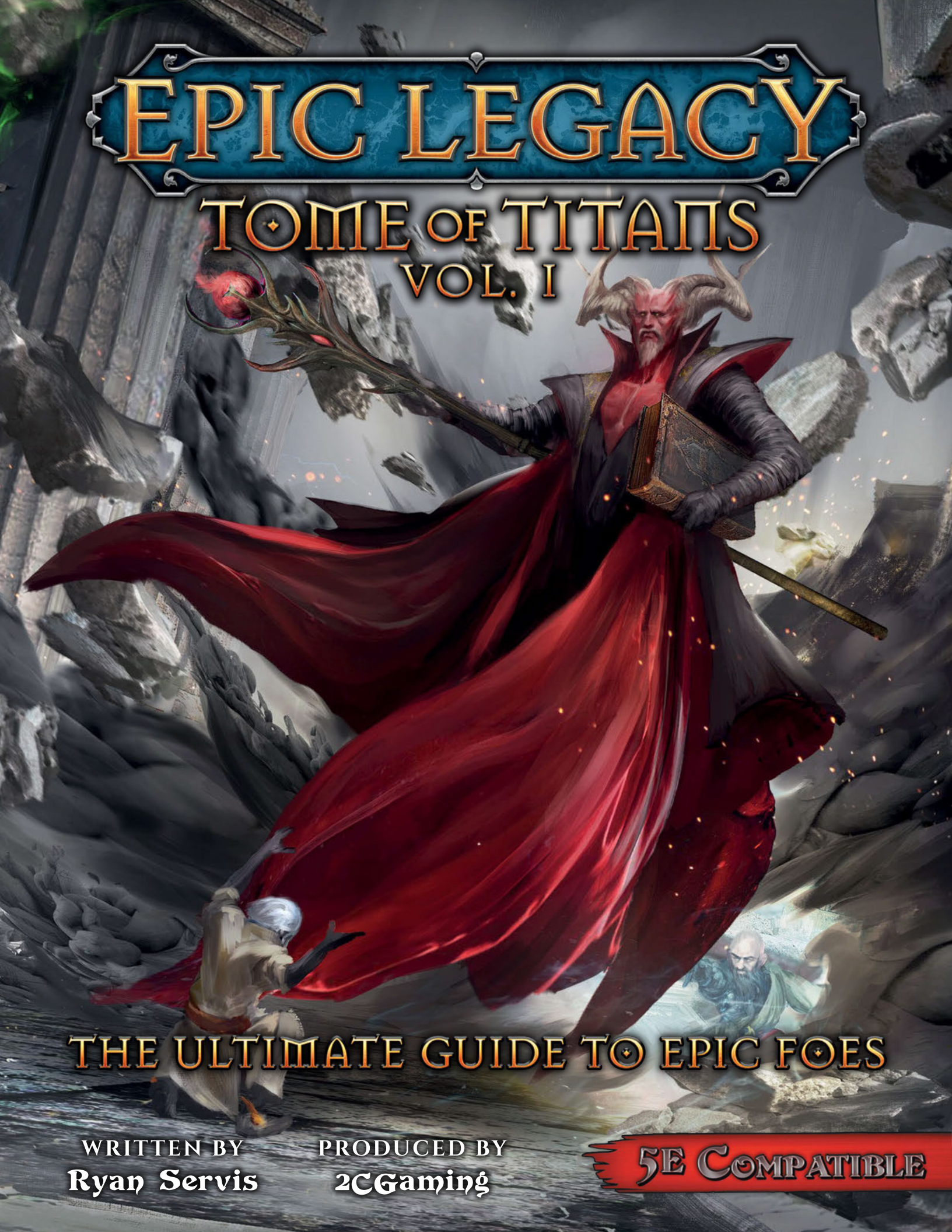


EPIC LEGACY

TOME OF TITANS VOL. I



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO EPIC FOES

WRITTEN BY
Ryan Servis

PRODUCED BY
2CGaming

5E COMPATIBLE



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Standard Edition ISBN 9781946678201
Deluxe Edition ISBN 2370001582453
Alternate Deluxe Edition ISBN 2370001582460
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Special thanks to all Kickstarter backers, preorders, and the
2CGaming Discord community who made this Epic Legacy
project a reality. Your generous support has truly brought this book
from vision to reality!





*This book is dedicated to those in the
RPG community who dream big.
When we began our journey into
Epic-level 5th Edition, it was with
an uncertain future. Was there a
community hungry for bigger, grander
stories of epic power? The answer was
yes, and this book is proof of that.
This latest continuation of the
Epic Legacy series wouldn't be possible
without your support. So a toast to you!
May you roll fistfuls of dice and weave
unforgettable tales!*

– Ryan



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INTRODUCTION

“Envied by gods, feared by heroes, and revered by the wise, I wield power beyond reckoning. Whatever sad delusion inspired you to draw swords against me, it matters not. You will be just another pathetic chapter in my blood-soaked legacy. Be grateful. Few names are worth remembering among the countless fools laid low by my magic.”

– Niccoli the Lich Child

PREFACE

What is a legendary hero without a worthy antagonist? Bored, that’s what. If you are like us, you’ve probably experienced games of 5th Edition in which the campaign’s villains just couldn’t live up to the hype. Perhaps their mechanics weren’t unique or scary enough to make an impression. Maybe the DM struggled to effectively integrate the foe into the story. These can be frustrating experiences for DM and player alike. The ultimate antagonists to a grand 5th Edition campaign should be figures of tremendous power, wondrous lore, and engaging mechanics. That is where this book comes in. Contained within the *Epic Legacy Tome of Titans* are twenty-two incredible antagonists ranging from iconic fantasy villains such as Asmodeus and the Dark Dragonqueen to completely original concepts such as Niccoli the Lich Child or Suhte the Celestial Dragon.

A titan is more than a collection of stats. Each is meticulously crafted to deliver a comprehensive campaign experience. You will find content to not just make a titan a badass on the battlefield but a truly dynamic foe that will never disappoint in every pillar of play. Whether your games are exploring the high-level realms of 5th Edition or reveling in the staggering power of our Epic Legacy system, the *Tome of Titans* has what you need to run your best campaign ever. The content found here will help you integrate or even structure an entire campaign around these awesome creatures.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Making RPG books for a living is a dream come true, and thanks to the legion of backers who supported this project, it’s a dream that lives on. Thanks to their generous support, thoughtful

opinions, and brilliant ideas, the *Epic Legacy Tome of Titans* is able to menace game tables across the globe, inspire tireless DMs struggling to put their games together, and forge unforgettable experiences between friends on game night. It is an incredible privilege to facilitate those moments in countless games, one that we are so incredibly thankful for. To all our backers, we make the following dedication:

With each passing year our little company has grown, crafting new and exciting RPG books of ever-increasing quality and complexity. We pride ourselves on our ability to continually improve upon our designs, and for that reason we are immeasurably proud of what we have created with the *Epic Legacy Tome of Titans*. This book is our current crowning achievement: the result of nearly half a decade of RPG design and writing, something that would never have been possible if you hadn’t taken *many* chances by putting your faith in us. Thank you for that trust; it means more than words can possibly express.

We hope this book brings you as much joy to use as it was to create, and we wish you and your table good luck! Your players will need it.

– The 2CGaming Team

Like all great projects, we had a fantastic team who worked night and day to put this awesome book together. Here is to our contributing writers, who delved deep into their imaginations to find inspiration designs and delightful mechanics for their titans. The diversity of ideas present in this book wouldn’t be possible without them.

Content Warning

The *Epic Legacy Tome of Titans* contains incredible and terrifying foes to menace your game table. In order to make a fitting impression and evoke strong reactions from players, some titans explore some pretty dark and disturbing aspects of fantasy. We feel that such designs add presence and impact that evoke real fear and disgust in players, emotions that are just as important to the RPG experience as fun, laughs, and thrills. However, they aren’t for everyone, and you should take the prospect of integrating creatures that

push this boundary seriously. The last thing we want is to see someone walk away from your game table because of something we made, so please talk to your players about how far you can explore certain themes within these pages. The following titans are flagged here for disturbing content, including explicit depictions of death, injury to children, bodily mutilation, and psychological trauma: Niccoli the Lich Child, Orcus the Demon Prince of Undeath, the Worm that Walks, and Cthulhu.



Ryan Servis serves the dual role of Lead Designer and Writing Director at 2CGaming, ensuring the writing quality and game design are always improving and achieving a diverse array of high-quality projects. You can herald his coming or issue a challenge at

www.2cgaming.com or twitter @2cgaming.



Celeste Conowitch is a game designer based out of the Pacific Northwest. She is the producer, DM, and editor of the actual-play podcast *Venture Maidens*. When not plotting behind the screen, you can catch her championing femme-led shows as cofounder of the Penwitch

Studio podcast network. She works as a full-time designer at 2CGaming and has freelanced with companies like Wizards of the Coast, Kobold Press, and MCDM Productions. To keep up with Celeste, follow her on Twitter @cconowitch.



Jim Davis started running roleplaying games like *Dungeons & Dragons* when he was eleven years old, and he's played every edition of D&D since joining a group in high school. In 2015, Web DM was born and has grown into one of the largest online RPG content creation

companies in the world. Web DM currently has over 170,000 subscribers on YouTube. When he's not researching some obscure aspect of D&D, Jim enjoys spending time with his family and reading ancient and medieval history.



Jon Kelly supports 2CGaming as founder and occasional writing contributor, with credits such as the *Total Party Kill Handbook*, *Domes of Ishaq-Zahur*, and bits and pieces here and there on other projects. As a D&D veteran, he started with AD&D, quickly moving to 3rd,

then 4th and 5th Edition before starting the company in 2014.



Joshua Mendenhall is one of the project directors for the fantastic 5th Edition campaign setting *The Islands of Sina Una*. Josh (known as HTTPaladin online) has joined the *Tome of Titans* project to lend his writing and game design skills to this legendary content.



Ady Veisz Draghia has been an active member of the 2CGaming community Discord for several years, becoming an early Epic Legacy expert. Today, he manages the online community and writes and reviews content alongside the 2CGaming core team, leveraging his experience

with TTRPG systems of various persuasion.



Paul Wright enjoys reading and playing D&D. This is his fourth project with 2CGaming, and his second as a writer. He has traveled with 2CGaming, helped run their TPK Tournaments, and enjoys creating interesting challenges for his players. Paul can be found on Twitter and

on the 2CGaming Discord at @Iceoverlord.

WHAT IS IN THIS BOOK

The decision to make the *Epic Legacy Tome of Titans* was not an easy one. We knew we had to make more than a collection of epically powerful statistic blocks. These legendary figures are more than just foes to fight. They are characters worthy of grand stories, exciting encounters, and spectacular rewards for defeating them. To accomplish these lofty design objectives, we pooled our resources from across our product line, along with creating completely new tools to complete the experience. The result is a detailed volume of these titans' most important traits for running games, which answer the following guiding questions: Who is the titan? How does it exist in the world? Who are its friends and allies? How can it be encountered? And so much more. Detailed in this section is a summary of these tools, along with explanations of where you can find some of the content referenced from other books.

REFERENCES

This book provides nearly all the content required to run every titan to its fullest capacity, but some content is referenced or pulled from other sources. You'll need these books to get the most of certain designs.

- **The 5th Edition core rules**, including the *PHB*, *DMG*, and *MM*.
- **XGE and VGM**, official supplement sourcebooks for 5th Edition.
- **The *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook***, 2CGaming's rules for 5th Edition play at levels 21–30.
- **The *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex***, a companion product to the *Hero's Handbook* with extra Epic-level content.

EPIC LEGACY COMPATIBILITY

Over the years, 2CGaming has produced an expansive ruleset for Epic-level play in 5th Edition, a system called Epic Legacy. Spanning two books, the *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook* and the *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex*, these rules help players take their characters to new heights and help DMs run truly grandiose campaigns. This book is designed to have considerable (but not exclusive) compatibility with the Epic Legacy system, particularly when it comes to providing worthy challenges to Epic heroes. These designs assume you understand the general rules and principles of the Epic Legacy system when exploring compatible content found here. Be sure to familiarize yourself with its general rules to get the best possible experience from this content! If you are not using Epic Legacy, expect to see some content that is too powerful for standard 5th-Edition play. Even 20th-level characters cannot hope to challenge the might of a mythic titan. We guarantee it.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Every great tale has a worthy antagonist, a figure that challenges the heroes in a variety of devious and dangerous ways. Fantasy and 5th Edition feature mighty creatures that can fill this role, but they often lack the necessary details to fully utilize their storytelling potential. With the *Epic Legacy Tome of Titans*, that is no longer the case. The awe-inspiring creatures found in this book range from sinister gods to heroic knights, otherworldly horrors, and more. Each has the potential to tell a different type of story in your campaign and shape your game world. These are not foes who sit contentedly in a dungeon, waiting for the heroes to show up. They are movers and shakers. Their very existence demands recognition and appreciation, something a party of characters may find themselves doing long before they meet the titan face to face. Whether it's the iconic archdevil Asmodeus or the mysterious sun lotus from beyond the stars, each titan is meticulously designed to be a formidable influence on a campaign from tier 1 all the way to tier 4 and beyond!

You will find the titans here are more than mere foes. They are developed characters with unique personalities, powers, and relationships that take many adventures to fully explore. Expect each titan to deliver many sessions of content up to an entire campaign's worth of terrific storytelling.

BUILDING A CAMPAIGN

While you can certainly use the titans in this book to serve as a worthy punching bag for your most powerful characters, they can be so much more. These creatures deserve to be a presence, or even the centerpiece, of your campaign. Accompanying them is a selection of resources including a recommended campaign arc around which the DM can flesh out adventures and story. Each arc is designed to synergize with the titan's features and personality and is divided up into three sections: an introduction, a conflict, and a conclusion.

An introduction showcases how to make the characters aware of the titan's presence without obliterating them with a mighty foe beyond their ability. If you are looking for a way to hook your players into a plot concerning the titan or just want to make them aware this awesome being exists, this is where you should start.

Next, we outline a conflict, the primary source of antagonism between the characters and the titan. The scope and scale of this conflict varies from titan to titan, but in all cases, it demonstrates how the titan is aggressive toward the characters or influences the world around them. When you need the titan to make an impact or facilitate exciting encounters, this is where the magic happens.

Every great story needs an ending. At the end of a titan's story arc is a conclusion that brings the conflict between the characters and your antagonist to a head. This is nearly always a climactic affair, full of epic moments, drama, and excitement. In ideal circumstances, your players will have struggled mightily to get this far, and you want to make sure the payoff for all these hardships is well worth it.

CHALLENGES

A titan wouldn't be much without the provision of epic challenges. With such a diverse array of abilities and expansive resources, each titan has tremendous potential to challenge the characters in all three pillars of 5th Edition play. Whether your players crave exploration, combat, or roleplaying, these titans provide. Within each titan's "Challenges" section you will find a host of lore, plot hooks, and mechanical tools to flesh out such encounters. A memorable antagonist cannot just be a ferocious statistics block that pummels the characters into oblivion. It should influence all aspects of the campaign. With whom do the characters interact, and how? Where must the heroes travel, and what are the perils they face along the way? What minions and allies of the titan will the characters face, and in what capacity? All these questions and more are explored in each titan's chapter and include the following sections.

Exploration

An often-underserved area of 5th Edition, exploration is a major component of a titan's design. These creatures are too powerful and too important to not impact the world around them. Some extend their reach across the planes, while others forge devious lairs or control realms for the characters to explore. A titan's exploration section details the nature of these interactions to help DMs craft appropriate encounters.

Additionally, each titan possesses a lair from which its operations are based. Often this location is the site of many different encounters with the titan, but reaching such a formidable and dangerous place is an act of heroic exploration in itself. This lair is no mere place of rest for its titan. It is a location of tremendous significance to your game world, shaping the lore of your campaign and the fantasy elements within it.

Social

A good story usually involves some social interaction, and epic antagonists often have a lot to say. The social component of a titan's writeup plays off its personality traits, how it affects the people of a fantasy world, and how its allies influence the realm. While not all titans detailed here are great conversationalists, there is much to be gained by social interactions, either directly with them or with others in the lands they influence. Learning a titan's secrets, bartering with its minions, or enlisting allies to take up arms against the foe are all worthy components of the social gameplay pillar your players can experience.

Combat

The foes of this book present some of the greatest challenges any 5th Edition character is likely to face. While you don't necessarily need to use a titan as a final boss for your campaign, they are certainly well suited for the role. The combat section of each titan details not only different scenarios in which the creature may be battled, but how to resolve such conflicts in a manner best suited for your campaign.

Detailed tactical writeups ensure that your campaign's titan is run smoothly and effectively, guaranteeing a climactic encounter your players will talk about for years. Too often a primary

antagonist in a 5th Edition campaign fails to deliver on a quality combat experience, so be sure to read this section thoroughly before running combat with a titan. You will even find a collection of plot hooks and examples to help flesh out unique encounters that are more than just opportunities to cross swords. Any direct conflict with a titan is a moment of tremendous importance to both the characters and the world, and this section helps a DM bring that reality to life.

STATISTICS

No legendary foe is complete without a collection of awesome statistics. Each titan has been designed to deliver on a combat experience that is both formidable and thematic. These aren't just monsters with high Challenge Ratings. Their mechanics are innovative and unique, forcing players to think on their feet as they encounter devastating attacks and overwhelming effects beyond anything they have faced before. Defeating a titan is intended to be the hardest thing your players have ever had to do. They will likely struggle mightily to even have a chance at victory, especially when compared to "ordinary" monsters of a titan's Challenge Rating. This is intentional. Characters should walk into battle against a titan well prepared for what lies ahead, possessing uniquely effective tools, strategies, weapons, and knowledge that will help compensate for the massive gap in strength between them and their foe. Do not take these writeups lightly. A titan can easily mop the floor with an overconfident or under-prepared party. We here at 2CGaming have mastered high-level monster design, and while we understand most tables are used to their characters being extremely overpowered at higher tiers of play, these titans are built with that truth in mind. Combat with a titan is a challenge of the highest caliber, testing your players' knowledge, skill, and strategy.

Mythic Statistics

For those daring souls running these titans using 2CGaming's Epic Legacy system, each titan possesses an array of special statistics that transform it from formidable 5E antagonist to an Epic foe of godlike power. As a mythic creature, the titan conforms to the design principles found in the *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*, which details what general changes occur when a creature is made using these specialized Epic Legacy elements. A mythic creature is a world-shattering force, suitable only for Epic characters to challenge. Ordinary 5th Edition characters cannot hope to compete. Under no circumstances should you use these statistics in a standard game of 5th Edition. It is guaranteed to result in disaster.

Monster Classifications

Titans within this book are classified into groups based on their strengths and abilities, which helps a DM easily understand their role on the battlefield. Each monster possesses a classification, with the most powerful among them being "elites" who are proficient in multiple classifications simultaneously. By understanding this system of classifications, you can craft encounters that deliver on a specific challenge you want your players to experience. Do you want your heroes to dodge

sniper fire as they storm a fortress? Use an artillery creature. Looking for a fearsome beast that crushes adventurers beneath its feet? Try a brute. Perhaps you need a final boss for your dungeon, in which case all you must do is find an appropriate elite. This system is a throwback to 4th Edition and helps create encounters that deliver on a specific style of play. The details of each monster classification and how to use them can be found in this section.



Artillery. The artillery classification indicates ranged combat specialists with abilities that can harry enemies from afar. Only the best snipers can match an artillery creature at ranged combat, which can often unleash firepower that puts even the most optimized *eldritch blast*-slinging warlock to shame. Artillery creatures are vulnerable at close range, relying on allies or their own evasive abilities to stay out of melee. An artillery wants to end a fight from afar, keeping its enemies on the defensive and struggling to find cover.



Brute. Brutes are savage melee combatants specializing in giving out as much punishment as they take. Free from player interference, a brute quickly pulverizes vulnerable characters and dismantles tactical advantages. Brutes can be counted on to take powerful hits and often do so to protect vulnerable allies or objectives. A brute seeks to be the focus of a fight, soaking up punishment and returning the favor tenfold.



Controller. Controllers may not be the ones who kill a character, but they certainly make things easier for their allies. Controllers unleash debilitating effects that impair or cripple their enemies

and are most effective when paired with more directly lethal creatures able to capitalize on advantages the controller provides. A controller wants to secure victory through tactical superiority, placing itself and its allies into a winning position that requires only a final killing blow.



Elite. Elites are monsters with enough diverse strengths to fit multiple classifications. Only the most powerful creatures are classified as elites and possess few weaknesses that adventurers can exploit. As rare as they are powerful, elites can be considered bosses that lurk at the end of a dangerous dungeon or the climax of an epic adventure. An elite is often legendary and crushes opposition with overwhelming power.



Leader. Leaders are masterful support creatures that aid allies with healing, magical enhancement, and other powerful buffs. Leaders rarely possess significant kill potential, focusing instead on teamwork and keeping their deadly allies in top fighting shape. Leaders need at least a few allies to help, preferring those that help them accomplish their encounter objectives. In combat, a leader alleviates harm on its allies, undoing damage with an efficiency that is nearly impossible to outclass.



Lurker. Master ambushers and assassins, lurkers strike first and hard. Using evasion and stealth to achieve their goals, lurkers are slippery foes that are difficult to lock down and destroy. Because adventurers travel in groups, most lurkers require the assistance of other creatures to finish the job. A lurker seeks to systematically and swiftly eliminate threats, taking heroes out of commission before they have a chance to respond.



Skirmisher. Mobility specialists, skirmishers use hit-and-run tactics to deliver precise blows while avoiding reprisal. A skirmisher can swiftly capitalize on a vulnerable enemy or disrupt a tactical advantage. Clever skirmishers are good at teamwork, waiting for the precise moment to strike or baiting frustrated adventurers into chasing them into traps. A skirmisher wants to frustrate and harass its target by being too dangerous to ignore but too elusive to easily kill.



Soldier. Tactical melee combatants of the highest caliber, creatures with the soldier classification are an implacable barrier that cannot be overcome with brute force. These creatures often plant themselves firmly between any force seeking to assail weaker allies, punishing those who injure their comrades with a frightful vengeance. A soldier never fights alone and wants to enable and protect its more vulnerable allies to achieve victory.

RESOURCES

Few creatures have only their own raw strength to pose a challenge. Most titans are dynamic foes with a storied history and considerable influence, which can be demonstrated through their considerable assets and allies. Many of the encounters a titan facilitates rely on these elements. Exploration encounters can be spiced up thanks to the vast tracts of land possessed and guarded by a powerful titan, requiring careful planning to safely approach its lair. Social encounters can involve negotiating with a titan's allies or attempting to persuade other NPCs to take up arms against the foe. Combat encounters can involve hordes of minions, magical items, or even unique spells that make a challenging fight even more deadly. You will find all these elements and more in this section, so consider how to integrate these tools into your encounters.

What are you waiting for? It's time to prepare your next grand session with the *Epic Legacy Tome of Titans!*

Titanic Creatures

The *Epic Legacy Tome of Titans* features a creature with a unique set of traits, summarized by classifying them as Titanic creatures. A Titanic creature is truly massive, with a unique anatomy that doesn't make sense for it to be treated as a single target. It has multiple sections, each of which functions like an independent creature, relying on the monster's core statistics for most of its effects. Each section has the same AC, resistances, immunities, and saving throw bonuses as the base statistical block of the creature. Sections are affected by conditions and other effects individually unless explicitly stated otherwise in the section's traits. A Titanic creature's statistics describe how much space each section takes up as well as its height. If you're using physical miniatures, you're unlikely to have a massive miniature that's appropriate, so you may have to improvise. Because a Titanic creature is so big, creatures smaller than it can always occupy the same space or move through the Titanic creature's space without penalty, and Titanic creatures neither take nor provoke opportunity attacks.

Every Titanic creature has a "core" section. If the core is reduced to 0 hit points, the Titanic creature is slain. Other sections that are reduced to 0 hit points become incapacitated for as long as they have 0 hit points, but the creature as a whole remains alive and well. Some creatures can restore incapacitated sections during a fight. In general, unless a Titanic creature has an ability that allows it to restore an incapacitated section, it can only do so if it finishes a long rest, which allows each section to individually spend Hit Dice to recover hit points.

In combat, every section has a fixed initiative result on which it acts. On each section's turn, if that section has a speed, the entire creature can move during that section's turn, following normal rules for movement. In some cases, a creature may have a certain speed on a specific section's turn, such as a dragon with a "wings" section only having a fly speed when its wing section acts.

Characters can attempt to climb a Titanic creature as part of their movement by making an Athletics or Acrobatics

check (their choice) opposed by the creature's Athletics or Acrobatics (DM's choice). Success means they can move up to half their speed along the creature, while failure means they stay where they are, whether that's on the ground or upon the creature. Making this attempt doesn't require an action, but a creature can only attempt it once per turn. If a creature takes damage while climbing a Titanic creature or if a forced movement effect would push or pull the climbing creature, it must attempt a Strength or Dexterity saving throw (climbing creature's choice) against a DC of half the damage taken or 10, whichever is higher. Success means the climber holds on and remains where it is. Failure means it falls, dropping to the ground in the Titanic creature's space and taking falling damage as appropriate. Titanic creatures have disadvantage on all attacks against creatures that are currently climbing them.

You should use your best judgment when it comes to targeting a creature's sections. Ranged attacks should be able to target any section if the attacker is within range of the creature, but melee attacks and touch spells can only target sections the character could conceivably reach. A fighter with a sword, for example, isn't going to be able to attack the head of a 60-foot-tall golem—he'll be stuck hacking at the legs.

Likewise, use your best judgment when it comes to applying status effects to the Titanic creature. Casting *dominate monster* on a dragon's tail, for example, probably won't work. It would need to target the creature's head or its core to be effective. Likewise, you probably can't knock a golem's arm prone. Otherwise, most effects will only affect one section of the creature. For example, you could stun a creature's arms or legs, preventing them from acting, but the rest of the creature would act as normal. Finally, most Titanic creatures are immune to forced movement and teleportation effects unless they wish to be affected.

To avoid making dozens of rules to cover every possibility, control of the details is in your hands. Go with what feels right from the descriptions provided and your own sense of fair play.

FIDELIR

The Marching City

“A parasite disguised as a utopia, preying on the desperate, lost, and deluded.”

DESCRIPTION

Few creatures are as grand or bizarre as the sentient city known as Fidelir. This being's body is a colossal metropolis of stone and brick. Its many buildings are its limbs, carved with doors in the shape of mouths and windows in the shape of eyes. Its arteries are streets, its veins back alleys and corridors. Its lungs and breath are found in chimneys and smoke. The people who inhabit Fidelir, however, are another thing entirely. They are extensions of its sight and voice; they are its bloodstream and its warmth. Their bodies are grafts to its reach and influence, and in its expanding depths lie their memories, dredged out and swallowed until all that is left are mere thoughtless hands. At the center of this grim city beats the heart of a tyrannical parasite, desperately searching for more poor souls to ensnare or employ toward perfecting the form that is Fidelir.

FIDELIR IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Campaigns involving Fidelir revolve around its attempt to control a group of people, always aiming to influence the largest population it thinks it can reach. While it may be content with

a village, can it successfully reach a city? Or if the settlement it's in has enough trade and traffic, would it be more suitable to trap people there and grow it into a city? Ultimately its goal is to spread as far as it can, growing directly in power with how many people, roads, and buildings it controls.

In opposition, players should be led into learning of Fidelir's existence and hunting it down or discovering Fidelir while it attempts to actively take control of a settlement and destroy it by combating its inhabitants or destroying buildings. Players should be careful as well to avoid being taken over by Fidelir, which is made easier or harder depending on whether or not characters are either visitors or long-standing residents of the settlement Fidelir has targeted. In either instance, there always exists the possibility that in order to continue their fight against the creature, they may have to exorcise Fidelir's influence out of one of their own allies.

INTRODUCTION

Fidelir is a ponderous but sinister force in your campaign. Introducing it to your story is a simple matter of making it a location worth visiting. Visitors, traders, and explorers come and go from the city all the time, so having a party of low-level

PROFILE

Personality: Perfectionist

Ideals: Fidelir prizes silence and unity above all things and knows that through it, such things are achievable. It distastes war and combat and has no great need of conquest. All it seeks is to keep its citizens at peace within itself.

Bonds: Fidelir is bound to its dream of a perfected self, of a vast ocean of stone and civilization, where all who inhabit it share in having nothing but the patterns that Fidelir has granted them. The enduring complacency of its people is its serenity.

Flaws: Fidelir is a being of cowardice who, when truly threatened or diminished enough, will flee—from those attacking it, from those it has already consumed, and from the buildings it has taken into its form. Its desire to pursue

its dream has filled it with a deep and unsettling paranoia of death.

Legend: There exists a parasite in this world whose form appears rarely, who when first spoken of is described as a thing that feeds upon structure and infrastructure. Many would claim that Fidelir takes the form of a large crustacean, whose shell is covered in many feelers and tendrils. Others claim that Fidelir's true body is that of a great astral worm, which burrows through sky and earth with ease. But in truth, Fidelir is an infection whose form is that of an ordinary mortal when it first enters a city, who runs from its previous home on its host's command, so that it may spread into a new city to grow. Its eyes and skin bear no visible illness, and its gait shows no sign of fatigue. By all accounts, it is ordinary. It is normal. While it cannot recall where it is from, or why it has come, it is more than happy to make a new life for itself in this new city.



characters discover the city won't prove too dangerous. However, under scrutiny it should be evident something about the city of Fidelir isn't quite right. Perhaps it is the zealous, uniform Collective who treat the city like a living thing. It may also be the fact the city seems to move when no one is paying attention, slowly crawling toward other cities with a ravenous appetite. While the characters may realize something is wrong, it takes a while before they possess the resources to oppose an entire city. They could fight a sheriff or deranged citizen maybe, but the true nature of the marching city will likely have yet to reveal itself.

CONFLICT

As time goes on it should become quite evident the city of Fidelir is either populated by a sinister force or is itself a living entity. This realization is still difficult to act upon. The characters have the monumental task of opposing hundreds of thousands of citizens, along with the supremely powerful entity that is manipulating them. Doing so requires the acquisition of vast resources and careful planning. Infiltrating the city and learning its ways or recovering powerful weapons are good courses of action, as well as tracking the lucky few who escaped Fidelir's clutches and possess notable lore about the evil city. Once the characters are prepared to take Fidelir on, it is time to move to the endgame.

Behind the Curtain: Preparing Fidelir Encounters

Fidelir is more than just a monster. It is a living, thriving fantasy city filled with countless points of interest and intriguing characters. Due to its massive size and nature as a creature, object, and structure, running encounters with Fidelir is no small task. One of the most exciting aspects of the city is its customizable nature. Fidelir's Shapechanger trait allows it to configure its layout and reorganize its cityscape body, with specific sections included for combat purposes. Beyond that, the layout and design of Fidelir is something for you to create. You could make its many streets a dizzying maze, fill its sections with loot, or even add minions that have made the city their home. A more detailed Fidelir makes the disguise more convincing to your players in the metagame in addition to increasing the encounter's difficulty. Consider the merits of presenting your Fidelir in the form of a battlemat to explore rather than a creature to be fought (at least at first). The mark of a well-made Fidelir encounter is the moment of dawning comprehension from the players as they begin to realize what exactly they have just walked their characters into.

CONCLUSION

Laying siege to Fidelir is an epic conclusion to a campaign. Doing so likely requires help or considerable stealth to infiltrate its borders. The Collective defends the marching city with everything they have, aided by their patron and its formidable arsenal. Fidelir likely unleashes its champions at this stage: its most powerful pawns, as dangerous as they are indoctrinated. Once the city starts taking damage from the characters, things have reached their climax. The heroes should have some insight as to how to finish the city off, hard earned from a dozen mighty adventures and key to ensuring victory over Fidelir. Once the city is slain, an entire town of people are indebted to the characters, who have purged the world of one of its most insidious and harmful evils.

CHALLENGES

Fidelir can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who encounter it.

EXPLORATION

The massive city of Fidelir is packed from end to end with interesting things to explore. The magic of the city has populated its streets with hundreds of buildings fit for the labor of its citizenry, who constantly integrate new mass and material into the structure. While most of these structures primarily serve Fidelir, its residents still need to live. One can find all the usual elements of a bustling metropolis within the sentient city, save for unsavory criminal elements. Every street corner and edifice is dedicated to Fidelir's glorious pursuit of perfection. One can find within countless cultural relics of societies the city has consumed, along with curious folk from all walks of life. Mapping the city is impossible, for with each day the city shifts, building and rebuilding itself with ceaseless zeal. This process often unearths strange resources and peculiar buildings, the true purpose of which is known only to Fidelir. The following examples serve as possible exploration encounters when interacting with Fidelir.

Regional Effects

The region within the borders of Fidelir is warped by its power, which has created the following effects within the area:

- If a creature spends 1 continuous month within the city of Fidelir, it must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or be forcibly indoctrinated as a citizen of the city. A creature indoctrinated in this manner loses all memory of its previous home, seeing Fidelir as its only place of rest and respite. A creature that is immune to the charmed condition has advantage on this saving throw.
- Fidelir is magically warded against magical intrusion. A creature that magically teleports into or within the area of Fidelir takes 35 (10d6) force damage.
- When a creature is slain within the area of Fidelir, its body is mysteriously consumed by the city within 24 hours, leaving only inorganic material behind.

If Fidelir is slain, these effects fade immediately.







Exploration Encounters

Finding a giant, slow-moving metropolis is not particularly hard, but exploring it is! Since Fidelir designs its own layout, the city has filled its streets, alleys, sewers, towers, and structures with all manner of secrets, caches, and environments begging to be discovered. In most cases these locations serve as resource centers for the city's devoted citizens or as treasuries to store wealth for a rainy day. As a perfectionist, Fidelir is obsessed with adding and reshaping its body, representing dozens of architectural styles and filling its buildings with countless works of art. An elven historian could spend several lifetimes cataloguing Fidelir's secrets and not get through even half of them. The following encounters serve as examples for the kinds of exploration adventures your characters may experience when interacting with Fidelir.

The Secret Stash. A refugee from the city of Fidelir left behind a precious family heirloom they would like returned. Unfortunately, the item in question has fallen into the hands of the Collective, who wish to use it as blackmail to lure back their escaped member. Recovering the object in a nonviolent manner will prove challenging but worth it to avoid the wrath of the sentient city and its residents.

Lost Progeny. A section of Fidelir was "left behind" over the course of the city's travels and now meanders about—a single building desperate to be reunited with its progenitor. The structure seems to retain some of Fidelir's memories and knowledge while possessing none of its sinister qualities. If the section can be found and captured, it would prove most useful in the fight against Fidelir and its schemes.

Rock the Block. A hidden sect of the Collective seeks to overthrow Fidelir and take control of the city by subjugating the entity. Rumors of this treacherous group reach the party, who would benefit by finding their well-concealed hideout within the sentient city and enlisting their aid. The group knows secrets of the city no others possess, including hidden passageways and truths about Fidelir that would prove extremely useful to the city's enemies.

SOCIAL

Talks with Fidelir itself are always done through someone else, and typically without the other party aware of Fidelir's puppet skills controlling their mouthpiece. It speaks at length of how good life is, of the benefits of the current weather (be it a winter storm or a midday summer calm), or of the news of the day. It does its best to provide an ear for gossip or comfort to another: the longer a conversation goes, the more chances Fidelir has at attempting to pull the other party into its growing civilization. With the players, however, it attempts a few necessary tactics in a particular order to keep itself as hidden and safe as possible if it doesn't think it can overtake them.

Social Encounters

As a living embodiment of community, Fidelir's entire existence is a social one. Most of the encounters characters are likely to directly experience with the sentient city will draw from this dynamic. The movements and actions of the city may be subtle, but over time even the most oblivious characters will come to

realize the city is capable of engaging with them (or has been this whole time). Most of these interactions are nonverbal, so when you need to spell things out specifically, have the city speak through a loyal intermediary that understands its will and intent. The city has a keen interest in adding any capable adventurers to its list of resources. With an entire city's worth of assets at its command, there is little it cannot bring to the negotiating table. The following encounters serve as examples of the types of experiences characters may have when interacting with Fidelir.

Quest Giver. Fidelir uses any hearsay of problems or dangers outside its influence—such as banditry, wild monsters, or evil lurking nearby—that could one day pose a threat to it. Fidelir attempts to send characters on quests as often as it can should it view them as a potential or active threat, pooling resources from many of the people it controls in order to tempt the characters to go toward these dangerous objectives in an effort to kill them off.

Temptation. Individuals who succeed at repeated quests Fidelir gives them are approached with a different tactic: an attempt to pull them into a life of ease and comfort. It offers good food, a moderate home, a servant, a ship—whatever it needs to drag individuals into a life of retirement where they pose no threat at all. The larger Fidelir's influence gets, the more tempting a life it can offer.

It's Free Real Estate. Fidelir becomes desperate to keep itself safe from perceived or real threats and desperately seeks to add more capable defenders to its population. By harassing and sabotaging the lives of others, it hopes to provide a peaceful alternative for subjects to settle in. The city stoops to such strategies as sending goons after characters to overwhelm them, sinking a vessel on which they sail by planting a saboteur stowaway onboard, or setting fire to their homes. Eventually, Fidelir approaches them directly with a powerful NPC under its control, with an offer of sanctuary and a home—an offer that is certainly too good to be true.

COMBAT

As a living city, Fidelir presents a unique and challenging foe on the field of battle. While the city cannot act as freely as most creatures, it is still a formidable enemy. The citizens of Fidelir number in the hundreds of thousands, many of who are fanatically loyal. These devoted guardians gladly sacrifice all they have to defend their home, believing their relationship to the city to be a symbiotic one. Between bouts with the city itself, any wishing to do battle with Fidelir find themselves navigating perilous streets full of blockades, guards, and other hostile forces fanatically devoted to the city's survival. Resolving such an epic conflict cannot be done in a single encounter. It requires many strategic maneuvers and battles to attain final victory over Fidelir, especially if one wishes to avoid horrific collateral damage to the city's misguided citizens.

Combat Encounter Example: Public Service

The characters hear of a lucrative adventuring trade in the far-away city of Fidelir, where heroes are commissioned to defend the burgeoning metropolis against those who would disrupt its

idyllic locale. When the heroes arrive, all seems well until a violent disturbance breaks out. A group of citizens is attempting to leave, violently assaulting any who stand in their way. The local authorities deputize the party on the spot, demanding they put a stop to these “anarchists” who are under the delusion they can’t leave peacefully. In truth, the locals hope the characters will violently quell these dissidents, starting them down a path of cooperation with Fidelir that will end with some powerful additions to the Collective.

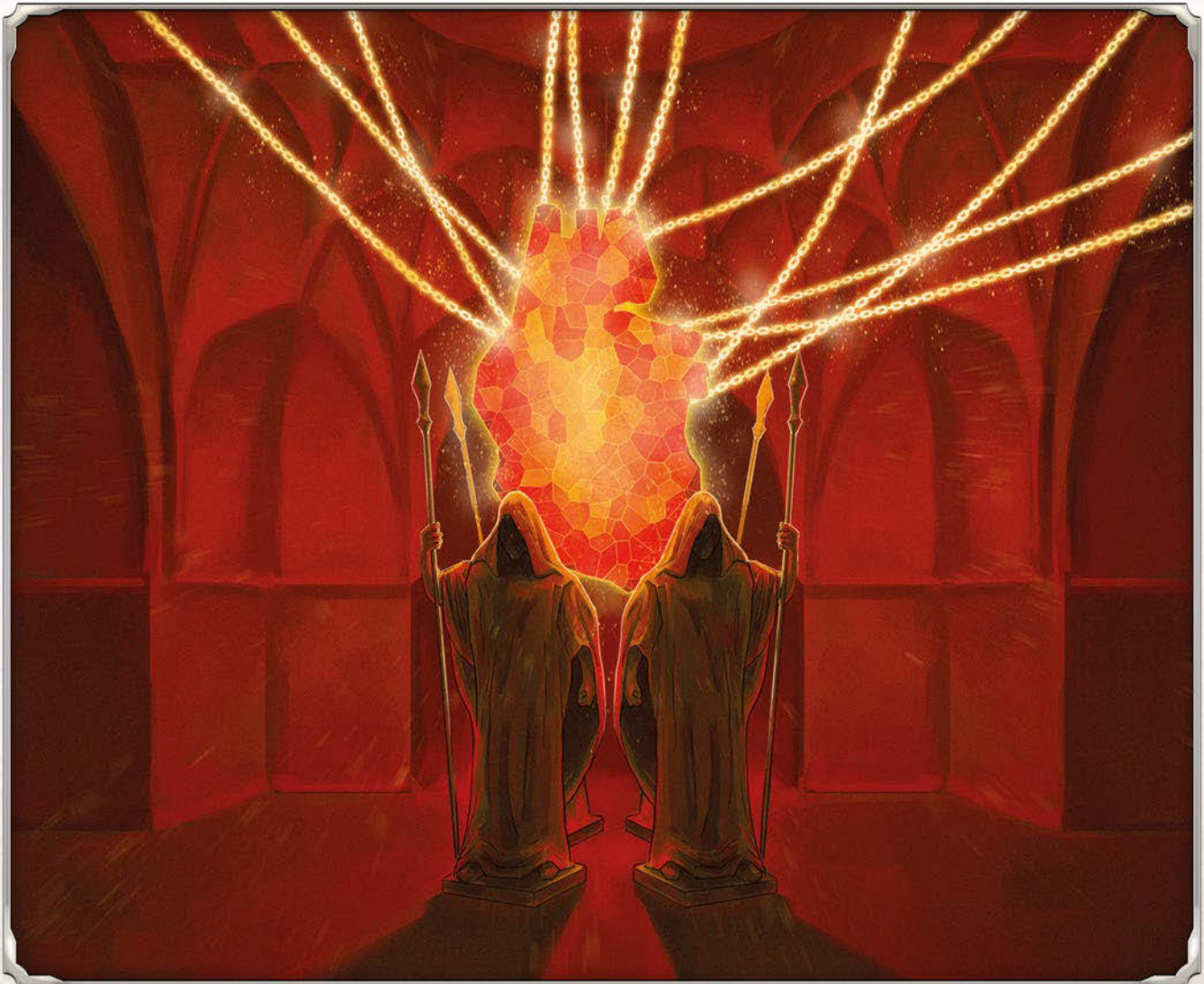
Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Soldier

Fighting a living city is a complex task. Fidelir is not so much a monster as it is an entire battlefield. Each of its sections presents a unique obstacle for the players to overcome, made all the more complicated by the nonstop interference by the enraged citizenry. Note how the city’s massive size interfaces with its abilities. Depending on where the characters are within the city, a section may be limited in what it can do to affect them. Don’t worry if this happens, as this is part of the challenge. Remember, Fidelir only has a limited number of rounds to participate in combat before it must rest, thanks to its Slovenly Combatant trait. During this time, the city can hit extremely hard, and as a soldier it is best

served by coordinating its attacks with loyal, powerful citizens. As a titanic creature, Fidelir can be systematically dismantled as the characters move from one section to the next, though doing so is likely one of the most difficult paths to victory. Instead, many adventuring parties may opt to move through the city as quickly as possible in search of the final means of destroying Fidelir—a wise course of action for all but the most powerful parties.

The Battlements and Walls section of the city is Fidelir’s first line of defense. This section can unleash devastating long-range attacks and likely continues to be a problem for the majority of the fight. The Streets and Suburbs section is the largest, and consequently the section where the characters are most likely to spend their time. It is here the allies of Fidelir gather in great numbers, mobbing trespassers as a riotous gang while Fidelir provides support. Note that while other sections may be out of range or unable to assist, they may “donate” their turns to embattled sections should the need arise. To achieve victory, the characters must locate and destroy Fidelir’s core. Doing so requires venturing to the Seat of Power section and exploring its depths. It is at the Seat of Power the characters must contend with the city’s magical lawful influence. The Decree of Law action can be used to further whittle down the trespassers and up the advantage for the city’s allies. Pick the options from this action



carefully, as the typical fanatic of Fidelir is likely quite weak and in desperate need of all the help it can get. If the characters actually manage to reach the core, it is here Fidelir deploys its finest servants via its Summon Guardians action. The Core is supremely vulnerable, so be sure by the time the characters have reached this point they have paid a mighty price. A healthy and well-rested group will have no trouble dispatching the city in this vulnerable position.

Easier Tactics – Keep the minions of Fidelir either low in number or extremely weak. A Challenge Rating of 2 or lower is appropriate for most devotees of the marching city, which shouldn't prove too troubling to most adventuring parties. All Fidelir's actions are powerful, but the city need not fight for several consecutive rounds for fear of running out of turns to defend itself. If things are looking rough for the party, have the city withdraw from the initiative count to conserve its actions and allow its minions to finish the fight. In most instances this will be a nice reprieve for the heroes.

Harder Tactics – Fidelir is masterful at battles of attrition. With tens of thousands (if not more) at its command, the city can easily overwhelm characters who charge in unheeded. The power and wealth of the sentient city should grant it a formidable garrison of powerful creatures ready to defend it at all costs. Do everything in your power to keep the party away from the Core section. Expect to have the city finish a short rest to counter the effects of Slovenly Combatant, so be sure to do so when the characters still have a long way to go before reaching the Core. While the city is resting, its defenders should be at their most aggressive, preventing the characters from taking advantage of this window of opportunity.

Mythic Fidelir

The mythic incarnation of Fidelir is a more powerful entity in every regard, but its defining feature is the addition of a new section to the city: the Belltower. This addition to Fidelir's arsenal not only allows the city to speak but introduces two special actions that can prove extremely dangerous. Toll of Doom can easily kill characters running low on hit points, and it quickly escalates over the course of an encounter. Toll of Glory is more useful to Fidelir's allies and pairs well with powerful minions in need of a little boost. Combine this effect with Decree of Law and Sanction of Duty for catastrophic synergy with the city's minions.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, Fidelir causes the following effects:

False Consciousness. Creatures friendly toward Fidelir that are within its limits can empathically sense the city's desires, emotions, and fears unless Fidelir wishes otherwise. A creature that senses the city's emotions in this manner cannot be forcibly compelled (even by magic) to act in a manner contrary to the Fidelir's interests as the creature understands them.

Statecraft. If Fidelir finishes a long rest while in physical contact with a city, town, village, or other municipality smaller than itself, it adds a portion of that location to its own mass at a rate of one 100-foot cube per long rest.

FIDELIR, THE MARCHING CITY

Titanic construct (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points special

Speed special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	1 (-5)	24 (+7)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +12, Int +5

Skills Deception +21, Perception +15

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, fire, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses blindsight 5 ft., darkvision 300 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages understands all languages but can't speak

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Shapechanger. When Fidelir finishes a long rest, it can alter its shape to change its configuration to that of a city that is appropriate for its size. In this state, Fidelir is indistinguishable from an ordinary city until it moves or takes actions. Each of Fidelir's sections is connected by pathways, streets, and modes of ingress that permit access between them and may be filled with a number of rooms, buildings, and features befitting a bustling metropolis. Fidelir must always be in the shape of a city appropriate for its size and cannot be forced to revert to a "true" form by any means.

Slovenly Combatant. The act of combat is supremely exhausting for Fidelir due to its size. When Fidelir rolls for initiative, it may only act for 10 rounds before it becomes unable to fight until it finishes a short or long rest.

Sturdy Architecture. Fidelir is both a creature and a structure.

Titanic Creature. Fidelir is a 300-foot-tall Titanic creature, taking up a space in the form of a 25,000-foot-radius cylinder that is on average 100 feet high. It is so large that combat involves dividing its body into various sections, each of which has a fixed initiative count on which it acts (losing initiative ties), detailed in its description. Each section is considered a unique creature for purposes of targeting (in case an effect or attack would include multiple targets), and effects that include an area may affect multiple sections of Fidelir if the area is large enough. Each section has its own hit points and actions but shares Fidelir's other statistics (such as damage resistances, saving throws, etc.). When a section is reduced to 0 hit points, it becomes incapacitated until it regains hit points or Fidelir is slain, which causes the section to die along with Fidelir. If a section has a speed, Fidelir can move up to that section's speed during that section's turn. Creatures can enter and occupy the same space as Fidelir, and Fidelir cannot make opportunity attacks. Additionally, Fidelir is immune to effects that would forcibly move, banish, or magically teleport it.

FIDELIR – BATTLEMENTS AND WALLS

Hit Points 262 (15d20 + 105)

Initiative 20

Speed 10 ft.

TRAITS

Bastion of Sight. Effects that would attempt to influence Fidelir's sight (such as blinding or making eye contact with it) can only affect this section (all other sections are immune). If this section is blinded, all other sections are as well.

Position. This section of Fidelir borders the city and is centered on the space it occupies. It is roughly 60 feet thick and 140 feet high.

ACTIONS

Hail of Arrows. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 1 mile, any number of targets within range. *Hit:* 26 (4d8 + 8) piercing damage.

Focus Energy. This section's turn ends, and another section of Fidelir immediately takes a turn.

Siege Volley (Recharge 5–6). The section launches volleys of siege ammunition at up to three 30-by-30-foot spaces within 1 mile, no two of which can share the same area. Creatures in the affected areas must attempt a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage and being knocked prone on a failure, or taking half damage and preventing the prone condition on a success. Additionally, unattended objects in the affected areas take 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage.

Spotlight. The section emits a 15-foot-wide, 10-mile-long line of bright light for 1 minute. Creatures within the beam are vulnerable to all damage and are unable to concentrate on spells or effects. If a creature inside the area of the beam attempts to move out of it, Fidelir can choose to follow its movement with the beam, keeping the creature within the area if the creature remains within 10 miles of Fidelir.

FIDELIR – STREETS AND SUBURBS

Hit Points 367 (21d20 + 147)

Initiative 15

TRAITS

Favored Terrain. This section magically enhances Fidelir's allies while hindering its enemies. When a creature ends its turn within this section, it magically regains 14 (4d6) hit points if it is a friendly creature, or takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage if it is an enemy creature.

Position. This section of Fidelir forms a 20,000-foot-radius perimeter around the Seat of Power section. The section is a cylinder that is roughly 100 feet tall at its highest point.

Streetlights. This section is constantly lit by an eerie, dim, green light. Creatures illuminated by this light cannot be hidden or invisible.

ACTIONS

Smite Trespasser. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 35 (6d8 + 8) radiant damage.

Architectural Assault (Recharge 5–6). The buildings of this section crash together in a 100-foot cube within the section's space. Creatures within the area must attempt a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, moving to the edge of the area on a success. On a failure, a creature takes 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage and is knocked unconscious until the start of its next turn.

Foggy Streets. A 60-foot cube of Fidelir's choice within 120 feet of this section becomes filled with dense fog for 1 minute or until Fidelir uses this option again. The area is heavily obscured for enemy creatures, and spells cast within the affected area immediately fail unless their casters succeed on an ability check using their spellcasting ability. The DC of this check is equal to 10 + the spell's level.

Sanction of Duty. Until the next initiative count of 15, a friendly creature of Fidelir's choice gains the following benefits.

- The creature deals an additional four damage dice on all damage rolls.
- The creature uses Fidelir's proficiency bonus (+8) instead of its own.
- The creature can perceive everything Fidelir can perceive, and vice versa.

FIDELIR – CORE

Hit Points 490 (28d20 + 196)

Initiative 10

TRAITS

Hidden. The Core is magically hidden and cannot be found without great effort. Creatures wishing to locate the Core must search beneath Fidelir’s Seat of Power section. At the end of each of its turns, a creature within the Seat of Power section may attempt a DC 22 Intelligence (Investigation) ability check, coming closer to deducing the Core’s exact location on a success. Once a creature (or group of creatures that are sharing the results of their efforts) has succeeded on three checks made in this manner, the location of the Core and the shortest path to it is revealed. Any attempt to locate the Core in a manner other than this method automatically fails unless the attempt comes from an effect of a spell of 8th level or higher. At its discretion, Fidelir can allow a creature to find its Core.

Position. The Core section is a 500-foot cube in the shape of a small dungeon. The Core is located somewhere beneath Fidelir’s Seat of Power section. Within the Core is a great crystalline heart that grants Fidelir life. This heart is an object with an AC of 20, 300 hit points, and immunity to all damage from creatures of a CR or level of 15 or lower. If Fidelir is slain but the heart remains intact, Fidelir is restored to life with each section at its hit point maximum in 1 year.

Vulnerability. When this section is reduced to 0 hit points, Fidelir is slain. Additionally, this section takes double damage from all sources.

ACTIONS

Beating Heart. The crystalline heart emits a single beat. Each creature of Fidelir’s choice within this section must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or take 35 (10d6) thunder damage, or half as much on a success.

Donate Life. The Core can choose to lose up to 80 hit points and divide them among other sections of its choice.

Focus Energy. The Core’s turn ends, and another section of Fidelir immediately takes a turn.

Summon Guardians. The Core magically teleports up to six friendly creatures within Fidelir’s space to unoccupied spaces within 10 feet of it.

FIDELIR – SEAT OF POWER

Hit Points 297 (17d20 + 119)

Initiative 5

TRAITS

Bastion of the Mind. Effects that would attempt to influence Fidelir’s mind (such as psychic damage, the stunned and unconscious conditions, or effects that force an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw) can only affect this section (all other sections are immune). If this section is blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, incapacitated, stunned, or unconscious, all the other sections are as well.

Position. The Seat of Power section is a 2,500-foot-radius cylinder in the center of the city that is roughly 200 feet tall at its highest point.

ACTIONS

Decree of Law. Fidelir issues a magically empowered legal decree which can be heard throughout the city. Each creature of Fidelir’s choice within any of its sections must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or suffer one of the following effects of Fidelir’s choice at the start of an affected target’s next turn.

- The creature drops what it is holding, moves its speed in a straight line away from what it dropped, and falls prone.
- The creature’s hit point maximum is reduced to its current hit points for 1 hour.
- The creature becomes charmed or frightened of a creature of Fidelir’s choice for 1 minute. An affected creature can attempt a Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.
- Until the end of its next turn, when the creature would roll a 6 or higher on a d20, it instead rolls a 5.

MYTHIC FIDELIR, THE MARCHING CITY

Titanic mythic construct (shapechanger), lawful evil

Armor Class 24 (natural armor)

Hit Points special

Speed special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	1 (-5)	26 (+8)	11 (+0)	8 (-1)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +17, Dex +3, Con +16, Int +8, Wis +7, Cha +14

Skills Deception +21, Perception +15

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, fire, piercing, slashing

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, paralyzed, prone, restrained, unconscious

Senses blindsight 5 ft., darkvision 300 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages understands all languages but can't speak

Challenge Mythic 1

TRAITS

Shapechanger. When Fidelir finishes a long rest, it can alter its shape to change its configuration to that of a city that is appropriate for its size. In this state, Fidelir is indistinguishable from an ordinary city until it moves or takes actions. Each of Fidelir's sections is connected by pathways, streets, and modes of ingress that permit access between them and may be filled with a number of rooms, buildings, and features befitting a bustling metropolis. Fidelir must always be in the shape of a city appropriate for its size and cannot be forced to revert to a "true" form by any means.

Slovenly Combatant. The act of combat is supremely exhausting for Fidelir due to its size. When Fidelir rolls for initiative, it may only act for 12 rounds before it becomes unable to fight until it finishes a short or long rest.

Sturdy Architecture. Fidelir is both a creature and a structure.

Titanic Creature. Fidelir is a 300-foot-tall Titanic creature, taking up a space in the form of a 25,000-foot-radius cylinder that is on average 100 feet high. It is so large that combat involves dividing its body into various sections, each of which has a fixed initiative count on which it acts (losing initiative ties), detailed in its description. Each section is considered a unique creature for purposes of targeting (in case an effect or attack would include multiple targets), and effects that include an area may affect multiple sections of Fidelir if the area is large enough. Each section has its own hit points and actions but shares Fidelir's other statistics (such as damage resistances, saving throws, etc.). When a section is reduced to 0 hit points, it becomes incapacitated until it regains hit points or Fidelir is slain, which causes the section to die along with Fidelir. If a section has a speed, Fidelir can move up to that section's speed during that section's turn. Creatures can enter and occupy the same space as Fidelir, and Fidelir cannot make opportunity attacks. Additionally, Fidelir is immune to effects that would forcibly move, banish, or magically teleport it.

MYTHIC FIDELIR - BATTLEMENTS AND WALLS

Hit Points 277 (15d20 + 120)

Initiative 20

Speed 10 ft.

TRAITS

Bastion of Sight. Effects that would attempt to influence Fidelir's sight (such as blinding or making eye contact with it) can only affect this section (all other sections are immune). If this section is blinded, all other sections are as well.

Position. This section of Fidelir borders the city in a circle centered on the space it occupies and is roughly 60 feet thick and 140 feet high.

ACTIONS

Hail of Arrows. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, range 1 mile, any number of targets within range. *Hit:* 27 (4d8 + 9) piercing damage.

Focus Energy. This section's turn ends, and another section of Fidelir immediately takes a turn.

Siege Volley (Recharge 5–6). The section launches volleys of siege ammunition at up to three 30-by-30-foot spaces within 1 mile, no two of which can share the same area. Creatures in the affected areas must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage and being knocked prone on a failure, or taking half damage and preventing the prone condition on a success. Additionally, unattended objects in the affected areas take 70 (20d6) bludgeoning damage.

Spotlight. The section emits a 15-foot-wide, 10-mile-long line of bright light for 1 minute. Creatures within the beam are vulnerable to all damage and are unable to concentrate on spells or effects. If a creature inside the area of the beam attempts to move out of it, Fidelir can choose to follow its movement with the beam, keeping the creature within the area if the creature remains within 10 miles of Fidelir.

MYTHIC FIDELIR – STREETS AND SUBURBS

Hit Points 388 (21d20 + 168)

Initiative 16

TRAITS

Favored Terrain. This section magically enhances Fidelir's allies while hindering its enemies. When a creature ends its turn within this section, it magically regains 14 (4d6) hit points if it is a friendly creature, or takes 14 (4d6) necrotic damage if it is an enemy creature.

Position. This section of Fidelir forms a 20,000-foot-radius perimeter around the Seat of Power section. The section is a cylinder that is roughly 100 feet tall at its highest point.

Streetlights. This section is constantly lit by an eerie, dim, green light. Creatures illuminated by this light cannot be hidden or invisible.

ACTIONS

Smite Trespasser. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 35 (6d8 + 8) radiant damage.

Architectural Assault (Recharge 5–6). The buildings of this section crash together in a 100-foot cube within the section's space. Creatures within the area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, moving to the edge of the area on a success. On a failure, a creature takes 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage and is knocked unconscious until the start of its next turn.

Foggy Streets. A 60-foot cube of Fidelir's choice within 120 feet of this section becomes filled with dense fog for 1 minute or until Fidelir uses this option again. The area is heavily obscured for enemy creatures, and spells cast within the affected area immediately fail unless their casters succeed on an ability check using their spellcasting ability. The DC of this check is equal to 10 + the spell's level. For Epic spells, the DC is 21 for a tier 1 spell, 24 for a tier 2 spell, and 28 for a tier 3 spell.

Sanction of Duty. Until the next initiative count of 15, a friendly creature of Fidelir's choice gains the following benefits.

- The creature deals an additional four damage dice on all damage rolls.
- The creature uses Fidelir's proficiency bonus (+8) instead of its own.
- The creature can perceive everything Fidelir can perceive, and vice versa.

MYTHIC FIDELIR – CORE

Hit Points 518 (28d20 + 224)

Initiative 12

TRAITS

Hidden. The Core is magically hidden and cannot be found without great effort. Creatures wishing to locate the Core must search beneath Fidelir's Seat of Power section. At the end of each of its turns, a creature within the Seat of Power section may attempt a DC 25 Intelligence (Investigation) ability check, coming closer to deducing the Core's exact location on a success. Once a creature (or group of creatures that are sharing the results of their efforts) has succeeded on three checks made in this manner, the location of the Core and the shortest path to it is revealed. Any attempt to locate the Core in a manner other than this method automatically fails unless the attempt comes from an effect of a spell of 8th level or higher. At its discretion, Fidelir can allow a creature to find its Core.

Position. The Core section is a 500-foot cube in the shape of a small dungeon. The Core is located somewhere beneath Fidelir's Seat of Power section. Within the Core is a great crystalline heart that grants Fidelir life. This heart is an object with an AC of 20, 300 hit points, and immunity to all damage from creatures of a CR or level of 15 or lower. If Fidelir is slain but the heart remains intact, Fidelir is restored to life with each section at its hit point maximum within 1 year.

Vulnerability. When this section is reduced to 0 hit points, Fidelir is slain. Additionally, this section takes double damage from all sources.

ACTIONS

Beating Heart. The crystalline heart emits a single beat. Each creature of Fidelir's choice within this section must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or take 35 (10d6) thunder damage, or half as much on a success.

Donate Life. The Core can choose to lose up to 80 hit points and divide them among other sections of its choice.

Focus Energy. The Core's turn ends, and another section of Fidelir immediately takes a turn.

Summon Guardians. The Core magically teleports up to six friendly creatures within Fidelir's space to unoccupied spaces within 10 feet of it.

MYTHIC FIDELIR – SEAT OF POWER

Hit Points 314 (17d20 + 136)
Initiative 4

TRAITS

Bastion of the Mind. Effects that would attempt to influence Fidelir’s mind (such as psychic damage, the stunned and unconscious conditions, or effects that force an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw) can only affect this section (all other sections are immune). If this section is blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, incapacitated, stunned, or unconscious, all the other sections are as well.

Position. The Seat of Power section is a 2,500-foot-radius cylinder in the center of the city that is roughly 200 feet tall at its highest point.

ACTIONS

Decree of Law. Fidelir issues a magically empowered legal decree which can be heard throughout the city. Each creature of Fidelir’s choice within any of its sections must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or suffer one of the following effects of Fidelir’s choice at the start of an affected target’s next turn.

- The creature drops what it is holding, moves its speed in a straight line away from what it dropped, and falls prone.
- The creature’s hit point maximum is reduced to its current hit points for 1 hour.
- The creature becomes charmed or frightened of a creature of Fidelir’s choice for 1 minute. An affected creature can attempt a Wisdom saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.
- Until the end of its turn, when the creature would roll a 6 or higher on a d20, it instead rolls a 5.

MYTHIC FIDELIR – BELLTOWER

Hit Points 351 (19d20 + 152)
Initiative 8

TRAITS

Position. The Belltower section is a 60-foot cube that is 300 feet tall in the exact center of the city.

The Telltale Tolling. The Belltower is the voice of Fidelir and can communicate verbally via the ringing of its bells. Anything Fidelir speaks in this manner can be heard everywhere within the city.

ACTIONS

Toll of Doom. This section tolls the doom of enemy creatures of Fidelir’s choice. If a creature has 10 hit points or fewer when it hears the toll, it must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or die instantly. If a creature hears the toll of doom again within 1 hour, the amount of hit points or fewer a creature requires to be affected by this feature increases by 10, to a maximum of 50.

Toll of Glory. This section tolls an inspirational anthem. Each friendly creature of Fidelir’s choice that hears the toll may immediately use its reaction to move up to its speed and make a single weapon attack or cast a cantrip.

RESOURCES

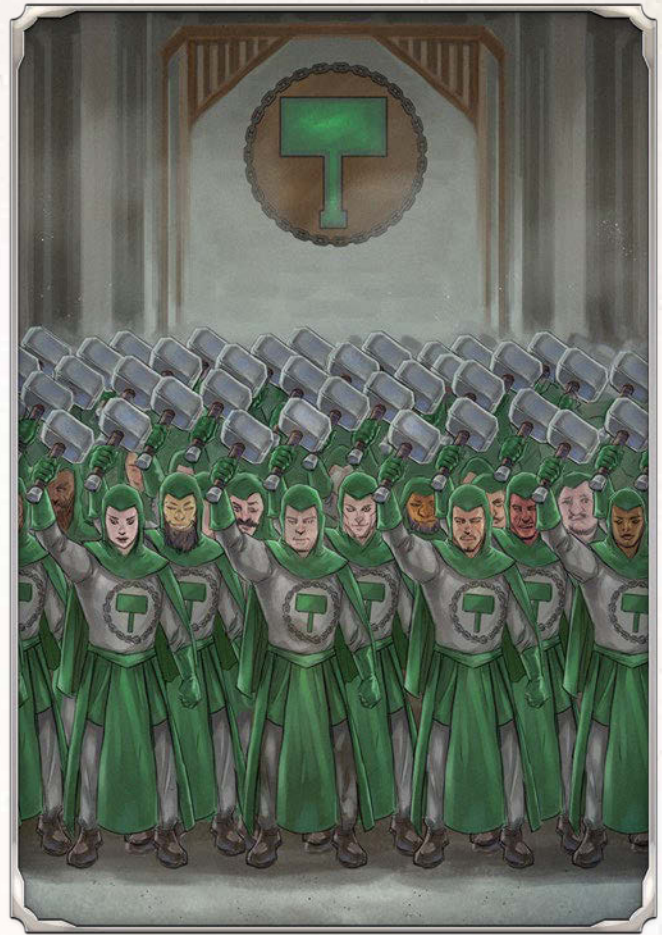
Fidelir possess the following resources to further its goals and schemes.

ALLIES

Most beings who dwell within Fidelir are either indoctrinated, a willing ally, or a zealous member of the organization known as the Collective. Indoctrinated citizens love their city dearly despite their laborious lifestyle toiling on its behalf, but rarely do they give their lives in its defense. Instead, these poor souls are exploited to contribute to Fidelir's perfection by sculpting, chiseling, and building new structures within its boundaries. Willing allies of the city are rare, but a few cunning creatures have learned to live within Fidelir without becoming its minions. These beings contribute to the exploitation of the citizenry but reap considerable personal gains in the process. Fidelir tolerates the presence of such creatures, including fiends, dragons, or other lawful evil creatures, as a deterrent against assault or investigation. Such creatures keep a low profile, however, keeping up the charade of the city simply being a tad peculiar rather than sinister. The most formidable force at Fidelir's disposal is the group known as the Collective. These misguided souls are completely dedicated to the city and are aware of its true nature. They view themselves as but another extension of Fidelir's will, serving a purpose and entity far greater than they could ever be. Clad in green and silver, these disturbed people number in the tens of thousands and hail from all walks of life. There is nothing they will not do for their master, and it is a cult from which few have ever escaped.

REWARDS

Should Fidelir fall, the wealth of a metropolis is laid bare for looting. As its former citizens disperse and take what they can carry, much is left to unearth within the collapsing, blood-soaked ruins. In addition to the wealth of its people, Fidelir keeps vast stores of resources hidden away, which in turn are revealed upon its death.



Hidden artifacts from a bygone age, sinister lore, and countless other treasures are all ripe for the taking. Having lived tens of thousands of years, some of these valuables are nearly priceless from a cultural and historical standpoint, a horrific testament to the hundreds of cultures Fidelir has consumed over the course of millennia.



ISHAQ-ZAHUR

The Priest-King

"In the scope of eternity and in service to the greatest good, the ramifications of our actions bear no consideration."

DESCRIPTION

Twelve feet tall with a slender grace befitting a heron, the ibis-headed priest-king Ishaq-Zahur is the picture of divine rulership. Ishaq-Zahur dresses in rich silks befitting his royal station and always bears an ornate golden staff passed down through the ancient line of Nartheneen monarchs. No matter the situation, Ishaq-Zahur moves with a slow and practiced deliberation, weighing each action against lifetimes of accrued knowledge.

ISHAQ-ZAHUR IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Unless your game is already set in the distant past, Ishaq-Zahur and the Nartheneen have been extinct for thousands of years as your story begins. However, Ishaq-Zahur has no intention of letting his people remain buried in the sands of time. Using hideous magics granted by an extraplanar entity, Ishaq-Zahur intends to resurrect his people to once more attempt to conquer

PROFILE

Personality: Conceited

Ideals: The Nartheneen culture is defined by strict adherence to meritocratic principles, where only those deemed worthy of power can ever hope to possess it. As the supreme ruler of the Nartheneen, Ishaq-Zahur represents the absolute pinnacle of this principle. He rose to the position of priest-king by demonstrating extraordinary power and is now tasked with improving the Nartheneen empire's capabilities at large. He regards nothing more important than his divine quest to expand his kingdom's influence by whatever means necessary.

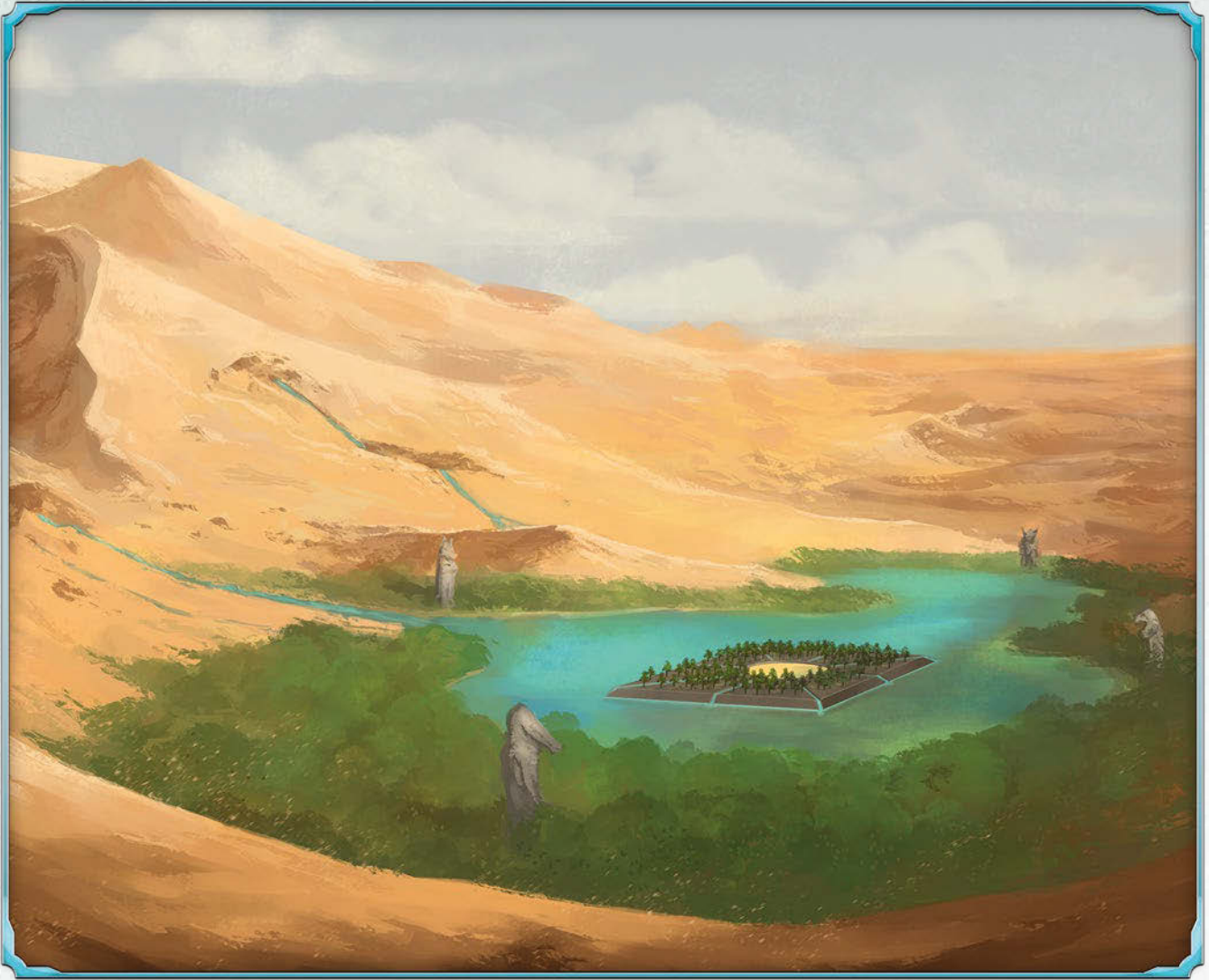
Bonds: Nartheneen society demands that rulers must continue to prove their merit through combat and conquest. In his deific position, Ishaq-Zahur is expected to prove his prowess whenever challenged. The priest-kings of the Nartheneen fight an eternal war on two fronts: combating personal challenges of worthiness from subjects within their empire and waging war to conquer all corners of the world in the name of the Nartheneen.

Flaws: The priest-king's fatal flaw is one he shares with most of the Nartheneen people: the all-consuming drive to become more powerful. The quest for power is an integral part of Nartheneen society and has become the defining force behind Ishaq-Zahur's every decision. This extreme ambition has caused Ishaq-Zahur and his people to pay a grave price in the name of progress.

Legend: At the height of Nartheneen power, Ishaq-Zahur doomed his people by forging a dark pact

with an entity called the Ebon Flame. This pact gave him access to an extraordinary type of magic known as nethermancy but came at a grave price. The Ebon Flame began to burn away Ishaq-Zahur's body, growing like a cancer that kept the priest-king alive but in a perpetual state of pain. Worst of all, this nethermancy spread like a plague to other spellcasters in the realm, empowering their abilities then slowly burning away their souls until they only sought endless destruction. The ambitious Nartheneen were wholly unable to resist the promise of such power, and the Ebon Flame consumed the population entirely in a matter of decades, bringing an abrupt end to their civilization.

But that extinction was not the true end of the Nartheneen, for Ishaq-Zahur was clever in his deal-making. When forging the pact with the Ebon Flame, the priest-king demanded the Ebon Flame promise that all enemies of the Nartheneen would fall before his might. The entity agreed and gave Ishaq-Zahur nethermancy to achieve his ends, but the Nartheneen were destroyed by the powers long before they defeated their enemies. Upon his death, the spirit of the priest-king demanded the Ebon Flame fulfill the agreement as promised. Enraged but caught in its schemes, the Ebon Flame used its strength to pluck the Nartheneen capital of Nasoten out of time and hurl it into the future. Even the Ebon Flame's eldritch powers could not restore the entire empire. Still, by removing Ishaq-Zahur's city from the ultimately disastrous timeline, the Ebon Flame has given the priest-king another chance to defeat the empire's foes. The city of Nasoten, its people, and Ishaq-Zahur now live again, with another chance to rewrite history in their favor.



the world. Ishaq-Zahur is a hyperintelligent and particularly terrifying villain. The priest-king sacrificed everything to gain mystical powers that would allow the Nartheneen to fulfill their dreams of conquest, and this single-minded determination has dire consequences for the modern world. Thousands of years ago, Ishaq-Zahur struck a deal with an extraplanar entity called the Ebon Flame. The Ebon Flame promised to help the Nartheneen obliterate their foes, but it could feed on those who wielded its dark gifts in exchange. The priest-king doomed his people, for those who wielded the Ebon Flame had their minds and hearts rapidly burned away by accepting this deal. These empty shells, once upstanding citizens of the realm, turned their extraordinary powers to destroying everything in their path as they forgot who they once were. With this new plague of power, the Nartheneen empire, which had stood for centuries, was utterly destroyed in mere decades.

INTRODUCTION

A campaign featuring Ishaq-Zahur begins with the arrival of the Nartheneen in the modern world. To fulfill its end of the bargain, the Ebon Flame propels Ishaq-Zahur, the Nartheneen capitol city of Nasoten, and all the city's denizens into the future.

Who are the Nartheneen?

The Nartheneen are an ancient people who reached their zenith thousands of years before modern races began to carve out their corners of the world. The Nartheneen are humanoid creatures with the heads of different animals that denote their role in society. Every member of the civilization belongs to a different caste based on which animal head they are born with, though there is a unique process by which individuals can leave one caste for another. Nartheneen culture is built on the concept of meritocracy, where any individual can advance their position in life through demonstrations of personal merit. This potential for social mobility makes the Nartheneen a dangerously ambitious people hyper-focused on besting others. This cultural zeitgeist allowed the Nartheneen empire to expand rapidly, since military conquest is regarded as an extreme symbol of achievement.

You can find more information about the Nartheneen in 2CGaming's *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 1*.



To give Ishaq-Zahur another chance to conquer the world, the Ebon Flame plucks these players from their original timeline at the moment after they struck the deal to avoid the series of events that led to their downfall. All of this, of course, is hidden knowledge to be discovered throughout the campaign.

The sudden apparition of an ancient city populated with thousands of people is a highly upsetting event in the scope of global politics. Ishaq-Zahur realizes this and plays his cards close to his chest so the Nartheneen might survive in an unfamiliar world. Immediately upon appearing, the priest-king sends diplomatic emissaries to nearby cities, requesting aid for his people who have been thrown out of time. There are a multitude of ways to involve your party in the story as the strange city of Nasoten suddenly appears, and existing world factions try to figure out what to do about it. Creating an opportunity to immerse your party in the city of Nasoten, to encounter its customs and people, is the best way to begin this adventure. The sooner the characters get involved in helping the citizens of Nasoten, the sooner they can start to see that this civilization is much more of a threat than Ishaq-Zahur led the leaders of the modern world to believe.

CONFLICT

Once the presence of Nasoten is established and the Nartheneen learn how this new world functions, they begin to pursue their hidden agenda of conquest. Ishaq-Zahur does not know the exact events that led his people to be destroyed in his original timeline, but he knows the Ebon Flame propelled the city here to avoid those past mistakes. Ishaq-Zahur suspects the rapid spread of the Ebon Flame's power was ultimately responsible for the destruction, and consequently, he intends to keep a tight rein on its growing influence. The priest-king may even commit to enlisting the help of powerful adventurers to solve the Ebon Flame's corrupting problem. If Ishaq-Zahur can discover a way to keep the flame's power without the side effects of burning out the minds of its wielders, the Nartheneen truly will be unstoppable. This conflict around finding a way to stop the corrupting effects of the Ebon Flame coupled with the realization that Ishaq-Zahur intends to conquer the world forms this campaign's central action.

CONCLUSION

The campaign's conclusion is marked by the drastic shift in the relationship between the Nartheneen and the adventurers. At this point, the characters should know the truth about the Ebon Flame and Ishaq-Zahur's goal of world domination. In turn, the priest-king is aware that the adventuring group has officially become enemies. Launching full-scale warfare against the city of Nasoten to destroy Ishaq-Zahur is one possibility, but it requires enlisting the aid of surrounding nations and their armies. A subtler approach is also possible if the adventurers manage to win allies inside Ishaq-Zahur's court and stage a coup. Either way, getting to the priest-king to defeat him will only be the first challenge. The second challenge is defeating Ishaq-Zahur in direct combat, and with the power of the Ebon Flame at his command, the fight will not be an easy one.

CHALLENGES

Ishaq-Zahur can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with him.

EXPLORATION

The city of Nasoten has been plucked from the past and landed in the modern world. This hugely strange arcane event provides a lot of opportunities for exploration in a campaign featuring Ishaq-Zahur. The characters can experience the wonders of a highly advanced magical society preserved in its entirety. The city of Nasoten has a wide array of diverse locations to explore, but seeing its magnificent gardens, tombs, libraries, and other structures should form a cornerstone of the campaign.

The crown jewel of Nasoten is the golden palace, which is where Ishaq-Zahur holds court. The golden palace not only serves as Ishaq-Zahur's base of operations. This marvelous structure is where the priest-king is at his most powerful; it is the base of the secret cult of the Ebon Flame and is situated above the ever-expanding chambers to which his immortal soul will retreat upon his death.

Regional Effects

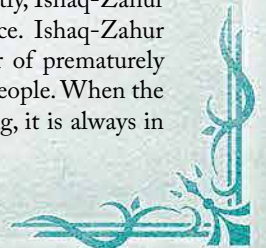
The region containing Ishaq-Zahur's lair is warped by his connection to the Ebon Flame, which has created the following effects within the entirety of the golden palace:

- The palace architecture glows with an inner radiance; all areas of the golden palace are considered to be in full daylight, even at night. Ability checks made to hide while on the grounds of the golden palace are made with disadvantage.
- Flocks of enchanted ibis are allowed to wander freely about the palace grounds. As an action, a creature within 5 feet of an ibis can cast the spell *animal messenger* using the ibis to deliver a message to anyone inside the golden palace. Casting the spell in this way does not require a spell slot or the use of any components.
- Time bends strangely around the golden palace, keeping everything in stasis. While on the palace grounds, creatures cease to age and cannot be forced to age through magical means.

If Ishaq-Zahur is destroyed, these effects fade after 7 days.

Ishaq-Zahur's Lair

The golden palace is the center of the capital city of Nasoten and the nexus of Ishaq-Zahur's power. Hidden within the palace are the chambers dedicated to the Ebon Flame cult where the dark rites that tied the priest-king to the eldritch entity were conducted. The palace is the anchor point that allowed Nasoten to be propelled forward in time, and consequently, Ishaq-Zahur is at his strongest when fighting in the palace. Ishaq-Zahur is hesitant to leave the palace grounds for fear of prematurely ending the time-bending magic that saved his people. When the adventurers interact directly with the priest-king, it is always in his lair.





Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Ishaq-Zahur can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Ishaq-Zahur uses his mythic statistics, he can instead choose to take a mythic action or a lair action, but not both. Ishaq-Zahur can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

- Ishaq-Zahur causes black flames to appear as per the *wall of fire* spell. The flames remain until Ishaq-Zahur uses another lair action. Casting the spell in this way does not require concentration or material components and does not expend a spell slot.
- Ishaq-Zahur pulls in the sunlight of the golden palace to burn away effects that hinder him. All conditions affecting Ishaq-Zahur end immediately.
- Flocks of birds swarm around Ishaq-Zahur, granting him half cover until initiative count 20 on the next round.

Exploration Encounters

Exploring the city of Nasoten and the culture of the Nartheneen is an integral part of running a campaign featuring Ishaq-Zahur. When the city of Nasoten lands in the present, the Nartheneen open their gates to neighbors, hoping to learn as much as possible about modern people and to keep up the guise of being nonthreatening. Exploration encounters can occur throughout the capital city of Nasoten, in the golden palace where Ishaq-Zahur rules the city, and even in the royal tombs that form the city's boundary.

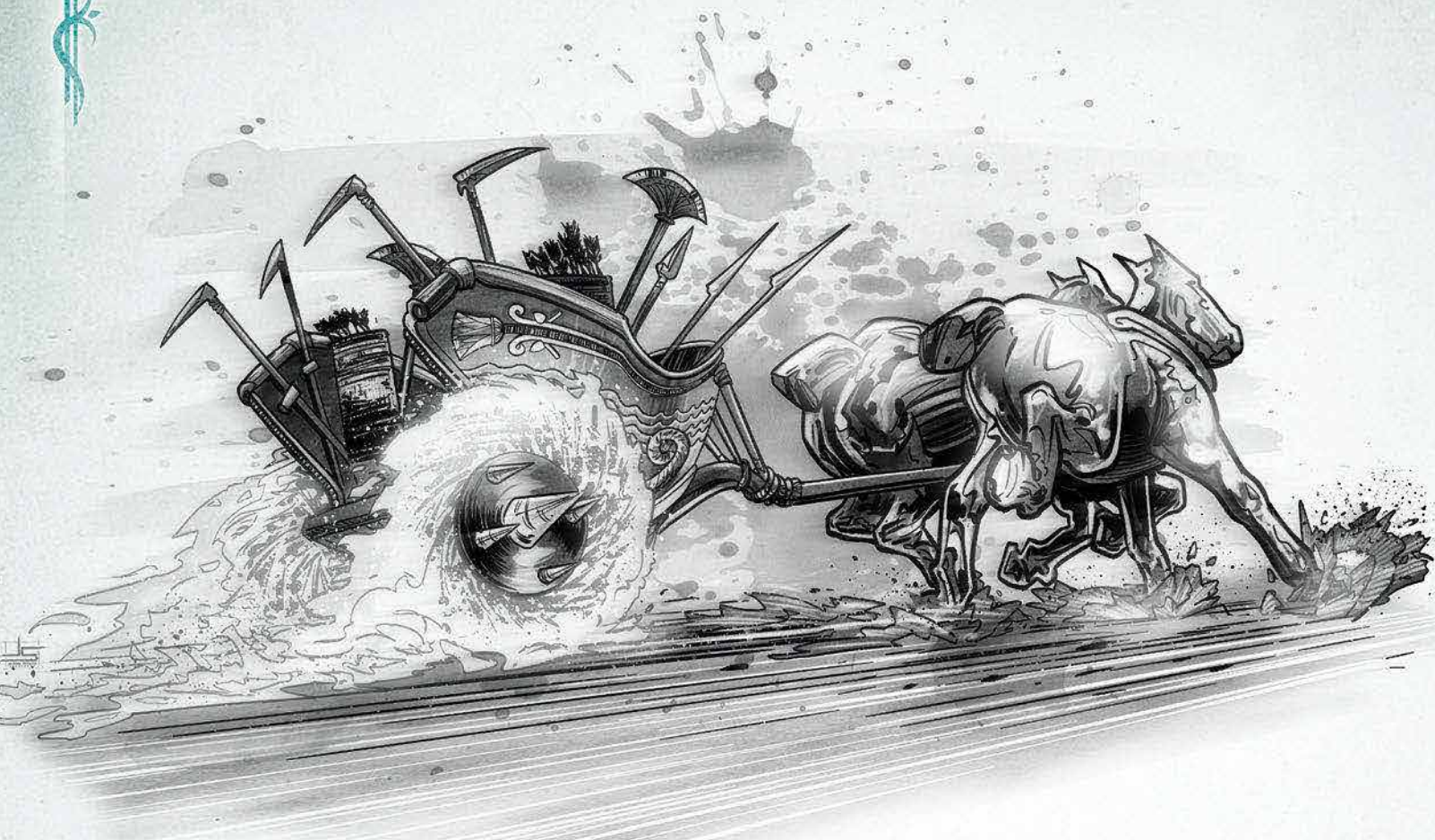
Exploring the City. Spending time in the city of Nasoten is the best way for adventurers to learn about Nartheneen culture. Nasoten is home to magnificent libraries, museums, theaters, coliseums, gardens, and many more cosmopolitan locations to rival modern wonders. The Nartheneen capital blends beauty with functionality at every turn, displaying magical features to delight (and perhaps intimidate) visitors. If you would like to create encounters in the city of Nasoten, you may choose or roll from the Nasoten City Encounters table for inspiration.



Nasoten City Encounters

d10	Encounter	Description
1	Rich Customs	Hequet-Lapis, a prolific merchant of the feline caste, invites the adventurers to spend the day touring Nasoten on her riverboat. Hequet-Lapis wants to learn as much as possible about the trading customs of the modern world and is prepared to wine and dine the party in exchange for information.
2	Spontaneous Combustion	While walking through the streets of Nasoten, the party suddenly hears screaming. A soldier from the ram caste begins violently attacking bystanders as his head is wreathed in black flames in the nearby square. The city guard arrives in 3 rounds to kill the soldier if the party does not intervene. Once on fire, the soldier is incapable of coherent speech, and neither the city guard nor bystanders seem willing to answer questions about the black flame.
3	If You Build It	While touring Nasoten, the party runs into one of the many build-sites meant to expand the city's new borderline. One of the project managers, a crocodile-headed man named Hamadi, asks if the party would help out for the day. If the adventurers take up Hamadi's offer, allow them to suggest ways to help perform construction tasks or create appropriate skill challenges for them to engage in. If the adventurers are generally helpful, they earn the crocodile caste's gratitude, and Hamadi becomes a valuable ally for navigating the city.
4	Prize Fight	While in Nasoten, the adventuring party encounters a ram-headed crier standing outside a splendid fighting ring. A combat tournament is to be held in a day's time, and there are still spaces for heroes to enter in hopes of winning the prize. If any of the characters are interested in entering, the crier named Chuma is happy to help them do so. An individual can enter the tourney, but an entire party can join as well. The tournament events all consist of three rounds, and fights are to the surrender (not the death). Choose a level-appropriate magic item to reward the winning combatant.
5	Healing Herbs	The party is approached by a hippo-headed messenger named Gyasi, who works at the nearby hospital. Gyasi and the rest of the hippo caste (who preside over healing) hope to interview the adventurers about the local herbology. If the party agrees to go with Gyasi, they are led to a wing of Nasoten's hospital where new medicines are developed. If the characters are able to provide useful information about the natural resources of the region, they earn the gratitude of the hippo caste, and Gyasi becomes a helpful ally who can provide potions and magical healing.
6	Riddle Me This	While walking through the streets of Nasoten, the party discovers a beautiful plaza with a raised stage at its center. A crowd of people gather around the stage where a royal androsphinx is posing a series of riddles. The sphinx offers magical trinkets to any creature who can answer one of its riddles.
7	Jail Break	While passing by the golden palace, the party suddenly hears yelling and hocking. Two ibis-headed pages named Hor-Aka and Jabari have accidentally allowed a flock of waterfowl to escape from the palace grounds. The two pages are desperately trying to round up the birds before they get in trouble, but the flock is causing havoc in the streets. If the adventurers help round up the birds, the two pages are grateful and become useful allies for navigating the affairs of the golden palace.
8	Book of the Dead	The party is approached by a group of priests from the jackal caste. They are tasked with conducting a door-to-door census of Nasoten, trying to catalog all the Nartheneen who remain and who were left in the past (and are now assumed to be dead). The priests face a monumental task, and the leader of the project, a jackal-headed Nartheneen named Issa, would be incredibly grateful for any help the party can provide in accomplishing her task. If the adventurers assist Issa, they earn the jackal caste's gratitude and are free to shelter in any of their temples throughout the city.
9	Moving to the Country	On the outskirts of the city, the party finds a group of wagons being hastily packed by dozens of Nartheneen. Several city guards are surveying the action, and the situation is clearly tense. The Nartheneen loading their possessions into their wagons believe that traveling through time as they have is some form of curse, and they have decided to leave the city. The guards are under orders to stop them if the group actually tries to depart. The party has an opportunity to pick a side in hopes of deescalating the situation; otherwise, the standoff devolves into violence. If the party helps the refugees leave, they acquire a loyal group of Nartheneen who can answer questions about the civilization. If the party sides with the guards, the Nartheneen authorities might be more inclined to look the other way if the adventurers get into trouble.
10	Market Day	While traveling in the city, the party happens upon a street hosting a pop-up market. Artisans from across Nasoten display their wares in tented stalls down the road. Music fills the air, and a variety of Nartheneen foods are for sale from small carts. Touring the market allows the party to see the luxuries Nasoten has to offer and allows them an opportunity to purchase a wide variety of useful items.





Trial of the Tomb. When the adventurers first meet Ishaq-Zahur, he explains that the Nartheneen need assistance from worthy heroes. If the party is eager to prove their worth, he suggests they head to his royal tomb's construction site. There, the characters can meet the Foreman, who is always in need of heroes to test his latest tomb designs. If the adventurers head to the tomb, the Foreman is delighted to put them through a grueling series of dungeon rooms he is considering as additions to guard Ishaq-Zahur's final resting place.

A Light in the Dark. While the adventurers are staying at the golden palace by Ishaq-Zahur's invitation, they are approached by cultists of the Ebon Flame. These individuals are splinter-cell members of the cult who disagree with the priest-king's decision to keep the power of the Ebon Flame secret. These cultists are extremely secretive but tell the party of a secret passageway that leads into the temple of flame below the palace. The cultists ask the party to meet them later in this temple to learn the truth about Ishaq-Zahur. If the party does as requested, they walk into a trap. The cultists lock the characters in the temple with a horrific avatar of the Ebon Flame to test their worthiness. If the party survives the encounter with the monster, these cultists are impressed and willing to work with the characters against Ishaq-Zahur.

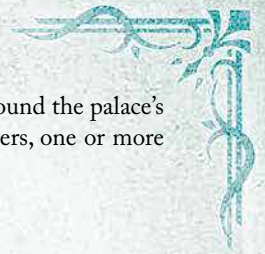
SOCIAL

Ishaq-Zahur is a particularly thoughtful and well-spoken villain. He is, after all, the leader of a nation. Social interactions with the priest-king feel like a well-practiced dance, as he has a talent for turning adversaries into allies. His social graces should not be mistaken for kindness, however; a creature who insults him is likely to find themselves obliterated in an instant. Speaking with Ishaq-Zahur should always feel dangerous, almost as dangerous as fighting him outright.

Social Encounters

Ishaq-Zahur is a master of social manipulation, and social encounters frequently occur until the Nartheneen become openly hostile toward the end of a campaign. Because the priest-king needs the nations surrounding Nasoten to trust the city (or at least not be openly hostile toward it), he often invites representatives of these nations to visit with him directly in the golden palace.

Diplomatic Relations. Ishaq-Zahur invites representatives from the surrounding regions to attend a celebration at the golden palace. The adventuring party is hired by one such representative to serve as personal bodyguards during the event. The celebration is an extraordinary affair, meant to impress guests with Nasoten's



strength and prosperity. The guests are safe during the event, but it becomes clear that not all the Nartheneen people are as interested in peace as the priest-king appears to be.

Conspiracy Theories. Ishaq-Zahur has growing suspicions that one of his four sons is getting too close to discovering his secret connection to the Ebon Flame. Hoping to dispose of the situation without arousing further suspicion among his courtiers, the priest-king enlists the party to discover which one of his sons has been “conspiring” against him (he does not reveal his involvement with the Ebon Flame to the party). All four of Ishaq-Zahur’s sons belong to the ram-headed warrior caste and are involved with different aspects of the military throughout Nasoten. Ideally, the party will discover the traitorous son and simply report back to the priest-king. However, Ishaq-Zahur isn’t particularly upset if the party happens to kill the offending child independently.

Curiosity Killed the Cat. The adventuring party receives a message from a royal androsphinx named Ialu. The sphinx requests that the party meet with them as soon as possible at a holy site called the Pools of Wisdom, where the sphinx intends to reveal information of dire consequence. Ialu, like the other royal androsphinxes, has become corrupted by the Ebon Flame, but they continue to resist the flame’s total control. Unfortunately for Ialu, the other androsphinxes of the city have noticed this, and by the time the party reaches the meeting place, Ialu has been assassinated. Finding the sphinx’s body is a horrifying event for the priests who maintain the Pools, and they request the party solve the murder as soon as possible.

COMBAT

Direct combat with Ishaq-Zahur is unlikely to happen until relations with the Nartheneen begin to unravel toward the end of the campaign. The priest-king only fights on his own behalf when his hand is forced. In other cases, he commands the royal androsphinxes or one of his sons to fight in his stead. Even though Ishaq-Zahur cannot be bothered to fight the characters until he must, there are still plenty of combat encounter opportunities.

A Worthy Challenge. By Nartheneen law, any citizen can challenge any other citizen to a trial by combat to settle a dispute. The loser of such a deal must concede to whatever terms are set forth by the victor. If the characters attempt to issue such a challenge to Ishaq-Zahur, he sends one of his four ram-caste sons to fight on his behalf to settle the dispute. If the characters do not offer a challenge, one of the priest-king’s sons challenges the adventurers to a duel independently. The son who challenges the party disagrees with his father’s decision to open the doors of Nasoten to the world and aims to beat the characters into leaving the city.

Servant of Flame. The royal androsphinxes of Nasoten are dedicated to the Ebon Flame even more than they are to Ishaq-Zahur. If one or more of the sphinxes believe the party is close to revealing the Ebon Flame’s secrets, they take action into their own paws. The androsphinxes command great respect across the city. They can easily gain access to anywhere the adventurers might be resting while visiting the city to launch a surprise attack.

Alternatively, if the characters begin to snoop around the palace’s hidden passageways that lead to the cult chambers, one or more sphinxes attack them there.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Artillery

Ishaq-Zahur is a magical powerhouse who can smite his enemies from afar. His primary weapon is his formidable array of spells, along with his capacity to sling an alarming number of them in a single round. Note that thanks to his Scepter of the Priest-King feature, Ishaq-Zahur can even concentrate on multiple spells simultaneously, an extremely handy ability. In most battles, Ishaq-Zahur has the foresight to cast spells before battle begins. These often include *fire shield*, *freedom of movement*, *death ward*, and others. His most powerful spell in this regard is *invulnerability*, which he typically saves for when things are looking down and when it is less likely to be dispelled.

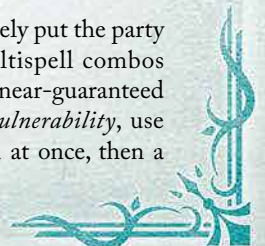
When going on the offensive, Ishaq-Zahur can choose between slinging multiple spells or more powerful single effects. However, note the priest-king’s Ancient Magic feature, which allows him to improve the level of some of his weaker spells to a far more threatening level. This effect pairs well with his lowest-level spells and should be used to test the characters’ defenses in a variety of aspects. Once Ishaq-Zahur knows what is likely to work, he can apply his more powerful spells for maximum effect. *Harm*, *netherclasm*, and *power word stun* are dangerous, but the true horror comes in the form of *meteor swarm* and other such spells. Note that Ishaq-Zahur can recover these more expensive spells through the Divine Blessing legendary action, so don’t be afraid to exhaust their supply at optimal moments.

Supplicate the Lesser is one of Ishaq-Zahur’s greatest abilities, capable of incapacitating an entire party in an instant. Use this ability to affect as many targets as possible, and follow up with spells that best capitalize on paralyzed and prone targets. Be sure to familiarize yourself with Ishaq-Zahur’s many spells to get the most mileage from their effects. While his list isn’t extensive, it is carefully curated to provide a diverse pool of defensive, offensive, and utility options and maximize his action economy. A good turn with Ishaq-Zahur should make use of all of his actions and optimal spells.

Easier Tactics – Ishaq-Zahur approaches his foes with an air of casual indifference, neglecting to enter combat with his typical spell defenses up. His turns and spell casts should alternate between providing defensive buffs and damaging enemies, never hammering the characters so hard that they cannot keep the pressure on. Don’t use Supplicate the Lesser until about halfway through the fight, and never follow it up with a devastating effect like *meteor swarm*.

Harder Tactics – While you might be inclined to have Ishaq-Zahur use Scepter of the Priest-King to concentrate on *invulnerability*, switch things up and have him concentrate instead on *spirit guardians*. This removes the possibility of counterplay by disarming Ishaq-Zahur.

Open combat with *meteor swarm* to immediately put the party on the defense. Clean up the mess with Multispell combos of *hold monster* and *flame strike* for consistent, near-guaranteed damage. If the party manages to disable *invulnerability*, use Supplicate the Lesser to disable many of them at once, then a







few round-by-round turns of *power word stun* to disable any who are still standing. You may even be able to squeeze in another use of *invulnerability* should the characters struggle to get back on their feet.

NEW SPELL: NETHERCLASM

8th-level necromancy (warlocks only)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self (60-foot line)

Components: V, S, M (a pound of rancid meat)

Duration: 1 round

A flood of ebon netherplasm extends from you along the ground in a 60-foot line that is 30 feet wide. Creatures in the area have their speed halved and have their vision reduced to 10 feet. At the start of your next turn, the area erupts in a blast of netherplasm that is 60 feet high. Creatures in the area when it erupts must attempt a Constitution saving throw, taking 12d10 necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Mythic Ishaq-Zahur

Mythic Ishaq-Zahur trades in his knowledge of the *invulnerability* spell in favor of a slew of mythic actions and some mighty Epic spells. Note that many of the priest-king's abilities are improved in his mythic form, such as the Ancient Magic feature. Using these new mythic action options is key to Ishaq-Zahur's success. Divine Insight boosts his talents in ability checks and saving throws and is particularly helpful when dealing with enemy spellcasters. Divine Might is ideal for damage spells and pairs extremely well with his most powerful magics, such as *meteor swarm*. Divine Resistance is the defensive option, granting Ishaq-Zahur an incredible defense against almost any effect. The priest-king is more than intelligent enough to know which effect works well against his foes, so don't feel bad about using these to counter the characters' every move.

MYTHIC EFFECTS

As a mythic creature, Ishaq-Zahur causes the following effects:

Deific Being. Ishaq-Zahur is a demigod. Against non-Epic creatures he gains the following benefits, unless he chooses not to:

- Ishaq-Zahur automatically hits with any attacks.
- Ishaq-Zahur automatically succeeds on saving throws and ability checks, and non-Epic creatures can't succeed on saving throws or ability checks against him.
- When Ishaq-Zahur deals damage to non-Epic creatures, he deals maximum damage on all his damage dice.

Divine Ritual. By spending 1 minute of uninterrupted concentration, Ishaq-Zahur can cast one of the following spells without the need for any components: *commune*, *guards and wards*, *plane shift*, *teleport*, *temple of the gods*,¹ *true resurrection*.

¹ The spell *temple of the gods* can be found in the official 5E supplement *XGE*.

ISHAQ-ZAHUR

Medium humanoid (Nartheneen), chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 493 (58d8 + 232)

Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	24 (+7)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +19, Con +12, Int +15, Wis +15

Skills History +23, Insight +15, Intimidation +12,

Perception +15, Religion +23

Damage Resistances fire, radiant

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages Common, Nartheneen

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Ancient Magic. Ishaq-Zahur practices an ancient form of magic that is no longer understood, known as drift magic. When he would cast a spell with a casting time of an action or bonus action on each of his turns, Ishaq-Zahur can expend 40 feet of movement to improve the potency of the spell. When he does so, the spell's level is increased to 6th level, and it cannot be countered or dispelled by non-Epic effects for its duration.

Mythic Resistance. When Ishaq-Zahur fails a saving throw, he can expend one of his unspent legendary action to succeed instead.

Nartheneen Physiology. Ishaq-Zahur is a member of the ibis caste of Nartheneen, the holy priests of their people. When Ishaq-Zahur deals damage other than bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, he can choose to instead deal radiant damage.

Scepter of the Priest-King. Ishaq-Zahur holds the scepter of the Nartheneen priest-kings. While he holds the scepter, if he casts a spell that requires concentration, he may choose to have the scepter maintain concentration on the spell for its duration. The scepter can only concentrate on one spell in this manner, and the effect immediately ends if Ishaq-Zahur no longer holds the scepter.

Innate Spellcasting. Ishaq-Zahur is a 20th-level spellcaster. His innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 23, +15 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *counterspell*, *daylight*, *death ward*, *destructive wave*, *dispel magic*, *fire shield*, *flame strike*, *freedom of movement*, *hold monster*, *misty step*, *sacred flame*, *shield of faith*, *spirit guardians*, *spiritual weapon*

2/day each: *divine word*, *harm*, *heal*, *netherclasm*,² *power word stun*

1/day each: *invulnerability*,³ *meteor swarm*, *power word kill*

ACTIONS

Multispell. Ishaq-Zahur casts two different spells he can cast at will.

Supplicate the Lesser (Recharge 5–6). Ishaq-Zahur demands creatures of his choice within 60 feet of him that can hear him honor his presence. An affected creature must attempt a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw, becoming paralyzed until the end of their next turn on a failure, or falling prone on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Ishaq-Zahur can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ishaq-Zahur regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Readiness. Ishaq-Zahur gains an additional reaction, which lasts until the end of his next turn.

Sacred Flame. Ishaq-Zahur casts *sacred flame*.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Ishaq-Zahur casts a spell he can cast at will.

Divine Blessing (Costs 3 Actions). Ishaq-Zahur recovers a cast of a spell, up to his maximum number of casts per day of that spell.

² The spell *netherclasm* is described earlier in the chapter as well as in the 2CGaming supplement *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 1*.

³ The spell *invulnerability* can be found in the official 5E supplement *XGE*.

MYTHIC ISHAQ-ZAHUR

Medium mythic humanoid (Nartheneen), chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 608 (64d8 + 320)

Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	28 (+9)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +9, Dex +12, Con +13, Int +17, Wis +16, Cha +13

Skills History +25, Insight +16, Intimidation +13, Perception +16, Religion +25

Damage Resistances fire, radiant

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 26

Languages Common, Nartheneen

Challenge Mythic 1

TRAITS

Ancient Magic. Ishaq-Zahur practices an ancient form of magic that is no longer understood, known as drift magic. When he would cast a spell with a casting time of an action or bonus action on each of his turns, Ishaq-Zahur can expend 40 feet of movement to improve the potency of the spell. When he does so, the spell's level is increased to 9th level (when applicable), and it becomes a Deific effect.

Innate Spellcasting⁴. Ishaq-Zahur is a 22nd-level spellcaster. His innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks). He can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components.

At will: *counterspell*, *daylight*, *destructive wave*, *dispel magic*, *fire shield*, *flame strike*, *hold monster*, *misty step*, *sacred flame*

2/day each: *divine word*, *harm*, *heal*, *netherclasm*,⁵ *power word stun*

1/day each: *antimagic ray*, *catastrophe*, *genesis*, *meteor swarm*

Mythic Resistance. When Ishaq-Zahur fails a saving throw, he can expend one of his unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Nartheneen Physiology. Ishaq-Zahur is a member of the ibis caste of Nartheneen, the holy priests of their people. When Ishaq-Zahur deals damage other than bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, he can choose to instead deal radiant damage.

Scepter of the Priest-King. Ishaq-Zahur holds the scepter of the Nartheneen priest-kings. While he holds the scepter, if he casts a spell that requires concentration, he may choose to have the scepter maintain concentration on the spell for its duration. The scepter can only concentrate on one spell in this manner, and the effect immediately ends if Ishaq-Zahur no longer holds the scepter.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Ishaq-Zahur takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. Ishaq-Zahur can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Divine Insight. Until the next initiative count of 20, Ishaq-Zahur gains Epic advantage on saving throws and ability checks. Additionally, when Ishaq-Zahur attempts an ability check that uses an ability score other than Wisdom, he may instead use Wisdom in association with that check.

Divine Might. Until the next initiative count of 20, Ishaq-Zahur rolls the maximum amount of damage on all his damage dice.

Divine Resistance. Ishaq-Zahur gains 100 temporary hit points, which cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source. While he has temporary hit points in this manner, Ishaq-Zahur is immune to all conditions.

ACTIONS

Multispell. Ishaq-Zahur casts two different spells he can cast at will.

Supplicate the Lesser (Recharge 5–6). Ishaq-Zahur demands creatures of his choice within 60 feet of him that can hear him honor his presence. An affected creature must attempt a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, becoming paralyzed until the end of their next turn on a failure, or falling prone on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Ishaq-Zahur can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Ishaq-Zahur regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Readiness. Ishaq-Zahur gains an additional reaction, which lasts until the end of his next turn.

Sacred Flame. Ishaq-Zahur casts *sacred flame*.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Ishaq-Zahur casts a spell he can cast at will.

Divine Blessing (Costs 2 Actions). Ishaq-Zahur recovers a cast of a spell, up to his maximum number of casts per day of that spell.

⁴ The spells *antimagic ray*, *catastrophe*, and *genesis* are Epic spells and can be found in 2CGaming's *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

⁵ The spell *netherclasm* is described earlier in the chapter as well as in the 2CGaming supplement *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 1*.

RESOURCES

As priest-king of the Nartheneen, Ishaq-Zahur has a wealth of resources at his disposal. Even though the city of Nasoten is the only remaining piece of the Nartheneen empire, its riches and population are enough to rival an entire country. A direct assault on Ishaq-Zahur is impossible. The city of Nasoten is protected by walls, defended by magic, and occupied by thousands of highly trained soldiers. The citizenry of Nasoten worship Ishaq-Zahur as a literal god, and unless their minds are changed, fighting Ishaq-Zahur means fighting an entire city of Nartheneen. The odds are stacked against the heroes from the beginning, but those who play politics well and secretly work to expose the priest-king's secrets can destroy Ishaq-Zahur's schemes from the inside out.

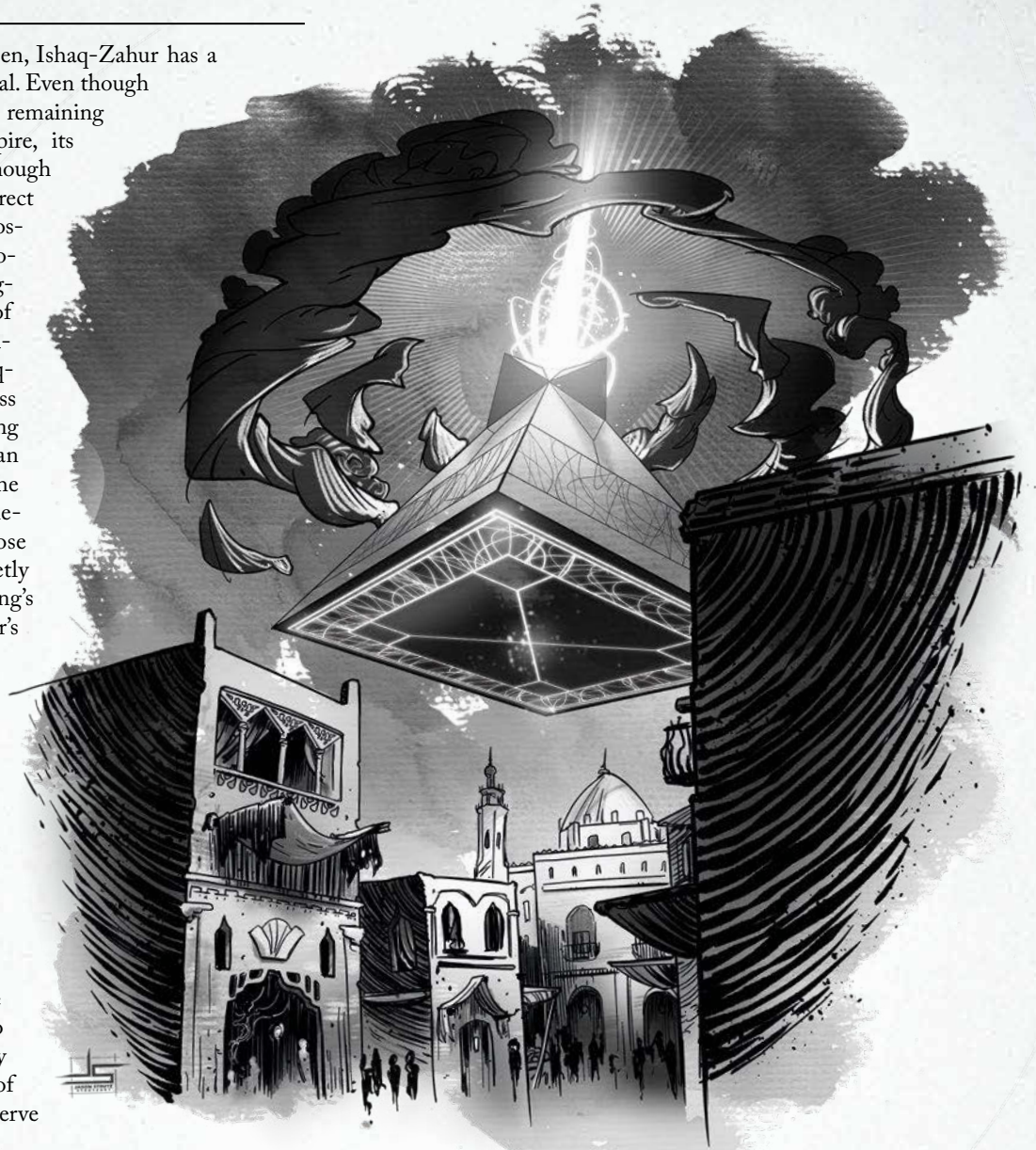
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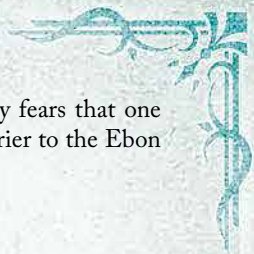
Ishaq-Zahur is playing an incredibly dangerous game trying to keep the secret of the Ebon Flame hidden until the time is right. Consequently, few people in his confidence can be trusted to parlay on his behalf. When not interacting with the priest-king directly, the adventurers are most likely to interact with the artificial entity known as “the Foreman” or one of the royal androsphinxes who serve him.

The Foreman. In Nartheneen society, the title of priest-king is not determined by lineage, but by a trial of strength and cunning. Among the other duties a priest-king must conduct in life, they are tasked with constructing an expansive dungeon to serve as their final resting place. Upon their death, a priest-king is buried in this structure with an artifact called *The Scepter of the Priest-King*. After a period of mourning following the death, a grand challenge is hosted during which worthy contenders attempt to bypass the tomb's hazards to claim the scepter. The creature who successfully emerges from the tomb with the scepter in hand is crowned priest-king. To preserve this tradition and safeguard its sanctity, the first priest-king used their power to create a guardian suitable for the task. This guardian is a construct woven from drift magic called the Foreman. The Foreman is responsible for preserving the Nartheneen ritual of lineage across the generations. The Foreman is immortal, and for hundreds of years it has remained

responsible for helping each priest-king build an appropriate tomb to house the scepter upon death. While the Foreman spends most of its time designing these elaborate tombs, it also plays a critical role in confirming each new priest-king. Unlike the Nartheneen, the Foreman is utterly incapable of ambition or emotion; consequently, it is the final adjudicate in determining if the scepter has been fairly won.

Royal Androsphinxes. One of the greatest boons to Nartheneen power has been an ongoing relationship with a pride of royal androsphinxes. In the distant past, the Nartheneen forged an alliance with a community of sphinxes who sought to escape a rival nation's oppression. The priest-king who helped liberate them cemented a partnership between this powerful pride and the priest caste of the Nartheneen that has stood the test of





time. These androsphinxes are one of the few creatures regarded as equals by the Nartheneen, and their partnership has led to several unique advances in magics that alter time and space. When Ishaq-Zahur forged a pact with the Ebon Flame, the royal androsphinxes were among the first groups to be infested by its corruption due to their mystic sensitivities. Unlike the Nartheneen, however, the sphinxes' complicated minds have not entirely surrendered to the corruption. Rather than losing themselves to the burning flames, the androsphinxes have become zealous guardians of its power, obsessed with serving it before all things. This devotion to the Ebon Flame has so far

worked in Ishaq-Zahur's favor, but he rightfully fears that one day the sphinxes will perceive even him as a barrier to the Ebon Flame's agenda.

REWARDS

If Ishaq-Zahur is defeated, the characters can retrieve his scepter. The scepter itself possesses great power but is also made potent by its influence over the Nartheneen people. Any who carry the scepter without the Foreman's consent are doomed to face persecution from both its guardian and all surviving Nartheneen.

ROYAL ANDROSPHINX

Large monstrosity, lawful evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 262 (25d10 + 125)

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +11, Int +12, Wis +10

Skills Arcana +12, Insight +16, Perception +16, Religion +18

Damage Immunities psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 26

Languages Common, Nartheneen, Sphinx

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Inscrutable. The sphinx is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as any divination spell that it refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the sphinx's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.

Magic Weapons. The sphinx's weapon attacks are magical.

Spellcasting. The sphinx is a 12th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 20, +12 to hit with spell attacks). It requires no material components to cast its spells. The sphinx has the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light, message, sacred flame*

1st level (4 slots): *command, healing word, sanctuary*

2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse, counterspell*

4th level (3 slots): *death ward, freedom of movement*

5th level (2 slots): *antilife shell, scrying*

6th level (1 slot): *mass suggestion*

Timely Resilience (3/Day). When an ability or spell would afford the sphinx the opportunity to attempt a saving throw at the end of its turn to end an effect, it can choose to attempt that saving throw at the start of its turn instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The sphinx makes two Claw attacks, and either uses its Roar or makes a Bite attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 33 (4d12 + 7) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 18 (2d10 + 7) slashing damage.

Roar (3/Day). The sphinx emits one of three magical roars, choosing from the options below. Each creature within 500 feet of the sphinx and able to hear the roar must attempt a saving throw according to the roar used.

- **Roar of Slow Time.** Each creature that fails a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw is surrounded by a nimbus of slow time causing its movement speed to be halved and preventing it from taking reactions for 1 minute. A creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns to end the effect.
- **Roar of Temporal Acceleration.** Each creature that fails a DC 20 Constitution saving throw is thrown forward in time, gaining two levels of exhaustion and causing all effects, spells, and abilities with a duration less than 24 hours to end immediately. A successful saving throw causes the creature to gain one level of exhaustion instead.
- **Roar of Time Displacement.** Each creature that fails a DC 20 Charisma saving throw is displaced from the current timestream until the end of its next turn. While in this state it can move and take actions but cannot affect creatures other than itself with abilities, attacks, or spells, nor can it be affected by abilities, attacks, or spells by creatures other than the sphinx.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

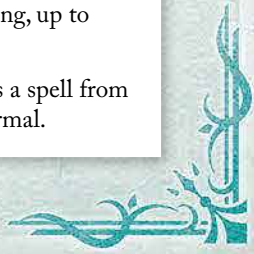
The sphinx can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The sphinx regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Cast a Cantrip. The sphinx casts a cantrip.

Claw Attack. The sphinx makes one Claw attack.

Teleport (Costs 2 Actions). The sphinx magically teleports, along with any equipment it is wearing or carrying, up to 120 feet to an unoccupied space it can see.

Cast a Spell (Costs 3 Actions). The sphinx casts a spell from its list of prepared spells, using a spell slot as normal.



Scepter of the Priest-King

Staff, artifact (requires attunement by a creature deemed worthy by the Foreman)

This staff is shaped like a crook and is made of striped black wood and gold. The ceremonial *Scepter of the Priest-King* is passed from one Nartheneen to another, symbolizing the divine transition of power in their society. The staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it.

Attunement. To attune to the scepter, a creature must be deemed worthy by its guardian, the immortal entity known as the Foreman. Without the express consent of this being, it is impossible to attune to the scepter. The first time you attune to the scepter, you become permanently bonded to it. You cannot choose to end attunement to the scepter, and no other creature can attune to the scepter. If the attuned wielder dies and remains dead for 7 consecutive days, the attunement ends, and another creature can attune to the scepter if they are granted permission by the Foreman. While attuned to the staff, you gain the following traits:

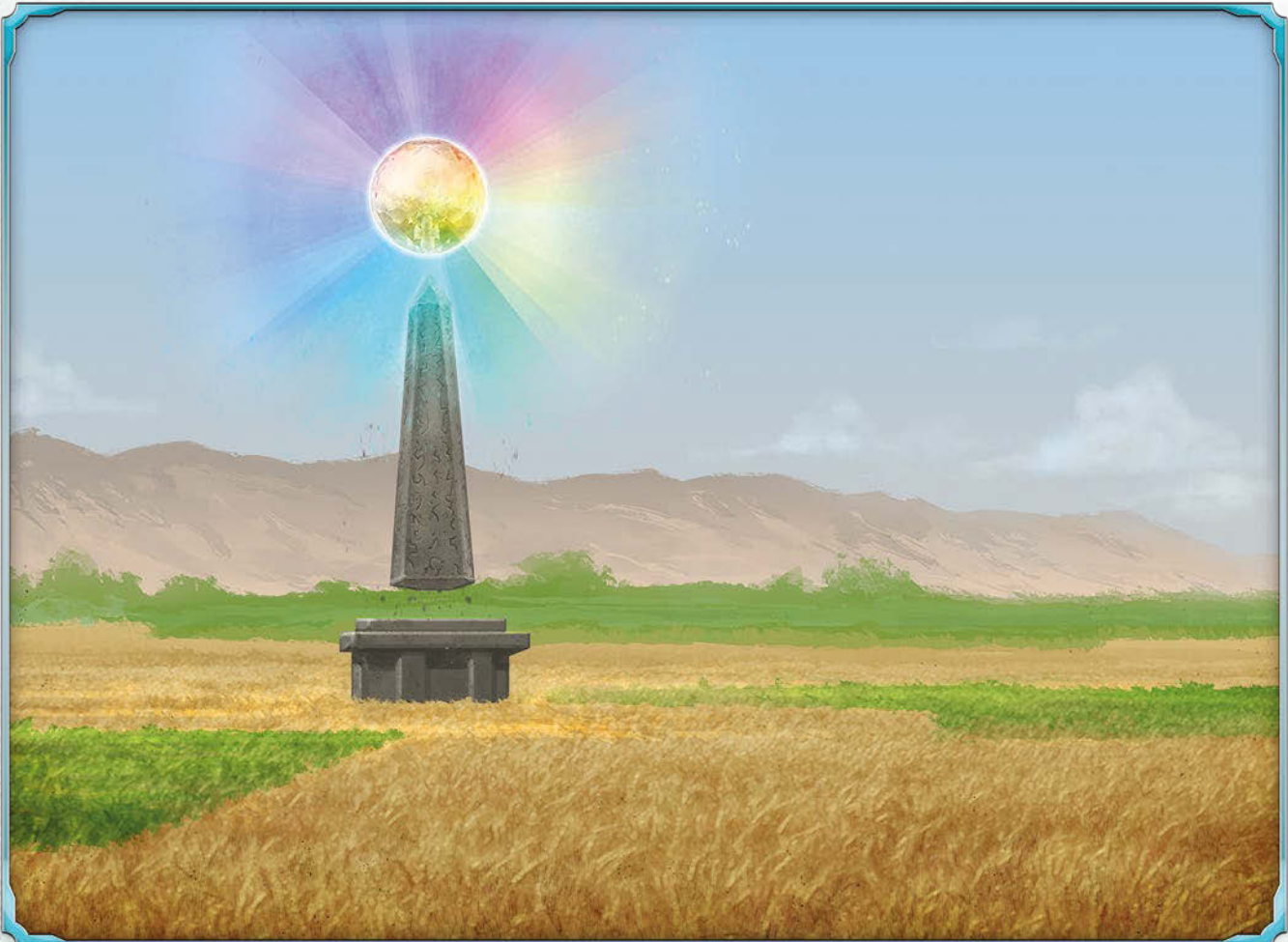
- **All-Seeing Eyes.** Your eyes become the color of molten gold, and you have truesight out to a range of 120 feet.
- **Divine Protection.** You gain a +2 bonus to Armor Class, saving throws, and spell attack rolls.

- **Regal Aura.** Your Charisma score becomes 20 unless it is already 20 or higher.
- **Sun-Cursed.** You have resistance to fire and radiant damage.

Gift of Kings. While holding the scepter (even while not attuned to it), when you cast a spell, you can cause the scepter to maintain concentration on the spell you have cast. The scepter can maintain concentration on only one spell at a time. While the scepter maintains concentration for you, you do not have to roll Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration. While the scepter concentrates on a spell, you can cast another spell that requires concentration, but the second spell is affected by taking damage as normal.

Radiant. The scepter sheds bright light in a 5-foot radius and dim light for an additional 5 feet. As a bonus action, you can intensify the scepter's light, causing it to shed bright light in a 15-foot radius and dim light for an additional 15 feet or reduce its glow to its normal intensity.

Destroying the Scepter. The Foreman is the only being capable of destroying the scepter, a task it does not consider until the last Nartheneen is dead. If the scepter is destroyed, the Foreman is destroyed as well.



GRENDDELKIN

Child of Monsters

"A creature of darkness, exiled from happiness, and accursed of gods, the destroyer and devourer of our kind."

DESCRIPTION

Grendelkin are creatures born of dark ritual. As such, each grendelkin differs slightly in appearance, typically assuming the worst features of the host creature who created them. Due to their horrific appearances, grendelkin are forced to live away from others. This imposed isolation drives these fearsome giants to constantly experience unbridled rage, an emotion that fuels their devastating fighting capabilities. The only creature spared from the rampaging ferocity of the grendelkin is the creature's parent, whom they often serve with deep affection. While all grendelkin differ from one another on a superficial level, they are all gigantic, possessing twisted and bulging bodies capable of extraordinary strength. These monstrous children are hideous to behold, a perverse version of the parent who bore them.

Author's Note

The creature Grendel from the epic of Beowulf is shrouded in mystery. Since Grendel isn't exactly described in the original text, many scholars have crafted extraordinarily differing interpretations of the enigmatic character. Whether interpreted as a berserker, a troll, or something more feral, Grendel is always portrayed as hideous to look upon. I've imagined the grendelkin to be both tragic and powerful. They are unfortunate creatures doomed to serve the whims of the desperate creatures which spawn them. I hope that the grendelkin in your games inspire some measure of empathy from your players alongside brutal devastation. Being born "accursed of the gods" seems an understandable reason to be so full of rage.

- Celeste Conowitch

PROFILE

Personality: Enraged

Ideals: Grendelkin live to serve the beings who created them and regard them as parents. A creature desperate enough to perform the rituals required to birth a grendelkin often has an ambitious reason for doing so. A grendelkin serves their parent without question, lending their strength and ferocity to whatever tasks their creator sets for them.

Bonds: Grendelkin cannot exist for long in civilization and most often depend entirely on their parent for social contact. The bond between a grendelkin and their parent transcends mere physical affection. The two creatures are tied magically to one another. A grendelkin can't defy the wishes of their creator. Even if a grendelkin's parent dies, the grendelkin spends the rest of their life attempting to carry out their parent's last set of commands.

Flaws: Grendelkin are born to serve and are doomed to a life of codependence. Even if their parent creature is cruel to them, a grendelkin still regards them with great love. This dedication to fulfill their progenitor's wishes at any cost is frequently the cause of death for these pitiable creatures.

Legend: The first grendelkin was born to a human woman whose village was devastated by a rival nation. After losing those she loved to violence and experiencing violence herself at the raiders' hands, she sought magic to punish those who had taken everything from her. As time passed and the raiders established themselves as the rulers of her village, the woman learned she was pregnant. She prayed to gods, to demons, to darker powers, to anyone who would listen, that her child would be born with the ability to enact her vengeance. An eldritch being heard the woman's pleas and began to instruct her in dreams what she must do to bear such a child. When the time came, the woman gave birth to a being of supreme strength, though horrible to behold. Her child was the first grendelkin, a hideous monster born of her flesh and dark desire. The grendelkin grew to full size in a matter of weeks and slaughtered every last raider shortly after. The surviving townspeople were now free but equally terrified of the woman and her new child. Mother and grendelkin were driven from the village, retreating into the wilderness to live out the remainder of their lives. It is unclear how exactly an individual can learn the secret rituals to birth a grendelkin, but it is said that if your pleas are desperate enough, that mysterious being shall speak to you as well in dreams.



GRENDELKIN IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The grendelkin is a monster spawned from dark desire, hidden away until their ferocity can be unleashed upon the world. It is unclear when the ritual to birth these beings was first created, but these monstrous children have stalked through time, always leaving their indelible impression through supreme violence. Grendelkin are malformed combinations of giant and monster, capable of extraordinary strength. When stirred to passion, a grendelkin can level structures, rend armies limb from limb, and shatter the very earth.

Grendelkin are often created to punish those who have wronged their parent creatures. A court mage dismissed from their post, a sole survivor of a bloody coup, or a druid facing the destruction of their wood are just a few examples of those who may create a grendelkin to enact revenge. Any creature desperate for the destructive power these children hold are worthy candidates.

A campaign involving a grendelkin centers on the agenda of the grendelkin's parent creature. Once you decide what the parent wants to accomplish, you can begin introducing the fallout that occurs as their plan progresses. Grendelkin are not capable of subtle workings themselves but act as the weapon of their creator's will. A grendelkin terrorizing a community, absconding with an artifact, or serving a villainous leader is likely to attract adventurers' attention.

INTRODUCTION

A campaign with a grendelkin always starts with some kind of fallout. Grendelkin are typically raised secretly in isolation, so the revelation of their presence is always devastating. The adventurers could discover an entire town slaughtered, an ally's battalion devastated in minutes, a mage's tower ransacked, or any other equally shocking trigger event.

CONFLICT

A major source of conflict when dealing with a grendelkin is locating it. Grendelkin only attack in accordance with their parent's goals, so if adventurers have any chance of stopping the ferocious creature, they must discover clues as to its ultimate goal.

Characters are likely to encounter the grendelkin several times throughout a campaign, arriving just in time to drive the monster away from doing more harm. A grendelkin does not fight to the death unless specifically ordered to do so, which means the creature does just enough damage to escape these first few fights.

CONCLUSION

Once the characters have discovered the true nature of the parent's plot, they can stop it at the source. If the grendelkin's creator becomes aware of the party's interference, they likely send their child to eliminate the threat once and for all. Such a



command from the parent results in the final confrontation with the grendelkin, who will fight to the death enacting orders.

Alternatively, if the adventurers attempt to slay the parent directly, a final confrontation occurs in the parent's lair. A grendelkin fights to the death to protect its parent or to take revenge upon those who have slain their beloved creator.

CHALLENGES

A grendelkin can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with them.

EXPLORATION

When not actively pursuing their parents' plans, grendelkin are sequestered far from civilization. A grendelkin requires a great deal of space and access to enormous amounts of food, so a deep tract of forest, a series of underground caverns, or a remote uninhabited island would all be a likely place for a grendelkin lair.

Grendelkin may share their lairs with their parents, who are frequently pariahs among their peers. Alternatively, the parent could have a discrete way to visit the grendelkin in secret.

Regional Effects

The region within 10 miles of the grendelkin's lair is warped by their malevolent power, which creates the following effects within the area:

- The land within 10 miles of the lair teems with plant and animal life. All predators have abandoned the area or have been slain by the grendelkin.
- Within 1 mile of the lair, non-beasts feel the effects of subtle and unnatural magic. Creatures other than the grendelkin in the affected area gain no benefits from finishing short or long rests.
- Creatures in the affected area have disadvantage on Charisma ability checks to avoid violence and bloodshed.

If the grendelkin is destroyed, these effects fade over 1d10 days.

The Grendelkin's Lair

The grendelkin's lair is always a remote location where they can eat, recover, and sleep in isolation. The exact specifications of a grendelkin's lair typically depend on their parent creature's needs and whether the parent creature also resides with the grendelkin. A grendelkin born from a red dragon, for example, probably keeps their lair on a volcanic island. Grendelkin who live closer to civilization with their parent creature might be kept in a labyrinth beneath their manor house, be confined within an abandoned castle, stalk the deep recesses of a local forest, or even live bound inside a pocket dimension. Feel free to be creative with the placement of a grendelkin's lair.

Though these lairs are in wildly different locales, they all share some commonalities. The lairs must be gigantic to accommodate the creature's massive size. The lairs are also frequently wrecked due to the grendelkin's proclivity for violent mood swings. These

rageful tendencies make it difficult to keep any real furnishings or decorations intact. Most lairs are bare of furniture and are instead filled with textural features to soothe the grendelkin, such as pools of cool water, piles of soft rugs or hides, and fragrant flowers or fungi. Grendelkin also require vast quantities of food, so their lairs are always near lush hunting areas. A more gentle-minded grendelkin may even tend herds to ensure constant access to food.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the grendelkin can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects.

- A thunderclap originates at a point the grendelkin can see within 120 feet of them. Each creature within a 60-foot radius centered on that point must attempt a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) thunder damage and becoming deafened until the end of its next turn on a failure.
- The grendelkin surges with strength. Until the next initiative count of 20, the grendelkin automatically succeeds on Strength ability checks and saving throws.
- The grendelkin causes the area to shake violently. The area of the lair becomes difficult terrain for creatures other than the grendelkin until the next initiative count of 20.

Exploration Encounters

Here are some suggested exploration encounters for a campaign featuring a grendelkin.

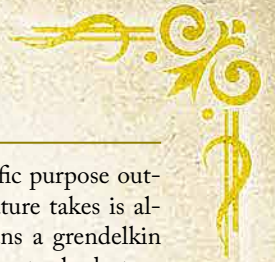
The Trespasser. A lord wishes to hunt in the local forests, which are bursting with game. However, a gargantuan beast of some kind stalks the woods, consuming all the best quarry. The lord hires adventurers to discover more about the monster (and stop it if possible).

Mystery Island. A crew of settlers was sent by ship to set up a town on an isolated island. After sailing out, the settlers have not been heard from again. City officials ask the party to investigate what happened to the colony.

The Grave Cave. After a run-in with a grendelkin, the adventurers must track them back to their lair. Once the party arrives, they must fight their way through a twisting series of subterranean caverns the grendelkin has filled with traps.

SOCIAL

Grendelkin are hesitant to engage in conversation with any creature, especially if they have not been instructed to do so by their parent. Grendelkin are kept away from society and consequently have the guile of a child. A social encounter is more likely to occur with the creator than with the grendelkin. However, there is plenty of potential for characters to interact with victims of the grendelkin's sprees. Trying to tease out what exactly happened and why can be a major point of intrigue in a grendelkin campaign.



Social Encounters

Here are some suggested social encounters for a campaign featuring a grendelkin.

Recovery Efforts. The adventurers encounter a city decimated by a grendelkin. They must work with local authorities to gather information and interview witnesses about the creature responsible for the destruction. Few clues can be found, but a local legend speaks of a mighty giantess with a grudge against the villagers for ancient transgressions.

Parent Conference. The heroes capture or confront the parent responsible for starting the grendelkin's rampage. Convincing the mother to betray her child will not be easy, but it may be the only chance of stopping the grendelkin before it strikes again.

Scandalous Secret. Rumors point to a local ruler hiding some kind of monster in their castle. This monster comes out at night to terrorize the land, with the authorities curiously unwilling to do anything about the beast. In truth, the ruler sired a grendelkin with a fearsome dragoness, who blackmails them into enabling her monstrous progeny.

COMBAT

A grendelkin always fights in pursuit of a specific purpose outlined by their parent. Whatever action the creature takes is always tempered by this ultimate goal. This means a grendelkin does not recklessly pursue prey and does not wantonly destroy everything in their path (unless that is indeed their mission). While fighting, a grendelkin is fueled by the dark wrath infused into them at creation. This ferocity, combined with a deep sense of purpose, makes a grendelkin particularly horrifying to behold in combat.

Combat Encounter Example

A grendelkin most frequently brings the fight to their victims, but on the rare occasion the grendelkin picks the staging ground, they set the field to their advantage as much as possible. The grendelkin relies on their ability to grapple then crush their enemies, so a battleground where their foe's mobility is limited is ideal. Because of this, grendelkin prefer fighting amid ruined buildings, boulder-strewn fields, or inside cavern systems.



Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Brute

A grendelkin is a straightforward and uncomplicated combatant whose primary goal is to bring enemies within reach to be easily pulverized. Fighting with immense strength and unrivaled ferocity, a grendelkin charges into battle without fear or mercy. They rarely wield weapons, seeking to crush their enemies into oblivion with their bare hands. These creatures begin combat by using their speed and jumping abilities to reach flying characters, those wielding ranged weapons, or magic-users. While dealing with these characters with grapples and Crush actions, a grendelkin ignores attacks from melee characters to build up their rage dice. Note the grendelkin's surprising mobility. They can leap about the battlefield for ideal positioning and to harry seemingly safe enemies. While these creatures are perpetually angry, they are not stupid. A grendelkin should fight with an animalistic cunning, quickly adapting to problems and avoiding obvious hazards. A particularly nasty ability is their Throw action, which can be used to hurl grappled characters like projectiles. A well-run grendelkin sees the characters scurrying for cover against the giant's relentless onslaught, desperately trying to withstand their

punishing blows. Remember to save rage dice for big hits (especially critical ones), and don't be afraid to have the grendelkin take unnecessary hits to build more damage potential.

Easier Tactics – Keep the grendelkin stationary and avoid using the Titanic Leap legendary action. Favor divvying up the grendelkin's attacks between multiple targets, taking extra care not to brutalize squishier characters on accident. Never expend more than five rage dice at a time, and don't expend any when the grendelkin scores a critical hit. It's okay to potentially hit the rage dice cap when running the monster—the players definitely won't notice. Use Throw primarily on objects the grendelkin can reach rather than on characters, and feel free to play the creature like a big, dumb, rage-drunk brawler, which should make battle considerably easier.

Harder Tactics – Don't stop moving on the field, and ruthlessly prioritize eliminating spellcasters. Grapple magic-users, then drag them away from the rest of the party using movement and the Titanic Leap action. Since grendelkin are immune to nonmagical bludgeoning damage, free fall from the air while grappling characters to inflict falling damage on them as often as possible. Once spellcasters are eliminated, prioritize using grapples to get the rest of the characters clustered around the grendelkin. Use Upheaval as often as possible to stun characters, which allows the grendelkin to automatically grapple them then Crush until dead. If there is a character repeatedly attacking the grendelkin with melee weapon attacks, save them for last so you can build up your rage dice.





Mythic Grendelkin

The fighting style of a mythic and non-mythic grendelkin is generally the same, but the mythic grendelkin has a couple more options to focus on single targets. Whenever the mythic grendelkin uses their Blood Thirst ability, they always follow up with attacks that expend rage dice to quickly capitalize on their benefits. Once these dice are expended and a character is grappled, the grendelkin can use Crush on the victim for even more damage efficiency. Make sure to optimize Upheaval and use Throw on stunned targets to keep them away from their allies. This interaction pairs extremely well against airborne enemies, as a thrown target then falls for even more damage on top of being stunned.

Mythic Effects

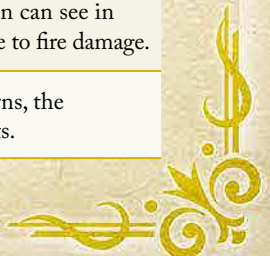
As a mythic creature, the grendelkin causes the following effects.

Dutiful Child. Grendelkin are born to serve the creature who created them. Grendelkin never act against the wishes of their parent and will die in the pursuit of fulfilling whatever agenda has been given to them. A grendelkin cannot be persuaded to defy their orders by non-Deific means.

Mythic Mutation. Grendelkin are created by means of a disturbing ritual performed by a parent creature. Particularly fearsome grendelkin are born with a mythic mutation determined by the creature type of their host parent.

Either choose or roll on the Grendelkin Mutation table to determine a grendelkin's parentage and mutation.

Grendelkin Mutation		
d10	Parent Creature Type	Mutation
1–2	Celestial	The grendelkin has a pair of wings and gains a flying speed of 90 feet.
3–4	Dragon	The grendelkin's skin is covered in a rotting mass of grey scales. Its Armor Class is 26.
5–6	Fey	The grendelkin can teleport in a cloud of fetid spores. The grendelkin can expend a legendary action to teleport up to 30 feet to an unoccupied space they can see.
7–8	Fiend	The grendelkin's eyes and skin glow with a hellish red light. The grendelkin can see in magical darkness and is immune to fire damage.
9–10	Giant	At the start of each of their turns, the grendelkin regains 30 hit points.



GREDELKIN

Gargantuan giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 702 (36d20 + 324)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	8 (-1)	28 (+9)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	6 (-2)

Saving Throws Str +18, Dex +7, Con +17, Wis +13

Skills Athletics +26, Perception +12

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical sources

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages Giant, plus the languages of their parent

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Berserker Rage. When the grendelkin rolls initiative, they immediately enter a berserker rage which lasts until they are no longer in combat. While in this state, creatures have advantage on attack rolls against the grendelkin, and vice versa, and the grendelkin has advantage on Strength saving throws and ability checks.

Additionally, when the grendelkin takes 10 or more damage in a single instance, they gain a special rage die for every 10 damage they took in that instance. Rage dice are d8s and last for as long as the grendelkin is in combat or until they choose to expend them, to a maximum of twenty rage dice. When the grendelkin deals damage on a hit with an attack, they can choose to expend up to ten rage dice and roll them, dealing additional thunder damage on the attack equal to the amount rolled.

Mythic Resistance. When the grendelkin fails a saving throw, they can expend one of their unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Spellshatter (1/Turn). When the grendelkin would make an attack, they can forgo making that attack to attempt to destroy a spell effect within reach. To do so, the grendelkin rolls as though they were making a melee weapon attack. If the result of the attack roll is equal to or greater than 15 + the target's spell level, the spell immediately ends.

Unstoppable. The grendelkin cannot be pushed, pulled, or magically teleported unless they allow it.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The grendelkin makes four attacks, each of which may be a Strike or Throw attack.

Crush. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature grappled by the grendelkin. *Hit:* The target must attempt a DC 26 Constitution saving throw, taking bludgeoning damage equal

to its hit point maximum on a failure, or half as much damage on a success (rounded down).

Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (4d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the grendelkin may grapple it (escape DC 26).

Throw. The grendelkin throws a Huge or smaller creature or object they are holding. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (4d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage. The grendelkin can throw creatures they are grappling as improvised weapons for this attack. On a successful hit, a creature thrown by this attack also takes the attack's damage. Otherwise, it lands prone in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target.

Upheaval (Recharge 5–6). The grendelkin reaves the ground in a 120-foot radius around them. Each creature in the affected area other than the grendelkin must succeed on a DC 26 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone and stunned until the end of its next turn. If a creature fails this saving throw by 10 or more, it is instead knocked unconscious until the end of its next turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The grendelkin can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The grendelkin regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

Strike. The grendelkin makes a Strike attack.

Crush (Costs 2 Actions). The grendelkin makes a Crush attack.

Sunder (Costs 2 Actions). The grendelkin makes a Strike attack against an object or structure within reach. On a successful hit, the target takes double damage from the attack.

Titanic Leap (Costs 2 Actions). The grendelkin jumps up to twice their speed.

Fearsome Bellow (Costs 3 Actions). The grendelkin howls with suffering, which can be heard up to 1 mile away. Creatures within 120 feet that can see and hear the grendelkin must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for as long as they can see the grendelkin. While frightened by this effect, a creature must take the Dash action and move away from the grendelkin by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If the creature ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to the grendelkin, the creature can attempt a Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature succeeds on a saving throw against this effect or the effect ends for it, it becomes immune to it for 24 hours.



MYTHIC GRENDELKIN

Gargantuan mythic giant, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 1,404 (72d20 + 648)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
32 (+11)	18 (+4)	28 (+9)	14 (+2)	24 (+7)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +21, Dex +14, Con +19, Int +12, Wis +17, Cha +9

Skills Athletics +31, Perception +17

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic sources

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages Giant, plus the languages of their parent

Challenge Mythic 2

TRAITS

Berserker Rage. When the grendelkin rolls initiative, they immediately enter a berserker rage which lasts until they are no longer in combat. While in this state, creatures have advantage on attack rolls against the grendelkin, and vice versa, and the grendelkin has advantage on Strength saving throws and ability checks.

Additionally, when the grendelkin takes 10 or more damage in a single instance, they gain a special rage die for every 10 damage they took in that instance. Rage dice are d8s and last for as long as the grendelkin is in combat or until they choose to expend them, to a maximum of forty rage dice. When the grendelkin deals damage on a hit with an attack, they can choose to expend up to ten of their rage dice and roll them, dealing additional thunder damage on the attack equal to the amount rolled.

Mythic Resistance. When the grendelkin fails a saving throw, they can expend one of their unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Spellshatter (1/Turn). When the grendelkin would make an attack, they can forgo making that attack to attempt to destroy a non-Epic spell effect within reach. To do so, the grendelkin rolls as though they were making a melee weapon attack. If the result of the attack roll is equal to or greater than 15 + the target's spell level, the spell immediately ends.

Unstoppable. The grendelkin cannot be pushed, pulled, or magically teleported unless they allow it.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the grendelkin takes one of the following mythic actions. The grendelkin cannot take the same action twice in a row.

Blood Thirst. The grendelkin becomes filled with an all-consuming thirst for blood and violence. The grendelkin immediately gains five rage dice, per their Berserker Rage feature. When the grendelkin uses this action again, they gain an additional five rage dice. This effect is cumulative, to a maximum of twenty rage dice per use. This increase lasts until the grendelkin finishes a short or long rest.

Juggernaut. The grendelkin runs or leaps up to their movement speed in a straight line. Creatures, objects, and structures in the grendelkin's path take 100 bludgeoning damage. A creature in the affected area can attempt a DC 29 Dexterity saving throw, moving

out of the grendelkin's path on a success to the nearest unoccupied space outside the affected area.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The grendelkin makes four attacks, each of which may be a Strike or Throw attack.

Crush. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature grappled by the grendelkin. *Hit:* The target must attempt a DC 29 Constitution saving throw, taking bludgeoning damage equal to its hit point maximum on a failure, or half as much damage on a success (rounded down).

Strike. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 44 (6d10 + 11) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the grendelkin may grapple it (escape DC 29).

Throw. The grendelkin throws a Huge or smaller creature or object they are holding. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 38 (6d8 + 11) bludgeoning damage. The grendelkin can throw creatures they are grappling as improvised weapons for this attack. On a successful hit, a creature thrown by this attack also takes the attack's damage. Otherwise, it lands prone in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the target.

Upheaval (Recharge 5–6). The grendelkin reaves the ground in a 120-foot radius around them. Each creature in the affected area other than the grendelkin must succeed on a DC 29 Dexterity saving throw or be knocked prone and stunned until the end of its next turn. If a creature fails this saving throw by 10 or more, it is instead knocked unconscious until the end of its next turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The grendelkin can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The grendelkin regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

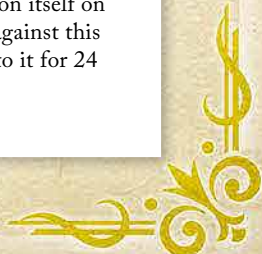
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Crush (Costs 2 Actions). The grendelkin makes a Crush attack.

Sunder (Costs 2 Actions). The grendelkin makes a Strike attack against an object or structure within reach. On a successful hit, the target takes double damage from the attack.

Titanic Leap (Costs 2 Actions). The grendelkin jumps up to twice their speed.

Fearsome Bellow (Costs 3 Actions). The grendelkin howls with suffering, which can be heard up to 1 mile away. Creatures within 120 feet that can see and hear the grendelkin must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for as long as they can see the grendelkin. While frightened by this effect, a creature must take the Dash action and move away from the grendelkin by the safest available route on each of its turns, unless there is nowhere to move. If the creature ends its turn in a location where it doesn't have line of sight to the grendelkin, the creature can attempt a Wisdom saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature succeeds on a saving throw against this effect or the effect ends for it, it becomes immune to it for 24 hours.



RESOURCES

Beyond their combat capabilities, the resources available to the grendelkin depend entirely on the resources of their creator. If the creature is born to a noble, they likely have a well-defended lair and potentially have soldiers at their command. If the creature is born to a magic-user, they probably have magical charms and protections. A grendelkin may also have bullied local populations into providing tribute. A community could be forced to give weapons, food, and wealth to a grendelkin to stave off their attacks.

ALLIES

The defining relationship in a grendelkin's life is the one it shares with its parent. This relationship is typically the only relationship a grendelkin ever has. Here are some suggestions for the possible types and roles a parent may have in your campaign.

Celestial. A celestial driven to create a grendelkin most often does so because their power has diminished somehow. This diminishing could have occurred because they were cast out of favor with their heavenly court, or perhaps they have been bound to the material plane. If you would like the celestial parent to have a more passive role in your campaign, set them up to be one of these fallen angels who are currently powerless. If you would like the celestial parent to have a more active role in your campaign, consider using the deva, planetar, or solar stat blocks.

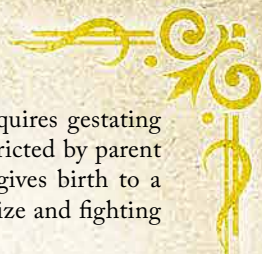
Dragon. Dragons are prideful beings, and a dragon driven to create a grendelkin has most likely had their pride injured in some unforgivable way. This slight could have left the dragon sick, permanently disabled, trapped, or otherwise unable to

fight their adversaries physically. If you would like the dragon parent to have a more passive role in your campaign, consider making the dragon parent a noncombatant due to a magical or physical affliction. If you would like the dragon parent to have a more active role in your campaign, consider using any adult or ancient dragon stat block. Keep in mind that a chromatic dragon is far more likely to turn to the dark magics required to create a grendelkin. If you choose to make the progenitor a metallic dragon, they must have a compelling reason to do so.

Fey. Of all the creatures capable of bearing grendelkin, a fey's reason to do so is the most varied. Fey may wish to create a grendelkin to have an agent free to move on the material plane, or they may make a grendelkin to defend their corner of the fey from others of their kind. A fey may even create a grendelkin by accident or do so through sheer curiosity. If you would like the fey parent to have a more passive role in the campaign, simply keep them in a different realm or have them abandon the grendelkin (perhaps this loss inspires the creature's rage). If you would like the fey parent to have a more active role in your campaign, most fey creature stat blocks will do, but hags make an especially compelling choice.

Fiend. Like a celestial, a fiend is driven to create a grendelkin most often because their power has diminished. Fiends can create demons and devils far more easily than a grendelkin, so a fiend who takes this option does so only for a good reason. Perhaps the fiend parent has been cast out of the hells, have found themselves stuck in a binding contract, or have set their sights on ruling a different plane. If you would like the fiend parent to have a more passive role in your campaign, set them up to be one of these outcast devils who are currently powerless. If you would like the fiend parent to have a more active role in your campaign, consider using the balor, marilith, erinyes, or horned devil stat blocks.





Giant. The nature of giants makes them the most likely candidates to birth a grendelkin. Most giants who sire these creatures do so because they do not possess the power to enact their agenda, whether driven by revenge, greed, or service to a higher power. If you would like the giant parent to have a more passive role in the campaign, consider making them a noncombatant, content to influence things from the shadows. There are plenty of notable giants to choose from in the 5e core rules to serve as a worthy progenitor, so be sure to explore the backgrounds and cultures of your choice to better synergize with the story you wish your grendelkin to tell.

REWARDS

Spoiling the agenda of the grendelkin’s parent is the main reward for confronting these deadly creatures. The progenitor creature may have wealth or treasures to plunder upon defeating their monstrous child. However, a grendelkin parent may also offer an exchange of knowledge to preserve themselves from death. A parent creature can teach another being to birth their own grendelkin (if they are capable creature types). The DM has the final say on the exact consequences of this decision, but the process of creating a grendelkin should exact an extreme toll on the parent creature. This could mean a curse effect, a permanent reduction to their health or abilities, or dire

roleplaying penalties. Bearing a grendelkin requires gestating the creature in your own body (this is not restricted by parent gender) for one year, after which the parent gives birth to a grendelkin. The creature grows into their full size and fighting capabilities in 1d10 weeks.

However, a precious few grendelkin wield a crude but effective magical item known as a *rune totem*. These tree-sized weapons are formidable indeed, improving a grendelkin’s already fearsome arsenal of natural weapons.

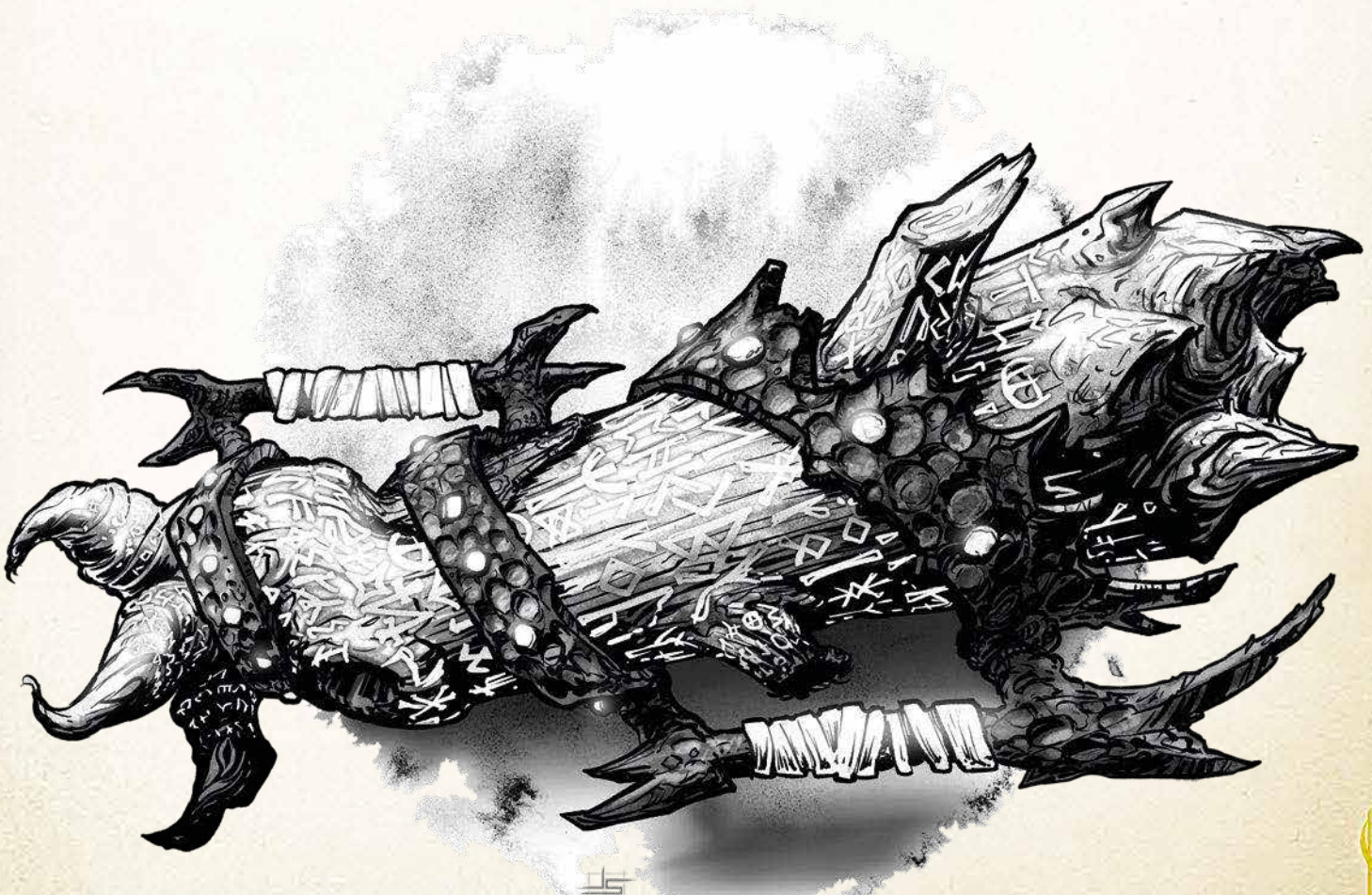
Rune Totem

Weapon (greatclub), legendary (requires attunement by a creature with 21 Strength or higher)

This tremendous greatclub resembles the log of a tree inscribed with mystical runes that ooze with blood and magic. Instead of its normal damage, the greatclub’s weapon damage is a number of d8s equal to your Strength modifier.

Additionally, while you hold the greatclub, you can speak, read, and write Giant.

Curse. The greatclub is cursed. When you score a hit with the weapon, you take 10 lightning damage.





STORM HERALDS

Brothers of Sound and Fury

*"You cannot fight the thunderous sky, nor the howling wind, nor the raging waves.
No, my friends—the brothers clash, and we must take the field a different day."*

DESCRIPTION

Eteri and Zeru are the embodiment of a storm's ferocity. The two brothers are more akin to the turbulent forces of the skies than to material form. Still, every so often, a fortunate (or unfortunate, depending on the weather) mortal might be perceptive enough to catch sight of the duo. When not traveling as a bolt of lightning or crest of wind, the brothers have a roughly humanoid appearance. Zeru, who commands thunder and lightning, is a powerfully built figure with electric-red skin and always in possession of a large mallet ready to strike the drums carried on his back. Eteri, who controls the winds, is lither than his brother, marked by jade-green skin and possession of a billowing cloak and a flute carved from dragonbone.

THE STORM HERALDS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Since Zeru and Eteri hold allegiance to only themselves, a campaign featuring these two is built around their relationship. When the brothers argue, they leave massive swaths of destruction in their wake. If their relationship becomes strained enough, the whole world will likely be consumed by natural disasters stirred up during their conflict. The adventurers must stop Zeru and Eteri from warring with one another if they hope to prevent populations from becoming casualties of elemental turbulence.

Coastal areas in a campaign with the storm heralds have many trading advantages and resources available to them. But these benefits also come with a slew of dangers against which they

PROFILE

Personality: Mischievous

Ideals: The volatile nature of winds and storms perfectly represent Zeru and Eteri. More concerned with frivolity than responsibility, the two brothers travel the world stirring up foul weather as they fight both alongside and against each other. Typically, the collateral damage they cause during their travels escapes their notice. The brothers are not evil but rather forces of nature themselves and rarely consider the dangers they pose to the mortal creatures around them.

Bonds: The relationship between Zeru and Eteri is their defining bond. To reach their full potential, the brothers must work in tandem, but that doesn't stop them from seeking ways to outmatch each other. When working together, they can perform great good, bringing bountiful harvest or defending the lands of their domain; when working against each other, they cause devastating earthquakes, floods, and windstorms. The two balance each other out and are ultimately beholden only to each other.

Flaws: The storm heralds embody the elements they represent for better or for worse. Their mastery over elemental air brings them great freedom to travel the world as they fancy. The brothers refuse to be tied down, and attempting to bind them to long-term

commitment is always a futile effort. Their general love of mischief and complete disconnectedness from the consequences of their actions has caused countless natural disasters. Like the fluid nature of the elements, the brothers' allegiances are ever shifting. Allies today are enemies tomorrow, which makes them incredibly difficult to reason with.

Legend: Embodiments of thunder and wind, Zeru and Eteri are among the oldest elemental beings. In some myths, the brothers are depicted as vicious foes, while in others, they are more like temperamental deities. Through all tales, their mastery over the skies remains uncontested. While not truly evil, the brothers' eternal battle for dominion over the skies causes devastating weather patterns that can ravage the lands below. Some of the fiercest thunderstorms, typhoons, hurricanes, and torrential rains in living memory result from Zeru and Eteri's ferocious competition. But like so many things in nature, the brothers also have a positive side. When the two are at peace, Zeru and Eteri grant weather that allows crops to grow and communities to flourish. Their power over storms has even been an invaluable boon protecting areas against attack and invasion. When the brothers work together, they become an unstoppable force, for good or for ill. Populations familiar with Zeru and Eteri rightfully both fear and revere them as masters over both life and destruction.

must prepare: storms, monstrous creatures, and earthquakes. Many a city has been buried underwater amid fits of anger from earth and sea. As Zeru and Eteri compete against each other seeking dominion over the heavens, the lands below are likely to suffer destruction in the wake of their powerful confrontation. While the brothers are famous for their destructiveness, areas where the two hold dominion are fiercely guarded. And when these brothers work in concert, any who stand against them or the lands they protect rarely withstand their ferocity.

INTRODUCTION

An introduction to a campaign with Zeru and Eteri always begins with a glimpse of their explosive handiwork. The first time the party becomes aware of the brothers might be while traveling across the ocean and getting swept up in a violent typhoon. Or perhaps the adventurers happen upon a landscape devastated by hundreds of lightning strikes. A local population might approach the party, seeking protectors against the ravages of conflict between Zeru and Eteri. Whatever the initial circumstances, the party needs to see the devastation caused by these powerful elementals so they are spurred to bring the brothers' conflict to an end. As villages and towns are subjected to abnormal weather, the number of people displaced and looking for justice grows. Those who hold political power may begin looking for a resolution to the crisis and task a group of adventurers to stop the brothers.

CONFLICT

While Zeru and Eteri remain embroiled in their feud, there is no way to stop their devastating battles with one another completely. The best chance the party has of putting a stop to the destruction is approaching one brother first to either persuade him to stop the conflict or destroy him. Both brothers have mercurial tempers, which are only made worse by their war, so persuading either one of them to make peace is an arduous task. However, neither brother can resist the thrill of competition or a challenge, so clever characters can persuade a brother to lay down arms with a bit of creative thinking. Tracking down one of the brothers and dealing with him individually forms the central conflict of a campaign featuring Zeru and Eteri.

CONCLUSION

The final encounter of a campaign with Zeru and Eteri culminates in a decisive battle where the storm heralds team up to stop the interlopers who have interfered in their dispute. However, the circumstances surrounding this final confrontation will be different depending on how the party chose to deal with the brothers in the earlier parts of the campaign. If the party decided to work peacefully with one brother, this final battle will likely be more akin to a friendly competition. After all, the party managed to outwit the brothers, making Zeru and Eteri interested in them as rivals. If the party chose to kill one of the brothers before pursuing the other, the remaining brother is furious and resurrects his fallen sibling to wage total war against the party. This second situation is by far the more deadly of the two. The only thing more frightening than the destruction caused by the brothers while apart is when Eteri and Zeru are united in vengeance. As long as one brother lives, he can resurrect the other.

To eliminate future threats, they must be dealt with together. Death is one solution, but if the two are impressed enough by the party's prowess, they might peacefully agree to relocate to another plane of existence (one less likely to be destroyed by their inherent powers).

CHALLENGES

Zeru and Eteri can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with them.

EXPLORATION

When dealing with the storm heralds, exploration and its hazards should be a large part of the campaign. There is no elaborate lair or hidden shrine where the brothers reside. Instead, all the earth and sky are their domain. The closer you get to the brothers, the more hazardous the environment becomes. High winds, lightning strikes, earthquakes, and floods are common when Zeru and Eteri are near. Pursuing the brothers for a confrontation poses an increasingly difficult series of exploration encounters necessary to reach them.

Regional Effects

The region within 10 miles of either brother is warped by elemental energies, which create the following effects. The brothers can choose to suppress these effects.

- Erratic winds blow at high speeds in the area surrounding Zeru and Eteri. The area is considered difficult terrain for any enemy flying creatures. Additionally, creatures in the affected area have disadvantage on ranged weapon attacks.
- Seismic activity, sudden bouts of rain, and other terrible weather events ravage the area around Zeru and Eteri. Creatures exposed to these conditions must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw each hour or gain one level of exhaustion as the ravages of nature wear upon them.
- Thunder crashes and lightning flashes routinely split the skies. All Wisdom (Perception) checks based on sight or sound are made with disadvantage while exposed to these conditions.

If Zeru and Eteri are destroyed, these effects immediately cease.

The Storm Heralds' Lair

From one edge of the horizon to another, everything Zeru and Eteri see forms their domain. Bound to no single place, the two influence the areas they pass through, traveling in a small eye of calm surrounded by raging storms. When the brothers decide to rest or cease traveling for a time, they gravitate toward majestic locales. A high mountain peak, a windswept field, or a lush valley might attract the brothers as an ideal backdrop for their endless competitions with one another. For mechanical purposes, Zeru and Eteri's lair is considered the eye of the storm, which is an area centered on each brother, extending for a half-mile radius in all directions.



Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), either Zeru or Eteri can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Zeru and Eteri are using their mythic statistics, they can instead choose to take a mythic action or a lair action, but not both. They cannot use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Heavy fog rolls in, causing the area to become heavily obscured difficult terrain until the beginning of the next initiative count 20.
- One of the brothers chooses a point within the lair. A bolt of lightning strikes the point, and each creature within 5 feet of that point takes 22 (4d10) lightning damage.
- Divine winds suddenly fill the area. All flying creatures (except Zeru and Eteri) must immediately succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or fall prone.

Exploration Encounters

Since Zeru and Eteri's lair travels with them, perilous terrain awaits anyone foolish enough to stay on their trail. The journey and overcoming the obstacles created by Zeru and Eteri should be the central focus of a campaign featuring the storm heralds.

Highest Heights. The trade industry of a once-thriving city has come to a complete standstill. The city, located at the base of an extensive mountain range, has been plagued with bizarre earthquakes, gale-force winds, and a torrent of deadly rockslides. Even worse, multiple reports of two monstrous flying creatures spotted in the mountains have driven the citizens to the verge of panic. City officials seek a party willing to travel into the mountains, locate these creatures, and see if they are behind the recent string of natural disasters.

Matsuri. Zeru or Eteri wishes to hold a festival to celebrate a renowned weaponsmith. Without warning, hundreds of summons on the winds appear before every creature within 10 miles of the valley where the brothers prepare their competition. For the main event, the brothers have organized a treasure hunt to find a number of special gemstones they have hidden throughout the valley. The group that returns to the brothers with the greatest number of gemstones will receive a magical weapon forged by the smith. However, the task will not be an easy one, for a cadre of hostile monsters also received the brothers' invitation and are eager to turn the games into a feast.

Build for the Boon. Two towns are competing for a blessing from Zeru and Eteri. The towns have decided to construct a series of marvelous monuments and shrines to impress the brothers and



are eager for any creative assistance the party can provide before Zeru and Eteri judge their creations in one month. The winning city will have favorable agricultural weather for one year. The losing city will be ravaged by foul storms that will cause massive devastation (but the brothers haven't divulged that information to the competing cities).

SOCIAL

Zeru and Eteri are not against talking with mortals, but they have difficulty maintaining interest in creatures they consider to be so boring. Occasionally a remarkable event or person garners their attention long enough to hold a real conversation. More likely, the party will deal with social encounters centered on the creatures harmed by the storm heralds' activities or desperate to attract the brothers' attention.

Social Encounters

Rarely ones for idle chatter, Zeru and Eteri are beings of action. Social encounters with the brothers don't have to end in a fight, but long-winded conversations or excuses are likely to start one.

Drum Circle. Zeru is seeking the best musicians around; he has a particular proclivity toward proficient percussionists. Zeru is hoping to recruit a large group of talented drummers for a musical competition that will shake the world's foundations. If the party is hoping to speak to Zeru, winning this competition is an excellent way to get his attention.

Cardinal Directions. Sailors everywhere begin to panic because the winds have ceased to blow. Eteri has intentionally halted the winds and refuses to create them until four directional lodestones are brought to him. If the party offers their assistance, Eteri gives them a compass that can point to the nearest lodestone. Once all four stones are delivered to him, Eteri says he will let the winds blow once more.

Harbor Ills. A small village has been ravaged by recent collateral damage from Zeru and Eteri's latest conflict. The villagers need help to repair the significant damage to the town. Once a calm bay where ships could dock, it is now filled with earthen debris due to an unending torrent of mudslides. Both magical and mundane means are needed to help repair the damage to the village. If the adventurers help the villagers, they can offer free passage aboard any seafaring vessels the party might need.

COMBAT

The storm heralds view battles as the ultimate sport and fight with reckless abandon. While the brothers enjoy fighting each other more than other creatures, they do not back down when faced with confrontation. The challenge is getting either Zeru or Eteri to take a challenger seriously enough to consider them worthy of combat. Before a fight with either brother can occur, the party must first prove their worth by taking down the brothers' obstacles. These obstacles often take the form of battles with the creatures who serve Zeru and Eteri.

Combat Encounter Example: Kill the Beast

Zeru has issued a decree that anyone seeking favor from him must first bring him the body of a magical blue panther. This challenge is a game Zeru and his elemental companion Vajra have played frequently (though Zeru certainly doesn't reveal this fact to the party). Zeru begins to make trouble in the surrounding countryside, hoping to lull eager adventurers into a fight. Zeru doesn't make it easy, attacking the party, then retreating, then attacking them again when they don't expect it, in an attempt to wear them down. If the party does succeed in slaying Vajra and bring its body before Zeru, the thunder brother is impressed and agrees to speak with them right after he resurrects his fallen friend.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Skirmisher

Fighting Zeru and Eteri should feel like fighting a force of nature. The storm heralds relish any opportunity to prove their strength through combat and joyfully attack their foes with everything they've got. Zeru and Eteri are not concerned with subtleties or tactics and rarely have a strategy beyond "hit them hard." That said, a fight with the brothers always occurs on their turf: in the sky. Zeru and Eteri fight from the air, soaring high above any enemies unable to join them in the air. Several of the brothers' abilities rely on smacking flying foes down to earth, so don't make the mistake of grounding either of them.

Of the two brothers, Zeru is the front-line fighter. When running him, don't be afraid to get in close to the biggest flying threats to wham them with his Static Charge aura. If there is a clustered group of foes, come in swinging with Zeru's Mallet attack to deal damage to the entire group at once. Successfully running Zeru is all about being in the perfect position to deal maximum damage, so lean on his Lightning Jaunt legendary action to zip around the field as needed to achieve this goal. Finally, if things do take a turn for the worse, Zeru is not above using his Storm Form to flee the scene and recover elsewhere.

Eteri is the nimbler of the two brothers and better suited to fighting combatants at a distance. Eteri's greatest strength is his mobility. Between his Flyby trait, push attacks, and legendary actions, you should be able to keep enemies out of melee range whenever possible. Lean on the attacks that push multiple characters together, then hit them with powerful moves like Cyclone or Zephyr Step to wear the group down. If Eteri gets into trouble, he can recover some hit points with his Breath of the Divine action or flee using his Storm Form.

When the two brothers fight together, they work as a seamless unit. Eteri uses his abilities to cluster foes together for Zeru to come in swinging. The two also lean heavily on their Brother's Keeper reactions to equally divide damage between them to keep

the fight going as long as possible. Ideally, Eteri stays back from the main bulk of the combat, using his long range and healing abilities to support Zeru on the front line.

Easier Tactics – To make a fight with the brothers a little easier, keep the action closer to the ground (so there is less potential for falling damage). Save the condition-dealing attacks like Cyclone and Drum Roll for later in the fight, and only use them once.

Harder Tactics – Open the fight with the brothers' big recharge abilities to pepper the party with debilitating conditions. Focus on mobility before taking attack actions to put yourself in the best position possible. Make sure to focus-fire attacks on any characters relying on concentration spells to fly. Make smacking enemies out of the air your number-one priority.

Mythic Zeru and Eteri

The main difference between the brothers' mythic and standard versions is their mythic action set. Their Storm Heart mythic action allows either brother to place a damaging sphere on the battlefield. Zeru and Eteri can move freely through these spheres, but other creatures can be trapped within if they fail to make their saves from round to round. Better yet, the brothers' second mythic action, Stir the Heart, allows them to double the size of a sphere present on the field (even ones created by the other brother). By effectively placing these spheres on the battlefield, you create safe pockets from which the brothers can attack while simultaneously covering the field with gigantic obstacles to diminish the adventurers' mobility.

Mythic Effects

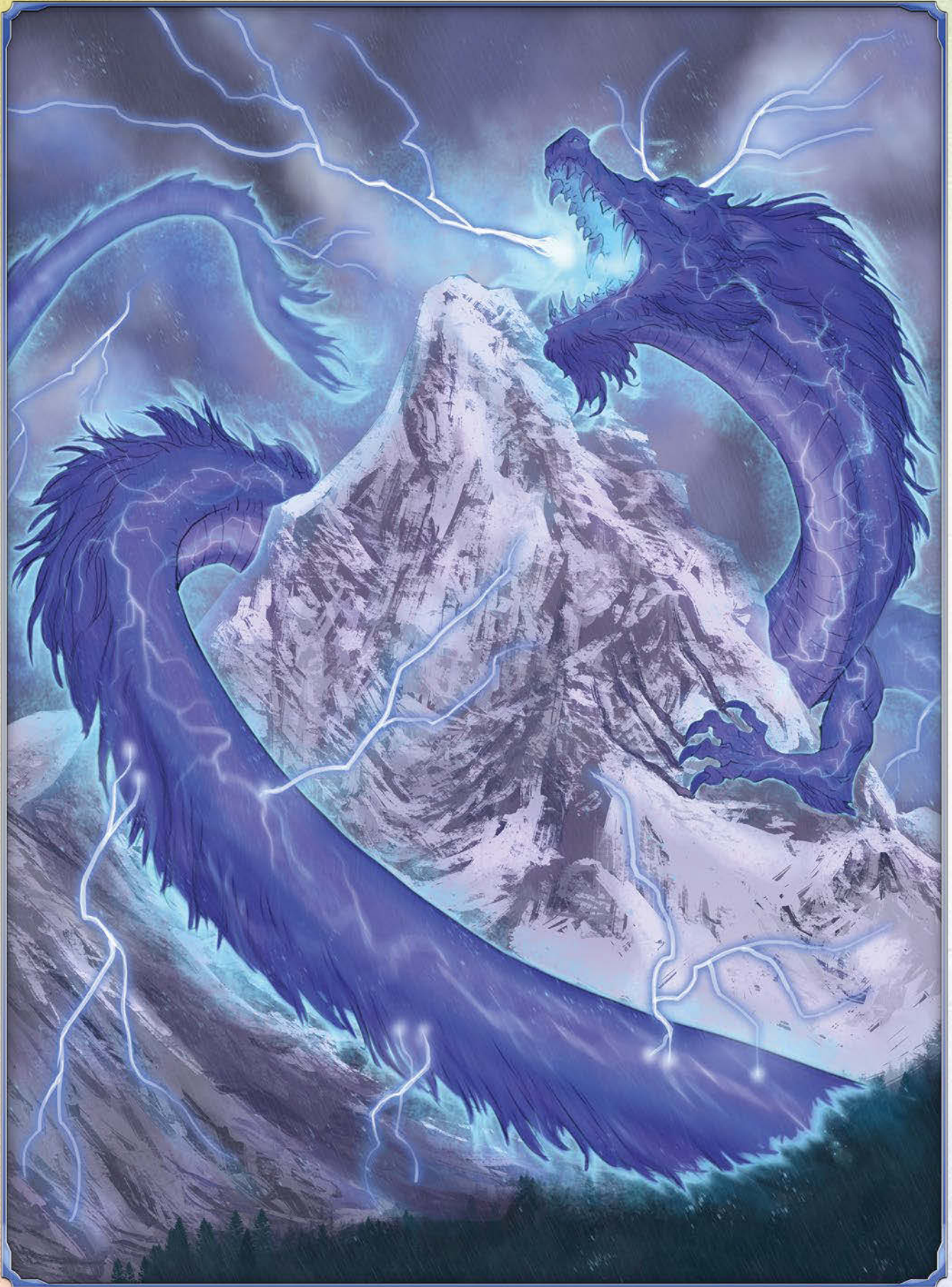
As mythic creatures, the storm heralds cause the following effects:

Elemental Lords. Zeru and Eteri possess ultimate control over the skies. Because of their status, they gain the following benefits unless they choose not to:

- Creatures cannot have immunity or resistance to lightning or thunder damage dealt by Zeru and Eteri.
- Zeru and Eteri are not affected by any spells or magical effects that would confine them or hinder their movement.
- If Zeru or Eteri dies, they reform on the elemental plane of air and cannot return to the plane on which they died for a year and a day.
- Zeru and Eteri do not need to breathe or eat, and they do not age.

Master of Storms. Zeru and Eteri control the weather around them. They can instantly shift weather conditions within 10 miles of them. Furthermore, any attempt by a creature other than the brothers to change weather conditions with a spell or other magic within 10 miles of either brother fails.

Brotherly Bond. Either storm herald can choose to make his brother immune to the effects of all of his own abilities, attacks, and features.



ZERU

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 420 (40d10 + 200)

Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +12, Wis +12

Skills Athletics +14, Insight +12, Perception +12, Performance +10

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

Damage Immunities lightning, poison, thunder

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

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 22

Languages all

Challenge 21 (23 if fighting with Eteri) (33,000 XP; 50,000 XP if fighting with Eteri)

TRAITS

Conductive. Zeru's weapon attacks are magical. When Zeru hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 33 (6d10) lightning damage (included in the attack).

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Zeru fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Musician's Art. Zeru cannot be disarmed of his mallet or drums. If these tools are ever taken more than 30 feet away from him, they magically reappear on his person.

Sibling Rivalry. Zeru has advantage on all attack rolls if Eteri is within 300 feet of him and isn't incapacitated.

Static Charge. Zeru emits an aura of intense static charge that extends 30 feet from him in all directions. If a creature begins its turn in this field and is holding or wearing any manufactured metal objects (such as metal weapons or suits of metal armor), the creature must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or drop the object if it can. If the creature doesn't drop the object, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Zeru makes two weapon attacks or makes one weapon attack and takes one other action.

Bolt. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 150/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) piercing damage plus 33 (6d10) lightning damage.

Mallet. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 33 (6d10) lightning damage. In addition, all creatures within 10 feet of the target take 33 (6d10) lightning damage.

Drum Roll (Recharge 5–6). Zeru strikes his drums, unleashing a thunderous cacophony that can be heard out to a range of 300 feet. Every creature that can hear the drum must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or take 110 (20d10) thunder damage and be deafened for 1 minute. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and is deafened until the start of Zeru's next turn.

Storm Form. Zeru transforms into a dragon-shaped mass of electricity. While in this form, Zeru is invisible, is immune to all nonmagical damage, and has advantage on all saving throws. While in this form, Zeru can pass through small holes, narrow openings, and even mere cracks. While in storm form, Zeru cannot make attacks or use legendary actions.

REACTIONS

Brother's Keeper. As a reaction when Eteri takes damage, Zeru can choose to take the damage instead. Zeru can only use this reaction if Eteri is within 300 feet of him.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Zeru can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Zeru regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Strikes Twice. Zeru makes two weapon attacks.

Lightning Jaunt (Costs 2 Actions). Zeru magically teleports to an unoccupied space he can see within 120 feet of him. Immediately after he disappears, lightning crashes down, and each creature within 20 feet of the space Zeru left must attempt a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Shockwave (Costs 3 Actions). Zeru strikes his drums, creating a wave of thunderous sound in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or take 82 (15d10) thunder damage, be pushed 50 feet away, and be knocked prone. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and is not pushed or knocked prone.

ETERI

Large elemental, neutral

Armor Class 25 (natural armor)

Hit Points 340 (40d10 + 120)

Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +10, Wis +11

Skills Acrobatics +12, Insight +11, Perception +11, Stealth +12

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

Damage Immunities lightning, poison, thunder

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

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 21

Languages all

Challenge 21 (23 if fighting with Zeru) (33,000 XP; 50,000 XP if fighting with Zeru)

TRAITS

Flyby. Eteri doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when he flies out of an enemy's reach.

Guardian Gale. All ranged attacks against Eteri are made with disadvantage. Additionally, Eteri attempts Dexterity saving throws with advantage.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If Eteri fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.

Musician's Art. Eteri cannot be disarmed of his flute. If the flute is ever taken more than 30 feet away from him, it magically reappears on his person.

Sibling Rivalry. Eteri has advantage on all attack rolls if Zeru is within 300 feet of him and isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Eteri makes two weapon attacks or makes one weapon attack and takes one other action.

Gust. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 150/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 20 feet.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 29 (4d10 + 7) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 20 feet.

Cyclone (Recharge 5–6). Eteri plays a series of notes on his flute, creating a swirling vortex of wind. All creatures within 150 feet of Eteri must succeed on a DC 20 Strength saving throw or take 77 (14d10) bludgeoning damage and become restrained until the beginning of Eteri's next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half damage and is not restrained.

Storm Form. Eteri transforms into a shapeless mass of air. While in this form, Eteri is invisible, is immune to all nonmagical damage, and has advantage on all saving throws. While in this form, Eteri can pass through small holes, narrow openings, and even mere cracks. While in storm form, Eteri cannot make attacks or use legendary actions.

REACTIONS

Brother's Keeper. As a reaction when Zeru takes damage, Eteri can choose to take the damage instead. Eteri can only use this reaction if Zeru is within 300 feet of him.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Eteri can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Eteri regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Windstep. Eteri moves up to his speed.

Zephyr Step (Costs 2 Actions). Eteri launches himself forward, moving in a straight line up to his movement speed (this movement does not provoke opportunity attacks). Each creature in the line must attempt a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 44 (8d10) slashing damage and is knocked prone. On a success, a creature takes half damage and is not knocked prone.

Breath of the Divine (3 Actions). Eteri brings forth a healing wind. He and up to three allies of his choice that he can see immediately recover hit points equal to their Constitution score.

MYTHIC ZERU

Large mythic elemental, neutral

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 828 (72d10 + 432)

Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	25 (+7)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +17, Dex +13, Con +14, Int +12, Wis +15, Cha +12

Skills Athletics +17, Insight +15, Perception +15, Performance +12

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

Damage Immunities lightning, poison, thunder

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

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages all

Challenge Mythic 1 (Mythic 2 if fighting with Eteri)

TRAITS

Conductive. Zeru's weapon attacks are magical. When Zeru hits with any weapon, the weapon deals an extra 66 (12d10) lightning damage (included in the attack).

Musician's Art. Zeru cannot be disarmed of his mallet or drums. If these tools are ever taken more than 30 feet away from him, they magically reappear on his person.

Mythic Resistance. If Zeru fails a saving throw, he can expend the use of one of his unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Sibling Rivalry. Zeru has advantage on all attack rolls if Eteri is within 300 feet of him and isn't incapacitated.

Static Charge. Zeru emits an aura of intense static charge that extends 60 feet from him in all directions. If a creature begins its turn in this field and is holding or wearing any manufactured metal objects (such as metal weapons or suits of metal armor), the creature must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or drop the object if it can. If the creature doesn't drop the object, it has disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Zeru makes three weapon attacks or makes two weapon attacks and takes one other action.

Bolt. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, range 150/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (4d10 + 9) piercing damage plus 66 (12d10) lightning damage.

Mallet. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (4d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 66 (12d10) lightning damage. In addition, all creatures within 10 feet of the target take 66 (12d10) lightning damage.

Drum Roll (Recharge 5–6). Zeru strikes his drums, unleashing a thunderous cacophony that can be heard out to a range of 300 feet. Every creature that can hear the drum must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or take 132 (24d10) thunder damage and be deafened for 1 minute. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and is deafened until the start of Zeru's next turn.

Storm Form. Zeru transforms into a dragon-shaped mass of electricity. While in this form, Zeru is invisible, is immune to all nonmagical damage, and has advantage on all saving throws. While in this form, Zeru can pass through small holes, narrow openings, and even mere cracks. While in storm form, Zeru cannot make attacks or use legendary actions.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Zeru takes one of the following mythic actions. Zeru cannot use the same effect twice in a row.

Storm Heart. Zeru creates a 20-foot-sphere storm heart in an unoccupied space he can see. When the storm heart appears, each creature (other than Zeru and Eteri) within its area must attempt a DC 23 Strength saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) magical bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. At the start of each of Zeru's turns after the storm heart appears, any Huge or smaller creature inside the sphere must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or take 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.

A creature caught in the heart can move by flying. Because of the force of the heart, a creature must make a successful DC 23 Strength (Athletics) check in order to move at all. If it fails the check, it can't move. A creature without a flying speed that moves out of the area falls to the ground.

Stir the Heart. If a storm heart exists that Zeru can see, he can strengthen its power. The storm heart immediately doubles in size. Each creature (other than Zeru and Eteri) in the newly expanded area must attempt a DC 23 Strength saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) magical bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

REACTIONS

Brother's Keeper. As a reaction when Eteri takes damage, Zeru can choose to take the damage instead. Zeru can only use this reaction if Eteri is within 300 feet of him.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Zeru can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Zeru regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Strikes Twice. Zeru makes two weapon attacks.

Lightning Jaunt (Costs 2 Actions). Zeru magically teleports to an unoccupied space he can see within 120 feet of him. Immediately after he disappears, lightning crashes down, and each creature within 20 feet of the space Zeru left must attempt a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, taking 77 (14d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Shockwave (Costs 3 Actions). Zeru strikes his drums, creating a wave of thunderous sound in a 90-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or take 110 (20d10) thunder damage, be pushed 50 feet away, and fall prone. On a successful save, the target takes half damage and is not pushed or knocked prone.

MYTHIC ETERI

Large mythic elemental, neutral

Armor Class 27 (natural armor)

Hit Points 747 (65d10 + 390)

Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	28 (+9)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	25 (+7)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +17, Con +14, Int +12, Wis +15, Cha +12

Skills Acrobatics +17, Insight +15, Perception +15, Stealth +17

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

Damage Immunities lightning, poison, thunder

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

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages all

Challenge Mythic 1 (Mythic 2 if fighting with Zeru)

TRAITS

Flyby. Eteri doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when he flies out of an enemy's reach.

Guardian Gale. All ranged attacks against Eteri are made with disadvantage. Additionally, Eteri attempts Dexterity saving throws with advantage.

Musician's Art. Eteri cannot be disarmed of his flute. If the flute is ever taken more than 30 feet away from him, it magically reappears on his person.

Mythic Resistance. If Eteri fails a saving throw, he can expend the use of one of his unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Sibling Rivalry. Eteri has advantage on all attack rolls if Eteri is within 300 feet of him and isn't incapacitated.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Eteri makes three weapon attacks or makes two weapon attacks and takes one other action.

Gust. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, range 150/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (4d10 + 9) slashing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 40 feet.

Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (4d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 40 feet.

Cyclone (Recharge 5–6). Eteri plays a series of notes on his flute, creating a swirling vortex of wind. All creatures within 150 feet of Eteri must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or take 154 (28d10) bludgeoning damage and become restrained until the beginning of Eteri's next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half damage and is not restrained.

Storm Form. Eteri transforms into a shapeless mass of air. While in this form, Eteri is invisible, is immune to all

nonmagical damage, and has advantage on all saving throws. While in this form, Eteri can pass through small holes, narrow openings, and even mere cracks. While in storm form, Eteri cannot make attacks or use legendary actions.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Eteri takes one of the following mythic actions. Eteri cannot use the same effect twice in a row.

Storm Heart. Eteri creates a 20-foot-sphere storm heart in an unoccupied space he can see. When the storm heart appears, each creature (other than Zeru and Eteri) within its area must attempt a DC 23 Strength saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) magical bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. At the start of each of Eteri's turns after the storm heart appears, any Huge or smaller creature inside the sphere must succeed on a DC 23 Strength saving throw or take 27 (5d10) bludgeoning damage.

A creature caught in the heart can move by flying. Because of the force of the heart, a creature must make a successful DC 23 Strength (Athletics) check in order to move at all. If it fails the check, it can't move. A creature without a flying speed that moves out of the area falls to the ground.

Stir the Heart. If a storm heart exists that Eteri can see, he can strengthen its power. The storm heart immediately doubles in size. Each creature (other than Zeru and Eteri) in the newly expanded area must attempt a DC 23 Strength saving throw, taking 33 (6d10) magical bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much damage on a success.

REACTIONS

Brother's Keeper. As a reaction when Zeru takes damage, Eteri can choose to take the damage instead. Eteri can only use this reaction if Zeru is within 300 feet of him.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Eteri can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Eteri regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Windstep. Eteri moves up to his speed.

Zephyr Step (Costs 2 Actions). Eteri launches himself forward, moving in a straight line up to his movement speed (this movement does not provoke opportunity attacks). Each creature in the line must attempt a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 88 (16d10) slashing damage and is knocked prone. On a success, a creature takes half damage and is not knocked prone.

Breath of the Divine (3 Actions). Eteri brings forth a healing wind. He and up to three allies of his choice that he can see immediately recover hit points equal to their Constitution score.

RESOURCES

The storm heralds carry instruments of power—Zeru his drums and mallet, and Eteri his flute. While they will occasionally deal with clerics or settlements seeking their favor, the two brothers have little need for material possessions. They are reluctant to take up responsibilities that would tie them down. If the brothers need something done that they can't accomplish themselves, they are more likely to intimidate others into compliance than to deal in favors.

ALLIES

Zeru and Eteri mostly concern themselves with each other, but they enlist other creatures to participate in their mischief on occasion. The brothers possess awesome powers over the elements, attracting a wealth of allies interested in currying their favor.

Masters of the Elements. Zeru and Eteri's power over the skies grants them a measure of influence over lesser elementals. If the brothers need guardians or extra muscle, they can easily obtain the services of air, water, and even earth elementals as needed. While Zeru and Eteri themselves pose the largest threat while warring, unchecked groups of elementals summoned by their chaos also create serious risks to nearby towns and villages.

Vajra. Centuries ago, Zeru formed a close bond with an elemental creature named Vajra. Vajra is a being of pure energy, but it prefers to take a more solid mammalian form when traveling the material plane. Most often seen as a blue panther, Vajra only appears when Zeru calls for help. It is unclear whether Vajra is one creature or one of many creatures bonded to the brothers, but no matter how many times Vajra is slain, it always appears again when called. Vajra's attitude is typically that of a sleepy large cat, but it becomes ferociously virile during stormy weather.



VAJRA

Medium elemental, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 195 (26d8 + 78)

Speed 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Wis +7

Skills Acrobatics +10, Perception +7, Stealth +10

Damage Immunities lightning

Condition Immunities deafened, stunned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

Languages understands Common and Primordial but can't speak

Challenge 10 (5,900 XP)

TRAITS

Living Spark. Vajra can enter a hostile creature's space but cannot end its turn there. The first time it enters a creature's space on a turn, that creature takes 10 (3d6) lightning damage.

Thunderstruck. At the start of each of its turns, Vajra may emit an explosive shockwave in a 30-foot-radius sphere. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 17 Constitution saving throw, taking 16 (3d10) thunder damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Vajra can make two Claw attacks and one Bite attack, or one Bite attack and a Voltaic Spike attack.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) lightning damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) lightning damage.

Voltaic Spike. Vajra shoots a bolt of lightning at a creature it can see within 120 feet of it. The creature must attempt a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 28 (8d6) lightning damage and becoming stunned until the end of Vajra's next turn on a failure, or taking half damage and avoiding the stunned condition on a success.

With the Band. A group of fanatical clerics and paladins dedicated to the power of storms are vying for attention from Zeru and Eteri. While the brothers are not interested in maintaining a permanent relationship with such a following, they occasionally use these clerics to perform boring or arduous tasks for them. This storm cult operates out of a small rocky island surrounded by perpetual storms.

REWARDS

If the party manages to find a peaceful resolution with Zeru and Eteri, the brothers might be inclined to bestow their greatest blessing on the adventurers before parting ways. Either Zeru or Eteri can grant the following blessing to each member of the party:

Stamp of Expectation. Zeru or Eteri can bestow this blessing on a creature from whom they expect greatness. The stamp is an invisible mark that can be permanently applied to either a weapon or a piece of armor.

If applied to a weapon, the weapon's damage type becomes lightning. Lightning damage dealt by this weapon bypasses resistances or immunities to lightning damage.

If applied to armor, when the wearer would take lightning damage, the wearer instead regains hit points equal to the damage dealt.

Additionally, those who pay proper homage to a faith that honors the might of storms, the swiftness of lightning, and the power of thunder at the herald's destruction may add the following spell to their cleric spell list.

NEW SPELL: HEAVENFALL

8th-level evocation (clerics only)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 500 feet

Components: V, S, M (a forged platinum lightning bolt worth 1,000 gp)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You pull a pillar of divine lightning to the ground in a 20-foot-radius, 40-foot-high cylinder centered on a point within range. When a creature enters the spell's area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it is shocked by lightning, and it must attempt a Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 14d6 lightning damage and is blinded. On a successful save, the creature takes half damage and is not blinded. A creature blinded by this spell can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the condition on a success.

On each of your turns after you cast this spell, you can use an action to move the pillar up to 100 feet in any direction.



ETTEILLA

Supreme Diviner

"Your past, present, future—I see it all in the cards. One of my duller reads, I must say."

DESCRIPTION

Etteilla transcends physical reality, existing in an eternal, immaterial state that casts her consciousness forward, backward, and between time. When she does choose to take a physical form, she appears as a condensed being of starlight, formed in the shape of a humanoid woman. Though her body is fluid, the celestial always appears with her tarot deck. Sometimes the deck is contained in a pouch or box, but more often, the cards bob and spin around Etteilla with a will of their own.

ETTEILLA IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Once the mortal Etteilla grounded her powers with tarot cards, she became unstoppable. The seer could predict natural disasters,

knew impossible secrets about the workings of empires, and possessed hidden knowledge the world had never dreamed. The same magical practitioners who had failed to help her as a child now came to her for aid. Diviners and priests beseeched Etteilla to teach them how to grow their power. Etteilla turned all away, because as her ability to read fate grew, she became less concerned with the physical world. She eventually became so perturbed by constant interruption that she consulted her cards to discover a permanent solution. With her newfound knowledge, she carved out a piece of the celestial realm for herself and transformed herself into an eternal form. Gods, celestials, and all manner of immortal beings were shocked by the sudden presence of this self-made immortal. Etteilla had foreseen this consequence and offered her services as the fortune-teller to the immortals to quell their wrath. This strange offer intrigued the immortal beings of the multiverse, so they acquiesced to Etteilla's small shred of divinity.

PROFILE

Personality: Cold

Ideals: Etteilla understands all that has ever been and all that will ever be, a quality that makes her unconcerned with current events. She instead peers deeply into the temporal fabric of the universe, examining each strand of fate and its infinite potential. It is beauty, truth, and meaning all in one, beyond the capacity for any language to truly describe.

Bonds: Etteilla views the universe as the pinnacle of cosmic perfection, where fate's plan rules all beings. The diviner considers herself the supreme emissary of this web of order. She believes that all creatures shall receive their due, for better or for worse.

Flaws: Etteilla possesses no concept of good and evil, only the ultimate faith in the predestined path of fate. This commitment to protecting the divine plan causes her to intercede on behalf of good or evil forces in equal measure. Her insistence on remaining neutral makes her a target for greater beings capable of manipulation.

Legend: Etteilla was once a mortal, touched with the gift of prophecy. From infancy, Etteilla could sense the future, and as she grew, her prescient abilities seemed to

expand without end. She received visions of the future in dreams, could read a person's past with a mere touch, and could predict how a coin would fall each throw. At first, these abilities granted Etteilla a measure of celebrity, but in time she began to unravel as her gifts endlessly grew. She was tortured with indecision, pained by the constant perception of intimate secrets of those around her. To make the visions stop, Etteilla tried to lock herself away, wishing only for the continuous barrage of knowledge to end. Her parents sought the help of spellcasters across the land to help their daughter control her overwhelming powers. Divination wizards could not help the child, nor sorcerers, nor clerics, nor any other reputable casters.

Just when Etteilla's case seemed lost, a traveling carnival rolled into town. The fortune-teller of the show took an interest in the suffering girl's story and offered her aid. At their wit's end, Etteilla's parents agreed. The fortune-teller gave young Etteilla a deck of tarot cards and instructed the child to imbue them with her power. For days, Etteilla, the deck, and the fortune-teller remained locked away in silence. Just when Etteilla's parents grew to the height of concern, their daughter emerged from the room and, for the first time in years, seemed free from her pain. Etteilla had tied her powers of prophecy to the cards, and with the deck, she could finally master her abilities.

A campaign involving Etteilla is centered around the concept of fate. Etteilla acts as an enforcer of destiny and makes a powerful ally or a deadly enemy depending on what side of the coin the characters fall. If the party avoids their future or seeks to rewrite fate, Etteilla does everything in her power to set them back on the course she deems correct and proper.

Author's Note

If you're anything like me, you've always wanted divination casters to be just a little bit cooler than the way they are currently mechanically portrayed. You probably also love any excuse to shake up mechanics with a physical prop. If either of these things is true, you are going to have so much fun running Etteilla. I'm not going to lie to you, though—it's going to be tough to portray an all-knowing villain in a way that is genuinely satisfying for your players. If you play Etteilla without any flaws, it will be nearly impossible for the characters to have any real agency. To portray the diviner in the best way, lean into her single-minded obsession with fate. She is trying to restore the balance of the universe, and the more covertly she can do it, the better. This subtle approach means you have to craft devilish stratagems, enact heart-wrenching manipulations, and become a master metaphysical trap-smith. If you are a creative type, such a campaign is going to be a lot of fun. Just remember to play your cards carefully.

- Celeste Conowitch

INTRODUCTION

Involving Etteilla in the story of the characters begins with a significant alteration of events. This triggering event could be a party surviving a fight with an all-powerful foe or perhaps using great magic like a *wish* spell to alter events in a critical moment. It could even be an act forced on the characters against their will or without their knowledge. To Etteilla, it matters not who is responsible, only that fate's course be corrected and destiny fulfilled. Depending on what changes about the characters' destiny, this could spell dire conflict in the days ahead or a simple reordering of fate. At the very least, the party should receive prophetic omens that Etteilla has taken an interest in them. Never swift to act, the Supreme Diviner performs her due diligence, learning all she can about these peculiar creatures before engaging them.

CONFLICT

Once Etteilla has decided fate needs correcting, she attempts to set things right in subtle ways, growing more and more heavy-handed if her schemes continue to fail. The Supreme Diviner considers her mistakes to be quite the personal insult; with her visions of the future, it is nigh-inconceivable she could be foiled, especially by trivial mortals. This personal stake can turn Etteilla's overbearing influence into a deadly threat. The Supreme Diviner begins to "stack the deck" against the characters at every opportunity, making trivial obstacles ferociously difficult

or invoking bad luck resulting in catastrophic consequences. Should things get extremely serious, Etteilla sends one or more of her knights to finish the job. These dedicated thralls are all the evidence the characters need to know something powerful is causing them trouble.

CONCLUSION

If the party survives both subtleties and her servants, Etteilla decides to eliminate them herself. The diviner invites the characters to her sanctuary of stars, where she aims to kill them and restore the weave of fate. This confrontation is nigh-impossible to avoid. The Supreme Diviner uses her lair's power to open countless inconvenient portals at the party's expense. A trip to the restroom can easily turn into an awkward first meeting as Etteilla constantly harasses the characters with portals. In the event they prove impossible to snag, Etteilla turns to her vast knowledge and understanding of the future to lure the characters to her. The theft of precious loot, the abduction of a loved one, or something more sinister are all acceptable methods to the Supreme Diviner at this point.

CHALLENGES

Etteilla can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with her.

EXPLORATION

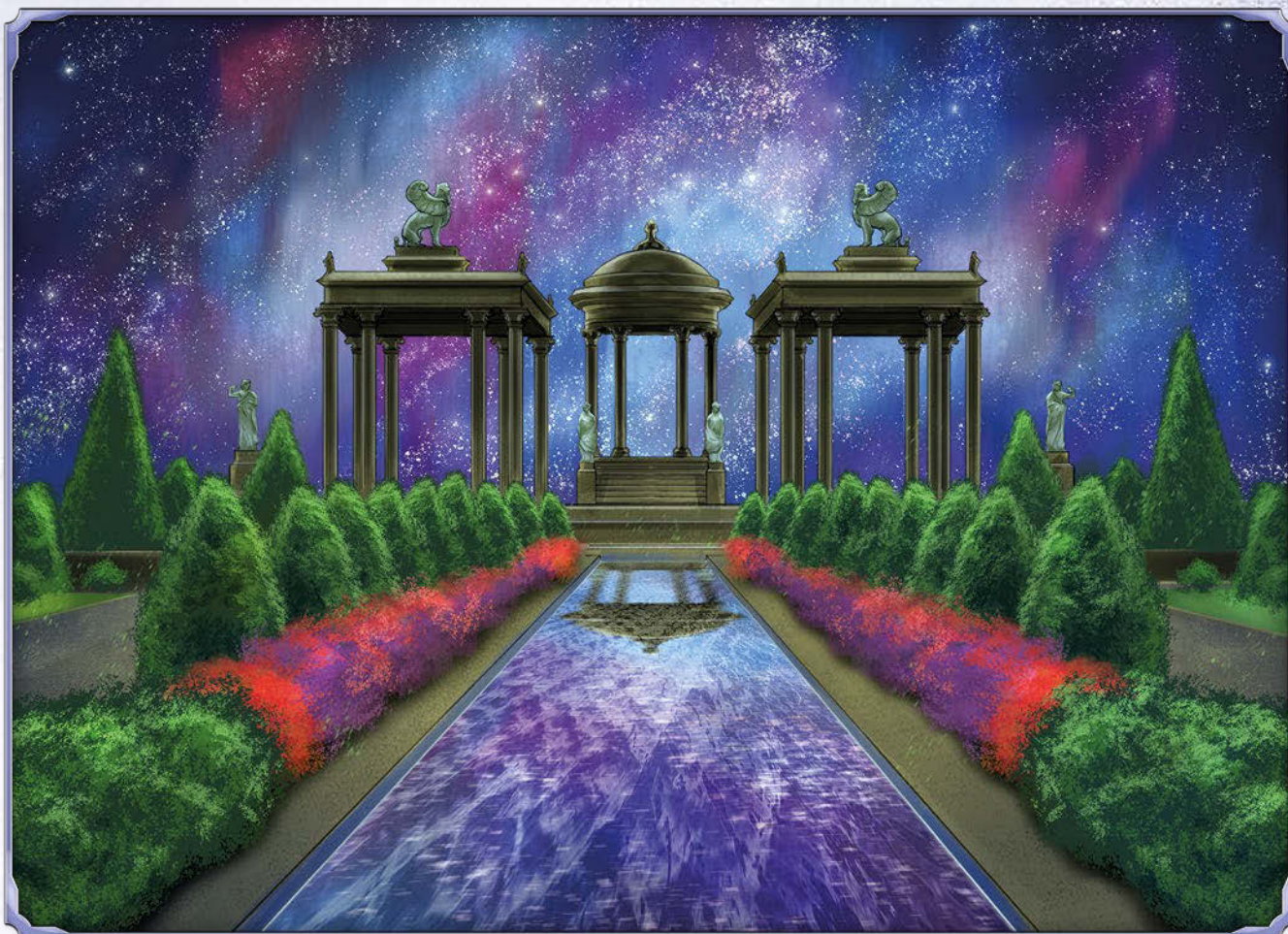
While Etteilla is loath to leave the glorious tranquility of her Sanctum of Stars, her eye often observes the mortal realms when such matters interfere with fate. Much of the Supreme Diviner's influence is subtle. A little twist of fate here, a little bad luck there, and suddenly what was a standard mountain climb has become a perilous excursion of ludicrous proportions. Etteilla may not create many opportunities to explore, but she certainly adds to them. Depending on whether they understand what is happening, the characters may simply attribute her interference to coincidence or some lesser force. However, if enough of these "coincidences" keep happening, the party is bound to get suspicious and begin factoring her influence into how they explore and interact with their environment.

Etteilla's Sanctum of Stars is a simple place, a cozy demiplane perpetually awash in a starlight sky rife with activity. Here the Supreme Diviner spends her days perusing her Deck of Omens, exploring the most interesting and exciting strands of fate woven throughout the multiverse. Intruders are an extremely unwelcome distraction, to be evicted as quickly as possible.

Regional Effects

The region containing Etteilla's lair is warped by her celestial power, which has created the following effects within the entirety of the demiplane:

- When a creature in the affected area rolls with any advantage or disadvantage, it rolls three d20s (instead of two) and chooses the highest (if advantage) or lowest (if disadvantage) result.



- The pools of water within the sanctum can be used to scry upon the mortal realms without the aid of magic. As an action, a creature within 5 feet of a pool can cast the spell *scrying* (spell save DC 25) without the need for any verbal or somatic components and using the pool as the material component.
- Projections of a creature's past and future selves wander through the gardens of Etteilla's domain. These projections are harmless illusions, but they persistently stalk and crowd intruding creatures, pointing out their presence in obnoxiously loud voices.

If Etteilla is destroyed, these regional effects immediately cease until another creature takes up her mantel in 78 days.

Etteilla's Lair

Etteilla's lair is a pocket plane she sustains through her divine power. This plane is directly adjacent to the planes other celestial creatures call home, but Etteilla allows other creatures to visit only by her express invitation. Etteilla's lair is a serene place, full of quiet, manicured gardens, reflective pools, and exquisite statuary. The entirety of her realm is cast in eternal twilight, Etteilla's favorite time of day. At the very center of the domain sits Etteilla's house, made entirely of neatly stacked cards. The walls, ceilings, and furniture of the home are made of cards identical to those from tarot decks across the multiverse, displaying a

dizzying array of artistry. The house of cards is built around a central courtyard where the diviner spends her time reading the weavings of fate.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Etteilla can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Etteilla is using her mythic statistics, she can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Etteilla can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A portal opens in an unoccupied space within the lair to a precise location on a different plane of existence of Etteilla's choice. The portal is a circular opening up to 20 feet in diameter which must fit within an aperture (such as a doorway or hole) and lasts for 1 minute or until Etteilla uses this action again.

The portal has a front and a back on each plane where it appears. Travel through the portal is possible only by moving through its front. Anything that does so is instantly transported to the other plane, appearing in the unoccupied space nearest to the portal.

An unwilling creature adjacent to the portal's front when it appears must succeed on a DC 24 Charisma saving throw or be pulled through, causing the portal to close behind them.



- A creature within the lair or being scryed upon via Etteilla's regional effects is cursed with strange twists of fate for 1 minute or until Etteilla uses this action again. While so cursed, when a creature would have advantage it instead has disadvantage, and vice versa.
- Stars rain down from the sky within the lair. Each creature of Etteilla's choice in the lair takes radiant damage equal to its Constitution score.

Exploration Encounters

Etteilla has seen all there is to see about the past, present, future, and even alternate timelines. This perspective grants her an incredibly keen understanding of how everything works, allowing her to act with discretion and precision. With little ego and littler care for the banality of a linear mortal realm, Etteilla enhances or facilitates exploration encounters from the safety of her Sanctum of Stars.

Fool's Folly. The knight of pentacles approaches the characters with a worthy quest! Nearby is an ancient tomb, known locally as Fool's Folly, filled with deadly traps and a worthy payoff in the form of a divine blessing for good luck from a mysterious statue. The knight embellishes the tale of this peril to make it seem like an exciting and thrilling challenge. At first things seem quite handleable by the characters, but with just a few unlucky rolls things could quickly get out of hand.

The Covenant of Stars. Etteilla is not the only one who has taken an interest in the party. Thanks to their unintended relationship with the Supreme Diviner, a fortune-telling wizard approaches the party. The strange figure cryptically speaks of the characters' significance in determining the future, offering them sanctuary and knowledge among their colleagues at the mysterious Covenant of Stars. Though the wizard is peculiar—even for a wizard—the promise of learning more about this so-called Supreme Diviner and her interest in the characters is potentially too valuable to pass up.

Endless Possibilities. While they sleep, the characters are tortured by nightmarish versions of themselves from alternate potential timelines and predictions, a phenomenon invoked by Etteilla's continued divination of their future activities. The horror of what could have befallen the party on their adventures is extreme. It should become clear their current course of action is a dangerous one, but these dream selves may possess unique knowledge about events surrounding the characters. Unfortunately, the nightmares are uncommunicative, reduced to a shadow of their former selves by what they endured in another life.

SOCIAL

Because Etteilla relies primarily on subtle manipulation to achieve her ends, a direct social confrontation is unlikely until the very end of her arc. Instead, her influence is felt through uncovered prophecy and mercurial

NEW ORGANIZATION: COVENANT OF STARS

Name: Covenant of Stars

Leadership: Anarchic

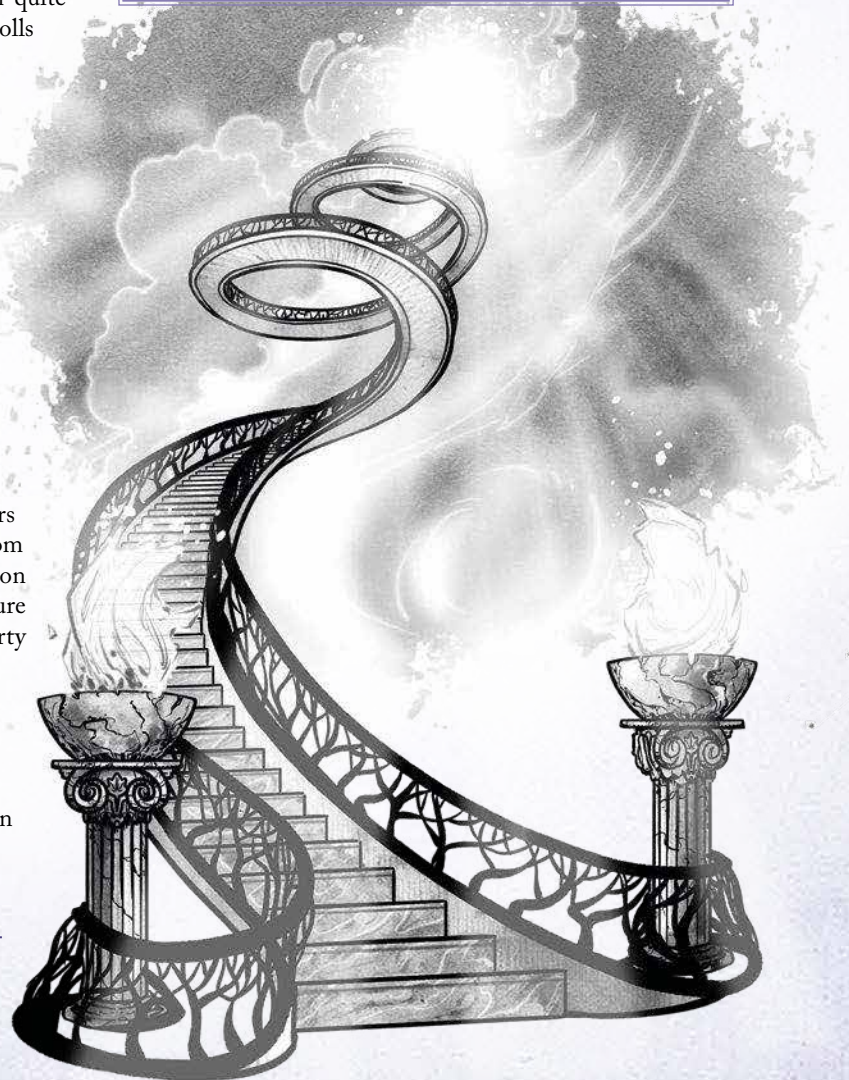
Membership: Large (213 members): humanoids; wizards (school of divination)

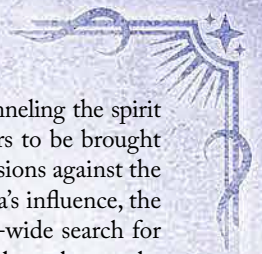
Alignment: True neutral

Motto: "Our future is her design."

Resources: Knowledge (the future), magic (divination)

Creed: To the Covenant of Stars, Etteilla the Supreme Diviner is more than just a seer. By the very act of divining what is to come the celestial moves the future from a supposition of uncertainty to a deterministic state. By this act Etteilla does not just predict the future—she writes it. The wizards of this organization hold this practice in the highest regard, studying her ways to learn how they, too, may write what is to come. While other mages view this extraordinary possibility with a healthy degree of skepticism, the Covenant is undeterred. With each day the organization's understanding of Etteilla and her methods grows, merging arcane science, mysticism, and time into one unified theory of existence...or so they would like to believe.





rumors. Divining the future is an imprecise and extraordinarily complex art. Consequently, Etteilla puts little stock in such simple modes of communication as language or writing. When she lowers herself to speak, it is only to impart time-sensitive information or ask a question. The rest of her intentions are veiled beyond symbolism and empathic impressions.

Social Encounters

Interacting socially with Etteilla is akin to contacting an alien life form for the first time. So vast and complex is her insight that simple language often fails to establish any meaningful engagement. The symbology of her *deck of omens* plays a tremendous role in how Etteilla communicates. Often in answer to a question or statement of fact, the Supreme Diviner simply presents a configuration of cards, indicating not only her desired intent, but countless possible intents that may or may not come to pass. This experience is maddeningly cryptic, well beyond the comprehension of all but the wisest of mortals.

The First One Is Free. Before the party learns that Etteilla has it out for them, the diviner invites them to her realm. She performs a tarot reading full of clues meant to push them in a direction which ensures the continued cosmic balance and certainty of the future. This reading is a particularly elegant display, utilizing a mystical art known as Prognostication to achieve startlingly accurate and specific details about what lies ahead (with key elements withheld at Etteilla's discretion).

Touch of Destiny. A famous prophet begins channeling the spirit of Etteilla, issuing a public call for the characters to be brought to them to “stand and account for their transgressions against the universe.” While the public is unaware of Etteilla's influence, the prophet is respected enough to warrant a realm-wide search for the heroes. While no one wants things to get violent, the prophet's increasingly irate attitude demands urgent resolution.

The Knight Embassy. The knight of wands appears before the party and seeks to negotiate on behalf of its lady. According to Etteilla, if the characters continue on their adventurous course, they will encounter and slay a creature whose survival is significant to the cosmic order. The offer is simple. The characters must refrain from any acts of heroism and violence for a period of 1 year and 1 day. The knight offers no compensation for such a request, but its threatening tones make it clear this negotiation could easily go south.

COMBAT

Etteilla never willingly leaves her domain and is influential enough to guarantee her enemies will eventually come to her. Etteilla is the ultimate tactician who uses her divination abilities to predict then counter every move the party makes. She uses her knowledge of the past and future to throw as many obstacles at the party as it takes for them to die, to suffer, or to choose as fate has decreed they must.

NEW EPIC SKILL¹: PROGNOSTICATION

Prognostication (Wisdom). Magic is not the only method by which one may divine the future. For some who have the gift for navigating the nigh-infinite possibilities the future holds, there is the skill of Prognostication. The practice of this skill takes many forms: astrology, cartomancy, clairvoyance, and many more. However, at its heart, all forms of Prognostication require the rare gift to see probable futures and great Wisdom required to interpret the signs. Creatures that lack the gift of foresight cannot become proficient in Prognostication and cannot attempt Wisdom (Prognostication) ability checks.

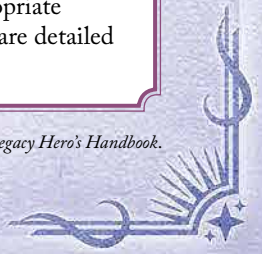
In order for a creature to attempt a Wisdom (Prognostication) check, it must have direct contact with either a creature, object, or structure and indicate an interest in using its gift. Some practitioners of Prognostication use special tools to aid with their art, but such objects have little impact other than to provide the user with a comfortable way to apply these skills. When the practitioner attempts the check, it has the potential to gain great insight into either the past or the future (practitioner's choice) of either the target or itself.

If the target is insignificant regarding the past or future of the practitioner or if the target's past or future is of little consequence, the DM may not allow the check. If the target possesses some significance regarding the past or future of the practitioner or the world at large, a DM that allows the check is obliged to provide special information to the user. In most

cases, this information takes the form of “meta knowledge” of upcoming events the DM has prepared for the game session or lore from the past relevant to the tasks at hand. This information is typically bestowed in the form of cryptic hints or visions described by the DM, though a far more expedient method involves granting the player a quick look behind the DM screen. A DM may also call for a Wisdom (Prognostication) check if the practitioner incidentally comes into contact with a creature, object, or structure that has great significance to its past or future, though such uses of the gift are far rarer. Additionally, the future is not set in stone. The information the DM provides may be one of many possibilities, which should be made clear to the character.

The DC of the check is determined by the DM, with typically more significant meta knowledge increasing the DC. Additionally, the further forward or back the practitioner is attempting to look can dramatically increase the DC. Another possible manner by which the DC can increase is based on the clarity of the information received. The more specific the desired information, the higher the DC becomes. Finally, characters that possess the gift would be wise not to abuse it. It is a fickle power, prone to mysteriously vanishing when a character constantly attempts to peek behind the campaign's curtain and leave no room for mystery. An example of some appropriate Prognostication uses and appropriate save DCs are detailed in the Prognostication Uses table.

¹The details about Epic skills can be found in the official 2CGaming supplement *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.



Prognostication Uses

Use	Ability Check DC
The target is a piece of a much larger puzzle, providing a small hint of things to come or things that have been. Interacting with it may change the future slightly.	14
The target is of moderate significance of things to come or things that have been. Interacting with it may change the future in a few important ways.	19
The target is of great significance of things to come or things that have been. Interacting with it may change the future in dramatic ways.	24
The target is of ultimate significance of things to come or things that have been. Interacting with it almost certainly changes the future on a grand scale.	30
The period of time toward which the target is significant spans a century.	+5 to DC
The period of time toward which the target is significant spans a millennium.	+10 to DC
The period of time toward which the target is significant spans an eon.	+20 to DC
The period of time toward which the target is significant spans eternity.	+30 to DC
The information received is murky and uncertain.	+0 to DC
The information received is clear but cryptic.	+5 to DC
The information received is clear and specific.	+10 to DC

When the characters eventually figure out their string of misfortune is the doing of Etteilla, they can bring the fight to her. When they choose to confront her, she is aware they are coming long before their arrival. This web of certainty makes her an emotionless and cruel fighter as she executes a victory already ordained. While the diviner is aloof, she is not above using intimate knowledge of the characters to taunt them. The titan takes her time to know her enemies well and uses whatever advantages she can to ensure the outcome she has foreseen.

Combat Encounter Example: The Four Honors

Etteilla has allowed the party into her realm and offers them a chance to choose their destiny. With her four knights by her side, Etteilla proposes that if the characters can defeat her champions with creativity, fortitude, love, and reason, she will change their fate and spare their lives. This test is a puzzle, one last chance afforded by Etteilla to see if the characters have the wisdom to avoid causing cosmic catastrophe in their future endeavors. To succeed, the party must outplay the knight of wands in a battle of wits, endure pain from the knight of pentacles, logically confound the knight of swords, and make friends with the knight of chalices. Alternatively, the characters can always take on Etteilla or even involuntarily provoke her if they attempt to cheat the test.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Controller

When Etteilla fights, she aims to restore order through the party's demise. This is not a job she takes lightly, so she seeks to kill and kill quickly. If you are using a tarot deck to run Etteilla, make sure to have it ready to use with the major arcana cards

separated from the minor arcana cards. You could even describe that the characters see Etteilla setting up the cards the same way you are to increase the drama.

If you are using a tarot deck for this fight, divide your deck into two separate stacks before combat begins. One deck should have all 22 major arcana cards, and the other deck should have all 56 minor arcana cards.

Whenever Etteilla deals damage or heals with an action, she draws minor arcana cards to determine the numerical total (instead of rolling dice). Each action specifies how many cards to draw. If at any point you run out of minor arcana cards to draw, simply reshuffle the deck. The numerical values of the minor arcana cards match the number listed in the card's title. For example, the two of pentacles has a numerical value of two. The numerical values of the face cards are listed in the Minor Arcana Values table. The exception to the rule is the ace, which changes the value of all cards when drawn.

To determine the value for each action, you can draw from a stack of minor arcana cards in a standard tarot deck, or you can roll on the table to determine which card she pulls.

Remember, Etteilla's Favored Suit feature is her greatest strength. Combining her Gift of Cups, Ward of Pentacles, Strike of Swords, and Mysticism of Wands actions effectively with this feature is key to her success. A particularly horrific interaction is using a trump Ward of Pentacles to create a mighty barrier from which Etteilla can strike from a protected position. The potential trump card interactions and synergies on each of these abilities are considerable, so make sure to explore all the potential strategic options they present. While her hit point maximum is small for a creature of her CR, Etteilla's formidable AC—thanks to Danger Sense—and the ability to heal herself with Gift of



Cups should be exploited to keep her in the fight. If things are going well, use Read the Cards to set Etteilla up for a supremely powerful turn. Combined with Deadly Deal, this interaction can be extremely damaging. Note that Read the Cards applies to Favored Suit as well, allowing Etteilla to choose the perfect trump card for her situation.

Minor Arcana Values

2d8	Card	Value
2	Two	2
3	Three	3
4	Four	4
5	Five	5
6	Six	6
7	Seven	7
8	Eight	8
9	Nine	9
10	Ten	10
11	Page	11
12	Knight	12
13	Queen	13
14	King	14
15–16	Ace	If an ace is drawn, the attack is considered a critical success. Every card drawn (including the ace) counts as if it has a value of 14.

Easier Tactics – To make things easier, avoid combining Favored Suit with the trump interaction found on Gift of Cups, Ward of Pentacles, Strike of Swords, or Mysticism of Wands. These effects are just too powerful for an inexperienced or under-leveled party to handle in most cases. Don't use Read the Cards unless you really need a strong turn from Etteilla. The players won't respect you making deliberately favorable card choices for them, so don't ruin the immersion of the encounter by putting yourself in that position.

Harder Tactics – Etteilla has read the past, present, and future of each character before they ever step foot into combat. You should run the fight as Etteilla would: with a perfect plan hand-tailored to destroy the party. Study the players' character sheets before the fight and specifically note which actions will work the best against each character. Use every ounce of your knowledge about the meta of the how the characters play to Etteilla's advantage. Open with Read the Cards and a trump-enhanced Ward of Pentacles around a spellcasting character. Try to down the character as quickly as possible, putting them beyond the aid of their companions until the barrier is dropped. Always use the trump interaction granted by Favored Suit. Choose targets with low hit points for Strike of Swords, reap the most powerful spells with Mysticism of Wands, and keep Etteilla and any allies healthy with Gift of Cups.

Mythic Etteilla

Mythic Etteilla has a greater emphasis placed on the power of the Major Arcana cards. With a single mythic action, Etteilla can invoke one of these cards and completely change the dynamic of the battlefield. Remember to shuffle the deck after each use, as this allows you to potentially draw devastating cards over and over again, especially when you use Read the Cards to guarantee an outcome. The other major change to Etteilla in her mythic form is her Future Perfect action. This escalation mechanic guarantees that as the fight advances, both surviving Etteilla's effects and harming her become increasingly more difficult. Fifteen dice from this mechanic is an overwhelming degree of influence Etteilla can hold over the battlefield, which can negate critical hits, guarantee hits on her attacks, and force creatures to fail saving throws.

Mythic Effects

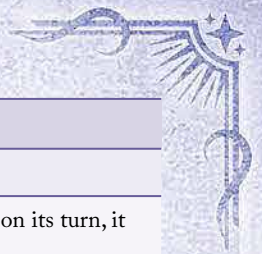
As a mythic creature, Etteilla causes the following effects.

Destined Being. Etteilla cannot truly die as long as cartomancy persists (the practice of using cards to tell fortunes). If Etteilla is slain, another willing cartomancer transforms into her in exactly 78 days. Etteilla retains all the memories of the creature which transformed into her.

Major Arcana. Etteilla's *deck of omens* consists of 22 major arcana tarot cards, whose epic power can change the very fabric of fate on the battlefield. When Etteilla draws one of her major arcana cards using her Major Arcana mythic action, she immediately presents the card and produces the effect.

When determining which card Etteilla produces from the deck, you can roll a d100 and consult the Major Arcana Cards table or draw from an actual tarot deck.

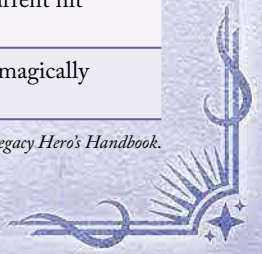




Major Arcana Cards

d100	Card	Effect
1	The Fool	Until the next initiative count of 20, when a creature Etteilla can see misses an attack roll on its turn, it immediately falls prone and its turn ends.
2–5	The Magician	Etteilla casts a tier 1 Epic spell of her choice from the archmage spell list, without the need for any components (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks).
6–10	The High Priestess	Until the next initiative count of 20, when Etteilla would deal radiant damage, she instead deals righteous damage ² .
11–15	The Empress	Etteilla gains 100 temporary hit points which last until she finishes a short or long rest. While she has these temporary hit points, she is immune to non-Epic spells and critical hits.
16–20	The Emperor	Until the next initiative count of 20, Etteilla can name a second suit of her <i>deck of omens</i> to be trump, per her Favored Suit feature.
21–25	The Hierophant	Each creature of Etteilla's choice that she can see must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or fall prone. A creature that falls prone in this manner must remain prone until the next initiative count of 20.
26–30	The Lovers	Two creatures of Etteilla's choice must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the other target until the next initiative count of 20. A creature charmed in this manner views the other target with great affection and cannot willingly harm or affect other creatures in any way, instead focusing all its attentions on the other target.
31–35	The Chariot	Each creature of Etteilla's choice that she can see must succeed on a DC 25 Strength saving throw or be thrown up to 60 ft. in a straight line in a direction of Etteilla's choice.
36–40	Strength	Until the next initiative count of 20, Etteilla becomes proficient in all skills and tools.
41–45	The Hermit	Until the next initiative count of 20, the area around Etteilla in a 120-ft.-radius sphere is magically silenced. Within the area, no sound can be heard and spells with verbal components cannot be cast.
46–50	Wheel of Fortune	Etteilla immediately draws two more major arcana cards.
51–55	Justice	Until the next initiative count of 20, creatures cannot have advantage or Epic advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks against Etteilla.
56–60	The Hanged Man	Until the next initiative count of 20, when a creature Etteilla can see fails a saving throw, she can cause it to gain one level of exhaustion.
61–65	Death	Etteilla afflicts a creature she can see with an Epic curse, which lasts until the next initiative count of 20. While cursed in this manner, if the creature ever falls below 100 hit points, it dies instantly.
66–70	Temperance	Etteilla afflicts a creature she can see with an Epic curse, which lasts until the next initiative count of 20. While cursed in this manner, a creature cannot take more than a single action (including bonus actions and reactions) on a turn.
71–75	The Devil	Etteilla afflicts a creature she can see with an Epic curse, which lasts until the next initiative count of 20. While cursed in this manner, when a creature would regain hit points, it instead regains no hit points and takes fire damage equal to the amount it would have regained.
76–80	The Tower	Fire rains from the sky until the next initiative count of 20 in a 300-ft.-radius, 1-mile-high cylinder centered on Etteilla. At the start of its turn, a creature other than Etteilla in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking take 70 (20d6) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.
81–85	The Star	Until the next initiative count of 20, Etteilla has two additional legendary actions.
86–90	The Moon	Until the next initiative count of 20, all creatures of Etteilla's choice that she can see become invisible.
91–95	The Sun	Until the next initiative count of 20, Etteilla shines like the sun, emitting bright daylight in a 120-ft. radius and dim daylight 120 ft. beyond that. Areas of magical darkness in the affected area are immediately destroyed, and invisible creatures in the affected area become visible.
96–99	Judgment	A creature of Etteilla's choice that she can see has its hit point maximum reduced to its current hit points, which lasts for 1 year.
100	The World	Each creature of Etteilla's choice must succeed on a DC 25 Charisma saving throw or be magically teleported to an unoccupied space of her choice within 300 ft.

² Righteous damage is an Epic damage type detailed in the official 2CGaming supplement *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.



ETTEILLA, SUPREME DIVINER
Medium celestial, true neutral

Armor Class 15 (26 with Danger Sense)
Hit Points 451 (43d8 + 258)
Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	26 (+8)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +11, Wis +15, Cha +14
Skills Arcana +11, Insight +17, Perception +17, Prognostication +25

Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages all

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

TRAITS

Danger Sense. Etteilla possesses cosmic awareness of the future in a 30-foot radius centered on her. Against creatures in the affected area, Etteilla cannot be surprised and has an AC of 26.

Deck of Omens. Etteilla possesses a mystical deck of tarot cards: *the deck of omens*. Etteilla can draw cards from this deck magically without needing to hold it, so long as it is on her person. At the end of each turn, if a card is missing from the deck it is magically returned and the deck instantly shuffles itself.

If Etteilla starts her turn and is not in possession of this deck, she can choose to have them instead mystically appear on her person. Any creatures touching or carrying this deck when this occurs take 140 (40d6) psychic damage.

Favored Suit. As a bonus action on each of her turns, Etteilla can draw the top card of her *deck of omens* until she draws a minor arcana card from any of the four suits: cups, pentacles, swords, or wands. Whichever suit she draws becomes the trump suit until the start of her next turn, which has special benefits according to which actions she takes, as detailed in their descriptions.

Mythic Resistance. When Etteilla fails a saving throw, she can expend one of her unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Etteilla makes three attacks or makes two attacks and takes one other action.

Deadly Deal. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, range 120/300 ft., one creature. *Hit:* Etteilla randomly draws five minor arcana cards from her *deck of omens*, or twice as many on a critical hit. The attack deals radiant damage equal the sum of the values shown on the cards, as detailed in the Minor Arcana Values table.

If Etteilla draws a card that is currently trump thanks to her Favored Suit feature, the damage that card deals is doubled.

Gift of Cups. Etteilla chooses a creature she can see and grants it the gift of good fortune. Etteilla randomly draws seven minor arcana cards from her *deck of omens*, and the target magically regains a number of hit points equal to the sum of the values shown on the cards (as detailed in the Minor Arcana Values table). Additionally, the affected creature is cured of the blind, deafened,

exhaustion, and stunned conditions, along with any reductions to its hit point maximum.

If the cups suit is trump when Etteilla uses this action, the amount of hit points the target regains is doubled.

Ward of Pentacles. Etteilla encloses a Huge or smaller creature she can see within 120 feet of her within a bubble of crimson force. An unwilling creature must attempt a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the target moves to the nearest outside edge of the bubble. On a failure, the creature is completely enclosed within the barrier for as long as Etteilla concentrates (as though concentrating on a spell). The barrier is an object of magical force (120 hit points, AC 15). Nothing other than light can pass through the barrier, nor can anything within be influenced by anything outside, and creatures attempting to magically teleport into or out of the affected area must succeed on a DC 24 Charisma saving throw or the attempt fails.

If the pentacles suit is trump when Etteilla uses this action, she is immune to the properties of the barrier, allowing her and any effects she produces to pass through the affected area unimpeded.

Strike of Swords. *Melee Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 64 (10d10 + 9) slashing damage.

If the swords suit is trump when Etteilla uses this action, the attack instead deals 119 (20d10 + 9) slashing damage.

Mysticism of Wands. Etteilla manipulates a spell effect of 5th level or lower she is aware of within 300 feet of her, choosing one of the following options.

- Etteilla immediately ends the effect.
- Etteilla immediately casts the targeted spell without the need for any components (spell save DC 24, +16 to hit with spell attacks).
- Etteilla learns the exact location and true nature of the creature who cast the spell.

If the wands suit is trump when Etteilla uses this action, the maximum level of the spell she can affect is 9th.

Read the Cards (Recharge 5–6). Until the end of her next turn, when Etteilla would randomly draw cards from her *deck of omens*, she instead draws cards of her choice.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Etteilla can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Etteilla regains spent legendary actions at the start of each of her turns.

Deadly Deal. Etteilla uses her Deadly Deal action.

Teleport. Etteilla magically teleports to an unoccupied space she can see within 60 feet of her.

Sixth Sense (Costs 2 Actions). Etteilla attunes her senses to a creature of her choice that she is aware of within 1 mile of her. For 1 hour or until she uses this action again, the target is considered within the affected area of Etteilla's Danger Sense feature.

Minor Arcana (Costs 2 or 3 Actions). Etteilla uses her Gift of Cups, Ward of Pentacles, Strike of Swords, or Mysticism of Wands action. If one of these actions would benefit from Etteilla's Favored Suit feature, this action costs 3 legendary actions. Otherwise, it costs 2.

MYTHIC ETEILLA

Medium mythic celestial, true neutral

Armor Class 15 (27 with Danger Sense)

Hit Points 1,176 (112d8 + 672)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	28 (+9)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Str +12, Dex +14, Con +15, Int +13, Wis +18, Cha +16

Skills Arcana +11, Insight +17, Perception +17, Prognostication +25

Damage Resistances radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages all

Challenge Mythic 3

TRAITS

Deck of Omens. Etteilla possesses a mystical deck of tarot cards: *the deck of omens*. Etteilla can draw cards from this deck magically without needing to hold it, so long as it is on her person.

If Etteilla starts her turn and is not in possession of this deck, she can choose to have them instead mystically appear on her person. Any creatures touching or carrying this deck when this occurs takes 220 (40d10) psychic damage.

Favored Suit. As a bonus action on each of her turns, Etteilla can draw the top card of her *deck of omens* until she draws a minor arcana card from any of the four suits: cups, pentacles, swords, or wands. Whichever suit she draws becomes the trump suit until the start of her next turn, which has special benefits according to which actions she takes, as detailed in their descriptions.

Danger Sense. Etteilla possesses cosmic awareness of the future in a 60-foot radius centered on her. Against creatures in the affected area, Etteilla cannot be surprised and has an AC of 27.

Mythic Resistance. When Etteilla fails a saving throw, she can expend one of her unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Etteilla takes one of the following mythic actions. Etteilla cannot use the same effect two rounds in a row.

Future Perfect. Etteilla rolls three d20s and records the results, which signify her insight into future events. When a creature she can see makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, Etteilla can replace the result of the roll (no action required) with one of these foretelling rolls, even after she knows the result. Etteilla can use each d20 result once. She regains expended uses, along with three new rolls, when she uses this action again. Etteilla can have up to fifteen d20 results from this feature at a single time (any new results in excess of fifteen replace the oldest ones), and these benefits are lost if Etteilla finishes a short or long rest.

Major Arcana. Etteilla randomly draws a major arcana tarot card from her *deck of omens*, immediately causing the corresponding effect as detailed in the Major Arcana Cards table.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Etteilla makes three attacks or makes two attacks and takes one other action.

Deadly Deal. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, range 120/300 ft., one creature. *Hit:* Etteilla randomly draws eight minor arcana cards from her *deck of omens*, or twice as many on a critical hit. The attack deals radiant damage equal the sum of the values shown on the cards, as detailed in the Minor Arcana Values table.

If Etteilla draws a card that is currently trump thanks to her Favored Suit feature, the damage that card deals is doubled.

Gift of Cups. Etteilla chooses a creature she can see and grants it the gift of good fortune. Etteilla randomly draws ten minor arcana cards from her *deck of omens*, and the target magically regains a number of hit points equal to the sum of the values shown on the cards (as detailed in the Minor Arcana Values table). Additionally, the affected creature is cured of the blind, deafened, exhaustion, and stunned conditions, along with any reductions to its hit point maximum.

If the cups suit is trump when Etteilla uses this action, the amount of hit points the target regains is doubled.

Ward of Pentacles. Etteilla encloses a Huge or smaller creature she can see within 120 feet of her within a bubble of crimson force. An unwilling creature must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw. On a success, the target moves to the nearest outside edge of the bubble. On a failure, the creature is completely enclosed within the barrier for as long as Etteilla concentrates (as though concentrating on a spell). The barrier is an object of magical force (200 hit points, AC 15). Nothing other than light can pass through the barrier, nor can anything within be influenced by anything outside, and creatures attempting to magically teleport into or out of the affected area must succeed on a DC 25 Charisma saving throw or the attempt fails.

If the pentacles suit is trump when Etteilla uses this action, she is immune to the properties of the barrier, allowing her and any effects she produces to pass through the affected area unimpeded.

Strike of Swords. *Melee Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 79 (20d6 + 9) slashing damage.

If the swords suit is trump when Etteilla uses this action, the attack instead deals 149 (40d6 + 9) slashing damage.

Mysticism of Wands. Etteilla manipulates a spell effect of 8th level or lower she is aware of within 300 feet of her, choosing one of the following options.

- Etteilla immediately ends the effect.
- Etteilla immediately casts the targeted spell without the need for any components (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks).
- Etteilla learns the exact location and true nature of the creature who cast the spell.

If the wands suit is trump when Etteilla uses this action, the maximum level of the spell she can affect is a tier 1 Epic spell.

Read the Cards (Recharge 5–6). Until the end of her next turn, when Etteilla would randomly draw cards from her *deck of omens*, she instead draws cards of her choice.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Etteilla can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Etteilla regains spent legendary actions at the start of each of her turns.

Deadly Deal. Etteilla uses her Deadly Deal action.

Teleport. Etteilla magically teleports to an unoccupied space she can see within 60 feet of her.

Sixth Sense (Costs 2 Actions). Etteilla attunes her senses to a creature of her choice that she is aware of within 1 mile of her. For 1 hour or until she uses this action again, the target is considered within the affected area of Etteilla's Danger Sense feature.

Minor Arcana (Costs 2 or 3 Actions). Etteilla uses her Gift of Cups, Ward of Pentacles, Strike of Swords, or Mysticism of Wands action. If one of these actions would benefit from Etteilla's Favored Suit feature, this action costs 3 legendary actions. Otherwise, it costs 2.

RESOURCES

Etteilla is above material and interpersonal concerns. She views such things as impermanent and small in the grand scheme of the universe glowing around her. However, when she feels compelled to act, Etteilla can muster up useful trinkets, tools, and allies to aid in her cosmic goals. Most of her assets have no idea who, how, or why they are being employed, only that inexorable forces of the universe have conspired to bring them to specific locations at exact times to perform expected deeds. Few beings are beyond her influence, with those rare few who are aware of what is happening often playing along out of respect for Etteilla's power and significance.

ALLIES

While Etteilla primarily works her will through a network of favors and temporary alliances with other creatures, she occasionally animates servants of her own to deal with problems requiring a more direct hand. For such tasks, she is most likely to call upon the powers of the knights from her deck. Each of the four knights possesses a different personality, and Etteilla uses a different suit to attend to different kinds of problems. Only in the gravest of circumstances does Etteilla send all four knights to do her bidding, since the four rarely get along with one another.

Knight of Cups. The knight of cups is the best-natured of Etteilla's servants. They typically take the form of a holy person, a generous noble, or a kindly mentor. The knight of cups prefers to influence people through diplomatic appeals rather than direct combat.

Knight of Pentacles. The knight of pentacles is the most cunning of Etteilla's servants. They typically take the form of a charming performer, a cutthroat rogue, or a crafty merchant. The knight of pentacles specializes in laying both figurative and literal traps to deal with their quarry.

Knight of Swords. The knight of swords is the most action-oriented of Etteilla's servants. They typically take the form of a warrior, a tyrant, or a monster. The knight of swords favors violence and confrontation as solutions to all obstacles.

Knight of Wands. The knight of wands is the most powerful yet least predictable of Etteilla's servants. They typically take the form of a mage, a scholar, or a sentient object. The knight of wands possesses vast knowledge and trades in bargains of power to accomplish their goals.

REWARDS

If Etteilla is defeated, the characters are finally free from her relentless pursuit. Upon the Supreme Diviner's death, her body scatters into a flutter of tarot cards. If these cards are assembled, the party receives the following item.

Lesser Deck of Omens

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a creature with a Spellcasting feature)

This tarot deck contains 78 cards made of vellum.

All-Seeing Eye. While attuned to the deck, you have truesight out to a range of 120 feet and can see through solid objects.

Fate's Hand. The deck has 5 charges. As a bonus action you can choose to spend 1 or more charges, drawing one card from the deck for each charge spent. Once you have stopped drawing cards, you can decide to heal or harm one creature you can see within 120 feet of you. If you choose to heal a creature, it regains 35 (10d6) hit points per card. If you choose to harm a creature, it takes 35 (10d6) radiant damage per card. The deck regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn.

Supreme Divination. While holding the deck, you automatically succeed on Constitution saving throws made to maintain your concentration of divination spells.





KNIGHT OF CUPS/PENTACLES/SWORDS/WANDS

Medium humanoid, true neutral

Armor Class 22 (magical plate armor, shield)

Hit Points 256 (21d8 + 162)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	7 (-2)	22 (+6)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +11, Con +11, Wis +9

Skills Deception +10, Insight +15, Perception +9, Persuasion +10

Damage Immunities poison, radiant

Condition Immunities charmed

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Celestial, Common

Challenge 14 (11,500 XP)

TRAITS

Foresight. The knight has insight into the immediate future. It cannot be surprised and has advantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws.

Additionally, other creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against the knight.

Magical Equipment. The knight's armor and weapons are magical. It has a +2 bonus to its AC and a +2 bonus to weapon attacks and damage rolls (included in its statistics).

Minor Arcana. The knight belongs to one of the four suits of the minor arcana found in tarot—cups, pentacles, swords, or wands—and exudes an aura in a 30-foot radius centered on it, which is endowed with the mystical nature of the suit to which it belongs.

Cups. Allied creatures within the affected area are immune to the charmed condition and are immune to harmful effects from friendly or allied creatures.

Pentacles. At the start of each of the knight's turns, creatures in the affected area gain 20 temporary hit points, which last for 1 hour.

Swords. When an allied creature the knight can see in the affected area hits with a weapon attack, the knight can allow the creature to deal maximum damage on that attack (no action required).

Wands. When the knight or a friendly creature in the affected area succeeds on a saving throw against a spell or magical effect and suffers an effect on a success, it instead suffers no effect.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The knight makes four Longsword attacks. It can forgo making two of these attacks to instead use its Invoke Arcana action.

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d8 + 8) slashing damage plus 14 (4d6) radiant damage. This attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.

Invoke Arcana (Recharge 5–6). The knight casts one of the following spells, requiring no components (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks): *eyebite*, *mass suggestion*, *sunbeam*, *true seeing*.

REACTIONS

Deadly Defense. As a reaction when the knight is attacked by a creature it can see within 5 feet of it, it gains a +5 bonus to its AC. If the attack misses, the knight may immediately make a Longsword attack against the target.



NYARLATHOTEP

The Crawling Chaos

“There are few creatures in nature who enjoy inflicting suffering; humankind is one of them. Perhaps that is why it is ironic to see the guise and methods of Nyarlathotep. Causing chaos and madness just for misery and suffering they bring—these are the delights of the Outer Gods and their harbinger, Nyarlathotep.”

DESCRIPTION

Often seen as a suave man in a fitted jacket, Nyarlathotep is a creature of countless appearances. It often appears in a humanoid guise of a dapper gentleman. Behind this polished exterior lies the horror and madness of the outer realms. The true form of Nyarlathotep is one of unbridled madness. Its head is a large tentacle with a terrifying maw of teeth. The lower half of its body contains countless tentacles writhing in the shadows of the void. The voice of this monster comes as a hushed whisper which caresses the back of the listener's ear as both sensual and terrifying.

NYARLATHOTEP IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Dealing with Nyarlathotep means handling the myriad of convoluted plots it establishes. The ultimate goal is to inflict insanity, but achieving it through chaos is the preferred method.

Neighbor against neighbor, friend against friend, and family against family create distrust. Distrust breeds anger and fear. Frustration directed fruitlessly leads to despair, and despair gives way to madness. Cults, devils, demons, angels, and fey alike all stand to be controlled by the incalculable madness conceived by Nyarlathotep. Guile is its main weapon, but only the foolish tackle this foe unprepared for battle. A campaign with Nyarlathotep involves backstabbing deals, perplexing problems, and dangerous combat encounters.

Nyarlathotep does not seek to take center stage in a conflict. It is a master manipulator that uses people as pawns. Nyarlathotep seeks to sink an entire metropolis, or even a country, into madness and despair. It should not be obvious that Nyarlathotep is pulling the strings behind these conflicts. Guilds suddenly distrust each other and lash out; business agreements fall through; national alliances dissolve. These types of social interactions should leave the party confused, as connections between such events should be random. Mysterious assassinations and lecherous blackmail bring the seedy side of society to light. These events accelerate in the dark, as it seems though the sun itself is reticent to shine in an

PROFILE

Personality: Deceptive

Ideals: Nyarlathotep seeks to cause suffering, madness, and despair wherever it goes. It seems to drown the known worlds in chaos and insanity, a rationalization known only to those of the outer realms. While many chaotic beings seek death and destruction, Nyarlathotep's truest goal is to supplant order through madness.

Bonds: Nyarlathotep is the messenger and harbinger of the horrors of the outer realms. Beings such as Cthulhu, Azathoth, and Yog-Sothoth send forth Nyarlathotep to bring entropy against all known realms. When madness reigns, the old gods can shake off their shackles and bring chaos in their wake.

Flaws: As a being of chaos, the schemes, manipulation, and madness of Nyarlathotep fuel its entertainment. While other old gods seek destruction, Nyarlathotep seeks madness and confusion to the point of ludicrous

machinations. Failed schemes and manipulations are the hallmark of Nyarlathotep. Its cunning and disregard for pursuing madness dwarfs even the pursuit of opening a path for the old gods to break into the universe.

Legend: Madness. True madness eats at the very fibers of one's being; it acts violently and unpredictably. This is the truest goal and essence of Nyarlathotep. It uses intermediaries like puppets in the single-minded pursuit of the goals of the old gods. Creating a malleable force to do the bidding of the old gods, Nyarlathotep sows rumor, evil, and mistrust, driving even the most pious to do its bidding. There are said to be a thousand forms of Nyarlathotep, though it often takes the guise of a human. Many of its forms are said to cause insanity simply upon seeing them. In the many schemes of Nyarlathotep lie true goals, though the maddening nature of these goals confuses even the wisest philosophers. Often, by the time you meet Nyarlathotep, you have already become seeped in the schemes of the master manipulator. The end is always the same: madness.



area where Nyarlathotep operates. The characters need to delve into the reports and events to discover the network of rumor and blackmail driving the trouble. Members of this group speak of a man who gives power and information. The introduction of Nyarlathotep should be subtle at first. As Nyarlathotep draws closer to embroiling a large area in enough madness to draw forth and awaken the old gods, the party should have more social interactions with intermediaries or cloaked forms of Nyarlathotep. These interactions attempt to dissuade, bribe, or blackmail them into leaving plans alone or joining them. A face-to-face encounter with Nyarlathotep requires careful sifting of events and people.

INTRODUCTION

Precipitous madness from shortening daylight and increased darkness draws those who seek to end the reign of night. Whether drawing characters into political conflict or forcing them into combat and taking a side in a fight, the initial interactions with the forces of Nyarlathotep should appear as random disgruntled factions seeking justice over insignificant slights blown out of proportion. Several events in which characters can investigate

the instigators are important to provide a confusing web of seemingly disconnected incidents. Once players begin to probe the influencers of such events, meeting an intermediary or even a hidden form of Nyarlathotep allows them to fall deeper into the hole of madness. Confusing signs, irrational people, and bribes should distract and entice the party away from the goal until at last they grasp that a puppet master appears to be working behind the scenes.

CONFLICT

When Nyarlathotep is established as the manipulator of events, it does not idly let others disrupt its plans. When the characters begin investigating Nyarlathotep, it resorts first to flattery and bribery before moving onto blackmail and violence. Bringing the party into the conspiracy and gaining their aid is the most ideal, but the end result should be that they either help Nyarlathotep or they themselves are thwarted. There is little Nyarlathotep will not grant to distract or dissuade them from interfering.

As the characters continue to interfere and attempt to thwart Nyarlathotep, blackmail from important allies and violence become heavy-handed attempts to bring the goal of summoning

the Old Ones to fruition. Replacement of NPCs, allies, or characters' family members via doppelgangers or intellect devourers can further confuse the true intentions of those involved.

CONCLUSION

If the characters are able to overcome the difficulties in identifying Nyarlathotep as the mastermind behind the madness seeping into the area, they must then locate the area from which Nyarlathotep is propagating its darkness. This is a hidden, shadowy maze that misdirects and confounds those seeking a way through it. Upon reaching the center of the darkness, the party finds Nyarlathotep. It seeks a large, inky black pool, large enough to harness the madness and where it can reflect the void and release the old gods. Even in this place, Nyarlathotep makes promises or even gives power to those who are willing to help its plans come to fruition or to simply leave. Until Nyarlathotep is slain, the characters continue to have their investigations and plans disrupted by agents Nyarlathotep controls. Nyarlathotep does not fear death; even if it is slain, its will returns to the void, from whence it can once again walk the earth as the messenger of the old gods, seeking to free them.

CHALLENGES

Nyarlathotep can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with it.

EXPLORATION

The hold where Nyarlathotep gathers the madness is known as a Void Mirror. This mirror is hidden in the Shadow Labyrinth, the seemingly endless maze where Nyarlathotep nurtures and spreads madness. From the outside of the labyrinth, the area appears to be the size of a city block, but upon entry it becomes

clear that the spatial distortion of the void has compressed an area of a few miles into a singular point. The wandering that occurs within the labyrinth is simply another step the party must overcome to face the mirror. Within the mirror, Nyarlathotep has hidden many of its controlled beings. Creatures from the void, the hells, and beyond are all under its control. Nyarlathotep seeks to stall and detain the characters for as long as possible. If it stalls them long enough to complete the gate, it is ultimately successful. This entire space is designed to drive the party mad. Within the walls of the labyrinth, captured souls are tortured with madness and locked in eternal strife.

Regional Effects

The Shadow Labyrinth is a machination of the void. The more madness Nyarlathotep collects, the larger the area it can influence.

- While the Shadow Labyrinth exists, the void energies begin to overpower the light. The days become darker and the nights longer. While within the Shadow Labyrinth any source of light, magical or otherwise, cannot penetrate farther than 30 feet from its source. While within this shadow, all aberrations become immune to surprise and have advantage on Dexterity (Stealth) checks.
- Nyarlathotep controls the planar space within the Shadow Labyrinth, preventing magical teleportation into, within, and out of it unless Nyarlathotep chooses otherwise.
- While navigating the labyrinth, creatures who rest find the void siphoning their life. At the end of each long rest, creatures must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion as the entropy begins to consume them.

If Nyarlathotep is destroyed, these effects fade at the next sunrise.



Nyarlathotep's Lair

The Shadow Labyrinth is the manifestation of the void and madness of the old gods. A literal labyrinth of darkness and shadow houses the strongest creatures Nyarlathotep controls. The walls of the labyrinth show the ghastly faces of the area's inhabitants who succumbed to the call of the void. Sallow flesh, bones, and eyes line the walls, which appear only 30 feet tall. However, when a creature attempts to scale or fly over the walls, they increase in height. The features of this void space impose the order that Nyarlathotep desires. The labyrinth is a space that must be conquered rather than subverted. Beneath the shadowy walls, the characters may even see a shadow of themselves. The labyrinth is a space of terror both physically and mentally. Once they conquer the winding maze, the characters come to the center where the Void Mirror resides. This glassy pool of water is the gateway through which Nyarlathotep intends to summon the old gods. The size of the mirror depends on the size of the body of water. The pool itself is simultaneously clear and reflective. In its waters both the present reality and the horrors of the void can be seen. Ancient sigils of power line the pool drawing in and refining the madness Nyarlathotep has spawned.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Nyarlathotep can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Nyarlathotep is using its mythic statistics, it can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Nyarlathotep can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- A creature of Nyarlathotep's choice within the lair hears the whispers of Azathoth. Nyarlathotep attempts a Charisma (Deception) check contested by the target's Wisdom (Insight) to impart a fragment of understanding to the target about the nature of Azathoth. On a success, the target is stricken by the horror of what it comprehends and cannot have advantage on attack rolls and ability checks against Nyarlathotep for 1 month or until it forgets this knowledge. At the DM's discretion, this fragment of knowledge may incur additional penalties such as madness, psychic harm, or other dreadful consequences.
- Creatures of Nyarlathotep's choice within an area of darkness up to a 30-foot cube within the lair may immediately attempt a Dexterity (Stealth) check to hide.
- An unattended nonmagical object or 20-foot cube of material within the lair crumbles to dust.

Exploration Encounters

The Shadow Labyrinth can take on any shape Nyarlathotep desires. The key points of the labyrinth are the seemingly endless and random paths and the location of the Void Mirror in the middle. Nyarlathotep's allies include all types of creatures, though it has a penchant for aberrations.

Cult of Devils. Nyarlathotep is using a fiendish cult to disguise its true intentions. The cultists were attempting to summon demons with the goal to make deals for power. Nyarlathotep is more than willing to co-opt the summoned devils and twist the infernal contacts to leverage the madness such creatures can create.

Decent into Darkness. An entire nation has been covered in darkness. The capital was seized by an impenetrable darkness one month ago and has been growing each day. No one knows what is causing the darkness, but several allies of the nation have become concerned as they are unable to contact the capital and scouts have not returned.

Creature of a Thousand Forms. Nyarlathotep comes to the characters in disguise, looking to recruit several powerful allies to venture into the astral sea and retrieve a fragment of darkness that was buried there. It promises great rewards should the party obtain the shard and bring it back to be cleansed—or so Nyarlathotep claims.

SOCIAL

Social Encounters

Nyarlathotep is a being of great power who delights in suffering and madness. It can appear as a suave gentleman, a useful appearance when moving within the material plane. When in this guise, Nyarlathotep is prone to use its silver tongue to mislead and beguile. It is willing to make deals or even blackmail people to cause even greater strife.

Return to Sender. There is a powerful sorcerer who counts Nyarlathotep as their benefactor. They have been causing ruin, directly targeting the characters for a powerful magical artifact they have in their possession. The party learns of a dapper gentleman who may be able to revoke the sorcerer's power. However, Nyarlathotep does not disempower an agent of chaos without standing to gain more from this loss. Nyarlathotep desires the bones of a planetar and an ice devil in exchange for ending its relationship with the sorcerer and thus removing their power.

Vivid Dreaming. Nyarlathotep has afflicted the party with terrible premonitions and nightmares. They are unable to rest, seeing only a fragmented five-pointed star floating in the sky struck by a meteor. While the nightmares continue, the characters are unable to gain a good night's rest. They suffer and maintain two levels of exhaustion while these nightmares occur. Nyarlathotep is drawing them in to protect its plans. A powerful celestial being is planning to strike at the arcane formation Nyarlathotep is attempting to use to summon the old gods. Nyarlathotep draws the party to the center of the Void Mirror and promises a fragment of the Void Mirror in exchange for help in preventing the celestial hosts from ruining the mirror.

Fragment of the Void Mirror

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

You gain advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks while holding this fragment.

Additionally, if you are slain while in possession of this fragment, when you are returned to life you lose all sense of morality and ethics, and your alignment changes to *unaligned*.



Three's a Crowd. Nyarlathotep's penchant for schemes has resulted in a planar tear that is pulling devils, demons, and fey into the material plane. All three groups are affected by indefinite madness and simply want to kill creatures in the area. Unfortunately, the more creatures that are summoned, the more the madness spreads. While this madness benefits Nyarlathotep, it also poses a risk that the Void Mirror may be damaged or destroyed. The party may see fit to help whichever side they choose; each promises wealth and riches in exchange for assistance conquering their foes.

COMBAT

Born of destruction and entropy, Nyarlathotep is among the most lethal of the known Great Old Ones. While invoking chaos

and madness are fine goals, the fate of all who dare challenge Azathoth's herald is insanity and destruction. Battle with Nyarlathotep is not a contest of strength over a mighty foe. It is a struggle against the insurmountable, inevitable tide of entropy that wears down all opposition. Concepts like suffering and despair are well known to the Great Old One, and Nyarlathotep eagerly inflicts all manner of misery as but a taste of the horror that lies in store. Such battles are brutal, cruel affairs that at best allow for a pyrrhic victory.

Combat Encounter Example: A Lesson in Misery

Ever one to wear a mortal guise, Nyarlathotep has assumed the form of a humanoid and discovered the party soon after their most recent triumph. Eager to give them a taste of defeat, Nyarlathotep attempts to trick the party into a friendly sparring

match, pretending to be a warlock of considerable eldritch power. The Great Old One offers a rare *libram of Azathoth* as a reward for victory, but in truth either result is a dreadful loss for the party. In combat all Nyarlathotep cares to accomplish is to inflict as many curses as possible, all the while lecturing the characters about their insignificance within its master's dream. Acquiring the *libram* may seem like a reward at first, but Nyarlathotep has fell plans for whatever unfortunate soul dares exploit its power.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Controller

Battling a Great Old One is to struggle against more than just physical forces. Like its relatives, Nyarlathotep's powers defy reality, such as the benefits it gains from its Shadow of Nyarlathotep feature. This strange interaction allows Nyarlathotep to deny the party the benefits of physical barriers and other ordinary protections they may have against its influence. Make use of this feature to ensure no character can break line of sight or hide from the Great Old One. Remember to move Nyarlathotep about the battlefield to get the most mileage from Aspect of Malevolence. This feature completely incapacitates threats and is particularly brutal against overconfident melee characters. When going on offense, take note of the four different options available in the Dire Curses action. This action can also be used to deal tremendous damage to creatures already cursed by Nyarlathotep, so use it often. Your goal should be to have everyone in the party cursed with a choice that is particularly debilitating to that character. For example, the Curse of Shadows option is perfect for those who rely on sight for spellcasting or prefer to attack from afar. Remember, these curses are permanent but can be removed by certain spells and class features that specifically target curses.

Don't neglect Great Old One's Influence for when things aren't going Nyarlathotep's way. Troublesome spells and niche tools are issues easily navigated by this feature. It's recommended you keep a selection of preferred warlock spells handy to get the best mileage from this feature.

Song of Azathoth is Nyarlathotep's mightiest feature and one that can absolutely massacre a party. Many classes are fond of using perfectly efficient action economy to play out their turns, so this interaction ensures they either suffer horribly for such a choice or elect to play sub-optimally.

Remember, Nyarlathotep is more grounded than the typical Great Old One but is still completely incomprehensible to most mortals. Not everything it does needs to make tactical sense, nor should it. Play up its strange behavior by focusing overwhelmingly on applying curses and watching the party handle their effects. Like a cat playing with its food, Nyarlathotep enjoys the struggle and takes particular delight in watching its enemies futilely struggle against its power.

Easier Tactics – Play up Nyarlathotep's irrationality to extreme degrees. The Great Old One should not make optimal choices, such as choosing less effective curse options from its Dire Curses action. Provoking opportunity attacks, not removing troublesome magical effects, and not fighting to win are all ways Nyarlathotep can be fought more easily without trivializing the encounter. Don't use Song of Azathoth until the fight is at least half over, as the characters can easily kill themselves without Nyarlathotep taking a single action while that feature is in play.

Harder Tactics – Open with Song of Azathoth and get as many Dire Curse options up and running as quickly as possible. From there, focus on vulnerable cursed targets with additional Dire Curse effects to deal significant damage, especially if you manage to get a Curse of Suffering in play. Great Old One's Influence should be used immediately to remove powerful spells like *mind blank* and *haste*, as the longer the fight goes on the more mileage those effects get. If a creature succumbs to the Aspect of Malevolence, focus on keeping allies away from the target and leave the incapacitated target be. Fighting shorthanded is a significant problem, and it makes little sense to continue to target an incapacitated enemy when you don't have any attacks.

Mythic Nyarlathotep

At Epic levels, Nyarlathotep is one of the mightiest beings in existence. While compared to other Great Old Ones Nyarlathotep lacks much of the same raw power, it makes up for it with one especially powerful interaction: Epic curses. In its mythic form, Nyarlathotep's Dire Curses action now inflicts Epic curses. These maledictions are extremely hard to remove compared to ordinary curses, but thanks to the Dark Bargain mythic action these effects can be removed, at the cost of healing Nyarlathotep a considerable amount. This decision grows more difficult depending on the severity of the curse, so be strategic about which Dire Curse effects are applied to which characters.

Nyarlathotep's other mythic action is Envoy of Entropy. This mechanic escalates the fight considerably, threatening to instantly kill any creature that gets below a certain hit point total, along with obliterating objects and structures in the area. Don't underestimate the power of the latter effect. Destroying such things can prove tremendously advantageous to Nyarlathotep, particularly if it destroys a dropped weapon or deployed magic item. At Epic levels, Nyarlathotep almost never fights for anything other than pleasure, so be sure to emphasize its joy at having such powerful heroes to challenge it.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, the Nyarlathotep causes the following effects.

Master of Shapes. Nyarlathotep can spend 1 hour of strenuous activity to magically assume the form of any creature that has a challenge rating no higher than its own or to transform back into its true form. It reverts to its true form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or borne by the new form.

In a new form, Nyarlathotep retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, proficiencies, Mythic Resistance trait, lair actions, Great Old One's Influence action, and Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise replaced by those of its new form. As an action, Nyarlathotep can end this effect and revert to its true form.

Herald of Azathoth. Nyarlathotep draws its power from Azathoth, a Great Old One of such radical power that all of existence is merely the result of its fitful dreams. If Nyarlathotep is slain or destroyed, Azathoth simply dreams the Great Old One back into being within 100 years. This new Nyarlathotep has the same personality and goals of its predecessor but retains none of its memories.

NYARLATHOTEP

Large aberration (Great Old One), unaligned

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)**Hit Points** 579 (61d10 + 244)**Speed** 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +13, Con +12, Wis +12, Cha +17**Skills** Athletics +13, Deception +25, Perception +12, Persuasion +17, Stealth +12**Damage Resistances** cold**Damage Immunities** lightning, necrotic, psychic**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened**Senses** blindsight 60 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 22**Languages** Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 500 ft.**Challenge** 25 (75,000 XP)**TRAITS**

Aspect of Malevolence. When an enemy creature starts its turn within the area of Nyarlathotep's Shadow of Nyarlathotep feature, it must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or become magically incapacitated as it succumbs to eldritch horror. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Mythic Resistance. If Nyarlathotep fails a saving throw, it may expend the use of an unspent legendary action to succeed instead.

Shadow of Nyarlathotep. Nyarlathotep's true form is beyond petty laws of physics or mortal conception, casting a "dimensional shadow" in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on it. Nyarlathotep is treated as though it occupies this space at all times, though it suffers no penalties nor provokes opportunity attacks from sharing this space with other creatures, objects, and structures. Creatures can end their movement in the affected area, but while in the affected area they cannot have total cover from Nyarlathotep, nor can any barrier prevent them from being targeted or touched by Nyarlathotep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nyarlathotep uses its Dire Curses three times. It can forgo two uses of Dire Curses in this manner to instead use its Great Old One's Influence.

Dire Curses. Nyarlathotep curses a creature it can see within 120 feet of it with one of several malevolent curses. The target must succeed on a DC 24 Charisma saving throw or be permanently cursed with an effect chosen from the following options. If an affected creature is already cursed by Nyarlathotep in this manner, it instead takes 45 (10d8) necrotic damage, or half as much on a success.

Curse of Horror. The target becomes frightened of all creatures it can see and no longer considers any creatures allies or friends.

Curse of Impotence. The target loses proficiency in a saving throw of Nyarlathotep's choice.

Curse of Shadows. The target's senses are reduced to 5 feet, and it is blind beyond that radius.

Curse of Suffering. The target's speed is halved by eldritch tentacles which pull at its body. While cursed in this manner, a creature is vulnerable to all damage dealt by Nyarlathotep.

Great Old One's Influence. Nyarlathotep demonstrates the otherworldly supremacy of a Great Old One, causing one of the following effects.

- Nyarlathotep casts a non-Epic warlock spell of 4th level or lower (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks) with a casting time of an action or bonus action, without the need for any components. If a spell cast in this manner would deal damage other than necrotic damage, it instead deals necrotic damage. If it would force an affected creature to make a saving throw other than a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution saving throw, it instead makes a Constitution saving throw.
- Nyarlathotep ends a spell or magical effect of 8th level or lower within reach.
- Nyarlathotep creates an area of roiling void in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point Nyarlathotep can see within 120 feet of it. The void is devoid of all light, sound, and smell, and the affected area is heavily obscured for creatures other than Nyarlathotep. This effect lasts for 1 hour or until Nyarlathotep uses this option again.

Song of Azathoth (Recharge 5–6). Nyarlathotep sings a grand epic, telling of the apocalyptic entity known only as Azathoth, during which time it must concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to maintain the effect. Every creature within 300 feet of Nyarlathotep's choice that can hear the song becomes infused with entropy for as long they remain in the affected area. While so infused, whenever a creature takes an action, bonus action, or reaction, it takes 21 (6d6) psychic damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Nyarlathotep can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Nyarlathotep regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Baleful Calling. Nyarlathotep magically teleports a creature cursed by it to an unoccupied space it can see within 60 feet.

Curse. Nyarlathotep uses its Dire Curses action.

Great Old One's Influence (Costs 2 Actions). Nyarlathotep uses its Great Old One's Influence action.

Song of Azathoth (Costs 3 Actions). Nyarlathotep uses or recharges its Song of Azathoth action.

MYTHIC NYARLATHOTEP

Large mythic aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 27 (natural armor)

Hit Points 1,932 (168d10 + 1,008)

Speed 40 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
25 (+7)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Str +17, Dex +15, Con +16, Int +14, Wis +16, Cha +20

Skills Athletics +17, Deception +30, Perception +16, Persuasion +20, Stealth +15

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities lightning, necrotic, psychic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses blindsight 60 ft., truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 26

Languages Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 500 ft.

Challenge Mythic 3

TRAITS

Aspect of Malevolence. When an enemy creature starts its turn within the area of Nyarlathotep's Shadow of Nyarlathotep feature, it must succeed on a DC 29 Wisdom saving throw or become magically incapacitated as it succumbs to eldritch horror. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to this effect for 24 hours.

Mythic Resistance. If Nyarlathotep fails a saving throw, it may expend the use of an unspent legendary action to succeed instead.

Shadow of Nyarlathotep. Nyarlathotep's true form is beyond petty laws of physics or mortal conception, casting a "dimensional shadow" in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on it. Nyarlathotep is treated as though it occupies this space at all times, though it suffers no penalties nor provokes attacks of opportunity from sharing this space with other creatures, objects, and structures. Creatures can end their movement in the affected area, but while in the affected area they cannot have total cover from Nyarlathotep, nor can any barrier prevent them from being targeted or touched by Nyarlathotep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Nyarlathotep uses its Dire Curses three times. It can forgo two uses of Dire Curses in this manner to instead use its Great Old One's Influence.

Dire Curses. Nyarlathotep curses a creature it can see within 120 feet of it with one of several malevolent curses. The target must succeed on a DC 28 Charisma saving throw or be permanently cursed with an effect chosen from the following options. If an affected creature is already cursed by Nyarlathotep in this manner, it instead takes 65 (10d12) necrotic damage, or half as much on a success.

Curse of Horror. The target becomes frightened of all creatures it can see and no longer considers any creatures allies or friends.

Curse of Impotence. The target loses proficiency in a saving throw of Nyarlathotep's choice.

Curse of Shadows. The target's senses are reduced to 5 feet, and it is blind beyond that radius.

Curse of Suffering. The target's speed is halved by eldritch tentacles which pull at its body. While cursed in this manner, a creature is vulnerable to all damage dealt by Nyarlathotep.

Great Old One's Influence. Nyarlathotep demonstrates the otherworldly supremacy of a Great Old One, causing one of the following effects.

- Nyarlathotep casts a non-Epic warlock spell of 8th level or lower (spell save DC 28, +20 to hit with spell attacks) with a casting time of an action or bonus action, without the need for any components. If a spell cast in this manner would deal damage other than necrotic damage, it instead deals necrotic damage. If it would force an affected creature to make a saving throw other than a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution saving throw, it instead makes a Constitution saving throw.
- Nyarlathotep ends a spell or magical effect of tier 1 or lower within reach.
- Nyarlathotep creates an area of roiling void in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point Nyarlathotep can see within 120 feet of it. The void is devoid of all light, sound, and smell, and the affected area is heavily obscured for creatures other than Nyarlathotep. This effect lasts for 1 hour or until Nyarlathotep uses this option again.

Song of Azathoth (Recharge 5–6). Nyarlathotep sings a grand epic, telling of the apocalyptic entity known only as Azathoth, during which time it must concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to maintain the effect. Every creature within 300 feet of Nyarlathotep's choice that can hear the song becomes infused with entropy for as long they remain in the affected area. While so infused, whenever a creature takes an action, bonus action, or reaction, it takes 35 (10d6) psychic damage.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Nyarlathotep takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. Nyarlathotep can cause the same effect multiple rounds in a row.

Dark Bargain. Nyarlathotep offers to end one of its curses on up to three creatures of its choice within 300 feet of it. If a creature accepts, the curses end and Nyarlathotep regains 100 hit points.

Envoy of Entropy. The physical properties of reality around Nyarlathotep in a 100-foot-radius sphere begin to break down over the course of 1 hour. If a creature, unattended object, or structure in the area is reduced to 20 hit points or fewer, it fades into nothingness. An Epic creature can attempt a DC 28 Constitution saving throw, preventing the effect on a success. If Nyarlathotep uses this action again, the minimum hit points a creature, object, or structure must be reduced to in order to be affected increases by 20, to a maximum of 100 hit points.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Nyarlathotep can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Nyarlathotep regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Baleful Calling. Nyarlathotep magically teleports a creature cursed by it to an unoccupied space it can see within 60 feet.

Curse. Nyarlathotep uses its Dire Curses action.

Great Old One's Influence (Costs 2 Actions). Nyarlathotep uses its Great Old One's Influence action.

Song of Azathoth (Costs 3 Actions). Nyarlathotep uses or recharges its Song of Azathoth action.



RESOURCES

Nyarlatotep is solely entrusted with enacting the will of Azathoth but finds minor pawns and minions useful in a limited capacity. In tune with reality (for a Great Old One), Nyarlatotep sees value in conventional assets such as wealth, influence, and allies. These elements are always expendable in the extreme, as from Nyarlatotep's perspective everything is but an aspect of Azathoth's dream. But what better way to mess with mortals than with their own tools? Nyarlatotep revels in exploiting the deluded desires of other creatures, offering them everything they could desire only to reduce it all to dust before the unfortunate victim's eyes. Such hard lessons demonstrate that all is but dust before Azathoth's true power, instantly swept away without reason or significance.

ALLIES

Only the most unhinged beings would devote themselves to the service of Azathoth, leaving Nyarlatotep to sort out most of its affairs personally. Sinister aberrations or the brutally deranged are among the precious few who would aid Nyarlatotep willingly, and their help is unreliable to say the least. However, in the rare event Nyarlatotep requires assistance, its allies revel in the chance to glorify Azathoth and bring the world one step closer to utter oblivion.

Entropy (Level 23 Aberrant Mind Sorcerer/Level 4 Archon Half-elf). Entropy is a powerful sorcerer whose powers come from Nyarlatotep. He had visions of Nyarlatotep from a young age and sought out the source of these visions. While

Nyarlahotep cares little for its spawn, Entropy has been a powerful, if unruly, force for madness and mayhem. Entropy's insanity leads to rashness in attempting to obtain power. His relationship to Nyarlahotep grants him a unique metamagic bestowed upon those who accept Nyarlahotep's interference in their ancestral lineage.

NEW METAMAGIC: PRESERVED SPELL

When you cast a spell that requires concentration, you can spend 1 sorcery point for each level of the spell (minimum of 1) to remove the concentration component to maintain the spell's effect for the duration. Instead, you must use a bonus action on each of your turns to sustain the effect, which immediately ends if you fail to take this action.

Xarmon the Sovereign. Xarmon is one of the oldest aboleths in existence, and its intelligence and wisdom led Nyarlahotep, who now commands the creature, to offer its patronage to Xarmon. While most aboleths are self-centered, Xarmon understood the knowledge Nyarlahotep could grant it and instead sought alignment with a powerful entity from the void.

REWARDS

Defeating Nyarlahotep is a heroic but ultimately pointless deed. As inevitable as death and as enduring as time, Nyarlahotep will unavoidably return to continue its work of waking Azathoth from its restless slumber. However, delaying the inevitable is not without its merits. Many mighty beings will heap praise and accolades upon those who lay Nyarlahotep low, particularly those dedicated few who truly understand the magnitude of such a terror.

XARMON THE SOVEREIGN

Large aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 209 (22d10 + 88)

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	11 (+0)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Con +10, Int +14, Wis +9

Skills History +18, Perception +15

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages Deep Speech, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 17 (18,000)

TRAITS

Amphibious. Xarmon can breathe air and water.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When Xarmon fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

Necrotic Slime. While underwater, Xarmon leeches life from its surroundings. A creature that touches Xarmon or that hits it with a melee attack while within 25 feet of it must attempt a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 22 (4d10) necrotic damage, and Xarmon regains a number of hit points equal to half the damage dealt (rounded down).

Nightmarish Precognition. If a creature communicates telepathically with the aboleth, Xarmon learns the creature's greatest fears. Xarmon's attacks have advantage against any creature that communicates with it telepathically for 24 hours.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Xarmon makes two Tentacle attacks and one Tail attack or one Tentacle attack and one Life Siphon attack.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 35 (8d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 27 (6d8) necrotic damage.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (6d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage plus 27 (6d8) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or be grappled (escape DC 21).

Life Siphon. Xarmon attempts to drain the life out of a creature it is grappling. The target must attempt a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, it loses half its current hit points or gains three levels of exhaustion (target's choice).

Nihility (Recharge 5–6). Xarmon targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it. The target must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or be magically banished by Xarmon to a realm of shadows and madness. Xarmon must concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to maintain the effect. While banished in this manner, the target is incapacitated. If the target remains banished for 1 minute, the void consumes the target, and it cannot be brought back except by means of a *wish* spell. When the banishment ends, the target reappears in the closest unoccupied space to where it disappeared.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

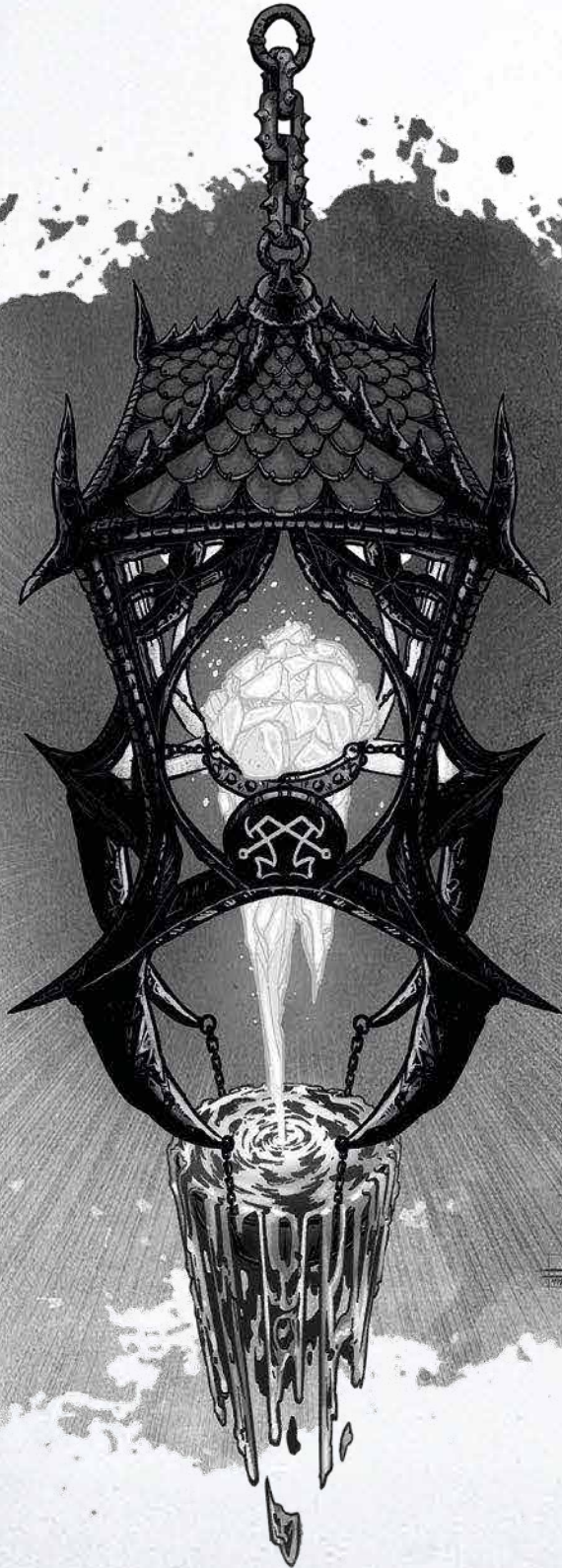
Xarmon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Xarmon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. Xarmon moves up to its speed.

Void Displacement. Xarmon teleports up to 30 feet and makes one Tentacle attack.

Mind Shatter (Costs 3 Actions). A creature Xarmon can see within 120 feet of it must succeed on a DC 21 Intelligence saving throw or take 70 (20d6) psychic damage. A creature that fails this saving throw by 10 or more instead takes 140 (40d6) psychic damage.

If ever there was a Great Old One who deigned to care for material possessions, it is Nyarlathotep. While the Great Old One has no personal use for items or equipment, to better proliferate the truth of Azathoth, Nyarlathotep is fond of carrying strange eldritch grimoires known as a *libram of Azathoth*. These tomes are mighty indeed but ultimately serve as another tool by which the Great Old One sews madness and mayhem.



Libram of Azathoth

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

A large, black, leatherbound tome with heavy silver clasps, this book holds the names of those signed to the service of Azathoth. Countless dark secrets lie within the flesh-colored pages covered in blood scrawl. Many believe the path to lichdom or the means to open gateways to the old gods are hidden within this tome. Nyarlathotep loves to grant gifts to mortals in exchange for their signature inside the book. Those who sign their name in blood seal a pact to serve Azathoth.

Eldritch Knowledge. While you hold this book, you have a +3 bonus to spell attacks, and your spell save DC increases by 3.

Forbidden Knowledge. You can take 1 hour to search the book for a piece of hidden or forbidden knowledge. You can attempt a DC 30 Intelligence check to search for the name of an archdevil, a ritual for lichdom, the name of a forgotten god, or other evil knowledge. On a success, you find a hint or piece of useful knowledge in your search. On a failure, your mind is warped by the insidious nature of the book. You immediately suffer five levels of exhaustion, and your hit point maximum is halved.

Random Properties. The *Libram of Azathoth* has the following random properties:

- One major detrimental property
- Two minor detrimental properties

Soul Bank. Creatures you kill while attuned to this tome have their souls trapped inside the book. While attuned to this book, when you kill a creature, you can absorb a number of hit points equal to the total number of Hit Dice the creature has into a bank of temporary hit points you can draw upon. You can store up to 200 temporary hit points in the book at one time. As an action while you hold the book, you can grant yourself up to 100 temporary hit points, reducing the amount held within the book by an equivalent amount. If the bank of hit points reaches 0, you must succeed on a DC 30 Charisma saving throw or have your soul torn from your body and consumed by the book, killing you instantly.

Void Armaments. While you are attuned to this book, you have resistance to necrotic damage.



EITSOOTH

The Chain of Slaughter

"If you bleed, it will kill you."

DESCRIPTION

A delicate thing to be certain, Eitsooth is a chatelaine of adamantine and gold with a braided length of leather holding the pieces together. Its fastener appears applicable to both metal or cloth, leather or loop. On the corpse on which you find it, its weight looks tremendous, shattering bone and bending metal. But curiously, it weighs almost nothing in your hands. Attached to your bag or your cape, its weight is a comforting thing. It was as if it was always meant to be there, and without it, you have always been unbalanced. Upon its three flat discs, it even bears your sigil. Of course it does. After all, it called out to you.

It is unknown how old Eitsooth is, for its leather always appears freshly oiled, and adamantine never betrays its age. But

the story goes that Eitsooth has seen the rise and fall of entire epochs, merely moving from one host to another, and that it gains joy at watching its bearer compete to keep its life. Its greatest foe is boredom, for it will outlast each one of its hosts, and all its efforts are to ensure that the time before the next one is minimal. In a far-forgotten fiefdom that now lies in ruins, a careful observer could see Eitsooth adorning the mantle cape of a long-dead king in his grand portrait. Those who explore the waterlogged stone of civilizations now sunken into the ocean can make out carvings of Eitsooth alongside depictions of great and terrible tyrants. It would take a lifetime—or more—to learn Eitsooth's true path throughout the course of history. But those seekers would be at risk the moment they knew its name...and who is to say how many lifetimes have already been taken in this pursuit?

PROFILE

Sentience: Eitsooth is a sentient wondrous item of chaotic evil alignment with an Intelligence of 8, a Wisdom of 14, and a Charisma of 27. It has hearing out to a range of 120 feet and blindsight out to a range of 30 feet. Eitsooth communicates telepathically with its wielder, and it can read and understand all languages.

Personality: Bloodthirsty

Ideals: Eitsooth prizes only cruel and ceaseless competition. It finds little satisfaction or benefit in the goals of those who bear it, pushing them further and further to violence until their body fails and another takes up the mantle of bloodsworn. There is no deeper truth to Eitsooth than this: all who encounter it will know temptation, toil, and blood until their final moments. And Eitsooth will take joy in their suffering.

Bonds: Eitsooth's bonds are mutable and ever shifting, mimicking those it calls, no matter how many creatures pursue its current bearer. In that sense, it is bonded to the horde that it constantly seeks to expand and diminish. But even with its changeling nature or its lulled butchers, Eitsooth is most closely tied to its current host, both literally and metaphysically. For it is within its host it finds the most joy, through each of their kills, and through their eventual death.

Flaws: While Eitsooth is adept at manipulation, its slothful ways are its foil. It is always desirous of bloodshed, always hungry for struggle, and always biting to witness the consequences of greed. It relies heavily on its magical abilities to provide the bulk of its entertainment and efforts, preferring to watch pieces fall into place than speak more to its potential bearers.

Legend: There was once a pit into which creatures were thrown to battle one another, cutting and jabbing until one could escape in bloody victory. The king of this pit was not the one who wore a crown of platinum and mithril and sat high upon the stone rafters. The king of this pit was not the one with the lash who whipped the backs of those who attempted to escape. The king of this pit was the one who sat upon the bloody ground, who saw his gory kingdom as wonderful. He knew from his position that should he wish it, he could ruin the pit for all, or he could make each spectacle breathtaking. He knew that each person who came to him was another joy to be had, for each person would become more blood upon the ground. But his victories would become his horror, and one day, the one with the lash and the one with the crown sought to remove him from his kingdom. In this, he found one last victory, and with blood-soaked lash and crown, made himself anew. As the dogs of the two pretender kings slew him, he knew he would live on in his newfound form.

EITSOOTH IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

A campaign against Eitsooth pits the characters against a largely unseen and constantly shifting power whose reach extends far beyond itself. Any delay in getting to Eitsooth's current bearer risks it transferring to a stronger or luckier form. But if they rush, an underprepared party may face off against its bearer before they truly know what it is they face. Without proper timing and planning, unprepared characters may even face those who have already been called by Eitsooth's magic, fooled into pursuing the treasure with violent and bloody means. Worse, they may find that one of their own party members has been enchanted by its promises of grandeur and success. With each step toward Eitsooth should come the acknowledgement that anyone may become a contestant in its bloody sport, and that anyone may succumb to its games.

INTRODUCTION

Stories of Eitsooth are hidden among other stories, in tales in which kings or champions are slain or tyrants rule eternal. Eitsooth lies behind such stories, visible only when looking between the lines of history, or only when close attention is paid to art made of those tales' characters. Learning of Eitsooth's true nature and true role in history should be a sickening and horrifying revelation, one that shows the characters that any of them may be susceptible to its calling, or that anyone they've met may become a target as well. They may have even already befriended Eitsooth's current bearer, and now they take notice of how many come to fight their ally. Perhaps they realize that one of their own has already had their own whims supplanted by a desire for power—one that Eitsooth promises to fulfill.

CONFLICT

Even if the characters become aware of Eitsooth, or Eitsooth of them, it still acts as it wishes, ensnaring and enchanting whomever it can into chasing it down to kill its current bearer. Should the characters act against Eitsooth's whims or seek to prevent it from pulling more people to its slaughter, only then does it respond to them in kind. Any creature currently under its sway sees the characters as obstacles or enemies, sending anyone over whom Eitsooth has control to kill or impede the party from obstructing Eitsooth's sport. Should none of its current butchers be good enough to dissuade the characters, Eitsooth attempts to sway those close to the party, forcing them to struggle against their own allies.

CONCLUSION

Should the previous methods fail, Eitsooth directs its current bearer to the characters and attempts to force its will onto the them, hoping to generate conflict among them as its bearer attempts to kill them. It brings any nearby creatures under its control to this conflict in an effort to overwhelm the characters through force and numbers. The longer Eitsooth must travel, both in time and in distance, the more creatures it has with it when it comes time to fight against characters. Unless they know this

ahead of time, Eitsooth may catch them off guard and attack with a host of would-be bearers. If the characters become aware of Eitsooth's intent and plan, they may begin to fight against the bloodthirsty artifact and those under its sway, but how much time they actually have may not be enough.

CHALLENGES

Eitsooth can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with it.

EXPLORATION

As a particularly mobile titan, Eitsooth holds great potential for exploration encounters in your campaign. Once the chatelaine has taken possession of an unfortunate soul, its bloody rampage can begin. Eitsooth sends its host venturing far and wide in search of a good fight. In its wake lies a trail of bloody ruin and broken bodies. While tracking Eitsooth may not be difficult, the artifact can take its host to some extraordinarily dangerous places. The darkest corners of the multiverse are filled with vicious foes spoiling for a fight. The longer Eitsooth is out in the world causing mayhem, the more havoc it wreaks. As the realms fall to anarchy and violence, the roads grow ever more dangerous, and fearsome creatures wander where once they dare not tread. Nowhere is safe as all succumb to the violence of Eitsooth.

Regional Effects

The region around Eitsooth is warped by ruthless power, which has created the following effects within 10 miles of it:

- The area is reduced to a violent wasteland known as a warbound domain (see the sidebar of the same name).
- If a creature bleeds while in the affected area, Eitsooth becomes aware of the creature's exact location and current hit points.
- Stains in the affected area left by blood cannot be removed by any known means.

If Eitsooth is destroyed or is taken up by a new bearer, these regional effects end immediately.

Eitsooth's Lair

Eitsooth's lair isn't one stagnant location, but forms and follows its host. Its bearer becomes a focal point for Eitsooth's ambient cruelty and joy. While the region is one of constant reminders of its bearer's now-malignant presence, the area around Eitsooth's bearer is an active machine of bloodshed and turmoil. Whenever the bearer finishes a long rest, Eitsooth's power spreads out from this creature to fill the space to an uncomfortable and staggering degree. A vast coliseum manifests over the course of the rest, the great stones rising from the ground to form an area ideal for blood sports. With each passing day creatures are drawn to the arena and summarily butchered, staining the lair with their essence and further feeding the malevolent artifact.



WARBOUND DOMAIN¹

If war is hell, then a warbound domain is its deepest, darkest pit. Where blood is spilled and battle rages, these deadly domains may be found. Those within its borders are driven toward violence, resolving all conflicts through remorseless brutality. A warbound domain may be the site of a bloody siege, a nation of militaristic creatures always ready for battle, or even a gladiatorial arena where blood sports are held. The defining characteristic of these realms is violence on a massive scale. Those who desire battle are drawn to it, fueling the endless, churning war machine that grinds all within to dust. A warbound domain has the following traits.

Creatures. Celestials, fiends, humanoids, and undead populate warbound domains. Armies are required to wage war, and few creatures possess the numbers to marshal a force capable of large-scale conflict. Creatures that thrive on battlefields also inhabit warbound domains. Gorecrows, scavengers, and war constructs can easily be found in such realms.

Detection. A successful DC 21 Wisdom (Survival) check is required to determine a warbound domain's true nature.

Properties. A warbound domain causes the following effects within its area.

- **Battle Ready.** When a creature inhabiting the area finishes a long rest, a set of weapons, armor, and equipment it can use mysteriously appears in an

unoccupied space within 5 feet of it. The items are nonmagical but are always equipment with which the creature is proficient. If the creature removes any of these items from the domain's area, they vanish instantly.

- **Blood Curse.** Creatures in the domain's area that are engaged in combat become cursed with an all-consuming bloodlust. Creatures so cursed have advantage on attack rolls and Strength and Dexterity ability checks. However, for every 24 hours a creature so cursed does not attack an enemy creature, its hit point maximum is decreased by 10. A creature whose hit point maximum is reduced to 0 in this manner dies instantly.
- **Call to Battle.** Creatures in the domain's area always know the direction toward any enemy creatures in the domain, as well as the distance toward the nearest enemy creature.
- **Lord of the Warbound.** The most powerful creature in the domain's area is mystically empowered by the domain. A creature so empowered has Epic advantage on Charisma ability checks, and its hit point maximum increases by 100 for as long as it remains within the domain's area. Additionally, creatures friendly to the warlord that can see or hear it are immune to the charmed and frightened conditions.



¹ More about domains can be found in 2CGaming's 5E supplement *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex*.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Eitsoth can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Eitsoth uses its mythic statistics, it can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Eitsoth can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- A pool of roiling blood appears on the ground in a 20-foot radius centered on a point of Eitsoth's choice within the lair. Weapon attacks against enemy creatures in the affected area score a critical hit on a roll of 16–20. The pool lasts for 1 minute or until Eitsoth uses this option again.
- Until the next initiative count of 20, creatures in the lair cannot willingly move or magically teleport away from enemy creatures they can see.
- A creature of Eitsoth's choice in the lair gains advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks but loses any immunity or resistance to types of damage. This effect lasts until the next initiative count of 20.

Exploration Encounters

As Eitsoth's bearer wanders the realms, the bloody path of ruin left in its wake is a grim and perilous place to explore. The artifact's passing is marked by an upheaval of the status quo. Communities are devastated, great beasts are slain, and chaos reigns. Simply navigating this devastation is risky. It takes exceptionally brave souls to step into these situations willingly. Those who do are often attempting to provide aid to the afflicted or track down the source of slaughter. In either case, there are battlefields to explore, loot to acquire, and investigations to conduct, all courtesy of Eitsoth's cruel influence.

The Red Square. The recently devastated village of Ville De Rouge becomes inhabited by wild, bloodthirsty animals. Unable to be tamed or cowed, these beasts have come to feast on the corpses of the inhabitants slain by Eitsoth. The town was once renowned for its artistry and culture, with a resplendent golden statue in its city square said to be worth a fortune. With many interested parties looking to recover the statue, heroes from far and wide begin making plays to brave the beasts and strike it rich.

Blood in the Streets. The bearer of Eitsoth takes up residence in a slum within a massive metropolis, which swiftly devolves into a bloodbath. As the streets run red, the local authorities are desperate to take control of the situation. The bearer of Eitsoth must be run out of town, but first it must be found. In the meantime, the victimized citizenry are determined to tear each other apart, making navigating the streets a supremely perilous affair.

A Giant Problem. A clan of storm giants is now leaderless thanks to a particularly brutal encounter with Eitsoth's bearer. Now leaderless, the giants roam the countryside in search of a new home. This causes some rather large problems for other creatures caught in the giants' path. Perhaps some heroes could help the desperate emigrants find a new place to live as quickly as possible.

SOCIAL

The unfortunate soul ensnared by Eitsoth's power is beyond redemption or saving, but the artifact itself is not beyond reason. Eitsoth gladly halts its warpath if the promise of greater bloodshed can be made. While far from trustworthy, the artifact is not cunning, and elaborate deceptions are beyond its ken. However, any social interaction that proves more trouble than it's worth quickly devolves into bloodshed. What is worse, Eitsoth attracts few allies. Creatures that share its affection for violence are quickly battled and slain, while those who do not are unable to stand the presence of the vicious artifact for long. There is but one creature that shares a friendship with the Chain of Slaughter: Malhavoc Bloodmane. The relationship of this peculiar fey feline to the artifact is unknown, but under no circumstances does Eitsoth raise a fist against the creature. In turn, Malhavoc serves as a herald for Eitsoth, narrating its fights with excessive bravado.



Social Encounters

A social encounter with Eitsoth is a desperate struggle to avoid a fight. The Chain of Slaughter is itching to rip out of the throats of those who prattle on, so those wishing to communicate would do well to speak simply. Creatures around the artifact are similarly prone to bloodlust. Even the most passive and kindhearted soul can be driven to violent depravity by its mere presence. Once the fighting starts, there is little hope of de-escalation.



Fight Night. Instead of avoiding conflict with the malevolent artifact, a party of warriors decide to take it head on. Each desires to take the artifact for themselves, believing they can control its radical power. This delusion, however, is dangerous. The warriors must be persuaded from their task. Failure means more tragedy at the “hands” of Eitsoth, while victory means the artifact falls into the hands of an even more dangerous host.

Grudge Match. Unable to track down a hated enemy—the archdevil pugilist Hellfist—Eitsoth resolves to bring the fight to it. Taking an entire city hostage, the Chain of Slaughter demands Hellfist be brought to the material plane and face it in battle. This is easier said than done. Hellfist is enjoying a quiet retirement and has no interest in bloodying its knuckles once again—at least, not without a handsome fee.

Unlikely Allies. A virtuous kingdom has desperate need of powerful warriors to battle an undead army led by a mighty archlich. In a questionable act of judgement, the rulers wish to add Eitsoth and its pawn to the cause, willing to offer nearly anything in return for its services. While the artifact is tempted, it hates the idea of serving another, particularly since undead do not bleed when beaten. However, a sacrifice of the kingdom’s best warriors may be enough, the details of which require grim negotiation by a heroic party of diplomats.

COMBAT

Any battle against Eitsoth is through the proxy of its bearer: an unfortunate humanoid enthralled to the artifact’s service. The Chain of Slaughter is not picky about the kind of creature it entralls, so long as it is powerful. Even the most mundane commoner can be transformed into a bloodthirsty warrior by Eitsoth’s power. Such conflicts are gore-filled displays of physical excess. Its bearers cannot help but throw themselves at any foes

before them, caring nothing for their own lives, only that they serve the artifact’s will. Should its bearer fall in battle, Eitsoth happily attaches itself to the victors, feigning submission and capitulation. This is a clumsy ruse, but the power of Eitsoth is often too tempting to pass up.

Combat Encounter Example: Cat and Dead Mouse

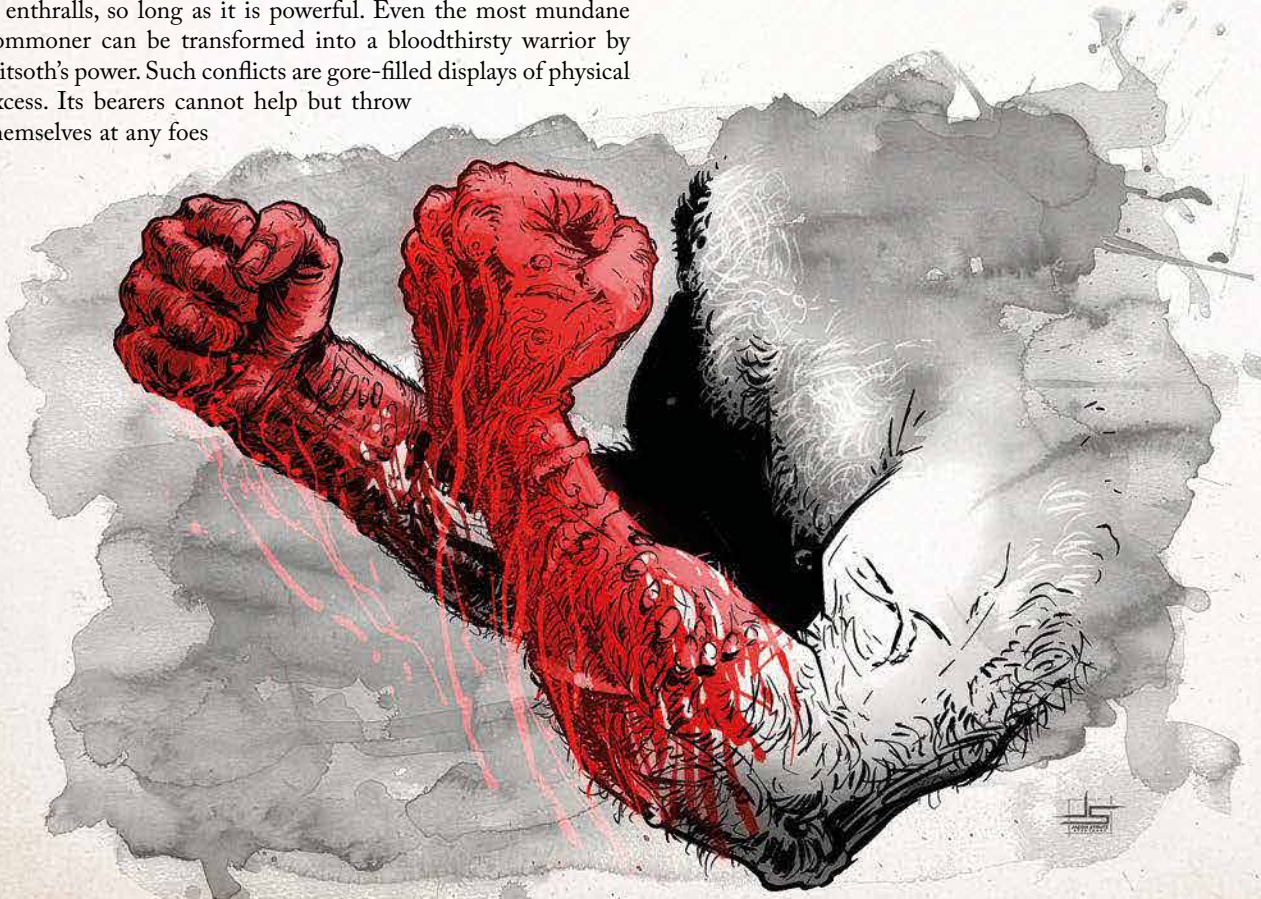
This encounter assumes Eitsoth has sent others to kill the characters and that those attempts have failed, whether they were simply people under Eitsoth’s control or people the characters knew personally. Pressured and irate, Eitsoth now sends itself against the party with its current bloodsworn, eager to test the characters’ mettle. The unfortunate host should be making a beeline for the party, throwing aside any obstacles and being heard long before it is seen. The bloodsworn may even sustain injuries along the way, depending on what stands in its path.

Ambush is Eitsoth’s preferred method of approach, and it favors encountering the characters in highly populated areas in a city. While an alley might be more desirable for a cutthroat, Eitsoth begins its attack in more dense areas: a marketplace, a temple, or a town meeting. The high number of people nearby lets Eitsoth attack from cover, and should its bearer fall, there are plenty of people for it to pull under its control for the fight or to help it make its escape.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Brute

When a creature dons Eitsoth, that creature becomes a bloodsworn. While the properties of the bloodsworn template can be granted to any humanoid creature, Eitsoth’s power ensures that creature fights on the front lines as a brute. With a ludicrously



high Strength and the ability to make a horrific number of attacks, the bloodsworn can easily chop even the beefiest barbarian down to size. Note the creature's Bloody Rampage trait, which ensures the bloodsworn fights with supreme effectiveness. There are few problems players present that the creature cannot overcome with its fists. Note that while Eitsoth forces its thrall to

fight recklessly, it is not easy to take down. Gore-soaked Triumph allows the creature to continually buff its defenses with an endless supply of temporary hit points. Massacre is Eitsoth's trump card, which can potentially take a wounded character down in a single blow. With its tremendous mobility, Eitsoth should have no problem dealing serious damage, no matter the enemy.

BLOODSWORN TEMPLATE

When Eitsoth assumes power over a humanoid, it transforms the unfortunate creature into a bloodthirsty engine of destruction known as a bloodsworn. The malevolent power within warps body and mind, allowing a bloodsworn to unleash terrific violence upon its enemies. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 40 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

Speed. The creature's speed increases by 40 feet.

Ability Scores. The creature's Strength and Constitution scores increase by 12, to a maximum of 30. The creature also increases two other ability scores of its choice by 8, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Strength saving throws and two other saving throws of its choice.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Athletics, Intimidation, and Perception skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Damage Immunities. The creature is immune to psychic damage.

Condition Immunities. The creature is immune to the charmed, exhaustion, and frightened conditions.

Senses. The creature gains a special sense known as bloodscent out to a range of 1 mile. The creature can smell any flesh-and-blood creature in the area that is below its hit point maximum and knows its exact location.

Challenge Rating. A creature with a challenge rating of less than 1 has its challenge rating increased to 20. Otherwise, the creature's challenge rating increases by 20, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits. The creature gains the following traits:

Bloody Rampage. When the creature rolls initiative, it immediately enters a bloodthirsty rage. While in this state, the creature gains the following benefits.

- The creature cannot have disadvantage on weapon attacks.
- On each of its turns, the creature can expend half its movement to deal 200 bludgeoning damage to an unattended object or structure within reach.
- When the creature scores a hit with a weapon attack, it can choose to force its target to attempt a contested Strength (Athletics) check. If the bloodsworn creature wins, it can cause one of the following effects.
 - The target is knocked prone.

- The target is thrown up to 60 feet in a straight line away from the bloodsworn creature.

- The target is grappled by the bloodsworn creature.

Gore-soaked Triumph. When the creature deals damage with a weapon attack, it can immediately take a bonus action to gain temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt. These temporary hit points last until the creature finishes a short or long rest.

Master of Battle. When the creature hits with a weapon attack, it rolls three additional weapon damage dice (included in the attack). Additionally, the creature's weapon attacks are magical and grant a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls (included in the attack). Finally, the creature calculates any of its save DCs as follows: 8 + Strength modifier + proficiency bonus.

Mythic Resistance. When the creature fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Actions. The creature gains the following actions:

Multiattack. The creature makes four weapon attacks. It can forgo making two attacks in this manner to instead take one other action.

Massacre (Recharge 5–6). The creature makes a single weapon attack against a target of its choice within reach or range of one of its weapons. On a successful hit, the target takes additional necrotic damage equal to the target's missing hit points.

Primal Cry. The creature emits a ferocious war cry which can be heard by creatures up to 1 mile away. Enemy creatures that can hear the cry must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency bonus + Strength modifier) saving throw or be permanently frightened or be frightened until they do not have line of sight to the bloodsworn creature, whichever is longer.

Spellbreaker. The creature makes a single weapon attack against a spell effect within reach or range of its weapon. If the result of the attack roll is greater than the spell save DC of the effect, the effect ends immediately.

Legendary Actions. The creature gains the following legendary actions. The creature can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The creature regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Charge. The creature moves up to its speed in a straight line and makes a single weapon attack at the end of that movement.

Spellbreaker (Costs 2 Actions). The creature uses its Spellbreaker action.

Massacre (Costs 3 Actions). The creature uses or recharges its Massacre action.

MYTHIC BLOODSWORN TEMPLATE

When Eitsoth assumes power over a humanoid, it transforms the unfortunate creature into a bloodthirsty engine of destruction known as a bloodsworn. The malevolent power within warps body and mind, allowing a bloodsworn to unleash terrific violence upon its enemies. When these powers manifest, a humanoid retains all its statistics except as noted here.

Type. The creature becomes an Epic creature.

Hit Dice. The creature gains 120 additional Hit Dice, and its hit point maximum adjusts accordingly.

Speed. The creature's speed increases by 40 feet.

Ability Scores. The creature's Strength and Constitution scores increase by 18 to a maximum of 40. The creature also increases two other ability scores of its choice by 12, to a maximum of 30.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in all saving throws.

Skills. The creature gains proficiency in the Athletics, Intimidation, and Perception skills. If the creature would gain proficiency in a skill in which it is already proficient, its proficiency bonus is instead doubled for any ability check it makes using that skill.

Damage Resistances. The creature has resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Damage Immunities. The creature is immune to damage from non-Epic sources.

Condition Immunities. The creature is immune to the charmed, exhaustion, and frightened conditions.

Senses. The creature gains a special sense known as bloodscent out to a range of 1 mile. The creature can smell any flesh-and-blood creature in the area that is below its hit point maximum and knows its exact location.

Challenge Rating. The creature's challenge rating is Mythic 4, and its proficiency bonus is +10.

Traits. The creature gains the following traits:

Bloody Rampage. When the creature rolls initiative, it immediately enters a bloodthirsty rage. While in this state, the creature gains the following benefits.

- The creature cannot have disadvantage on weapon attacks.
- On each of its turns, the creature can expend half its movement to deal 200 bludgeoning damage to an unattended object or structure within reach.
- When the creature scores a hit with a weapon attack, it can choose to force its target to attempt a contested Strength (Athletics) check. If the bloodsworn creature wins, it can cause one of the following effects.
 - The target is knocked prone.
 - The target is thrown up to 60 feet in a straight line away from the bloodsworn creature.
 - The bloodsworn creature grapples the target.

Gore-soaked Triumph. When the creature deals damage with a weapon attack, it can immediately take a bonus action to gain temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt. These temporary hit points last until the creature finishes a short or long rest.

Master of Battle. When the creature hits with a weapon attack, it rolls three additional weapon damage dice (included in the attack). Additionally, the creature's weapon attacks are magical and grant a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls (included in the attack). Finally, the creature calculates any of its save DCs as follows: 8 + Strength modifier + proficiency bonus.

Mythic Resistance. When the creature fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Mythic Actions. The creature gains the following mythic actions. On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the creature takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. The creature can cause the same effect twice in a row.

Boiling Blood. Until the next initiative count of 20, when the creature takes damage from a source within 15 feet of it, its body erupts with boiling blood, dealing 35 (10d6) fire damage to the source of the damage.

Single-minded Fury (1/Turn). The creature chooses a creature it can see to be the target of its unrelenting bloodlust. When the bloodsworn creature scores a hit with a weapon attack against the target, it may make two additional weapon attacks against the target (no action required). This effect is cumulative, to maximum of ten additional attacks. The benefits of this feature are lost when the creature finishes a short or long rest.

Actions. The creature gains the following actions:

Multiattack. The creature makes four weapon attacks. It can forgo making two attacks in this manner to instead take one other action.

Massacre (Recharge 5–6). The creature makes a single weapon attack against a target of its choice within reach or range of one of its weapons. On a successful hit, the target takes additional necrotic damage equal to the target's missing hit points.

Primal Cry. The creature emits a ferocious war cry which can be heard by creatures up to 1 mile away. Enemy creatures that can hear the cry must succeed on a DC (8 + proficiency + Strength modifier) saving throw or be permanently frightened or be frightened until they do not have line of sight to the creature, whichever is longer.

Spellbreaker. The creature makes a single weapon attack against a spell effect within reach or range of its weapon. If the result of the attack roll is greater than the spell save DC of the effect, the effect ends immediately.

Legendary Actions. The creature gains the following legendary actions. The creature can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The creature regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Charge. The creature moves up to its speed in a straight line and makes a single weapon attack at the end of that movement.

Spellbreaker (Costs 2 Actions). The creature uses its Spellbreaker action.

Massacre (Costs 3 Actions). The creature uses or recharges its Massacre action.

Easier Tactics – Keep the bloodsworn’s attacks focused on a diverse pool of targets. Too much focus on a single character can easily overpower and down them. Don’t use Massacre until the fight draws to a close, and make sure it’s not on a target that has taken too much damage. Play the bloodsworn as a creature that has completely surrendered its mind to the thrill of battle and the service of Eitsoth. In a particularly dark twist, the creature may secretly long for death, tired of the endless slaughter it is forced to perpetuate. In either case, making some poor tactical choices in pursuit of scoring more hits is a great way to ease combat with Eitsoth.

Harder Tactics – Maximize Eitsoth’s speed to hit hard and fast. Take the Dash action via Multiattack to get a huge boost of speed, then strike the most vulnerable characters. Once they’ve taken a hit or two, follow up with Massacre to get a quick kill. From there move to the next most vulnerable target, making your way up the ladder until only the most resilient characters are left standing. Use Primal Cry early to disperse the party, and lean on lair actions for tactical solutions to complex problems.

Mythic Eitsoth

A creature granted mythic power by Eitsoth becomes a being of godlike strength. Everything ordinary Eitsoth does, its mythic version does better. It hits harder, lives longer, and causes an epic amount of mayhem. Key to this strategy is its Boiling Blood and Single-minded Fury mythic actions, which make the bloodsworn more dangerous by an order of magnitude. Boiling Blood is perfect against characters who love to make lots of

attacks, while Single-minded Fury is the solution to taking down bulky characters with lots of hit points. Don’t forget to consider Eitsoth’s lair actions. They are powerful options that can be well worth using in the right scenario.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic entity, Eitsoth causes the following effects:

Only the Strong. When the creature wielding Eitsoth is slain by another creature, the victor must succeed on a DC 30 Wisdom saving throw or be filled with a lust for its violent power. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on the saving throw. On a failure, the creature attempts to don Eitsoth by the most expedient means possible for 1 hour.

Violent Impulses. When a creature wearing Eitsoth encounters a creature for the first time in a 24-hour period, the creature wearing Eitsoth must succeed on a DC 24 Charisma saving throw or be filled with an unrelenting desire to kill that creature by any means necessary. While Eitsoth’s bearer is filled with this desire, the target of its ire cannot succeed on Charisma ability checks against the bearer nor alter this attitude by magical means. This effect lasts until the target of Eitsoth’s ire is slain or until 1 hour has passed.

RESOURCES

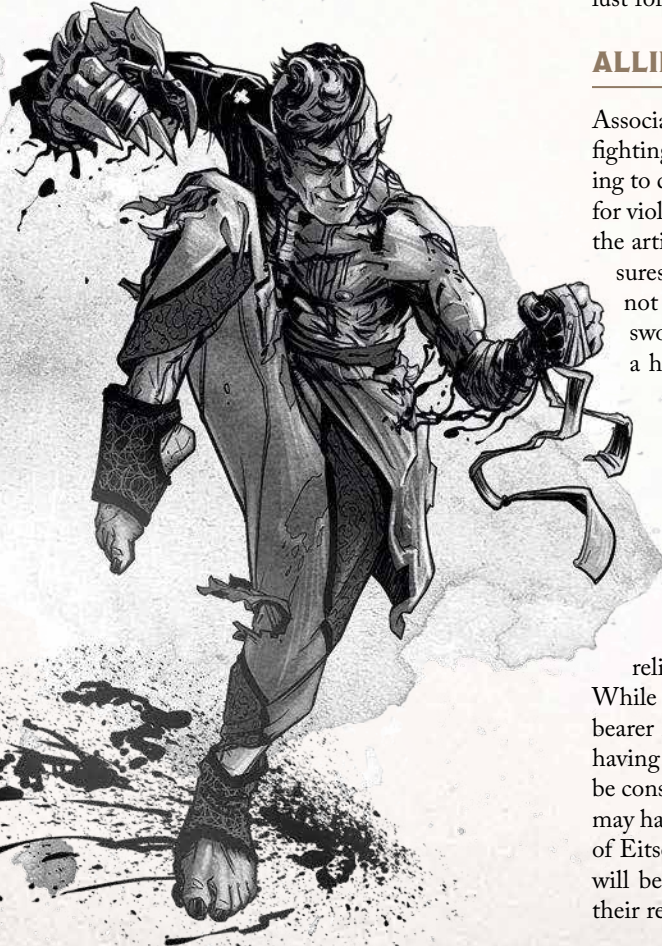
Eitsoth possesses the following resources to further its goals and lust for bloodshed.

ALLIES

Associates of Eitsoth fall into one of two categories: worthy of fighting and not worthy of fighting. The chatelaine wants nothing to do with pitiable allies who lack its bottomless appreciation for violence. They are to be ignored or swept aside. What is more, the artifact’s disregard for the health and safety of its bearer ensures the unfortunate soul does not live well. Eitsoth cares not for clothes, comforts, or appearances, leaving the bloodsworn a sorry sight for the eyes. At most there will be but a handful of weapons for acts of butchery on the creature’s person, though the artifact gladly wields more potent tools should they become available. The one exception to Eitsoth’s misanthropy is Malhavoc Bloodmane, a fey creature as old as Eitsoth and equally as violent.

REWARDS

If Eitsoth’s bearer is defeated and it has no new bearer that will don and use it, the characters have momentary relief from its enchanted creatures’ constant bombardment. While they have access to the equipment and items that its bearer may have had, they do get hold of Eitsoth itself. Despite having no host, its powers are still active, and the characters must be conscious of its efforts to bring others to harm them so that it may have a bearer again. However, should a method of disposing of Eitsoth be found, all those who are currently under its magic will be liberated and would surely be grateful to the party for their renewed freedom.





THE SUN LOTUS

Xenoflora Ignis

"There is always a higher link in the food chain."

DESCRIPTION

Beyond the stars lie alien beings of terrific power. When such a creature encounters our world, it is a harbinger of upheaval and disturbing change. Such is the case with the mysterious sun lotus, an alien plant with an appetite for populated worlds. Descending from the sky as an emerald comet, a sun lotus quickly takes root, spreading across the surface of a realm through a peculiar and deadly life cycle. At its place of impact, a gigantic, iridescent flower blooms, resplendent and horrific. From this epicenter of otherworldly terror, a great jungle spreads forth filled with luminous extensions of the flower's biomass. Those who come into contact with the sun lotus are exposed to a sinister contagion, binding them to the flower's will before their bodies immolate in an act of coerced martyrdom, burning down the surrounding

lands to make room for the alien plant. Those who would assault the sun lotus must face its deadly warden: the emissary of flame, leading countless victims of the flower's disease. If left unchecked, a sun lotus can easily overwhelm an entire plane, reducing its population to ash before consuming the nutrients and completing its nefarious life cycle.

THE SUN LOTUS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

As an overpowering, relentless force of nature, the sun lotus represents a uniquely sinister threat. Thanks to its infectious nature and propensity for fire, it is easy to mistake a sun lotus

PROFILE

Personality: Voracious

Ideals: The sun lotus is a primordial creature, embodying the circle of life to an extreme degree. It is part of a cosmic ecology, a cycle of life on a scale beyond what most mortal creatures are capable of understanding. It gives no more thought to the lives it destroys than a typical humanoid would give to the harvesting of a crop.

Bonds: To accomplish its goals, the sun lotus must form a parasitic relationship with the local fauna. Without adherents to fuel its fires with their burning bodies, the flower cannot attain the ashen nutrients it requires to bloom and propagate. Among these minions, a prime specimen is chosen to embody its emissary of flame, an avatar serving as the lotus's shield and sword.

Flaws: The sun lotus is single minded in its approach to consuming a world. It can form no alliances, partnerships, or agreements with other creatures. The only exception is via infection through flame fever, the disease by which the sun lotus ensnares others to serve its whims. Even when faced with utter annihilation, the concept of collaborating with willing entities is an impossibility for the sun lotus.

Legend: Countless souls have looked to the sky and wondered what else was out there, dreaming of heavens teeming with majestic life. These wistful fantasies are far from the truth, for the sun lotus is living testament of what horrors await us in the darkness of the cosmic void. From what foul alien world the sun lotus hails, none can say. It is clear the entity has traversed the stars for centuries, if not longer; despite all its malevolence, the being is clearly a product of horrific evolution.

The capacity to consume entire realms places the sun lotus at the top of a food chain most didn't even know existed. The creature is highly specialized to not only overcome any fauna which oppose it, but flora as well. The emerald fires caused by its spontaneously combusting victims burn with a supernatural heat, resisting all attempts to extinguish them as though they, too, were a living extension of the sun lotus. It is no wonder that those who revere the savagery and brutality of nature respect—and even admire—the deadly sun lotus. What purer demonstration of nature's might than a plant that turns the tables on so-called "civilized" life?

As more and more sun lotuses are encountered, it becomes all too clear that mortal existence is far more tenuous than previously thought. Any mastery or dominion over nature is clearly an illusion in the face of such power, begging the question: How extensive is this creature's infestation? If enough realms fall, there will be no stopping the increasingly frequent invasions of the xenoflora ignis and the end of all things.



infestation for many other threats. Only upon closer investigation is it revealed that those suffering from a horrific disease are actually pawns of a hidden entity. Discovering the sun lotus's true nature and then defeating it is not for the faint of heart. The creature challenges characters to learn all they can about their mysterious foe from beyond the stars if they are to have a chance of victory.

The sun lotus works perfectly as an antagonist with whom the party can neither barter nor reason. Once the invasion has begun, the characters must either evacuate the realm upon which they dwell or try to defeat the plant. This conflict can involve a huge variety of threats, from hostile alien biomes created by the lotus to powerful creatures bent to the plant's will. The lotus provides a DM with tons of opportunities to personalize and build out a campaign, even providing a perfect vehicle to attack places and people the characters may hold dear.

INTRODUCTION

A campaign featuring a sun lotus begins with an ominous sign: a strange green meteor streaks across the sky, landing in the remote wilderness. It is here the lotus takes root, beginning its expansion and infestation. To most this will appear as nothing more than nature simply doing what it does best—survival of the fittest between plants, animals, and everything in between. The magical nature of the lotus may attract some attention, which only furthers the plant's goals as it begins to enthrall humanoid for its first major expansion. A notable scholar, a druidic circle, or a squad of rangers are likely to be the first of the sun lotus's sentient victims.

CONFLICT

Once the lotus has a small army under its thrall, it begins igniting catastrophic wildfires, immolating the bodies of its followers to fuel the conflagration. This is the first sign something is dreadfully wrong, as these flames are clearly mystical in nature and strategically started to maximize damage. Areas reduced to ashes are quickly overtaken by the expanding sun lotus, which moves to feed on the ashes of any organic life caught in the blazes. As the lotus expands, it gathers dozens, hundreds, maybe even thousands to its cause. The potent disease flame fever spreads quickly, drawing more resources and allies to the plant's cause. At this point it may not be clear what exactly is causing these disasters, but there can be no doubt a powerful and malevolent force is responsible. Characters may be forced to contend with sickened thralls and even a chance encounter with the emissary of flame should they get too close to the sun lotus's hiding place.

CONCLUSION

Only when the party has discovered the sun lotus's hiding place (or at least its general location) can the campaign begin to move to a close. If the heroes have taken their time, entire continents may be overrun by the lotus. Such a scenario demands the characters plot an expedition deep into the alien jungle to track down the flower. This practice is incredibly dangerous, as the sun lotus eagerly attempts to enthrall such powerful creatures. Should it fail, the plant sees the party as an overwhelming threat, deploying all forces at its disposal to drive them out. This puts the characters in the difficult position of having to kill potentially



hundreds of enthralled creatures in between bouts with the emissary of flame. Such a conflict is a battle of attrition, one the characters are likely to lose.

CHALLENGES

The sun lotus can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with it.

EXPLORATION

When the sun lotus makes landfall, its impact on the local environment is immediate and extreme. The region surrounding the sun lotus is quickly converted into rings of ashen fields and charred forests surrounding an alien hellscape of tangled brambles and bizarre flowering plants. Wildfires occur frequently along the border between this region and the local environment. As the flames clear out native plant life, the sun lotus spreads its roots throughout the region, drawing nourishment from the ash and reseeding the landscape with plant species from its distant and alien home world.

As the sun lotus grows and consumes, it absorbs the memories of creatures that perish from its flames. It exploits this information to better infest the realms, using those charmed by flame fever to draw ever more nutrient-rich beings into its fold. Even regions leagues from the sun lotus can feel its influence, forming bizarre cults and forcing emigrations to its lush, alien jungle.

The most important feature of the sun lotus is the great flower itself. Hidden within its otherworldly biome is a gigantic, iridescent flower of alien beauty. The sun lotus is gorgeous to behold, worshipped by those infested with flame fever in bizarre

rituals invariably involving self-immolation. The sun lotus is an inanimate plant that is also an object, with an AC of 18 and 500 hit points. This flora is viciously defended by its greatest champion, the emissary of flame, which is both the flower's shield and sword as it invades worlds.

Disease: Flame Fever

Transmission: Inhalation

Virulence: Aberrations, beasts, dragons, giants, humanoids, monstrosities

Treatment: 100 hit points

Flame fever infects a creature with a parasitic pollen which influences both mind and body. This disease is unique to the sun lotus and is used to burn away the surrounding flora and fauna so that nutrients can be consumed from the ashes. A creature that inhales any of the infectious pollen must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or contract flame fever.

Upon infection, a creature's eyes turn a brilliant shade of crimson, and it cannot have resistance or immunity to fire damage.

After 1 week of infection, a creature becomes charmed by the sun lotus and emissary of flame, doing everything in its power to protect and serve them.

After 1 month of infection, the creature spontaneously combusts, killing it instantly. When this occurs, unattended objects and structures within a 10-foot radius of the creature are set alight, and creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 14 (4d6) acid plus 14 (4d6) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Regional Effects

The region containing the sun lotus is warped by its cosmic, iridescent power, which creates the following effects within 5 miles of the lotus.

- The area becomes overgrown with strange, yellow-leafed trees that form a dense canopy roughly 100 feet off the ground. The area below the canopy is heavily obscured against all creatures above the canopy. If a section of the canopy is destroyed, it magically regrows within 1 minute.
- The lair of the sun lotus is hidden by vegetation (detect DC 32). The sun lotus may spend 1 hour of strenuous activity to magically change the position of the lair, growing a new one within an unoccupied area within the region.
- If the emissary of flame is slain, within 1 hour it is magically reconstituted in an unoccupied space within 30 feet of the sun lotus at its hit point maximum.
- The region's size increases by 5 miles in all directions every 24 hours.

If the sun lotus is destroyed, these effects fade within 1 week.

The Sun Lotus's Lair

A blanket of dense vines sprouting thick leaves of impossible colors surrounds the heart of the lair. These are the vanguard of the sun lotus's reseeding efforts, and they cover the charred remains of the native ecosystem, absorbing the nutritious ash and carbonized timber. A haze of pollen hangs throughout the region with some patches so thick that it asphyxiates any remaining native fauna. It forms a coating of chartreuse powder on all surfaces and, if allowed to settle, becomes a brittle crust that turns the ash into fertile soil for the sun lotus's relentless conquest.

The lair is a 1-square-mile area radiating out from the sun lotus. It is the thickest part of the alien ecosystem, infested with coils of thorny brambles as thick as an ogre's arm and groves of towering trees whose goliath trunks ooze a pungent and bitter sap that pools at their bases. Snaking through the undergrowth of this otherworldly forest are creeping vines covered in spiraling patterns of vivid flowers in shades of cyan, magenta, saffron, and mauve. The roots, brambles, and vines create a thorn maze and shafts of multi-hued light as it filters down through the canopy, turning the forest floor into a patchwork of incandescent radiance and pools of shadow.

Under the canopy it is oppressively hot—no wind penetrates this far in, and every leaf, stem, and petal radiate dry heat. Open flames burn with hot luminescence and quickly ignite the invasive foliage. The petal-fire flares up in bright colors of teal, cerulean, and vermillion. These fires rage beneath the canopy and give off a noxious smoke on which the invasive plants thrive.

The area within 100 feet of the sun lotus flower is a truly alien environment. Bioluminescent petals cast wavering patterns of iridescent light. The ground seems to give way to a tangled mass of roots which obscure the soil below. There is a barely perceptible pulse which beats throughout this area, which grows louder and louder the closer to the sun lotus's location.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the sun lotus's emissary of flame can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If the emissary is using its mythic statistics, it can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. The emissary can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- The emissary draws forth nutrients from the ground, saturating its body with radiant power. Until the next initiative count of 20, the emissary deals an additional 18 (4d8) radiant damage whenever it scores a hit with a weapon attack.
- A cloud of dense pollen fills a 30-foot cube centered on a point the emissary can see within the lair. The area is heavily obscured, and when a creature starts its turn in the affected area, the creature is exposed to flame fever. This cloud lasts for 1 minute or until the emissary uses this action again.
- When the emissary is atop loose earth, it can extend its roots into the ground. When it does so, it gains the following properties for as long as it remains rooted:
 - It cannot move from its space and cannot be pushed, pulled, thrown, or magically teleported.
 - It magically regains 30 hit points at the start of each of its turns.

This effect ends if the emissary is slain or if it uses this action again to end the effect.

Exploration Encounters

The alien biome created around the sun lotus's point of impact is a strange realm full of plants, infected creatures, and ashen ruins. This area is hazardous in the extreme. At every turn, creatures risk exposure to the sun lotus's pollen as they are accosted by other infected. Strange emerald fires burn away native flora and fauna, resisting any attempt to douse the blaze without the aid of magic. The sun lotus desires only to infect such invaders and burn away those it cannot enthrall. Surviving even a day within such a deadly place is a significant challenge.

The Exclusion Zone. The party comes across a structure in the liminal space between the native ecosystem and the growing influence of the sun lotus. The area is covered in sprawling magenta vines and poisonous orchids and shows clear signs of fire damage. It holds the secrets of what happened in the initial days of the lotus's impact—an infected druid dying in the last unclaimed corner of a cellar, the final account of a ranger who ventured into the heart of this new forest, or the charred remains of several people who burned from the inside out.

Hedge Maze. A bramble maze blocks the characters' passage. To traverse it they must find a way to orient themselves within it and overcome its hazards. It's much bigger than they initially realized and full of dangers that would incite envy in the most devious trap makers. Inside the tangle are bizarre insects, clouds of infectious pollen, and armor-piercing thorns. The deeper in

they go, the stranger it gets. Dangers here come not just from the usual environmental hazards but from the countless crazed creatures enthralled by the lotus's power and eager to deter would-be intruders.

Fires upon Us. A catastrophic fire of epic proportions is rampaging through an elven forest. All attempts to douse the emerald flames have failed, as countless beasts, humanoids, and other beings rush forward to immolate themselves. With more fuel being added to the fire each day and seemingly no hope of stopping the flames, an emergency evacuation is underway to save who and what remains. Elf families struggle to stay ahead of the fire while countless cultural artifacts are lost to the blaze. Those daring heroes who step in to save what little remains would be heroes in the elves' eyes, deserving of story, song, and great reward.

SOCIAL

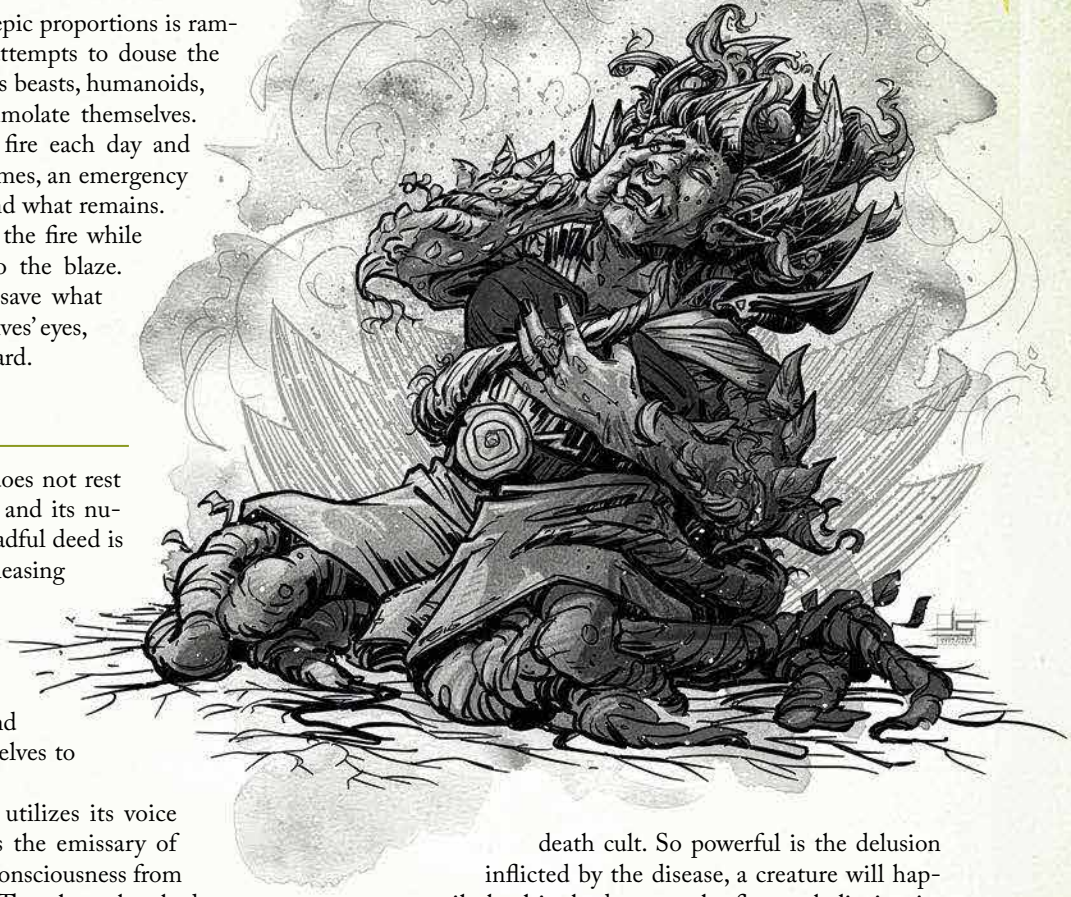
The sun lotus is insatiable. The flora does not rest until the entire realm is burned away and its nutrients consumed. Only when this dreadful deed is done does the sun lotus fully bloom, releasing its seeds into the sky to spread across the multiverse before finally dying. It is a laborious process, but the cooperation of locals can speed it along nicely. It simply wants them to slash and burn all their lands and submit themselves to its will.

While the flower cannot speak, it utilizes its voice via the mighty avatar known only as the emissary of flame. This being contains an echo of consciousness from a humanoid victim of the sun lotus. The plant absorbed this poor soul and incorporated their rudimentary appearance and personality into its ecosystem in the form of a plant-like simulacrum. The emissary communicates with the outside world, seeking to deceive native inhabitants to join with the lotus and reshape the world into a transcendent utopia.

The sun lotus uses these adherents to spread its infection to nearby communities, preferring hermits and solitary folk initially before moving on to larger population centers. It sends members of its cult out into the wider world hoping to scout any potential obstacles and nutrient-rich biomes. Those under the sun lotus's thrall speak as if in a state of euphoria. They constantly espouse the virtues of the sun lotus, claiming the relationship will afford a unique opportunity to shed a banal and mundane life in favor of a transcendent journey among the stars. This is, of course, a lie used to lure volumes of gullible folks to serve as kindling for the flower's deadly fires.

Social Encounters

While the sun lotus flower has little to contribute to a conversation, the emissary of flame is a charismatic being of a pseudo-spiritual nature. The being constantly espouses the virtues of serving the alien flower, supplementing its opinions with bizarre testimonials from other infected victims. The religious zeal with which creatures infected with flame fever worship the sun lotus is disturbing and dangerous; they are essentially an unwitting



death cult. So powerful is the delusion inflicted by the disease, a creature will happily hurl its body upon the flames, believing its own immolation to be a transcendental act promising eternal life. Encountering such experiences and other disturbing acts of similar fervor make for challenging social encounters, as the infected are unwilling to be treated for their disease and incapable of losing their faith in the sun lotus.

Paid Vacation. A troupe of crimson-eyed halflings emerge from the woods bearing great wealth and signs of prestige. The group tells of a woodland retreat in a faraway forest where one can rest and relax, their every need and want satisfied by a dedicated and professional staff. What is more, the halflings are offering a selection of free tickets for a 1-week, all-expenses-paid vacation at the resort. While the offer appears genuine, something is not quite right. The retreat is far too remote and the halflings far too eager. A group of heroes are clearly required to investigate the offer.

The Circle of Transcendence. A group of druidic fanatics try to recruit the party with wild tales of transcendent existence and promises of a utopia where animals and plants merge into a new form of consciousness. They're serious and clear headed in their conviction, believing the sun lotus represents the ultimate expression of nature that all should aspire to serve. They have even formed an alliance with the sun lotus, forgoing infection (for now) to better facilitate its growth as willing servants. At first

the circle is fuzzy on the details, but in their eagerness the characters can easily learn more about the nature of the sun lotus, provided their intentions appear benevolent to the druids.

**NEW ORGANIZATION:
CIRCLE OF TRANSCENDENCE**

Name: Circle of Transcendence

Leadership: Ruling council of seven

Membership: Medium (79 members): humanoids; druids (all circles)

Alignment: Lawful evil

Motto: *"Our bodies are but fuel, lighting the fires of ascension."*

Resources: Magical herbs, monsters (plants), spells (druid)

Creed: Many druids revere plants and their role in nature, so it is natural that when the first sun lotus appeared on the mortal realms, many druids took it as a sign that plant life was far more powerful and spectacular than what had previously been understood. Some druids became convinced that the sun lotus was the ultimate expression of nature: an organism whose environment stretched across the stars and whose life cycle encompassed entire worlds. Who were lowly humanoids to challenge such a grand design? Gathering druids from all walks of life, the loosely organized Circle of Transcendence aids the sun lotus the way a botanist cultivates a garden. Their chief desire is to see the sun lotus's life cycle complete, being among the last to burn and witness the flower's seeds spread across the stars.

Speak for the Trees. A population of treants seeks aid in opposing the expanding influence of a sun lotus. The noble tree creatures cannot leave their forest and must ask mighty heroes to act as ambassadors to rally others to their cause. The treants have a few months at best before they are overrun, doing their level best to violently oppose the countless incursions into their territory by infected creatures of flesh. The aid required to oppose the sun lotus is substantial. Magic, power, and knowledge are all necessary to mount an effective resistance, and maybe even an eventual counterattack.

COMBAT

The sun lotus is a subtle enough enemy to win most battles before a blade is drawn or spell is slung. The overpowering nature of its infection forces its enemies to face down friends, allies, and innocent victims to get to the flower. The population of infected defending the sun lotus is always large in number but is rarely powerful. Its strength stems from diversity and the relationships the infected hold with any intruders. Should the sun lotus feel threatened, the emissary of flame quickly takes center stage. This powerful warden can go head to head with almost any foe and is a reflection of the sun lotus's true power. Between the legions of infected, a hazardous environment, and the might of the emissary, any combat conflict with the sun lotus is guaranteed to be a challenge featuring multiple encounters that whittle down resources and incur great costs.

Combat Encounter Example: Blood and Ashes

Bordering the territory of the sun lotus is a realm of ash and ruin. These areas are slowly being subsumed by the expansive flora generated by the plant, which eagerly soaks up the nutrients to grow.





Characters investigating this area are likely to be challenged by the emissary of flame, which demands they leave the lotus's "feeding grounds," and attempts to infect them. The party will likely respond poorly to such a transgression, forcing a combative encounter between the heroes and the emissary.

In such a conflict, the emissary has no wish to fight to the death. Every humanoid is just another opportunity to gain a powerful ally, so the creature will take this time to learn about the characters' strengths and weaknesses as well as try to infect a party member or two with flame fever. Should the conflict turn against the emissary, it strategically withdraws, covering its retreat with a sudden onslaught of infected minions eager to prove their devotion to the sun lotus. Even in defeat, the emissary has cause to be intrigued by the party and their capabilities. Anything that can defy the sun lotus is a powerful enemy—or promising ally.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Leader

Battling the sun lotus always involves the emissary of flame and likely many other infected creatures eager to defend the plant. Beasts, dragons, giants, and other powerful creatures make for ideal allies and ready guardians. As a leader, the emissary of flame synergizes well with allies, with many of its abilities selectively harming enemies and protecting allies. The top priority for the sun lotus involves infecting as many creatures as possible with flame fever via the emissary's Contagion feature. To prevent inhaling the disease, the characters may be required to use a free hand to cover their mouths, which can prove a troublesome restriction for characters of all stripes.

A successful infection guarantees the creature's fire damage cannot be prevented by pesky magic or challenging class features. When dealing said fire damage, do not forget the potent interaction with Emerald Flames. This allows the sun lotus to burn enemies for continuous damage and is a key strategy for keeping characters low on health in perpetual fear. Meanwhile the emissary can move swiftly about the battlefield thanks to its Greenwalker feature. Note that this feature interacts with the plants created by the creature's Cinder Oak and Living Wall actions, so be sure to strategically place these objects to maximize the efficacy of Greenwalker.

When it comes to dealing damage, Grasping Tendril is an excellent attack that not only hits hard but can separate allies and move characters into poor positions. Placing a character low on health beneath a Cinder Oak or behind a Living Wall can be extremely effective, particularly if that character benefits from being in proximity to allies (such as paladins). If you are running the emissary with a host of allies, remember that Font of Living Flame not only roasts enemies but heals allies in its affected area. The damage and healing of this ability can be staggering when effectively placed, so don't use it lightly. Lastly, use Bind on targets low on health to add an extra layer of difficulty in aiding them. Unwilling characters may even wind up accidentally healing the emissary as they attempt to rescue their entrapped teammate, turning a bad situation to worse.

Easier Tactics – Keep the sun lotus and the emissary close to each other for the fight, allowing the players an opportunity to destroy both of them in one fell swoop. If you are running allies with the emissary, make sure said creatures are small and weak. They can still absorb a hit or two but won't be so much of a hassle the

characters feel they can't focus on their primary target. Use Cinder Oak at most three or four times, and use Living Wall once. These obstacles can prove troubling for inexperienced players, so don't overdo it. Lastly, don't make maximum use of Greenwalker. Use it to teleport the emissary every other turn, allowing the characters a chance to get in some good hits before it moves.

Harder Tactics – The party should encounter the emissary and its allies far from the actual location of the sun lotus. In the worst of cases, this can force the heroes to either retreat or face the emissary a second time as they struggle to track down the flower. When battle is joined, use Living Wall to cut the party in half and punish those trapped closest to the emissary. By the time their allies can get to them, these unfortunate heroes should be badly injured, under the effects of Bind, and roasting beneath a Cinder Oak. This is the perfect opportunity to use Font of Living Flame and send in some nasty allies, resulting in a burning bloodbath from which the characters have almost no hope of escape.

Mythic Emissary of Flame

When taking the sun lotus to Epic levels, the might of the emissary of flame reaches tremendous levels. However, it is unlikely the sun lotus will have a host of epic allies that can stand toe to toe with Epic characters. When choosing creatures to fight alongside the mythic emissary, select allies with lots of hit points to serve as meat shields and physical obstacles rather than damage-dealing threats. Don't worry—the mythic emissary deals plenty of damage to make up for this discrepancy.

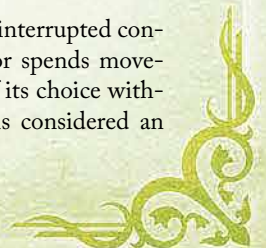
Of the two mythic actions available to the emissary, Blooming Might is the most dangerous. This action continually reinforces the creature's hit points, effectively increasing its hit point maximum via stackable temporary hit points. If the characters are not efficient in killing the buds created by this action or take too long to kill the emissary, they quickly find themselves out of resources as they try to burn through hundreds of temporary hit points each round. Between uses of Blooming Might should be applications of Spark Moss. This troublesome feature not only deals considerable fire damage to creatures that move along the ground (including those moved by the Grasping Tendril attack) but exposes them to Emerald Flames as well. If everything goes according to plan, an Epic party will be in a constant struggle to deal damage to the emissary while managing the catastrophic damage from constantly being on fire.

MYTHIC EFFECTS

As a mythic creature, the emissary causes the following effects.

Lotus Warden. If the sun lotus is destroyed, the emissary can propagate a new one by expending half its hit point maximum (rounded down). When it does so, it must touch a 20-foot square of ground, implanting the area with a new sun lotus seed when it does so. One hour after the seed is planted, a new sun lotus blooms in the affected area.

Primordial Magic. By spending 1 minute of uninterrupted concentration during which it takes no actions nor spends movement, the emissary can cast a non-Epic spell of its choice without the need for any components. This spell is considered an Epic effect for its duration.



EMISSARY OF FLAME

Medium plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 701 (61d8 + 427)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	26 (+8)	24 (+7)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Dex +16, Con +15, Cha +17

Skills Deception +17, Nature +21, Perception +10, Survival +18

Damage Resistances cold, radiant

Damage Immunities acid, fire, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, unconscious

Senses tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan

Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

TRAITS

Contagion. The emissary can use a bonus action to “bloom,” emitting a cloud of invisible pollen in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the emissary uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the emissary can force the creature to attempt a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, becoming infected with flame fever on a failure.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

Emerald Flames. A creature that takes fire damage from the emissary for the first time on a turn must attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, catching fire with brilliant green flames on a failure. A creature on fire takes 7 (2d6) acid plus 7 (2d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. These flames can only be extinguished by magical water or by a creature within reach using an action to attempt a DC 25 Wisdom (Medicine) check, extinguishing the flames on a success.

Greenwalker. The emissary can magically teleport by moving into a Medium or larger inanimate plant's space, appearing in the nearest unoccupied space to another inanimate plant of the emissary's choice within 300 feet.

Mythic Resistance. When the emissary fails a saving throw, it can spend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The emissary makes three Grasping Tendril attacks, each of which must be against a different target.

It can forgo making one of these attacks to instead make a Bind attack and/or forgo making two of these attacks to instead use its Cinder Oak or Living Wall action.

Bind. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 120 ft., one creature grappled by the emissary. *Hit:* The target is no longer grappled and is instead restrained (escape DC 25) as its body is pierced by vines. When a creature so restrained would regain hit points, it instead regains no hit points and the emissary regains that many hit points.

Grasping Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 44 (8d8 + 8) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 25) and the emissary may push or pull the target up to 30 feet in a straight line in a direction of the emissary's choice.

Cinder Oak. The emissary causes a 60-foot-tall inanimate tree to erupt from the ground in an unoccupied 5-foot square it can see within 120 feet of it. The tree is an object with an AC of 19 and 90 hit points. When the tree forms it immediately begins dropping crimson petals in a 30-foot-radius, 60-foot-high cylinder. When an enemy creature starts its turn in the affected area, it takes 22 (4d10) fire damage from the burning petals.

Font of Living Flame (Recharge 5–6). The emissary emits a gout of green flame in a 90-foot cone. Enemy creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 90 (20d8) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Friendly creatures in the area instead regain 90 (20d8) hit points.

Living Wall. The emissary creates a wall of living roots on the ground in a line up to 90 feet long, 20 feet high, and 5 feet thick, or in a 30-foot-diameter circle. The wall is a solid object with an AC of 19 and 150 hit points. The wall lasts until it is destroyed or until the emissary uses this action again.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The emissary can take three legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The emissary regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The emissary moves up to its speed.

Strike. The emissary makes a Bind or Grasping Tendril attack.

Explosive Growth (Costs 2 Actions). The emissary uses its Cinder Oak or Living Wall action.

Font of Living Flame (Costs 3 Actions). The emissary uses or recharges its Font of Living Flame action.

Naturalize (Costs 3 Actions). The emissary ends a magical effect within 60 feet of it.

MYTHIC EMISSARY OF FLAME

Medium mythic plant, neutral evil

Armor Class 20

Hit Points 1,809 (134d8 + 1,206)

Speed 30 ft.

STR 17 (+3) **DEX** 30 (+10) **CON** 28 (+9) **INT** 22 (+6) **WIS** 19 (+4) **CHA** 30 (+10)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +20, Con +19, Int +16, Wis +14, Cha +20

Skills Deception +20, Nature +26, Perception +14, Survival +24

Damage Resistances cold, radiant

Damage Immunities acid, fire, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, unconscious

Senses tremorsense 60 ft., passive Perception 24

Languages Common, Druidic, Sylvan

Challenge Mythic 5

TRAITS

Contagion. The emissary can use a bonus action to “bloom,” emitting a cloud of invisible pollen in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on it. The bloom ends after 1 hour or when the emissary uses a bonus action to end the bloom early, after which it must finish a long rest before it can bloom again.

While in bloom, when a creature in the affected area starts each of its turns, the emissary can force the creature to attempt a DC 28 Wisdom saving throw, becoming infected with flame fever on a failure.

Unless surprised, a creature with the anatomy to cover its means of breathing can do so to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can’t smell and must hold its breath until the start of its next turn. If the creature attempts to breathe in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

Emerald Flames. A creature that takes fire damage from the emissary for the first time on a turn must attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, catching fire with brilliant green flames on a failure. A creature on fire takes 17 (5d6) acid plus 17 (5d6) fire damage at the start of each of its turns. These flames can only be extinguished by magical water or by a creature within reach using an action to attempt a DC 28 Wisdom (Medicine) check, extinguishing the flames on a success.

Greenwalker. The emissary can magically teleport by moving into a Medium or larger inanimate plant’s space, appearing in the nearest unoccupied space to another inanimate plant of the emissary’s choice within 300 feet.

Mythic Resistance. When the emissary fails a saving throw, it can spend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the emissary takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. The emissary can’t use the same effect twice in a row.

Blooming Might. A bud of the sun lotus blooms in an unoccupied space of the emissary’s choice on the ground within 300 feet of the emissary. The bud is an object with an AC of 20 and 25 hit points. When the bud appears, the emissary gains 50 temporary hit points which last for 1 hour or until the bud is destroyed and cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source. If these temporary hit points are lost, the bud dies. If the emissary uses this

action again, the number of buds the action creates increases by one, and the temporary hit points granted by the effect increases accordingly, to a maximum of ten buds (500 temporary hit points).

Spark Moss. The ground around the emissary in a 300-foot radius becomes saturated with a strange moss which lasts until the next initiative count of 20. When an enemy creature moves along the ground in the affected area, it takes 2 (1d4) fire damage for every 5 feet it moves.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The emissary makes three Grasping Tendril attacks, each of which must be against a different target. It can forgo making one of these attacks to instead make a Bind attack and/or forgo making two of these attacks to instead use its Cinder Oak or Living Wall action.

Bind. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 120 ft., one creature grappled by the emissary. *Hit:* The target is no longer grappled and is instead restrained (escape DC 28) as its body is pierced by vines. When a creature so restrained would regain hit points, it instead regains no hit points and the emissary regains that many hit points.

Grasping Tendril. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 73 (14d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Large or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 28) and the emissary may push or pull the target up to 30 feet in a straight line in a direction of the emissary’s choice.

Cinder Oak. The emissary causes a 60-foot-tall inanimate tree to erupt from the ground in an unoccupied 5-foot square it can see within 120 feet of it. The tree is an object with an AC of 20 and 200 hit points. When the tree forms it immediately begins dropping crimson petals in a 30-foot-radius, 60-foot-high cylinder. When an enemy creature starts its turn in the affected area, it takes 33 (6d10) fire damage from the burning petals.

Font of Living Flame (Recharge 5–6). The emissary emits a gout of green flame in a 90-foot cone. Enemy creatures in the affected area must attempt a DC 28 Dexterity saving throw, taking 135 (30d8) fire damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Friendly creatures in the area instead regain 135 (30d8) hit points.

Living Wall. The emissary creates a wall of living roots on the ground in a line up to 120 feet long, 40 feet high, and 5 feet thick, or in a 30-foot-diameter circle. The wall is a solid object with an AC of 20 and 250 hit points. The wall lasts until it is destroyed or until the emissary uses this action again.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The emissary can take three legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature’s turn. The emissary regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Move. The emissary moves up to its speed.

Strike. The emissary makes a Bind or Grasping Tendril attack.

Explosive Growth (Costs 2 Actions). The emissary uses its Cinder Oak or Living Wall action.

Font of Living Flame (Costs 3 Actions). The emissary uses or recharges its Font of Living Flame action.

Naturalize (Costs 3 Actions). The emissary ends a magical effect within 60 feet of it.

RESOURCES

With vast lands at its disposal and a huge variety of creature types susceptible to infection, the sun lotus excels at repurposing a world's resources to suit its own ends. Entire nations can fall to its influence in a matter of weeks, seeing the sun lotus send legions of infected to start wildfires, spread the flame fever disease, and acquire new targets. No creature is beneath the flower's notice. Everything must be burned away, from the mightiest dragon to the cutest chipmunk. Among the ashes of these victims are pointless objects such as treasure and other items, which are only useful to bribe or coerce forces resistant to the sun lotus's standard approaches. The sun lotus's greatest resource is the emissary of flame, which, while never far from the flower, is dispatched to deal with any immediate threat with extreme prejudice. Even if this champion is destroyed, the lotus only requires a short time to reconstitute a new one, leading to near-suicidal tactics when employing the emissary from a safe distance.

ALLIES

Any creature infected by flame fever soon becomes an ally of the sun lotus. Those who cannot be charmed would never serve the plant willingly unless they had a death wish. Such instances are exceedingly rare, but they do happen, such as the aforementioned Circle of Transcendence organization. All infected creatures are extremely expendable to the sun lotus. With only a month to live, even keeping powerful infected in reserve doesn't make strategic sense. The plant happily sacrifices thousands to accomplish even minor objectives, for such poor souls always serve as nutrients in the end whether the sun lotus succeeds or fails.

REWARDS

The sun lotus only values the nutrient potential within each living thing, but with widespread destruction comes a plethora of ruins, lost treasures, and other fireproof valuables just waiting to be discovered. Any area subjected to the ravages of a sun lotus's flame are ripe for looting. Entire nations lie in ruins beneath the ashes of their former citizens, full of cultural artifacts, arms, armor, and other valuables. The death of the lotus presents a tremendous opportunity that is too good to pass up. Looters, adventurers, and fortune hunters are quick to respond to such a gold rush. The scale of such an event can be massive, creating an entirely new conflict over the treasure, invariably leading to bloodshed. However, the magic of the sun lotus can be harnessed by daring druids. In the event such primordial knowledge can be gleaned from the alien plant, it may take the form of new and fearsome magical powers, such as the spell *emerald flames*.

NEW SPELL: EMERALD FLAMES

7th-level evocation (druids only)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Reach

Components: V, S, M (a piece of jade worth 50 gp)

Duration: Instantaneous

You imbue your hand with blazing green fire, which is eager to spread to a nearby foe. Make a melee spell attack against a creature you can reach. On a successful hit, the target becomes engulfed in green flames. At the start of each of its turns, a creature so engulfed takes 18 (4d8) fire damage, and each creature within 10 feet of the target must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or become engulfed in green flames as the effect spreads.

This spell immediately ends if you cast it again any time during its duration.



THE WHITE QUEEN

The Warrior Monarch

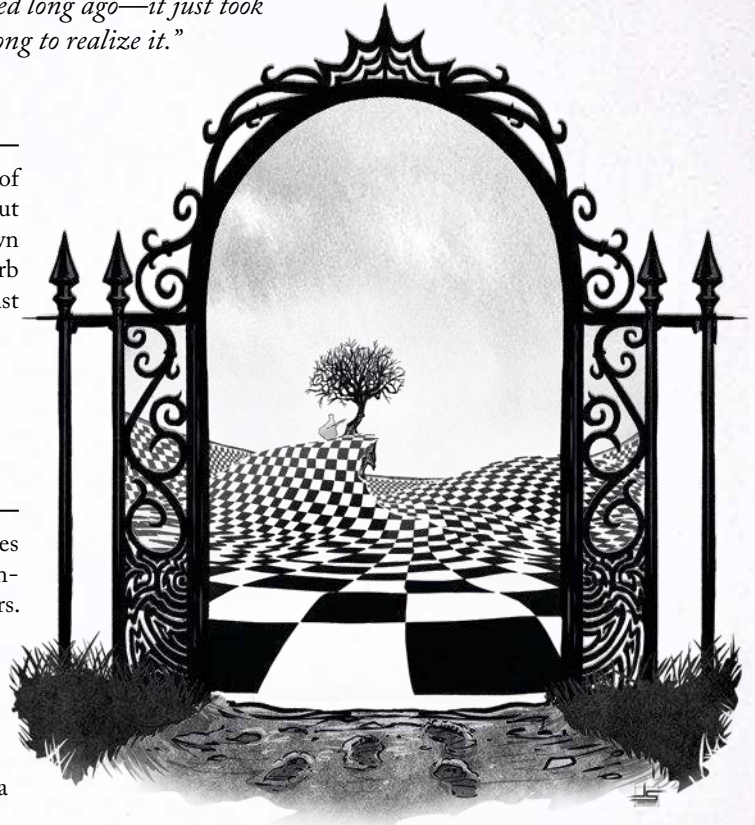
"You were defeated long ago—it just took you this long to realize it."

DESCRIPTION

A serene and regal figure, the White Queen stands as a statue of the purest alabaster come to life. Her imposing figure stands out in her royal regalia among that of her soldiers. A demure crown offsets the power she exudes. She stands tall, wielding her Orb of Rulership, in a queenly dress, confident and steadfast against all trials.

THE WHITE QUEEN IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

A campaign involving the White Queen should be one of games and puzzles. The White Queen will best serve as a light antagonist or a powerful ally who first wishes to test the players. The biggest emphasis should be on strategy within games and overcoming these challenges. The White Queen would rather the characters face the challenge fairly and overcome it through traditional or non-conventional means than outright cheat the system. Any conflict surrounding the White Queen should either be one of her own design or a middle point between the Summer and Winter Courts.



PROFILE

Personality: Imperious

Ideals: The White Queen stands apart from the fey of the Summer and Winter Courts. While these courts may be the predominant powers of the fey, the White Queen is resolute in the power she controls. She is the embodiment of games, serving as an arbiter among the wilier fey.

Bonds: The White Queen is bound by honor to face her opponents openly and in good faith. Her enemies must know whom they face, witness her brilliance, and ultimately kneel in defeat before her majesty. Unless her foes are dishonorable knaves, the queen always adheres to principles of fair play and good sportsmanship.

Flaws: Above all other possessions, the White Queen cares for her white tree upon which grow the succulent, magical ruby apples. The truth behind this obsession is unknown.

It may be the result of mercurial moods so common to fey or some deeper truth known only to the White Queen. Whatever the cause, her majesty will risk everything to safeguard the tree's wellbeing, no matter the cost.

Legend: The mirrored, duplicitous nature of the fey left little trust among the races. This dichotomy created the storm of law versus chaos, good versus evil, and what remained amid the crash of the cosmic waves was the neutrality of the White Queen. She has since served as a mediator of the Winter and Summer Courts, though her primary function has been a spot of respite within the chaotic fey. The White Queen spends much of her time traveling the planes, seeking out new puzzles to master, and challenging others to all manner of games. Her lack of duplicity has made her somewhat of a pariah among the other fey, though the unrivaled power over her domain has granted her freedom in this autonomy.

INTRODUCTION

A series of games and puzzles should be the early interactions with the White Queen; these games and puzzles can take many forms, but games of the mind are her specialty. Whether you use playing cards, dice, Three-Dragon Ante, or a series of other puzzles, all encounters should focus less on overcoming these challenges by force and more on outwitting or outplaying the other side. While the White Queen is not averse to force, her primary motivator is the game. Emphasis should be made on tailoring these games to enhance player engagement rather than simply punishing them with a series of mundane puzzles. A well-set White Queen forces the players to play games and challenge her mastery of them, but her benevolent nature means even in conflict death is an unlikely outcome.

CONFLICT

The White Queen takes notice of those who overcome the many puzzles and challenges put before them. Her attention can also be drawn in the case of the Summer and Winter Courts needing a mediator. After several puzzles have been solved, the White Queen invites the characters to her domain, where she offers a great reward should they triumph over this last challenge. The difficulty is discovering where the White Queen resides and how to get there.

CONCLUSION

Facing off against the White Queen culminates in a final struggle against her and her Alabaster Army. Those who fail to overcome this challenge find themselves indebted to a powerful entity whose favor may not always be benevolent. She is a powerful adversary and a master of tactics. A battle against the White Queen is likely to be less deadly than a powerful dragon or master of magic, but the consequences of failure in a challenge against her may mean a lifetime of servitude.

CHALLENGES

The White Queen can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with her.

EXPLORATION

The Chessboard is the realm in which the White Queen resides. This is a domain hidden within the expanses of the fey realm. While within the Chessboard, the White Queen can freely shift and warp the space within. This anomaly is simultaneously immense and diminutive. The armies of the White Queen stand ever present through the Chessboard as both powerful guardians and exquisite works of art. While within the Chessboard, the colors of the world seem almost muted, and the monochromatic colors of space seem to permeate everything. The longer creatures and objects from outside the Chessboard remain within, the more color seems to be drained from them, replaced with the slate and alabaster hues of the realm.

Regional Effects

The region containing the White Queen's lair is controlled by her mastery of games, which has created the following effects within 10 miles of the Chessboard and any entrances into it.

- All creatures not of the Alabaster Army and not currently immersed in a game of the White Queen's design shed bright light in a 60-foot radius and cannot be hidden or invisible.
- When any creature within the Chessboard would be slain, it is instead not slain, reduced to 1 hit point, and magically incapacitated for 24 hours.
- If a creature in the affected area attempts to cheat at a game of strategy, chance, or wit, its duplicity is magically revealed, and it automatically loses.

If the White Queen is destroyed, these effects fade immediately.

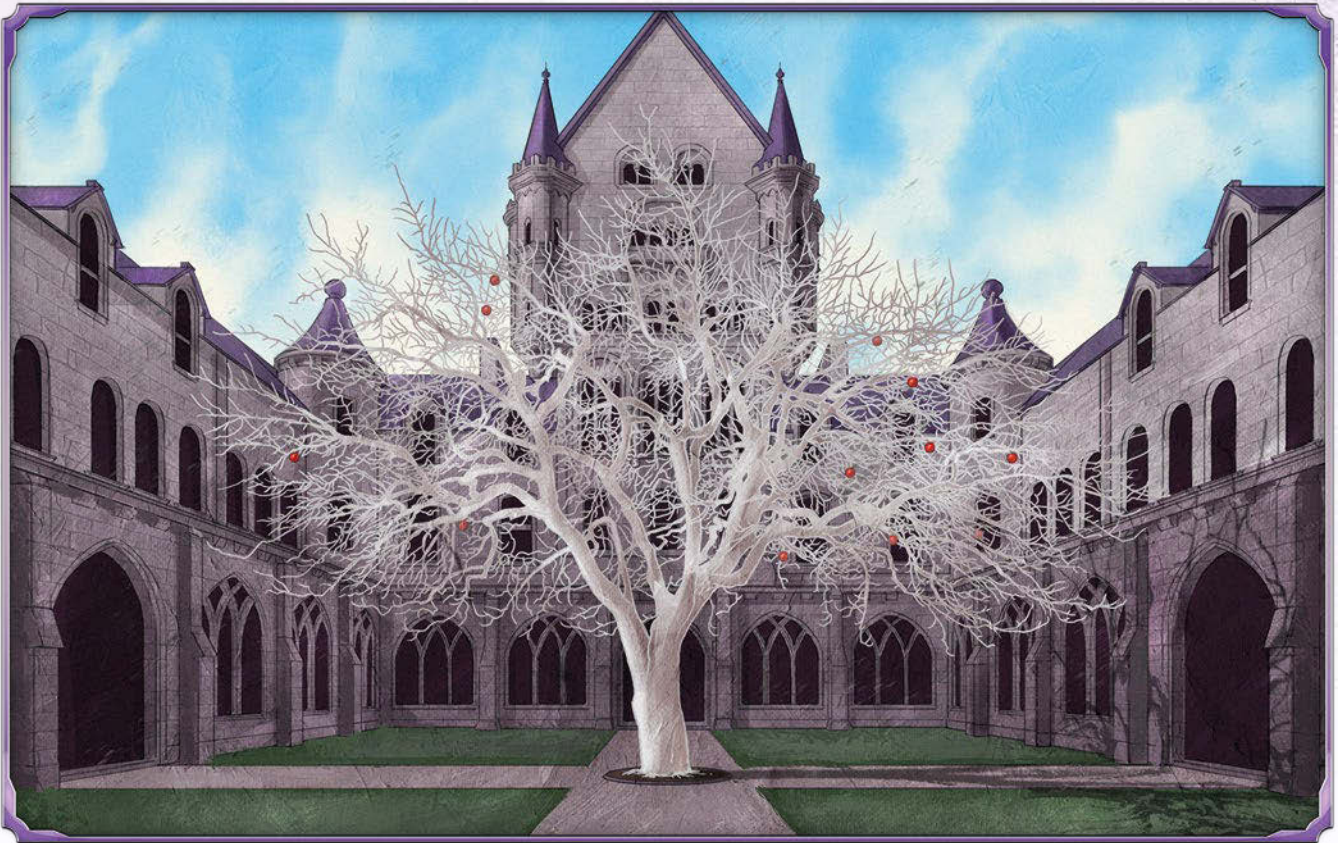
The White Queen's Lair

The White Queen resides within the monochrome lands of the Chessboard. The simple grid of black and white tiles spreads out toward the horizon as far as the eye can see. At the edge of the sightline, surrounded by the only color in this otherwise two-tone landscape, stands an alabaster apple tree in a stark courtyard. Protected most fiercely, the apples this tree bears are the prized possessions of the White Queen, and only those who triumph over the toughest challenges may share in the fruits of victory.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the White Queen can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If the White Queen is using her mythic statistics, she can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. The White Queen can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- The White Queen chooses a 5-foot square she can see to be imbued with magical power, designating it to be a white or black square. If the square is white, anything other than the queen within the square's area has resistance to all damage. If the square is black, anything other than the queen within the square's area has vulnerability to all damage. This effect ends after 1 minute or if the queen chooses to end it (no action required).
- An unattended object or structure of the White Queen's choice within the lair is magically banished for 1 hour, which returns to its place of departure at the end of the duration. When the target reappears, it pushes anything that would share its space to the nearest unoccupied spaces. This effect ends early if the White Queen uses this option again.
- The White Queen chooses a creature she can see within the lair and imbues it with strategic guile. When that creature would roll with advantage or disadvantage, it instead rolls three d20s and chooses the highest result (if advantage) or the lowest result (if disadvantage).



Exploration Encounters

With the entirety of the Chessboard at her command, and many in the fey courts seeking to gain her favor, the White Queen has a multitude of tools at her disposal when challenging foes to her games. The nature of the White Queen and the influence of her games permeates all interactions with her.

Misdirection. While within the Chessboard, the killing of another creature is difficult due to the restrictions imposed by the White Queen. However, a powerful chaotic force has been disturbing the Chessboard and allowing the permanent death of members of the Alabaster Army. This slight is one the White Queen does not overlook. She seeks a group who can track down this powerful force and destroy it. The only clues appear to be rumors from among the fey courts, and who knows if the mischievous fey will be of any help.

Colored Hypoxia. The powerful magics of the Chessboard are leaking through rips in the weave. The colors of intersecting planes are being drawn into the Chessboard and drained of their magics. Areas of errant magic or antimagic are appearing throughout the planes. Many powerful casters would hand-somely reward the party responsible for ending this arcane disruption.

Apple of the Alabaster Realm. The White Queen has posed a challenge to the most inventive and creative minds throughout the planes. The creature or creatures who can devise the best puzzle or create the best new game shall receive a great boon as their reward: a treasured *ruby apple* from the alabaster apple tree within the Chessboard.

Ruby Apple of the White Queen

Wondrous item, legendary

This strange fruit takes the form of a crystalline apple glowing with vibrant magic. As an action, you can consume this apple, becoming imbued with the stoicism of the Alabaster Army. When you do so, you gain proficiency in a saving throw of your choice.

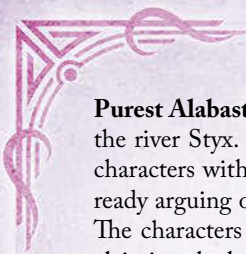
A creature can only benefit from a ruby apple once.

SOCIAL

The White Queen is a social being who derives much interest from the intelligence of others, whose intrigue and machinations provide a myriad of chances to study the short lives of mortal beings. Those prone to use force over cunning can expect dismissal from the alabaster sovereign. She has spread all manner of puzzles and games across the realms; those who excel in these crafts may even find themselves invited for a visit by the sovereign.

Social Encounters

Investigation and Enticement. A dispute over the control of a section of the fey realm has broken out between nobles of the Winter and Summer Courts, both of whom desire the land for its powerful magics. The White Queen has been sought out as a mediator and has tasked several creatures to investigate the claims of both sides. She demands that both sides present only facts, though it is unlikely either noble will relinquish their claim. Will the investigators follow the trail to the truth, or will the promises of the nobles entice them away from it?



Purest Alabaster. A vein of pure alabaster has been found near the river Styx. Emissaries of the White Queen have tasked the characters with staking out the area. A number of devils are already arguing over the contract terms for possession of the vein. The characters are tasked with negotiating with the devils and claiming the largest possible portion for the White Queen.

The Unending Game. The White Queen has heard that the characters are quite resourceful. She is intending to lead a great game involving the entirety of the Summer and Winter Courts, and she has delegated control of the courts' strategy to the characters. It is unclear how long the game will last, but the characters must manage the wily fey of both courts while the White Queen renders her game.

COMBAT

As a master tactician, the White Queen carefully weighs each move she makes, executing the most efficient one. While she values her army, they are ultimately her soldiers. They move as she directs, fight as she wills, and die should she ask it. Her extensive array of tactics and experience pose a significant challenge to any who would face off against her. The thrill of the victory is her most precious treasure. The White Queen never fails to enter battle prepared and with the knowledge of the abilities of those she faces.

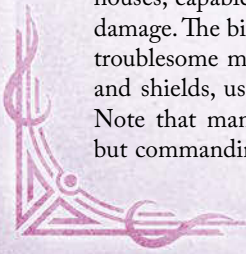
Combat Encounter Example: A Points Race

The White Queen has posed a challenge to the strongest parties of combatants across the planes. She is looking for a party to collect the highest number of points based on defeating members of her Alabaster Army. One point is awarded for the defeat of a pawn, three points for a knight or bishop, five for a rook, and nine for the queen. The contest will continue until all contestants have been reduced to 1 hit point. The White Queen hopes to find a worthy group of challengers who can beat the current record of 91 points. The challenge will take place within the Chessboard. A special 80-foot-by-80-foot board has been crafted as the battleground, enchanted to ensure no participant can cheat the game by way of magic or similar skullduggery.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Soldier

On the battlefield, the White Queen is a terrific foe, possessing strategic brilliance, bizarre powers, and an endless army of stone soldiers ready to do her bidding. As a soldier, the white queen stands shoulder to shoulder with her army, striking down those who stand in her way and marshalling her forces with tactical precision. When running the White Queen, take note of her Alabaster Army feature and its many elements; each piece fills a strategic role in combat. The king is both the queen's greatest strength and weakness, and it must be protected at all costs. The rooks are bastions of defense around which pieces can be protected and positioned. The knights are her offensive powerhouses, capable of trampling enemies and dealing considerable damage. The bishops are flexible support pieces, ideal for ending troublesome magics or for healing allies. The pawns are fodder and shields, used to protect the queen and to swarm enemies. Note that many of the queen's actions involve doing nothing but commanding these pieces, so treat them like the extensions







of her statistics that they are. Don't underestimate the queen's strength. She can easily hold her own thanks to her mighty Rod attacks, and she poses a deadly threat to any who dare come within melee range.

Use Check, Conquer, and Queen's Gambit in between managing her army and making weapon attacks. Check especially can be deadly, and it's used best when combined with powerful pieces like knights or rooks. Queen's Gambit is the White Queen's strongest ability and should be placed on a high-value target. This feature completely changes the dynamic of the battlefield, forcing the characters to run defense on their afflicted ally or suffer extreme consequences. A well-run White Queen is a delicate balance between protecting her king and crushing her enemies.

Easier Tactics – When the alabaster army appears, arrange them closely together and at a reasonable distance from the party. This typically gives the players time to position and prepare their characters before the pieces get too close. Additionally, don't put too much effort into protecting the king. Push the White Queen forward and away from friendly pieces, leaving the king exposed to all manner of assault. The players should feel in control of the battlefield, with there being little strategic reasoning behind the queen's moves beyond moving her pieces to attack the nearest enemies.

Harder Tactics – Carefully position the Alabaster Army so that the pieces are spread out, keeping the king close to at least one rook. The other rook should be at a considerable distance from the queen, so that her Castle action can be used to reposition it at a moment's notice. Use Check on a vulnerable character, then swarm the target with pawns to beat them into submission. Once a character is reduced to 0 hit points, hit them with Conquer to make things go from bad to worse.

Mythic White Queen

Like all mythic creatures, the White Queen's capabilities in this formidable incarnation are extremely dangerous. Her Alabaster Army creations have been dramatically improved, making what was once a deadly skirmish a veritable war with her endless legions of stone minions. Her new mythic actions change the fight from friendly competition to deadly confrontation. Master of the Board ensures that any characters wishing to battle the White Queen must fight on her terms. This even prevents characters from flying outside the range of her pieces without severe consequences. Promote allows the White Queen to escalate a fight rapidly, filling the board with potent pieces that are ideal for whatever enemy she is facing. Remember the strengths and weaknesses of each piece to make optimal use of this feature.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, the White Queen causes the following effects.

Master of Games. The White Queen has proficiency in all games of strategy, wit, and chance, and she doubles her proficiency bonus when making ability checks in association with these games. Additionally, the White Queen can spend 1 minute of strenuous activity to magically create a set of gaming pieces for any such game.

Endowment of Games. The White Queen refuses an audience with any creature who is not first willing to play on the queen's board. She is a benevolent fey who seeks the thrill of the game and does not wish harm on any who play. If an opposing creature loses a game, they must offer an item of extreme value, a new game, or their services as repayment. If the White Queen loses, she grants the winners a boon or a single favor within her power.

THE WHITE QUEEN

Large fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 483 (46d10 + 230)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Dex +8, Int +12, Wis +14, Cha +17

Skills History +12, Intimidation +17, Perception +14

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Primordial, Sylvan

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

TRAITS

Alabaster Army. When the White Queen rolls initiative, she conjures an army of powerful objects which appear as chess pieces in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of her. Each piece is a Medium object (AC 18, immunity to poison and psychic damage, resistance to damage from spells and magical effects) and a number of hit points according to its role, as detailed in the Allies section. Using this feature, the White Queen creates a number of the following pieces detailed here and can never have more pieces conjured of each type at one time:

- 8 pawns
- 2 knights
- 2 bishops
- 2 rooks
- 1 king

Each piece has special properties as detailed in its description in the Allies section. The pieces do not move nor perform actions unless explicitly commanded to by the queen, behaving as inanimate objects. When a piece is reduced to 0 hit points, it crumbles to dust and cannot be reconstructed or repaired. If a piece is ever farther than 300 feet from the White Queen, it crumbles to dust.

Mythic Resistance. If the White Queen fails a saving throw, she may expend the use of an unspent legendary action to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The White Queen uses her Strategic Maneuvers twice. She can forgo using one of her Strategic Maneuvers in this manner to instead make a Rod attack or use her Check action.

Rod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (2d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 35 (10d6) force damage.

Brilliant Strategy (Recharge 5–6). The White Queen commands up to five pawns and five other pieces created by her Alabaster Army feature to use either their Move or Attack feature.

Check. The White Queen chooses a creature she can see within 5 feet of one of the pieces created by her Alabaster Army feature. The target must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or become stunned for as long as it remains within 5 feet of that piece.

Conquer. The White Queen chooses a creature with 10 or fewer hit points she can see within 300 feet of her. The target must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or become permanently petrified and magically transformed into a piece of her choice, as per her Alabaster Army feature. A creature of CR 10 or lower cannot be transformed in this manner into anything other than a pawn.

Queen's Gambit (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The queen chooses an enemy creature she can see within 300 feet of her and curses it to serve as her opponent's king for 1 hour. While cursed in this manner, the target cannot be magically teleported, and if the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, each other creature of the queen's choice within 300 feet of the target takes 200 necrotic damage.

Strategic Maneuvers. The White Queen commands up to two pawns and one other piece created by her Alabaster Army feature to use either their Move or Attack feature.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The White Queen can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The White Queen regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Castle. The White Queen or the king piece created by her Alabaster Army feature magically teleports to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of a rook of her choice created by her Alabaster Army feature.

Pawn. The White Queen commands a pawn created by her Alabaster Army feature to use its Move and Attack feature.

Advanced Tactics (Costs 2 Actions). The White Queen commands a knight, bishop, or rook created by her Alabaster Army feature to use its Move and Attack feature.

Rod (Costs 2 Actions). The White Queen makes a Rod attack.

Reinforcements (Costs 3 Actions). The White Queen conjures two pawns and one other piece of her choice as per her Alabaster Army feature, which appear in unoccupied spaces within 120 feet of her.

THE MYTHIC WHITE QUEEN

Large mythic fey, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 24 (natural armor)

Hit Points 1,725 (150d10 + 900)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
32 (+11)	12 (+1)	23 (+6)	21 (+5)	24 (+7)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Str +22, Dex +12, Con +17, Int +15, Wis +18, Cha +21

Skills History +16, Intimidation +21, Perception +18

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic sources

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 28

Languages Common, Druidic, Elvish, Primordial, Sylvan

Challenge Mythic 5

TRAITS

Alabaster Army. When the White Queen rolls initiative, she conjures an army of powerful objects which appear as chess pieces in unoccupied spaces within 60 feet of her. Each piece is a Medium object (AC 18, immunity to poison and psychic damage, resistance to damage from spells and magical effects) and a number of hit points according to its role, as detailed in the Allies section. Using this feature, the White Queen creates a number of the following pieces detailed here and can never have more pieces conjured of each type at one time:

- 8 pawns
- 2 knights
- 2 bishops
- 2 rooks
- 1 king

Each piece has special properties as detailed in its description in the Allies section. The pieces do not move nor perform actions unless explicitly commanded to by the queen, behaving as inanimate objects. When a piece is reduced to 0 hit points, it crumbles to dust and cannot be reconstructed or repaired. If a piece is ever farther than 300 feet from the White Queen, it crumbles to dust.

Mythic Resistance. If the White Queen fails a saving throw, she may expend the use of an unspent legendary action to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The White Queen uses her Strategic Maneuvers twice. She can forgo using one of her Strategic Maneuvers in this manner to instead make a Rod attack or use her Check option.

Rod. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (4d10 + 11) bludgeoning damage plus 70 (20d6) force damage.

Brilliant Strategy (Recharge 5–6). The White Queen commands up to five pawns and five other pieces created by her Alabaster Army feature to use either their Move or Attack feature.

Check. The White Queen chooses a creature she can see within 5 feet of one of the pieces created by her Alabaster Army feature.

The target must succeed on a DC 30 Constitution saving throw or become stunned for as long as it remains within 5 feet of that piece.

Conquer. The White Queen chooses a creature with 10 or fewer hit points that she can see within 300 feet of her. The target must succeed on a DC 30 Wisdom saving throw or become permanently petrified and magically transformed into a piece of her choice, as per her Alabaster Army feature. A creature of CR 10 or lower cannot be transformed in this manner into anything other than a pawn.

Queen's Gambit (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The queen chooses an enemy creature she can see within 300 feet of her and curses it to serve as her opponent's king for 1 hour. While cursed in this manner, the target cannot be magically teleported, and if the creature is reduced to 0 hit points, each other creature of the queen's choice within 300 feet of the target takes 200 necrotic damage.

Strategic Maneuvers. The White Queen commands up to two pawns and one other piece created by her Alabaster Army feature to use either their Move or Attack feature.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the White Queen takes one of the following mythic actions. The White Queen can use the same effect multiple rounds in a row.

Master of the Board. The White Queen designates a 120-foot-square of area on the ground that she can see as the "field of play." Creatures engaged in combat with the White Queen outside this affected area (including while in the air) take 21 (6d6) psychic damage. If the White Queen uses this feature again, the affected area does not change, but the damage increases by 21 (6d6) psychic damage. These effects last for 1 hour.

Promotion. The White Queen chooses a pawn created by her Alabaster Army feature within 120 feet of her and transforms it into another piece of her choice, which is restored to its hit point maximum.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The White Queen can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The White Queen regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

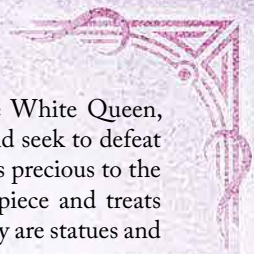
Castle. The White Queen or the king piece created by her Alabaster Army feature magically teleports to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of a rook created by her Alabaster Army feature.

Pawn. The White Queen commands a pawn created by her Alabaster Army feature to use its Move and Attack feature.

Advanced Tactics (Costs 2 Actions). The White Queen commands a knight, bishop, or rook created by her Alabaster Army feature to use its Move and Attack feature.

Rod (Costs 2 Actions). The White Queen makes a Rod attack.

Reinforcements (Costs 3 Actions). The White Queen conjures two pawns and one other piece of her choice as per her Alabaster Army feature, which appear in unoccupied spaces within 120 feet of her.



RESOURCES

The White Queen possesses an extensive army and powerful contacts within the Summer and Winter Courts to further her goals and machinations. A number of powerful fey creatures are willing to serve the White Queen, in an attempt to garner her favor, should she call. Fey who stand outside either of the traditional courts are eager to please her to gain her protection. The White Queen has little need to hoard wealth thanks to the nature of her army. However, as befitting her status, the White Queen feels compelled to acquire wealth, territory, and assets to both enhance her own prestige and better enlist the aid of others should the need arise.

ALLIES

The White Queen knows many who would offer their allegiance in hopes of earning her favor. Perhaps the greatest ally to the White Queen is her Alabaster Army, the number of which is almost too large to count. It is unclear whether her army numbers in the hundreds of thousands, or even the millions.

The Alabaster Army. The greatest force of the White Queen, the Alabaster Army stands against all who would seek to defeat her. While they are innumerable, they are no less precious to the White Queen. She knows the names of each piece and treats them as her devoted subjects, despite the fact they are statues and are incapable of any social interaction.

Typhnia the Birch. Typhnia is a powerful dryad gifted to the White Queen as the gardener for the alabaster apple tree that resides inside the Chessboard. An archfey gifted this dryad to the White Queen in hopes of courting her. To their dismay, the White Queen dismissed the archfey and offered Typhnia a place among her silent court. Typhnia now carefully tends and guards the tree, ensuring that each *ruby apple* is carefully tended and harvested to the White Queen's exact specifications.

Yll'vaelen. A powerful ahd moar¹, Yll'vaelen has often become a player against the White Queen. Both share a neutrality and a long lifespan that has made them ideal game partners. Yll'vaelen respects the White Queen as time holds no terror for her; conversely, the White Queen respects the intellect and powerful luck of the ahd moar.

¹ The details of an ahd moar can be found in 2CGaming's supplement, the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 1*.

TYPHINIA THE BIRCH Medium fey, lawful neutral

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)
Hit Points 201 (31d8 + 62)
Speed 40 ft., 30 ft. fly

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Wis +12, Cha +13
Skills History +11, Insight +12, Perception +12, Persuasion +13, Stealth +13
Damage Resistances acid, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
Condition Immunities charmed, frightened
Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 22
Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Innate Spellcasting. Typhnia's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 21, +13 to hit with spell attacks). Typhnia can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *druidcraft*, *thorn whip*

5/day each: *entangle*, *goodberry*, *grasping vine*

3/day each: *barkskin*, *pass without trace*, *plant growth*, *shillelagh*

1/day each: *sunburst*, *transport via plants*, *wall of thorns*

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

Nature's Protection. When Typhnia is hit by a melee attack, retributive thorns lash out against the attacker, dealing 18 (4d8) piercing damage.

Tree Stride. Once on her turn, Typhnia can use 10 feet of movement to step magically into one living tree within reach and emerge from a second living tree within 60 feet of the first tree, appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 feet of the second tree. Both trees must be Large or bigger.

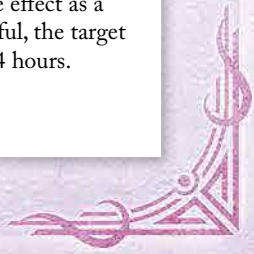
ACTIONS

Multiattack. Typhnia makes three Shillelagh attacks.

Shillelagh. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (4d12 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Earth's Fury. Typhnia smashes the ground, and sharp wooden spikes explode outward from that point. Typhnia targets up to 5 creatures within 60 feet of her. The creatures must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or take 44 (8d10) piercing damage and become restrained as they are impaled upon the spikes.

Fey Charm. Typhnia targets one humanoid or beast she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see her, it must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed. The charmed creature regards Typhnia as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target is not under Typhnia's control, it takes her requests or actions in the most favorable way it can. A charmed creature can attempt a saving throw each time it or an ally is harmed by Typhnia. This effect lasts for 24 hours or until Typhnia dies or ends the effect as a bonus action. If the target's saving throw is successful, the target is immune to Typhnia's Fey Charm for the next 24 hours.



KING

Hit Points. 300

Move. The king moves up to 10 feet along the ground.

Trait. While the king is not destroyed, the White Queen cannot be slain. When the king is reduced to 0 hit points, the White Queen loses 300 hit points. This effect cannot be prevented by any known means.

Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 64 (10d10 + 9) slashing damage.

ROOK

Hit Points. 150

Move. The rook moves up to 60 feet along the ground in a straight line.

Trait. The rook exudes an aura of protection in a 10-foot-radius sphere. Enemy creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against objects and creatures within the affected area, and friendly creatures and pieces created by the White Queen's Alabaster Army feature in the affected area cannot be moved or magically teleported unless the White Queen allows it.

Attack. *Melee Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., each creature of the rook's choice within reach. *Hit:* 36 (6d8 + 9) force damage, and the targets must succeed on a DC 24 Strength saving throw or be pushed 30 feet away from the rook in a straight line.

BISHOP

Hit Points. 80

Move. The bishop moves up to 40 feet along the ground in a straight line.

Trait. When the bishop ends its movement, each non-Epic spell or magical effect of the White Queen's choice within 5 feet of it immediately ends. For each effect the bishop ends in this manner, it takes 30 necrotic damage.

Attack. The bishop charges another creature or object within 120 feet of it with magical energy. If the target is an enemy creature, it must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or take 35 (10d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a friendly creature or object, it instead magically regains 35 (10d6) hit points.

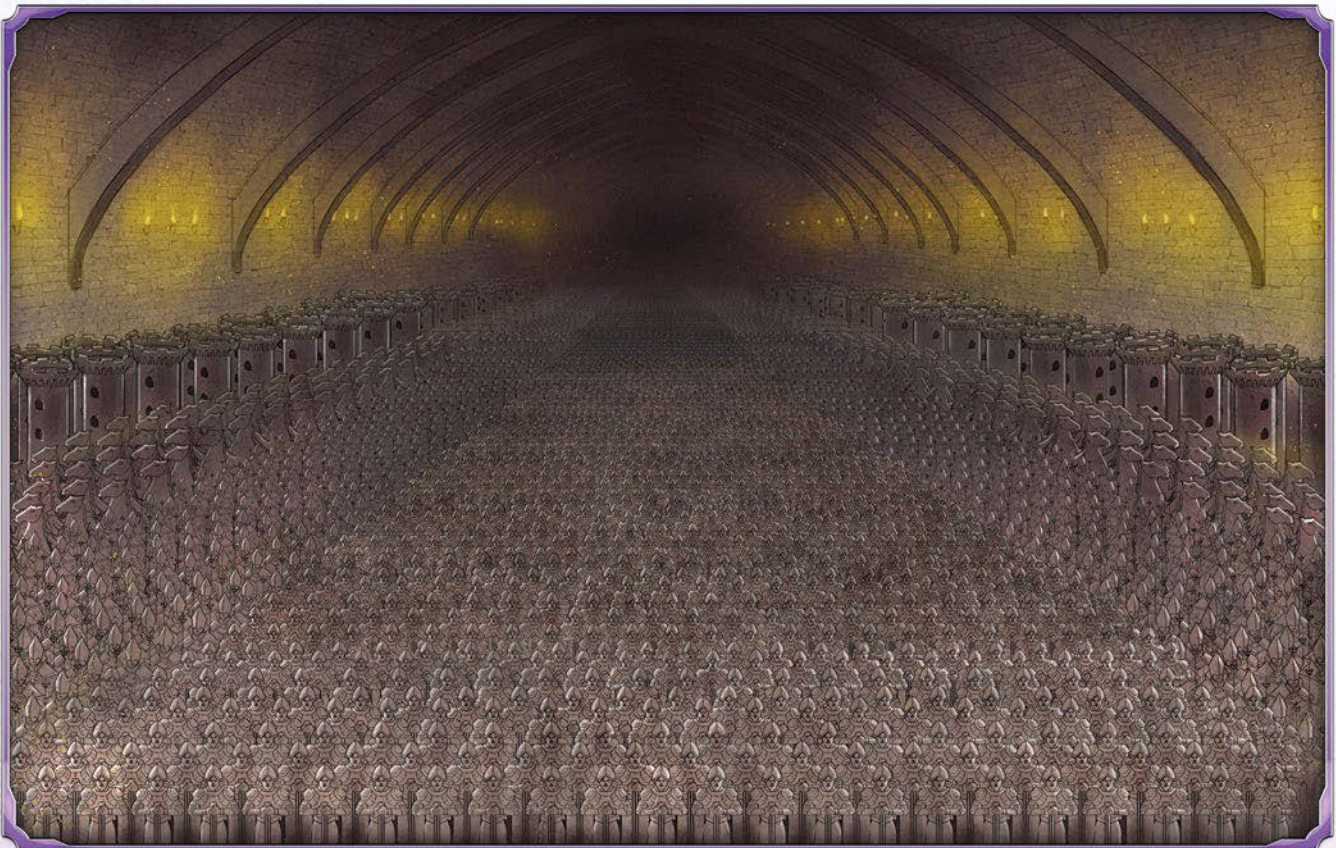
KNIGHT

Hit Points. 120

Move. The knight moves up to 50 feet along the ground.

Trait. The knight can move through enemy creatures' spaces as though they were difficult terrain. When the knight moves through a creature's space for the first time on a turn, it can choose to trample it. The creature must succeed on a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw or take 13 (2d12) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 48 (6d12 + 9) piercing damage.



PAWN

Hit Points. 30

Move. The pawn moves up to 15 feet in a straight line along the ground.

Trait. When the White Queen takes damage and the pawn is within 120 feet of her, she can instead take no damage, and the pawn is destroyed.

Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 19 (4d4 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Mythic Alabaster Army

If you are using the White Queen's mythic statistics, her Alabaster Army are instead Epic objects, produce Epic effects, and have the following characteristics.

MYTHIC KING

Hit Points. 1,200

Move. The king moves up to 10 feet along the ground.

Trait. While the king is not destroyed, the White Queen cannot be slain. When the king is reduced to 0 hit points, the White Queen loses 1,200 hit points. This effect cannot be prevented by any known means.

Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 121 (20d10 + 11) slashing damage.

MYTHIC ROOK

Hit Points. 500

Move. The rook moves up to 60 feet along the ground in a straight line.

Trait. The rook exudes an aura of protection in a 10-foot-radius sphere. Enemy creatures have Epic disadvantage on attack rolls against objects and creatures within the affected area, and friendly creatures and pieces created by the White Queen's Alabaster Army feature in the affected area cannot be moved or magically teleported unless the White Queen allows it.

Attack. *Melee Spell Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 10 ft., each creature of the rook's choice within reach. *Hit:* 65 (12d8 + 11) force damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 30 Strength saving throw or be pushed 60 feet away from the rook in a straight line.

MYTHIC BISHOP

Hit Points. 240

Move. The bishop moves up to 40 feet along the ground in a straight line.

Trait. When the bishop ends its movement, each spell or magical effect of the White Queen's choice within 5 feet of it immediately ends. For each non-Epic effect the bishop ends in this manner, it takes 80 necrotic damage; when it ends an Epic effect in this manner, it is destroyed.

Attack. The bishop charges another creature or object within 120 feet of it with magical energy. If the target is an enemy creature, it must succeed on a DC 30 Wisdom saving throw or take 70 (20d6) necrotic damage. If the target is a friendly creature or object, it instead magically regains 70 (20d6) hit points.

MYTHIC KNIGHT

Hit Points. 390

Move. The knight moves up to 100 feet along the ground.

Trait. The knight can move through enemy creatures' spaces as though they were difficult terrain. When the knight moves through a creature's space for the first time on a turn, it can choose to trample it. The creature must succeed on a DC 30 Dexterity saving throw or take 26 (4d12) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone.

Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 76 (10d12 + 11) piercing damage.

MYTHIC PAWN

Hit Points. 100

Move. The pawn moves up to 15 feet in a straight line along the ground.

Trait. When the White Queen takes damage and the pawn is within 120 feet of her, she can instead take no damage, and the pawn is destroyed.

Attack. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 41 (12d4 + 11) bludgeoning damage.

REWARDS

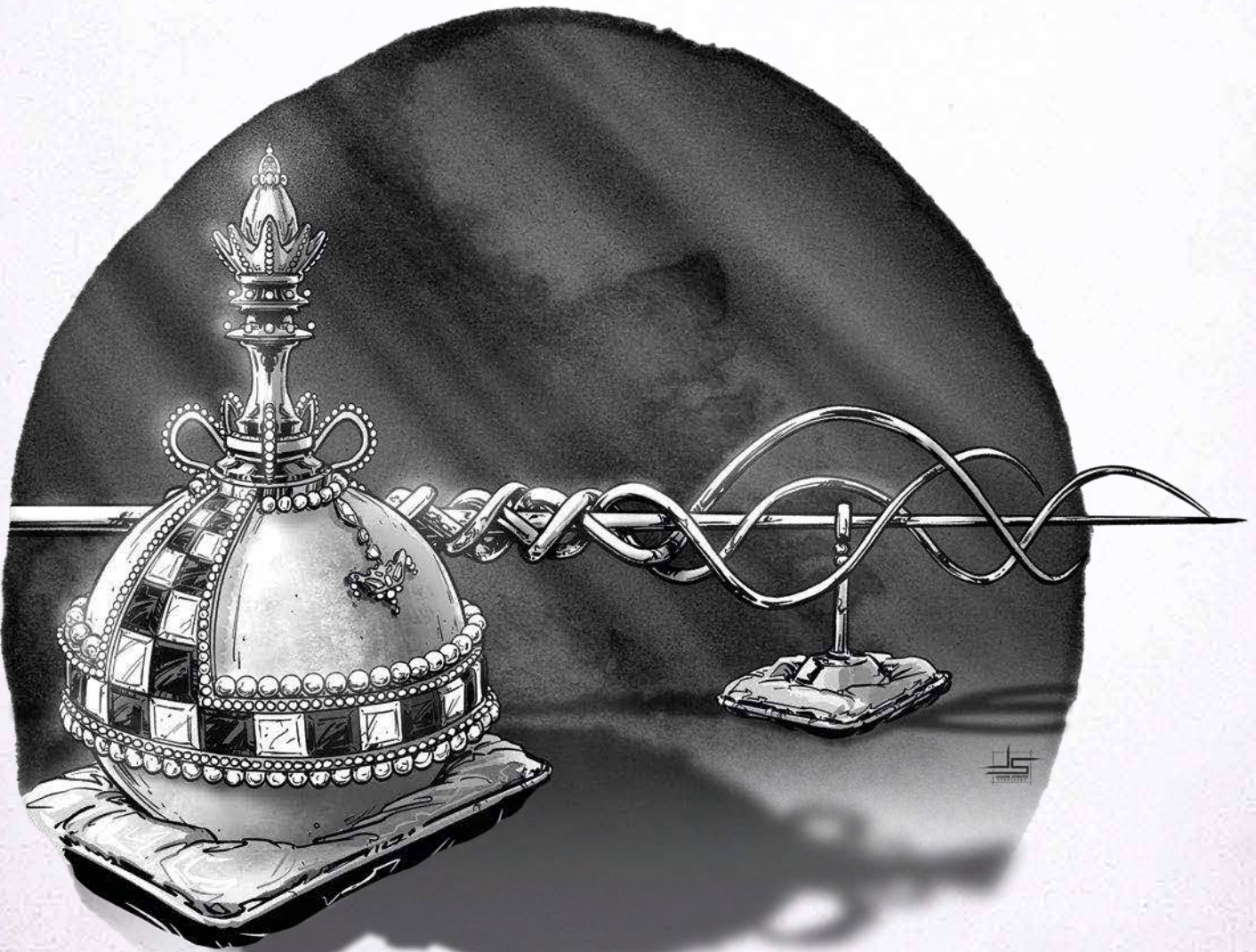
From within her ivory fortress, the White Queen hoards countless treasures taken from her foes. Its silent halls are filled with art objects, magical equipment, and wealth carefully arranged to contribute to the citadel's pale beauty. On her person the White Queen always carries a powerful object which denotes her authority and prestige. While the White Queen's *Orb of Rulership* denotes her status and she would be loath to give it up, a party that could convince her to wager it (and win) would be rewarded with a powerful item indeed. More often, the White Queen will offer a *ruby apple* from her alabaster tree. A truly generous counter-wager would have to be offered to balance the value of the orb.

Orb of Rulership

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This fist-sized alabaster orb is engraved with the Chessboard motif and adorned to look like the crown of the White Queen. While holding this orb you cannot be charmed or frightened. While attuned to the orb you gain the following benefits:

- As an action you can cast *command* as a 7th-level spell (spell save DC 21).
- You have advantage on Charisma ability checks.
- During a short rest, you can inspire your allies. For 1 hour after a short rest, your inspired allies regain the maximum number of hit points possible from any healing. They also have advantage on all saving throws against spells and magical effects. Additionally, the first time one ally would drop to 0 hit points as a result of taking damage, the target instead drops to 1 hit point and the effect ends. This inspiration cannot be used again for 1 week.



THE WORM THAT WALKS

Harbinger of Decay

"The flesh of the living is a feast for the grave."

DESCRIPTION

Rising from the earth like a fetid infection given sentience, the Worm that Walks is the embodiment of death's most malignant aspects: rot, decay, and the inevitable subsumption of flesh. Once a mortal who sought to usurp the deities of death, the Worm that Walks has failed in this foolhardy ambition. It now "lives" as but a minor deity, forever relegated to a lesser, disgusting role in the

great mystery that is death. Its form is a conglomeration of noxious green worms in the barest visage of a man. From within their wriggling mass a pair of burning eyes blazes with psychotic hatred for the living. In a vain attempt to conceal its disgusting form, the Worm that Walks cloaks itself in tattered robes, beneath which it stows a brutal mace-like weapon from an ancient, death-worshipping culture. To behold the Worm that Walks is to stand face to face with death as certain as the grave, and twice as malevolent.

PROFILE

Personality: Ambitious

Ideals: While the Worm that Walks has stumbled on its path to full dominion over death, its desire to stand among the greatest of gods burns with an unquenchable fire. The worm is convinced that in order to usurp its betters, it must bring about a mortal apocalypse that would put all other death gods to shame. This prophesized "Age of Worms" has been foiled more than once, but for as long as the worm writhes with unlife, so too do its dark designs for the mortal realms.

Bonds: Every apocalypse deserves a worthy herald, and the Worm that Walks is no exception. No matter the era, there is always one being among the wormgod's favored who is instrumental in the coming of the next Age of Worms. This creature is always favored by the worm for its power and the delusional affection it holds for the wormgod. Should this harbinger fall, the Worm that Walks must wait for another worthy being to present itself, lest the prophesied Age of Worms never come to pass.

Flaws: The Worm that Walks is completely deluded in its ambitions. Reducing the mortal realms to rotting lands flush with the carcasses of billions will not bring it divine power. Rather, such an act will ultimately deprive all unliving gods of their power by ending the cycle of life and death. The wormgod cannot be counseled against this course of action, believing such words to be

the sinister lies of anxious rivals who lack the worm's formidable ambition.

Legend: Many gods were once mortals, elevated through great action, magic, and even ambition. The Worm that Walks was one such mortal. But rather than carve out his own space among the divine pantheon, the man that became the wormgod sought to overthrow the gods of death and ascend to divinity in one fell swoop. Admittedly the plan was brilliant, for such powerful deities rarely turned their eyes to the affairs of the living. Over decades the man's scheme came closer to fruition. Gathering a fanatical cult who willingly worshiped a mortal, along with a formidable arsenal of necromantic power, the man gathered an entire nation in service of his ascendancy. These poor souls were but fuel to the pyre that would light the path to the divine, and so millions fell before the scythe of the would-be death god. Using their deaths as a catalyst, the man began to ascend to godhood. But in his ambition, he had underestimated the forces of those whom he sought to challenge. While the gods of death could not help but admire the man's determination and love of death, they could not let such hubris go unpunished. The power of divinity would be bestowed, but it would be no blessing. So it was the wormgod was born: the lowly eater of the dead who festers in the rot born of the grave. Despite many attempts to escape this lowly role in the portfolio of death, the wormgod yet still serves, a prisoner of its own misguided ambition.



THE WORM THAT WALKS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

To introduce the Worm that Walks to your campaign is to threaten your game world with an apocalypse. The vile deity desires nothing but to walk the world of the living so that its rotting touch may reduce it to ruinous decay. While accomplishing this task is monumentally difficult, every action the wormgod and its minions take is in service of this goal. Be sure you are prepared to overshadow your game's story with the threat of an imminent apocalypse at the hands of one of the vilest beings in existence. The Worm that Walks is hated by nearly every other being, and for good reason. Its actions and schemes are never minor affairs. They are terrific atrocities that scar the land, soul, and minds of its victims. A campaign featuring this malevolent deity as an antagonist will likely walk down some of the darkest paths of horror. It will be grotesque and disturbing, and—should the characters prove victorious—supremely satisfying.

INTRODUCTION

As an entity that most beings wish to forget about, the Worm that Walks begins influencing a campaign through subtle means. The cult of the wormgod has learned to be discreet, cloaking itself in layers of deception, subterfuge, and camouflage to keep their master's influence concealed. Invariably, the rotting presence of the wormgod leaks through, giving rise to undead monstrosities, strange prophecies, and dark portents that indicate a truly malevolent force is on the rise. In the beginning the characters should just barely scratch the surface of what is going on. They will need to thoroughly investigate these bizarre phenomena to uncover the truth, and even then the information should be frustratingly vague. Few beings know of the true nature of the Worm that Walks, with even fewer pieces of lore on the subject persisting in the mortal world.

CONFLICT

Once the characters get a sense of what their enemy is, they can begin conflict with the Worm that Walks in earnest. While they may not fully understand the enormity of what they face, a few things should be clear, such as the worm's general history, personality, and purpose. Even then it is likely the heroes will spend much of their time battling smokescreens and unwitting allies tricked or shackled to the worm's cause. With each major victory, the characters should learn a significant truth about the worm's schemes. While they may not know everything they need to stop the death god from ascending, it is always enough to keep them nipping at the cult's heels.

CONCLUSION

Only when the wormgod is on the cusp of ascension will the cult reveal itself in force. This should be a devastating affair as an evil army of undead and crazed fanatics unleash centuries of gleeful anticipation at their master's return. Amid the chaos, the wormgod's plan unfolds with disturbing efficiency. This attempt to attain mastery over the divine domain of death should be centered around a sinister, ritual atrocity; the sacrifice of an entire

metropolis, the slitting of an ancient gold dragon's throat, or the destruction of a holy artifact are all suitable events to grant the apotheosis of the Worm that Walks. While it awaits its ritual's completion, the Worm that Walks strides across the mortal realms, laying waste to all in its path. Even if the characters manage to disrupt the ritual, they must contend with the wormgod's fury—a test only the mightiest of heroes are likely to survive.

CHALLENGES

The Worm that Walks can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who encounter it.

EXPLORATION

The Worm that Walks exists far from the planes of life and prosperity it seeks to destroy. In a small realm accessible only by the gods of unlife, the Worm that Walks toils endlessly, deserving neither lair nor respite. Its only charge is to unmake the physical remains of those who do not pass quietly into the realm of death. When a soul is too resilient or stubborn to forsake its physical form, the wormgod's writhing progeny go to work, stripping the remains away so the gods of death may pass their judgement. This is gruesome, grotesque work, earning the plane the inglorious title of the Realm of Ruin. It is a land devoid of life, festering with the fleshy remains of countless mortals. The incessant chewing and wriggling of worms is always audible, a ceaseless and nauseating consumption of all mortal flesh they can fit within their maws.

Outside this dimension, the cult of the wormgod works tirelessly to bring about the next Age of Worms. These deranged fanatics are exceptionally cunning and secretive, weaving intricate plots over the centuries that are nigh impossible to unravel. Tracking down and eliminating these cabals is a formidable task. The devoted of the wormgod know that exposure not only means death for themselves but endangers their plans for their beloved deity. Temples to the Worm that Walks are always hidden by magic and political power, while the sites themselves are guarded by mighty undead that few have ever encountered, let alone heard of. It is not uncommon for a discovery of wormgod cultists to be a ruse designed to throw easily satisfied adventurers off the scent, while the true threats remain cunningly hidden in plain sight.

Regional Effects

The region within 10 miles of the Worms that Walks is warped by its divine power, which has created the following effects within the area:

- When a flesh-and-blood creature in the affected area is slain, 1 hour later it returns to "life" at its hit point maximum as an infested creature (see the Infested Template sidebar later in this chapter for details).
- Creatures suffering from disease and poison cannot be hidden or invisible to the wormgod, which is always aware of their exact location within the affected area.
- Food and drink (including those of a magical nature) in the affected area become putrid and infested with vermin and cannot provide any nutritional or magical benefits.

If the Worm that Walks is slain, these effects fade immediately.



Exploration Encounters

With a cult extremely proficient at concealing its actions, many encounters centered around exploring involve tracking down the followers of the Worm that Walks and putting a stop to their machinations. Doing so can lead a party across the mortal realms and beyond, hunting down sleeper cells and hidden temples where dark powers conspire to bring their master back into the world. Additionally, lore concerning the Worm that Walks is sparse and extremely valuable. It may well be worth the characters' time to recover such knowledge, wherever it may be found.

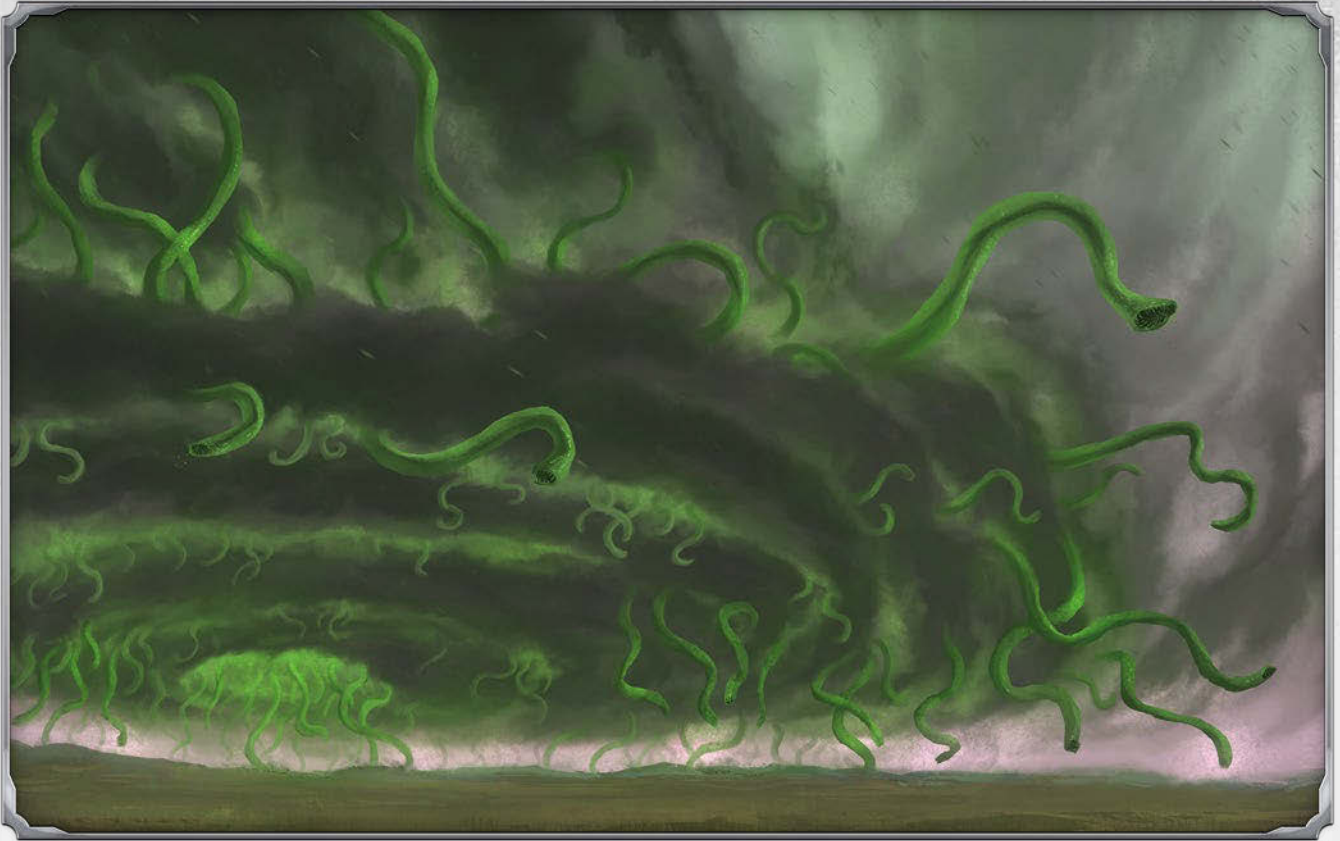
The Ziggurat of Ascension. Deep within an undead-infested jungle lies a ruined ziggurat of evil power. Here is where the nameless mortal who aspired to master death became the Worm that Walks, sacrificing an entire nation in a foolhardy and depraved ritual. The site is filled with lore concerning the Worm that Walks, scrawled in ancient carvings and in the remains of the ritual. Reaching the site is perilous, and exploring it even more so, for the Worm that Walks has left a garrison of its finest minions to safeguard its secrets.

We Ride unto Ruin. A holy order of paladins has discovered a portal to the Realm of Ruin and seeks to stop the apocalypse before it can even begin by slaying the Worm that Walks in its home plane. This bold maneuver requires the assistance of as many heroes as the paladins can muster and no small amount of courage. Once within the realm, the crusaders must survive to confront their enemy, navigating a realm that is unrelentingly inhospitable to the living.

The Writhing Storm. One of the portents of the wormgod's coming—a storm of putrid rain with lightning in the shape of hungry worms—manifests over an ordinarily peaceful nation. With the storm comes an unstoppable horde of undead which infest and consume all in their path. The deadly phenomenon stubbornly refused to move or disperse, leading many to believe at its epicenter is the source of the danger. If a group of heroes were to brave its perils and put an end to the threat, an entire nation would be in their debt.

SOCIAL

The Worm that Walks is not much of a conversationalist when roused to battle, but otherwise knows that alliances are key to its ambitions. Where other gods offer power or promise salvation after death, the Worm that Walks pledges friendship. Few worshippers of any deity are afforded a chance to form a relationship with their god, leading many beings to jump at this rare, if risky, opportunity. Of course, the Worm that Walks sees these partnerships as only a means to an end, but to powerful beings the dynamic has meaningful benefits. Those who seek to usurp the status quo, carve out their own futures, or shape destiny have cause to empathize with the Worm that Walks. Just as its followers work to realize the worm's greatest ambitions, so too does the deity offer to realize theirs. However, over time the wormgod twists its followers' ambitions to align with its own. By the time their usefulness has run out, even the most devoted worshipper is likely to have been reduced to a ruinous state, a shadow of its former self, rotting in both body and soul.



Adventurers wishing to challenge the wormgod likely receive many direct overtures from the deity. While it is wise to refuse, more than one heroic soul has fallen to the powers freely given by the ambitious wormgod.

An Audience with Death. In response to the recent activities of the Worm that Walks, the supreme deity presiding over the domain of death invites mortal heroes to discuss the coming threat. While answering such a call would ordinarily be a foolhardy endeavor, in this case the offer is genuine. The deity wishes to strike a deal with the living: accept its assistance in defeating the wormgod and receive a one-time “get out of death” pass, provided they prove themselves worthy of the boon.

The Harbinger. A prophet telling of the coming “Age of Worms” has been heard on every street corner across the mortal realms. This strange but clearly magical fellow has glimpsed the future and has seen the wormgod’s inevitable victory, lest a daring series of tasks are completed to prevent the apocalypse. Unfortunately, what these tasks involve is as cryptic as the prophet’s crazed ramblings, with only vague hints given to their nature. The cost of ignoring these warnings is too high, so the harbinger’s ambiguous clues must be deciphered to foil the wormgod’s ascension.

Wormsign. A shifty potion seller in the local area is selling strange brews that are advertised to allow one to speak with a dead god. The potions in question are strange, disturbing items containing a toothed worm suspended in the noxious liquid. Some who drink the potion die agonizing deaths, while others





emerge “changed” by their conversation with a deity, speaking of an imminent, dread apocalypse. Either result bears investigating by heroes daring enough to take a drink.

COMBAT

The Worm that Walks is a power few can ever hope to match. Its every action brings rot and decay in the form of vicious necrotic worms that infest all they touch. The wormgod’s sinister ego and unrivaled ambition demands direct confrontation with its foes. Having known harsh defeats, the Worm that Walks fights with a relentless fury that only a god can muster. There is no enemy the wormgod will not challenge. Mortals, gods, and monsters are all equally contemptible in its eyes, their heinous opposition to its rightful ascension driving the wormgod into a murderous rage. While the minions of the Worm that Walks are numerous and powerful, they serve only to accomplish what the deity could not do alone. For this reason, the worm rarely fights alongside allies, relishing in the satisfaction of personally ruining the tender flesh of its victims. Between blows from its executioner’s mace, blasts of toxic energy, and an epidemic of infectious vermin, the wormgod can overpower most foes within seconds. Those that can withstand such an onslaught only serve to further enrage the Worm that Walks, reminding the fallen god of its own inadequacies and raising its already formidable ire. In its wake the Worm that Walks leaves only rot and ruin, with the only “mercy” shown to those it raises as infested undead to serve the coming apocalypse.

Combat Encounter Example: Hour of Rot

In an uncharacteristically merciful—but still dreadfully malevolent—mood, the Worm that Walks has decided that instead of

instantly obliterating the characters to subject them to a slow, torturous death. Being devoured from the inside by ravenous worms seems a fitting enough fate. Only those who have foiled the wormgod’s plans, but are still undeserving of its full attention, deserve this punishment. All the Worm that Walks must do to deliver this judgment is make a personal appearance and deliver wave after wave of its Age of Worms action. The wormgod takes terrific delight in witnessing how the heroes suffer and despair against its infectious power. It is even worth enduring a few feeble acts of resistance just to watch the valiant defenders waste away. Once the Worm that Walks is satisfied the characters are duly infested and unlikely to survive, it withdraws. Even if the heroes manage to survive, the wormgod’s satisfaction of hearing their anguished cries is well worth the exertion.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Brute

In battle, the Worm that Walks is a terrific engine of destruction. What it cannot crush into oblivion it corrodes from the inside, reducing even the most stalwart of beings into shriveled husks begging for slaughter. The deity is utterly sadistic, reveling in each scream of agony and wail of despair from those who cross its path. This viciousness is born from a millennium of spite. The Worm that Walks has come too far and worked too hard to not savor the destruction of the living and rotting corpse of the world it infests.

As a brute, the Worm that Walks is the epicenter of any battle. Its actions are few but devastating in their power. Age of Worms is one of its most fearsome options, inflicting characters with a nigh-irresistible disease that grows more potent with each subsequent use. While the initial damage of this feature is

unimpressive, this is by design. Overconfident heroes may ignore the threat until it's too late and the disease is rampaging out of control. For more sturdy enemies, the Executioner's Mace attack serves as an excellent tool to bludgeon heroes into paste. Vile Ray is reserved for enemies that lurk outside the wormgod's reach, while Divine Will can be used to solve any problem for which the Worm that Walks is otherwise ill equipped to handle. Supreme among the worm's offensive capabilities is its *Writhe unto Ruin* action. This devastating effect not only surrounds a target in a shell of deadly vermin but prevents any allies from rendering effective assistance or escape. This action should be used against either very weak or very powerful heroes, as it is far too powerful to be ignored.

Easier Tactics – The Worm that Walks should prioritize its *Age of Worms* action over striking with its Executioner's Mace. Use *Writhe unto Ruin* only once, and only against the most durable hero in the party. This should preferably be performed early in the fight, making recovering from and managing the catastrophic effect as easy as possible. Leave any healers alone, allowing them a chance to make use of the worm's *Healing Antipathy* feature instead of constantly supporting their teammates.

Harder Tactics – Your first move should be to apply *Writhe unto Ruin* on a healer or a character with few hit points. From there, use *Age of Worms* until each character is suffering from its effects. Prioritize Executioner's Mace on the most damaging threat to the worm, giving *Age of Worms* time to work its magic. The wormgod has a lot of hit points, so you can afford to take your time. If you happen to get an opportunity to use *Writhe unto Ruin* again, hit a target with a particularly nasty case of *Age of Worms* or one at low hit points.

Mythic Worm that Walks

This incarnation of the wormgod is beyond the power of all but the most extraordinary mortals. Lesser creatures are nothing before its wrath, completely incapable of mounting any defense or escape. Such a creature is a true apocalyptic threat, capable of not only ending all mortal life on one world, but all worlds. Thankfully, the power required to call forth this incarnation of the wormgod is significant. Such efforts are likely millennia in the making, prophesized and prepared for by mighty forces desperate to stop the Worm that Walks from treading upon the mortal realms.

The wormgod gains two new mythic actions in this form: *Pillar of Ruin* and *Infestation*. *Pillar of Ruin* is devastating when combined with the wormgod's potent attacks, especially *Writhe unto Ruin*. Within the area characters cannot regain hit points, which can prove catastrophic while suffering from constantly damaging effects. *Infestation* can not only apply the effects of *Age of Worms* in a huge area, but it can do so multiple times in a single turn if a player rolls poorly enough. Combine these abilities to add tons of damage while limiting counterplay options, forcing the heroes to endure the worst the Worm that Walks has to throw at them.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, the Worm that Walks causes the following effects:

Deific Being. The Worm that Walks is a lesser deity. Against non-Epic creatures it gains the following benefits unless it chooses not to.

- The Worm that Walks automatically hits with any attacks.
- The Worm that Walks automatically succeeds on saving throws and ability checks.
- When the Worm that Walks rolls damage against non-Epic creatures, it always rolls the maximum possible damage on its damage dice. Additionally, such creatures cannot succeed on saving throws against the worm.

Harbinger of Decay. Everywhere the worm treads becomes infested with its malevolent rot. If the worm spends 10 continuous minutes within 300 feet of a corpse, the corpse rises as an infested undead loyal only to the Worm that Walks. The creature has the same statistics it did in life, minus those caused by gaining the infested template. An infested undead obeys any commands given by the Worm that Walks or those the worm deems worthy of commanding the undead (no action required in either case).

RESOURCES

The Worm that Walks possesses the following resources to further its goals and schemes.

ALLIES

The naked ambition of the Worm that Walks exerts a strange pull on many creatures who share a similar, reckless desire for power at any cost. The worm is quick to make allies of such creatures, transforming them into vile undead that would make even a vampire's stomach turn. These followers are key to the worm's goals, and are devoted, patient, and deadly in the extreme. Weak or foolish individuals have no place among the worm's faithful, for they are likely to expose the cult's machinations with frustrating ease. Unless intended as a distraction or fodder, allies of the Worm that Walks are always CR 8 or higher. The cult has a particular preference for individuals with considerable physical resources or political power, working tirelessly to recruit such individuals into their fold. Many rulers have been tricked into serving the wormgod in secret, being slowly led down a twisted path by a cunning operative who delivered on all that was promised. At this time, the horrific truth is finally revealed, by which point it is too late to turn back and the cult gains another devotee for the harbinger of decay.

However, the most fearsome of the wormgod's chosen are undead, particularly those infested with the deity's iconic, green, necromantic worms. These deadly creatures, called infested, are the eyes and ears of the Worm that Walks, possessing deadly power and terrible purpose. While other undead may pledge loyalty to the Worm that Walks, only the infested are truly favored. Creating an infested creature is one of the unholy rituals a cult of the worm can perform, a blasphemous affair that infects the very fabric of reality. The details of the infested template can be found in the sidebar of the same name.

THE WORM THAT WALKS

Huge undead (lesser deity), chaotic evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 884 (61d12 + 488)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	14 (+2)	27 (+8)	12 (+1)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +16, Int +9, Wis +16, Cha +13

Skills History +9, Intimidation +13, Perception +16, Religion +17

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, restrained

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 300 ft., passive Perception 26

Languages all, but can only be understood by creatures infected with a disease

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

TRAITS

Aura of Decay. The worm exudes a magical aura of decay in a 60-foot-radius sphere. Creatures other than the worm in the affected area suffer the following penalties.

- If an affected creature would be immune to a type of damage, it instead has resistance.
- When an affected creature would regain hit points, it instead regains half as many hit points.
- If an affected creature would be immune to disease, it instead is not immune and has advantage on saving throws against diseases and effects that inflict diseases.

Healing Antipathy. When the worm is subjected to an effect that would cause it to magically regain hit points, it instead regains no hit points and takes radiant damage equal to half the hit points the effect would cause a target to regain (rounded down).

Mythic Resistance. When the worm fails a saving throw or is critically hit, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead or turn the critical hit into a normal hit.

ACTIONS

Executioner's Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 48 (6d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the worm can unleash a torrent of necrotic energy in a 15-foot-radius sphere centered on the target. Each enemy creature in the affected area takes necrotic damage equal to the bludgeoning damage dealt by the attack.

Vile Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 63 (10d10 + 8) poison damage.

Writhe unto Ruin (Recharge 5–6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* The worm engulfs the target within a swarm of writhing worms that gnaw and feast with a relentless hunger. The swarm is a magical object with an AC

of 15 and 120 hit points. While it is engulfed in this manner, a creature's speed is 0, it has total cover from everything outside the swarm and vice versa, and it cannot be moved or magically teleported.

Additionally, at the start of each of its turns the target must attempt a DC 24 Dexterity saving throw, taking 70 (20d6) piercing damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Age of Worms. The worm attempts to inflict a horrific disease on up to three creatures it can see within 120 feet of it. Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or become infested with a parasitic disease consisting of writhing green worms. A creature so infested experiences the following symptoms for as long as it remains afflicted by the disease.

- The worm can choose to deal 11 (2d10) poison damage to the target at the start of each of the target's turns. This damage increases by 11 (2d10) each time a creature so afflicted fails a subsequent saving throw against this action, to a maximum of 110 (20d10).
- The target cannot hear anything but the writhing of the worms within its body.

This disease is divine in nature and can only be removed if a creature attempting to remove the disease succeeds on a DC 24 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a failure, any resources used to attempt to remove the disease are wasted.

Divine Will. The worm exerts its will as a deity of death, causing one of the following effects.

- The worm ends a spell or magical effect of 7th level or lower within 300 feet of it.
- The worm casts a warlock spell of 4th level or lower with a casting time of an action or bonus action. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 24, +17 to hit with spell attacks).
- The worm becomes immune to a damage type of its choice until the end of its next turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The worm can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The worm regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Age of Worms. The worm uses its Age of Worms action but can target only a single creature.

Dispersion (Costs 2 Actions). The worm collapses into a swarm of vermin which then vanishes. At the start of the worm's next turn, it reappears in an unoccupied space of its choice within 60 feet of where it took this action.

Strike (Costs 2 Actions). The worm uses either its Executioner's Mace or Vile Ray action.

Divine Will (Costs 3 Actions). The worm uses its Divine Will action.

THE MYTHIC WORM THAT WALKS

Huge mythic undead (lesser deity), chaotic evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 2,495 (16d12 + 1,449)

Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
34 (+12)	14 (+2)	29 (+9)	12 (+1)	32 (+11)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +21, Dex +11, Con +18, Int +10, Wis +20, Cha +14

Skills History +10, Intimidation +14, Perception +17, Religion +19

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, restrained

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 300 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages all, but can only be understood by creatures infected with a disease

Challenge Mythic 5

TRAITS

Aura of Decay. The worm exudes a magical aura of decay in 1-mile-radius sphere. Creatures other than the worm in the affected area suffer the following penalties.

- If an affected creature would be immune to a type of damage, it instead has resistance.
- When an affected creature would regain hit points, it instead regains half as many hit points.
- If an affected creature would be immune to disease, it instead is not immune and has Epic advantage on saving throws against diseases and effects that inflict diseases.

Divine Resistance (3/Day). When the worm is affected by an enemy creature or is hit with an attack, it can choose to be immune to all damage and harmful effects caused by the effect or attack for its duration (if any).

Healing Antipathy. When the worm is subjected to an effect that would cause it to magically regain hit points, it instead regains no hit points and takes radiant damage equal to half the hit points the effect would cause a target to regain (rounded down).

ACTIONS

Executioner's Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 77 (10d12 + 12) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, the worm can unleash a torrent of necrotic energy in a 15-foot-radius sphere centered on the target. Each enemy creature in the affected area takes necrotic damage equal to the bludgeoning damage dealt by the attack.

Vile Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 88 (14d10 + 11) poison damage.

Writhe unto Ruin (Recharge 5–6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* The worm engulfs the target within a swarm of writhing worms that gnaw and feast with a relentless hunger. The swarm is a magical object with an AC of 15 and 120 hit points. While it is engulfed in this manner, a creature's speed is 0, it has total cover from everything outside the swarm and vice versa, and it cannot be moved or magically teleported.

Additionally, at the start of each of its turns the target must attempt a DC 28 Dexterity saving throw, taking 140 (40d6) piercing damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Age of Worms. The worm attempts to inflict a horrific disease on up to three creatures it can see within 120 feet of it. Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 28 Constitution saving throw or become

infested with a parasitic disease consisting of writhing green worms. A creature so infested experiences the following symptoms for as long as it remains afflicted by the disease.

- The worm can choose to deal 22 (4d10) poison damage to the target at the start of each of the target's turns. This damage increases by 22 (4d10) each time a creature so afflicted fails a subsequent saving throw against this action, to a maximum of 220 (40d10).
- The target cannot hear anything but the writhing of the worms within its body.

This disease is divine in nature and can only be removed if a creature attempting to remove the disease succeeds on a DC 28 Wisdom (Medicine) check. On a failure, any resources used to attempt to remove the disease are wasted.

Divine Will. The worm exerts its will as a deity of death, causing one of the following effects.

- The worm ends a spell or magical effect of 9th level or lower within 300 feet of it.
- The worm casts a warlock spell of 7th level or lower with a casting time of an action or bonus action. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks).
- The worm becomes immune to a damage type of its choice until the end of its next turn.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the worm takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. The worm can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Infestation. The worm overwhelms a creature it can see within 120 feet of it with an onslaught of worms. The target must succeed on DC 28 Constitution saving throw or become infested as though it had failed its saving throw against the worm's Age of Worms action. If the target fails the saving throw, it must immediately repeat the saving throw or suffer the effect again. This repetition continues to occur until a creature either fails five consecutive saving throws or succeeds on one.

Pillar of Ruin. The worm conjures a pillar of necrotic power in a 30-foot-radius cylinder that is infinitely high, centered on a point it can see within 300 feet of it, which lasts for 1 hour or until the worm uses this action again. Creatures, objects, and structures in the affected area cannot regain hit points, and if reduced to 0 hit points while in the affected area, they crumble to dust.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The worm can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The worm regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Age of Worms. The worm uses its Age of Worms action but can target only a single creature.

Dispersion (Costs 2 Actions). The worm collapses into a swarm of vermin which then vanishes. At the start of the worm's next turn it reappears in an unoccupied space of its choice within 60 feet of where it took this action.

Strike (Costs 2 Actions). The worm uses either its Executioner's Mace or Vile Ray action.

Divine Will (Costs 3 Actions). The worm uses its Divine Will action.

INFESTED TEMPLATE

A creature with the infested template applied to it has been transformed into a particularly vile undead being. Its zombified flesh is completely saturated with green worms lurking just beneath the surface, ready to spring forth and assault the living. Only flesh-and-blood creatures can become infested; all others lack the necessary anatomy and physiology to receive the wormgod's gifts. These unfortunate souls are particularly grotesque, even for undead. They exist only to serve the Worm that Walks and bring about an end to all mortal life. An infested creature gains the following traits, actions, and benefits.

Type. The creature's type changes to undead.

Ability Scores. The creature's Strength and Constitution scores increase by 4, to a maximum of 30, while its Intelligence score decreases by 4, to a minimum of 3.

Saving Throws. The creature gains proficiency in Wisdom saving throws. If it is already proficient in Wisdom saving throws, it instead gains proficiency in a saving throw of the worm's choice.

Damage Resistances. The creature is immune to poison damage.

Condition Immunities. The creature is immune to the exhaustion and poisoned conditions.

Challenge Rating. The creature's challenge rating increases by 2, and its proficiency bonus adjusts accordingly.

Traits. The creature gains the following traits:

Eyes of the Worm. The Worm that Walks can see and perceive anything the creature sees or perceives with its senses.

Healing Antipathy. When the worm is subjected to an effect that would cause it to magically regain hit points, it instead regains no hit points and takes radiant damage equal to half the hit points the effect would cause a target to regain (rounded down).

Regeneration. The creature regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point and isn't in sunlight. If the creature takes radiant damage, this trait is suppressed until the end of its next turn. The creature is destroyed only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and this trait is suppressed.

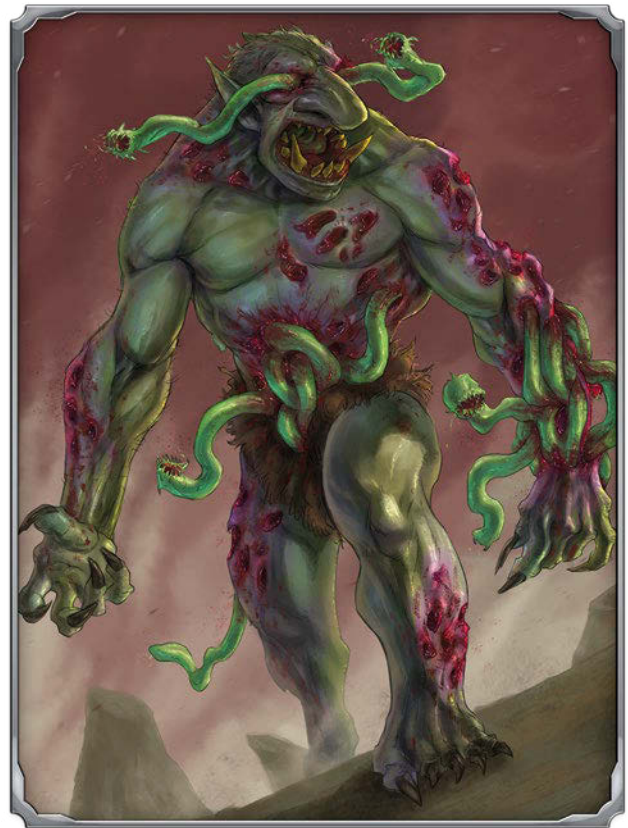
Actions. The creature gains the following actions. If the creature has a Multiattack action, it can forgo using an action it can take with that Multiattack action to instead use one of the following actions:

Infest. The creature attempts to inflict a horrific disease on a creature it can see within 60 feet of it. The target must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC equals 8 + proficiency bonus + Constitution modifier) or become infested with a

parasitic disease consisting of writhing green worms. A creature so infested experiences the following symptoms for as long as it remains afflicted by the disease.

- The creature can choose to deal 7 (2d6) poison damage to the target at the start of each of the target's turns. This damage increases by 7 (2d6) each time a creature so afflicted fails a subsequent saving throw against this action, to a maximum of 35 (10d6).
- The target cannot hear anything but the writhing of the worms within its body.

Rot Breath (Recharge 5–6). The creature exhales a cloud of rot in a 30-foot cone. Each living creature in the affected area must attempt a Constitution saving throw (DC equals 8 + proficiency bonus + Constitution modifier), taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success. Additionally, on a failed save a creature cannot benefit from magical healing for 1 minute.



REWARDS

Defeating the Worm that Walks means one has either saved the world or subdued a catastrophic evil before it could become a dire threat. In either case, such a heroic act is worthy of story and song. However, the greatest gratitude comes from the pantheon of deities who manage the death portfolio. In their eyes the worm has always been a petulant challenger to their authority that deserved to be put in its place. In return for such a pleasing display, the gods of death personally appear before the mortals responsible and offer them a reward they would be wise not to

refuse. This boon takes the form of a type of “death insurance,” by which the gods of death will do all in their power to grant a willing mortal three opportunities to cheat death and twist the arm of fate. All that is required to reap these benefits is to request aid from the deathly gods immediately before one's death. In the space between eternal and mortal realms the gods will then spirit the mortal soul back to its body, restoring the creature to its hit point maximum and repairing any damage its body has suffered. This effect can occur up to 1 hour after a benefitting creature's death, but no sooner than 1 minute after its death.



ORCUS

Demon Prince of Undeath

“And lo, I beheld in my divining mirror a pale throne: and His name that was sat upon it was Malice, and Oblivion followed with Him. Slouched and spent, His withered flesh stretched taut over demonic bone, the once magnificent frame now diminished by dark machinations across mortal eons. His great girth no more, now a machine of terrible and gruesome design sat in form, its snaking metal appendages coiling through flesh, bleeding light of impossible color. And then, His gaze pierced me, living eyes in a rotten, caprine skull.”

– Folio of Xyz: Meditations on the Hexadaemonicon

DESCRIPTION

Atop a throne of lich skulls sits the tremendous, cadaverous figure of Orcus, his limbs withered and his torso bearing a gangrenous wound. Where his abdomen should be is a necrotic furnace of iron, bone, and brass that hungers for the souls of the living. Wild and painful balefire light shines from it, with metal tendrils connecting to Orcus’s torso, spine, and head. His still-living right hand clutches the *Wand of Orcus*, a scepter of blackened iron topped with a human skull. His

head is a goat skull locked into a rictus grin and containing his two living eyes, which reveal no sign of diminishment. Metal tendrils have ripped off his lower jaw and coil about his face.

He seems relaxed and calm, slouching on a throne which is itself part of the machine. It is born aloft by a phalanx of humanoid skeletons and guarded by undead demons whose eyes glow with the same light as the machine. Before him is a host of dispassionate skeletons who feed mortals into the machine and retrieve their husks once their souls are ground down.

PROFILE

Personality: Misanthrope

Ideals: Orcus views life as a chaotic, maddening force on the world. In his eyes, everything would be so much simpler if all life were to drop dead. The realms would be free to exist in empty bliss, immaculate and quiet for all eternity. Even undeath, while an improvement on the plague of life, will inevitably be disposed of to ensure his vision. In the end, all that will remain will be Orcus, free to enjoy the perfect world he so painstakingly wrought.

Bonds: After one of his many defeats, Orcus’s spirit was shattered. Taking the form of a shadowy entity named Tenebrous, this echo eventually facilitated the demon prince’s return from oblivion. But there was problem. Tenebrous still lives, albeit in a pitiable state. Despite all his hatred, Orcus cannot bring himself to destroy the creature. Perhaps even demon princes can feel pity and gratitude, but knowing Orcus, there is likely a deeper truth at play.

Flaws: Orcus’s course is one of self-destruction. Even if he somehow manages to succeed and end all life, he will still be miserable because he, too, will live. The demon prince will then be faced with a difficult choice. Either

end his own existence or embrace the impossibility of perfection. Both outcomes are equally enraging, and pointing this logical paradox out to Orcus guarantees a swift death.

Legend: Like his demon brethren, Orcus crawled forth from the writhing chaos of the abyssal planes. However, unlike his fellows, who reveled in the chaos of life and all its foul pleasures, Orcus longed to once again experience the tranquility of nonexistence. This new mode of living was messy, crude, and maddening to the demon, who quickly set about murdering his fellows and raising their corpses as undead minions. Soon after, Orcus had claimed an entire abyssal plane, converting the once-vibrant realm into a necropolis. Seeing a universe afflicted with the same disease he had managed to purge from his home, Orcus knew what he had to do. So long as life remained in the universe, it would grow and fester, eventually contaminating every peaceful corner with its incessant nonsense. The path ahead would be a hard one. Life had many mighty champions, none greater than the many progenitor gods who saw fit to populate countless realms with ego-stroking reflections of themselves. They had to go. Every life, no matter how small, deserved death, and it would be by Orcus’s hand the universe would be purged.





ORCUS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

While any demon prince is a formidable force in your campaign, Orcus is exceptional. Only a handful of fiends have attempted such bold schemes, and none with the endless zeal of the demon prince of undeath. Naturally, one can expect such a campaign to feature lots of undead, demons, and undead demons. What's more, Orcus's plans are brilliant in conception and devious in execution. With such ambitious goals, the demon prince is a paragon of supervillainy. His methods are insidious, his forces horrific, and his power nigh unstoppable. Thankfully, nearly every living thing has a vested interest in foiling Orcus. Even his fellow demon princes may become involved should Orcus once again threaten to unmake life itself. Such campaigns make for interesting scenarios in which the forces of good, evil, law, chaos, and beyond must collaborate to undo the latest scheme Orcus has been building toward for centuries. With his newfound power of the soul furnace burning within his chest, Orcus is primed to once again menace the world, wielding newfound powers and a fresh scheme.

INTRODUCTION

The best way to introduce Orcus to your campaign is with a hefty application of undead. Since these creatures are commonplace in most fantasy worlds, it can be quite the adventure to trace the hoards of skeletons ravaging the countryside to a demon prince from the abyssal planes. Most schemes by Orcus get discovered thanks to the incompetence of mortals, such as the bumbling cultists who mistakenly believe the demon prince sees any value in their worship. However, discovering a piece of the plan is a far cry from understanding it. Orcus's brilliance and vast resources ensure an adventuring party must work extremely hard to even begin to comprehend the full horror of his plots, let alone stop them.

CONFLICT

Orcus is no stranger to defeat and has learned from every failure. His plans contain countless redundancies, contingencies, and backups. Once it becomes clear the characters are facing the demon prince of undeath, it is time to nail down exactly what his plan is. Knowing Orcus, it must be something over the top, diabolical, and fiendishly clever. In all cases the end goal is the death of a key figure, such as a deity or powerful entity who favors life. This assassination will be brilliantly executed and nigh impossible to stop. With a major obstacle out of the way, Orcus is free to move to the next stage of his plan. This typically involves ludicrous quantities of undead, general mayhem, and mighty necromancy magic. Orcus ideally wants to keep his foolish foes distracted from his primary goal, which is only revealed when things enter their darkest hour.

CONCLUSION

At this stage of the campaign, the characters should be racing against the clock to stop Orcus. Should they fail, catastrophe will reign on an epic scale, with countless lives lost in the process.

Every rest taken or mistake made should result in a horrific loss of life. How Orcus is accomplishing all this should be a herculean application of necromancy magic. He may be zombifying entire planes at once, converting suns into frozen orbs of deathly energy, or unleashing an apocalyptic virus that consumes the living. Whatever the endgame, make it dramatic, horrific, and devious. The players should feel like they have been outwitted but still possess a glimmer of hope to put a stop to the demon prince once and for all.

CHALLENGES

Orcus can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with him.

EXPLORATION

Possessing an entire plane of existence filled with undead minions, Orcus presents many exciting exploration challenges to those investigating his domain. This dread realm is inhospitable to all life, full of strange necromantic machinery, wandering hoards of undead, and no signs of intelligence beyond Orcus's foul will. Here Orcus toils day and night, weaving deathly magic with ancient artifice, twisting the very boundaries of death itself into new, horrific shapes. The endless stream of horrors that crawl forth from this foul realm are unique, disturbing, and deadly, ensuring any would-be explorers must tread carefully lest they meet an end by some nameless undead abomination.

Regional Effects

The region containing Orcus's lair is warped by his necromantic power, which has created the following effects within the entire abyssal plane upon which it resides.

- Speech spoken by living creatures other than Orcus is always heard as a whisper, and undead creatures can never make a sound unless Orcus allows it.
- Food and drink instantly spoil and turn to ash when a living creature attempts to eat or drink them.
- Orcus can concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to have his voice be heard across the entire plane, regardless of boundary or magical barrier.

If Orcus is destroyed on his home plane, the entire realm collapses into oblivion after 24 hours.

Orcus's Lair

Deep within the acrid wastes of his abyssal plane, Orcus makes his lair amid the silent remains of ancient titans he slew long ago. Here Orcus gathers countless resources to conduct his experiments, merging flesh, sinew, bone, and spirit into abominable shapes from the darkest nightmares. Only the most powerful of the demon prince's servants are allowed to roam here, ceaselessly patrolling between the gigantic skeletons in search of any force that would disturb their master. The entire lair is a testament to Orcus's madness, full of contradictions, pointless partitions, and other foul phenomena which only a truly deranged mind

could conceive. Those who have witnessed this waking nightmare and lived are forever scarred, their very souls maimed by the absolute desecration of life found at every turn. The most disturbing of these experiments are the undead horrors known as “lost and damned.” The necrotic remains of creatures whose souls have been torn from their bodies, these creatures are but profane echoes of their once-living forms.

LOST AND DAMNED TEMPLATE

You can create a lost and damned monster by taking the statistics of any flesh-and-blood creature and making the following changes.

Type. The creature’s type changes to undead.

Alignment. The creature’s alignment becomes chaotic evil.

Ability Scores. The creature’s Constitution increases by 4, and its Wisdom decreases by 4 (minimum of 1).

Damage Resistances. The creature has resistance to cold damage.

Damage Immunities. The creature has immunity to necrotic and poison damage.

Condition Immunities. The creature is immune to the poisoned, stunned, and unconscious conditions.

Challenge Rating. The creature’s challenge rating increases by 2.

Traits. The creature gains the following traits.

Servant of Orcus. The creature cannot be commanded, compelled, or magically manipulated into acting in a manner that would go against Orcus’s interests.

Soulblighted. The creature’s soul has been removed, endowing it with an undying will. When the creature is reduced to 0 hit points or takes damage while at 0 hit points, it does not die if it succeeds on a Constitution saving throw with a DC equal to half the damage taken (rounded down).

Unnatural Hunger. The creature hungers for the souls of the living in a desperate attempt to replace the one it has lost. When the lost and damned creature slays a flesh-and-blood creature, it consumes the target’s soul. The creature whose soul was consumed cannot return to life until the lost and damned creature is slain.

Proficiency. The creature’s proficiency bonus increases to match its adjusted challenge rating.

Actions. The creature gains the following action.

Feast. *Melee Weapon Attack:* Strength modifier + proficiency bonus to hit, reach 5 ft., one incapacitated creature. *Hit:* The target’s hit point maximum is halved for 1 hour, and the lost and damned creature gains a number of hit points equal to the target’s Constitution score.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Orcus can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Orcus is using his mythic statistics, he can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Orcus can’t use the same effect twice in a row.

- Orcus commands an undead creature he is aware of in the lair to sacrifice itself for him. The creature dies instantly



and explodes in a blast of necromantic energy in a 30-foot radius. Each living creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 21 Constitution saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

- Orcus chooses a living creature he is aware of within the lair and examines its life energy. Orcus learns the target’s exact location and cannot have disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks against the target until the next initiative count of 20.
- Orcus magically teleports an undead creature he is aware of within the lair to an unoccupied space within 30 feet of him.

Exploration Encounters

With a plane full of undead to explore, a sinister cult of death-obsessed misanthropes, and tons of unique monsters in his employ, Orcus creates many significant challenges to those seeking to explore his domain.

Lament for the Lost. A mighty paladin lost her lover, who now roams the abyssal planes as a lost and damned creature, to Orcus’s depraved necromancy. The paladin requests the aid of mighty heroes to help track down the missing partner and help put her to rest via an honorable death. Doing so will not be easy, as in life the partner was a mighty sorceress (level 18 divine soul sorcerer high elf) who has proven to be a great asset to Orcus. It is likely the demon won’t take kindly to her destruction.

Demon Delivery. As punishment for their crimes, a gang of demons is being sent to Orcus's domain by the celestials who imprisoned them. What deal the celestials brokered with Orcus none can say, but mortal allies are called upon to escort the demons down the river Styx and to their final judgement. As a reward, a *holy avenger* is offered should the heroes succeed at their task.

The Titans Rise. Orcus has mastered a necromantic spell capable of raising the titanic remains of those who fell on his home plane. All that is required is a rare material component known as voidstone, a material of pure entropy that is extremely difficult to handle, let alone obtain. The implications of the demon prince of undeath commanding the skeleton of a primordial god are dire, and the characters are requested to track down some voidstone so that Orcus's agents may be trapped and slain.

SOCIAL

From his many failures of his countless schemes, Orcus has learned to place little value in the pedantic prattling of the living. Even his fellow demons can't expect anything more than death when confronting Orcus, despite honorable intentions. Orcus will only interact socially as a last resort. The effort required to communicate with the living is exhausting and irritating for the demon prince, so any conversation partners would be wise to keep things short and to the point. Even the demon's minions aren't much for talking. Orcus typically strips them of any intelligence, leaving them broken shells that reflect his will. When forced to use intelligent intermediaries, Orcus prefers necromancers and cult worshipers, who can at least be counted on to not question any commands given by the demon, no matter how dangerous.

Other demon princes and princesses hate Orcus with a passion, as do most demons in general. Only those with an aptitude for self-destruction see any value in Orcus's cause. None of these rivalries comes close to the legendary feud between the demon prince of undeath and the demon prince of the arcane. Both fiends are terrifically powerful, often at odds regarding their plots and schemes. However, Orcus has failed to best his rival even once, leaving the twin-headed demon prince one of Orcus's greatest foes.

Social Encounters

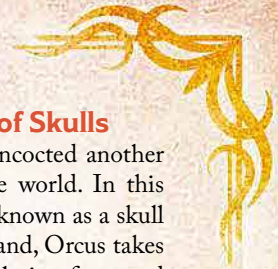
Socially interacting directly with Orcus almost always results in death, often followed by resurrection as mindless undead and eventual destruction as an expendable soldier in the demon's war on the living. In the rare instance it does not or when one interacts with Orcus through an intermediary, one may experience a variety of social encounters.

Ancient Rivalry. The demon prince of the arcane summons the characters to his domain with a simple, if ridiculous, demand: personally deliver a package to Orcus under the ancient laws of primordial demon-kind, which ensure that for 24 hours, Orcus cannot harm them. The heroes must be swift, however, as while Orcus must honor the ancient, arcane codes, he will surely do everything in his power to delay visitors while not harming them.

Tenebrous Speaks. The shadowy echo of Orcus's former life as Tenebrous calls out across the planes, begging for its release from a shadowy prison on a plane run by inevitables.¹ Tenebrous offers

¹ See 2CGaming's *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 2* for more information on inevitables.





secret information on Orcus in return for its release, though convincing the law-obsessed constructs running the prison to part with the entity will be difficult in the extreme.

COMBAT

Orcus is no stranger to battle, though he does not necessarily enjoy it. In the past, Orcus relished the opportunity to take the fight to the living, but after numerous defeats and setbacks the demon prince has lost his lust for firsthand slaughter. In combat, Orcus is seated upon his Lich Throne, commanding hordes of weak undead and mighty champions to take the brunt of the fighting. With his characteristic nihilism, Orcus seeks to end any confrontation as quickly as possible, pursuing neither gratification nor vindication from battle. The only acceptable outcome is utter annihilation of the demon's enemies so that the universe may move one step closer to the sweet tranquility of death.

Combat Encounter Example: Plague of Skulls

Ever the schemer and innovator, Orcus has concocted another loathsome undead horror to unleash upon the world. In this instance, the foul being is a horrifying creation known as a skull tyrant. Eager to see the fruits of his labor firsthand, Orcus takes the rare opportunity to not strike with overwhelming force and unleash his creation upon mighty heroes. Content to observe from a safe distance, Orcus takes the time to study every action and stratagem carefully so that he may better perfect his creation. He may even occasionally intervene to test specific variables or factors in combat, curious to observe just how well his design serves his every whim.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Leader

Orcus is a shrewd and precise combatant. The demon prince has killed countless creatures of all shapes, sizes, species, and abilities,

SKULL TYRANT

Large undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 241 (21d10 + 126)

Speed 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	26 (+8)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +10, Dex +8, Con +12, Cha +11

Skills Insight +14, Perception +14, Religion +9

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

Senses truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 24

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 19 (22,000 XP)

TRAITS

Aura of Night. When the tyrant starts its turn, each creature of the tyrant's choice within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or become permanently cursed. While cursed in this manner, a creature's senses are reduced to 5 feet and it is blind beyond that radius.

Lord of Skulls. At the start of each of its turns, the tyrant conjures four flying skulls, which are objects (AC 15, 10 hit points) which orbit the tyrant. When the tyrant takes damage other than poison or psychic damage, it can choose to instead have one of its skulls take that damage instead. The tyrant can have up to eight skulls orbiting it in such a manner.

Tripartite Mind. The tyrant has three heads and can take three turns on each round of combat. The tyrant takes its second turn at its initiative count minus 5 and its third turn at its initiative count minus 10.

Additionally, the tyrant has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws and ability checks.

ACTIONS

Skullstorm (Recharge 5–6). The tyrant orders any flying skulls orbiting it to strike at creatures within a 60-foot radius centered on the tyrant. Each creature of its choice in the affected area must attempt a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage for each flying skull orbiting the tyrant on a failure, or half as much on a success. Once this effect has occurred, any skulls orbiting the tyrant are destroyed.

Utter Blasphemy. Each of the tyrant's heads knows a dark blasphemy and may utter it to devastating effect. When the tyrant chooses to utter a blasphemy, it chooses one blasphemy from the following options.

- **Blasphemy of Broken Souls.** The tyrant utters a blasphemy that damages the very soul of a being. A creature of the tyrant's choice within 120 feet of it that can hear it must attempt a DC 22 Constitution saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) necrotic damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.
- **Blasphemy of Cursed Life.** The tyrant selects one living creature it is aware of within 120 feet and forces that creature to attempt a DC 22 Charisma saving throw, becoming overwhelmed with harmful impulses on a failure. A creature so overwhelmed must spend its action and movement making every attempt to end its life in the most expedient way possible. If no obvious hazard or option is available, the creature makes an attack with the most dangerous weapon available against itself that automatically hits and scores a critical hit. A creature may repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
- **Blasphemy of Dying Magic.** The tyrant ends an ongoing magical effect it can see of 7th level or lower. When this occurs, the spell effect explodes in a 15-foot-radius blast. Creatures in the affected area take 28 (8d6) fire damage.



so he likely knows the best way to lay an enemy low. As a master necromancer, Orcus is never without a massive retinue of undead minions. Even in the rare instance he is caught unprepared, the Army of the Dead action can swiftly correct that error. As he is a leader, keep Orcus in the back line away from angry barbarians and vicious paladins. The demon prince knows full well he can simply wear down any foe given enough time, whether by endless waves of undead, his fearsome Tenebrous Shroud, or thanks to the safety of the Lich Throne. Orcus has lived, died, and lived again over the course millennia, so he gladly takes his time in order to guarantee victory. In the rare instance Orcus feels compelled to take a direct hand, Clutch and Wand are both extremely powerful action options, easily turning a bad situation to worse. Keep The Last Word in reserve for when Orcus needs to kill a character on demand. It's his biggest hit, but once expended, there is no getting it back. A well-resourced and healthy party will handle its power far better than a ragged and bloody one.

When commanding undead minions, be sure to throw up a wall of bodies between Orcus and the characters. Deathswarms make for ideal shields, as their great size makes them extremely challenging to ignore. More powerful undead such as a death

knight are good for challenging powerful opponents, particularly if Orcus is looking to go on the offense. Be sure to use Orcus's Fell Command legendary action option effectively, combining it with powerful undead when possible. Consider the merits of adding other undead to Orcus's entourage and how they may synergize with this particular action.

Easier Tactics – Orcus should not begin battle with any undead minions, and the terrain should favor the characters closing the gap on the demon prince quickly. Note that because of Tenebrous Shroud, even an “easy” Orcus can quickly kill an unprepared party. While some classes are adept at dealing with death saving throws, most are not. The best defense for the characters is to keep their distance from Orcus unless melee is required, so provide a battlefield where this is easily accomplished. Orcus should remain nearly stationary during the fight, only moving to scoot out of harmful areas.

Harder Tactics – Grant Orcus a formidable army of undead before combat begins. Avoid legendary creatures, as running multiple creatures with those action options can prove disastrous. Instead, use the template for lost and damned creatures to





develop potent undead allies for Orcus that work well with his abilities. Big, powerful bodies that cannot be ignored are ideal, such as giants or young dragons. Rather than staying in the back, Orcus should move deliberately toward vulnerable foes to deliver punishing Wand attacks while using Clutch to keep the more fearsome characters at bay. Strategically maneuver Orcus to maximize the coverage of Tenebrous Shroud, and you are sure to kill at least a few characters through proximity to the demon prince.

Mythic Orcus

An Orcus of mythic proportions wields godlike power, commands legions of undead, and can more than stand up for himself when forced into direct confrontation. Besides the across-the-board improvements most mythic creatures gain, Orcus receives a pair of significant mythic actions that dramatically change how he plays. The first is Harrowing Power, which can allow Orcus to deal catastrophic damage to any good-aligned characters foolish enough to stand in his presence. Couple this with dealing as much necrotic damage as possible to get the most mileage from this action. Alternatively, you can summon a fearsome Epic minion known as a dreadguard via the Honor Guard action. These are Orcus's personal attendants. Not only are they deadly in their own right, they can absorb damage Orcus would ordinarily take, allowing the battle to drag on for even longer. Try to have at least one dreadguard in play at all times, surrounded by a legion of undead.

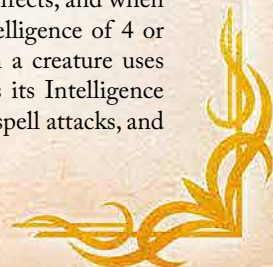
MYTHIC EFFECTS

As a mythic creature, Orcus causes the following effects.

Demon Prince. Orcus is a demon prince, granting him the following benefits.

- Orcus cannot be magically summoned or called from his home plane unless he allows it or unless the creatures responsible invoke Orcus's true name when doing so.
- Orcus can spend 1 hour of strenuous activity to cast any necromancy spell or Epic spell without the need for any material components. When Orcus casts a non-Epic spell that is not a cantrip in this manner, it is always cast as a 9th-level spell. When Orcus casts an Epic spell in this manner, it is always cast at tier 3.
- When Orcus creates an undead creature from the remains of a living creature, he learns everything that creature knew in life.

Deathly Supremacy. Orcus tolerates no defiance or independent will among his "subjects." Undead creatures cannot be immune to the charmed condition against Orcus or his effects, and when Orcus charms an undead creature with an Intelligence of 4 or higher, its Intelligence is reduced to 3. If such a creature uses Intelligence as its spellcasting ability, it retains its Intelligence score for the purposes of casting spells, making spell attacks, and calculating spell save DCs.



ORCUS, DEMON PRINCE OF UNDEATH

Huge fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 792 (48d12 + 480)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	8 (-1)	30 (+10)	24 (+7)	24 (+7)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Con +18, Int +15, Cha +18

Skills Deception +18, Insight +15, Perception +15, Religion +23

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal

Challenge 28 (120,000 XP)

TRAITS

Lich Throne. Orcus is integrated into a foul necromantic machine known as the Lich Throne. He cannot be pushed, pulled, moved, or magically teleported unless he allows it.

Additionally, when a living creature attempts to move or magically teleport to a space within 15 feet of Orcus, it must attempt a DC 26 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the movement is prevented, and the creature is shunted to the nearest unoccupied space (when applicable) outside the affected area. Once a creature has been affected in this manner, it cannot enter a space within 15 feet of Orcus until the start of its next turn.

Mythic Resistance. When Orcus fails a saving throw, he can spend one of his unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Tenebrous Shroud. Orcus emits a vortex of soul-draining energy in a 30-foot radius. At the start of each of Orcus's turns, each living creature of his choice in the area must succeed on a DC 14 death saving throw (as though they were at 0 hit points). If a creature fails three total death saving throws while in the affected area within 24 hours, it is slain instantly as its soul is consumed, and it cannot be returned to life until Orcus is slain.

Wand of Orcus. Orcus is never without his powerful relic, the *Wand of Orcus*. While Orcus holds the wand, undead creatures within 300 feet of him are automatically charmed by him.

Additionally, Orcus cannot be disarmed of the wand unless he allows it, and any who attempt to disarm him of the wand must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or be wracked with agonizing pain, falling prone and becoming incapacitated until the start of its next turn.

ACTIONS

Clutch. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft., one living target. *Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 26 Strength saving throw or be restrained (escape DC 26) by necrotic energies. While restrained in this manner, when a creature

attempts an attack roll or saving throw, it rolls 1d8 and subtracts the amount rolled from the result of its attack or saving throw. This effect ends if Orcus becomes incapacitated, uses this attack against another target, or is ever farther than 120 feet from the target.

Wand. *Melee Spell Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: The target is cursed with necromantic energies. While cursed in this manner a creature is vulnerable to necrotic damage and cannot have resistance or immunity to necrotic damage. At the end of each of its turns, the target can attempt a DC 26 Charisma saving throw, ending the curse on a success.

Army of the Dead (Recharge 5–6). Orcus raises up undead in unoccupied spaces of his choice within 300 feet of him. The undead act immediately after Orcus's initiative count, use his proficiency bonus (+8) instead of their own, follow his commands without question (no action required), and last until he finishes a short or long rest. When Orcus creates undead in this manner, he can choose one of the following options. Orcus cannot command more than 50 Hit Dice worth of undead created in this manner at one time, and any excess he would create fail to appear.

- 1 death knight (19 HD)
- 1 deathswarm (21 HD)
- 3 ghosts (10 HD each)
- 10 ghouls (5 HD each)
- 3 wraiths (9 HD each)

Marshall Undead. Orcus calls upon friendly undead creatures of his choice within 120 feet of him, filling them with dread purpose. Each affected creature gains 50 temporary hit points which last for 1 hour. While a creature has temporary hit points from this effect, its attacks deal an additional 9 (2d8) necrotic damage on a successful hit.

The Last Word (Recharge on a Long Rest). Orcus speaks a terrible, destructive word of primordial power at a creature he can see within 300 feet of him. The target takes necrotic damage equal to its hit point maximum.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Orcus can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Orcus regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Fell Command. An undead creature of Orcus's choice that he can see within 120 feet of him immediately takes an action.

Clutch (Costs 2 Actions). Orcus uses his Clutch action.

Wand (Costs 2 Actions). Orcus uses his Wand action.

Army of the Dead (Costs 3 Actions). Orcus uses or recharges his Army of the Dead action.

Wither (Costs 3 Actions). Orcus ends a non-Epic spell or magical effect within 60 feet of him.

MYTHIC ORCUS, DEMON PRINCE OF UNDEATH**Huge mythic fiend (demon), chaotic evil****Armor Class** 24 (natural armor)**Hit Points** 2,293 (139d12 + 1,390)**Speed** 20 ft., fly 20 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	8 (-1)	30 (+10)	26 (+8)	24 (+7)	32 (+11)

Saving Throws Con +20, Int +18, Cha +21**Skills** Deception +21, Insight +17, Perception +17, Religion +28**Damage Resistances** cold, fire, lightning**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison, vile;² bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned**Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 25**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Infernal**Challenge** Mythic 6**TRAITS**

Lich Throne. Orcus is integrated into a foul necromantic machine known as the Lich Throne. He cannot be pushed, pulled, moved, or magically teleported unless he allows it.

Additionally, when a living creature attempts to move or magically teleport to a space within 15 feet of Orcus, it must attempt a DC 29 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the movement is prevented and the creature is shunted to the nearest unoccupied space (when applicable) outside the affected area. Once a creature has been affected in this manner, it cannot enter a space within 15 feet of Orcus until the start of its next turn.

Mythic Resistance. When Orcus fails a saving throw, he can spend one of his unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Tenebrous Shroud. Orcus emits a vortex of soul-draining energy in a 60-foot radius. At the start of each of Orcus's turns, each living creature of his choice in the area must succeed on a DC 18 death saving throw (as though they were at 0 hit points). If a creature fails three total death saving throws while in the affected area within 24 hours, it is slain instantly as its soul is consumed, and it cannot be returned to life until Orcus is slain.

Wand of Orcus. Orcus is never without his powerful relic, the *Wand of Orcus*. While Orcus holds the wand, undead creatures within 300 feet of him are automatically charmed.

Additionally, Orcus cannot be disarmed of the wand unless he allows it, and any who attempt to disarm him of the wand must succeed on a DC 29 Wisdom saving throw or be wracked with agonizing pain, falling prone and becoming incapacitated until the start of its next turn.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Orcus takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. Orcus can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Harrowing Power. Until the next initiative count of 20, when Orcus would deal necrotic damage, he can choose to instead deal vile damage.

Honor Guard. Orcus creates a dreadguard (as detailed in the Allies section) in an unoccupied space he can see within 120 feet of him. The dreadguard acts immediately and follows Orcus's commands without question (no action required). The dreadguard lasts until it is slain or until Orcus uses this option again.

ACTIONS

Clutch. *Melee or Ranged Spell Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 120 ft., one living target. *Hit:* 34 (4d12 + 8) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 29 Strength saving throw or be restrained (escape DC 29) by necrotic energies. While restrained in this manner, when a creature attempts an attack roll or saving throw, it rolls 1d8 and subtracts the amount rolled from the result of its attack or saving throw. This effect ends if Orcus becomes incapacitated, uses this attack against another target, or is ever farther than 120 feet from the target.

Wand. *Melee Spell Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.

Hit: The target is cursed with necromantic energies. While cursed in this manner a creature cannot have resistance or immunity to necrotic or vile damage, and when it would regain hit points, it instead regains half as many hit points. At the end of each of its turns, the target can attempt a DC 29 Charisma saving throw, ending the curse on a success.

Army of the Dead (Recharge 5–6). Orcus raises up undead in unoccupied spaces of his choice within 300 feet of him. The undead act immediately after Orcus's initiative count, use his proficiency bonus (+10) instead of their own, follow his commands without question (no action required), and last until he finishes a short or long rest. When Orcus creates undead in this manner, he can choose one of the following options. Orcus cannot command more than 250 Hit Dice worth of undead created in this manner at one time, and any excess he would create fail to appear.

- 2 death knights (19 HD each)
- 3 deathswarms (21 HD each)
- 10 ghosts (10 HD each)
- 30 ghouls (5 HD each)
- 10 wraiths (9 HD each)

Marshall Undead. Orcus calls upon friendly undead creatures of his choice within 120 feet of him, filling them with dread purpose. Each affected creature gains 100 temporary hit points which last for 1 hour. While a creature has temporary hit points from this effect, and its attacks deal an additional 17 (5d6) necrotic damage on a successful hit.

The Last Word (Recharge on a Long Rest). Orcus speaks a terrible, destructive word of primordial power at a creature he can see within 300 feet of him. The target takes necrotic damage equal to its hit point maximum. This is a deific effect.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Orcus can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Orcus regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Fell Command. An undead creature of Orcus's choice that he can see within 120 feet of him immediately takes an action.

Clutch (Costs 2 Actions). Orcus uses his Clutch action.

Wand (Costs 2 Actions). Orcus uses his Wand action.

Army of the Dead (Costs 3 Actions). Orcus uses or recharges his Army of the Dead action.

Wither (Costs 3 Actions). Orcus ends a spell or magical effect within 60 feet of him.

² Vile damage is an Epic damage type explained in 2CGaming's *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

RESOURCES

Orcus has been attempting to extinguish all life in the multiverse for longer than most mortal races have existed. His many attempts have both exhausted and replenished the vast resources required to even attempt such a horrific thing, leaving the Orcus of today a bitter but resourceful adversary. Orcus's knowledge of necromancy is absolute. No creature can claim to understand as much about the magic of death as the demon prince. Even deities of death must concede the demon's superiority in this regard. With this expansive knowledge of such magic comes vast quantities of undead servants. Orcus has learned that the motivations of other intelligent creatures, even undead, are not to be trusted. Under his command are near-limitless legions of lesser undead, with many more powerful specimens reduced to subservient shells devoid of any will or ambition. This loathsome arrangement ensures Orcus is hated by nearly all other beings. None serve the demon prince of undeath willingly, even the dead.

ALLIES

No creature truly thinks of Orcus as an ally. In the demon prince's eyes, other creatures fall neatly into one of three categories: slain and subjugated, temporarily useful, and dire foe. This viewpoint is

reinforced by Orcus's all-consuming and irrational hatred for life. Through foul experimentation Orcus has fashioned a fearsome variety of undead minions, ideal for bringing total annihilation to the living. Among his most horrific servants are the lost and damned, whose recent appearance and loathsome power have brought Orcus's schemes back with a vengeance. Other notable minions include formidable dreadguards and countless swarms of lesser undead swarming over the living like a necrotic tide. These deathswarms are composed of hundreds of minor undead, unified in their purpose of tearing the living limb from limb.

REWARDS

Defeating Orcus claims a tremendous victory for all living beings. While Orcus has been felled before and inevitably returned, in the wake of his defeat lie untold riches, arcane knowledge, and deadly artifacts of cosmic significance. The demon prince of undeath cares only for tools that suited his plans for universal extinction, leaving many fearsome weapons and deadly magic to be collected from the remains of his forces. Orcus himself carries little treasure, bearing only his legendary *Wand of Orcus* and the arcane machinery which now holds his wretched form together. Any who dare claim the *Wand of Orcus* from his shattered husk are either incredibly daring or pathetic fools, for such an item is evil as it is powerful, capable of turning even the most noble soul toward damnation.

DREADGUARD

Large Epic undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 24 (magic plate, magic shield)

Hit Points 637 (51d10 + 357)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	10 (+0)	24 (+7)	8 (−1)	23 (+6)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +18, Con +16, Wis +15, Cha +14

Skills Athletics +27, Perception +15

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge Epic 1

TRAITS

Deathsworn. The dreadguard is magically bound to the creature that created it. If the dreadguard is within 300 feet of its creator, half of any damage the creator takes (rounded up) is transferred to the dreadguard.

Leadership. As a bonus action on each of its turns, the dreadguard may issue a leadership command to other undead friendly to it that can hear it, choosing from the following options. Each effect lasts until the start of the dreadguard's next turn.

- **Coordinated Strikes:** The undead gain a +5 bonus to attack and damage rolls with weapon attacks.
- **Defensive Formation:** The undead gain a +5 bonus to their armor class, and creatures have Epic disadvantage on attack rolls against them.
- **Spell Defense:** The undead gain a +5 bonus to their saving throws against spells and other magical effects, and they take half damage from spells.

Magical Equipment. The dreadguard's armor and weapons are magical. It has a +2 bonus to its AC from its shield and plate armor (included in its statistics).

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dreadguard makes three attacks with either its Doom Flail or Iron Shot. The dreadguard can forgo making one of these attacks to instead make a Shield Slam attack.

Doom Flail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., each creature of the dreadguard's choice within reach. *Hit:* 15 (1d12 + 9) slashing damage plus 26 (4d12) necrotic damage.

Iron Shot. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 31 (4d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

Shield Slam. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (1d6 + 9) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 26 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of its next turn.

DEATHSWARM

Gargantuan swarm of Medium undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (armor scraps)

Hit Points 304 (21d20 + 84)

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	14 (+2)	19 (+4)	6 (-2)	8 (-1)	5 (-3)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Con +8

Skills Perception +3

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

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

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

Languages Abyssal, Common

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

TRAITS

Immense. The swarm is massive in size, consisting of nearly one hundred skeletons and zombies bound together by necrotic energy. The swarm cannot be pushed, pulled, or magically teleported, and on the battlefield typically occupies a 40-foot-by-40-foot space.

Swarm. The swarm can occupy another creature's space and vice versa, and the swarm can move through any opening large enough for a Small humanoid to fit through. The swarm can't regain hit points or gain temporary hit points. The swarm's area is difficult terrain for enemy creatures.

ACTIONS

Rip and Tear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 0 ft., any number of creatures in the swarm's space. *Hit:* 28 (4d10 + 6) slashing damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 18).

Lamentations of the Damned (Recharge 5–6). The swarm emits a cacophony of wailing that can be heard up to 500 feet away. Each living creature within 60 feet of the swarm that can hear it must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.



Epic Versus Non-Epic Wand of Orcus

The *Wand of Orcus* detailed in this section was created using the Epic Legacy system, as the item's significance requires it be one of the most powerful objects in existence using that system: a relic. However, if you are not using Epic Legacy and decide to run Orcus, the wand detailed in this chapter is not appropriate for your game. It is recommended you utilize the wand as detailed in the 5th Edition core rules in its place. That artifact far better serves the purpose of an interesting story-based reward

for defeating the bloated demon prince of undeath in his non-mythic form.

Note that the statistics of Orcus, even in his non-mythic form, reference features described in the description of the wand. If you introduce the artifact wand from the 5th Edition core rules, you can explain the disparity between Orcus's powers and those granted by the wand by its particular affinity to Orcus. The wand only unlocks its full potential in the demon prince's hand.

Wand of Orcus

Wondrous item, relic

This fearsome magical rod is fashioned from the spine of a humanoid and capped with an archdemilich skull, whose eyes still glow with an arcane fire. From its mouth emit sinister whispers, speaking necromantic secrets in a language long forgotten. The *Wand of Orcus* is a horrific weapon with an Epic history. While clutched in its master's talons it has worked to fell gods, raise billions of undead servants, corrupt entire planes, and deliver death on an apocalyptic scale. As Orcus has transformed and evolved over the eons, so too has the wand. With Orcus at his zenith, the wand has taken on a frightening array of powers. As nefarious as its master and wholly sworn to the extinction of all life, the *Wand of Orcus* guarantees its master's continued supremacy in all matters of death and destruction.

Properties

While unattuned, the *Wand of Orcus* has the following properties.

- **Deathly Curse.** As an action you can make a melee spell attack with the wand against a creature within reach. On a successful hit the target is cursed with necromantic energies. While cursed in this manner a creature cannot have resistance or immunity to necrotic or vile damage, and when it would regain hit points, it instead regains half as many hit points. At the end of each of its turns, the target can attempt a DC 29 Charisma saving throw, ending the curse on a success.
- **Necromantic Shroud.** While you hold the wand, you are infused with necromantic power, granting you the following benefits:
 - You are immune to all damage from non-Epic undead, and you have resistance to damage from Epic undead.
 - When you deal damage of a type other than bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage, you can choose to change that damage type to necrotic or vile damage.
 - You radiate an aura of overwhelming evil in a 60-foot radius. Living creatures in the affected area instinctively know you to be an enemy of all life.
 - You have immunity to spells and magical effects from the Necromancy school.
- **Nihilus the Archdemilich.** The wand is a sentient, chaotic evil item thanks to the integration of the archdemilich Nihilus the Soulflayer. The wand has an Intelligence of 30, a Wisdom of 8, and a Charisma of 17. It has hearing and truesight out to a range of 120 feet. The wand communicates verbally with its wielder and can speak, read, and write Abyssal, Common, and Infernal. Additionally, Nihilus knows the answer to any question concerning the nature of the magical school of Necromancy or undead creatures.

Attunement

To become attuned to the *Wand of Orcus*, you must befriend the archdemilich Nihilus the Soulflayer. Wholly committed to the extinction of all life, this entity refuses to trust any creature that does not demonstrate a genocidal contempt for living beings. Earning Nihilus's trust typically involves acts of catastrophic evil that would make even the most nefarious fiend balk.

Three specific standards must be met to be considered worthy by Nihilus:

- A demonstration of supreme authority over undead, such as by raising and commanding an undead army or creating unique and powerful undead horrors.
- An act of vile depravity through killing a Deific creature, such as a deity or divine spawn.
- Complete and total disregard for one's own flesh in pursuit of the purity of an undead existence, such as by becoming an undead or allowing one's body to rot away to putrid ruin.

While attuned, the *Wand of Orcus* has the following properties, in addition to its unattuned properties.

Army of the Dead. You raise up undead in unoccupied spaces of your choice within 300 feet of you. The undead act immediately after your initiative count (when applicable), use your proficiency bonus instead of their own, follow your commands without question (no action required), and last until you finish a short or long rest. When you create undead in this manner, you can choose one of the following options. You cannot command more than 250 Hit Dice worth of undead created in this manner, and any excess you would create fail to appear.

- 2 death knights (19 HD each)
- 3 deathswarms (21 HD each)
- 10 ghosts (10 HD each)
- 30 ghouls (5 HD each)
- 10 wraiths (9 HD each)

Dread Necromancy. While you hold the wand, you can take an action to cast one of the following Epic spells without the need for any components (spell save DC 29, +21 to hit with spell attacks): *bloodbane*, *necrotic cyst*, *soul harvest*, *wave of calamity*. Once you have cast a spell in this manner, you cannot cast it again until you finish a long rest.

Additionally, while you hold the wand, as an action you can cast any non-Epic spell from the Necromancy school without the need for any components. Any spell cast in this manner that is not a cantrip is always cast at 9th level.

Bane

The *Wand of Orcus* is one of the vilest tools of destruction in existence. When a creature touches the wand for the first time in a day, it must succeed on a DC 29 Wisdom saving throw or be wracked with pain, fall prone, and become incapacitated until the start of its next turn. A creature that fails this save cannot attempt to hold the wand again until 24 hours have passed.

Additionally, the archdemilich integrated into the wand constantly whispers profane secrets and vile temptations to any creature that wields it. When a creature attuned to the wand uses it to perform one of the wand's actions, Nihilus can attempt to influence the wielder's soul, corrupting it with necromantic power. The creature must succeed on a DC 29 Charisma saving throw or begin to have its soul necrotized. A creature that fails ten of these saving throws dies instantly; its creature type changes to undead, its alignment becomes chaotic evil, and it becomes immune to necrotic and poison damage. Additionally, Nihilus seizes complete control over the creature's actions and mind, and this control lasts until the wand is removed from the unfortunate victim's person.

SUHTE

Draconic Celestial Judge

“Though it bore wings upon which to loom over us, they did not touch its body. Though it bore a head with which to bite, it did not have eyes to see us. Though it took a form of blood, I saw nothing which tied it to the realm of the dying.”

DESCRIPTION

While draconic in appearance, with wings and scales and a body akin to a lizard, Suhte’s form is much more than that of a mere dragon. The scales upon its body glimmer with a pearl-like appearance, but beneath this first layer, there are even more scales, visible only when Suhte moves. While it possesses wings, a careful observer can see that they are not joined with its body. Instead, these six feathered limbs appear tethered by some loose and unseen force, trailing the main body some feet behind. While its head is recognizable and possesses a mouth, it has no eyes upon its face. Instead, the double joints of the wings blink out of sync with celestial eyes, gazing down and around it.

SUHTE IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

A campaign featuring Suhte is a campaign that deals with moral extremes. The celestial judge is tasked with stopping ultimate

evil, no matter the cost. This extremist point of view often leaves a trail of destruction and comes at the cost of innocent lives. Since Suhte is fixated on collecting dragon souls to add to its domain, draconic allies and foes are likely to feature heavily in these adventures. The day-to-day ambitions of good, evil, and neutral dragons can be used to spur both Suhte’s and the characters’ actions.

INTRODUCTION

When a campaign featuring Suhte begins, the party likely does not know who the celestial judge is or anything about its mission. Since Suhte largely concerns itself with the actions of dragons, it is important to introduce draconic characters and conflicts early in your campaign. Perhaps war is brewing between metallic and chromatic dragons or news spreads of a dragon champion’s soul snatched from a heroic afterlife. You could introduce an evil dragon scholar attempting to use dark magic to achieve immortality. Maybe a dragon cult starts slaying innocents in the

PROFILE

Personality: Zealous

Ideals: Suhte holds unrelenting retribution and vengeance as paramount, and to others its actions might appear as exercises in joyful cruelty. They are half right, of course, as Suhte does take joy in it. But its actions are not cruel in Suhte’s eyes, but merely a pleasurable fulfillment of principle. The celestial judge must create a truly just world, regardless of who must fall to make it happen.

Bonds: Suhte is beholden only to its realm, filled with denizens who serve Suhte’s needs and whims. It is here and only here that Suhte finds peace and respite from its seemingly endless mission.

Flaws: Through the weight of endless fights and cleansings, Suhte has grown callous. Weighing in on the nuances of right and wrong has waned Suhte’s patience and care. Moral shades of gray have become stark and defined in Suhte’s eyes, and it now treats even minor transgressions against others as criminal and evil.

Legend: All souls eventually find themselves in the afterlife that befits them. While souls of heinous natures are sent to the planes below, those of benevolent natures find solace in the planes above. Dragon souls, however, might find themselves pulled somewhere in between.

The creature known as Suhte is a harsh judge and collector, believing foremost in justice and its ruthless execution. Suhte exists primarily in a plane of its design (though rumor exists that the plane created Suhte), and it is here that dragons may find themselves transported upon death. When dragons perish, if they have not taken magical precautions, Suhte is known to collect their souls and bring them to its dominion, where their ultimate fate is not known.

Many dragons spend their lengthy lives unaware of Suhte’s existence, unaware of the fate that may lay in store for them. Some dragons are never plucked by Suhte, lucky to escape its notice. But the few dragons that do learn of this impending possibility upon death spend countless years hoarding wealth and magic to avoid being whisked away to that hidden dominion—which, to the celestial judge, is a grave insult.

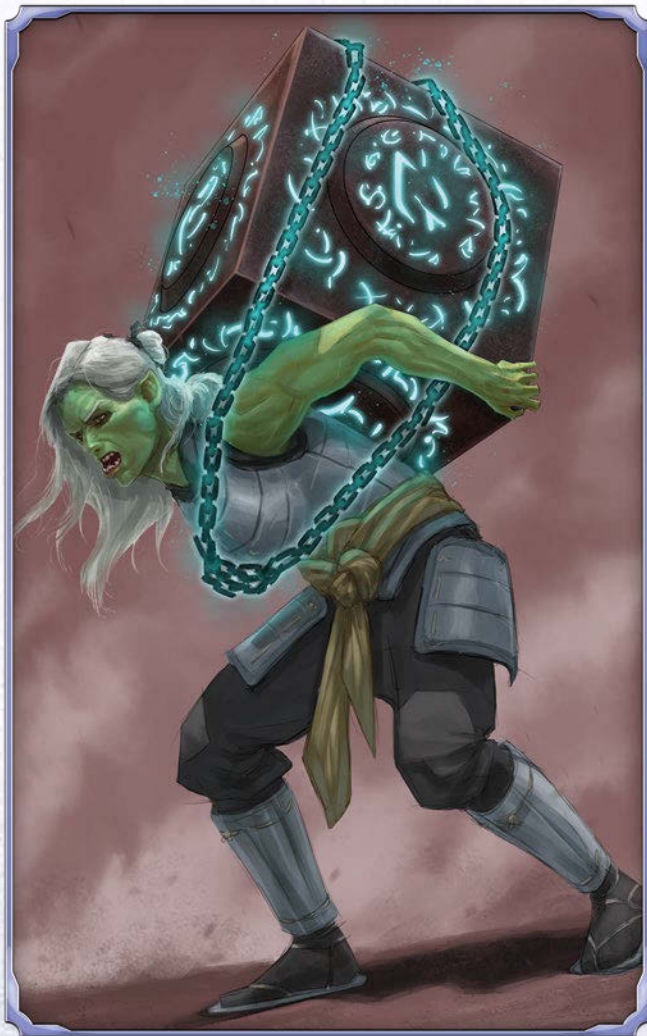


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name of a fiendish dragon god. Whatever the setup, use the introduction to create a draconic conflict with large enough stakes to attract the celestial judge's attention. Once the scenario is established, introduce Suhte into the equation, and demonstrate the dragon's interest in the unfurling events.

CONFLICT

Once the growing danger and Suhte are introduced, you can move on to the central conflict of the campaign. The adventurers' main problem is figuring out what exactly Suhte plans to do and how to stop it from taking extreme measures. These events hinge on what Suhte has in mind. Is it planning to obliterate an entire city to kill a small cultist group hidden within its walls? Is Suhte systematically murdering each member of a draconic council that made a neutral ruling? Does the dragon intend to steal the souls of hundreds of dragons to lead a crusade? Whatever your central conflict, it should be clear that while the ultimate intentions might be good, the methods Suhte is willing to take are not worth the cost. Once the adventurers have discovered Suhte's plan, they face the challenge of stopping impending catastrophe. They might take steps to safeguard an area destined to come under attack, attempt to protect victims from Suhte's action, or maybe try to find a way to confront the celestial judge in its domain directly.



CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the campaign happens when the characters finally face the celestial judge. Depending on the action so far, the characters might be facing down the dragon amid unfolding apocalyptic events or attempting to fight Suhte in its celestial domain. Wherever this final conflict occurs, Suhte is likely to initiate combat. The celestial judge is wholly inflexible and views any threat to its agenda as an admission of evil. Confronting Suhte is not an easy task, whatever the circumstance, so a campaign conclusion ideally features appearances from all the allies the party has made along the journey to stop impending disaster.

Legend: The Long Life of Brundriath the Silent One

In a bid to subvert the natural order of life, an ancient wyrm named Brundriath enacted profane rites to create an antique that housed its soul. The wyrm discarded its still-beating heart to become that which is rumored even among arcane scholars: a dracolich. After living for centuries, Brundriath now possessed an eternity of time and power that such undeath would hold. The wyrm's hall became decorated with gold, then platinum, with foundations of metals with unknowable names and scrolls of spells yet to be remembered. Brundriath smiled at all times, for its hall became a bastion of wealth a single lifetime could never grant.

One fateful day a twist of fate struck Brundriath's smile from its face. The wyrm screamed in horror as a radiant beam of light suddenly poured into its halls, vaporizing the wondrous magics it held and turning its treasures to ash. As Brundriath watched its hoard turn to dust, he looked up and saw a dragon, eyeless, with a perfect and jagged grin. Then all became dark once more.

When the ancient wyrm awoke within its antique, lifetimes of travel away, its body reformed, still blistered and seared by the beam of light. As its scales and limbs took new shape, Brundriath remembered the shock of its loss. As useless lungs and heart were shed, it remembered feeling fear. As the wyrm's undead body was made anew, it remembered all the pains of life it shouldn't have felt to begin with.

After donning a disguise, Brundriath traveled back to where its old hall once lay, only to find nothing. Where once there was a grand mountain and great rivers of magma, there was nothing but naked stone. Whatever destroyed the lair had destroyed all it had built over its life.

In time, Brundriath would learn that this was the work of the celestial dragon, Suhte. Still immortal, still afraid of this dragon, Brundriath travels, hidden and constantly moving, changing the location of its antique every year while seeking a way to destroy Suhte. It has been countless lifetimes since it began the search, and Brundriath fears it to be a futile task.



CHALLENGES

Suhte can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with it.

EXPLORATION

The celestial judge is loath to leave the perfect paradise of order it has created for itself in its home demiplane but does not shy away from departing when it must dispense justice elsewhere. Suhte's domain is an austere demiplane filled with architecture that speaks to rigid order. Intimidating marble towers and temples span the entirety of the plane, reminding all who pass through that structure is the only way to combat chaos. The celestial judge spends its time patrolling the plane for imperfections to correct and debating the moral decisions of history with its captive draconic servants.

Regional Effects

The region containing Suhte's lair is warped by its celestial power, which has created the following effects within the entirety of the demiplane:

- Whenever a creature that can understand a language enters the demiplane, Suhte can establish telepathic contact with that creature.

- All creatures are immune to poison and disease while in Suhte's demiplane. Creatures that enter the realm while suffering ongoing effects of poison or disease have their symptoms suppressed while they are in the realm, but symptoms resume as normal once they leave.

- All creatures of evil alignment are outlined in bright red light while in Suhte's domain. A creature outlined in this way sheds dim light in a 10-foot radius, can't benefit from being invisible, and rolls Dexterity (Stealth) checks with disadvantage. If a creature does not have an evil alignment but commits an act that Suhte would deem evil while in the boundaries of its lair, it becomes outlined in this red light for 24 hours.

If Suhte is destroyed, these regional effects immediately end.

Suhte's Lair

Suhte rules over its private demiplane, where the celestial judge hordes the souls of captured dragons to serve as adherents. The demiplane resembles a perfectly manicured city composed of cut marble, crystal-clear streams, plentiful orchards, and unchangingly perfect weather suspended on an island floating within an endless sky. Suhte's favored dwelling, the largest structure of all, is a polished stone courthouse that stands as a testament to the power of divine justice.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Suhte can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Suhte is using its mythic statistics, it can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Suhte can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- Suhte calls the spirits of captured dragons to protect it. Suhte becomes surrounded by these spirits out to a distance of 30 feet until the next initiative count 20. When a creature enters the area for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, its speed is halved and it takes 36 (8d8) radiant damage.
- Suhte cleanses itself of hostile magic and ends one spell affecting it.
- Suhte speaks an oath of order. Each creature of a non-lawful alignment that can see or hear the dragon must attempt a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, a creature must use its turns trying to move as far away from Suhte as it can and can't willingly move into a space within 30 feet of Suhte. This effect lasts for 1 minute or until the affected creature takes damage.

Exploration Encounters

Because Suhte rarely leaves its domain, exploration encounters in a campaign featuring the dragon are most likely to be tied to the locations the party visits while attempting to stop the judge's plans. However, visiting Suhte's demiplane can pose interesting opportunities, and dealing with the dragon's earthbound admirers opens doors for exploration encounters.

Library Caper. While attempting to learn more about the celestial judge, the party hears word of a magnificent arcane library that likely has the information they seek. Upon arriving, the characters discover the library is a private collection, and the head librarian attempts to usher the characters out of the library. The head librarian can be placated to allow them to remain on the top level through successful negotiations or bribery. Still, access to the lower levels must be achieved through further negotiations or stealth. Lower levels are protected from scrying, with increasingly tricky locked doors heading down. Scholars with access to lower levels carry keys for their permitted floors and studies but are loath to let go of them. If the characters can reach the rare tomes on the floors below, they find information on Suhte and its domain.

Deadly Dreams. In an attempt to learn more about Suhte's plan, a dragon mage offers the party a unique opportunity to gather information. The dragon proposes they cast a spell to put the dragon and the adventurers in a death-like sleep, so they may more easily travel to Suhte's realm. If the party agrees, the plan works, and they can all travel to Suhte's demiplane on the back of the ghostly dragon. Once they arrive, they have enough time to explore the buildings of the demiplane and converse with some of the captured dragon souls. Luckily, Suhte is away on other business when the characters visit, but the judge is aware of the party's meddling upon its return.

SOCIAL

Suhte is intelligent and hyper-focused on its agenda but is not entirely without a sense of compassion. While it is possible to parlay with Suhte, it comes with great risk. Reaching the celestial judge's realm is a titanic task on its own, and the risk of failing to change the dragon's mind is exceptionally high. A clever speaker may seek to engage Suhte in discourse or pleasantries, buying time for their allies through lengthy talks about good and just things or about memories of home or small comforts they could potentially share. But they only need to slip once to cause their plans to go awry and fail.

Social Encounters

Conversing directly with Suhte is difficult, so social encounters in the campaign are more likely to occur with the dragons who serve or fear the celestial judge. However, well-timed conversations with the dragon or its adoring supporters can be a helpful way to communicate information about Suhte's goals.

Dragon Hospitality. Suhte itself is nearly impossible to stop with words alone. But it is possible to divert Suhte's attention from pressing matters by refocusing attention on the quality of its celestial realm. The dragon is obsessed with creating a perfect bastion of order, so comparisons of niceties with Suhte result in it trying to outdo itself in terms of beauty and comfort. Commentary about food results in prideful attempts to provide



even more exquisite delights. While Suhte is interested in discussing philosophies of morality and law, only the most knowledgeable orators can maintain the dragon's interest. In most cases, the party would do better to distract Suhte with trivial pursuits instead of wrestling with moral debates.

Higher Calling. A group of Suhte's devotees has caught wind of the party's desire to interfere with the celestial judge's plans, and they begin to stalk the characters. Whether the party is studying about the dragon, training to fight it, or headed to Suhte itself, these devotees try a wide variety of tactics to divert the adventurers from their course. The devotees use elaborate costumes, bribes, and subterfuge to stall the party without engaging them in a direct fight. Characters pursued by these devotees encounter a shocking number of villagers needing assistance, traveling performers blocking the road, and messengers appearing with court date appearance notices in towns far off the beaten path.

COMBAT

As a self-proclaimed celestial judge, Suhte is no stranger to enacting its will through violence. While Suhte is by no means evil, its extreme point of view often results in action being taken without consideration for the consequences. The celestial dragon's unending mission has made Suhte hardened and impatient, resulting in a preference for settling things with combat rather than lengthy discussion. A campaign featuring Suhte is likely to end with a fight since death is truly the only way to stop the celestial judge once it has made up its mind.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Brute

Suhte is a meticulous opponent who becomes more deadly from round to round of combat. To successfully run the celestial dragon, there are several abilities you must track to ensure you are dealing maximum damage every round. Your priority is to set yourself up to hit as many characters as possible with Suhte's Gaze of Judgement. Using this feature doesn't cost action economy, so make sure to check at the beginning of every single character turn if that character has to make their save or take penitent dice. Ensuring each character accrues as many penitent dice as possible is the best way to deal damage, since Suhte's base attack damage is quite low. Every time you make an attack, you should prioritize attacking creatures with the greatest number of penitent dice. Make sure to use Suhte's Graceful Presence ability whenever you need to force characters to look at the dragon so you can continue to dole out penitent dice. Your second priority is to make sure you use your Wages of Sin every single turn against the opponent who is dealing the most damage. Make using Suhte's Power Word Smite ability a priority early in the fight since you'll be better served by making melee attacks to capitalize on penitent dice damage in later rounds. Your most challenging task will be keeping Suhte alive for the first couple rounds of combat so the dragon can build up penitent dice. To make the fight last longer, don't be afraid to burn mythic resistances early and be conservative with your legendary actions if you need to use your Purify ability to end a debilitating spell.

Easier Tactics – To make a fight with Suhte easier, divide attention between the characters equally. Rather than focusing attacks on creatures with the highest number of penitent dice, just attack opportunistically. Use legendary actions to perform basic attacks, avoiding shutting down spells or recharging Power Word Smite.

Harder Tactics – To increase the difficulty of a fight with Suhte, pick one target and systemically destroy characters one by one. Once it becomes clear which character will accumulate the most penitent dice, attack that character exclusively with all four melee attacks. Using melee attacks only will allow you to add penitent dice damage to every single melee attack. Your goal is to drop creatures to 0 hit points, so you can transform them into coins and remove them from the fight permanently. Prioritize melee attacks whenever possible, favoring these over your Power Word Smite ability. Use Graceful Presence in the first round to try and ramp up penitent dice totals as soon as possible.

Mythic Suhte

Running the mythic version of Suhte is similar to running the normal version. The only major differences are its mythic actions. The first action, Avenging Might, allows you to increase the total number of penitent dice you can dole out each round. Make sure to use Avenging Might as your first action to start things off right, then fall back to use Exalted Roar every other round (since you can't use Avenging Might every round). Don't forget to keep track of the penitent dice increase each time you use Avenging Might since it accumulates round to round.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, Suhte causes the following effects.

Heart Sight. Suhte automatically succeeds on any Wisdom (Insight) ability checks it makes to ascertain a creature's motivations.

Oath to Order. If Suhte remains in a 10-mile-cube area for 1 week, it magically transforms the local environment into a flourishing ecosystem. Any pollution, harmful magic, or other contamination simply evaporates. Evil-aligned creatures in the region must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw at dawn each day Suhte remains in the area or be compelled to flee the region.

Swift Wings. If Suhte knows the location of a creature, it can use an action to magically teleport to an unoccupied space within 60 feet of that creature. Suhte can use this ability to travel to any plane of existence. The celestial dragon cannot use this ability to teleport to a creature whose location is veiled by magical means.



SUHTE

Gargantuan celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 779 (38d20 + 380)

Speed 40 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	16 (+3)	30 (+10)	16 (+3)	28 (+9)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Str +18, Con +18, Wis +16, Cha +15

Skills Intimidation +23, Perception +16, Religion +19

Damage Resistances cold, fire, thunder

Damage Immunities radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 26

Languages understands all languages but only speaks Celestial and Draconic

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

TRAITS

Gaze of Judgement. When a creature that can see Suhte's eyes starts its turn, Suhte can force it to attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw if Suhte isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. A creature that fails the save gains three special d6s known as penitent dice. When Suhte deals damage to the creature with a weapon attack, it can choose to force the creature to roll its penitent dice, which are then added to the attack's damage dice as additional radiant damage. A creature can have up to fifteen penitent dice, which are lost when it finishes a short or long rest.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it cannot harm Suhte until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at Suhte in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

Immense. Suhte's form is tremendous. It is 90 feet long from snout to tail and has a wingspan of 160 feet. On the battlefield, Suhte typically occupies a 45-foot-by-45-foot space. It can end its movement in a Huge or smaller creature's or object's space and does not treat such spaces as difficult terrain.

Additionally, on each of its turns Suhte can spend 20 feet of movement to deal 100 bludgeoning damage to an unattended object or structure within 5 feet of it.

Mythic Resistance. When Suhte fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Price of Defiance. When Suhte reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it can choose to stabilize the target and force it to attempt a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, becoming permanently magically polymorphed into a platinum coin and sent to Suhte's home plane on a failure.

Wages of Sin (1/Turn). When Suhte takes damage from an enemy creature that it can see, it can offer that creature a choice: the creature can take radiant damage equal to half the damage it dealt to Suhte (rounded down), or the creature can choose to instead deal no damage to Suhte.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Suhte makes four attacks: one with its Bite, two with its Claw, and one with its Tail. It can forgo making a Bite or Tail attack in this manner to instead use its Graceful Presence.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 49 (6d12 + 10) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or instead be critically hit by the attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 38 (8d6 + 10) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 50 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (4d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 25 Strength saving throw or be thrown 50 feet in a straight line away from Suhte, landing prone.

Graceful Presence. Each creature of Suhte's choice that is within 120 feet of it and is aware of it must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or be transfixed by the dragon's beauty. While transfixed in this manner, a creature cannot avert its eyes from Suhte or willingly break line of sight. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature becomes immune to Suhte's Graceful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Power Word Smite (Recharge 5–6). Suhte speaks a word of terrific magical power and calls down a 15-foot-wide, infinitely high cylinder of bright light centered on a point it can see. When the cylinder appears, each creature of Suhte's choice in the affected area takes 80 radiant damage. Suhte can choose to concentrate on the effect (as though concentrating on a spell) to cause the cylinder to persist for as long as it maintains concentration. When Suhte does so, at the start of each of its turns it deals 80 radiant damage to creatures of its choice in the affected area. As an action while it concentrates in this manner, Suhte can move the cylinder up to 120 feet to a space it can see.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Suhte can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Suhte regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

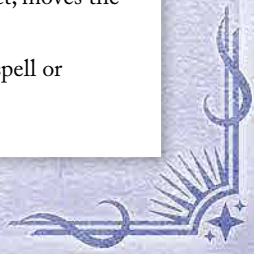
Claw. Suhte makes a Claw attack.

Move. Suhte moves up to its walking speed or flies up to half its flying speed.

Tail (Costs 2 Actions). Suhte makes a Tail attack.

Power Word Smite (Costs 3 Actions). Suhte recharges its Power Word Smite action, or if concentrating on the effect, moves the cylinder up to 120 feet to a space it can see.

Purify (Costs 3 Actions). Suhte ends a non-Epic spell or magical effect it can see within 120 feet of it.



MYTHIC SUHTE

Gargantuan mythic celestial, lawful good

Armor Class 29 (natural armor)

Hit Points 2,967 (138d20 + 1,518)

Speed 40 ft., fly 90 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
34 (+12)	16 (+3)	32 (+11)	18 (+4)	32 (+11)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Str +22, Dex +13, Con +21, Int +14, Wis +21, Cha +18

Skills Intimidation +28, Perception +21, Religion +24

Damage Resistances cold, fire, thunder

Damage Immunities radiant; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 31

Languages understands all languages but only speaks Celestial and Draconic

Challenge Mythic 6

TRAITS

Gaze of Judgement. When a creature that can see Suhte's eyes starts its turn, Suhte can force it to attempt a DC 29 Constitution saving throw if Suhte isn't incapacitated and can see the creature. A creature that fails the save gains five special d6s known as penitent dice. When Suhte deals damage to the creature with a weapon attack, it can choose to force the creature to roll its penitent dice, which are then added to the attack's damage dice as additional radiant damage. A creature can have up to fifty penitent dice, which are lost when it finishes a short or long rest.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it cannot harm Suhte until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at Suhte in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the save.

Immense. Suhte's form is tremendous. It is 90 feet long from snout to tail and has a wingspan of 160 feet. On the battlefield, Suhte typically occupies a 45-foot-by-45-foot space. It can end its movement in a Huge or smaller creature's or object's space and does not treat such spaces as difficult terrain.

Additionally, on each of its turns Suhte can spend 20 feet of movement to deal 100 bludgeoning damage to an unattended object or structure within 5 feet of it.

Mythic Resistance. When Suhte fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Price of Defiance. When Suhte reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it can choose to stabilize the target and force it to attempt a DC 29 Wisdom saving throw, becoming permanently magically polymorphed into a platinum coin and sent to Suhte's home plane on a failure.

Wages of Sin (1/Turn). When Suhte takes damage from an enemy creature that it can see, it can offer that creature a choice: the creature can take radiant damage equal to half the damage it dealt to Suhte (rounded down), or the creature can choose to instead deal no damage to Suhte.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Suhte takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. Suhte can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Avenging Might. Suhte's rage at evil and injustice grows. When it causes a creature to gain penitent dice via its Gaze of Judgement feature, it instead causes it to gain five additional penitent dice. This effect is cumulative, to a maximum of twenty additional penitent dice.

Exalted Roar. Suhte roars with holy power, which can be heard by creatures up to 10 miles away. Each creature of Suhte's choice that hears the roar must either use a reaction to praise the dragon or become vulnerable to radiant damage until the next initiative count of 20.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Suhte makes four attacks: one with its Bite, two with its Claw, and one with its Tail. It can forgo making a Bite or Tail attack in this manner to instead use its Graceful Presence.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 90 (12d12 + 12) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 29 Constitution saving throw or instead be critically hit by the attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 47 (10d6 + 12) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 50 ft., one target. *Hit:* 45 (6d10 + 12) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 29 Strength saving throw or be thrown 50 feet in a straight line away from Suhte, landing prone.

Graceful Presence. Each creature of Suhte's choice that is within 120 feet of it and is aware of it must succeed on a DC 29 Wisdom saving throw or be transfixed by the dragon's beauty. While transfixed in this manner, a creature cannot avert its eyes from Suhte or willingly break line of sight. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature becomes immune to Suhte's Graceful Presence for the next 24 hours.

Power Word Smite (Recharge 5–6). Suhte speaks a word of terrific magical power and calls down a 15-foot-wide, infinitely high cylinder of bright light centered on a point it can see. When the cylinder appears, each creature of Suhte's choice in the affected area takes 200 radiant damage. Suhte can choose to concentrate on the effect (as though concentrating on a spell) to cause the cylinder to persist for as long as it maintains concentration. When Suhte does so, at the start of each of its turns it deals 200 radiant damage to creatures of its choice in the affected area. As an action while it concentrates in this manner, Suhte can move the cylinder up to 120 feet to a space it can see.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Suhte can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Suhte regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

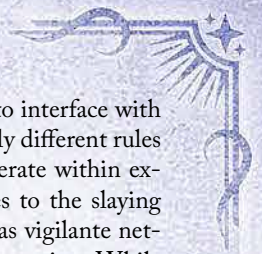
Claw. Suhte makes a Claw attack.

Move. Suhte moves up to its walking speed or flies up to half its flying speed.

Tail (Costs 2 Actions). Suhte makes a Tail attack.

Power Word Smite (Costs 3 Actions). Suhte recharges its Power Word Smite action, or if concentrating on the effect, moves the cylinder up to 120 feet to a space it can see.

Purify (Costs 3 Actions). Suhte ends a spell or magical effect it can see within 120 feet of it.



RESOURCES

While Suhte maintains control over its private realm, the celestial judge wants for nothing. Suhte spends little time in the material plane and consequently does not require many resources to perform its duty. The dragon spends most of its time contemplating its next mission, then transports itself to the material plane to strike down its target in an instant before returning to its demiplane to repeat the process. On occasion, Suhte is confronted with a particularly elusive foe or obstacle, and it is forced to call upon servants that can move more easily in mortal realms.

ALLIES

Suhte is ultimately dedicated only to its mission of abolishing evil, and creatures that do not help achieve this goal are liabilities. The celestial judge does not pursue friendly relationships (which it considers to be frivolous), but Suhte is not above using inferior creatures to its advantage.

Celestial Clergy. Suhte's relentless pursuit of justice has attracted the attention of several mortal factions. While the destruction of evil at all costs does not lend itself well to mainstream society, a smattering of clerics and paladins have formed groups devoted to upholding the example established by the celestial

judge. Suhte does not have the time or interest to interface with these devoted worshippers, so each cell has widely different rules and practices. More benign factions tend to operate within existing legal systems. Others dedicate themselves to the slaying of evil dragons. The deadliest of them function as vigilante networks doling out violent justice as they deem appropriate. While the celestial judge does not directly condone the actions of these small groups, it is not above leveraging their assistance to draw out a particularly diabolical foe.

Dragon Soul. While the celestial judge delights in the obliteration of evil, there are some souls Suhte considers too precious to be destroyed entirely. Specifically, Suhte preserves the souls of evil dragons, transferring their spirits into platinum coins upon death. By trapping the souls of these dragons, Suhte can keep them from traveling to whatever afterlife awaits them and instead force them to serve for eternity in its realm. Every resident in Suhte's demiplane is one of these captured spirits, doomed to eternally serve as clerks, builders, sounding boards, or whatever else the celestial judge might order them to do. While this may not seem like the cruelest of fate for an evil dragon, Suhte's definition of evil is extremely broad when considering which creatures are deserving of such a fate. The longer a dragon soul lives in Suhte's realm, the more devoted it grows to the draconic judge. These oldest souls become trusted henchmen of the dragon and are even allowed to leave its realm to perform tasks Suhte can't see to personally.

DRAGON SOUL

Huge undead, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)
Hit Points 184 (16d12 + 80)
Speed 0 ft., fly 120 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +10, Wis +6, Cha +6

Skills Perception +10, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities cold, necrotic, poison

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

Senses blindsight 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages any languages it knew in life

Challenge 15 (13,000 XP)

TRAITS

Incorporeal Movement. The dragon soul can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). If the dragon soul fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

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

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragon soul can use its Horrifying Visage. It then makes three attacks: one with its Bite and two with its Claw.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.
Hit: 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

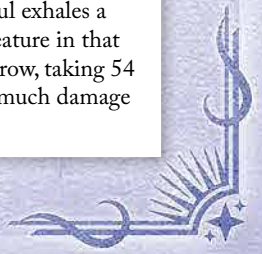
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage plus 4 (1d8) necrotic damage.

Horrifying Visage. Each creature of the dragon soul's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon soul and aware of it must succeed on a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. If the save fails by 5 or more, the target also ages 1d4 × 10 years. A frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success. If a target's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the target is immune to the dragon soul's Horrifying Visage for the next 24 hours. The aging effect can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell, but only within 24 hours of it occurring.

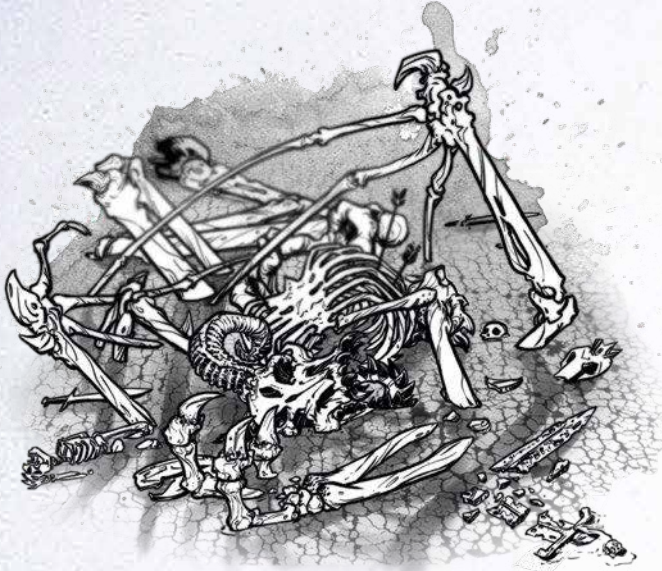
Shapechanger. The dragon soul can use its action to polymorph into a tiny platinum coin or back into its spirit form. It reverts to its coin form if it dies. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying is absorbed or dropped by the new form (the dragon soul's choice).

In coin form, the dragon soul retains its alignment, hit points, Hit Dice, ability to speak, its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores, and this action. Its statistics and capabilities are otherwise limited by those of the new form.

Withering Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon soul exhales a blast of necrotic energy in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in that area must attempt a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 54 (12d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.



The Redeemed. Not all evil is beyond saving. In the rare instance Suhte discovers a creature whose heart is not wholly lost to the malevolent corruption of darkness, it may bestow that creature with the opportunity to turn over a new leaf. While many fail, a precious few have worked hard to make up for their misdeeds, becoming “The Redeemed.” This motley crew of former villains is a bizarre menagerie: a lich, a red dragon, an archdevil, and more count themselves among their numbers. Those who give The Redeemed a chance will find them to be incredibly philanthropic, eager to prove there is a better way to live.



REWARDS

The draconic affinity for wealth holds no sway over the heart of Suhte. To the dragon such distractions serve only to pervert the cause of justice and corrupt the lawful. However, the dragon understands that not all may walk its righteous path, and bequeaths its feathers to those it finds worthy and true. These feathers are as sturdy as a sword and as sharp as a razor, making for ideal weapons in the hands of those who would serve the cause of justice. In the hands of non-lawful creatures, these blades crumble to ash, which combined with their rarity make them near priceless to most beings.

Weapon

Name	Cost	Damage	Weight	Properties
Feather Blade	N/A	1d10 slashing	1/10 lb	Light, finesse, versatile (1d12)



Suhte’s divine status ensures that the celestial judge cannot truly die but instead faces the same judgment it has passed upon so many others. Upon defeat, Suhte’s soul is sealed in a platinum coin which appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to the dragon’s body.

Platinum Coin

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a creature of good alignment)

The *Platinum Coin* is of celestial origin and serves as a prison for the soul of the draconic celestial judge Suhte.

While the coin is on your person, you gain immunity to radiant damage.

Sentience. The *Platinum Coin* is sentient as long as it imprisons Suhte. While sentient, the coin has the following properties:

- The coin has an Intelligence of 16, a Wisdom of 28, and a Charisma of 24, as well as hearing and blindsight out to a range of 60 feet.
- The coin can speak, read, and understand all languages, and it can communicate telepathically with any creature it can sense within 120 feet of it.
- While attuned to the coin, you can use an action to cast *true polymorph* to transform yourself into a dragon type of your choice whose challenge rating is equal to or less than your level. Once you use the coin in this way, you cannot do so again until the following dawn.
- While holding the coin, you can use a bonus action to activate an aura of judgment for 1 minute. Any creature of evil alignment that starts its turn within 20 feet of the coin must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, the creature is frightened until the start of its next turn. On a successful save, the creature is immune to this power of the coin for the next 24 hours.

Suhte’s Personality. Suhte is interested in achieving freedom to resume its mission but is content to remain in the coin as long as it is being used by someone the celestial judge deems worthy.

When carried by someone who regularly performs acts of good, Suhte can be extremely helpful and insightful. However, after a time, the dragon grows impatient and abusive toward any carrier since Suhte’s standards are inevitably impossible to meet.

Freeing Suhte. The *Platinum Coin* is immune to all damage and cannot be destroyed by magical means. The only exception to this rule is damage dealt by a dragon’s breath weapon. If the coin takes more than 50 damage from a dragon’s breath weapon in one round, it is destroyed.

Upon the coin’s destruction, Suhte’s soul is freed, and it immediately possesses the body of the nearest dragon. Once possessed in this manner, the dragon’s consciousness is taken over by Suhte, and its statistics transform to that of the celestial judge.

THANARIEL

Angel of Death

“Dread it. Run from it. Death arrives all the same.”

DESCRIPTION

Infamous in its title and ominous in its demeanor, Thanariel, the Angel of Death, appears as the towering, emaciated skeleton of an angelic celestial. Trailing a gray burial shroud and bearing a keen-edged scythe, the macabre being moves with a disturbing silence, as if the air itself were afraid to acknowledge its presence. The angel glides like a specter on wings of bone-white feathers as its eye sockets, a pair of deep pits of stygian darkness, observe all that transpires around it with a calm impartiality as if it were an absolute sovereign surveying their realm. Thanariel is utterly silent and imperceptible; a sudden shudder or chill prickling on the neck are the only signs of its presence. A mournful keening accompanies its appearance when it chooses to reveal itself. Regardless of whether creatures can perceive the Angel of Death, it smells of jasmine and hyacinth, of newly turned earth

and powdery linen shrouds. Those whose death is imminent can see the Angel of Death as it draws near. If they accept their fate, Thanariel approaches slowly and treats the dying with tenderness and care. Those who resist or who resent their mortality perceive Thanariel as an impending menace; it shows these bitter mortals no mercy as it reaps their souls.

THANARIEL IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The impartial universality of dying is a strong theme in a campaign arc centered on Thanariel. Death is not evil or an aberration, even though it might be dreadful or unwanted. Death is simply death. All things that have a beginning must have an end, even the gods.

PROFILE

Personality: Dutiful

Ideals: Thanariel views death as the beautiful final act of one's life. Like the finale to a symphony, the conclusion of life is a necessary and fitting end to all one has accomplished. The angel desires neither recognition nor appreciation for the hand it plays in death, only that each is unique and beautiful in its finality.

Bonds: Thanariel is charged by the progenitors of the multiverse with ensuring the deaths of particular creatures. It is not known who informs Thanariel what its next target is or why, only that Thanariel prioritizes this duty over all others.

Flaws: Having reaped the lives of billions for countless eons, Thanariel has grown practiced and particular about how it conducts its job. None dare tell the angel of death how to perform its duties, despite Thanariel's many proclivities and habits that make the job less efficient. Thanariel always seeks to add some spice and variety to its work. Unfortunately for those with a vested interest in the outcome of Thanariel's deeds, these distractions can prove quite frustrating.

Legend: Before Death, the multiverse existed as an endless moment. The cosmic beings who inhabited this infinite instant danced across worlds, treating each one as a play-

thing. They tapped into their potent essences and created all manner of lesser beings to satisfy their every desire and unrestrained whim. The Ineffable Demiurge, the Architect of all Creation, saw this and looked upon these first cosmic entities with contempt, for they had no appreciation for the majesty of Creation. The Ineffable Demiurge, in all its inscrutable and confounding wisdom, revealed to them Time, their Beginning and Ending, which the Ineffable Demiurge had kept hidden. It shaped for Time a servitor, Death, who would ensure that all things in existence met their end. Outraged at this injustice, the cosmic powers sought to overthrow Time, but the Ineffable Demiurge sent Death into their midst, and they could not withstand its power.

Those who survived or submitted became the gods of the multitudinous cosmos, each having dominion over their respective spheres. They never forgot the first reaping and feared its return. For though they grew to surpass Death in power, the gods merely ruled over their domains, no longer part of those primordial forces from when the universe was young.

Ever-present Death imposed itself over a new cosmic order and took a name for itself: Thanariel, the Angel of Death. It would ensure that those souls fated to die would meet their end at the appointed time. Thanariel, the masterless master, served only itself, and gods and mortals alike reshaped their existence around it...for all things that have a beginning must also come to an end.





DMs who want to feature Thanariel can lean into the characters' ability to lessen the sting of death. Instead, embrace the fact that as they rise through the levels the characters' capacity to interact with a creature like Thanariel grows. At the same time, Thanariel's ability to kill outright and retain the souls of the dead means it will remain a threat throughout the campaign.

Consider a game in which Thanariel undertakes a Great Reaping, a mass slaughter of sentient and non-sentient mortal creatures and gathering of their souls. Finding a way to elevate Thanariel's motivation beyond mere death-dealing adds depth to the campaign. Thanariel might have greater concerns that necessitate widespread death: the demons and devils set aside their differences and unite to conquer the material plane; the cancerous metaphysical wound of the demonic realm metastasizes across the multiverse; a dimension-hopping necromancer wants to collect the souls of the dead for some nefarious purpose. Each of those warrants the intercession of Thanariel to avert disaster, but the cure is worse than the disease.

INTRODUCTION

At the start of the campaign, the party hears rumors of some horrid calamity from a distant land. Tales of pestilence, war, famine, and total collapse of civilized society spread like wildfire through their region. Reports of newly formed death cults increase. Necromancers and the like come out of hiding to make use of the surge in ambient necrotic magic. Any gods the characters revere send signs and omens warning them of the danger. High-level NPCs approach the party to assist them against this overwhelming threat.

To address the conceptual and mechanical power of Thanariel, a DM must consider its limits. Perhaps its foes have placed themselves beyond the reach of death or have warded themselves with magic designed to protect themselves. The party could seek out or be approached by cosmic entities who have a stake in the conflict. It is easy to assume the characters have no way to oppose threats of this magnitude, but consider that sometimes it's the smaller, overlooked elements that bring down such mortal enemies.

CONFLICT

Thanariel is a being of singular purpose. It administers death to the dying and collects their souls. That is all. Once it gets going, Thanariel is unlikely to stop, especially if the threat is large enough. The characters hear rumors of the Great Reaping in their lower levels: death cults on the rise or terrible omens from the gods of the underworld. As they investigate, the party comes to comprehend the magnitude of Thanariel's appearance and the scale of the precipitating danger. Mid-level adventures feature the party dealing with the fallout of the Great Reaping while seeking information and marshaling resources to stop both threats. At these levels they can begin to interact with Thanariel itself, speaking with the angel or directly observing its work. After all, Thanariel cannot be in two places at once and makes use of its minions to reap souls.

CONCLUSION

The climax of such a campaign could feature the party facing off against Thanariel in combat or infiltrating its lair to liberate the souls of the dead. As the characters rise to prominence, Thanariel sends its strongest minions to stop the party or seeks them out

personally. If the party mounts a sufficiently heroic defense, they could even earn Thanariel's respect, and maybe even its mercy. Defeating Thanariel is an accomplishment worthy of multiversal acclaim, but it need not result in the angel's destruction. Merely putting an end to the angel's immediate activities may be a fitting conclusion to the campaign, as Thanariel is a cosmic force upon which the universe relies in its darkest hours.

CHALLENGES

Thanariel can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with it.

EXPLORATION

Nowhere is truly safe from the hand of the reaper. Thanariel ventures to far-flung planes, well-defended citadels, desolate wildernesses, and hidden refuges with equal ease. So long as there are deserving souls to reap, Thanariel will find them. The Angel of Death always travels stealthily, preferring not to be seen except by those whose souls it has come to claim. Those who encounter death often do so accidentally. An unintentional brush of the shoulder or a fluke of awareness can alert creatures to the celestial's presence and so begin a hunt to track down death itself. However, not every encounter with death takes place on the mortal planes. When not fulfilling its duties, Thanariel finds refuge on its demiplane: the Hills of Forgotten Graves. This endless expanse possesses little color and is filled with unmarked graves, silent ravens, and the grim certainty of death. Here the angel rests among the souls of the dead who have nowhere else to go. This desolate realm is nigh impossible to find, requiring a direct invitation by Thanariel to gain access.

Regional Effects

The region around Thanariel is warped by its power, which has created the following effects within 10 miles of its location.

- Thanariel is aware of the presence of every living creature in the affected area, along with its creature type, hit point maximum, and name.
- Creatures slain in the affected area experience a painless death unless Thanariel chooses otherwise.
- When a creature in the affected area dreams, it is visited by the spirit of a dead loved one within the dream. The spirit recalls everything it knew in life but can provide no details about the nature of its existence after death.

If Thanariel is destroyed, these effects fade immediately.

Thanariel's Lair

Within the Hills of Forgotten Graves there exists a macabre, gothic-style cathedral whose windows glow with an ominous blue light. This is the Church of the Reaper, Thanariel's abode and memento of a time when death was not so reviled. Within its graying halls countless candles burn with a blue flame, said to be the lives of mortals slowly waning under the watchful eye of Thanariel. Here one can find death's personal collection of



recalcitrant souls: those who have escaped its clutches, trophies of the mightiest beings slain by its hands, and even a select few mortals who have gained death's favor. It is a place of grim certainty and death, fit only for the dead or deranged.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Thanariel can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Thanariel is using its mythic statistics, it can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Thanariel can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- A 20-foot-radius, infinitely high cylinder becomes shrouded in magical darkness. Creatures other than Thanariel in the affected area are vulnerable to all damage. This effect lasts for 1 hour or until Thanariel uses this option again.
- An object a creature is holding becomes cursed with dread malevolence. While cursed in this manner, when a creature touching or holding the object attempts a saving throw, it rolls 1d8 and subtracts the amount rolled from the result of the saving throw. This curse lasts until Thanariel uses this option again.
- Thanariel learns the exact location of a living creature within the lair and can choose to magically teleport to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of it.

Exploration Encounters

Thanariel's duty sends the angel across many worlds, always searching for the next soul to reap. However, these journeys are rarely efficient affairs. With its tremendous stealth Thanariel can pass through most realms undetected, observing the curiosities of life in all its forms. Occasionally, the Angel of Death may even forget to cloak itself, creating a chance encounter with mortals that leads to countless legends of rendezvous with death. Even the angel's home plane, the Hills of Endless Graves, is worthy of exploration. Its grim landscape is filled with souls without a home, many of which were too infamous, powerful, or dangerous to be accepted anywhere else.

The Dark Traveler. Having spied Thanariel while exploring the wilds, a keen-eyed ranger wishes to track the celestial down and observe it. The Angel of Death has been observed moving toward a quaint hamlet and would prefer to remain undisturbed as it performs its duties. The ranger dares not stalk death itself alone and is requesting the help of daring adventurers to catalogue and chronicle death's actions within the hamlet, offering one sack of platinum for every day logged. A tenuous balance must be struck to succeed—the party must stay just far enough away not to inconvenience death but close enough to determine what the creature is doing.

Graverobbing. A death-worshiping church has uncovered a portal to the Hills of Endless Graves and wishes to venture there to recover the soul of a forgotten prophet said to perfectly foretell who will be taken by the reaper and when. It is highly unlikely Thanariel will accommodate such a desire, but thankfully the Angel of Death isn't home too often. To make matters worse, the seemingly infinite scape of the Hills of Endless Graves makes

tracking the soul down no mean feat. In return for the aid of worthy adventurers in this task, the clergy offers their services free of charge should their allies ever be in need of resurrection.

Eyes of the Reaper. A flock of silent ravens has appeared within a prosperous kingdom, taking roost atop the castle and refusing to leave. Killing the ravens has proven pointless. More appear as if by magic, staring with their beady, unblinking eyes at whomever crosses their path. The royal family fears to go outside, believing the ravens to be the eyes of death itself, watching their movements and waiting for the right moment to strike. The truth is far more sinister. The ravens are a curse visited by the Angel of Death upon the entire royal family as punishment for some obscure crime committed by the bloodline long ago. Helping the royals escape the ravens is a challenging task indeed, even for experienced adventurers. Thankfully, the kingdom is rich and eager to see the matter resolved.



NEW EPIC SPELL: NEVERMORE



Tier 3 Epic Enchantment (ascendants and overlords only)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Special (see description)

Components: V, S, M (a raven's feather that has never seen the light of day)

Duration: Permanent

You speak the full name of a single creature, or the family name of a group of related creatures, inflicting them with a strange and deadly curse for the spell's duration. Creatures cursed in this

manner constantly have a flock of ravens magically appear and roost above them, observing the target in perfect silence.

While cursed in this manner, a creature loses proficiency in up to three skills of your choice, loses proficiency in up to two saving throws of your choice, and loses the ability to speak, read, and write in a language of your choice. Additionally, you treat the target as if you can see it all times, even if you would ordinarily be unable to do so (such as if you were blinded or leagues away from its position).

A creature can attempt to end this curse by using a Hide action to attempt a Dexterity (Stealth) check contested by your Wisdom (Perception). On a success, the curse ends. On a failure, the creature becomes unable to attempt to end the curse in this manner again until 1 week has passed.

SOCIAL

Doing the same job for a lifetime results in some peculiarities in one's psyche. Thanariel has been fulfilling its role as the multiverse's assassin since before time existed, so the celestial is understandably strange. When encountered socially, there is always a singular question hanging over every conversation: *Has it come for me?* If the answer is yes, the target should consider themselves lucky they have a chance to speak before coming to a swift end. In the answer is no, mortals may be afforded the rare opportunity to converse with Thanariel, which is surprisingly personable so long as one doesn't interfere with its work. The Angel of Death overwhelmingly abhors any appeal to morality in regards to its actions, swiftly ending any conversation that trends in that direction. From Thanariel's perspective, it is above petty concepts such as good and evil, thanks in no small part to its incredibly vast perspective and compassion fatigue after reaping countless souls.

Social Encounters

A rendezvous with death is always a tense experience. Because it can be encountered and conversed with almost anywhere, Thanariel has held many conversations with intrepid mortals from across the ages. This practice has given birth to countless legends, most of which fail to accurately identify Thanariel for what it truly is in favor of a divine avatar or a manifestation of a more conventionally understood aspect of death. When speaking, Thanariel is articulate, personable, and utterly unempathetic. It has witnessed every conceivable mortal problem a thousand times and heard tales of them a thousand times more. Only a truly extraordinary life or perspective is novel to Thanariel, which can prove tremendously distracting to the immediately fascinated angel. Thanariel possesses one crippling weakness: its love of games. Mortal amusements have a nearly hypnotic effect on Thanariel, which jumps at the chance to explore some new form of entertainment, so long as doing so doesn't overly distract from its duties. Socially interacting with this being is like dancing on a knife's edge, providing a host of potential challenges.

Roll the Bones. Thanariel observes the characters and approaches them for a friendly game of dice, eager to try out its new set of hand-crafted dice, *the reaper's ivory*. Death isn't particular about what game is played so long as it involves the roll of some six-sided dice, a wager or two, and fair play.

The Reaper's Ivory

Wondrous item, legendary

This set of dice can consist of between one to five six-sided dice, each of which is set with black diamonds cut into the shape of skulls, glistening upon each of the die's faces. While you hold the dice, once per round when you would roll a d6 using any class feature, skill, or effect and you roll a 6, you may immediately roll an additional die and add that result to the total. This effect can occur a number of times in a single instance equal to the number of dice in the set, up to a maximum of five times.



The Crossroads. At a crossroads, the characters encounter Thanariel, which approaches peacefully and warns them a close friend or loved one will soon be taken from them by death's own hand. Thanariel performs this service as courtesy, believing the characters deserve a chance to say their goodbyes. While Thanariel is adamant about what it must do, it is willing to entertain personal requests by the characters to delay its scythe, particularly if addressed in a friendly and respectful manner. If angered or mistreated, Thanariel may become vengeful, cutting short the life of the characters' associate as soon as possible.

On Strike. Thanariel has begun shirking its duties, inexplicably taking no interest in continuing its role as the multiverse's agent of death. This turn of events is met with both joy and dire concern. Powerful forces worry that without the Angel of Death, many dangerous beings will soon menace the world unchecked, while others feel the universe has finally been freed from the yoke of oppression that was Thanariel's judgment. Those who respect the cosmic order request that Thanariel be tracked down and convinced to return to its post, a perfect job for mighty adventurers. Such heroes will need every ounce of their strength, for there are many equally mighty forces who would gladly see Thanariel never return and are willing to do anything to stop it.

COMBAT

Battling death itself is a suicidal prospect. Most submit willingly to the reaper's power, knowing they could never dare to challenge its prodigious might. Should one be foolish enough



to face down Thanariel, one must contend with powers that make even gods envious. The celestial does far more than kill. It assures death with every action, utterly overpowering any defense and striking with catastrophic might. To even look upon Thanariel's form is to invite death, as its visage can strike down most mortals on sight. Those who have spoken with or seen the Angel of Death before combat soon find this seemingly disarming demeanor to be a deadly ruse. Thanariel has slain lethal beings across millennia and is rarely surprised (or impressed) by whatever meager resistance mortals present against it. There is no goal beyond the death of Thanariel's enemies. Pain, justice, and cruelty are pointless concepts and distract from the task at hand. Such merciless and efficient killing is unrivaled, with no mercy afforded to those who dare raise blades against the reaper.

Combat Encounter Example: The Deathly Hand of Fate

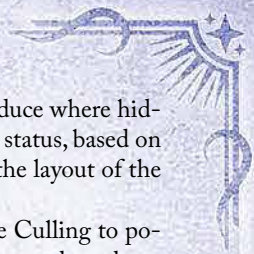
Through an act of providence and prophecy, a great queen becomes aware of Thanariel's intention to kill her within a fortnight. Having no wish to die so unceremoniously, the queen begins crafting an elaborate and well-defended fortress to prevent death

from claiming her. With such a mighty battle ahead, the queen puts out the call for any and all adventurers daring enough to face death head on. Any who accept can expect the best assistance, equipment, and tools money can buy. The question is, will it be enough? No fortunes will be paid out if the queen is slain, and prophecy dictates she must survive until the next full moon to turn Thanariel from its task. Fortifying the queen's castle and ensuring her safety are paramount to such an encounter. Merely detecting Thanariel is a challenging proposition, let alone facing it in battle. It is far wiser for the queen's defenders to play for time, forcing Thanariel to eat up precious days searching for its quarry or dealing with troublesome obstacles.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Lurker

Thanariel is not a complex enemy. Its attacks and powers are simple but terrifyingly effective. As a lurker, Thanariel utilizes stealth to get the upper hand. However, where other creatures use the Hide action to conceal themselves, Thanariel instead uses its Shadow of Death feature to always be potentially hidden from enemies. Thanks to its invisibility, Thanariel can



be hidden almost anywhere, and anyone daring enough to look for it runs the risk of encountering its Doomed to Die feature. This puts characters in a bind. Do they contend with an invisible, undetectable assassin cutting them down? Or do they dare gaze upon death and risk taking terrific damage, or even dying instantly?

Note that to benefit from Reaper's Mercy, Thanariel must have advantage on its weapon attacks. This is best accomplished by attacking targets that cannot see through its invisibility or by using its hidden status to gain the advantage. Remember, once Thanariel has been detected by a creature via its Shadow of Death, it cannot rely on that feature again for quite some time to become hidden. This means you should prioritize creatures that have not detected Thanariel to gain full use of Reaper's Mercy, while letting Doomed to Die handle those that can perceive

Thanariel. Remember, the characters can still deduce where hidden creatures are without defeating their hidden status, based on the nature of the attacks they are receiving and the layout of the battlefield.

If things are getting particularly hairy, use The Culling to potentially cut down characters instantly or deal tremendous damage. You may be hesitant to utilize an effect that could potentially kill multiple characters simultaneously, but remember: the characters are facing the Angel of Death. There will likely never be another encounter more befitting of such a mechanic, and the party should expect effects like this.

Don't forget to use Inevitable Stride if Thanariel is having trouble navigating the battlefield. It can be absolutely terrifying to witness the angel pass through seemingly impenetrable barriers and cut down the characters hiding behind them.

THANARIEL

Large celestial, neutral

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 635 (41d10 + 410)

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	18 (+4)	30 (+10)	24 (+7)	26 (+8)	22 (+6)

Saving Throws Con +18, Int +15, Wis +16, Cha +14

Skills Insight +16, Perception +24, Religion +16, Stealth +20

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 34

Languages all

Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

TRAITS

Doomed to Die. When a creature that can see Thanariel starts its turn within 60 feet of Thanariel, Thanariel can force it to attempt a DC 24 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, if the creature has 100 or fewer hit points, it dies instantly. If it has 101 or more hit points, it is instead reduced to 100 hit points.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it cannot see Thanariel until the start of its next turn and is cursed until it next sees Thanariel. While cursed in this manner, a creature cannot regain hit points and cannot succeed on death saving throws. If the creature looks at Thanariel in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

Mythic Resistance. When Thanariel fails a saving throw, it can spend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Reaper's Mercy (1/Turn). Thanariel deals an extra 70 (20d6) necrotic damage when it hits a living target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll.

Additionally, Thanariel's weapon attacks are magical, it has a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made using weapons (included in the attack), and Thanariel cannot be disarmed of its scythe.

Shadow of Death. Thanariel is always invisible and hidden (detect DC 30) from all senses unless it chooses to reveal itself. Once a creature has detected Thanariel, this effect is suppressed for that creature for 1 hour.

ACTIONS

Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) slashing damage.

Inevitable Stride. Thanariel becomes an incorporeal shadow until the start of its next turn. While in this state, Thanariel can pass through other creatures, objects, and magical barriers as though they were difficult terrain. If Thanariel ends this movement inside an object, it is shunted to the nearest unoccupied space and takes 5 (1d10) force damage for every 5 feet it is moved in this manner.

The Culling (Recharge 5–6). Each creature of Thanariel's choice that it can see within 300 feet of it must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or be forced to look at Thanariel and be subjected to its Doomed to Die feature, even if it would ordinarily be outside the effect's range.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

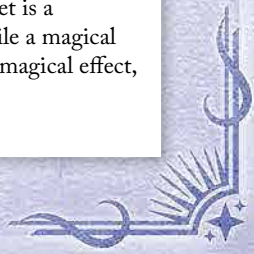
Thanariel can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Thanariel regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Hide. Thanariel takes the Hide action.

Move. Thanariel moves up to its speed.

Scythe (Costs 2 Actions). Thanariel makes a single Scythe attack.

Touch of Unmaking (Costs 3 Actions). Thanariel touches an object or magical effect within reach. If the target is a nonmagical object, it is immediately destroyed, while a magical object takes 200 necrotic damage. If the target is a magical effect, the effect immediately ends.



Easier Tactics – The best way to make Thanariel easier is by giving the party awareness of Thanariel’s presence. Even if the angel is still hidden, letting the characters know it’s around provides them with opportunities to coordinate a defense or

strategy before their teammates start getting cut down. Refrain from using The Culling until the last round or two of combat, and have Thanariel make plenty of Scythe attacks when it wouldn’t benefit from Reaper’s Mercy.

MYTHIC THANARIEL

Large mythic celestial, neutral

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 2,805 (181d10 + 1810)

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	21 (+5)	30 (+10)	25 (+7)	32 (+11)	24 (+7)

Saving Throws Str +20, Dex +16, Con +21, Int +18, Wis +22, Cha +18

Skills Insight +22, Perception +33, Religion +18, Stealth +27

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 44

Languages all

Challenge Mythic 7

TRAITS

Doomed to Die. When a creature that can see Thanariel starts its turn within 60 feet of Thanariel, Thanariel can force it to attempt a DC 32 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, if the creature has 100 or fewer hit points, it dies instantly. If it has 101 or more hit points, it is instead reduced to 100 hit points.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it cannot see Thanariel until the start of its next turn and is cursed until it next sees Thanariel. While cursed in this manner, a creature cannot regain hit points and cannot succeed on death saving throws. If the creature looks at Thanariel in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

Mythic Resistance. When Thanariel fails a saving throw, it can spend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Reaper’s Mercy (1/Turn). Thanariel deals an extra 140 (40d6) necrotic damage when it hits a living target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll.

Additionally, Thanariel’s weapon attacks are magical, it has a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made using weapons (included in the attack), and Thanariel cannot be disarmed of its scythe.

Shadow of Death. Thanariel is always invisible and hidden (detect DC 37) from all senses unless it chooses to reveal itself. Once a creature has detected Thanariel, this effect is suppressed for that creature for 1 minute.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Thanariel takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. Thanariel can’t use the same effect twice in a row.

Final Death. Thanariel chooses the remains of a creature it can see within 120 feet of it and administers final death. The target cannot be returned to life by any means (including by Deific effects) unless Thanariel allows it.

Lifebane’s Edge. Thanariel’s scythe becomes imbued with fell power. Until the next initiative count of 20, creatures cannot have resistance or immunity to damage dealt by Thanariel’s weapon attacks. Additionally, the damage of Thanariel’s Reaper’s Mercy feature increases by 35 (10d6) necrotic damage. This effect is cumulative, to a maximum of 350 (100d6) necrotic damage. This damage increase lasts until Thanariel finishes a short or long rest.

ACTIONS

Scythe. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 36 (4d12 + 10) slashing damage.

Inevitable Stride. Thanariel becomes an incorporeal shadow until the start of its next turn. While in this state, Thanariel can pass through other creatures, objects, and magical barriers as though they were difficult terrain. If Thanariel ends this movement inside an object, it is shunted to the nearest unoccupied space and takes 5 (1d10) force damage for every 5 feet it is moved in this manner.

The Culling (Recharge 5–6). Each creature of Thanariel’s choice that it can see within 300 feet of it must succeed on a DC 30 Wisdom saving throw or be forced to look at Thanariel and be subjected to its Doomed to Die feature, even if it would ordinarily be outside the effect’s range.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Thanariel can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature’s turn. Thanariel regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

Hide. Thanariel takes the Hide action.

Move. Thanariel moves up to its speed.

Scythe (Costs 2 Actions). Thanariel makes a single Scythe attack.

Touch of Unmaking (Costs 3 Actions). Thanariel touches an object or magical effect within reach. If the target is a nonmagical object, it is immediately destroyed, while a magical object takes 200 necrotic damage. If the target is a magical effect, the effect immediately ends.

Harder Tactics – The only thing worse than fighting the Angel of Death is getting surprised by it. Thanks to its formidable stealth, the angel can easily sneak up on the party and lay them low. This puts the characters immediately on the defensive, forcing them to choose between recovering from the horrific damage Thanariel inflicts or trying to simply perceive what is killing them. For a particularly cruel strategy, open with The Culling, which when combined with Doomed to Die may cause character deaths within the first few rounds of combat. Remember to use the Hide action to withdraw, reposition, and tactically confuse the players. Even if Thanariel isn't invisible, most battlefields have opportunities for creatures to conceal themselves and strike again from the shadows.

Mythic Thanariel

The mythic incarnation of Thanariel is a being which even the gods fear. Characters with only a few hundred hit points run the serious risk of being killed nearly instantly by Thanariel's blows, which get continually more powerful the longer the fight goes on. What's worse, the Final Death mythic action ensures that if an Epic character goes down during the fight, they stay down. This is catastrophic, forcing the party to focus all their efforts on keeping the party healthy or risk losing a team member for the remainder of the encounter. Lifebane's Edge ensures that no defense is foolproof against Thanariel, which when combined with the enhanced damage on Reaper's Mercy ensures only the beefiest characters can withstand a direct hit from Thanariel (let alone a critical hit). Deaths in this encounter are expected and encouraged, as Epic characters have the means to recover from such devastating assaults at least once or twice.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, Thanariel causes the following effects.

Grim Duty. Once per short or long rest, Thanariel can choose to magically teleport itself to an unoccupied space within 300 feet of a living creature whose life Thanariel intends to reap.

Soul Shepherd. Thanariel holds tremendous power over the souls of living creatures it has slain. When Thanariel slays such a creature, it can choose to cause one of the following effects.

- Thanariel sends the soul to the Hills of Forgotten Graves.
- Thanariel sends the soul to an afterlife of Thanariel's choosing.
- Thanariel destroys the soul utterly.

Additionally, by touching the remains of a creature Thanariel has slain, it can restore the creature to life. This effect closes all wounds, cures all diseases, restores the creature to its hit point maximum, lifts any curses affecting the creature when it died, and replaces damaged or missing organs or limbs.

RESOURCES

Thanariel wants for little and has learned to rely on its own power to overcome most obstacles. The only things Thanariel truly lacks is knowledge and insight. Rarely does the Angel of Death fully understand the nature of what it attempts to slay, and when faced with challenging opponents stands to benefit



tremendously from others' experience and expertise. To that end, Thanariel consults with the hosts of forgotten souls within the Hills of Endless Graves, using their life experiences as a sort of grim library in the event tactical or useful knowledge is required for an upcoming job.

ALLIES

Few beings willingly ally with death, and Thanariel has no interest in being a domineering overlord to a host of supplicants. However, many beings choose to aid the Angel of Death in its

mission, believing Thanariel's role to be worthy of assistance despite the horrors that often result. These beings form the secretive "Church of the Reaper," which performs unprompted acts of service for the Angel of Death such as maintaining its abode and gathering information.

The Counselor (Level 20 Bard/Level 6 Truespeaker Dwarf).

Known only as the Counselor, this mighty Epic bard learned Thanariel's true name, and in doing so gained tremendous power over the Angel of Death. However, rather than exploit this advantage, the dwarf chose to befriend and aid Thanariel. Seeing the celestial as melancholy and depressed from millennia of drudgery, the Counselor routinely engages in therapeutic conversation with Thanariel, hoping to revitalize the angel's passion for its work and "life" in general. Most view this practice as extremely misguided at best, and frightfully dangerous at worst, but the Counselor has dug in deep within the Hills of Endless Graves and refuses to leave until their work is complete.

The Forgotten. Drifting across the drab landscape of the Hills of Endless Graves are the ghostly visages of countless souls taken by Thanariel that were unwelcome everywhere else. These poor spirits were so hated, feared, or misunderstood that no afterlife would take them, and in a rare act of compassion Thanariel offered up its own home for them to find rest. While hardly ideal, the Hills of Endless Graves is far better than oblivion, and the so-called "forgotten" are grateful to the Angel of Death for providing them with an alternative to destruction. These spirits range from ghosts to specters to far more dangerous incorporeal undead, most of which never betray Thanariel under any circumstances.

The Pale Horse. For when Thanariel must travel swiftly and without subtlety, it utilizes the only companion that has been with it since day one. Known only as the Pale Horse, this skeletal, undead steed charges across the land and between worlds, transforming Thanariel into an apocalyptic horseman unleashing death to all in its path. Its barding is fashioned from adamantine plates, and from its back protrude a set of ghostly, black wings.

REWARDS

If defeat is certain, Thanariel surrenders before its own destruction, wishing to meet death with the same dignity and grace it witnessed in so many mortals across the millennia. If those who have triumphed over the Angel of Death elect to spare its life, Thanariel offers a tremendous boon that no other could match. It pledges not only to never claim the souls of the victors and their loved ones, but it ensures that death never takes them without just cause and becomes their advocate against the multiverse in matters of life and death. Few could ask for a better ally on this cosmic scale, and Thanariel is true to its word, doing everything in its power to defend against untimely, unfair, or undeserved death.

THE PALE HORSE
Huge undead, neutral

Armor Class 23 (adamantine barding)

Hit Points 207 (18d12 + 90)

Speed 80 ft., fly 160 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	24 (+7)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Wis +8, Cha +7

Skills Perception +13

Damage Resistances necrotic, radiant

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23

Languages understands all languages but can't speak

Challenge 16 (15,000 XP)

TRAITS

Deadly Charger (1/Turn). When the horse spends movement and moves in a straight line for at least 60 feet and either it or its rider makes a melee attack immediately at the end of that movement, the attack deals an additional 3 (1d6) damage for every 10 feet traveled in the line.

Loyalty. The horse cannot be compelled to act in a manner that goes against the interests of Thanariel. Additionally, when the horse rolls initiative and is being ridden, it can choose to have its turn occur simultaneously to Thanariel.

Soulbound. While ridden, the horse cannot be slain.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The horse makes two Hooves attacks.

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., up to four different targets. *Hit:* 21 (4d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage.

Planeshift (1/Short Rest). The horse casts the spell *planeshift*, targeting only itself. Willing creatures wishing to journey with the horse must be riding it instead of linking hands.

THE ONCE & FUTURE KING

Wielder of Excalibur

"We cannot build a future by avenging our past."

DESCRIPTION

With a long list of epic deeds to his name, it is difficult to see the Once and Future King as a mere man, but a mere man he is, albeit one wielding the most powerful sword ever forged. When questing or on the battlefield, King Arthur is clad head to toe in resplendent armor imbued with ancient magic. Always at his side is the blade *Excalibur*, which, when coupled with its legendary sheath, ensures victory on any battlefield. No matter how bloody the battle, the king's noble countenance never falters, meeting each challenge with dignity and grace that seems impossible for a warrior. To be in the king's presence is to witness honor incarnate. He weighs each action's moral consequences with wisdom gained through a lifetime of humility and studious education. When in the company of his many allies, the king showcases his intense humanity. He cares deeply for his subjects and loves his friends with fierce loyalty. To challenge the Once

and Future King is to challenge both the man and the human spirit's enduring virtue.

THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

A campaign centered on the Once and Future King deals heavily with politics and morality. The Once and Future King is a paragon of virtue, and what makes his story compelling is how he ultimately fails, despite having every advantage. Any character who is purely good is not interesting. What is interesting is seeing how such characters try to exist in a world that constantly pushes them from grace. A campaign featuring the king starts as a fun medieval romp with everything going right, then slowly descends into darkness as both friends and foes drive him

PROFILE

Personality: Honorable

Ideals: The Once and Future King seeks a world where all peoples can live free from cruelty and injustice. However, the ends do not justify the means, and might does not make right. The king must win the battlefield and the hearts of those he seeks to empower, all without sacrificing the noble ideals that gave him power in the first place.

Bonds: King Arthur heads the Knights of the Round Table, an order of heroes that share his grand vision for the future. When seated at the round table, everyone is equal before both gods and kings. Above all else, the king believes in this organization's efficiency and considers it an essential asset.

Flaws: Honor is a double-edged sword. The king's greatest champion, Sir Lancelot du Lac, is engaged in a secret affair with the queen. Even worse than the affair itself is the king's intentional ignorance of the

relationship. Public exposure of the affair would threaten to undo the king's hard-won reputation, and by allowing the situation to fester, he continues to endanger his kingdom.

Legend: Destiny is a cruel and difficult teacher. When a young boy pulled a sword from a stone and became king, it was only the beginning of what would become an arduous but glorious tale. Uniting a nation, founding an order of knights, slaying dragons—these epic deeds are but footnotes in the story of the Once and Future King's destiny. From a world of darkness and cruelty, he forged a kingdom of honor and virtue. With his mighty sword *Excalibur* in hand and a legion of knights at his back, the Once and Future King is a shining example of humanity. However, his tale is not without tragedy. Along the way, the king was viciously betrayed by several of his knights, was manipulated by sinister sorcery, and fell prey to short-sighted ambition. King Arthur's story is destined to always end in tragedy, for no paragon of virtue can stand for long in a cruel world.

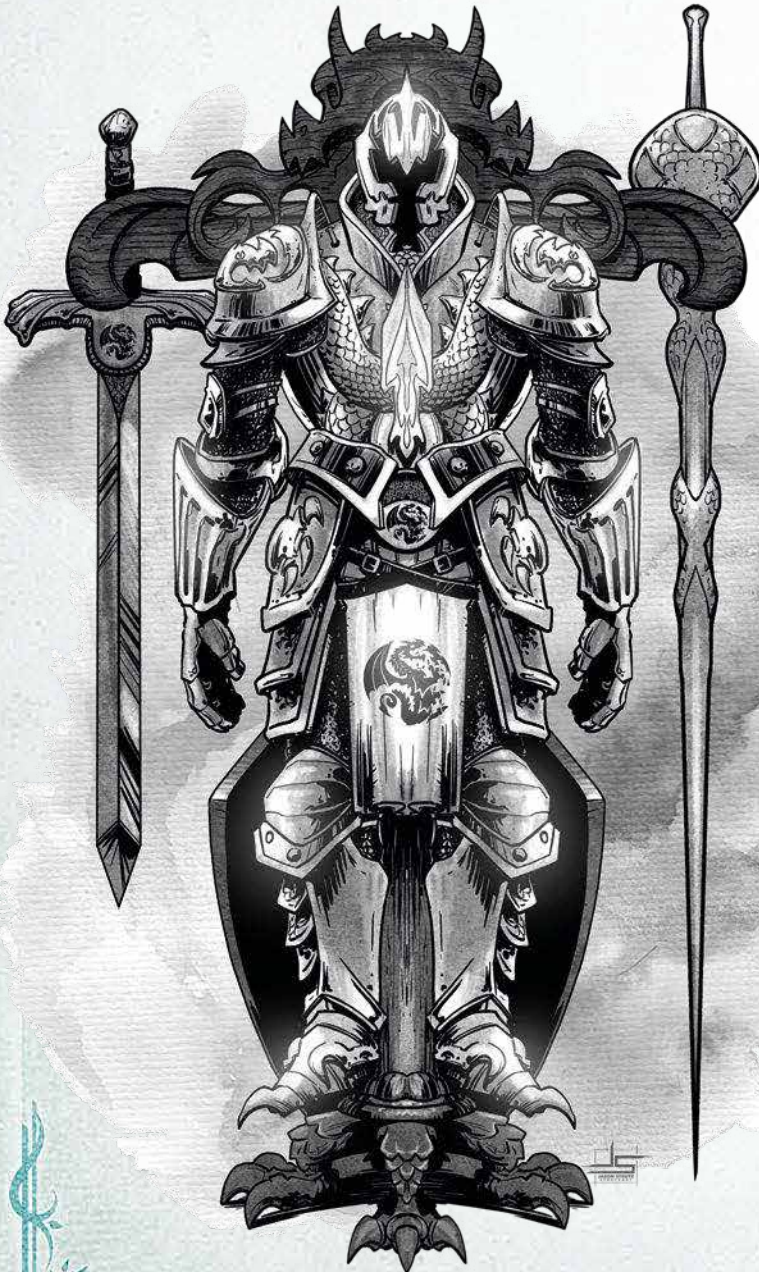




toward demise. The party must contend with the machinations of Camelot, choosing at every turn to uphold the king's decisions or ultimately betray his authority.

INTRODUCTION

The beginning of a campaign featuring King Arthur should feel like a storybook tale of knights and dragons. At the start of the campaign, it is essential to introduce the characters to the kingdom of Gramarye and the knights who protect it. Perhaps the party is given quests by the king to prove their worth, receiving commandments to slay evil dragons and tyrants to secure their places as Knights of the Round Table. Perhaps the party are visitors to the land of Gramarye and find Camelot in need of their capabilities. This campaign introduction is action packed and sets the party up to interact with all the major political players in the court of Camelot.



Code of Honor

In this chapter, the words *honor*, *honorable*, and *dishonorable* are used a lot. These words don't have objective definitions but rather mean different things to different people and cultures. The important question to ask here is, what do those concepts mean concerning the Once and Future King? The king follows a particular code of conduct similar to that of archetypal Western medieval knights we see in fantasy stories. Here is a list of tenets common to that archetype, which you can use to decide what the Once and Future King would consider honorable or dishonorable.

A knight must maintain faith in both gods and country.

A knight must protect the weak and defenseless.

A knight must obey those placed in authority and guard the honor of their fellow knights.

A knight must fight for the welfare of all.

A knight must speak the truth at all times.

A knight must eschew unfairness, meanness, and deceit.

A knight must persevere to the very end of any enterprise begun.

A knight must never refuse a challenge from an equal.

A knight must never turn their back upon any foe.

CONFLICT

Once the party members have become trusted members of the king's court, they begin to see the troubles brewing behind the facade of perfection. The Once and Future King is truly worthy of his royal station, but many would see an end to a king destined to live forever. Stirring the central conflict of this campaign are several plots that threaten to unravel the status quo of Camelot. One thread is the ongoing affair between Queen Guinevere and the king's greatest champion, Sir Lancelot du Lac. While the king chooses to remain willfully ignorant of the situation, others in the court have begun to notice the growing tension between the three courtiers. In addition to threats inside the walls of Camelot, destructive rumors have started to circulate through Gramarye about an ever-increasing threat to Arthur's rule. With the help of a cabal of sorcerers, a young warrior named Mordred is amassing an army of monsters to bring war to the kingdom. Worst of all, the rumors say that Mordred may even be Arthur's illegitimate son. As the king and party are forced to deal with these growing threats, it becomes clear that the mounting pressure from all sides is driving the Once and Future King away from staunchly upholding his principles. The apex of this climate might occur when King Arthur suddenly abandons Camelot in the name of a quest to find some storied relic. With the king's sudden departure, the remaining Knights of the Round Table—and the party—must deal with attacks from Mordred's forces and the people's rapidly growing disapproval of their king.



CONCLUSION

Since Arthur is undefeatable while he possesses *Excalibur*, the campaign's conclusion deals with how the Once and Future King loses the protection of the sword. The most likely scenario is that the king questions whether he is still worthy of *Excalibur* and challenges the party to a fight to settle the matter. Arthur takes defeat at the hands of a worthy adversary as a sign that he should no longer wield the legendary blade. Setting the stage for the king to make this decision is critical. Perhaps everything begins to fall apart when Arthur returns from his holy quest and finds Camelot falling to pieces. Or maybe Guinevere and Lancelot have fled the castle together, causing the king to spiral into darkness. Set the final battle against a dramatic scene to raise the stakes, like an invasion from Mordred's forces or a dragon attack. Arthur does not relinquish *Excalibur* unless the situation is truly dire, so the campaign's conclusion must be an amalgamation of impossible odds the party needs to overcome to save Gramarye.

CHALLENGES

The Once and Future King can pose combat, exploration, or social challenges to characters who interact with him.

EXPLORATION

A king is nothing without a kingdom. Gramarye, the magical realm where the Once and Future King holds court, is home to shining knights, cunning mages, and deadly dragons. It's dangerous and in need of virtuous heroes to make it safe for the common folk. The Once and Future King challenges all heroes who arrive at his court with quests, expecting them to act with honor

and integrity in the face of any challenge. The land of Gramarye is geographically fluid, with countless hidden realms and strange lands to be discovered. The king himself is no stranger to questing and can even be encountered on the road alongside his network of trusted allies.

Regional Effects

The lands surrounding Camelot are afforded all the protections and privileges of Arthurian rule, which has created the following effects within the kingdom of Gramarye:

- Gramarye citizens have innate protection from certain types of creatures: aberrations, celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead. This protection means a citizen cannot be charmed, frightened, or possessed by any creatures of these types.
- The Knights of the Round Table regularly patrol the kingdom and are never far away when trouble strikes. If combat breaks out within the kingdom's confines, a patrol of 1d6 knights arrives within 10 minutes to investigate the situation.
- King Arthur's just rule has brought the citizens great bounty. A hungry or weary traveler can always find a free meal or place to stay the night while in Gramarye.

If the Once and Future King is killed, these effects fade after 1 year.

The Once and Future King's Lair

The Once and Future King's lair is the court of Camelot. The court includes the central castle where King Arthur lives and the entirety of the city built inside a defensive wall. Camelot is a bastion of order, where the Knights of the Round table keep the peace and encourage citizens to embody the virtues demonstrated

by its king. The city is a thriving metropolis, full of resources and people ready to lay down their lives for the king. Thanks to Arthur's trusted advisor Merlin, the city also has various enchantments, subtly working to keep peace within its walls. While the Once and Future King is in Camelot, he can call upon various mundane and magical assistance in times of need.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Once and Future King can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If the Once and Future King uses his mythic statistics, he can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. The Once and Future King can't use the same effect two rounds in a row:

- The Once and Future King casts the *calm emotions* spell (DC 20) without expending a spell slot.
- The Once and Future King commands obedience from each creature of his choice that he can see within 120 feet of him. Each target must succeed on a DC 20 Charisma saving throw or be charmed by the king for 8 hours. While charmed in this way, a creature regards the king as its trusted leader. If harmed by the king or commanded to do something contrary to its nature, a target ceases to be charmed in this way. A creature who successfully saves against this charm effect cannot be charmed in this way again until the following dawn.
- The Once and Future King imbues his allies with hope. He can choose any number of creatures he can see within 60 feet of him. Until the beginning of initiative count 20 on the next turn, each target has advantage on Wisdom saving throws and death saving throws and regains the maximum number of hit points possible from any healing.

Exploration Encounters

The Knights of the Round Table are constantly traveling the lands of Gramarye, settling disputes, tracking monsters, or hunting for hidden treasures. A campaign featuring the Once and Future King is ripe with exploration encounters as the party members are sent on many quests to prove their worth.

Mists of Avalon. When one of his knights falls ill, King Arthur commands the heroes to find a cure only produced on the isle of Avalon. The isle itself is magical and is said to hide from all but the worthiest heroes. The party must travel through thick forests to reach the lake where Avalon is rumored to rest, but along the way, they are met with fights and puzzles ultimately meant to test their character. If the party passes these tests, they arrive to find the enchanted mists surrounding the isle have parted, and the priests who live there willing to grant the cure.

Blood Moon. Camelot has begun to receive reports of a bizarre series of monster attacks. Multiple towns have been beset by a gigantic bestial creature that eats both livestock and villagers during the night. Little is known about the creature (since it leaves few survivors), but it is clear that it is traveling from town to town through Gramarye and only appears on moonlit nights.

The king requests the party investigate the attacks, interview people in the various towns, and discover where the beast will strike next.

A Giant Problem. A squadron of knights tasked with investigating reports of a giant on Gramarye's borders has failed to report back. The king asks the party to follow after the knights and determine whether they are dead or in need of rescue. Upon reaching the knights' destination, the party learns an entire band of giants has moved into the area. The knights are still alive but being held prisoner in the giant camp. The characters must figure out how to extract the knights from a war camp occupied by an army without raising any alarm.

SOCIAL

The Knights of the Round Table hold court at the fortress of Camelot. In place of politicians, the many halls of Camelot are filled with knights who act as soldiers, counselors, and leaders throughout the kingdom. Any encounter with the Once and Future King inevitably involves at least some of his knights. Their many goals, backgrounds, and flaws cause constant friction at the court, whose stress is often only abated by a healthy dose of questing. Navigating this court is essential to confronting or interacting with the king, with many knights eager to challenge young upstarts who mistakenly believe their issues are important enough for the eyes of the king.

Social Encounters

An encounter centered on the Once and Future King provides ample opportunity for social interaction. King Arthur has many allies at Camelot, and all of them have personal motivations, desires, and needs that frequently conflict with one another. Outside of court, the party is likely to interact often with Gramarye citizens in need of assistance from capable heroes.

Royal Summons. Once a year, King Arthur calls all the Knights of the Round Table back to Camelot. This meeting serves as an opportunity for the knights of the realm to share news and opinions on issues facing the kingdom as well as a time of great celebration. With recent events casting shadows on the land, King Arthur enlists the party's help preparing for a grand ball. The characters must ensure food, decorations, music, and guests are handled in time for the festivities.

Dark Council. Merlin, the king's mage advisor, approaches the party in secret. He has received a message from a council of witches that reportedly have grave news to deliver. The witches' leader, a woman named Morgana Le Fey, insists that the news can only be delivered in person, and Merlin asks the party to investigate. If the party decides to take up this quest, they must travel through a faerie ring to reach the witches' domain. If they survive the trip, Morgana shares helpful portents regarding the troubles Camelot is about to face.

Right to Rule. A young noble lord in a remote part of Gramarye is attempting to stir up a rebellion against King Arthur. He claims that since Arthur is not of noble blood, he has no right to the crown. The Once and Future King does not take these hotheaded threats too seriously, but he does ask the party to travel to the



region to quell the growing unrest. Once the characters arrive, it is clear the noble lord has been taxing his people far beyond reason and blaming their hardship on the crown. The party must find a way to expose the lord's actions to win back the trust of the people.

COMBAT

Being human has been nothing but a boon to the Once and Future King. A proven warrior and honorable opponent, the king never fights unless there is no other choice. Even then, he carefully considers the purpose of such a battle. If the opponent can be humbled and educated rather than slain, the Once and Future King fights to instruct, even intentionally losing to appeal to the foe's better nature. Against those who cannot be reasoned with, the full fury of *Excalibur* is brought to bear. The legendary blade virtually guarantees victory, with the immortality-imparting scabbard ensuring triumph. However, if defeated by an honorable enemy, the king submits to their mercy. This surrender is the consequence of an intense moral code that the king never willingly compromises. Only fools would consider this a weakness, for the list of beings who can best the Once and

Future King in such a manner is thin indeed. In any case, battle with his majesty is a visceral, bloody experience. His armor is as strong as his skills are peerless, save one: Lancelot du Lac.

Cave Crawl. To further acquaint the party with the Knights of the Round Table, King Arthur arranges for them to accompany several knights on a quest to slay a dragon. In particular, this elder dragon has troubled Gramarye for many years, retreating into the mountains for long periods. So far, the knights haven't had the numbers to pursue the dragon into its lair and slay it. But now that the party has joined the court, it is the perfect opportunity to join their comrades on the field. This encounter is a good way to introduce the characters to any of the major players they may not have met yet, such as Sir Lancelot, Sir Galahad, Sir Agravaing, Sir Bors, Sir Gawain, or Sir Percival.

Good Sport. The characters' stay at Camelot is interrupted by the arrival of one of the Knights of the Round Table. The knight (you may choose which) has just returned from fulfilling a long and difficult quest and has yet to meet the recently knighted party. The knight asks to pit their skills against the newly minted party members in a friendly sparring match by way of introduction.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Soldier

The Once and Future King is not a complicated titan to run, but keeping him moving and choosing targets wisely is critical to using his abilities effectively. As soon as possible, use his Mount Up ability to summon a steed to ensure he can stay mobile through the fight. Once mounted, use his Carnwennan and Rhongomyniad attacks to lock down the most threatening casters and melee combatants on the field. In the first couple of rounds, these unique abilities should set the king up nicely to slash away at his foes' hit points using *Excalibur*. Keep in mind that the king can sacrifice attacks to dodge if he gets trapped, and his Shields Up legendary action makes him significantly harder to hit. Be patient, don't get surrounded, and let *Excalibur* take care of the rest.

Easier Tactics – For an easier fight, choose a Mount Up creature without a flying speed. Use Glorious Charge only once during the fight, and choose suboptimal targets to lock down with Carnwennan and Rhongomyniad.

Harder Tactics – For a harder fight, choose a Mount Up creature that can fly. While airborne, use Carnwennan and Rhongomyniad to attack targets from above. Only come down from the air to attack once the dagger and spear have caught their targets, then use Dash and the Move legendary action to return to the sky after swooping down to attack. Make sure to use Glorious Charge as often as possible to set yourself up for critical hits with *Excalibur* every time it recharges. Also, make sure to use your Shields Up legendary action as soon as possible every turn to boost your AC.

Mythic Once and Future King

The Mythic Once and Future King has several key features that work together to ensure he deals maximum damage from round to round. His Destined Victory allows him to accumulate a pool of victory dice to roll in addition to any dice he normally would and choose between them all to determine the final result. His mythic action Challenge is an opportunity to accrue even more victory dice by forcing all nearby opponents to choose between staying put or running toward him. The final difference is his Righteous Might feature, which allows him to give himself Epic advantage for a turn.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, the Once and Future King causes the following effects:

Knights of the Round Table. By performing a 1-hour ritual, the king can knight a willing humanoid creature, inducting it into his order of mighty warriors. A creature so knighted cannot willingly act against the king's interests unless doing so would be an honorable act. Additionally, creatures so knighted are also Epic creatures and may use the king's proficiency bonus (+10) instead of their own.

Noble Quests. As an action, the king can send a willing creature on a noble quest. The king details three Epic tests that must be completed to accomplish the quest: a test of will, a test of character, and a test of might. The creature has 1 year to complete the quests, during which time it must conduct itself honorably. If the creature completes its quest, the king will forever call himself an ally of that creature unless said creature gravely dishonors itself.



THE ONCE AND FUTURE KING

Medium humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 26 (+3 plate, +3 shield)

Hit Points 688 (51d8 + 459)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	12 (+1)	28 (+9)	17 (+3)	21 (+5)	30 (+10)

Saving Throws Dex +9, Con +17, Wis +13, Cha +18

Skills Athletics +17, Insight +21, Perception +13, Persuasion +18

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities frightened, incapacitated, unconscious

Senses passive Perception 28

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

TRAITS

Blessed Resistance. When the king would be affected by a spell or magical effect, he can expend a use of one of his legendary actions to be unaffected. When the king fails a saving throw, he can expend a use of one of his legendary actions to succeed instead.

Honorable Presence. The king emits an aura of honorable chivalry in a 60-foot-radius sphere, granting him and allies within the affected area the following benefits:

- Affected creatures take half damage from creatures outside the affected area.
- The king and affected allies have advantage on saving throws against creatures outside the affected area.
- Creatures within the affected area cannot be hidden or invisible to the king.

Humble in Defeat. So long as the king wears the scabbard of *Excalibur*, he cannot die and is immune to the incapacitated and unconscious conditions (included in his statistics). However, if the king is reduced to 0 hit points by an honorable opponent, he often concedes defeat and places himself at their mercy.

Magical Equipment. The king's equipment is magical, granting him the following benefits:

- The king has a +6 bonus to AC (included in his statistics).
- The king has a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls (included in his statistics).
- If the king is disarmed of any of this equipment, it magically reappears on his person at the end of his next turn.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The king makes four attacks. The king can forgo making two of these attacks to instead take the Dash, Dodge, or Help action.

Carnwennan (Dagger). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d4 + 12) piercing damage. If the target has a spellcasting feature, it must succeed on a DC 26 Charisma saving throw or be cursed. When a creature so cursed attempts to cast a spell, it must first succeed on a DC 17 Constitution ability check, or the spell fails.

Excalibur (Longsword). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 33 (2d20 + 12) slashing damage. If the attack exceeds the target's AC by 10 or more, it deals triple damage. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the king can choose to cleave it in twain.

Rhngomyriad (Spear). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 25 (2d12 + 12) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, the king can force it to attempt a DC 26 Constitution saving throw, becoming impaled by the spear on a failure. While so impaled, the target's speed is 0, and it cannot maintain concentration on spells or magical effects. A creature can be freed from impalement if a creature within 5 feet uses an action to attempt a DC 26 Wisdom (Medicine) check, freeing the impaled creature on a success. If the king uses this action option again, the creature is immediately freed from its impalement as the spear returns to the king's hand.

Glorious Charge (Recharge 5–6). The king emits a battle cry that can be heard up to 120 feet away. Each creature of the king's choice that can hear the battle cry gains the following benefits until the end of its next turn.

- If the affected creature's speed is less than 60 feet, it is instead 60 feet.
- The next hit an affected creature scores is instead a critical hit.
- An affected creature cannot willingly harm a defenseless creature.

Mount Up (Recharge 5–6). The king casts the spell *find greater steed*¹ as an action. Any creature created in this manner has its hit point maximum increased by 200 and uses the king's proficiency bonus in place of its own. The mount always acts on the king's turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The king can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The king regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. The king moves up to his speed.

Strike. The king makes a single attack.

Shields Up (Costs 2 Actions). The king gains three-quarters cover until the start of his next turn.

¹ This spell can be found in the official 5E sourcebook *XGE*.

THE MYTHIC ONCE AND FUTURE KING

Medium mythic humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 30 (+5 plate, +5 shield)
Hit Points 2,727 (202d8 + 1,818)
Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	12 (+1)	28 (+9)	17 (+3)	26 (+8)	32 (+11)

Saving Throws Str +19, Dex +11, Con +19, Int +13, Wis +18, Cha +21
Skills Athletics +19, Insight +28, Perception +18, Persuasion +21
Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures
Condition Immunities frightened, incapacitated, unconscious
Senses passive Perception 28
Languages Common, Draconic
Challenge Mythic 7

TRAITS

Aura of Honor. The king emits an aura of honorable chivalry in a 60-foot-radius sphere, granting him and allies within the affected area the following benefits:

- Affected creatures take half damage from creatures outside the affected area.
- The king and affected allies have advantage on saving throws against creatures outside the affected area.
- Creatures within the affected area cannot be hidden or invisible to the king.

Blessed Resistance. When the king is affected by a spell or magical effect, he can expend a use of one of his legendary actions to be unaffected. When the king fails a saving throw, he can expend a use of one of his legendary actions to succeed instead.

Destined Victory (1/Turn). At the start of each of his turns, the king gains a special die, known as a victory die (d20). When the king makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check and does not have disadvantage on the roll, he can choose to roll all of his victory dice, choosing his result from any of the dice rolled. These dice last until the king finishes a short or long rest.

Humble in Defeat. So long as the king wears the scabbard of *Excalibur*, he cannot die and is immune to the incapacitated and unconscious conditions (included in his statistics). However, if the king is reduced to 0 hit points by an honorable opponent, he often concedes defeat and places himself at their mercy.

Magical Equipment. The king's equipment is magical, granting him the following benefits:

- The king has a +10 bonus to AC (included in his statistics).
- The king has a +5 bonus to attack and damage rolls (included in his statistics), and damage dealt by him cannot be reduced or prevented by non-Deific means.
- If the king is disarmed of any of this equipment, it magically reappears on his person at the end of his next turn.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the king takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. The king can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Challenge. The king issues a challenge of honorable combat to each enemy creature that can hear and understand him within 120 feet of him. An affected creature must succeed on a DC 29 Charisma

saving throw or the king gains one victory die (as per his Destined Victory feature). A creature can choose to automatically succeed on this saving throw by using a reaction to move its speed toward the king by the safest possible route.

Righteous Might. The king is emboldened by the righteousness of his cause, gaining Epic advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, and ability checks until the next initiative count of 20.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The king makes four attacks. The king can forgo making two of these attacks to use his Glorious Charge, and one of these attacks to instead take the Dash, Dodge, or Help action.

Carnwennan (Dagger). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (4d4 + 12) piercing damage. If the target has a spellcasting feature, it must succeed on a DC 29 Charisma saving throw or be cursed. When a creature so cursed attempts to cast a spell, it must first succeed on a DC 22 Constitution ability check, or the spell fails.

Excalibur (Longsword). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 54 (4d20 + 12) slashing damage. If the attack exceeds the target's AC by 10 or more, it deals triple damage. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, the king can choose to cleave it in twain.

Rhngomyniad (Spear). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +22 to hit, reach 10 ft. or range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 38 (4d12 + 12) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, the king can force it to attempt a DC 29 Constitution saving throw, becoming impaled by the spear on a failure. While so impaled, the target's speed is 0, and it cannot maintain concentration on spells or magical effects. A creature can be freed from impalement if a creature within 5 feet uses an action to attempt a DC 29 Wisdom (Medicine) check, freeing the impaled creature on a success. If the king uses this action option again, the creature is immediately freed from its impalement as the spear returns to the king's hand.

Glorious Charge (Recharge 5–6). The king emits a battle cry that can be heard up to 120 feet away. Each creature of the king's choice that can hear the battle cry gains the following benefits until the end of its next turn:

- If the affected creature's speed is less than 60 feet, it is instead 60 feet.
- The next hit an affected creature scores is instead a critical hit.
- An affected creature cannot willingly harm a defenseless creature.

Mount Up (Recharge 5–6). The king casts the Epic ritual *call of the lance*² as an action. Any creature created in this manner has its hit point maximum increased by 200 and uses the king's proficiency bonus in place of its own. The mount always acts on the king's turn.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The king can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The king regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Move. The king moves up to his speed.

Strike. The king makes a single attack.

Shields Up (Costs 2 Actions). The king gains three-quarters cover until the start of his next turn.

² This spell can be found in 2CGaming's 5E supplement *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

RESOURCES

The Once and Future King possesses the following resources to further his goals and protect his people.

ALLIES

While his Knights of the Round Table are many, a few members of the king's court stand above the rest.

The Knights of the Round Table. The Once and Future King's greatest champion is Lancelot du Lac ("the ill-made knight"), who has never been bested by lance or blade. When called to battle, Arthur can muster entire armies of knights, all of whom are loyal to his cause, willing to die for an ideal and love of their king. However, the king never asks of others what he is unwilling to do himself. Other notable knights include the divinely blessed Sir Galahad, the fearsome Sir Agravain, the dutiful Sir Bors, the loyal Sir Gawain, and the humble Sir Percival, all of whom possess unique strengths the king knows how to utilize for utmost effect.

Merlin. King Arthur's other treasured ally is his longtime teacher and confidant, the archmage Merlin, whose dutiful tutelage is second to none. Those wishing to confront the king would be wise to consider Merlin his greatest ally, capable of formidable magic and blessed with future sight. Merlin is cursed to be forever an observer of the world around him, capable of only nudging destiny in the right direction. Such a nudge is always impactful but never enough to guarantee the desired outcome.

REWARDS

The Once and Future King wields many formidable weapons, but none are mightier than *Excalibur*. The greatest weapon ever forged and a gift from the Lady of the Lake, *Excalibur* never leaves the king's side. With it, he is mighty, though the blade can, in theory, be claimed by any strong enough to wield its power. While claiming *Excalibur* as a prize is no easy task, its unrivaled power makes it well worth the effort.

Excalibur

Weapon (longsword), artifact (requires attunement by a good-aligned creature)

Excalibur is a magic longsword that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. If a successful attack made with *Excalibur* exceeds the target's AC by 10 or more, the attack deals triple damage. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, you can choose to cleave the creature in twain. The creature dies if it can't survive being cut in half. A creature is immune to this effect if it is immune to slashing damage, it has legendary actions, or the DM decides that the creature is too big to be cut in half with this weapon.

Attunement. The sword allows you to attune to it immediately, without having to take a short rest. The first time you attune to the sword, it transforms you into a reflection of the goodness in your heart. Neither magic nor divine intervention can reverse this transformation. Your alignment becomes lawful good, and you gain the following traits:

- **Destiny Bond.** While you are conscious, *Excalibur* is unbreakable by any means short of divine intervention. While holding this weapon, you cannot be disarmed unless you allow it. If the sword or its scabbard are taken more than 10 feet away from you without your permission, they magically reappear on you.
- **Fearless.** While you hold the sword, you are immune to the frightened and incapacitated conditions.
- **Immortal.** While you are attuned to *Excalibur* and its scabbard is worn on your body, your hit points cannot drop below 1. Any spells or magical effects that would outright kill you fail.

Sentience. *Excalibur* is a sentient, lawful-good item with an Intelligence of 10, a Wisdom of 18, and a Charisma of 20. It has hearing and normal vision out to a range of 30 feet.

The sword communicates by transmitting emotion to the creature carrying or wielding it.



THE THRONE LORD

Master of Magic

“Knowledge. Power. Genius. Small words for small minds desperate to comprehend my achievements.”

DESCRIPTION

So named for his mastery of the mighty arcane relic over which he holds dominion, the *Siege Arcana*, the Thronelord is quite simply the greatest mortal spellcaster in existence. However, this scruffy, middle-aged human hardly looks the part. Clad in the dusty-blue robes of a humble mage, this mighty wizard needs no fancy trinkets nor mystic tools, only his trusty staff and well-worn spellbook by which he commands the greatest force in the known multiverse. His hands are stained with

ink from centuries of scribbling and research; his dirty, trim beard is brownish red, along with the rest of his unkempt hair. But when one looks past this unassuming facade and into the Thronelord's icy eyes, there can be found an unmistakable spark of brilliance beyond measure. With but a flick of his hand and a dry whisper, incalculable magics are unleashed. Meteors rain from the sky, time turns backward upon itself, and a thousand other miracles lie at the Thronelord's fingertips, each a spell practiced thousands of times and performed with effortless efficiency.

PROFILE

Personality: Scholarly

Ideals: The Thronelord seeks knowledge and understanding of magic that exceeds all others. It is not enough for the archmage to know an extraordinary truth about the mythic arts. His mastery must be indisputably superior to all other beings, even the gods. This passion is not driven by arrogance or vanity, but rather by a firm theory that only his prodigious mind can responsibly comprehend such truths.

Bonds: While his quest for knowledge has taken the Thronelord across the multiverse, he holds a soft spot in his heart for his childhood home. This simple, two-story house is magically preserved from the ravages of time. The Thronelord tends this place, an ideal childhood home, for one week every year to remind himself about the life he could have lived had he walked a different path. In his absence, the house is tended by sentient illusions of his mother, father, and brother, whose names have been lost to time.

Flaws: Scholarly work does little to build one's social skills. The Thronelord is more than awkward when it comes to social interaction, having an inescapable habit of speaking magical jargon that would make the average archmage's head spin. He finds fast talkers and intense emotions far more challenging than the "simplicity" of spellwork, swiftly retreating from any conversation he finds overwhelming or intense (which is nearly all of them).

Legend: Magic is a fundamental force at the heart of existence. Its power and presence are everywhere, as endemic to the universe as the primal forces of gravity, matter, and time. By its power reality bends and twists into inconceivable shapes, and it is spellcasters who guide magic's course. These practitioners take many forms, but it is the wizards who command magic through comprehension and study. When the Thronelord was but a bright-eyed lad apprenticing under such a wizard, his heart was full of enthusiasm and his mind bursting with inspiration. Seeing promise in the young boy, his master sought to temper the lad's ambition out of jealousy and a hubris coming from old age and unfulfilled dreams. Undeterred, the boy circumvented every attempt by his master to hold him back; he studied in secret, gathered forbidden lore, and innovated at every opportunity. When the wizard finally passed on, he was ignorant of his apprentice's efforts, leaving everything to his young ward, confident he would never amount to anything but a common village mage. Never has a wizard been more wrong. With his greatest obstacle removed, the young Thronelord embarked on what can only be described as an educational rampage of mystical discovery. Scholars can only speculate as to what the young wizard accomplished in this time, for he shared his secrets with no one, but the results are indisputable. He mastered the arts of magic like none had done before. Centuries later, the now archmage performed a series of legendary feats that defy belief, culminating in his mastery of the unconquerable mystical relic known as the *Siege Arcana*. Today the Thronelord lairs atop his mystic tower, wielding the *Siege Arcana* as a scientific instrument, unveiling new secrets of magic with every passing century.

THE THRONE LORD IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

If you have need of a powerful wizard that knows no equal, look no further. Equal parts brilliant, knowledgeable, and powerful, the Thronelord serves as the ultimate authority on the nature of magic in your campaign. What exactly this means varies from setting to setting, but one thing always holds true: the Thronelord understands more about magic than any other mortal being. What's more, this ambitious archmage is always attempting to further his understanding. This practice can take many forms: collecting mysterious lore from eras best left forgotten, experimenting with apocalyptic magic, or siphoning power from a deity. These are but a handful of examples to demonstrate to what extreme lengths the Thronelord will go to further his understanding of the mystic arts. While not as diabolical as a traditional villain and certainly not evil, the actions and goals of the Thronelord will always cast a shadow on any campaign in which magic plays a central role.

INTRODUCTION

A campaign involving the Thronelord is full of magical mysteries and otherworldly danger. While not reckless, the Thronelord has already discovered all there is to know by playing it safe, and now he plans on taking calculated risks to further his goals of magical mastery. To that end he likely enlists outside help in the form of resources, tools, and subjects who will facilitate these experiments. Inevitably, the archmage will push things too far and something will go terribly wrong. What this means for your campaign depends on how magic functions in the game world, but undoubtedly some line has been crossed, and serious consequences are imminent. Strange ripples in the fabric of reality, chaotic magic that defies attempts to control it, or other arcane phenomena are sure signs the Thronelord has meddled with forces beyond even

his prodigious intellect. It is up to the characters to undo the havoc wrought by these experiments as best they can.

CONFLICT

The thrill of discovery is an intoxicating euphoria, driving the Thronelord further toward his goals. While the suffering of innocents does not please the archmage, the promise of magical secrets beyond the ken of gods is too tempting to pass up, no matter the collateral damage. After all is said and done, the Thronelord intends to undo as much of the damage as he can, but that is small comfort to those who are struggling with the magical fallout incurred by his experiments. Should the characters transition from damage control to a more proactive response to the Thronelord's activities, the archmage responds in kind. His remarkable intelligence ensures his retaliation is precise and effective. Disruptions to the archmage's experiments at this crucial juncture are unacceptable. All it takes is a single miscalculation and the Thronelord may never get another chance to unearth an astonishing secret of magic. The farther away he can keep meddling adventurers, the better.

CONCLUSION

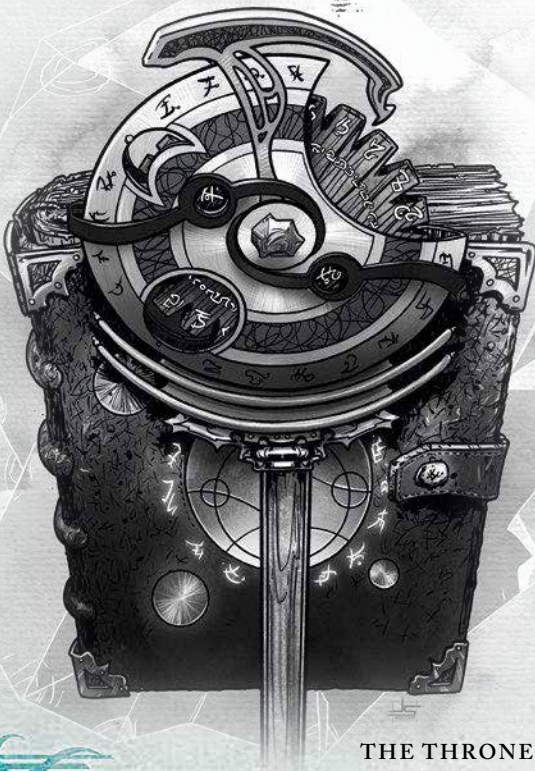
Having done everything in his power to thwart the party short of direct intervention, the Thronelord begins taking a more direct hand. Using powerful magic, he engages in formidable displays of power in an effort to deter them. With each passing attempt the Thronelord grows more frustrated, as more and more time is taken away from his precious research. Finally, the archmage snaps, striking with the fury of an erupting volcano, but somehow even more destructive. This emotional outburst is a testament to the differences between Intelligence and Wisdom. While this assault undoubtedly proves catastrophic, it is far from the wisest approach. If defeated, the Thronelord sadly gives up his quest for knowledge, sinking into a grim melancholy that keeps him holed up within the *Siege Arcana* until the end of his days.

CHALLENGES

The Thronelord can pose exploration, social, or combat challenge to characters who interact with him.

EXPLORATION

A wizard such as the Thronelord gets around. Magic is found across time and space, so the archmage must venture there to find what he seeks. These epic journeys are difficult to comprehend and even harder to follow. However, no matter where, when, or why the Thronelord leaves, he always returns to his base of operations at the *Siege Arcana*. Mantled in illusory defenses and enough defensive wards to bamboozle even the sneakiest rogue, the tower and its surrounding lands are perilous to any the Thronelord deems unwelcome (which is almost everyone). The closer one gets to the archmage, the more significant the defenses. While he does not kill arbitrarily, the research conducted within the glistening halls of the *Siege Arcana* are too important to risk interference. The obstacles the Thronelord provides are brilliant in their complexity and precise in their execution, requiring



brilliant intellect to solve efficiently. This is not an attempt by the archmage to lord his intellect over others. He simply doesn't understand people well enough to challenge them in ways that wouldn't prove troublesome for him as well.

Regional Effects

The region containing the Thronelord's lair is warped by his arcane power, which has created the following effects within his tower:

- When a creature in the area casts a spell of 1st level or higher, it may increase the level of the spell by 1, to a maximum of 9th level.
- The affected area is a special type of region known as an arcanium domain, which is detailed in this section.
- When a magic item would regain charges while in the affected area, it instead regains all its missing charges.

If the Thronelord is slain, these effects fade after 1 century.

The Thronelord's Lair

At the epicenter of the region where the Thronelord lives is the towering spire of iridescent black crystal that surrounds the *Siege Arcana*. This indestructible tower houses the Thronelord's prized possessions, including his vast library and the mighty *Siege Arcana* itself. Within its twisted halls lie countless magical defenses—impossible rooms, devious puzzles, and powerful guardians—which easily deter all but the most experienced heroes. A reflection of its master's genius, the tower can only be truly understood by one as brilliant as the Thronelord. All others must blunder about in hopes they can either force their way through countless magical obstacles or get extremely lucky in their navigational choices.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Thronelord can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If the Thronelord is using his mythic statistics, he can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. The Thronelord can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- The Thronelord consults his spellbook and makes alterations to a spell he has prepared that forces a saving throw. When he casts that spell, he may replace the type of saving throw with another of his choice, chosen from Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma. These benefits last until the Thronelord finishes a short or long rest.
- A room within the lair becomes a reality-defying tessellation of walls, doors, and windows. A creature attempting to leave the room by any means must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence check or the attempt fails, and they become unable to leave the room until the start of their next turn. This effect lasts for 8 hours or until the Thronelord uses this option again.
- The Thronelord summons a magic item he owns that he can hold, which appears in his free hand.

ARCANIUM DOMAIN

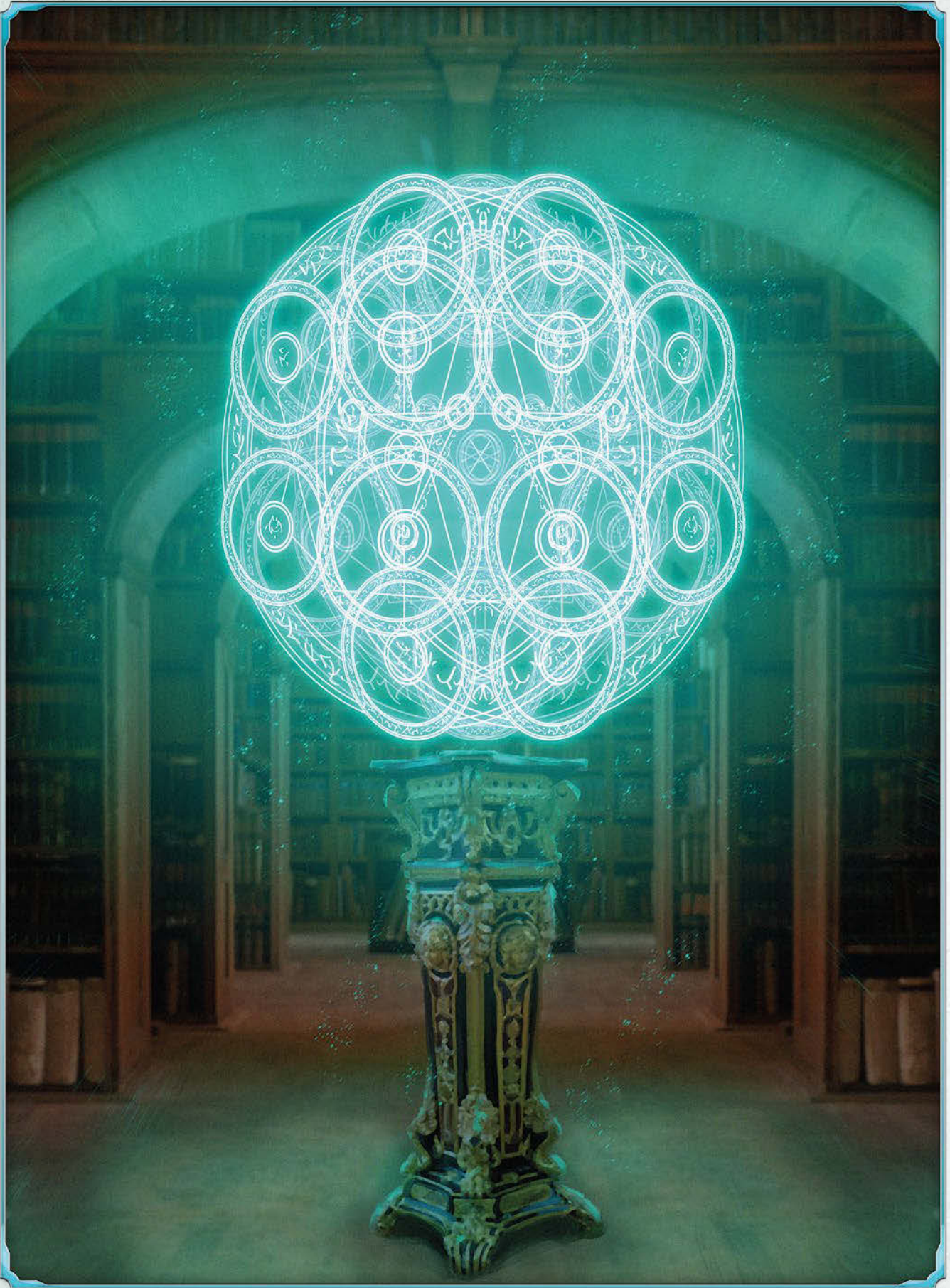
When magic gathers in great concentrations, matter can take on mystical properties that defy reality. No better example of this can be found than in arcanium domains, realms so contaminated by powerful magic their features rival the mightiest spells. The mysterious nature of arcanium domains is poorly understood. Their magic is impossible to harness but surprisingly stable, creating idyllic environments for unusual creatures or those willing to live dangerously. Each domain is affiliated with a single school of magic that never changes and embodies that school's properties in the environment. For example, an arcanium domain of illusion may generate constant mirages, while an arcanium domain of transmutation constantly warps and transforms into new fantastical shapes. Each arcanium domain possesses unique magic to be unleashed in a manner that to this day remains poorly understood. An arcanium domain has the following traits.

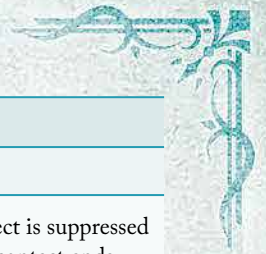
Creatures. Elementals, fey, and monstrosities are common in an arcanium domain. In addition, spellcasters of all types have good reason to explore an arcanium domain, so long as the domain is of a school of interest to said caster. Arcanium domains are far from safe, but with the aid of powerful magic and a little creativity one can live quite comfortably.

Detection. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check is required to determine an arcanium domain's true nature.

Properties. An arcanium domain causes the following effects within its area.

- **Arcane Power.** The domain can cast spells in its area without the need for any components. The domain's spell attack bonus and spell save DC is determined by the DM, and the domain can know up to fifteen spells (including Epic spells) from its affiliated school according to its School Loyalty feature. When a domain casts a spell in this manner, the spell is cast instantly, its range is always the domain's area (when applicable), and it lasts for its full duration. A domain can cast a single spell in this manner once every 8 hours.
- **Magical Marker.** Creatures in the domain's area with a Spellcasting feature radiate with magical power. Affected creatures cannot be hidden.
- **School Loyalty.** The domain is affiliated with one of the schools of magic: Abjuration, Conjunction, Divination, Enchantment, Evocation, Illusion, Necromancy, or Transmutation. Creatures inhabiting the area that cast a spell from the domain's school do not need to provide material components, and they gain a +2 bonus to their spell attack rolls and their spell save DC with that spell.
- **Waters of Magic.** Natural water in the domain is transformed into magical fluid, the type and effects of which are detailed in the Waters of Magic table. If the fluid is removed from its natural environment, it immediately transforms back into water.





Waters of Magic		
School	Description	Effect
Abjuration	Sparkling, pearlescent goo	When the water contacts a non-Epic spell or magical effect, that spell or effect is suppressed for as long as it maintains contact with the water and for 1 minute after the contact ends.
Conjuration	Brown, smooth mud	When the fluid is poured into a mold in the shape of a nonmagical object, it becomes that object over the period of 1 hour so long as the mold is not disturbed.
Divination	Perfectly clear, viscous fluid	When a creature completely submerges itself within the fluid, the creature immediately regains all features and abilities as though it had finished a long rest. A creature cannot benefit from this effect more than once a week.
Enchantment	Black sludge with starlike flecks of crystal	When a creature drinks the fluid, it becomes charmed for as long as it remains within the domain's area. A creature so charmed views the domain as its home and will not willingly leave the domain under any circumstances.
Evocation	Flowering, prismatic fluid that glows with dancing light	When a creature comes into contact with the fluid for the first time on its turn or starts its turn in contact with the fluid, it takes 35 (10d6) acid, arcane, cold, fire, lightning, poison, radiant, or thunder damage (chosen randomly or DM's choice).
Illusion	Mirrored, viscous fluid	When a creature, object, or structure comes into contact with the fluid, it becomes invisible for as long as it maintains contact with the fluid. Additionally, illusions that occupy an area completely above an area of the fluid cannot be detected as illusions by spells, magical effects, or even truesight.
Necromancy	Gray mud	When the body of a creature is submerged in the fluid, the body is consumed, and a willing creature within 15 ft. gains a number of temporary hit points equal to half the consumed creature's hit point maximum (rounded down). These temporary hit points are lost if the affected creature leaves the domain's area.
Transmutation	Fleshy, viscous fluid	When a damaged object is completely submerged within the fluid, it is instantly restored to its full hit points and repaired of any damage it has suffered. Additionally, if the object is a magical item with charges, it is instantly restored to its maximum number of charges. An object can benefit from this effect only once.

Exploration Encounters

Magic has a funny way of messing with the laws of space and time. The Thronelord is particularly adept at pushing these boundaries to their limit, utilizing magic that is as impossible to understand as it is to navigate. Since the archmage has better things to do than engage in direct confrontation, he often unleashes convoluted spells that complete their objectives in indiscernible manners. These particular effects make for challenging exploration encounters, as the characters must learn to navigate hazards and obstacles that not only don't play by the rules, but invent entirely new ones for them to follow.

The Timeways Window. A curious side effect of the Thronelord's experiments has resulted in areas of "anti-time" appearing throughout the realms. These zones serve as a window into a dimension that exists in an incomprehensible dimension where time flows backward. As the anti-time leaks into the surrounding lands, strange phenomena start to manifest, interfering with the very fabric of reality. What is worse, the closer one gets to the Thronelord's sanctum, the more severe the effects of anti-time become.

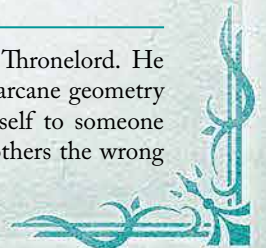
The Ur-Runes. The Thronelord has begun inscribing a gigantic rune across the face of the material plane with the help of copious

disintegrate spells. When asked what he is up to, the archmage shyly mutters, "drawing," and magically moves those in his way to a safe distance. While no one has been harmed, most folks do not appreciate being "readjusted" without their consent, not to mention the massive inscription the Thronelord has drawn in their backyard. Some say they should aid the wizard to "get it over with," while others want the weirdness to stop before things get out of hand.

Falling Around. Gravity has been broken, granting every surface its own directional gravity. While fun at first, an alarming number of injuries in a short period of time has led to general outcry. While the Thronelord says he is not responsible, he believes it can be fixed. All he requires is an elaborate list of hard-to-find materials and a daring adventuring party willing to risk life and limb to find them!

SOCIAL

Social contact has always been hard for the Thronelord. He would much prefer to do a thousand hours of arcane geometry than spend one minute trying to explain himself to someone else. Unfortunately, this aversion tends to rub others the wrong



way. Many believe the Thronelord to be a far more malevolent force than he actually is, thanks to his awkward demeanor. For this reason, the archmage prefers to deal primarily through intermediaries, sending forth more communicative minions and agents that can better articulate what he needs or is trying to do. In the rare instance he does enjoy talking, the Thronelord speaks softly and with haste, as though he is unaccustomed to the intricacies of social interaction. He will eagerly explain to a bewildered audience the details of his latest theorem or the mechanics of a particularly well-designed spell, often going over the heads of his entire audience in the process.

Social Encounters

Since direct conversations with the Thronelord are rare, many encounters with him likely involve intermediaries or indirect forms of communication. If he wants something from the party, such as their cooperation or assistance, he likely sends a courteous letter delivered by an overqualified minion. Should he wish to deter or threaten the party, strange nonsensical threats mixed with harmful magics are what qualify as standard for the Thronelord. Often the result is a frustrating game of telephone, wherein the characters attempt to communicate with the archmage through intermediaries, who in turn poorly interpret their actions, and the Thronelord responds according to his best understanding. The results can easily end in catastrophe unless one side is convinced to back down.

Kill the Messenger. A magic item in the characters' possession is of particular interest to the Thronelord due to its use of an ancient and obscure magic. He is interested in purchasing the object, so he dispatches a powerful devil to negotiate a settlement on the archmage's behalf. However, as devils are wont to do, the fiend is interested in sabotaging the deal with its nefarious talents. The result is a tricky game of deception with the fiend pitting the characters and the Thronelord against each other, doing everything in its power to antagonize both parties.

The Great Conundrum. A grand assembly of wizards is called at the Thronelord's request to assist in solving a magical calculation apparently beyond even his formidable intellect. As thousands of wizards from across the realms gather, the situation quickly devolves into attempts to find favor with the archmage in lieu of solving the problem. Frustrated beyond belief, the Thronelord seeks intermediaries who can manage the situation and create a buffer between him and the countless wizards clamoring to apprentice under the greatest wizard of the age.

Matchmaker. While searching for beings born of primordial magic, the Thronelord came across a mysterious entity composed of pure enchantment magic. His attempts to communicate with the being ended in disaster as it became apparent the being had an affinity for romance. Particularly unskilled in this area of social interaction, the archmage is now seeking a coach to rapidly improve the necessary skills and finally unlock the mysteries the entity holds.

COMBAT

To battle the Thronelord is to contend with one of the most intelligent beings in existence. This is reflected in the extraordinary

potency of his spells and deviousness of his magic. That isn't to say the Thronelord always makes good strategic choices. His Intelligence allows him to know a great many things about both his powers and those of his enemies, but that isn't the same as interpreting how best to apply them. In combat the archmage prefers efficient solutions to problems. If it's easier to relocate the characters than kill them, he pursues that objective with unrelenting persistence. Alternatively, if pushed too far he will simply delete troublesome foes with overwhelming applications of magic. Moderation is not a word the Thronelord has ever appreciated, and he has more than enough magic to spare to cast *meteor swarm* a few times to prove a point. While he has no interest in becoming a villainous wizard, the lives of others come second to his ultimate goal. Many who oppose the Thronelord have found themselves utterly obliterated, lost in time and space, or thrown across dimensions with no hope of return.

Combat Encounter Example: Battle of Wits

Hearing the characters are interested in challenging him, the Thronelord pays them a visit via a collective dream fashioned by powerful magic. Here the heroes can attack him to their hearts' content, and he can respond in kind. Such an experience proves highly educational to those who foolishly believe they could challenge the archmage's arcane might, and the best part is, no one gets hurt! Because he is feeling generous, the Thronelord provides the party with an array of magic items within the illusion to serve as a handicap and further drive the point home when the characters inevitably lose.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Controller

When running an encounter with the Thronelord, you must clearly establish what his goals are for battling well in advance. This approach is key, as preparing the right spells for the job is essential to success on the battlefield. Whether it's reducing the characters to dust, banishing them to another dimension, or transforming the heroes into newts, an optimized prepared spell list is crucial. Try to avoid giving the Thronelord too many "flavor" spells for a combat encounter. It might feel appropriate for him to know *scrying* on an average day, but the archmage is just too smart to walk into battle with that on his list. Even if you make a mistake in this regard, it can be easily fixed through a use of Arcane Preparation for when you need the right tool for the job.

Many of the Thronelord's features are designed around his spell choices, such as the potent Arcane Mastery. This action can take your favorite spell and make it even stronger. This feature is best used on higher-level spells, so save it for anything of 7th level or higher. Note that because the Thronelord can sling multiple spells in a single turn, the potential for combos is tremendous. Hitting a paladin with *bold person* is extremely troubling when it is followed up with a *disintegrate* that can't be dodged thanks to the paralyzed condition.

Don't forget to use Spell Shield! While it's conceivable the Thronelord doesn't need it if he is packing spells like *invulnerability*, it's still a huge gamble not to use it. This should be his priority either before combat or on the first turn. Once it's up, you can be far more courageous, as the shield is extremely effective against attacks. Make sure to deal with warlocks and martial characters while it is up, as the Thronelord won't last long against an angry champion fighter once Spell Shield is down.



Put all this together, and you have a dynamic encounter against one of the most potent spellcasters your characters are ever likely to face!

Easier Tactics – Only have a single spell or two pre-cast when the Thronelord enters combat, and wait at least one turn before raising Spell Shield. Avoid using spells like *maze*, *banishment*, and other “lose a turn” interactions that are both frustrating and difficult for characters to deal with. Focus on modest damaging spells and a few neat tricks with illusions and enchantments, and you should still have a tricky foe that keeps the party on their toes. Make sure to use lots of cantrips, as those spells have several counterplay options for clever characters. If you are feeling particularly generous, shift the meta of the Thronelord’s spellcasting so that any *counterspell* attempts always stop the most powerful spells from being cast.

Harder Tactics – The Thronelord should walk into battle with a perfectly optimized spell list and every spell he can muster enchanting him. Spells like *freedom of movement*, *mirror image*, and *mind blank* are must-haves. Thanks to the Arcane Mastery action, you can take this a step further by removing the concentration component on spells. This turns some effects like *greater invisibility* from good to amazing, so carefully review your spells for opportunities such as this. When you need damage, use *meteor swarm* and similarly powerful spells. You can afford the slots, and it does a good job of forcing the characters to play from behind over the course of the encounter as they struggle to recover from the relentless onslaught of spells.

Mythic Thronelord

Running the mythic Thronelord introduces a formidable arsenal of Epic spells, including the extremely potent archmage exclusive

options normally unattainable to most characters and monsters. Thanks to the Thronelord’s Epic Spell Mastery you can even cast multiple Epic spells in a single turn, an impossible feat for nearly all other beings. Use this to your full advantage by optimizing the Thronelord’s action economy. Use Epic spells with bonus action cast times to unleash devastating turns that will leave the characters scrambling for cover. Epic spells pair particularly well with Arcane Mastery, which not only removes their concentration component but can shift their damage type to unstoppable arcane damage. This is never a bad thing, so be sure to use it.

As if that weren’t enough, the Thronelord also gains two mythic actions of terrific power. Obliterate is one of the most damaging effects you will find in 5th Edition, and even in Epic legacy. It easily reduces characters to dust, particularly if you let it “cook” for three to four turns. While charging this ability, Magical Genius ensures the characters have a horrific time undoing the potent magics the Thronelord has wrought. Make sure to follow this action with your favorite spells and watch as the party wastes their time fruitlessly trying to rid themselves of these potent magics.

Note that the mythic Thronelord possesses numerous tools for defeating, but not killing, a party. Spells like *infinity room* and *microcosm* are perfect ways to defeat Epic characters, especially when death is far less permanent at that tier of play.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, the Thronelord causes the following effects.

Wizard’s Tools. The Thronelord always carries with him two pieces of equipment: his wizard’s staff and his spellbook. While he carries or holds these objects, the Thronelord can perform a single Intelligence (Arcana) ability check instantly on each of his turns without requiring any actions or effort.

Additionally, if one of these objects is removed from the Thronelord's person, they immediately reappear on his person at the start of his next turn.

Arcane Mysteries. Spells and magical effects produced by the Thronelord are inscrutable and difficult to analyze. Creatures cannot identify the school of magic or spell level of spells he casts.

THE THRONELORD

Medium humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 11 (25 with Spell Shield)

Hit Points 237 (25d8 + 125)

Speed 30 ft., teleport 60 ft. (to an unoccupied space he can see)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	31 (+10)	20 (+5)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Con +14, Int +19, Wis +14

Skills Arcana +28, History +28, Perception +14

Senses magicsense 120 ft. (see traits), passive Perception 24

Languages all, but prefers Common

Challenge 29 (135,000 XP)

TRAITS

Magicsense. The Thronelord can sense the presence of spells and magical effects within 120 feet of him. When he senses a spell in this manner, he instantly learns its school, spell level, and exact location.

Mythic Resistance. When the Thronelord fails a saving throw, he can expend an unspent legendary action to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. The Thronelord is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 27, +19 to hit with spell attacks). The Thronelord can prepare any spell from the wizard spell list, up to a combined maximum of sixty spells, but he typically has at least the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, mage hand, message, minor illusion, prestidigitation*

1st level (9 slots): *chromatic orb, magic missile, shield, silent image, sleep*

2nd level (8 slots): *detect thoughts, hold person, mirror image, misty step*

3rd level (7 slots): *blink, counterspell, dispel magic, fireball, slow*

4th level (6 slots): *arcane eye, dimension door, greater invisibility, polymorph*

5th level (5 slots): *animate objects, cone of cold, telekinesis, wall of force*

6th level (5 slots): *chain lightning, eyebite, globe of invulnerability, true seeing*

7th level (4 slots): *forcecage, prismatic spray, teleport*

8th level (4 slots): *feblemind, maze, mind blank*

9th level (3 slots): *meteor swarm, prismatic wall, time stop*

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Thronelord casts 3 spells, only one of which may be a 5th-level spell or higher. The Thronelord may forgo casting two spells in this manner to instead use his Arcane Mastery or Arcane Preparation action.

Arcane Mastery. The Thronelord mentally prepares himself to cast an extremely complex spell, which lasts until the start of his next turn or until he casts a spell. While so prepared, when the Thronelord next casts a spell of 1st level or higher, he grants the spell the following benefits (when applicable):

- The spell scores a critical hit on an attack roll of 16–20.
- The spell's save DC is 30.
- The Thronelord does not need to concentrate to maintain the spell's effects for the duration.
- If the spell has a casting time greater than an action, the Thronelord instead casts it as an action.

Arcane Preparation. The Thronelord replaces one of his prepared spells with another wizard spell of his choice, provided he has the necessary spell slots to do so.

Spell Shield (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The Thronelord mantles himself in a shield of arcane energy, which grants him 600 temporary hit points that cannot be replaced with temporary hit points from another source. While he has temporary hit points from this effect, the Thronelord is immune to critical hits and his AC is 25.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Thronelord can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Thronelord regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cantrip. The Thronelord casts a cantrip.

Move. The Thronelord moves up to his speed.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The Thronelord casts a spell of 6th level or lower.

Quick Reflexes (Costs 2 Actions). The Thronelord gains an additional reaction, which lasts until the start of his next turn.

Power Overwhelming (Costs 3 Actions). The Thronelord charges himself with arcane energy, which lasts until the end of his next turn. While so charged, the Thronelord deals maximum damage on his spell damage rolls.

THE MYTHIC THRONELORD

Medium mythic humanoid (human), lawful neutral

Armor Class 13 (31 with Spell Shield)

Hit Points 675 (50d8 + 450)

Speed 30 ft., teleport 60 ft. (to an unoccupied space he can see)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	16 (+3)	28 (+9)	36 (+13)	24 (+7)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +12, Dex +15, Con +21, Int +25, Wis +10, Cha +11

Skills Arcana +37, History +37, Perception +19

Senses magicsense 1 mile (see traits), passive Perception 29

Languages all, but prefers Common

Challenge Mythic 7

TRAITS

Epic Spell Mastery. The Thronelord can cast any number of Epic spells in a single turn, so long as he has the required actions to do so.

Additionally, the Thronelord can prepare the archmage-exclusive Epic spells from that Epic prestige class's Master of the Arcane¹ feature, including: *blackout*, *grand summons*, *hellball*, *knowledge cascade*, *microcosm*, *obsolescence*, *prismatic weapon*, and *traumatize*.

Magicsense. The Thronelord can sense the presence of spells and magical effects within 1 mile of him. When he senses a spell in this manner, he instantly learns its school, spell level, and exact location.

Mythic Resistance. When the Thronelord fails a saving throw, he can expend an unspent legendary action to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. The Thronelord is a 30th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 33, +25 to hit with spell attacks). The Thronelord can prepare any spell from the wizard or archmage spell list, up to a combined maximum of seventy spells, but he typically has at least the following spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *message*, *minor illusion*, *prestidigitation*

1st level (10 slots): *chromatic orb*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *silent image*, *sleep*

2nd level (9 slots): *detect thoughts*, *hold person*, *mirror image*, *misty step*

3rd level (8 slots): *blink*, *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *slow*

4th level (7 slots): *arcane eye*, *dimension door*, *greater invisibility*, *polymorph*

5th level (6 slots): *animate objects*, *cone of cold*, *telekinesis*, *wall of force*

6th level (6 slots): *chain lightning*, *eyebite*, *globe of invulnerability*, *true seeing*

7th level (5 slots): *forcecage*, *prismatic spray*, *teleport*

8th level (5 slots): *feeblemind*, *maze*, *mind blank*

9th level (4 slots): *meteor swarm*, *prismatic wall*, *time stop*

Epic Spells²

Tier 1 (6 slots): *antimagic ray*, *infinity room*, *magic bullet*, *reverse magic*, *spell sequencer*

Tier 2 (5 slots): *dematerialize*, *kinetic control*, *planar eviction*, *prismatic deluge*

Tier 3 (4 slots): *grand summons*, *microcosm*, *pyroclastic cannon*

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Thronelord takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. The Thronelord can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Magical Genius. Until the next initiative count of 20, any spells or magical effects the Thronelord casts cannot be countered or dispelled and are immune to the effects of antimagic.

Obliterate. The Thronelord conjures a 5-foot-radius magical sphere of destructive force that orbits him for 1 hour. As an action the Thronelord can unleash the sphere, projecting a line of force 15 feet wide of infinite length. Creatures, unattended objects, and structures in the affected area takes 110 (20d10) arcane damage, and anything reduced to 0 hit points by this effect is utterly obliterated. Creatures caught in the beam can attempt a DC 33 Dexterity saving throw, taking half as much damage on a success. When the Thronelord uses this action while the sphere already orbits him, the damage of the sphere when unleashed increases by 110 (20d10), to a maximum of 550 (100d10) arcane damage.

If the Thronelord is slain while the sphere orbits him, it instead instantly erupts in a 120-foot-radius sphere, affecting each creature, unattended object, and structure in the area as though it were caught in the line effect.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Thronelord casts 3 spells, only one of which may be an 8th-level spell or higher. The Thronelord may forgo casting two spells in this manner to instead use his Arcane Mastery or Arcane Preparation action.

Arcane Mastery. The Thronelord mentally prepares himself to cast an extremely complex spell, which lasts until the start of his next turn or until he casts a spell. While so prepared, when the Thronelord next casts a spell of 1st level or higher, he grants the spell the following benefits (when applicable):

- The spell scores a critical hit on an attack roll of 16–20.
- The spell's save DC is 40.
- The Thronelord does not need to concentrate to maintain the spell's effects for the duration.
- If the spell deals a type of damage other than arcane damage, it instead deals arcane damage.
- If the spell has a casting time greater than an action, the Thronelord instead casts it as an action.

Arcane Preparation. The Thronelord replaces one of his prepared spells with another wizard spell of his choice, provided he has the necessary spell slots to do so.

Spell Shield (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). The Thronelord mantles himself in a shield of arcane energy, which grants him 2,400 temporary hit points that cannot be replaced with temporary hit points from another source. While he has temporary hit points from this effect, the Thronelord is immune to critical hits and his AC is 31.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Thronelord can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Thronelord regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Minor Magic. The Thronelord casts a spell of 3rd level or lower.

Move. The Thronelord moves up to his speed.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). The Thronelord casts a non-Epic spell.

Quick Reflexes (Costs 2 Actions). The Thronelord gains an additional reaction, which lasts until the start of his next turn.

Epic Magic (Costs 3 Actions). The Thronelord casts an Epic spell.

Power Overwhelming (Costs 3 Actions). The Thronelord charges himself with arcane energy, which lasts until the end of his next turn. While so charged, the Thronelord deals maximum damage on his spell damage rolls.

¹The Epic prestige class feature Master of the Arcane can be found in 2CGaming's *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

²All Epic spells in this list can be found in 2CGaming's *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

RESOURCES

The Thronelord possesses the following resources to further his acquiring arcane knowledge and experimenting with magic.

ALLIES

The Thronelord isn't good with people and consequently has earned himself few allies. He instead surrounds himself with his own creations or magically enlisted companions: constructs, elementals, or outsiders all bound and created by his arcane might. Spells such as *planar binding*, *gate*, *grand summons*, and *conjure elemental* are often employed to gain allies or subjects on which to experiment. The archmage has a particular affinity for elementals, whom he believes represent a natural evolution of magic that perfectly merges physical form with arcane power. So great is his affection for these creatures, he has even devised a potent spell by which he can study and work with elementals of greater power. Known as *elemental titan*, this spell is exceptionally difficult to cast, but the benefits are well worth the effort.

NEW SPELL - ELEMENTAL TITAN

9th-level conjuration (wizards only)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 90 feet

Components: V, S, M (a ruby [if fire], sapphire [if water], emerald [if earth], or diamond [if air] worth 1,000 gp)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You summon a mighty elemental titan to serve you in battle. The titan appears in an unoccupied space you can see within range. You choose what type of elemental plane your titan hails from—air, earth, fire, or water—which determines some of its statistics, traits, and actions. The titan uses the Elemental Titan statistics block detailed in this chapter and disappears when it drops to 0 hit points or the spell ends.

The titan is an ally to you and your companions, following your commands (no action required) to the best of its ability. In combat, it shares your initiative count but takes its turn immediately after yours. If you do not issue any commands to the titan, it defends itself to the best of its ability.



REWARDS

Like all great wizards, the Thronelord has amassed an awe-inspiring library of knowledge from which he draws his research, studies the arcane, and conducts experiments. Within this vast repository hidden away within the *Siege Arcana* are countless tomes that can be found nowhere else. Bound within magical fields, enchanted with words, and perfectly indexed, this carefully curated collection is the envy of archmages everywhere. The lore contained within is second to none, with many books heralding from impossible origins such as the distant future, parallel dimensions, other universes, and hypothetical realities. Even more staggering is the fact that the Thronelord has personally annotated and edited each one to optimize its use by him. While

he likely finds this tremendously helpful, most other beings can't make heads or tails of even the simplest of his books. To gain any meaningful use of this library requires an Intelligence of 21 or higher, with some of its most complex works demanding even greater intellects to comprehend.

While the Thronelord's library is indeed a wonder, it pales in comparison to the might and wonder of the *Siege Arcana* itself. This formidable relic is both a wondrous mystery and terrific tool. Its power is one of the greatest in the multiverse, provided there is a worthy soul to wield it. In recorded history, there have only ever been three who could command its might. Few would dare challenge a wielder of the *Siege Arcana*, for even if one somehow managed to achieve victory over the Thronelord, that is far from a guarantee one can wield such radical power.

ELEMENTAL TITAN

Gargantuan elemental, neutral

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 300

Speed 40 ft., burrow 40 ft. (if earth), swim 60 ft. (if water), fly 60 ft. (hover, if fire or air)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	5 (−3)	12 (+1)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Str (9 + your proficiency bonus), Dex (3 + your proficiency bonus), Wis (1 + your proficiency bonus), Cha (4 + your proficiency bonus)

Skills Perception (1 + your proficiency bonus)

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities fire (if fire), poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 60 ft. (if earth), passive Perception (Perception skill bonus + 10)

Languages Primordial; understand the languages you speak

Challenge —

TRAITS

Elemental Bond. The titan is magically bound to you. As long as you and it are on the same plane of existence, you can telepathically call the titan to travel to you, and the titan knows the distance and direction to you. If the titan is within 120 feet of you, half of any damage you take (rounded up) is instead taken by the titan.

Cyclonic Winds (Air Only). The area around the titan in a 30-foot-radius sphere is awash in terrific winds. The affected area is lightly obscured, and enemy creatures have disadvantage on ranged attacks against creatures in the affected area.

Siege Monster (Earth Only). The titan deals double damage to objects and structures and cannot be pushed, pulled, moved, or magically teleported unless you allow it.

Fiery Body (Fire Only). A creature that touches the titan or hits it with a melee attack while within 10 feet of it takes 11 (2d10) fire damage.

Liquid Form (Water Only). The titan can enter a hostile creature's space and stop there. When it enters a creature's space for the first time on a turn, the titan can attempt to grapple the creature with its fluidic body (no action required). A creature grappled in this manner is considered underwater.

ACTIONS

Multitattack. The titan makes three attacks.

Wind Blast (Air Only). *Ranged Weapon Attack:* + (your spell attack modifier) to hit, range 120 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 18 (2d8 + 9) bludgeoning damage, and the target must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be pushed 20 feet in a straight line away from the titan.

Slam (Earth Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* + (your spell attack modifier) to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (3d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

Flare (Fire Only). *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* + (your spell attack modifier) to hit, reach 20 ft. or range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d6 + 9) fire damage.

Tentacle (Water Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* + (your spell attack modifier) to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d10 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage.

Elemental Blast (1/Day). The titan projects a blast of elemental matter in a 60-foot cone. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage plus 35 (10d6) fire damage (if fire), acid damage (if water), lightning damage (if air), or force damage (if earth), or half as much damage on a success.

Siege Arcana

Wondrous item, relic

Hidden away within a land mantled in illusions and guarded by wards is a dark tower of iridescent crystal rumored to be the source of all magic. There is no entrance to this grand spire, which rejects all but the most magically powerful creatures attempting to gain access to its elegant halls. At its precipice sits a chair carved from the same material. Its frame is jagged and uncomfortable, but it resonates with unmistakable arcane power. Its countless facets crackle and spark with magical energy, eager to channel into the first creature who dares sit upon the throne. It appears almost as if the entire complex was grown, as if magic itself gave birth to a powerful tool that magical mortals could wield should they prove themselves worthy. Whether this truly is the source of all magic is unclear, but the overwhelming magical might of the *Siege Arcana* assures any who sit upon it absolute dominion over the arcane.

Properties

While unattuned, the *Siege Arcana* has the following properties.

- **Arcane Wellspring.** While you sit upon the *Siege Arcana*, you no longer need expend non-Epic spell slots for your class spellcasting feature(s) to cast spells. Additionally, you can cast your spells without the need for material components.
- **Epic Rituals.** When you first sit upon the *Siege Arcana*, you learn three Epic rituals for which you meet the necessary primary caster restrictions. These rituals are chosen by your DM.
- **Magical Conductivity.** While you sit upon the *Siege Arcana*, when you cast a spell with a range greater than self, you may increase the range of that spell to anywhere on the same plane. Once you have used this feature, you cannot use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Attunement

Becoming attuned to the *Siege Arcana* is one of the greatest tests a mortal spellcaster can endure. When one sits upon the throne, the overwhelming magical energy from within threatens to overwhelm the user unless they actively try to prevent it. Those daring enough to endure its power must undergo a grueling assault on their person as incalculable forces course through the throne and into their body as their mind is cast into the tides of magic that flow throughout the multiverse. The experience transcends space and time, with the user enduring 1 month of bizarre illusory “tests” experienced within their own mind. To the user, these tests occur over a period of 1 month, even though to others they are seated for only mere moments. These tests are always Epic in nature, ranging from Epic ability checks, encounters with powerful foes, strange mystical puzzles, and other far more abstract phenomena. Should the user fail any of these tests, they become one with magic itself, vanishing forever. None have ever returned from such a fate, though it is believed a worthy wielder of the *Siege Arcana* could reconstitute the many heroic spellcasters who failed to unlock its secrets. Each trial by the *Siege Arcana* is different,



and it falls to the DM to construct fitting challenges for the spellcaster in question.

While attuned, the *Siege Arcana* has the following properties, in addition to its unattuned properties.

High Arcana. If you could prepare spells using your Spellcasting feature, you can now prepare any number of spells instead of the amount granted by your spellcasting feature.

Additionally, whenever you finish a long rest you may choose three non-Epic spells and one Epic spell from any class spell list and add those spells to your known spells and class spell lists (when applicable). This benefit lasts until you finish a long rest.

Finally, you can cast any number of Epic spells on each of your turns, provided you have the necessary actions to do so.

Supreme Channeling. While you sit upon the *Siege Arcana*, you may cast an Epic ritual you know as an action without the need for any preparation time. Once you have used this feature, you cannot use it again until 1 month has passed.

True Disjunction. While you sit upon the *Siege Arcana*, as an action you can touch a magical object and permanently remove all its properties. If you use this feature on an artifact or relic, you must succeed on a DC 40 Constitution saving throw or be utterly obliterated by the act, beyond the aid of all but Deific effects.

Bane

The *Siege Arcana* is loyal to its master, recognizing them as the supreme ruler of all magic. If a creature other than the one attuned to the *Siege Arcana* (if any) sits upon the throne, that creature becomes permanently cursed. While cursed in this manner, the creature cannot succeed on saving throws against spells or magical effects, and hits scored with spell attacks against the creature always score critical hits. This curse is a Deific effect and can only be removed if a creature attuned to the *Siege Arcana* chooses for it to be removed.

CTHULHU

Master of R'lyeh

"Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgab'nagl fhtagn (in its house in R'lyeh dead Cthulhu waits dreaming)."

DESCRIPTION

An alien being beyond mortal comprehension, the malevolent entity known as Cthulhu is an ancient, slumbering force. Lurking in the deepest, darkest depths of the realm's oceans, the Great Old One waits. From within the sunken city of R'lyeh, Cthulhu dreams of the day it will awake and bring utter annihilation to the mortal world. While its shapes are many and its true form beyond conception, Cthulhu always shares the same notable characteristics when acting in the physical world. Its head resembles an alien octopus, its countless tentacles dripping with ichor and twitching with malevolent intent. These purple protrusions extend in all directions, usurping the laws of nature wherever they manifest. Its corpulent body is both rubbery and scaled, with hands and feet ending in curved claws.

Multi-jointed bat-like wings emerge from Cthulhu's shoulder blades, mantling its form like a leather cloak when closed. Its very presence fractures the fabric of reality, the boundaries of physical and conscious existence cracking like fragile glass.

CTHULHU IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

A campaign featuring Cthulhu rarely begins with a mention of its name. Instead, the vile actions of the cult are exposed, leading the characters into a dangerous investigation that grows darker at every turn. As a Lovecraftian monster, the Great Old One should be presented in a context emphasizing cosmic horror, and the

PROFILE

Personality: Enigmatic

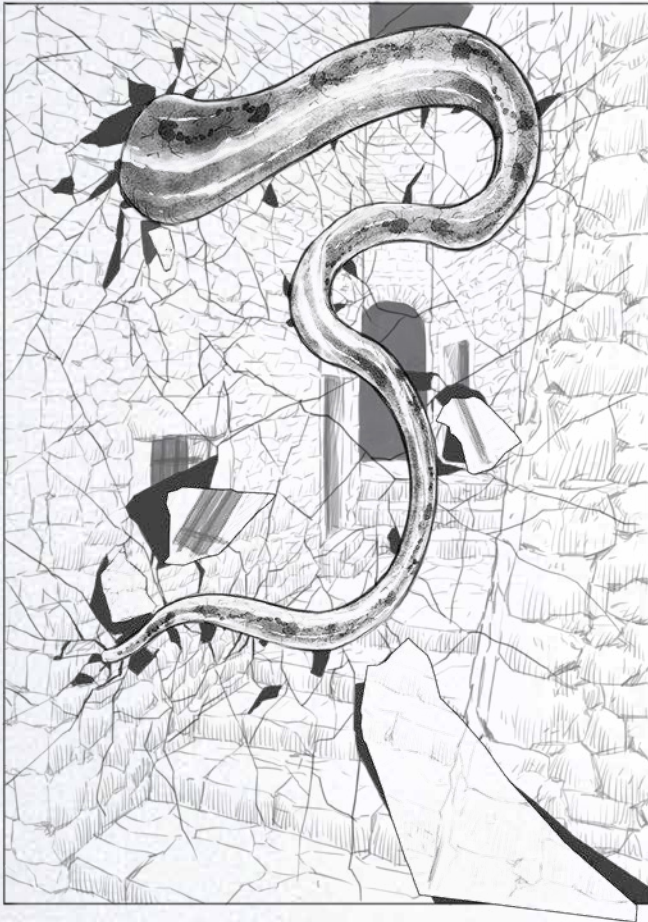
Ideals: Great Cthulhu is the ruler of an alien race from beyond the stars, whose only purpose is to subjugate worlds in the name of their master. As such, Cthulhu's mind is unknowable and ancient, bent only on fulfilling this task when cosmic fate has decreed the time is right. Cthulhu's actions are not born of love, hatred, or any other emotion lesser beings are able to comprehend. At best they can be described as the instincts of a conqueror possessing a natural right to rule, but the truth is undoubtedly far more complex and mysterious.

Bonds: Cthulhu is a figure worshipped by fanatics allured by its enigmatic power. While the Great Old One cares nothing for these followers, it still reaps considerable benefits from their adoration. The cult of Cthulhu is an essential tool in rousing the Great Old One from its slumber, performing countless grotesque rituals in the slim hope of awakening Cthulhu. These unfortunate souls include monsters, transformed humanoids, and other countless horrors. Once Cthulhu wakes, these multitudes are unleashed upon the world in an apocalyptic wave, heralding their master's awakening with bloody carnage.

Flaws: Cthulhu, like the other Great Old Ones, regards most creatures as unworthy of consideration. This hyper fixation on fulfilling cosmic goals leaves Cthulhu blind to the potential of lesser beings. With but a fraction of its power, Cthulhu could annihilate most of its enemies in an instant, but it simply does not care or understand this to be true. This inability to comprehend its enemies has proven to be Cthulhu's downfall again and again, as intrepid investigators, brave heroes, and learned scholars work tirelessly to ensure the Great Old One never rises.

Legend: Before humanoids ever walked the planet, a great race descended from the stars. The herald of their race, an infinitely wise being called Cthulhu, looked upon the land and decided it was fit for conquering. Cthulhu called the seas to quench the world's molten surface, called the stones forth to make towering structures, and crowned itself ruler of all. For many years Cthulhu reigned from the dreadful city of R'lyeh, but when the stars changed, all was undone. The waters and the earth betrayed Cthulhu, plunging R'lyeh into the boiling seas. Before all was lost, great Cthulhu condemned itself and the people into a deathly sleep. In this sleep, the creatures of R'lyeh are preserved until the stars change once again. And when they change, Cthulhu shall rise to punish the traitorous world and revel with its followers in glory once more.

material presented in this section reinforces this model. Cthulhu is a horrific foe, menacing the world with vile cults, unspeakable monsters, and eldritch magic. Opposing such a force is to face the unknowable, requiring terrific bravery and questionable judgement. With such power comes a sinister presence. The cult of Cthulhu should be everywhere in your campaign, working from the shadows to wake their patron and spread its influence. The characters' investigations should slowly reveal the full magnitude of what they face and leave them with a single, dire task: to face the Great Old One on the battlefield and return it to slumber. Cthulhu's exact agenda should be shrouded in mystery throughout the campaign. Few people in the world have any knowledge of the Great Old Ones and their goals. Every clue the party gathers should come with a hefty price and feel more and more like a step away from the safe world they know. This descent into the bizarre and abstract is what forms the heart of cosmic horror.



INTRODUCTION

While Cthulhu has existed since time immemorial, its cult works tirelessly to recruit more followers and perform despicable services in the Great Old One's name. Inevitably these sinister actions become revealed, presenting a perfect opportunity for characters to dip their toes into fathomless, eldritch horror. The party soon discovers the actions of the cult, who seek to awaken it from slumber through the completion of eldritch rituals that will raise the region of R'lyeh (which contains Cthulhu's tomb) from the darkest depths of the sea. The specifics of this ritual should form many adventures in your campaign. The characters must

work to foil the cult and their nefarious schemes to prepare for Cthulhu's inevitable awakening. The odds of success are long and the road ahead dark, but there should always be hope, contrary to the traditional tropes of cosmic horror. Whatever your chosen path, an introduction to a campaign with Cthulhu should be riddled with shiver-inducing eldritch omens and bizarre dreams, making your game table a place of horror and mystery.

CONFLICT

Once your players have dipped their toes into the occult lore surrounding Cthulhu, they begin to confront the growing level of strangeness gripping the world. Beyond the humanoid cults that actively seek Cthulhu's rise, strange monsters start to climb to the surface. Confrontations with aberrations from beyond the stars or below the seas begin to happen in earnest. These actions often have bizarre and arcane consequences. Entire populations are visited by strange nightmares that draw them to the seas or compel them to craft works of art depicting the Great Old One. The very sight of such things pushes communities toward chaos, driving entire populations into panicked dread. Legends whisper of several such cities that disappeared entirely after experiencing a plague of these dreams.

When the emissaries of Cthulhu have succeeded in their task to begin awakening the Great Old One, the region of R'lyeh appears to menace the world. This connection might mean that an island rises from the ocean, a great portal opens to another plane of existence, or a ghostly city suddenly appears upon the land. Whatever the source, this is a dire omen that signals Cthulhu's awakening is nigh. The players need to prepare to face the Great Old One in battle, whether it is a psionic projection or its true form. The entire world hangs in the balance of such a conflict, one the characters should not be expected to survive unscathed.

Author's Note

Oh, Cthulhu, here we are again. Few monsters have continued to grip human imagination the way Cthulhu has over the past decades. Despite Lovecraft's problematic values and societal evils of bandying about mental health issues, we can't help but be fascinated with the Great Old Ones who lurk beyond the stars. Herein lies my attempt to bring you a Cthulhu capable of shaking off the traditional rubber-skinned monster mantel and instead bring you a subtle master of terror waiting to collect its due. This design does not rely on the worn-out tropes of "madness" to communicate devastation, focusing instead on the far more relatable emotions of fear and dread.

Fifth Edition is often a game about stomping faces to arrive at a sure victory. If that sounds like your kind of game, Cthulhu is likely not the villain for you. Cthulhu can never really die; a battle against an eldritch horror is all about surviving for as long as possible before inevitably breaking in the wake of the cosmic unknown. It is a being of infinite complexity and requires a subtle hand to play. Wield these pages only if you dare.

- Celeste Conowitch



CONCLUSION

The final phase of a campaign with Cthulhu is the awakening of the ancient one. Cthulhu's physical form lies sleeping beyond an impenetrable black door somewhere within R'lyeh. Cthulhu is not a being to simply awaken and roll out of bed. When fate decrees the Great Old One must rise, the entire world shudders at the horror that has befallen it. Terror reigns, the sky is wracked with thunderbolts, and the gods fall silent. Once Cthulhu walks the world, the characters are on the clock. The longer the Great Old One is allowed to wreak havoc, the more it comes into its full power. Once this apotheosis has occurred, Cthulhu is completely invincible, equivalent to a greater deity at minimum but with none of the traditional limitations on such radical power¹. At this point there is no hope of victory. How long this ascension takes should fit the needs of your campaign. The party should feel considerable pressure to mount a final assault and be aware that if Cthulhu is not forced back asleep, the black door containing its physical body will open, and the world will be ushered into a new age.

CHALLENGES

Cthulhu can pose combat, exploration, or social challenges to characters who interact with it.

EXPLORATION

Throughout a campaign featuring Cthulhu, there should be a great deal of emphasis placed on dreams. While Cthulhu slumbers, its unconscious mind reaches out across the boundaries of space and time to mingle with those of mortals. These disturbing visitations are more than just upsetting; they can present unique challenges that must be resolved through the power of wit and cunning rather than combat prowess. Before the characters ever step foot in physical R'lyeh, they are pulled to walk among its crumbling ruins in nightmares. Cthulhu's magical sway can pull an entire party into a shared dream, where they are forced to confront horrible monsters and dark secrets night after night.

Regional Effects

The plane containing Cthulhu's lair is warped by its otherworldly power, which has created the following effects within the plane.

- When a creature begins a long rest while in the affected area, Cthulhu can choose to concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to share that creature's dream. When the affected creature finishes its rest, creatures allied to Cthulhu become aware of the target's exact location for 24 hours.
- When a creature begins a long rest while in the affected area, Cthulhu can choose to alter the dreams of that creature, along with each creature of Cthulhu's choice within 60 feet of the target. For the duration of the rest, affected creatures experience a deadly challenge in the dream, forcing them to attempt a DC 25 group Wisdom (Insight) check. On a

failure, affected creatures gain no benefit from the rest and become frightened by Cthulhu and its allies for 24 hours. Once a creature has been affected in this manner, it cannot be affected by it again until 1 week has passed.

- When a creature allied with Cthulhu begins a long rest, it can choose to offer itself fully to the Great Old One's power. If Cthulhu accepts the offering, over the course of that rest the creature is rapidly transformed into a deep one (see the "Deep One Template" sidebar), completing the metamorphosis at the end of the rest. If an affected creature does not complete the long rest while transforming in this manner, it dies instantly.

If Cthulhu is defeated, these effects are suppressed for a period of 100 years.

Cthulhu's Lair

Cthulhu sleeps in the sunken city of R'lyeh, the former capital of the Great Old One's dread empire. From this city, Cthulhu ruled over a confederation of unspeakable horrors best forgotten. When the stars aligned and fate decreed Cthulhu's time of slumber was nigh, the city of R'lyeh vanished, pulling the Great Old One and its people into a death-like slumber. Now all that remains of this once-thriving metropolis is a sprawl of cyclopean ruins emblazoned with eldritch iconography, waiting for the day it will finally return and usher in a new era of darkness. The buildings of R'lyeh are strangely shaped, displaying architecture only comprehensible to alien intelligence. Simply moving around the towering ruins is likely to damage the psyche as the illogical geometry worms its way through the mind. Among the endless field of spires and labyrinths are sealed tombs. Beyond the black gates of these sarcophagi, thousands of Cthulhu's servants lie in a trance, dreaming of the time when the stars are right once again and they may emerge. These black gates are impassable, beyond the influence of all but deific effects or by rituals meant to awaken Cthulhu from slumber.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Cthulhu can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Cthulhu is using its mythic statistics, it can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Cthulhu can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- Nightmarish voices whispering eldritch knowledge fill a 60-foot radius centered on a point of Cthulhu's choice within the lair. Each creature of Cthulhu's choice in the affected area must succeed on a DC 26 Wisdom saving throw or become unable to hear anything but the voices for 1 minute. At the end of each of its turns, a creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.
- Cthulhu creates a column of utter darkness in a 30-foot-radius, 10-mile-high cylinder centered on a point of its choice in the lair. No sense can penetrate the area from either side other than Cthulhu's blindsight. The column lasts until Cthulhu chooses to dismiss it or uses this option again.

¹ The details of deities and their capabilities are discussed in the 2CGaming supplement the *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex*.

- A creature of Cthulhu's choice becomes lost in the bewildering dimensional space of R'lyeh. A creature lost in this manner has total cover from all creatures other than Cthulhu for as long as it remains within the lair. A creature can use its action to attempt a DC 18 Wisdom ability check, ending the effect on a success.

Exploration Encounters

With a sunken city to explore, an untold number of eldritch cults worshiping its name, and the capacity to influence dreams, Cthulhu provides a campaign with a host of potential exploration encounters. Examples of some of these encounters are detailed here.

From the Depths. The modest fishing village of Innsmouth is experiencing many strange happenings. Each night horrors from the sea prowl the streets, to what purpose none can say. So long as the townsfolk stay inside, the monsters do not trouble them, but that provides little comfort to the terrified locals. Driving the strange beings away has proven pointless, as they simply return as soon as the threat passes, with even greater numbers. The mayor's request is simple: find what is drawing the "fish monsters" to Innsmouth and remove it. It is rumored an abandoned manor on a nearby hill has been exhibiting strange magical phenomena lately, so that is a good place to start.

The Gate to R'lyeh. A magical portal is discovered that will take any who activate it to R'lyeh, the home of Cthulhu, a Great Old One. A team of archaeologists wishes to mount an expedition to the sunken city and would gladly hire a team of heroes for protection and navigation. The payment is not only substantial, but any discoveries would also be credited to the entire team, earning much prestige in the archaeological community. All that is required to activate the portal is a series of eldritch keys, seven in total, which must be tracked down. Thankfully, one has already been found, and its magic points to the next key, which is suspiciously nearby.

Dreamwalker. A mysterious being calling itself the Dreamwalker appears in the characters' dreams. The ethereal figure claims a terrific force is "rising from the depths to drown the world" and that they should seek her in the waking world. However, before they can be told where to find her, a mass of tentacles appears and drags her away screaming. All that can be heard as she pleads for help are two words: Miskatonic University.

SOCIAL

Cthulhu is mostly unaware of the lesser beings that populate the world, possessing only impulse to simply destroy them with as much care as one puts toward squashing an ant.

Social Encounters

Cthulhu's sleeping thoughts create such intense energy that sensitive beings are affected by the Great Old One's presence without concentrated effort. Therefore, most social encounters occur as the characters encounter those touched by Cthulhu in dreams or those attempting to wake the sleeping creature. Examples of some of these encounters are detailed here.

Otherworldly Desires. One of the characters is revealed to be in possession of a fragment of knowledge Cthulhu greatly desires. How or why the character knows this is unknown, but it's apparent they do not even realize they understand it. Each night the poor character is visited by Cthulhu in their dreams, where the Great Old One empathically demands the character hand over the fragment, growing increasingly aggravated the longer they fail to comply. This uncharacteristic behavior from the Great Old One causes its cult to reach out in a rare show of diplomacy, hoping to acquire the knowledge and appease their lord by less forceful means.

Signal Interference. When clerics attempt to contact their deities, they instead find themselves speaking with Cthulhu. This horrific turn of events has shattered the faith of many a believer, as religions across the realms struggle to cope with the deafening silence from their gods. When communicating with Cthulhu a strange, rhythmic chanting can be heard in an alien language that defies all comprehension. How this was accomplished remains a mystery, but one thing is clear: if this interference cannot be stopped, Cthulhu will be one step closer to overwhelming the world. The only clue lies in the strange language, which is believed to be used by a reclusive race of star spawn that broke from Cthulhu long ago and now lives in hiding.

The Necronomicon. A legendary book said to detail a ritual that can prematurely awaken Cthulhu is discovered in an ancient library. Known as the Necronomicon, this ancient tome is indecipherable except by those who have been visited by Cthulhu in dreams. The call goes out for any who have had the misfortune of such an experience, in the hopes they can provide some insight into the book's contents. At the same time, the cult of Cthulhu is eager to acquire the book, which is slated to go up for auction within a month. The starting bid: 50,000 gp.

COMBAT

Cthulhu has slept patiently for centuries, waiting for the precise cosmic moment to break free of its confinement. Cthulhu regards all other goals beyond freedom—even handling enemies attempting to slay it—as peripheral concerns at best. Consequently, the being is supremely disdainful of its foes, often applying only minimum effort to route them. Survivors are common, and the Great Old One counts on its many devoted minions to mop up those "lucky" enough to escape with their lives. A battle with Cthulhu is as much a test of mental fortitude as it is physical. The Great Old One is anathema to both physical and conscious existence, blurring the lines between the two and warping the laws of the multiverse with overwhelming power.

Combat Encounter Example: The Night Terror (Encounter Level 14)

Having stirred Cthulhu's curiosity, the Great Old One elects to visit the dreams of the party in response to their actions against its cults and worshippers. During a long rest on a particularly dark and rainy evening, the characters are cast into strange dreams in a more elaborate incarnation of Cthulhu's regional effects. They awaken inside a sealed tomb within the sunken city of R'lyeh, a dream reflection of the many graves imprisoning the



sleepers therein. To wake from the nightmare, the party must escape the tomb before they succumb to Cthulhu's power. Such an encounter includes the following elements.

Encounter Details

Wisdom Saving Throws. The terror of death stalks the characters. While experiencing this encounter, the party will be repeatedly asked to attempt Wisdom saving throws as the Great Old One assaults their minds. This strange effect is but a dream abstraction of the threat posed by Cthulhu, but for the duration of the encounter if a single character fails three or more of these Wisdom saving throws (regardless of when or how they occur), they immediately awaken with five levels of exhaustion.

If an affected creature fails a death saving throw while within the dream, that failed saving throw counts toward the number of Wisdom saving throws that creature has failed.

The First Room. The initial room in which the party finds themselves is a pitch-black, stone room adorned with bizarre alien carvings of strange geometry that harms the mind. Any character who attempts to read or understand the glyphs must attempt a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the glyphs remain indecipherable, and no information can be gained. A

character who succeeds on the check learns the following from the glyphs:

- This room is a tomb built for a great being referred to as a “dreamer.”
- The doors of the tomb will only open when “The Master’s Call” is heard.
- Any other clues you would like to introduce to the party about Cthulhu’s nature.

Exiting this room requires breaking through the walls. Each wall has an AC of 20 and 50 hit points. Each wall also has a *glyph of warding* cast as a 9th-level spell concealed in the plaster. If the glyph is not disabled, the first instance of damage a wall receives triggers the explosive runes effect.

The Second Room. Breaking through any of the first room’s walls reveals the second room, which is a 100-square-foot cavern submerged in briny water, at the end of which is a passageway beyond. The moment a wall in the first room is reduced to 0 hit points, water starts filling up the first room. Before any of the

characters can react, they must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw as Cthulhu once again assaults their subconsciousness. The characters have 1 round to react before the first room is full of water. From this point on, the tomb is entirely underwater, with no air to be found. Entering the second room attracts four star spawns (see stat block later in this chapter) lurking in the water, which immediately move to attack.

The Black Gates. The second room's passageway is only large enough for Medium or smaller creatures to pass through, or larger creatures if they squeeze. At the end of the 30-foot passageway is another cavern sealed by a pair of gigantic black gates. Interacting with the gates captures Cthulhu's attention, and the characters hear slithering whispers echo through their minds, forcing each to attempt a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a success, a character cannot understand what the whispers are saying. On a failure, a character understands the whispers:

*Small thing, you have stumbled into the eternal dream.
Wake now. Wake now to serve. Open the gates. Open the gates. I wait. I hunger. Open the gates.*

Waking Up. After the whispers are heard, the nightmare ends. All characters who wake up from the dream gain a number of levels of exhaustion equal to the number of Wisdom saving throws they failed over the course of the dream.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Artillery

Cthulhu has no understanding of mercy or honor and only a passing comprehension of pain. In combat, the Great Old One inflicts catastrophic damage on both body and mind. There is no rhyme or reason to its battle strategy. Cthulhu simply acts according to its alien whims, which may seem completely illogical or foolhardy to rational observers. However, the Great Old One can afford to be inefficient in battle, with a host of deadly interactions to compensate for a less than stellar tactical mind. Its primary weapon is its tentacles, which ensure any creature ensnared in their grasp is vulnerable to its mental attacks. Use this interaction to ensure Cthulhu visits dreadful ruin on characters who feel being grappled by the Great Old One isn't a big deal. Note that every saving throw Cthulhu forces is either Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma, so make a grappled creature a high-priority target.

Particularly notable is the Shadow of Cthulhu feature. This strange trait allows Cthulhu to effectively occupy a huge area while simultaneously providing no advantages to its enemies. Movement within this space provokes attacks of opportunity from Cthulhu, and creatures within cannot have total cover from the Great Old One. This ability is abstract, so be sure to communicate to the players such an interaction is only possible thanks to the Great Old One's ability to warp time and space.

Cthulhu's more powerful abilities are excellent heavy hitters. The appropriately titled Call of Cthulhu action can remove a troublesome character from a fight and is particularly effective because it leaves the body behind. Note that a creature grappled by Cthulhu and affected by this feature cannot escape without help. Eldritch Storm is an extremely potent damage-dealing tool, especially if the characters are spread out or have brought allies. Use this action option if Cthulhu needs to deal some

serious damage or needs to put the party on the defensive. Great Old One's Influence is a versatile tool to help Cthulhu deal with troublesome effects or find a flexible solution to a unique problem it couldn't solve otherwise. Keep spells like *dimension door* and *dispel magic* handy as backup options just in case things get dicey.

Easier Tactics – For an easier fight with Cthulhu, favor its tentacle attacks against no more than a single foe at a time, allowing allies a chance to free their grappled comrades or at least keep them alive. Use Apocalypse Storm only once at the beginning of combat and choose less than ideal targets for the lightning strikes. Play up Cthulhu's alien perspective on combat by having the Great Old One make inexplicable or strange combat decisions. Provoking attacks of opportunity, targeting enemies with good saving throws, and other tactical blunders are perfectly acceptable under the context of the incomprehensible logic behind Cthulhu's mind. Only use Call of Cthulhu so that no more than one character is affected at a time.

Harder Tactics – Use the terrific range of Shadow of Cthulhu to begin battle early. The more distance the characters must cover to reach the Great Old One, the better. All the while Cthulhu should be annihilating grappled characters, using Call of Cthulhu often. Any affected characters should be torn apart by Cthulhu while their minds are banished. Use Great Old One's Influence via legendary actions to get in some powerful spells or remove nasty magical effects. Look for any *mind blank* spells on characters and be sure to remove them as quickly as possible. Apply Eldritch Storm when the party is at their worst. A few well-placed bolts on grappled targets can ensure multiple characters go down simultaneously.



Mythic Cthulhu

While all of Cthulhu's abilities improve in its Epic incarnation, the most significant change comes in the form of a special condition the Great Old One inflicts called existential dread. This disturbing condition allows the Great Old One to kill with the power of fear alone, adding several dangerous aspects to the encounter. Existential dread can come from several sources, notably the Aspect of Dread trait, and both of Cthulhu's new mythic actions. Reality Fracture is a particularly dangerous action when paired with Cthulhu's tentacles, allowing it to quickly pile on several levels of existential dread. If a character can remove levels of existential dread or cast spells that would otherwise negate the condition, Cthulhu focuses its abilities on that character. Whereas before Cthulhu needed to damage characters to death, now the Great Old One can simply stack levels of existential dread until a creature has a good chance of dying each turn. Use Flash of Lucidity to deal massive damage to creatures carrying levels of existential dread, adding injury to insult. If a character is proving extremely difficult to kill with damage, they make for a primary target for death by this new condition.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, Cthulhu causes the following effects.

House of Dead Dreams. While Cthulhu's true form sleeps within R'lyeh, its influence and presence can be felt across the universe. While dreaming in this manner, Cthulhu can manifest a physical body composed of psionic energy, which is represented by its mythic statistics. While this body is manifested, its actions aid Cthulhu in slowly drifting closer to awakening. If such a physical form persists for a period of 7 years, Cthulhu fully awakens and utterly subjugates the plane upon which it resides, converting its inhabitants into deep ones and slaying those it cannot. This is a deific effect that cannot be prevented by any means other than the direct intervention of an overgod². Once Cthulhu has annihilated a plane in this manner, it then appears on another plane and falls into slumber.

Terror from Beyond. The mounting psychic pressure created by Cthulhu's presence inspires overwhelming fear in all creatures and is represented by a special condition called existential dread, which is measured in six levels. Existential dread cannot be removed by any means other than those presented in this feature. When a creature would regain 100 or more hit points from a single effect, it may instead prevent that healing and reduce its levels of existential dread by one for every 100 hit points it would have regained.

If a creature would be immune to existential dread or the frightened condition, it loses that immunity and instead gains Epic advantage on saving throws against effects that would cause it to gain levels of existential dread or the frightened condition³.

A creature suffers the effect of its current level of existential dread as well as all lower levels. For example, a creature suffering

two levels of existential dread is frightened of Cthulhu, and if immune to damage dealt by Cthulhu instead has resistance to that damage.

Abilities, effects, or spells that would remove existential dread instead reduce its level by one. All effects end if a creature's existential dread level is reduced below one.

Existential Dread Table

Level	Effect
1	You are frightened of Cthulhu.
2	If you would be immune to damage dealt by Cthulhu, you instead have resistance to that damage.
3	When you have disadvantage on an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, you instead have Epic disadvantage.
4	When you miss a weapon attack roll made with a weapon, you immediately drop the weapon.
5	You enter a state of panic, screaming and sobbing uncontrollably. You cannot verbally communicate or cast spells with verbal components.
6	At the start of each of your turns, you must succeed on a DC 29 Wisdom saving throw or die of fright.

RESOURCES

Cthulhu has no need for trifling physical matter. The Great Old One only considers relics⁴ to be objects deserving of its attention. R'lyeh seems to be the only physical space Cthulhu holds any real affinity for. The Great Old One perceives any desecration to this sacred site an irredeemable offense and takes great care to ensure the city is always fit for its purpose. How this is accomplished while Cthulhu sleeps is unknown, but the city has endured millennia of abuse while remaining as menacing as ever. Far more potent, however, are the many monstrous beings who have come to worship the Great Old One. These foul beings are often aberrations such as aboleths, but many far more dreadful beings dwell among their number.

ALLIES

While Cthulhu sleeps, lesser beings work to prepare the way for the Great Old One's awakening. The most common allies of Cthulhu are the humanoids who form cults dedicated to its worship. Cthulhu has influenced the psychically sensitive for thousands of years and, consequently, many cults thrive in secret all over the world. Cthulhu's second source of allies comes from the aquatic aberrations dwelling in the darkest depths of the mortal realms. A race of amphibious aberrations known as the "deep ones" serve Cthulhu and frequently emerge from the oceans to aid its cults and proliferate terror. Finally, guarding the lost realm of R'lyeh are beings known as star spawn.

² The details of deities and their divine ranks can be found in the 2CGaming supplement *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

³ Epic advantage and Epic disadvantage, two mechanics of the Epic Legacy system, are further explained in the 2CGaming supplement *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

⁴ Relics are Epic artifacts detailed in the 2CGaming supplement *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

CTHULHU**Huge aberration (Great Old One), unaligned****Armor Class** 22 (natural armor)**Hit Points** 610 (47d12 + 305)**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover), swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
22 (+6)	6 (-2)	30 (+10)	21 (+5)	25 (+7)	29 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +14, Con +18, Int +13, Wis +15**Skills** History +21, Insight +23, Perception +15**Damage Resistances** acid, cold**Damage Immunities** psychic**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, stunned, unconscious**Senses** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 25**Languages** telepathy 1 mile**Challenge** 28 (120,000 XP)**TRAITS****Mythic Resistance.** If Cthulhu fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.**Out of Touch.** Cthulhu barely registers reality as we know it. If Cthulhu would take 15 or less damage from a single instance of damage, it instead takes no damage.**Shadow of Cthulhu.** Cthulhu's true form is beyond petty laws of physics or mortal perception, casting a "dimensional shadow" in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on it. Cthulhu is treated as though it occupies this space at all times, though it suffers no penalties nor provokes attacks of opportunity for sharing this space with other creatures, objects, and structures. Creatures in this affected area cannot have total cover from Cthulhu, nor can any barrier prevent them from being targeted or touched by Cthulhu. This effect is suppressed in areas of magical daylight.**What Is Dead May Never Die.** If Cthulhu is slain, its form vanishes and reappears in a state of deep slumber a century later on a plane chosen by the DM. This effect can only be prevented by divine intervention or a *wish* spell.**ACTIONS****Multiattack.** Cthulhu makes three Tentacle attacks.**Tentacle.** *Melee Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 28 (3d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage and 19 (3d12) psychic damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 25). Until the grapple ends, the target cannot succeed on Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throws.**Call of Cthulhu.** Cthulhu forces a creature it can see to attempt a DC 25 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, its mind is pulled into a horrific realm of Cthulhu's own dreams. The body of an affected creature becomes incapacitated for the duration, while the mind of the creature wanders the nightmarish dreamscape of Cthulhu's subconscious. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect and returning to its body on a success. A creature whose mind remains in Cthulhu's subconscious in this manner for 1 continuous minute becomes permanentlytrapped there, beyond the help of anything short of a *wish* spell or divine intervention.

A creature that succeeds on a saving throw against this effect becomes immune to it for 1 year.

Eldritch Storm (Recharge 5–6). Cthulhu conjures an otherworldly storm in a 60-foot-radius, 1-mile-high cylinder centered on a point it can see within 300 feet. Cthulhu must concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to maintain the effect. While the storm persists, the affected area is heavily obscured by otherworldly weather, and creatures other than Cthulhu in the affected area are deafened by its thunderous cacophony.

Additionally, when the storm appears and as an action on each of its turns Cthulhu can choose to call down up to three bolts of eldritch lightning, each of which strike a space of its choice in the affected area. A creature in a space struck by a bolt of eldritch lightning must attempt a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, taking 35 (10d6) necrotic damage and 35 (10d6) lightning damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much on a success.

Great Old One's Influence. Cthulhu demonstrates the otherworldly supremacy of a Great Old One, causing one of the following effects.

- Cthulhu casts a warlock spell of 5th level or lower (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks) with a casting time of an action or bonus action, without the need for any components. If a spell cast in this manner would deal damage other than psychic damage, it instead deals psychic damage. If it would force an affected creature to make a saving throw other than an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, it instead makes an Intelligence saving throw.
- Cthulhu ends a spell or magical effect of 8th level or lower within reach.
- Cthulhu reads the surface thoughts of a creature within range of its telepathy that it is aware of, which lasts until the start of its next turn. While reading a creature's thoughts, Cthulhu cannot have disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks against that creature.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Cthulhu can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Cthulhu regains spent legendary actions at the start of each of its turns.

Tentacle. Cthulhu makes a Tentacle attack.**Great Old One's Influence (Costs 2 Actions).** Cthulhu uses its Great Old One's Influence action.**All-Consuming Shadow (Costs 3 Actions).** Until the end of its next turn, the radius of Cthulhu's Shadow of Cthulhu trait is increased to 1 mile. Cthulhu then immediately makes a single Tentacle attack against each creature of its choice in the affected area.**Call of Cthulhu (Costs 3 Actions).** Cthulhu uses its Call of Cthulhu action.

MYTHIC CTHULHU

Huge mythic aberration (Great Old One), unaligned

Armor Class 24 (natural armor)**Hit Points** 3,662 (225d12 + 2,200)**Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover), swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	6 (−2)	30 (+10)	26 (+8)	25 (+7)	31 (+10)

Saving Throws Str +18, Dex +9, Con +21, Int +19, Wis +15, Cha +21**Skills** History +30, Insight +29, Perception +18**Damage Resistances** acid, cold**Damage Immunities** psychic**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, stunned, unconscious**Senses** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 28**Languages** telepathy 10 miles**Challenge** Mythic 8**TRAITS**

Aspect of Dread. When a creature starts its turn and has line of sight to Cthulhu or Cthulhu's shadow via the Shadow of Cthulhu feature, it must succeed on a DC 29 Wisdom saving throw or gain a level of existential dread.

Mythic Resistance. If Cthulhu fails a saving throw, it can expend one of its unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Out of Touch. Cthulhu barely registers reality as we know it. If Cthulhu would take 25 or less damage from a single instance of damage, it instead takes no damage.

Shadow of Cthulhu. Cthulhu's true form is beyond petty laws of physics or mortal perception, casting a "dimensional shadow" in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on it. Cthulhu is treated as though it occupies this space at all times, though it suffers no penalties nor provokes attacks of opportunity for sharing this space with other creatures, objects, and structures. Creatures in this affected area cannot have total cover from Cthulhu, nor can any barrier prevent them from being targeted or touched by Cthulhu. This effect is suppressed in areas of magical daylight.

What Is Dead May Never Die. If Cthulhu is slain, its form vanishes and reappears in a state of deep slumber a century later on a plane chosen by the DM. This effect can only be prevented by a deific effect.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Cthulhu takes one of the following mythic actions. Cthulhu can use the same effect multiple times in a row.

Flash of Lucidity. Cthulhu experiences a brief moment of lucidity, bringing its full might upon those who have caught its attention. Each creature that shares a plane of existence with Cthulhu takes 45 (10d8) psychic damage for each level of existential dread it has.

Reality Fracture. Cthulhu stirs in its slumber, causing reality to fracture in the area of its Shadow of Cthulhu feature until the next initiative count of 20. When a creature in the affected area fails an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, it gains a level of existential dread.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Cthulhu makes three Tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. *Melee Spell Attack:* +21 to hit, reach 60 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 42 (5d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage plus 32 (5d12) psychic damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 29). Until the grapple

ends, the target cannot succeed on Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throws.

Call of Cthulhu. Cthulhu forces a creature it can see to attempt a DC 29 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, its mind is pulled into a horrific realm of Cthulhu's own dreams. The body of an affected creature becomes incapacitated for the duration, while the mind of the creature wanders the nightmarish dreamscape of Cthulhu's subconscious. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect and returning to its body on a success. A creature whose mind remains in Cthulhu's subconscious in this manner for 1 continuous minute becomes permanently trapped there, beyond the help of anything short of a deific effect.

A creature that succeeds on a saving throw against this effect becomes immune to it for 1 year.

Eldritch Storm (Recharge 5–6). Cthulhu conjures an otherworldly storm in a 60-foot-radius, 1-mile-high cylinder centered on a point it can see within 300 feet. Cthulhu must concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to maintain the effect. While the storm persists, the affected area is heavily obscured by otherworldly weather and creatures other than Cthulhu in the affected area are deafened by its thunderous cacophony.

Additionally, when the storm appears and as an action on each of its turns Cthulhu can choose to call down up to ten bolts of eldritch lightning, each of which strike a space of its choice in the affected area. A creature in a space struck by a bolt of eldritch lightning must attempt a DC 29 Wisdom saving throw, taking 45 (10d8) necrotic damage and 45 (10d8) lightning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Great Old One's Influence. Cthulhu demonstrates the otherworldly supremacy of a Great Old One, causing one of the following effects.

- Cthulhu casts a non-Epic warlock spell (spell save DC 29, +21 to hit with spell attacks) with a casting time of an action or bonus action, without the need for any components. If a spell cast in this manner would deal damage other than psychic damage, it instead deals psychic damage. If it would force an affected creature to make a saving throw other than an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, it instead makes an Intelligence saving throw.
- Cthulhu ends a spell or magical effect of tier 3 or lower within reach.
- Cthulhu reads the surface thoughts of a creature within range of its telepathy feature that it is aware of, which lasts until the start of its next turn. While reading a creature's thoughts, Cthulhu cannot have disadvantage or Epic disadvantage on attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks against that creature.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Cthulhu can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Cthulhu regains spent legendary actions at the start of each of its turns.

Tentacle. Cthulhu makes a Tentacle attack.

Great Old One's Influence (Costs 2 Actions). Cthulhu uses its Great Old One's Influence action.

All-Consuming Shadow (Costs 3 Actions). Until the end of its next turn, the radius of Cthulhu's Shadow of Cthulhu trait is increased to 1 mile. Cthulhu then immediately makes a single Tentacle attack against each creature of its choice in the affected area.

Call of Cthulhu (Costs 3 Actions). Cthulhu uses its Call of Cthulhu action.

Star spawn are tentacled aberrations who once served Cthulhu and other members of its species. When R'lyeh was pulled beneath the waves, the majority of star spawn perished since they were not protected by great Cthulhu's sleep spell. However, a few managed to hide away among the sinking ruins and still guard the watery tombs waiting for Cthulhu to rise.

Cultists of Cthulhu. Evidence of Cthulhu worship stretches back alongside the origin stories of other traditional pantheons. Cults dedicated to the Great Old One can be found among all races and regions, though they are slightly more prevalent in cultures familiar with seafaring. You can create a standard Cthulhu Cult using standard cultist, cult fanatic, and priest stat blocks.

DEEP ONE TEMPLATE

Deep ones are twisted creatures infested with the essence of Cthulhu. Their skin becomes rubbery and fish-like, they sprout gills, and their minds are invariably twisted toward evil. Their eyes are bulbous like those of a fish, while their voices gurgle as if constantly choking on fluid. When a flesh-and-blood creature becomes a deep one, it retains its statistics except as described here. A creature that is not composed of flesh and blood cannot become a deep one.

Type. The creature's type becomes aberration.

Hit Dice. The creature gains four additional Hit Dice and recalculates its hit point maximum using its new Hit Dice total.

Ability Scores. The creature's Strength and Charisma scores increase by 3, to a maximum of 22, and its Wisdom score decreases by 4, to a minimum of 2.

Damage Immunities. The creature becomes immune to acid damage.

Condition Immunities. The creature becomes immune to the grappled condition.

Senses. The creature gains darkvision out to range of 120 feet and can see in magical darkness.

Languages. The creature can speak, read, and write Deep Speech.

Challenge Rating. The creature's challenge rating increases by 3 and its proficiency bonus increases to match its new challenge rating.

Traits. The creature gains the following traits.

Amphibious. The creature can breathe both air and water. Additionally, the creature has a swimming speed equal to its walking speed or a walking speed equal to its swimming speed (whichever is greater).

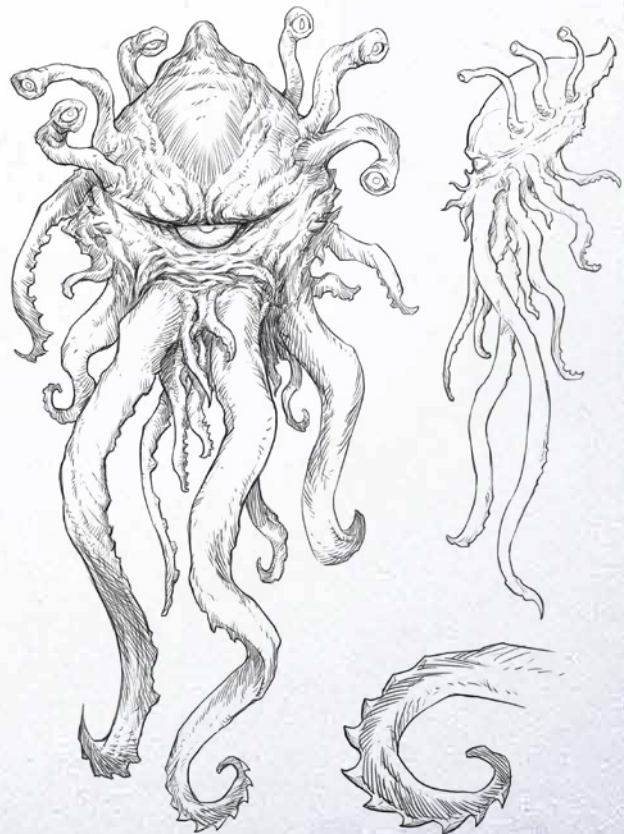
Beneath the Waves. When completely submerged in a liquid, the creature has total cover against creatures that are not completely submerged in the same body of liquid.

Foul Mucus. The creature's body is coated in an acidic mucus. When a creature that touches the deep one or hits it with a melee attack while within 5 feet of it takes 10 (3d6) acid damage.

Servant of Darkness. The creature must obey any commands given by Cthulhu or those who act in its name. The creature follows the commands to the best of its ability and can never willingly act in a manner that goes against the intentions of the creature giving the commands.



Deep Ones. The amphibious creatures known as deep ones are the driving force behind the most significant efforts to awaken Cthulhu. Powerful cults of Cthulhu are likely to have at least one deep one leading or influencing their activities, even breeding with their members to produce deep one offspring. These corrupted creatures are a glimpse of the fate of all who oppose Cthulhu, for any creature of flesh and blood can be twisted by Great Old One into a deep one. A template is provided in this chapter so you can build unique deep ones from whatever creatures proliferate your campaign, making for a particularly horrific fate for beloved characters and communities known to the party.



Eyes of the Deep. Greatest among Cthulhu's servants are the dread eyes of the deep. These strange, gigantic, floating heads are tentacled reflections of their dark master. Their faces are a mass of writhing arms, with two horrifically long, barbed appendages for grasping prey. At the center of the creature's face lies a strange, eldritch eye whose profane power can turn those it beholds into deep ones with a glance. Its putrid green flesh perpetually glistening with seawater, an eye of the deep emerges from the darkest depths to bring corruption and ruin to all. Thankfully, these minions are blessedly rare, serving as an elite guard to R'lyeh and Cthulhu's minions, second only to the Great Old One itself.

Star Spawn. A population of these aberrations guard R'lyeh, and would be considered Cthulhu's "people" if the Great Old One ever cared to share any affection toward other beings. Their physical resemblance to Cthulhu is no coincidence. These horrors exist solely to exalt their lord and enact its unknowable

will. This wretched existence ensures the star spawn are among the most loathsome creatures. Should any creature approach R'lyeh while submerged, these octopus-like beings emerge from the deep trenches surrounding the region to attack. Every so often, a group of deep ones request the aid of a star spawn and call it to the surface to assist with their schemes. If R'lyeh rises, the star spawn rise as well to protect Cthulhu's tomb.

REWARDS

Defeating Cthulhu ensures that the Great Old One continues to slumber for a century, an achievement that carries with it the inherent reward of saving the world. However, encountering such a powerful being directly leaves an indefinite, eldritch scar that never fades. Characters who defeat Cthulhu are permanently tied to the sleeping Great Old One, who haunts their dreams long after its "death" as though they were always in the area

EYE OF THE DEEP

Huge aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 637 (51d12 + 306)

Speed 0 ft., fly 40 ft. (hover), swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	8 (-1)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +7, Con +14, Int +12, Wis +13

Skills Athletics +17, Perception +13, Religion +11

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities prone, stunned, unconscious

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 23

Languages Aquan, Deep Speech

Challenge 25 (75,000 XP)

TRAITS

Amphibious. The eye can breathe both air and water.

Gaze of Cthulhu. At the start of each of its turns, the eye can choose to open or close its central eye. While its central eye is open, the creature projects a 120-foot cone of bright green light in a direction of its choice, which becomes the direction the eye faces. When the eye moves on its turn, it can choose to change the direction it faces, changing the orientation of the cone. Creatures illuminated by the light are forced to assume their true form. Additionally, a flesh-and-blood creature illuminated by the light that is reduced to 0 hit points or slain is instead reduced to 1 hit point and becomes incapacitated for 8 hours, during which time it does not need to eat, drink, or breathe. A creature so incapacitated begins a horrific transformation into a deep one (see the "Deep One Template" sidebar). A *greater restoration* or *heal* spell targeting the transforming creature halts the transformation, but once fully transformed, the creature can only be restored with the casting of *wish* or greater magic.

Will of the Deep (1/Turn). When the eye fails an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw, Cthulhu can intervene and cause the eye to succeed instead. When the Great Old One does so, the eye takes 39 (6d12) psychic damage.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The eye chooses one of the following options:

- The eye makes two Tentacle attacks.
- The eye makes four Arm attacks.
- The eye makes one Tentacle attack and two Arm attacks.

Arm. Melee Weapon Attack: +17 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.

Hit: 16 (2d6 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) acid damage. When the eye would make an Arm attack, it can instead choose to forgo that attack to cast *dispel magic* (spellcasting ability Wisdom), requiring no components.

Tentacle. Melee Weapon Attack: +17 to hit, reach 50 ft., one creature. **Hit:** 28 (3d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage plus 28 (8d6) acid damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 25). At the end of each of its turns, a creature grappled in this manner takes 28 (8d6) acid damage and the eye can choose to pull the target 30 feet toward it.

Wave of Mutilation (Recharge 5–6). The eye emits a blast of sickly energy in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on it. Each creature of its choice within the affected area must succeed on a DC 23 Constitution saving throw or be infected with a vile disease known as living rot. When a creature so infected would regain hit points, it instead regains no hit points and takes necrotic damage equal to the number of hit points it would have regained.

Witness. The eye chooses a creature it can see to behold the dark horror of Cthulhu. The target must succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom saving throw or have its mind sent to the Great Old One until the start of the eye's next turn. A creature so affected cannot move or take actions as its consciousness beholds the cosmic, eldritch horror that is a Great Old One. When the creature's mind returns, it is traumatized by the experience. It cannot gain advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks, and it cannot speak by any means. This effect only ends when a creature forgets its memories of the experience.

produced by its regional effects. Having known defeat at mortal hands, Cthulhu offers such champions the chance to share in its power and the rare privilege of bargaining with a Great Old One. This connection allows the heroes to learn profound and terrible secrets. At their request, Cthulhu can grant a single gift to each of them, such as new spells, the ability to travel to the far realms of existence, or even far darker and mysterious powers. There are secrets mortal creatures were never meant to know and cannot be gained by any other means. What Cthulhu gains from this arrangement is unknown, but there is no doubt such gifts are not an act of charitable benevolence.

An example of such a reward is detailed here, known as an *eldritch grimoire*. This vile tome mysteriously appears in the characters' possession while they sleep, as if placed there by a doting parent.

Eldritch Grimoire

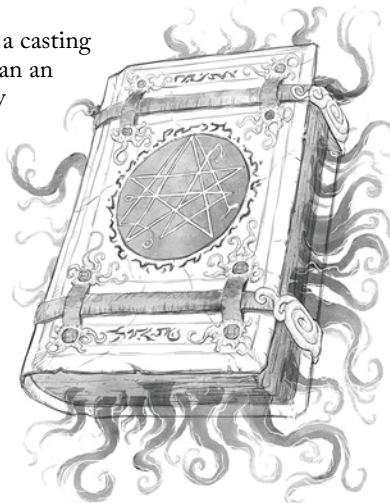
Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a creature with a Spellcasting feature)

An *eldritch grimoire* is a tome of profane power, bound in the slimy hide of a deep-sea creature and emblazoned with the symbols of Great Old Ones.

While you are attuned to the grimoire, you can use it as a spellbook to prepare and record spells. Additionally, each grimoire comes inscribed with seven spells of a Great Old One's choosing. While you hold the grimoire, you can read from the book to cast one of the spells using its casting time, without the need for any material components. A spell cast in this manner gains one of the following benefits of your choice.

- If concentration is required to maintain the spell, the grimoire maintains concentration on the spell instead of you. The grimoire's concentration can only be broken if it is destroyed.
- If the spell forces one or more creatures to make a saving throw to resist its effects, the spell save DC for that spell is increased by 4 for the first saving throw each affected creature makes against the spell.
- If the spell requires that you make one or more spell attack rolls, those attacks score a critical hit on a roll of 18–20.
- If the spell has a casting time greater than an action, you may instead cast it as an action.

Cursed. The grimoire is cursed. When you cast a spell from the book, the time until Cthulhu wakes from slumber again is reduced by 5 years.



STAR SPAWN

Large aberration, unaligned

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 157 (15d10 + 75)

Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	18 (+4)	21 (+5)	12 (+1)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +9, Con +10, Wis +10

Skills Athletics +8, Perception +8, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances acid, cold

Damage Immunities psychic

Senses blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 18

Languages telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 12 (8,400 XP)

TRAITS

Amphibious. The star spawn can breathe air and water.

Beneath the Waves. When completely submerged in a liquid, the star spawn has total cover against creatures that are not completely submerged in the same body of liquid.

Disturbing Visage. When a creature that can see the star spawn starts its turn within 30 feet of the star spawn, the star spawn can force it to attempt a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes psychic damage equal to half its hit point maximum.

Unless surprised, a creature can avert its eyes to avoid the saving throw at the start of its turn. If the creature does so, it can't see and is frightened of the star spawn until the start of its next turn, when it can avert its eyes again. If the creature looks at the star spawn in the meantime, it must immediately attempt the saving throw.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The star spawn makes any combination of three attacks with its Tentacles or Beak.

Beak. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 26 (4d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (3d8 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 15) if it is a Large or smaller creature. Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained and takes 17 (3d8 + 4) damage at the start of each of the star spawn's turns. The star spawn has eight tentacles, each of which can grapple one target.

Psychic Shriek (Recharge 5–6). The star spawn emits a psychic scream in a 60-foot-radius sphere centered on it and shreds the minds of those who hear it. Creatures of the star spawn's choice in the affected area must succeed on a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until the end of their next turn.



NICCOLI VEN FAUST

The Lich Child

"My undeath held more promise than any so-called life."

DESCRIPTION

Dressed in a jacket and noble finery, the seemingly youthful figure of Niccoli the lich child carries himself with the recognizable arrogance of a young teenager. A twisted mockery of youthful vigor, Niccoli's body is skeletal, wrapped in an

ethereal skin carrying the visage of a handsome human male. The spectral echoes of fair auburn hair, a pleasant smile, and shy eyes are all that remain of Niccoli's humanity. When he speaks, Niccoli's voice retains its youthful tones and pitch, though the words always seem to come from far away, as if they struggle to be heard by living ears. If it were not for his

PROFILE

Personality: Arrogant

Ideals: Niccoli holds his personal perspective in the highest regard. Forever trapped in the limited outlook of youth, Niccoli acts with immature selfishness and childlike ego. His opinion is always the most important and insightful, a philosophy proven by his dreadful magical power and formidable list of achievements. To Niccoli, all others are lucky to hear what he has to say or play a part in his plans.

Bonds: As the "youngest" member of the now undead Ven Faust clan, Niccoli still holds some sense of duty to his ancestry and family legacy. Having transformed his grandfather, parents, and sister into undead horrors, Niccoli retains a sense of familial camaraderie with their twisted forms. This unsettling relationship is but a twisted reflection of a family. Nonetheless it is one Niccoli holds great affection for, with the lich child taking great care of his relatives and including them in his schemes.

Flaws: A peculiar side effect of achieving lichdom at such a young age is Niccoli's mental state becoming perpetually locked at that of a thirteen-year-old human. Despite all his great intellect and experience, Niccoli is still prone to outbursts, immature behavior, and impulsive action. This juxtaposes terrifically with Niccoli's magical power, making him a dreadfully unpredictable figure at even the best of times.

Legend: Within a great, wealthy empire over half a millennium old, there existed many noble houses who ruled with distinction, grace, and nobility. Greatest among them was

the house of Ven Faust, a family renowned for producing skilled warriors and politicians. To this noble family was born a brilliant child, Niccoli Ven Faust, who eschewed the family traditions of martial skill in favor of the magical arts. Disappointed with their son's passion for the arcane, Niccoli's parents Rakken and Ophelia Ven Faust focused their attentions on their elder daughter, Sylfie. With each passing year Sylfie's skills at bladedancing grew, while the neglected Niccoli delved deeper and deeper into eldritch lore, leveraging his parents' fortune to purchase tomes best left unread. Eventually Niccoli's activities were noticed by the patriarch of the family, grandfather Graven Ven Faust, who confiscated the young human's research, spellbooks, and magical accessories in what was likely a dramatic confrontation.

What happened next is not known, only that for three months not a soul entered or left the Ven Faust estate. On dark nights neighbors could spot ghostly lights in its dark windows and a pallid chill set over the countryside. Eventually heroes were called in to investigate. They returned from the depths of the manor as undead horrors, leading an army of spectral minions bent on obliterating any who dared cross their path. Within a year the empire fell, its panicked citizenry fleeing to other nations and abandoning the land to the hoards of spectral dead. To this day, Niccoli lairs within Ven Faust Manor, collecting arcane knowledge to further expand his necromantic powers. As the centuries passed, Niccoli's power has only grown, eventually achieving archlichdom by committing atrocities too numerous and horrific to recount. Now known as the lich child, Niccoli has nearly exhausted his capacities at Ven Faust Manor and is eager to venture across the multiverse in search of new magic to master.



radical magical power, Niccoli would unassumingly appear to be a minor, albeit disturbing, undead. The air around the lich child ripples with malevolent magic. His eyes spark with emerald arcane fire, and from his hands seep foul necromantic strands of energy, coiling through the air in search of the living. Even with such ominous signs it is difficult to accept that this mere boy is one of the most fearsome liches to ever exist, one whose talent and evil eclipses all others who have chosen to walk this dark path.

NICCOLI VEN FAUST IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

Niccoli carries with him all the trappings and themes of a lich, but with a far more disturbing and proactive pattern of behavior. The lich child does not possess megalomaniacal goals such as conquering the world or unearthing hidden artifacts. He merely—and futilely—wishes to prove to his long-dead family that his obsession with magic was a worthy and powerful pursuit that would have brought them glory. This goal lets Niccoli take a prominent role in any campaign, as the lich child seeks out whatever sources of magical power he can find to achieve these ends. With legions of undead at his command, uniquely powerful allies to fulfill dangerous missions, and an egotistical habit of handling things personally, Niccoli can prove a diverse and dangerous challenge to heroes seeking to end the Ven Faust family line.

INTRODUCTION

Niccoli can be directly introduced to a campaign through personal appearance. Supremely arrogant, Niccoli happily walks among the living in search of new magic, slaughtering those who do not treat him with impeccable manners and the utmost respect. The lich child can be easily lured out of his lair with the promise of a new spell to master, a style of magic to study, or an ancient grimoire for sale. Such excursions invariably end in tragedy. Some overambitious paladin or suicidally principled cleric always picks a fight they cannot win, much to the delight of Niccoli who relishes the opportunity to show the common folk just how powerful he really is.

Alternatively, a subtler introduction to Niccoli could involve his overwhelming application of incorporeal undead. Should Niccoli find the need to deploy undead minions in the pursuit of some objective, he always utilizes ghosts, wraiths, and other such undead, even when more traditional forces of zombies and skeletons would be more effective. Why the lich child does this is unknown, but its peculiarity is enough to pique the interest of dedicated heroes who would be keen to investigate the strange phenomenon.

CONFLICT

Niccoli takes everything personally. Even the smallest opposition or act of disrespect is enough to send the lich child into a tantrum, dedicating a disproportionate amount of time and resources to avenging his bruised ego. The smallest slight can lead to a continent-spanning conflict between aspiring heroes

and Niccoli's undead forces. Niccoli has committed countless atrocities to achieve archlichdom, so what's a few dozen more in the name of petty revenge? With his brilliance, Niccoli can learn everything there is to know about his foes in short order, using that knowledge against them to terrifying effect. A particularly favored tactic of Niccoli is transforming the spirits of slain loved ones and friends into undead minions, then gleefully unleashing them upon his enemies. Being forced to cut down the ghosts of one's parents, friends, and family is but one of the horrors Niccoli can visit upon those he despises. Through acts of twisted necromancy and evil genius, Niccoli can craft sinister schemes of devious complexity. Between the Ven Faust family fortune, powerful magic, and fearsome reputation, there are few beings Niccoli cannot leverage or manipulate to advance his agenda.

CONCLUSION

Should any heroes manage to repel Niccoli's forces, unravel his schemes, and foil his goals, the enraged lich child withdraws to Ven Faust Manor to sulk. This is the moment to strike, for in this petulant state Niccoli's veneer of supremacy and brilliance is replaced with that of an entitled child who didn't get his way. While still dangerous, Niccoli's behavior becomes impulsive and short-sighted. He senselessly squanders allies and resources in strategically irresponsible decisions, while simultaneously neglecting to optimize his magic to best crush his enemies. The final showdown between Niccoli and any heroes should be a highly charged, emotional affair—a fraught conflict impulsively sought by an arrogant, desperate child.

CHALLENGES

Niccoli can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with him.

EXPLORATION

Deep within the ruinous borders of an ancient empire lies Ven Faust Manor. Haunted by countless spectral undead and devoid of civilization, these lands are perilous to explore for even veteran heroes. Time has not been kind to this neglected realm. Its lands contain only the barest modicum of life, while every undead within is pledged to Niccoli's ambition. While the lich child rarely deals with trespassers personally, any who approach Ven Faust Manor can expect stiff resistance from an array of magical wards, twisted undead horrors of Niccoli's design, and other evils that secure the property.

However, Niccoli is not above venturing beyond the boundaries of his domain. The lich child will travel great distances to enact his agenda, using his magic to confound enemies at every turn. Those who have made an enemy of Niccoli can expect to find sleeping difficult, as their campsites become haunted with spectral undead, their pathways obscured by potent illusions, and their objectives hindered by mischievous spells. Cruelty is a frequent theme in Niccoli's behavior, and creating logistical inconveniences and perils are among the lich child's favorite pastimes.



Regional Effects

The region around Niccoli's lair is warped by his power, which has created the following effects within 50 miles of Ven Faust Manor.

- Undead of CR 5 or lower that are slain in the area are restored to "life" 24 hours later. The restored undead appear in an unoccupied space within 1 mile of Ven Faust Manor.
- Corporeal undead in the affected area can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. An undead that ends its turn inside an object is shunted to the nearest unoccupied space and takes 5 (1d10) force damage for every 5 feet it is shunted in this manner.
- Food and drink within the affected area spoils within 1 hour.

Niccoli's Lair

Atop a forlorn hill in what was once an idyllic valley, Ven Faust Manor lies in a state of suspended decay. Its paint is peeling, wood rotten, metal rusted, and windows faded, but the mansion is far from abandoned. Here Niccoli Ven Faust "lives" with the undead abominations fashioned from the remains of his former family. Its haunted corridors are stalked by vengeful ghosts of ages past. Coupled with the now undead members of the Ven

Faust line, Niccoli has fashioned a necromantic effigy of day-to-day life, with zombie servants, family "dinners," spectral dance parties, and other activities that would seem wholesome in almost any other context. While the manor may appear ancient and decrepit, this is merely an aesthetic choice by Niccoli as a final act of spite against his hated family. Hidden away behind magically locked doors are hidden chambers containing countless books of magic, strange artifacts of arcane power, and innumerable other curios fit only for Niccoli's twisted amusements.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Niccoli can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Niccoli is using his mythic statistics, he can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Niccoli can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- A room of Niccoli's choice within the lair becomes flooded with necromantic energy. Undead in the affected area regain 26 (4d12) hit points, and living creatures in the area take 26 (4d12) necrotic damage.
- Spectral limbs reach out to grasp a creature of Niccoli's choice in the lair. The target must attempt a DC 22 Strength saving throw. On a failure, an object the creature

NECROPOLIS DOMAIN

Among the most fearsome and dangerous of domains is the dreaded necropolis. Within their vile borders, undead gather in tremendous numbers and necromantic power flows like water. A necropolis domain is an undead paradise—which is hell for most other beings. Everything within these domains is dead or dying. While it may seem initially appealing to necromancers and similar masters of undeath, a necropolis is inhospitable to all who cling to the feeble spark of life. Over time these areas become terrifying bastions of evil and darkness, spawning new undead monstrosities and gathering powerful creatures looking to influence the hordes of mindless dead. Necropolis domains always appear where areas of large-scale death and decay have occurred. War-torn battlefields, ancient castles ravaged by disease, and sites of mass extinction events are all prime candidates to form a necropolis. A necropolis domain has the following traits.

Creatures. Undead, undead, and more undead. Vampires, liches, and death knights are among the most significant creatures likely to be found in a necropolis domain, seeking to marshal the hordes of mindless undead that gather in a necropolis.

Detection. A successful DC 22 Wisdom (Survival) check is required to determine a necropolis domain's true nature.

Properties. A necropolis domain causes the following effects within its area.

- **Dead Rising.** A living, flesh-and-blood creature that dies within a necropolis domain rises as a zombie within 1 hour. A creature so risen has its type changed to undead, has its Intelligence score reduced to 3, and gains immunity to poison damage and the poisoned condition.
- **Eternal Decay.** Living creatures in the area rot away as though they were dead. Whenever a living creature in the area finishes a long rest, it gains a level of a unique condition called decaying.
- **Scourgelight.** Areas of bright light in the domain are instead always dim light.

- **The Calling.** Undead are drawn to the domain's area and naturally gather in large groups. Undead in the area can instinctively sense the presence of other undead in the domain and experience a compulsion to congregate in concentrated groups, so long as doing so would not cause them harm.

THE DECAYING CONDITION

When a living creature finishes a long rest in a necropolis domain, it gains levels of decaying, a condition that causes it to rot away as though it were dead. The decaying condition is measured in six levels.

Decaying Table

Level	Effect
1	Disadvantage on Charisma ability checks
2	Vision reduced to 60 ft.
3	Deafened
4	Cannot take the Dash or Disengage actions
5	Hit point maximum halved
6	Death

If an already decaying creature suffers another effect that causes decaying, its current level of decaying increases by the amount specified in the effect's description. A creature suffers the effect of its current level of decaying as well as all lower levels.

When an affected creature finishes a long rest outside of the domain, its level of decaying is reduced by one. Other methods of removing decaying are believed to exist, though the existence and nature of such is determined by the DM.

is holding is pulled from its grasp or the creature becomes grappled and restrained (Niccoli's choice; escape DC 22).

- An unattended object of Niccoli's choice within the lair magically teleports to an unoccupied space of his choice within the lair.

Exploration Encounters

An exploration encounter involving Niccoli always involves undead, magic, or both. The lich child is capable of terrific forces when provoked, completely flooding areas with endless undead hordes or magical hazards. What is worse, the lich child's incredible intellect ensures his schemes are as creative as they are cruel. Niccoli is quick to learn the strengths and weaknesses of heroes who oppose him, using exploration encounters as opportunities to separate a party and drive wedges between them. There is no honor or dignity in these actions, only assurances of victory and the kind of raw cruelty of which only a child is capable.

The Living Nightmare. In a scheme to torment would-be heroes, Niccoli has fashioned a grim scenario through the cunning use of the *mirage arcane* spell, extensive research, and necromantic magic to replicate the hometowns of the characters, complete with ghostly visages of friends and family. With a disturbing degree of detail and effort put into the visage, Niccoli seeks to confuse and demoralize the heroes, having slaughtered the inhabitants of the town and raised them to fulfill this vile task. The lich child has no interest in violence, instead forcing the spirits to beg and plead for their lives if attacked, lamenting the heroes could not save them from this cruel fate.

The Dreadmoon. Through an act of herculean magic, Niccoli has enchanted the realm around his lair to be a haven for undead of all types, at all hours of the day. This enchantment places a necromantic lunar body within the sky, casting a grim light down upon the inhabitants of the ruined empire. The fell magic has further corrupted the land, transforming it into a strange magical

realm known as a necropolis¹. With more undead flocking to Niccoli's undead haven, it is clear something must be done to destroy the "dreadmoon" and undo the enchantment.

The Onyx Eye. Taking a curious fancy to divination magic, Niccoli begins searching for a legendary artifact known as *The Onyx Eye*. This peculiar crystal ball is said to be fashioned from a perfectly shaped facet of black diamond and capable of foretelling the exact time and nature of one's final death. For obvious reasons, an immortality-obsessed lich has great use for such an object, and Niccoli's undead minions search high and low for any hint as to the eye's whereabouts. Any who can track down the eye before the lich child are sure to earn his ire but also gain tremendous leverage over him.

SOCIAL

With the etiquette of a noble, the arrogance of a teenager, the maturity of an entitled brat, and enough power to level a small nation in a single day, Niccoli is a volatile and dangerous force with which to socialize. The lich child yearns for unconditional respect, still insecure after many centuries thanks to the neglectful parenting he received. Eager to demonstrate his hard-earned power, Niccoli frequently accents his social skills with displays of magic meant to intimidate or impress. He enjoys the company of sycophants and despises those who would judge him in silence. To the lich child, the day an average being shares his company should be the most important day of their life. If they are incapable of realizing it, there are always other, more direct ways to guarantee a memorable experience.

Social Encounters

Never one for hiding in the shadows, Niccoli readily engages socially with any who cross his path, even with his enemies. Having survived so many deadly foes, the lich child has little to fear from not taking his enemies seriously, at least until they prove themselves a considerable threat. Niccoli uses these encounters to stroke his ego and indulge his desire for respect regarding his numerous magical achievements. The lich child no longer comprehends the value of friendship and has little to gain outside the scope of his personal goals. In the worst cases, Niccoli uses these opportunities to torment and belittle his

enemies, particularly if he knows they cannot strike directly at him and must instead endure.

Breakfast at Niccoli's. In a gesture of magical power and passive-aggressive taunting, Niccoli conjures a *magnificent mansion* near the characters while they sleep, inviting them to breakfast with his family. Clearly a farce, Niccoli's only intention in this encounter is to make the heroes as uncomfortable as possible. The lich child intends to have each member of his family engage in morbid conversation with the party, taking great efforts to ensure no one leaves the table without contributing to some colorful conversation. For good measure, the food is suitably foul, befitting a family of centuries-old undead.

The Bear Heist. In an act of supreme daring, a thief has stolen Niccoli's phylactery. The typically arcane device is revealed to be a stuffed teddy bear named Simon, the loss of which drives Niccoli into an incoherent rage. However, unable to locate the thief, the



¹ A necropolis is one of many magical areas known as domains, which are explained in further detail in the *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex*.

lich child makes a proclamation: If the bear is not returned within a week, Niccoli will unleash thousands of incorporeal undead upon the countryside, with standing orders to slay all they encounter.

The Deathly Concordance. Liches from across the planes are gathering to discuss something of great import: an award for the most accomplished lich of the millennium. Oddly self-conscious around his peers, Niccoli seeks the aid of a social expert to fine-tune his social graces. As this is as much a popularity contest as it is a measure of achievement, Niccoli needs to make some serious improvements to his social skills if he is to have any chance of winning the award. With the conference only a few months away, the lich child opens his domain to adventurers willing to tutor him, in return for handsome rewards of course.

COMBAT

When roused to battle Niccoli is cruel and overwhelming. His childlike fury would be almost amusing if it weren't accompanied by an overwhelming onslaught of necromantic spells that rend asunder both body and mind. With a genius intellect, there are few combat scenarios for which Niccoli is not prepared, provided he is not experiencing a tantrum. Niccoli did not become a lich so that he could live forever. He did it to prove a point, and that point can't be demonstrated by waiting in a lair for adventurers to approach. The lich child takes great pleasure in bringing the fight to his enemies. Nothing better demonstrates his hard-earned power than obliterating hapless heroes with his unstoppable magic. Niccoli is prone to leaving survivors, though always with enough scars to ensure their paths will never willingly cross again. How can one truly appreciate the lich child's strength if there is no one left to talk about it? If truly threatened thanks to the destruction or loss of his phylactery, Niccoli fights savagely. Arrogance and cruelty melt away and are replaced with shrieking rage, a disturbing display to any unfortunate enough to bear witness.

Combat Encounter Example: Thoughtless Death

Sometimes making a point isn't about how much ass you can kick, but proving how tough you are to take down. In an unusual display, Niccoli has chosen to recklessly and openly attack the characters when they are experiencing downtime. The lich child isn't interested in killing them, only proving how little regard he has for their lives and how much stronger he is without even trying. In such an encounter, Niccoli fully intends to lose.

With his phylactery secure and far away, it is a simple matter for Niccoli to fall and return soon after to gloat about his superiority. In the meantime, the lich child intends to cause as much havoc and destruction as possible. The purpose is to demonstrate just how much destruction Niccoli can rain down upon them, with the full intention of making good on this threat at a later, less convenient date. In such a battle the lich child seems almost bored, yawning between spells, barely bothering to aim, and causing ludicrous amounts of collateral damage. All the while Niccoli childishly gloats, happily stopping combat to trade barbs should the characters stand down, only to spontaneously resume combat moments later.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Artillery

As a spellcasting enemy Niccoli is extremely complex to run. His entire arsenal of spells is at your disposal, and none are chosen arbitrarily. Thanks to his Multiattack feature, Niccoli can unleash multiple spells in a single turn, allowing him to eat up his lower-level slots without compromising his action economy. Note that this tool is essential for preventing troublesome *counterspell* castings, as the characters will have to choose which spells to stop, likely without knowing which spells are powerful and which are negligible. It is wise to review Niccoli's spell list before running him, and to pick out at least one spell from each slot level to utilize as the default option during combat. You can also mix and match additional spells according to your needs, but it is wise to not grant Niccoli prepared spells he will likely not cast in combat.

In addition to his magic, Niccoli has several nefarious traits and abilities that complement his magical arsenal. Chief among them is Master of Shrouds, which allows Niccoli to put down even more damage and punish characters who specialize in delivering big, heavy hits. Note that the trait requires targets fail a saving throw against one of Niccoli's spells, so be sure to force as many group saving throws as possible for maximum effect. Should spells prove less than ideal, use Death Ray to deliver huge damage. Because Death Ray is an attack, it can even score critical hits, so keep that in mind when dealing with paralyzed or similarly vulnerable targets. Dread Necromancy is Niccoli's signature move, allowing him to unleash a devastating spell against which almost no character can defend, making it the most optimal spell Niccoli can use at any given moment.

Easier Tactics – Avoid casting spells that affect multiple targets, as this can provide too many interactions with Master of Shrouds. Similarly, Dread Necromancy should be combined with more forgiving spells to prevent an overwhelming magical effect, such as *psychic scream*, from downing the entire party. Don't have Niccoli begin combat with any spells pre-cast. He should instead raise defensive spells as the fight progresses, and generally not until he has a suitable reason to counter an existing strategy employed by the party.

Harder Tactics – Begin combat with *invulnerability* already cast on Niccoli. This is a huge obstacle for the characters to overcome, allowing the lich to pummel them with spells and fear few consequences. Use Dread Necromancy as often as possible, recovering high-level slots via legendary action to ensure Niccoli is casting powerful spells at every opportunity. Make sure to put Master of Shrouds on the damage-dealing characters at every opportunity. Depending on the luck of the dice, this can transform potential advantages, such as critical hits, into deadly interactions.

Mythic Niccoli

When wielding mythic power, Niccoli becomes an unstoppable spell-slinging machine. With a new arsenal of Epic spells to unleash, Niccoli gains tremendous synergy with his Dread Necromancy and Master of Shrouds traits. These Epic spells are Niccoli's most powerful tools. Failure to effectively use their power will result in a poor encounter.

NICCOLI VEN FAUST

Small undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 14

Hit Points 494 (52d6 + 312)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)	29 (+9)	15 (+2)	19 (+4)

Saving Throws Dex +12, Int +17, Wis +10, Cha +12

Skills Arcana +25, History +17, Insight +10, Perception +10

Damage Resistances cold, lightning

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Common, plus ten other languages

Challenge 27 (105,000 XP)

TRAITS

Archlich. While Niccoli's phylactery is intact, he gains 300 temporary hit points whenever he finishes a short or long rest, which last until he begins another short or long rest.

Additionally, if Niccoli is destroyed, he immediately reappears with a new body in an unoccupied space within 10 feet of his phylactery at his hit point maximum. This effect cannot occur more than once per week.

Master of Shrouds. When a creature fails the first saving throw it attempts against each spell cast by Niccoli, he can choose to curse the target with vengeful spirits for 1 minute, which appear as ghostly visages swirling around the target. When a creature cursed in this manner next deals damage to Niccoli, the haunting ends and the creature takes necrotic or psychic damage (Niccoli's choice) equal to the damage Niccoli took.

Mythic Resistance. When Niccoli fails a saving throw, he can spend one of his unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Niccoli is a 20th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks). Niccoli typically has the following spells prepared but can prepare up to forty spells from the sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell lists:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *mage hand*, *message*, *toll the dead*^{*2}

1st level (6 slots): *charm person*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *unseen servant*, *witch bolt*

2nd level (5 slots): *darkness*, *hold person*, *mind spike*^{*}, *suggestion*

3rd level (5 slots): *animate dead*, *bestow curse*, *counterspell*, *dispel magic*

4th level (4 slots): *black tentacles*, *blight*, *charm monster*^{*}, *dimension door*

5th level (4 slots): *cloudkill*, *enervation*^{*}, *far step*^{*}, *negative energy flood*^{*}

6th level (3 slots): *circle of death*, *create undead*, *glove of invulnerability*

7th level (3 slots): *finger of death*, *sequester*, *teleport*

8th level (2 slots): *maddening darkness*^{*}, *mind blank*

9th level (2 slots): *invulnerability*^{*}, *psychic scream*^{*}

ACTIONS

Multispell. Niccoli casts up to three spells, the combined spell levels of which cannot exceed 9th level.

Death Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, range 600 ft., one living creature. *Hit:* 54 (10d8 + 9) necrotic damage. Niccoli can expend one or more spell slots to increase the damage of this attack. This increased damage is 1d8 for a 1st-level slot, plus an additional 1d8 for every slot higher than 1st, to a total maximum of 189 (40d8 + 9) necrotic damage.

Dread Necromancy (Recharge 5–6). Niccoli casts a spell of 1st level or higher from the necromancy school, which is always cast at 9th level, regardless of the slot used to cast it. The spell save DC for this spell is 30 (when applicable), any spell attack hits scored with the spell are instead critical hits (when applicable), and Niccoli automatically succeeds on Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration on the spell (when applicable).

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Niccoli can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Niccoli regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cantrip. Niccoli casts a cantrip.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Niccoli casts a spell of 3rd level or lower.

Death Ray (Costs 2 Actions). Niccoli uses his Death Ray action.

Gather Power (Costs 2 Actions). Niccoli regains a spell slot of 8th level or lower.

Dread Necromancy (Costs 3 Actions). Niccoli uses or recharges his Dread Necromancy action.

² Spells in Niccoli's spell list marked with a * can be found in the official 5E supplement, XGE.

MYTHIC NICCOLI VEN FAUST

Small mythic undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 24 (*force armor*)

Hit Points 1,137 (91d6 + 819)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	21 (+5)	29 (+9)	33 (+11)	16 (+3)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +10, Dex +17, Con +21, Int +23, Wis +15, Cha +18

Skills Arcana +35, History +23, Insight +15, Perception +15

Damage Resistances cold, lightning

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 25

Languages Common, plus ten other languages

Challenge Mythic 8

TRAITS

Archlich. While Niccoli's phylactery is intact, he gains 1,000 temporary hit points whenever he finishes a short or long rest, which last until he begins another short or long rest.

Additionally, if Niccoli is destroyed, he immediately reappears with a new body in an unoccupied space within 10 feet of his phylactery at his hit point maximum. This effect cannot occur more than once per week.

Master of Shrouds. When a creature fails the first saving throw it attempts against each spell cast by Niccoli, he can choose to curse the target with vengeful spirits for 1 minute, which appear as ghostly visages swirling around the target. When a creature cursed in this manner next deals damage to Niccoli, the haunting ends and the creature takes necrotic or psychic damage (Niccoli's choice) equal to the damage Niccoli took.

Mythic Resistance. When Niccoli fails a saving throw, he can spend one of his unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Spellcasting. Niccoli is a 20th-level spellcaster and an 8th-level Epic spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 31, +23 to hit with spell attacks). Niccoli typically has the following spells prepared but can prepare up to forty spells from the sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell lists:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch, mage hand, message, toll the dead*³

1st level (6 slots): *charm person, magic missile, shield, unseen servant, witch bolt*

2nd level (5 slots): *darkness, hold person, mind spike*, suggestion*

3rd level (5 slots): *animate dead, bestow curse, counterspell, dispel magic*

4th level (4 slots): *black tentacles, blight, charm monster*, dimension door*

5th level (4 slots): *cloudkill, enervation*, far step*, negative energy flood**

6th level (3 slots): *circle of death, create undead, glove of invulnerability*

7th level (3 slots): *finger of death, sequester, teleport*

8th level (2 slots): *maddening darkness*, mind blank*

9th level (2 slots): *invulnerability*, psychic scream**

Niccoli has the following Epic spells⁴ prepared:

Tier 1 (5 slots): *antimagic ray, hideous mandate, mortifying apparition, wave of calamity*

Tier 2 (4 slots): *bloodbane, force armor, necrotic cyst, storm of torment*

Tier 3 (3 slots): *malevolent fists of spite, silent scythe of slaying, soul harvest*

ACTIONS

Multispell. Niccoli casts three spells, one of which can be an Epic spell, and the combined spell levels of the non-Epic spells cannot exceed 9th level.

Death Ray. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, range 600 ft., one living creature. *Hit:* 141 (20d12 + 11) necrotic damage. Niccoli can expend one or more spell slots to increase the damage of this attack. This increased damage is 2d12 for a 1st-level slot, plus an additional 2d12 for every slot higher than 1st, to a total maximum of 271 (40d12 + 11) necrotic damage.

Dread Necromancy (Recharge 5–6). Niccoli casts a spell from the necromancy school, which is always cast at the highest possible level or Epic tier, regardless of the slot used to cast it. The spell save DC for this spell is 40 (when applicable), any spell attack hits scored with the spell are instead critical hits (when applicable), and Niccoli automatically succeeds on Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration on the spell (when applicable).

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Niccoli takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. Niccoli can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Dread Specters. Niccoli calls forth sinister spirits to aid him, which swirl around Niccoli in a 60-foot-radius sphere. When a creature in the affected area attempts an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, the specters force the creature to roll 1d4 and subtract the amount rolled from the result. Each time Niccoli uses this action, the die increases in size: 1d6 if used twice, 1d8 if used thrice, 1d10 if used four times, and 1d12 if used 5 times.

This benefit lasts until Niccoli finishes a short or long rest.

Vile Magic. Niccoli suffuses his magic with the very essence of evil. Until the next initiative count of 20, when Niccoli would deal any type of damage with his spells, he may choose to instead deal vile damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Niccoli can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Niccoli regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Cantrip. Niccoli casts a cantrip.

Cast a Spell (Costs 2 Actions). Niccoli casts a spell of 8th level or lower.

Death Ray (Costs 2 Actions). Niccoli uses his Death Ray action.

Gather Power (Costs 2 Actions). Niccoli regains a spell of tier 1 Epic level or lower.

Dread Necromancy (Costs 3 Actions). Niccoli uses or recharges his Dread Necromancy action.

³ Spells in mythic Niccoli's spell list marked with a * can be found in the official 5E supplement, *XGE*.

⁴ These Epic spells can be found in the *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.



In addition to these new magics, Niccoli also gains powerful mythic actions that add terrific power to his already formidable arsenal. Vile Magic is always a solid choice, allowing Niccoli to diversify his damage types and punish good-aligned characters who dare oppose him. Dread Specters is an initially less impressive but escalating ability. Through its repeated use, Niccoli can quickly overwhelm the opposition as he continues to apply Master of Shrouds with greater ease. Lastly, note the significant increase in damage from Death Ray. With Epic spells at his disposal, Niccoli is incentivized to eat up large numbers of lower-levels slots to give that action a bigger kick.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, Niccoli causes the following effects.

Child Prodigy. Niccoli is a genius of the arcane arts, mastering magic at a young age that would take most wizards several lifetimes. Niccoli has a passive Intelligence (Arcana) of 45, which he uses to immediately identify any spell or magical effect he sees (no action required).

Additionally, if Niccoli observes a sorcerer, warlock, or wizard spell being cast that he does not know, he can prepare that spell from the memory of observing its casting.

Arcane Tantrums. Niccoli's magic is affected by his volatile emotional state. If Niccoli is in one of his infamous tantrums, he gains the following properties.

- Niccoli can cast spells without the need for material components but must scream the verbal components as loudly as possible.
- Creatures have Epic disadvantage on spellcasting ability checks to counter or dispel Niccoli's spells.
- Niccoli cannot maintain concentration on his spells or effects.

RESOURCES

Niccoli has spent half a millennium as a lich accumulating magic and raising undead. Consequently, his resources are vast and potent. Within Ven Faust Manor lie countless undead horrors, fearsome experiments Niccoli fashioned like a child playing with building blocks. For his hated enemies Niccoli has reserved more sinister fates, creating unique undead that retain a twisted

semblance of their former lives. As an archlich, Niccoli commands formidable magic. Eschewing traditional tools of spell-casting such as staves and wands, Niccoli prefers to rely on his hands. He never utilizes magical equipment other than his trademark *lich liege vestments*, preferring to invest instead in knowledge. The dark and twisted magic found with Niccoli's library ranks among some of the most horrid spells ever penned, fit only for the depraved or the pyre. Accompanying this knowledge of the arcane is a mastery of history, theory, and other intellectual pursuits, ensuring Niccoli has adequate resources to tackle any intellectual problem that comes his way.

ALLIES

No creature is known to associate with Niccoli that isn't already sworn to his service through necromantic magic. Such is the sad fate of the Ven Faust family, who serve the wayward "youth" in an eternal mockery of their household. Either Niccoli no longer notices the twisted nature of this relationship, or he is truly too cruel to care, as the lich child seems to genuinely enjoy the adoring company of his father, mother, sister, and grandfather. Along with the Ven Faustus, many potent undead assist Niccoli in his schemes. However, the lich child never associates with powerful, intelligent undead such as vampires or liches, preferring minions he can easily control and manipulate like the dolls he once loved.

Charnel Hounds. When Niccoli was young he owned a mastiff, which he loved with a fierce passion. His misery at the mastiff's death began Niccoli's obsession with necromancy, for the young boy could not believe something so tragic need happen again. In honor of his former friend, the lich child has crafted a new breed of undead horror known as charnel hounds. These massive undead abominations are composed of multiple humanoid corpses smashed together into the lithe shape of a great hound. From its mouth jut rusted spikes dripping blood, eager to crush the bones of any who dare challenge Niccoli's might.

Ophelia Ven Faust. Renowned for her acidic personality, Ophelia Ven Faust suffered a poetic fate at the hands of her son as she was transformed into a malevolent vampiric spirit and his personal assassin. Dressed in an elegant white dress, Ophelia moves with a fluid grace that echoes her days as a martial artist. Completely stripped of her emotions, Ophelia remembers everything about her past life but holds no malice toward Niccoli. Twisted to view him as the rightful leader of the Ven Faust family, Ophelia does as she is commanded without question and can never be turned from her son's side.

Sylfie Ven Faust. Niccoli's older sister and promising blade-dancer before her untimely demise, Sylfie Ven Faust now serves as her brother's personal bodyguard in the rare instance he feels the need to travel with protection. In an elegant dancing gown rotten with age, Sylfie leaps across the battlefield in defense of her brother. While she wields a rapier with devilish skill, Sylfie's mind has been corroded by necrotic energies into a delusion where she and her family are still alive and happy. Niccoli does nothing to dispel this delusion, perhaps showcasing some shred of humanity left within him.

CHARNEL HOUND

Huge undead, unaligned

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 500 (40d12 + 240)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	16 (+3)	22 (+6)	6 (-2)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +14, Dex +9, Con +12, Wis +12

Skills Perception +18

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic

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

Senses blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius)

Languages understands the language of its creator but can't speak

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Amorphous Body. Composed of dozens of corpses, the charnel hound has no obvious weak points, making it immune to critical hits. In addition, a charnel hound may pass through a space at least 5 inches wide by squeezing and compressing its form.

Eater of Flesh. Attacks from the charnel hound deal an additional 22 (5d8) necrotic damage (included in the attack), and the charnel hound regains hit points equal to any necrotic damage it deals. In addition, attacks against creatures frightened of the charnel hound deal damage as though they are critical hits. A creature critically hit by the charnel hound must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or have a limb torn off and consumed by the charnel hound.

Pack Tactics. The charnel hound has advantage on attack rolls if its target is adjacent to an ally of the charnel hound and that ally isn't incapacitated.

Scent. The charnel hound has advantage on Perception checks to detect creatures by scent.

ACTIONS

Multiaction. The charnel hound makes two Bite attacks. It can forgo making one Bite attack in this manner to instead use its Death Howl action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (5d8 + 6) piercing damage plus 22 (5d8) necrotic damage.

Death Howl (Recharge 5–6). The charnel hound unleashes a baying howl. Each living creature within 120 feet of the charnel hound must succeed on a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of the charnel hound for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on a success.

Faithful Hound. The charnel hound is bound to a location when created and can return there faithfully across great distances. If the charnel hound is farther than 100 feet from its bound location, using this action magically teleports it to the nearest unoccupied space to that location.

OPHELIA VEN FAUST

Medium undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 19

Hit Points 378 (36d8 + 216)

Speed 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	28 (+9)	22 (+6)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)

Saving Throws Str +10, Dex +15, Wis +9

Skills History +15, Insight +15, Perception +15, Stealth +21

Damage Resistances bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagic weapons

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Challenge 17 (18,000 XP)

TRAITS

Acidic Sneak Attack (1/Turn). Ophelia deals an additional 35 (10d6) acid damage on a successful attack against a creature adjacent to an ally or when she has advantage on that attack.

Death Striker. When Ophelia attacks an enemy that cannot see her, she automatically critically hits and the creature must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or take necrotic damage equal to the damage of her attack.

Dexterous Defense (1/Turn). If Ophelia would be forced to make a saving throw that is not a Dexterity saving throw, she can choose to make a Dexterity saving throw instead (the saving throw DC remains the same).

Phantom Assassin. By expending 15 ft. of movement on each of her turns, Ophelia can take the Hide action.

Ven Faust Loyalty. Ophelia cannot be forcibly compelled into acting against Niccoli's best interests.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Ophelia makes two attacks, only one of which may be a bite attack.

Bite (Recharge 5-6). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 25 (6d6 + 4) piercing damage and if the creature is at 100 hit points or fewer it must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or die instantly, rising one turn later as a vampire spawn under her control.

Sickle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 16 (1d12 + 9) slashing damage.

Assassin's Step. Ophelia magically transports herself up to 120 ft. to a space adjacent to an enemy she can see. If Ophelia was hidden from the creature when this action was taken, she gains advantage on her next attack against that creature. This benefit lasts until the end of her next turn.

SYLFIE VEN FAUST

Small undead, neutral evil

Armor Class 21 (natural armor)

Hit Points 342 (36d6 + 216)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	18 (+4)	22 (+6)	17 (+3)	20 (+5)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Dex +10, Con +12, Wis +11, Cha +13

Skills Perception +17, Performance +19

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, deafened, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages Common

Challenge 18 (20,000 XP)

TRAITS

Bladedancer's Grace. If Sylfie is subjected to an effect that would allow her to make a saving throw and suffer an effect on a success, she suffers no effect on a success instead. If Sylfie would be subjected to an effect that allows her to make a saving throw to take only half damage, she instead takes no damage if she succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if she fails.

Elegant Performance (1/Turn). When Sylfie is forced to make a saving throw, she may choose to make a Charisma (Performance) check instead against the saving throw DC.

Martial Poise. Sylfie can choose to not take an action or bonus action on her turn. If she does so, she gains an additional reaction for each action she chooses not to take. This effect lasts until the end of her next turn.

Ven Faust Loyalty. Sylfie cannot be forcibly compelled to act against Niccoli's best interests.

ACTIONS

Censure. Sylfie emits a pulse of force, repelling all would-be attackers. Each creature within 40 feet of Sylfie is pushed to the edge of the area's effect and knocked prone, and each creature must attempt a DC 22 Strength saving throw, taking 49 (14d6) force damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Slumbering Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or be knocked unconscious. Slapping the unconscious creature or causing it to take damage causes the creature to regain consciousness.

REACTIONS

Dancing Parry. As a reaction when Sylfie or a creature she can see within 5 feet of her is targeted by a spell or attack, she may make a Charisma (Performance) check contested by the triggering creature's Charisma (Deception), Charisma (Intimidation), or Charisma (Persuasion) check. If Sylfie is successful, she may select a new target of her choice (if eligible) within reach or range of the attack or spell.

REWARDS

Defeating Niccoli is both a merciful end to the tragedy of the Ven Faust family line and a triumph of good over evil. Niccoli has much to answer for, and the list of those who would see him dead is extensive. Those whose family members were lost and their souls shackled to Niccoli's service would be ever grateful, rewarding those responsible by any means they could. Niccoli's profane libraries would prove bountiful as well, provided one could overlook the ethical implications of using or selling the knowledge within. Of particular note is the only piece of magical equipment Niccoli ever bothers to wear: *lich liege vestments*. Despite their unsavory origins, they are a picture of style and quality.

Lich Liege Vestments

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a sorcerer, warlock, or wizard)

This black suit and sport coat are woven from silken threads spun from shadow spiders and is completely weightless. While you wear the suit, as an action you can fire a death ray by making a ranged spell attack against a creature you can see within 300 feet of you. On a successful hit, the ray deals 45 (10d8) necrotic damage plus your spellcasting ability modifier.

Additionally, you can expend one or more spell slots to increase the damage of this attack. This increased damage is 1d8 for a 1st-level slot, plus an additional 1d8 for every slot higher than 1st, to a total maximum of 180 (40d8) necrotic damage.





THE DARK DRAGONQUEEN

Mother of Draconic Evil

*“My children shall attain their rightful place as masters of all others.
And I, as their mother, will command the realms through rite of strength and blood,
as it was meant to be.”*

DESCRIPTION

Like a draconic hydra, the five-headed deity known as the dark dragonqueen is a terror to behold. Her mud-colored body is immense, its scales slowly shifting to vibrant black, blue, green, white, and red as they move toward her many necks. Each of her heads is a unique epitome of form and virtue that epitomizes chromatic dragonkind. She surveys all with a tyrannical gaze that bears only disdain for all she beholds. Her voices boom like thundering clouds, each unique in its pitch and tone but united in a symphony of authoritative dictation. While there is much to admire about her terrific form, the same cannot be said of the smell. Poisonous gas, acrid fumes, ionized air, burning sulfur, and rime mix noxiously, the result of a slurry of chemicals oozing from her mouths. Great and terrible in equal measure, the dark dragonqueen is among the greatest evils in the known realms.

THE DARK DRAGONQUEEN IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The dark dragonqueen is not one for subtlety. Her name is commonly known throughout the multiverse. Her children, the chromatic dragonflight, demonstrate the ferocity of her power with every innocent village they devastate and vile scheme they enact. Her presence is palpable and her dangerous evil is felt throughout the world, just waiting to be fully unleashed. Any conflict against the dragonqueen involves taking on the devoted mortals who worship her, the Chromatic Cult, her many vicious children, and even fiends from the lower hells. With such evil at her side, the dragonqueen is the ideal archetypal evil for any campaign, full of colorful dragons, unstoppable evils, and peril on an epic scale.

PROFILE

Personality: Tyrannical

Ideals: In the dragonqueen's eyes, all other creatures are inferior to her children. Even the noble offspring of her brother are second to her spawn. However, only a fool would believe the dragonqueen capable of seeing others as equals. She holds herself in highest regard and dreams of ruling the realms with a vast, draconic empire.

Bonds: The dragonqueen has a little-known sister for whom she holds a soft spot: the three-headed dragon princess Malefica. While her sister is inferior in every way, the dragonqueen sees any challenge to Malefica's strength and dominion as a direct challenge to her own.

Flaws: The dragonqueen is envious of her platinum brother and the esteem he holds among mortal races. While she is incapable of being loved as he is, the dragonqueen does everything in her power to achieve the same degree of reverence and worship through fear, intimidation, and violence.

Legend: The dark dragonqueen was created alongside her brother, the platinum dragonking, by the divine lord of dragonkind. First among his children, the sibling pair served in harmony, exploring the realms and learning magic. With the permission of their creator, the siblings created races of mighty dragons, inferior but nonetheless mighty reflections of themselves. Both children sought to impress their parent with their creations, and a rivalry soon grew between the two. The dragonqueen sought to increase the power of her children, granting them savage strength and dominion over lesser races. The dragonking in turn instilled unmatched virtue and grace within his creations. Rivalry turned to jealousy as the competition grew ever fiercer, until the siblings' creator intervened. The divine lord of dragonkind went to his platinum son, knowing him to be the more reasonable of the two, to convince him to end the squabbling peacefully. Unfortunately, the dragonqueen's spies learned of this visit, and in a jealous rage she believed her creator to be siding with her brother. The dark dragonqueen vowed to not only surpass her disgustingly noble sibling, but her creator as well, falling ever further into evil over the eons, dragging her children alongside her into the depths of depravity.

INTRODUCTION

It is one thing to know the dragonqueen's name. It is quite another to act against her. An early introduction of the dragonqueen into a campaign should involve an altercation with the Chromatic Cult. As a deity of tyranny, dragons, and evil, it should be easy to develop a scheme enacted by the cult that introduces the dragonqueen as a future adversary. One of the cult's favorite strategies is to usurp civilizations with the aid of a mighty draconic ally, which is just the sort of problem adventurers are well suited to handle. What initially appears to be a simple dragon menacing a fiefdom can be revealed to have ties to the cult, devils, and eventually the dragonqueen herself.



CONFLICT

Just because the characters have taken direct action against the dragonqueen does not mean she has noticed them in turn. It takes a lot to earn the goddess's ire, so setting the party up to foil her plans is a great way to build repartee. Since all chromatic dragonkind are her family, the slaying of a favored descendant is just the sort of thing that enrages the dragonqueen. Once she is angered, the campaign can shift into a more epic conflict, involving journeys to hell, battling more powerful dragons, and even the occasional encounter with the dragonqueen's mortal form. Remember, the dragonqueen would almost always devastate the party if they were ever within biting range of her true form, but as the main antagonist, direct interaction is recommended to

build up her villainous persona. Use the influence of other powerful creatures, such as the platinum dragonking or an archdevil, to shield the characters from complete annihilation while still allowing direct confrontation.

CONCLUSION

The dragonqueen aspires to escape hell and take her rightful place as queen of the material plane. In her minds, all that is required to accomplish this is to fully manifest upon that realm and lead her children into battle. Even if this ultimately wouldn't work, the devastation wrought by such a conflict would be tremendous, providing your players with a challenging dilemma. Do they journey to the hells and challenge the dragonqueen before she can complete her schemes? Or do they wait for her to manifest and do battle in the skies above the material plane? Both options present unique challenges and suitably climactic set pieces to end a campaign. There are a whole host of allies to aid the characters in either task, from disgruntled archdevils to metallic dragons to other gods. The dragonqueen is such a terrific evil it is likely the characters will need to ride into battle with tremendous boons and powers well beyond what they would ordinarily have at her level. Defeating her means ridding the multiverse of one of its greatest threats, unless of course the gods of your campaign setting require far more than a mortal blow to be fully vanquished.

CHALLENGES

The dark dragonqueen can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with her.

EXPLORATION

The dark dragonqueen lives within a gigantic cave carved into a titanic mountain on the topmost layer of the hells. From there she oversees the industrious devils and their machinations, briefly entertaining visitors between gluttonous meals. A steady stream of messengers and sycophants brave the perilous journey to her abode. Any who dare approach would be wise to bring lavish gifts: priceless treasures for her to hoard or valuable information, such as word of her enemies' movements. Chief among her concerns is any information pertaining to her hated brother, whom she seeks to thwart at every opportunity. Feared by both her children and neighbors, the dragonqueen is alone in her opulent home. Her days are spent plotting and scheming, ruthlessly expending any resource other than her own wealth.

Regional Effects

The region containing the dragonqueen's lair is warped by her divine power, which has created the following effects within 50 miles of her lair:

- Dragons in the area feel incredibly uneasy and cannot benefit from short or long rests, and non-dragons cannot assume the forms of dragons.
- Magic items of legendary or rarer qualities give off an aura that can be detected by dragons up to 50 miles away.

- Gold and other currencies mysteriously vanish every hour. A creature carrying currency loses 1d100 of its most valuable coinage every hour it remains within the area, which appears within the dragonqueen's hoard.

If the dragonqueen is destroyed, these effects fade immediately.

The Dragonqueen's Lair

Deep within the cave behind the dragonqueen's massive bulk is the wealth of worlds, melted down into great rivers of precious metal upon which the dragonqueen languishes, a hoard that has never been robbed or swindled for as long as the dragonqueen has dwelt there. The entire complex is massive, capable of containing a small city. If it were not for her wretched evil, this place could be considered a work of great beauty and inconceivable fortune. Instead, the entire lair is saturated with the dragonqueen's stench and perpetually awash in darkness. Here her tyrannical ladyship broods in a sullen silence, emerging only to receive gifts from her faithful and consume whatever fetid tribute the devils offer. No other creatures dwell here. Any who dare intrude, from the smallest mouse to the mightiest devil, are obliterated with terrible prejudice and without mercy.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragonqueen can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If the dragonqueen is using her mythic statistics, she can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. The dragonqueen can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- The dragonqueen becomes aware of a creature or object within the lair that would ordinarily not belong there, along with its exact position and size. This effect lasts for 1 minute or until the dragonqueen uses this option again.

- A vortex of elemental power manifests in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point within the lair. Creatures in the affected area are vulnerable to acid, cold, fire, lightning, and poison damage. The vortex lasts until the next initiative count of 20.

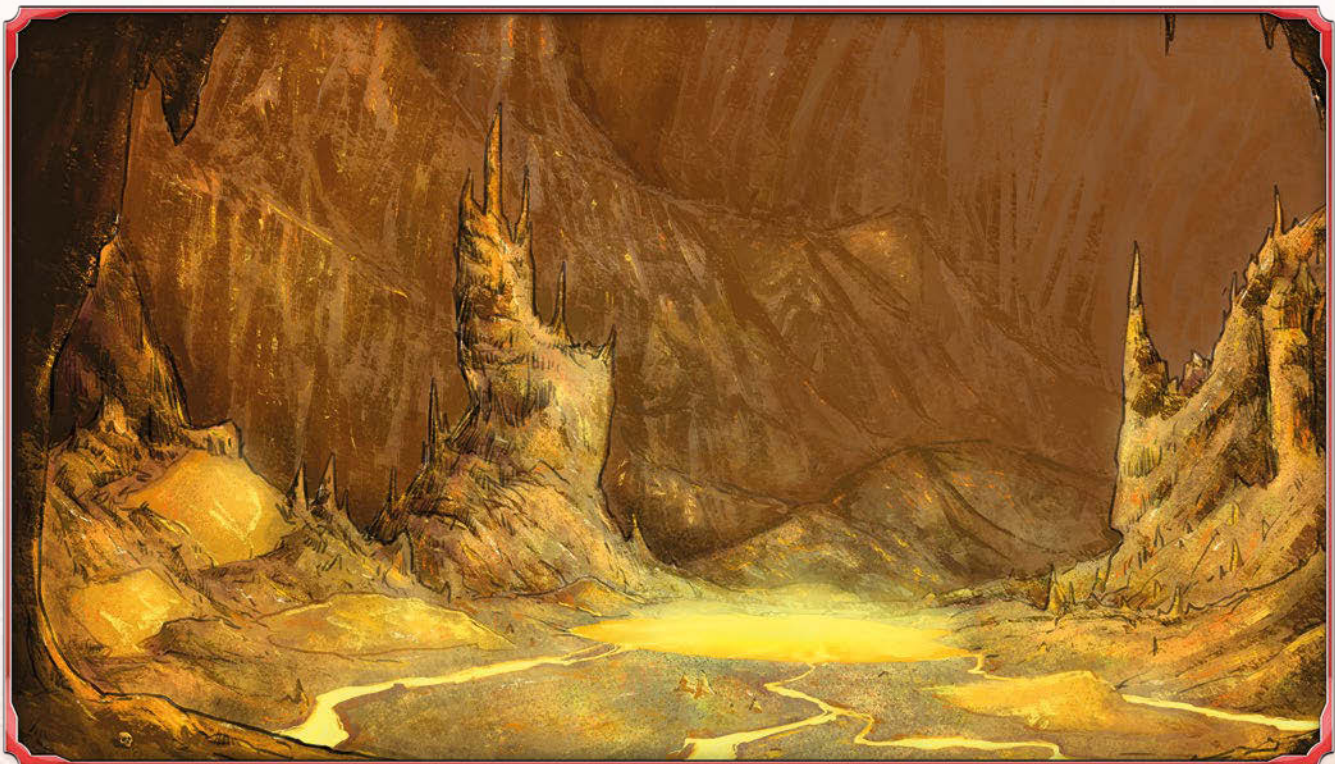
- The lair shines and sparkles with bright light until the next initiative count of 20. Creatures in the area of light have disadvantage on saving throws against the dragonqueen.

Exploration Encounters

While she rarely leaves her lair, the dark dragonqueen is far from accessible. Even attempting to reach her domain is a daring feat, one that only the most experienced or stalwart of souls should attempt. Coupled with her vast reach as a mighty deity, the dragonqueen can pose serious challenges to those venturing into her domain. Examples of some of these encounters are provided here.

Chromatic Empire. In an act of divine power, the dark dragonqueen gifts one of her most faithful children, a black dragon, a magical boon to their dominion within the mortal realms. This blessing takes the form of a special type of magical environment known as a tyrant domain¹. The already formidable black dragon benefits tremendously from its mother's generosity and has used this domain to propagate her faith far and wide across the region. Unless stopped, the faithful of the dragonqueen will swiftly spread their evil into other lands, advancing their goddess's foul schemes to horrific ends.

¹ The details of domains can be found in the 2CGaming supplement the *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex*.



The Pilgrimage. A great caravan of clerics, cultists, and other adherents to the dragonqueen's faith are planning a pilgrimage to her lair. The forces of good, especially the platinum dragonking, are greatly interested in infiltrating this company to spy on the dragonqueen and her minions. However, infiltrating the group is extremely dangerous, but not nearly as perilous as traveling to hell and braving the path to the dragonqueen's lair. Those that succeed at such a task would be well rewarded for any information they could relay to the dragonqueen's enemies.

The Hellbound Heist. Always on the hunt for a new challenge, an organization of interplanar thieves proposes a challenge of absurd difficulty. The group challenges any daring rogues to infiltrate the dark dragonqueen's lair and recover her most prized possession: the *Crown of the Platinum King*. Any who could succeed at such a legendary task would not only become renowned across all the planes but would receive the highest honors a multiverse's worth of thieves could bestow.

SOCIAL

The dark dragonqueen is five identities sharing one soul. Each of her heads speaks with a different voice and mannerisms, exemplifying the legendary behavior of their chromatic dragon counterparts. The white head is savage and aggressive, from which the dragonqueen gains her proficiency in Intimidation. The red head is knowledgeable and clever, resulting in her proficiency in History. The green head is duplicitous and conniving, granting her proficiency in Deception. The blue head is noble and dignified, from which the dragonqueen gains her proficiency in Insight. The black head is predatory and cruel, so she necessarily has proficiency in Perception. Unless the creature she is addressing is significant, the dragonqueen rarely speaks with all her heads. In the rare moments her voice is one, her tone echoes with divine authority and overwhelming evil.

Social Encounters

Socially interacting with the dark dragonqueen is dangerous and intimidating. Rarely does the goddess lower herself to speak with mortals, particularly when it is far simpler just to slay them. More often the dragonqueen interacts with lower beings through her clerics, whom she treats as menial servants. This behavior seems cruel until one remembers almost any alternative treatment from the dragonqueen is likely far worse. The challenges of interacting socially with the dragonqueen are extreme.

The Summoning. While ordinarily incapable of leaving the hells, the dragonqueen can circumvent this restriction by assuming a lowly humanoid form. In this shape her power is diminished, but the dragonqueen can walk among other worlds and take a direct hand in her affairs. At her request, clerics pledged to the dragonqueen's service enact just such a summoning. Once she has been called forth to the material plane, the dragonqueen's agenda remains a mystery, but she reportedly often meets with a mighty dracolich to discuss matters best negotiated in person.

NEW DOMAIN: TYRANT

A tyrant domain is a region magically shackled to the rulership of a single creature: the eponymous tyrant who holds sway over everything within it. Nothing happens within a tyrant domain without this ruler's say-so. Birds cannot sing; trees cannot grow; nothing lives unless the tyrant wills it. The physical properties of the region are twisted to suit the whims of its ruler. Colors may change to suit its desires, certain sounds may not be audible, and other strange phenomena ensure the region is perfectly adapted for the one and only soul within who truly matters. Those who dwell within these regions find themselves bent toward their ruler's will with little to no recourse. One cannot simply flee a tyrant domain. The magic of the region twists the mind to ensure obedience and warps the land to prevent escape. However, many also flock to a tyrant domain in search of order, power, and prosperity under the overbearing eye of its ruler.

Creatures. Dragons, fiends, and undead are the most common types of creatures found within a tyranny domain, so long as they possess a strong affiliation for order and tyrannical rulership. However, many creatures exist within these domains against their will. Entire civilizations may be within the ruler's thrall, forced to serve for generations until the leader can be deposed.

Detection. A successful DC 19 Wisdom (Survival) check is required to determine a tyrant domain's true nature.

Properties. A tyrant domain causes the following effects within its area.

- **Absolute Authority.** When a tyrant domain forms, a single creature is chosen to be ruler of that domain. That creature is naturally understood by all within the affected area to be its rightful ruler. The ruler has advantage on Charisma ability checks to interact socially with creatures within the domain and cannot have disadvantage on ability checks while within the domain. Additionally, when the ruler gives a verbal command that is heard and understood by a creature native to the domain, that order is always followed to the best of the target's ability. If the ruler of the domain is slain and not returned to life within 7 days, the effects of the domain end and the affected area returns to normal.
- **Loyalty's Reward.** If a creature native to the domain is slain while in the affected area, the ruler immediately becomes aware of its death along with the way it died. Additionally, a creature that pledges its life to the domain's ruler becomes a native of the domain, so long as the ruler chooses to accept the pledge.
- **Smite Insurrection.** Creatures that are enemies of the domain's ruler are vulnerable to a damage type of the ruler's choice while within the affected area. This damage type is chosen when an affected creature enters a domain for the first time or first becomes an enemy of the domain's ruler while within the affected area (whichever comes first).
- **Tyrannical Borders.** Creatures native to the domain cannot willingly leave unless the domain's ruler allows it.

NEW SPELL - DIVINE VESSEL*9th-level conjuration (clerics only)***Casting Time:** 24 hours**Range:** 30 feet**Components:** V, S, M (an object that once belonged to the target deity, which is consumed when the spell is cast)**Duration:** 1 week

You call forth a willing deity and bind it within a mortal shell so that it may walk among other worlds discreetly. The deity appears in an unoccupied space within range, taking the form of a Medium humanoid creature bearing distinguishing features according to the deity's portfolio and lore. In this form the deity has 200 hit points. If the deity is reduced to 0 hit points while in this form, the spell ends.

The deity has two ability scores of 30, two of 24, and two of 20, which it chooses when it is formed. Additionally, the deity is proficient in three saving throws of its choice, six skills of its choice, three weapons of its choice, any armors of its choice, and its proficiency bonus is +8. Finally, the deity can cast the spell *wish* (spellcasting ability of its choice) at will without any components but may only produce the effect of replicating any spell of 8th level or lower.

While in this form, the deity retains any of its knowledge but cannot use its "ordinary" powers nor grant spells to its clerics. If the spell ends the deity returns from whence it came, and when the spell ends the deity cannot be affected by this spell again until 10 years have passed.

This spell immediately ends if you cast it again any time during its duration.

A Royal Gift. As a diplomatic overture to his estranged sister, the platinum dragonking wishes to send her a gift: a sapphire-encrusted platinum necklace. The jewelry's value is beyond measure, requiring a mighty team of heroes to deliver the object safely to its intended recipient. Additionally, to survive a direct encounter with the dragonqueen, said heroes must observe every conceivable act of reverence, respect, and politeness when in her presence. The dragonqueen is never one to turn down free treasure, particularly at the expense of her brother, and is eager to twist the situation to her advantage.

Wayward Children. The dragonqueen has need for mortal dragonslayers to deal with a particularly troublesome offspring: a mighty imperial dragon² who has been slaying her favored children. As productions of the dragonqueen's twisted ambitions, imperial dragons are ferociously powerful and excel at slaying other dragons, making mortals ideal for the task of defeating one. Should such heroes prove victorious against her wayward child, the dragonqueen pledges to reward them handsomely, provided they meet her in person to collect their prize.

² Imperial dragons are detailed in the 2CGaming supplement the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 1*.

COMBAT

As a goddess of an already staggeringly powerful race, the dark dragonqueen is an opponent few can match. Her abilities are a mixture of fiendish influence, draconic might, divine power, and a dash of magic. Everything her offspring can do, the dragonqueen can do better: her breath weapons are more powerful, her presence more terrifying, her strength more formidable, and her savagery unrivaled. She has gone toe to toe with fellow gods, cosmic horrors, and even the archdukes of hell. These clashes were excellent teachers, affording her experience that exceeds any mortal's. The dragonqueen's five cunning brains fight flawlessly together, ensuring no one strategy dominates her approach to an opponent. Her cowardice and cunning are equal to her savagery and cruelty on the battlefield, with no amount of pride stopping the dragonqueen from doing whatever it takes to win. With immense divine power and legions of subjects, the dragonqueen is never without key strategic information, used to formulate both



cruel and effective strategies to deal with foolhardy challengers. While her power is great, she is not invincible. Mighty heroes, powerful servants of her brother, and other divinities may challenge her might (albeit with a significant amount of effort and teamwork). The dark dragonqueen takes great care never to put herself in a fight she cannot escape, having long since learned discretion is the better part of valor.

Combat Encounter Example: The Day of Dragons

When five ancient daughters of the dark dragonqueen forfeit their lives in her name, they can perform a terrific ritual that allows the goddess to escape the confines of hell and finally rampage to her heart's delight. Away from the safety of her lair and devil allies, the dragonqueen is a diminished, but still terrifically powerful, foe. Her primary goal in such a scenario is the destruction of the hated metallic dragonkind. Accompanying her in this grim task is a small army of faithful cultists, clerics, and offspring, fervently enraptured by the glory of their goddess and her quest. Those who oppose the dark dragonqueen would find allies in the many metallic dragons fearing for their lives. While many are tempted to flee, other dragons know salvation can only be found in meeting the goddess head on. Such a battle would take place in the air, as dragons, mortals, and the goddess tore each other to ribbons. Such a conflict would be truly epic in scope, with the fate of the world hanging in the balance.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Brute

The dark dragonqueen exemplifies the terrific power of evil dragons magnified by the raw power of divinity. Her attacks are devastating and diverse, capable of destroying nearly anything that gets in her path. The dragonqueen is not a subtle foe. Her tremendous size means battle is always a grand affair, involving considerable movement, destruction, and mayhem.

The defenses of the dragonqueen are formidable. She can tank ludicrous amounts of damage without fearing for her life and often deals out far more in return. Few opponents are ever out of reach thanks to her great size, and those that manage to keep their distance are prime targets for her many breath weapons. Note the dragonqueen's most powerful abilities emphasize spreading the damage out between multiple targets. She cannot Bite the same creature twice on a turn, and her breath weapons affect huge areas to ensure maximum carnage on her enemies. In battle this makes the dragonqueen play much like a typical dragon, albeit one that never allows even a moment of respite for her foes.

Take special notice of the dragonqueen's Immense trait. Her size can be a massive asset when it comes to how she moves and affects areas. Creatures are nearly always within reach, and by simply standing in areas of cover the dragonqueen can completely negate the party's advantages. Should the actions of characters prove too troubling, the dragonqueen can invoke her Divine Power trait to foil their magical gear, undo magic, or incapacitate a troublesome enemy. Don't forget to use Tyrannical Presence at least once. This effect can prove extremely troubling to martial characters, who will find the reduction in mobility and penalty to attacks from being prone extremely limiting.

For when you want to outright kill some heroes, Cataclysm Breath is always a good choice. This effect does absurd damage and is nearly impossible to resist. An entire party struck by this effect runs the risk of losing party members instantly to the damage of a failed save or having to expend massive resources to recover from such a blow.

Easier Tactics – Avoid using Cataclysm Breath until the very end of the fight; that way, the consequences of losing a character aren't nearly as dire. Keep the dragonqueen relatively stationary on the battlefield. She doesn't need to move to hit her foes, and this way the party can build a strategic advantage around her positioning. Don't be discerning about what Breath Weapon options you use, allowing characters the chance to resist or even be immune to the damage of those effects. The dragonqueen can still deal plenty of damage with her other attacks, and it's more than acceptable to have such an interaction occur more than once or twice.

Harder Tactics – Use Divine Power to remove troublesome spell effects or disable key magic items at the start of battle. As an experienced combatant, the dragonqueen should be more than capable of making excellent tactical choices in this regard. Once their defenses are lowered, hit the characters with Cataclysm Breath for devastating results, then close in for the kill with her Breath Weapon options and a flurry of Bite attacks. Continue hitting downed targets for failed death saves, as those are key to ensuring the characters stay down. The Bite legendary action option is particularly helpful in this regard, allowing the dragonqueen to down a character at 0 hit points in less than one round.

Mythic Dark Dragonqueen

Facing the mythic dark dragonqueen is a fool's errand. She is an evil dragon god made flesh, with terrifying strength and an enhanced arsenal to back up such a position. When her full might is brought to bear, the dragonqueen is a living cataclysm. Her power can level entire planes singlehandedly, exterminating entire cities in moments. Even most Epic creatures can only hope to escape her wrath, with those strong enough to survive the onslaught possessing but a brief window before they are overcome by the dragonqueen's divine influence. It takes titanic effort for this version of the dark dragonqueen to manifest, an opportunity she capitalizes on to the best of her expansive abilities.

Note the introduction of two mythic action options for the dragonqueen: her Curse of Supplication and Resplendent Mantle. Curse of Supplication is a deadly effect best used against powerful characters, allowing the dragonqueen to seize control of them when she would otherwise down them. Turning a powerful character against the party is a disaster in the extreme, made all the easier by the fact the cursed target will have a far harder time enduring the dragonqueen's assaults. Resplendent Mantle is a formidable action that continuously improves the dragonqueen's defenses. This option ensures the dragonqueen can tank bigger and bigger hits with no consequence, eventually becoming nigh impossible to injure. The longer the fight goes on, the more obscene this defense becomes, pushing the party to finish the battle quickly or become impotent before the dragonqueen's might.

THE DARK DRAGONQUEEN

Gargantuan dragon, lawful evil

Armor Class 24 (natural armor)

Hit Points 962 (52d20 + 416)

Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	6 (-2)	26 (+8)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)	23 (+6)

Saving Throws Str +19, Con +17, Wis +15, Cha +15

Skills Deception +23, History +23, Insight +23, Intimidation +23, Perception +24

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, unconscious

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 240 ft., passive Perception 34

Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal

Challenge 30 (155,000 XP)

TRAITS

Fiendish Influence. The dragonqueen's nature has been altered from her time spent in the hells, granting her the following benefits:

- **Devil's Gaze.** The dragonqueen can see in magical darkness and can see the presence of magic on creatures and objects in the form of a faint aura, learning the effects' strength (in spell levels) and school (when appropriate).
- **Fiendish Weapons.** The dragonqueen's attacks are magical. Additionally, if a target hit by her attacks would be immune to damage dealt by it, the target instead has resistance.
- **Magic Resistance.** The dragonqueen has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Immense. The dragonqueen's form is tremendous. She is 120 feet long from snout to tail and has a wingspan of 180 feet. On the battlefield, the dragonqueen typically occupies a 60-foot-by-60-foot space. She can end her movement in a Huge or smaller creature's or object's space and does not treat such spaces as difficult terrain.

Additionally, on each of her turns the dragonqueen can spend 20 feet of movement to deal 100 bludgeoning damage to an unattended object or structure within 5 feet of her.

Multiple Heads. The dragonqueen has five chromatic dragon heads: black, blue, green, red, and white. While she has more than one head, she cannot be blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious (included in her statistics).

Additionally, while the dark dragonqueen has more than one head she has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.

Mythic Resistance. When the dragonqueen fails a saving throw, she can spend one of her unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragonqueen makes two Bite attacks, each of which must be made with a different head and against different targets. She may also make two Claw attacks and a Tail attack. The dragonqueen can forgo making two attacks in this manner to instead use her Breath Weapon action or her Tyrannical Presence.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target.
Hit: 32 (4d10 + 10) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) acid (black), cold (white), fire (red), lightning (blue), or poison (green) damage according to which head was used to make the attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target.
Hit: 24 (4d6 + 10) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target.
Hit: 23 (2d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 27 Strength saving throw or be thrown 60 feet in a straight line away from the dragonqueen, landing prone.

Breath Weapon. The dragonqueen unleashes a breath weapon using one of her heads, which causes the following effects according to which head she uses.

Black. The dragonqueen exhales a 300-foot line of acid that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 67 (15d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Blue. The dragonqueen exhales a 300-foot line of lightning that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 88 (16d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Green. The dragonqueen exhales a 120-foot cone of poisonous gas. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, taking 77 (22d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Red. The dragonqueen exhales a 120-foot cone of fire. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Dexterity saving throw, taking 91 (26d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

White. The dragonqueen exhales a 120-foot cone of icy cold. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, taking 72 (16d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Cataclysm Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragonqueen's five heads collectively unleash their breath weapons in a 300-foot cone of roiling, chaotic energy. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 25 Constitution saving throw, taking 175 (50d6) damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success. The type of damage is either acid, cold, fire, lightning, or poison, which is different for each affected creature according to which type it is likely to take the most damage from after factoring in resistances, immunities, and vulnerabilities.

Unattended objects and structures take double damage from this effect.

Divine Power. The dragonqueen exerts her divine power, causing one of the following effects.

- The dragonqueen ends a spell or magical effect she is aware of within 300 feet of her.
- The dragonqueen suppresses the properties of a non-artifact magic item she can see within 300 feet of her for 1 hour.
- The dragonqueen turns a Gargantuan or smaller creature, object, or structure she can see into solid gold. An unwilling creature must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or become restrained. At the end of its next turn, a creature so restrained must repeat the saving throw, becoming permanently petrified on a failure.

Tyrannical Presence. Each creature of the dragonqueen's choice that is within 240 feet of her and aware of her must succeed on a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw or bow before her power. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on this saving throw. A creature so bowing immediately falls prone and cannot stand up without the dragonqueen's explicit permission. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragonqueen's Tyrannical Presence for the next 24 hours.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragonqueen can take 5 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragonqueen regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

The dragonqueen's legendary actions associated with her five heads (a Bite and Breath Weapon for each) can only be used once per head until the start of her next turn.

Bite. The dragonqueen makes a Bite attack using one of her heads.

Move. The dragonqueen moves up to half her walking speed or flies up to half her flying speed.

Breath Weapon (Costs 2 Actions). The dragonqueen uses her Breath Weapon action.

Divine Power (Costs 3 Actions). The dragonqueen uses her Divine Power action.

MYTHIC DARK DRAGONQUEEN

Gargantuan mythic dragon (intermediate deity), lawful evil

Armor Class 30 (natural armor)
Hit Points 3,362 (164d20 + 1,640)
Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
34 (+12)	6 (-2)	30 (+10)	22 (+6)	25 (+7)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +24, Dex +10, Con +22, Int +18, Wis +19, Cha +21

Skills Deception +33, History +30, Insight +31, Intimidation +33, Perception +31

Damage Immunities acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic sources

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, unconscious

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 240 ft., passive Perception 41

Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal

Challenge Mythic 9

TRAITS

Fiendish Influence. The dragonqueen's nature has been altered from her time spent in the hells, granting her the following benefits.

- **Devil's Gaze.** The dragonqueen can see in magical darkness and can see the presence of magic on creatures and objects in the form of a faint aura, learning the effects' strength (in spell levels) and school (when appropriate).
- **Fiendish Weapons.** The dragonqueen's attacks are magical. Additionally, if a target hit by her attacks would be immune to damage dealt by it, the target instead has resistance.
- **Spell Resistance.** The dragonqueen has Epic advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects.

Immense. The dragonqueen's form is tremendous. She is 120 feet long from snout to tail and has a wingspan of 180 feet. On the battlefield, the dragonqueen typically occupies a 60-foot-by-60-foot space. She can end her movement in a Huge or smaller creature's or object's space and does not treat such spaces as difficult terrain.

Additionally, on each of her turns the dragonqueen can spend 20 feet of movement to deal 100 bludgeoning damage to an unattended object or structure within 5 feet of her.

Multiple Heads. The dragonqueen has five chromatic dragon heads: black, blue, green, red, and white. While she has more than one head, she cannot be blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious (included in her statistics).

Additionally, while the dark dragonqueen has more than one head she has Epic advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.

Mythic Resistance. When the dragonqueen fails a saving throw, she can spend one of her unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the dragonqueen takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. The dragonqueen can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Curse of Supplication. The dragonqueen targets a creature she can see within 300 feet of her with a dread curse. The target must succeed on a DC 30 Wisdom saving throw or become afflicted with an Epic curse. A creature so cursed cannot be immune to any conditions or damage. Additionally, when a creature so cursed is reduced to 0 hit points by the dragonqueen, she can choose to instead reduce it to 1 hit point and bind its soul to her service. A creature so bound dies instantly if it ever willingly disobeys a command given by the dragonqueen and cannot be returned to life unless the dragonqueen allows it.

Resplendent Mantle. The dragonqueen's golden mantle hardens, shielding her from harm. When the dragonqueen takes 50 or fewer points of damage from a single instance, she instead takes no damage. If the dragonqueen uses this action again, the amount of damage to which she becomes immune in a single instance increases by 50, to a maximum of 300. This benefit lasts until the dragonqueen finishes a short or long rest.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The dragonqueen makes two Bite attacks, each of which must be made with a different head and against different targets. She may also make two Claw attacks and a Tail attack. The dragonqueen can forgo making two attacks in this manner to instead use her Breath Weapon action or her Tyrannical Presence.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +24 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 56 (8d10 + 12) piercing damage plus 35 (10d6) acid (black), cold (white), fire (red), lightning (blue), or poison (green) damage according to which head was used to make the attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +24 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 47 (10d6 + 12) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +24 to hit, reach 60 ft., each target of the dragonqueen's choice within range. *Hit:* 38 (4d12 + 12) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 32 Strength saving throw or be thrown 60 feet in a straight line away from the dragonqueen, landing prone.

Breath Weapon. The dragonqueen unleashes a breath weapon using one of her heads, which causes the following effects according to which head she uses.

Black. The dragonqueen exhales a 300-foot line of acid that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 30 Dexterity saving throw, taking 90 (20d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Blue. The dragonqueen exhales a 300-foot line of lightning that is 10 feet wide. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 30 Dexterity saving throw, taking 110 (20d10) lightning damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Green. The dragonqueen exhales a 120-foot cone of poisonous gas. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 30 Constitution saving throw, taking 105 (30d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Red. The dragonqueen exhales a 120-foot cone of fire. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 30 Dexterity saving throw, taking 140 (40d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

White. The dragonqueen exhales a 120-foot cone of icy cold. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 30 Constitution saving throw, taking 90 (20d8) cold damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Cataclysm Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragonqueen's five heads collectively unleash their breath weapons in a 300-foot cone of roiling, chaotic energy. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 30 Constitution saving throw, taking 220 (40d10) arcane damage on a failed save, or half as much on a success.

Unattended objects and structures take double damage from this effect, and anything reduced to 0 hit points from the damage is utterly obliterated.

Divine Power. The dragonqueen exerts her divine power, causing one of the following effects.

- The dragonqueen ends a non-Deific spell or magical effect within 300 feet of her.
- The dragonqueen suppresses the properties of a non-relic magic item she can see within 300 feet of her for 1 hour.
- The dragonqueen turns a Gargantuan or smaller creature, object, or structure she can see into solid gold. An unwilling creature must succeed on a DC 30 Constitution saving throw or become restrained. At the end of its next turn, a creature so restrained must repeat the saving throw, becoming permanently petrified on a failure.

Tyrannical Presence. Each creature of dragonqueen's choice that is within 240 feet of her and aware of her must succeed on a DC 30 Wisdom saving throw or bow before her power. A creature immune to the charmed condition has advantage on this saving throw. A creature so bowing immediately falls prone and cannot stand up without the dragonqueen's explicit permission. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragonqueen's Tyrannical Presence for the next 24 hours.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragonqueen can take 5 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragonqueen regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

The dragonqueen's legendary actions associated with her five heads (a Bite and Breath Weapon for each) can only be used once per head until the start of her next turn.

Bite. The dragonqueen makes a Bite attack using one of her heads.

Move. The dragonqueen moves up to half her walking speed or flies up to half her flying speed.

Breath Weapon (Costs 2 Actions). The dragonqueen uses her Breath Weapon action.

Divine Power (Costs 3 Actions). The dragonqueen uses her Divine Power action.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, the dragonqueen causes the following effects.

Deific Being. The dragonqueen is an intermediate deity. Against non-Deific creatures she gains the following benefits, unless she chooses not to.

- The dragonqueen automatically hits with any attacks.
- The dragonqueen automatically succeeds on saving throws and ability checks, and non-Deific creatures can't succeed on saving throws or ability checks against her.
- When the dragonqueen deals damage to non-Deific creatures, she deals maximum damage on all of her damage dice.

These advantages are muted against Epic creatures. When the dragonqueen encounters Epic creatures for the first time in a day, she does not gain these benefits for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Epic (not total) character level or Epic CR.

Draconic Magic. By spending 1 minute in uninterrupted concentration during which time she takes no actions nor spends movement, the dragonqueen can cast a spell or Epic spell of her choice without the need for any components. This spell is considered a Deific effect for its duration.

RESOURCES

The dark dragonqueen possesses excessive resources to further her schemes and plots. With an entire religion dedicated to her, thousands of draconic relatives, and an ironclad alliance with devils, there is little the dragonqueen cannot accomplish given enough time and effort. While few serve her out of affection or loyalty, the dragonqueen's authority is absolute and tyrannical. Only the most devious or foolish dare betray her, and few ever live long to boast about it.

ALLIES

As the mother of all chromatic dragons, the dark dragonqueen commands the largest following of dragons in the known realms. Her children serve through equal measures of fear, admiration, and devotion. While the most powerful among them may resist the casual call to action, no chromatic dragon will refuse a direct order given by their progenitor. Those who serve her out of faith are among her most loyal offspring, granted powerful divine boons as rewards for their service. Mortals are known to join in this worship, though in the dragonqueen's eyes most are but expendable fuel to light the fires of her rising empire.

Devils of Hell. Among the dragonqueen's more unusual allies are the fiendish devils. While their alliance is tenuous, the dragonqueen's residence in the hells has proved mutually beneficial. Her presence ensures ongoing supremacy against demonic incursions, while in turn the devils provide the dragonqueen with one of the most effective networks of spies in the known realms. None know who would win if both sides came to blows, but for the moment it seems both parties have an unshakable interest

in perpetuating their alliance. Many suspect this relationship is cemented in a magical contract said to be penned by Asmodeus himself, the destruction of which would prove disastrous to the forces of evil. The devils rarely intervene directly on the dragonqueen's behalf, and when they do, they almost never commit high-ranking fiends to the cause. Only once has an archduke followed the dark dragonqueen's orders, a decision they quickly came to regret.

Malefica, Princess of Darkness. Among all her allies, there is one creature for whom the dragonqueen holds genuine affection: her mysterious sister Malefica, the princess of darkness. While no less horrid and evil, the bond between these sisters is stronger than any alliance or pawn the dragonqueen commands. Malefica is the mother of the failed strains of chromatic dragons—orange, purple, and yellow³—who eke out an existence at the edge of extinction. The dragonqueen hates her brother for failing to protect and nurture Malefica, blaming him for her sorry state as the mother of such twisted progeny.

REWARDS

While the dragonqueen loves her hoard as much as any dragon, she gladly makes sacrifices to achieve her goal of a draconic empire. Since treasure is a key motivator for dragons, the dragonqueen uses her vast wealth to bribe powerful draconic allies, though she never pays as much as she ought to. Even mortals can be blessed with the dragonqueen's wealth should they serve her well, though such transactions can easily end in catastrophe. Every deal ends with the dragonqueen having the upper hand, a status quo one would be wise not to challenge.

Among all her possessions, there is one item the dragonqueen does not corrupt or destroy. This object belongs to her hated brother, the platinum dragonking: his royal crown from when they both ruled as brother and sister over all dragonkind. The dragonqueen keeps the mighty *Crown of the Platinum Dragonking* out of a mixture of sentiment and spite. Its loss would deal terrific emotional damage to her psyche, sending her into fits of unhinged rage.

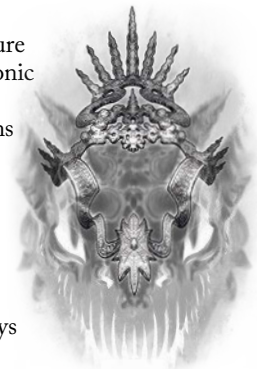
³ The details of orange, purple, and yellow dragons can be found in the 2CGaming supplement *Dragonflight*.

Crown of the Platinum Dragonking

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a good-aligned creature)

This gigantic crown is made of pure platinum and inscribed with draconic runes that speak of a time before humanoids existed and the dragons were unified. The crown changes size to fit its wearer, and while wearing the crown evil dragons cannot willingly harm you unless you harm them first.

Additionally, while you wear the crown good dragons are always initially friendly toward you.





MALEFICA, PRINCESS OF DARKNESS

Gargantuan dragon, lawful evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 735 (42d20 + 294)

Speed 60 ft., fly 120 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
26 (+8)	7 (-2)	25 (+7)	19 (+4)	16 (+3)	21 (+5)

Saving Throws Con +15, Int +12, Wis +11, Cha +13

Skills Insight +19, Intimidation +21, Perception +19

Damage Immunities force, necrotic, psychic

Condition Immunities blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, unconscious

Senses blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 240 ft., passive Perception 29

Languages Common, Draconic, Infernal

Challenge 26 (90,000 XP)

TRAITS

Immense. Malefica's form is tremendous. She is 90 feet long from snout to tail and has a wingspan of 140 feet. On the battlefield, Malefica typically occupies a 50-foot-by-50-foot space. She can end her movement in a Huge or smaller creature's or object's space and does not treat such spaces as difficult terrain.

Additionally, on each of her turns Malefica can spend 20 feet of movement to deal 100 bludgeoning damage to an unattended object or structure within 5 feet of her.

Multiple Heads. Malefica has three chromatic dragon heads: orange, purple, and yellow. While she has more than one head, she cannot be blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, or knocked unconscious (included in her statistics).

Additionally, while Malefica has more than one head she has advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.

Mythic Resistance. When Malefica fails a saving throw, she can spend one of her unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Malefica makes two Bite attacks, each of which must be made with a different head and against different targets. She may also make two Claw attacks and a Tail attack. Malefica can forgo making her Bite attacks in this manner to instead use her Breath Weapon action or her Corrupting Presence.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 25 ft., one target. *Hit:* 24 (3d10 + 8) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic (orange), force (purple), or psychic (yellow) damage according to which head was used to make the attack.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (3d6 + 8) slashing damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (2d12 + 10) bludgeoning damage.

Breath Weapon. Malefica unleashes a breath weapon using one of her heads, which causes the following effects according to which head she uses.

Orange. Malefica strikes a target with an elongated tongue coated in necrotic saliva. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 90 ft. one creature. *Hit:* 110 (20d10) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or have its hit point maximum reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

Purple. A bomb of explosive antimagic erupts in a 30-foot-radius sphere centered on a point Malefica can see within 200 feet of her. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 24 Wisdom saving throw or have all spells affecting it immediately end. For each spell ended in this manner, a creature takes 21 (6d6) force damage.

Yellow. Malefica unleashes a psionic scream in a 300-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 24 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

Corrupting Presence. Each creature of Malefica's choice that is within 120 feet of her and aware of her must succeed on a DC 24 Charisma saving throw or have its spirit corrupted. When a creature so corrupted would regain hit points, it instead regains half as many hit points. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to Malefica's Corrupting Presence for the next 24 hours.

Mutilating Breath (Recharge 5–6). Malefica's three heads collectively unleash their breath weapons in a 120 ft. cone of mutating gas. Each flesh-and-blood creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 24 Constitution saving throw or have its form become wracked and twisted into horrific shapes. While affected in this manner, a creature cannot make more than a single attack on each of its turns, its speed is halved, and it cannot take bonus actions or reactions. At the end of each of its turns, an affected creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Malefica can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Malefica regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Bite. Malefica makes a Bite attack using one of her heads.

Move. Malefica moves up to half her walking speed or flies up to half her flying speed.

Breath Weapon (Costs 2 Actions). Malefica uses her Breath Weapon action.



THE MOTHER OF SPIDERS

Queen of the Drow

“Only the spider is safe in her web.”

DESCRIPTION

On the surface, the Mother of Spiders appears as a beautiful dark elf maiden, a paragon of the race whose absolute loyalty she demands. Clad in a long dress spun from spider silk, the fallen goddess of the dark elves draws in her prey with pleasant scents and seductive words, with only faint details such as the carapace on her legs and the hunger in her eyes betraying the darkness lurking within. Her true form, which few have seen and lived to

speak about, is that of an enormous, monstrous spider possessing a vaguely humanoid upper body, reminiscent of her drider servants but far more terrifying. She shifts between these forms to suit her purposes, using their different strengths to punish those who would defy her. Those who succumb to the Mother's power are in for a grim fate: cocooned in her webs as food for her pets, a plaything for her amusement, or even an arachnid minion bound to serve her for all eternity.

PROFILE

Personality: Sadistic

Ideals: The Mother of Spiders is guided by her overwhelming lust for revenge and penchant for chaos. Her every move is poised to instill fear in those who oppose her and revere her, ensuring her true intentions cannot be known until it is far too late. Often, she harms her own followers in an attempt to sow confusion among her enemies, setting unseen and complex traps into which her foes blindly walk. This duality of belief confounds her enemies and deludes her allies, weaving a devious web of intrigue only she fully comprehends.

Bonds: The church of the Mother of Spiders is one of the most feared religious institutions in all the planes, a fact that in which the Mother delights and makes sure to maintain. The relationship between the Mother of Spiders and her faithful is an abusive one. She promises her love and blessings in exchange for unflinching loyalty, requiring unspeakably cruel acts be carried out to curry her favor, only to betray and dethrone the leadership for no discernable wrongdoing of their own. Despite this, the Mother's perfect world has a place for the dark elves who venerate her, something that can't be said for most others in the multiverse.

Flaws: The Mother's sadistic and chaotic tendencies may be effective in certain cases, but they have led to failures in the past. Her desire to keep the leadership of the dark elves on edge by brutalizing them has led to her enemies capitalizing on the opportunity and delaying her plans by several hundred years. Her desire to toy with her prey and cause it great suffering before disposing of it has allowed some to

escape and hinder her goals. Perhaps one day these aspects of her will prove her undoing, but so far, she has managed to thrive in spite of (or perhaps because of) them.

Legend: Prior to her descent into the abyss, the Mother of Spiders is said among the elves to have once been the goddess of fate. Wife to the head of the pantheon, she had an important role in leading the elves to their destiny while refraining from intervening with or altering fate. She eventually grew weary with her never-ending vigil and desired to do more. The Mother of Spiders pleaded with her husband to grant her more power in her domain, but he insisted on maintaining the freedom of each elf to carve their own path. And so, she began plotting and scheming, looking for a way to take control of the pantheon and bring the change she felt was necessary. This all culminated in one fateful battle in which she orchestrated everything to lead to her husband's demise. Unfortunately for her, the conspiracy was discovered and foiled at the very last moment. For her crimes against elvenkind she was sentenced to banishment and was transformed into a demonic drider, the true reflection of her soul. After her exile, she took the title of "Mother of Spiders" and conquered one of the layers of the abyss to make her new domain. From there, she gathered power and plotted to exact revenge against her former husband. Being unable to strike at him directly, she planned to be worshipped as a goddess by the elves once more, bringing misery to them and therefore to their "father." Whether the Mother of Spiders will ever succeed on exacting her revenge and how she intends to do so remains to be seen; in the meantime, the spider awaits patiently on her web and directs her faithful to cause widespread mayhem.

THE MOTHER OF SPIDERS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

A campaign with the Mother of Spiders sets the players up against an incredibly cunning and sadistic intellect, one which commands one of the fiercest religions with some of the most zealous faithful in the entire multiverse. Any who find themselves in opposition to the Mother of Spiders must first face a cadre of dangerous foes: fanatical zealots, cunning nobles, hordes of demons, and other unfortunate souls tangled in her schemes. These schemes involve nothing less than the downfall of an entire divine pantheon, a task few beings in the multiverse could hope to accomplish and to which she directs all of her efforts.

INTRODUCTION

There are many ways an adventure involving the Mother of Spiders can begin, but most starts revolve around her faithful, the poor deluded drow coerced into her service. These unfortunate souls are an incredibly vast collective split into many factions, most of which serve the Mother of Spiders and seek to further her motives. As such, the adventure is likely to begin with the players getting embroiled in one of her schemes while facing off against dark elves in combat and in wit. At this stage, the players may not even know that their antagonist is the Mother of Spiders directly, and it is likely that at this point she gives them little consideration too. As they advance through the adventure and realize the scope of the scheme involved, they'll come to understand that stopping these events is a monumental task that may lead them to conflict with the Mother of Spiders herself. This reveal should chill the players, as they know the terrifying power she represents.

CONFLICT

Once the Mother of Spiders notices the party (if they kill one of her higher-ranked servants, for example), she readies herself for the next step in her scheme. She typically initiates contact with the characters with an omen. One night when the party rests in a place they think is safe, she sends spiders to weave them a message in webbing in a place they can't miss. This message is meant to spook any would-be heroes away from pursuing this scheme any further, one last chance to escape the web. Should the characters persist, the Mother of Spiders instructs her servants to seek and capture the party. If the characters are elusive, the dark elves resort to capturing and threatening friends, family, and other allies to bait the party into a confrontation. While this happens the Mother of Spiders continues to keep an eye on the party using any spider in their vicinity. Although the party may grow wise to this strategy and begin to clear their surroundings in a paranoid frenzy, her spiders continue swarming, and this pressure alone may bring the characters to bargain with the dark elves.

Should the characters continue to be a thorn in her side, her tactics grow far crueler and far less subtle. Assassination, torture, and other extreme tactics of the dark elves are employed against the party and their allies until they are finally captured or get too close to the center of the power structure. Should things go that far, the Mother of Spiders may send the tormented maiden (her personal assassin) to resolve matters on her own. If

the characters are eventually captured or give into the constant pressure of the Mother of Spiders, she makes sure to request they be tormented for a long time before they're eventually sacrificed, a sadistic move that will likely backfire and allow their escape or buy enough time for them to get reinforcements.

CONCLUSION

At last, if none of her other methods succeed, the Mother of Spiders shifts her focus to completing her scheme. This puts pressure on the party to solve the problem at its source, to delve into her lair and defeat her once and for all. This is no easy feat; few adventurers have ever gotten that far and none have even defeated her, so the characters should prepare as much as they can. In this capacity they must gather magic items that may protect them from her most vile assaults and find a method by which they can enter her domain. Getting in turns out to be the hardest part, as her lair is one of the most treacherous places in all of the planes and proves more dangerous than a mere dungeon. Once they have defeated the guardians of her lair and gotten past the many hazards, they find themselves at the center of the Mother's web, a place from which only one side will emerge victorious.

CHALLENGES

The Mother of Spiders can pose exploration, social, and combat challenges to characters who interact with her.

EXPLORATION

The lair of the Mother of Spiders can be found on the sixty-sixth level of the abyss in a divine domain called the Fiendweb. In this interminable black void, webs stretch in an elaborate network that supports ruined cities and relics stolen from other worlds. The webs change constantly, shifting as the goddess spins new threads and destroys old ones. At the center of this labyrinthine formation is where the Mother of Spiders resides, holding court and hatching her hideous plans, only leaving her lair when she feels an issue must be addressed personally or a demon lord seeks to intrude upon her domain. The Fiendweb contains horrific "children" wrought by the Mother's twisted imagination: arachnoid monstrosities and mutants bent on destruction and loyal only to her. The Fiendweb even boasts a number of hidden portals that link to the other planes, particularly to the strongholds of the drow sworn to her service. Using these gateways, the Mother of Spiders extends her influence across the multiverse, to the ill of all.

Regional Effects

The region containing the Mother's lair is warped by her divine power, creating the following effects within her home plane of the Fiendweb.

- The Fiendweb is covered by strands of webbing that are barely visible to creatures not native to the plane. These webs are hidden (Perception DC 23 to detect) and are difficult terrain for creatures without a Web Walker feature. When a creature comes into contact



with the webs for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in contact with the webs, it must attempt a DC 23 Dexterity saving throw, becoming restrained on a failure (escape DC 23). If a creature tries to use teleportation or interplanar travel while so restrained, it must attempt a DC 23 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the effect fails, and the action is wasted.

- When the Mother of Spiders is reduced to 0 hit points or slain on a plane of existence other than the Fiendweb, she is instead reduced to 1 hit point, not slain, and magically teleported to an unoccupied space within the Fiendweb.
- Light (including magical light) within the Fiendweb is diminished. This effect causes sunlight to become bright light, bright light to become dim, and dim light to become darkness.
- If the Mother of Spiders is destroyed, these effects fade over the course of 1 year, at the end of which the Fiendweb collapses and everything that remains within is instantly obliterated.

The Mother of Spiders' Lair

Deep within the bowels of the Fiendweb, surrounded by garrisons of twisted drow, lies the lair of the Mother of Spiders. Like a black widow suspended beneath her web, this ornate palace is carved from crimson and black crystals and hangs below silken threads. These gossamer cords are woven into a spiraling pattern that would be an astonishing work of art if it weren't so horrific. Known as the Seething Palace, this abode is inhabited only by the Mother of Spiders and any guests she wishes to entertain; all other creatures know far better than to approach this foreboding sanctum. Within, the goddess has collected thousands of art objects and cultural relics from across the planes, allowing her to take a perverse pleasure in depriving their rightful owners of such treasured possessions. Within the Seething Palace are dozens of rooms fit for a goddess, ensuring no pleasure the Mother of Spiders seeks goes unsatiated. It is a place of beauty, pain, and narcissism, a sinister reflection of its malevolent master.

Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Mother of Spiders can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If the Mother of Spiders is using her Epic statistics, she

can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. The Mother of Spiders can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- A creature of the Mother's choice within the lair must succeed on a DC 25 Charisma saving throw or be magically teleported to an unoccupied space within 5 feet of her. When the creature appears, it provokes an opportunity attack from the Mother of Spiders.
- The Mother of Spiders learns the greatest fear of a creature of her choice within the lair. While the Mother of Spiders is hidden from that creature, it is also frightened of her as she uses the knowledge of this fear against it. This effect ends if a creature leaves the Fiendweb or uses an action to succeed on a DC 23 Wisdom (Insight) check to steady its nerves. Once this effect has ended for a creature, it becomes immune to the effect for 24 hours.
- A source of light (including magical light) within the lair becomes snuffed out and cannot be reignited (when applicable) for 24 hours.

Exploration Encounters

With an entire plane at her command and dozens of drow empires sworn to her service, the Mother of Spiders can provide many challenging encounters themed around exploration and discovery. The goddess is always eager to draw her enemies into deadly traps, devious webs she has woven from which there can be no escape. Some examples of these encounters are detailed here.

Caught in the Web. The characters discover a sinister plot to pull one of the elven cities into the Fiendweb, acted out by a cabal of drow followers who infiltrated the city and laid the groundwork for this horrid ritual.

Thankfully, the act of transporting an entire city to an abyssal plane is complex and difficult in the extreme, forcing the clerics to bide their time and ensure several key sites remain undisturbed and shielded from prying eyes. The Mother of Spiders has even taken a personal hand in the proceedings, intruding her Fiendweb into the local boundaries of the material plane to ensure her minions cannot be stopped.

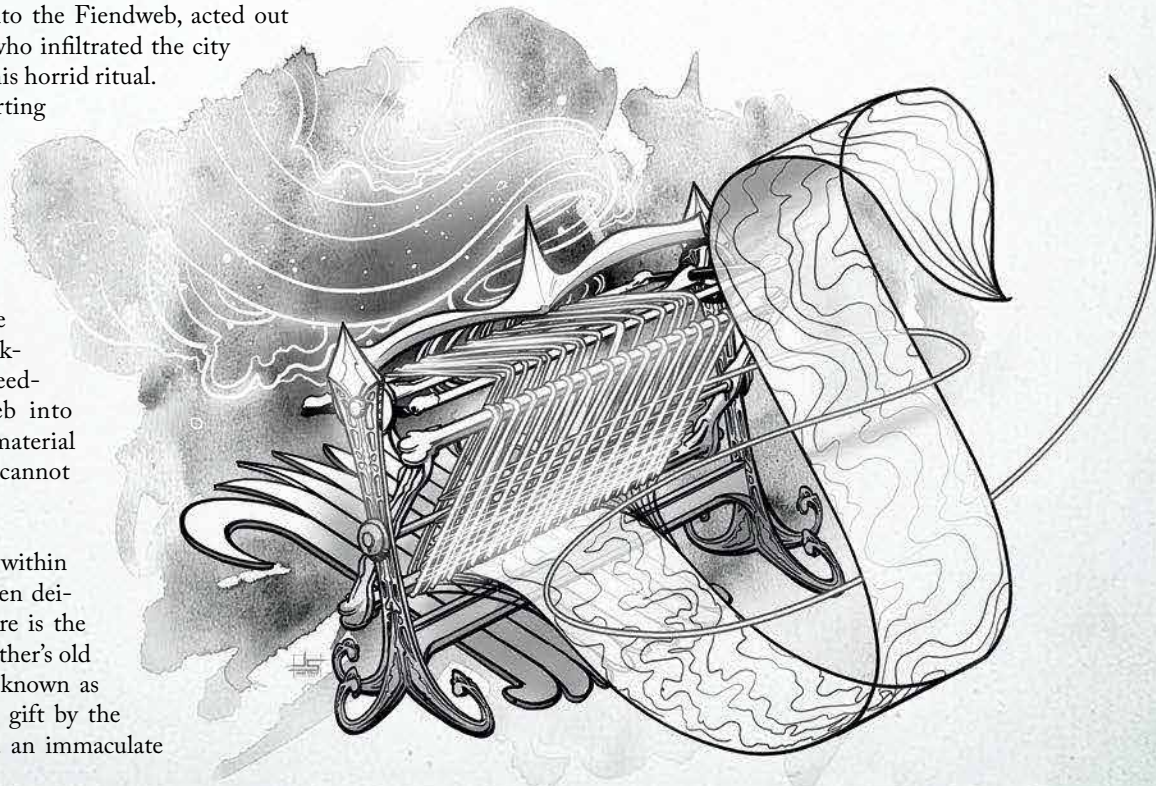
The Loom of Fate. Hidden within a celestial forest where the elven deities lounge in divine bliss, there is the last remaining shard of the Mother's old existence. This ancient tool is known as the Loom of Fate: a wedding gift by the Mother's former husband and an immaculate

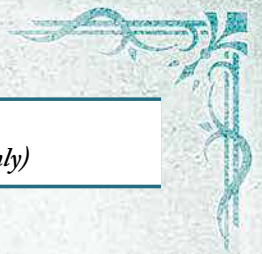
tool with which she wove countless works of unparalleled beauty. As the last vestige of when the Mother of Spiders was a generous soul, the Loom holds special power over the goddess. While wearing clothes woven from the Loom, creatures facing the Mother of Spiders are immune to her lair actions and regional effects. Weaving such extravagant wares requires not only recovering the Loom, but success on a DC 40 Wisdom (Weaver's Tools) check, along with a strand of hair from each of the elven deities who safeguard the ancient object.

The Offering. Despite her evil, the Mother of Spiders is still an elven goddess, one who must be honored and respected for her role in the history of her people and the good she once wrought. Once every decade, an embassy of elves from every race visit the Fiendweb with offerings to the Mother of Spiders, braving body and soul in the hope she may one day be redeemed. These diplomatic missions require heavy guard to survive the many arachnid monstrosities and vile fiends determined to interfere, with a hefty bounty offered to any heroes who ensure each diplomat makes it back alive. While the Mother of Spiders is divinely bound to not attack the ambassadors, she has no intention of making things easy.

SOCIAL

The Mother of Spiders is not a passive goddess. Her lust for vengeance and devious nature drive her to interact socially with "friend" and foe alike. Always on the hunt for new pawns, the Mother of Spiders is quick to torture, blackmail, or oppress those with potential. Weaving a web of intrigue and deception is her specialty, ensuring that only she truly benefits from any arrangement made with lesser creatures. Allies of the Mother of Spiders





can expect little better. Her clerics receive favor in the form of monstrous gifts: horrific abominations, cursed items, and cruel magic that only the truly sadistic or hopelessly deluded could appreciate. Such is the sad fate of all who parlay with the Mother of Spiders, be they friend or foe. In the end, only her whims matter, and all others should be sacrificed in service of those goals, preferably in as cruel a manner as possible. To say there is a grand design behind these acts would give the Mother of Spiders too much credit. There is only her thirst for vengeance, narcissistic disdain, and sadistic charm behind every encounter.

Social Encounters

Since the Mother of Spiders doesn't often leave her lair, social interactions with her are typically indirect. Her followers do a more than adequate job of conveying their goddess's wishes to others, particularly through inflicting pain. In blessedly rare occasions, the Mother of Spiders may speak through her devoted to deliver a personal message. What she would want to communicate varies greatly but typically includes offers of tenuous alliances, terrifying threats, savage mockeries, and elaborate deceptions. Examples of some of these encounters are detailed here.

The Blackest of Mail. A famous paladin is seen sporting mail of black steel adorned with the insignia of the Mother of Spiders. This shocking change in allegiance is soon followed by the former champion of good seeking justice for the wrongs inflicted upon the Mother of Spiders by the elven people. While things are not yet violent, they're trending that way, as most elves have no interest in being forced to answer for these supposed "crimes." Many believe the paladin to have been corrupted or somehow coerced by the Mother of Spiders, but only the most cunning and daring of heroes could possibly discover what leverage the dark goddess holds over such a mighty champion.

Convocation of Venom. A millennial festival celebrating the many elven deities is held within a mystical city forever shrouded in moonlight. During the month of this legendary festival, the elven deities are said to walk among their people as equals, sharing and celebrating their differences. However, this time a special guest decides to crash the party: the Mother of Spiders along with her noxious entourage of drow. The elves endeavor to push forward with the festivities despite this twist. Though technically the Mother of Spiders has every right to attend, all assembled doubt her intentions, seeking the help of noble heroes to keep a close eye on the goddess during her stay.

Toxic Relationship. A magical mountain spring once beloved by the Mother of Spiders is "repossessed" by her followers and transformed into a fell pool flush with toxins. The area is being fashioned into a bathhouse for the Mother of Spiders and her latest lover, a solar who became ensnared within her web, to spend private moments together. The many lowland communities who depend on the spring are aghast at this turn of events, but they are powerless to stop the goddess from claiming something that is rightfully hers and transporting the spring to the Fiendweb. Their only hope is for the Mother to lose interest in the site, which she only desires to strengthen her hold over her celestial lover. Should the relationship meet an untimely end, there is a chance the spring can be saved.

NEW SPELL - FOUNTAIN OF VENOM

9th-level transmutation (clerics and warlocks only)

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S, M (an eyeball of a creature that died from a disease)

Duration: Permanent

You cause a geyser of noxious poison to erupt in a 15-foot-radius that is 100 feet high, centered on a point on the ground you can see within range. The geyser erupts continuously, spewing its noxious poison until the effect ends. Creatures in the affected area are poisoned, and when a creature in the affected area attempts a saving throw or ability check, it takes 10d6 poison damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Additionally, any bodies of water in contact with the geyser become contaminated and unfit for drinking.

This spell immediately ends in its current space if you cast it again.

COMBAT

The Mother of Spiders is a mighty and cunning adversary, using her dual forms to divide and conquer. Unless faced with a true threat to her power, the goddess does not fight efficiently. Those who would dare strike a goddess deserve a chance to grasp the full depths of their folly as they are reduced to quivering, agonized wrecks. She delights in giving false hope, withdrawing from the conflict feigning weakness, only to turn the tables and slaughter overconfident pursuers.

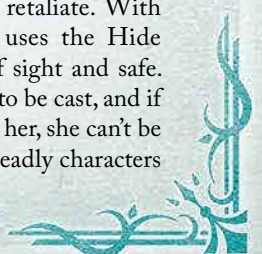
Combat Encounter Example: The Search for the Moonblade

The Mother of Spiders has many goals, one of which being the acquisition of artifacts and relics significant to the elves. Nothing is more prized by them than the legendary *moonblades*. When presented with a chance to seize a *moonblade*, the Mother of Spiders may even take a personal role in its acquisition, joining a cabal of drow faithful while disguised, aiding them in the pursuit of the weapon. Once such a hunt is on, the Mother of Spiders seeks to observe her drow minions, revealing her presence only if the *moonblade* threatens to fall beyond her grasp. Once revealed, the Mother has only a few rounds before her divine presence provokes an extreme cosmic response and forces her to retreat. This gives her just enough time to give any belligerent heroes contesting the *moonblade* a taste of her power.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Lurker

As sneaky as she is dangerous, the Mother of Spiders creeps about the battlefield to strike from the shadows, retreating to the safety of her webs before the enemy can retaliate. With a tremendously good bonus to Stealth, she uses the Hide action whenever possible to keep herself out of sight and safe. Remember, many spells require sight of a target to be cast, and if the Mother of Spiders is using total cover to aid her, she can't be targeted. Use these facts to keep her safe from deadly characters



and never leave her out in the open for long. This strategy pairs well with her Shapechanger feature.

In her humanoid form, the Mother can seize control of enemy creatures. In her spider form, the goddess specializes in stealth, allowing her to instantly retreat from the battlefield and approach from a new angle. You do not have to dance between these two forms, but with each transformation comes a deadly effect and a powerful action option. While individually these effects are strong, they truly shine when combined. For example, characters cocooned by her Dark Weaver trait are prime targets for her Spider's Kiss attack, ensuring a truly devastating hit.

If you are hiding, use Palace of Webs to ensure the ultimate bunker to lurk in. While the characters will have a clear idea of where the Mother is, entering the affected area to attack her is a dangerous proposition, and leaving her to her own devices an even worse one. Unless the party clears away the webs, they have a difficult time dealing with the long range of Web Lash and Divine Power.

Don't forget to account for Divine Poison. This feature ensures that normally foolproof defenses against poisons are only situationally effective. The poison damage from the Mother's Web Lash can be extremely dangerous to characters with high damage output, so make sure to keep them poisoned as often as you can.

Easier Tactics – Don't Web Lash creatures with poor Constitution, as they will likely fail to resist the poison and protect against the effect. When hiding, keep the Mother of Spiders close to the characters so that they may reposition themselves to reveal her position rather than having to search for her. Inexperienced players often forget they can use the Ready or Search actions to deal with hiding enemies, so at most have her Hide every two to three rounds. Only use Palace of Webs once, and only in the second half of the fight.

Harder Tactics – The Mother of Spiders should begin combat hidden and even surprise the party if the setup was devious enough. She should begin combat in her spider form, shifting to her humanoid form once she is positioned well to affect as many as possible with Dark Weaver, using Puppeteer on the lowest Strength character to gain an unwilling ally. She can then transition back to her spider form, hiding with Palace of Webs and puppeteering the creature from relative safety, emerging only to assassinate vulnerable targets.

Mythic Mother of Spiders

When facing the mythic Mother of Spiders, daring heroes must contend with a new selection of formidable actions that make the task of defeating the goddess that much harder. Her first deadly option is Eldritch Venom, which she can use in conjunction with the poisoned condition from her Web Lash to add debilitating effects and even more poison damage to those afflicted. Her other mythic action is Threads of Chaos, which allows the Mother to target specific characters with deadly effects, even if they would otherwise be safe against her assaults. Note the staggering improvements to the Mother's stats. These changes increase her power by orders of magnitude, making her nearly impossible to defeat by any but the most epic heroes.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, the Mother of Spiders causes the following effects.

Deific Being. The Mother of Spiders is an intermediate deity. Against non-Deific creatures she gains the following benefits, unless she chooses not to.

- The Mother of Spiders automatically hits with any attacks.
- The Mother of Spiders succeeds on all saving throws and ability checks.
- When the Mother deals damage to non-Deific creatures, she deals the maximum amount of damage unless she chooses otherwise.

Additionally, such creatures cannot succeed on saving throws against the Mother.

However, these advantages are muted against Epic creatures. When the Mother encounters such creatures for the first time in a day, she does not gain these benefits for a number of rounds equal to the creature's Epic (not total) character level, Epic CR, or mythic CR.¹

Mother of Spiders. When the Mother of Spiders would kill a flesh-and-blood creature poisoned by her, she can choose to spare its life and instead reduce it to 1 hit point. When she does so, the creature becomes paralyzed for as long as it remains poisoned and begins transforming into a monstrous, spidery creature over the course of 1 week. At the end of this duration, the unfortunate victim becomes one of the following creatures based on its CR or character level, replacing all its statistics and features with those of its new form and retaining no memory of its past life. A completed transformation is a Deific effect that can only be undone by another intermediate deity or greater.

Mother of Spiders Transformations

Affected Creature CR or Character Level	Transformation
4 or lower	Giant spider
5–10	Drider
11–20	Spider demon
21+	Dread widow

¹ The details of battling gods can be found in the 2CGaming supplement the *Epic Legacy Campaign Codex*.

MOTHER OF SPIDERS

Medium humanoid (humanoid form) or Large fiend (spider form), chaotic evil

Armor Class 20

Hit Points 900 (72d8 + 576)

Speed 30 ft. (humanoid form); 50 ft., climb 50 ft. (Web Walker) (spider form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	30 (+10)	23 (+6)	22 (+6)	21 (+5)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Dex +19, Con +15, Wis +14, Cha +17

Skills Acrobatics +19, Deception +17, Perception +14, Religion +15, Stealth +28

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

Languages all

Challenge 29 (135,000 XP)

TRAITS

Divine Poison. The Mother's poisons are imbued with her divine power. If a creature would be immune to poison damage dealt by the Mother, it instead has resistance.

Additionally, if a creature would be immune to the poisoned condition against the Mother, it instead is not immune, but has Epic advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

Finally, a creature attempting to cure a creature afflicted with the poisoned condition (even by magical means) from the Mother must attempt a DC 25 Wisdom (Medicine) check as a part of the attempt, only removing the condition on a success.

Mythic Resistance. When the Mother fails a saving throw, she can spend 1 of her unspent legendary actions to succeed instead.

Shapechanger. As a bonus action on each of her turns the Mother can transform between her humanoid form and her monstrous spider form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying is transformed when she changes her shape. Additionally, she gains the following traits according to which form she has assumed.

- **Dark Weaver (Humanoid Form Only).** When the Mother assumes this form, shadowy webs surround her in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on her. Each creature of her choice in the affected area must succeed on a DC 25 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (creature's choice) or become wrapped in a cocoon of webs. The webs are an object with an AC of 18 and 50 hit points. While wrapped in this manner, a creature is restrained and vulnerable to all damage.
- **Death Lurker (Spider Form Only).** When the Mother assumes her spider form, she immediately moves up to her speed, becomes invisible, and can take the Hide action. This invisibility lasts until she makes an attack or casts a spell.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Mother makes three Web Lash attacks.

Spider's Kiss (Spider Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 20 (3d6 + 10) piercing damage plus 90 (20d8) poison damage. Additionally, if the Mother was hidden from a creature she hits with this attack, she instead scores a critical hit.

Web Lash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 32 (4d10 + 10) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, the

Mother can force it to attempt a DC 35 Constitution saving throw, becoming permanently poisoned on a failure. While poisoned in this manner, whenever the creature deals damage to the Mother, it takes poison damage equal to the damage dealt.

Divine Power. The Mother of Spiders exerts her divine power, causing one of the following effects.

- The Mother forces a creature she can see within 300 feet of her to attempt a DC 30 Charisma saving throw, becoming afflicted with an Epic curse on a failure. While cursed in this manner, a creature cannot succeed on Constitution saving throws.
- The Mother ends a spell or magical effect within 120 feet of her.
- The Mother forces a creature she can see within 60 feet of her to attempt a DC 25 Wisdom saving throw, becoming magically polymorphed into a giant spider on a failure. While polymorphed in this manner, the creature gains a number of temporary hit points equal to the hit point maximum of its new form. These temporary hit points can't be replaced by temporary hit points from another source, and if these hit points are reduced to 0 the creature returns to its true form. The creature's statistics are otherwise replaced by those of its new form, and it retains none of its personality nor memories of its true form. Additionally, the target becomes friendly toward the Mother and follows her commands to the best of its ability. At the end of each of its turns, a creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If a creature fails three Wisdom saving throws against this effect, the transformation becomes permanent and irreversible, except by Deific intervention.

Palace of Webs (Recharge 5–6). The Mother creates a 50-foot cube of magical webbing centered on a point she can see within 300 feet of her, which lasts for 1 hour. The cube is heavily obscured and difficult terrain for creatures other than the Mother or those with a Web Walker trait. While she is within the affected area, the Mother has resistance to all damage and has advantage on saving throws. The palace is an object (AC 15, 100 hit points) that is vulnerable to fire damage.

Puppeteer (Humanoid Form Only). A creature of the Mother's choice must attempt a DC 25 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (creature's choice), its limbs becoming bound by magical webs on a failure. While bound in this manner, the Mother must concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to maintain the effect and the creature cannot move or take actions unless the Mother allows it. As a reaction when the affected creature starts each of its turns, the Mother can seize control of its body and force it to perform any actions or movement of her desire it should ordinarily be able to otherwise take on its turn. This effect ends early if the Mother is ever farther than 120 feet from her target, or if she uses this action again.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Mother of Spiders can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Mother regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Lash. The Mother makes a single Web Lash attack.

Hide (Costs 2 Actions). The Mother takes the Hide action.

Shapechanger's Strike (Costs 2 Actions). The Mother uses her Puppeteer or Spider's Kiss action.

Divine Power (Costs 3 Actions). The Mother uses her Divine Power action.

MYTHIC MOTHER OF SPIDERS

Medium mythic humanoid (humanoid form) or Large mythic fiend (spider form, intermediate deity), chaotic evil

Armor Class 23

Hit Points 2,610 (180d8 + 1,800)

Speed 30 ft. (humanoid form); 50 ft., climb 50 ft. (Web Walker) (spider form)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	36 (+13)	30 (+10)	22 (+6)	21 (+5)	26 (+8)

Saving Throws Dex +25, Con +22, Int +18, Wis +17, Cha +20

Skills Acrobatics +25, Deception +20, Perception +17, Religion +18, Stealth +37

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic creatures

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages all

Challenge Mythic 9

TRAITS

Divine Poison. The Mother's poisons are imbued with her divine power. If a creature would be immune to poison damage dealt by the Mother, it instead has resistance.

Additionally, if a creature would be immune to the poisoned condition against the Mother, it instead is not immune, but has Epic advantage on saving throws against being poisoned.

Finally, a creature attempting to cure a creature afflicted with the poisoned condition (even by magical means) from the Mother must attempt a DC 30 Wisdom (Medicine) check as a part of the attempt, only removing the condition on a success.

Divine Resistance (3/Day). When the Mother of Spiders is affected by an enemy creature or is hit with an attack, she can choose to be immune to all damage and harmful effects caused by the effect or attack for its duration (if any).

Shapechanger. As a bonus action on each of her turns the Mother can transform between her humanoid form or into her monstrous spider form. Any equipment she is wearing or carrying is transformed when she changes her shape. Additionally, she gains the following traits according to which form she has assumed.

- **Dark Weaver (Humanoid Form Only).** When the Mother assumes this form, shadowy webs surround her in a 120-foot-radius sphere centered on her. Each creature of her choice in the affected area must attempt a DC 30 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (creature's choice), becoming wrapped in a cocoon of webs on a failure. The webs are an object with an AC of 18 and 200 hit points. While wrapped in this manner, a creature is restrained and vulnerable to all damage.
- **Death Lurker (Spider Form Only).** When the Mother assumes her spider form, she immediately moves up to her speed, becomes invisible, and can take the Hide action. This invisibility lasts until she makes an attack or casts a spell.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the Mother takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. The Mother can cause the same effect multiple times in a row.

Eldritch Venom. The Mother magically influences the venom flowing within poisoned creatures of her choice within 300 feet of her. Affected creatures take 21 (6d6) arcane damage and suffer one of the following effects of the Mother's choice, which lasts for the duration of the creature's poisoned condition.

- All the creature's senses are reduced to a range of 10 feet (blind beyond this radius).
- The creature becomes unable to concentrate or communicate verbally.
- When the creature would have disadvantage on an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, it instead has Epic disadvantage.

Each time the Mother uses this action, the damage increases by 21 (6d6) arcane damage for each time she has used it, to a maximum of 210 (60d6) arcane damage. This benefit lasts for 1 minute or until there are no poisoned enemy creatures within 300 feet of the Mother.

Threads of Chaos. The Mother binds together any number of creatures within 300 feet of her in a 60-foot-radius sphere of mystical strands of pure chaos,

which last until the next initiative count of 20. While so bound, when an affected creature would take damage or suffer a harmful effect, the Mother can choose for another creature so bound to instead suffer that damage or effect. A creature cannot suffer the same damage or effect twice in a single instance in this manner.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The Mother makes three Web Lash attacks.

Spider's Kiss (Spider Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +25 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 41 (8d6 + 13) piercing damage plus 180 (40d8) poison damage. Additionally, if the Mother has hidden from a creature she hits with this attack, she instead scores a critical hit.

Web Lash. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +25 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 68 (10d10 + 13) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, the Mother can force it to attempt a DC 30 Constitution saving throw, becoming permanently poisoned on a failure. While poisoned in this manner, whenever the creature deals damage to the Mother, it takes poison damage equal to the damage dealt.

Divine Power. The Mother of Spiders exerts her divine power, causing one of the following effects.

- The Mother forces a creature she can see within 300 feet of her to attempt a DC 30 Charisma saving throw, becoming afflicted with an Epic curse on a failure. While cursed in this manner, a creature cannot succeed on Constitution saving throws.
- The Mother ends an Epic or non-Epic spell or magical effect within 120 feet of her.
- The Mother forces a creature she can see within 60 feet of her to attempt a DC 30 Wisdom saving throw, becoming magically polymorphed into a giant spider on a failure. While polymorphed in this manner, the creature gains a number of temporary hit points equal to the hit point maximum of its new form. These temporary hit points can't be replaced by temporary hit points from another source, and if these hit points are reduced to 0 the creature returns to its true form. The creature's statistics are otherwise replaced by those of its new form, and it retains none of its personality nor memories of its true form. Additionally, the target becomes friendly toward the Mother and follows her commands to the best of its ability. At the end of each of its turns, a creature can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If a creature fails three Wisdom saving throws against this effect, the transformation becomes permanent and irreversible, except by Deific intervention.

Palace of Webs (Recharge 5–6). The Mother creates a 50-foot cube of magical webbing centered on a point she can see within 300 feet of her, which lasts for 1 hour. The cube is heavily obscured and difficult terrain for creatures other than the Mother or those with a Web Walker trait. While she is within the affected area, the Mother has resistance to all damage and has Epic advantage on saving throws. The palace is an object (AC 15, 300 hit points) that is vulnerable to fire damage.

Puppeteer (Humanoid Form Only). A creature of the Mother's choice must attempt a DC 30 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (creature's choice), its limbs becoming bound by magical webs on a failure. While bound in this manner, the Mother must concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to maintain the effect and the creature cannot move or take actions unless the Mother allows it. As a reaction when the affected creature starts each of its turns, the Mother can take control of it and force it to perform any actions or movement it should ordinarily be able to otherwise take on its turn. This effect ends early if the Mother is ever farther than 120 feet from her target, or if she uses this action again.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The Mother of Spiders can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Mother regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Lash. The Mother makes a single Web Lash attack.

Hide (Costs 2 Actions). The Mother takes the Hide action.

Shapechanger's Strike (Costs 2 Actions). The Mother uses her Puppeteer or Spider's Kiss action.

Divine Power (Costs 3 Actions). The Mother uses her Divine Power action.

RESOURCES

The Mother of Spiders has a multitude of resources ranging from demonic servants to magical wonders. In addition to all of these, she has collected a vast array of stolen books and scrolls which are scattered across her vast Fiendweb. Some examples of the resources in the Mother's possession are detailed here, but undoubtedly more exist, kept within her lair to be used by her or discovered by intrepid adventurers.

The Mother's most effective tool for spreading her influence is the *royal clutch*, a terrible creation that can birth her monstrous arachnid spawn or expand her territory into other planes of existence. These are granted to her most trusted servants to be planted in key locations and guarded until they hatch, free to spread the Fiendweb in the name of their dark mistress.

ALLIES

The Mother of Spiders carries out her will in the world through her many servants and followers. The most common of these are the drow, who are split into many noble houses constantly vying for power. While the political struggles between these factions are legendary, all serve the word of the Mother of Spiders in

the end. From the lowliest soldiers to the most powerful high priestesses, all drow have felt the touch of the Mother of Spiders in their lives.

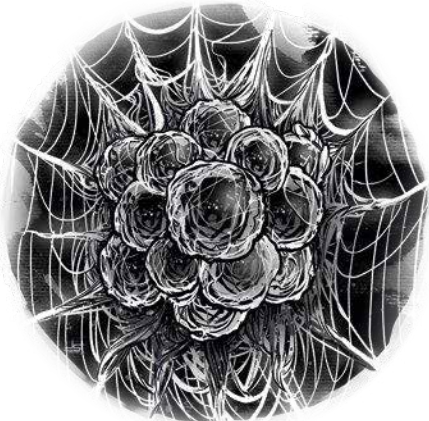
Her affiliation with spiders and other arachnid monsters provides another source of allies. The Mother of Spiders grants powerful arachnids access to the drow houses as guardians, and lesser spiders serve as spies or messengers. The biggest and most powerful of these monstrous spiders, the dread widows, are set out around the world to dispatch foes and guard areas of importance to their goddess. Many demons serve the Mother of Spiders as well, thanks to a healthy dose of coercion and proximity to the Fiendweb. These servants are as varied as the abyssal planes, though such alliances are short and endure only out of mutual convenience.

Arachna, Divine Tailor. None of the Mother's servants better reflects her cruelty and cunning than Arachna. This drow priestess won her place by her goddess's side by betraying the Mother of Spiders herself, thus proving she had the intelligence and wherewithal to outwit a goddess. Arachna's influence is so great that her name evokes fear in all who oppose the Mother of Spiders. When not serving on the front lines in her queen's divine quest for vengeance, Arachna spends her days weaving

Royal Clutch

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement by a cleric of the Mother of Spiders)

This cluster of spider eggs pulses with an ominous red glow, revealing the hideous creatures lying within. Each clutch is a Medium object (AC 20, 100 hit points) that is vulnerable to fire damage. As an action, you may place the clutch in an unoccupied space completely within darkness and say a prayer to the Mother of Spiders, which causes the eggs to begin their 1-week gestation period. During this time, you must remain within 500 feet of the *royal clutch* or it is instantly destroyed. At the end of 1 week, a 1-mile-radius sphere around the *royal clutch* is converted into a portion of the Fiendweb, becoming a part of the Fiendweb and serving as an extradimensional passageway to the realm of the Mother of Spiders. This effect immediately ends if the *royal clutch* is destroyed, restoring the affected area to its original state.



gorgeous dresses fit for such a horrific goddess. Her creations are the envy of countless rivals of the Mother of Spiders, and for this reason Arachna has survived far longer than any other high priestess in her position. Some of her handiwork has found its way into mortal hands, and her creations are prized for their magic as well as beauty.

Raiment of the Legged Empress

Wondrous item, legendary (requires attunement)

This elegant dress is woven from the silks of demonic spiders and embroidered with divine skill. While you wear the dress and are not wearing armor or wielding a shield, your AC is equal to 10 + your proficiency bonus + your Charisma modifier.

Additionally, you gain proficiency in Deception while you wear the dress. If you are already proficient in Deception, you instead double your proficiency bonus when making Charisma (Deception) checks.



Dread Widows. Few creatures inspire genuine affection from the Mother of Spiders, save for her prize pets: the dread widows. These horrific creatures spawned from the darkest pits of

DREAD WIDOW

Gargantuan fiend (demon), chaotic evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 478 (29d20 + 174)

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft. (Web Walker)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
28 (+9)	22 (+6)	22 (+6)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Str +15, Dex +12, Con +12, Cha +8

Skills Acrobatics +13, Perception +17, Stealth +18

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

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages Abyssal, Elvish

Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

TRAITS

Death Throes. When the widow dies, it explodes in a 30-foot-radius sphere of poisonous ichor. Each creature in the affected area must attempt a DC 23 Constitution saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) poison damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

Razor Webweaver. When the widow moves, jumps, or falls and is not incapacitated, it can choose to leave behind lines of razor-sharp webbing in a 5-foot-wide line with a length equal to the distance it moved. A creature without a Web Walker feature that comes into contact with the webbing for the first time on a turn or starts its turn in contact with the webbing takes 14 (4d6) slashing damage. The webbing can be suspended in midair between two points and is considered difficult terrain by all creatures without a Web Walker feature.

Additionally, the widow can spend 20 feet of movement to create a 20-foot cube of webbing that must be anchored against at least two separate surfaces.

The webbing has an AC of 12, and a 5-foot cube of webbing is an object with 20 hit points and vulnerability to fire damage.

Shadowstalker. The widow is invisible while completely within dim light or darkness.

Spell Resistance. The widow has advantage on saving throws against spells and magical effects, and it takes half damage from spells.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The widow makes three Leg attacks and a single Bite attack. The widow can forgo making two of these attacks to instead take the Hide action.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 48 (6d12 + 9) piercing damage. If the target is a flesh-and-blood creature, it must attempt a DC 23 Constitution saving throw, becoming poisoned for 1 minute on a failure. At the end of this poison's duration, the creature dies instantly.

Leg. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +15 to hit, reach 25 ft., one target. *Hit:* 23 (4d6 + 9) piercing damage.

Fell Shriek (Recharge 5–6). The widow emits an evil scream which can be heard up to 300 feet away. Creatures of the widow's choice that hear the shriek must attempt a DC 23 Constitution saving throw, becoming cursed for 1 hour on a failure. While cursed in this manner, when a creature would attempt an attack roll or saving throw, it rolls a d10 and subtracts the amount rolled from the result.

the Fiendweb, perfectly engineered to serve her sinister agenda. While rare outside of their home plane, dread widows have earned a fearful reputation.

With venom that can slay a great wyrm, unsettling stealth, and an unshakable loyalty to the Mother of Spiders, dread widows spread their webs far and wide in pursuit of their mistress's enemies.

Maiden of Agony. There are many crimes for which the Mother of Spiders punishes her followers, but none is greater than following the other dark elven deities. This is a truth the maiden of agony knows all too well, as she once was a high priestess of the Lady of Midnight, the daughter of the Mother of Spiders and the only good-aligned deity of the dark elven pantheon. After being captured by the Mother of Spiders, the maiden was twisted and transformed into a foul form. This shape is a lesser reflection of the Mother of Spiders, but without the ability to transform out of this monstrous shape. The maiden of agony now serves as the Mother's greatest assassin, tasked with eliminating dangerous enemies even a goddess fears to confront.

MAIDEN OF AGONY

Medium fiend, lawful evil

Armor Class 20

Hit Points 294 (31d8 + 155)

Speed 40 ft., climb 40 ft. (Web Walker)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	30 (+10)	21 (+5)	19 (+4)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +20, Con +15, Wis +13

Skills Acrobatics +24, Perception +10, Sleight of Hand +24, Stealth +24

Damage Resistances fire, necrotic

Damage Immunities poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages Abyssal, Elvish, Undercommon

Challenge 21 (33,000 XP)

TRAITS

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, the maiden can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Shadow in the Night. The maiden is invisible when in dim light or darkness.

Sneak Attack (1/Turn). The maiden deals an extra 35 (10d6) damage when she hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the maiden that isn't incapacitated and the maiden doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

Tools of Assassination. The maiden's weapons are magical and composed of magical shadows. The maiden has a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls (included in her attacks) made with her weapons, and she deals an additional 27 (6d8) poison damage on a successful hit (included in her attacks). If the maiden starts her turn and is not in possession of her weapons, the weapons magically reappear in her possession.

REWARDS

Defeating the Mother of Spiders is a remarkable feat with tremendous consequences for both gods and mortals. The elven pantheons would rejoice at her downfall, while the pernicious drow would undoubtedly seek revenge. However, in the long run the dark elves would be spared from the treacherous tyranny of their goddess. This shift would ultimately allow their race to escape the bigotry and prejudice that has entrapped them for centuries and finally choose their own destiny. While still a fantastic boon, this reward is not the only thing to be gained from victory over the Mother of Spiders. The Mother's lair contains many artifacts and treasures that she has claimed over the years, which can take the form of long-forgotten spells, powerful magic items, or whatever else you wish to grant the players for this victory. The greatest treasure comes from a grateful elven pantheon, who would gift those responsible the tremendous boon of a mighty *royal moonblade*: the highest honor the elves can bestow and a universal sign of prestige among their people.

Torturing Venom. When the maiden hits a flesh-and-blood creature with her attacks, she may inject venom into the target, which causes agonizing pain. At the start of each of the creature's turns, it must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or fall prone, become incapacitated, and become unable to utter any sound other than agonized screams until the start of its next turn. Once a creature has succeeded on three saving throws in this manner, the effect ends for it and the creature is immune to the effects of Torturing Venom for 24 hours. A creature immune to the poisoned condition has advantage on saving throws against this feature.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The maiden makes two attacks and uses her Snuff Light action.

Knife. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (1d4 + 13) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) poison damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +20 to hit, range 120/300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (1d10 + 13) piercing damage plus 27 (6d8) poison damage.

Snuff Light. The maiden extinguishes a source of magical light that she can see. The light is snuffed out immediately, and spells or magical effects producing light affected by this feature immediately end. If this effect is produced by a magical item, the light is instead suppressed for 24 hours.

REACTIONS

Shadowy Evasion. As a reaction when the maiden is attacked by a creature she can see within 60 feet of her, she can magically teleport to an unoccupied space she is aware of within 60 feet. This effect causes the attack to automatically miss.

Royal Moonblade

Weapon (any sword), artifact (requires attunement by a noble elf or a creature blessed by elven gods)

A *royal moonblade* is an extraordinarily rare variation on the famous *moonblade*, possessed only by elven houses of the highest standing. These weapons are unquestionable symbols of prestige as well as formidable tools of destruction to be used in times of dire conflict.

A *royal moonblade* is an impossibly elegant weapon, perfectly cast from a single pour of starmetal and enchanted with astonishing magic to blaze with a celestial blue flame. Their crafting is unrivaled, baffling even the most skilled of smiths with their peerless design. Unlike their more mundane counterparts, *royal moonblades* are loyal only to the bloodline to which they are bound and can be made into tools of evil when wielded irresponsibly.

A *royal moonblade* has the following properties.

Random Properties. The *moonblade* has three major beneficial properties in addition to the other properties listed here.

Baleful Moonlight. The *moonblade* sheds bright light in 60-foot radius and dim light 60 feet beyond that. At the start of each of your turns, each creature of your choice in the area of light must attempt a DC 23 Charisma saving throw, being forced to return to its true form (if assuming the form of another creature) or be rendered visible (if invisible) on a failure. These effects last until an affected creature leaves the affected area.

Eternal Rest. If you are slain while you are attuned the *moonblade*, your soul enters the weapon and joins the other spirits within, becoming a part of the weapon's consciousness and sentience. While your soul is stored in this manner, you cannot be returned to life unless all the spirits within the *moonblade* consent to your release.

Invoke the Ancients. As an action while you hold the *moonblade*, you can commune with the elven spirits within and entreat them for assistance. If they view your need as dire and your cause just, the spirits may choose to grant your request and the spell *wish* (spell save DC 23, +15 to hit with spell attacks) is cast without the need for any components.

The *wish* provides a form of aid the spirits view as most appropriate, though doing so comes at a great cost. A single elven spirit is lost from the *moonblade* to generate the magic and can never be restored. The number of spirits within a *royal moonblade* varies from blade to blade, but it is rarely more than a dozen.

Loyalty. You cannot be disarmed of the *moonblade* unless your limb holding it is severed or you allow it. Additionally, a creature willingly holding the *moonblade* without your permission takes 20d6 radiant damage at the end of each of its turns.

Masterful Technique. You gain a bonus to attack and damage rolls made with the *moonblade* equal to your Intelligence or Wisdom modifier (your choice).

Personality. The *royal moonblade* contains the spirits of its previous wielders, which collectively form its consciousness. While this varies from elven house to house, only the most prestigious and powerful houses can possess such an extraordinary weapon. The weapon only communicates when all its spirits are in agreement about what to say, which can be startlingly frequent or tremendously rare, depending on the house and the weapon's previous wielders.

Conflict between the weapon and its wielder occurs when it's used in a manner that brings dishonor to the house to which it belongs. Such an act makes the weapon sullen and uncooperative for dramatic lengths of time, often only becoming cooperative once such a disgrace has been rectified.

Sentience. The elven spirits within the *moonblade* are bound by tradition and ritualistic protocol, making them prone toward lawful alignments. A typical *moonblade* has an Intelligence score of 21, a Wisdom score of 23, and a Charisma score of 17.

The weapon can speak, read, and understand Druidic, Elvish, and Sylvan, but can only be heard by you. Its voice echoes with the synchronous tones of the spirits within, all speaking as one.

ASMODEUS

Lord of the Nine

“The truth, like a contract, is a fickle thing. Full of loopholes, contradictions, and exclusivity. My role is to define truth. Yours, to adhere to it—or suffer my displeasure.”

DESCRIPTION

The undisputed ruler of the Nine Hells and the progenitor of the fiends known as devils, Asmodeus is a sinister being whose duplicitous voice has proven more dangerous than any mortal weapon. Archetypal in his appearance, Asmodeus presents himself as a towering, red-skinned humanoid, clad in silks spun from the darkest pits of hell and sporting a regal face complete with tightly manicured goatee and a rack of pointed horns. To hear the Lord of the Nine Hells speak is both blessing and curse. His voice effortlessly shifts from terrifying authority to honeyed guile in an instant, with prose, vocabulary, and intonation that is hypnotic to all who hear it. Most unsettling of all are Asmodeus's

eyes. His gaze is like a predator who has sighted easy prey, making one feel vulnerable and exposed with but a glance. Few have stood in the presence of such a being and emerged better for it, with most becoming another pawn in Asmodeus's grand plans spanning centuries, ready to be sacrificed at a moment's notice.

ASMODEUS IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

A campaign with Asmodeus pits the party against the mightiest of hell's forces. The Lord of the Nine sits atop a massive pyramid

PROFILE

Personality: Conniving

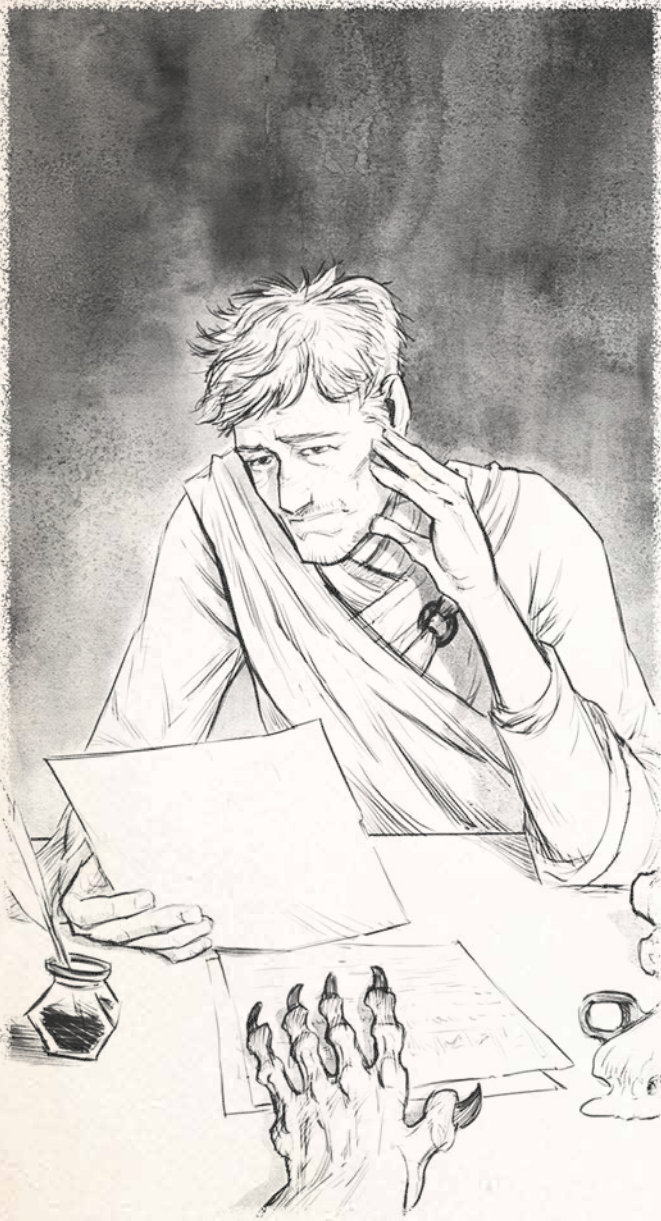
Ideals: Asmodeus holds order by any means necessary as the only worthy goal. Naturally, the fiend views himself as the most necessary component of whatever system of which he is a part, seeking to supplant the authority of others so that he can better run the show. It is Asmodeus's dream to one day bring the universe to heel, harnessing the combined powers of countless worlds to stamp out chaos once and for all.

Bonds: Hell is among the most complicated and intricate places in the known universe. To Asmodeus, this realm is the imperfect, but highly necessary, foundation upon which he balances his goals. While he may count other devils among his rivals and enemies, the Lord of the Nine gladly collaborates with such creatures with a twisted combination of abusive affection and grim duty. No matter how corrupt and bureaucratic these institutions become, Asmodeus never abandons them, for the alternatives are far worse.

Flaws: Asmodeus is completely incapable of trusting anyone, especially those closest to him. No matter how detailed and elaborate his schemes, the Lord of the Nine is continually foiled by his own obsessive manipulations. Those in his service are constantly pitted against one another in tests of loyalty, turned against him through constant surveillance, or simply betrayed outright should Asmodeus feel they are no longer worth the risk.

Legend: Before he was Lord of the Nine, Asmodeus is said to have been a celestial being of tremendous power and great vision. Respected by the forces of order across the multiverse, Asmodeus passionately threw himself against the forces of chaos both in battle and interplanar politics. He quickly became disillusioned with the powers that be, whom he deemed more interested in serving the status quo than living up to their obligations to abolish chaos. And so, in secret, Asmodeus gathered eight followers who shared his desire to reshape the universe, and he concocted the greatest scheme ever devised. Together they proposed to deities, otherworldly beings, and other champions of order a vision in which the souls of willing mortals would be enlisted into a volunteer force that would serve as a bastion against chaos. All that would be required would be their signatures on an elaborate contract which would reorder the primordial forces of life and death, and a sizable donation of planar space upon which to marshal this army. To their everlasting shame the forces of order agreed, and Asmodeus and his followers immediately began deceiving mortals into signing their souls away to join his grand army, becoming twisted weapons of war or scheming fiends to expand the scam further. When those he tricked protested and rose against the new archdukes of hell, they laughed and held up their contract, pointing out the humiliating oversight in failing to read the fine print. Whether Asmodeus enacted this scheme for his personal gain or out of high-minded conviction is unknown, but what is clear is that this end cannot possibly justify the means.

of deadly foes: archdevils, cults, and other minions shackled to Asmodeus's service. What's worse, raw military might is far from the archdevil's greatest asset. Asmodeus plots and schemes at every turn, and any campaign which includes him should be centered around some elaborate plan that has taken centuries to come to fruition. Unraveling this plot should be like peeling a conspiratorial onion. With each disturbing revelation a layer is peeled away, slowly revealing the full depth of Asmodeus's evil nature and the magnitude of his goals. As subtle as he is powerful, any campaign with Asmodeus should involve political intrigue, conniving foes, and sinister mysteries as often as it includes combat encounters.



INTRODUCTION

Few creatures dare to take on Asmodeus and his minions, and fewer still realize it is he pulling the strings behind whatever plots they uncover. Introducing Asmodeus to your campaign should be a disturbing reveal. The archdevil is masterful in cloaking his

involvement, so construct your campaign so that the characters must work hard to discover that Asmodeus is responsible for their troubles. Consorting with other fiends, infiltrating infernal cults, or even a visit to the hells may be required to get to the bottom of what is going on. Likely the party will suspect a devil of some significance is involved, perhaps even Asmodeus himself, but obtaining meaningful proof should be a challenging adventure.

CONFLICT

Once the Lord of the Nine is established as a known character in your campaign, he does not sit idly by. Any creature that can expose his involvement, especially mortals, is worth investigating. Asmodeus typically opens with a letter of introduction and a warning delivered by an imp, giving the characters one last chance to step off the board and avoid playing against a masterful opponent. Should the party persist, Asmodeus takes a direct hand in both surveillance and subterfuge against the party. He leverages allies and calls in favors to ensure the characters are constantly under threat of attack, all the while keeping less subtle minions in view to distract the party from the true threat. To keep the characters off balance, Asmodeus often sends gifts and bribes. These items are rarely cursed, but they carry the stench of the hells and make the characters easier to track. The archdevil's primary goal is to keep the party away from his schemes in as cost effective a manner as possible, applying precise tools to ensure his continued success.

As the characters experience continued victories against Asmodeus, his tactics grow far less subtle. Assassination, imprisonment, blackmail, or frivolous legal troubles become his favored weapons. He even reaches out to allies and families of the party members, beguiling them to his service to better manipulate the characters' behavior. Should things start getting out of hand, he may even dispatch his daughter Lilitha to take a direct hand. All the while Asmodeus contacts the characters, attempting to coerce them through correspondence, spoken word, or any other available means. Each conversation is another opportunity for the archdevil to win the characters over to his side and learn more about their capabilities.

CONCLUSION

If all other methods of attack should fail, Asmodeus seeks an audience with the party by inviting them to his Hellfire Court. This conference is one last attempt at diplomacy. Here Asmodeus bargains with every ounce of his guile, offering fortunes, power, prestige, and title in an attempt to cease hostilities between him and the characters. While Asmodeus is legally bound to remain peaceful during their stay, other devils are far less benevolent. Should no agreement be reached, 1 month later Asmodeus issues a direct challenge to the characters and names them an enemy of all the hells. Until Asmodeus is defeated, all devils are obligated to oppose the party at every turn, though many jump at the chance to betray the Lord of the Nine to those whom he clearly fears. Reaching Asmodeus in his Hellfire Court is no easy task, but once present the archdevil does not flee his seat of power for anything. He unleashes his full and terrible might upon the mortal worms who have so vexed him, who in turn best be prepared for the greatest fight of their lives.

CHALLENGES

Asmodeus can pose combat, exploration, or social challenges to characters who interact with him.

EXPLORATION

Asmodeus lairs on the lowest level of hell. From within its darkest pit the Lord of the Nine plots and schemes, only ascending to the higher levels when he feels an issue must be addressed personally. While some see Asmodeus's isolation as a sign of paranoia and weakness, the truth is far more complex. Deep within the layer's darkest pit lie the remains of Asmodeus's former form: an angelic serpent whose body is ravaged by terrific wounds that bleed fresh ichor. Any rumor of this fact is brutally suppressed, and anyone suspected of propagating it is suspended by chains at the entrance to the legendary Hellfire Court, where Asmodeus sits upon his throne of hellfire. The devils found here are among the most fearsome and disciplined of their kind, devoid of any ambition other than to serve the Lord of the Nine to the best of their ability.

Regional Effects

The ninth layer of hell is warped by Asmodeus's infernal power, which has created the following effects within the structure.

- Devils native to this layer of the hells cannot be compelled or tricked, even by magic, into acting against Asmodeus's known interests. Additionally, such devils always have the highest possible hit point maximum allowed by their Hit Dice.
- When Asmodeus is reduced to 0 hit points or slain on a plane of existence other than the hells, he is instead reduced to 1 hit point, not slain, and teleported to his chambers within the Hellfire Court.
- When a creature in this layer performs an act of good, it becomes marked with an infernal tattoo that glows with a fiendish light. Devils that see an affected creature can instantly recognize its true nature, regardless of what form it has assumed or what magic it has used to conceal itself.

If Asmodeus is destroyed, these effects fade until a new archdevil assumes control over this layer of hell, at which time the effects begin again.

Asmodeus's Lair

The seat of power in all the hells, the Hellfire Court is part political office, part fortress, part retreat, and all evil. The massive structure is composed primarily of the infernal metal known as green steel and its every rampart and corridor lit by the malevolent flames of hellfire. The exterior architecture is an unassailable citadel guarded by disciplined, elite fiends that put their ordinary counterparts to shame. The interior is a different story, eschewing deadly defense for tasteful elegance. While undoubtedly the home of fiends, the Court is a place of comfort and peace, a place where even a celestial could find a quiet corner to relax. Its many

offices and courtrooms are packed with executive devils whose sole purpose is to manage the maddening bureaucracy that comes with running nine planes of hell. Here, some of the most important deals, legal cases, and trials in the hells are observed where the legal process can be enacted without interference. Most significant of all is Asmodeus's boardroom, a magnificent circular hall with seats for each of the nine archdevils. Most prominently placed is the Hellfire Throne, a construction of burning power from which Asmodeus directs his greatest subordinates.

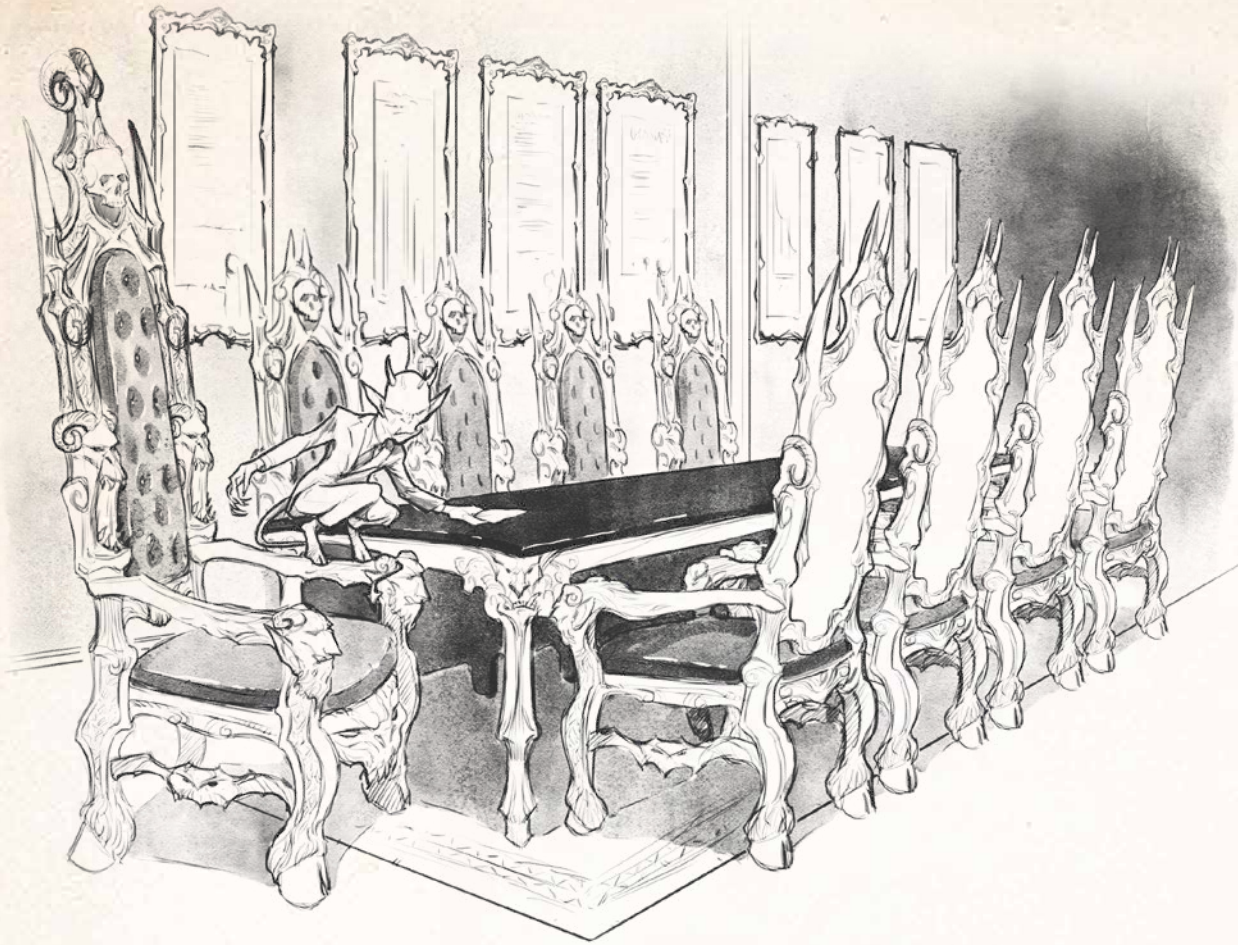
Lair Actions

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Asmodeus can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Asmodeus is using his mythic statistics, he can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Asmodeus can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- Asmodeus calls forth an account of all the acts of evil a creature within the lair has committed over the course of its lifetime. The ledger is an object, which Asmodeus holds in one of his free hands, with an AC of 15 and 60 hit points. While he holds the ledger, the creature cannot succeed on saving throws and is frightened of Asmodeus. Once a creature has been affected by this action, it cannot be affected again until 1 year has passed.
- An object within the lair of Asmodeus's choice vanishes, appearing in an unoccupied space within the lair. If the object is being worn or held by a creature, that creature can attempt a DC 28 Charisma saving throw, preventing the object from vanishing on a success.
- Another creature of Asmodeus's choice within the lair becomes empowered with hellfire until the next initiative count of 20, gaining the following benefits for the duration.
 - Any damage dealt by the creature other than bludgeoning, piercing, or slashing damage instead becomes hellfire damage.
 - The creature uses Asmodeus's proficiency bonus (+8/+11) instead of its own.
 - The creature gains 100 temporary hit points and immunity to hellfire damage.

NEW DAMAGE TYPE: HELLFIRE

Hellfire is a unique substance, equal parts fire, magic, and evil. This makes hellfire a new damage type, separate from other damage types such as fire or necrotic damage. This allows those who wield hellfire to burn creatures that would ordinarily be immune to fire damage, which is particularly useful when dealing with other fiends. Additionally, a creature damaged by hellfire cannot regain hit points through nonmagical means for 24 hours after it takes this damage. Finally, burning hellfire cannot be extinguished by nonmagical means.



Exploration Encounters

With an empire of fiends spanning multiple planar layers and enough capital to make a tyrant-king blush, Asmodeus provides a campaign with a tremendous host of potential encounters for heroes looking to take him on. Examples of some of these encounters are detailed here.

Daring Defectors. A small troupe of devils loyal to Asmodeus have defected, taking to the mountains of the ninth layer in an attempt to evade retribution. While the defectors have managed to evade capture thus far, it is only a matter of time before they are tracked down and executed. Many rival archdevils and other beings have taken a particular interest in these fiends' plight, eager to send in a daring team from which they can deny any association in the event of failure. It is believed the defectors carry with them knowledge of an *infernal contract* which Asmodeus mistakenly signed, which outlines terms under which he may be forced to abdicate his position. However, the mountains of that layer are inhospitable in the extreme, and Asmodeus's forces are everywhere, leaving few capable of both tracking down the elusive creatures and securing their safety.

Under Lock and Key. The characters are magically summoned to the Hellfire Court to testify in a case. During their visit, one of the items in their possession piques Asmodeus's curiosity, which he acquires using his Confiscate Lair action during their stay. To see what today's mortals are made of, Asmodeus sequesters the item somewhere within the Hellfire Court, eager

to watch the mortals attempt to unravel the cunning series of bureaucratic obstacles the archdevil placed in their way.

The Codex of Fundamental Law. A cabal of lawful entities from across the multiverse have formed a council with one goal: uncover Asmodeus's secrets and ultimately defeat the archdevil. This unusual alliance has pooled its resources and discovered the existence of a primordial artifact of power with promising potential. Known as the *Codex of Fundamental Law*, this ancient tome is said to be penned in the first language ever conceived and contains the fundamental laws that govern all of existence. If Asmodeus can be proven to have violated such law, his position may be invalidated, and his weaknesses exposed. The council believes the book is in the possession of a former archdevil who has only survived this long due to the leverage the book may hold over the Lord of the Nine. Choosing the party as the perfect operatives for this mission, the council offers vast rewards for the recovery of the book, with a sizable bonus if the deed can be accomplished without attracting Asmodeus's attention.

SOCIAL

Being the ruler of the Nine Hells is an extremely social enterprise. Asmodeus must expertly juggle the affairs of millions of devils and foil his rivals, all while advancing diabolical schemes of cosmic proportions. These complex objectives cannot be achieved through force alone. Diplomacy and subterfuge are

Codex of Fundamental Law

Wondrous item, artifact (requires attunement)

Penned at the dawn of the ordered multiverse by an entity whose name is lost to time, the *Codex of Fundamental Law* stands as a record of the history of order for as long as the concept has existed. Bound in woven adamantine threads and emblazoned with the emblem of a scale cast in bronze, the codex's magic ensures that despite its modest size its pages are seemingly infinite. Revered by creatures of law and feared by those of chaos, the codex has been used to censure the greatest criminals in all of history. There is no greater tool for justice among the known realms, and any who wield its power are seen as great arbiters of their time. The *Codex of Fundamental Law* has the following properties.

Random Properties. The codex has the following randomly determined properties.

- 2 minor beneficial properties
- 2 major beneficial properties
- 1 major detrimental property

Axiomatic Influence. While you hold the codex, you cannot lie. Additionally, you cannot be forcibly compelled or tricked (even by magic) into knowingly committing a crime.

Full and Fair Accounting. As an action, you can open the codex and name a single creature you can see within 60 feet of you. When you do so, the target's entire criminal history appears within the codex, detailing its every crime, any evidence in existence relating to said crimes, and a just punishment. A creature that reads this information from the book in its entirety gains the following special benefits against the target.

- The target cannot succeed on Charisma ability checks against you, and you always know when you hear the target lie.
- When you roll a d20 against the target and roll a 10 or lower, you instead roll an 11.
- When you reduce the target to 0 hit points, you can instead choose to reduce it to 1 hit point and magically lock the target in time for a duration of your choosing, up to 10,000 years. While locked in this manner, the creature is unconscious and is immune to all damage and effects. This effect ends early if the *Codex of Fundamental Law* is destroyed.

Destroying the Codex. The *Codex of Fundamental Law* is impervious to all but the forces of chaos. It cannot take damage or be harmed in any way unless the force responsible is a creature of chaotic alignment with a challenge rating of 21 or higher.

potent tools in Asmodeus's arsenal, as dangerous as any *holy avenger* or *meteor swarm*. Even mortals play a role in Asmodeus's grand plans. While he leaves the devilish goal of acquiring souls to his lesser kin, Asmodeus makes a point of interacting directly with mortals he deems useful. The Lord of the Nine does not let his distaste for chaos or goodness get in the way of hashing out a good deal. To Asmodeus, an agreement with mortal forces, in which he always has the upper hand, is just good business. What's worrying is that bargains with Asmodeus are rarely unfair. The archdevil has the power to deliver on tremendous boons for those who serve him well, leaving most mortals far better off with his help than they would be otherwise. The truth behind this perceived benevolence is that those who make pacts with Asmodeus fail to appreciate the significance of their role in his schemes. Even a simple peasant coerced to the archdevil's cause can create plane-wide consequences. Thankfully, most mortals spectacularly fail at seeing the bigger picture, so Asmodeus's grand deceptions and schemes continue to run rampant in mortal realms, much to the chagrin of those who know better.

Social Encounters

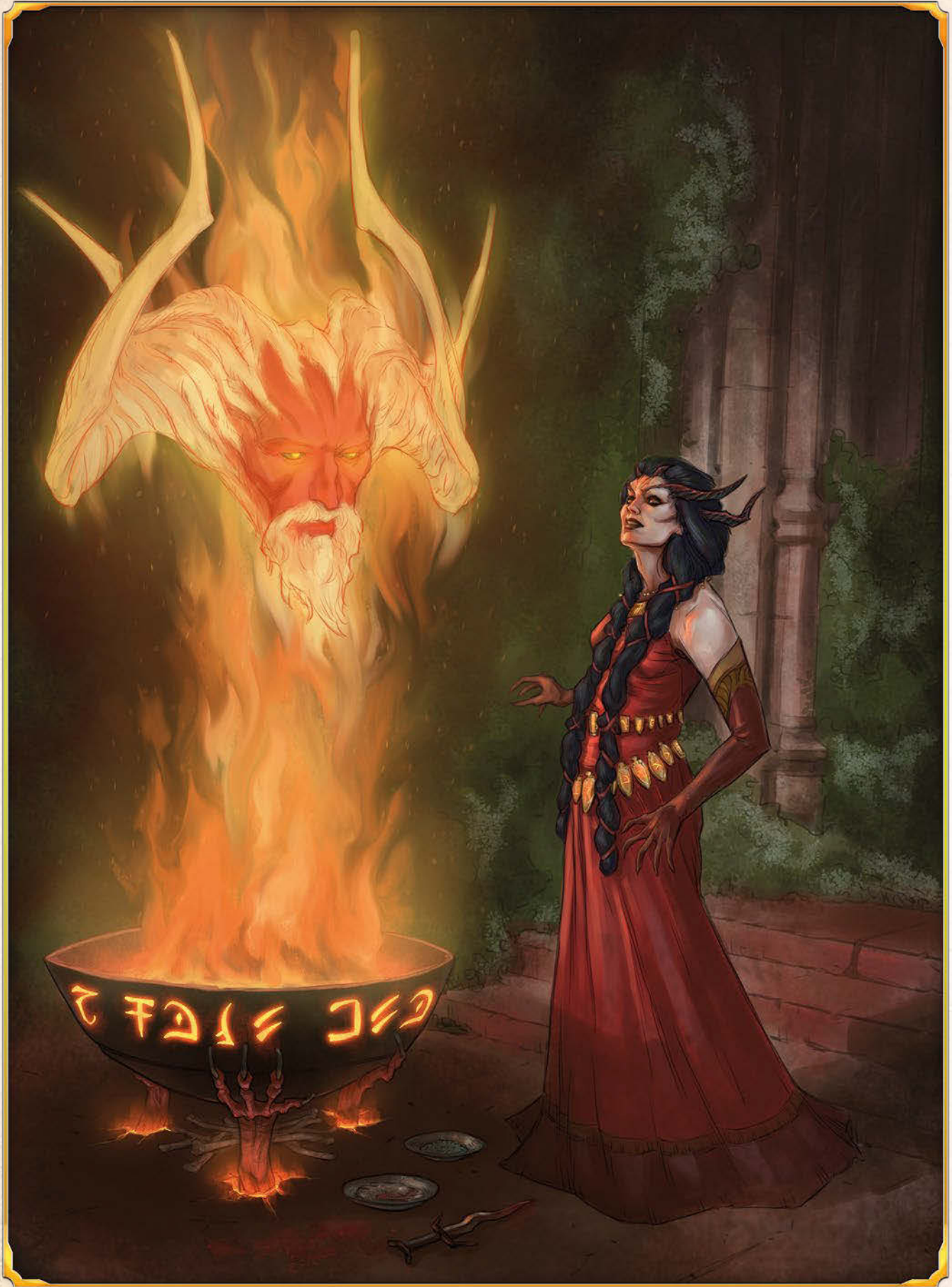
Socially interacting with Asmodeus can invoke a variety of sinister encounters. While the archdevil rarely leaves the hells, there are countless reasons for others to pay him a visit. Legal troubles, contract negotiations, and business propositions are all fitting scenarios for a social encounter with Asmodeus. Examples of some of these encounters are detailed here.

Against the Chaos. Asmodeus sends imps across the planes in search of heroes, carrying a message promising a job: he has learned a famous demon lord's weakness and is poised to bring an end to the fiend's reign, preferably with mortal assistance. The message also invites heroes under banner of truce to the Hellfire Court to discuss the plan and negotiate terms of employment. The offer is entirely sincere, as Asmodeus stands to benefit tremendously from the destruction of his chaotic rivals, though the archdevil fully intends to get his "money's worth" from any heroes brave enough to answer the call. Asmodeus is willing to offer magic items of formidable power in return for loyal service, but to the heroes who form the vanguard of the assault, he offers something far greater: a place in his court as a member of the hells' nobility and a champion of law. Those who would complete the task and take Asmodeus up on this offer gain the following Epic boon.

Boon of Infernal Nobility

You gain proficiency in Deception, Intimidation, and Persuasion. If you are already proficient in one or more of these skills, you instead double your proficiency bonus when making ability checks using that skill.

Additionally, if you are slain your soul is sent to the hells and you are reincarnated as a pit fiend. When you are reincarnated in this manner, you lose any semblance of who you once were (including your memories) and your statistics and features change to those of a pit fiend, though your Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma scores remain the same.





Impartial Jury. The characters receive a jury summons from the hells, hand delivered by an erinyes. The summons demands they present themselves at the Hellfire Court within 1 month to arbitrate a case between two rival archdevils, overseen by Asmodeus playing the role of judge. The case is so complex and convoluted no devil is capable of being impartial, hence the need for mortal arbitrators. If the characters refuse, they are summoned anyway through the use of *gate* spells, where they are placed alongside a dozen other bewildered creatures. The case lasts for nearly a month, with threats, bribes, and all manner of infernal subterfuge clouding every aspect of its proceedings. Should the party perform their duty admirably, Asmodeus personally thanks them for their service and promises to call upon them again in the future. Should the characters fail to respect devilish jurisprudence or come to a decision Asmodeus does not endorse, they make a powerful enemy with plans for revenge.

A Family Matter. In a stunning betrayal, Asmodeus's own daughter has openly disparaged the Lord of the Nine. This act causes political upheaval across the layers, with many archdevils openly marshaling forces from across the planes for an inevitable open conflict. However, the daughter has other plans, seeking to legally secede from the rest of the hells and establish her layer as an independent nation-state. To accomplish this, she has enlisted the aid of celestial forces, mortal allies, and other enemies of Asmodeus to secure her realm and argue her case in the Hellfire Court. With so much on the line, any characters with a grudge against Asmodeus are undoubtedly tempted by the opportunity to strike such a devastating blow by helping his daughter succeed.

NEW LANGUAGE: DARK SPEECH

When evil was born, it took many hateful forms as it spread across the multiverse, infecting countless worlds with its vile presence. While few evil beings remember this era from eons past, a hateful few carry with them the knowledge to speak a horrific atrocity of a language known as Dark Speech.

Uttering Dark Speech is to describe evil in its purest form, and its sound is hateful to all decent creatures. When speaking Dark Speech, a creature has advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) ability checks, and evil creatures always perfectly understand words spoken to them in Dark Speech. Good creatures of CR 10 or lower that hear Dark Speech become incapacitated for as long as they can hear it being spoken.

If you are using 2CGaming's Epic Legacy supplement, Dark Speech is instead an Epic language with the following properties.

Language Prerequisites: Epic creature, evil alignment, Charisma score of 20 or higher.

Creatures speaking Dark Speech have Epic advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) ability checks, and non-Epic good-aligned creatures that hear Dark Speech become incapacitated for as long as they can hear it being spoken.

COMBAT

Asmodeus eschews weapons and spells in favor of the terrific power behind his own voice. Each conflict is as much a test of combat prowess as it is social influence: a titanic clash of personalities that leaves one victorious and the other kneeling in defeat. While direct challenges to Asmodeus are rare, they are not unwelcomed, provided the challenger is one Asmodeus deems worthy of servitude. Killing a foe is indeed a victory but twisting them into an unwitting ally is a true triumph. However, the Lord of the Nine isn't above teaching a lesson, particularly against arrogant or unsubordinated foes. The fiend's capacity for cruelty is legendary, even among devils, and defeated enemies can expect unimaginable suffering, just to make sure they understand who is in charge. Every action Asmodeus takes in combat is practical and strategic, designed to accomplish multiple objectives simultaneously.

Combat Encounter Example: Trial by Fire

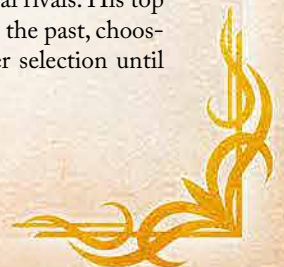
Those accused of high crimes in the Nine Hells may request trial by combat, battling against any who bring charges against them. This proposition is exceedingly risky, for rarely does a denizen of hell have more than vague suspicions as to who accuses them. In particularly unfortunate circumstances, the responsible party may be Asmodeus himself, who relishes the chance to remind his subjects why he is Lord of the Nine. Should the characters find themselves in the troubling scenario of being brought up on charges in hell and choose a trial by combat, their situation can turn from bad to worse as Asmodeus teleports into the courtroom and inquires if they are ready to begin. Such an encounter includes the following elements.

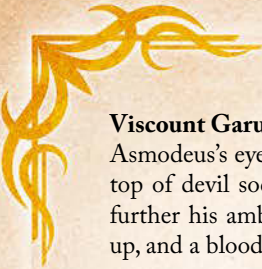
Terrain

A typical trial by combat in the hells takes place in a 75-foot-radius arena composed of basalt. The edges are ringed by pews in which are seated all manner of devils employed in the hells' legal system. Such a spectacle is a rare treat, leading many prominent figures to make an appearance, ranging from high-ranking devils, rakshasa dignitaries, and fiendish ambassadors. The crowd is rowdy, eager to see blood spilled, and they bet excessively on the potential outcomes. The arena is domed by a ceiling that reaches 120 feet high at its apex, and the pews are elevated 30 feet off the arena floor. Four basalt columns, each a 5-foot-radius cylinder that extends to the ceiling, support the dome and provide a nigh-indestructible source of cover. To the south is seated the judge overseeing the proceedings, often a particularly corpulent pit fiend but occasionally something far worse.

Encounter Details

Asmodeus is never one to pass up a chance to leverage his authority, and if outnumbered requests that, for the sake of "fairness and justice," he be allowed a selection of companions to even the odds, a request the fiendish judge eagerly grants. Asmodeus uses this opportunity to twist the arms of political rivals. His top choices are devils who have disappointed him in the past, choosing from the following options or from a wider selection until both sides are of equal numerical strength.





Viscount Garuspax (Pit Fiend). A particular disappointment in Asmodeus's eyes, this aggressive pit fiend climbed his way to the top of devil society only to languish in luxury with no wish to further his ambitions. Such complacency deserves to be shaken up, and a bloody pit fiend is just the right opportunity.

The Iceman, Gelugon (Ice Devil). A sadistic torturer who in his zeal accidentally slaughtered a pawn key to Asmodeus's plans. The Lord of the Nine has been looking for an opportunity to legally end the devil's existence, so now is as good a time as ever.

The Jade Sisters (Erinyes). When a great rebellion against Asmodeus failed, this pair of emerald-winged erinyes managed to escape punishment despite serving a prominent role in many acts of sedition. Never one to forget a past treachery, Asmodeus relishes the opportunity to force their service, especially in a matter so trivial as this.

Bippi (Imp). This unfortunate imp made the tragic mistake of sneezing loudly while serving hors d'oeuvres to the archdevils during their annual meeting, spattering Asmodeus's robes with blink dog pâté, a sin for which one can never be forgiven.

Combat

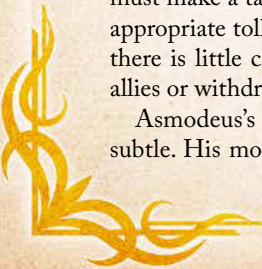
Unless the characters have done something to dreadfully offend Asmodeus, the archdevil has no interest in killing them. The same can't be said for any devils thrust into the arena alongside him. Asmodeus is content to watch the fight play out between the two forces, lazily throwing out his own abilities alongside snide remarks and backhanded compliments. Should his allies fall, Asmodeus unleashes his full power, restraining himself only when his enemies are utterly defeated and on the brink of death. Only then does Asmodeus offer them a way out, seeking to forge an *infernal contract* in return for sparing their lives. However, if the characters manage to deal enough damage to Asmodeus to reduce him to below half his hit point maximum (rounded down), Asmodeus concedes the field and grants the mortals their victory. This maneuver is an attempt to save face in front of the crowd by pretending he is letting the party win, but it is also an act of cowardice as Asmodeus considers the possibility he may lose. The Lord of the Nine is a patient being and can wait decades if necessary, to take his revenge for such public humiliation.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Controller

Asmodeus is a dignified combatant that dismantles his enemies with the language of evil itself. His primary "weapon" is his *Aura of Subjugation* feature, which threatens to charm any creature who dares oppose his fiendish influence. Note that immunity to the charmed condition provides little protection against this fearsome power, for the *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus* ensures that no defense is perfect. However, a creature can always choose to succeed on the saving throw against the effect, consequently taking a tremendous amount of psychic damage. This ensures a party must make a tactical choice whether to risk the charm or pay an appropriate toll. Once a creature has been charmed by this aura, there is little chance of victory unless they can be liberated by allies or withdraw from the fight.

Asmodeus's other powers are equally fearsome but far less subtle. His most diverse and favored action is *Infernal Decree*,





which can be customized to specifically target vulnerabilities in his foes. Because this action can affect multiple creatures, Asmodeus always chooses the most effective option between all his targets. For example, effects like Decree of Privilege have little benefit unless multiple targets are benefiting from spells. When taking a fight seriously, Asmodeus can invoke his Hellfire Crown. This deadly effect makes it extremely dangerous to even harm the Lord of the Nine as well as empowers his effects to even greater efficacy. Note that the change to hellfire damage from this action applies to *all* damage Asmodeus deals, regardless of feature or effect, including his Aura of Subjugation.

For when these formidable tools don't suffice, Asmodeus can lean on his Archdevil's Might for less powerful, but still potent, options. This action is particularly useful if Asmodeus finds himself in need of a specific spell, some deadly attacks, or an ally to join the fight.

Remember, Asmodeus rarely fights to kill. Few things annoy the Lord of the Nine more than seeing a resource go to waste. Enemies are always more valuable when turned into allies, even against their will. His role as a controller ensures his enemies are always fighting at a disadvantage, such as charmed allies turned against them or their hit point maximum being cut from hellfire damage. Asmodeus can easily put most foes in a position where surrender is the only option for survival, and that is just the way the archdevil likes it.

Easier Tactics – An “easy” battle with Asmodeus is a bit of misnomer, but the archdevil is arrogant enough to risk taking foes less seriously than he should. In such instances, Asmodeus is more interested in sending a message than seeking victory, simply because he believes he cannot lose. He may use his Aura of Subjugation against specific targets rather than every enemy within range, delighting in the terror of his enemy's face as they struggle to resist his influence. Only when reduced below half his hit point maximum does Asmodeus consider using his most formidable ability, Hellfire Crown, accompanied by more efficient applications of his Infernal Decree action. A particularly overconfident Asmodeus may even fail to keep a legendary action in reserve for his Mythic Resistance feature, a tactical error which could prove disastrous against an enemy ready to capitalize on the mistake.

Harder Tactics – Asmodeus always begins a difficult battle with a use of Hellfire Crown, followed by a relentless onslaught of Infernal Decrees perfectly chosen to not only maximize their effects but afflict the most vulnerable targets. The archdevil's Intelligence and experience are so extensive that most weaknesses about an enemy can be determined with but a glance. With an entire layer of hell at his command, Asmodeus never needs to fight alone. Devils, fiends, and other monsters of terrific power stand ready to answer the archdevil's call for aid, many of which are uniquely dangerous or unknown to mortal scholars: secret weapons kept in reserve for just such an occasion.

Mythic Asmodeus

Asmodeus at Epic strength is a being of near-godlike power and unfathomable evil. The raw power of his attacks and effects are magnified to terrific proportions, while his defenses ensure the archdevil can survive almost any assault. With this increase in might comes a host of new abilities in the form of mythic

actions: specifically, Price of Defiance and Fiendish Insight. Price of Defiance allows Asmodeus to further punish those who resist the influence from his Aura of Subjugation feature. This interaction rapidly escalates the battle's difficulty, as few healers can keep pace with the staggering damage required to resist the Lord of the Nine's influence round after round. Fiendish Insight allows Asmodeus to negate the strengths of his enemies, cutting powerful foes down to size for what is likely the remainder of the fight. This action is ideal for any enemies who are proving particularly resistant or damaging to Asmodeus. By the seventh or eighth round of a fight against Asmodeus, most foes will be in dire straits, desperately trying to cut down the archdevil with what little strength they have left.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, Asmodeus causes the following effects.

Archdevil. Asmodeus is an archdevil, granting him the following benefits.

- Asmodeus cannot be magically summoned or called from his home plane unless he allows it or unless the creatures responsible invoke Asmodeus's true name when doing so.
- Asmodeus is always aware of the exact location of any creature that has broken a contract with him.
- Asmodeus's rank in the hells is 14, the highest of any devil, allowing him to promote and demote other devils accordingly, even other archdevils.

Bargaining Power. Asmodeus is the ultimate negotiator and bargainer. When forging contracts or infernal pacts, Asmodeus can magically create a material incentive as a part of negotiating and finalizing the contract. This incentive is always a material object the target deeply desires, but it cannot be a magic item with a rarity greater than legendary or have a value greater than 50,000 gp.

RESOURCES

Any archdevil can call upon thousands of fiends and allies to aid in their dark schemes, but Asmodeus has tools that are beyond even those of his fellows. His ancient nature has afforded him primordial knowledge predating all written record, while his legendary persuasiveness affords him allies far beyond the reach of most fiends. It is believed that even some celestials and good-aligned deities trade in secret with Asmodeus, deceived by his guile or tempted by his infernal offerings. Some examples of the resources in Asmodeus's possession are detailed here, but more undoubtedly exist, kept secret so that the true scope of the archdevil's power can never truly be known.

One of Asmodeus's favorite tools are the dreaded *infernal contracts*, potential magic items which can ensure obedience and compliance in those who sign them willingly. Asmodeus provides these contracts to other archdevils at his pleasure, but always keeps the stock in short supply. The details of an *infernal contract* can be found in the sidebar of the same name.

ASMODEUS

Large fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 20 (natural armor)

Hit Points 1,037 (83d10 + 581)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	24 (+7)	26 (+8)	24 (+7)	32 (+11)

Saving Throws Con +16, Wis +16, Cha +20

Skills Deception +29, Insight +17, Perception +16, Persuasion +29, Religion +17

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities fire, hellfire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 26

Languages Celestial, Common, Dark Speech, Infernal

Challenge 30 (155,000)

TRAITS

Aura of Subjugation. Asmodeus exudes an overpowering aura of authority in a 120-foot radius centered on him. At the start of each of his turns, Asmodeus can exert this influence over any number of creatures of his choice in the affected area, causing them to become charmed for as long as they are on the same plane of existence as Asmodeus.

An affected creature can prevent being charmed in this manner by defying Asmodeus's authority. A creature that does so does not become charmed but takes 35 (10d6) psychic damage as it suffers retribution for its defiance.

Mythic Resistance. When Asmodeus fails a saving throw, he can expend one of his unexpended legendary actions to succeed instead.

Ruby Rod of Asmodeus. Asmodeus is never without his powerful relic, the *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus*. While Asmodeus holds the rod, if he attempts to charm a creature within 120 feet of him that is immune to the charmed condition, it is instead not immune.

Additionally, Asmodeus cannot be disarmed of the *Ruby Rod* unless he allows it, and any who attempt to disarm him of the rod must succeed on a DC 28 Constitution saving throw or take 55 (10d10) necrotic damage and be thrown 60 feet away from him in a straight line, landing prone.

ACTIONS

Ruby Rod. *Melee Spell Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 33 (6d10) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 28 Strength saving throw or be thrown 60 feet away from Asmodeus in a straight line, landing prone.

Archdevil's Might. Asmodeus unleashes the true power of an archdevil, causing one of the following effects.

- Casts a warlock spell of 7th level or lower (spell save DC 28, +20 to hit with spell attacks) with a casting time of an action or bonus action, without the need for any components.

- Summons a devil of CR 20 or lower in an unoccupied space he can see within 300 feet of him, which acts on the initiative count immediately after Asmodeus's.

- Makes three Hellfire Blast attacks.

Hellfire Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +20 to hit, reach 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 30 (3d12 + 11) hellfire damage.

Hellfire Crown (Recharge 5–6). Asmodeus becomes crowned with hellfire until the end of his next turn, signifying his supremacy as lord of the hells. While so crowned, when Asmodeus would deal damage other than hellfire damage, he can choose to instead deal fire damage. Additionally, when a creature deals damage to Asmodeus, it takes hellfire damage equal to half the damage dealt to Asmodeus (rounded down).

Infernal Decree. Asmodeus issues an infernal decree using Dark Speech, the primal language of evil, to up to three creatures of his choice within 300 feet of him. Asmodeus chooses which decree he utters from the following options.

- **Decree of Dark Fates.** Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 28 Charisma saving throw or become permanently afflicted with a curse. When a creature so cursed is reduced to 0 hit points, it is instead reduced to 1 hit point, has its alignment changed to lawful evil, and becomes unable to harm or act against Asmodeus for as long as it remains cursed.
- **Decree of Fealty.** Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 28 Wisdom saving throw or fall prone and prostrate themselves before Asmodeus. A creature knocked prone in this manner cannot spend movement until the start of Asmodeus's next turn.
- **Decree of Privilege.** Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 28 Charisma saving throw or have Asmodeus end a single spell or magical effect currently affecting it.
- **Decree of Suffering.** Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 28 Constitution saving throw or take 40 fire damage.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Asmodeus can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Asmodeus regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Infernal Decree. Asmodeus uses his Infernal Decree action but can target only a single creature.

Strike. Asmodeus makes a Ruby Rod or Hellfire Blast attack.

Archdevil's Might (Costs 2 Actions). Asmodeus uses his Archdevil's Might action.

Gather Hellfire (Costs 3 Actions). Asmodeus recharges his Hellfire Crown action.

MYTHIC ASMODEUS

Large mythic fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 22 (natural armor)

Hit Points 3,399 (206d10 + 2,266)

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

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	12 (+1)	32 (+11)	26 (+8)	24 (+7)	38 (+14)

Saving Throws Str +15, Dex +11, Con +23, Int +20, Wis +19, Cha +26
Skills Deception +37, Insight +19, Perception +19, Persuasion +37, Religion +20

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities fire, hellfire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic sources

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 29

Languages Celestial, Common, Dark Speech, Infernal

Challenge Mythic 10

TRAITS

Aura of Subjugation. Asmodeus exudes an overpowering aura of authority in a 120-foot radius centered on him. At the start of each of his turns, Asmodeus can exert this influence over any number of creatures of his choice in the affected area, causing them to become charmed for as long as they are on the same plane of existence as Asmodeus.

An affected creature can prevent being charmed in this manner by defying Asmodeus's authority. A creature that does so does not become charmed but takes 55 (10d10) psychic damage as it suffers retribution for its defiance.

Mythic Resistance. When Asmodeus fails a saving throw, he can expend one of his unexpended legendary actions to succeed instead.

Ruby Rod of Asmodeus. Asmodeus is never without his powerful relic, the *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus*. While Asmodeus holds the rod, if he attempts to charm a creature within 120 feet of him that is immune to the charmed condition, it is instead not immune.

Additionally, Asmodeus cannot be disarmed of the *Ruby Rod* unless he allows it, and any who attempt to disarm him of the rod must succeed on a DC 33 Constitution saving throw or take 110 (20d10) necrotic damage and be thrown 60 feet away from him in a straight line, landing prone.

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Asmodeus takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. Asmodeus can't use the same effect twice in a row.

Fiendish Insight. Asmodeus attempts to intuit the deepest, darkest secrets and weaknesses of a creature he can see. Asmodeus makes a Wisdom (Insight) check contested by the target's Charisma (Deception). On a success, Asmodeus gains supernatural insight against the target, granting him the following benefits for 1 hour.

- If the target would be immune to any damage dealt by Asmodeus, it instead has resistance to that damage.
- The target cannot have advantage or Epic advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks against Asmodeus.
- Asmodeus learns the target's greatest desire, granting him Epic advantage on Charisma ability checks against the target when leveraging this knowledge.

Price of Defiance. The psychic damage dealt to a creature that defies Asmodeus via his Aura of Subjugation feature increases by 22 (4d10) psychic damage. This effect is cumulative, to a maximum of 220 (40d10) additional damage.

ACTIONS

Ruby Rod. *Melee Spell Attack:* +25 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target.

Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) bludgeoning damage plus 60 (11d10) necrotic damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 33 Strength saving throw or be thrown 60 feet away from Asmodeus in a straight line, landing prone.

Archdevil's Might. Asmodeus unleashes the true power of an archdevil, causing one of the following effects.

- Asmodeus casts a warlock spell of 9th level or lower, or an overlord Epic spell of tier 1 or lower (spell save DC 33, +25 to hit with spell attacks) with a casting time of an action or bonus action, without the need for any components.
- Asmodeus summons a devil of CR 30 or lower in an unoccupied space he can see within 300 feet of him, which acts on the initiative count immediately after Asmodeus's.
- Asmodeus makes three Hellfire Blast attacks.

Hellfire Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +25 to hit, reach 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 53 (6d12 + 14) hellfire damage.

Hellfire Crown (Recharge 5–6). Asmodeus becomes crowned with hellfire until the end of his next turn, signifying his supremacy as lord of the hells. While so crowned, when Asmodeus would deal damage other than hellfire damage, he can choose to instead deal fire damage. Additionally, when a creature deals damage to Asmodeus, it takes hellfire damage equal the damage dealt to Asmodeus.

Infernal Decree. Asmodeus issues an infernal decree using Dark Speech, the primal language of evil, to up to three creatures of his choice within 300 feet of him. Asmodeus chooses which decree he utters from the following options.

- **Decree of Dark Fates.** Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 33 Charisma saving throw or become permanently afflicted with an Epic curse. When a creature so cursed is reduced to 0 hit points, it is instead reduced to 1 hit point, has its alignment changed to lawful evil, and becomes unable to harm or act against Asmodeus for as long as it remains cursed.
- **Decree of Fealty.** Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 33 Wisdom saving throw or fall prone and prostrate themselves before Asmodeus. A creature knocked prone in this manner cannot spend movement until the start of Asmodeus's next turn.
- **Decree of Privilege.** Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 33 Charisma saving throw or have Asmodeus end a single spell or magical effect currently affecting it, including Epic spells and Epic magical effects.
- **Decree of Suffering.** Each affected creature must succeed on a DC 33 Constitution saving throw or take fire damage equal to its missing hit points, or half as much on a success.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Asmodeus can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Asmodeus regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

Infernal Decree. Asmodeus uses his Infernal Decree action but can target only a single creature.

Strike. Asmodeus makes a Ruby Rod or Hellfire Blast attack.

Archdevil's Might (Costs 2 Actions). Asmodeus uses his Archdevil's Might action.

Gather Hellfire (Costs 3 Actions). Asmodeus recharges his Hellfire Crown action.

ALLIES

While it's rare an ally serves Asmodeus for any reason other than a contractual obligation, their loyalty is often assured thanks to foolproof legal language and a healthy dose of fear. Most beings with which Asmodeus associates cannot truly be counted as allies; they are merely convenient pawns with no value other than their function in the archdevil's schemes. Those rare few who rise above this role are formidable beings to be feared and respected as though Asmodeus were always by their side. Examples of these allies and their relationships to Asmodeus are detailed here.

Lilitha, Daughter of Asmodeus. The sinister progeny of Asmodeus goes by many names, but her closely-guarded birth name is Lilitha. This subterfuge is a necessary precaution against those who would attempt to summon her and gain leverage against her father. Lilitha is an archdevil in her own right, holding dominion over the sixth layer of hell, ruling with a capricious greed for power and wealth unrivaled among her peers. While Asmodeus is an antagonistic father figure, Lilitha maintains a far greater degree of loyalty than the other archdevils and can be counted upon to always account for her father's interests—second to her own, of course.

Abaddon, Hell's High Court¹. There exists only one creature with an understanding of law greater than Asmodeus's, and that is the mighty devil Abaddon. This corpulent fiend spends his days overseeing all manner of legal disputes, with an authority that supplants even the Lord of the Nine when it comes to matters of jurisprudence and justice. With indisputable logic and an icy demeanor, Abaddon often works closely with Asmodeus to examine high-stakes contracts, ensuring the legality of the archdevil's schemes among the cosmic order of the universe. Without the High Court's aid, many of Asmodeus's plans would never get off the ground or would run into terrific legal challenges from godlike entities.

Overlord Wexlan (Tiefling Warlock 20/Overlord 6). One of Asmodeus's greatest mortal servants to which he grants patronage, Overlord Wexlan and his silver tongue has condemned more mortal souls to hell in this lifetime than most devils could in a thousand years. Regal in his demeanor and dressed for success, Wexlan operates openly, sharing in his patron's seeming benevolence at the negotiating table while advancing Asmodeus's

¹ The details of Abaddon and his associate Astaroth can be found in 2CGaming's supplement *Epic Legacy Hero's Handbook*.

Infernal Contract

Wondrous item, very rare

This scroll is a fiendish contract inscribed in blood on vellum of mysterious origin. Each scroll comes with a corresponding pen and scroll case, emblazoned with Infernal script that notes its significance as a binding legal document produced by Asmodeus himself. As an action, you can present the scroll to another creature you can see within 5 feet of you, causing the magic of the scroll to form a binding magical contract between the wielder and the target. For the next 24 hours, both you and the creature can negotiate on the terms of the contract, causing the language to magically change to adapt to what is agreed upon by both parties. While negotiating the contract you can attempt a Charisma (Deception) check contested by the target's Wisdom (Insight), allowing you to conceal certain stipulations and conditions within the contract in the form of fine, printed text. These conditions cannot interfere or negate the general parameters of the contract.

If at any point during the negotiation the target chooses to willingly sign the contract while free from magical influence, the scroll's magic becomes expended and the *infernal contract* simply becomes a written record of the transaction. If the target does not sign the contract at the end of the negotiation, the scroll returns to its original state, and any *infernal contract* cannot be used against that creature for a period of 1 year.

If a target violates the terms of an *infernal contract*, they become permanently cursed. Any non-Epic effect that would remove this curse instead suppresses its effects for 1 hour. While cursed in this manner, whenever a creature would roll an 11 or higher on a d20 roll, it instead rolls a 10. Additionally, when a creature cursed in this manner is slain, its soul is sent to the hells, where Asmodeus takes

possession of it and transforms it into a devil. This curse can only be removed by a willing archdevil within reach using an action to dismiss the effect.



agenda at every turn. In return for his excellent service, Asmodeus has developed a formidable eldritch invocation, available only to warlocks who serve him.

**NEW ELDRITCH INVOCATION:
BLESSING OF HELLFIRE**

Prerequisite: 15th level, fiend otherworldly patron

When you deal fire, necrotic, or vile damage, you may instead deal hellfire damage.

REWARDS

While the coffers of the lord of the hells are vast indeed, no single treasure is greater than the infamous *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus*. While no hand other than the lord of the hells has ever held the infernal weapon, any with the strength to defeat Asmodeus may find themselves with the unique opportunity. The rod is a relic with the following properties.

LILITHA

Medium fiend (devil), lawful evil

Armor Class 18

Hit Points 493 (47d8 + 282)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	27 (+8)	23 (+6)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)	28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +13, Dex +16, Int +13, Wis +14

Skills Deception +25, Insight +14, Perception +14, Performance +17

Damage Resistances cold

Damage Immunities fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, poisoned

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 24

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Infernal

Challenge 26 (90,000)

TRAITS

Aura of Avarice. Creatures within 300 feet of Lilitha cannot gain advantage on attack rolls, saving throws, or ability checks unless they pay a toll. Each time an affected creature would roll in this manner with advantage, it instead rolls with disadvantage unless it chooses one of the following options as a toll.

- The creature loses 100 gp, which vanishes from its possession and appears in Lilitha’s coffers in the sixth layer of the hells.
- The creature takes 22 (4d10) fire damage.
- The creature expends a spell slot of 5th level or higher.

Exploitation (1/Turn). For each allied fiend she is aware of within 120 feet of her, Lilitha gains a special d20 known as an “exploitation die” as she siphons some of that fiend’s power for herself. When Lilitha makes an attack roll, saving throw, or ability check, she can choose to roll all her exploitation dice, choosing any die from the result to be the result of her roll.

Infernal Royalty. Lilitha is endowed with hellish privilege that protects her from harmful effects. When Lilitha is targeted by a spell or magical effect with a duration greater than instantaneous, she can choose to reduce the duration of that effect to 1 round.

Legendary Resistance (3/Day). When Lilitha fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lilitha makes three attacks, only one of which can be her Tail attack.

Green-Steel Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (1d12 + 8) piercing damage plus 35 (10d6) necrotic damage.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +16 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 63 (10d10 + 8) poison damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or be permanently poisoned. While poisoned in this manner, a creature cannot willingly relinquish any of its possessions or drop what it is holding.

Archdevil’s Might. Lilitha unleashes the true power of an archdevil, causing one of the following effects.

- Lilitha casts a spell of 6th level or lower (spell save DC 25, +17 to hit with spell attacks) with a casting time of an action or bonus action, without the need for any components.
- Lilitha summons a devil of CR 16 or lower in an unoccupied space she can see within 300 feet of her, which acts on the initiative count immediately after hers.
- Lilitha makes two Hellfire Blast attacks.
Hellfire Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 300 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (3d12 + 9) hellfire damage.

Touch of Greed (Recharge 5–6). *Melee Spell Attack:* +17 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* The target must succeed on a DC 25 Constitution saving throw or be petrified as it is turned to gold.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Lilitha can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature’s turn. Lilitha regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

Spear. Lilitha makes a Green-Steel Spear attack.

Archdevil’s Might (Costs 2 Actions). Lilitha uses her Archdevil’s Might action.

Touch of Greed (Costs 3 Actions). Lilitha uses or recharges her Touch of Greed action.

Ruby Rod of Asmodeus

Wondrous item, relic

This spiked, golden rod is capped with a massive ruby cut with 666 facets, so as to appear as nearly spherical. The gem glows with a sinister light that flickers as if sourced from a simmering fire. It is whispered in secret that the rod is the last vestige of Asmodeus's existence before his fall, a celestial weapon transformed into an instrument of malevolence and evil. Others believe the rod to have been claimed from the original fiends that once inhabited of the hells. Whatever the rod's origin, the relic is both a symbol of Asmodeus's unquestionable authority over the hells and a terrific weapon in its own right. Its magic has twisted the souls of virtuous angels, shattered nefarious rebellions, and led uncountable mortal souls to ruin.

Properties

While unattuned, the *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus* has the following properties.

Evil Within. While you hold the rod, your creature type changes to fiend, and you gain the following:

- Resistance to cold damage as well as bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage from nonmagical attacks that aren't silvered
- Immunity to fire damage, poison damage, and the poisoned condition
- Darkvision out to a range of 120 feet, and magical darkness does not impede your vision
- Advantage on saving throws against non-Epic spells and magical effects

Fiendish Influence. While you hold the rod, if you attempt to charm a creature within 120 feet of you that is immune to the charmed condition, it is instead not immune but has advantage on saving throws against being charmed by you.

Hellish Supremacy. You take half damage from devils.

Attunement

To become attuned to the *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus*, you must gain the political position as an archduke of hell. Doing so requires the willing endorsement of at least one other archduke, an oath of fealty from 100,000 devils (which must include at least nineteen pit fiends), and military dominance of one of the nine layers of hell.

While attuned, the *Ruby Rod of Asmodeus* has the following properties, in addition to its unattuned properties.

Aura of Subjugation. While the rod is on your person, you exude an overpowering aura of authority in a 120-foot radius centered on you. At the start of each of your turns, you can exert this influence over any number of creatures of your choice in the affected area, causing them to become charmed for as long as they are on the same plane of existence as you.

An affected creature can prevent being charmed in this manner by defying your authority. A creature that does



so instead does not become charmed but takes 35 (10d6) psychic damage as it suffers retribution for its defiance.

Devil Summoning. As an action while you hold the rod, you can conjure a devil of CR 30 or lower in an unoccupied space you can see within 120 feet. The devil acts on an initiative count immediately after yours and remains until it is slain or until you use this feature again.

High-Stakes Negotiation. By spending 1 hour of strenuous activity while you hold the rod, you can establish telepathic communication with an entity of your choice (including deities) for up to 1 hour. For the duration of the communication, you have a +20 bonus to Charisma ability checks to interact with the entity when working to negotiate a contract or agreement. Once you have contacted an entity in this manner, you cannot contact that entity again with this feature until 10,000 years have passed.

Bane

The sinister power of the rod is overwhelming and threatens to overpower all but the mightiest creatures. If you touch the rod and are not 20th level or higher, your alignment permanently changes to lawful evil and you become irrefutably convinced you are the rightful ruler of the Nine Hells. While you are convicted in this manner, your only desire is to take your place as hell's leader at any cost. If you are 20th level or higher, you must succeed on a DC 33 Charisma saving throw or suffer these effects. However, when you commit an act of evil while holding the rod, you must repeat the saving throw; on a success, you become immune to this effect for 1 week.



DEMOGORGON

Demon Prince of the Arcane

*“First, we shall break you, then your world, then any who dare remain standing.
On this, we are in agreement.”*

DESCRIPTION

Deep within the foul layers of the abyssal planes swims the fiendish being known as the Demon Prince of the Arcane. Awash in oppressive darkness and corrupted magic, Demogorgon is the mightiest known demon in all of creation. From the spiraling towers of his oceanic home, Demogorgon unleashes arcane might that befouls the multiverse. His body is saurian, scaled in putrid green and blue. His feet are clawed and webbed like some grotesque amphibian, and his arms are each a pair of sinewy tentacles that twist and writhe with incomprehensible intent. Atop his great form rest his two heads, each a fearsome visage of a

demonic beast saturated with magical energy, and possessing a unique, malevolent will. Both heads hate each other nearly as much as they hate everything else, with their constant bickering accompanying Demogorgon's every thought and action.

DEMOGORGON IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The Demon Prince of the Arcane is not a minor character. If you wish to feature Demogorgon in your game's story, you

PROFILE

Personality: Dual (Spiteful and Devious)

Ideals: With two demonic minds constantly jostling for supremacy over the prince's goals and ambitions, it is impossible to know exactly what Demogorgon aspires to achieve at any given time. One century may be taken up by the demon prince enacting a plan of strategic brilliance over his archdevil rivals, only to be suddenly abandoned in favor of unearthing new arcane lore for a millennium in solitude. No matter the course, the actions of Demogorgon always result in misery, death, and destruction. If such horrors are visited on the demon prince's enemies, so much the better, but no being is beneath the spiteful cruelty of Demogorgon's attention.

Bonds: Demogorgon is the purest expression of the abyssal plane's chaos and evil, representing its will made manifest. The proliferation of its existence is the only cause to which Demogorgon swears allegiance. The Demon Prince of the Arcane drops everything to slaughter those who would dare pose a serious threat to the abyssal realms, be they outsider or fellow demon. It is said that this loyalty is born of an ancient will from a primordial era when the planes were in their infancy, giving Demogorgon an obscure sense of purpose only he truly understands.

Flaws: As a being of pure vice and depravity, Demogorgon's character flaws are many. There is no evil the demon prince does not indulge, no vice in which he does not revel in excess. However, to call these indulgences “flaws” would be a mistake, for it is from these sinister acts that Demogorgon wrought his power. His only true weakness is the perpetual conflict

between his competing personalities. If not for their conflicting interest and constant bickering, Demogorgon would have obliterated the cosmos long ago.

Legend: The 88th layer of the abyssal planes, known as the Gaping Maw, has been home to this mighty demon since before the first elf put pen to paper. Said to be spawned by the union of the greatest evils that once ruled those chaotic realms, Demogorgon is a vile being of evil magic and raw savage power. With an affinity for the dark and vile depths of oceans, Demogorgon's malevolent might is worshiped by all manner of evil aquatic beings across the planes. While completely incomprehensible by mortal standards, Demogorgon's dual nature allows him to access powerful magic the likes of which the world has never seen. The Demon Prince of the Arcane has countless goals, some of which are millennia in the making and all of which are dedicated toward the annihilation of the universal order. In the writhing darkness, Demogorgon consults with the entity known as Dagon, a fell Great Old One who has dwelled deep beneath the waves since time immemorial. What secrets Dagon has imparted to Demogorgon remain a mystery, but it is often said that between the two beings, one can answer any question about the multiverse. Demogorgon is universally opposed by the forces of good, and any appearance he makes outside his home is well observed for any active threat he may present. Cooperation between celestials and devils is not unheard of when faced with the unrelenting might of the demon prince. What Demogorgon's next move is none can say, but many of the universe's greatest protectors dread his next horrific act.

are introducing one of the most powerful creatures you could possibly allow your characters to fight. Do not take this premise lightly. While Demogorgon serves as a great backdrop to a world's setting, as a major character he is an ultimate antagonist. There cannot be an outcome in a conflict with Demogorgon that doesn't result in apocalyptic destruction. The demon prince's nature cannot be denied, twisted, or coerced. Even if your characters are dastardly villains, it is highly unlikely they appreciate the vision Demogorgon holds for all of existence. He is an antagonist all find cause to oppose. The party must forge unlikely alliances and accomplish truly epic deeds to even have a chance against such an implacable foe.

INTRODUCTION

The name Demogorgon is no secret, but one whispered in fear. Wherever demons tread, the possibility of his influence is felt. When the characters encounter demons for the first time, it should be in a manner that sparks curiosity. Perhaps cults summon a demon well beyond what they could control, or a hidden enclave of fiends were lairing on the material plane. In answer to the characters' questions, there should be signs that Demogorgon is involved. Strange iconography and symbols, an obsessive association with magic, and watery corruption are all solid omens that the demon's evil gaze is turned toward the mortal realms. Even if the party gets ahead of themselves and forecasts Demogorgon's direct involvement, there are still many unknowns to discover about the demon's schemes.

CONFLICT

In a disturbing development, Demogorgon has unearthed some arcane secret that dramatically advances his agenda. What this secret is should be deeply tied to how magic works in your setting. Perhaps he has unlocked the true name of the material plane, pulled out key threads in the tapestry of magic, or broken down the barriers between the planes. Whatever the result, it must be based in a deep understanding and perversion of magic. Demogorgon is capable of achieving things that are beyond even the gods, and the primary source of the conflict should echo this reality. The consequences for the universe are understandably catastrophic. It should be immediately clear that Demogorgon is responsible and that if he is not soon stopped, entire worlds will be lost. This arcane apocalypse unites heroes and villains, and the characters should feel all other concerns are secondary to this imminent threat.

CONCLUSION

Defeating Demogorgon involves either unraveling his magic or slaying him directly. Both acts are herculean feats of strength, cunning, and brilliance. To foil the arcane apocalypse Demogorgon has invoked, the characters must in turn become students of magic. A terrific combination of magic, knowledge, and likely several powerful artifacts would be required to turn the tide, each of which requires heroic adventures to acquire.

Should the characters prefer the more straightforward task of destroying Demogorgon, they have their work cut out for them. As a demon prince, it is not enough to simply reduce him to 0 hit points. Unless defeated upon his own abyssal layer, the Demon Prince of the Arcane will invariably return with a more refined and effective strategy. In the span of mortal lifetimes this can take generations, but if one has the power to take Demogorgon down, the potential exists to defeat him once and for all. Should the characters manage to confront the demon on his home turf, they are in for the fight of their lives. Here Demogorgon is at the zenith of his power, with an armada of demons at his beck and call. Players who triumph in such a scenario deserve any reward they desire, along with a hearty round of high fives at the game table.





CHALLENGES

Demogorgon can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who encounter him.

EXPLORATION

As the mightiest demon prince in the known realms, Demogorgon doesn't get out much. Not that he would want to. He is perfectly content to spend centuries in consultation with Dagon and experimenting with magic, unearthing alien truths best left undiscovered. However, the abyssal planes are far from inaccessible. On the 88th layer, where Demogorgon makes his home, great, briny oceans drown the landscape. From within their murky depths countless vile horrors spew forth, twisted and warped far beyond what is normal, even for demons. This alone would make this layer one of the most dangerous of the abyssal planes, but it gets worse. Demogorgon's corruptive magic suffuses the land. This effect is supremely disturbing, obliterating what little consistency and order remained in these realms. It is a place of cosmic horror, roiling chaos, and watery death, feared by all but the most fanatical demons loyal to Demogorgon's cause.

Regional Effects

The region within the Gaping Maw, the 88th layer of the abyssal planes, is warped by Demogorgon's magic, which has created the following effects within the area:

- The surface of the plane's ocean is wracked by an ever-churning abyssal storm. While not below the surface of the water or in an area with total cover from the elements, creatures, objects, and structures in the affected area take 1d4 bludgeoning, 1d4 lightning, and 1d4 thunder damage per minute.
- When a creature casts a spell in the affected area, it must succeed on a DC 15 ability check using its spellcasting ability, or the spell fails.
- The area is highly suffused with crushing darkness, forming a strange effect known as an abyssal domain.

If Demogorgon is permanently slain, these effects fade over the course of 1,000 years.

ABYSSAL DOMAIN

The crushing, black oblivion of the deep is a realm few dare tread. Those daring souls who venture into the darkest depths of a world may encounter deadly abyssal domains. These realms are inhospitable to all surface life and even present a survival challenge to those who would ordinarily consider themselves subterranean. An abyssal domain may be the deepest part of an ocean, a plane that has never been exposed to daylight, or a cave of near-immeasurable depth. To survive in such a place, one must be well suited to life without the warming glow of a sun. Sight is meaningless in the all-encompassing black of the abyss. Natives are blind horrors that have honed their other senses to perfection, ready to pounce upon fools stumbling around in the dark. Abyssal domains are safe from the many wonders of the surface world. Ancient species and forgotten cultures may lurk within such realms, waiting for the right time to rejoin those who live in the light. An abyssal domain has the following traits.

Creatures. Aberrations, dragons, and monstrosities are the most common types of creatures found in an abyssal domain. It takes something brutally powerful or perfectly adapted to thrive in an abyss, resulting in blind creatures with sharp alternative senses.

Detection. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check is required to determine an abyssal domain's true nature.

Properties. An abyssal domain causes the following effects within its area.

- **All-Consuming Dark.** Light cannot be shed within an abyssal domain. Sources of light are visible but provide no illumination beyond their space.
- **Dwellers in the Deep.** Creatures native to the domain have blindsight out to a range of 60 feet and have advantage on Perception checks to locate creatures by scent or sound. If an affected creature already has blindsight, the range of its blindsight is increased by 60 feet.
- **No Way Out.** Creatures that have been within the domain's area for 24 consecutive hours lose all sense of direction and become unable to determine a route or direction out of the domain by nonmagical means.
- **Shadow Blight.** Creatures within the area are perpetually afflicted by a strange disease known as shadow blight for as long as they remain within the area. When a creature so afflicted would regain hit points, it instead regains half as many hit points. Additionally, an affected creature's dreams are always auditory, olfactory, and tactile, but never visual.

Demogorgon's Lair

Towering above the roiling sea of the 88th abyssal layer is the home of Demogorgon. These twin towers weave together in a helix, ascending into the clouds and descending deep beneath the ocean's waves. The structure is continually wracked by arcane lightning as the Demon Prince of the Arcane pushes the boundaries of magic, and the entire area feels unstable, as if reality itself were threatening to collapse at any moment. Within the tower are countless floors full of repositories of primordial lore, magical devices, and fiendish agents. Each is dedicated to a specific, apocalyptic scheme Demogorgon plans to enact. Some rooms are frequented daily by the demon prince, while others have not been touched in ten thousand years, but all serve a grand design known only to Demogorgon.

Lair Actions

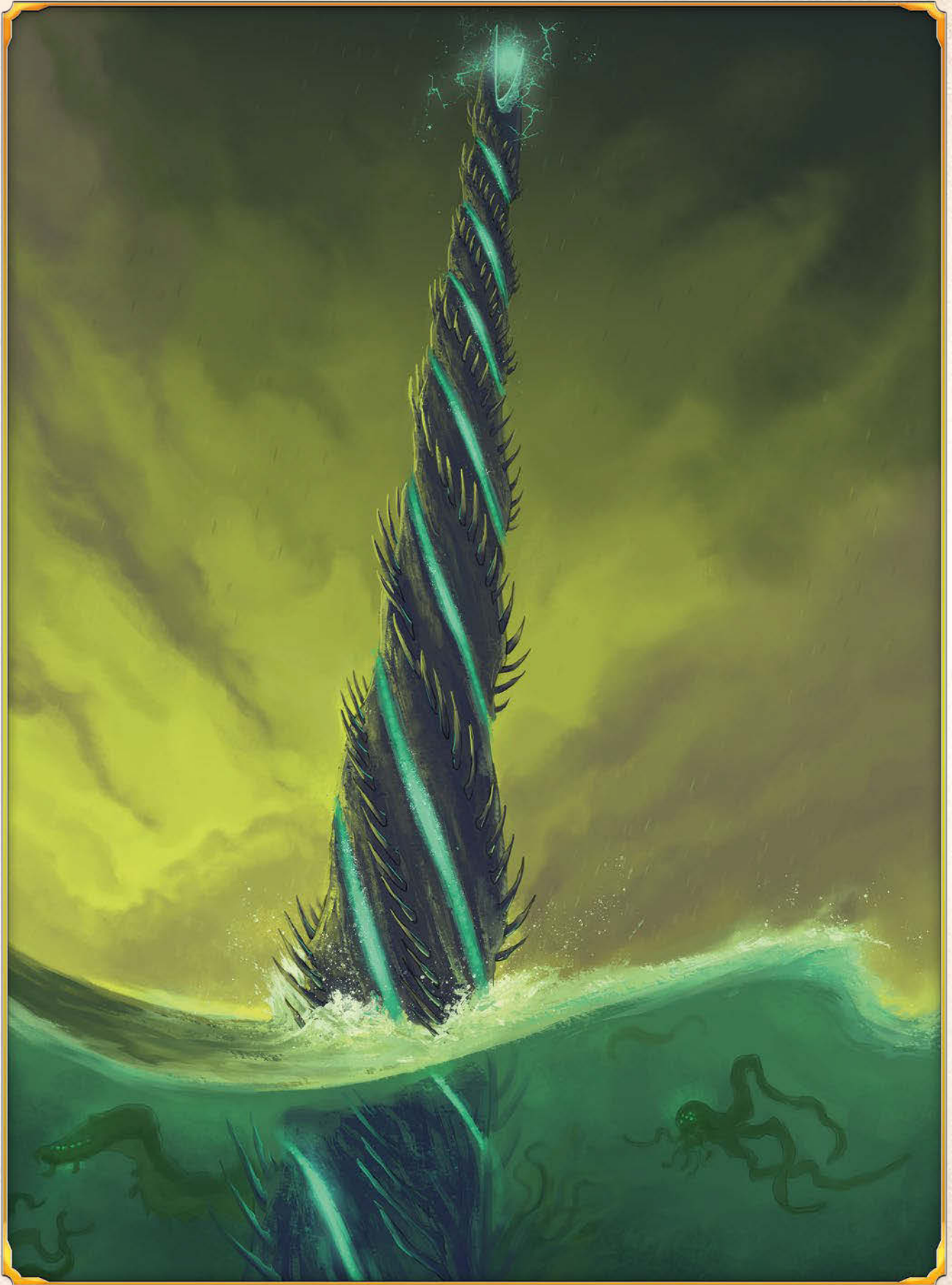
On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Demogorgon can take a lair action to cause one of the following effects. If Demogorgon is using his mythic statistics, he can instead choose to take a mythic action or lair action, but not both. Demogorgon can't use the same effect twice in a row.

- A room of Demogorgon's choice within the lair becomes filled with briny water, which is heavily obscured for creatures without a swimming speed. This effect lasts until Demogorgon is slain or until he uses this option again.
- Demogorgon identifies each spell and magical effect he can see, learning its exact properties and effects.
- A room of Demogorgon's choice within the lair becomes dimensionally locked. Creatures cannot magically teleport into or out of the room, nor can magical portals open within the room. This effect lasts until Demogorgon is slain or he uses this option again.

Exploration Encounters

Traversing the abyssal planes is perilous, and the Gaping Maw even more so. Its oceans are rife with strange sea life, mysterious islands lost to time, and other horrors eager to encounter wayward heroes. Sailing these seas requires the naval skills of the multiverse's most experienced crews, while swimming its waters takes legendary daring. However, outside of this dread realm, Demogorgon sends his agents far and wide in search of magical secrets. Those wishing to contest Demogorgon's schemes would do well to head off these goons and preempt the demon prince's goals. Such expeditions span the multiverse, visiting locations of great magical significance and formidable power. The following exploration encounters can serve as examples for what may happen over the course of a campaign featuring Demogorgon.

Lost and Found. In a fit of rage, Demogorgon hurled a tome of ancient spells into the abyssal sea. The object promptly sunk to the bottom and was forgotten by the incensed demon prince, at least for now. The enemies of Demogorgon are eager to take advantage of the situation and recover the book, though doing so involves exploring the depths of one of the most dangerous locations in the multiverse. If the characters have any interest in opposing Demogorgon, this is an opportunity they cannot afford to pass up.



The Lost Library of Larai. Abandoned on a desolate plane by a highly magical race known as the spellweavers, an ancient magical library has been discovered and its location made known to the interplanar community. While most interested groups are eager to preserve the site and its knowledge for general use, the malevolent minds of Demogorgon have other plans. The demon prince dispatches his agents to seize control of the library and transport its knowledge back to the abyssal planes. While the agents are successful in claiming the library, the process of transporting the books off world is ripe for piracy and theft.

Blood Feud. A demon prince with a longstanding rivalry against Demogorgon is building a series of magical wards that will trap the Demon Prince of the Arcane within his realm forever. However, to do so the fiend must construct a massive obsidian pylon upon two dozen worlds, most of which are uncomfortable with a demonic construction crew openly operating for months. Those amicable to the project must clear and prepare the land for usage, collaborating with demons to find a suitable site and begin operations, all while tangling with the interfering forces of Demogorgon.

SOCIAL

Demogorgon is a socially complex creature. On one hand, he has two heads, each with a mind of its own and lots of opinions to share. On the other hand, he is the most powerful demon in existence and has little reason to speak to anyone beyond whatever immediate pleasure such an experience provides. Any creature lucky (or unlucky) enough to hold conversation with Demogorgon should consider themselves blessed for every moment the demon prince allows them to draw breath. If there is one thing his heads can both agree on, it's that the minds of other beings pale in comparison to his own and are rarely worth indulging. However, those who come to Demogorgon with humility and subservience may find favor with the demon prince. It is rare that Demogorgon cannot find use for an unwitting pawn in his grand schemes, even a treacherous or uncooperative one. Such creatures would do well to be wary even when the Demon Prince of the Arcane looks on them with favor. The fickle temperament of Demogorgon is impossible to predict, gleefully betraying minions for any number of incomprehensible reasons beyond the understanding of mortals.

Social Encounters

When Demogorgon speaks, the universe listens in fear. Between his two heads there are enough plots and schemes to last ten thousand lifetimes, and not nearly enough time to get them all done himself. While his contempt for others is legendary, Demogorgon nonetheless applies social graces with alarming frequency. Those who call upon the demon prince with spells and magic find him shockingly responsive, eager to explore the possibilities presented by a fresh, pliable mind. Even when traveling to his abyssal plane, provided one can survive the journey, one finds Demogorgon surprisingly receptive to guests. While one head is in control of the demon prince's body and hard at work, the other is free to converse and scheme with minions. While this openness is unusual for a demon, Demogorgon is no fool. He has existed since before time was recorded and is fully aware of when and how any creature could pose a threat

to him or his plans. Those meeting with Demogorgon in bad faith would do well to remember this fact. Social encounters with Demogorgon must balance upon the head of a pin. At any moment, the demon prince is poised to turn into the worst enemy the characters have ever encountered, so they best watch their step.

The Primus of Evil. Always the collector of ancient and evil lore, Demogorgon is once again on the hunt for an unusual and mighty object: *The Primus of Evil*. This ancient tome was penned by a race of fiends native to the abyssal planes that are now long extinct, said to be the progenitors of modern-day demons and believed to have had a direct hand in the creation of the Demon Prince of the Arcane. Curiously, it appears no demon can read from, let alone acquire, this nefarious grimoire without suffering catastrophic agony, forcing Demogorgon to lean on his least favorite category of mortals: heroes. If aspiring adventurers manage to acquire this object for Demogorgon, as well as read it to him, the demon prince would be uncharacteristically grateful.

Primus of Evil

Wondrous item, legendary

This ancient book is bound with the sewn-together hides of various demons and sized for a Large creature. When not being held, it floats ominously in the air, suspended in a nimbus of noxious blue light. The book is penned in a strange language none can name, but for some reason any non-demon can read it as if they were proficient in it. The book tells of the storied history of a race of fiends that predated demons and ruled over the infinite abyssal planes. When you hold this book, demons cannot be immune to the frightened condition against you, and any demon within 60 feet of you that can see you is frightened of you.

As an action, you can read a passage from the book in the language of ancient fiends that can be heard by demons within 120 feet of you. When a demon hears this reading, if it has 100 hit points or fewer, it is utterly obliterated and can never return to life. Once you use this feature, you gain five levels of exhaustion.

Anonymous Buyers. Beings of great power always attract the devotion of mortal beings, and Demogorgon is no exception. As an avatar of chaos and magic, Demogorgon is an admirable being to those who prize personal power above all other considerations. Rarely does this affection extend beyond personal taste, but in one rare instance the mortal followers are organized into a secretive cult known as the Students of Chaos. These deluded fools believe that Demogorgon is the purest expression of magic, chaotic, untamed, and destructive. They scour the realms in search of lore and power, sending their gifts to their master in bloody rituals that turn the stomach. When the characters come into possession of a powerful piece of arcane lore, they invariably attract the attention of this profane organization. Wishing to keep their intentions hidden, the Students of Chaos pose as scholars and researchers, attempting to purchase the objects in question through legitimate negotiation and mercantilism.

ORGANIZATION: STUDENTS OF CHAOS**Name:** Students of Chaos**Leadership:** Anarchic**Membership:** Gargantuan (4,000+ members):
humanoids; bards, warlocks, wizards**Alignment:** Chaotic evil**Motto:** *"Within every chaos, an order lies hidden."***Resources:** Demons, lore (arcana), magic**Creed:** Demons have always intrigued the curious and inspired the depraved. For when this attraction becomes an obsession, there are the Students of Chaos waiting to welcome their newest member with open arms. Operating in secret, these twisted spellcasters cloak their affinity for evil magics behind the veil of scholarly inquiry. Their every action is dedicated to destabilizing the fabric of magic and empowering creatures of chaos. Demons and other evil creatures that embody this concept are figures of reverence and worship to the Students of Chaos. Beings such as Demogorgon, Great Old Ones, and other malevolent creatures are frequently consorted with by the Students, who offers gifts of magic, equipment, and lore. There is no expectation of reward or recompense for such actions. The Students of Chaos believe themselves to have a superior understanding of the universe that transcends petty mortal concerns, serving higher powers not because it is advantageous but because it advances the natural progression of entropy.

Demon Telegram. When the characters next encounter a demon, instead of the traditional practice of violence, the demon asks to deliver a message. Speaking with surprising seriousness and etiquette, the demon informs the party that one in their number possesses a rare arcane catalyst within their blood, one that their master Demogorgon is eager to collect. Unfortunately, the catalyst is spoiled unless freshly drawn. To facilitate a mutually beneficial trade, Demogorgon has empowered his agent to offer one *wish* in return for a visit to his abyssal home, where the blood can be drawn and magically preserved. Trusting Demogorgon to wholly honor his word is foolish, but the characters are holding all the cards. Can they make a deal and escape with their lives?

COMBAT

Combat with Demogorgon is one-sided for any but the most powerful creatures. Once the Demon Prince of the Arcane has committed to violence, he brings to bear the full measure of his arcane might. Magic is the demon's preferred tool of destruction, with the concept of restraint being completely alien to Demogorgon. For most foes, it is enough for the demon prince to hurl a single spell in their direction and return to the task at hand. If the creature is lucky enough to survive, it will likely have learned better than to mess with such a powerful spellcaster. Unfortunately, this means any direct confrontation the characters have with Demogorgon will likely be their last unless they are truly prepared. This relegates the demon prince to a true "final boss" creature, fit only to be encountered at the climax of a campaign. It takes truly extraordinary circumstances for Demogorgon to practice any measure of mercy or forethought when violence provides an immediate and more satisfying solution.



Combat Encounter Example: Day of Chaos

A demonic invasion is upon the material plane, headed by none other than the Demon Prince of the Arcane. As he holds open a portal with his arcane might, Demogorgon's legions pour into the mortal realms in horrific numbers, slaughtering all in their path. One of the demon's heads is completely devoted to holding open the portal, taking no actions and forcing it to concentrate (as though concentrating on a spell) to allow his minions safe passage. The other head can act freely, slinging deadly spells at any creature foolish enough to come within range. The forces of good must rally and disrupt the demon prince's focus, as it is believed with the portal's closing the demons and their master will be pulled back into the abyssal realms from whence they came.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Artillery

Wherever Demogorgon deigns to do battle, he brings forth an apocalypse of arcane energies and fiendish power. With his every action the Demon Prince of the Arcane unleashes an onslaught of death and destruction. Nothing is safe from his wrath; buildings crumble, flesh is rent, and magic itself writhes in agony. Key to this strategy of wanton destruction is Demogorgon's most formidable feature: Dual Personalities. Thanks to his two heads, in lieu of legendary actions Demogorgon gets two turns on each round of combat. This trait synergizes tremendously with the demon prince's spellcasting feature, allowing him to cast upwards of six spells every round with his two actions, bonus actions, and reactions. Making effective use of all these actions is key to running Demogorgon well, so carefully examine all his spells and action options to optimize his action economy. What is more, thanks to his second turn Demogorgon can capitalize on good opportunities extremely quickly. A downed character is a prime target for *disintegrate*, while a wizard hidden safely behind a magical shield can have their spell dispelled on one turn and their body torn apart later that round.

The Demon Prince of the Arcane would not be complete without a formidable array of spells. Demogorgon is intentionally loaded with an array of extremely powerful spells and a tremendous capacity to cast them. His damaging options range from *disintegrate* and *finger of death* to more fearsome spells like *meteor swarm*. While these spells are impressive, don't neglect Demogorgon's other magics. Between *globe of invulnerability*, *dispel magic*, and *counterspell*, Demogorgon should be more than capable of handling any troublesome spellcasters. Chief among Demogorgon's greatest powers is his Mass Spell feature. This action is disgustingly powerful when used properly, allowing the demon prince to unleash a swath of destruction with a *mass disintegrate* or rend minds to ribbons with a *mass feeblemind*. You cannot afford to misuse this ability, so choose carefully. Accompanying this formidable array of spells are the twin Gaze abilities of Demogorgon which, in conjunction with his tentacle attacks, are solid choices in the rare instance the demon prince's magic proves ineffective. Keep Demogorgon at distance, using his increased spell range to mow down any who dare approach, and you will have run an encounter worthy of the greatest of demon princes.

Easier Tactics – Lean into Demogorgon's chaotic nature by having his spells choose their targets seemingly at random (though always on a character that has a decent chance of handling it well). As an artillery, Demogorgon benefits tremendously by being at range, so reduce the engagement distance to within 90 feet for a more intimate and less optimized battlefield. Only use Mass Spell once, and do not combine it with *feeblemind*, favoring *finger of death* or *dispel magic* instead.

Harder Tactics – You have an unrivaled arsenal of high-power spells that deal catastrophic damage, so use them. A lot. *Mass feeblemind* is one of the worst things Demogorgon can do to a party, short of a *mass power word kill* on a particularly damaged party, so do both. Open with *meteor swarm*, then follow up with Gaze to make a character vulnerable. Use subsequent turns to hammer through hit points and magical defenses that prove effective against the initial onslaught, and be sure to mix in a disrespectful Tentacle attack or two once it's clear victory is assured.

Mythic Demogorgon

Mythic Demogorgon is one of the most powerful creatures in existence, rivaling even some deities in sheer, unstoppable power. While his fundamentals remain the same, the strength of his Innate Spellcasting feature expands to include some of the most powerful spells ever penned in 5th Edition: Epic spells. These new magics are not only mighty, they synergize with Demogorgon's Mass Spell feature to devastating effect. Few beings can survive a bout with *mass implosion* or *mass catastrophe*. Accompanying this expansion in power are three new mythic actions that focus on manipulating the battlefield. Pillar of Hate and Pit of Dagon are both extremely powerful and serve to not only damage characters, but to make Demogorgon's spells more effective when chosen correctly. The true horror of these effects is revealed when Demogorgon unleashes his Abyssal Gate action. This portal floods the battlefield with demons eager to aid the demon prince and empowered by his presence. To say this is bad for the characters is the ultimate understatement. You are free to use any demons you wish in aiding the Demon Prince of the Arcane. Whether it's hordes of dretches or mighty balors empowered with Epic affixes, a veritable army stands ready to pummel Demogorgon's enemies into ruin the moment one of these gates is opened.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, Demogorgon causes the following effects:

Demon Prince. Demogorgon is a demon prince, granting him the following benefits.

- Demogorgon cannot be magically summoned or called from his home plane unless he allows it or unless the creatures responsible invoke Demogorgon's true name when doing so.
- Demogorgon can spend 1 hour of strenuous activity to cast any necromancy spell or Epic spell without the need for any material components. When Demogorgon casts a non-Epic spell that is not a cantrip in this manner, it is always cast as a 9th-level spell. When Demogorgon casts an Epic spell in this manner, it is always cast as a tier 3 Epic spell.



- Demons cannot willingly harm Demogorgon unless explicitly told to do so by another demon prince.

Arcana of the Drowning Deep. Demogorgon dredges forth foul arcana from the infinite depths of the abyssal planes. When Demogorgon finishes a long rest, he chooses a single spell he can cast with his Innate Spellcasting feature to be imbued with this vile magic. When Demogorgon casts the spell, it cannot be countered or dispelled, and the spell save DC for the spell is increased by 4 (when applicable). This benefit lasts until Demogorgon finishes a long rest.

RESOURCES

Demogorgon possesses the following resources to further its goals and schemes.

ALLIES

Relationships between demons are defined by violence and power. The more powerful the demon, the more influence it exerts over its fellows. Since Demogorgon is objectively the most powerful known demon in existence, he can command all but his fellow demon princes and their most loyal servants through sheer terror. The legions of monsters at Demogorgon's command are vast. Most are nothing more than terrified demons desperate to avoid obliteration, but a crazed few are loyal to their master. This devotion is rarely rewarded, but the sheer strength of Demogorgon ensures a steady supply of deluded nihilists willing to risk standing beside him.

The only being Demogorgon truly respects is the local Great Old One, Dagon of the Drowning Deep. At the bottom of Demogorgon's twisting tower this ancient entity slumbers, possessing dark secrets the demon prince longs to possess. The

DEMOGORGON

Huge fiend (demon prince), chaotic evil

Armor Class 23 (natural armor)

Hit Points 986 (68d12 + 544)

Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
29 (+9)	14 (+2)	26 (+8)	30 (+10)	17 (+3)	25 (+7)

Saving Throws Str +18, Con +17, Wis +12, Cha +16

Skills Arcana +28, Insight +20, Perception +20, Religion +28

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 29

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge 30 (155,000 XP)

TRAITS

Dual Personalities. Demogorgon has two heads, each with a different personality. Demogorgon takes two turns on each round of combat: the first on his normal initiative and his second turn at his initiative count minus 10.

Additionally, Demogorgon can concentrate (as if concentrating on a spell) on up to two spells or effects simultaneously and has Epic advantage on saving throws against being blinded, deafened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Innate Spellcasting. Demogorgon's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 27, +19 to hit with spell attacks). Demogorgon can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components. Spells Demogorgon casts with a range greater than self instead have a range of 600 feet.

At will (as a 6th-level spell): *counterspell*, *disintegrate*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *finger of death*, *fly*, *hellish rebuke*

5/day: *gate*, *globe of invulnerability* (8th level), *meteor swarm*, *power word kill*

3/day: *dominate monster*, *feeblemind*, *mind blank*

Fell Resistance. When Demogorgon fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead. When he does so, he loses 30 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Demogorgon makes two Tentacle attacks.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +18 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (2d12 + 9) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, until the end of its next turn it has disadvantage on its next saving throw against Demogorgon.

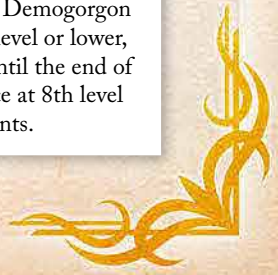
Gaze. Demogorgon turns his magical gaze toward one creature that he can see within 120 feet of him. That target must attempt a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw. Unless the target is incapacitated, it may use its reaction to shield its eyes, giving it advantage on the saving throw. If the target fails the save, it suffers one of the following effects of Demogorgon's choice:

- **Beguiling Gaze.** The target is charmed and stunned until the end of Demogorgon's next turn. While charmed in this manner, the creature cannot willingly move away from Demogorgon.
- **Mindbreaker Gaze.** Until the end of Demogorgon's next turn, whenever the creature takes an action, it takes 35 (10d6) psychic damage.

Mass Spell (Recharge 5–6). Until the end of his next turn, when Demogorgon casts any spell that targets a creature other than himself, he may instead target each creature of his choice within range that would be an otherwise eligible target of the spell.

REACTIONS

Arcane Supremacy. As a reaction when a creature Demogorgon can see within 300 feet of him casts a spell of 8th level or lower, Demogorgon may learn from that spell's magic. Until the end of his next turn, Demogorgon may cast that spell once at 8th level without the need for somatic or material components.



MYTHIC DEMOGORGON

Huge mythic fiend (demon prince), chaotic evil

Armor Class 28 (natural armor)

Hit Points 3,955 (226d12 + 2,486)

Speed 40 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR 32 (+11) **DEX** 14 (+2) **CON** 32 (+11) **INT** 34 (+12) **WIS** 19 (+4) **CHA** 28 (+9)

Saving Throws Str +23, Dex +14, Con +23, Int +24, Wis +16, Cha +21

Skills Arcana +36, Insight +28, Perception +28, Religion +36

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning

Damage Immunities poison, psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic sources

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened

Senses truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 38

Languages all, telepathy 120 ft.

Challenge Mythic 10

TRAITS

Dual Personalities. Demogorgon has two heads, each with a different personality. Demogorgon takes two turns on each round of combat: the first on his normal initiative and his second turn at his initiative count minus 10.

Additionally, Demogorgon can concentrate (as if concentrating on a spell) on up to two spells or effects simultaneously and has Epic advantage on saving throws against being blinded, deafened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

Innate Spellcasting. Demogorgon's spellcasting ability is Intelligence (Spell Save DC 32, +24 to hit with spell attacks). Demogorgon can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components. Spells Demogorgon cast with a range greater than self instead have a range of 600 ft.

At will (as a 9th-level spell): *counterspell*, *disintegrate*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *finger of death*, *fly*, *hellish rebuke*

5/day: *antimagic ray* (as a tier 1 Epic spell), *gate*, *globe of invulnerability* (9th level), *hideous mandate* (as a tier 1 Epic spell), *meteor swarm*, *power word kill*, *reverse magic* (as a tier 1 Epic spell), *translocation* (as a tier 1 Epic spell), *wave of calamity* (as a tier 1 Epic spell)

4/day (as a tier 2 Epic spell): *crimson winds of havoc*, *implosion*, *kinetic control*

3/day: *catastrophe* (as a tier 3 Epic spell), *dominate monster*, *feeblemind*, *malevolent fists of spite* (as a tier 3 Epic spell), *mind blank*, *sphere of ultimate destruction* (as a tier 3 Epic spell)

Fell Resistance. When Demogorgon fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead. When he does so, he loses 90 hit points.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Demogorgon makes two Tentacle attacks.

Multispell. Demogorgon casts two non-Epic spells.

Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +23 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 63 (8d12 + 11) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, until the end of its next turn it has Epic disadvantage on its next saving throw against Demogorgon.

Gaze. Demogorgon turns his magical gaze toward one creature that he can see within 120 feet of him. That target must attempt a DC 32 Wisdom saving throw. Unless the target is incapacitated, it may use its reaction to shield its eyes, giving it Epic advantage on the saving throw. If the target fails the save, it suffers one of the following effects of Demogorgon's choice:

- **Beguiling Gaze.** The target is charmed and stunned until the end of Demogorgon's next turn. While charmed in this manner, the creature cannot willingly move away from Demogorgon.

- **Mindbreaker Gaze.** Until the end of Demogorgon's next turn, whenever the creature takes an action, it takes 55 (10d10) psychic damage.

Mass Spell (Recharge 5–6). Until the end of his next turn, when Demogorgon casts any spell that targets a creature other than himself, he may instead target each creature of his choice within range that would be an otherwise eligible target of the spell.

REACTIONS

Arcane Supremacy. As a reaction when a creature Demogorgon can see within 300 feet of him casts a tier 1 Epic spell or a spell of 9th level or lower, Demogorgon may learn from that spell's magic. Until the end of his next turn, Demogorgon may cast that spell once without the need for somatic or material components as either a tier 3 Epic spell or a 9th level spell (when applicable).

MYTHIC ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Demogorgon takes a mythic action to cause one of the following effects. Demogorgon can't use the same effect twice in a row. The effects produced by these actions last until Demogorgon finishes a short or long rest.

Pillar of Hate. Demogorgon summons a vicious portal to the abyssal realms in a 15-foot-radius, 1-mile-high cylinder of magical darkness, centered on a point he can see. The first time a creature enters this area or starts its turn there in a round, it must attempt a DC 32 Constitution saving throw, losing any resistance or immunity it may have to damage and taking 104 (16d12) vile damage on a failure, or taking half as much damage on a success.

Pit of Dagon. Demogorgon creates a vile pit of water to Dagon's realm in a 15-foot radius centered on the ground on a point he can see. When the Pit is created and at the end of each of Demogorgon's turns, creatures in the affected area must succeed on a DC 32 Strength saving throw or be drawn into the depths by Dagon himself. An affected creature takes 45 (10d8) acid damage and 45 (10d8) bludgeoning damage from Dagon's tentacles and is restrained (escape DC 32). A successful save halves the damage and prevents being restrained.

Open the Abyss. Demogorgon opens a portal to the abyss, allowing his armies to pour through. Demogorgon chooses a Pillar of Hate or Pit of Dagon he can see within 1 mile of him and magically transforms it into an Abyssal Gate. Countless demons pour forth from the gate and streak into the sky. Creatures within the Pillar of Hate or within 15 feet of it when it is transformed must succeed on a DC 32 Dexterity saving throw or take 175 (50d6) fire damage. A successful save halves the damage, and creatures within the affected area who succeed on the save are moved to the nearest available space outside the effect's area. An affected Pillar of Hate or Pit of Dagon loses any properties it had and instead gains the following properties:

- The Abyssal Gate forms a 15-foot-radius portal to the 88th layer of the abyssal plane, and creatures may freely move through it to travel between the planes. If Demogorgon is on the 88th layer of the abyssal plane, it opens to a different layer loyal to Demogorgon instead.
- When Demogorgon takes a mythic action, at the DM's discretion, more demons may join the battle to aid Demogorgon by passing through the portal, appearing in the nearest unoccupied spaces to the portal. No more than a combined 50 Hit Dice worth of demons can appear in this manner in a single instance of this effect. Demons in the presence of Demogorgon add his Intelligence modifier (+12) to their attack and damage rolls, saving throws, and ability checks.

horrific conversations that take place between these two titans are the stuff of nightmares. Demogorgon owes much of his power and knowledge to the education provided by Dagon and, as much as a demon can, considers the Great Old One a friend. Whether Dagon reciprocates this affection is unknown, but one thing is clear: their alliance spells nothing but woe for the rest of the multiverse.

REWARDS

A grateful universe smiles upon those who manage to defeat Demogorgon. If your characters manage to accomplish this feat, there are likely few mountains left to climb. Unless doing so would allow said heroes to become an even greater threat than Demogorgon, they are likely rewarded with whatever they wish from those appreciative of their efforts. Within Demogorgon's fortress is the greatest repository of arcane knowledge found anywhere. Most is best forgotten or destroyed, as only a mind as depraved as Demogorgon could find purpose for it. However, there will always be some spellcaster who desires magic as dastardly and otherworldly as this.

NEW SPELL - DISCORDANT TEMPEST

9th-level evocation (warlocks and wizards only)

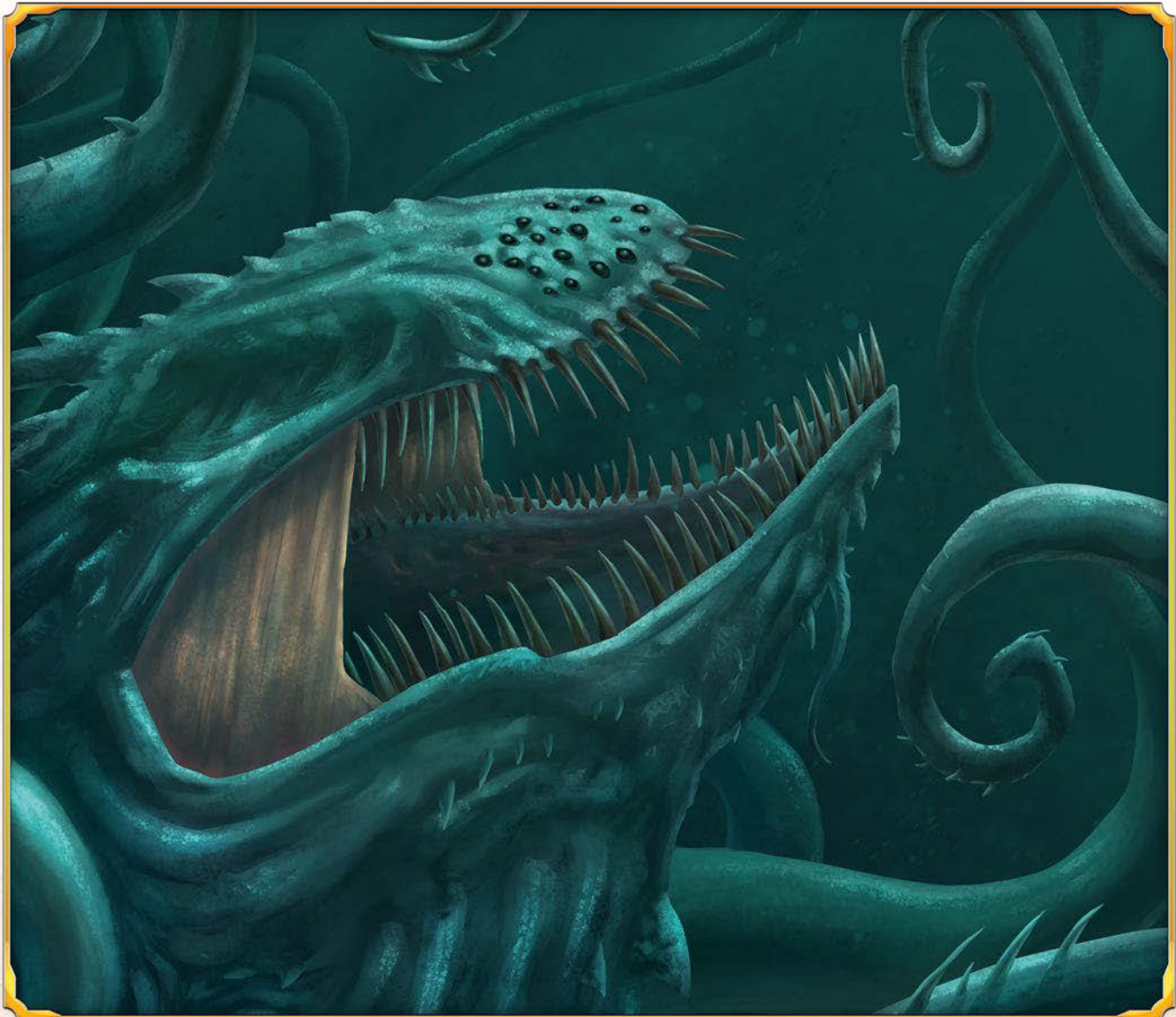
Casting Time: 1 action

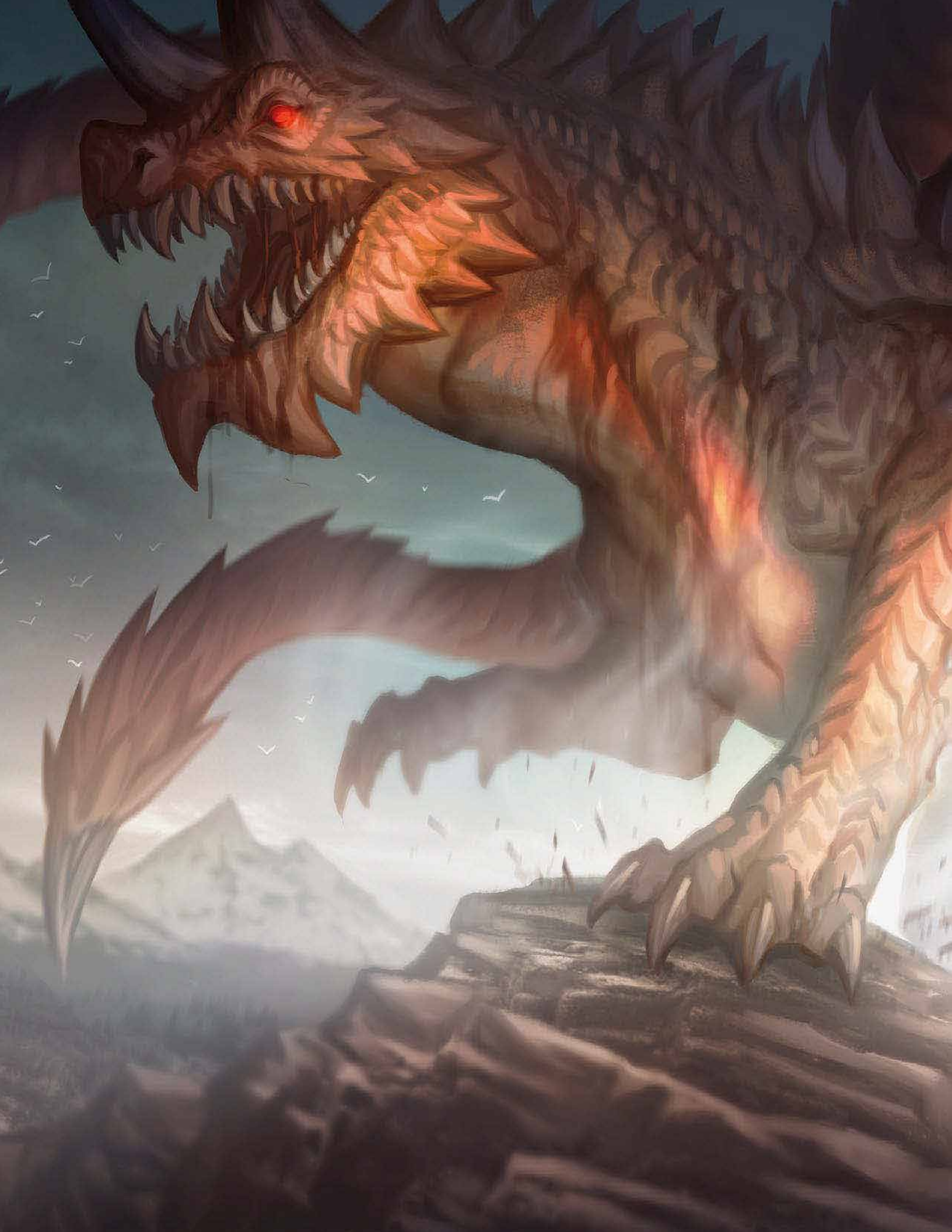
Range: 1 mile

Components: V, S, M (a small mirror broken in three places)

Duration: Instantaneous

A rift opens above an area within range in the shape of a cylinder that is 100 feet tall with a 300-foot radius. When the rift appears, you may call down a bolt of scarlet lightning on each creature of your choice within the affected area that does not have total cover from the sky. When you do so, make a melee spell attack against each target, dealing 32 (5d12) lightning damage and 32 (5d12) necrotic damage on a successful hit. If this damage reduces a creature to 0 hit points, it must succeed on a Charisma saving throw or have its soul stricken from its body, killing it instantly and preventing it from being returned to life without the aid of divine intervention.





PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE

The Titan Before Time

"All hail her majesty, queen of the monsters for eons untold!"

DESCRIPTION

The very earth trembles with fear at the approach of the mightiest monster to ever walk the realms. The legendary primeval tarrasque, the sole survivor from an era before time, is an awe-inspiring sight. Towering above even the tallest buildings and the highest natural formations, the tarrasque's hunched body is carried by a pair of clawed, bipedal legs. Its massive claws hang low beneath its hulking form, capable of grasping prey of any size. Its body is covered in a thick chitin bristling with spikes—an impenetrable shell that shrugs off any assault. Its head is nearly half mouth—its cavernous maw can consume entire nations or utter devastating roars that can be heard across the globe. In the rare instance the tarrasque is injured, its unnatural heart unleashes regenerative energies that allow the monster to recover from any catastrophic wound. Combining the size of a mountain, the strength of a god, and the savagery of nature's cruelest beasts, the

tarrasque is an unstoppable, world-eating monster that knows no equal.

PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

The tarrasque is not a complicated creature and knows only one mode of operation: rampant destruction. A campaign featuring this creature must be carefully run to avoid overwhelming the players with an enemy they cannot defeat too early in the story. Due to the tarrasque's low Intelligence, justifying an inexplicable or convenient pattern of behavior is not difficult. The monster can awaken, wreak havoc, and fall asleep with no obvious reason. Your campaign should make use of this fact to showcase the tarrasque's devastating power without obliterating the entire

PROFILE

Personality: Savage

Ideals: The tarrasque holds no morality and respects no ethical code. It exists purely to fight, consume, and dominate the environment. There is nothing more important than existing as the tarrasque was meant to: in a state of primal supremacy over the world.

Bonds: When the tarrasque isn't sleeping, eating, or causing havoc, it is busy being a mother. The creature lays massive eggs which in turn birth lesser—but still formidable—reflections of itself. These "ordinary" tarrasques are the far more commonly seen but are still legendary in strength. The primeval tarrasque needs no mate to birth its young and defends its eggs with staggering ferocity.

Flaws: While most beings possess an instinct for fight or flight, the tarrasque does not. It knows only violence, refusing to withdraw from any battle or potential conflict no matter the odds. Any possible threat, no matter how small, must be crushed with overwhelming savagery.

Legend: Before the world was corrupted by the quibbling of sentience and the weakness of morality, there was only power. Monsters of terrific size and ferocious strength ruled the realms, known as the primevals. These great beasts were the purest expression of nature's savagery—ultimate monsters ruling supreme over entire planes. Their existence was a violent one, full of ferocious contests that shook the very foundations of existence. There is no knowing for how long these titans ruled, for time was a trivial concept in those early days. What is known is that the primevals' brutal might was their undoing. One by one they fell to each other's strength, fighting over territory, mates, or simply because it was their nature, until only one remained. Amid the ruins of these ancient worlds stood what became known as the tarrasque. It had proven itself mightiest among titans, earning the respect and fear of all living things. With no rivals to crush and with existence shifting toward a model of order and balance, the tarrasque faded into obscurity. Burying itself deep beneath the earth, the primeval tarrasque slumbers, patiently awaiting some unknown sign to awaken and return the world to savage anarchy.



world. However, no matter the nature of its activity, one thing is always clear about such a foe: so long as the tarrasque is permitted to exist, devastation on an epic scale is only a matter of time.

INTRODUCTION

A campaign featuring the tarrasque begins with its awakening. For millennia it has lain dormant, suddenly emerging without warning and possessing a ravenous hunger. There is nothing the world can do in the face of such an assault. Every being from mighty dragon to humble peasant can only hope to stay out of the monster's path. The characters stand no chance of confronting the tarrasque at this juncture. They lack both the strength and the knowledge to even injure the monster let alone defeat it. The best they can do is help refugees escape its path of devastation and work hard to gain strength in hopes of one day finally putting the tarrasque down for good.

CONFLICT

Once the characters have grown in power and the realms begin responding to the threat, the time has come to fight back. While it is unlikely the monster can be truly beaten at this stage, there is much to be gained by observing its battles and testing its defenses. Such conflicts must be carefully orchestrated. Even the slightest miscalculation could spell disaster and an early end to one's adventuring career in the jaws of the tarrasque. The characters should seek out allies, magical weapons, and any

other resources they can muster for the final confrontation. As the tarrasque's attacks grow more savage and frequent, time is running short. Soon there may be nothing left to save.

CONCLUSION

Tracking down and confronting the tarrasque is a simple affair. The monster eagerly fights any who dare cross its path, charging forward with jubilant ferocity as soon as it becomes aware of the characters. Such a battle is one of epic proportions. The very land is torn asunder by the beast's might, while horrific sacrifices are required by the defenders of the realms to assure victory. Even if downed, the tarrasque is far from dead. The heroes must carve out its heart and destroy it in short order, lest the tarrasque become reconstituted and continue its rampage with frightful efficiency.

CHALLENGES

The tarrasque can pose exploration, social, or combat challenges to characters who interact with it.

EXPLORATION

Even mountains fall before the might of the tarrasque. When on its ravenous rampages, the monster ventures across any terrain in search of prey to consume and civilizations to destroy. Fleeing

from such a foe is a dire exodus, full of peril and panic as entire nations seek to escape its grasp. This is a logistical nightmare. Heroes looking to save what they can from the horrors of the tarrasque have their work cut out for them. Much will be lost to the monster, with only a small opportunity to save what is most precious to them.

DIREWYLD DOMAIN

Nature is not always subtle. When a realm is untainted by the stain of civilization the land can flourish on a grand scale, becoming a primordial haven where nature reigns supreme. These magical domains are direwylds, home to fantastically powerful endemic life. Direwylds are perfectly balanced, unshakable ecosystems. They may be towering mountains awash in snow, crystal-clear tropical lakes that rejuvenate the spirit, or verdant forests that have stood for eons. It takes titanic force to threaten a direwyld. Inhabitants are swift to protect their home and immediately recognize outside threats. Living within a direwyld is the ultimate survival experience and demands one find one's place within its circle of life. Adventuring and exploring these environments are dangers few willingly undertake. The trappings of civilization are of little use in the direwyld, and even experienced survivalists struggle to do more than scrape by.

Creatures. Beasts, dragons, monstrosities, plants. Everything living in a direwyld is part of a balanced ecosystem. Nothing is unnecessary or trivial; everything plays a critical role in the cycle of life within the direwyld.

Detection. A DC 22 Wisdom (Survival) check is required to determine a direwyld's true nature.

Properties. A direwyld domain causes the following effects within its area.

- **Bonded.** Creatures and plants of the direwyld learn a unique Epic language they can use to communicate with each other. This language is generally referred to as symastai, though the dialect spoken by the creatures of the direwyld is unique and can only be understood by those proficient in the dialect. The details of symastai can be found in the sidebar by the same name.
- **Explosive Growth.** Beasts and plants that are born in a direwyld cannot die of old age and never stop growing throughout their lives, unless continued growth would make the beast or plant unsustainable by the direwyld.
- **Extreme Environment.** When a creature finishes a short rest within the direwyld, it gains one level of exhaustion. Additionally, when a creature enters a direwyld for the first time in a day, it gains one level of exhaustion. Natives of the direwyld and those who have lived within its confines for more than 1 month do not suffer this effect.
- **Night Watchers.** When a creature that is not native to the direwyld takes a long rest there, all creatures and plants of the direwyld become aware of that creature's exact location for the duration of the rest.

Alternatively, those wishing to go on the offensive must journey into deadly territory. The tarrasque will have reduced vast swaths of land to ruin, returning it to a state of primordial nature. Here beasts and monsters will have grown to astonishing sizes, ensuring any unwary explorers suffer a grim fate. Tracking down the tarrasque's lair is simple enough. Follow the giant footprints and fields of bones, and take care to avoid the monster's gaze while intruding in its lands.

Regional Effects

The region within 10 miles of the tarrasque's lair is warped by its primal power, which has created the following effects within the area:

- When the tarrasque awakens, the land within 100 miles of the lair becomes a magical domain known as a Direwyld, the details of which can be found in this section.
- Creatures in the affected area emit pheromones that can be smelled out to a range of 1 mile. A creature which smells these pheromones learns the source's exact location for as long as it remains within the affected area.
- Flesh upon corpses of slain creatures in the affected area does not rot or spoil.

If the tarrasque slumbers for 5 continuous years or is slain, these effects fade over the course of 1 year.

EPIC LANGUAGE: SYMASTAI

Language Prerequisites: Living creature

Symastai is a complex form of communication that can be performed by any creature with a visible form. The language is entirely nonverbal, requiring incredibly subtle physical cues that necessitate perfect distance, appearance, timing, and sometimes even physical contact. Symastai can convey incredibly complex emotions and ideas, some of which are nearly impossible to articulate verbally. For this reason, it is considered an incredibly intimate language, rarely spoken to those who do not have the absolute trust and confidence of the speaker. To "speak" symastai a creature must be visible to those with whom it is communicating.

The Primeval Tarrasque's Lair

The tarrasque cares nothing for comforts or pleasantries. The hole from which it emerged from hibernation simply becomes its lair. This yawning pit swiftly becomes surrounded by the remains of the monster's prey. The pit itself is massive, requiring a colossal expedition to explore. Within the burrow are remnants of a time predating recorded history. Fossils of ancient titans or strange primordial magics can be found here, precious beyond measure and informative to all who would study the ancient histories of the realms.



Exploration Encounters

Many of the challenges the tarrasque presents stem not from directly confronting the creature, but from how it affects the world around it. In the case of explorative or logistical encounters, helping the world manage the threat the tarrasque poses to civilizations is a monumental task. The creature is like a natural disaster. It cannot be stopped or controlled, only mitigated (at least until heroes powerful enough to slay it emerge). Outrunning an angry tarrasque isn't easy. Entire nations will likely be lost before anyone stands a chance of defeating the monster, putting even the most experienced heroes to the test.

The Last Shadow Banyan. Kept safe for a thousand generations of forest gnomes, a mystical tree known as a shadow banyan is hidden away by powerful illusion magic. However, no glamour is strong enough to stop a rampaging tarrasque, whose path now includes the resting place of the last shadow banyan. The gnomes are desperate to deter the monster, requesting daring heroes lure the beast away so the tree can endure.

Biological Sample. A druidic researcher is in desperate need of a sample of the tarrasque's waste, for "agricultural purposes." While the monster hasn't left its territory for some time, it still vigilantly patrols the land, violently crushing intruders. What's worse, an expedition may be just the kind of provocation the

tarrasque needs to start an intercontinental rampage. The rewards the druid is offering are substantial, however, causing more than a few overconfident heroes to begin mounting an expedition.

Monster Mash. When the primeval tarrasque awoke, its roar of emergence disturbed over a dozen slumbering titans of similar proportions. Now the monsters are rampaging across the lands, but there is a silver lining to this dark cloud. If the monsters can be brought together, they will surely slaughter each other. All that remains will be to mop up the victors, and the world will be saved—provided the creatures can be baited in such a manner.

SOCIAL

Socializing with the tarrasque is like kissing a piranha. The monster cannot be reasoned with, charmed, or manipulated with any degree of subtlety. However, the social dynamics that arise from the tarrasque's presence are another matter. Between the hordes of refugees fleeing the tarrasque's might, the opportunists exploiting the situation for profit and prestige, and the desperate heroes trying to slay the monster, there are many opportunities for drama. Of particular significance is an ancient, dangerous cabal of druids known as the Circle of the Ancients, who revere the titans of old and the facet of nature they represent.



LEGENDARY DRUID CIRCLE

Circle of the Ancients

Among druids there are those who believe the wild has been corrupted over the eons. In the past, nature was pure: savage, untamed, and powerful. The influence of sentient minds, civilizations, and symbiotic harmony has corroded the fabric of nature itself. Druids of the Circle of the Ancients seek to fight this decay by resurrecting past eras to once again hold dominion over the world. Calling upon powers predating recorded history, these druids revel in the primordial might of ancient titans. While their order is secret in its operations and few in number, its power and purpose cannot be denied. Their path is a circular one, shaping the future by returning to the past.

Circle of the Ancients Features

Druid Level	Feature
2nd	Ancient Blood, Primordial Rites
6th	Fang and Claw
14th	Primeval Savagery
26th	Epic Druid Circle: Circle of the Ancients

ANCIENT BLOOD

Starting at 2nd level, you can expend two uses of your Wild Shape feature to assume the form of a more powerful, ancient beast: a dinosaur. The type of dinosaur you can transform into is determined by your druid level, as detailed in the Ancient Blood Transformations table. When you transform into a dinosaur in this manner, it takes a tremendous toll on your body. When you resume your true form after transforming into a dinosaur in this manner, you gain one level of exhaustion.

Ancient Blood Transformations

Druid Level	Dinosaur Options
2nd	Allosaurus, quetzalcoatlus, ² plesiosaurus
6th	Ankylosaurus, stegosaurus ³
10th	Brontosaurus, ⁴ triceratops
14th	Tyrannosaurus rex

² Details about this creature can be found in the official 5E supplement *VGM*.

³ Details about this creature can be found in the official 5E supplement *T&A*.

⁴ Details about this creature can be found in the official 5E supplement *T&A*.

PRIMORDIAL RITES

At 2nd level, when you cast a spell of 1st level or higher with a casting time of an action, you may choose to also expend a bonus action and reaction to augment the spell with strange rites pre-dating recorded history. When you do so, the spell is no longer considered a spell or magical effect for its duration (when applicable), instead utilizing ancient, supernatural power.

FANG AND CLAW

At 6th level, when you assume the form of a dinosaur using your Ancient Blood feature, your attacks count as magical for the purposes of overcoming resistances and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Additionally, you gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls you make while transformed in this manner. At 10th level, this bonus increases to +2, and at 14th level it increases to +3.

PRIMEVAL SAVAGERY

At 14th level, when you score a hit with a weapon or spell attack, you can expend a druid spell slot of 1st level or higher to deal additional acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage. This damage is 1d4 for a 1st-level slot, plus an additional 1d4 for each slot level higher than 1st.

EPIC DRUID CIRCLE: CIRCLE OF THE ANCIENTS

At 26th level you can awaken the power of ancient titans and even assume their form. When you use your Ancient Blood feature to assume the form of a dinosaur, you can choose to gain one or more of the following benefits for the duration of that form.

- Your hit point maximum is increased by 500.
- Your attacks deal triple damage on a successful hit.
- Your size is Gargantuan, and if your Strength and Dexterity scores are lower than your Wisdom score, they change to match your Wisdom score. Additionally, you occupy a 50-foot-cube area, and you cannot be forcibly moved, pushed, pulled, or magically teleported against your will.

When you return to your true form, the hit point maximum of your true form is reduced by 40. This effect cannot be reversed until you finish a long rest and is cumulative each time you use this feature.

Social Encounters

Because one cannot socially engage the tarrasque, such encounters instead focus on the creatures surrounding the events of the monster's presence. There are all manner of characters seeking to defeat, escape from, or profit from the tarrasque's existence. These individuals invariably complicate the process of dealing with the monster, with the safety of the entire world on the line.

Ancient Rites. The Circle of the Ancients has been conducting ritualistic ceremonies in the wake of the tarrasque's rampages.

The purpose and extent of these rituals are unknown, but the circle is going to great lengths to accomplish them. Those who seek to halt the tarrasque advise investigating the druids, hoping to glean secrets of the beast's nature by observing their magics.

Market Materials. Every battle with the tarrasque leaves behind a plethora of organic material: scales, chitin, bone, teeth, blood, and more. These materials are worth a small fortune to magical researchers, biologists, and far more unsavory individuals. Reclaiming these samples is dangerous work, but the payoffs are generally considered to be worth it, as a massive black market develops around the tarrasque's activities.

Refugee Crisis. As the tarrasque lays waste to nation after nation, the number of refugees soon becomes overwhelming. Other nations are reluctant to take in all the survivors, fearing their infrastructure cannot handle it. Political advocates are needed to secure a future for these poor souls, with the trusted opinions of mighty heroes carrying particular weight.

COMBAT

Doing battle with the tarrasque is truly an epic struggle. Both the size and strength of the monster is overwhelming, forcing any who dare challenge it to structure the entire fight around its massive proportions. Such a battle is not without consequence to the world at large. When the tarrasque fights, it causes ruin all around it. With each step, hundreds are trampled underfoot. With each roar, entire cities crumble. There is no clean or effective method of stopping such a monster. There is only a desperate struggle against impossible strength, and a few well-placed prayers just in case things go terribly wrong.

Combat Encounter Example: Hold the Line

A mighty nation has prepared for the tarrasque's arrival and has constructed a massive wall bristling with weaponry. As the monster approaches, the call goes out for any brave enough to stand atop the titanic ramparts and drive the monster off. Thousands marshal in defense of their country, prepared to die to stop the tarrasque's advance. The preparation effort is enormous: siege machines, structural reinforcements, and more archers than are conceivable are just the beginning. The more defenses the wall can muster, the better. Magical wards, monstrous allies, and more are on their way. Hopefully, it will be enough.

Tactics

Battlefield Classification: Brute

Normally brutes are simple monsters, but the tarrasque is an exception. As a Titanic creature, this monster possesses multiple turns, each dedicated to a different body part. Think of each part as an individual monster designed to work with its fellows to accomplish its goals. Nonetheless, the tarrasque's brutish nature ensures the fight will be up close and personal. The monster has a ridiculous number of hit points and deals similarly absurd damage with its attacks. No defense against the tarrasque is foolproof. At best one can mitigate its terrific power, and even then, the odds of success are slim.

Starting with the tarrasque's traits, note how Chitinous Shell prevents any incoming damage from flimsy hits from the characters. Remember to use the Primal Might feature to help the

tarrasque survive nasty effects. Taking 50 necrotic damage is a lot, so use this feature sparingly. The head of the tarrasque is its most dangerous section. Its Chomp attack deals enough damage to potentially kill a character in a single hit. Its Consume action is similarly devastating, isolating an entire character from the rest of the team by devouring them. For a more useful action, consider Titan's Roar to disperse troublesome magic or send characters running for cover. The legs section has tremendous mobility, which should be more than enough to keep up with extremely maneuverable characters. You can even trample them underfoot or obliterate any cover behind which they try to hide. The body is the most significant part of the tarrasque. Use its Heart of the Tarrasque and Regeneration features to keep it in the fight. If the party fails to focus the body down, they will quickly run out of resources against such an absurdly powerful foe. Finally, the claws can be used to not only deal even more damage but to hurl characters across the battlefield. Even a single hit from the tarrasque is more than enough to wind a character, so don't worry if you aren't scoring lots of hits. A lucky critical hit is an awe-inspiring moment, so be sure to keep lots of dice handy for the fallout.

Easier Tactics – Emphasize the tarrasque's low Intelligence to grant the characters strategic superiority. The monster is worse than a dumb animal—it is blind with savage fury. The creature can easily fail to recognize the potent threats the characters pose in favor of less threatening or distracting prey. It shouldn't have any understanding of tactics or what is harming it beyond a very loose comprehension. Remember, the tarrasque has little interest in harming characters past the point of getting them to stop fighting. It ignores characters who aren't actively attacking it and those who attempt to escape, particularly if there is something large and tasty nearby.

Harder Tactics – The tarrasque should be a shrewd opponent that fully understands just how dangerous the characters really are. It focuses its attacks on nearby enemies first, ensuring anyone foolish to stand so close are utterly obliterated before moving on to more cowardly targets. Make sure to open with Titan's Roar to remove most of the helpful magic employed by the heroes. From there it should be a simple matter of crushing all opposition with a brutal series of attacks. Use Consume to eliminate any supporting characters, particularly healers, from the battlefield. Don't worry about spellcasters. All it takes is one good hit to lay them low, so don't go chasing them down when a Throw attack will do.

Mythic Primeval Tarrasque

Aside from a truly ridiculous increase in statistics across the board, the mythic tarrasque gains one incredibly powerful feature in the form of Ancient Apocalypse. This feature ensures that any characters attempting to harm the tarrasque suffer brutal consequences. A single hit's damage being doubled is a catastrophe, but tripled or quadrupled? That can one-shot even the beefiest of barbarians. Otherwise keep the tarrasque's strategy the same as its non-mythic counterpart. Just make sure to target characters with a high quantity of apocalypse dice. They make for choice victims.

Mythic Effects

As a mythic creature, the tarrasque causes the following effects.

Ceaseless Tread. When the tarrasque begins a long rest, instead of sleeping it can choose to enter a state of torpor. In this state it cannot make attacks, and its speed is halved, but it can continue to move. If it finishes a long rest while in this state, it gains the ordinary benefits of finishing that long rest.

Ravenous Hunger. Creatures slain while devoured by the tarrasque have their life essence recycled into the conduits of primordial energy found in nature. A creature recycled in this manner is reincarnated as a beast or plant within 1 year unless it is restored to life first. This is a Deific effect which cannot be undone while the tarrasque lives.

RESOURCES

The tarrasque is a monster in its purest form. It needs nothing but the strength of its muscles, the sharpness of its claws, and the depth of its hunger. Allies? Pointless and inferior. Magical tools or equipment? Too complicated to use. The tarrasque is a being born of a simpler time and reflects that in all that it does. The only thing the tarrasque values beyond its own existence are its eggs. Laid once every 1,000 years, these massive eggs hatch into the far less powerful, but still formidable, tarrasques with which many cultures are familiar. Once such an infant is in the wild, the primeval tarrasque holds no affection for it. It will readily slay the child should they cross paths, as the primeval tarrasque can suffer no challenge to its supremacy—even from family.



PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE

Titanic monstrosity (titan), unaligned

Armor Class 25 (natural armor), 10 (if shell is cracked; see Chitinous Shell)

Hit Points special

Speed special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
30 (+10)	1 (-5)	30 (+10)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +19, Con +19, Wis +10

Skills Athletics +28, Perception +10, Survival +19

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical sources

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

Senses blindsight 300 ft., passive Perception 20

Languages —

Challenge 30 (155,000 XP)

TRAITS

Chitinous Shell. The tarrasque is coated in a layer of thick chitin that repels all but the mightiest blows. When any of the tarrasque's sections takes 30 or less damage in a single instance, it instead takes no damage. If the tarrasque's body section is reduced below half its hit point maximum, the shell becomes cracked, the tarrasque's AC becomes 10, and this benefit is suppressed. The shell's integrity is restored when the tarrasque finishes a short or long rest.

Engine of Destruction. If a creature would be immune to damage dealt by the tarrasque, it instead has resistance to that damage.

Primal Might. When the tarrasque fails a saving throw, it can choose to take 50 necrotic damage to succeed instead.

Titanic Creature. The tarrasque is a Titanic creature that is so large that combat involves dividing its body up into various sections, each of which has a fixed initiative count on which it acts (losing initiative ties), detailed in its description. Each section is considered a unique creature for purposes of targeting (in case an effect or attack would include multiple targets), and effects that include an area may affect multiple sections of the tarrasque if the area is large enough. Each section has its own hit points and actions but shares the tarrasque's other statistics (such as damage resistances, saving throws, etc.). When a section is reduced to 0 hit points, it becomes incapacitated until it regains hit points or the tarrasque is slain, which causes the section to die along with the tarrasque. If a section has a speed, the tarrasque can move up to that section's speed during that section's turn. Creatures can enter and occupy the same space as the tarrasque, which is considered difficult terrain, and the tarrasque cannot make opportunity attacks. Finally, attempts to forcibly move, banish, or magically teleport the tarrasque or any of its parts automatically fail.

PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE - HEAD

Hit Points 512 (25d20 + 250)

Initiative Count 20

TRAITS

Position. The head of the tarrasque is at least 400 feet above the space it occupies. The section is a cube approximately 50 feet wide, 60 feet tall, and 50 feet deep.

Bastion of the Mind. Effects that would attempt to influence the tarrasque's mind (such as psychic damage, the stunned and unconscious conditions, or effects that force an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw) can only affect this section (all other sections are immune). If this section is blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, incapacitated, stunned, or unconscious, all the other sections are as well.

ACTIONS

Chomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 140 (20d12 + 10) piercing damage. If this damage reduces a target to 0 hit points, it is torn in half.

Consume. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 30 ft., one creature that can fit within a 60-foot cube. *Hit:* The target is swallowed. A creature so swallowed takes 35 (10d6) slashing damage as it passes through the tarrasque's gullet.

Titan's Roar. The tarrasque emits a roar that can be heard across the entire plane, causing one of the following effects of its choice in a 300-foot-radius sphere centered on the tarrasque.

- **Rolling Thunder.** The roar echoes with deafening power. Each creature, unattended object, and structure in the affected area takes 35 (10d6) thunder damage. A creature that takes damage from this effect must succeed on a DC 27 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of its next turn.
- **Shrieking Keen.** The roar resonates with an ear-splitting keening. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 27 Wisdom saving throw or be permanently frightened of the tarrasque.
- **Spellbreaker.** The roar shatters the very fabric of magic. Each spell or magical effect of 8th level or lower in the affected area immediately ends.

PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE - LEGS

Hit Points 430 (21d20 + 210)
Initiative Count 15
Speed 120 ft.

TRAITS

Position. The legs of the tarrasque are positioned at the base of its space, which is typically a 100-foot-by-100-foot square. The tarrasque's legs are approximately 250 feet tall.

Powerful Strides. The tarrasque is immune to difficult terrain.

Trample. When the legs of the tarrasque spend movement to move into another creature's space for the first time on a turn, it can choose to trample that creature. A creature so trampled must attempt a DC 27 Dexterity saving throw, taking 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

ACTIONS

Devastate. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 90 ft., one unattended object or structure. *Hit:* 200 bludgeoning damage.

Worldbreaker (Recharge 5–6). The tarrasque stomps upon the ground, generating an earthquake of apocalyptic proportions in a 10-mile radius on the ground. Every structure in the affected area is instantly destroyed, and the entire area becomes difficult terrain. Creatures other than the tarrasque in the affected area must succeed on a DC 27 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE - CLAWS

Hit Points 389 (19d20 + 190)
Initiative Count 5

TRAITS

Position. The claws of the tarrasque are positioned on the right and left side of its body and are typically 300 feet up immediately to the left and right of the space the tarrasque occupies. Each claw occupies a cube approximately 120 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 40 feet deep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The claws make two attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 120 ft., every creature and object in a 25-foot cube within reach. *Hit:* 45 (10d6 + 10) slashing damage. If the target is a Gargantuan or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 27).

Throw. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, range 500 ft./1 mile. One target. *Hit:* 65 (10d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the tarrasque is grappling a creature, it can choose to throw it with this attack. A creature so thrown takes 55 (10d10) bludgeoning damage if it collides with the target or a solid object.

PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE - BODY & TAIL

Hit Points 840 (41d20 + 410)
Initiative Count 10

TRAITS

Position. The body of the tarrasque is a cube approximately 300 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 280 feet high and connects its head, legs, and claws sections.

Heart of the Tarrasque. The tarrasque's heart fills its body with unnatural vitality. Every 10 minutes each section of the tarrasque is restored to its hit point maximum, recovers from any harmful effects, and regrows any missing body parts.

Additionally, the tarrasque can only be slain if its heart is carved from its body and destroyed. In such circumstances, the heart is an object with an AC of 15 and 300 hit points.

Unfathomable Hunger. A creature swallowed by the tarrasque comes to rest in its stomach inside its body section. A swallowed creature is blinded, has total cover against attacks and effects outside the tarrasque, and takes 52 (8d12) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this damage is slain and digested by the body, which immediately regains 52 (8d12) hit points.

If the body takes 100 or more damage in a single round from creatures it has swallowed, a hole opens in its body through which swallowed creatures can escape. At the end of the body's next turn, muscular action closes this hole.

ACTIONS

Regeneration. The body loses up to 100 hit points, and a different section of the tarrasque's choice regains twice as many hit points.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 109 (22d8 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Gargantuan or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 27 Strength saving throw or be thrown 120 feet away from the tarrasque in a straight line, landing prone.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +19 to hit, reach 300 ft., up to four different targets. *Hit:* 43 (6d10 + 10) piercing damage plus 35 (10d6) poison damage.

MYTHIC PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE

Titanic mythic monstrosity (titan), unaligned

Armor Class 35 (natural armor), 15 (if shell is cracked; see Chitinous Shell)

Hit Points special

Speed special

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
40 (+15)	1 (-5)	36 (+13)	3 (-4)	19 (+4)	10 (+0)

Saving Throws Str +28, Dex +8, Con +26, Int +9, Wis +17, Cha +13

Skills Athletics +41, Perception +17, Survival +30

Damage Immunities bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-Epic sources

Condition Immunities charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

Senses blindsight 300 ft., passive Perception 27

Languages —

Challenge Mythic 10

TRAITS

Ancient Apocalypse. The tarrasque is endowed primordial powers of destruction from the beginning of time. When a creature harms the tarrasque for the first time in a round, it becomes exposed to this destructive energy. A creature so exposed gains a special die called an apocalypse die, which is a d20. When a creature takes damage from the tarrasque, it must roll all its apocalypse dice. If it rolls a 16 or higher on any of its apocalypse dice, it multiplies the damage taken from the effect by the number of apocalypse dice rolled in this manner. Any apocalypse dice gained in this manner are lost when a creature finishes a long rest.

Chitinous Shell. The tarrasque is coated in a layer of thick chitin that repels all but the mightiest blows. When any of the

tarrasque's sections takes 50 or less damage in a single instance, it instead takes no damage. If the tarrasque's body section is reduced below half its hit point maximum, the shell becomes cracked, the tarrasque's AC becomes 15, and this benefit is suppressed. The shell's integrity is restored when the tarrasque finishes a short or long rest.

Engine of Destruction. If a creature would be immune to damage dealt by the tarrasque, it instead has resistance to that damage. If a creature would have resistance to that damage before this effect is applied, it instead does not have resistance.

Primal Might. When the tarrasque fails a saving throw, it can choose to take 100 necrotic damage to succeed instead.

Titanic Creature. The tarrasque is a Titanic creature that is so large that combat involves dividing its body up into various sections, each of which has a fixed initiative count on which it acts (losing initiative ties), detailed in its description. Each section is considered a unique creature for purposes of targeting (in case an effect or attack would include multiple targets), and effects that include an area may affect multiple sections of the tarrasque if the area is large enough. Each section has its own hit points and actions but shares the tarrasque's other statistics (such as damage resistances, saving throws, etc.). When a section is reduced to 0 hit points, it becomes incapacitated until it regains hit points or the tarrasque is slain, which causes the section to die along with the tarrasque. If a section has a speed, the tarrasque can move up to that section's speed during that section's turn. Creatures can enter and occupy the same space as the tarrasque, which is considered difficult terrain, and the tarrasque cannot make opportunity attacks. Finally, attempts to forcibly move, banish, or magically teleport the tarrasque or any of its parts automatically fail.

MYTHIC PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE - HEAD

Hit Points 1,692 (72d20 + 936)

Initiative Count 20

TRAITS

Position. The head of the tarrasque is at least 400 feet above the space it occupies. The section is a cube approximately 50 feet wide, 60 feet tall, and 50 feet deep.

Bastion of the Mind. Effects that would attempt to influence the tarrasque's mind (such as psychic damage, the stunned and unconscious conditions, or effects that force an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma saving throw) can only affect this section (all other sections are immune). If this section is blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, incapacitated, stunned, or unconscious, all the other sections are as well.

ACTIONS

Chomp. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +28 to hit, reach 30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 275 (40d12 + 15) piercing damage. If this damage reduces a target to 0 hit points, it is torn in half.

Consume. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +28 to hit, reach 30 ft., one creature that can fit within a 60-foot cube. *Hit:* The target is swallowed. A creature so swallowed takes 70 (20d6) slashing damage as it passes through the tarrasque's gullet.

Titan's Roar. The tarrasque emits a roar that can be heard across the entire plane, causing one of the following effects of its choice in a 300-foot-radius sphere centered on the tarrasque.

- **Rolling Thunder.** The roar echoes with deafening power. Each creature, unattended object, and structure in the affected area takes 90 (20d8) thunder damage. A creature that takes damage from this effect must succeed on a DC 36 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the start of its next turn.
- **Shrieking Keen.** The roar resonates with an ear-splitting keening. Each creature in the affected area must succeed on a DC 36 Wisdom saving throw or be permanently frightened of the tarrasque.
- **Spellbreaker.** The roar shatters the very fabric of magic. Each non-Epic spell or magical effect as well as any Epic spell or magical effect of tier 2 or lower in the affected area immediately ends.

MYTHIC PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE - LEGS

Hit Points 1,433 (61d20 + 793)
Initiative Count 15
Speed 120 ft.

TRAITS

Position. The legs of the tarrasque are positioned at the base of its space, which is typically a 100-foot-by-100-foot square. The tarrasque's legs are approximately 250 feet tall.

Powerful Strides. The tarrasque is immune to difficult terrain.

Trample. When the legs of the tarrasque spend movement to move into another creature's space for the first time on a turn, it can choose to trample that creature. A creature so trampled must attempt a DC 36 Dexterity saving throw, taking 110 (20d10) bludgeoning damage on a failure, or half as much on a success.

ACTIONS

Devastate. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +28 to hit, reach 90 ft., one unattended object or structure. *Hit:* 1,000 bludgeoning damage.

Worldbreaker (Recharge 5–6). The tarrasque stomps upon the ground, generating an earthquake of apocalyptic proportions on the ground across the entire plane. Every structure in the affected area is instantly destroyed, and the entire area becomes difficult terrain. Creatures other than the tarrasque in the affected area must succeed on a DC 36 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

MYTHIC PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE - CLAWS

Hit Points 1,504 (64d20 + 832)
Initiative Count 5

TRAITS

Position. The claws of the tarrasque are positioned on the right and left side of its body and are typically 300 feet up immediately to the left and right of the space the tarrasque occupies. Each claw occupies a cube approximately 120 feet long, 40 feet wide, and 40 feet deep.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The claws make two attacks.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +28 to hit, reach 120 ft., every creature and object in a 25-foot cube within reach. *Hit:* 85 (20d6 + 15) slashing damage. If the target is a Gargantuan or smaller creature, it is grappled (escape DC 36).

Throw. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +28 to hit, range 500 ft./1 mile, one target. *Hit:* 131 (22d10 + 10) bludgeoning damage. If the tarrasque is grappling a creature, it can choose to throw it with this attack. A creature so thrown takes 121 (22d10) bludgeoning damage if it collides with the target or a solid object.

MYTHIC PRIMEVAL TARRASQUE - BODY & TAIL

Hit Points 2,843 (121d20 + 1,573)
Initiative Count 10

TRAITS

Position. The body of the tarrasque is a cube approximately 300 feet long, 90 feet wide, and 280 feet high and connects its head, legs, and claws sections.

Heart of the Tarrasque. The tarrasque's heart fills its body with unnatural vitality. Every 10 minutes each section of the tarrasque is restored to its hit point maximum, recovers from any harmful effects, and regrows any missing body parts.

Additionally, the tarrasque can only be slain if its heart is carved from its body and destroyed. In such circumstances, the heart is an object with an AC of 15 and 1,000 hit points that is immune to all damage.

Unfathomable Hunger. A creature swallowed by the tarrasque comes to rest in its stomach inside its body section. A swallowed creature is blinded, has total cover against attacks and effects outside the tarrasque, and takes 130 (20d12) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this damage is slain and digested by the body, which immediately regains 130 (20d12) hit points.

If the body takes 300 or more damage in a single round from creatures it has swallowed, a hole opens in its body through which swallowed creatures can escape. At the end of the body's next turn, muscular action closes this hole.

ACTIONS

Regeneration. The body loses up to 500 hit points, and a different section of the tarrasque's choice regains twice as many hit points.

Tail. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +28 to hit, reach 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 204 (42d8 + 15) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a Gargantuan or smaller creature, it must succeed on a DC 36 Strength saving throw or be thrown 120 feet away from the tarrasque in a straight line, landing prone.

Tentacles. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +28 to hit, reach 300 ft., up to four different targets. *Hit:* 81 (12d10 + 15) piercing damage plus 70 (20d6) poison damage.

REWARDS

Thanks to the tarrasque's tendency to eat everything it can and the formidable power of its digestive tract, almost nothing about the monster can serve as a fitting reward for adventurers. It keeps no treasure nor fabricates useful assets for other creatures to enjoy. However, the mighty carapace of the tarrasque is the only part of the body to not wither away upon the monster's defeat. This chitin is one of the most valuable materials in existence, useful for forming all manner of powerful weapons and armor. In the hands of an extraordinary master, a suit of legendary armor can be forged with a successful DC 35 Wisdom (Leatherworker's Tools) check, requiring over a year to complete, carving the hide by hand. The result is the legendary *titan's carapace*, an armor which knows few equals in all existence.



Titan's Carapace

*Armor (any medium or heavy armor),
legendary (requires attunement)*

This suit of armor is carved from the legendarily indestructible carapace of the mythical tarrasque. Its design is equal parts monstrous and masterwork. While you wear the armor, you gain the following benefits.

- When you attempt a Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution saving throw with a DC greater than 16, the DC is instead 16.
- When you finish a long rest, you gain a number of temporary hit points equal to your hit point maximum. These temporary hit points last until you finish a short or long rest and cannot be replaced by temporary hit points from another source.
- When you deal damage to a creature, roll a d20. On a roll of 17–20, the creature instead takes double damage from the effect.

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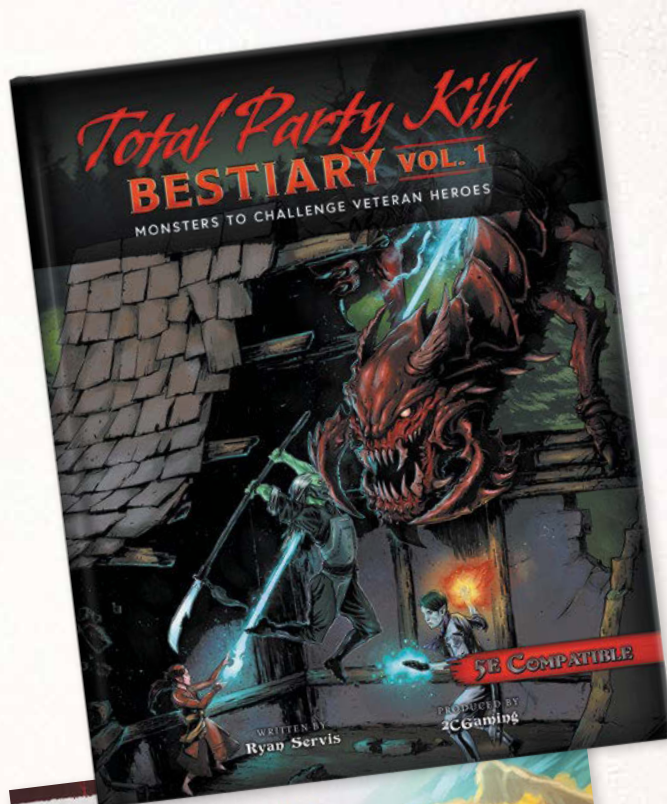
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Total Party Kill

BESTIARY VOL. 1

Quite possibly the greatest compilation of high-level monstrous foes compatible with the 5th Edition of the world's greatest roleplaying game, the *Total Party Kill Bestiary: Volume 1* focuses on development of monsters with a challenge rating above 10, putting special emphasis on non-humanoid, non-legendary creatures. Monster information includes detailed descriptions, lore, background, ecology, treasure, plot hooks, and tactical suggestions and scaling.



Abominable Hybrids

The phrase "a weird did it" is often offered as explanation for the unusual things happening in a fantasy world, and none is more accurate than with the abominable hybrids. A horrific blending of two or more animals, abominable hybrids bring the most fearsome offensive abilities of their respective components to bear. Each time a hybrid appears, it ties off their respective components to bear. Each time a hybrid appears, it ties off their respective components to bear. Each time a hybrid appears, it ties off their respective components to bear. Each time a hybrid appears, it ties off their respective components to bear.

LORE

A character can learn the following information about an abominable hybrid with an Intelligence (Arcana) or Wisdom (Divination) ability check. Note that because hybrids are customizable, the lore information should be adjusted based on the hybrid the character is investigating.

The Abominable Hybrid

Has [insert random name] gone too far? The hybrids are the obvious result of a twisted and malicious mind, for who else would weld Black into Black and create such an amalgam of muscle and Lord? Once, when on an expedition in the company of Archmagister King, we encountered a pack of these hybrids. He'd breed such a thing of profanity as cannot be repeated in good conversation, and I have never felt more grateful for my priestly's found all-clearing. These... these horrors should be scrubbed from the multiverse, never to be seen again.

- Taba, Von Karven

Classification: Drake
Favored: Clerics, Rangers, Rangers, Wizards (Targeting), Warlocks
Foes: AC (2), Bardic Charisma (Targeting), Progress, Wizards

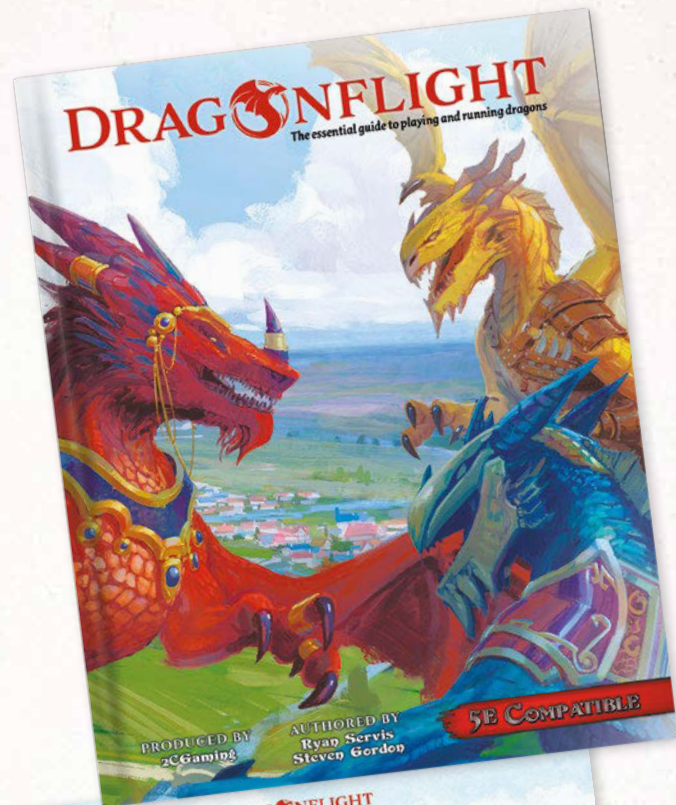
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DRAGONFLIGHT

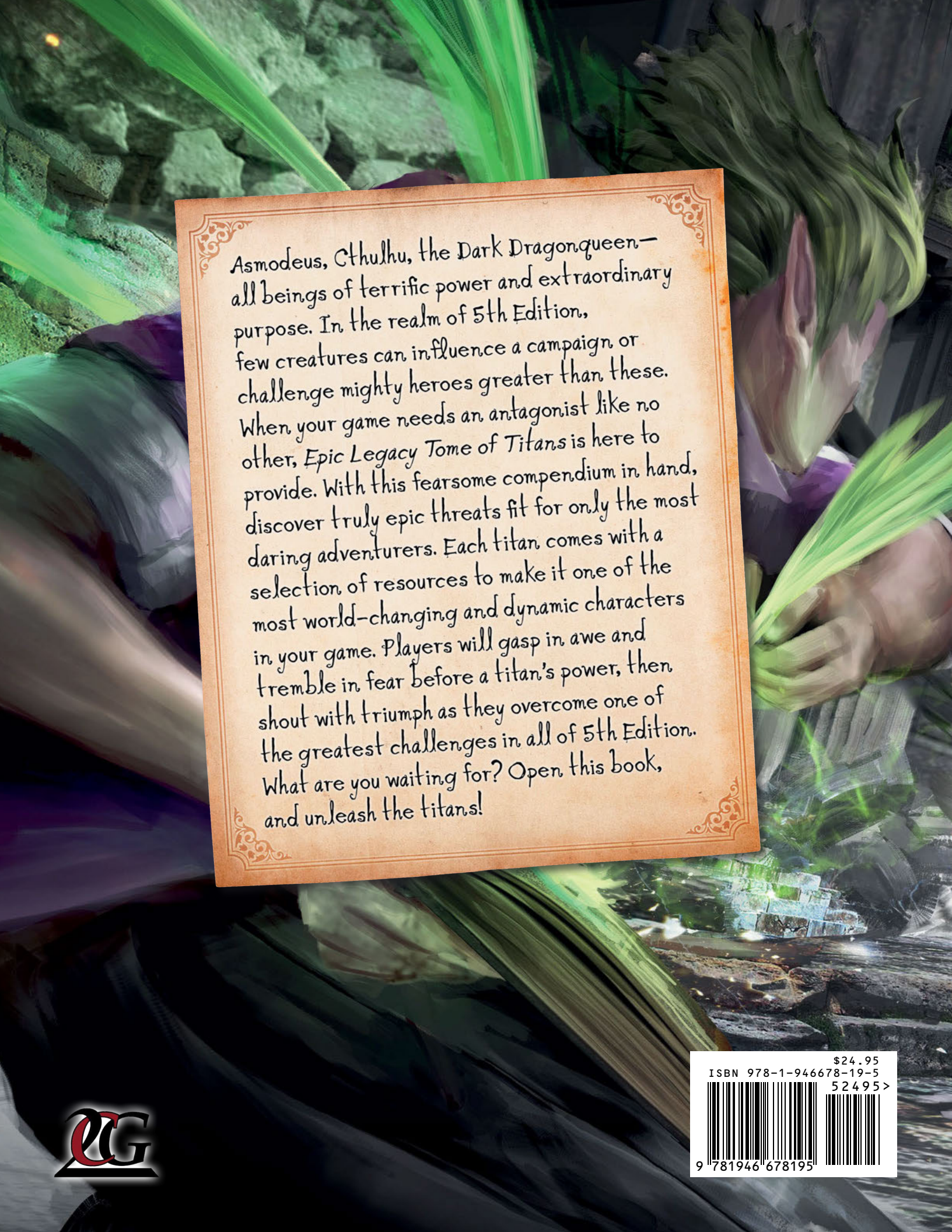
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