn with 0 hit points.

Stillness of Mind. Gene can use his action to end one effect on himself that is causing him to be charmed or frightened.

Variable Resistance. When Gene is struck by elemental damage during combat, he gains resistance to that type of damage for 1 minute.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Gene attacks three times.

Enchanted Brass Knuckles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+4) magical bludgeoning damage and if Gene has already hit the target once this turn, it must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure the target is stunned until the end of Gene's next turn or drops one object it is holding (the object lands in an adjacent square of Gene's choice).

REACTIONS

Slow Fall. Gene can use his reaction when he falls to reduce any falling damage he takes by 40. 🐼