

DEMON GOD'S FANE™

AN ELDRITCH
MIGHT HIGH-LEVEL
ADVENTURE
by
MONTE COOK

DEMON GOD'S FANE



MALHAVOC PRESS®





DEMON GOD'S FANE

An Eldritch Might Adventure for 14th- and 15th-level characters

BY MONTE COOK

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ADDITIONAL CREDITS

Editing and Production: Sue Weinlein Cook

Cover Illustration: Brian LeBlanc

Interior Illustrations: Talon Dunning, Stephen Shepherd, and The Unseelie Court

Cartography: The Unseelie Court

Art Director: Rich Thomas

Cover and Interior Page Design: Peter Whitley

Playtesting: Bruce R. Cordell, Chris Perkins, Jeff Quick, and Sean K Reynolds

For supplemental material, visit Monte Cook's Website: <www.montecook.com>



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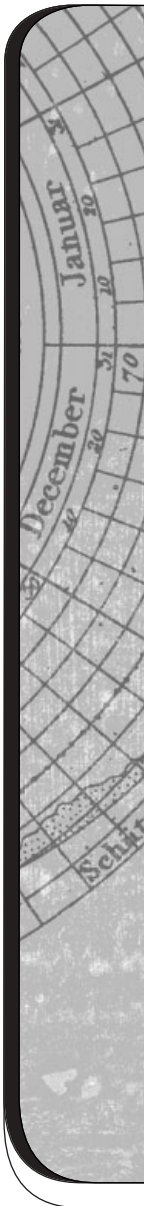
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A High-Level Challenge

So, why is the very first Malhavoc Press adventure for such high-level characters? Wouldn't it make more sense to start with 1st level and work our way up? I don't think so. The d20 System has been out for more than a year now, and the characters in your game are probably not 1st level any more. In fact, if things are going the way we planned, a lot of you probably have games with 10th- to 14th-level characters in them now. But even if you don't have PCs available to use this adventure immediately, I'm still glad that I chose to write something for high-level characters. There are already a lot of low-level adventures out there and, frankly, they're not that hard for DMs to whip up on their own. High-level adventures are harder, however, and not as easy to find.

A lot of people used to say that the d20 System breaks down after about 10th level. Some still do. I scoff at them. High-level play is just different, and, yes, it's harder. The DM and players really have to know the characters' (and NPCs') capabilities. *Demon God's Fane* exists to show that high-level play using the d20 System is not only possible, but challenging and fun. In the playtests of this adventure, the players started out thinking they could do anything, that they had seen it all. By the end of the first session, they realized they were up against a challenge that required all their great powers: a challenge befitting heroes of the highest caliber. I hope you find the same to be true.

YESTERDAY

Golden Lake has always been known as a wonderful place. The people who live along its shores are happy and healthy, the fish from its waters are abundant, and outsiders even claim that a drink from the lake is rejuvenating and restorative of lost health. If the area were not so remote, it probably would be more populated.

However, unbeknownst to most, not every statement in the above description is true. The first sentence is a lie. Golden Lake—or rather, the area that is now Golden Lake—was not always a wonderful place. In fact, it was once the center of a dark religion that offered up living sacrifices and unspeakable rites to the demon prince known as Ochremeshk (Oh-cray-MESH-ik). Once, his blasphemous name terrorized local folk to their very souls. Now, it is almost entirely forgotten.

The followers of Ochremeshk, who simply referred to their master as “the Demon God,” built a huge temple that was also a strangely stylized statue of their patron. They called forth demons from the pits until they were almost without number. With this infernal might on their side, they pillaged and raped the surrounding lands until the earth itself bled. The Demon God's Fane stood within a place called the Vale of Fears, for the bloody sacrifices of innocent captives went on night after night. And when there were too many sacrifices to make at night, they extended into the day as well. The sun soon ceased to shine upon the Vale of Fears, for it is said that the gods could no longer tolerate to look upon the bloodshed, the debauchery, and the soul-churning, abominable acts perpetrated by the cultists of Ochremeshk.

It seemed that evil had triumphed in this land, and that darkness would rule eternal. Until, that is, a single man of great power and faith resisted the power of Ochremeshk and the depraved hordes that cavorted in his name. Enchelious (Ahn-KEL-ee-us) was a cleric of Gaen, the Goddess of Light. Tales told of this man today in the Church of Gaen say that his heart was so full of her love, her power, and her glory, that you could see it glowing within his chest like a bit of the sun. Enchelious led a small band of stalwart soldiers and mages against the cult of Ochremeshk, and by no fewer than three miracles (whose details are lost) in one day, they overcame the forces of darkness. Enchelious called upon the might of Gaen to destroy the Fane utterly, including all the cultists and demons still within.

But even Gaen's power had its limits. Instead of destruction, Gaen brought forth mighty rains and diverted a major river, filling the Vale of Fears forever with water. The Demon God's Fane became submerged in a very deep lake. What's more, the water possessed a divine magic that acted as a ward, trapping those within the Fane in an eternal tomb.

Years, decades, and centuries passed. The Church of Gaen remembers the hero Enchelious, but few remember the cult of Ochremeshk. No one remembers the Demon God's Fane.

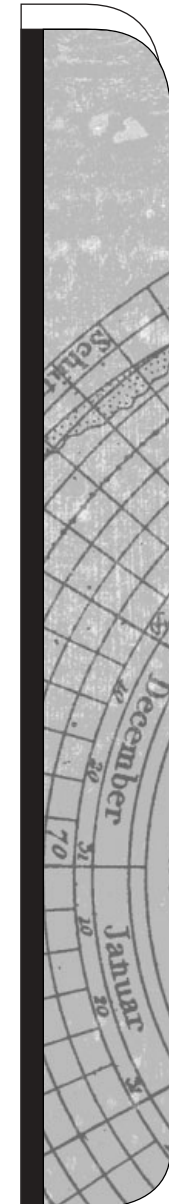
Such is folly.

Conversion Ideas

Demon God's Fane utilizes and references The Book of Eldritch Might, a sourcebook of arcane spells, magic items, prestige classes, and more. In fact, it references it heavily—the adventure was made to be a companion piece to that sourcebook. You can download The Book of Eldritch Might from Malhavoc Press at at <www.montecook.com>.

If you'd prefer not to buy it, here is a short list of possible replacements for some of The Book of Eldritch Might-specific references:

- Change the graven ones to loremasters.
- Change spells with unfamiliar names to other spells of the same level.
- In place of the Lace Spell feats, use a meta-magic feat such as Empower Spell or Maximize Spell to approximate the same results.
- Change the embermage to a single-classed sorcerer.
- Change the iron chimera in Area 5 to a half-fiendish chimera.



TODAY

A terrible drought has come to Golden Lake, lowering the waterline more than ever before. The receding water level has exposed the topmost portion of the Demon God's Fane, and some demons have escaped.

But a strange thing has happened to many of the demons trapped within the temple for so long. Their demonic physical forms degraded and eventually eroded away with the passage of time into mere shadows of themselves—literally shadows. Left as only demonic essence, these demons took the form of a malady, a disease: a virus. Given the chance to leave the Fane, this intelligent and diabolic virus, calling itself the Umbral Taint, flew up and out. It found its way into the secluded fishing village called Golden Lake, after the body of water upon whose shores it lay. It gripped its first unwilling victim, a fisherman named Drabat Finch. The viral essence possessed him like a demon, but it also waited within him, dormant for a time, festering until it could spread like a contagion to everyone he contacted.

Meanwhile, the remaining demons, creatures, and cultists (who survived the centuries by accepting the curse of undeath) sought to determine their next move. Sussinst-ir, the cult's high priestess—now a lich—communed with Ochremeshk and learned of a ritual that would restore power to the temple. Jealous of the prestige this would bring Sussinst-ir, the half-demon Lytaros Fel stole the secrets of the ritual from the lich and destroyed her. Now the rest of the Fane's inhabitants have sworn allegiance to Lytaros Fel out of fear, but also because of his great potential to achieve what he sets out to accomplish. Lytaros Fel will, if successful, use the ritual to travel back in time and help the forces of evil against Enchelious as the cleric fights the Fane's old master, the balor Charmachnar. With Enchelious dead, the Demon God's Fane will once again be a place of power—in fact, it will never have fallen in the first place.

Lytaros Fel wields his power with an iron hand. He commands the others not to leave the Fane and not to draw attention to themselves until the ritual ends. Instead, the demons and vile creatures must remain vigilant to defend the structure against attack.

THE AWFUL TRUTH

Enchelious made a terrible mistake. When he called upon Gaen's power to bring down the rain of heaven to submerge the Demon God's Fane, the forces of evil had already been routed. The demons were preparing to leave, taking the few remaining cultists with them (to give them someone to torment in the Abyss). They were about to give up Ochremeshk's hold on this prime material world forever. By sealing the demons in the Fane, Enchelious ensured that they would remain to wreak their havoc in his future (the present).

But not all is lost. Enchelious' mistake can be undone—in fact, with the power in the Fane's Heart, it can be unmade.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The player characters (PCs) come to Golden Lake and learn of a series of mysterious murders. Helping to investigate, they discover that the murderer is a fisherman named Drabat Finch. When they confront him, however, they inadvertently loose from him the Umbral Taint, which begins to spread through the village.

Investigating the infestation, the PCs hear of a cabal of graven ones, powerful runic spellcasters who live in an old fortress not far from the village. The Umbral Taint has infected even some of the graven ones, and the PCs must stop the spread before all the spellcasters become diseased and possessed. As a reward for helping them, the graven ones tell the PCs important information and show them old documents that discuss the Demon God's Fane's true center of power—the Fane's Heart. Perhaps if the Heart is destroyed, the plague of the Umbral Taint will come to an end. The graven ones offer the PCs additional aid as well, and promise to keep things in the village under control while the characters go to the Fane.

The PCs learn of strange things seen recently around the lake, and they soon discover the location of the Demon God's Fane. Armed with the knowledge of the graven ones, they must enter the temple and find its very heart to stop the Umbral Taint from spreading throughout the land.

To get there, the characters must overcome many obstacles, as well as activate the proper ritual keys to gain access to the Fane's Heart. They also encounter an old ally of Enchelious—a ghost who tells them the awful truth: The Fane should never have been sealed and submerged so long ago. The real way to stop the virus is to stop Enchelious from calling on Gaen's miracle to bring about the Golden Lake.

Once finally in the Fane's Heart, the PCs have one chance to undo the past. Lytaros Fel is attempting to use the Heart's power to kill Enchelious before he can destroy Charmachnar the balor. If the PCs make sure that doesn't happen, and then either convince Enchelious of the truth or physically stop him from casting the final *miracle* spell, they will find themselves in a different—but ultimately better—present.

USING THIS BOOK

DMs should place this adventure within any secluded, temperate area in their campaign world. The deities involved can easily be replaced with others, although Ochremeshk is simple to add into an existing campaign, and may even be a valuable addition.

Throughout this adventure, sidebars offer special information and guidelines for the DM. Blocks of boldface type provide descriptive text that DMs may read aloud or paraphrase for players. This book uses the following new class abbreviations in stat blocks: Gra = graven one†, Emb = embermage†. Some spells, items, feats, and classes mentioned in this book

were introduced in *The Book of Eldritch Might*; a double dagger (‡) indicates these references. Spells, items, feats, etc. introduced in this book are marked with a single dagger (†). Otherwise, all references to spells, feats, and other rules are from the three Core Rulebooks: the *Player's Handbook*, DMG, and MM.

In this reprinting of the original electronic edition of *Demon God's Fane* we have updated the page design to match the look of our current product line, facilitate quick printing, and conserve ink. We've also corrected a few typos and included some material from Monte Cook's website that was featured in the print edition of this book.

Bonus source material and ideas to augment the information in *Demon God's Fane* appear on MonteCook's website. To find the links to these free web enhancements, visit the book's product page online at <www.montecook.com/mpress__DGF.html>.

This adventure is protected content except for items specifically called out as Open Gaming Content on the title page. For full details, please turn to the Appendix. Open content is not otherwise marked in the text of this book.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

If the PCs are good aligned and seem generally helpful, get them into this adventure simply by having them arrive in the secluded area around Golden Lake. Although happenstance is a fine way to start an adventure, below are a few ways to get the PCs into the area or motivate them to go to the Fane.

1. The characters have some connection to Golden Lake. Perhaps one of them is originally from the area, or has friends or relatives here. If the group contains clerics or paladins, substitute their patron deity for Gaen and let them learn of the lake's holy aspects—or at least catch some hint of them. Help them conclude that a pilgrimage is in order.
2. Play up the rejuvenating powers of the lake's waters, or the generally peaceful, secluded nature of the area, to encourage the PCs to come of their own accord.
3. As a reward, a local noble grants one or more of the PCs a small, uncleared tract of land on the shores of the lake, near the village of Golden Lake.
4. Place something that the characters need in or near Golden Lake (either the village or the lake itself). For example, if the PCs are questing for some ancient artifact as a part of a completely different adventure, a clue to its whereabouts may be found only in the extensive library of the graven ones (see page 14). Or, information learned in that library may force the PCs to believe that they must find some object of importance—such as the *spellstealer*† (in Area 28)—within the Fane itself.
5. Taking Hook #4 a step further, the PCs learn that an important object or bit of ancient lore that they seek lies within something called the Demon God's Fane. After hinting about it and letting them search for it for a long time, allow the PCs to learn (perhaps through a potent divination) that the structure has just become accessible. Or better yet, perhaps the characters themselves put into motion powerful forces that caused the drought, making the once unattainable location accessible once more. They travel to the isolated region, believing this to be a lucky break, but instead find it to be a horrible calamity for the region—and perhaps beyond. (This option is the author's favorite.)
6. Evil parties, or those simply motivated by base greed, may hear that great treasures (again, perhaps specifically the *spellstealer*†) await them within a place called the Demon God's Fane. When they happen to stumble into Golden Lake, they learn of the place and find themselves tempted by the lure of its bounty.

About the Author

Monte Cook started working professionally in the game industry in 1988. For Iron Crown Enterprises, he worked on the *Rolemaster* and *Champions* games as an editor, developer, and designer. In 1994 Monte came to TSR as a game designer. As a senior game designer with *Wizards of the Coast*, he codesigned the new edition of *Dungeons & Dragons*, authored the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and designed *The Book of Vile Darkness* and the d20 version of *Call of Cthulhu*. For *WizKids* games, he designed the *HeroClix* system of superhero combat. *Arcana Unearthed* is his latest release from Malhavoc Press.

A graduate of the Clarion West writer's workshop, Monte also has published short stories and two novels. In his spare time, he runs games, builds vast dioramas out of LEGO building bricks, and reads a lot of comics.

About the Illustrators

Cover artist **Brian LeBlanc** also created the cover illustration for *The Book of Eldritch Might*. You can see more of his work in many other *Sword & Sorcery* titles.

Atlanta artist and graphic designer **Talon Dunning**, a survivor of *White Wolf's* intern program, is now the chief illustrator for their *Ravenloft* line as well as a regular in other *Sword & Sorcery* projects, including *Book of Eldritch Might II: Songs and Souls of Power* from Malhavoc. He's also done work for *West End Games*, *Wizards of the Coast*, *Eden Studios*, and *KenzerCo*.

Stephen Shepherd is a Florida-based artist who got his start with Malhavoc Press. He has worked on a number of books for *Mongoose Publishing* and *Troll Lord Games*, as well as many others. He lives with his supportive wife, Julie, and his inspirational daughter Andi. He is currently plotting world domination. Visit his website at <<http://voodoo.home.sapo.pt/>>.

The Unseelie Court creates imaginative interior illustrations for Malhavoc titles, including *The Book of Eldritch Might*. In addition, they designed the Malhavoc Press logo as well as Monte Cook's popular website.

Malhavoc Press

Malhavoc Press is Monte's d20 System imprint devoted to the publication of unusual magic, monsters, and evocative game elements that go beyond traditional fantasy. Malhavoc Press products exhibit the mastery of the d20 System rules that only one of its original designers can offer.

Demon God's Fane is a support adventure for Malhavoc Press' *Book of Eldritch Might*. Also look for the mega-adventure *The Banewarrens*, which takes PCs from 6th to 10th level. Current titles are available in either print or electronic (PDF) format at <www.montecook.com>.



Darkness Comes to Golden Lake

After you choose one of the adventure hooks on the previous page, the adventure begins when the player characters arrive at the peaceful—for the moment—village of Golden Lake.

The foul and twisted demonic virus, the Umbral Taint, has infected Drabat Finch, a previously well-liked, quiet fisherman in the village of Golden Lake. It forced him to murder and mutilate four people in horrible and cruel ways, and will continue to force him to kill until he is stopped. Drabat is a former mercenary and well trained with a sword, allowing him to kill villagers wantonly.

THE UMBRAL TAINT

Spread like a contagious disease (by prolonged contact), the Umbral Taint allows a demonic entity, completely without physical form, to quickly grow upon and take over a victim. The host falls completely under the control of the Taint, which operates with the twisted, chaotic evil thought processes of a demon. The Taint adds one special capability to the

The Drought

The area around Golden Lake received much lower than average snowfalls last winter, and now is very short on rain. The lake stands 15 to 20 feet below normal levels. In addition, some wildlife has left the area (although by normal standards, game is still plentiful), and crops are doing poorly.

This is a natural event. An interesting side plot (out of the scope of this adventure) is that one of the graven ones (see page 11) accidentally caused the drought through a miscast spell. The PCs must somehow undo what was done.

host: It can set up a *conditional spell*† and store up to any 3rd-level arcane or divine spell as if it had all of the *Lace Spell*† feats. The demonic virus also carries with it some very special information. The first victim (in this case Drabat Finch) has a fairly good working knowledge of the Umbral Taint's origins, the Demon God's Fane, and its inhabitants. Each

successive "generation" of the infection carries less and less information, until the victims retain only a vague awareness of an evil temple somewhere where the disease was "born." If the Taint is destroyed or banished, victims remember nothing of what occurred while they were infected.

While infected, victims retain all their knowledge, skills, and abilities. The Taint does not hesitate to make use of this information and these capabilities to carry out its evil agenda: Victims of the Taint desire to commit evil acts and atrocities however they can—murder, pain, mutilation, and destruction are their only goals. Their alignment becomes chaotic evil.

Victims of the disease have no evil aura discernible by *detect evil* or other alignment-sensing divinations. See *invisibility*, *invisibility purge*, and similar spells also register nothing strange about a victim (the disease consists of beings of ephemeral shadow, not of the real world). *True seeing* however, reveals an insectoid creature made of shadow riding the victim's upper back. Shadowy, tattered wings flutter, and the creature seems at least partially burrowed into the victim. (See illustration, page 10.)

Remove disease and other effects that deal with disease are insufficient to rid the victim of the otherdimensional aspects of the Umbral Taint, although an immunity to disease (such as that enjoyed by a paladin) does protect a character. Only a *banishment* or a spell with a similar effect and level (or higher) can free a victim from the throes of the malady (*dismissal*, for example, is not powerful enough).

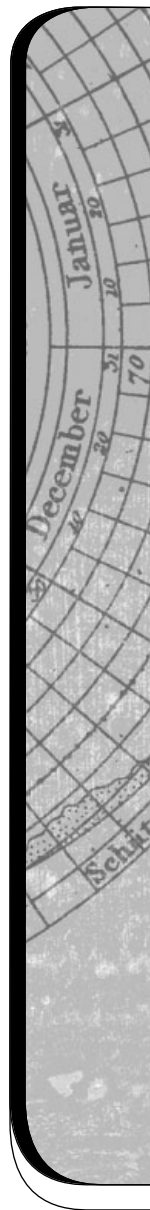
Remaining within 10 feet of the contagion (including someone already infected) for at least a minute potentially infects you. The Umbral Taint can also be propagated through evil magic. Touch or even ranged spells with the evil descriptor transmit the malady directly, and area spells (like *unholy blight*) scatter the disease throughout a 200-foot radius, potentially infecting 1d6 random targets.

Those exposed to infection must make a Fortitude saving throw and Will saving throw, both with a DC of 15. If either saving throw fails, the victim becomes infected.

THE SURROUNDINGS

The area around Golden Lake has long been verdant and prosperous, a temperate forest in a mountainous region far from any major cities or trade routes. There are no local orc tribes, marauding giants, dragon lairs, or anything of the sort. Even the lake, for all its fabled depth, harbors few aquatic predators of any real threat. (As a side effect of the warding nature of the water, the lake has subtly driven away monsters and dangerous creatures.)

The lake itself is 1 mile wide and 6 miles long, running mostly east and west. People say it might be as deep as 300 to 400 feet in places, but no one knows for sure. Most of the banks are sheer, particularly in this time of drought, with only the occasional beach. One can see by the rocks alongside the water how the level has dropped dramatically—at least 15 feet.



THE VILLAGE OF GOLDEN LAKE

The main occupation of Golden Lake's residents is fishing. There are a small handful of hunters as well, and a few farmers have cleared land to the south for small crops, although the forest is so thick and fertile, it is a constant struggle to fight off the encroaching woods that seek to reclaim the cleared spaces.

Golden Lake (village): Conventional; AL NG; 200 gp limit; Assets 4,270 gp; Population 423 (was recently 427); Isolated (406 humans, 9 halflings, 4 elves, and 4 dwarves).

Authority Figures: Reeve Dallen Styne, male human Ftr5.

Important Characters: Nargeret Javen female human Com4 (fisherman), Taggert male dwarf Com4 (barkeep), Drabat Finch male human War4, Greddan Sylvos male human Clr3 (cleric of Gaen), Kraun Thein male human Com3 (merchant), Evan Mench male human Exp3 (fisherman), Red Ginter male human Exp3 (blacksmith), Unith Chester female elf Rng2, Gesse Anatham female human Com2 (fish cleaner), Stretti Thadson female human War2 (hunter).

Others: War1 (8), Com2 (9), Exp1 (4), Com1 (391)

KEY LOCATIONS

Taggert's Taphouse: This tavern is a central touchstone for the whole community. Although the décor (fishnets, harpoons, oars, etc.) makes it seem as though the place caters primarily to fishermen, the truth is that everyone in town frequents Taggert's for a pint of ale and a bit of news or gossip. Taggert is one of the very few dwarves in Golden Lake, and while he runs this place as a fisherman's haven, he secretly fears the water. He is stout and endearingly gruff. He is a 4th-level commoner.

The Boarding House (Nesther's): Golden Lake does not get many visitors or passers-by. Nesther Mench (wife of Evan) allows the occasional traveling merchant or hunter to stay in one of their three extra rooms for 1 sp per night, per room. For an extra silver piece, Nesther provides well-cooked, delicious meals of fish, venison, or turkey, with herb bread, peppers, potatoes, and other vegetables, and spiced tea (no alcohol). Currently, none of the rooms are occupied. PCs looking for somewhere to stay will find this the only place available to them in town.

Nesther is a tall, extremely self-sufficient woman who likes to hear gossip more than she likes to share it. Evan isn't around much, working hard on his fishing boat. She is a 1st-level commoner.

The Pier: Along the shore nearest the village, locals have built a single wooden pier where they moor boats. A small wooden shack built onto the pier houses fishermen's nets

and other needed tools. Because of the drought, the pier has been moved farther away from town to keep up with the receding waterline.

Fish Oil House: A dozen people work here, extracting fish oil and putting it into small kegs. Not surprisingly, this place smells terrible.

Kraun's Store: Golden Lake's general store carries a variety of foodstuffs, equipment, and miscellaneous goods purchased from the infrequent merchants that come to the village. Kraun's Store stocks any equipment listed in the *Player's Handbook* that costs less than 200 gp. Kraun Thein is a tall, thin man with a wispy beard and a squint. He is a 3rd-level commoner.

Red's Smithy: Red Ginter, a 3rd-level expert, is a blacksmith working with his two sons (both 1st-level commoners). A hulking man with red hair in braids and a bushy beard, Red makes iron items of all sorts, including weapons and armor.

Tannery: At the edge of town, Lasel Philis, a 1st-level expert, runs the tannery and sells various leather goods, including armor. Lasel's hair is prematurely gray. This friendly and talkative woman is a good source for village rumors.

Church of Gaen: This small, one-room chapel serves as the only formal spiritual center in town. A few of the villagers also pay homage to nature gods as well (a 7th-level druid named Inthass comes into Golden Lake on an infrequent basis).

Greddan Sylvos, a 3rd-level cleric of Gaen, has headed the church since the passing of the old church warden two years ago (of natural causes). Greddan is a poor source of information, for he doesn't pay much attention to facts and details—he does pay attention to emotions and feelings. Thus, he is overwrought at the state of worry and fear that grips the villagers. He likes everyone and is very welcoming of strangers, particularly other clerics.

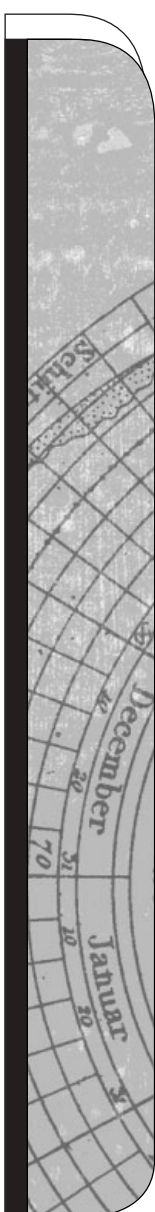
REEVE DALLEEN STYNE

Dallen Styne and his wife Petralla live in a large house in the village. Petralla is known for her hospitality and excellent cooking. Both of them are short and stout humans in their fifties. Dallen's main concern, up until the murders began, was the drought. This is shaping up to be the worst year he can remember.

Gaen

People call Gaen, the Goddess of Light, the Dark-Breaker. She is a champion of the simple but noble folk, respected by humans, halflings, and a few gnomes and elves. Gaen is neutral good and provides access to the following domains: Good, Protection, Strength, and Sun. Her male clerics wear gold and white, and her female clerics wear silver and white.

The doctrine they teach says the nobility of one's soul is more important than all else, and that helping others and struggling against the forces of darkness lead to true grace. Gaen's symbol is a starburst or a burst of light.



Dallen is a good source for information about the village and the surrounding area. (He is not a great means to accomplish anything, however, as he is slow to act.) He knows that outsiders sometimes come to town to check out the “blessed” water of Golden Lake, and he believes it to be true. He points out that the area’s never seen anything that most people would call a “monster”—not so much as an orc or an ogre in his lifetime (the water subtly drives off such evil creatures). He knows nothing of the Demon God’s Fane.

If anything bad happens in Golden Lake, however, count on Dallen to come running—huffing and puffing all the way. He wants to help, but when things get stressful, he’s just not a great leader. People sometimes say his grandfather was a werewolf, but this is untrue.

THE INVESTIGATION

Normally, the people in the village would be a little suspicious of strangers asking questions, but since the murders, everyone is so afraid that they welcome help from any quarter. As the DM, you can handle inquiries through a simple Gather Information check, using the DCs below. You can also have the characters actually interact with the NPCs presented here (as well as those you create), or try a combination of both approaches.

GATHER INFORMATION

DC	Details Learned
5	Someone or something is murdering people when they least expect it.
8	There has been a drought all year long. Crops in cleared fields to the south are sure to be very poor, game is growing scarce (at least relative to its usual bounty), and the lake is down 15 to 20 feet.
10	There has never been an actual murder in Golden Lake before, although in the past people have died in accidents or, very rarely, animal attacks while hunting.
15	Villagers share the names and details of the victims (see page 9).
18	The victims were all fishermen or people who work with fishermen.
20	None of the corpses were eaten, so animal attacks have been ruled out.
25	No one actually saw anything, and the murderer left no easy clues.
27	Hanna and the Whitnels were found in closed-up (but not locked) buildings with no signs of a break-in.

FALSE RUMORS

Feel free to sprinkle in these false facts with what people say or the results of a Gather Information check:

- There have been six murders.
- People have seen some large, bestial humanoids (perhaps gnolls) skulking about the woods near the village.
- Gesse Anatham was seen arguing with the Whitnels at Taggert’s Taphouse last week.
- Drabat Finch has said he thinks he will be the next victim; he is afraid for his life.
- The reeve’s grandfather was a werewolf.
- Lasel Philis knows who the murderer is but is protecting him.

GRAVEN ONES

In discussing the slayings with the villagers, the PCs probably will hear mention of the mysterious graven ones. This cloistered group of a dozen or so wizards and sorcerers led by a half-elf woman named Erepoth specializes in studying symbols, glyphs, and hieroglyphs of all kinds. Their secluded fortress, called the Sigil Hearth, houses a vast library. They are willing to sell potions, scrolls, and magical tattoos. See page 14 for more information.

SPELLS

The PCs can call upon a number of divination spells to help them solve the murders. In fact, after only a little investigation, the spells they possess should make short work of the “mystery.” That’s fine—do not feel that the players are “cheating” by doing this.

Divination: The question this spell answers must be related to an action or goal, such as, “Will we find the murderer by questioning all the fishermen?” to which the spell would reply (assuming the roll for a correct divination succeeds), “Those who plumb the waters know much, and one has had dark secrets bestowed upon him only recently.”

Commune: This is probably most useful of all spells; once the PCs get some suspects, they can simply ask “yes” or “no” questions using this spell and get the answers. Asking if Drabat Finch is the murderer will obviously get a “yes” answer.

Scrying (including clairaudience/clairvoyance or arcane eye): Once some suspects are identified, another quick and simple way to find out more about them is to spy on them magically.

Detect Thoughts: Using this spell is fairly invasive, but it gets the job done. However, the Umbral Taint has placed a *conditional spell* on Drabat, so if someone attempts to use this spell on him, dire events occur. (See pages 9 and 10.)

Legend Lore: This spell won’t help much with solving the murders—the events are too recent and not “legendary.” However, once the PCs discover the existence of the Demon God’s Fane, they can use this spell to learn the history of this area:

Ochremeshk, both demon and god, built a terrible temple here, where blood sacrifices were offered to him night and day. Demons cavorted with mortals, spreading pain and misery throughout the land. Only the might of Gaen's chosen one ended the Fane, sealing it within a golden tomb that glistens today right before your very eyes.

Speak with Dead: If the PCs attempt to question one of the victims with this spell, they discover that not enough of the face and head of the body remains for the corpse to speak. A *make whole* spell, however, turns this into a quick and easy way to get information. While Ritter was killed quickly from behind (and thus knows nothing), Drabat subdued and tortured other three slowly. They remember it all in horrifying detail, and do not hesitate to name their killer. Hanna even heard Drabat mention something called “the Demon God.”

Raise Dead/Resurrection: Too little of any of the victims remains to use *raise dead*. *Resurrection* or *true resurrection* is needed to bring them back to life. Once so restored, however, they can relate any information mentioned under the description for *Speak with Dead*, above.

THE VICTIMS

All the victims, particularly the three found in their homes, were horribly mutilated, their corpses chopped up and the pieces flung chaotically about.

Ritter Young: A fisherman, Ritter kept to himself and had no family. He was a large man with blond hair and a short-cropped beard. He was found by another fisherman, Evan Mench, five days ago near where Ritter had moored his boat. He probably had been dead less than a day.

Hanna Thadson: A net weaver, Hanna was an old woman who lived with her daughter, Stretti. Three days ago, upon her return from a hunting trip, Stretti found her dead in their house.

Seit Whitnel: A cooper, Seit had a wife, Dar, but no children. Gesse Anatham, a friend of the couple, found him in their house two days ago, but he had been dead for quite some time. Seit and Dar were young. He had dark black hair and a dashing smile to befit his talkative, charming personality.

Dar Whitnel: A cooper, Dar was found with her husband (see above). Dar had long blond hair and was considered the prettiest girl in town growing up. She was quiet and reserved.

INTERVIEWING VILLAGERS

Each murder scene inflicted a terrible psychological toll on the poor people who found the victims.

Evan Mench: Evan is a fisherman whose wife Nesther runs the local boarding house. Evan has no idea who would kill Ritter (or the others), but he knows—as do most folks in Golden Lake—that the village’s “bad seed” is a woman named Gesse Anatham. She has been caught stealing in the past and has threatened violence against those who have angered her. A fish cleaner, she is very handy with a knife.

Stretti Thadson. Stretti is a muscular woman with short brown hair—she makes her living as a hunter. Stretti was so horrified by the mutilation of her mother that she is convinced that something inhuman committed the act. Stretti has never seen such a creature around here, but she thinks it’s the work of an ogre or maybe a troll. Perhaps the graven ones who live nearby could have summoned a creature like that accidentally.

Gesse Anatham: Gesse is a human woman, about 30, with dark, unruly hair. She always wears a blood-stained apron and carries a fish-cleaning knife. She acts belligerent and unkind, particularly to anyone accusing her of wrongdoing. She was truly friends with the Whitnels, however. Gesse believes the murderer is Drabat Finch. He was friends with Ritter and did business with the others (although locals will tell the characters that such a profile covers lots of people).

Gesse watches everyone in town, she says, because they are all against her. She knows that Drabat Finch has acted strangely quiet and standoffish for about a week, and she tells the PCs that only one other person saw Finch earlier in that week: A graven one sorceress named Tyrestina came to visit him the day before yesterday. (Gessee doesn’t know it, but Tyrestina came to Golden Lake to help stop the murders, confronted Finch, and became infected herself.) She noted it, because the graven ones rarely get involved in the villagers’ affairs.

If asked about the graven ones, Gessee can tell the PCs that they live in a fortress called the Sigil Hearth deep in the forest. She doesn’t know much about them, other than that they cover their bodies in magical tattoos.

If the PCs Are Slow...

If the player characters have not spotted Drabat Finch within two days of their arrival, Gessee Anatham is found dead behind the Fish Oil House. Drabat’s killing spree continues until the PCs stop it.

CONFRONTING DRABAT FINCH

Drabat is well-built, muscular, and in his early thirties. He has sandy brown hair, blue eyes, and a stubbly beard. If questioned, Drabat plays it cool (although he has no real ranks in Bluff to try to hide anything). He claims that each time a

murder victim was found, he was on his boat fishing, alone. Those with the Sense Motive skill might very well be able to tell he is lying.

If the PCs attempt to use *detect thoughts* on Drabat, the spell triggers a *conditional spell* that activates an unholy, chaotic, and enemy bane (humans) laced *fireball*, which detonates in Drabat's demoniacally grinning face, inflicting 10d6 points of fire damage (+20% more damage to humans). The DC is 14, 16 if a target is lawful or good, and 18 if the target is lawful and good. This effect almost certainly kills Drabat, and it scatters the Umbral Taint.

If confronted and accused, Drabat reacts with sudden violence. He attacks, and although he is certainly no match for the PCs, any villagers present are clearly in danger. If one foe seems particularly dangerous, he pulls out a rune-covered, poisoned dagger (given to him by the infected graven one sorceress Tyrestina) and uses it against that foe.

The villagers, if alerted to Drabat's guilt, seem both disbelieving ("He's always been friendly and kind.") and a little worried, for everyone knows that Drabat spent his early years as a mercenary warrior in a far-off military campaign. They will deal with him only in large numbers.

Tyrestina, as mentioned above, came to visit Drabat the day before yesterday. During her visit, she gave him the magic dagger coated with the poison she stole from the Sigil Hearth. The dagger has her arcane mark upon it—a *read magic* spell reveals that it is hers. Most villagers recognize the name and that she is one of the graven ones.

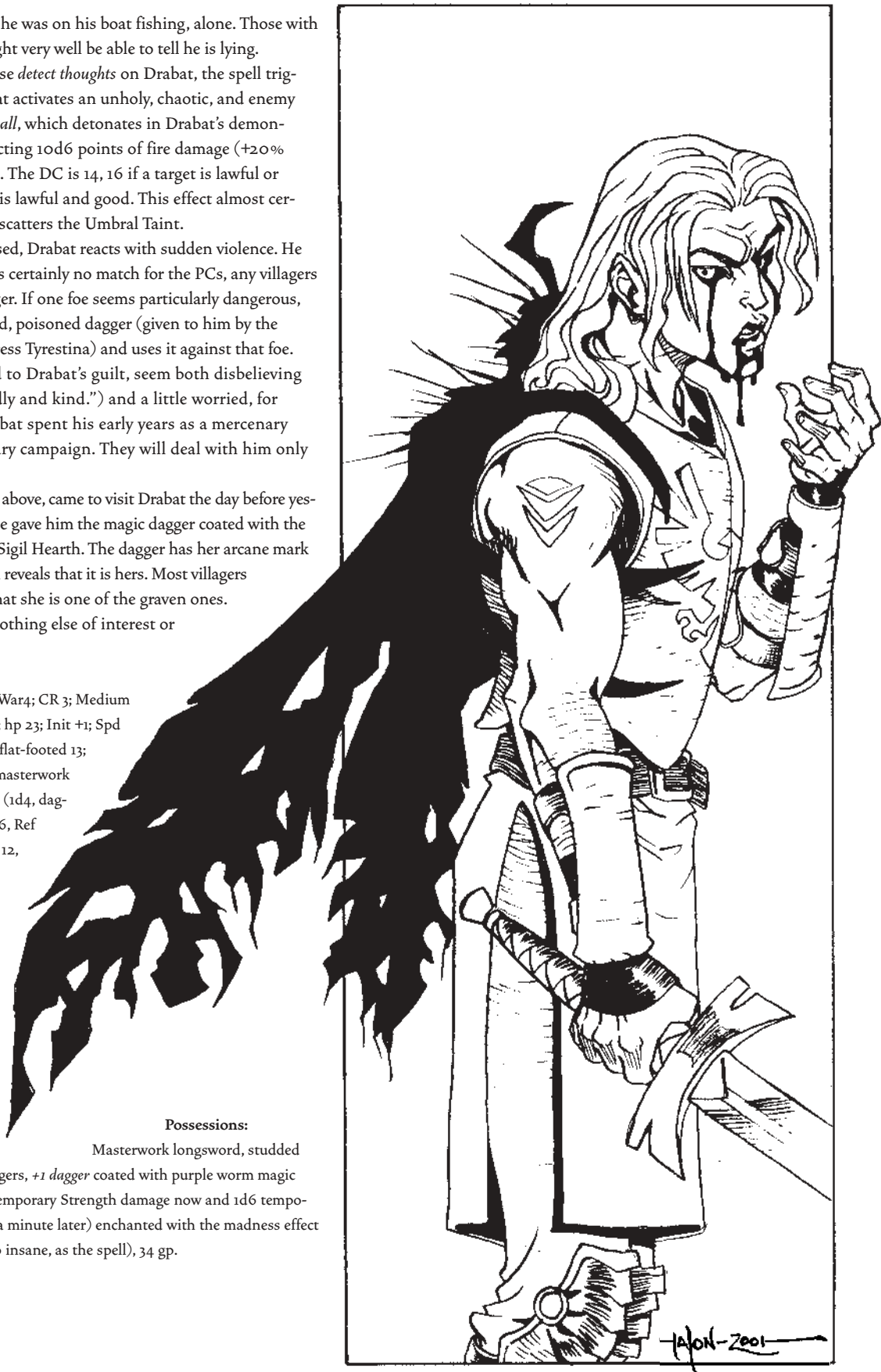
Drabat's house holds nothing else of interest or relevance.

Drabat Finch: Male human War4; CR 3; Medium humanoid; HD 3d8+6; hp 23; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Atk +8 melee (1d8+2, masterwork longsword), +5 ranged (1d4, dagger); AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Swim +9, Jump +4, Listen +2, Profession (fisherman) +5, Spot +5; Alertness, Skill Focus (Fisherman), Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions:

Masterwork longsword, studded leather armor, two daggers, +1 dagger coated with purple worm magic poison† (DC 24, 1d6 temporary Strength damage now and 1d6 temporary Strength damage a minute later) enchanted with the madness effect (DC 20 Will save or go insane, as the spell), 34 gp.



THE SIGIL HEARTH

The fortress of the graven ones lies about 6 miles from the village, through dense coniferous woods. Only a narrow, ill-used trail makes travel through the thick forest possible. Of course, a *fly* spell or similar magic will get the PCs there much faster.

The Sigil Hearth is a single, dark-stone keep, with a small courtyard bailey (80 feet square) surrounded by a 15-foot-high stone wall. A slate-shingle roof tops this two-story structure.

When the PCs arrive, a fight is going on!

THE COURTYARD

From inside the walls of this fortress come cries of surprise and shouts of dismay. A purple glow extends over the wall.

A Listen check (DC 15) enables a character to pick out the sounds of a spellcasting fight. A Spellcraft check (DC 21 [19+2 for only hearing the spell]) reveals that the spells *chains of vengeance* and *wall of fire* have been cast.

The infected Tyrestina has launched a surprising and therefore devastating attack against her fellow graven ones.

The 12 people in the mud (the result of a *transmute rock to mud* spell) are members of the graven ones (most are 9th-level wizards with one or two levels of graven one), their apprentices (1st- through 3rd-level wizards), or their servants (1st- or 2nd-level commoners). The nine that seem to bathe in the stuff failed their saves versus a *mass suggestion* encouraging them to do so—five are servants, three are apprentices, and one is a graven one. The three trying to get out made their saves—two of them are graven ones and one is an apprentice. The graven ones are obvious because of their leathery skin covered in tattoos.

If the PCs investigate or attempt to help people out of the mud, someone yells, “She’s gone mad! You’ve got to stop her! She’s behind the *wall of fire*!”

The PCs must either go across the mud and through the *wall of fire* or somehow fly over the whole setup to get at the force behind all of this. Climbing up the side of the keep (Climb, DC 20) and scuttling across the roof works as well.

BEHIND THE WALL OF FIRE (EL 16)

Within a shimmering sphere stands a human woman with long black hair. Covered in tattoos and symbols, she holds a bright red wand and laughs maniacally. Three terrible, spine-covered, sulfur-breathing beasts stand outside the sphere, pawing at the ground, and a huge, hulking brute with gray leathery skin and six eyes crouches

protectively next to it. Near the entrance into the keep, two rune-covered men in robes (an elf and a halfling) lie on the floor, struggling in vain to free themselves from chains made of fire.

The violet wall is a *wall of fire*. Behind it stands Tyrestina within a *globe of invulnerability*, which is surrounded by summoned fiendish dire boars and her gray render. The two graven ones are held within *chains of vengeance* spells from Tyrestina’s wand.

CREATURES

Tyrestina attacks the PCs immediately and viciously, using her *hasted* action to cast *mass suggestion* (“Don’t you think you should go home now?”) followed by a *coldscream* upon whomever didn’t flee. She willingly puts the bound graven ones in the area of her spells as well as the PCs. It’s her goal to kill everyone, eventually.

She fights to the death. If the Umbral Taint is banished from her, she remembers nothing about the whole time she was infected. Without the Taint, she is quiet and studious, usually keeping to herself.

Tyrestina: Female human Sor10/Gra6; CR 16; Medium

humanoid; HD 10d4+10+6d6+6; hp 58; Init +4; Spd 30 feet; AC 19, touch 16, flat-footed 15; Atk +10/+5 melee (1d4+1, dagger), +13/+8 ranged (1d4+1, dagger); SA Tattoos of power: fortification (negates 25% of all criticals against her), defense (+3 natural armor bonus to AC—already figured in), strength (+2 enhancement bonus to Strength, already figured in), graven image (grey render); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 21.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +20, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (local) +22, Spellcraft +22, Spot +10, Tumble +13; Conjure Mastery, Dodge, Etch Object Rune, Item Image, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration, Toughness.

Possessions: *Mirror of vanity* +4, *ring of protection* +2, *wand of chains of vengeance* (16 charges) *glass of mist* (stored in an *item image*, inflicts 1d6 points of fire damage upon anyone other than Tyrestina who attempts to use it), *flesh runes of lightning bolt* (10d6 DC 18), *haste*, *dragonskin*, and

Running the Battle

Even though there are other graven ones about, you can effectively choose to ignore them, assuming they are helping others out of the mud, attempting (and failing) to dispel Tyrestina’s spells, etc. Alternatively, they can take actions and cast spells that deal with her summoned creatures when they get the chance. It is not, however, worth the time to create stats for all of them—the PCs are in the best position to take on Tyrestina, and they should be her focus.

coldscream† (10d6, DC 19), etched object rune† (dagger) of *summon monster V*, etched object rune (amulet on necklace) of *stoneskin*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, dagger, 22 gp, 250 gp gold necklace.

Spells per Day (DC 15 + spell level): 0 level—6, 1st level—8, 2nd level—7, 3rd level—7, 4th level—7, 5th level—7, 6th level—4.

Spells Known (9/5/5/4/4/3/2): 0—*arcane mark*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mental alarm*, *minor ward*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*erase*, *grease*, *magic missile*, *mage armor*, *shield*; 2nd—*cat's grace*, *endurance*, *mark of fire*†, *invisibility*, see *invisibility*; 3rd—*dragonskin*†, *explosive runes*, *lightning bolt*, *sepia snake sigil*; 4th—*coldscream*†, *greater mark of air*†, *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*; 5th—*summon monster V*, *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of force*; 6th—*globe of invulnerability*, *mass suggestion*.

Tyrestina has already cast the following spells:

- On herself: *mage armor*, *shield*, *cat's grace*, *endurance*, see *invisibility*, *mark of fire*†, *dragonskin*† (red), *haste* (from her flesh rune, created with the help of another graven one), *stoneskin*, and *greater mark of air*†. Her Dexterity is now 22 (+2 to AC, +2 to Reflex saves), her Constitution is now 15 (+16 more hit points, +1 Fortitude saves), and her AC is now 37 (including +4 from *haste*). She has 9 rounds of *haste* left.
- In the battle: *mass suggestion*, *transmute rock to mud*, *wall of fire* (in front of her), *globe of invulnerability* (around herself), and three *summon monster V* spells cast before the battle began, summoning three fiendish dire boars, now vigilant beside her. One will disappear in 8 rounds, one in 7, and one in 6. She also used her graven image to create a gray render to serve her for about five more minutes.

The Umbral Taint has created a *conditional spell*† ready to be triggered so that if Tyrestina is subdued or incapacitated in any way, a *summon monster III* spell conjures a fiendish constrictor snake (for visual effect, the snake slithers out of her open mouth) that wraps around her to use *coup de grace* and finish her off before she can reveal any information. However, as DM, if the PCs try to stop the serpent, don't work too hard to prevent them from questioning Tyrestina. She won't willingly give any information, but vague mentions of the Demon God's Fane at this point only serve to further the plot and entice the players, so it's okay.

Fiendish Dire Boars (improved with Conjure Mastery)† (3): hp 56, 60, 64, AC 16, +13 bite (1d8+13), DR 5/+1, SR 14, smite good (+14 damage) once, continues to fight to -10 hp, cold and fire resistance 10. See MM.

Gray Render: hp 125, AC 19, +12 bite (2d6+6), +7 claws (1d6+3), 10-foot reach, improved grab, rend (3d6+9). See MM.

OTHER INFECTED VICTIMS

Tyrestina is not the only infected person in the fortress, however. A younger man named Hilandir hides in the keep, but Tyrestina spread the demonic contagion to him earlier in the day. Hilandir, in turn, infected his visiting friend Tosh Havenstar, a powerful fighter. They make no move to help Tyrestina, for she clearly is a lost cause. Instead, they watch the PCs. The two infected men will work together to destroy these powerful characters so they may be free to spread the Umbral Taint wantonly.



Thus, Hilandir and Tosh become a potential threat for later. While the PCs investigate the Demon God's Fane, these two can cause all manner of trouble—even attacking them when they return to rest during the course of the adventure. They will go to any lengths, including taking villagers hostage or following the PCs into the Fane itself, to gain an advantage over the group.

As DM, use these two infected/possessed men to provide more challenges for the PCs when they are not expecting it. Further, they demonstrate that the threat of the Umbral Taint is ongoing, and the Demon God's Fane must be put down once and for all.

Hilandir: Male human Wiz9/Gra5; CR 14; Medium humanoid; HD 9d4+18+5d6+10; hp 71; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22, touch 16, flat-footed 19; Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+1, masterwork staff), +11/+6 ranged (1d4, dagger); SA Tattoos of power: unholy (all attacks, even spells, inflict an additional +2d6 damage to good characters), defense (+3 natural armor bonus to AC—already figured in), wounding (all attacks, even spells, cause wounds that bleed for 1 hp damage/round), graven image (five-headed hydra); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 10, Cha 13.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +21, Concentration + 21, Diplomacy +9, Hide +12, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Spellcraft +21, Spot +8; Craft Rod, Craft Wand, Dodge, Etch Object Rune, Forge Ring, Item Image, Scribe Scroll, Toughness.

Possessions: *Bracers of armor +3, ring of protection +3, wand of flaming corrosion* (28 charges) *bookrod* (stored in an item image), *flesh runes of wall of stone, fireball* (10d6, DC 17), *true seeing*, and *electrical deluge* (10d6, DC 19), etched object rune (on dagger) of *teleport*, etched object rune (on dagger) of *telekinesis*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, masterwork quarterstaff, two daggers, 133 gp, two 50 gp gold rings.

Spells Prepared (4/5/5/5/4/3/2): ○—*detect magic, mage hand, ray of frost, read magic*; 1st—*acidic curse, magic missile* (2), *mage armor, shield*; 2nd—*cat's grace, endurance, mark of fire, mark of frost, web*; 3rd—*dispel magic, foil tracer, haste, lightning bolt, sleet storm*; 4th—*charm monster, ice storm, improved invisibility, stonesskin*; 5th—*cone of cold, cross of lightning, wall of force*; 6th—*coma, disintegrate*.

Spellbook (bookrod): ○—all *Player's Handbook* plus *minor ward*; 1st—*acidic curse, alarm, comprehend languages, detect secret doors, endure elements, erase, identify, mage armor, magic missile, shield, sleep*; 2nd—*alter self, cat's grace, endurance, icebolt, invisibility, mark of air, mark of fire, mark of frost, protection from arrows, web*; 3rd—*dispel magic, explosive runes, fireball, fly, foil tracer, haste, lightning bolt, secret page, sepia snake sigil, sleet storm*; 4th—*charm monster,*

greater mark of fire, greater mark of frost, ice storm, improved invisibility, Otil's resilient sphere, rainbow pattern, scrying, stonesskin; 5th—*cone of cold, cross of lightning, lesser planar binding, sending, telekinesis, teleport, wall of force, wall of stone*; 6th—*antimagic field, coma, disintegrate, legend lore, teleport tracer*.

Tosh Havenstar: Male human Ftr13; CR 13; Medium humanoid; HD 13d10+52; hp 123; Init +5; Spd 20 ft.; AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24; Atks +21/+16/+11 melee (1d10+12 bastard sword/crit 15–20/x2); AL CE; SV Fort +12, Ref +7, Will +7; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 18, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Heal +7, Intimidate +6, Jump +10, Spot +7; Blind Fight, Cleave, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Cleave, Improved Critical (bastard sword), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Iron Will, Sunder, Weapon Focus (bastard sword), Weapon Specialization (bastard sword).

Possessions: +1 *full plate armor*, +1 *large steel shield*, +1 *keen bastard sword*, +2 *amulet of natural armor, gauntlets of ogre power*, *bottled whirlwind, potions of nondetection and cure serious wounds*, 98 gp, 25 sp, a dagger with a jeweled pommel (100 gp).

A GESTURE OF THANKS

When the battle ends (either with Tyrestina defeated or rid of the Umbral Taint), an elderly half-elf woman in gray robes, with runes covering her flesh as well as her wooden staff, comes to the PCs from within the keep. She introduces herself as Erepoth, leader of the graven ones. Erepoth thanks the group for their help, but worries that more are infected with this horrific malady, which seems to turn otherwise good-hearted people into near fiends. If asked where the plague might have originated, Erepoth tells them this:

“Long ago, at least seven centuries, there was an evil cult devoted to the Demon God, Ochremeshk. The cult's central temple, what they called the Demon God's Fane, was once located in the area around Golden Lake. They committed horrible atrocities in their god's name, sacrificing hundreds and hundreds of innocent victims—this area ran red with their spilt blood. The Fane was a haven for demons and fiends and monsters of all evil description. But a great hero named Enchelious defeated the cult and sealed the Fane. He brought the horror to an end.

“Nevertheless, this dark disease we have seen today is clearly demonic in origin. It must, somehow, be related. Although this is almost too terrifying to consider, perhaps the Demon God's Fane is once again... operational.”

The half-elf does not know much more than this, but she does remember some old books in the graven ones' extensive library that might offer more information. Once the wall of

Inherent Power Boost Amulet†

This silver medallion is prized by creatures with supernatural or spell-like abilities inherent to their race (not those gained by training, such as being a member of a class or prestige class). When a creature wears this amulet, all the saving throw DCs for such powers increase. This item comes in five different power levels, the weakest adding a +1 enhancement bonus to the saving throw DC, and the strongest adding a +5 bonus.

Caster Level: 7th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, enhance magical flow, greater magical flow enhancement (for +4 and +5 amulets); Market Price: 1,000 gp (+1 amulet), 4,000 gp (+2 amulet), 9,000 gp (+3 amulet), 16,000 gp (+4 amulet), 25,000 gp (+5 amulet); Weight: —

fire is dispelled, the courtyard returns to normal stone and everyone is in the process of getting healed and/or cleaned from all the mud, Erepoth helps the PCs find the books. After a few hours of research together, they can come up with these tidbits of information:

- “The Fane itself stood like a massive demon. Vaguely in the shape of Ochremeshk the Defiler, the huge stone idol held its evil

sword and raised its claw as if to reach down and swoop up sacrificial victims into its horrible, twisted grin.”

- “Like anything else, you must go to the Fane’s heart to find the true source of its power.”
- “To get from head to heart, or at least on your way, make the demon smile and use the key to open the invisible lock.”
- “To reach the heart, you must partake of the three sacraments of Ochremeshk. Such is distasteful to all who are good and noble, but one soul is a small price to pay.”
- “Blood flows through the Fane, carrying both knowledge and life—for demonspawn and their hellish brethren.”
- “‘Chaos and evil for Ochremeshk,’ are words that are also the key with three uses.”

The graven ones grant each of the PCs an item image† of their choosing, as well as scrolls with these spells: *analyze dweomer*, *true seeing*, *tongue of fiends*, and *greater magical flow enhancement†*.

GRAVEN ONE ALLIES AND PCs

The PCs can return to Sigil Hearth for advice and equipment (assume that they have all potions, scrolls up to 7th level, and the ability to make etched object runes† as needed, for sale). The graven ones are not interested in buying treasure nor in helping the PCs explore the Demon God’s Fane. The only exception to this is if a replacement or additional last-minute PC is needed. In that case, a graven one is the obvious choice to add to the party. For full prestige class rules, see *The Book of Eldritch Might*.

FINDING THE FANE

None of the graven ones’ books refer to a location of the Demon God’s Fane. However, if the PCs go back to Golden Lake, a few fisherman are talking about a new island—or actually, a pair of them. If they ask questions, the PCs learn that a rocky island, about 30 feet across, and another one, even smaller, have shown up about 4 miles down the length of the lake. Considering that there are also some jagged rocks nearby, the fishermen have decided to avoid this obviously shallow spot. Strangely enough, they had always thought that the area in question was one of the deeper parts of the lake.

Further questions reveal that the islands are very smooth and rounded. However, the player characters really can’t learn any more without investigating themselves, either directly or by using spells like *arcane eye* to spy on the place.





THE RESTLESS DEMON (EL 14)

Lasteresh, a hezrou, has wormed his way free of Lytaros Fel's authority and has come to the village to learn what has happened and take out his frustrations upon any living being he sees.

Lasteresh hangs about near the shore, killing a drinking deer for sport. By then he grows hungry for prey that will beg for its life before he rips out its heart. He slips into the trees and follows the water's edge, making his way to the village.

The PCs can become aware of his presence in two ways. If they were coming to the shore to check out the recent appearance of the islands, he suddenly attacks them. He uses *unholy blight* on them from afar, then wades onto shore (or teleports onto the pier).

Otherwise, if they are in the village, they hear the cries of horror and pain as the demon slays a fisherman loading nets into his boat. The village is small enough that no matter where they are, the PCs can come to the man's aid in 3 or 4 rounds (depending on their speed). Of course, if the attack happens at night (at the DM's discretion), it may take them much longer, should they pause to put on armor or gather equipment.

Lasteresh does not care to fight to the death. Once he realizes he's up against capable opponents, he teleports under the water of the lake to get away. (Merely a barrier to demons, the water does not hurt them once out of the Fane.) He bides his time to attack again later, waiting for an opportune moment—such as when the capable opponents (the PCs) are gone.

Lasteresh goes into a fight with these spell-like abilities active: *magic circle vs. good* (+2 bonus to AC and saves for him) and *dispel good* (adding another +2 to AC for a total of 30). He wears an *inherent power boost amulet* (see the sidebar on page 14), and a *wish* spell has permanently increased his SR to 25.

Lasteresh (hezrou): hp 70, AC 30, +13 bite (4d4+5), +8 claws (two of them, 1d6+2), DR 20/+2, SR 25, many special abilities. See MM.

Into the Fane

In the middle of the lake, about a mile from the western shore, the Demon God's Fane has been submerged for about 700 years. The inhabitants, trapped within its confines for all that time, are eager to kill and maim. They have faced the excruciating boredom within for so long because they are immortal (or at least undying or undead), but it has made them very angry.

Except for Areas 13, 25, and 28, the ceilings in the Fane are 15 feet high. The stone walls and floors are usually at least 2 feet thick (180 hp, 8 hardness, Break DC 39). Unless otherwise described, all doors in the Fane are stone, carved with horrific scenes of carnage and mayhem, and are unlocked (60 hp, 8 hardness, Break DC 28). The walls and doors are resistant to spells (see below).

All the rooms (unless otherwise mentioned) are lit by dim, flickering *continual flames* that glow a hellish red.

THE FANE'S BLOOD

The power of the Abyss itself flows through the Demon God's Fane, and in no way is this more evident than in the "blood" that circulates through the structure and connects most important areas of the Fane. Many chambers in the Fane have a small font built into a wall. A demonic skull in the font occasionally issues what appears to be dark blood from the corner of its mouth or its eyes. This substance accomplishes two things. Any fiend or undead that drinks the blood regains 4d8 + 7 hit points. Second, the drinker receives information transmitted by anyone who specifies the information they wish to send and bleeds at least 4 hp worth of blood into the font. The information goes to anyone drinking the blood, so if the succubus Distania wanted to relate that intruders had entered the Fane, she would cut herself for 4 points of damage and mentally phrase the details into a few short sentences and/or images. Now, until a new message is placed within the blood, anyone drinking it gains the information and receives a mental image of Distania, so they know who sent the message.

Nonfiends or nonundead who drink the blood suffer 4d8 + 7 points of damage. Further, they must make a Will saving throw (DC 22) to gain the information.

At any given time, there are 1d4 + 1 draughts of blood in a font, with another one being created every day.

Of course, smart PCs who figure out a way to impersonate a demon (a *polymorph self* spell, for example) could bleed into the font and transmit inaccurate messages, but this would require that they know how the Fane's Blood works. A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) might relate such details, as might a Bardic Knowledge check based on the graven ones' information (see page 14).

If a vial of holy water is poured into a font, or if the font is stopped up, blocked, or destroyed, it ceases to function. Each font has 40 hp, a hardness of 8, and a Break DC of 26.

DEMONIC DEFENSES

The demons and cultists of the Fane have installed a number of sinister defenses to guard against attack by interlopers.

SCRYING

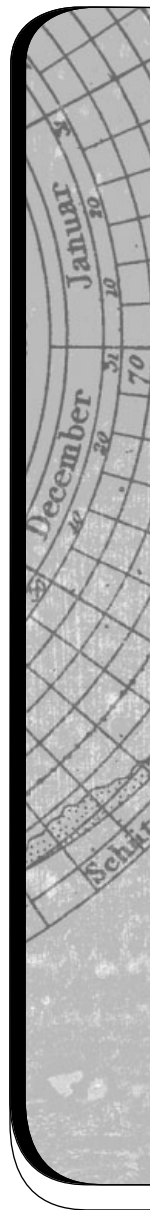
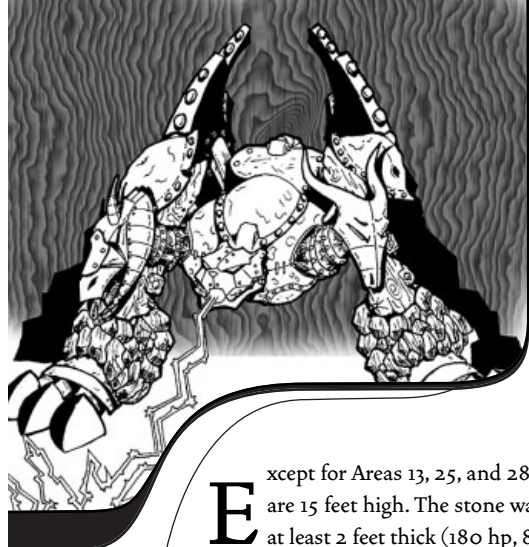
The entire Fane is protected from scrying by a *static veil* spell cast by an 18th-level caster (adding +18 to the Scry DC). Further, the waters of the Golden Lake themselves add another +5 to the Scry DCs (so rooms not completely submerged, such as Areas 1 and 13, remain unaffected by the water's ability and become somewhat easier to scry).

SPELLS AGAINST THE FANE

The walls, floors, ceilings, and other portions of the Fane are made of a powerful, antimagical stone and treated with all manner of abjurations. Thus, the Fane itself has an SR of 25 and makes all saving throws with a +15 bonus. It makes saving throws even when no saving throw is normally allowed. This property applies not only against destructive spells like *lightning bolt* or *disintegrate*, but also against *passwall* and even against the ability of a *wall of stone* spell to meld with the stone of the Fane. It does not apply against spells that affect a creature, such as *ethereal jaunt* or *teleport*. However, keep in mind that Areas 22, 25, 26, and 28 are warded against such effects with *teleport redirect* or *forbiddance* spells.

THE ETHEREAL ALARM

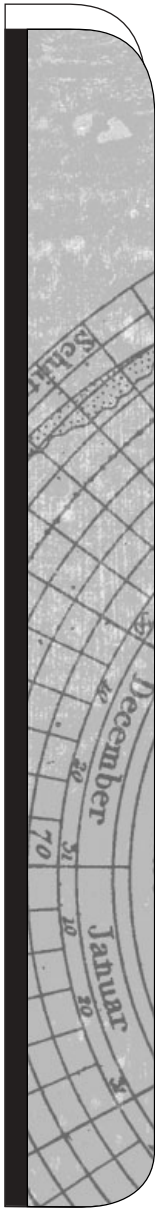
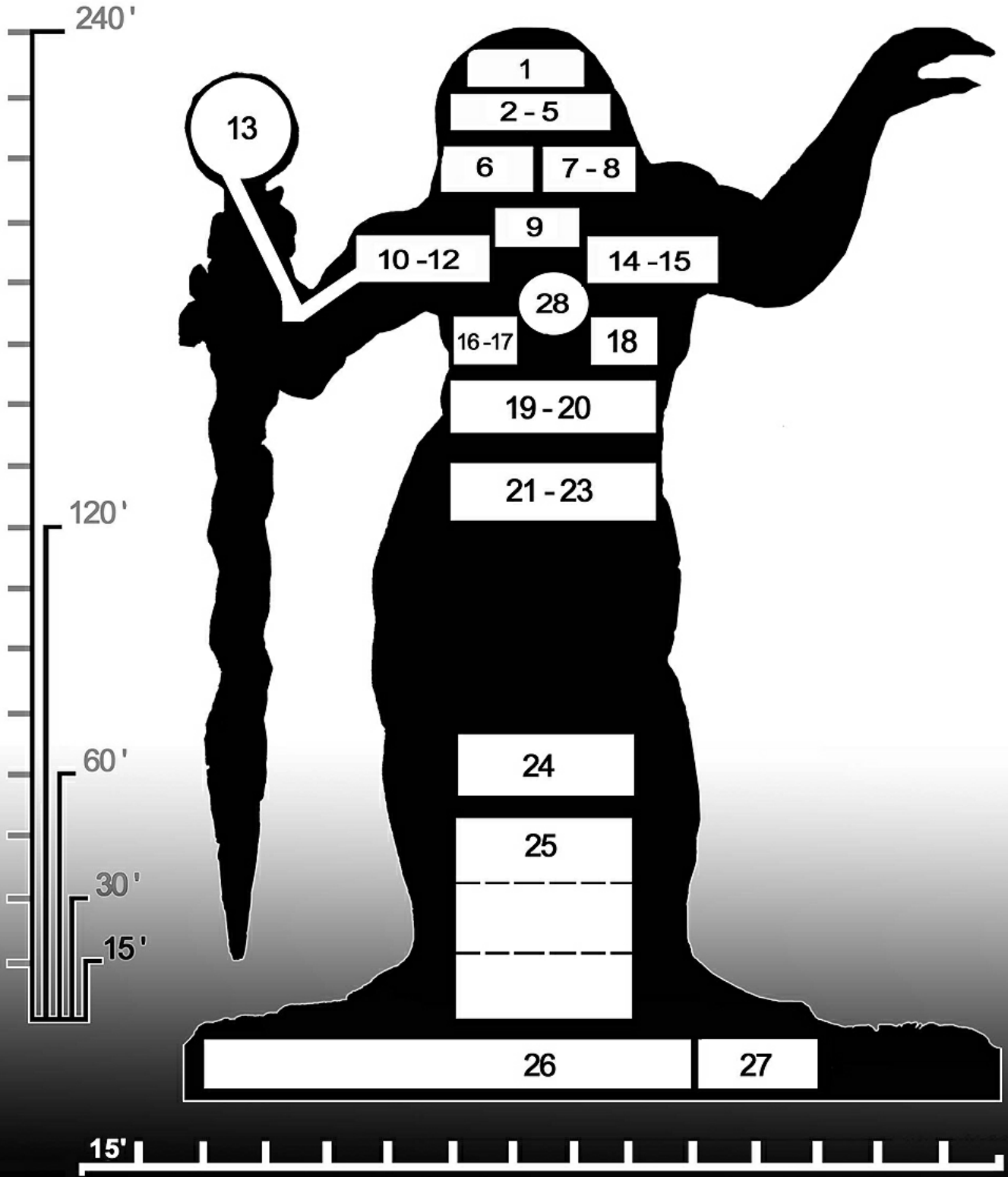
Anything passing through one of the Fane's walls, floors, or ceilings ethereally sets off a special *alarm* spell keyed to Distania the succubus (see Area 11). It has long been her duty to deal with such threats. Due to her special abilities, she adores it when a single ethereal scout wanders into the Fane—she becomes ethereal herself and attempts to *charm* or use *suggestions* on the scout. When Enchelious' party came into the Fane, they sent a rogue ahead with a *cloak of ethereality* to scout ethereally. He never came back. When the attackers reached Area 11, they found their rogue a level-drained thrall of Distania. His cloak is still in Area 11, and—presumably—he has become one of the wights in Area 12.



THE DEMON GOD'S FANE:

siderview

"in the middle of the lake about a mile from the western shore the demon god's fane has been submerged for about 700 years"



If an entire group of intruders enters ethereally, Distania observes them hiding (+16 bonus) on whichever plane they are on or by retreating to use *clairaudience/clairvoyance*. She then reports to Lytaros Fel.

OTHER DEFENSES

Fortunately for the PCs, Lytaros Fel's attentions are turned toward the ritual he must perform, and demons, while very intelligent, do not always act in the most organized fashion.

The glabrezu in Area 9 is in charge of preliminary defenses. He moves defenders around as needed and as possible. For example, if intruders come and then leave again, he might bring the trolls up from Areas 19 and 20 to replace the slain vrocks in Areas 7 and 8. Unless stated otherwise, creatures in the Fane other than Distania, Lytaros Fel, and Ungalish do as he commands. The golems, the ropers, the hags, and the devourers are never told to move, nor are the creatures in the Profanity (Area 26).

Most of the time, if the Fane's inhabitants hear a fight elsewhere, they prepare themselves—or they might even investigate. However, as mentioned in the text, some inhabitants hate each other. The giants (Area 14) and the hags (Area 22) hate Distania, for example. They would do nothing to help her. Distania, on the other hand, helps no one unless it might suit her. She and Lytaros Fel were once lovers, and now that the half-demon has taken command of the Fane, she wishes to re-establish their relationship. Thus, she wants to look good in his eyes. Killing intruders would help meet that goal.

WATER AND THE FANE

Enterprising PCs might try to destroy a section of the Demon God's Fane with the express purpose of flooding it. However, it won't work. The blessed waters of Golden Lake cannot enter the Fane. This becomes evident if the characters try to bring even a little of the water in, or are simply wet with lake water when they enter the Fane. The water immediately evaporates. If a hole is made in a wall, the water simply "refuses" to go in. This ceases to be the case if the Fane's Heart (Area 28) is disabled or destroyed.

Note that, while the lake water is blessed it is not holy water and cannot hurt the demons, other than serving as a barrier.

AREAS OF THE FANE

The numbered areas described in this section correspond to the areas shown in the side view of the Fane (see page 17) and in the top-down view maps (see pages 19 and 36). On the top-down maps, letter tags indicate staircase/passageway linkup points.

UNDERWATER OUTSIDE THE FANE

PCs may wish to explore the outside of the Fane, either physically (perhaps with *water breathing* spells) or visually with *clair-*

voyance, prying eyes, or something similar. Describe to them the size and shape of the statue (see page 14), although even 10 feet down the water becomes too dark to see anything normally.

The base of the statue can't be seen at all, because it is buried in a mound of skulls and bones, calcified into a single, macabre mass around the statue's feet. These are just some of the remains of the hundreds and hundreds slaughtered by the sacrifices to Ochremeshk. The main entrance of old is hidden within the mass of skulls and bones as well.

There are no dangerous fish or aquatic monsters in Golden Lake; however, this might prove an interesting time for Lasteresh the hezrou to strike—or strike again. (See page 15.)

ON TOP OF THE FANE

The way into the Demon God's Fane is through the head. The pommel of the demon's sword, as well as the jagged tops of its claw, can be seen above the surface as well.

Out of the water, a perfectly round and smooth carved stone dome projects up about 5 feet. It looks about 30 feet across. A visible seam encircles a separate stone piece, about 6 feet in diameter, in the middle of the "island." It suggests a hatch or a plug, although it lies flush with the rest of the stone. Faintly carved into this hatch is the grinning skull of a demon, with horns and sharp teeth.

This plug is 2 feet thick—as thick as the stone itself. It rotates counterclockwise, unscrewing until a character can remove it entirely. It is *arcane locked*, a magic spell which can be temporarily disabled (for 10 rounds) by speaking the phrase, "Chaos and evil for Ochremeshk" (as suggested by references in the graven ones' library). Otherwise, the plug must be overcome by a *knock* or *dispel magic*. It can be forced open, too (Strength check, DC 25 to unscrew it by force).

The plug also bears a magical spell that returns it to its proper place. If the plug is removed, destroyed, *teleported* away, or even *disintegrated*, it appears back in its rightful place 10 minutes later, screwed in tightly with the *arcane lock* once again functioning.

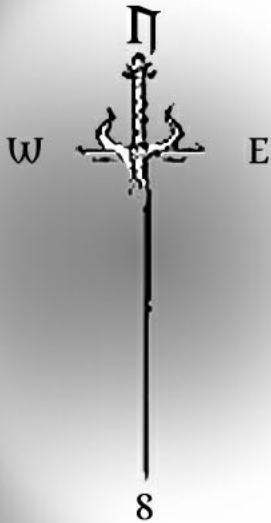
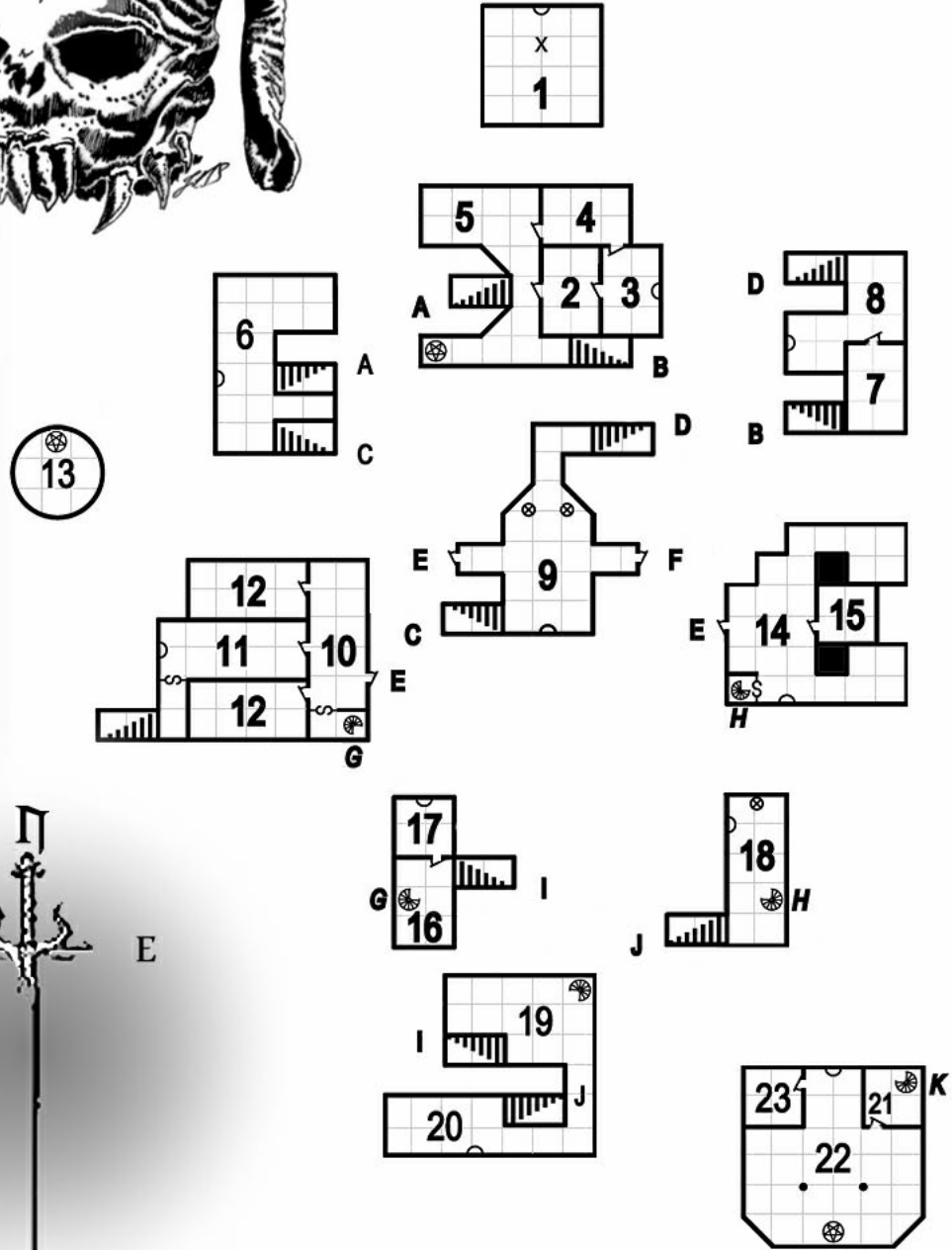
1. THE SMILING DEMON

The removal of the plug exposes a hole down into the statue. A mosaic of chaotic, swirling red and black covers a flat floor 15 feet below you. A life-sized statue of a man—jet black in flesh, with yellow, dagger-shaped eyes—stands in the center of the room below, his arms at his sides. His face is expressionless: The only feature you can see are his eyes. A small onyx box lies at his feet.

Another moment's observation reveals that the statue is actually wrapped tightly in black leather. The walls around him in the interior of this 40-foot-square chamber show scenes of horrible torture, with black-clad torturers

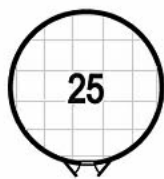
THE DEMON GOD'S FANE:

top-down views



□ = TEN FEET

KEY



using unspeakable devices crafted by canny but twisted artisans—if the term “artisan” can apply in this case. Although their shape is human, something about their demeanor suggests that the leather-wearing humanoids are demons.

The north wall has a small font built into it. The grinning demonskull within it seems to fill the basin with a tiny trickle of blood, not water.

THE DEMON STATUE

This statue is the smiling demon referred to in the fragments found in the graven ones’ library (see page 14). Characters searching the statue (DC 20) notice that certain parts—biceps, chest, calves, and other muscled areas—feel slightly soft, unlike the rest of the statue, which is hard. While most of it is made of dark marble, certain areas underneath the leather are padded cushions.

Inside the box at the statue’s base—an ornately carved onyx box showing demonic visages (worth 120 gp)—are three dozen thin metal needles about 6 inches long. If at least three of these needles are inserted into the cushiony portions of the statue, the face suddenly contorts (this is a magical, spell-like effect), producing a horrific grin of pleasure. A moment later, the mouth opens; a dark red, forked tongue produces a key.

INVISIBLE LOCK

That’s only the first part of the puzzle in this room. Next, the PCs must find the invisible lock mentioned in the graven ones’ text—a task easily accomplished by a *see invisible* or *invisibility purge* spell, but quite tricky without them. Permanently invisible, a stone sphere about 6 inches across floats silently about the room, moving randomly but never striking anything.

This stone sphere has a keyhole in it, which is where the smiling demon’s key is supposed to go. The Spot DC to notice that something invisible is floating around the room is 30. Once it’s detected, a character must make an attack roll to grab the sphere; the sphere has an AC of 25 due to size and its magically-enhanced mobility (50 percent miss chance if it is still invisible, plus the character must ascertain the area it is in—a nearly impossible task, considering that it floats randomly around the room). Even after someone grasps the sphere, the spell that allows it to float can lift up to 300 lbs., so it most likely lifts the character off the floor and carries him or her about (without striking anything). Opening this lock without the key requires an Open Lock check with a DC of 35 (add +5 to the DC if the sphere is moving, or an additional +10 if the lock is invisible). With the key, opening it is automatic.

When the sphere is unlocked, it *teleports* away for one minute. During that minute, a 10-foot-square hole appears at the spot marked “X” on page 19’s map. This is also a magical, spell-like effect. When the sphere reappears, the hole ceases to exist, and the statue returns to normal, any pins teleporting back into the box (which closes). Basically, the room resets.

Using *dispel magic* or similar effects successfully against the sphere (treat the sphere as a single magic item, caster level 15th), nullifies its magic for 1d4 rounds. Of course, this means that the key inserted into the lock accomplishes nothing until the suppression ends.

In the days when the cult was in power, the demons ignored this room, simply *teleporting* where they wanted to go in the Fane. Residents that could not *teleport* usually used the exit in Area 25, now forever sealed.

THE PLUG

The plug, if it returns to its screwed-in position (as it does 10 minutes after removal) can be unscrewed from the underside. Without the command phrase (see above), it requires a Strength check (DC 25).

2. CHAMBER OF HOOKS

This chamber’s dark walls are covered in iron hooks, some of them bearing grisly stains and dried remnants of things better left unidentified. The floor’s mazelike pattern is gouged with deep lines that lead to a 6-inch grate in the center. You can make out the outlines of two stone doors amid the hooks: one on the west wall and one on the east.

If characters are coming down from Area 1, they either have to climb on the hooks (Climb, DC 10, but on a roll of 1, the climber sustains 1d6 points of damage) or provide their own means.

Characters searching the pattern on the floor (Search, DC 20) can see that the pattern leads not only to the drain on the floor, but to the doors as well. If liquid is poured into the pattern in such a way that it flows to one of the doors, the door opens. Otherwise, liquid poured into the pattern flows to the central drain and accomplishes nothing. This is tricky; it takes 3 rounds minimum and requires at least 2 pints of liquid, but no actual roll. In its heyday, the Fane’s inhabitants used blood from sacrifices impaled on the hooks to open the doors.

Without liquid properly applied into the pattern, the doors are considered *arcane locked* (DC 25 to force open). When one is closed, the lock seals again, although either door can be opened as if it were a normal, unlocked door from the other side (from Area 3).

A search of the east wall (DC 30) reveals narrow peep-holes for watching into this room.



GETTING BACK UP

When the hole down from Area 1 disappears (see above), the only way back up is a gem-studded lever hidden within a fake hook on the south wall (Search, DC 25 to find). This lever *teleports* any player character who pulls it to a position in front of the statue in Area 1.

The ruby on the handle is worth 800 gp, but removing it destroys the lever's magic effect.

3. GUARD ROOM

An old, iron-topped table and two benches furnish this room. An ancient corpse, shriveled and black in its banded armor, lies atop the table, still clutching a short sword thrust into its midriff.

Leering, demonic faces peer out from carvings along the top of the walls, near the ceiling. The east wall also features a small built-in font. The grinning demonskull within it seems to fill the basin with a tiny trickle of blood, not water.

The banded armor the skeleton wears is masterwork, as is the sword he killed himself with. When this guard realized he was trapped here forever, he took his own life.

The door on the north side of the room is locked (DC 30 to open, the key is long lost). No one has disturbed this chamber in years.

4. ARMORY

Dust-coated and filled with cobwebs, the table running down the center of this room is covered in weapons, as are the racks on the walls.

All the weapons have strange runes carved on the blades; leering demons, skulls, and evil symbols embossed on the hilts and worked into the designs; and other frightening aspects that clearly identify them all as the tools of great evil. Many of the weapons are fashioned from some blood-red metal.

The north wall of this armory bears a painted relief showing trolls using an elaborate winch to lower an elf into a fire pit.

A dozen masterwork longswords, six masterwork short spears, six masterwork long spears, a battleaxe, two heavy crossbows, and 50 masterwork bolts are in this room, either on the table or on the walls.

The weapons look ornate, but none are magical. Ochremeshk's everpresent demonskull symbol (see illustration on page 2) figures prominently in the design of these weapons.

5. THE IRON CHIMERA (EL 13)

A terrible metallic clanking fills the chamber. From the west, lumbering toward you, comes a horrible creature with three heads, batlike wings, and a long, quadruped's body. The entire beast is made of iron plates. Bones litter the floor, and long chains ending in hooks hang from the ceiling, swaying aside as the metallic creature brushes past them to get to you.

The chains on the ceiling make moving and attacking more difficult. All attacks suffer a -2 circumstance penalty here. Characters moving more than 10 feet in 1 round must make a Balance check (DC 15) or scrape against a hook (50 percent chance, character suffers 1d6 points of damage) or slip on a bone (50 percent chance, character falls prone).

A staircase going down juts from the center of the west wall, and another descends from the room's southeastern corner.

CREATURE

The creature is an iron chimera†, a construct made to look and operate like a chimera, fashioned from metallic plates and pieces. It attacks any intruder and fights until destroyed, following its foes if they attempt to flee.

Iron Chimera: CR 13; Huge construct; HD 27d10; hp 149; Init -2 ; Spd 20 ft., fly 25 ft. (poor); AC 26 (touch 6, flat-footed 26); Atk Bite +43 melee (2d8+18), bite +37 melee (2d6+9), butt +37 melee (2d6+9), 2 claws +37 melee (1d8+9);

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA Two breath weapons; SQ Construct, scent, darkvision 60 feet; AL N; SV Fort +15, Ref +13, Will +9; Str 47, Dex 7, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

Breath Weapon (Su): Every 1d4 rounds, line of lightning 5 ft. wide, 5 ft. high, 40 ft. long, damage 3d8, Reflex half DC 17. The dragon head (the second listed bite) can use this power instead of biting.

Breath Weapon (Su): *Sleep* gas cone, 60 ft., every 1d4 rounds (but no more than five times per day); Fortitude save (DC 17) or fall asleep for 1d10 minutes. The goat head can use this attack instead of butting.

Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, death effects, paralysis, stunning, sleep, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

PENTAGRAM

In the southwestern corner, there is a long, narrow niche—sort of a hallway going nowhere. At its end, traced on the floor, is a pentagram 10 feet across, made of glowing red energy. At the center of the pentagram, red letters of energy spell out one word, in Common: “Eat.” Stepping into this pentagram teleports (as a *teleportation circle*) a character to the Nightmare Chamber (see page 40).

6. THE BLACK COCOONS (EL 14)

This cold chamber carries a slightly acrid odor. A thin layer of mist blankets the floor. Eight large ovoid objects rise out of the mist, each covered with a roughly textured black skin. In the northwest section of the room, an all-

iron guillotine, now quite rusted, rests menacingly in the corner. There appear to be runes on the heavy metal blade.

A small font built into the west wall bears a grinning demonskull, which seems to be filling the basin with a tiny trickle of blood, not water. In the southeast corner, stone steps descend still farther down.

CREATURES

Each cocoon contains a bodak. Each bodak was once a cultist who underwent a terrifying transformation rather than die within the sealed Fane. If disturbed by an intruder, or if they are commanded to do so by Sekeren (the glabrezu in Area 9), the eight bodaks tear their way out of the cocoons in 1 round and attack.

Each bodak has a death gaze, but remember that its range is only 30 feet, so it's possible that not every PC has to make eight Fortitude saves every round (also remember that the MM has rules for avoiding gaze attacks).

Bodaks (8): hp 58 each, AC 15, +6 slam (1d8+1), DR 15/silver, fire and acid resistance 20, immune to electricity, Death gaze (Fort save, DC 15). See MM.

GUILLOTINE

The runes on the guillotine blade read as follows (in Abyssal): “Feed on the blood of their necks, oh mighty lord.” This device was used for sacrifices long ago, when the Fane was “operational.”

7. VROCK ROOST (EL 14)

A sharp odor grows heavier as you descend the stairs. A large, gray-green feather lies on one step. In the room at the bottom of the stairs, a series of iron bars crisscrosses overhead, about 8 feet above the floor. More feathers lie about the floor of the room.

TRAPPED STEP (CR 6)

The bottom step descending into the room is trapped. (This is not the step where the feather lies.) If a human steps upon it, two things happen. First, he or she must make a Will saving throw (DC 19) or be stunned for 1d6+1 rounds. This is a 6th-level effect, cast by a 11th-level caster. Second, whether the save succeeded or not, the character must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 20) or be catapulted 20 feet into the room by a spring-action device built into the step. Such a character lands prone. If there is another character(s) in front of the affected one, the character(s) in front also must make a

Reflex save (DC 20), or both end up prone, in a heap. The trap's Search and Disable Device DCs are 31.

IRON BARS (CR 3)

The iron bars form a roost for the inhabitant of the room, Bulustres the vrock. The bars are magically electrified, so that anyone touching them suffers 5d6 points of electricity damage (no save). Tanar'ri, of course, are immune to electricity. This is a 3rd-level effect, cast by a 5th-level caster. The trap's Search and Disable Device DCs are 28.

CREATURE

Bulustres the vrock lives in this chamber. If Bulustres hears fighting with the iron chimera in Area 5, it alerts its fellow vrock, Umthark in Area 8. Together, the two prepare for intruders to come down into their area by using their mirror image ability. Bulustres stands in the north part of the room, on the roost, with his type V *necklace of missiles* (this is a special necklace, for each missile is laced, as with the Lace Spell: Unholy† and Lace Spell: Enemy Bane† (humans) feats). Thus, the missiles (9d6, 7d6 [×2], 5d6 [×2], 3d6 [×3]) have DCs of 16 if used against good creatures, and inflict +20 percent more damage against humans. Bulustres hurls the 9d6 missile, then pulls back through the door on the north wall into Area 8. He wears red full plate made to fit him (this makes his Move Silently and Hide bonuses +8 and +4, respectively).

If Sekeren the glabrezu tells him to do something, there is a 70 percent chance that Bulustres will obey, for despite his chaotic nature, Bulustres is a bit of a coward and fears

Sekeren. (The glabrezu uses the existence of the bebiliths in Area 26 to threaten the demons that work under him.)

Bulustres (vrock): 68 hp, AC 33 (wears masterwork full plate), +11 claws (two of them, 1d8+4), +9 bite (two of them, 1d6+2), +9 rakes (1d4+2), DR 20/+2, SR 22, 10-ft. reach, many special abilities. See MM. Has a *necklace of missiles*, as described above, as well as a platinum and obsidian bracelet worth 1,000 gp.

8. VROCK LAIR (EL 13)

Something has built a large nest of bones and grisly remains in the northeast corner. A stooped, vulture-headed beast with gray wings and a crooked leg stands ready with a large repeating crossbow pointed at you.

The west wall has a small built-in font, its grinning demonskull filling it with a tiny trickle of blood. Next to it is an upright metal rack made of two hinged panels of barbed razorwire-spike-covered bars. A long-dead victim's blackened and dried skeleton remains trapped within it. Dark red runes are inscribed on a plaque mounted to the side of the device.

Stairs in the northwest corner of the room go down to Area 9.

CREATURE

Umthark the vrock was wounded by a grievous holy spell cast by Enchelious centuries ago, and his leg has never



healed correctly. He walks with a limp, his talons scraping and sliding along the ground. He uses a powerful *+2 repeating crossbow* and has 10 *+1 unholy bolts*.

If forewarned of an intrusion, he stands near the font and uses his crossbow to attack anyone coming into the room. If Sekeren, his “superior,” gives him an order, Umthark has about a 50 percent chance of actually carrying it out in a timely fashion.

Umthark (vrock): 159 hp, AC 25, +11 claws (two of them, 1d8+4), +9 bite (1d6+2), +9 rakes (two of them, 1d4+2), DR 20/+2, SR 22, 10-ft. reach, many special abilities. See MM. Has *+2 repeating crossbow* and 10 *+1 unholy bolts*, as described above (giving him a ranged attack of +10/+5 for 1d8+3 points of damage, +2d6 if target is good).

THE TORTURE DEVICE

The runes on the torture device read (in Abyssal): “Although this sacrifice is long in coming, enjoy its sweet suffering, dark master, as much as its soul.” The rack was used for sacrifices long ago, when the Fane was “operational.”

THE NEST

Umthark cannot perch with his wounded leg, so instead he constructed a nest from bones, flesh, and scraps of cloth. Characters can find hidden within the nest (Search, DC 24) 341 gp and a gold ring (worth 150 gp) still on a bony finger. Searching through the nest, characters face the danger of vrock spores as surely as if they were engaged in combat with one of these demons (see MM).

9. MASTER OF DEFENSES (EL 16)

The center of this large chamber contains an imposing iron throne, covered with bones and skulls lashed together with razorwire and black thorny vines. The whole thing is stained reddish brown, as if with blood. The floor here is black marble with white running through it. A chandelier of bones and razor-sharp blades hangs from the ceiling directly above the throne. It holds a plaque with etched red runes.

Straight behind the throne, the south wall sports a small font. The grinning demonskull within it trickles blood into the basin. Two gray stone statues of robed human men holding demonskulls occupy the room as well.

THE THRONE

The throne is the seat of power for Sekeren the glabrezu, charged with the duty of defending the Fane. It is also a trap

for the unwary who might try to use it. Characters who speak the name “Ochremeshk” before sitting on the throne gain two abilities (both cast as 16th-level sorcerers) while seated:

1. The throne can endow them with a *mantle of egregious might*. This grants them a +4 luck bonus to AC, attack rolls, saving throws, and all ability scores for 160 minutes. These effects last even after they get off the throne. The throne can grant these bonuses three times per day.
2. They can raise or lower *prismatic walls* that run north to south across the passageways out of this room (marked E and F on page 19’s map). These walls block the short, downward-sloping corridors that lead to Areas 10 and 14. The throne can bestow this ability countless times daily.

A character who sits on the throne without speaking the proper name is held immobile by the sudden twining of the wire and vines (no saving throw). The wire and thorns cut into the character’s flesh for 1d6 points of damage per round. To get free, either the caught PC or another must perform a Strength check (DC 25). Otherwise, the wires and vines must be cut, which requires at least 10 blows with a bladed weapon for 4 points of damage each time. This also destroys the magic of the throne. Simply breaking free using a Strength check does not.

CREATURES

This is the lair of Sekeren the glabrezu. Sekeren wears a red and black khat headdress (from ancient Egypt in the real world, typified by the Sphinx’s headdress). He has a *rod of the viper* that he uses as a symbol of his authority. Sekeren listens for the approach of intruders at all times. If he hears the sound of danger, he uses the throne to bestow the *mantle of egregious might* upon himself and raises the *prismatic walls*.

If Sekeren knows that intruders are coming from a certain direction, he attempts to get aid from the other direction. For example, if the PCs are fighting the vlocks in Areas 7 and 8, Sekeren gathers the bodaks from Area 6. If he hears intruders fighting the bodaks, he enlists the aid of the vlocks. Either way, his strategy makes this already difficult encounter extremely challenging—particularly if he gains the help of both vlocks.

In battle, Sekeren leads with *power word, stun*, although if he had the time he already might have cast *dispel good* (note that this adds a +4 deflection bonus to AC against good creatures—that would make his AC 31, 37 if he has the mantle), *mirror image*, and *reverse gravity* (the latter’s effect manifests at the bottom of the staircase he believes his foes will come down). If he has assistance from either the bodaks or the vlocks, he makes them go into melee while he uses *chaos hammer*, *unholy blight*, *dispel magic*, and *confusion* from farther away.

If he does get into melee and achieves a grab on a foe, he drags the foe to one of the *prismatic walls* (if they are up) and sticks the victim into it, laughing as he does so. Sekeren is a real bastard.

Sekeren (glabrezu): hp 90, AC 27, +15 pincers (two of them, 2d6+7), +13 claws (two of them, 1d3+3), +13 bite (1d4+3), DR 20/+2, SR 21, 15-foot reach, many special abilities. See MM. Has a *rod of the viper* and a *demon skull talisman*† (see sidebar). With the *mantle of egregious might*, he gains +20 hp (110 total), +6 AC (33 total), +6 to attacks, +2 to damage, +2 to initiative, +6 to all saves, +2 to save DCs for special abilities, and +2 to all skills.

Award +20 percent experience points for defeating Sekeren if he has the mantle upon him.

THE CHANDELIER

The plaque says, in Abyssal “As this sacrifice’s blood drains down upon the throne, Ochremeshk, know that we speak your name in reverent tones.” Long ago, sacrifices were trapped within the chandelier, where they would bleed to death slowly. The plaque also offers a clue to using the throne properly.

10. HALL OF PAINTINGS

Paintings on canvas and framed in gilt wood cover the walls here. A lush red carpet with swirling streaks of black and green covers most of the floor. There are three doors on the western wall.

THE PAINTINGS

Ten large (4 feet tall, 8 feet across) paintings hang here, one occupying each blank 10-foot space along the wall (one covers the secret door to the south). Anyone attempting to remove a painting from a wall must make a Will saving throw (DC 20) or become compelled (as with a *suggestion* spell) to say, “Ochremeshk be praised!” If this phrase is spoken three times in this room, the area takes on a special *unhallow* effect accompanied by the effects of a *blasphemy* spell. Should this happen, the succubus Distania may use that moment to *teleport* out of her room (Area 11) and attack.

The paintings provide background information about the Fane. Each bears a small label on a brass plate with a title:

- 1. The Building of the Fane.** This painting depicts mostly humanoid cultists with a few demons, all laboring to erect the huge statue/temple within a valley.
- 2. The Finished Fane.** No one is around. The temple stands amid trees and broken ground within a valley.

3. The First Revel. At a huge bacchant party/orgy around the Fane, cultists cavort with trolls, hags, and demons.

4. Sacrifices for the Demon God. Dozens of living sacrifices await their cruel fate.

5. The Bloodhunters. Mortal cultists ride nightmares and dire lions, dragging kidnapped victims behind them from ropes. This shows a close image of Ungalish the vampire (see Area 24).

6. Sekeren. The glabrezu (see Area 9) sits on his throne.

7. Charmachnar, Master of the Fane. The balor who once ran the temple stands with corpses strewn about him.

(Charmachnar was slain by Encheliou.)

8. Sussinst-ir, High Priestess. A bald half-elf priestess in a long gown poses with a staff topped by a demonic head. (She became a lich, but Lytaros Fel destroyed her very recently.)

9. Lytaros Fel and Distania. These two are pictured as if they are lovers, within Area 11. (They were lovers, but not anymore.)

10. Ochremeshk. The Demon God himself stands in his otherplanar dimension, surrounded by tormented souls. The resemblance of the Fane to the Demon God is clear.

THE SECRET DOOR

After the painting is removed, a Search check (DC 20) locates this door. With the painting still on the wall, the Search DC is 30. The door pivots to open. Behind is a spiral stair down to Area 16.

11. DISTANIA (EL 15)

A lavish bedchamber lies behind the center door. A red carpet with swirling streaks of green and black covers the floor. Upon the rug rest a canopy bed, a chest, a dresser, a wardrobe, and three padded chairs. On the north and south walls hang huge brass-framed mirrors.

The western wall sports a small font. The grinning demon-skull within it slowly fills it with a tiny trickle of blood.

CREATURES

This is the bedchamber of Distania the succubus. If she needs help in battle, or a means to cover her escape, Distania

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.

Caster Level: 5th; Weight: 1 lb.

calls her beloved—the wights in both rooms marked Area 12—as a free action. They arrive at the end of the following round unless somehow prevented.

Distania (succubus): Rog6; CR 15; Medium outsider; HD

6d8+6 +6d6+6; hp 60; Init +4; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 23 (touch 14, flat-footed 23); Atk +13/+8 melee (1d4+2 dagger of venom) and +9 melee (1d3+1 claw); SA Spell-like abilities, energy drain, summon demon, sneak attack +3d6; SQ Damage reduction 20/+2, SR 12, demon qualities, alternate form*, tongues, evasion, uncanny dodge; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +12, Will +9; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +17, Concentration +10, Disguise +17*, Escape Artist +16, Hide +16, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +22, Move Silently +16, Ride +10, Search +15, Spot +22, Tumble +10, Use Magic Device +9; Ambidexterity, Dodge, Mobility, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse (dagger)

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*charm monster*, *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect thoughts*, *doom*, *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *suggestion*, and *teleport without error* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only); 1/day—*unholy blight*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 12th-level sorcerer (save DC 15 + spell level).

Energy Drain (Su): A succubus drains energy from a mortal it lures into some act of passion, or by simply planting a kiss on the victim. If the target is not willing to be kissed, the succubus must start a grapple, which provokes an attack of opportunity. The succubus' kiss or embrace inflicts one negative level; the victim must succeed at a Wisdom check (DC 15) to even notice. The Fortitude save to remove the negative level has a DC of 18.

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day a succubus can attempt to summon one balor with a 10 percent chance of success.

Alternate Form* (Su): Succubi can assume any humanoid form of Small to Large size as a standard action. This ability is similar to the *polymorph self* spell but allows only humanoid forms.

Possessions: +1 dagger of venom coated with magic *dark chakra poison*† (DC 22, 2d6 points of temporary Dexterity damage now and 1d6 points of temporary Dexterity damage a minute later) enchanted with the *swarmdeath* effect (Fortitude save, DC 17, or die from insects bursting from one's stomach), *demon skull talisman†*, *potion of cat's grace*.

* While using the alternate form ability, a succubus gains a +10 circumstance bonus to Disguise checks.

CHEST (CR 5)

This small chest is locked (DC 32 to open) and trapped. If a character opens the chest without using the key, or without finding and removing the trap (DC 30 for both), the chest emits poison insanity gas that fills the room. Anyone breath-

ing the gas must make a Fortitude save (DC 24) or suffer 2d6 points of Wisdom damage now and again one minute later.

The chest contains a *cloak of ethereality*, a *demon skull talisman†*, and a bag with 12 pearls worth 50 gp each.

OTHER FURNISHINGS

The wardrobe contains silky, sheer clothing. The dresser has 500 gp worth of cosmetics and perfumes. The mirrors are each worth 250 gp, but each weighs 150 lbs. The keys to both this room's secret door and the chest can be found hidden in the pillows of the bed (Search check, DC 30).

SECRET DOOR

A Search check (DC 25) is required to find this door. It is also locked (DC 30 to open). Beyond is a short sloping passageway down to a landing, where an incredibly steep staircase (almost a ladder) leads up to Area 13. This passage goes up the hilt of the Demon God's sword (see map on page 17).

12. THE BELOVED OF DISTANIA (EL 9)

Each of these two rooms is accessible via a door from Area 10.

Once a lavish room with silk pillows and plush carpets, sadly this chamber has fallen into a terrible state. Corpses lie about the tattered pillows and rugs, dressed in rags that were once elegant, foppish finery. The walls are painted in a horrible—almost painful—mixture of black and red swirls, spirals, and bursts.

Suddenly, the corpses begin to move. They bare black claws and teeth, and their eyes glow like firepits.

“Distania, my love...” they groan in unison....

CREATURES

These undead are wights, human men drained to death by the kiss and caress of the succubus, Distania (Area 11). Despite the fact that 10 of them await the party in each of these rooms, they should be easily dispatched and most likely are worth no experience.

Wights (10 in each room): hp 26 each, AC 15, +3 Slam (1d4+1 plus one negative level), undead immunities. See MM.

13. HILT SPHERE

Climbing up the near-ladder, you emerge into a spherical room. On the north “wall” of the sphere, there is a pentagram 10 feet across, made of glowing red energy. Written in red letters of energy, in Common, a message at the center of the pentagram says: “Breathe.”

PENTAGRAM

Stepping into this pentagram on the wall (as if it were a doorway) teleports (as a *teleportation circle*) a character to the Nightmare Chamber (see page 40).

14. DEMON GIANTS (EL 14)

A blast of infernal heat greets you in this room. The walls and floor here are blackened with soot. A font with a demonic skull dribbling blood into a basin is built into the south wall.

CREATURES

Erche and Burch, demonic fire giants that worship Ochremeshk, are close followers of Lytaros Fel. They hate Distania and, if they ever got the chance, they would kill her. However, that would make the rest of the demons in the Fane angry, and it's practically impossible anyway (she just retreats to the Ethereal Plane when attacked).

If the giants know an attack is coming, they meet their foes in this outer room, having drunk their potions. Otherwise, they are in the bedchambers (the rear 20-foot square rooms) or in Area 15.

The giants keep their swords in the heat, so for the first 10 rounds of combat, their attacks inflict an additional 1d6 points of heat damage.

Erche and Burch (fiendish fire giants): hp 140 and 149, AC 21, +20/+15/+10 huge greatsword (2d8+15+1d6 heat), smite good once (+20 damage), DR 10/+3, SR 25, cold resistance 20, immune to fire. See MM.

BEDCHAMBERS

The rear chambers each contain a huge iron bed, a pot of burning coals, and a burlap bag (usually shoved under the bed).

The bag in the northernmost bedchamber (Erche's area) contains eight large rocks for throwing, two iron vials containing a *potion of protection from cold* and a *potion of endurance* (if he drinks it, this gives Erche 30 more hit points and adds +2 to his Fortitude saves), a battered bronze idol of Ochremeshk (worth 50 gp), and 43 sp.

Burch's bag holds six rocks, three fairly lifelike copper skulls (worth 45 gp each), and three iron vials containing a *potion of cat's grace*, a *potion of bull's strength*, and a *potion of invisibility* (these give him +2 to AC, attack rolls, damage, and Reflex saves).

SECRET DOOR

A Search check (DC 25) is required to find this door, which pivots to open. Behind it, a spiral stair leads down to Area 16.

15. FIREPIT

A burning pit, 15 feet across, takes up most of this room. The heat from the fire, which originates perhaps 10 feet below but licks the upper edges of the pit itself, is staggering. Around the edges of the pit, red runes spell out something in a strange language.

This pit is where all the waste generated by the Fane's inhabitants is disposed of. The magical flames destroy everything and produce no smoke. The only door here is the entry from Area 14.

ABOVE THE PIT

The heat is horrible, inflicting 1d6 points of damage per round upon anyone in the room. The runes spell out (in Abyssal) "Accept the lives of these burning sacrifices, Lord Ochremeshk. Their charred flesh and screams of agony are yours."

IN THE PIT

The fire is magical, inflicting 3d6 points of damage per round to anyone within it. Characters near the pit can make Spot checks (DC 20) to notice something dark within the fire. The fire giants keep some valuables in the pit within a fireproof iron chest.

The chest remains hot for 30 minutes after removing it; for the first five minutes, its heat inflicts 2d6 points of damage per round if a character touches it, and for the next 10 minutes it inflicts 1d6 points of damage. It is bound with bands that require a Strength check (DC 28) to remove. Within the magically cool interior of the chest lie 2,310 gp, a golden goblet worth 80 gp, a brass urn with small rubies worth 550 gp, two golden platters worth 120 gp each, and a malachite-inlaid golden flask worth 400 gp.

16. FLESH GOLEMS (EL 12)

After going down the spiral stairs behind the secret door in Area 10, the characters can emerge here.

The spiral staircase is made of cold black iron. The floor of this room is covered in bones, torn bits of clothing, and old weapons. The walls are spattered with ancient bloodstains and scratch marks, and a single door waits on the north wall.

TRAP

As soon as someone touches the middle step on the spiral staircase, iron bars hidden within the stairs extend up and down, turning it into a cylindrical cage—even the top, back up into the secret room next to Area 10, is sealed off. Then, the cage is filled with an *antimagic field*. After this happens, from the old bones and flesh on the floor, five golems rise, cobbled together from bits of sacrificed victims. Further, these golems have been constructed so that they have bony armor on the outside, giving them a carapacelike protective shell.

Bending or breaking the bars of the cage is DC 30—hard to do without magical aid. The bars have a hardness of 10 and 60 hit points.

CREATURES

The flesh golems attack with polearms through the bars of the cage. With the 15-foot reach offered by these weapons, the golems can reach anyone anywhere in the stair/cage. To fight the golems, the PCs can't use spells, but they can employ ranged weapons. The magical bonus of an arrow shot out of the *antimagic field* counts against the golems' damage reduction.

Flesh Golems (5): hp 49 each, AC 22, +11 glaive (1d10+5), immune to most spells, DR 15/+1. See MM.

17. HOLY GHOST

This chamber lies north of the trapped Area 16.

This room full of rubbish smells of rot. A small font is built into the wall opposite the door. The grinning demon-skull within it slowly fills the basin with a tiny trickle of blood. Around the font, small shelves built into the wall hold various statuettes and idols of demons and evil beasts.

CREATURES

This room is haunted by the ghost of Ghelord, a paladin who aided Encheliou in his attack against the Demon God's Fane. Ghelord was captured and brought into the Fane to be sacrificed. Before that could happen, the Fane was sealed, and thus Ghelord was the last victim that most of the terrible fiends in this place had to torment and torture. Ghelord's misery lasted for decades.

Ghelord's ghost rises up from the trash here, most likely worrying PCs, but in fact he is not at all hostile. He speaks to the characters and can tell them much about this place. He knows the general layout and the history of the attack seven centuries ago, although he does not know the particulars of the rain that created Golden Lake, for he was already captured at that point. He also knows the following:

- “The Umbral Taint is a demonic virus composed of the spirits of demons that once lived here. To end its threat, destroy the Fane's Heart.”
- “The Fane's Heart is the demons' ‘holy of holies,’ where only priests were allowed to go. It is the center of the Fane's power.”
- “To get to the Fane's Heart, at least one of you must partake of all three sacraments in the Nightmare Chamber, accessed from three pentagrams found about the Fane. Then, that person can activate the magical transporter that takes people to the Fane's Heart.”
- “Lytaros Fel, a half-demon embermage†, now commands the Demon God's Fane. He took that position after he slew the high priestess, Sussinst-ir (who had become a lich). The original master of the place, Charmachnar the balor, died in the battle of the Fane long ago.”
- “Lytaros Fel is attempting to use the power in the Fane's Heart to make it so that the Temple never fell and was never submerged in the lake. If he succeeds, more than 700 years of misery, destruction, and death will be suddenly thrust into the present time, and the whole surrounding area will be (and will have been) a veritable hell on earth.”
- “They took my holy sword and hid it away. I don't know where.”

He also can recount some facts about his comrade Encheliou (see “Yesterday” in the Introduction).

After he tells the characters these things, Ghelord's ghost can finally rest, leaving for his proper eternal reward. He was a 15th-level paladin when alive (although Distania drained most of his levels over years of torture).

18. TENDRILS OF DEATH (EL 14)

Down the stairs from the giants' chamber, the characters come upon a treacherous room.

A number of long, sticky strands of something organic shoot toward you! These tendrils come from horrible mounds of gibbering flesh, each with a single, bloodshot eye staring at you. The room is large, and the floor is covered in dried husks and organic droppings hardened into things that look like rocks.

Near the north wall stands a bronze statue of a woman holding a skull in each hand; she wears a macabre grin. The western wall sports a small font, the leering demon-skull within slowly filling it with a trickle of blood. The fouled floor has a mosaic pattern of black, red, and green stones, but much of it is no longer visible.

From this room, a staircase on the west wall leads down.

CREATURES

The monsters are ropers, and they attack anything non-fiendish or non-undead that comes into this room, for they are starving. (The fiendish giants in Area 14 and the trolls in Area 19 prevent the ropers from wandering away to seek food.) They all start out 10 to 20 feet from the spiral stair, encircling it. If the same character is hit by the strands of two different ropers—entirely possible with 24 strands flying about—the Strength damage is cumulative. Ropers may engage in a tug-of-war over which one gets to eat a captured foe.

Characters who are pulled off the stair from at least halfway up fall and suffer 1d6 points of damage.

Ropers (4): hp 80, 82, 90, 102, AC 24, +11 strands (6 attacks, 50-ft. range), +2 bite (2d6+2), 10-ft. reach, strands deal 2d8 Strength damage and pull characters 10 ft. per round, cold resistance 30, immune to electricity, SR 28. See MM.

19. GUARDIANS (EL 14)

A large iron cage, 8 feet square, rests on the floor in the middle of the room. The western side of the cage is hinged, but locked with a big iron padlock. Its rusted bars keep a single skeleton, animate and shaking the bars, held within. Three large sleeping mats are sprawled on the floor near the north wall, as is a large iron pot. On shelves above them are tools, bits of armor, and other miscellaneous objects.

The cage's lock is only DC 25 to break, and the key can be found on one of the shelves, along with tools for sharpening and oiling weapons, plus eating utensils and other mundane items the trolls use in their meager lives here. The iron pot is a large chamber pot, which they occasionally empty into Area 15.

A spiral staircase in the northeast corner of the room leads down, and around the southwest corner lies another chamber.

CREATURES

The skeleton is a strange magical undead creature that reforms immediately upon destruction if laid low by weapons (although fire, acid, or spells can destroy it permanently, as can turning). The trolls living here use the skeleton for training, although they also spar with each other (because of their regeneration, they can't permanently harm themselves). The fact that these trolls originally come from the Abyss means that, not only do they have particular resistances, they regenerate twice as quickly as normal trolls.

Unless they are caught totally unprepared, the trolls' commander (from Area 20) joins them in battle.

Fiendish Trolls (3): Ftr5; CR 11; Large giant; HD 6d8+36 + 5d10+30; hp 122 each; Init +1; Speed 20 feet; AC 26, touch 10, flat-footed 25; Attack +18/+13 melee (2d8+16, +2 *Huge greatsword*) or +15 melee (1d6+8, 2 claws) +10 melee (1d6+4, bite); Face/Reach 5 feet × 5 feet/10 feet; SA Rend, smite good 1/day +12 damage; SQ Cold and fire resistance 10, SR 12, DR 5/+1, regenerate 10, scent, darkvision 90 feet; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 26, Dex 13, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Listen +8, Spot +8; Alertness, Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Rend (Ex): If a troll hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+12 points of damage.

Possessions: +2 *Huge greatsword*, +1 *full plate*, 3d10 gp.

20. LASTERESH'S POOL (EL 12)

Against the western wall sits a large rusted metal basin: 10 feet wide, 20 feet across, and 5 feet deep. It is filled with water. On the sides of this water tank, red-painted runes have faded over time. Some gear—a small shield, a backpack, and some tools—lies on the floor next to the pool.

The south wall sports a small demon-faced font slowly filling with a trickle of blood.

Lasteresh the hezrou lived here before he left (see page 15). Since then, the leader of the trolls from Area 19 lives here. The equipment is his.

The runes on the side of the pool say (in Abyssal script), "The drowning screams that come from the murders in this pool are yours, oh mighty Ochremeshk."

CREATURES

The fiendish troll leader now lives here. Unless they are caught totally unprepared, the trolls all face an attack together, either here or in Area 19.

Fiendish Troll Commander: Ftr6; CR 12; Large giant; HD 6d8+36 + 6d10+36; hp 150 each; Init +1; Speed 20 feet; AC 29, touch 10, flat-footed 28; Attack +20/+15 melee (2d6+17, +2 *greatsword*) or +17 melee (1d6+9, 2 claws) +12 melee (1d6+4, bite); Face/Reach 5 feet × 5 feet/10 feet; SA Rend, smite good 1/day +12 damage; SQ Cold and fire resistance 10, SR 12, DR 5/+1, regenerate 10, scent, darkvision 90 feet; AL CE; SV Fort +16, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 28, Dex 13, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 7.

Skills and Feats: Climb +7, Listen +9, Spot +9; Alertness, Cleave, Dodge, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power

Attack, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Weapon Specialization (greatsword).

Rend (Ex): If a troll hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically deals an additional 2d6+13 points of damage.

Possessions: +2 greatsword, +2 full plate, strength gauntlets +2, demonskull talisman, masterwork large metal shield, 34 gp.

21. T'LURG'S CHAMBER (EL 7)

A simple cot is pushed against the south wall, with a rough wooden table next to it holding a bag, a ceramic mug, and a few coins. A large iron chamber pot sits on the other side of the room. An odor reminiscent of stale sweat hangs in the air.

This is the chamber of the ogre mage servant of the night hags that live in Areas 22 and 23. A door on the south wall leads to T'lurg's mistresses' chamber.

CREATURES

T'lurg the ogre mage is old, his skin wrinkled and weathered. As soon as he realizes that someone might be coming down the stairs, he flees to Area 22 (probably flying invisibly). In battle, he starts with *cone of cold*, and then enters into melee, using his power of *invisibility* when able.

T'lurg (ogre mage): hp 32, AC 24, +8 greatsword (2d6+6),

SR 18, regeneration 2, spell-like abilities. See MM. He has a +1 Large steel shield, a +1 breastplate, a +1 ring of protection, and a +1 greatsword.

22. MISTRESSES OF THE NIGHT (EL 13)

This large room has two pillars near the center, each formed to resemble a jagged, demon-face-covered spike that has just thrust up through the floor. The builders fashioned the floor, in turn, to look as though the pillars came up through smashed holes. The eyes of the faces on the pillars seem to watch you wherever you go in the chamber.

The northmost wall sports a small font, a leering demonskull within slowly filling the basin with a trickle of blood. On the floor near the center of the south wall, a pentagram 10 feet across glows with red energy. Written in red letters of energy, a message in Common at the center of the pentagram says: "Burn."

Unless caught entirely unprepared, night hags mounted atop two retrievers wait here. If they are unaware of intrud-

ers, the hags will be in Area 23, and the retrievers will not be "formed."

TELEPORT REDIRECT

A permanent *teleport redirect* spell remains in effect here. It sends anyone attempting to *teleport* into or out of this room into the bottom of the firepit in Area 15. Any teleportation spell is affected, including *word of recall*, except for the teleportation powers of the pillars and the pentagram.

CREATURES

The two night hags, Kadara and Vumul, do not have their *heartstones*, and thus cannot haunt dreams or become ethereal. The stones were stolen by Distania, whom they plan to kill when the opportunity arises. Instead, now Kadara relies on her three wands: *stoneskin* (8 charges left), *bind item* (12 charges left), and *lightning bolt* (cast at 10th level, DC 15, 7 charges left). To use these items, she has a +13 Use Magic Device skill rather than any bonus in Spellcraft. If prepared ahead of time, she uses the wand to cast *stoneskin* on herself and Vumul (and, potentially T'lurg and the retrievers, if there's time). She then hurls *lightning bolts*, *bind item*, and *magic missiles* from atop a retriever.

Vumul wears *boots of speed*, a +1 *longsword*, and a +1 *Large steel shield*, so she can wade into combat with multiple attacks. She leaps off her retriever and into melee, using the beast to flank opponents.

Kadara (night hag): hp 43, AC 20, +12 bite (2d6+6 and disease), SR 25, DR 20/+3, immune to fire, cold, charm, sleep and fear affects, spell-like abilities. See MM. Has three wands (as detailed above), a *demonskull talisman*, as well as the key for the door into Area 23 hidden in her hair (Search check, DC 24 to find).

Vumul (night hag): hp 52, AC 28, +11/+6 longsword (1d8+5) and +10 bite (2d6+4 and disease), SR 25, DR 20/+3, immune to fire, cold, charm, sleep, and fear effects, spell-like abilities. See MM. Has *boots of speed*, +1 *longsword*, +1 *Large steel shield*, wears a masterwork breastplate. Her longsword is poisoned with magic *blackblade poison* (DC 24, 1d6 temporary Strength damage now and 2d6 temporary Strength damage a minute later), enchanted with the *fireheart* effect (inflicts 3d6 points of fire damage each time a save against the poison fails).

The retrievers are actually magical constructs created by the pillars. They disappear when the hags do not need them. Even if the retrievers are destroyed, the pillars can recreate



them in one hour. When intruders appear, both retrievers target foes with their eye rays. Then Vumul's retriever moves into melee, while Kadara's continues to use its eye rays.

Retrievers (2): hp 55 each, AC 22, +12 claws (four of them, 2d6+7) or +6 eye rays, regenerate 5, construct immunities. See MM.

PILLARS

These magical pillars not only can be commanded to create retrievers magically, but either one can *teleport* a character to Area 24. Touching a pillar and saying the words, "Chaos and evil for Ochremeshk" activates this function immediately.

PENTAGRAM

Stepping into the pentagram along the south wall *teleports* (as a *teleportation circle*) a character to the Nightmare Chamber (see page 40).

23. THE HAGS' QUARTERS (EL 7)

A door in the northwest corner of Area 22 leads here—if the PCs can get through it.

TRAPPED AND LOCKED DOOR (CR 5)

Anyone not chaotic evil who touches the door into this area immediately gains one negative level (the saving throw DC to avoid permanent level loss is 18). Further, the door remains locked (DC 35 to open), although Kadara has a key.

Two large wooden beds here are suspended from the ceiling on bronze chains. A circular rug made of what appears to be woven hair partially covers the floor. The wall opposite the door is lined with bookshelves, while flat-topped wooden trunks sit against both the north and south walls. Atop each trunk are a bullseye lantern, a few more books, and some skulls.

THE LANTERNS (CR 3)

Each of these lanterns bears a strange curse. Anyone touching one must make a Will saving throw (DC 20). Failure means that anytime that character tries to create magical light (*light, dancing lights, continual flame, daylight*, etc.), the effect—if successful—creates *darkness* instead. This is true whether the light comes from a spell, a spell-like ability, a magic item, or anything else. The areas, durations, etc., of

the spell or spell-like effect remain the same. This curse is permanent until removed.

THE TRUNKS (CR 3)

Each trunk is locked with a three-spinner combination-style lock. The DC to open one without the combination is 40. Further, each trunk has a *conditional spell* cast upon it that is triggered if someone casts *knock* upon it. The stored spell is *lightning bolt* (10d6 points of damage, DC 15).

One trunk holds tattered articles of clothing, a variety of knives, three doses of blackblade poison (DC 24, 1d6 points of temporary Strength damage now and 2d6 points of temporary Strength damage a minute later), three flasks of alchemist's fire, two flasks of acid, a *potion of neutralize poison*, 10 miscellaneous pieces of jewelry worth 100 gp each, and a *star of blood*.

Within the other trunk are more tattered clothing items, a bag with 782 gp and 219 pp, a *bag of devouring*, a small cloth doll riddled with needles, two *potions of cure serious wounds*, and one of *lesser restoration*.

THE BOOKS

The books are all about arcane lore, the lower planes, and history. One inconspicuous book on the shelves (DC 25 to find) is actually a *manual of quickness in action +1*. One of the books on a trunk, however, is Vumul's journal. This journal shows a real devotion to Ochremeshk and gives a distorted view of the history of the Fane. It takes an hour to read it all, but characters would be wiser to simply flip to the back; most importantly, the hag's journal contains the following relevant bits of information near the very end:

If we hadn't become trapped here, we would have left! We were all ready to flee back to the dark planes when the horrible golden rain fell, sealing us in. Now the time has come for our revenge. Now we have a chance to rebuild the Fane. If we had left back then, we would never have returned. Now history is to be rewritten.

This knowledge is important for the PCs to have when they face the encounter in the Fane's Heart (Area 28).

24. MASTER OF THE BLOODHUNTERS (EL 14)

Characters *teleported* here appear in the exact middle of the room. This area is filled with a permanent *deeper darkness* spell. Use this descriptive text only if someone dispels this effect.

This circular room seems to spin. The walls and floor are dark, with an occasional blood-red curtain or cloth-

covered furnishing providing a stark contrast. The furniture includes a large wooden throne in the northernmost portion of the room, a low table near it with six silver flagons, and a few shields and swords mounted on the walls.

The southern portion of the curved wall holds a small font, a leering demonskull within slowly filling the basin with a trickle of blood.

FLOOR AND PILLARS (CR 4)

The floor of this room actually does spin. Characters must make a Balance check (DC 20) every round or suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls, checks, and saving throws. Further, there are three spinning pillars with attached 5-foot blades whipping about them—and the pillars are permanently *invisible*. A Listen check (DC 15) tells PCs something is there but does not pinpoint the blades. Characters coming within 5 feet of the poles suffer an automatic 2d6 points of damage if they cannot see the pillars—otherwise, a Reflex save (DC 25) lets them avoid the damage.

The flagons are each worth 25 gp. The swords and shields are all mundane. There is no other treasure here.

UNHALLOW

Unhallow remains in constant effect here. That means the site boasts a permanent *protection from good* effect, and the *unholy aura* confers a -4 profane penalty to turning undead (+4 to rebuke undead). The *unhallow* spell also continually grants all evil beings the benefits of *protection from elements (fire)* while in this room.

CREATURES

When the Demon God's Fane was in full operation, the perverted rites of Ochremeshk demanded greater and greater numbers of living, intelligent beings as sacrifices. The Bloodhunters were cultists in charge of hunting and capturing victims and bringing them back to the Fane. Their leader was a bloodthirsty half-orc maniac named Ungalish. When the Fane was sealed, Ungalish called out to Ochremeshk, pleading that he not be trapped in the Fane alive. Thus, he was struck dead. Ungalish rose from the dead as a vampire, however, fueled by anger and bloodlust. His anger was directed at the Demon God, who did not truly save him, and yet he remained trapped within a temple dedicated to him for centuries. His lust and hunger for blood went forever unsatisfied, for he had no victims to feed upon. (He cannot even call upon children of the night to sustain him.)

Thus, Ungalish went insane. Now all the inhabitants of the Fane avoid him. They would destroy him if they could,

but no one knows where he flees to rejuvenate when he becomes mist.

When characters enter this room, Ungalish's bloodlust will send him into a fury resembling a barbarian's rage, for he is a vampire that has never fed. He uses the darkness against the intruders as much as possible. If denied, however (because the PCs are too powerful for him to overcome), he offers to make them a deal. He will tell them about the Fane and about Lytaros Fel if they allow him to leave. In his insanity, Ungalish has not yet realized that he can already leave. Of course, telling him this would be very foolish, because as soon as he realizes the truth, he turns to mist and flees the Fane to feed upon the living. Worse, any information he provides is nothing more than the ravings of a madman. He tells the PCs that Lytaros Fel is a half-dragon, and that the Fane's powers are hidden within its eyes (or whatever nonsense the DM wishes him to say).

Ungalish uses his *gem of seeing* eyepatch not only to see in the magical darkness but also to avoid the spinning blades.

If Ungalish needs a way to escape, he becomes gaseous and flows *into* the font. Using the tiny pipelines that circulate the Fane's Blood, he travels to Area 26, where his resting place lies—under the statue in the pit.

Point out to characters who were in Area 10 that the vampire looks familiar.

Ungalish (vampire): Ftr12; CR 14; Medium undead (was half-orc); HD 12d12; hp 80; Init +7; Speed 20 feet; AC 31, touch 14, flat-footed 28; Attack +23/+18/+13 melee (2d8+10+1d6, 17-20/x2 crit, +2 *shock longsword*) or +20 melee (1d6+12, slam); SA Domination, energy drain, blood drain, create spawn; SQ Damage reduction 15/+1, +4 turn resistance, cold and electricity resistance (20), *gaseous form*, *spider climb*, alternate form, fast healing; AL CE; SV Fort +8, Ref +9, Will +7; Str 26, Dex 17, Con —, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 20.

Skills and Feats: Bluff +13, Hide +11, Jump +20, Listen +12, Move Silently +13, Search +9, Sense Motive +9, Spot +11; Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Cleave, Dodge, Expertise, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Spring Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword), Whirlwind Attack.

Domination (Su): A vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must take a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed at a Will save (DC 23) or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though by a *dominate person* spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a vampire's slam attack suffer two negative levels.

Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain each round it maintains the pin.

Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a vampire's energy drain attack rises as a vampire spawn (see the "Vampire Spawn" entry in the MM) 1d4 days after burial.

If the vampire instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or less, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under the command of the vampire that created it and remains enslaved until its master's death.

Aura of Despair (Su): The vampire radiates a malign aura that causes enemies within 10 feet to suffer a –2 morale penalty on all saving throws.

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can assume *gaseous form* at will, as the spell cast by a 5th-level sorcerer, but can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

Alternate Form (Su): A vampire can assume the shape of a bat, dire bat, wolf, or dire wolf as a standard action. This ability is similar to a *polymorph self* spell cast by a 12th-level sorcerer, except that the vampire can assume only one of the forms listed here. It can remain in that form until it assumes another or until the next sunrise.

Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire heals 5 points of damage each round, so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points or lower, a vampire automatically assumes *gaseous form* and attempts to escape. It must reach its resting place within two hours or be destroyed. (It can travel up to 9 miles in two hours.) Once in its resting place, it rises to 1 hit point after one hour, then resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.

Possessions: +2 *shock longsword*, +1 *breastplate* (with spikes), +3 *large steel shield* (with spikes), +1 *ring of protection*, a *gem of seeing* built into an eyepatch, a *demon skull talisman*, silver bracers with ebony inlay (worth 1,000 gp each).

THRONE

If the party locates a secret switch (Search, DC 20) on the throne, the throne and the 10-foot-square area of floor around it sink 15 feet to the level below (the top level of Area 25). This takes 2 rounds. The throne remains there for 10 rounds, then rises again.

25. THE MULTILEVELED PIT (EL 16)

This strange room seems to have an invisible floor suspended about 30 or 40 feet above the actual floor. About 15 feet below, two tall skeletal figures with a strange distortion field around them stare up at you, floating in midair. Each skeleton appears to hold a small humanoid figure within its ribcage as if it were an actual cage, and each stands next to an iron lever set into the wall.

Far below you, a large painted eye looks up from the center of the floor. Big iron double doors lead south out of the room, at the level of the actual floor.

As shown in the side-view map (see page 17), this room is about 50 feet tall and contains three levels. The upper two levels are built upon permanent *walls of force*. To exit this room and continue on, the PCs need to get to the bottom of the chamber.

TELEPORT REDIRECT

There is a permanent *teleport redirect* spell in effect here, which sends anyone attempting to *teleport* into or out of this room into the bottom of the firepit in Area 15. Any teleportation spell is affected, including *word of recall*.

Talisman of Turn Resistance

The golden amulet worn by the devourers in Area 25 grants undead creatures turn resistance. It has no effect upon nonundead. It comes in two varieties: +4 and +6.

Caster Level: 7; Prerequisites: *Craft Wondrous Item*, *desecrate* (+4 amulets), *unhallow* (+6 amulets); Market Price: 4,000 gp (+4 amulet), 12,000 gp (+6 amulet); Weight: —

UNHALLOW

Unhallow remains in constant effect here. That means the site boasts a permanent *protection from good* effect, and the unholy aura confers a -4 profane penalty to turning undead (+4 to rebuke undead). The *unhallow* spell also continually grants all evil beings the benefits of *protection from elements (fire)* while in this room.

IRON LEVERS (CR 8)

If someone pulls either of the iron levers on the walls, a *reverse gravity* spell takes effect in the room for 1d4 rounds.

DOORS

These iron doors lead out. A Strength check (DC 45) is needed to open these magically sealed double doors (300 hp, 10 hardness). A *knock* spell or a *dispel magic* does not affect them. Outside, the doors remain completely blocked by the solidified, calcified remnants of all the skulls piled at the base of the Fane. To maintain the Fane's appearance as a giant statue, these doors were concealed from the outside during the cult's heyday.

THE PAINTED EYE

One round after the PCs enter this area, unless they are all invisible or otherwise hidden from sight—in other words, if the painted eye can't "see" them—the eye summons an angry eye tyrant eager to attack. The tyrant remains here 10 rounds before returning from whence it came (unless it is killed first). The eye can summon the same tyrant again as soon as one hour later. Inflicting 20 points of damage upon the floor (8 hardness) renders the eye inoperative.

PHASE DOOR PIT

At the bottom of the room's south end, in the actual floor, a permanent *phase door* allows anyone to pass through it as long as they say, "Chaos and evil for Ochremeshk." Characters will have to *fly*, *levitate*, or climb on ropes to get down this pit to Area 26. It is impossible to climb the ethereal walls of the *phase door* passage.

CREATURES

The two skeletal creatures in this chamber, devourers, serve as eternal guardians. It is likely that an angry eye tyrant will be summoned as well.

Devourers (2): hp 77 and 80, AC 20, +11 claws (2 of them, 1d6+5 plus one negative level and 1d6 sonic), SR 21, +6 turn resistance, many spell-like abilities. Each holds the trapped essence of a 10th-level victim. See MM. Each wears a pair of *boots of flying* and a special magic item called a *+4 talisman of turn resistance*. Each also has an *elemental shroud (sonic)* spell cast upon it (+2 turn resistance, +2 AC, inflicts +1d6 sonic damage when touched or when it strikes, already figured in).

Eye Tyrant: hp 60, AC 20, +7 eye rays (varies), +2 bite (2d4). Antimagic cone. See MM.

TACTICS

The eye tyrant is not familiar with this chamber, but it catches on quickly. Its antimagic eye ray suppresses the *walls of force* while it is in effect, but the devourers fly with their

boots so as not to fall. If some of the PCs are hanging onto the walls or somehow keep themselves from falling the 45 feet (5d6 points of damage) when the *wall of force* under them gives way (remember that *fly* and *levitate* spells will be canceled out as well), this only serves to separate the party. What's more, in the middle of the battle, if the eye tyrant uses its antimagic eye to suppress the *walls of force* again, the devourers use the levers to force those on the ground to fall back up to the top again. Then, the cycle repeats.

26. THE PROFANITY (EL 12)

The smell of blood and incense commingle here in a disturbing odor. A large demonic statue rises up out of a circular pit 30 feet in diameter, with smoke wafting from the depths around it. The statue stretches out two clawed hands, each of which holds a misshapen, protoplasmic blob of tentacles, eyes, claws and flesh. Things of darkness and blades, with far too many legs, lurk around the edges of the pit.

This is the actual temple portion of the Fane, where the cultists performed the darkest of evil rites to the Demon God. On either side of the central pit lies a sizable alcove.

SPELLS IN EFFECT HERE

Unhallow and *forbiddance* both remain in constant effect here. That means the site has a permanent *protection from good* effect, and the *unholy aura* confers a -4 profane penalty to turning undead (+4 to rebuke undead). The *unhallow* spell also continually grants all evil beings the benefits of *aid* while they are in this room. The *forbiddance* spell means that none other than chaotic evil creatures can enter the room unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 19). Those who fail the save also suffer 3d6 damage (6d6 points of damage if lawful good).

STATUE

The statue's base is hollow, providing a small cavity for Ungalish (the vampire from Area 24) to retreat to—this now serves as his resting place. It can be reached only through 1-inch holes (Ungalish goes in gaseous).

SMOKE

The smoke rising up out of the pit is actually a magical transporter into the Fane's Heart (Area 28). It functions only if a character who has partaken of the three sacraments of Ochremeshk in the Nightmare Chamber touches the smoke. When that takes place, the smoke forms a doorway that lasts for 10 rounds. Characters cannot see through the doorway,



and passing through is a one-way trip—if someone sticks a hand through, or pops a head in to get a peek, the character is automatically pulled through into the Heart. Spells, including things like *clairvoyance*, won't pass through the doorway.

Down in the 20-foot-deep pit, the statue stands a mere 2 feet from the side of the pit. Thrown down there, however, is Ghelord's +1 *holy fiendbane longsword*. Someone who can fit down into that area can find the sword amid the smoke with a Search check (DC 30). Characters would more likely find the sword as the result of a *detect magic* spell cast in this area, however.

CREATURES

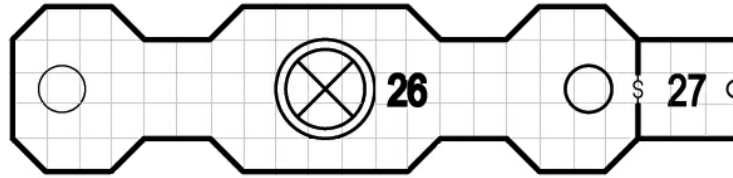
The creatures in the room attack immediately. The things in the statue's hands are chaos beasts, and the two spiderlike monsters are bebiliths. The chaos beasts leap down onto foes from above, while the bebiliths move in with their *circle of protection against good* aura active.

Chaos Beasts (2): hp 46 and 51, AC 16, +11 claws (two of them, 1d3+2 plus corporeal instability), SR 15, immune to criticals, immune to transmutation. See MM. Have 4 extra hit points and +1 attack from *aid* spell (already figured in).



THE DEMON GOD'S FANE

top-down views



the nightmare chamber

□ = TEN FEET

KEY	
⌘	Secret Door
⊗	Statue
⬆	Font
⬠	Pentagram

Bebiliths (2): hp 106 and 108, AC 25, +20 bite (2d6+9 plus poison), +15 claws (two of them, 2d4+4 plus armor damage), DR 30/+3, webs, protective aura (+2 AC against good creatures), plane shift. See MM. Have 4 extra hit points and +1 attack from *aid* spell (already figured in).

ALCOVES

Each of the chamber's side areas is devoted to a different aspect of Ochremeshk—to the west, chaos; to the east, evil. The text below applies to both alcoves.

In this roughly octagonal side chamber, a 10-foot-wide firepit lies near the far wall. A little heat comes from the pit, but no visible smoke. Next to the pit are two long iron poles. The floor is covered with strange sigils and runes, surrounding the now-familiar demonskull symbol near the center of the room.

Judging by the shadows playing about the ceiling, there may be something within the firepit.

FIREPITS

The firepits are 15 feet deep, and the flame within them is magical. Those near the pits suffer no heat damage, but anyone within one suffers 3d6 points of damage per round. Within each firepit stands an obsidian statue of Ochremeshk.

Any *demonskull talisman* found in the Fane can be attached to one of the poles. A character using a pole to

touch the talisman to the statue gains the blessing of Ochremeshk: He or she can add +1 to attack and damage rolls, saves, and checks for one hour. As a side effect, however, the character glows with a light nimbus of dark green energy.

Another effect manifests if a character whose alignment matches the alcove's aspect (chaotic for the western statue, evil for the eastern statue) touches the statue with a talisman after partaking of all the sacraments of Ochremeshk in the Nightmare Chamber (see page 40). Such a character has a vision of the Demon God. Ochremeshk offers the character a *wish* in return for a living, intelligent sacrifice made in the Demon God's name. If the sacrifice is offered, Ochremeshk does indeed grant the wish. However, characters with a good alignment lose that aspect of their alignment if they offer the sacrifice.

In the latter use, the talisman touched to a statue is destroyed.

RUNES

Written in Abyssal, the runes on the floor proclaim the praises of Ochremeshk, stressing the aspect to which the alcove is devoted (chaos for the western alcove, evil for the eastern one).

THE SECRET DOOR

After a successful Search check (DC 30), a character can locate a door on the eastern wall. It is locked (DC 35 to

open—Lytaros Fel has the key) and trapped with a *firetrap* (5-foot-radius explosion, inflicting 1d4+11 points of damage, Reflex save [DC 21 for half, DC 29 to find and disable]).

27. LYTAROS' QUARTERS (EL 11)

The furnishings of the 30-foot-square chamber behind the secret door are sparse. A long table covered with strange items runs along the north wall, while a cauldron rests in the middle of the room (there is no sign of a fire under it). Near the northeastern wall lies a pile of pillows and blankets, a sign that someone sleeps here. The eastern wall sports a small font. The leering demonskull within it slowly fills the basin with a trickle of blood.

A huge painting of a bald half-elf woman with a long black dress hangs on the south wall. A dagger has recently been plunged into the canvas, destroying the image of her face. Below it lies a bronze urn whose contents—ashes—are spilled about the floor. A tiny metal box with leather straps, all blackened and charred, lies amid the ashes.

Point out to characters who were in Area 10 that the woman in the painting looks familiar.

This is the former chamber of the lich/priestess Sussinst-ir; Lytaros Fel uses it now. The high priestess used to provide the living, mortal creatures in the Fane with sustenance via *create food and water* spells to help keep them under her control. Now that she is gone, clearly the creatures must get out of the Fane soon and look for food—ill tidings for the people and creatures around Golden Lake. The ashes and remnants under the picture are what remains of Sussinst-ir's phylactery, now destroyed.

THE TABLE

Sussinst-ir used this as an alchemist's lab and magic item creation workbench when she was a lich. Amid the equipment (worth 1,000 gp by itself, assuming it could all be transported) are a *potion of cure serious wounds*, a *potion of endurance*, and a *wand of inflict light wounds* (50 charges).

THE HIDDEN SPELLBOOK (CR 3)

Concealed using a *hidden object* spell, this book sits on the table invisibly. A Search check of the table (DC 20) allows a character to find it, but the special viewing glass is in Lytaros Fel's possession (see *The Book of Eldritch Might* for more information on how this spell works).

The book is locked (DC 30 to open—Lytaros Fel has the key), and trapped with a *firetrap* (5-foot-radius explosion, inflicting 1d4+11 points of damage, Reflex save [DC 21 for half, DC 29 to find and disable]). It contains the following spells:

o—all *Player's Handbook* plus *tongue of fiends*†; 1st—*alarm*, *burning hands*, *comprehend languages*, *endure elements*, *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *silent sound*, *sleep*; 2nd—*cat's grace*, *endurance*, *enhance magical flow*†, *invisibility*, *mark of fire*†, *protection from arrows*, see *invisibility*, *static veil*†, *web*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fireball*, *flame arrow*, *fly*, *foil tracer*, *haste*, *lightning bolt*, *nondetection*; 4th—*charm monster*, *confusion*, *firetrap*, *flaming corrosion*†, *greater mark of fire*†, *hidden object*†, *improved invisibility*, *scrying*, *spelltrap*†, *stoneskin*; 5th—*elemental shroud*†, *lesser planar binding*, *permanency*, *sending*, *teleport*, *teleport redirect*†, *wall of fire*, *wall of force*; 6th—*antimagic field*, *circle of death*, *conditional spell*†, *disintegrate*, *greater dispelling*.

THE HIDDEN CHEST (SIX CR 6 TRAPS)

Hidden by a *screen*, a chest rests in the southeast corner of the room. Characters who successfully Search that corner (DC 20) may make a Will save (DC 24) to overcome the illusion. Only then can they find the chest. (Lytaros Fel himself has not found it yet, but he's been busy.)

The chest is locked (DC 35 to open—the key was destroyed with Sussinst-ir) and trapped with a *greater glyph of warding* that sprays acid for 9d8 points of damage (Reflex save, DC 23 for half). A rogue can find this trap with a Search check (DC 31) and then disable it (DC 31).

Inside the chest, Sussinst-ir kept some of her most valuable treasures: a scroll with the following spells: *greater restoration*, *repulsion*, *greater dispelling*, *blade barrier*; and another with these spells: *flame strike*, *raise dead*, *create undead*, and *destruction*. Each of these is kept within a brass scroll tube, and each is trapped with a *greater glyph of warding* exactly like the one protecting the chest.

Further contents include: a *demonwhistle rod*† wrapped in black silk, a *horn of goodness/evil* in a jeweled box (worth 650 gp and trapped with yet another *greater glyph of warding*, as described above), and an intelligent +1 *dagger* named *Soulstealer* (CE alignment, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 15, Ego 10, communicates with speech, gives wielder free use of *Mobility*, *detects good* at will, casts *haste* on wielder once per day for 10 rounds).

The chest has a hidden compartment in the back (DC 30 to find). This compartment is trapped with a *greater glyph of warding* that inflicts a *harm* spell on anyone opening the compartment. A rogue can find this trap with a Search check (DC 31) and then disable it (DC 31). Within the compartment is a *bag of holding* (bag 1). Inside the bag is an iron box. The box is locked (DC 30 to open) and trapped with a *greater glyph of warding* that sprays acid (as above). The box contains a *demonskull talisman*† and two books: the first is a *vacuous grimoire*, and the other is a copy of the *Book of Vile Darkness*.

28. THE FANE'S HEART (EL 17)

You appear within a globe without gravity. You float there, amid pulsing red runes that glare from the circular wall all around you. But suddenly, there is a distortion, and you are shifted yet again. Now you appear in what looks like the same room, although things are subtly different about the walls and runes. More dramatically, however, you are not alone in the room....

Three figures are engaged in a terrible conflict. A human man, arrayed in white with a starburst symbol around his neck, literally glows with a holy aura around him. He fights with a mace and a shield (also bearing the burst of light symbol) against a bat-winged demon of massive muscles, horns, and a halo of flame. The demon bears a whip and a wicked blade. Outside the melee, a goat-legged fiend with a dagger looks prepared to interfere.

Point out to characters who were in Area 10 that both demons look familiar.

The PCs have been transported back in time over 700 years through the Ritual of Time Displacement now in effect in the Heart. They are not only in the past, they are witnessing the momentous battle that led to the Fane's sealing. Lytaros Fel, the half-demon embermage, has performed the ritual (see page 40) and seeks to kill the cleric Enchelious.

SPELLS IN EFFECT HERE

Unhallow and *forbiddance* both remain in constant effect here. That means the site has a permanent *protection from good* effect, and the *unholy aura* confers a -4 profane penalty to turning undead (+4 to rebuke undead). The *unhallow* spell also continually grants all evil beings the benefits of *aid* while they are in this room. The *forbiddance* spell means that none other than chaotic evil creatures can enter the room unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 19)—those who fail shift back to Area 25. Those who fail the save also suffer 3d6 points of damage (6d6 points of damage if lawful good).

LEAD LINING

The area around the Fane's Heart is lined with a 6-inch layer of lead to keep out many divinations.

NO GRAVITY

All within the sphere of the Heart automatically have a *fly* spell cast upon them for the entire time they remain there. This *fly* effect cannot be dispelled. Unattended objects remain in place where they are left (they do not fall). Remember throughout this fight that the battle should be fought in three dimensions.

CREATURES

The three combatants are Enchelious, Charmachnar the balor, and Lytaros Fel the half-demon. Most likely, the PCs will deal primarily with Lytaros Fel, for he attacks them as soon as he becomes aware of them, hoping to stop them quickly from interfering. He starts his attacks with *horrid wilting*, then bombards them with heightened *fireballs*.

Lytaros Fel (half-demon): Wiz7/Emb8; CR 17; Medium outsider;

HD 7d4+14+8d6+16; hp 75; Init +5; Speed 30 feet; AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 11; Attack +10 melee (1d6+3, 2 hooves), +12/+7 ranged (1d4+3, masterwork dagger); SA Embermage† abilities, spell-like abilities; SQ Immune to poison, acid, cold, electricity and fire resistance 10; AL CE; SV Fort +10, Ref +9, Will +11; Str 16, Dex 20, Con 14, Int 24, Wis 10, Cha 15.

Skills and Feats: Alchemy +25, Concentration +21, Hide +14, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Scry +25, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +25, Spot +9, Tumble +14; Craft Wand, Endurance, Forge Ring, Heighten Spell, Lace Spell; Elemental Energies, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration.

Embermage† Abilities: Burning touch (1d4+5), burning blood (1d6 to 5d6), fingers of fire (up to 5 spurts, 2d6 each), burning blood backlash (1d6), tongue of fire

Half-Demon Abilities: *Darkness*, *poison*, and *unholy aura* 3/day each, *desecrate*, *unholy blight*, *contagion*, *blasphemy*, *unhallow*, and *horrid wilting* 1/day each.

Possessions: *Spellstealer‡* (stolen from Sussinst-ir), *wand of fireballs* (10th level, heightened, DC 14, 10d6 damage) (11 charges) a *demonskull talisman‡*, scroll of *teleport without error*, *potion of cure serious wounds*, two masterwork daggers, *hidden object‡* viewing glass, key to his spellbook and to Area 27.

Spells Prepared (4/6/6/6/4/3/2; base DC = 17 + spell level, +2 for evocation spells): 0—*daze*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*; 1st—*burning hands*, *magic missile* (2), *mage armor*, *shield*, *silent sound*; 2nd—*cat's grace*, *endurance*, *enhance magical flow‡*, *invisibility*, *mark of fire‡*, *web*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fireball* (2), *flame arrow*, *haste*; 4th—*confusion*, *flaming corrosion‡* (2), *stoneskin*; 5th—*heightened fireball*, *heightened lightning bolt*, *wall of fire*; 6th—*circle of death*, *greater dispelling*.

Lytaros Fel has already cast the following spells:

- On himself: *mage armor*, *shield*, *cat's grace*, *endurance*, *enhance magical flow‡*, *mark of fire‡*, *displacement*, *haste*, *stoneskin*, and *unholy aura*. His Dexterity is now 22 (+1 to AC, +1 to Reflex saves), his Constitution is now 16 (+15 more hit points, +1 Fortitude saves), and his AC is now 37 (including +4 from *haste*). He has 10 rounds of *haste* left.

- Other spells: Lytaros Fel has a permanent *see invisibility* spell cast upon himself, as well as a *conditional spell*†: If someone casts *dispel magic* upon him, a *lightning bolt* is immediately cast upon that person.

Encheliou: Male human Clr18; Medium humanoid; HD 18d8+51; hp 130; Init +1, Speed 20 feet; AC 27 (touch 13, flat-footed 26); Attack +16/+11/+6 melee (1d8+2, +1 heavy mace), +15 ranged (1d8/19-20, +1 light crossbow); AL LG; SV Fort +14, Ref +7, Will +18; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 24, Cha 17.

Skills and Feats: Concentration +14, Diplomacy +12, Heal +16, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Knowledge (religion) +22, Listen +9, Spellcraft +10, Spot +9; Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Dodge, Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Possessions: +1 holy heavy mace of disruption, +2 full plate, +2 Large steel shield, ring of protection +2, periapt of wisdom +4, cloak of displacement (minor), wand of cure critical wounds (45 charges), potion of heroism, +1 light crossbow, 20 +1 holy crossbow bolts, scroll of holy aura, mass heal, true seeing, regenerate, holy word, and greater restoration, 34 gp.

Spells Prepared (6/7+1/7+1/7+1/6+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; base DC = 17 + spell level): 0—create water, detect magic, detect poison, light, mending, purify food and drink; 1st—bless, comprehend languages, divine favor, magic weapon, protection from evil*, remove fear, sanctuary, shield of faith; 2nd—aid*, augury, bull's strength, endurance, hold person, lesser restoration (2), zone of truth; 3rd—daylight, dispel magic, magic circle against evil*, magic vestment, prayer, protection from elements, remove curse, remove disease; 4th—discern lies, dismissal, divination, freedom of movement, holy smite*, neutralize poison, restoration; 5th—dispel evil*, commune, flame strike, healing circle, raise dead, spell resistance; 6th—banishment, blade barrier*, harm, heal (2), word of recall; 7th—empowered flame strike (2), holy word*, summon monster VII; 8th—fire storm (2), holy aura, mind blank*; 9th—miracle (2), prismatic sphere*.

* Domain spell. Deity: Gaen. Domains: Good (casts good spells at +1 caster level), Protection (protective ward).

Encheliou has already cast the following spells:

- On himself: *protection from evil*, *aid*, *bull's strength*, *endurance*, *magic vestment*, *protection from elements (fire)*, *freedom of movement*, *holy aura*, and *mind blank*. His Strength is now 15 (+1 to damage, +2 to attack rolls when coupled with *aid*), his Constitution is now 18 (+40 more hit points when coupled with *aid*, +1 Fortitude saves), and his AC is now 31.
- Earlier in the long battle (now gone): *bless*, *magic weapon*, *lesser restoration*, *dispel magic*, *neutralize poison*, *heal*, *spell resistance*, *prismatic sphere*, *firestorm*, and *miracle*.

Charmachnar (balor): hp 120, AC 39, +18/+13/+8 +1 vorpal greatsword (2d6+8) and +17 whip (1d4+3 and entangle), 10-foot reach (15 with whip), SR 28, DR 30/+3, many special abilities. See MM. Wears +1 full plate and has two *demon skull talismans*†. Already has given himself an *unholy aura* (+4 to AC for 43 total, +4 bonus to saves).



THE RITUAL OF TIME DISPLACEMENT

There is one minute—10 rounds—of the Heart's power left. This means that, after 10 rounds, the PCs and Lytaros Fel return to the present. Here are the PCs' best possible courses of action:

- Use all their time and energy to defend Encheliouso so he can take the offensive. During the battle, convince Encheliouso not to call upon Gaen to seal the Fane.
- Focus their attention on Lytaros Fel, since clearly Encheliouso can handle Charmachnar (he did, after all, accomplish it in the past). During the battle, convince Encheliouso not to call upon Gaen to seal the Fane.
- Convince Encheliouso to use the *miracle* spell—his last—to defeat the balor or something else, so he can't use it later for his plea to Gaen.
- Subdue Encheliouso or somehow keep him from using his *miracle* later on.

Time Displacement Rules

Nothing can be brought back physically from the past, living or dead, that did not travel there from the future. Encheliouso, his belongings, or even his continuing spell effects, cannot come to the future (instantaneous duration spells are not continuing spell effects).

Things from the future cannot be left in the past, either. When the Heart's power ends, everything that experienced the past is returned to the present. Even fired arrows (now broken) or dropped, unattended objects return.

higher level than the PCs—he focuses all his attention on the balor. The PCs just need to stop the embermage.

CONVINCING ENCHELIOUS

Remember, the PCs should have realized by now that the whole situation would be better if Encheliouso never sealed the Fane. They must work to convince the cleric of that. He doesn't know if the PCs aren't some trick of the demons, or demons in disguise, however, and it's difficult for him to believe they are from the future. Encheliouso should be tough to convince.

Roleplaying here is encouraged, but if a game mechanic is desired, assume a Diplomacy check (coupled with clear actions showing that the characters are on his side) with a DC of 25 will convince him.

INTERPRETING THE PAST

Assume that even if the PCs or Lytaros Fel wrought huge changes in the past, nothing in the campaign should leave

your control. Seven hundred years gives you plenty of time to institute whatever changes you need to make to keep things on an even keel. For example, if Encheliouso dies in the past, his body and gear were removed in the intervening years—the PCs can't get their hands on it.

THE NIGHTMARE CHAMBER

You appear in a place with stifling heat. The walls are black and made of what appears to be some coarse stone. You stand on a platform about 50 feet above a raging fire, or perhaps a pit of lava—it's difficult to tell. The creators of this horrible place fashioned the platform to look like a giant pentagram. Worse yet, they made it from what appear to be still-living body parts of humans, elves, halflings, gnomes, and dwarves. The very place where you stand is someone's arm and someone else's face—and the face looks up at you, moaning in misery.

This special chamber is actually located in the Abyss. The three pentagrams throughout the Fane (in Areas 5, 13, and 22) bring the characters here, and always to the northernmost apex of the pentagram. Conditions within the chamber obey most of the same rules of reality as the material plane, with one exception: No spells allow PCs to damage or pass through the walls here.

Further, nothing can be done to save the figures in the pentagram. These are actually manifestations of lost souls in the Abyss. They have earned their place here.

When the PCs arrive, what happens depends on which pentagram brought them here, for each is tied to a different dark sacrament. Only someone who has partaken of the three sacraments can activate the magical transporter in the Profanity (Area 26) that leads to the Fane's Heart (Area 28).

Characters falling into the lava suffer 5d6 points of damage from the fall and 10d6 points of damage per round while immersed. Even *flying* or *levitating* down within 5 feet of the lava inflicts 2d6 points of heat damage. The faces on the pentagram laugh if a character is burned by the lava.

Investigating the room, the PCs can discover that the pentagon-shaped area in the center of the pentagram is not open, but in fact is a platform made from an invisible *wall of force*. If a character steps onto this platform—up to 12 Medium creatures will fit at once—it begins to sink at the rate of 1 foot per second. It lowers to the level of the lava below, but characters on the force platform suffer no damage (although they feel very hot). When it reaches this level, a quasit *teleports* to the center of the platform, holding one of the three sacraments (see below).

THE THREE SACRAMENTS

Body, breath, and soul. The first is represented by dark red wafers with a grinning, demonic face upon them; the second by dark, narcotic incense meant to be inhaled; and the last by black fire intended to burn a worshipper's flesh.

1. **Wafers:** If the PCs used the pentagram in Area 5 (“Eat”) to get here, the demon appears with a gold platter (worth 100 gp) covered with these small wafers. “Consume the flesh of the Demon God and become one with him,” the quasit says in Common. These wafers are mildly poisonous to non-outsiders of a non-evil alignment. Anyone eating one must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or sustain 1 point of temporary Constitution damage (and another point a minute later).
2. **Incense:** If the PCs used the pentagram in Area 13 (“Breathe”) to get here, the demon appears holding a bronze incense burner (worth 25 gp) with demonic images on its surface and fumes wafting from the top. The quasit says, “Breathe the breath of the Demon God to become one with him.” Anyone breathing the narcotic incense must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be granted a +2 enhancement bonus to Intelligence and Charisma for one hour. The character then suffers a –4 penalty to Strength and Constitution for the hours following that.
3. **Black Fire:** If the PCs used the pentagram in Area 22 (“Burn”) to get here, the quasit appears with a burning silver brazier shaped to look like a skull (worth 120 gp). It glows with black flame. “Feel the burning soul of the Demon God and become one with him,” the demon says. Those who stick their flesh—a hand, most likely—into the fire suffer 2d6 points of damage from the negative energy. This damage can be healed only by magic cast within a temple dedicated to a good god.

When a sacrament has been taken by at least one person, it is offered to others for another round. If there are no takers, all characters standing on the platform (whether they took the sacrament or not) are teleported back to the pentagram they used to get here.

If the characters kill, banish, or otherwise harm or incapacitate the quasit, they appear back inside the pentagram that transported them to the Nightmare Chamber (a new quasit appears next time, if necessary).

Characters of good alignment who partake of the three sacraments must atone for this action within one week, or their alignment changes to neutral. They will begin to feel a heaviness in their heart and an unwillingness to bother doing good acts. They become somewhat despondent and unresponsive to their friends—overall, they become entirely indifferent.



Concluding the Adventure

This chapter describes the three most likely outcomes of the adventure. As an option for continuing the adventure, you could bring the characters face to face with the Demon God himself. Following are statistics and background for Ochremeshk the demon prince, along with his faithful demonic minion Vorm the Unspeakable. These character writeups originally appeared on Monte Cook's Website.

What happens next basically depends how the player characters dealt with the situation in the Fane's Heart. Success, failure, or... well, let's try not to even think about that final option. It's not pleasant.

SUCCESS

The PCs saved Enchelious from Lytaros Fel and managed to stop him from submerging the temple. The Golden Lake does not exist, and it never did. The village of Golden Lake is called Vale's Edge and exists in the same place, but it is at the top edge of a deep valley. Naturally, fishing is not its major industry; instead, most villagers make a living hunting and trapping. Without the blessed waters of Golden Lake, game is not unnaturally plentiful, but everyone has what they need. The drought the area was experiencing at the start of the adventure is still in evidence.

The Demon God's Fane stands, dry, amid what is still known as the Vale of Fears, a forbidden and unhealthy place (it is haunted by the ghosts of the sacrificial victims). However, it is completely free of demons and any remnant of the cult of Ochremeshk. The village is peaceful, and the people the PCs remember are all still there (including Drabat Finch!), quite healthy and happy. Of course, they are harassed by the occasional orc or troll, as any village would be.

The Fane, however, has fallen into serious disrepair, and within 1d4+1 minutes, it literally begins to collapse around the PCs. They need to get out quickly, or suffer 10d6 points of damage from remaining within the collapsing structure. When all is settled, the Demon God's Fane is nothing but a pile of broken stones in the valley.

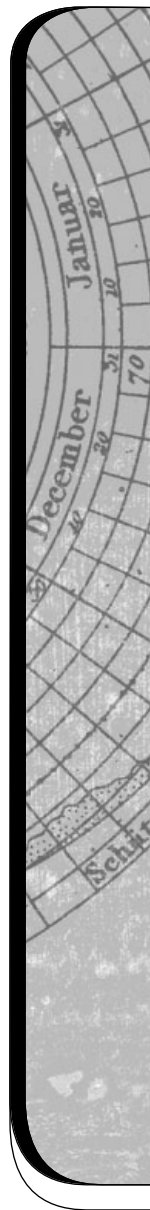
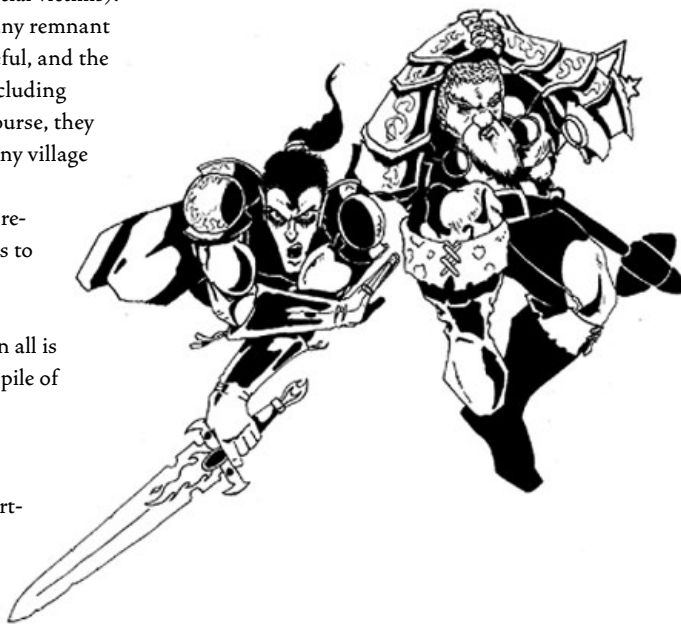
FAILURE

The PCs didn't stop Enchelious, but they thwarted Lytaros Fel's goals. Things in the present have not changed appreciably, and in order to help the village and the surrounding lands, the PCs must hunt down and deal with all those infected by the Umbral Taint.

UTTER FAILURE

Lytaros Fel killed Enchelious before the cleric could destroy Charmachnar. The present has been changed dramatically—and not for the better. The balor still controls the temple (and is present in the Profanity [Area 26] if the PCs leave the Heart). The cult of Ochremeshk controls the surrounding lands with an iron hand, allowing people to live as slaves and eventual blood sacrifices. Demons walk the earth freely, and evil reigns supreme.

Unless you want to alter your campaign in this dramatic way, you may wish to offer the PCs a way to travel back in time yet again to have a second chance. This can be handled by having a PC arcanist learn the Ritual of Time Displacement, with the group forced to go back into the Fane—but this time it's even more heavily guarded than before, as it is the center of a huge religion.



OCHREMESHK

(DEMON PRINCE)

Large Outsider (Chaotic, Evil)

Hit Dice: 16d8+80 (152 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 feet

AC: 38 (−1 size, +3 Dex, +20 natural, +6 bracers)

Attacks: +2 *Huge unholy vorpal greatsword* +25/+20/+15 or two slams +23 melee

Damage: +2 *Huge unholy vorpal greatsword* 2d8+14 (+2d6 to good creatures) or slam 1d6+8 and touch of fear

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, touch of fear, death visage, body flames, summon demons

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 40/+4, SR 30, immunities and resistances, *ring of evasion*, death throes

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +16

Abilities: Str 26, Dex 17, Con 20, Int 22, Wis 24, Cha 22

Skills: Bluff +20, Concentration +19, Diplomacy +20, Hide +20, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (the planes) +20, Knowledge (religion) +22, Listen +30, Move Silently +20, Scry +21, Search +21, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +21, Spot +30

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary or accompanied by followers (Ochremeshk, 1–2 balors, and 1–4 mariliths)

Challenge Rating: 20

Treasure: See below

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: N/A

Ochremeshk was a balor who literally clawed his way to the top—or at least very, very near it. Although he does not command the might of beings like Orcus or even Yeenoghu, he is a powerful and terrible demon prince nonetheless. His mortal cult aside, he commands an elite cadre of balors and mariliths, as well as a small army of lesser demons, half-demons, and bodaks.

Ochremeshk is a repulsive, towering humanoid (about 16 feet tall) with dark red skin and massive, clawed hands. He greatly resembles a wingless balor, wielding a massive sword and sheathed in flames.

COMBAT

Not surprisingly, Ochremeshk relies on his sword in combat, particularly if fighting good-aligned foes. Adopting his death visage, he goes in swinging his massive weapon with unstoppable muscle and skill. He is also very fond of his *implosion* ability.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*blasphemy*, *deeper darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *fear*, *greater dispelling*, *pyrotechnics*, *read magic*, *suggestion*, *symbol* (any), *telekinesis*, *teleport without error* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *tongues* (self only), *unhallow*, *unholy aura*, *unholy blight*, and *wall of fire*; 1/day—*fire storm* and *implosion*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 20th-level sorcerer (save DC 16 + spell level).

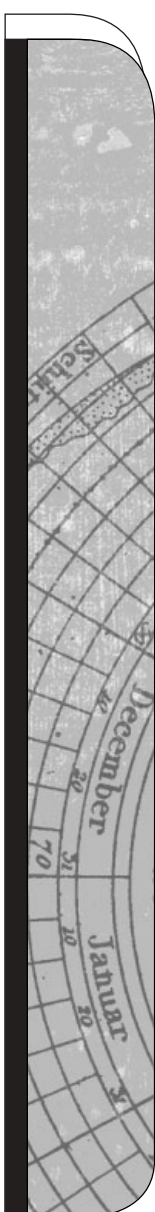
Touch of Fear (Su): A creature hit by Ochremeshk's slam attack must succeed at a Will save (DC 24) or flee in terror for 1d6 rounds.

Death Visage (Su): Once per day, Ochremeshk can change his face into that of a horrific demon skull that gives him a gaze attack with a range of 50 feet. This gaze attack slays anyone failing a Fortitude saving throw (DC 24). He can maintain this visage for no more than 6 rounds, and cannot use his body flames or any spell-like abilities while he does.

Body Flames (Su): Ochremeshk can engulf his own body in roaring flames as a free action. Ochremeshk suffers no harm, but anyone within 5 feet sustains 2d6 points of fire damage each round. Anyone grappling with him or touching him (as with an unarmed attack) suffers 4d6 points of fire damage each round.

Detect Magic (Su): Ochremeshk continuously can *detect magic* as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer.

See Invisibility (Su): Ochremeshk continuously can *see invisibility* as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer.



Immunities (Ex): Ochremeshk is immune to poison and electricity.

Resistances (Ex): Ochremeshk has cold, fire, and acid resistance 20.

Telepathy (Su): Ochremeshk can communicate telepathically (within 100 feet) with any creature that has a language.

Summon Demons (Sp): Once per day Ochremeshk can automatically summon 10d10 dretches, 2d4 vrocks, or 1d2 mariliths or balors.

Death Throes (Ex): If killed, Ochremeshk explodes in a blinding flash of light that deals 60 points of damage to everything within 100 feet (Reflex save for half damage, DC 22).

Skills: Like balors, Ochremeshk receives a +8 racial bonus to Listen and Spot checks.

Treasure (Su): Ochremeshk carries a +2 *Huge unholy vorpal greatsword*. The sword also has the spell-like ability to *detect good* as cast by a 12th-level sorcerer, except that its range is 30 feet.

Ochremeshk also wears *bracers of armor +6* and a *ring of evasion*.

OCHREMESHK AS A GOD

While he is worshipped as a god, Ochremeshk may not actually be a true deity. It is known that some demon princes are actually fronts for other evil gods. In exchange for the prince's loyalties, the evil deity grants the demon's priests the spells and power they desire in his name. In comparison to their patrons, these demonic vassals have small cults and few worshippers, so this is a small price for the god to pay.

In any event, Ochremeshk's cult is very real, although it once was much greater than it is now. To its members he is definitely a god—lord of chaos and evil, of fire and death. To his worshippers, he is the Demon God and the Defiler.

He is a god of destruction: equal parts chaos and evil. He demands living sacrifices in huge numbers, killed with horrific and bloody methods. His symbol is the horrific demonskull visage that he himself can display (see illustration on page 2), and as a direct reward for serving him he grants special unholy symbols to his followers that contain minor blessings from him (see page 25 for more information on the *demonskull talismans†*). His main temple is a monolithic statue resembling his form.

Ochremeshk is associated with the domains of Chaos, Evil, and Destruction.

VORM THE UNSPEAKABLE

(UNIQUE DEMON)

Huge Outsider (Chaotic, Evil)

Hit Dice: 10d10+70 (125 hp)

Initiative: +4 (Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

AC: 18 (–2 size, +10 natural)

Attacks: Slam +19 melee

Damage: Slam 2d8+13 and 2d6 acid

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, summon demon, improved grab, acid, drown, constrict 2d8+13 and 2d6 acid

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 20/+2, SR 25, blindsight, immunities, resistances, amorphous

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +7, Will +10

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 10, Con 25, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 18

Skills: Concentration +17, Hide +11, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Listen +15, Move Silently +11, Scry +13, Search +13, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +13, Spot +15

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Climate/Terrain: Any land and underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 16

Treasure: None

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: N/A

Vorm the Unspeakable is a lieutenant of Ochremeshk. It serves the demon lord as an enforcer, an assassin, and—very rarely—a commander of his demonic forces. Most often, Vorm operates alone, sent on some mission for its dread master. A unique demonic entity, Vorm is an ooze-like creature of Abyssal power and essence. It is not at all subtle—Vorm does not steal, tempt, or seduce. Vorm destroys.

Vorm is a vast creature with an amorphous form. It seethes and oozes its way across the blasted terrain of the Abyss, simply rolling over and engulfing foes. It burns its way through obstacles or oozes around them. Its flesh is a horrible purple-gray, and its eyes burn with green fire. The stench of acid and putrid meat is so strong around it that one's nose and eyes burn to be near it.

Its voice is a guttural, gurgling sound, but it rarely speaks.

COMBAT

Vorm has an impressive array of magical powers, but it likes nothing more than to engulf its foes, drowning them within its own semi-liquid form even as it crushes them with its huge bulk.

Blindsight (Ex): Vorm's entire gelatinous body is a sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—*contagion*, *deeper darkness*, *desecrate*, *detect good*, *detect law*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *hold person*, *locate creature*, *poison*, *telekinesis*, *teleport without error* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *unhallow*, *unholy aura*, and *unholy blight*; 1/day—*power word: stun* and *blasphemy*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 15th-level sorcerer (save DC 14 + spell level) and require no somatic components—only verbal. Vorm can use these abilities with victims engulfed or constricted within its body.

Immunities (Ex): Vorm is immune to poison and electricity because it is a demon. It is immune to paralysis, stunning, polymorphing, and critical hits because it has no discernible anatomy.

Resistances (Ex): Vorm has cold, fire, and acid resistance 20.

Telepathy (Su): Vorm can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

Summon Demon (Sp): Once per day Vorm can summon a hezrou (75 percent chance of success). Vorm rarely uses this ability, preferring to fight on its own.

Engulf (Ex): Vorm can simply mow down Large or smaller creatures as a standard action. It cannot make a slam attack during a round in which it engulfs. Vorm merely has to move over the opponents, affecting as many as it can cover.

Opponents can make opportunity attacks against Vorm, but if they do so they are not entitled to a saving throw. Those who do not attempt opportunity attacks must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 18) or be engulfed; on a success, they are pushed back or aside (opponent's choice) as Vorm moves forward.

Engulfed creatures are subject to Vorm's acid and drown attacks and are considered to be grappled and trapped within its body.

Drown (Ex): Characters needing air to breathe who find themselves engulfed within Vorm's horrible, acidic, semi-liquid form must make a Constitution check (DC 10) every round in order to hold their breaths. Each round, the DC increases by 1. When a character finally fails a check, she falls unconscious (0 hp). The next round, she drops to -1 hp and is dying. The round after that, she drowns and dies.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, Vorm must hit with its slam attack. If it gets a hold, it can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): Vorm deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor suffer a -4 penalty to Reflex saves against the acid.



Acid (Ex): Vorm secretes acid that dissolves organic material and metal quickly. Any melee hit deals acid damage, and each round characters are engulfed or constricted they also sustain acid damage. Vorm's acidic touch deals 50 points of damage per round to wood or metal objects. The opponent's armor and clothing dissolve and become useless immediately unless they succeed at Reflex saves (DC 19). The acid can dissolve stone, dealing 20 points of damage per round of contact. A metal or wooden weapon that strikes Vorm also dissolves immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex save (DC 19).

Amorphous (Ex): Blunt weapons and impact damage inflict no harm upon Vorm. Because of its jellylike substance it can slip through any space that a creature of size Small normally could fit through.

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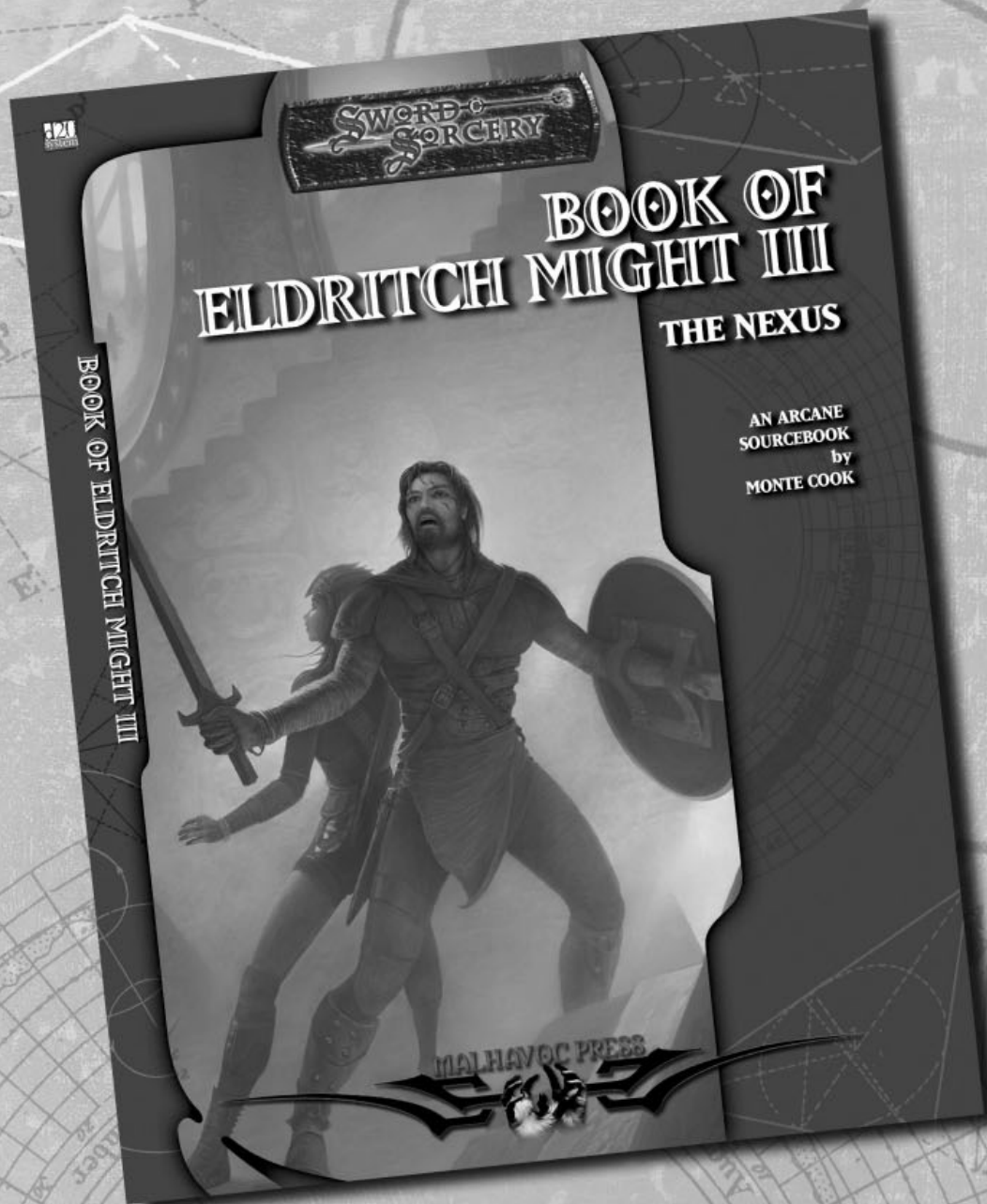
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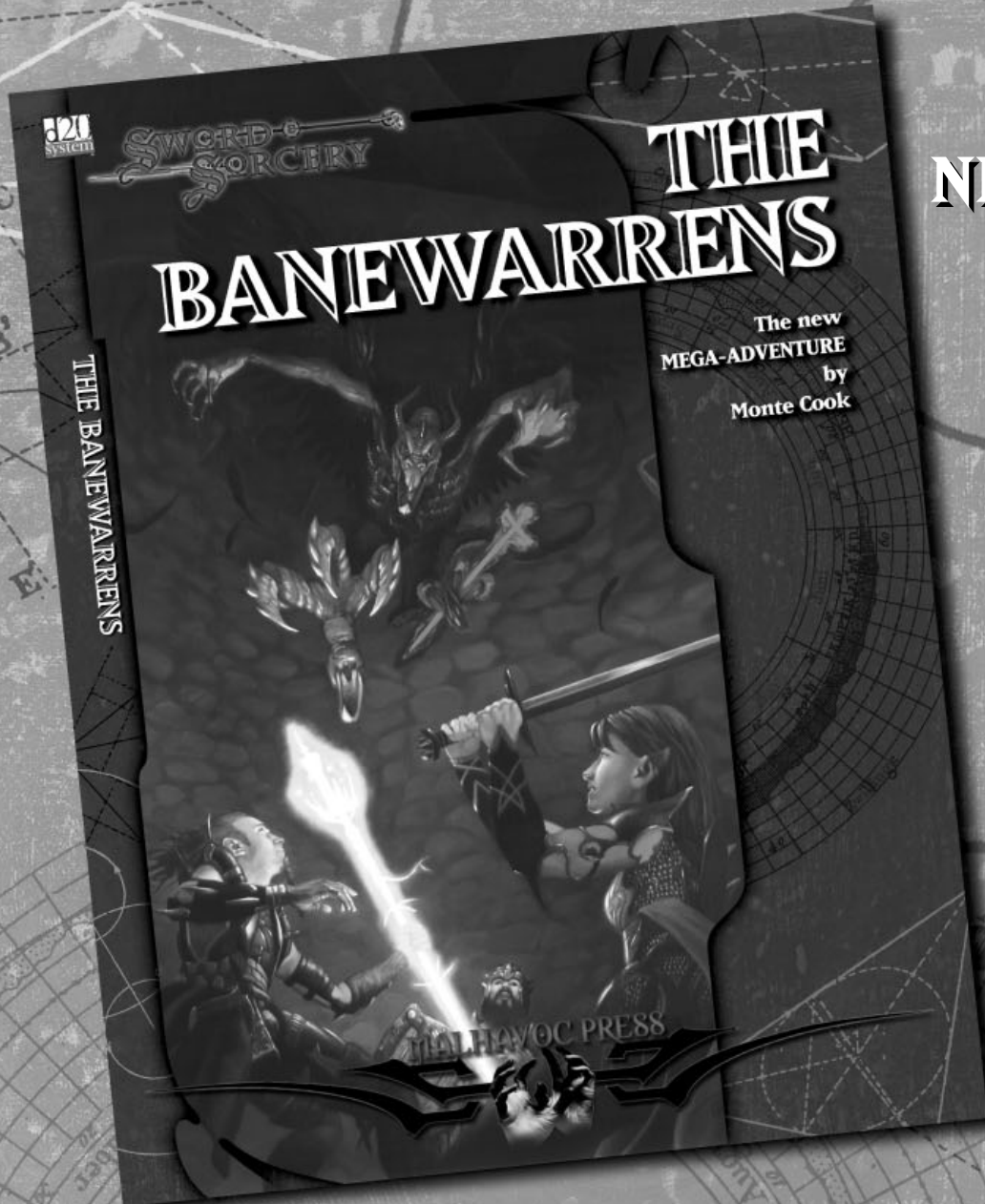
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