

PT9



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THE SPIRE

A Sourcebook By
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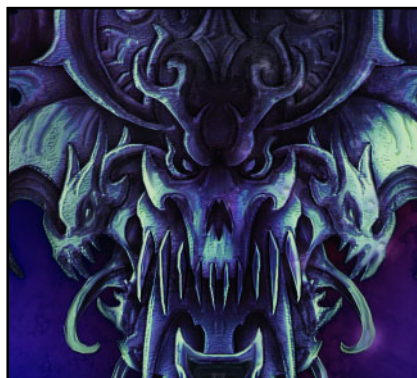


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GUIDE TO THE PTOLUS PDFS

Throughout this book you will find references in the text and in the side-panels to other books in the PT series of *Ptolus* PDF editions. For your convenience, here’s a listing of all the titles in the series and their corresponding title codes:

<i>A Player’s Guide to Ptolus</i>	PT1
<i>The World of Praemal</i>	PT2
<i>Organizations</i>	PT3
<i>Districts of the City, Vol. 1</i>	PT4
<i>Districts of the City, Vol. 2</i>	PT5
<i>DM’s Companion</i>	PT6
<i>Beneath the Streets</i>	PT7
<i>Adventures</i>	PT8
<i>The Spire</i>	PT9

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INTRODUCTION

Soaring above the characters' heads at all times, the Spire is both awe-inspiring and daunting. Although it is often obscured by clouds, it poses an everpresent threat and a reminder of the region's dark history.



PAGE NUMBERING

Two sets of page numbers appear at the top of the pages that come after this introduction. The main page numbers correspond to this book's table of contents. The ones in parenthesis correspond to the page numbers of the Ptolus print book. They are there so you can properly check the side-panel cross-references of important words that you'll find boldfaced throughout this book. These cross-references tell you where to find more information about a given term, character, or place. They direct you to either a page number in this book, a chapter in another book, or a page number and title code of another installment of the PT series. We reference the page numbers from the print book so that, whatever edition of Ptolus you have, you can discuss page references with friends and not risk any confusion. Look for a rundown of all PT title codes in this book's Table of Contents.

Welcome to *The Spire*, a book that details the most foul and evil place in the world of Praemal—which just so happens to lie next to the City of Ptolus. The material in this book corresponds directly to Chapters 24 and 25 in *Ptolus: Monte Cook's City by the Spire*.

This is one in a series of nine Ptolus PDF releases from Malhavoc Press. When used together, they comprise the entirety of the Ptolus print book. Each one is also usable on its own for city-based fantasy d20 roleplaying campaigns.

WHERE DO I START?

If you've purchased this book as a general sourcebook and you're not sure what *Ptolus* is, check out the sidebar on the next page for a primer on the product and the city it details. If on the other hand you're starting to plan your own Ptolus Campaign, here are a few guidelines on how to get started.

Whether you are a player or a DM, start by reading *A Player's Guide to Ptolus*. That book—free to download as a PDF at www.ptolus.com—provides a quick overview of everything else in the book. Of course, it doesn't go into any of the secrets of the setting—

those are for the DM to reveal as time goes on. DMs should **print out a copy for each player**. Let everyone have a chance to learn about the city and get a feel for the setting.

Where you go next depends on how you're going to use Ptolus. If you want it to be your campaign setting, start reading *The World of Praemal* and learn all the basics of the world.

If Ptolus is destined to become a city in your existing world, jump straight to the **Districts of the City** PDFs and read about the various parts of town.

If you only want to mine the setting for ideas, flip through the various PDF releases that interest you and look at whatever strikes your fancy. You'll find interesting city locales, strange and fascinating NPCs, dungeon complexes, evil fortresses, haunted ruins, complex organizations, a few new races, monsters, prestige classes, spells, and a lot more.

Ready-made adventures for characters of level 1 to 4 are available in this book. For those of you who need adventures beyond those offered here, check out the ninety-six-page *Night of Dissolution* Ptolus adventure. It provides an exciting Ptolus-based adventure for 4th- to 9th-level characters.

If you want to read every last bit of information available on the city, look for two Ptolus-related products previously released by Malhavoc Press: *The Banewarrens* and *Chaositech*.

To delve even deeper into Ptolus, check out the official comic book, published by DB Pro, available from Diamond Comics. We're also proud to offer metal miniatures from Paizo Publishing, specialty map products from cartographer Ed Bourelle's SkeletonKey Games, architectural sketchbooks from The Forge, and the *Ptolus Counter Collection* from Fiery Dragon Productions.

THE WORST PLACE IN THE WORLD

In this book you will find details about the two fortresses on the Spire. The first is Goth Gulgamel, the fortress of Ghul: the Skull-King and Half God. It is a place of great evil and great power, of interest to high-level characters as a site to explore.

The next is Jabel Shammar, almost certainly the worst place in the world. Jabel Shammar is the fortress at the top of the Spire, built by the Dread One himself. You get a room-by-room

description of the stronghold plus ideas for staging an exciting campaign climax there.

The locations described in this book are designed for high-level characters.

The Appendix of this book includes full-color maps of both fortresses for the DM's use.

Throughout *The Spire*, all references to spells, feats, and other rules come either from this book or from the v. 3.5 revision of the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM. This book is protected content except for items specifically called out as Open Game Content on the Legal page. For full details, please turn to the Appendix. Open content is not otherwise marked in the text of this book.

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in the *Ptolus* PDFs appear on my website. Find the links to these free web enhancements, my campaign journal, and much more online at www.ptolus.com.

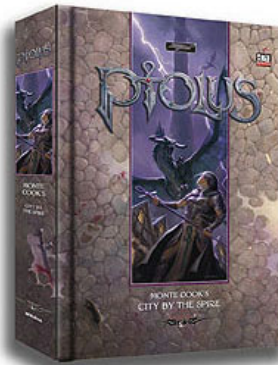
Thanks for trying the Ptolus Campaign! I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

WHAT IS PTOLUS?

If you were to imagine the most deluxe roleplaying game product ever, what would be in it? More than 600 pages of fantasy source and adventure material from one of the industry's greatest designers? Check. Glorious full-color art? Check. Double-sided poster map? Player handouts? A CD-ROM packed with bonus material? Check, check, and check.

As a book, Ptolus is many things all at once. It is . . .

- The ultimate fantasy campaign in which adventurers plumb the depths of a gigantic underground labyrinth filled with treasure, monsters, and traps—or try to make names for themselves in a city filled with intrigues, politics, and mystery.
- The very first and longest-running 3rd Edition campaign, run by one of the game's designers for industry celebs including two editors of *Dragon*® magazine, two editors of *Dungeon*®, three Wizards of the Coast roleplaying designers and three editors, and even the former D&D business manager.
- A detailed city setting crammed with characters, locations, and enough adventures to take characters from 1st to 20th level.
- A work of unsurpassed usability, featuring extensive indexing and cross-referencing throughout, designed and tested by the author of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and the "Dungeoncraft" column in *Dungeon* to make play even easier and more fun.
- The most deluxe RPG package ever designed; the 672-page print book includes more than 130 pages of color artwork and maps, three bound-in fabric bookmarks, four tear-out card-stock bookmarks, two dozen handouts, and a CD-ROM containing 700 pages of additional bonus products, Ptolus adventures, reference documents, and source material.
- For our readers who prefer electronic (PDF) versions of roleplaying products, we've made the entire book available as a series of PDFs: the PT series (see page 3). When you buy all nine PDFs, you have the same print items available in the physical *Ptolus* book.



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GOTH GULGAMEL

Goth Gulgamel: “Castle of Darkness.” The name is the corrupt and somewhat awkward combination of an Elvish and a Dwarvish word, but that fact perfectly describes the nature of the place’s original master. Ghul stole what came before him and twisted it to his own ends—first and foremost, he stole the legacy of the Dread One. Some believe that his flagrant, self-proclaimed association with Eslathagos Malkith was his ultimate undoing.



The Spire was created when the world itself reacted to the evil the Dread One had gathered in his fortress and thrust it away.

Hall of Shadows, page 489

Entropy Sphere, page 499

Dalenguard, PT5: page 320

For the story of Ghul and Goth Gulgamel, see PT2: page 81.

A soul magic spell etched into the tooth of a half-orc named Tinareg in the Dark Reliquary’s Cruciform Prison can free Ochremeshk from entrapment. For more regarding this event, see PT4: page 256. Find stats for Ochremeshk himself in PT6 on page 623.

Soul riders, page 489

Ghul is long dead. Most of his servants are dead or scattered to the far corners of the world, where they slink in shadows, fearing the light. Yet his fortress, Goth Gulgamel, remains—mostly due to its unique nature and its source of power: the legendary and fearsome **Entropy Sphere**.

INHABITANTS

After Ghul’s defeat, the unified armies of humans, elves, and dwarves built **Dalenguard** to watch over Goth Gulgamel and prevent intrusion. Thanks to that move, Ptolus was born—or rather, reborn—and the evil fortress halfway up the Spire lay quiet and vacant for centuries.

In the last few hundred years, however, the fortress has seen activity from strange and unexpected fronts. Three different groups have moved into Goth Gulgamel hoping to use it for their own ends. Dalenguard has not noticed their presence, as the troops there have gotten lax over the centuries, and all three groups are lying low—for now.

SOUL RIDERS

One of the most enigmatic and—among the few who know they exist—feared groups in Ptolus call themselves the **soul riders**. This group of

now-disembodied minds uses the statues in the **Hall of Shadows** as their foci, believing that Goth Gulgamel’s remoteness and reputation provides the necessary seclusion they need and its history suits their decidedly macabre tastes.

The soul riders attempt to keep their presence a secret and virtually never send their soul-slaves deeper into the fortress than the Hall of Shadows.

OCHREMESHK

An evil demon prince, one of the so-called Demon Gods, Ochremeshk was trapped in a magical prison almost five thousand years ago, bringing the Wars of Fire in ancient Kem to an end. To this day he remains trapped within a magical rune in a hidden room of a ruined citadel far south and east of Ptolus.

But the key to his freedom, he has found, lies within the wild, uncontrolled power of the now-damaged Entropy Sphere located on the Spire near Goth Gulgamel. Although he has not yet liberated himself, Ochremeshk has called to his ancient followers. Evil creatures like salamanders and hellfire giants have answered this clarion and now inhabit Goth Gulgamel, awaiting their master in the Path of Burning Souls (see page 491).

URTHON AEDAR

Ironically, one of the groups utilizing Goth Gulgamel isn't evil at all. The **Urthon Aedar**, a secretive and enigmatic gathering of most remaining Elder Elves, use the fortress as a waystation between Ptolus and **Dreta Phantas**, the Dreaming City. This elven city, which the dark elves stole ages ago and hid far beneath the earth, can be entered through the Entropy Sphere—a well-guarded secret known to very few.

THE NATURE OF GOTH GULGAMEL

Goth Gulgamel isn't the simple stronghold it appears to be. This fact becomes clear to anyone who has explored the **Banewarrens** and found the Baneheart, a shaft that extends up the entire length of the Spire. Goth Gulgamel is, in fact, its own demiplane—a half-world that worms its way through a realm of utter darkness, with various chambers anchoring themselves metaphysically in the dark, and many others now lost in lightless realms forever. Thus, the layout of Goth Gulgamel does not conform to the size and shape of the Spire.

REACHING AND ENTERING GOTH GULGAMEL

Unlike **Jabel Shammar**, it is entirely possible for someone to fly or even climb up the Spire to the fortress and enter. Its main doors are not even locked. Still, as with **Jabel Shammar**, the stories of those who have tried to do so virtually always end with the words, “and they were never heard from again.” Plus, conventional wisdom maintains that the fortress is still entirely sealed. Goth Gulgamel's reputation keeps most intruders away, and its reality keeps most intrepid explorers from ever returning to tell of what they have seen.

One cannot teleport into any location in Goth Gulgamel other than the **courtyard** (Area 9) and the **Hall of Shadows** (Area 7). Likewise, incorporeal creatures can get to those locations but cannot pass farther into the fortress—one must be corporeal to enter the extradimensional space that is Goth Gulgamel. (Once inside, an incorporeal creature can move about normally.)

WALLS, DOORS, AND DECOR

Except where noted, the walls of Goth Gulgamel are made of foot-thick blocks of stone. Behind the stone lies only darkness—the Utterdark. Entering the Utterdark is likely to be the end of any character (see below).

Unless otherwise stated, doors are made of reinforced iron two inches thick. They have a hardness of 10, 60 hit points, and a break DC of 30. Most are elaborately engraved with demonic imagery and skull faces.

Elaborate ornamentation and baroque style is the hallmark of the interior of this magical fortress. Many walls bear intricate frescoes or paintings. Dark wooden paneling covers other walls, or sometimes the lower half of the walls. Dark curtains are also common.

THE DREAD

Any creature of good alignment suffers a –4 morale penalty to attacks, saves, and checks while in the confines of Goth Gulgamel. There is no save or resistance to this effect; however, it is a fear effect, so those immune to fear (such as paladins of 3rd level and higher) are immune to the Dread. Spells such as *remove fear* suppress the Dread for 1d4 rounds.

EXTRADIMENSIONAL SPACES

Because all of Goth Gulgamel is itself an extradimensional space, characters cannot create or access other extradimensional spaces within it. This means such spells as *Mord's magnificent mansion* do not function, and items kept in a *bag of holding* are inaccessible in the fortress, for example.

THE UTTERDARK

The chambers and halls within Goth Gulgamel are all surrounded by the Utterdark of Ghul, a realm of complete blackness. A character who enters the Utterdark—either by breaking through an interior wall or in traversing the **Chamber of Immortal Fears**—finds it a virtually endless void of darkness, without gravity or orientation. Objects and creatures in the Utterdark float in random directions at a speed of twenty feet each round. Unless a character can fly, movement through this void is impossible. So is vision—no light short of that produced by a deity or a 9th-level magical effect sheds any illumination in the Utterdark. Darkvision and even *true seeing* do not help.

The Utterdark is extremely cold; it inflicts 1d6 points of cold damage each hour.

Characters who remain in the Utterdark for more than one minute cannot be located by anyone using divinations short of *discern location*. Characters flying or somehow moving through the Utterdark must make Intelligence checks each round (DC 15 +1 per previous check) to avoid becoming hopelessly disoriented and lost.

Dead Ends

Some passages in Goth Gulgamel now come to dead ends. They were not dead ends originally—after the defeat of Ghul, the elf wizard **Khelaeson** severed the ties that bound much of the fortress' interior to the physical world. The dead ends now represent corridors that once connected to portions of the fortress now lost, adrift in the Utterdark. Today these passages offer direct access into

Urthon Aedar, PT3: page 138
Dreta Phantas, PT7: page 457

The forces of light that defeated Ghul cast powerful spells to seal Goth Gulgamel from intrusion, particularly by those of evil alignment. Over time, many of those spells decayed and so—unbeknownst to the majority of people—most of the fortress is unsealed today.

The Banewarrens, PT7: page 419

The Pits of Insanity are a phenomenon found throughout the interior of the Spire as well as the Dungeon areas beneath Ptolus. For details, see PT7: page 416.

Jabel Shammar, page 501

Chamber of Immortal Fears, page 497

More than a thousand years ago, Ghul used the magic of the Entropy Sphere to spread his Utterdark across Palastan and all the lands he conquered in the Ghulwar.

Courtyard, page 490
Hall of Shadows, page 489



Khelaeson, PT2: page 81

DM TIPS

DMs running Spire-centered campaigns can use this chapter following The Banewarrens adventure. However, The Banewarrens is designed to take characters from 6th to 10th level, and adventuring groups really should not visit Goth Gulgamel before 15th. DMs might want to add a few visits to mid-level locations in Ghul's Labyrinth (PT7: page 418) to help their groups level up.



Hall of Shadows, page 489

Marlite is a magic-dead material that shines like blue-tinted iron and is as hard as steel. For details, see PT2: page 46.

DM TIPS

Ghul's slaying ward at the main entrance may pose more of a threat to the PCs' animal companions, cohorts, and conjured allies than to them, unless they attempt this adventure prematurely.

Sometimes at night, folks in Ptolus can look up and see eerie yellow-green lights coming from within Goth Gulgamel. Most attribute this, correctly, to restless evil spirits.

the Utterdark. They look like spots where a hallway just fades into complete darkness.

FORTRESS LAYOUT

The layout of this strange extradimensional fortress includes more than two dozen areas today, though in the past, it was much larger. These areas appear on the map of Goth Gulgamel included in the Appendix at the back of this book.

1. MAIN ENTRANCE

Long ago, a massive stone platform jugged out from the Spire in front of Goth Gulgamel. It is gone now, so the main entrance hangs almost entirely above empty air—only a small ledge remains in front of it. The entrance to the fortress lies within a small tower completely open inside. From this point, an observer is about thirteen hundred feet in the air. On a clear day one can see the entire city and Ptolus Harbor. Most of the time it's not a clear day, however, and anyone standing at this entrance would be wreathed in clouds.

A broad staircase leads up into a larger entry tower. This old guard tower has three levels; ferocious demon-ogre guards once occupied the upper two, but today all are empty. The tower's main level holds two sets of double doors. One set (marked **A** on the poster map) leads south to the razorwire tunnel (Area 2). These doors are not locked and, in fact, stand slightly ajar. They are made of iron three inches thick.

The other set of double doors (marked **B** on the poster map) leads west deeper into the Spire and the **Hall of Shadows** (Area 7). The portals are made of adamantine-reinforced **marlite**, making them immune to magic. White iron chains hang loosely on either side of the doors, and remnants of a mithral seal that was poured into the door still cling to the edges of the doorway—the seals on these doors obviously have been forced open. The unlocked doors now open easily. Only one remaining aspect of the original magic used to keep creatures out of Goth Gulgamel remains: three special, layered *forbiddance* spells keyed toward lawful evil, chaotic evil, and neutral evil creatures (DC 22), centered on the ground before the doors. Any evil creatures within either overcame this ward or entered in another way.

But another abjuring hex centers on the entrance, this one just inside the doorway. Ghul himself placed a strange but powerful ward here to keep out riff-raff but allow powerful visitors or servants access. Anyone with fewer than 13 HD who attempts to pass through the main doors must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 24). Failure results in immediate death. Even characters who succeed at the saving throw suffer 15d6 points of damage and two negative levels. This necromantic

effect carries a caster level of 20th. Because it is just within the doorway, good characters attempting the saving throw are subject to the -4 penalty imposed by the Dread.

2. RAZORWIRE TUNNEL

A twenty-foot-wide, south-running tunnel connects the entry tower with the Tower of the Guardians (Area 3). It stretches across empty air, with a thirteen-hundred-foot drop to the city below. The tunnel is made of curling razorwire with occasional iron supports. Walking through the tunnel inflicts 1d6 points of slashing damage per thirty feet, although a successful Balance check (DC 18) reduces this damage by half.

3. TOWER OF THE GUARDIANS (EL 10)

The doors into this tower are identical to the adamantine-reinforced marlite doors described for the main entrance (Area 1). However, the top of this tower is open; it is the lair of two massive chimeras that hunt the surrounding countryside, but typically avoid the city. They attack anyone entering this tower from above or below but flee quickly if dropped below half their hit points. They never use the doors to get out (obviously, having no way to open them).

Within the nestlike top level of the tower are scattered 958 gp, 1,390 sp, and a random selection of objects and gear, most broken and worthless (armor, weapons, furnishings, tools, and so on, but including a +1 *halberd*). Amid the items lies a key (Search check, DC 22, to find) that opens the side entrance farther south (Area 9). This third level connects to the third level of Ghul's Tower to the immediate northwest.

This tower's first and second levels once had furnishings, but everything is wrecked and ruined now. Only a few very old wooden and cloth scraps lie about.

Chimeras (2): 110 and 117 hp; see MM.

4. GHUL'S TOWER

The five levels of this tower, once Ghul's personal quarters, stand empty except for the occasional piece of ornate but now rotten furniture. The top level was a bedchamber, the fourth level a sitting room and study, the third a private library, the second a dining area, and the first a receiving area for guests. Nothing of value remains in Ghul's Tower.

The third level of this tower connects to the third level of the Tower of the Guardians to the immediate southeast.

5. ANCIENT ARMORIES

Now looted and empty, two chambers down a short passage from Ghul's Tower once contained weapons (westernmost) and armor (easternmost) for the guards in the fortress—mostly

orcs and ogres, but also a variety of other monsters. Only hooks and empty racks suggest the rooms' former purpose.

6. OLD BARRACKS

Once the quarters of a number of Ghul's elite soldiers—in this case, Sorn-Ulth orcs—this room between the armories (Area 5) and Hall of Shadows (Area 7) now stands empty. Iron bed frames and rusted iron-bound wooden chests furnish the room, but there is nothing of value. Presumably, when Goth Gulgamel was intact, it held many such chambers.

7. HALL OF SHADOWS (EL 19)

Characters heading west out of the main entrance enter into a long hallway with a fifty-foot-high vaulted ceiling. Wide pillars line the walls, and in between each set of pillars stands a twenty-three-foot-tall statue of a muscular figure in armor. There are sixteen statues total. The room is completely dark; no matter what illumination the player characters bring with them, the hall stays shadowy and dimly lit. A Spot check (DC 20) reveals that the shadows seem to move and scuttle about. (This is an effect of the room—these shadows cannot harm or interact with anything, but they also cannot be affected themselves.)

Soul Riders

The soul riders are a group of mutant creatures who have long ago discarded their own bodies; their souls can take over or “ride” the souls of other creatures (see PT3: Organizations for more details).

Player characters who are hostile to the soul riders will find perhaps the most dangerous encounter in Goth Gulgamel right here in this room. It is likely that 2d6 of the dozen soul riders will be here at any given time, each tied to one of the statues. They also keep four mighty human fighters here to “ride” if they need to accomplish something physical—like driving off intruders. (They sustain these hosts with food and water brought here by controlled wizards from the city.) If the PCs attempt to confront the soul riders here, not only must they face the four guardians, but any soul riders not attached to the fighters can attempt to launch soul control over the intruders each round (Will save, DC 25, to resist).

However, the soul riders may have no desire or reason to fight—or even reveal themselves—to any PC intruders. They would rather keep their presence here a secret; if that's not possible, they prefer to allow player characters to enter Goth Gulgamel and destroy the other creatures in the extradimensional fortress. While they do not consider the other forces here their enemies, they would have no objection to being the stronghold's



only residents. It is also worth noting that the soul riders would never want anything to happen to Ptolus, because that would leave them with no one to ride. So if the PCs are on a mission of great import, they may actually *help* them, offering advice and an idea of the fortress' layout.

Controlled Guardians (4)*

Male or female humans (Lawful Good)

Fighter 2 **CR** 12

HD 12d10+24 **hp** 88

Init +5 **Speed** 20 feet

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 21

BAB/Grapple +12/+15

Attack +19 melee (1d12+6+1d6 cold, greataxe) or +17 ranged (1d8+7+1d6 electricity, 19–20/x3, longbow)

Full Attack +19/+14/+9 melee (1d12+6 +1d6 cold, greataxe) or +17/+12/+7 ranged (1d8+7 +1d6 electricity, 19–20/x3, longbow)

Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Goth Gulgamel as it appeared during the Ghulwar.

Main entrance, page 488

Soul riders, PT3: page 137

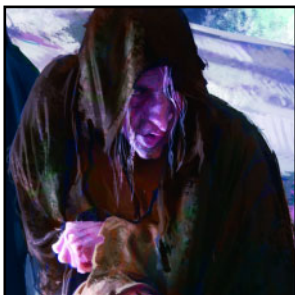
While creatures like the soul riders do not actually need a “base,” they find it useful to have one spot where they can gather in controlled bodies and meet in secret.

Ageless Titan, page 497

DM TIPS

Remember that any creature of good alignment suffers a -4 morale penalty on attacks, saves, and checks while in Goth Gulgamel, due to the Dread (see page 487).

*Zaug, PT6: page 633
Elder Brood, PT6: page 634*



*Harrow elves, the blighted ones,
PT2: page 52*

In the end, Ghul simply wished to be the Dread One and wanted Goth Gulgamel to be Jabel Shammar. Yet, Ghul himself was never able to gain entrance to the notorious fortress atop the Spire.

*Chamber in Ghul's Labyrinth,
PT7: page 421*

An explorer named Chrystara is interested in getting inside Goth Gulgamel and may approach suitably powerful PCs about it in a local tavern. She won't say why she wants to go there, though...

Str 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 15, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

Crucial Skills: Climb +17, Hide +3, Jump +17, Listen +2, Spot +2.

Other Skills: Survival +1, Swim +12.

Crucial Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Other Feats: Alertness, Greater Weapon Focus (greataxe), Greater Weapon Focus (longbow), Improved Critical (longbow), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow).

Possessions: +2 full plate armor, +2 cold greataxe, masterwork composite longbow (Strength +3), +2 shock arrows (12), ring of protection +1; potions of cure serious wounds, heroism, and divine favor; 50 feet of rope.

* While controlled, the guardians do not suffer the -4 penalty due to the Dread.

8. TOWER OF THE HARROWING

This two-level tower holds the chambers Ghul and his minions—including such minor Galchutt as the **zaug** and the **Elder Brood**—used in ages past to torture captured Elder Elves, twisting them into the **Harrow elves** of today. (There were similar torture areas deeper in the complex as well; now they are lost to the Utterdark.) The chambers here hold torture devices of all kinds: racks, iron maidens, pillories, furnaces and branding irons, and a variety of knives, needles, spikes, hooks, hammers, and other grisly implements.

Due to the powerful psychic resonance of the place and the terrible things that happened here, any elf who enters this tower must succeed at a Will save (DC 26) or be stunned for 1d6 rounds, then shaken for 1d6 minutes. This is a mind-affecting, supernatural fear effect. A Harrow elf who enters automatically fails the save.

9. COURTYARD AND SIDE ENTRANCE

This forlorn open-air courtyard at the south end of the fortress is empty. The door leading into the fortress is double-locked conventionally (Open Lock, DC 30, for both) and also *arcane locked*. The entry room feels extremely cold; anyone passing through it sustains 1d6 points of cold damage. Anyone lingering here suffers 1d6 points of cold damage each round.

10. OLD STORAGE

Once the grisly meat locker for storing food for some of Ghul's servants, this cold chamber reeks of rot. Hooks on chains dangle from the fifteen-foot ceiling. A few bones lie scattered across the smooth stone floor stained with ancient blood.

11. OLD TEMPLE (EL 14)

Ghul encouraged—even forced—his followers to worship him as a god. He created this temple

chamber to serve as a shrine to himself. Black draperies cover the walls, each embroidered with the skull symbol of Ghul in glossy black fabric. In the center of the room, a black altar with inlaid silver plates in the shape of Ghul's skull symbol sits atop a steep eight-foot-high dais. The chamber is *unhallowed*.

Ghul himself never attained true divinity (a Knowledge [religion] check, DC 25, confirms this), so his altar has no power. However, hidden within it (Search, DC 25), a small compartment holds a stone idol of the **Ageless Titan**, with an attached brass plate bearing his name: Kadavalus.

Piled around the altar on the dais, up to the altar's very base, lay scores of small mummified figures. These are children, aged five to ten, that Ghul slew and mummified to desecrate his temple. Today these tiny corpses are extremely brittle, virtually turning to dust at a touch. If anyone disturbs them, portions of various mummies leap into the air and form into two devourers. Each has what appears to be the spirit of a child trapped in its cagelike chest.

Devourers (2): 78 hp each; see MM.

Tactics: Since each devourer holds only the essence of a 1 HD child, each has only five uses of spell-like abilities. They are likely to blast away at foes with confusion (perhaps multiple times) and then move in to use their trap essence ability on a creature more substantial than the child they currently imprison.

Experience Points: Award 150 percent of normal experience for both devourers.

12. CHAMBER OF COLD

An oddly-shaped room near the north end of the fortress lies within the grip of soul-numbing cold due to an ancient spell of great power that Ghul once cast here. Anyone within it suffers 1d6 points of cold damage each round. The room is empty, but an elaborate mural covers the eastern wall. It depicts Ghul himself in shining silver armor, wielding a massive greatsword and commanding a vast army of bizarre and horrible creatures within a massive cavern.

This mural radiates magic (strong transmutation). It transports anyone who deliberately walks into it fifteen hundred feet directly down, to a chamber with a similar-looking mural. This matching chamber within **Ghul's Labyrinth** connects to many other areas below Ptolus. One can use the mural in that room to return to this one, so the transport effect is two-way.

13. LOOKOUT TOWER

Stairs from the Chamber of Cold lead up to a tower that peeks out of the Spire and overlooks the surrounding countryside.



14. PATH OF BURNING SOULS (EL 15, 16, AND 16)

This enormous, winding area appears to be a natural cavern. In reality, it is no more natural than any other portion of Goth Gulgame. The entire cavern is dotted with pits of bubbling lava. Powerful and twisted illusions make it appear to any observer that the lava is actually a pit of souls tormented within fire—incorporeal humanoid forms seem to writhe and swirl in the red-hot miasma, so it looks like the salamander inhabitants of the room literally swim in burning souls. The lava itself is quite real; it inflicts 2d6 points of damage each round to anyone touching it and 20d6 to anyone submerged in it. The pits are all five to ten feet deep.

Once a place of torture Ghul used to imprison and torment his captured enemies, the Path of Burning Souls has become the refuge of the followers of Ochremeshk, who await the return of their demonic master. Presumably, if the demon god ever did come here, the place would teem with lesser demons, but the only creatures here now are his fire-using servitors.

Scattered throughout this vast, snaking chamber, ten salamanders led by a salamander noble cavort amid the lava pools. Just barely tolerating their presence are six hellfire giants: fiendish fire giants of consummate evil who live in the eastern end of the path, although sometimes one may stand sentry at the western end.

Encounters on the Path

The disorganized inhabitants of Path of Burning Souls spread themselves out to the point where intruders are unlikely to encounter all of them at once. More likely, player characters will face three separate encounters:

1. A single giant and six salamanders together (EL 15).
2. The salamander noble, the remaining four salamanders, and two more giants.
3. The remaining three giants.

However, if any one encounter lasts more than 5 rounds, creatures from another encounter may come to investigate the noise.

Average Salamanders (10): hp 58 each; see MM.

Salamander Noble: hp 112; see MM. He has a +3 *longspear*, magically fireproof leather pouch containing ten 200 gp rubies, a *ring of solidified fire* (this magical ring confers no powers or benefits, although it is worth 5,000 gp as a curiosity and piece of jewelry—it also has a special function in the **Temple of Blood**).

Hellfire Giants (6): hp 142 each; as “fire giant” in MM but add DR 10/magic, SR 20, cold resistance 10, and the ability to smite good once per day, inflicting 15 points of extra damage to a good foe. These giants wear

DM TIPS

Some DMs may want to make the souls in the lava pits real. If you do, you should provide a means (such as a freedom spell) to release the trapped souls.



Ochremeshk, PT6: page 623

Temple of Blood, page 493



Demon skull Talisman

This small, angular, bestial skull appears to be the actual shrunken skull of a fiendish creature, with horns and sharp teeth. It is the unholy symbol of Ochremeshk, the Demon God.

The talisman is a gift from Ochremeshk himself, allowing the possessor to reroll any single die roll made by that character. The decision to reroll comes after the original roll is made, and the player may use the higher of the two rolls. After one use, the talisman turns to powder.

These items cannot be made by mortals, only by Ochremeshk himself.

Strong transmutation; CL 20th

Some Orcish Words

The three orc subraces have vaguely different dialects of the same root language. Since Orcish comes from Westron (PT2: page 45) and Abyssal (PT2: page 44), the dialects vary based on whether they are more of one than the other.

Bruhur	=	Enemy
Nar	=	No
Nom	=	Axe
Orn	=	Howl
Rask	=	Kill
Rul	=	Fist
Sorn	=	Breath
Toruk	=	Closed
Ulth	=	Blood

+1 full plate armor (add +2 to their Armor Class for a total of AC 25) and wield masterwork greatswords (add +1 to standard fire giant attack rolls).

Possessions: +1 full plate armor, huge masterwork greatsword. One giant has a **demon skull talisman**. Another has a **ring of solidified fire** like that of the salamander noble.

Tactics: The inhabitants are likely to attack any intruder they see and fight to the death. They all use the burning souls pits to their advantage, attempting to grapple or bull rush opponents into the lava.

Experience Points: The hellfire giants are each CR 12. Award 150 percent of normal experience for all monsters in this area.

15. PASSAGE TO THE ORC CAVES

This passage stemming from the Path of Burning Souls winds for another three thousand feet, widening every five hundred feet into what appears to have once been a guard post (now unmanned). The corridor continues to spiral ever downward until it becomes what it looks like—a passage hewn from the living rock. Only those with stonemasonry are likely to notice the transition.

The path leads to a large complex made of both natural and created caverns beneath what is now the Nobles' Quarter. Here, descendants of the Sorn-Ulth orcs created by Ghul live in darkness, practicing their foul sorceries. As time passes, they grow more bold—and more likely to venture up into the city above from time to time. If the more powerful current residents in Goth Gulgamel were to leave, Zathirax (female orc sorcerer14) would most likely lead the Sorn-Ulth back up into the fortress.

The Sorn-Ulth caves, in turn, lead to caverns filled with Toruk-Rul orcs. Although the Toruk-Rul are three times as numerous as the Sorn-Ulth, the Sorn-Ulth dominate their less intelligent brethren.

All total, between three hundred and four hundred orcs dwell in these caves: the legacy of Ghul.

Assuming one can fight or sneak through the orc caves, they eventually connect to other natural cave systems and tunnels of ancient origin below the city, and thus to numerous access points in the surface.

16. MINOR VAULT (EL 11)

The massive door to this chamber near the end of the Path of Burning Souls is made of iron a foot thick, with a hardness of 10, 360 hit points, and a break DC of 35. It is triple locked (Open Lock, DC 35) and *arcane locked* as well. To one side of the door, the wall holds a secret keyhole (Search, DC 25; Open Lock, DC 30). If anyone attempts to open the door without first activating that hidden lock bypass, a trap door opens in front of the door, dumping anyone within ten feet down a fifty-foot pit with poisoned spikes.

Poisoned Spiked Pit Trap: CR 11; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; hidden lock bypass (see above); Reflex save, DC 20, avoids; 50 feet deep (5d6, fall); multiple targets (see above); pit spikes (attack +15 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 plus poison each); poison (purple worm poison, Fortitude save, DC 24, to resist, 1d6 Strength/2d6 Strength); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 30.

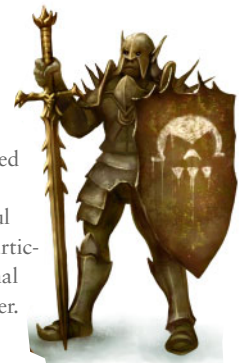
Ghul maintained a number of secured storerooms for potent magic items and other objects of worth, most now lost in the Utterdark. This is one such vault. Inside the small room beyond the door lies a table of polished ebony wood and an iron rack of weapons mounted on the wall.

Table: On the table rests a locked silver box (Open Lock, DC 35). The silk-lined box contains a pair of *lenses of the Utterdark* (see sidebar, next page) and a *wand of deeper darkness* (50 charges).

GHUL'S ORCS

The Sorn-Ulth have skin as black as pitch and beady white bulbous eyes. Their faces look more human than those of other orcs, but they are still bestial. Most walk hunched over. Use standard orc statistics with the following modifications: -2 Strength, +4 Intelligence, +2 Wisdom, +4 Charisma. Sorn-Ulth have a +2 racial bonus to Spellcraft and Knowledge (arcana) checks. Their favored class is sorcerer, and there are many fighter/sorcerer multiclassed Sorn-Ulth.

Toruk-Rul have dark green skin and large, usually hairy heads. Toruk-Rul stand almost six inches taller on average than the standard orc. They are particularly muscular and have an additional +2 Strength modification over normal orcs. They also enjoy a +1 natural armor bonus. Their favored class is fighter. They receive a +1 adjustment to Challenge Rating and Level Adjustment.



Weapons Rack: This weapon rack holds ten masterwork short spears, five +1 *battleaxes*, two +1 *longswords*, a +1 *bastard sword*, and a +1 *light mace*.

Secret Stash: A secret door behind the weapons rack proves challenging to find (Search, DC 25). It is also locked (Open Lock, DC 35). Behind it lies a small niche with another weapons rack that still holds a +1 *unholy adamantite longsword* and quiver of ten +3 *arrows* and an *arrow of greater slaying* (elves).

17. BLOOD TEMPLE (EL 15)

The walls of this room farther down the passage from the Path of Burning Souls appear to have been burned recently. Crude images of hellish flames, tortured souls, and cavorting demons now cover the walls. In the middle of the room rests a solid block of reddish stone with veins of black running through it like streaks of dark lightning. This stone measures six feet long and three feet high and wide. Atop it rest four macabre black candlesticks.

This chamber was once an open staging area for Ghul's guards, but of late it serves a very different purpose. It is now a temple to Ochremeshk. The creatures that have come here awaiting the demon god's return have transformed the room to suit their needs, and those of their dread master. The entire area is *unhallowed*. Each blood troll (see below) gains the effects of a *bless* spell while here.

An open door at the west end of the temple leads into the room where the blood trolls live. This side chamber is a mess and contains nothing but miscellaneous worthless gear.

The Altar

The reddish block of stone in the temple is magical, having been brought here by the hellfire giants from their own foul nether-home. Any non-evil-aligned character who touches it must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 22). Those who fail this saving throw are nauseated for 1d4+1 rounds and suffer 1d4 points of Wisdom damage as their minds fill with horrible, hellish images. Even those who make successful saves are nauseated for 1 round as they catch a brief mental glimpse.

Anyone with a *demonskull talisman* (such as Quiral) who touches it to the altar gains a +1 luck bonus on all attack and damage rolls for ten minutes once per day. If one of the *rings of solidified fire* from the Path of Burning Souls is touched to the altar, the wearer can contact Ochremeshk and gain the effect of a *divination* spell.

In either case, if the creature touching the talisman or ring to the altar is not a worshipper of Ochremeshk, the act instantly conjures a vroock demon that attacks the offender immediately and fights until one of them is dead.

Vroock: hp 115; see MM.



The Blood

The blood are fiendish, intelligent trolls. Their skin is blood red, and their faces seem somewhat more humanlike than other trolls'. Blood trolls remain some of the most devout servants of Ochremeshk. The priest of their temple resides nearby.

Blood Trolls (8): hp 80 each; as standard troll in MM but add DR 5/magic, SR 11, resistance to cold 5 and fire 5, and the ability to smite good once per day, inflicting 6 points of extra damage to a good foe. They also have Intelligence 10 and Sense Motive +8. Each wears spiked full plate armor (+8 armor bonus, for a total of AC 24, speed 20 feet) and carries a masterwork composite longbow (Strength +6) in order to make ranged attacks (+7 attack, 2d6+6 points of damage).

Possessions: Spiked full plate armor, masterwork large composite longbow (Strength +6), arrows (20).

Tactics: Usually, at least two of the blood trolls are in the temple at any given time, while the others stay in the side chamber, relaxing but fairly alert. They like to double-up on their opponents and attempt to throw or push them into the altar if possible. Blood trolls prefer to use their natural claws and bite when in melee. They call for their priest, Quiral, in the next room only if they are outnumbered, although he may hear the sounds of combat in the temple and come on his own.

Experience Points: Each blood troll is CR 7. In addition, award 150 percent of normal experience for each of them.

Lenses of the Utterdark

These special lenses fit over any creature's eyes. The wearer can see in absolutely any darkness up to sixty feet, including magical darkness and even the Utterdark. While wearing them, a creature cannot see in any kind of light, however—one becomes blind in anything but total darkness.

Strong divination; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, darkvision, limited wish; Price 24,000 gp

Ochremeshk, PT6: page 623

It's not always interesting to have creatures just sitting around in their quarters. Feel free to place the blood trolls in the middle of a horrific ceremony in their temple here, or have a few wandering blood trolls out speaking with their erstwhile allies the hellfire giants in the Path of Burning Souls (page 491).

Demonskull talisman, page 492
Quiral, page 494



Path of Burning Souls, page 491

Blood Temple, page 493

Once, this fortress and the warrens carved out below what is now Ptolus held many breeding pits and laboratories that produced Harrow elves, Sorn-Ulth orcs, and other monstrosities. Those in Goth Gulgamel all have been lost to the Utterdark except for the one in Area 19, but more may remain hidden away beneath Ptolus.

DM TIPS

Remember, that any creature of good alignment suffers a -4 morale penalty on attacks, saves, and checks while in Goth Gulgamel, due to the Dread (see page 487).



18. BLOOD PRIEST (EL 14)

The high priest of the Blood Temple and the leader of the blood trolls in general is Quiral the cleric, who lives in a room adjoining the temple. Originally a storeroom of some kind, this chamber includes old crates and barrels now used as furniture. It is crude but private compared to where the other blood trolls live (see above).

Quiral is missing an eye and has a large but crude ruby in the empty socket. He suffers no penalties from the loss, as he has adapted to it.

Quiral

Blood troll (Large giant), (Chaotic Evil)

Cleric 7 (Ochremeshk) CR 14

HD 6d8+36 + 7d8+42 **hp** 147

Init +1 **Speed** 20 feet

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 23

BAB/Grapple +9/+20

Attack +15 melee (1d6+7, claw)

Full Attack +15 melee (1d6+7, 2 claws) and +13 melee (1d6+3, bite)

SA Rend 2d6+10, smite good 1/day (+13 damage to good)

SQ DR 10/magic, SR 18, darkvision 90 feet, low-light vision, regeneration 5, scent, resistance to cold 5 and fire 5

Fort +16, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

Str 24, **Dex** 12, **Con** 23, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 5

Crucial Skills: Concentration +14, Listen +10, Spot +10.

Other Skills: Knowledge (religion) +8.

Crucial Feats: Power Attack.

Other Feats: Brew Potion, Iron Will, Multiattack, Scribe Scroll.

Domains: Evil, Chaos.

Spells: 6/5+1/4+1/2+1/1+1; save DC 12 + spell level.

4th—*divine power, wall of fire.*

3rd—*cure serious wounds, magic circle against good, resist energy.*

2nd—*bear's endurance, bull's strength, hold person, shatter, silence.*

1st—*protection from law, cure light wounds, divine favor, entropic shield, magic weapon, shield of faith.*

0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic (2), read magic, resistance (2).*

Possessions: +1 spiked full plate armor, potions of cure moderate wounds (4), potion of cure serious wounds, scroll of divine favor (×3) and divine power, scroll of hold person (×2), ruby worth 100 gp.

Tactics: Quiral goes into battle with *resist energy* (acid) cast, as well as *divine power* (+6 to Strength, +8 on attack rolls, +3 to damage, +7 temporary hit points) and *bear's endurance* (+2 on Fortitude saves and Concentration checks, +26 hit points). If there's time, he casts *divine favor* (+2 bonus on attack and damage rolls) and *shield of faith* (+3 bonus to Armor Class for a total of AC 27) before entering combat, and *bull's strength* on one of the

other blood trolls. He then goes right into melee, unless his foes are clumped together so that a *wall of fire* would cause them a great deal of trouble.

19. THE LABORATORY (EL 12)

This long chamber off a hallway leading from the Blood Temple (Area 17) contains a dozen large, cylindrical glass vats that measure seven feet high and three feet across. Four of them still contain brackish, green-hued liquid and what appear to be shriveled corpses suspended within. Workbenches with alchemical tools and equipment line the walls.

A careful search (DC 25) of the alchemical equipment on the workbenches reveals a sealed jar containing three *potions of cure serious wounds* and a packet of dust that, when added to water, produces two doses of *universal solvent*. There are also sixteen flasks of acid, one flask of alchemist's fire, and twenty tindertwigs amid the tables.

The vats contain the remnants of what once were elves. These would have been transformed into Harrow elves, but they have been here far too long. They have instead turned into bodaks, which leap out of the vats (as a move action) if anyone approaches them, hoping for surprise.

They stink of vinegary chemicals.

Bodaks (4): 58 hp each; see MM.

20. LAIR OF THE RAKSHASA LORD (EL 12)

Just west of the chamber of the blood lies a room decorated with a macabre sense. Everything here is made of fused bones: two chairs, a table, a bed, a chest of drawers, and a pair of wardrobes. Even the walls, ceiling, and floor are covered in a layer of carefully placed bones. Four braziers made from skulls sit unlit in the room's corners.

Unlike so many inhabitants of Goth Gulgamel today, Liilor the rakshasa was actually one of Ghul's servants—a master alchemist who oversaw many of the Skull-King's laboratories.

Liilor, Rakshasa: 77 hp; see MM but Liilor also wields a *staff of power* (adds a +2 bonus to Armor Class for a total of AC 23). Liilor's natural Charisma score is 21, and he wears a *cloak of charisma* +4, making his Charisma 25. This grants an additional bonus of +3 to the save Difficulty Classes of his *detect thoughts* ability, as well as all of his spells, and a +3 bonus to all his Charisma-based skills. He also can cast one additional spell of levels 1, 2, and 3 each day and has 10 bonus ranks of Craft (alchemy) and a special +10 competence bonus on Craft (alchemy) checks.

Possessions: *Staff of power* (22 charges), *cloak of charisma* +4, and *potions of cure serious wounds, fly, and displacement.*

Tactics: In case of a fight, the rakshasa already will have cast *mage armor* (+4 bonus to Armor

Class for a total of AC 27). If he knows intruders are nearby, he dons a tattered cloak, takes the shape of an elf, and casts *invisibility* and *bear's endurance* (giving him a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves, Concentration checks, and 14 more hit points). Then he moves to spy on them, using *detect thoughts* to learn what he can.

If discovered, or when he decides to show himself, his strategy is to convince the player characters he is a ghost of an Elder Elf slain here during Ghul's creation of the Harrow elves. He tells them they can go no farther without the "Gulgamel Key," which is in the possession of the Ageless Titan in the **Chamber of Immortal Fears** (Area 23). This is a lie. If they do not believe him, or if they do not immediately leave him alone, he then attempts to guide them into the Laboratory (Area 19) to face the bodaks; he moves to attack immediately after they have dealt with them. He casts *haste* and charges into the fight.

If attacked, he uses his staff to unleash a *fireball* or *lightning bolt*, or he uses *hold monster*. If seriously threatened, he uses the staff to create a *wall of force* barrier around himself—particularly if the party has weapons that can bypass his damage reduction—and calls for the other rakshasas (from Area 21).

Experience Points: Because he is equipped so well, award double experience points for Liilor.

Treasure: The wardrobes and chest of drawers hold fine clothing and personal belongings, including 500 gp worth of perfumes and a jeweled hand mirror and comb set worth a total of 450 gp.

21. MORE RAKSHASAS (EL 13)

Brightly colored silken pillows cover the floor of this room just south of the chamber of the blood trolls. It is dimly lit by two *everburning braziers* (similar to *everburning torches*, but only one-third as bright) that emit a pleasant lilac odor. The room magically produces the light strumming sound of harp music.

The rakshasas here, two assistants of Liilor, have spent the last few hundred years in a meditative state. Sounds of combat, or the call of Liilor, rouses them; they are ready 1 round later to take action. If intruders somehow reach this chamber without alerting the rakshasas, they see them sitting in the lotus position on silken pillows, covered in a smattering of dust. They use similar tactics to Liilor (*mage armor*, *bear's endurance*, and *haste*) before going into a fight.

Rakshasas (2): 52 hp each; see MM.

Experience Points: Award 150 percent of normal experience points for overcoming the rakshasas.

Treasure: Under a pile of pillows, a locked iron chest (Open Lock, DC 30) holds fifty 10 gp agates, ten 100 gp sapphires, and three 500 gp pearls.

22. MAUSOLEUM OF THE CTHORN (EL 16 AND 16)

A bluish-white glow dimly lights this long passage off a hallway leading from the **Path of Burning Souls**. The ceiling is twenty feet high, and a ten-foot-wide ledge runs along the eastern half of the hall at a height of twelve feet. At the far end of the hall, steps lead down to a small crypt with five empty niches.

Cthorn Background

An ancient race devoted to the cause of darkness, the cthorn lived mostly in what is now **Kem** far to the southeast. Before coming to the Spire, Ghul slew the last members of this corrupt and dying race, and stole from them their knowledge. However, when he created Goth Gulgamel, he brought their remains here, entombed in a shrine-mausoleum honoring their slavish dedication to black magic.

The power of the cthorn was so great that their spirits managed to use the dark energies from the nearby banes of the **Banewarrens** to bring themselves back from the dead. They rose as undead but retained many qualities and talents they had while alive.

In life, the cthorn were six-armed humanoids adept at completing multiple tasks at once with all their many hands. Cthorn combatants usually wielded one two-handed weapon, one shield, and three one-handed weapons all at once.

The undead cthorn here are all either blackguards or wizards. The cthorn blackguards make all melee attacks as if they wielded weapons with the *unholy* quality. Cthorn wizards can make a "full spell action" that allows them to cast two standard-action spells or use two spell-completion or spell-trigger items (or any combination thereof) in a single round, provided they take only a five-foot step. They have all other standard undead traits.

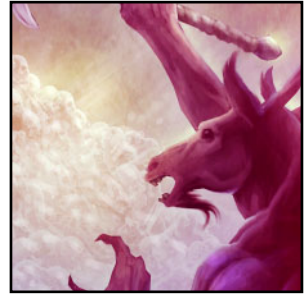
Cthorn Encounters

Two cthorn blackguards (EL 16) watch the mausoleum's entrance in eternal vigilance from atop the high ledge. They attack all who approach, first by letting javelins fly (they can throw three in a single round with a full attack action) and then by casting *doom* and *shatter*. They wait for melee-eager foes to come to them, casting *bull's strength* (adds a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls) while they wait, if time permits. Then they move into melee, always attempting to get flanking positions and usually both concentrating on one foe at a time.

Two cthorn wizards and another blackguard (EL 16) wait in the back of the mausoleum but are more likely to cast spells to prepare for battle than rush to join their fellows. The wizards cast

Path of Burning Souls, page 491

Kem, PT2: page 41



Chamber of Immortal Fears, page 497

The Banewarrens, PT7: page 419

Characters interested in ancient and arcane lore will be curious about the cthorn, a race that exists only in an undead state today and is all but forgotten.

The cthorn created the original Book of Darkness, using divinations that allowed them to look into the shadowy past and get information from the Book of Inverted Darkness.



DM TIPS

It's effective to have the player characters encounter the cthorn here before having ever heard of them elsewhere. The idea that this fortress holds evils so ancient that no one even remembers them creates the proper mood. After initial contact, the PCs can recall obscure mentions of them with a Knowledge (history) check (DC 25) or Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 30).

Unlike most of the other denizens of Goth Gulgamel today, the cthorn despise Ghul and grow angry even at the mention of his name. But then, they're always angry, their undead state fueled by the bitterness and spite of the Skull-King's genocidal attack. Good characters, however, should not mourn the slaughtered cthorn or feel too much sympathy for them—they were as vile a race as can be imagined.

cat's grace (+2 bonus on Reflex saves, Armor Class, and Dexterity-based skills, for a total of AC 23) *shield* (+4 bonus to Armor Class for a total of AC 27), *stoneskin*, *expeditious retreat*, *fly*, *invisibility*, and *fire shield* (chill version) on themselves, in that order, casting two spells each round. Then one casts *greater invisibility* on the blackguard with them. Meanwhile, the blackguard casts *bull's strength* (+2 bonus on attack and damage rolls) and—just as foes approach—*summon monster I*. The summoned fiendish hawk is for flanking foes who can see him; if no one can see *invisibility*, he enjoys his sneak attack with each attack. The wizards pound foes with *fireball*, *magic missile*, and *Mel's acid arrow*, but they don't hesitate to try *dominate person* on a fighter or rogue. With the *fire shield*, *stoneskin*, and their impressive Armor Classes, they aren't afraid to let foes into melee combat with them, particularly since using their wands does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Cthorn Blackguards (3)

Medium undead humanoids (Neutral Evil)

Fighter6/blackguard**5** CR 13
HD 6d12 + 5d12 hp 72
Init +7 Speed 20 feet

AC 26, touch 13, flat-footed 23

BAB/Grapple +11/+14

Attack +16 melee (1d12+7 +2d6 unholy, greataxe) or +15 ranged (1d6+3, javelin)

Full Attack +16/+11 melee (1d12+7+2d6 unholy, greataxe) and +13 melee (1d8+2+2d6 unholy, 2 longswords) and +13 melee (1d8+1+2d6 unholy, battleaxe), or +15 ranged (1d6+3, 3 javelin)

SA All melee attacks treated as unholy, sneak attack +1d6, smite good (+3 attack, +5 damage) 2/day

SQ Undead traits, darkvision 60 feet, aura of evil, aura of despair (foes in 10 feet suffer a -2 penalty on saves), command undead, detect good, dark blessing

Fort +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +9

Str 16, **Dex** 17, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16

Crucial Skills: Hide +9*, Intimidate +15, Move Silently +5*

Other Skills: Knowledge (arcana) +5, Knowledge (religion) +6.

* Indicates a class skill for cthorn.

Crucial Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Sunder, Power Attack.

Other Feats: Improved Initiative, Multiweapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (greataxe), Weapon Specialization (greataxe).

Possessions: +2 breastplate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 greataxe, two +1 longswords, masterwork battleaxe, masterwork javelins (6).

Spells: 2/2/1, save DC 13 + spell level.

3rd—*inflict serious wounds*.

2nd—*bull's strength*, *shatter*.

1st—*doom*, *summon monster I*.



Cthorn Wizards (2)

Medium undead humanoids (Neutral Evil)

Wizard10 CR 12
HD 10d12 hp 65
Init +4 Speed 30 feet

AC 21, touch 14, flat-footed 17

BAB/Grapple +5/+5

Attack/Full Attack By spell

SA Cast two spells at once as a full-round spell action.

SQ Undead traits, darkvision 60 feet.

Fort +3, **Ref** +7, **Will** +9

Str 11, **Dex** 19, **Con** —, **Int** 19, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Crucial Skills: Concentration +15, Hide +10*, Listen +6, Move Silently +9*, Spot +6.

Other Skills: Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (geography) +16, Knowledge (history) +17, Spellcraft +18.

* Indicates a class skill for cthorn.

Crucial Feats: Spell Penetration.

Other Feats: Brew Potion, Enlarge Spell, Heighten Spell, Magical Aptitude, Scribe Scroll, Still Spell.

Spells: 4/5/5/4/3/2; save DC 14 + spell level.

5th—*dominate person*, *hold monster*.

4th—*contagion*, *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *heightened lightning bolt*.

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball*, *fly*, *heroism*.

2nd—*cat's grace*, *command undead*, *hypnotic pattern*, *invisibility*, *web*.

1st—*endure elements, expeditious retreat, magic missile, shield, shocking grasp.*
 ○—*acid splash, detect magic, mage hand, touch of fatigue.*

Possessions: *Bracers of armor +4, wand of Mel's acid arrow (50 charges), wand of ice storm (24 charges), scroll of stoneskin.*

Experience Points: Award 150 percent of normal XP for each cthorn overcome.

23. CHAMBER OF IMMORTAL FEARS (EL 22)

The entrance to this chamber west of the Mausoleum of the Cthorn (Area 22) appears to be a shimmering curtain of moving shadows, impenetrable even with *true seeing*. The curtain is only about a foot thick, but it has been magically poisoned. The poisoned shadow inflicts 1d6/1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage (Fortitude save, DC 25). Even creatures immune to poison can be affected by this magical shadowborne toxin, although they gain a +4 bonus on the saving throw.

Vast and strange, the Chamber of Immortal Fears has no walls, floors, or ceiling—it is entirely open to the Utterdark. Twenty-foot-wide walkways of fused bone connect to platforms of floating black stone. Destrachans wait upon the entrance and first platform; they were enslaved long ago by one of the **Charad Titans** corrupted by the **Galchutt**. This titan killed himself only to receive the immortality of undeath. Now he remains here on the final platform, in a sort of eternal slumber.

The Fear

Any living creature that enters this chamber (other than the destrachans or rakshasas native to Goth Gulgamel) must make a Will save (DC 23) or become shaken. Shaken creatures must then make additional saves, once each round, to avoid becoming frightened. Frightened creatures remaining in the chamber longer than 1 round automatically begin cowering.

Walkways and Platforms

The walkways across the Utterdark here are made of fused humanoid bones and skulls. Moving across them at a rate faster than one's speed (that is, by making a double move or running) requires a Balance check (DC 15) to avoid tripping and falling. Each walkway is about three feet thick with a hardness of 4, 360 hp, and a break DC of 35.

The stone platforms in between walkways measure twenty feet thick and float in the Utterdark. Anyone who falls off one of the walkways or platforms is lost in the Utterdark. Anyone who leaves the walkways or platforms in

any direction enters the Utterdark after moving twenty feet away from the solid surfaces.

The Guardians

For centuries, a small clan of destrachans has lived in Goth Gulgamel, slaves of an evil Charad Titan. They secretly use the passage to the **Sorn-Ulth caves** (Area 15) to hunt and feed on the orcs and explore other locations beneath the city (but they never venture to the surface). The remaining members of the clan guard here, watching over their master's eternal rest. They attack intruders without question.

Four destrachans stand on the walkway near the entrance and remain alert and on guard. Four more relax on the first platform and seem likely to stand their ground.

Sadistic creatures, the destrachans likely use their nonlethal sonic attacks, hoping to capture any intruders for later torments and live feedings. When possible, they all focus their cones on the same foes, to overwhelm them quickly. They do not awaken the titan.

Destrachans (8): 60 hp each; see MM.

Awakening the Ageless Titan

Upon the final platform at the northwest end of the chamber stands a figure twenty-five feet tall. The rags of a funerary vestment cling to his desiccated flesh and gaunt bones. The figure does not stir, even if approached. The titan awakens on only two conditions:

1. If attacked or damaged in any way; or
2. If someone standing on the stone platform upon which he sleeps says his name, Kadavalus. His name can be discovered in Ghul's **Old Temple** (Area 11) or by making a Knowledge (history) check (DC 35).

If attacked or damaged, the titan first uses an ancient pact he made aeons before, casting *gate* to summon 1d6+2 **rhodintor** to him. They do as he bids without hesitation. Then he attacks any intruders he sees, not stopping until at least one of them is dead as a price for the transgression. At that point, he pauses to allow foes to parley with him, if they want to—he is always curious as to why someone would awaken him.

Should someone awaken him with his name, Kadavalus asks why he has been disturbed. A foolish answer, such as "it was an accident," leads him to launch an attack, such as a *meteor swarm*. Otherwise, the player characters can attempt a Diplomacy check. The check gains a +4 circumstance bonus if the PCs present the titan with a gift of a magic item worth at least 10,000 gp. The bonus becomes +6 if the item has an evil aura or connotation. What the titan does next depends on the result of the Diplomacy check.



Sorn-Ulth caves, page 492

The Ageless Titan was an ally of Ghul, but the Half God's most important lieutenants were demons made of darkness called the tenebraccus.

Charad Titans, PT2: page 77
Galchutt, PT2: page 60



Ghul's Old Temple, page 490

Rhodintor, PT6: page 628

Moving in the Utterdark, page 487

DM TIPS

Remember, that any creature of good alignment suffers a –4 morale penalty on attacks, saves, and checks while in Goth Gulgamel, due to the Dread (see page 487).

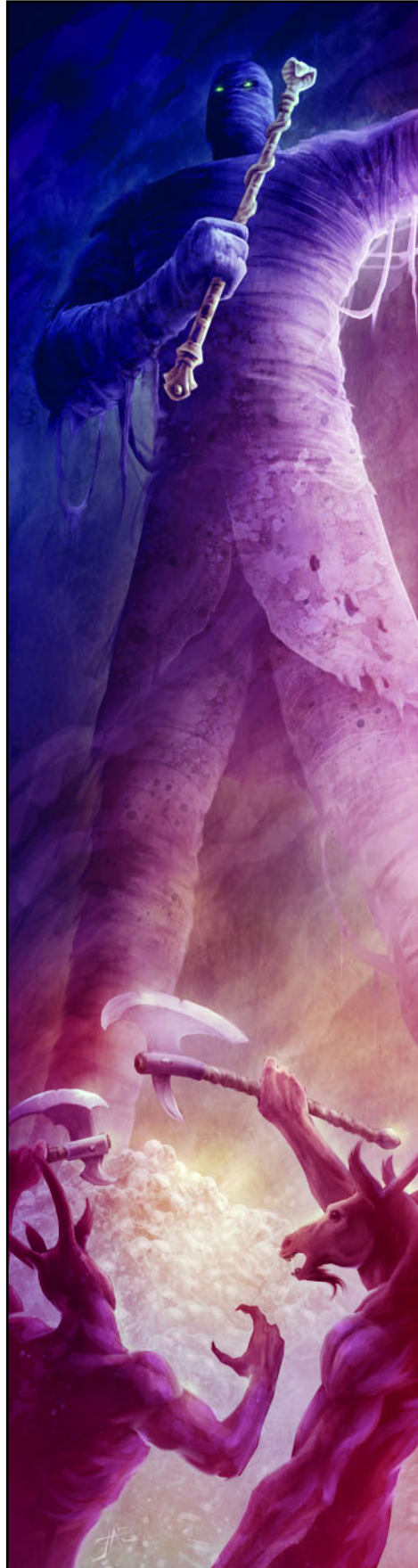
Entropy Sphere, page 499

Interacting with Baenarum the Urthon Aedar is disconcerting because, due to his glimpses of the future, he is likely to know more about the characters than they know about him when they first meet. In addition, he seems cold and compassionless. Like all Urthon Aedar, he is very slow to trust.

One can even use the Entropy Sphere to get to Jabel Shammar.

Urthon Aedar, PT3: page 138

“Worthy” candidates, in Baenarum’s view, often have received dreams from the Dream King in Dreta Phantas telling them to come and find the city.



- DC Ageless Titan’s Response**
- <25 The titan launches an attack against the PCs for wasting his time.
 - 25 The titan does not attack but demands each character’s most powerful magic item, or he attacks. Then he bids them to leave.
 - 30 The titan does not attack. He wants to know more about the characters and the events of the current day. If the PCs answer his questions, they can make another check with a +5 bonus.
 - 35 The titan commends them on the respect they show to their betters and offers to show them the means to get to the Entropy Sphere.

Kadavalus, the Ageless Titan: 240 hp; see MM but use evil version of the titan granted undead qualities, 20d12 HD, and no Constitution score. He is immune to turning.

Experience Points: Award 150 percent of normal XP for all opponents defeated in combat. Award normal XP for the titan if the player characters safely parley with him and get through the entropy portal (below), whether they fight him or not.

Portal to the Entropy Sphere

The portal to the Entropy Sphere is controlled by the titan and opens only at his whim—no one can even find it without him. With a wave of his hand, a massive dragon’s skull, fifteen feet long and seven feet wide, looms out of the darkness at the edge of his platform. It opens, revealing grey, swirling energy within. Anyone who steps into the energy is transported to the Urthon Aedar sentry (Area 24).

If the titan is destroyed, the portal to the Entropy Sphere opens and remains open forever.

24. URTHON AEDAR SENTRY (EL 20)

On the other side of the magical dragon-head gateway, an Urthon Aedar named Baenarum stands guard in a long, wide hallway, acting as a gatekeeper before the Entropy Sphere. Thanks to the future glimpses his race enjoys, Baenarum knows creatures are coming long before they appear. Unless he’s positive they are friendly or harmless, he casts *bull’s strength* (+2 bonus on attacks, damage, and Jump checks), *see invisibility*, *shield* (+4 bonus to Armor Class for a total of AC 34), and *stoneskin* just before they appear.

Baenarum challenges anyone who approaches him. He attempts to discern why the intruders seek the Entropy Sphere, using Sense Motive and *detect thoughts*. He allows only people he deems worthy past him, but those he might actually escort to the back of his hall and through a large opening to the Entropy Sphere. He worries about those who

want to use the sphere to get to **Dreta Phantas**, but those who convince him of the purity of their motives will find him a helpful guide through the portal and into the Dreaming City.

Baenarum

Male Elder Elf (Lawful Neutral)

Fighter8/**sorcerers/eldritch knight**6 **CR** 20

HD 8d10+8 + 5d4+5 + 6d6+6 **hp** 114

Init +4 **Speed** 30 feet

AC 30, touch 14, flat-footed 25

BAB/Grapple +16/+20

Attack +23 melee (2d6+9+2d6 axiomatic, greatsword) or +22 ranged (1d10+1, heavy crossbow)

Full Attack +23/+18/+13/+8 melee (2d6+9+2d6 axiomatic, greatsword) or +22 ranged (1d10+1, heavy crossbow)

SQ Future glimpses (grants a +1 insight bonus to AC, saving throws, and attack rolls; confers a +4 racial bonus to Sense Motive checks; and shows significant events before they happen [DM's discretion]), low-light vision, elven traits

Fort +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

Str 19, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 23

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elder Elvish, Elvish.

Crucial Skills: Balance +5, Intimidate +10, Jump +12, Listen +7, Sense Motive +8, Spot +3.

Other Skills: Decipher Script +5, Knowledge (arcana)* +10, Knowledge (history)* +9, Knowledge (local)* +7, Spellcraft +14.

* All Urthon Aedar gain a +2 racial bonus on Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history) and Knowledge (local) checks (already figured in).

Crucial Feats: Blind-Fight, Dodge, Maximize Spell, Power Attack, Rapid Reload (heavy crossbow), Silent Spell, Spell Penetration.

Other Feats: Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Spells Known: 6/8/8/7/6/4; save DC 16 + spell level.

5th—*cone of cold*.

4th—*stoneskin*, *wall of fire*.

3rd—*blink*, *lightning bolt*, *suggestion*.

2nd—*bull's strength*, *detect thoughts*, *see invisibility*, *web*.

1st—*endure elements*, *identify*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*.

0—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *light*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *ray of frost*, *touch of fatigue*.

Possessions: +5 **Urthon Aedar full plate armor**, +1 axiomatic greatsword, +1 heavy crossbow, +1 bolts (12), cloak of charisma +4, amulet of natural armor +2.

Dreta Phantas, PT7: page 457



Urthon Aedar full plate armor, PT3: page 138

25. ENTROPY SPHERE AND GATES OF DELIRIUM

This immense circular chamber resembles the interior of a globe. In the middle, a blazing sphere of power glows like the sun and spins with wild, crackling energy. All around it, six magical doorways stand on platforms connected to the walls of the chamber by very narrow bridges; an equally narrow walkway around the interior of the sphere connects the bridges to each other. The doors seethe with energy flowing from them into the sphere. One of the platforms is mangled and wrecked, the remnants of a shattered door frame on it—it appears as though that magical doorway was destroyed. It still crackles with energy in a less controlled manner than the other doors.

Once the player characters cross through the dragon-headed gateway to the Urthon Aedar sentry (Area 24), the Dread no longer has any effect.



It should be obvious to the player characters that the chamber of the Entropy Sphere is far more ancient than Goth Gulgameil and was built in a much different style. Technically, this chamber is more a part of Jabel Shammar than it is of Ghul's fortress. Like Goth Gulgameil, however, the space that the sphere occupies does not fully fit into the Spire but is extradimensional in nature.

Eslathagos Malkith, PT2: page 75

Sokalahn, PT7: page 438

The Banewarrens, PT7: page 419

Pits of Insanity, PT7: page 416

Vladaams, PT3: page 96

Jabel Shammar, page 501

Banewarrens key, PT7: page 419

Parnaith's mirrored sphere (see PT4, page 278) allows the owner to pass through the Entropy Sphere into Jabel Shammar.

Dread One's Staff, page 529

Seeping Portal, page 535

Sorn-Ulth orcs, page 492

One possible Ptolus Campaign could involve a party of Stonelost dwarves on an epic quest to prove the worthiness of their race by entering Goth Gulgamel or destroying the staves of Ghul (now in the hands of Helmut Itlestein; see "Helmut's Horrid Scheme" in PT8: Adventures).

Lenses of the Utterdark, page 493



The Dreaming City of Dreta Phantas, PT7: page 457

This is the fabled Entropy Sphere, perhaps the grandest creation of **Eslathagos Malkith**. Six gateways into a plane of primal chaos tap that immeasurable energy and direct it into a sphere of great power. The Dread One gained much of his power by tapping into this sphere, and even after his death others have tried to do so as well. Ghul built Goth Gulgamel here to access the Entropy Sphere, and the half-demon lich **Sokalahn** used a spell to destroy one of the gates to unleash the power needed to breach the **Banewarrens**. (Doing so also created the **Pits of Insanity**.) **Yrkyth Vladaam** built a machine called the Enigma Engine to tap into the power of the sphere, but he miscalculated the energies involved and his engine failed spectacularly.

Casting Spells Here

The chaotic energies swirling about this chamber make spellcasting difficult. Any character casting a spell first must make a Spellcraft check (DC 25). Failure means the spell goes wild. See page 416 in PT7 for information on the Pits of Insanity and the effects of a spell going wild.

Tapping Into the Sphere

Characters can attempt to utilize the wild energies of the Entropy Sphere—even nonspellcasters, but without skill at Spellcraft, success becomes virtually impossible. They can use the energy to create any effect that duplicates a spell they are aware of, either arcane or divine. Use the character's total level as the caster level and her Charisma score as the relevant ability score (if needed).

Tapping into the Entropy Sphere is exceedingly dangerous, however. If a Spellcraft check (DC 25 + emulated spell's level)* results in failure, the character absorbs the chaotic energy directly into herself. This inflicts 20d6 points of damage and, if the character survives, she must make a Will saving throw (DC 25). If the save fails, the character suffers 2d6 points of temporary Wisdom damage and her alignment moves one step toward chaos (neutral characters become chaotic, lawful characters become neutral).

Even if all checks succeed, tapping into the Entropy Sphere is taxing. Doing so inflicts 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage plus the level of the spell emulated, due to the energy coursing through the character's body.

Characters must be within one foot per caster level of the Entropy Sphere to tap its power. In the history of the world, only the Dread One could utilize its power from farther away.

* If the level of the spell to be emulated is greater than half the character's total level, add double the spell's level instead.

Going to Dreta Phantas: If accompanied by Baenarum or another Urthon Aedar, characters can use the sphere as a means of transporting

themselves to **Dreta Phantas**. Any Urthon Aedar can, as a full-round action, shape the energy of the sphere into a portal that lasts as long as he concentrates. This portal leads directly into the center of the stolen elven city.

Going to Jabel Shammar: The Dread One once created an access point to **Jabel Shammar** via the Entropy Sphere. Few know this fact—Ghul did not know, and even the Urthon Aedar do not. Someone who possesses the **Banewarrens key**, **Parnaith's mirrored sphere**, or the **Dread One's staff** can, as a full-round action, shape the energy of the sphere into a portal that lasts as long as he concentrates. This portal leads to the dungeons of **Jabel Shammar**; characters who step through it find themselves spit out of the **Seeping Portal**.

GOth GULGAMEL SCENARIOS

Although exploring Goth Gulgamel might be incentive enough for brave or foolhardy adventurers, there are other reasons to go here as well.

RECOVERY MISSION

Sorn-Ulth orcs have ventured into the city and stolen some magical treasures. Divinations used to locate the stolen loot reveal that it lies within Goth Gulgamel, as do the thieves. No one knows that most of the sealing spells are gone from the fortress, so most assume that it would be impossible to get to the loot. Then again, the very fact that the divinations worked suggest that it might not be so impossible after all.

FIND THE STAFF OF THE MAGI

The player characters seek the *staff of the magi*. Their extensive research of historical texts and conversations with sages near and far have taught them that the artifact once numbered among Ghul's treasures. However, it was lost in the Utterdark when **Khelaeson** (one of the Great Seven) helped dismantle much of Goth Gulgamel. In other words, the staff lies within a chamber that drifted off into the Utterdark, no longer connected to the rest of the fortress. Knowing this, a particularly wise sage recommends that a *wish* cast within the Utterdark itself might allow the PCs to brave that cold, dark void and locate the lost chamber of the staff. Of course, the *lenses of the Utterdark* would help, too. . . .

GETTING TO DRETA PHANTAS

The player characters need to get to the Dreaming City. Perhaps one or more of them have received dreams calling to them, dreams which make it clear to them that they must reach **Dreta Phantas**. Through these dreams, or through extensive research, they learn they can reach the stolen city through the Entropy Sphere—and that one can access the sphere only through Goth Gulgamel.



JABEL SHAMMAR

For as long as people have known of the Spire, there has been a sinister and mysterious fortress perched at its top. What most people don't realize is that the fortress is actually older than the Spire itself.



This chapter provides details of arguably the most horrific place in the world—even worse than the Dark Reliquary or Goth Gulgamel, a place of darkness and death built by a figure so powerful and so malevolent as to make even the demons and devils lower their heads in supplication and fear. This place, the fortress of Jabel Shammar, was the abode of the Dread One: Eslathagos Malkith.

But it was not always so. As the “History” chapter of PT2 describes, this tower was once called Mosul Pearl, the White Tower of Danar. The cleric Danar and his tower started out as forces of benevolence but fell from this lofty position into darkness, hatred, and despair—three things the Jabel Shammar of today still clearly reflects.

Eslathagos Malkith was that rarest of villains who reveled in evil and darkness for its own sake. Corrupted by the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, he was motivated entirely by hatred for what he had once been. For him, light was darkness and darkness light. He hated life, nature, and all things born of the Creator. Kindness, compassion, love—these qualities he considered contemptible. Misery, hate, and pain spoke to him, and depravity, destruction, and malice became the objects of his lust. Most would consider this outlook pathological, but

such was the nature of the corruptive *Book of Inverted Darkness*.

After the fall of the Dread One, the Elder Gods sought to destroy forever the evil of this place, but despite all their power, the best they could do was to seal it off magically from those thinking to enter.

THE LOOK AND FEEL OF JABEL SHAMMAR

Once the center of a tyrannical empire bent on murder and destruction, the fortress Jabel Shammar served not only as a residence for the Dread One, but as a command post for armies of demons, undead, and monstrous creatures. In its laboratories, Eslathagos Malkith fashioned such terrible beasts and aberrations as manticores and destrachans, plus the more ubiquitous goblins and bugbears, among others. Jabel Shammar was the birthplace of some of the mightiest and most malevolent spells of all time, as well as dark artifacts and other items of power.

Today, however, the fortress stands abandoned, virtually a ruin. Its master is dead, and time has claimed most of his servants as well. A few guardians remain, and wards summon even more if intruders violate the fortress, but Jabel Shammar remains but a lingering shade of the bastion of darkness and strife it once was.

Remnants of the original Mosul Pearl can still be found within Jabel Shammar, in an area called the Alabaster Sanctuary (see page 521).

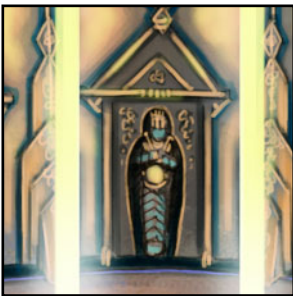
Dark Reliquary, PT4: page 238

Elder Gods, PT2: page 59

Refer to “Eslathagos Malkith” in PT2: page 75 for more on the fall of Danar.

Jabel Shammar differs in look from Goth Gulgamel in the same way that standing in the presence of a god differs from kneeling before that god's altar. Ghul designed Goth Gulgamel to mimic Jabel Shammar, but he had never been there. Even after all these millennia, the Dread One's fortress atop the Spire remains burdened with the oppressive weight of the evil deeds done there and the malevolence of its master.

The powerful magic that protects Jabel Shammar from intrusion, divination, and harm is a combination of abjurations granted by Eslathagos Malkith to protect his demesne and by the Elder Gods after the Dread One's demise to prevent anyone from gaining access to the evil therein.



Malevolent force: See the Malignancy, page 503

Keeping the Players Tense

Jabel Shammar is the worst place in all of Ptolus the player characters could visit—worse even than the Dark Reliquary or Goth Gulgamel. Call for frequent Spot and Listen checks, randomly setting the Difficulty Class at 15, 20, or 25. Those who succeed see movement in the omnipresent shadows or hear a strange noise: a scuttling, a squirming, breathing, or a distant moan or scream. However, no matter what they do, or how they investigate, no source of the motion or sound presents itself. Soon, the players will either get unnerved (which is good!) or begin to doubt their senses, assuming all calls for such checks are meaningless. The latter can lead to trouble when the danger becomes real.

It is a place of malice, but also of abiding sorrow, deep regret, and brooding despair. Its halls are quiet now, but each chamber seems laden with the monumental sins of the past and pregnant with the potential for further dangers—both physical and spiritual. Even the least sensitive individuals feel as though every inch of this place is haunted, and that spectral, sinister eyes follow them wherever they go.

Jabel Shammar is also a place of absolutes. Player characters entering this fortress should expect the forces they confront here to be singularly powerful. No locked door here is likely opened by any means other than that which Eslathagos Malkith intended. No barrier is bypassed by a simple spell or trick that worked in other dungeons or locales. Although this isn't always true, it's what explorers should expect. To put it another way, things just don't get any tougher than this. Jabel Shammar is the perfect setting for the final, climactic adventure of the Ptolus Campaign.

The Spire rises three thousand feet above the highest level of the city, but Jabel Shammar rises another five hundred feet above the pinnacle, extending its height by one-sixth. About two hundred feet across for most of its height, the Spire widens slightly to almost three hundred feet in diameter at the top, where the fortress rests.

Jabel Shammar consists of four towers: one central tower and three smaller and shorter ones that are each still quite massive. Two of the smaller towers connect to the central tower by ten-foot-wide walkways fifty feet above the level of the rocky, jagged ground below. Each tower appears to be fashioned from dark stone, but it is actually a form of solidified negative energy fortified by the malevolent force growing like a cancer within the fortress. Spikes and bladelike protrusions cover the outer walls, particularly at the top of each tower, which gives them the impression of wicked kings of darkness in barbed crowns brooding forever high above the city.

The wind often blows through the structure, which was deliberately fashioned so the breezes would moan as they passed by—distant, almost ephemeral, wails of torment. When the winds fall silent, clouds usually envelop the fortress. Tendrils of cold mist sometimes even seep inside the towers, reducing visibility to only five or ten feet.

Jabel Shammar's design is gothic and twisted, with baroque ornamentation of a most demonic nature covering virtually every surface. Where there are no leering gargoyles or graven demons, the architecture boasts sharp angles and dangerous flanges. The Dread One fashioned the entire place to intimidate others. The large and high-ceilinged interior chambers have niches and alcoves everywhere, so that no matter where one stands, some corner of the room is always in shadow.

THE NATURE OF JABEL SHAMMAR

All of Jabel Shammar is *unhallowed*. Thus, all attempts to turn undead suffer a -4 penalty, and all attempts to rebuke undead gain a $+4$ profane bonus. Further, all evil creatures enjoy the benefits of a continual *bless* spell.

Powerful dweomers infuse Jabel Shammar, making it impossible for mortal magic to affect or damage the outer walls in any way, including bypassing them with *teleport*, incorporeality, or divination spells like *scrying*. Using a spell like *commune* to find out anything about the interior is also impossible—even the gods cannot look inside. This effect is only one-way, from the outside in. Thus, one can teleport out of a tower or scry someone in Ptolus from within the confines of the fortress.

The outer walls and doors remain similarly immune to brute force; they cannot be harmed physically. None of this affects summoning creatures into the fortress by forces or casters within the fortress. Summoning something *out* of Jabel Shammar is impossible, though, as is summoning something into the fortress when the summoner stands outside its walls.

None of this is true of the interior walls, which have their own unique characteristics in each tower. However, note that no walls, ceilings, or floors in Jabel Shammar (except in the sub-levels) are actually stone, although most appear to be. Thus, spells like *passwall*, *stone shape*, and *phase door* do not work on them.

Each individual tower is distinct from the others in this regard. One cannot teleport or scry, for example, from the interior of one tower to another, although from one room to another in the same tower such magic functions normally.

Unless stated otherwise, doors are made of adamantine and are one inch thick. They have a hardness of 20, 40 hit points, and a break DC of 35. They are not locked unless so stated in the individual locale descriptions.

Windows in the outer walls are opaque black from the outside and function the same as the walls they are set into. However, a pervasive magic keeps all chambers in the towers (except the dungeons) lit in a shadowy illumination. No spell, item, or effect short of the direct intervention of a deity can brighten the lighting here. *Darkness* spells can make it darker, however.

MAGICAL EFFECTS

Unless otherwise stated in this chapter, assume that all magical effects of the fortress of Jabel Shammar have a caster level of 25th for the purposes of *dispel magic* and *spell resistance*. The Dread One was incredibly powerful.

THE MALIGNANCY

Something grows in Jabel Shammar, even to this day—grows like a cancer. This festering neoplasm is not visible to the naked eye and cannot be touched by the corporeal hand. However, anyone with *true seeing* within the fortress can see root-like fibers of darkness weaving through the walls, floors, and ceilings. These foul tendrils thread through the physicality of the structure the way a creeping vine weaves its way through a trellis.

Nearly the entire fortress lies within the invisible, incorporeal grasp of this tumor of pure evil called the Malignancy, which proves that an evil as potent as Jabel Shammar cannot exist for so long in one place without leaving behind a permanent scar—in this case, an infected one that spreads its contamination throughout the fortress.

Such would be of little concern, as Jabel Shammar is virtually empty and nigh unreachable, except for one thing: When the Malignancy spreads far enough to reach a chamber called the Sombrous Sepulcher, its power will flow into the last remaining spark of the Dread One’s life force, and he will live once again. After almost eight thousand years since his death, this is likely to happen within just a few years—sooner if the Malignancy’s growth is spurred on by the corruption of more creatures within its reach.

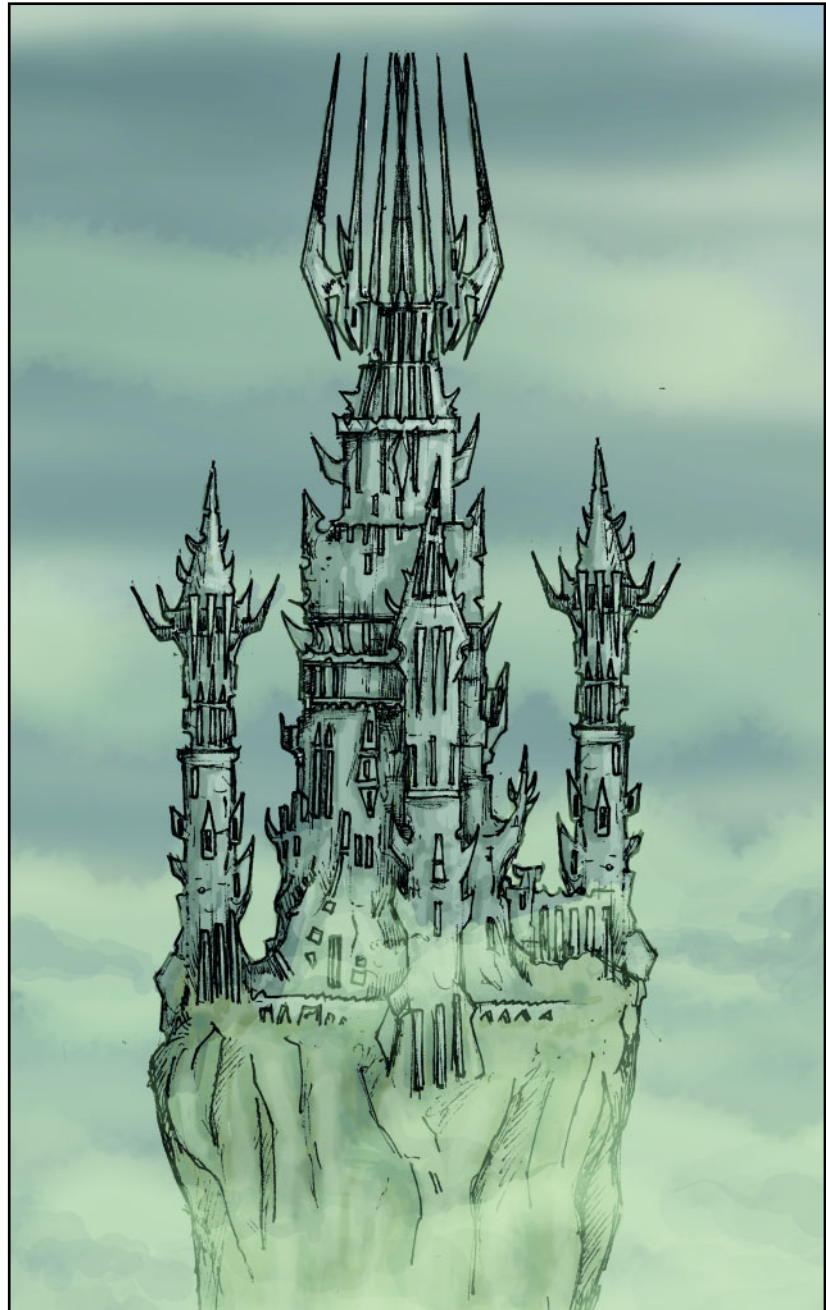
Actually, the Malignancy is the result of two factors: the accumulation of so much evil in one place for so long, and the nearly self-aware manifestation of the *Book of Inverted Darkness* that lies at the top of the Tower of Malice. In a manner of speaking, the fortress’ residual evil feeds the Malignancy’s metaphysical substance and the *Book of Inverted Darkness* focuses the power of the Malignancy toward a goal.

Since the concept of corruption is at the very core of the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, it is no surprise that the Malignancy spreads a corruptive influence throughout Jabel Shammar. Anyone visiting this dire place faces the same corruptive forces that eventually overcame even Danar, a veritable pillar of righteousness and benevolence no mortal has equaled in all the millennia since he was lost.

To measure the fell influence that infects anyone entering the grasp of the Malignancy, keep track of each character’s *corruption points* using the process described below.

Corruption Points

Corruption points are a way to measure the spiritually cancerous power of the Malignancy upon characters entering Jabel Shammar. Each character’s corruption point total indicates the level of defilement upon his soul. When a character comes to Jabel Shammar, determine his *resolve level*, a statistic that measures corruptibility and steadfastness. Resolve level is equal to a character’s



level plus his Will saving throw bonus, adjusted by an alignment-based modifier as follows:

Alignment	Modifier
Good	+10
Lawful	+5
Neutral	+0
Chaotic	-2
Evil	-15

The DM may wish to grant *ad hoc* bonuses or penalties based on the natures of the individual characters and their personalities. A particularly devout cleric or a paladin might gain as much as an

Time and Jabel Shammar

Despite its incredible age, none of the furnishings, décor, or fixtures in Jabel Shammar decay, unless described otherwise. Thus, wooden chairs, cloth tapestries, and woven rugs, just to name a few things, look mostly the way they did when the Dread One walked these halls. Jabel Shammar is also virtually free of dust or vermin (so no cobwebs).

Tower of Malice, page 515



Danace, PT2: page 68

Alabaster Sanctuary, page 521
Tower of Malice, page 515

How Long Before the Dread One Returns?

DMs who wish to use this plot line should decide exactly how long before the Malignancy reaches the Sombrous Sepulcher (page 532) and restores the Dread One. About one year is recommended, starting at a point when the player characters are of a level high enough to enter the fortress, and keeping in mind that each new figure completely corrupted by the Malignancy shortens that time by one month. If you're starting from the beginning of the campaign, two or three years is probably best.

Summoning Cascade, page 516
Misbegotten Tower, page 506
Tower of Blasphemy, page 511

Jabel Shammar is also known as the Black Tower and the Dread Spike.

additional +5 bonus, for instance. A character who is neutral good but strays from his alignment now and again may have a -2 penalty. Someone devoted to an evil deity could have a penalty as high as -5.

Thus, a chaotic good 20th-level character with a Will save bonus of +11 has a resolve level of 39. A 15th-level neutral evil character with a Will save bonus of +10, devoted to Danace, Master of the Thousand Pains, has a resolve level of 5.

When a character's corruption point total equals or exceeds his resolve level, he becomes forever evil, an unswerving servant of inverted darkness.

A character gains or loses corruption points based on the actions listed in the tables on the next page.

Also note: A character under the effects of a *holy aura* spell cannot gain corruption points. In addition, no character can have a negative corruption point total.

After gaining at least 10 corruption points, a character who is not already evil must make a Will save (DC 25) or his alignment moves one step toward evil (good characters become neutral, neutral characters become evil). This change takes place no matter what the character's resolve level.

When a character's corruption point total reaches 75 percent of his resolve level, his spirit grows darker. Even if his alignment is still good, his appearance takes on a sinister aura, and his features become more demonic. Voices in his head continually urge him toward foul, malevolent, or perverted acts. He can tap into the evil essence of the Malignancy to heal himself of damage. Using a standard action, he regains 10d10 hit points in a round. Doing so earns him 2 corruption points, however, and moves his alignment one step toward evil (no save). Once he does this, the character grows so infused with darkness that DM may want to apply the fiendish template to reflect his new nature.

When a character's corruption point total equals his resolve level, he becomes irredeemably evil. Such a character is considered completely corrupted. He immediately seeks to kill all those he once loved or felt kinship for (including his fellow

adventurers). A *wish* or a *miracle* cast within ten minutes of the final corruption has a 50 percent chance of restoring a completely corrupted character's original alignment, reducing his corruption point total to half of what it was. However, the shock of the sudden separation from the Malignancy immediately slays the character.

Corrupted Characters and the Malignancy

The process of completely corrupting a new character feeds the Malignancy, shortening the time until the return of the Dread One by one month. Such a character can continue to heal himself using the Malignancy and remains forevermore in contact with the malign awareness. He instantly and automatically knows the position of every creature in Jabel Shammar (except in the Alabaster Sanctuary within the Tower of Malice) and can use a standard action to perceive any location as if using *clairaudience/clairvoyance*. Even characters who are invisible or hiding can be found using the Malignancy; completely corrupted characters always know which square an invisible creature is in, for example, although the miss chance still applies. The Malignancy forever controls the character, likely making him a guardian of Jabel Shammar and eventually—as the Malignancy grows ever stronger—perhaps an agent sent out of the fortress to prepare the way for the Dread One's return. A completely corrupted player character becomes an NPC controlled by the DM.

Someone who looks at a completely corrupted character using *true seeing* sees one of the root-like tendrils of blackness extending directly into the controlled character's forehead from the walls of the fortress.

Should Eslathagos Malkith ever live again, all control of completely corrupted creatures transfers to him. In effect, he becomes the Malignancy.

Evil Creatures and the Malignancy

When fiends or fiendish creatures are summoned into Jabel Shammar (including those drawn in via the Summoning Cascade of the Tower of Malice), they immediately are considered corrupted characters in that they feed the Malignancy. Such creatures also have access to the Malignancy's awareness and its ability to heal 10d10 hit points using a standard action. Creatures awakened from stasis (such as the various aberrations in the Misbegotten Tower or Tower of Malice) or undead in the fortress (such as the nightcrawler and the mummies in the Tower of Blasphemy and the mohrgs in the Tower of Malice) are already considered a part of the Malignancy and do not feed it further, but they can take advantage of the healing effect (using negative energy to heal the undead) and its awareness. The various golems in



Gaining Corruption Points

Action	Corruption Points
Each full hour spent in Jabel Shammar*	+1
Each full hour spent with any item taken from Jabel Shammar**†	+1
Using <i>true seeing</i> **	+5
Using <i>speak with dead</i>	+3
Using <i>legend lore</i>	+3
Using <i>find the path</i>	+3
Using <i>scrying</i> on subject in Jabel Shammar	+3
Using <i>x-ray vision</i> ‡‡	+2
Using <i>prying eyes</i>	+2
Using <i>arcane eye</i>	+2
Using <i>analyze dweomer</i>	+2
Using <i>arcane sight</i>	+2
Using <i>detect evil</i>	+2
Using <i>know alignment</i>	+2
Using <i>detect thoughts</i>	+2
Using any other divination spell or item	+1
Using any spell with the evil descriptor	+5
Using a chaosithech item	+1
Wearing a <i>malefic mask</i> ** (see below)	+2
Being brought back to life within Jabel Shammar	+10
Committing an evil act††	+1 to +10
Examining a <i>blasphemous shrine</i>	+1
Examining the mural in the Tower of Malice's "Galleries" level	+2
Listening to the Dire Song in the Tower of Malice's "Residences" level	+2
Studying the books in the Tower of Malice's "Library" level	+2
Being possessed by the Dread One's shadow in the Heart of the Malignancy	+2
Being touched by a tendril in the Heart of the Malignancy	+4
Feeling the Breath of the Serpent in the dungeons	+2

Losing Corruption Points

Action	Corruption Points
Being the recipient of <i>atonement</i>	-2
Being the recipient of <i>remove curse</i>	-2
Being the recipient of <i>break enchantment</i>	-2
Being the recipient of <i>dispel evil</i>	-2
Being within the area of <i>consecrate</i> when it is cast	-1
Partaking of a <i>heroes' feast</i>	-1
Being within the area of <i>hallow</i> when it is cast	-2
Touching the lammasu statue in the Alabaster Sanctuary	-5
Being within the positive energy burst of <i>Parnaith's Heart</i>	-10
Using <i>wish</i> to reduce the corruption	-10
Using <i>miracle</i> to reduce the corruption	All points removed
Committing a particularly good or heroic act††‡	-1 to -10
Each day spent away from Jabel Shammar	-1

* Time spent in the Alabaster Sanctuary does not count, but time spent in an extradimensional space (such as a rope trick or Mord's magnificent mansion) does count.

** One-time only—subsequent uses of the spell or item do not result in further corruption points.

† Other than the Egg of Parnaith (page 508).

†† DM's discretion.

‡ This should not be something as straightforward as killing a demon, but something self-sacrificing or heroic (taking a blow for a comrade or putting oneself in unnecessary danger to help another).

‡‡ Spell from *The Complete Book of Eldritch Might* (Malhavoc Press, 2004).

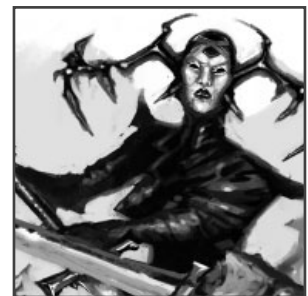
Using the Malignancy's Awareness

Even though all the nonconstruct creatures of Jabel Shammar know where intruders are via the Malignancy, they do not immediately swarm to attack, for fear of being outflanked with a teleport spell or some other strategy. However, some creatures, such as Ulithik the Misbegotten, may go hunting intruders if they show no interest in coming his way (assuming he awakes from his stasis; see page 509).

Parnaith's Heart, page 508

Blasphemous shrine, page 515

Egg of Parnaith, page 508



Thousands of years ago, the Dread One adopted the Abyssal language and taught it to all his creations and servants.

Dread One's Suite, page 525
Serpent Path, page 533

Jabel Shammar do not feed the Malignancy and cannot heal themselves using its energies.

Evil nonfiends that come to Jabel Shammar are not automatically corrupted. However, they likely have few resolve points and will soon become corrupted. Even creatures—fiends or not—summoned by casters not yet completely corrupted may be taken over by the Malignancy, adding further to its power.

MALEFIC MASKS

Eslathagos Malkith created a handful of featureless magical masks that allow wearers to bypass certain guardians, traps, or wards. These *malefic masks* are made of smooth, almost reflective obsidian that is transparent from the wearer's point of view. They radiate an aura of strong abjuration magic

but have no powers other than those specifically detailed in the keyed areas described in this chapter. A *malefic mask* is worth 1,500 gp. They can be found in the top levels of both the Misbegotten Tower and the Tower of Blasphemy, as well as in the Dread One's Suite in the Tower of Malice. The Serpent Path in the dungeons replicates the special powers of the *malefic masks*.

ENTERING JABEL SHAMMAR

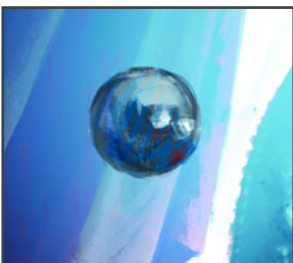
Getting into Jabel Shammar isn't just a matter of using a 3rd-level *fly* spell to reach the top of the Spire. Attempting to do so, in fact, is extremely dangerous. Anyone approaching within 100 feet of any part of the structure who has not used one of the methods listed below must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 30) or be *disintegrated*, the

Rumors

Just about anyone in the city (Gather Information, DC 12) can relate the fact that climbing or flying up to the top of the Spire is foolhardy and dangerous. Those who try never return, people say. A few tell tales of wizards flying up to Jabel Shammar only to fade away into the wind or disappear into a cloud, never to be heard from again. This is the kind of thing that sounds like tavern gossip one shouldn't take too seriously, but in fact, it is quite accurate. Asking more experienced, knowledgeable sources, like mages in the Inverted Pyramid (PT3: page 115) or the Brides of Magic (PT3: page 106), authenticates the popular stories.

Alchestrin's Tomb, PT4: page 232

The Banewarrens, PT7: page 419



Parnaith's mirrored sphere, PT4: page 278
Dread One's staff, page 529
Entropy Sphere, page 499
Seeping Portal, page 535

A Knowledge (arcana) or Craft (alchemy) check (DC 25) identifies the chemicals in the storehouse as materials one might use if attempting to alter the structure of creatures or create new organic substances from scratch.

resulting dust scattered into the Ethereal Plane. This disintegration is slower than normal, taking a full, extraordinary painful round to complete. Anyone attempting to dispel the magic involved during that round must make not only a successful caster level check (DC 31) but also roll an initiative check result of 15 or higher. If the caster's initiative check equals or exceeds 15 and she successfully dispels the effect, the victim is alive but dying, at -6 hit points. A great deal of his physical form has already been lost, as have half his possessions. If the initiative check is less than 15, even if the caster dispels the effect, all she actually manages to save is a bloody mess of flesh and bone. The victim is no longer alive, and all his gear is gone or destroyed. (The DM should not tell the caster this before she casts the spell, however.)

In any event, the doors and walls of Jabel Shammar remain impregnable to anyone attempting to enter the fortress in such a mundane way.

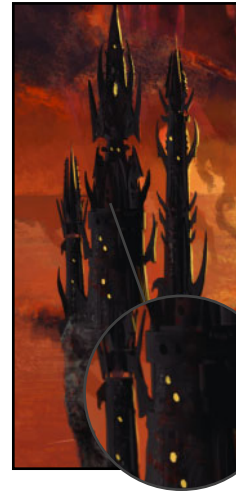
Also remember that the fortress is immune to magical means of entry such as teleportation or incorporeality, as described in "The Nature of Jabel Shammar" (page 502).

The ways into Jabel Shammar are very few.

1. Alchestrin's Tomb in the Necropolis contains the memorized spell that allows one to enter Jabel Shammar. This spell, usable once, takes characters onto the walkway between the Tower of Malice and the Tower of Blasphemy.
2. From the Banewarrens one can access the Dread One's Path, and from there—if one should find a secret door at the end of the path (Search, DC 40) opened only with the Banewarrens key—one can pass magically up into the dungeons of Jabel Shammar, arriving in Area 2 (see page 533). Getting into the Banewarrens presents its own difficulties, of course. (There is also an elevator found in the Dread One's Path that leads into the dungeons, but it can be activated only from the dungeons, not from the Banewarrens.)
3. If one has the Banewarrens key, Parnaith's mirrored sphere, or the Dread One's staff and accesses the Entropy Sphere via Goth Gulgamel, one can reach the Seeping Portal chamber in the Dungeons.

Those who use any of these means to get to the fortress can move around in Jabel Shammar, either within the towers or outside of them, without fear of the *disintegration* effect—unless and until they move more than one hundred feet from the structure as a whole. Then, they once again face the difficulties described above regarding physical or magical entry. In other words, just going inside once does not guarantee that they can easily return.

The areas described below correspond to those on the Jabel Shammar maps in the Appendix.



MISBEGOTTEN TOWER

The Dread One sought to warp everything good and natural, perverting it and thus showing contempt for its creator. Many of the more horrid creatures that plague the world today exist because of his actions, including many aberrations. The Misbegotten Tower, the easternmost of the

four, was devoted to the creation of such monsters.

The door into the tower lies on the second level, at the end of a walkway from the Tower of Malice.

Unless otherwise stated, the interior walls and floors of this tower resemble desiccated, diseased, and warped flesh more than stone. They have a hardness of 10, 30 hp per inch of thickness (most are one foot thick), and a break DC of 30. Black iron spiral stairs connect all levels.

LEVEL 1: STOREHOUSE (EL 14)

Huge, sealed glass vats of foul chemicals and soups of organic materials fill this lower level. The ceiling is fifty feet high, and the room smells of dust and acid.

Eight greater shadows skulk about here, muttering dark whispers, but they are likely to be little more than a nuisance to anyone powerful enough to enter this tower. If they fight, they melt into the vats incorporeally and lunge out to make their touch attacks, hoping to trick opponents into accidentally smashing a vat and unleashing the caustic and noxious chemicals inside (3d6 points of acid damage to anyone within five feet, and all in the chamber must make a Fortitude save, DC 18, or feel nauseous for 1d6 rounds from the poisonous fumes). The shadows flee if opposed by those with great puissance. However, observant PCs (Spot, DC 18) will note that *how* they flee is significant. They all slither incorporeally into an area behind one of the vats, where one can spot a narrow crevice. This crack is a flaw in Jabel Shammar's defense. After four man-hours of work (assuming some kind of tools are available), characters can widen the crack to reveal a slight natural cave in the solid (normal) stone of the Spire; the shallow cave measures seven feet deep and four feet wide. (The shadows are long gone by the time it is unearthed.) While this chamber does not provide refuge from the Malignancy, one could use a spell such as *teleport* to enter the cave from the outside of the fortress, thus gaining access back in. This is

useful to PCs who find that they have to leave but wish to return. In addition, knowledge of this option would be invaluable to some of the evil forces in Ptolus.

The narrow crevice can also be found with a Search check (DC 30).

Greater Shadows (8): 58 hp each; see MM.

LEVEL 2: ENTRY

The room behind the tower's main door appears empty except for the stairs going up to the next level, forty feet above, and down to the bottom level. However, as soon as a living creature enters this room, veins rise in the fleshlike walls, pulsing as they carry some vile liquid from below to the levels above. This action signifies that the creatures on Levels 5 and 7 (see pages 508 and 509) awoken from their aeons-long stasis effects and prepare to deal with intruders. Nothing short of an *antimagic field* can stop this trigger.

LEVEL 3: GUARDIANS (EL 20)

This high-ceilinged room is empty except for two huge statues that are, in fact, greater stone golems. No staircase rises to Level 4; a black adamantite valve five inches thick covers the ten-foot-wide hole in the ceiling that leads up to the next level, eighty feet above the floor. On the ceiling, a massive stone dragon head on a long stony neck curls protectively around the valve.

The Golems: The constructs stand at the ready and attack any creatures that enter the room except those who wear one of the *malefic masks*. The Dread One's servants fashioned each golem so that it appears to be a misshapen humanoid figure with grotesque, mutated features. These two guardians alternate using their *slow* ability every other round, and try to position themselves so that they command most of the chamber.

Each of them has a large ruby set into one eye socket and a black diamond in the other. A ruby (worth 5,000 gp each) cannot be removed before the golem's destruction; each confers a complete immunity to fire. Once removed from the golem, the gems lose all magical ability. A golem will remove its black diamond (worth 5,000 gp each) if commanded to do so by someone wearing a *malefic mask*. Otherwise, the diamonds can be removed only after the golem is destroyed.

Greater Stone Golems (2): 271 hp each; see MM.

The Dragon Head: When the golems move, so does the stone dragon head, which animates so as to breathe an eighty-foot cone of fire down into the room. This flame inflicts 10d6 points of damage (Reflex save, DC 20, for half). Further, the flame coalesces into a summoned elder fire elemen-

tal that attacks. The fire elemental remains for 10 rounds or until destroyed. Each breath summons a new fire elemental, so the room could get very crowded, very quickly. The dragon head has AC 13, hardness 8, and 200 hp. It goes dormant if the golems are destroyed or stop attacking.

Fire Elemental, Elder: 204 hp; see MM.

Opening the Valve: Touching the two black diamonds from the golems together causes the valve in the ceiling to float down like a platform to the floor to ferry people up through the opening. Otherwise, it will not open unless destroyed or magically coerced (such as with a *knock* spell). The valve ferries people down from above if someone standing atop it wills it to do so; if left on its own, it always reseals itself after one minute. The valve is indestructible.

Experience Points: Award normal XP for the greater golems, and award XP for each fire elemental that appears as if it were CR 13.

LEVEL 4: LABORATORY

The ceiling is twenty feet high in both of the rooms on this level. The larger chamber is a laboratory, while the smaller one is a kind of storage room.

Dread One's Laboratory

This room is crowded with equipment, all covered faintly in dust. A large glass vat of translucent green liquid stands in the middle of the room next to a U-shaped steel table covered in alchemical equipment and tools. In six recessed areas in the floor, steel boxes, not unlike coffins, lie marred with corrosion and the stains of strange admixtures and ancient blood. Along the walls and in between the recessed areas, tall glass tubes two to four feet across stretch from floor to ceiling. Suspended in thick liquid within each tube float strange-looking creatures, some humanoid, some not; apparently, they were grown there. Fleishy cords connect the creatures to strange arcane devices both inside and outside the tubes. A few shelves built into the walls hold various jars and bottles of alchemical compounds.

The creatures in the tubes are long dead, but the solutions in which they are suspended have preserved them. They appear to be half-grown goblins, fetal aberrations (like destrachans), or unidentifiable chimeras of twisted flesh and hideous form—obviously failed experiments. The vat contains a low-potency acid (inflicts half the damage of normal acid).

The recessed areas in the floor measure about eight feet long and three feet deep. The metal boxes in them are empty, save for one that is locked (Open Lock, DC 25) and contains a hirsute humanoid (a kind of proto-bugbear). The



When the Dread One lived in Jabel Shammar, he spent a great deal of time in the Misbegotten Tower creating new horrors to unleash upon the world—simply for the evil they would wreak. Even today, the legacy of his labors endures in such aberrations as destrachans, chokers, chuuls, and more. None of these creatures alive today knows that they owe the existence of their species to the Dread One. Many of the more intelligent ones, in fact, have developed their own myths and gods to explain their creations.

Malefic masks, page 505

FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

In my Ptolus Campaign, the Runewardens were summoned out of semi-retirement when a warning from elf historian Navaen Blueflight reached them from beyond the grave. His message was simply this: Something stirs again in Jabel Shammar.

A Knowledge (arcana) (DC 25) identifies the proto-bugbear for what it is. A Craft (alchemy) check (DC 25) identifies the black goo.

Court of Hate, page 520

DMs can also use the mutation tables in the Chaositech sourcebook for the effects of the concentrated corruption found in the laboratory.

Corruption points, page 503



A Knowledge (history) check (DC 34) identifies the Egg of Parnaith for what it is.

humanoid is alive, preserved in the box, but utterly mindless and soulless—more vegetable than sapient creature. The steel boxes are all magical (as are the tubes), with faint transmutation auras. No one other than the Dread One can get them to function, however.

Searching through the table or the shelves reveals a great number of valuable substances as well as some large, imposing, unlabeled bottles of foul-smelling black goo. The black goo is, quite simply, concentrated corruption. A living creature coated in this substance for 1d10 days changes into a twisted, horrible version of itself. Its flesh mutates, and it grows additional limbs, tendrils, extra heads, or stranger things. (DMs can use the fiendish template if no other modifications suggest themselves.) This is an extremely painful and mind-warping process. There are a total of six bottles of concentrated corruption in the room, each with enough to coat a Medium creature or two Small ones. The chemicals and equipment in this room, all total, is worth 8,000 gp.

The stairway at the south end of the level rises up into a plane of murky water that remains at the level of the ceiling as if there were a transparent barrier, but in fact, there is not one; the water is held up by magic. Characters can walk up and into the water.

Alchemical Storage (EL 8)

Various containers fill this large closet on the north end of the laboratory. Many of them are empty or filled with uninteresting items like empty glass bottles or tools.

Yellow Mold: A particularly nasty patch of yellow mold grows over a number of the crates in this storage room. If touched, it bursts with poisonous spores, forcing all within ten feet to make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or suffer 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage (and another save one minute later, even if the first save succeeded, to avoid taking 2d6 points of Constitution damage). The mold can be destroyed only by fire.

The Ivory Egg: After the yellow mold is gone, a Search check (DC 20) reveals a strange, seemingly out-of-place container hidden among the rest. It looks like an ivory egg about seven inches long set within an ornate circular stand of gold and laced with small gemstones. A web of golden, jeweled threads wrap around the egg, holding it in place in its stand. The object radiates auras of magic (strong conjuration) and good (strong).

If one removes the egg from the golden stand and casts a *dispel magic* or *dispel good* spell upon it, an otherwise undetectable seam grows along its

edge until the egg opens, revealing the artifact known as *Parnaith's Heart*. The egg can be opened by no other way, save a *wish* or *miracle*. No divination spell works on the egg or its contents.

The egg has uses on Level 4 of the Tower of Malice, in the Court of Hate.

Parnaith's Heart: Even as Danar changed into the Dread One, his wife Parnaith used her own formidable power to plant a seed of possible salvation and redemption in Jabel

Shammar before she fled for her life.

The seed, a magic artifact called *Parnaith's Heart*, looks like a golden orb three inches across, set with various gemstones. It feels warm to the touch and smells of lilac. Someone who holds the *Heart* and concentrates (Concentration check, DC 25) can release a pulse of positive energy from it, which spreads out twenty feet. The *Heart* can be activated twice per century, although on the second activation, the Concentration check DC is 35.

More than just normal positive energy, this energy has three effects:

1. All creatures (living or undead) in the area are affected by a *heal* spell.
2. All within the area lose 10 corruption points.
3. All evil creatures within the area must make a Will save (DC 20, spell resistance applies) or their alignment becomes neutral (law and chaos alignments are not affected).

LEVEL 5: CUSTODIANS (EL 20)

The tower's fifth level is filled with brackish water. Visibility within it is extremely poor: Anything more than five feet away has 50 percent concealment, and visibility goes no farther than ten feet. Plus, of course, air breathers will need a way to breathe. Worse, the water is so foul that air breathers—even those under the effects of a *water breathing* spell—must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or become nauseous until they leave the water, and remain so for 1d4 rounds afterward. The creatures that live here can see normally up to twenty feet; objects between twenty and thirty feet away from them have 50 percent concealment, and those beyond thirty feet they cannot see. And, of course, they are immune to the nausea effect.

The chamber is eighty feet high. Characters may exit up through a round hole ten feet across in the floor of Level 6.

Watery Denizens

The aboleth mages Ekarth'il and Setarsis (each a 10th-level wizard) were two of the first aboleths ever created, and certainly the oldest two still alive. These aboleths have the *Dread One's blessing*, a



specific effect that grants them maximum hit points, as well as a +4 bonus to all saving throw DCs for their spells and abilities. Thus, their enslave ability DC is 20, and their transformation attack and the mucus cloud DCs are 25. The save DC for their spells is 19 + spell level.

Aboleth Mages (2): 230 hp each; see MM.

Ekarth'il's Equipment: Two *pearls of power* (5th-level spell and 4th-level spell)

Setarsis' Equipment: *Bracers of armor +9* (total AC 27), waterproof scroll of *greater invisibility* and *true seeing* (written on special skum skin-parchment).

The aboleths have enslaved a giant octopus that the Dread One experimented upon long ago. Mainly, the octopus protects Ekarth'il.

Mutant Giant Octopus: 75 hp; see MM.

However, its type is aberration (but do not change Hit Dice, feats, or skills). It has 8 more points of natural armor (total AC 26), Strength 30 (add +5 on attack and damage—constriction damage, as well as grapple checks), and inflicts an extra +1d6 points of electricity damage when it strikes. It is immune to electricity.

Tactics: The aboleths each cast *stoneskin* and see *invisibility* on themselves as soon as they awaken. Ekarth'il casts *mage armor* (+4 bonus to Armor Class for a total AC of 22) on himself, while Setarsis is content with her *bracers of armor* (+9 bonus to Armor Class for a total AC of 27). Immediately afterward, Ekarth'il uses *veil* to cover this entire level, and Setarsis sets up a *programmed image* so that as soon as someone comes within ten feet of the water's edge from below, kraken tentacles reach out of the water menacingly. The image is meant to delay intruders for a round while both aboleths cast *displacement* on themselves right before intruders enter. Thanks to their link with the Malignancy, the aboleths know where the PCs are at all times.

If there's time, Ekarth'il casts *fox's cunning*, raising the save Difficulty Classes of his spells by +2. Meanwhile, Setarsis casts *bull's strength*, adding a +2 bonus to her attack and damage rolls. They then wait twenty-five feet above the entrance for their foes to show themselves, at which point both cast empowered *lightning bolts*. Afterward, Setarsis casts *greater invisibility*, then moves in to attack. Ekarth'il backs off and uses *project image*, casting offensive spells through that while he hides deeper in the murk. If they are in trouble, they swim upward, using the poor visibility to aid in their retreat. Those following them are likely to come upon an *illusory wall* and/or a *wall of force*, although both aboleths need to cast *wall of force* to actually cover the entire room. They use their enslavement ability only as a last resort, since the save Difficulty Class is so low.

Treasure

Hidden in the murky water is a spongelike organic sac that contains eight potions of *cure serious wounds* in special vials that make them easier to drink underwater. It also holds the aboleths' joint spellbook, written on a series of large shells. If deciphered, it holds all the spells that they have prepared as well as all cantrips from the *Player's Handbook* and six other random spells, levels 1st to 4th. Even without their spellbook aspect, the shells, adorned with jewels and delicate traceries, are worth 5,000 gp.

Experience Points: Award 150 percent of normal XP for each aboleth mage, but none for the mutant giant octopus (the octopus is effectively CR 10).

LEVEL 6: TROPHIES

Characters may enter this chamber from Level 5 through a round hole ten feet across in the floor. The Dread One used this level, whose ceiling rises twenty feet above the floor, to show off some of his creations. The chamber is crammed full of stuffed and mounted creatures, most of them aberrations: athachs, chokers, chuuls, destraction, gricks, rust monsters, skum, and more. Some depend by wires from the ceiling, while the heads of others are mounted on the walls, and still others stand, stuffed, upright on the floor. The room stinks of acrid chemicals.

A careful search (DC 20) reveals that a stuffed skum wears a *periapt of health* that has, over time, become a *periapt of foul rotting*.

LEVEL 7: MISBEGOTTEN MASTER (EL 22)

The ceiling of this level is twenty feet above the floor. This, the top floor of the tower, is the home of a creature that once served the Dread One as an ally and counselor.

Outer Room: The Misbegotten

This room has a series of black marble pillars that run along the wall. From hooks on each pillar hang the skulls of various humanoids, each with a large hole in the cranium. Each pillar holds around a dozen skulls. The floor is tiled with octagonal pieces of highly polished dark grey marble.

Ulithik, an 8th-level unique sorcerer aberration, was created long ago by Eslathagos Malkith. He resembles a man, but his face is nothing but a mass of tentacles, and most of it is obscured by a *malefic mask*. His skin is bluish-grey and covered in watery slime.

Ulithik enjoys the *Dread One's blessing*, as described on Level 5. Thus, he has maximum hit points, and the save DCs for his spells and abilities have a +4 bonus. His spells have a save DC of 21 + spell level, his *detect thoughts* DC 23, and *suggestion* DC 24.

A *remove disease spell* alleviates the nausea caused by the murky water in Level 5.



Ekarth'il's veil makes it appear as if the aboleths were both mermaids with silver tiaras and scepters, and the giant octopus was a dolphin. One must penetrate Setarsis' greater invisibility to see the illusion that covers her, however.

The Malignancy, page 503

If Ekarth'il uses *project image* while the *veil spell* is still in effect, the image projected will be that of Ekarth'il's true form (an aboleth), even while the creature's actual body still looks like a mermaid. Also keep in mind that the poor visibility makes it easy for both aboleths to hide in this room. They will frequently cast a spell and move, using both the murky water and their illusions to keep the player characters confused.

Malefic mask, page 505

DM TIPS

Don't forget that evil creatures in Jabel Shammar are affected by the *bless* spell and also can use the *Malignancy* to heal themselves for 10d10 hit points as a standard action.

Also remember that taking treasure from fallen foes, like Ulithik, results in corruption points (see page 505).

DM TIPS

Remember that every round, each skeletal hand can attack. This includes the wands, so there will be a lightning bolt and an ice storm each round. Plus, every time Ulithik is struck in melee, the shadowskin strikes.

This is all in addition to whatever Ulithik himself chooses to do that round.



Holy weapons can make a significant difference to someone fighting the evil denizens of Jabel Shammar.

He has a number of magic items, but most important among them (as far as a battle goes) is a *cube of force*. Ulithik also has the aid of *skeletal hands* and *shadowskin*.

Skeletal Hands: Long ago, the Dread One and Ulithik together slew a powerful wizard and fighter, then “harvested” their hands, ensorcelling them to become “companions” for Ulithik. Now, the fighter’s hands each bear a weapon, and the wizard’s hands each bear a magic wand as they orbit around Ulithik. The hands all share Ulithik’s Armor Class and hit points—basically, they are *his* hands and cannot be destroyed until he dies. The *skeletal hands* obey the Misbegotten’s mental commands, which require no actions on his part. Each of the fighter’s hands attacks with a +18/+13 attack bonus, inflicting 1d8+3 points of damage with its +3 *longsword*. Each wizard hand uses its wand with proficiency—one has a *wand of lightning bolt* (DC 14), and the other *ice storm*.

One can turn the hands as undead. Treat each one as a 17 HD creature with turn resistance +4, and don’t forget that Jabel Shammar is *unhallowed* (imposing a –4 penalty upon all turn attempts).

The Shadowskin: A sheath of darkness made of undead shadows surrounds Ulithik. These shadows are magically hardened like armor bound to his skin, which grants him an additional +5 armor bonus. They also swirl around him, deflecting attacks and granting him a +4 deflection bonus (adding to his +3 Dexterity bonus and +3 natural armor for a total of AC 25). The *shadowskin* also grants him immunity to negative energy effects. Most devastatingly, however, each time Ulithik is struck in melee, a shadow rises up from the skin and automatically touches the attacker, inflicting 1d6 points of temporary Strength damage. Since it inflicts this damage for every hit, it can do so more than once per round against a foe with multiple attacks (or against multiple foes).

One can turn the *shadowskin* as an undead creature. Treat it as a 20 HD creature with turn resistance +4, and don’t forget that Jabel Shammar is *unhallowed* (imposing a –4 penalty upon all turn attempts).

Tactics: As soon as he awakens, Ulithik casts *stoneskin* and *see invisibility*. Before his foes appear (he knows where they are thanks to the *Malignancy*), he casts *cat’s grace* (+2 bonus to Armor Class, for a total of AC 27, +2 bonus to tentacle attack rolls and Reflex saves), *shield* (+4 bonus to Armor Class, for a total of AC 31), *mirror image*, *haste* (+1 bonus to attack rolls and Armor Class, for a total of AC 32), and *greater invisibility*. When the intruders arrive, he activates his *cube of force* to keep out all things, assuming that will buy him a few rounds. During those rounds, if necessary, he finishes casting his preparatory spells. Then, he casts *spell turning*



from one of his scrolls and changes the cube so that it keeps out only nonliving matter—this allows him to use offensive spells like *waves of exhaustion*, *power word kill*, *disintegrate*, and *feeblemind* against foes while they most likely batter against the *force cube*.

Ulithik
Misbegotten (unique aberration), (Neutral Evil)
Sorcerer18 **CR 19**
HD 2d8+4 + 18d4+36 **hp** 105
Init +7 **Speed** 30 feet
AC 25, touch 17, flat-footed 22
BAB/Grapple +10/+10
Attack/Full Attack Spells only
SA Spell-like abilities
SQ SR 30, DR 5/magic
Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +17
Str 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 15, **Int** 15, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 26
Crucial Skills: Bluff +15, Concentration +15, Listen +5, Move Silently +11, Search +5, Sense Motive +7, Spot +8.
Other Skills: Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (arcana) +19, Spellcraft +18.
Crucial Feats: Combat Casting, Dodge, Quicken Spell.
Other Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes.
Spell-Like Abilities: Caster level 18th. The save DCs are Charisma based.
3/day—*detect thoughts*, *mage hand*, *suggestion*.
Spells Known: 6/8/8/8/8/7/7/6/3; save DC 18 + spell level.
9th—*power word kill*.
8th—*antipathy*, *Big clenched fist*.

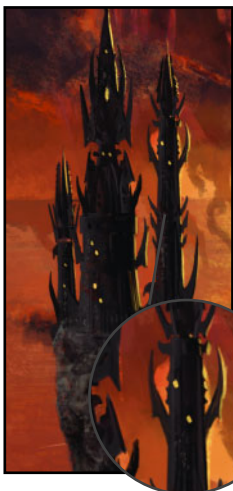
- 7th—control undead, ethereal jaunt, waves of exhaustion.
 - 6th—disintegrate, greater dispel magic, true seeing.
 - 5th—break enchantment, feeblemind, prying eyes, teleport.
 - 4th—charm monster, greater invisibility, stone-skin, wall of fire.
 - 3rd—fly, haste, ray of exhaustion, stinking cloud.
 - 2nd—cat's grace, ghoul touch, levitate, mirror image, see invisibility.
 - 1st—chill touch, expeditious retreat, mage armor, magic missile, shield.
 - arcane mark, dancing lights, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, light, open/close, ray of frost, read magic.
- Possessions:** Cloak of charisma +2, ring of protection +2, cube of force, malefic mask, scroll of spell turning (2).
- Hands' Equipment:** +3 longswords (2), wand of lightning bolt (CL 10th, 32 charges), wand of ice storm (21 charges).

Experience Points: Award double experience for Ulithik, due to the *skeletal hands*, greater equipment than normal, and other advantages.

Inner Room

A door in the west wall of this room opens into a smaller inner chamber. Hideous painted reliefs adorn the walls here: tentacled horrors devouring humans, foul rites conducted by **zaug** and equally blasphemous creatures, and so on. This chamber holds a shallow pool of grey slime, identical in appearance to grey ooze, but that is not what it is. This is the meditation pool of Ulithik. While reclining here, he gains fast healing 10. If need be, he can retreat to this chamber, lock the black adamantine door (Open Lock, DC 30), and recuperate in the pool while protected by his *cube of force*.

The pool does not affect creatures other than Ulithik. Etched crudely on the inside lip of the pool, just above the level of the slime, Ulithik has scratched "Ssenkrad99." This code refers to the *secret page* in the book in the Dread One's Suite.



TOWER OF BLASPHEMY

The Dread One created the Tower of Blasphemy to mock all things divine, and in particular all things holy. During his reign of terror, he captured powerful clerics, used years of torture to coerce them to renounce their faith, and then slew them in painful ways. These

clerics he made into undead versions of themselves, infusing them with some of his own power to channel in order to replicate some of the divine spellcasting powers they wielded in life. These, the Six Blasphemers, he placed in the Temple of Impiety at the top of this tower.

This tower is the northernmost of the four that make up Jabel Shammar. Unless stated otherwise, its interior walls and floors are smooth and glistening blackness forged from distilled night. They have a hardness of 10, 30 hp per inch of thickness (usually about twelve inches thick), and a break DC of 30. Black iron spiral stairs connect all levels (except on the first, where they are illusory).

LEVEL 1: GRIP OF THE UNHOLY (EL 19)

One may enter this tower from the walkway that connects it with the much larger Tower of Malice. The bottom level of the Tower of Blasphemy is an elaborate trap. Through the open door, the entire chamber looks empty, save for the sconces on the walls girded by relief panels of hooded, robed figures standing motionless. The floor and staircase in this room are an illusion, accompanied by a powerful compulsion similar to a *sympathy* spell. Anyone who can see the room through the open doorway must make a Will saving throw (DC 25) or be compelled to enter, and thus most likely fall through the illusionary floor into a pit below. However, if characters who failed the Will save are flying, levitating, or otherwise not likely to pass through the floor just by entering the room, the compulsion draws them down through it anyway.

The ceiling is thirty feet above the illusionary floor. Since the staircase is an illusion, some means of flying, levitating, or climbing is required to get to Level 2 through the opening above.

The Pit: The pit below the illusionary floor has the same diameter as the room but plunges fifty feet down to the actual bottom of the tower. Coiled at the bottom is a nightcrawler nightshade, eager for new victims to drain after so many millennia of quiet solitude. If more than one victim falls, it uses *mass hold monster*, but if only one comes within reach, it attacks with its bite. It fights until destroyed.

Nightcrawler: 215 hp; see MM.

Experience Points: Award 25 percent greater than normal XP for the nightcrawler.

LEVEL 2: CENOTAPH OF DARKNESS

This completely dark chamber is filled with a *deeper darkness* spell. (If someone dispels it, the room recasts the spell in one minute.) The ceiling rises seventy feet above, and a staircase at the east end of the room spirals up. Two vats of liquid

Temple of Impiety, page 153

Ulithik knows how to get into the Trial of the Book (page 529) in the Tower of Malice. A person might gain this information from him through magical compulsion, but he is beyond mundane intimidation.



Zaug, PT6: page 633

Dread One's Suite, page 525

While Ulithik was far too wise to dare betray the Dread One while Malkith was alive, today, if awakened, he would love to get his hands on the Book of Inverted Darkness and use its power for himself.

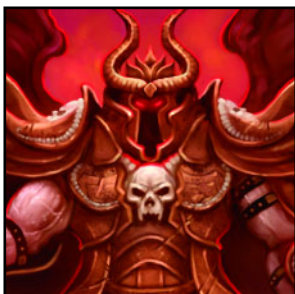
Liquid shadow, PT2: page 46

DM TIPS

Remember that true seeing reveals the tendril-like growths of the Malignancy connecting to the foreheads of all creatures it controls. Characters watching the growths might see them quiver slightly when a character earns a corruption point

Corruption points, page 503

Ithilnaur, PT2: page 46



Ul-Sinistar, PT7: page 456

The Sunslayer being built on Level 3 would not have required the wood and iron scaffolding described here. It would have used Jabel Shammar itself as a power source, had it ever been finished.

shadow flank an obsidian obelisk here. Written in shadow on the obelisk, so that one can read it only with a *read magic* spell, is this verse:

*I curse the rising of the sun,
I loathe the wellspring of the light.
I abominate all of the world,
I blaspheme the days of all that live.
My scorn and hate for all of nature,
Discern no breadth or boundary.*

LEVEL 3: SUNSLAYER

The ceiling in this chamber is twenty feet high, and the floor is black and white marble squares. Stairs in the center of the room lead up.

Here the player characters find a curved, semi-circular table on which rests what appears to be a twelve-foot lance of dark metal covered in small plates of bronze and ithilnaur. Copper wire attached in many places on the weapon extends off like dozens of thin tendrils. Some of these curl and coil back on themselves, some hang loose, and still others attach to more small ithilnaur and bronze plates on the table.

The walls bear six faded images of the sun, but each sun is covered in green and black sores, festering and cancerous. One of the many chthonian plans of the Dread One was to destroy the sun itself, to end all life in a single stroke of sacrilege against the Creator who put it there and all gods who extolled the beauty and warmth of daylight. In this chamber lies a half-constructed weapon that might have accomplished this foul task: the *lance of endless night*. (The dark elves of Ul-Sinistar scheme to build one too, based on legends of this very weapon.)

This room contains no secrets of the lance. Divination spells might be able to identify what it was meant to do, but none reveal how to complete it or even how close it is to completion (not at all close). Those wishing to do so could easily destroy it.

LEVEL 4: REVESTRY OF SACRILEGE

A blood-red carpet of woven leather covers the central portion of the floor of this level, with a hole cut in the middle to accommodate the staircase. A massive, intricate mural covers the fifty-foot-high walls, depicting every sin, every act of perversion, every wrong possible to commit. (It would take weeks of study to examine each portion of this mural, although carefully doing so grants 1 corruption point per ten-minute study period.) Three fonts of solid ebony are spaced equidistant from each other, just outside the perimeter of the carpet. Each one still contains water, and each bears a small bronze plate with its name in Abyssal.

The Font of Injustice: After speaking the phrase, “I revel in injustice,” anyone drinking the clear water from this font can afflict one other creature with injustice for 1d4 rounds. In this case, injustice comes in the form of inverted skill. Subtract any one of the foe’s bonuses (the drinker’s choice)—whether it is an ability score bonus, attack bonus, skill bonus, or save bonus—from 20. The result is the creature’s new bonus for that period (negative numbers are possible). Thus, the greater the bonus, the worse the effect of the injustice. This ability must be used within six days of drinking. If someone drinks the water without speaking the phrase, one of his own bonuses (determine randomly) is affected for the next twenty-four hours. Drinking the water grants 1 corruption point. Saying the phrase grants an additional 2 points. The water in the font magically refreshes itself.

The Font of Immorality: Even touching the slimy, brackish water in this font causes a character to think terrible, evil, and perverse thoughts. Good-aligned characters are stunned for 1d6+1 rounds. Neutral characters are stunned for 1 round. Touching the water grants 2 corruption points.

The Font of Lies: The water in this font is an illusion. Anyone recognizing the illusion but still pretending to drink the water gains a +1 inherent

LANCE OF ENDLESS NIGHT

This artifact comes in two parts. The first is gigantic and resembles a wooden and iron scaffolding. Once assembled, it forms a massive cube one hundred feet on a side.

This structure must be built around a major energy source. After twenty-four hours, the energy fully charges the artifact, and the second part of the device comes into play. An iron lance, twelve feet long, fits into a conduit built into the scaffold, so that all of the absorbed energy transfers into the weapon.

The lance has no magical powers as a weapon. It does not, in fact, even make a very good lance. When charged with energy and pointed at the sun, however, it emits a ray of darkness that stabs at the very heart of the fiery orb. It slays the sun.

Obviously, no one has yet ever successfully employed this horrible weapon. Without the sun, the world would quickly devolve into a cold, lifeless place of total darkness where only undead and similar creatures could survive.

Overwhelming transmutation; CL 25th.



competence bonus on Bluff checks permanently. Doing so grants 2 corruption points, however.

LEVEL 5: TEMPLE OF IMPIETY (EL 21)

The final steps into this chamber from the one below have six *symbols of pain* (Fortitude save, DC 20) inscribed upon them that activate when living creatures come within ten feet. While the effects of multiple symbols do not stack, intruders have six saves to potentially fail, rather than just one. The undead in the temple are immune to their effect if triggered, and they know the key to bypassing them without triggering them.

“Welcome to the Temple of Impiety,” a creature in this room states in hoarse whisper. “Your gods are not welcome here.”

This level is a temple dedicated not to a god, but to the hatred of and irreverence for gods, in particular, gods of goodness. **Divine spells are suppressed in the temple, and turning does not work.** Even divine spells cast outside of this level with active durations are suppressed when brought into the temple, as if by antimagic. Spell-completion and spell-trigger items of a divine nature are also suppressed, but no other magic items are; that means a *wand of cure serious wounds* does not function here, but a *potion of cure light wounds* or a *holy avenger sword* does.

This chamber is ninety feet high. At forty feet up, a five-foot-wide balcony runs the circumference of the room; its iron mesh railing provides

cover (+4 AC bonus, +2 Reflex save bonus). The room offers no mundane means to get from the floor to the balcony.

On the floor are six *bas relief* carvings of human faces, each different, each contorted in an expression of anger and contempt. The reliefs, which each measure about four feet long and three feet wide, radiate around the center stairwell with their chins pointed toward it. They are about ten feet from the stairs and five feet from each other. From each relief’s angry, open mouth springs a blue beam of intense light that reaches the ceiling. Touching any of these beams of light inflicts 4d6 points of cold damage and the loss of one prepared divine spell (if any) from the character’s highest-level current available spells. Inlaid into the floor between each relief is a solid piece of melanite.

The Mummies

At the floor level, equidistantly spaced around the circumference of the room are ten human-shaped niches, each containing an upright mummy. These mummies wear half plate armor and thus gain an armor bonus of +7 to their Armor Class, for a total of AC 27. They also each wear a headdress, cloak, and jewelry (worth a total of 800 gp each). The balcony level holds six such niches, each containing a mummy lord. The mummy lords are indistinguishable in appearance from the mummies below, including the armor and jewelry.

“Rumors say that one of the towers in the fortress of Jabel Shammar is dedicated solely to the hatred of all things divine. Thankfully, as powerful as the Dread One was, we know that even he could not block the power of the gods.”

—Aran Boturr,
High Priest of
Navashtröm



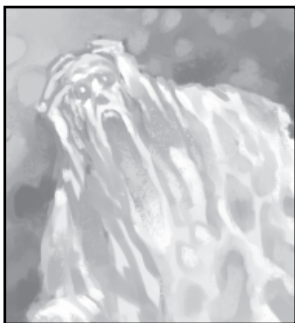
The gemstone melanite is a type of black garnet. Its opaque crystals are found in highly metamorphosed rocks and in some igneous formations.

DM TIPS

Don't forget that evil creatures in Jabel Shammar are affected by the bless spell and also can use the Malignancy to heal themselves for 10d10 hit points as a standard action.

Dungeons of Jabel Shammar, page 532

The mummy lords here, known as the Six Blasphemers, were powerful clerics of their time, broken through torture and forced to renounce their gods. After they did, the Dread One killed them to reforge them in undeath.



Malefic mask, page 505

DM TIPS

If someone falls victim to the Dread One's Despair, describe the effects subtly and without mechanics. Do not tell the player his affected PC's penalties until he actually attempts an attack, a check, or a save.

Throughout the entire encounter, all mummies and mummy lords rasp in unison a terrible, resonant, sacrilegious chant in the Abyssal tongue.

Mummies (10): 55 hp each; see MM.

Mummy Lords (6): 97 hp each; see MM.

Equipment: +2 half plate armor, cloak of resistance +2, ring of minor fire resistance, brooch of shielding, scroll of flame strike, jewelry worth 800 gp. One also has a staff of necromancy (20 charges).

Tactics: The mummies enter into combat and serve two purposes. Working together, they team up on two or three foes and use aid another tactics to grant the mummy lords Armor Class bonuses versus ranged attacks (or, if applicable, melee attacks). They also absorb attacks that would otherwise be meant for the mummy lords. If hurt, they back off and use their link with the Malignancy to heal themselves. Six of the mummies have *bull's strength* cast upon them by the mummy lords (+2 bonus to attack and damage rolls).

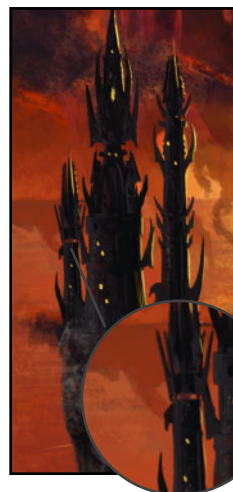
Using the Malignancy, the mummy lords almost certainly know the player characters are coming. Each has already cast *air walk*, *spell resistance* (SR 22), *divine power* (total attack bonus +29, total damage bonus +17, total hp 107), *divine favor* (total attack bonus +32, total damage bonus +20), *shield of faith* (total AC 33) and *spell immunity* (to *lightning bolt* and *fireball*). On the balcony, they use their ranged spells (*searing light*, *silence*, *dispel magic*, *flame strike*, and *hold person*) to damage or impede their foes before using *air walk* to engage in melee, if no intruder comes to them first. They choose their targets carefully and do not waste time casting spells against those who can resist their effects easily—they will try to *hold* a fighter or rogue, but not a cleric or wizard, for example. If up against powerful spellcasters, one or two of them will use *dispel magic* to attempt to counter their spells.

One of the mummy lords has a *staff of necromancy*. It starts off using its *waves of fatigue* power, then spends most of the rest of its time using *enervation* until the staff runs out of charges.

Hidden Treasure

Hidden within the niche of each mummy lord is a secret compartment (Search, DC 25, to find). These each contain a small silver coffer (worth 250 gp) that holds broken bits of silver, gold, and jeweled holy symbols worth a total of 1,000 gp each, as well as a pouch of powdered diamond and opal worth 1,000 gp (for casting *symbol of pain*). Within one of these compartments is another secret compartment (Search, DC 30, to find) that contains a *malefic mask*.

Experience Points: Award double experience points for the mummy lords, but none for the mummies.



FORLORN TOWER

This, the third of the small towers, stands alone, to the southwest of the others. It has no visible entrance, nor does it connect to the other towers in any visible way. One can enter it only through the Dungeons below the Tower of Malice. Strangely, this entire tower is open on the inside, making it mostly one cylindrical cham-

ber forty feet across and three hundred feet high. No stairs offer purchase to anyone interested in scaling to the top.

A trapdoor in the floor at the west end of the tower opens to stairs that lead up from the dungeons.

The interior walls are a medium grey but show strange, inexplicable black streaks, like claw marks or blood splatter stains. About thirty feet from the tower's ceiling, a lattice of foot-wide iron beams spaced about two feet apart creates a kind of floor, although one through which a Small or Medium creature could fall. There is no way to pass up through the lattice other than to squeeze through the two-foot-wide holes or to pass through incorporeally.

This top area has two interesting aspects. First, like the fortress' other two small towers, the black windows at the top of the Forlorn Tower are transparent from the inside, allowing one to view the rest of the fortress and the surrounding countryside if Jabel Shammar is not shrouded in clouds.

Second, a large crystal orb, five feet in diameter, floats about four feet above the iron grid. Next to it floats a huge iron chair without legs; it sports massive iron horns and spikes on both its left and right sides. It appears to be a seat for a Large humanoid. The orb is a *crystal ball* with special properties. Through it, one can cast any divination spell as if the targets viewed were within Close range.

THE DREAD ONE'S DESPAIR

Spending more than a minute in the Forlorn Tower forces any living creature to make a Will saving throw (DC 25). Those who fail are gripped by a cloying malaise that manifests itself subtly, but grows over time. Affected creatures suffer a -1 morale penalty on attacks, checks, and saves for each minute they spend in the tower. This cumulative penalty remains until the character leaves Jabel Shammar (although a *break enchantment* or a *heal*

spell removes the penalty). Someone who stays long enough to suffer a -20 penalty falls into a catatonic state permanently.



TOWER OF MALICE

This central tower is the main structure of Jabel Shammar. The very stones that comprise its interior walls, floors, and other structural elements sprang from the hatred and spite of Eslathagos Malkith. As such, they always feel cold to the touch, have a hardness of 20, and have 75 hit points per inch of thickness. The structure

(and every part of it) has SR 30 against any spell that might affect it, making even spells like *pass-wall* more difficult to use (despite the fact that such spells might not normally be subject to SR).

CHARACTERISTICS

The Tower of Malice has three unique characteristics as shown on the poster map, and described here: bladed hallways, blasphemous shrines, and iron guardians. The tower also brings into play the conditions of malice and a summoning cascade.

Bladed Hallways

Fashioned more for their intimidating appearance than as a defensive measure, the walls of certain corridors in the tower are lined with blades, hooks, and spikes that protrude menacingly at different lengths. Those moving faster than their speed, or—regardless of their speed—faster than sixty feet in a single round down one of these corridors must make a Balance check (DC 20). Those who fail suffer 1d4 points of damage. Anyone attempting a complex physical maneuver, including and especially combat, in a bladed hallway must make a Balance check (DC 20) or suffer 2d4 points of damage. Native residents of Jabel Shammar (such as the mirror guardians on Level 3 or the undead of Level 8) need not make such checks.

Blasphemous Shrines

Blasphemous shrines are located throughout the tower. While they appear to be shrines to some dark god, they are, in fact, more like anti-shrines. That is to say, each is dedicated not to the reverence of a deity, but to the hatred of deities (particularly good deities) as well as all things holy and natural. Worse, a loathsome intellect possesses each of these shrines; its

magical intuition allows it to reshape itself, incorporating the images and symbols of deities not yet born when Jabel Shammar appeared.

Covered in debased holy symbols, each shrine appears to be a high, narrow table set in a shallow alcove with black drapery. The symbols and images of the various gods of any and all thinking creatures within one hundred feet automatically appear on the shrine, formed from its own substance (the shrines are akin to demonic mimics). These symbols and images are debased, corrupted, and desecrated in ways only a demon's mind could conjure.

If approached, the shrine emanates a *blasphemy* effect without need of a word (and therefore sound). Those who are still standing afterward receive the attentions of huge, fistlike tendrils formed from the black draperies. Anyone who devoutly serves a deity (certainly divine spellcasters, perhaps other characters at the DM's discretion) suffers a -2 penalty to attacks and damage rolls made against the shrine (no save). Unlike normal mimics, the shrines never take other forms.

Blasphemous Shrine

Huge aberration (Neutral Evil)
Special advanced fiendish mimic **CR** 16
HD 21d8+105 **hp** 199
Init +0 **Speed** 10 feet
AC 17, touch 8, flat-footed 17
BAB/Grapple +15/+31
Attack/Full Attack +22 melee (2d6+8, slam)
Space/Reach 15 feet/15 feet
SA Adhesive (automatic grapple after a hit; grappled creatures or items remain stuck until adhesive dissolves 5 rounds after shrine's death; Reflex save, DC 18, to keep one's weapon free after hitting shrine; Strength check, DC 18, to pry it off if stuck), crush (2d6+8 points of damage after grappling), smite good (+20 bonus to damage against one good foe per day), *blasphemy* (every other round, DC 24)
SQ DR 10/good, darkvision 60 feet, immune to acid, resistance to cold 10 and fire 10, SR 25
Fort +14, **Ref** +9, **Will** +15
Str 27, **Dex** 10, **Con** 21, **Int** 10, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 20
Crucial Skills: Climb +20, Listen +15, Spot +15.
Other Skills: Disguise +25.
Crucial Feats: N/A
Other Feats: Ability Focus (adhesive), Ability Focus (*blasphemy*), Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Natural Armor, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (slam).

Iron Guardians

The Dread One created a number of varied iron golems to watch over the Tower of Malice in his absence. At each of the points marked on the poster map, he stationed these guardians. The golems attack all intruders, even demons and the like, except those who wear a *malefic mask*. They come toward noises they hear and, if they see an



FROM MY CAMPAIGN TO YOURS

Blasphemous shrines turned out to be much more dangerous than I had originally thought. Initially designed to be almost a nuisance encounter, the shrines proved to be a real threat due to their ability to use blasphemy (which allows no saving throw) every other round. This ability allowed the shrines to dominate every encounter. It got to the point where, after encountering two of these things, the player characters would flee from them and erect barriers to keep them at bay. In a rather unfortunate encounter, a PC attempted to destroy a blasphemous shrine with a chaositech void bomb (PT6: page 572), which ended up hurting the other party members much more than the shrine.

Malefic mask, page 505

JABEL SHAMMAR GUIDE

Misbegotten Tower

Laboratories, aboleth custodians, The Misbegotten, and the Ivory Egg.

Tower of Blasphemy

Nightcrawler pit, three evil fonts, and the Temple of Impiety.

Forlorn Tower

Dread One's crystal orb and Dread One's Despair.

Tower of Malice

Dread One's throne room and residence, Mirror Maze, Court of Hate, Alabaster Sanctuary, and Trial of the Book.

Dungeons

Master of the Dungeons, the Hidden Prison, Naxx the ocular tyrant, and the Seeping Portal.

DM TIPS

It may be difficult to remember the Malice effect for each and every combat encounter, so have the player characters make their saving throws even as they make their initiative checks.



intruder, they attack. Because of this, once player characters have entered the tower and the summoning cascade has occurred (see below), the golems might seem to wander about the tower, moving from noise to noise. The DM should feel free to have the PCs encounter them wherever and whenever seems logical; the map and the text below note only their starting locations. They pursue foes until destroyed. Each golem has been fashioned in a unique form and, in addition to its standard iron golem abilities, possesses a special power.



Heat Golem. These golems look like metal men in a constant state of melting and cooling. Each glows red hot, then white, then red again. In addition to the normal damage it inflicts, each golem deals +4d6 points of fire damage with each hit or touch on odd-numbered rounds, and +6d6 points of fire damage on even-numbered rounds. Anyone within ten feet of either golem suffers 1d6 points of fire damage (no save). These golems have fast healing 5, but additional fire damage does not heal them further. These golems are each CR 15. (*Tower Level 4*)



Spike Golem. These golems were fashioned in the shape of winged gargoyles covered with horns, spines, and spikes. They can fly with average maneuverability at speed 60. When not flying they have two additional wing attacks made at +18 that inflict 2d8+5 points of damage. When these golems breathe poison gas, they also fire a volley of iron spikes from their bodies in a thirty-foot cone as a free action, inflicting 6d6 points of damage (Reflex save, DC 19, for half damage). These golems are each CR 14. (*Tower Level 7*)



Electricity Golem. These golems look like featureless men made of blue metal and crackling with lightning. Both fire and electricity damage heal them the way fire normally heals an iron golem, and they have fast healing 5. Each also inflicts an additional +2d6 points of electricity damage with each strike or touch. When it breathes poison gas, it also loses a 15d6 *chain lightning* bolt (DC 19). In the area where they stand guard, the floor sprouts stony hands if a living creature walks upon it. These hands grasp, smack, and shove living creatures, inflicting no damage but making it difficult to act or think normally. Anyone standing on the floor suffers a -4 circumstance penalty on attacks, saves, and checks due to these hands. Spellcasters face a 20 percent spell failure chance. Speed from movement across the floor is cut in half. (*Tower Level 9*)

The golems are both CR 15, but the encounter has a total EL of 18 due to the grasping hands.



Angel Golem. The Dread One made this golem look like a tall female angel made of iron. It can fly with average

maneuverability at speed 80, has double the normal number of hit points (258), and Strength 38. It also wields a +4 *large flaming unholy longsword* in one hand that replaces its slams with a +30/+25/+20 melee attack (1d8+15 damage +1d6 fire +2d6 unholy, critical 17–20). Its other hand holds a +4 *large heavy steel shield* (adds +6 bonus to its Armor Class for a total of AC 36). The save DC for its poison gas attack is 25. This golem is CR 17. (*Tower Level 9*)

Iron Golems (Varies): 129 hp each; see MM.

Teleporters



The poster map shows four teleporters in various areas of the Tower of Malice. They link Levels 5, 6, and 7. Each is a platform about eight feet across that rises about an inch above the floor. They are made of stone engraved with a swirling pattern. A teleporter sends any creature (including gear) or object placed upon it to its corresponding teleporter after 1 round; anything placed on the teleporter marked "A" goes to the other teleporter marked "A," and likewise with the teleporters marked "B." A creature must step off a teleporter and step back on to return.

Malice

Whenever any intelligent non-evil outsider enters into combat within the Tower of Malice, it must make a Will saving throw (DC 25). Failure indicates that the creature is so consumed with anger and hate that it loses control and attacks the nearest creature to its fullest ability, regardless of that creature's identity. A new saving throw is allowed each round to throw off the effect. An outsider must make only one success per combat encounter to resist the effect for that entire encounter. This ability ignores spell resistance, but it is a mind-affecting, enchantment effect.

Summoning Cascade

As soon as anyone enters the Tower of Malice's first level, the summoned residents of Level 1, Level 5, and Level 10 appear in their chambers, compelled to kill any intruder they encounter. The summoned creatures remain in their positions for a year and a day, then disappear (if not slain first). This is called the "summoning cascade," because literally one summoning triggers the next, and so on, until all the conjured creatures are once again in place.

Eslathagos Malkith was neutral evil, with no patience for law or chaos (although truthfully he exhibited tendencies of both in his desire to both master and yet destroy everything he encountered). Thus, when he interacted with fiends, he had no preference for demons or devils, so the summoning cascade brings both to Jabel Shammar. The two types of fiends don't interact well together, but they

also do not automatically oppose one another, either, thanks in part to the Dread One's infamy and in part to the compulsions placed upon them.

In addition to those creatures mentioned in the descriptions below, a trio of cornugon devils is also summoned to Jabel Shammar, as are a pair of D'Stradi annihilators. They have no lairs, but instead wander around the four towers. Basically, DMs should use these encounters if the player characters begin to "clean out" the fortress. Returning to an already explored area may result in one of these encounters. The cornugons make for an EL 19 encounter and the pair of D'Stradi demons are an EL 15 encounter. In either case, the fiends are immediately Hostile. If seriously threatened, they are likely to teleport away, heal (using the Malignancy), find the PCs later (using the Malignancy), and attack with surprise.

LEVEL 1: ENTRY (EL 23)

Doors lead into the Tower of Malice via the walkways from the Misbegotten Tower to the east and the Tower of Blasphemy to the north. Only a *malefic mask* wearer can open these outside doors, which are, of course, indestructible. The statue next to the northern entrance depicts a life-size pit fiend, rendered in astonishing and terrifying detail. The ceilings on this level rise eighty feet above the floor.

Foyer

A mosaic of dark tiles covers the floor of foyer, forming an intricate pattern of evil symbols and unholy runes (though they have no magical properties). Three massive suits of full plate armor stand upright along the east wall, and six huge black battleaxes hang next to them. Strangely, each armor harness has two helmets.

The huge black adamantine doors leading into the Great Hall carry a permanent *antipathy* targeting neutral good creatures (Will save, DC 25).

Guardians: As soon as anyone enters this room, the summoning cascade is invoked, bringing three Huge fiendish ettin fighters *into* the suits of armor. These three were always favorites of the Dread One, and he granted them powerful magic armor and weapons to use when summoned here. As soon as they appear, they activate the *baste* effect in the armor, grab their weapons from the wall, and attack, fighting to the death. The *baste* grants them +30 feet of speed, +1 attack bonus, +1 to Armor Class (total AC 31), and a +1 bonus on Reflex saves (+10 total).

Huge Fiendish Ettins (3)

Huge giants (extraplanar), (Chaotic Evil)

Fightero CR 19
HD 10d8+60 + 10d10+60 **hp** 220
Init +5 **Speed** 30 feet
AC 30, touch 9, flat-footed 29
BAB/Grapple +17/+36

Attack +30 melee (3d6+15, 19–20/x3, battleaxe)

Full Attack +30/+25/+20/+15 melee (3d6+15, 19–20/x3, battleaxe) and +30/+25/+20/+15 melee (3d6+15, 19–20/x3, battleaxe)

SA Smite good (+20 damage) 1/day

SQ DR 10/magic, SR 25, resistance to cold 10, electricity 10, and fire 10; low-light vision, superior two-weapon fighting

Fort +20, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10

Str 32, **Dex** 13, **Con** 22, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Crucial Skills: Climb +22, Intimidate +15, Jump +22, Listen +15, Search +2, Spot +15.

Other Skills: Knowledge (the planes) +1.

Crucial Feats: Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Cleave, Power Attack.

Other Feats: Alertness, Greater Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe).

Possessions: +3 mithral full plate armor of speed and electricity resistance, +2 huge battleaxes (2).

Experience Points: Award 150 percent of normal XP for the ettin fighters.

Great Hall

As one enters from the foyer, the Great Hall plunges down into darkness as well as up to a dizzying height. Everything here is varying shades of grey and instills a feeling of dread.

This chamber has a *forbiddance* effect cast by a 20th-level neutral evil caster (Will save, DC 23).

The floor here is fifty feet below the level of the entrance from the east; a wide staircase leads up to the doors. The west half of the room is a platform of a height equal to that of the doors; wide steps lead from the floor up to it as well. Columns in an arc that bisects the room from north to south hold up the platform fifty feet off the floor and continue rising to meet the ceiling eighty feet above that.

Resting atop the platform in the west half of the room is another platform supported by pillars ten feet high. On this rectangular platform sits a ten-foot-cube steel cage with a door on the eastern side; a massive iron chain affixed to a hook in the top of the cage runs up to a hole in the ceiling. If anyone opens the cage door, the next time it is closed, the chain brings the cage up to Level 2 (or, if it is already there, back down to Level 1). This lift moves slowly, taking a full minute to get to the next level.

Anyone passing through the hole in the ceiling who is not in the cage gets zapped by an electrical field that inflicts 10d6 points of electricity damage (Reflex save, DC 25, for half).

The lowest level of the chamber harbors a ten-foot-square secret trap door (Search, DC 27) in the far western portion of the floor right under the main platform. The trap door is triple locked (each is DC 35 to open). This is the entrance to the dungeons of Jabel Shammar.

DM TIPS

To keep up the tension in Jabel Shammar, remember to call for frequent Spot and Listen checks, randomly setting the Difficulty Class at 15, 20, or 25. Success means a character sees movement in the shadows or hears a strange noise, but no source of the motion or sound ever presents itself.



D'Stradi annihilators, PT6: page 620
The Malignancy, page 503

Malefic masks, page 505

DM TIPS

Don't forget that evil creatures in Jabel Shammar are affected by the *bless* spell and can use the Malignancy to heal themselves 10d10 hit points as a standard action.



Dungeons of Jabel Shammar, page 532

“And in those days, the people did not understand what had become of their beloved Danar.

They would still visit his tower and see that it had changed, but still they would appear before his throne—such a testament to vileness and a darkness of spirit as the world has never known before or since. In this evil throne room they would speak to Eslathagos Malkith, some begging for mercy, some with words of diplomatic alliance, and some with the entreaties relating to the life he had led before his corruption. The most fortunate of these petitioners evoked dark, cynical laughter from the Dread Lord, and were slain swiftly. The less fortunate languished in the torture pits of his dungeons for untold years. Only one thing these supplicants had in common: All those who went into the fortress now known as Jabel Shammar never again saw the sun.”
—Ancient scroll of anonymous authorship in the collection of Navaen Blueflight

DM TIPS

While the player characters are on this level, listen carefully to what the players say. If a player says, “the Dread One,” “Eslathagos Malkith,” or “Danar,” assume that the PC says it.

Corruption points, page 503

Uncorrupted sections of Mosul Pearl: See the Alabaster Sanctuary, page 521.

LEVEL 2: THRONE OF THE DREAD ONE

This entire level is one vast, imposing chamber with a ceiling sixty feet above the floor. Those coming up via the iron cage lift from Level 1 find this room designed specifically to intimidate and strike dreadful awe in the minds of all who enter.

Hundreds of magic black candles, forever burning, are set into holders and sconces in the floor around the throne to provide a flickering illumination. A huge throne on a massive dais dominates the east part of the chamber, flanked by many rows of black candles on tall iron candleholders. The walls are jagged and angled but bear no symbols or images. A red and gold carpet leads from the iron cage to the throne.

Punishment of the Righteous

Any good-aligned creature that comes into this room suffers 3d6 points of unholy damage (no saving throw) with 1d6 points of damage per round afterward. The damage is augmented by the following factors:

- +1d6 for each holy or good-aligned magic item the creature possesses.
- +1d6 for each spell or spell-like effect with the good descriptor in effect on the creature.
- +2d6 if the creature has any celestial blood or essence (aasimar, half-celestial, or celestial creature).
- +2d6 if the creature is a good-aligned outsider.
- +2d6 if the creature is a full-blown celestial.

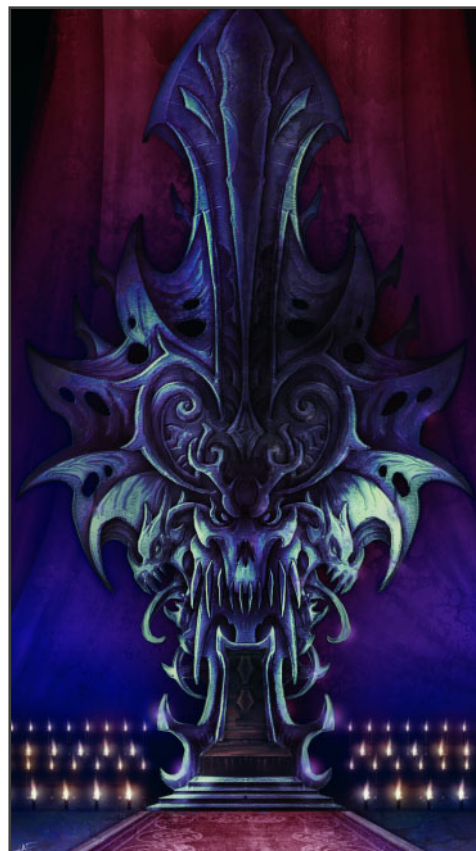
All additions are cumulative, so an astral deva with a holy mace suffers 11d6 points of damage on the first round and 9d6 points of damage each subsequent round (the deva’s protective aura, being just like a *magic circle against good*, counts as a good effect).

Speaking in the Throne Room

Anyone who speaks the name “the Dread One” while in this chamber is struck deaf permanently (no saving throw). The only exception to this effect is a creature kneeling before the throne when speaking the name. Such a creature instead gains a +1 luck bonus on its next attack, save, or check, but it also gains 1 corruption point.

Anyone who speaks the name “Eslathagos Malkith” while in this chamber is struck blind permanently (no saving throw).

Creatures who speak the name “Danar” in this room must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 20). Those who fail are struck dead. Those who succeed at the save suddenly get the idea that there may be sections of Mosul Pearl still left uncorrupted within Jabel Shammar.



The Throne

Covered in carved jet and inlaid with gold, the throne is a wonder to behold. Though it was fashioned for a Medium humanoid to sit upon, it measures ten feet wide and twenty feet tall. Anyone seated there enjoys SR 40. The throne cannot be moved without destroying it.

Four secret switches on the throne’s arms activate magical effects. Each is a standard action to activate.

1. Creates a magical stairway made of solidified darkness ten feet wide that winds up and around the walls to get to the next level.
2. Surrounds anyone seated on the throne (and the throne, but nothing else) with a *wall of force*, or lowers this wall. Activating this switch while not seated may result in characters being cut off from the throne unless they can bring down a *wall of force*. Activating this switch while seated on the throne bestows 1 corruption point.
3. Fires rays of negative energy (as the spell *enervation*, with an attack bonus of +15) at everyone in the room. (If the person activating the switch is seated, the attack excludes all allies.) Anyone seated on the throne gains 2 temporary hit points for each negative level bestowed in this way. Activating this switch while seated on the throne bestows 2 corruption points.

4. Teleports anyone in the room anywhere (Fortitude save, DC 25 to resist) in Jabel Shammar, including the dungeons. The person seated in the throne chooses both targets and destination. If no one is seated, everyone in the room must make the saving throw, and the destination is random. Activating this switch while seated on the throne bestows 1 corruption point.

Hidden Compartment: Within the massive throne and accessible to someone seated in it, lies a secret compartment (Search, DC 35) containing a Vallis stone. It is unprepared and, as such, would power five levels of spells. If treated (at a cost of 10,000 gp), it would power one hundred levels of spells. A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 35) reveals that the stone used to be much, much larger.

LEVEL 3: HALL OF TWISTED REFLECTIONS (EL 20)

This mazelike level is filled with mirrors arranged in a confusing layout not unlike the Undercity's well-known Mirror Maze (the Mirror Maze was actually inspired by half-remembered legends of this place). No mirror here is perfect; each distorts the image it reflects, and some of them magically transform the mirror images of creatures into those of demons, monstrous aberrations, or mutated versions of themselves. Each mirror is mounted on a sheet of steel one inch thick and presents as difficult a challenge to damage as any interior wall in the tower.

Due to the prevalence of mirrors, saving throws versus gaze attacks on this level suffer a -2 circumstance penalty. The ceiling here is 15 feet high.

Mirror Guardians

Each of the five small rooms on this level holds a mirror guardian in stasis. Standing fourteen feet high even with their hunched posture, these horrific monstrosities are covered in thick carapaces. Massive, toothy maws dominate their wide, misshapen heads. Bulbous eyes positioned on the sides of their heads command an almost three-hundred-sixty degree range of vision. Their vaguely humanoid forms include arms ending in wicked claws.

These personal creations of the Dread One have iron plates fused to their already formidable carapaces, granting each a +8 armor bonus to Armor Class (for a total of AC 30). They also enjoy the *Dread One's blessing*, an effect that grants them maximum hit points and a +4 bonus to the saving throw DCs of their spells and special abilities (so their *confusion gaze* has a DC of 26).

Anyone entering the maze awakens the mirror guardians from their slumber. Using their link with the Malignancy, they always know the position of any intruders in the maze, as well as that of the other mirror guardians. While they don't

work well together, they are all very hungry and eager to feast on fresh meat.

Mirror Guardians (5)

Huge aberrations (Neutral Evil)

CR 14

HD 20d8+200 hp 360

Init +2 Speed 30 feet

AC 24, touch 10, flat-footed 24

BAB/Grapple +15/+36

Attack +26 melee (3d6+13, claw)

Full Attack +26 melee (3d6+13, 2 claws) and +24 melee (4d6+6, bite)

Space/Reach 15 feet/15 feet

SA *Confusion gaze* (as the spell, 30 feet, CL 20th; Will DC 26 negates; Charisma-based save DC.)

SQ DR 10/magic, darkvision 60 feet

Fort +17, Ref +10, Will +15

Str 36, Dex 14, Con 31, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15

Crucial Skills: Climb +23, Jump +15, Listen +21, Spot +5.

Other Skills: N/A

Crucial Feats: Cleave, Dodge, Power Attack.

Other Feats: Improved Natural Attack (claw), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack.

Experience Points: Award 150 percent normal XP for the mirror guardians.

LEVEL 4: GUEST CHAMBERS

This level contains many small chambers once used by advisors and emissaries to the Dread One—most of whom never left Jabel Shammar alive. The guest rooms were once lavish, but now have decayed into rotted parodies of past finery created to deceive and, ultimately, betray. The ceiling here is fifteen feet high.

Antimagic Zone (EL 15)

An *antimagic field* with a radius of fifteen feet surrounding the staircase leading from here up to Level 5 suppresses all magical effects. No sensory signal provides a clue of this, unless someone directs or brings an obvious magical effect into the area. The *antimagic field* itself is suppressed if a living creature stands upon the staircase. However, this ends the suppression of two permanent magical effects in the area: a *symbol of death* on the stairs and a *wall of force* on the perimeter of the zone and over the hole in the ceiling where the top of the stairs would otherwise provide access to the next level.

Crushing Trap: A massive iron wheel depends around the staircase set into the ceiling, with the staircase passing up and through the hole in the center of the wheel. The wheel measures thirty feet in diameter, its bottom covered in jagged blades. The wheel is, in fact, a number of nested wheels, each about six inches thick. If more than 50 lbs. is placed anywhere beneath the wheel(s), all the individual

Extradimensional Spaces in Jabel Shammar

When a caster in Jabel Shammar creates an extradimensional space, such as a rope trick or Mord's magnificent mansion, and looks inside, everything appears normal at first. While she watches, however, a wave of dark red energy spreads from the entrance throughout the space, transforming it to resemble the interior of Jabel Shammar: strange and dangerous angles, hideous reliefs and paintings, and a shadowy darkness that cannot be dispelled. All aspects of the space, such as the servants conjured with Mord's magnificent mansion, appear to be evil spirits, and the furnishings are gothic and macabre in design.

Dungeons, page 532

Vallis stone, PT2: page 47 (note the effects of leakage)



Mirror Maze, PT7: page 436

The Malignancy, page 503

DM TIPS

In an encounter with the mirror guardians, a character could be affected by both the Malice effects of the tower (page 516) and the confusion of a monster's gaze. Both these effects dictate PC actions. However, when both are in effect, the guardians' confusion gaze trumps the effects of the Malice. This means that a character affected by both must first do as the confusion spell requires. Only when that action concludes does he then fall victim to the Malice.

Malefic masks, page 505

The Malignancy, page 503

DM TIPS

*Don't forget that evil creatures in Jabel Shammar are affected by the *bless* spell and also can use the *Malignancy* to heal themselves for 10d10 hit points as a standard action.*

Bladed corridors, page 515

Legends say that even fiends summoned to the Court of Hate from hellish dimensions below learned secrets of hatred and scorn from the Dread One. This is not the only time that ancient texts make reference to the idea that the Dread One somehow attained a stature of malevolence even greater than that of demons.



Ivory egg, page 508

wheels begin rotating quickly, each in a direction opposite those it touches. Then the entire terrible, grinding contraption pounds down to the floor. When the wheel is down, the staircase remains inaccessible. The crushing trap resets in 1 round.

The only safe place is the staircase, or so it would seem. When the *antimagic field* is suppressed by the presence of someone on the stairs, the *symbol of death* inscribed upon it (Fortitude save, DC 23) is triggered, and a *wall of force* seals the area at the edge of where the field used to be.

Hidden switches (Search, DC 30, to find) at the far ends of the bladed corridors on this level disable the trap (but not the *antimagic field* or the symbol on the stairs) for 1 full round when pressed. Originally, guards were posted at these positions to deactivate the trap for welcome visitors or inhabitants of the tower.

Crushing Trap: CR 14; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Reflex saving throw (DC 25) for half damage (20d6 crush, Reflex save, DC 25, half damage); Search DC 25 (trigger only—trap is obvious); Disable Device DC 30.

Iron Golems: The iron guardians on the west end of the room certainly come if the trap activates, and they likely hear any attempts to disarm it. They are not affected by the *antimagic field* and may attempt to use it, bull rushing or even tossing grappled characters into the area of the wheels.

LEVEL 5: COURT OF HATE (EL 24)

Due to the needs of this chamber, the floor itself is twenty feet thick. The stairs from Level 4 run up a shaft through this thick floor. This level is mainly a single large room built around a huge pool of blood-red water. The stairway shaft, in fact, comes up in the middle of the pool. On the west end of the pool rise two thirty-foot-tall clear crystal obelisks. The ceiling here is seventy feet high.

Between the two obelisks at one end of the pool, a robed skeleton propped up on a post and surrounded by skulls and bones stands in effigy. The pool itself is surrounded by horned skulls.

When Jabel Shammar was in use, Eslathagos Malkith's lieutenants staged mock trials in this chamber, pronouncing death and destruction not only on prisoners brought here, but on whole races and nations of the world as well. It was here that the Dread One taught his servants to have contempt for all things and fostered an aura of spite and malice unlike anything the world has ever seen.

The Blood-Red Pool

The pool is eleven feet deep. Any creature that is not an evil outsider who touches the water suffers 1d6 points of temporary Wisdom damage (Fortitude save, DC 25, for half damage). If the water is frozen (say, by the power of a summoned

gelugon), the ice retains its abilities, so a wall of ice would inflict Wisdom damage upon those touching it. Anyone wearing a *malefic mask* is immune to the effects of the water.

The Obelisks/Summoned Pit Fiends

Two pit fiends stand watch from within the transparent obelisks. As soon as intruders are about to arrive—which they know from their link to the Malignancy—the pit fiends cast *unholy aura* on themselves (adding +4 to Armor Class, for a total of AC 44, a +4 bonus on saves, and other effects for 20 rounds). They announce, “Welcome to the Court of Hate. You have been judged and found wanting. Ready yourselves for punishment.”

On their mental command, the obelisks become incorporeal, allowing them to cast spells or even make melee attacks through the obelisks without difficulty. This mental command is not an action; thus they can make the obelisk incorporeal, attack or cast, and then make it corporeal again, all on their turn. Their first actions will probably be to each summon an ice devil (unless the intruders are in a good position for a *meteor swarm*).

Within the transparent obelisks, the pit fiends have 100 percent cover—the player characters must destroy the obelisks to get at the devils. The clear material is a strange, otherworldly substance unique in this world. While the obelisks are corporeal, incorporeal creatures or attacks cannot bypass them, nor can magic that normally ignores objects, like a *brilliant energy* weapon. The transparent material is incredibly hard: It has a hardness of 30 and 100 hit points. Further, the material has SR 35 and fast heals itself 10 points per round.

Once a devil's protective obelisk is destroyed, it changes tactics abruptly and uses its speed and maneuverability to fly around the large room, making swooping attacks against foes.

Pit Fiends (2): hp 220 and 230; see MM.

Experience Points: Award double XP for the pit fiends.

The Egg

The ivory egg found on Level 4 of the Misbegotten Tower has great power here: It makes its possessor completely immune to the pit fiends' attacks, whether they be physical, spell-like, or supernatural. Also, if anyone should throw the egg against one of the obelisks, both obelisks crumble to dust permanently, although the process destroys the egg as well. Parnaith, creator of the egg, hated and feared this chamber most of all.

Hidden Treasure

Beneath each obelisk lies a secret compartment (Search, DC 25) containing a glowing green gem that gives the obelisk above its power. If it is



removed, each gem has the magical abilities of a *pearl of power* (9th level), and the obelisk—or whatever is currently left of it—crumbles to dust. If the gems are not removed, the obelisks reform after sixty-six days.

LEVEL 6: SANCTUARY

This level contains a chamber of such puissant benevolence that even the Dread One could not corrupt it. The ceiling here rises fifteen feet high. One can access this level only via the teleporters shown on the poster map on Levels 5 and 7.

The Corridor of Corruption

Originally designed to store malevolent power to be used in the corruption of the Alabaster Sanctuary (see below), this circular corridor surrounds the inner chamber. The only door that passes from this hallway to the sanctuary is sealed shut

with a special triple *arcane lock* (three separate *knock* spells are required to overcome it) and covered with black adamantine. Further, any creature of a non-evil alignment entering the corridor must make two Will saving throws each minute (DC 25 for both). Those failing the first are overcome by the overwhelming malevolence here and fall unconscious for 1d6 minutes. Those who fail the second saving throw suffer 3 corruption points.

Alabaster Sanctuary

No creature of evil alignment can enter this sanctuary. The Malignancy does not extend here. Neither it nor creatures linked to it can sense into this room, and they continue to be unable to sense any character who has been in this room for 1d6+4 rounds after they leave.

One of the last vestiges of Mosul Pearl, the Alabaster Sanctuary was the sanctum sanctorum of

It is likely that once the player characters find the Alabaster Sanctuary, they will want to make it their “base of operations” for the rest of the time they spend in Jabel Shammar. DMs should encourage this plan.

Corruption points, page 503

The Malignancy, page 503

Observant players will notice that the bed here (used by Danar), as well as the bed in the Dread One's Suite (page 525) both have incense of meditation nearby. Even after his complete corruption, some predilections of Danar/The Dread One did not change.

Galchutt, PT2: page 60

Corruption points, page 503



Balleah has been lonely but content knowing that helping to preserve a last bastion of goodness in this most evil of places is a worthwhile duty.

*The Malignancy, page 503
Dread One's Suite, page 525
Dungeons, page 532*

*Vested of the Galchutt,
PT2: page 60*

*Dark Averon, page 531
Bastion, page 530*

Danar before he became the Dread One. The walls and ceiling here are pearlescent white, with gold and silver tapestries hung tastefully throughout. A series of gold and blue rugs cover the floor. The air feels comfortably cool and smells of rose petals. All sounds are gently muffled.

In the center of the chamber is a circular dais surrounded by gauzy curtains. These drapes hang from a golden ring twenty feet across, suspended fifteen feet above the floor on golden chains. On the dais is a bed of white and gold silken pillows. The chamber also holds a large golden chest, a white marble statue of a lammasu, and a painted stone statue of a bald, green-skinned angel.

The Meditation Bed: With room for ten or more to recline comfortably, this area offers a safe and relaxing place to rest even within the evil confines of Jabel Shammar. On two sides of the dais, small tables hold incense burners filled with *incense of meditation*. A +4 *tome of understanding* lies amid the pillows.

The Golden Chest: Within the unlocked chest are ten *potions of cure serious wounds* in crystal vials (each worth 50 gp), ten crystal flasks (each worth 100 gp) of holy water, and a scroll of *holy aura, heal, and holy word*.

The Lammasu: Touching this statue infuses a character with positive energy. The character is fully healed—all lost hit points and temporary ability score damage points are restored. The character loses 5 corruption points, if he has them. The statue works only once for each character.

The Angel: Touching this statue brings it to life—it becomes a planetar named Balleah. As it does, it releases a pulse of holy energy equal to a maximized *holy smite* that fills the entire sanctuary (since evil creatures cannot enter, only nongood neutral characters are affected: 40 points of damage, Will save, DC 20, for 20 points). The planetar immediately notes whether anyone appears damaged when she comes to life. She willingly helps anyone in the chamber any way she can, casting such spells as *remove disease, raise dead, greater restoration, break enchantment, heroes' feast*, and so on. She knows all the properties of the sanctuary, about Jabel Shammar (generally, but not the specific contents or inhabitants of every room), and about the Malignancy. She tells player characters what she can. She doesn't know the secret of the book in the Dread One's Suite, but she knows there is a secret way into a place called "the Trial of the Book." She even knows that the dungeons hold a secret prison somewhere for important prisoners, but again, she has no specifics beyond that. She also knows that her former friends Averon and Bastion have both been corrupted to darkness. She remains here with the hope that one day the evil can be purged from the tower, but she is apprehensive about leaving, fearing corruption.

When the characters are ready to depart, if she noted that no one was harmed by the *holy smite* effect, and if they desire it, she will gather the courage to accompany them as an ally for as long as they are in Jabel Shammar, or until she is slain. If the entire group is not of good alignment, she will not accompany them, however she will cast *holy aura, bull's strength, bear's endurance, shield of faith, aid, eagle's splendor*, and any other lasting spell she might deem helpful.

Balleah, Planetar Angel: 133 hp; see MM.

LEVEL 7: GALLERIES

The ceilings on this level are twenty feet high. The various galleries here contain statues and paintings of demons, devils, dark gods, and hideous creatures—even horrible depictions of the Galchutt themselves.

The Hideous Mural: In the northern wall of this level, the Dread One commissioned fiendish artisans to create a work of singular evil. It depicts scenes straight from Hell of depredations and torment no sane person should ever look upon. Anyone taking more than just a cursory glance at the mural gains 2 corruption points.

LEVEL 8: RESIDENCES

This level served as the lair of some of Jabel Shammar's most powerful residents, most of whom are long dead. Thus, many of its chambers are simply empty bedrooms and other living quarters, variously furnished. The ceilings on this level are fifteen feet high.

Three Murderers (EL 22)

The door to a large room on the south end of this level hangs open. This chamber served as the quarters for three undead servants of the Dread One. It is empty except for three wooden coffins covered with Elvish script and elaborate designs. The floor is extremely uneven, carved to appear to be a mass of writhing snakes, some normal size and some quite large. The snakes rise and twist around, creating strange holes, looming obstacles and other dangers to those who do not move carefully along the surface.

In the days of Danar and Mosul Pearl, the elves sent three representatives to entreat with the benevolent lord and his lovely wife—one of the Solarr elves, one of the Lunas, and one of the Shoal. The forces of Vladaam and Gorgoth-Lol, two Vested of the Galchutt, tricked the elf emissaries into taking a book to Danar as a gift. The elves had no idea that it was none other than the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, a tome older than the world itself.

Danar recognized the book for what it was, but—due either to his faith, or overconfidence—he believed he could store it in a vault as he

had done with so many other evil artifacts and objects. As is now well known, this decision was his undoing. When Danar had become completely corrupted, he tracked down the emissaries who had brought him the book and magically compelled them to slay their own families and friends. When they were finished, he killed the elves and brought them to Jabel Shammar as undead servants.

Snake Floor. Anyone standing on the floor must make a Balance check (DC 20) or suffer a –2 circumstance penalty on attacks and Armor Class. Whenever someone moves, a new Balance check is required. Anyone running in the room suffers a –4 circumstance penalty on the check that round. The mohrgs, used to the snake floor, need not make checks.

Mohrgs: These undead hide not in the coffins, but amid the snakes on the floor, crouching and waiting to pounce. They attack any living creature that enters and pursue foes who attempt to leave or flee.

Mohrg Fighters (3)

Medium undead elves (Chaotic Evil)

Fighter 10 **CR** 18

HD 14d12 + 10d10 **hp** 146

Init +11 **Speed** 30 feet

AC 36, touch 19, flat-footed 30

BAB/Grapple +17/+25

Attack +25* melee (2d6+22, 17–20/x2, greatsword) or +25 melee (1d6+8, slam) or +25 melee touch (paralysis, tongue)

Full Attack +25/+25/+20/+15/+10* melee (2d6+22, 17–20/x2, greatsword) and +25 melee touch (paralysis, tongue)

SA Improved grab, paralyzing touch (Fortitude DC 22 after tongue hit or paralyzed 1d4 minutes), create spawn

SQ Darkvision 60 feet, undead traits

Fort +11, **Ref** +16, **Will** +13

Str 27, **Dex** 25, **Con** —, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 17

Crucial Skills: Climb +16, Hide +36, Intimidate +17, Jump +19, Listen +11, Move Silently +24, Spot +16.

Other Skills: Swim +12.

Crucial Feats: Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Disarm, Mobility, Power Attack.

Other Feats: Ability Focus (paralyzing touch), Alertness, Greater Weapon Focus (greatsword), Improved Critical (greatsword), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

* Assumes 5 points of Power Attack.

Possessions: +4 mithral chain shirt of fire resistance, ring of protection +3, cloak of elvenkind, +3 greatsword of speed, jeweled cloak clasp worth 500 gp.

Experience Points: Award 150 percent normal XP for the mohrg fighters.

Dire Song (EL 14)

This northern room appears to be a normal bedchamber not unlike the others on this level. Music can be heard coming from the room, but it sounds muffled and indistinct until the door is opened.

The Dread One once had a human lieutenant named Polemith who spent all her time studying the dark side of music and sound. Her studies helped her master create such awful creatures as cloaklers and destrachans and loose them upon the world, but such creatures had only a fraction of Polemith's powers. When the Dread One died, Polemith found herself trapped within Jabel Shammar. She died here, but her ghost remained to haunt the place.

Over time, though, even the haunting subsided. With the passage of millennia, the ghost's intellect eroded away, until all that was left of it was the haunting melody at its very core. This terrible song is itself a thing of corruption and darkness, even though it no longer has an intelligence behind it. Anyone listening to it gains 2 corruption points and suffers 1d6 points of permanent Wisdom drain. A difficult Will save (DC 32) allows a character to shut it out and avoid corruption points. A bard can counter the Dire Song with the countersong ability, but attempts to magically silence the effect must overcome a spell resistance of 35. A *holy word* or *dispel evil* spell can suppress the Dire Song for 1d6 rounds. Nothing else affects it.

Treasure: Polemith's various journals and handwritten texts lay about the room. If read in their entirety (which takes one month), an evil bard gains enough experience to rise to the midpoint of the next highest level and enjoys a +1 inherent bonus to Charisma. Even a non-evil bard gains 2d6 × 1,000 XP (or enough to gain the minimum needed to go up one level, whichever is less) for reading them.

Hidden Treasure: Hidden in this room beneath the bed (Search, DC 20) are a set of special *pipes of haunting* that have no Hit Dice limit and a save DC of 20. They have a value of 15,000 gp. Hidden in the back of the wooden dresser (Search, DC 25) is a *greater horn of blasting* and a *horn of goodness/evil*.

Experience Points: Award characters who encounter the Dire Song and survive as if they had overcome a CR 14 creature.

LEVEL 9: LIBRARY

A collection of mazelike chambers constitutes the library of the Dread One. This level holds an extensive collection of books and scrolls, each magically preserved so as not to age or decay as long as it stays here—any nonmagical books removed from the library turn to dust. The ceilings are thirty feet high, and the books go all the way to the top, although a dark wooden balcony

The Dire Song has gained a legendary status among chaos cultists and other malevolent forces in Ptolus. Its actual origins are shrouded in myth, although a Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (history) check (DC 30) reveals the truth. Cultists evoke its name and believe that on the Night of Dissolution (PT2: page 60) the Dire Song will ring out for all to hear.

Corruption points, page 503

Characters within Polemith's room or within thirty feet of the doorway can hear the Dire Song.

If the player characters do not enter the room containing the mohrgs but the mohrgs hear them moving about, they leave their chamber and hunt down the intruders—hoping to attack them even as they deal with the Dire Song.



The books in the Dread One's library are written in a variety of languages, all of them ancient. None are written in Common, which is too modern, but many are in Westron, Draconic, and especially Abyssal.

Corruption points, page 503

Summoning cascade, page 516



Hidden Prison, page 535
Trial of the Book, page 529

Malefic masks, page 505
Blasphemous shrine, page 515

When the Dread One launched his war against the rest of the world, Lathikamis the balor stood at the head of his armies of demons, orcs, undead, and aberrations.

three feet wide runs along most walls halfway up, with wooden ladders connecting the balcony to the floor. Smaller wooden ladders are spread throughout, resting on the floor and the balcony to reach high shelves.

The majority of the books are treatises on academic subjects, but many are tomes of inherent evil. A character searching through the shelves gains 2 corruption points (no save). If a searcher takes one hour or more to look and succeeds at a Search check (DC 25), the character finds a magic book. To determine the book's potency, roll 1d6, add the number of hours searched, and consult the following table. No book can be found more than once. Don't forget that every hour spent in Jabel Shammar also grants a corruption point.

Result	Strength of Book
2	Inherent bonus book +1
3–5	Inherent bonus book +2
6–7	Inherent bonus book +3
8–9	Inherent bonus book +4
10+	Inherent bonus book +5

Next, roll 1d6 again to determine the magic book's type.

rd6	Type of Book
1	<i>Manual of bodily health</i>
2	<i>Manual of gainful exercise</i>
3	<i>Manual of quickness in action</i>
4	<i>Tome of clear thought</i>
5	<i>Tome of leadership and influence</i>
6	<i>Tome of understanding</i>

LEVEL 10: DREAD ONE'S RESIDENCE

As the name suggests, this level was actually Eslathagos Malkith's home. For all his vast power and ineffable malevolence, he was still a mortal man.

The ceilings here are thirty feet high.

Prismatic Spray Traps (EL 12)

Any non-outsider entering this level without a *malefic mask* or without being adjacent to someone wearing one triggers four *prismatic sprays*, one from each direction. They fill the room 1 round after the first such person enters the level from below. Anyone within the room must make four saves, against four different rays. These are triggered each time someone comes up the stairs.

The blasphemous shrine in the room is immune to the effects.

Prismatic Spray Traps (4): CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*prismatic spray*, CL 20th; Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect, DC 20); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Personal Guardian (EL 21)

This chamber is filled with choking black smoke at all times (any smoke that does waft out of the room dissipates immediately). Visibility in this room is limited to about five feet, and everyone in it has concealment (20 percent miss chance). All breathing creatures in the room not immune to poison must make a Fortitude save (DC 15 + 1 per previous check) or spend that round choking and coughing. A character who fails two consecutive saves suffers 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and is poisoned, suffering 1d3 points of temporary Strength damage (no secondary damage).

Although it's difficult to see them in the smoke, ancient mummified corpses hang by chains from the ceiling, twenty feet off the floor.

When the summoning cascade occurs, Lathikamis, the Dread One's personal bodyguard, returns to Jabel Shammar. This perfect balor specimen has maximum hit points and a Strength of 39 (add an extra +2 bonus on attacks, damage, and Strength checks). His sword is a +3 *vorpal longsword* (add another +2 bonus on attacks and damage listed for the sword) and he wears a *ring of greater sonic resistance*; he also has a balor's traditional +1 *flaming whip* and a large steel key that opens the door in the Dread One's Suite (see next page). When Eslathagos Malkith faced his final battle, Lathikamis was trapped in an extradimensional space created to be a prison for him. Lathikamis is called, so he is here in the world physically and permanently.

And he's angry.

Jabel Shammar holds no secret of which Lathikamis is unaware, including all the traps, the Hidden Prison in the dungeons, and how to get to the Trial of the Book. He does not willingly reveal them, although he might try to tempt wary intruders to enter the smoke-filled room with promises of information.

Lathikamis, Balor: 360 hp; see MM, plus he carries the items above and a key.

Tactics: Millennia of imprisonment have made Lathikamis hungry for vengeance, and he is eager to take it out on intruders. Just before an encounter begins, he casts *unholy aura* (adding +4 to Armor Class for a total of AC 39, a +4 bonus on saves, and other effects for 20 rounds). He starts combat in the smoky room using abilities that do not rely on attacks (thus avoiding any miss chances) like *implosion* and his quickened *telekinesis*. Lathikamis is so angry that he does not retreat, even if in danger. He will, however, bellow loudly for the fiends in the harem (see next page) to hear and come in, probably via *teleport*, in addition to using his summon ability to bring in either a nalfeshnee or—if he is truly hard pressed—another (average) balor.

Hanging Corpses: The mummified corpses suspended near the ceiling are actually where Lathikamis stores his belongings. Amid the dried husks, or in hollowed-out cavities within them, he keeps a *malefic mask*, 10,000 gp worth of gems and jewelry, three *potions of cure serious wounds*, and four *immovable rods* (not activated).

Experience Points: Award 150 percent of normal XP for the balor.

Harem (EL 20)

The red curtains over this room's walls each hide a painting depicting a vile and sexually graphic scene of perversion (six total, each of them worth 2,000 gp). The floors are strewn with red and gold carpets and silken pillow-covered divans. This room's name is a misnomer, however. Although he reveled in the concepts of perversion, the Dread One did not partake in them. He gathered the female-appearing fiends that lived here (and are summoned here once again) only to show his contempt for his former wife, Parnaith.

Two mariliths, a succubus, and an erinyes appear when the summoning cascade occurs. Each is among the most alluring of their respective kinds, with a +4 inherent bonus to Charisma (increasing the Difficulty Class of all their Charisma-based effects by +2). One marilith has six +1 *longswords*, and the other uses six +1 *battleaxes*. (Add a +1 bonus to all attacks and damage. The axe-wielding marilith inflicts the same damage, but the criticals are 20/x3 instead of 19–20/x2.) The succubus wears a *robe of eyes*. The erinyes has her typical +1 *flaming composite longbow* (+5 Strength bonus). Each of them wears 1d6+2 × 1,000 gp worth of jewelry. Even if the fiends should die, the robe and the jewelry are native to this plane (the fiends put them on when they got here).

The demons reluctantly follow the direction of Lathikamis (see above). If the balor needs them, he will bellow for them, adding considerable might to his side. The erinyes hates the demons but is rightfully terrified by them.

Mariliths (2): 216 hp each; see MM.

Succubus: 33 hp; see MM.

Erinyes: 85 hp; see MM.

Treasure: A chest of woven bronze strips (worth 150 gp) under one of the divans holds 500 gp worth of perfume and cosmetics and two *malefic masks*.

Experience Points: Award 150 percent of normal XP for the fiends.

The Dread One's Suite (EL 14)

The door to this room on the east end of this level is three-inch-thick black adamantine and has its own *antimagic field* surrounding it out to one inch,

making it impervious to magic (and negating any magical aids one might employ in searching it or opening it). The lock is large and devious (Open Lock, DC 35), and anyone attempting to open it without first removing the trap triggers the release of a poison dart coated with purple worm venom. A special magical trigger outside the door's *antimagic field* sets off a *wail of the banshee* spell if the dart fires. Lathikamis has the key to this door; using it avoids both traps.

Poison Dart Trap: CR 12; mechanical; timed trigger; automatic reset; hidden lock bypass (Search DC 25, Open Lock DC 30); attack +20 melee (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); poison (purple worm poison, Fortitude save, DC 24, resists, 1d6 Strength/2d6 Strength); one target; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 35.

Wail of the Banshee Trap: CR 10; magic device; visual trigger (*arcane eye*); automatic reset; spell effect (*wail of the banshee*, 20th-level wizard, Fortitude save, DC 23, negates); multiple targets (up to 17 creatures); Search DC 34; Disable Device DC 34.

This large chamber has a wide canopy bed with iron posts and black curtains. Three large wardrobes, a huge chest, a long table, and a chair—all of black wood inlaid with polished ebony—also furnish the room. A bookstand of silvered steel and adorned with protruding long, curving razor blades holds a large black book with red pages. Black and white silk drapes cover the walls, and a thick white fur rug swathes most of the floor. Braziers of black iron hang from long chains attached to the ceiling. The room smells of sandalwood. The aura of deep, cold evil feels palpable here, even more so than in the rest of the fortress.

The Bookstand: The idea is that intruders will believe this tome is the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. It is not. It is, however, a sort of magical conduit to the book, and therefore to the Malignancy. The book's pages are filled with gibberish, but perusal of them requires the reader to make a Will save (DC 25) or suffer 1d6 points of temporary Wisdom damage due to a magical effect. On the 99th page of the book, a *secret page* hides a special soul magic spell that takes the reader instantly to the Trial of the Book. To activate the *secret page*, one must utter the word, "Senkrad."

The Bed: A small table next to the bed holds an incense burner and a number of blocks of incense as well as two blocks of *incense of meditation*. Hidden inside one block of normal incense (Search, DC 30) is a *ring of three wishes* with one *wish* left (for emergencies). A drawer in this side table contains a number of four-inch steel needles and three masterwork knives of different shapes and sizes.

Malefic mask, page 505

After Danar's corruption, his wife Parnaith returned to him many times, always hoping to redeem him somehow. As his evil power grew, these visits became more and more dangerous, and each time she had to use her own magic to escape. When she stopped coming, the Dread One made no attempt to find her.

Summoning cascade, page 516



The player characters can find a clue to the word needed to activate the secret page scratched into the edge of Ulithik the Misbegotten's meditation pool on the top level of the Misbegotten Tower (see page 511).

Soul magic, PT6: page 635

Trial of the book, page 529

Black adamantine, PT2: page 45

THE SEVEN JEWELS OF PARNAITH

Only a little is known about Danar's wife, Parnaith. Before her husband was corrupted by the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, Parnaith began creating her own magical masterpiece: seven Ethereal Islands tied metaphysically to Mosul Pearl (now Jabel Shammar) and developed specifically as a path to enlightenment—and eventual godhood—for those who sought it. These islands are called the Jewels of Parnaith. One can reach the first jewel fairly easily, but a traveler can attain the others only one at a time, as he draws closer to true enlightenment.

The Nature of the Jewels

The jewels are physical places located on the Ethereal Plane. But they are much more than that, as well: Each one represents an important philosophical/metaphysical concept. Each is also tied closely to a specific symbol and a specific note on the musical scale. Most are literal islands, seeming to float in the empty space of the Ethereal Sea, although at least one (Av) has its own entirely shapeable essence and form. Each jewel is as large as it needs to be, taking up only ethereal space that does not necessarily correspond to normal space. Some of the jewels are as large or larger than Ptolus itself. Each has magical qualities unique to its nature. They are like no other places in all the planes, and today their creation remains one of the most phenomenal and impressive accomplishments of any mortal.

Their creation would never have been possible without the help of the Wizard-Priests of Ni-Gorth. Ni-Gorth, the first mortal to ascend to godhood, had proven to be an enemy of evil, including his former master, Father Claw. Thus, when Danar built the Banewarrens and Mosul Pearl, the Wizard-Priests found themselves drawn to a place so devoted to utter benevolence.

It is said that the Wizard-Priests felt so in awe of Danar that they spent their time with Parnaith instead. At the time, however, Parnaith was every bit as powerful as her husband—it was only the influence of the *Book of Inverted Darkness* and the eventual creation of the Entropy Sphere (see “Entropy Sphere and Gates of Delirium” on page 499) that gave him the might to challenge both gods and men.

Over the millennia, the evil of Jabel Shammar has slowly corrupted the Jewels of Parnaith, but only slightly. Incidents of such corruption are detailed in some of the jewels' descriptions here.

Accessing the Jewels

Seven golden pergolas float in orbit around Jabel Shammar, invisibly and intangibly. Each of these golden, open structures is approximately ten feet across and fifteen feet high. The orbits are wild and complex (but not random or erratic) and stretch out to almost a mile from the Spire. Because they are both invisible and intangible, finding one—let alone the correct one—is virtually impossible without a little help.

That help comes in the form of a magic item simply called the *orvery*. This device shows the complex orbital paths of the pergolas at any given time, thus predicting their relative positions with great accuracy. Getting to a pergola usually entails some kind of magical flight; attempting to access one as it passes through the ground or near the surface is extremely difficult. Only when it comes within twenty-five feet of an *illitor* does a pergola become



A complex magical device called an *illitor* allows one to see a pergola high above the city, as shown above. There the *illitor*'s wearer may ring a chime to gain entry for his group to one of the Seven Jewels of Parnaith. Each jewel's chime has its own pure, distinct tone. Thus one can think of the jewels as notes on the musical scale: Orr's note is “do,” Ond's is “re,” and so on.

visible and tangible—and even then, only for those within twenty-five feet of the pergola.

An *illitor* is a complex item encompassing a golden belt, armband, and bracelet, each connected to the others by thin gold chains. Only someone wearing an *illitor* can gain entrance to a jewel; the process requires one to sound the proper tone on a chime while standing in a pergola. The wearer, and only the wearer, can see and play the chime located in each of the seven golden pergolas. The *illitor* has seven settings in which one can place a small gem. Travelers obtain these gems by attaining the proper enlightenment at each of the Seven Jewels of Parnaith.

Other than the chime, each pergola appears empty at first. Once the chime is played, a portal called a *colordoor node* opens and provides access to the Ethereal Plane and the corresponding jewel.

Progression Through the Jewels

Each jewel represents a fundamental concept of the nature of reality. The intention was for everyone visiting a jewel to study, discuss, contemplate, and meditate upon that concept. Only after reaching true understanding can one pass on to the next jewel. For example, in the jewel of Orr, one must understand the concept of beginnings and endings, and that every beginning is an ending, and every ending a beginning. Truly comprehending each concept normally requires months, if not years, of contemplation.

Each jewel has an enlightenment key that resembles a globe of energy (of a color appropriate to each jewel). An impenetrable force field surrounds this globe, but when someone who has achieved the proper enlightenment approaches the field, it disappears, freeing the globe for a moment. It then fires a beam of energy that strikes the forehead of the enlightened. That person is also granted a gem of the appropriate color, which he can place within his *illitor* before heading to a transport point keyed to the pergola for the next jewel.

There is a way to circumvent, or “cheat,” the whole process. The key to this is an object called *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*. Those who utilize such a sphere (there are said to be more than

one) to travel from jewel to jewel without gaining enlightenment do not receive the ultimate reward at the end, however. Ghul himself captured *Parnaith's mirrored sphere* and used it to pass through Orr to get to Ond, where he was slain. The Great Seven brought the sphere back to Ptolus, where it now rests in the hands of Raguel in the Dark Reliquary (see PT4, page 278).

Each of the jewels has a guardian, appointed long ago by Parnaith to safeguard a portion of the path to enlightenment.

Orr, Jewel of Beginnings and Endings

The first of the jewels is *Orr*. Orr represents life and death as a single dichotomy—the beginning and the end. Much of the island is covered by a ruined and abandoned town, destroyed long ago when Ghul came to the jewels.

The enlightenment sphere lies within a silver tower near the town. The tower was the abode of Damarcan (male half-celestial, fighter8/sorcerer6), who ruled the jewel for millennia before succumbing to the evil of Jabel Shammar. Now corrupt himself, Damarcan passed on to Ond in the hopes of attaining great power by passing through all the jewels. (This is much harder than he thought, though, and he is still stuck in Ond.) He covets *Parnaith's mirrored sphere* above all else.

To reach the interior of Damarcan's tower, one must ride a boat on a river that flows across the island, over its edge, and across its underside. On the "bottom" of the island lies an entrance to a network of underground passages that eventually come up beneath the tower. Damarcan has placed a number of guardians in these tunnels.

Ond, Jewel of the Physical

The jewel of *Ond* seems entirely underground. This island, which stresses the concept of the body and physical matter, is honeycombed with passages and caverns, and everything important lies within them. Most objects in Ond are made of stone or metal. Everything feels more solid here than elsewhere. Creatures always feel physically fit and well here—or, at least more so than normal. (Damage still accrues normally in combat.)

Ond has the distinction of being the place where Ghul finally met his end, slain by the heroes known as the Great Seven. This event scarred Ond in places. Where Ghul bled, slivers of his evil essence take ghostly form (treat them as wraiths) and attack all that lives. The stone in these areas looks twisted and blackened, with skull-like visages peering from within.

Donrah, the ruler of this jewel, is an intelligent, free-willed elder earth elemental. He is very practical, very straightforward, and ultimately quite cold. The enlightenment key to leaving lives in a hidden cave filled with crystals.

Imn, Jewel of Energy

Imn has a flat, relatively unremarkable landscape except for a tall iron tower at its very center. Surges of blue lightning run up and down this iron tower in regular, pulsating intervals, creating a rhythmic buzzing and flashing that one can see and hear anywhere in Imn.

The ruler, Znaam, lives in the tower. Znaam is a singular being, a bloated insectlike thing—use an ice devil's statistics, although he has no spear and is immune to all energy types. He is self-interested and mean-spirited, but not actually cruel or treacherous. He is equally uninterested in fighting or helping anyone. To reach the enlightenment key, a character who has come to understand all aspects of energy must leap off the tower and into the pulsing lightning.



Znaam, ruler of Imn

Av, Jewel of the Mind

The jewel of the mind resembles a thick, verdant forest, but that is not its natural state. Without any outside influence, *Av* would be nothing but a seemingly endless white void. However, the substance (if it can be called that) of *Av* is influenced by the subconscious minds of those upon the jewel. For many centuries, these minds have been mainly those of the sibeccai who live here. These caninelike humanoids (use gnoll stats) live here in a wooden fort, hunting and fishing for their sustenance and devoting themselves spiritually to Lothian. Their existence is a rather idyllic one. Beyond approximately a mile and a half from the fort, the landscape fades away into the white void, but the sibeccai do not venture that far. The enlightenment key lies within the white void, and only by those utilizing their own force of will to shape *Av's* existence (requiring a deliberate Will save, DC 24) can find it.

Av has a rift within it, created inadvertently by the Wars of Fire (see "Kem," PT2, page 41). It is possible to pass physically from *Av* to an isolated spot in the land of Kem and to travel from Kem to *Av*, bypassing the traditional means of reaching the jewel. However,

the secret of the rift is all but lost today. Further, those using the rift without some kind of special protection must make a Will saving throw (DC 24) or go insane due to the experience.

The sibeccai were brought here by none other than Lothian himself. Lothian's spirit, after his death, traveled through the Seven Jewels, attaining its reward of ultimate enlightenment. When he discovered the rift, he used it to bring the sibeccai here to ensure their safety.

Unfortunately, a powerful demon lord named Savvan discovered the rift and came to *Av* centuries ago. (Although not one of the Galchutt, Savvan was accidentally trapped in Praemal at the time of its creation, as they were.) These days Savvan takes the form of a sibeccai and rules them in the name of Lothian, twisting and perverting the god's teachings and dogma for his own use. No one has

traveled through the jewels all the way to this point in so long that Savvan has almost forgotten the rest of the world exists. When visitors come here, however, he is reminded and realizes it is time for him to leave. Savvan possesses the *cask of frozen dreams* in a demon-sealed box (see “Dreta Phantas” in PT7, page 457, and “The Cask of Frozen Dreams” in PT4, page 278).

Av’s ruler, Varen, became one with the Jewel but exists there only as a lingering mental form.

Ath, Jewel of Spirit

The jewel *Ath* has become a realm of ice and snow—a perpetual blizzard, in fact—due to an infestation of winter harridans (for more information on winter harridans, see the monsters section of the appendix in *The Banewarrens* adventure on the enclosed CD-Rom). This invasion was made possible through machinations of the Galchutt, who hoped to destroy the Jewels of Parnaith. It killed the jewel’s ruler, Faranastra the Faithful, some time ago. The people of Ath, the acolytes and hirelings of Faranastra (and their descendants), live within a handful of snowbound monasteries guarded by fanatical monks.

Faranastra’s tomb lies within an icy cave guarded by a white dragon and an ice devil, both brought here by the harridans. This same cave contains the enlightenment key.

Unn, Jewel of Magic

The jewel of magic resembles a pleasant island covered with grassy hills and trees. Dotting the landscape of *Unn* are tall stone wizards’ towers. The jewel was ruled by a Wizard-Priest of Ni-

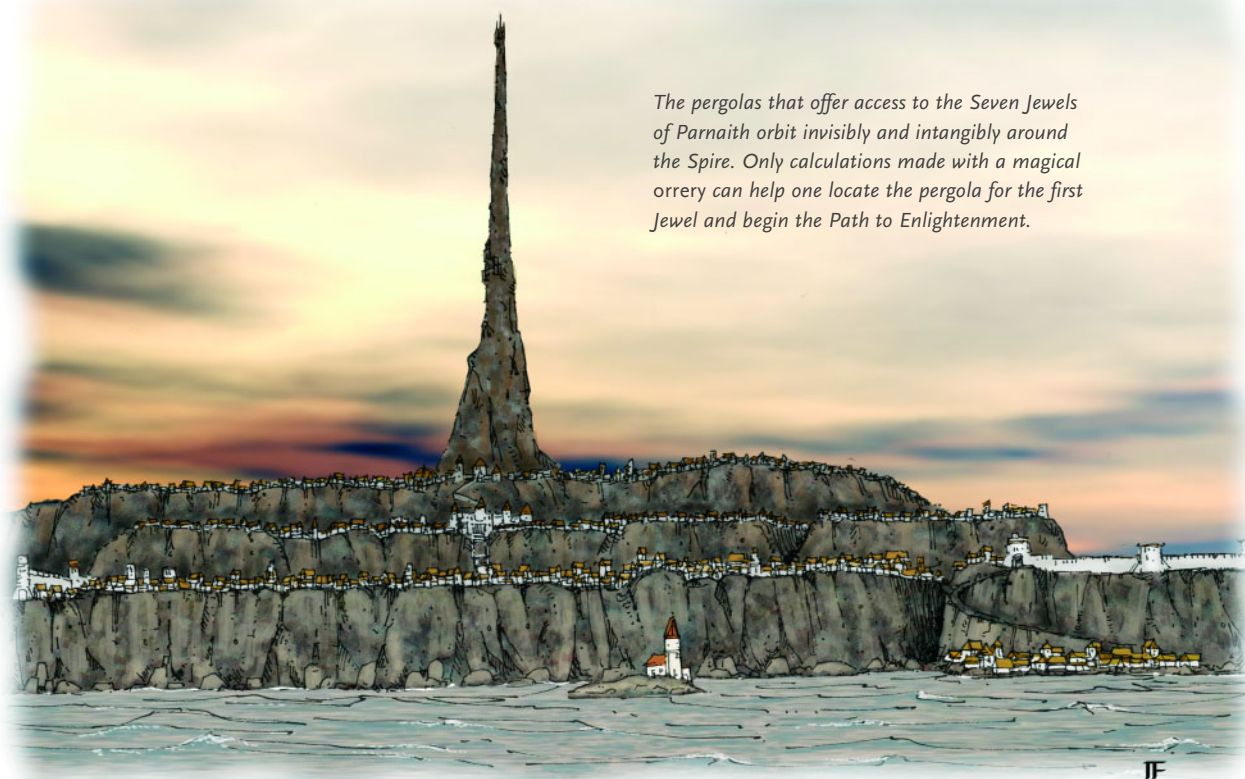
Gorth named Leisarth, who disappeared more than fifty years ago. However, he had many apprentices, students, and servants. The most powerful of these call themselves the Children of Leisarth.

The so-called Children of Leisarth all occupy their own towers across the face of the island—eleven in all. Each is a powerful wizard (of 12th to 15th level), and each spends his or her days studying magical lore for the secret of passing to Esh, the final jewel. They are a scheming, conniving, and treacherous lot, not one of whom actually earned passage to this point through enlightenment. The wizards are likely to use visitors to Unn in some way—either as a part of an experiment or as a tool by one of the Children of Leisarth to kill one of the others. The enlightenment key lies at the top of Leisarth’s old tower.

Esh, Jewel of the Divine

The jewel of divinity is different from the others. It has no ruler, *per se*. Upon arrival, a traveler sees *Esh* as a wide crater with walls of sheer rock rising fifteen hundred feet all around. Along these walls stand statues of the Elder Gods, rising *another* fifteen hundred feet. The objective here is to ascend out of this pit so that one can see it is merely a small hole in the head of a much, much larger statue of another god: Praemus, the Creator.

Travelers who reach this point without “cheating” by using *Parnaith’s mirrored sphere* spend anywhere from ten to one hundred years in conversation with the avatar of the Creator, before ascending to godhood themselves. Travelers who use the *mirrored sphere* can ask a handful of questions (perhaps one or two per character) before they are sent back to Ptolus bereft of their *illitor* and *sphere*.



The pergolas that offer access to the Seven Jewels of Parnaith orbit invisibly and intangibly around the Spire. Only calculations made with a magical orrery can help one locate the pergola for the first Jewel and begin the Path to Enlightenment.

The Wardrobes and Chest: The wardrobes and chest contain fine clothing (about 10,000 gp worth) and other simple personal possessions. One has a locked iron puzzlebox (Open Lock, DC 40) that functions exactly as an *iron flask* if one can get it open. A Large water elemental is currently within it.

Experience Points: If characters use the book to get to the Trial of the Book (see below), award experience points as if they had overcome a CR 12 challenge.

The Cloakroom

In this room at the south end of this level, cloaks and other types of clothing hang on hooks and sit folded on shelves. A wormy fruitwood table is pushed against the wall opposite the door. When the Dread One died, some of his objects of power returned here, thanks to intricate magical contingencies. Lying on the table are two *malefic masks*, the *Dread One's staff*, a *ring of spell turning*, and a *major ring of spell storing* that currently stores a *summon monster IX* spell. One of the cloaks hanging on a hook is a *cloak of poisonousness*, another is a *cloak of displacement* that is also a *cloak of charisma* +6 (total worth 122,000 gp). However, this last cloak currently hides a *scarab of death* that burrows into the wearer if not found and removed first (Search, DC 25—the scarab's magic aura is hidden within the cloak's, so *detect magic* alone does cannot locate it).

A suit of +5 *ghost touch full plate of heavy fortification* is stored in a wooden armoire with glass doors trapped with a *symbol of death* (Fortitude save, DC 26).

LEVEL 11: TRIAL OF THE BOOK

There is no staircase to the top level of the Tower of Malice. The only way to reach it is through the *secret page* in the book in the Dread One's Suite. This level appears entirely open and empty, with a fifty-foot-high ceiling. When a character arrives, he appears alone (no matter how many people come into the chamber) and suddenly sees a looming figure floating in the air above him. The figure appears to be a nine-foot-tall human man with a bald head and aged face. The figure holds a large black book with red pages and wears thick black and blue robes. It speaks immediately with a booming voice:

"I am Eslathagos Malkith, the Dread One. You are unworthy to be here. Begone!"

To proceed, each character must choose one of three means to prove worthy. Anything else accomplishes nothing and the figure simply stares disapprovingly, or mocks the actions with sophisticated, arrogant language: "Your meaningless prattle is as a gnat buzzing in my home, beneath my notice—beneath contempt!"

1. **Convincing:** If a character attempts to verbally convince the figure of his worth in some way, he should make a Diplomacy or Bluff check, as appropriate (a Perform [oratory] check might also work). The Difficulty Class of the check is 25.
2. **Combat:** If a character attempts to engage in any kind of physical combat with the figure, he suddenly finds himself grappling with it. He must best the figure, who is Large and has a total grapple bonus of +20.
3. **Spellcasting:** If a character attempts to cast a spell or use a spell-like effect on the figure, success or failure is judged by the spell chosen. A 7th-level spell or higher is deemed a success. Anything else is a failure.

Success: The character is drawn into the figure—specifically, into the book it holds. He finds himself in the Heart of the Malignancy (see below).

Failure: The figure disappears, leaving the character alone in the room (or with others who may have failed). They must figure out a way to escape the chamber on their own. In theory, however, if they return to the Dread One's Suite, they could use the book to come here and attempt the test again—meanwhile, however, their friends may be combating the Malignancy alone.

HEART OF THE MALIGNANCY (EL 22)

This location lies beyond the bounds of normal reality in its own pocket dimension crafted from pure corruption. (The *bleed* effect for evil creatures is not active here, nor can evil creatures here tap into the Malignancy for information or healing.)

To anyone who finds his way here, space itself seems to flow and pulse with an eerie, alien life of its own. There is no gravity, although characters can "fly" at their speed throughout the Heart and have no problems acting without a surface to stand on (wherever they are, it is as if they are standing on a solid surface, even if they are oriented differently than those around them). The size of the Heart fluctuates and changes—its red, violet, and black edges warp and swirl continually. Tendrils from the edges stretch into the space within the Heart, writhing and grasping. Those within the Heart can sense that many souls and minds are a part of the Malignancy, having been assimilated into its evil, corrupt whole. At the center of all of this floats a large black book with red pages: the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. The characters cannot leave unless they destroy the book, but the Malignancy wishes to absorb them into itself once and for all.

Worst of all, the shadow of the Dread One himself resides within the Heart of the Malignancy, floating about like a wave of soul-chilling black corruption.



The Dread One's Staff

This shriveled, ebony wood staff is bound at both ends with black adamantine. Liquid shadow runes (PT2: page 46) cover its surface, oozing and moving constantly. If used as a melee weapon, the staff is a +5 unholy/+5 unholy weapon that acts as a bane weapon for all living creatures.

Unlike other staves, the Dread One's staff does not have any charges. Instead, the wielder can use these spells freely once each, every round: blasphemy, create greater undead, disintegrate (DC 22), destruction (DC 23), and summon monster VII (evil only).

Further, the wielder always has an unholy aura in effect, and the area around the staff is always unhallowed. The Dread One's Staff is intelligent and thoroughly (neutral) evil. It has Intelligence 14, Wisdom 18, Charisma 18, telepathy, 120-foot darkvision, blindsense, and hearing. Its ego score is 45.

Overwhelming (all schools); CL 26th

Malefic mask, page 505

The Malignancy, page 503



The Reality of the Trial

Everything that happens in the Trial of the Book is a phantasm illusion, including the robed figure. Unless the characters see through the illusion (disbelief Will save, DC 25, or magic like true seeing), they are unaware that others are in the room. Those who disbelieve successfully can still partake in the trial, and success still brings them into the Heart of the Malignancy, but each character must undergo the trial individually.

Corruption points, page 503

Balleah, page 522

Hidden Prison, page 535

For more on the antithesis stone and Bastion (now called the Malificite) see Chapter 10 and the Banes Appendix in The Banewarrens adventure.

The Tendrils

Once each round, a tendril makes a +15 touch attack against each character. Those who are touched must make a Will saving throw (DC 26) or gain 4 corruption points. Remember that a character whose corruption point total equals or exceeds his resolve level becomes a slave of the Malignancy. If this happens here, the slave turns on his fellows and attacks them physically for 1d4 rounds before disappearing into the substance of the Malignancy itself, forever lost in corruption.

Alternatively, rather than corrupting the creatures it touches, the Malignancy can use the tendrils to *dispel magic* (as *greater dispel magic* cast at 20th level) upon any creature it touches.

The Dread One's Shadow

Once each round, the Dread One's shadow passes over one random character. That character must make a Will saving throw (DC 30) or become possessed by Eslathagos Malkith for 1 round, during which time the character attacks his fellows. If he is alone and has no one to attack, he allows a tendril to touch and affect him. Possession grants the character 2 corruption points. This shadow cannot be harmed, although *protection from evil* (or similar effects) protects against possession as normal, and a *dismissal*,

banishment, or similar effect, or a successful turn attempt that affects a 20 HD creature keeps it from taking an action for a round while it recoils.

It's worth noting that this is not a shadow in the undead sense, nor is it truly a ghost, wraith, or spectre. It is but a tiny sliver of the soul essence of the Dread One—all that remains of him.

Slave of the Malignancy

At the end of the second round after hostile creatures have entered the Heart, the Malignancy vomits up a creature that it corrupted and consumed long ago to fight on its behalf. With a hideous scream, this creature proclaims itself to be the intruder's death bringer. This creature is a corrupted solar now called Dark Averon.

In ancient times, Danar had three close angelic allies: a planetar named Balleah; Bastion, Guardian of the Morning; and a solar named Averon, Lord of the Eternal Day. When Danar was corrupted by the *Book of Inverted Darkness*, he tricked Bastion using a magical artifact called the *antithesis stone* and introduced darkness into his celestial soul. Averon could not be corrupted, however, and was placed in the Hidden Prison in the Dungeons.

But now Averon has turned to evil as well, corrupted like Bastion—except that Averon was the first being despoiled by the Malignancy itself.

When he turned to darkness, Averon was released from the prison and came here to lend his power and essence to the Malignancy. The solar lost all spell-like and spellcasting abilities. However, the corruptive influence of the Malignancy has caused him to swell to enormous size. Further, blue and black adamantine plates have fused to his flesh. Having long ago discarded his holy weapons, Dark Averon now strikes with his adamantite-clad fists and slashes with his metal-fused, razor-sharp wings (when not flying).

Dark Averon can exist as an independent entity for only 5 rounds before he must be absorbed back into the walls of the Heart. If the solar dies before that can happen, all the tendrils grow dormant for 2 rounds. If he is absorbed, Dark Averon re-emerges 1d2+1 rounds later, fully healed and ready to fight for another 5 rounds.

Dark Averon

Evil solar (Neutral Evil)

Gargantuan outsider (native) CR 20

HD 22d8+374 **hp** 473

Init +6 **Speed** 50 feet, fly 150 feet (good)

AC 43, touch 8, flat-footed 41

BAB/Grapple +22/+53

Attack +37 melee (3d6+19 +2d6 unholy, slam)

Full Attack +37 melee (3d6+19 +2d6 unholy, 2 slams) and +35 melee (2d6+9+2d6 unholy, 2 wings)

Space/Reach 20 feet/20 feet

SA Blasphemous aura (good-aligned creatures within 20 feet, Will DC 28 or suffer 2d6 damage/round)

SQ DR 15/epic and good, darkvision 60 feet, regeneration 10, immune to acid, cold, and petrification, resistance to electricity 10 and fire 10, SR 32, protective aura* (+4 deflection bonus to AC; +4 resistance bonus on saves against attacks or effects from good creatures; *magic circle against good* and *lesser globe of invulnerability*, radius 20 feet, CL 22nd; free action to create aura), *tongues* (CL 22nd, always active)

Fort +30 (+34 against poison), **Ref** +15, **Will** +20

Str 48, **Dex** 15, **Con** 44, **Int** 23, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 25

Crucial Skills: Concentration +30, Escape Artist +30, Hide +26, Listen +32, Move Silently +30, Search +31, Sense Motive +32, Spot +32.

Other Skills: Diplomacy +34, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (history) +33, Knowledge (religion) +33, Knowledge (the planes) +33, Spellcraft +31, Survival +7 (+9 following tracks), Use Rope +5 (+7 with bindings).

Crucial Feats: Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Sunder, Mobility, Power Attack.

Other Feats: Improved Initiative, Multiattack (bonus feat), Track.

* The defensive benefits from the protective aura are not included in Dark Averon's statistics.

The Book

The only way to fight the Malignancy is to attack the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. The book floats here about nine feet off the "floor." It measures about two feet tall and eighteen inches across (three feet when open). The cover is black, and the pages are red vellum with black lettering. A regenerating force field around it has 200 hit points and fast healing 20. The force field heals 20 points per round even if the field is completely destroyed. It cannot be *dispelled*, but it can be *disintegrated*.

Once one bypasses the force field, the book itself has SR 35, DR 20/—, and elemental resistance 25. It has AC 10 and 250 hit points. It always fails Reflex saves and always succeeds at Fortitude saves. If anyone touches the book, either with a hand or a weapon, black energy is unleashed that runs up the arm and into the person, unless he makes a successful Will saving throw (DC 30). Failure means that the book takes control of the person for 1d4 rounds, forcing him to fight on its behalf. After this possession ends, the victim gains 2 corruption points. A character who fails the save but has a spell protecting him from possession (*protection from evil*, *mind blank*, etc.) is surrounded by a black aura until he dies, the book is destroyed, or the spell effect vanishes. As soon as the protection goes away, the energy possesses the character as described.

The book can take no actions itself except that, once per round, it can automatically dispel any spell with the good descriptor that is active within the Heart. This proves particularly useful to get rid of spells hedging out the shadow of the Dread One or its own corruptive energy. Remember that this ability is *in addition* to the dispelling capabilities of the tendrils.

If the book is destroyed, it actually just fades from this plane of existence for nine hundred ninety-nine years. The Malignancy disappears from Jabel Shammar entirely. The characters return to the chamber of the Trial of the Book, but a silver portal with a green outline stands in the middle of the room like a doorway, created by the power of the Elder Gods. Those who pass through it see faint images of the gods seated on thrones in a silvery, green-tinted chamber. They commend the player characters on a job well done and offer to send them wherever they would wish to go, including back into Jabel Shammar, if they desire.

Experience Points: If PCs destroy the book, award them XP as if they had overcome a CR 18 challenge.

Summoning Creatures

Any creature that comes into the Heart of the Malignancy without passing the Trial of the Book, such as a creature summoned by a player character, is instantly corrupted, turns evil, and acts to

DM TIPS

The actions that PCs take in the Trial of the Book (page 529) depend a lot upon you. If you describe the situation and ask, "What do you do?" many players will respond to the image's statement verbally. If you describe the situation and ask the players to roll initiative, they are more likely to respond with action. Perhaps it is best to steer each player toward his character's strengths—it's no fun, after all, not to be a part of the climactic encounter.

Corruption points, page 503

Dark Averon has steeped so long in the Heart of the Malignancy, that not even a wish or miracle can restore him to his original angelic state.



*Trial of the Book, page 529
Elder Gods, PT2: page 59*

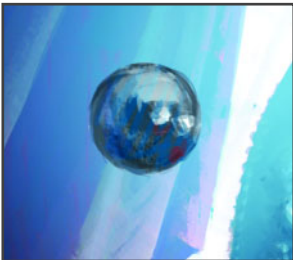
When the player characters enter the Heart of the Malignancy, make an initiative check (with a modifier of +0). It is on this initiative count that the book can use its power to dispel and also when the force field's fast healing 20 takes effect. Recall that even if the force field is completely destroyed last round, starting on this count it has 20 points again.

**Jabel Shammar
Without the Book**

If the player characters succeed in banishing the Book of Inverted Darkness, Jabel Shammar is free of the Malignancy and its effects. However, it remains a horribly evil and corrupt place. While corruption points no longer matter, remember that the place is so irredeemably evil that even divine beings could not purge it all, just contain it. Items removed from the fortress are still tainted with a lingering evil.

It is likely that only two things, in conjunction, could ever truly cleanse Jabel Shammar: stalwart, watchful heroes on hand to make sure that no evil comes along to exploit the place, and vast amounts of time.

Trial of the Book, page 529



*Parnaith's mirrored sphere, PT4: page 278
Dread One's staff, page 529
Seeping Portal, page 535
Entropy Sphere, page 499*

defend the book—which is to say, probably attacks the party.

The Sombrous Sepulcher

Hidden within the Heart is the magical entrance to a small chamber that exists back in the normal plane within Jabel Shammar. This black stone room, ten feet square, is empty except for swirling shadowy essence, which is Eslathagos Malkith's dark spark of life. Mortal magic cannot affect this spark, but neither can it do anything to harm or affect others. Entering the sepulcher grants a character 3 corruption points, and any living creature (other than an evil outsider) suffers 1d6 points of cold and 2d6 points of unholy damage per round while within.

Even though it exists above the Trial of the Book, to find the Sombrous Sepulcher one must enter the Heart of the Malignancy and search through its strange, fluctuating "walls," succeeding at a Search check (DC 30). Doing so is extremely difficult, because one would have to search while the Malignancy still thrived—otherwise the Heart disappears and the sepulcher once again becomes completely inaccessible, thanks to the sealing magic of the Elder Gods.

SUB-LEVEL 1: DUNGEONS

The dungeons of Jabel Shammar are rank and fetid, stained with blood, and littered with fragments of bones and skulls from those who were brought here and never released. Wet, dark slime seems to cover everything, including the bare stone walls and slightly rusted iron doors. The ceilings in the dungeons are about eighteen feet high.

One can enter the dungeons not only via a staircase from the Tower of Malice, but also through more unusual methods. As discussed in "Entering Jabel Shammar" (page 505), a secret door at the end of the Dread One's Path emerges from the Banewarrens into Area 2 of the dungeons. Also, one can use the *Banewarrens key*, *Parnaith's mirrored sphere*, or the *Dread One's staff* to reach the Seeping Portal chamber in the dungeons via the Entropy Sphere accessed through Goth Gulgamel.

Master of the Dungeons (EL 20)

Even after all this time, the unique master of Jabel Shammar's dungeons remains a true horror—a terrifying fusion of demon and metal, fueled by pain and memories of the anguish that still resonate in these walls. This horrible fiend wanders about the dungeons but becomes instantly aware of intruders due to its link with the Malignancy and its general awareness of everything that happens in its domain. Hungry for prisoners to torment, it is likely to attempt to capture at least some in a group of intruders, putting them in the prison pits or antimagic pillory (see Area 3, next page), as appropriate.



The deadliest thing about the Master is its ability to control its environment utterly. With a thought it can *arcane lock* the doors behind its foes, then use an action to seal them up behind a *wall of iron* or a *blade barrier*. While his opponents attempt to deal with their confinement, he can see through the walls (and move through them, if need be) to create more barriers or make attacks.

Master of the Dungeons

Unique demon (Neutral Evil)
Huge outsider (native) CR 20
HD 20d8+240 **hp** 330
Init +5 **Speed** 40 feet
AC 39, touch 18, flat-footed 34
BAB/Grapple +20/+40
Attack +30 melee (1d8+12, claw)
Full Attack +30 melee (1d8+12, 4 claws) and +28 melee (2d6+6, bite)
Space/Reach 15 feet/15 feet
SA Wisdom drain (2 points/strike), despair (–4 on attacks, saves, and checks to living creatures in 30 feet; Will DC 28), anguish (–4 on attacks, saves, and checks to living creatures in 30 feet; Fortitude DC 28)
SQ DR 15/good and adamantine, darkvision 120 feet, fast healing 10, immune to cold and poison, SR 34, *true seeing** (continuous, caster level 20th), *x-ray vision** (see through magical or mundane wall or door up to three feet thick), teleport suppression (no teleportation spells function within 100 feet; dismissible), control surroundings* (use *open/close*, *arcane lock*, or *knock* on any door, pass through any wall or door as if with *phase door*, create or dismiss *guards and wards*, as a free action; caster level 20th), spell-like abilities

Fort +24, **Ref** +17, **Will** +19
Str 34, **Dex** 20, **Con** 35, **Int** 10, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 26
Crucial Skills: Balance +11, Concentration +30, Intimidate +23, Jump +25, Listen +38**, Spot +38**.*
Other Skills: Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (religion) +19, Spellcraft +23.
Crucial Feats: Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Endurance, Mobility.
Other Feats: Alertness, Iron Will, Multiattack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*greater dispel magic*).
Spell-Like Abilities: Caster level 20th. The save DCs are Charisma based.
3/day—*mass hold monster, reverse gravity, symbol of fear, symbol of death, symbol of insanity, symbol of weakness.*
At will—*blade barrier, detect good, detect magic, greater dispel magic, locate object, phase door, unhallow, wall of iron, wall of stone.*
Possessions: *Ring of protection* +5.
* Functions only while in his native habitat (the dungeons beneath Jabel Shammar).
** Enjoys a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks while in his native habitat.

1. Vile Slime (CR 7)

Tainted by the evils perpetrated here, green slime patches have mutated over time into dark green crud that hangs over the floor at the bottom of the stairs leading down from the Forlorn Tower. Vile slime seeks life, animating enough to lunge at passersby within five feet (touch attack +12) even if they are too canny to walk underneath it (Spot check, DC 20). The touch of vile slime deals 1d6 points of temporary Constitution and Strength damage per round of contact. In all other ways, it is like green slime (see Chapter 3: Adventures in the DMG).

A secret switch on the northern wall (Search, DC 25, to find) causes a twenty-foot-square section of the floor in the center of this room to slide away, revealing a fifty-foot-deep shaft. At the same time, a platform with a dark skull emblazoned on its surface rises up the shaft like an elevator. The shaft leads to Area 2 of the Dread One's Path. The switch in that area no longer exists; only the one in this room will raise or lower the platform.

2. The Serpent Path

A sort of maze without walls, the Serpent Path resembles a snake painted on the floor, winding its way through the dungeons. If anyone walks the length of this path, starting at the tip of the tail and ending at the head, without deviation, the serpent head rises up from the floor as if real. The giant snake then breathes on the character. "The breath of the serpent" is a dark blessing that leads Jabel Shammar to react to the affected character as if she were wearing a *malefic mask* at all times. Affected characters gain 2 corruption points.

Characters passing up from the secret door in the Dread One's Path in the Banewarrens find themselves standing at the tip of the tail in the Serpent Path.

3. The Prison Pits (EL 18)

Into these dark, dank holes, prisoners were thrown—some never to emerge. A hinged steel grate (hardness 10, 60 hit points, break DC 27) with a heavy iron lock (Open Lock, DC 25) covers each pit. The keys for all the grates hang on a ring on a hook near the north exit. In the middle of these pits is a large wooden pillory stained with blood. Bones and chain fragments lie everywhere amid the pits, each of which contains 1d6 ancient corpses.

In some ways, the pits are surprisingly few in number. However, it is important to remember that most prisoners of the Dread One never made it this far (he also used portions of the Banewarrens as a prison). Only the most important—and therefore the least fortunate—were brought here. The Dread One's forces maintained many fortresses and prisons throughout the surrounding lands when his power was at its height.

The Antimagic Pillory: The pillory locks with a heavy, diabolical padlock (Open Lock, DC 35) and encases anyone held within it in an *antimagic field* that extends out five feet around the pillory.

The Gaols: With a single bellow, the Master of the Dungeons can awaken the jailers that work for him, each of whom has entered a sort of hibernation. The jailers are particularly tough and strong ropers. Each has a Strength of 25 (add +3 to bite attack bonus, +4 to bite damage, and +3 on Strength check Difficulty Class to escape from its drag attack) and a Constitution of 25 (note the higher than average hit point total and add +4 to its Fortitude saves and to the Fortitude save DC of its weakness attack). They obey the commands of the Master or Naxx (see below), but otherwise they simply seek food after their long fast.

Each roper's initial individual location is marked on the poster map.

Ropers (6): 125 hp each; see MM.

4. Two Spheres of Death (EL 16)

The leader of the gaols is not a roper but an ocular tyrant: Naxx, held in stasis within a five-foot-diameter black sphere that floats four feet off the floor in a chamber in the center of the dungeons. The sphere shares most properties of a *sphere of annihilation*, but it is uniquely keyed to Naxx. He can pass in and out of it as though it did not exist and controls its movement as a free action (as if he always made his control check) up to twenty feet in a round. If another creature attempts to control the sphere, assume Naxx makes his check with a result of 40 (see the description of a *sphere*

For details on the Dread One's Path, see Chapter 10 of The Banewarrens adventure.

DM TIPS

Don't forget that evil creatures in Jabel Shammar are affected by the *bless* spell and can use the *Malignancy* to heal themselves 10d10 hit points as a standard action.

The information panel in PT7: page 419 offers more background on the Banewarrens.

The dungeons beneath Jabel Shammar exist within an extradimensional space, not unlike that of Goth Gulgamel or the Dread One's Path in the Banewarrens.



Malefic mask, page 505
Corruption points, page 503

Mahdoth, PT5: page 362

Naxx's History

Naxx the ocular tyrant was one of the first of his kind that Eslathagos Malkith created. In his time, Naxx served as a general in the Dread One's armies and was responsible in particular for the campaign against the ancient dwarves. In those battles, Naxx was grievously wounded by a dwarven hero and, although most incapacitated warriors serving the Dread One were slain for their weakness, Naxx was reassigned to serve beneath the Master of the Dungeons. While not a sentence of death, this decision was, in Naxx's mind, a supreme humiliation.

Should he be awakened today in the present, Naxx is still gripped with resentment and bitterness. His only release is destruction, so he is not careful when using his eye rays or the sphere of annihilation.



of annihilation in Chapter 7: Magic Items of the DMG for more information).

Naxx is an ocular tyrant, similar to Mahdoth in the South Market. He is a large floating eye with two smaller eyes on eyestalks and four tendrils beneath, dripping with slime.

The Master must come to this chamber himself to bring Naxx out of stasis.

Naxx

Ocular tyrant (Lawful Neutral)

Large aberration **CR** 14

HD 11d8+44 **hp** 142

Init +9 **Speed** 5 feet, fly 20 feet (good)

AC 33, touch 18, flat-footed 28

BAB/Grapple +8/+17

Attack +12 ranged touch (eye rays) and +7 melee (1d6+5 + stun, slam)

Full Attack +12 ranged touch (eye rays) and +7 melee (1d6+5 + stun, 4 slams)

Space/Reach 10 feet/5 feet

SA Eye rays (magical ray from both eyestalks 1/round, free action, 6d8 force damage each; as 4th-level spell, CL 11th), stunning touch (Fortitude, DC 19, after a slam attack to avoid being stunned for 1 round by fluid secreted by fluid on tendrils beneath main eye; cumulative effects)

SQ All-around vision (can't be flanked), antimagic cone (continual 160-foot cone from main eye, CL 11th; suppresses all magical and supernatural powers and effects within it, including tyrant's own eye rays; 1/round on its turn, the tyrant may activate it by opening main eye), darkvision 60 feet, flight (speed 20; permanent *feather fall* effect, personal range)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +11

Str 21, **Dex** 20, **Con** 20, **Int** 17, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 15

Crucial Skills: Hide +14, Listen +18, Search +17, Spot +18, Survival +10.

Other Skills: Knowledge (arcana) +17.

Crucial Feats: Flyby Attack.

Other Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will.

Possessions: *Ring of strength* +6 (functions in all ways like a *belt of giant strength*), *ring of protection* +4.

5. The Chamber of Physical Torture

A dread chamber at the east end of the dungeons houses an array of diabolical torture devices meant to break the bodies—and therefore the spirits and wills—of the unfortunate souls brought here. It holds racks, iron maidens, multiple cauldrons for heating oil, and braziers to hold coals for heating irons. The southern wall is covered with hooks from which depend scalpels, tongs, saws, hammers, buckets of nails, containers of needles, spiked collars and harnesses (designed to make the spikes pierce the wearer), and other implements.

The Dread One used magical apparatuses of torture as well. In the southwest corner of the room, a bluish glass cylinder about two feet long and six inches wide sits upon an iron table. It feels cold to the touch. If the brass cap is removed, one can insert something into the hollow tube—like a hand or a finger. The cylinder contains absolute cold, inflicting 5d6 points of cold damage to anything placed within. Sometimes torturers would stick an iron into the cylinder and another into coals so that victims could feel both at once.

A magical torture device standing against the middle of the east wall looks like a large metal oven with a glass door. It stands eight feet high and about that wide. Victims placed into this device can be subjected to any of a variety of noxious fumes, extreme heat or cold, terrible wind, and even bursts of electricity (all inflicting from 1d6 to 10d6 points of damage per round, based on the intensity settings). The complex controls for this magical device involve a number of levers and switches located all over the surface of the machine. Figuring out all the controls requires an Intelligence check (DC 20).

6. The Chamber of Mental Torture

This room just north of the Chamber of Physical Torture looks starkly bare, except for six bedlike platforms covered with wires, tubes, and various arcane devices. The wires and tubes connect to a central column that is wider at the top than the bottom (like a cone ten feet wide at the top and five feet wide at the bottom). Strange devices of metal, stone, and glass cover the column as well.

Victims brought here were strapped to the platforms and connected to the tubes and wires, after which the magical machine fed thoughts and images directly into their minds. These projections were designed specifically to cause mental fatigue, pain, and eventually madness: bright flashing colors, scenes running backward or too fast to understand, screeching sounds, and mind-grating nonsense images of all kinds. A typical victim would succumb to madness within three days of being strapped into the machine.

7. The Chamber of Spiritual Torture (EL 17)

Near the north end of the dungeons lies a chamber that greatly resembles the Chamber of Mental Torture, in that it contains six platforms covered with wires, tubes, and various arcane devices, all connected to a central conelike column. However, victims placed within these magical devices are fed memories and thoughts that challenge their self-worth and identity. Telepathic messages tell them that they are alone, insignificant, unwanted, and unloved. This treatment could cause insanity, but it also proved useful for “reprogramming” victims into willing servants and slaves.

The spectral remains of some of the victims still haunt this torture chamber in the form of eight dread wraiths. They attack any living creature they see with a vengeance.

Dread Wraiths (8): 104 hp each; see MM.

8. The Seeping Portal (EL 14)

The open area down the hall from the Chamber of Spiritual Torture is consumed by a swirling, churning pool of multicolored ooze of an unknown nature. The pool measures twenty feet across and has a greasy, rotting odor. Beneath two feet of the swirling muck is an inky black substance that seems to absorb light. This blackness is an elder black ooze that can draw energy into itself like an eternally hungry darkness. In addition to its normal abilities, its slam attack also inflicts 1d3 negative levels. It greedily attacks anyone that comes near, except a creature wearing a *malefic mask*. It obeys the commands of a mask wearer, although the only commands it understands are to not attack and to transport someone down.

The ooze itself is a magical portal. If alive, it can send anyone passing into it down to the chamber of the Entropy Sphere near Goth Gulgamel. If it dies, anyone who enters the ooze pool is automatically transported.

Black Ooze, Elder: 290 hp; see MM.

9. The Hidden Prison (EL Varies)

The secret door at the top of the north stairs is extremely well hidden (Search, DC 35, to find). If someone attempts to descend the steps without wearing a *malefic mask*, *walls of stone* suddenly fill the staircase, enough to literally seal it in solid rock. Since the walls cannot appear where a creature is standing, they appear immediately in front and immediately behind those on the stairs, entombing them.

Walls of Stone Trap: CR 5; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (multiple *walls of stone*, 20th-level wizard); multiple targets; Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

The skeletal remains of a massive dragon dominate the Hidden Prison at the bottom of the staircase. In life, the dragon must have been well over one hundred feet long. Amid its bones lie the dried, desiccated corpses of what must be angels, archons, and other powerful but extremely exotic creatures.

Six birdcages, each about two feet tall, hang from chains attached to hooks on the walls here. Most appear empty. At the far eastern end of the hall, a brass-lidded glass jar about eight inches tall sits on a shelf, faintly glowing with a golden spark inside it. Two tall, rectangular mirrors in elaborate oaken frames flank the shelf, hanging on that wall.

The Cages

Each cage is made of a different metal: iron, bronze, brass, copper, gold, and silver and each has an *antipathy* effect upon it that affects neutral good creatures (20th-level caster, Will save, DC 25). Each cage is a very powerful magical prison, capable of holding a single victim similar to the *minimus containment* version of the *binding* spell. Three are empty, save for some dust. Touching an empty cage forces a character to make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 25) or be imprisoned within it.

The copper cage contains the skeleton of a tiny, bird-headed woman, a now-dead cosmic entity once imprisoned by the Dread One. The gold cage contains a small, green-skinned man with feathered wings who—while alive—appears on the brink of starvation and dehydration. He does not respond to any stimuli. The silver cage contains what looks like a roughly carved clenched human fist of stone.

The green man with feathered wings is Meruk, a solar angel. (Normally, a *minimus containment* does not require the victim to eat, drink, or breathe, but the Dread One's cruel magic enforced an eternal condition of deprivation upon him.) The stone fist is a magically *metamorphosed* being named Eruliche. The metamorphosis, in addition to the binding, was necessary to hold her because of her great power—she is, in fact, a demigoddess, the child and heir of Ni-Gorth.

Opening the door of any of the cages frees the victim within, assuming they are still alive. Meruk's condition persists even after he is freed—he has 1 hp, his ability scores are all 1, and he has no access to any of his special abilities (and of course has no possessions). He is incoherent until he receives restoration and healing, after which point he becomes extremely grateful to his rescuers. He was an ally of Danar's; when the onetime cleric became the Dread One, he imprisoned the angel here after failing to corrupt him (unlike Meruk's friend and half-brother, the angel once known as Bastion, but now known as the Malificite). He asks about Bastion; if the PCs don't know the planetar's whereabouts, Meruk likely will leave soon to find his companion, promising to reward the PCs when he can (he will do so in a major fashion—the details are up to the DM).

Meruk, Solar: 220 hp (currently 1); see MM.

Eruliche is more difficult to free. The stony fist must have a *break enchantment* or *dispel magic* spell cast upon her (with a caster level check of DC 31). Once freed, she appears as a massive humanoid woman of great beauty. Her power remains still diminished, however, so use the statistics for a titan until she can truly resume her mantle of godhood (which will take time, acclimation, and perhaps some special actions on her part).

For more on Bastion—now called the Malificite—see Chapter 10: The Dread One's Path in The Banewarrens adventure.

Malefic mask, page 505

Entropy Sphere, page 499
Goth Gulgamel, page 486

Ni-Gorth, PT2: page 70



If freed, Meruk the solar would be lauded among all the angelic hosts (or at least among those in the world, the Malkuth), for unlike Bastion and Averon, he resisted the temptations and corruptions of the Dread One.

Bastion and the Malificite, page 530



Father Claw, PT2: page 69



House Dallimothan,
PT3: page 89

Rescuing Queen Doril (either one, or both) and bringing her to the world could greatly alter the entire dwarven race. Once the queen(s) get an idea of the current situation facing the clans, they likely would attempt to rally the Stonelost dwarves—perhaps even renaming them Earthsingers—and move to reclaim Dwarvenhearth. Many Stonelost dwarves would see their return as a sign of a new dwarven age and would be willing to accept that Doril's leadership makes them once again worthy of their ancestral home.

Eruliche seems very leery of her rescuers, unconvinced that they did not somehow play a role in her imprisonment. Extremely diplomatic characters might be able to get her to aid them with some spells, but that's probably the most she'll do. She is too arrogant to ever truly appreciate the helpful actions of mortals; PCs who demand that she act more grateful could make her very angry...

Eruliche, "Titan": 370 hp; see MM.

The Golden Spark

The jar on the shelf resembles another type of magical *binding* prison. The golden spark is in fact the soul of the gold dragon whose bones fill the chamber. Anyone who attempts to open the jar (or breaks it) must make a Will saving throw (DC 30) or be inadvertently possessed by the soul of the dragon, while the character's own soul goes into the jar. The dragon, Nalachoserithis, really wants its own body, however, and immediately attempts to slay the body it inhabits, in order to get out of it. If the initial saving throw succeeds, or if the possessed creature dies, Nalachoserithis' soul goes into his corpse; as it does so, it transforms back into a living great wyrm gold dragon.

In any event, Nalachoserithis hardly notices any characters present, let alone that they just freed him. He teleports away almost immediately. Nalachoserithis, traditionally an ancient enemy of Father Claw, goes to discover how fares his foe and their respective forces (Unfortunately, Nalachoserithis' servants and allies are, of course, long gone—all note of him has been lost except in the most obscure of history texts. Once he learns this, he attempts to re-establish his power base, perhaps by usurping House Dallimothan.)

Nalachoserithis, Great Wyrms Gold Dragon: 717 hp; see MM.

The Mirrors

Both of the mirrors on the east wall are *mirrors of life trapping*. Each has a few souls trapped within it. The western mirror holds Muwal, an ogre-mage who was a prince of his kind millennia ago; an elder air elemental; a doppelganger that had been impersonating a Lunas elf princess named Lyaele; and a half-dragon fighter named Erreshifal, a scion of Father Claw.

The other mirror holds a neutral good cloud giant queen named Wilhemara; a gorgon; a troll chieftain named Haurt; and two dwarf queens, Doril the Elder and her devious sister.

The two dwarves are a part of the now-lost Earthsinger overclan. In fact, it was the loss of these queens that eventually led that overclan to die out thousands of years ago. Each woman is lovely (for a dwarf) and quite capable. Doril the Elder is the rightful ruler of all Earthsinger dwarves, and so Doril the Younger would like to

be freed without her sister. Neither realizes, of course, that they are the last two Earthsinger dwarves in the world.

Of all these prisoners, Muwal, Erreshifal, Haurt, the air elemental, and the gorgon are likely to attack anyone who frees them. The doppelganger continues its deception as long as possible, and Wilhemara is grateful, swearing eternal fealty to her rescuers. Doril the Elder is also grateful, but demands to be taken to her dwarven homeland as soon as possible (it no longer exists). Doril the Younger pretends to be her sister and does whatever she can to prevent her sister from being freed, even going so far as to claim that she is an evil impostor.

Muwal, Ogre-Mage: 49 hp; see MM.

Elder Air Elemental: 228 hp; see MM.

"Lyaele," Doppelganger: 22 hp; see MM.

Erreshifal, Half-Dragon Fighter4: 43 hp; see MM.

Wilhemara, Cloud Giant: 200 hp; see MM.

Gorgon: 85 hp; see MM.

Haurt, Troll: 81 hp; see MM.

Queen Doril the Younger

Female dwarf (Lawful Evil)

Aristocrats/fighter14 CR 18

HD 14d10+28 + 5d8+10 **hp** 153

Init +5 **Speed** 20 feet

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10

BAB/Grapple +17/+22

Attack +22 melee (1d3+5, unarmed strike)

Full Attack +22/+17/+12/+7 melee (1d3+5, unarmed strike)

Fort +14, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Str 21, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 16

Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Giant, Gnomish.

Crucial Skills: Bluff +13, Escape Artist +4, Intimidate +13, Jump +21, Listen +12, Sense Motive +12, Spot +12.

Other Skills: Craft (armorsmithing) +5, Craft (blacksmithing) +10, Craft (stonemasonry) +9, Craft (trapmaking) +4, Craft (weaponsmithing) +4, Open Lock +5, Ride +8, Swim +12.

Crucial Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Disarm, Power Attack, Quick Draw.

Other Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Greater Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Improved Critical (battleaxe), Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Weapon Focus (battleaxe), Weapon Specialization (battleaxe).

Possessions: None.

Queen Doril the Elder

Female dwarf (Lawful Good)

Aristocrats/Fighter15 CR 19

HD 15d10+75 + 5d8+25 **hp** 195

Init +5 **Speed** 20 feet

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10

BAB/Grapple +18/+22

Attack +22 melee (1d3+4, unarmed strike)

Full Attack +22/+17/+12/+7 melee (1d3+5, unarmed strike)

Fort +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +12

Str 19, **Dex** 12, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 18

Languages: Common, Dwarvish, Gnomish.

Crucial Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +20, Hide +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Sense Motive +10, Spot +3.

Other Skills: Craft (armorsmithing) +3, Craft (blacksmithing) +3, Craft (stonemasonry) +3, Craft (trapmaking) +3, Craft (weaponsmithing) +3, Diplomacy +19, Knowledge (nature) +7, Knowledge (religion) +3.

Crucial Feats: Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Far Shot, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Quick Draw.

Other Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (light crossbow).

Possessions: None.

SUB-LEVEL 2: DREAD ONE'S PATH

This sub-level is not on the poster map. It is an extradimensional area created by Eslathagos Malkith as a way to claw his way out of this plane as he sought a powerful artifact called the *antithesis stone* (he found the stone but failed to break out of the confines of this plane). It serves as a lair for a creature called the Malificite, a powerful angel perverted to evil by the Dread One.

For more information on the Dread One's Path, see Chapter 10 of the separate adventure *The Banewarrens*.

SUB-LEVEL 3: THE BANEHEART

This sub-level is not on the poster map—actually, calling it a sub-level is a misnomer. The Baneheart (also called Tremoc Korin) is, in fact, a shaft one hundred feet wide that extends down the length of the Spire. Its presence proves that space folds in upon itself within the Spire, as the shaft does not join up with the chamber of the Entropy Sphere. The Baneheart connects to the rest of the Banewarrens. For more information, see Chapter 9 of the separate adventure *The Banewarrens*.

JABEL SHAMMAR SCENARIOS

Exploring this, the most (in)famous location in the world, might be incentive enough to some characters. However, there are other reasons to face its dangers. Here are just a few.

SOMETHING STIRS ONCE AGAIN

A venerable elf, known for being extremely sensitive and a bit of a seer, engages in a public match of Gold Dragonscales. In the course of the game, he uses the scales to spell out the message, “Something Stirs, Once Again, in Jabel

Shammar”—then he passes away of old age. He refers, of course, to the growing power of the Malignancy, something he was too afraid to ever mention aloud, but which he wanted to warn others of before he passed.

The danger—and the irony—of such a mission is that the only way to stop the Malignancy is to go to Jabel Shammar and destroy the *Book of Inverted Darkness*. But anyone who goes to Jabel Shammar risks corruption by the Malignancy, which would only increase its power and hasten the danger.

RECOVER PARNAITH'S HEART

The player characters face the culmination of a long quest: to gain access to an important sealed location, to create a powerful artifact of good, to summon a god, or some other monumental task. They discover that to finish what they set out to do, they need an artifact called *Parnaith's Heart*. It's not her literal heart, but an item that she created to fight the growing evil she saw in her husband's heart (which failed, obviously). Research into ancient texts reveals that the object still lies within Jabel Shammar.

RESCUE THE DWARVEN QUEEN

Ancient records found in Dwarvenhearth reveal that a queen of old, long thought slain by demons, was in fact imprisoned by the Dread One in Jabel Shammar. Dreams haunting the sleep of dwarves everywhere suggest that Doril the Elder is still alive and, if rescued and returned to power, could lead the dwarves scattered across the world to unity and a renewed destiny. If a way into Jabel Shammar exists, the dwarves would repay Doril's rescuers with incredible treasures only they could grant.

DESTROY THE SIGNET OF SHALLAMOTH KINDRED

In his examination of the *Signet of Shallamoth Kindred*, the Iron Mage determines that only immersing it in the heart of darkness—which he determines to be the soul of the Dread One—will destroy it. Not wishing to brave the dangers of Jabel Shammar, he attempts to convince the player characters to go there, find the Sombrous Sepulcher, and place the signet within.

WRAPPING UP AN ADVENTURE IN JABEL SHAMMAR

If characters go to Jabel Shammar with the idea of cleansing it of its evil, the job is almost certainly too big for them. Even the Elder Gods could do no better than to seal it off. Destroying the Malignancy should be enough for heroes with even the loftiest of ideals. Jabel Shammar is sure to be a blight upon the world forevermore and, given time, may pose further threats.

The Hidden Prisoners

The Hidden Prison in the dungeons of Jabel Shammar (see page 535) is full of characters of historical importance: a demigoddess, the son of Father Claw, a great wyrm gold dragon, and other rulers and individuals of significance. Any of them could become the object of a quest into Jabel Shammar.

Parnaith's Heart, page 508

Entropy Sphere, page 499

Signet of Shallamoth Kindred,

PT7: page 454

Iron Mage, PT5: page 340

Sombrous Sepulcher, page 532

Gold Dragonscales,

PT5: page 359





Ptolus

NOBLES' QUARTER

THE SPIRE

OLDTOWN

SOUTH MARKET

NORTH MARKET

TEMPLE DISTRICT

MIDTOWN

GUILDSMAN DISTRICT

NECROPOLIS

THE WARRENS

THE DOCKS

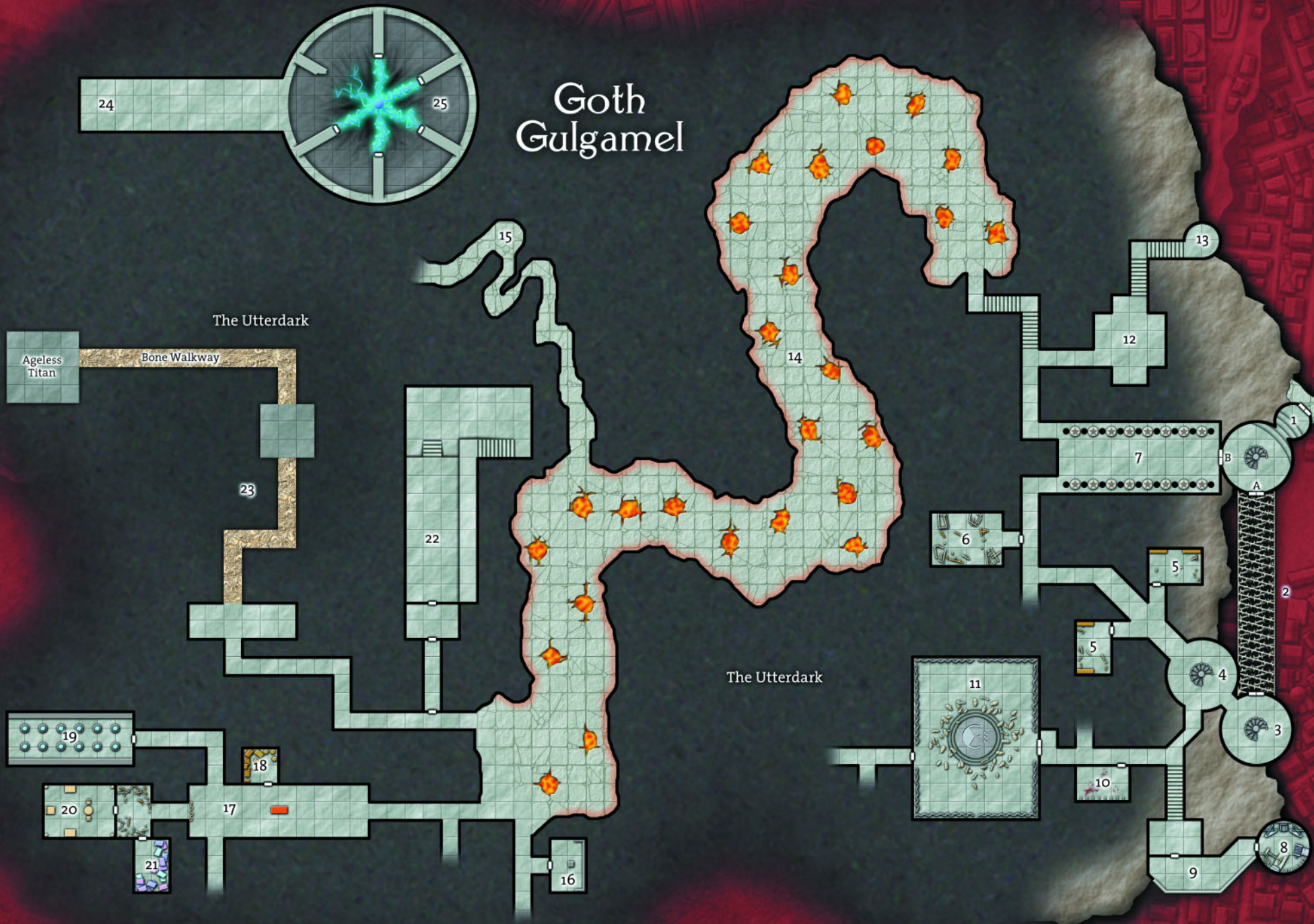
BAY OF PTOLUS



BAACON ISLAND

BOLEN
1:11,111

Goth Gulgamel



24

25

The Utterdark

Ageless Titan

Bone Walkway

23

22

15

14

13

12

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7

B

A

6

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The Utterdark

5

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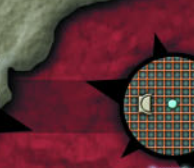
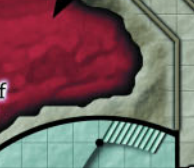
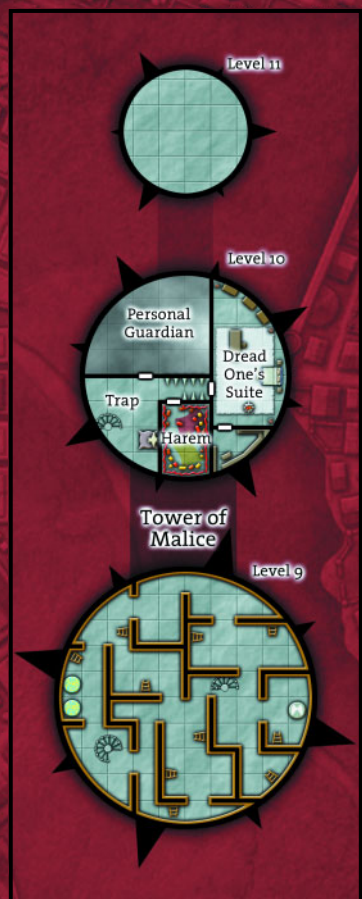
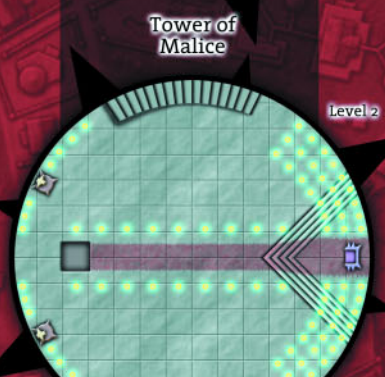
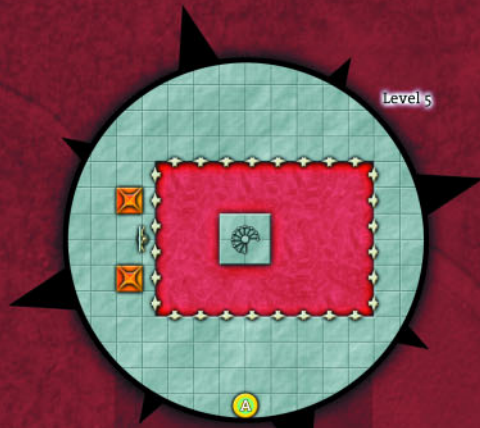
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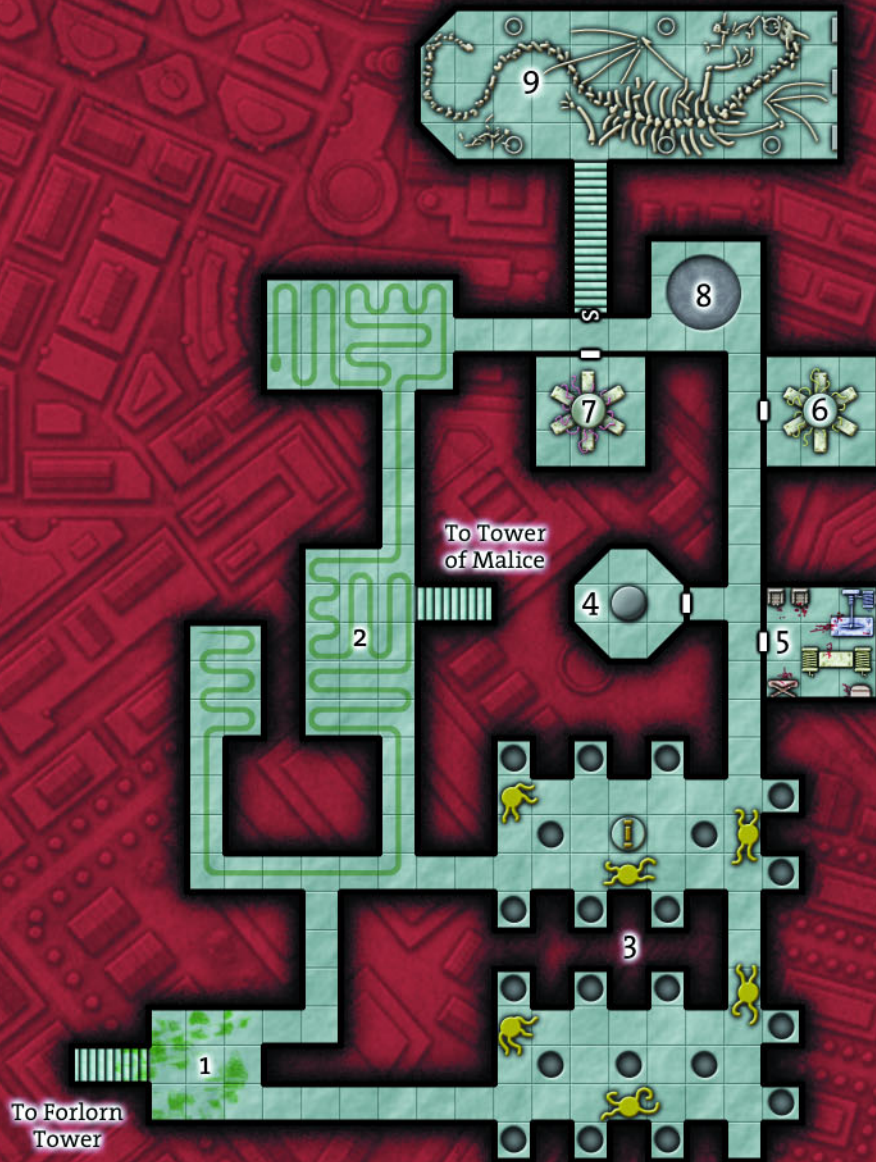
9

8

Jabel Shammar



The Dungeons



Key



Blasphemous Shrine



Cage



Bladed Hallway



Statue



Pit or Hole



Plug



Teleporter



Roper



Golems



1 square = 10 feet



PTOLUS

THE SPIRE

A Sourcebook By
MONTE COOK

Soaring above the characters' heads at all times, the Spire is both awe-inspiring and daunting. Although often obscured by clouds, it poses an everpresent threat and a reminder of the region's dark history.

In this book you will find details about Goth Gulgamel, the fortress of Ghul: the Skull-King and Half God. It is a place of great evil and great power, of interest to high-level characters as a site to explore.

You will also find a chapter describing Jabel Shammar, almost certainly the worst place in the world. Jabel Shammar is the fortress at the top of the Spire, built by the Dread One himself. You get a room-by-room description of the stronghold plus ideas for staging an exciting campaign climax there.

Includes full-color maps of both fortresses.

This is one in a series of nine *Ptolus* PDF releases from Malhavoc Press. When used together, they comprise the entirety of the *Ptolus* print book. Each one is also usable on its own for city-based fantasy d20 roleplaying campaigns.

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