

# DUNGEONS & DRAGONS<sup>®</sup>

## THE PLANE BELOW

Secrets of the Elemental Chaos



ROLEPLAYING GAME SUPPLEMENT

Ari Marmell • Bruce R. Cordell • Luke Johnson

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# CHAOS INCARNATE

**A RIOTOUS** realm, the Elemental Chaos is incomprehensible to those who have not experienced it firsthand. Here, flame speaks and lightning dreams, iron hates and seas hunger.

Islands of earth, ash, mud, salt, or semisolid smoke and flame, some as vast as continents, float amid an endless sky. Rivers of water, lava, or liquid air flow from oceans bounded by nothing solid, cross landscapes of broken crystal, and spill over cliff faces made of tangible lightning. Winds of heavy vapor are guided by currents of chaos, whipping into enormous storms of burning hail and sharp-edged thunder.

As disconcerting as the substance of the Elemental Chaos is, worse still awaits visitors. Direction has no meaning. Locations shift constantly. Even gravity is capricious, exerting its pull differently on living things than on objects.

This chapter helps you to comprehend this tumultuous place. Using this material, you can better convey the wonders, terrors, and peculiarities of the realm to your players. It offers tools to let you work the Plane Below into your adventures and campaigns, ensuring that your players experience it as someplace truly alien. It covers the following topics.

- ◆ **The Basic Elements:** An overview including game mechanics for travel, direction, and gravity.
- ◆ **Features of the Plane:** Descriptions and rules for some of the peculiar environments, terrains, and hazards of the Elemental Chaos.
- ◆ **Skill Challenges:** Situations that might arise as adventurers explore the plane.
- ◆ **Campaign Arcs:** Illustrative campaign arcs—one for each of the four varieties of planar campaigns discussed in the *Manual of the Planes* supplement.
- ◆ **Adventures:** A selection of adventure ideas, including sample hooks.
- ◆ **Patrons:** A review of elemental patrons for your adventuring party.
- ◆ **Orders out of Chaos:** Organizations that might serve as friend, foe, or both.
- ◆ **Artifacts:** Powerful magic items that have ties to the Elemental Chaos or its denizens.





## ELEMENTAL CHAOS TRAITS

As first presented in *Manual of the Planes*, the Elemental Chaos has the following traits. These qualities are expanded on in the sections that follow.

**Type:** Fundamental plane.

**Size and Shape:** Infinite in extent.

**Gravity:** Elemental buoyancy.

**Mutability:** Unstable.

## NATURE AND SIZE

The Elemental Chaos is the source of the material and energy that make up every other realm in the multiverse. Stone and smoke, fire and metal, water and light, ice and lightning, wind and raw magic—all combinations are the substance of the Plane Below.

Thus the Elemental Chaos is considered one of the two fundamental planes, along with the Astral Sea. These two realms anchor the entire cosmos; without them the world, and most other planes, could not exist.

The Elemental Chaos is infinite in size and shape, but each of its known regions and locations is contained within a finite, if enormous, space. Those who travel beyond the known reaches of the Elemental Chaos might make astounding discoveries that outshine the City of Brass or the Pillars of Creation, but more likely they'll become utterly lost amid the most alien and hostile environments conceivable.

## ELEMENTAL REALMS

The Elemental Chaos as a whole might be limitless, but the same is not true of the various elemental realms. Ranging from a few yards in diameter to a volume large enough to swallow worlds, these areas are carved from the Elemental Chaos by powerful magic or individuals of inconceivably strong will. In these regions, the environment is relatively stable. Some areas have normal gravity. Others feature elemental buoyancy, similar to that of the Elemental Chaos beyond, but perhaps with a different orientation of up and down. Still other realms have subjective gravity, where each creature decides for itself which is up and down. Most regions lack the unstable mutability of the Elemental Chaos—their substance is locked in place by the power or the mind that created them.

Uncountable numbers of elemental realms populate the Plane Below. Among the best known are the City of Brass, various githzerai monasteries, and the dreadful Abyss, which qualifies as both an elemental realm and a plane apart from the Elemental Chaos.

## ELEMENTAL BUOYANCY

The Elemental Chaos has no north or south, no sunrise or sunset. Gravity does pull in a consistent direction to give the otherwise unpredictable plane a definite up and down. Even so, gravity isn't always reliable.

Inanimate objects and materials native to the Elemental Chaos are not subject to gravity. Islands of earth or ice (also called earthmotes), rivers flowing without beds, and broad oceans unbounded by shores remain suspended in the skies of the Elemental Chaos. Pitch a rock off the edge of a cliff, and it comes to rest where its forward momentum stops. Lift water in your cupped palms, and it hovers when you drop your hands away.

Nonnative objects, however, and living creatures (regardless of origin) do not benefit from this buoyancy. For them, gravity functions as it does in the natural realm. Drop your sword, and it hits the ground at your feet. Step off the edge of an earthmote, and you could have a long drop during which to contemplate that error in judgment.

Whether native to the realm or not, though, any object does not remain in one place for long—all are propelled by the plane's ceaseless currents of chaos.

## CURRENTS OF CHAOS

Currents of chaos shape the Plane Below, but no one agrees on what exactly they are.

Chaos currents provide an easy explanation for the randomness inherent in the Elemental Chaos. Masses of land and other elements move constantly, making locations impermanent and often meaningless. An island here yesterday is somewhere else tomorrow. A route that was once straight now twists back upon itself. Winds blow unpredictably, storms move in opposition to those airstreams, mountains rise and fall—all in no apparent pattern. Observers write off such changes as a metaphor for the reality of living in the Elemental Chaos.

Nevertheless, chaos is a real force on this plane, no less so than fire or lightning, and it has its own ebb and flow. Elemental vessels such as *chaos gliders* latch on to something, and the same energy guides slaads and other entropic beings on their mysterious paths. Whether the currents of chaos are responsible for the fluctuations attributed to them is unclear, but no better explanation has been devised.

## UNSTABLE MUTABILITY

Islands drift, winds shift, water becomes fire, rivers change their course, and lightning carves tunnels through the lands. Travelers can't count on a specific destination being in the same place from one day to the next, or even on its having the same shape or being made of the same substance. Some regions

**Move Object:** Standard action.

- ◆ **DC:** The DC is based on the object's size—Tiny or smaller, DC 5; Small or Medium, DC 10; Large, DC 15; Huge, DC 20; Gargantuan, DC 25.
- ◆ **Success:** You move an unattended object. You move the object 1 square, +1 square for every 5 points by which you beat the DC.
- ◆ **Failure:** You can't try to move the same object until after a short rest.

**Alter Object:** Standard action.

- ◆ **DC:** The DC is based on the object's size—Tiny or smaller, DC 20; Small or Medium, DC 25; Large, DC 30; Huge, DC 35; Gargantuan, DC 40.
- ◆ **Success:** You change an unattended natural object into a different element or type of energy of the same size. For example, a boulder can be changed into a ball of fire.
- ◆ **Failure:** You can't try to alter the same object until after a short rest.

**Stabilize Area:** 1 minute.

- ◆ **DC:** The DC is 5 + 1 per square affected.
- ◆ **Success:** You lock an area into its current form for 24 hours. Double the area or the duration for every 5 points by which you beat the DC.
- ◆ **Failure:** You can't try to stabilize the same area until after an extended rest.

**Alter Area:** 1 minute.

- ◆ **DC:** The DC is 20 + 1 per square affected. Add 10 to the DC if the area has been stabilized (see above). Double the area or the duration for every 5 points by which you beat the DC.
- ◆ **Success:** You change the terrain of an area for 24 hours. For example, a bare rocky plain can be changed into a forest.
- ◆ **Failure:** You can't try to alter the same area until after an extended rest.

change constantly, hour by hour or minute by minute. Other places remain steady for hundreds or thousands of years, only to be suddenly reshaped in an instant by violent convulsions.

Most of the changes in the Elemental Chaos are random, but some transformations are driven by the will of living beings. So subject to change is the Plane Below that any powerful mind can shape its surroundings without magic, although certain rituals make the task easier. With concentration, a creature can cause an object to move or even change shape and substance: for example, a burning fire might be turned into a sculpture of ice, or a large uncut crystal into sandstone. An especially powerful being can even temporarily alter the nature of an entire area.

## INFLUENCING THE CHAOS

Creatures in the Elemental Chaos can alter their surroundings by spending a certain amount of time in

concentration and making a successful Intelligence check (see left).

Only unattended objects can be moved or altered. You can use this planar instability to create interesting encounters—terrain that rises and falls, footing that shifts from solid to liquid, pools of water that become flaming hazards.

## MUTABILITY IN COMBAT

Creatures strong in mind can attack enemies by manipulating the Elemental Chaos. This is an at-will basic attack, as described below.

This system requires some adjudication by the Dungeon Master as to its effects in combat. For a simpler combat option, see the *influence instability* power described below.

### Influence Instability

Basic Attack

*You bend the plane to your will, smashing a nearby object into your foe or creating energy that does it harm.*

**At-Will** ◆ see text

**Standard Action**      Ranged 15/30

**Target:** One creature

**Attack:** Intelligence vs. Reflex

**Special:** If you are trained in Arcana, you can add your implement's enhancement bonus to your attack roll. This power does not become an implement attack.

**Hit:** 2d10 + Intelligence modifier damage. This damage can be acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, radiant, thunder, or untyped.

**Level 21:** 4d10 + Intelligence modifier damage.

You can adjust the efficacy of this attack according to the locale, imposing a penalty to attack rolls in more stable realms or a bonus in easily altered areas.

## OPTIONAL RULE: VERY LONG RANGE

Weapons that hurl projectiles are usually constructed in the world, so the elemental buoyancy of the Elemental Chaos has no effect on their ammunition. But what happens if a character uses a projectile weapon that was constructed in the Elemental Chaos, or just decides to pick up and hurl a rock? Although such objects are not subject to gravity, they are nonetheless pulled off course by the currents of chaos that invisibly shape the Elemental Chaos, much as gravity acts on a missile in the world.

Where the churning chaos of the plane is somewhat quiescent, you might allow a projectile of elemental origin to gain an additional range category. Very long range extends from the limit of long range to twice that limit. Attacks made at very long range take a -5 penalty to attack rolls. Beyond that distance, even if the projectile encounters no other obstacles, hitting a target is impossible barring extraordinary circumstances and godlike aim.



## TRAVELING THE ELEMENTAL CHAOS

Navigating the Elemental Chaos is difficult. In the world, travelers can rely on landmarks, the sun, the stars, and a compass. Also, much of that realm can be reached by foot or boat. In contrast, the Plane Below features few dependable landmarks, and predictable foot travel is possible only in limited stable regions, such as the City of Brass, Zerthadlun, or the Canaughlin Bog (page 70).

Nevertheless, the Elemental Chaos does contain some stretches of solid surfaces. Some are composed of dangerous substances, but many are not inherently harder to traverse than regions of the world, except where they are broken by great chasms, impossibly tall peaks, walls of lightning, or rivers of acid. Some of these areas even contain reasonably permanent landmarks. Getting to such a surface, though, might be a greater challenge than traveling across it.

### RIDING THE CHAOS

Visitors to the plane who have no other options can try to “piggyback” on the drifting masses, though only the most desperate or most adventurous travelers practice such travel. A piggyback journey (sometimes called “riding the chaos”) requires hopping from one swift-moving body to another, making zigzag progress toward a final destination. Given the constant motion of the Elemental Chaos, it is only a matter of time before a stable mass drifts by in the right direction.

In some regions, suitable motes pass through regularly. In others, the masses are visible in the sky but difficult to reach. To make the jump between motes might require chartering a short flight on an airship, performing a teleportation ritual, or raising a floating stairway through sheer willpower. In the last resort, it might be possible for travelers to bribe a titan into hurling them across the gap.

Aside from the problem of reaching the mass, a traveler must determine which passing object is the best conveyance. Without some method of prediction,

### ELEMENTAL COLLISION

When large masses of elements collide, cataclysm results. One body might shatter the other, creating new, smaller masses in an instant of extreme violence. Sometimes one entity absorbs or encompasses the other, such as when an earthmote plunges into a vast ocean and becomes a sunken continent. The two objects might even transform each other: An earthmote and an enormous ball of fire might create a continent of lava, or a windstorm and an ocean of magma could give rise to a rain of fire.

By creating an impending elemental collision, you can set a time limit for characters’ heroics or provide an impetus for a dramatic escape.

riding the chaos is a matter of picking a habitable mass moving in the right direction and hoping it continues on that way. A common method of choosing a suitable drifting “vessel” was devised by the efreet, through a divining practice called *al-buraj*. Securing such assistance, however, always comes at a high price—and dealing with efreet is a perilous proposition. Other creatures might have a more instinctive understanding of the currents of chaos, but their guidance cannot be easily secured regardless of price.

### FLIGHT

Flight is available through spells or magic items, but most of those methods grant the ability for too short a time to be of much use in exploration. A character might be able to hop from one mote or vehicle to another, but that’s about it. Other sources of flight, such as *flying carpets* and mounts created by the Phantom Steed ritual, are limited by altitude restrictions and thus are incapable of flying between widely separated masses.

Some rituals and items grant long-distance flight, but even they are not without danger. In the world, when a flight effect wears off, a solid landing surface is often nearby. In the Elemental Chaos, no such guarantee exists. Additionally, some magical flight ends if the affected character takes any action other than flying. Getting into a fight while far away from a solid surface could be deadly. Only a few powers, such as the cleric’s *cloud chariot*, are truly effective means of long-range flight.

### TELEPORTATION

Because travel throughout the plane is so difficult, many settlements of the Elemental Chaos make use of teleportation circles. Such transport is common in the City of Brass and can be found in other efreet outposts, genasi and giant communities, githzerai monasteries, and Elemental Chaos-based headquarters of worldly factions and cults. The infamous Choking Palace (page 72) is said to have teleportation circles of solid smoke that slowly shift through a predetermined pattern, making them useful only at certain times.

Travelers can find teleportation circles at seemingly random points across the various drifting masses of the Elemental Chaos. Some are engraved bands that have known origins, marking the sites of old communities or strongholds. Others were created by secretive factions to facilitate unseen assemblies for purposes still concealed. Strangest of all, a few circles seem to have been created by nobody but appear fully formed from random fluctuations of chaos and magic. One infamous transport point, made of everburning flame, floats in empty space with no solid footing beneath.

Of course, teleportation circles are useful only to those familiar with their patterns. Some portal signatures (such as the public circles in the City of

Brass) can be learned through research, but many runic combinations require firsthand observation. As a result, teleportation is better as a way to return to a known location than as a tool for exploration.

## VEHICLES AND MOUNTS

Mounts and vehicles, including magic vessels, are common means of traversing the Elemental Chaos. Some adventuring parties purchase and crew their own, but most hire such conveyances.

Vehicles traveling to major trade centers and communities, such as the City of Brass and Gloamnull (page 74), are relatively easy to find. The farther one travels from the centers of the plane's civilizations, though, the scarcer such vessels become.

The Brazen Bazaar (page 68) is a caravan of wagons that travels the Elemental Chaos, sometimes stopping in the world or on other planes. Travelers are allowed to accompany it if they can afford a modest fee and shoulder their own load. Voyagers who shirk their duties, do not pay enough, or anger the caravan attendant risk becoming just another commodity sold to or by the efreets.

### ELEMENTAL CHAOS VEHICLES AND MOUNTS

Mount or Vehicle	Overland Speed	Miles per Day	Miles per Hour
Airship (AV 18)	fly 15	180 <sup>1</sup>	7½
Apparatus of Kwalish (AV 17)	6, swim 6	15, 15	3, 3
Chaos glider	fly 10	120 <sup>1</sup>	5
Chaos ship	fly 12	144 <sup>1</sup>	6
Gorgon, iron (MM 143)	6	30	3
Gorgon, storm (MM 143)	fly 10	50	5
Griffon (MM 147)	fly 15	75	7½
Griffon, rimefire (MM 147)	fly 15	75	7½
Hippogriff (MM 146)	fly 15	75	7½
Hippogriff dreadmount (MM 146)	fly 12	60	6
Lightning skiff <sup>3</sup>	fly 100	1,200 <sup>1</sup>	50
Ornithopter (AV 19)	fly 5	25	2½
Planar dromond (MP 159) <sup>2,4</sup>	swim 5	60 <sup>1</sup>	2½
Spelljammer (MP 159) <sup>2</sup>	fly 15	180 <sup>1</sup>	7½
Thunderhawk (MM 221)	fly 15	75	7½

AV = *Adventurer's Vault*

MM = *Monster Manual*

MP = *Manual of the Planes*

1: This vessel can travel 24 hours per day, rather than 10.

2: This vessel can cross from one plane to another.

3: *Lightning skiffs* "ride" lightning from place to place. If no storms or other sources of lightning exist in a region, a skiff cannot travel there.

4: Normal *planar dromonds* are capable of traveling only through water, but many such vessels are enchanted to survive damaging liquids such as magma or acid. A few have outriggers resembling skis that can be lowered for sailing across thick mud, snow, or loose-packed sand or salt; this sort of travel reduces overland speed by half.

Many travelers prefer to ride beasts native to the Elemental Chaos, such as rimefire griffons, because such mounts can easily find their way in the wild plane. Natural creatures such as hippogriffs are also common, but more suitable for short-distance transport. In general, mounts are riskier than inanimate vessels—a safe place to set down might not be available when the beast tires.

Some characters strike bargains with great creatures of the Elemental Chaos to transport them safely. Referring to them as mounts is grievously insulting to such intelligent beings, though; they are best treated as companions. The dragon eel is one such creature, as are tempest dragons and pyroclastic dragons (see *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons*), although they require travelers to find a way to endure their damaging auras.

### VEHICLE AND MOUNT TRAVEL TIMES

The *Player's Handbook* (page 261) gives travel times for basic mounts and vessels. The *Adventurer's Vault* supplement (page 15) covers a wider variety. The table on this page presents vehicles and mounts common or well suited to the Elemental Chaos.

In addition to the terrain modifiers given on page 261 of the *Player's Handbook*, use the following modifier for Elemental Chaos travel using creatures that are not native to the plane.

### ELEMENTAL CHAOS TRAVEL MODIFIER

Multiplier	Circumstance
×3/4	Nonelemental mount

*Spelljammers* and *planar dromonds* are most commonly associated with the Elemental Chaos, but other vehicles have been developed for travel in the plane. They are described below.

#### Lightning Skiff

Gargantuan vehicle

HP 250 Space 2 squares by 4 squares Cost 20,000 gp

AC 4; Fortitude 20, Reflex 2

Immune lightning

Speed fly 100

Pilot

The pilot must stand at a control wheel, typically at the rear of the *lightning skiff*.

Crew

In addition to the pilot, a *lightning skiff* requires a crew of three, all of whom use a standard action each round to control the vehicle. Reduce the *lightning skiff's* fly speed by 40 for each missing crew member. At fly speed 0, the *lightning skiff* sails out of control.

Load

Ten Medium creatures; one ton of cargo.

Out of Control

An out-of-control *lightning skiff* moves along the lightning at half speed.

Lightning Keel

A *lightning skiff* flies along lightning. Lightning that the skiff is riding cannot harm its pilot, crew, or passengers.

### Chaos Glider

Huge vehicle

HP 100 Space 2 squares by 3 squares Cost 13,000 gp

AC 4; Fortitude 12, Reflex 4

Speed fly 10

#### Pilot

The pilot must control the *chaos glider's* wings with both hands.

#### Crew

In addition to the pilot, a *chaos glider* requires a crew of four, all of whom use a standard action each round to control the vehicle. Reduce the glider's fly speed by 4 for each missing crew member. At fly speed 0, the *chaos glider* sails out of control.

#### Load

Six Medium creatures; 100 pounds of cargo.

#### Out of Control

An out-of-control *chaos glider* moves at half speed in a random direction.

#### Chaos Propulsion

A *chaos glider* rides the currents of chaotic energy that ripple through the Elemental Chaos, so it functions only there. Its propulsion is uncertain at best. Passengers on a *chaos glider* can be becalmed at times, tossed to unknown locations, or hurled to their destination in the blink of an eye. On average, a glider moves at its listed speed.

### Chaos Ship

Colossal vehicle

HP 2,000 Space 27 squares by 16 squares Cost n/a

AC 3; Fortitude 20, Reflex 2

Speed fly 12 (hover), overland flight 15

#### Pilot

The pilot must stand at the wheel, which sits atop the sterncastle deck. The wheel is mounted on a gimballed lever that controls pitch and altitude. Cables running beneath the deck connect to three *anarch sphere* cradles. These *anarch spheres* provide motive power and lift. The ship will hover without a pilot or crew, but forward motion requires both.

#### Crew

In addition to the pilot, a *chaos ship* requires a crew of three for any movement other than hovering. Each must be stationed adjacent to one of the three inset *anarch spheres*. Each of the crew must spend a standard action each round to help control the vessel once it is under way. Reduce the ship's fly speed by 4 for each missing crew member. If the ship reaches fly speed 0 on any given round after it is under way, the ship is unable to be steered and flies out of control. Once it is out of control, regaining control requires 3 consecutive rounds with the pilot and three crew members manning their stations.

#### Load

200 Medium creatures; 4,000 tons of cargo.

#### Out of Control

When the ship is out of control, it moves forward at half speed. Each round, roll a d20. On a roll of 1-5, the ship descends. It descends 5 squares per round for the first 10 rounds it's out of control. After 10 rounds, it descends 10 squares per round. If the ship hits a solid mote in the Elemental Chaos or the Abyss after traveling out of control for more than 20 rounds, it is destroyed.

#### Chaos Attunement

A *chaos ship* functions only in the Elemental Chaos and the Abyss.

#### Wheel and Three Anarch Spheres (Navigation Focus)

This vehicle is equipped with three *anarch spheres*, which serve as the navigation focus for the wheel mounted on top of the sterncastle deck.

## FINDING YOUR WAY

Up and down are never in doubt in the Plane Below, but cardinal compass points are meaningless. No sun rises or sets to establish direction. Landmasses drift continually. That anyone can find a route through this constantly shifting place is amazing. Travelers who can see their destination are not likely to get lost. Otherwise, navigation is a constant concern.

Elemental creatures have an instinctive sense of the flow of chaos in their environment and might guide outsiders who request their services. Some beings, such as efreet, claim to recognize patterns in the plane's seemingly random fluctuations. Natives can use either Arcana or Nature to navigate, as can outsiders who have spent several months within the Elemental Chaos and have grown somewhat acclimatized to its turbulence. Other explorers can use only Arcana. The "Lost in the Wilderness" skill challenge (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 79) and the "Sailing the Sea of Fire" skill challenge on page 27 are good examples of how to handle navigation in the Plane Below.

## THE CHAOS SHIP: RIDING IN STYLE

The most dependable way of traversing the Plane Below is on a *chaos ship*. Only a few of these enormous vessels exist, and finding one or booking passage on it might not be easy, but for many adventurers it's worth the effort.

The upper deck of a typical *chaos ship* is 130 feet from stem to stern. A 5-foot-high railing surrounds the upper deck. The railing holds stanchions every 5 feet, through which hawsers can be tied to secure crew or cargo.

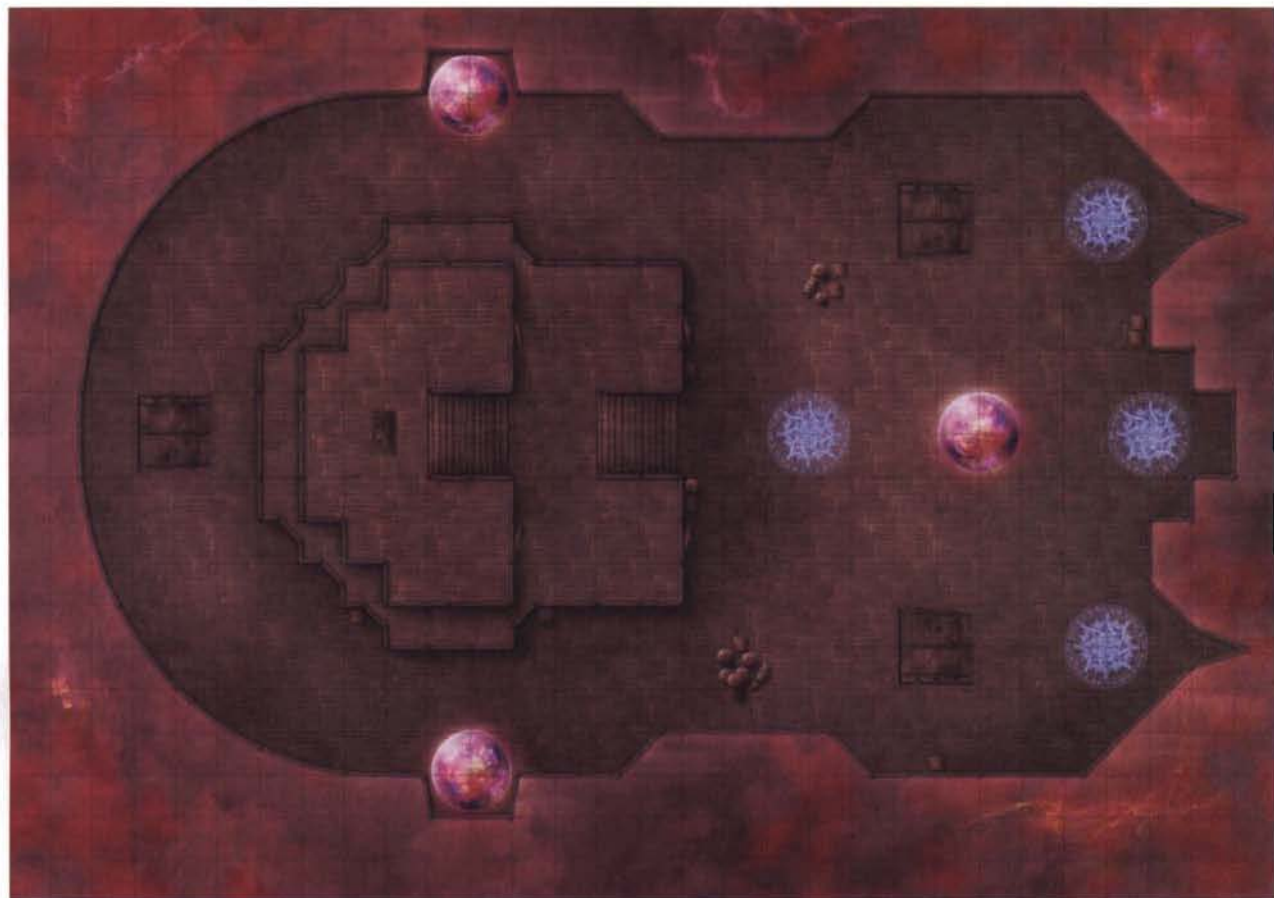
One of these vehicles plays a major part in the epic tier adventure *Prince of Undeath*. The illustration on the facing page depicts a *chaos ship's* major features.

**Sterncastle:** This two-story structure occupies much of the ship's stern. One set of stairs provides access to the first level, and a second set of stairs to the second level. The top level of the sterncastle contains the wheel that steers the craft.

**Hatches:** The three hatches on the main deck lead to the belowdecks areas where cargo is stored.

**Anarch Spheres:** These three crystal spheres sit in cradles. Each contains the bottled essence of chaos, and provides the ship's motive power.

**Magic Circles:** Each of these inscribed circles provides teleportation access to a different, distant location, depending on the ship's current position and the rituals used to create the circles.



## FEATURES OF THE PLANE

A spike of solid thunder erupts from a bubbling magma field before dissipating into storm clouds. The clouds spawn torrential rains that solidify the magma. This igneous rock shatters into a swarm of earthmotes, which crash into a sea of acid. The impact creates a tidal wave that spills into volatile lakes of liquid lightning hugging a rime-covered shore. An explosion melts the icy beach and pushes a river out into the clear skies. That rushing torrent slams into a plain of fire. The confluence of opposing elements hisses into a steam geyser, a half-mile wide and incredibly high. The elemental steam is so hot that it vaporizes everything nearby.

Such chaotic manifestations continually shake the Plane Below. Some sections of the plane are hospitable to the primordials alone. Other swaths are inhabited only by creatures spawned from the churning crucible, or those magically protected from its violent extremes.

Still, not all areas of the Elemental Chaos are anathema to visitors. In the infinity of this fundamental plane, countless areas and paths exist that nonnatives can travel. Surviving such a journey requires some preparation, a good dose of daring, and a careful step.

You can use the following tools to create evocative and interactive encounter environments in the Elemental Chaos and the Abyss. A brief description of strange weather and environments in the plane is followed by details of several new types of fantastic terrain. Finally, this section presents hazards and skill challenges to spice up elemental encounters.

## WEATHER AND ENVIRONMENTAL DANGERS

The weather found in the world also manifests in the Elemental Chaos, although often more violent. Locales are obscured by fog, blinded by blizzards, and pummeled by rain, tornadoes, sand storms, and gales. Stranger forms of weather also exist—ice mists, acidic rain, fiery cyclones, and gales of boulders.

The Endure Elements ritual is a handy tool for traversing the Elemental Chaos, but it has its limits. The more hospitable sections of the plane feature temperatures between the natural-world extremes of  $-50$  and  $140$  degrees Fahrenheit, but temperatures in most of the plane's regions extend beyond this range. In addition, the atmosphere can vary significantly in the blink of an eye. In areas of extreme temperatures,

creatures without protection expire quickly, and even warded individuals can hold out for only so long.

The Endurance skill gauges a character's ability to withstand environmental dangers. For normal dangers found in the world and in the hospitable areas of the Elemental Chaos (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 159), a character must succeed on an Endurance check every 8 hours or lose a healing surge, unless under the protection of Endure Elements. Within less hospitable areas, the Endurance check DCs do not increase dramatically, but the frequency of checks does. Characters without the protection of Endure Elements must make a check every 5 minutes or lose a healing surge. Those protected by the ritual must make a check every 8 hours or lose a healing surge.

Extreme conditions in the Elemental Chaos are described below. Although the Endure Elements ritual neutralizes most natural dangers, the environmental threats of the Elemental Chaos are more severe. The term "primordial" indicates an extreme that requires a character to make Endurance checks even when protected by Endure Elements. For such regions, the Endure Primordial Elements ritual provides more reliable protection. (See the "Greater Danger, Greater Magic" sidebar.)

Condition	Endurance DC
Primordial storms	20
Primordial winds	21
Primordial cold	22
Primordial heat	22
No air	26*
Frigid primordial cold	26
Stifling primordial heat	26
Primordial smoke or ash	26
Mutating primordial chaos	31

\* This check must be made every minute, rather than every 5 minutes, and Endure Elements does not lessen the frequency.

## GREATER DANGER, GREATER MAGIC

In many areas of the Elemental Chaos, the Endure Elements ritual reduces but does not eliminate environmental dangers. These extreme situations require a more powerful and much rarer ritual: Endure Primordial Elements.

Both rituals turn environmental dangers "on and off." Not until a character reaches the higher paragon tier is he or she able to overcome more intense elements by using the Endure Primordial Elements ritual.

Remember that these rituals protect characters from the ambient atmosphere and normal precipitation dangers of the plane. They do not protect characters from elemental attacks originating from terrain, hazards, or the powers of elemental creatures.

## ENDURE PRIMORDIAL ELEMENTS

*Flames lick you, or lightning crackles around you, but you pay these threats no mind.*

**Level:** 17

**Category:** Exploration

**Time:** 10 minutes

**Duration:** 24 hours

**Component Cost:** 4,300 gp

**Market Price:** 12,000 gp

**Key Skill:** Arcana (no check)

You designate up to eight ritual participants, including yourself, who ignore penalties and Endurance checks associated with the extreme weather and environments of the Elemental Chaos.

An affected creature and its equipment ignore ill effects from extreme temperatures and other ambient threats. Creatures' attacks, terrain features, and traps or hazards are still potential dangers. In areas where you would normally have to make Endurance checks every 8 hours while under the effect of Endure Elements, you need not make any checks while under the effect of Endure Primordial Elements.

## ELEMENTAL FANTASTIC TERRAIN

Compared to even the most bizarre areas of the world, the strange terrain of the Elemental Chaos is fantastic. Few creatures other than the efreets can swim the Sea of Fire, and only the hardiest of elemental beings can survive the deadly pummeling of an earth storm. Other places are so alive with churning, warping elemental energy that they seem to come alive when creatures venture too near.

The following hazards only scratch the surface of the variety of fantastic terrain that exists throughout the Plane Below. You can use these selections to create a variety of features to add an unexpected twist to encounters, or mix their material and functions to create new and exciting terrain of your own: crawling ice, frozen lightning, or fire mist.

Some of the hazardous terrain described below is typical of the Abyss. Nevertheless, the ever-shifting nature of the Elemental Chaos means that such dangers might appear anywhere in the plane.

### ACIDIC MIRE

Any quagmire can be dangerous and debilitating. In the Elemental Chaos, a swampy area filled with caustic liquid makes the peril far worse. Seas composed of flesh-dissolving liquids are bordered by shores riddled with moors that churn with acid bubbling up from below. Such confluences of muck and acid are deadly to traverse, so creatures that crave solitude build bastions amid this inhospitable terrain.

**Effect:** A square of acidic mire is difficult terrain for creatures without earth walk. They sink into the mire, muck clinging to flesh and clothing. In

addition, any creature that starts its turn in a square of acidic bog takes ongoing 5 acid damage per tier and is slowed (save ends both).

**Usage:** Acidic mire requires characters to trudge more slowly through an area. Artillery or controller monsters take advantage of such terrain to hinder melee attackers.

## BONEPOWDER HAZE

In desolate sections of the Abyss, especially the dread region of Thanatos (*Manual of the Planes*, page 82), strange clouds of fine, white powder hover in the air and crackle with necrotic energy. This strange haze saps the life force of creatures within it, dissipating or corrupting that life force to empower nearby undead.

**Effect:** Fields of bonepowder haze are lightly obscured. Any living creature within a square containing this terrain regains only one-half normal hit points from healing effects. Furthermore, whenever a living creature receives a healing effect while in bonepowder haze, each undead creature within 3 squares of it gains a +2 power bonus to attack rolls until the end of the undead creature's next turn.

**Usage:** Pairing bonepowder haze with undead is a no-brainer. Even without undead, the haze makes any combat more dangerous by degrading healing. Brutes wade into the haze, knowing that the damage of their powerful strikes will persist longer. You can position artillery at the edge of a field of bonepowder haze to obscure the enemy and also hinder ranged counterattacks.

## CHAOS BREATH

An area of chaos breath contains powerful, unpredictable wind gusts that extend high into the atmosphere, equally affecting flying and grounded creatures. The gusts occupy several areas, each 1 to 4 squares across. The currents react to movement and other disturbances, making them appear to be aware.

**Effect:** When a creature enters a square containing chaos breath or starts its turn there, it slides 1d4 squares in a random direction and must make a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone. Creatures that are already allowed a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone gain a +2 bonus to this saving throw.

A creature within a square of chaos breath can attempt an easy Athletics or Acrobatics check to reduce the distance of the slide by 1 square, plus 1 square for every 5 points by which the check result beats the DC. A creature that does not slide any distance is not knocked prone.

**Usage:** Chaos breath confounds strategic maneuvering by adding unpredictability to movement. Since this terrain is difficult to spot (requiring a hard Perception check), it can catch both sides in a conflict off guard.

Because of the variability of the Elemental Chaos, the effect of chaos breath might not be consistently applied in all cases. In certain areas, the gusts might not be strong enough to affect larger creatures. Air creatures might sense an area of chaos breath and avoid it, or can have an innate resistance to its effect at your discretion.

To create more disarray—and more complexity—you could have chaos breath potentially affect the entire encounter area instead of specific squares within it. Each creature has a chance of being caught in a gust at the start of its turn, perhaps on a roll of 1–4 on a d20.

## CRAWLING EARTH

The substance of the Elemental Chaos sometimes exhibits a destructive will, especially in the form of elementals, but sentience is not necessary for the semblance of living behavior. A prime example is crawling earth, which resembles normal ground but animates when stepped on, then quiets after a few moments.

**Effect:** When any creature ends its movement in a square of crawling earth, it triggers that square and any contiguous squares containing that terrain. The ground rises up and moves 1d4 squares in a random direction, carrying along any creature in that space. The movement is so quick and jarring that a creature in a square of crawling earth must make a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone.

A section of crawling earth is usually no larger than 4 squares on a side, but wider areas exist in particularly unstable sections of the Elemental Chaos.

**Usage:** The Elemental Chaos contains several fantastic terrain types that create a dynamic environment, but crawling earth does the best job. Such terrain discourages creatures from ending their movement in certain spaces, forcing them to move farther than they otherwise would (which favors melee combatants) or discouraging movement altogether (making them easy prey for ranged attacks). You might also set the crawling earth's movement in a specific direction or toward a given point to push the action a certain way or to enhance monsters' control effects.

## DEMON JAGS

These areas of sharp, rugged stone are formed when demons are trampled by other demons or otherwise violently absorbed into the surrounding surface. Most commonly encountered in the Abyss, demon jags could occur anywhere a demonic horde swarms.

**Effect:** Squares containing demon jags are difficult terrain, but any creature can move through the space normally by taking 5 damage per tier for each square entered. Demons are immune to this effect—the spars yield to their passing or retract into the



Ice  
Maws

ground. Furthermore, a demon occupying a square of demon jags can use its variable resistance without reducing its limit for the current encounter.

**Usage:** Demon jags serve well as walls and ramps in demon lairs. Those unusual demons that have any degree of patience use the jags to slow or wear down approaching enemies.

## DEMON SLICK

Dangerous and debilitating, this odd black slime is a common terrain feature throughout the Abyss. It is particularly widespread where large numbers of demons congregate for long periods of time.

**Effect:** The vile gunk smells foul and makes footing treacherous, creating large areas of difficult terrain. Any nondemon creature that ends its turn in a square of demon slick takes 5 acid and poison damage per tier. In addition, the oily slick responds to certain attacks by extending and latching onto creatures within it. Any creature that is hit by an acid or poison attack while in a square of demon slick takes ongoing 5 acid and poison damage per tier (save ends).

**Usage:** Demon slick is a natural complement to demons that have acid or poison attacks, such as bebiliths, mezzodemons, and vrocks. Against characters without protection against such types of damage, the demons' debilitating attacks are even more effective.

## EARTHFLOW

The world suffers the occasional mudslide or avalanche. In the Elemental Chaos, earth moves constantly in rivers of rock, dirt, or mud.

**Effect:** Each area of earthflow has a direction of current (see "Underwater Terrain," *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 45). Different sections of a single area could flow in different directions, creating a particularly turbulent earthcourse.

Earthflow squares are difficult terrain. Each creature within an earthflow area at the start of its turn slides 3 squares in the direction of flow. If the creature is forced into an area with a different flow direction, it slides the remaining distance in the new direction. The creature must also make an Acrobatics or Athletics check to avoid sinking into the flow and becoming grabbed. (Use the "Skill Check Difficulty Class by Level" table on page 24 to set appropriate DCs and difficulty.)

Creatures that have earth walk ignore all earthflow effects.

**Usage:** Earthflow terrain forces the characters in a certain direction or puts them at a disadvantage against creatures that have earth walk. An entire encounter area filled with earthflow can be frustrating, though, so be sure the encounter contains other terrain and rewards clever use of skills to bypass the earthflow.

## ELEMENTAL SPOUT

Eruptions of material or elemental energy are a common occurrence in the Plane Below. Any substance can issue forth from solid surfaces, bodies of liquid, raging storms, or empty air.

**Effect:** An elemental spout fills a burst, 1 square per tier, centered on a particular origin square. The spout might erupt at intervals or when a creature moves within 1 square of the burst's center. For interval eruptions, the spout rolls initiative at the start of combat or takes effect at a specific time in a round; for an erratic spout, you might roll initiative each round.

The effect of an elemental spout depends on the type of energy or material it disgorges. A summary of common elemental spouts and their effects follows. Exotic spouts also exist that contain more than one substance.

**Acid:** 5 acid damage per tier, and ongoing 5 acid damage per tier (save ends).

**Frost:** 5 cold damage per tier, and the target is slowed (save ends).

**Lightning:** 5 lightning damage per tier, and the target is dazed (save ends). If a target is already dazed, it is instead stunned (save ends).

**Magma:** 5 fire damage per tier, and ongoing 5 fire damage per tier (save ends).

**Poison Gas:** 5 poison damage per tier, and the target is weakened (save ends).

**Scalding Slick:** 5 fire damage per tier, and the target is knocked prone.

**Thunder:** 5 thunder damage per tier, and the target is pushed 2 squares from the spout's origin square.

**Usage:** Elemental spouts break up an encounter area and give the characters a reason to move in certain ways, whether to avoid the effects of the spouts or to use them in a clever tactical way. Creatures that have resistance or are immune to a spout's effects can take advantage of the spout to block and damage enemies.

## ENERGY ALTERATION FIELD

The air sparkles and the ground buzzes in the area of an energy alteration field. The terrain can be as big as an entire encounter area or as small as a few squares on a side.

**Effect:** When a creature within the field makes an attack that has a damage type, or such an attack targets a creature or a square within the field, the attack's damage type changes. For an attack that has an area of effect, the damage type changes only in the part of the area of effect that overlaps the field.

Energy alteration fields are inherently chaotic, each one producing a different effect. Use the following table to determine the new damage type, rolling once for each of the attack's damage types. If the new damage type is the same, nothing happens; an attack that has two or more damage types ends up with only one instead.

d8	Energy	d8	Energy
1	Acid	5	Lightning
2	Cold	6	Poison
3	Fire	7	Radiant
4	Force	8	Thunder

Creatures trained in Arcana can manipulate an energy alteration field as a minor action.

**Arcana Easy DC:** A successful check allows a creature to make one target ignore the effect of the energy alteration field until the end of that target's next turn.

**Arcana Moderate DC:** A successful check allows a creature to change the damage type of its attacks within the field to any other type that the field allows. This effect lasts until the start of the creature's next turn.

**Arcana Hard DC:** A successful check allows a creature to change the damage type of all attacks within the field to any other type that the field allows. This effect lasts until the start of the creature's next turn.

**Usage:** An energy alteration field lets characters and monsters alike tinker with their damage types and adds a surprise element to an encounter. It can be key strategic terrain in a battle, allowing a creature that specializes in limited damage types to diversify or to affect creatures that normally have resistance to such damage.

## FROZEN FIRE

Portions of the Elemental Chaos experience cold so intense that even fire freezes. In other areas, fire and ice mingle in ways that are contradictory to minds that are familiar only with the natural world. This mixing of opposites is highly unstable—the subtlest change in the surroundings can cause a dramatic explosion.

**Effect:** Patches of frozen fire are usually no larger than 6 contiguous squares, but larger areas can exist. When a creature without the cold keyword enters a square adjacent to frozen fire, or a square of frozen fire is subjected to fire, lightning, or thunder damage, that square explodes. The effect is a close burst 1, centered on the origin square, dealing 1d8 cold and fire damage per tier.

**Usage:** An encounter area containing several regions of frozen fire tightly limits safe zones on the battlefield. Such control particularly favors soldiers, forcing characters to make hard tactical choices during combat.

## ICE MAWS

These expanses of permafrost seem tranquil from a distance, but when a creature approaches, the frozen ground seems to come alive with mouthlike openings that snap at the creature's feet. The voracious maws are individually small and slow, but their collective bite is debilitating.

**Effect:** If a creature without ice walk starts and ends its turn in the same ice maws space, it takes 5 cold damage per tier and is immobilized (save ends). The affected creature cannot make a saving throw against this effect until the end of its next turn.

**Usage:** Large sections of ice maws can encourage characters to pass through an encounter area with haste and discourage ranged attackers from staying in one place. Ice archons are well known for using ice maws to protect their crystalline fortresses.

## EXOTIC TERRAIN, STANDARD EFFECTS

The Elemental Chaos is a place of wild magic and shifting elements, but not all its terrain requires special rules. You can adjust normal-seeming terrain to have unusual features that bring the Plane Below to life. A seeming lake might be traversed as if it were solid land. Stone might flow like water and use the same rules for combat and movement. Lightning could crawl slowly from the earth to the sky, allowing a creature to climb it as if it were a beanstalk.



## FANTASTIC TERRAIN FROM OTHER SOURCES

Several other D&D books contain fantastic terrain that can be found in the Elemental Chaos.

### DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE

Blood rock (page 67)

Choke frost (page 67)

Loadstone (page 68)

Mirror crystal (page 68)

Slides (page 68)

Whirlwind (page 69)

### DUNGEON MASTER'S GUIDE 2

Blast cloud (page 58)

Bolt stone (page 58)

Creeping ice (page 58)

Elemental windchurn (page 59)

Energy node (page 59)

Grasping bog (page 60)

Jade flame (page 60)

Rage stone (page 61)

Thunder shards (page 61)

### MANUAL OF THE PLANES

Abyssal wellspring (page 21)

Elemental seepage (page 22)

Phase rock (page 22)

Energy crystals (page 22)

## INFECTIOUS PALLOR

Pockets of diseased air drift through the Abyss. These vapors are often invisible, and those that can be seen appear innocuous. Light within an area of infectious pallor looks slightly different from that in surrounding areas. Also, creatures within this terrain appear sickly and wan, and any wounds they take seem to ooze with infection.

**Effect:** Each area of infectious pallor carries a specific disease (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, pages 49–50). Any creature that starts and ends its turn in a square of infectious pallor (even if they are different squares in the same area) is exposed to that disease. A common plague of the Abyss is demon pox, described below.

**Usage:** This terrain works well with undead and elemental creatures, both of which are commonly immune to disease and have no fear of being within the area. The disease you pick determines how scary the pallor is. Try positioning this terrain around areas that you want to be challenging to reach, or in places you want characters to pass through quickly.

## LIGHTNING MIST

These fields of gray-blue fog that drift slowly through the Elemental Chaos are hazardous to traverse quickly. Lightning mist typically coalesces into an area 5 squares on a side, but masses miles wide and just as deep are not unknown in treacherous territories.

**Effect:** When the particles within the mist are stirred, a charge of electricity lashes out. Any creature that enters more than 2 squares of lightning mist during a single move action takes 5 lightning damage per tier. Squares containing the mist are lightly obscured.

**Usage:** Lightning mist forces creatures to slow down or suffer the consequences. Artillery monsters zero in on slowly moving creatures within the mist, gaining more attacks at a slight cost to accuracy. Elemental creatures that have resistance or are immune to lightning damage thrive in these areas.

## LIQUID THUNDER

After a powerful elemental storm ravages an area of the Elemental Chaos, gray and placid pools are left behind. These innocuous-looking puddles are actually highly volatile liquid coalesced from the force of the storm. Liquid thunder pools are so unstable that they are rarely larger than 1 square.

**Effect:** A pool of liquid thunder remains calm and mirrorlike until a creature or an object enters it. It then releases the tremendous thunder stored within it, blasting a creature in its square and each creature adjacent to that square. The force of the blast hurls the affected creatures 10 feet per tier into the air. Any creature that falls back to the ground takes 1d10 damage per tier; it can make an Acrobatics check as normal to reduce the falling damage.

### Demon Pox

Level 5+ Disease

*Typically delivered by infectious pallors that waft through the Abyss, demon pox can also be contracted from the melee attacks of infected demons.*

**Attack:** Encounter level + 3 or demon level + 3 vs. Fortitude

**Endurance** improve DC 15 + encounter level or demon level, maintain DC 10 + encounter level or demon level, worsen DC 9 + encounter level or demon level or lower

The target is cured. **Initial Effect:** The target develops a multicolored rash of disgusting pox. Whenever a critical hit is scored against the target, it takes 1d10 extra damage and is dazed (save ends).

**Initial Effect:** The pox begins to ooze and scab over. The target loses a healing surge until it is cured. Whenever a critical hit is scored against the target, it takes 1d10 extra damage and is dazed (save ends). While the target is bloodied, it is also slowed.

**Final State:** The target dies and 1d6 dretches (*Monster Manual 2*, page 54) tear free from its corpse.

**Usage:** Liquid thunder is a simple but dangerous obstruction. Creatures that have forced movement powers use it to great effect.

## PHASE CRYSTAL

This translucent, silvery crystal is related to phase rock (*Manual of the Planes*, page 22). It can be induced to discharge its extradimensional energy and shunt a creature out of phase for a short time.

**Effect:** When a creature ends its move in a square of phase crystal, it gains phasing until the end of its next turn. That square cannot affect another creature until the end of the encounter.

**Usage:** Combined with obstacles that restrict a battlefield, phase crystal allows characters or monsters greater mobility. You can restrict the terrain's effect by limiting the number of squares it covers. Try not to use phase crystal as the only way to get to a special area or encounter unless the terrain is large enough to affect the entire party at one time.

## PRIMORDIAL FONT

Volatile fountains of liquid elemental energy can erupt anywhere in the Elemental Chaos, changing those who bathe in them.

**Effect:** A creature that remains in a square containing a primordial font for its entire turn gains a random elemental keyword and an accompanying benefit, as shown in the table below. Alternatively, a creature in the font's square can spend a standard action to splash the liquid over itself, gaining the keyword and the accompanying benefit even if it does not end its turn in the font.

Whenever a creature gains a primordial font effect and is already under the effect of a previous result, the prior effect ends. Otherwise, a creature that is under a primordial font's effect rolls a d20 at the end of its turn. On a result of 9 or lower, the effect ends.

Creatures of the elemental origin that are affected by a primordial font can make a saving throw to avoid its effect.

d6	Keyword	Effect
1	Earth	You gain resist 5 to all damage.
2	Fire	You deal 1d6 extra fire damage per tier with melee attacks.
3	Ice	Each creature that starts its turn adjacent to you is slowed until the start of your next turn.
4	Lightning	Until the start of your next turn, you don't grant combat advantage or take a -5 penalty to attack rolls when you run.
5	Thunder	Each creature that starts its turn adjacent to you is dazed until the start of your next turn.
6	Water	You can shift as a minor action.

**Usage:** Primordial fonts create interesting random interactions for monsters and characters alike. You can place them in an encounter when you want a strange and unpredictable battle. Alternatively, primordial fonts are useful in areas containing portals or other restricted zones that are accessible only to creatures that have a certain elemental keyword.

## STRANGLING WIND

The pressure of this wind is so great, and its blasts so turbulent, that it slows and even suffocates those who push themselves too hard. The winds are strong enough to hinder the accuracy of ranged and area attacks (even magical ones). A jet of strangling wind is typically 3 squares wide and 6 to 8 squares long at paragon tier, and 5 squares by 10 squares at epic tier.

**Effect:** A creature that starts its turn in a square of strangling wind is slowed until the start of its next turn. A creature that runs or takes a double move in strangling wind is dazed (save ends) at the end of that movement, even if it is no longer within the wind's area. With each failed saving throw, the target loses a healing surge.

Creatures take a -5 penalty to attack rolls with ranged or area attacks launched within or into an area of strangling wind.

**Usage:** Strangling wind makes a formidable barrier that penalizes creatures trying to move quickly through the area. Elemental brutes and soldiers, such as rockfire dreadnoughts (*Monster Manual*, page 104) and demons, love fighting in strangling wind. They can take their time beating the pulp out of their enemies without worrying much about ranged attacks.

## WRATH MUD

In parts of the Abyss, the land itself is subject to the insane rage that twists and contorts reality. Certain stinking bogs contain eerie mud that saps the sanity from creatures within it, pushing them to violence through psychic pain. The mud has a normal consistency but features an oily sheen, reflecting light in a swirling rainbow of sickly color.

**Effect:** Areas of wrath mud are difficult terrain. Any creature within a square of wrath mud that scores a critical hit with a melee attack deals 1d10 extra damage per tier on that attack. Furthermore, a creature that starts its turn in a square of wrath mud and does not make a melee attack before the end of its turn takes 5 psychic damage per tier.

**Usage:** Wrath mud is similar to, but more unforgiving than, blood rock (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 67). It is typically used to create bottlenecks that force bloody melee battles—the kind of fight that demons enjoy most.

# ELEMENTAL HAZARDS

The wilds of the Elemental Chaos are as dangerous as any of the plane's inhabitants. A variety of hazards threaten the unwary, and even natives give certain areas a wide berth. The hazards presented here expand on those in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* and *Manual of the Planes*.

## Gorgon Mud Level 8 Obstacle Hazard XP 350

*This viscous green mud forms pockets in bogs and soft ground. It erupts around those who disturb it to clutch at their feet, then hardens into an earthen prison.*

**Hazard:** This hazard consists of 10 squares positioned in a larger field of mud or soft earth. The hazard affects any creature that enters one of its squares.

### Perception

◆ DC 19: The character can discern if any adjacent squares contain gorgon mud.

### Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 14: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.

### Trigger

When a creature enters a square of gorgon mud, the hazard attacks.

### Attack

#### Opportunity Action Melee

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Special:** A creature that has earth walk or that is immune to petrification is immune to the effect of gorgon mud.

**Attack:** +11 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** The target is immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Saving*

*Throw:* The target is restrained (save ends). *Second Failed*

*Saving Throw:* The target is petrified (save ends).

**Miss:** The target is slowed (save ends).

### Countermeasures

◆ A character can make a DC 14 Athletics check to grant himself or herself or an adjacent creature a +2 bonus to the next saving throw against the mud's effect.

◆ A character who makes a DC 19 Arcana check siphons the elemental energy from the mud, rendering inert 1 square, plus 1 square for every 5 points by which the check result beats the DC.

### Upgrade to Elite (700 XP)

◆ Increase the DCs for Perception, Athletics, and Arcana checks by 2.

◆ If the target fails a saving throw against the petrified effect, a save can no longer end that effect. The target's allies must physically break away the hardened mud (AC 2; Reflex 2, Fortitude 15; hp 90). Each attack that deals damage to the hardened mud deals the same amount of damage to the trapped target (reduced by the petrified condition's resist 20 to all damage).

## Luminous Node

## Level 11 Blaster

Hazard

XP 600

*A glowing elemental mass pulses randomly, occasionally releasing lances of energy.*

**Hazard:** The node usually occupies 1 square, but it can be as big as 3 squares on a side. The node deals fire, force, lightning, or radiant damage (choose one or roll a d4). Its energy is attracted to moving bodies within range. Creatures can enter the node's space.

### Perception

A luminous node sheds bright light in a 10-square radius. No check is required to notice it.

### Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 21: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.

**Initiative** +2

### Trigger

When a creature enters a square within 10 squares of the luminous node's space, the hazard rolls initiative. The hazard also makes an opportunity attack against a creature that enters or starts its turn in the node's space.

### Attack

**Standard Action** Ranged 10

or **Opportunity Action**

**Target:** One creature or the triggering creature

**Attack:** +15 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 2d8 + 5 damage of a type from the following list, and an effect determined by that type.

**Fire:** 1d8 extra fire damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 fire (save ends).

**Force:** The target is pushed 2 squares, knocked prone, and slowed (save ends).

**Lightning:** The target is dazed (save ends).

**Radiant:** The target is blinded (save ends).

**Miss:** Half damage.

### Countermeasures

◆ With a DC 21 Acrobatics check made as part of a move action, a character can enter the node's space without triggering an opportunity attack.

◆ A character adjacent to or within the node's space can attempt a DC 16 Arcana check as a move action. If the check succeeds and the node's next attack hits, treat the attack as a miss. If check succeeds and the node's next attack misses, the attack deals no damage.

◆ A character within the node's space can attempt a DC 21 Arcana check as a move action. Results are as for a DC 16 Arcana check as above. In addition, three successful checks cause the node to dissipate, eliminating the hazard.

◆ A character within the node's space can attempt a DC 26 Arcana check as a standard action. Results are as for a DC 21 Arcana check as above. In addition, a character who makes a successful check can force the node to attack any target in range.

### Upgrade to Elite (1,200 XP)

◆ The node attacks twice per turn. Each attack can have a different damage type.

◆ Dissipating the node requires six successful DC 21 Arcana checks instead of three.

**Steel Rain** **Level 15 Blaster**  
Hazard XP 1,200

*Ahead, rain sheets down with a metallic tinkling. The ground beneath it is not damp.*

**Hazard:** Tiny shards of sharp metal drop from the sky and burrow into the ground or into any creatures they hit. The hazard occupies three areas, each 3 squares on a side. Steel rain squares are lightly obscured. At the start of each round, the hazard moves 1d8 squares in a random direction or in a direction you choose.

**Perception**

No check is necessary to notice the rain.

- ◆ DC 23: The creature sees that the “raindrops” are metallic.

**Additional Skill: Arcana**

- ◆ DC 23: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.

**Trigger**

When a creature enters a square of steel rain or starts its turn there, the hazard attacks.

**Attack**

**Opportunity Action** **Melee**

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** +20 vs. AC

**Hit:** 1d10 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

**Miss:** Half damage.

**Countermeasures**

- ◆ A character using a shield can hold it overhead as a minor action, gaining a +1 bonus to AC against the steel rain but losing any shield bonus to AC and Reflex against other attacks. These adjustments to AC last until the start of the creature's next turn.
- ◆ If a character makes a DC 23 Acrobatics check as part of a move action and ends his or her move outside the area of steel rain, he or she does not trigger an attack when moving through the hazard.
- ◆ With a successful DC 18 Arcana check as a minor action, a character can force one area of steel rain not to move at the start of the next round. With a successful DC 27 check, the character can move that area 1d4 squares in a direction of his or her choice.

**Upgrade to Elite (2,400 XP)**

- ◆ Increase the DCs for Perception, Acrobatics, and Arcana checks by 2.
- ◆ The steel rain occupies four areas, each 4 squares on a side.
- ◆ Harmless precipitation lightly obscures the entire encounter area. When a creature is about to enter an adjacent square of steel rain, it makes a DC 23 Perception check as a free action; on a success, the creature spots the metal needles before moving into that square.

## ELEMENTAL FLEXIBILITY

The hazards of the Elemental Chaos are myriad. The dangers in this section can be transformed in style or approach without significantly altering their mechanics. Often, adjusting damage type is the only change needed.

**Voidblight** **Level 15 Blaster**  
Hazard XP 1,200

*A mass of pulsing blackness slowly resolves into swarming motes of nothingness drifting over the ground, each one absorbing light, life, and sanity.*

**Hazard:** The voidblight occupies 9 contiguous squares. Each voidblight square must share a side, not just a corner, with at least one other voidblight square.

**Perception**

No check is necessary to notice the mass.

**Additional Skill: Arcana**

- ◆ DC 23: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.

**Initiative** +2

**Trigger**

The voidblight can sense nondemon living creatures within 20 squares, whether or not it has line of sight to them. When it does, the hazard rolls initiative. The mass moves on its turn, oozing through the air or dragging along the surface to a square occupied by a nondemon living creature. It has a speed of 5, fly 5 (hover). It then attacks such creatures that start their turns within its area.

**Attack**

**Opportunity Action** **Melee**

**Target:** Each nondemon living creature that starts its turn in the voidblight's square

**Attack:** +18 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 1d10 + 6 psychic damage, and ongoing 10 psychic damage and the target is affected by voidblight insanity (save ends both). While a conscious target is affected by the insanity, it must make a basic attack against an ally during its turn or take 10 extra psychic damage at the end of its turn.

**Special:** A creature cannot make a saving throw against the voidblight's effect while within the hazard's square.

**Countermeasure**

- ◆ A character can attack a square of voidblight (AC 29; other defenses 27; hp 30; half damage from melee and ranged attacks). When reduced to 0 hit points, that square of voidblight is destroyed.

**Upgrade to Elite (2,400 XP)**

- ◆ The voidblight fills 18 contiguous squares.
- ◆ Increase the voidblight's bonuses to attack rolls by 2.
- ◆ Increase all the voidblight's defenses by 2.

**Gates of Winter** **Level 16 Lurker**  
Hazard XP 1,400

*The ambient temperature drops sharply, and hoarfrost gleams ahead. All is quiet . . . until a wall of ice rises violently before you.*

**Hazard:** On the hazard's turn, a wall of jagged ice rises from the ground. This hazard has a single origin square, but its effect is widespread.

**Perception**

No check is necessary to notice the area of the hazard. Between the triggering of the hazard and its attack, creatures can see the frost on the ground shift, rise, and crack.

- ◆ DC 25: The character notices an area of thick frost, which is the hazard's origin square.

#### Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 25: If the character is aware of the thick frost in the origin square, he or she recognizes the hazard's nature.

**Initiative** +2

#### Trigger

The hazard normally triggers when a creature without the cold keyword comes within 20 squares of the origin square while the origin square has line of effect to that creature. Other triggers are possible. When triggered, the hazard rolls initiative. On its turn, the hazard creates an ice wall in a random part of the encounter area.

#### Attack

**Standard Action** Area wall 10 within 20 squares

**Effect:** A wall of ice erupts to a height of 6 squares. Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the wall takes 2d6 + 6 cold damage. The wall blocks line of sight and blocks movement. If the wall appears in a space that a creature occupies, the creature slides to one side of the wall (roll randomly for direction) and is knocked prone.

The wall remains until the start of the hazard's next turn and then crumbles into broken ice. The space formerly occupied by the wall is difficult terrain, which lasts until the end of the encounter.

#### Countermeasures

◆ A character can make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or a DC 25 Athletics check as an opportunity action when the wall appears in that character's space; if the check succeeds, the character can shift 2 squares away from the wall and make a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone. A character who is normally allowed a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone gains a +2 bonus to the roll.

◆ With a DC 20 Arcana check or Nature check made as a minor action, a character can determine the rough shape and location of the next wall.

◆ A character can attempt a DC 22 Arcana check as an immediate interrupt when the wall appears; if the check succeeds, the character places 1 square of the wall in a different contiguous square. The wall cannot enter the original square. For every 5 points by which the check result beats the DC, the character can alter the location of 1 extra square.

◆ With a DC 25 Arcana check as a standard action, a character can siphon energy from the origin square. After three such successful checks, the hazard is disabled for 24 hours.

◆ A character who makes a DC 20 Athletics check as part of a move action can smash through part of the wall, leaving a hole and treating the square as difficult terrain instead of blocking terrain. The character takes 1d6 + 6 cold damage for moving through the wall this way.

#### Upgrade to Elite (2,800 XP)

◆ Increase the DCs for Perception, Acrobatics, Athletics, Arcana, and Nature checks by 2.

◆ The walls crumble into difficult terrain after 2 rounds. Thus, after the first round, the hazard has two walls in existence at a time, rather than one. These walls can cross each other.



Gates of Winter

#### Elemental Eruptions

Level 18 Obstacle

Hazard

XP 2,000

*The area ahead shudders, projecting heat and small lightning arcs. Suddenly, part of it bursts upward, exploding in elemental fury.*

**Hazard:** A surface contains unstable elements in an area 10 squares on a side. Five squares within that area are ready to burst.

#### Perception

No check is required to notice the area of the hazard.

◆ DC 25: The character can discern if any adjacent squares are ready to burst.

#### Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 25: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.

#### Trigger

When a nonelemental creature enters a square that is ready to burst, that square attacks with a random effect. Once it attacks, the square is no longer ready to burst, but a secondary effect persists (see below).

#### Primary Attack

**Opportunity Action** Melee

**Primary Target:** The triggering creature

**Primary Attack:** +22 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** Roll a d8 to determine the attack's effect.

1—**Acid:** 2d6 + 5 acid damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

2—**Cold:** 2d8 + 5 cold damage, and the primary target is immobilized until the end of its next turn. *Aftereffect:* The primary target is slowed (save ends).

3—**Fire:** 2d10 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends). Whenever the primary target takes the ongoing damage, each creature adjacent to it takes 5 fire damage.

4—**Force:** 1d10 + 5 force damage, and the primary target is hurled 20 feet into the air, falls back into its original square (taking 2d10 damage), and is knocked prone.

5—**Lightning:** 3d6 + 5 lightning damage, and the primary target is dazed (save ends).

6—**Poison:** 3d6 + 5 poison damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends). Whenever the primary target takes the ongoing damage, each creature adjacent to it takes 5 poison damage.

7—**Radiant:** 2d6 + 5 radiant damage, and the primary target is blinded until the end of its next turn. *Aftereffect:* The primary target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

8—**Thunder:** 3d6 + 5 thunder damage, and the primary target is pushed 1d6 squares, knocked prone, and deafened (save ends).

**Miss:** Half damage.

**Effect:** The hazard makes a secondary attack that is a close burst 1 centered on the primary target.

#### Secondary Attack

**Secondary Target:** Each creature in burst

**Secondary Attack:** +21 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 1d8 + 5 damage of the same type as the primary attack.

**Effect:** The burst creates an area of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the encounter. When any creature enters the area or starts its turn there, the hazard makes another secondary attack as an opportunity action. 70n the hazard's turn each round, this area of effect expands by 1 square to a maximum of 4 squares.

#### Countermeasures

◆ With a DC 25 Acrobatics check made as part of a move action, a character can move through the hazard's area without triggering the primary attack. If the character ends its movement in an untriggered square that is ready to burst, it triggers that square's primary attack.

◆ A character who makes a DC 20 Arcana check as a minor action can choose 1 square of the hazard's area that does not erupt this round.

◆ A character who makes a DC 25 Arcana check as a standard action can force 1 square that is ready to burst to erupt immediately, or can disperse its elemental energy so that the square cannot erupt for 24 hours.

#### Upgrade to Elite (4,000 XP)

◆ Increase the DCs for Perception, Acrobatics, and Arcana checks by 2.

◆ 10 squares within the area are ready to burst.

### Elemental Transformation Field

Level 18 Lurker

Hazard

XP 2,000

*A hazelike heat rising from a desert fills the area with an oddly hued distortion. Suddenly, a companion is horribly transformed.*

**Hazard:** The air shimmers over a wide area, concealing 10 random squares of this hazard.

#### Perception

No check is required to see the air shimmering.

◆ DC 25: The character can discern if any adjacent squares contain an elemental transformation field.

#### Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 25: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.

#### Trigger

When a creature enters one of the field's squares, the hazard attacks.

#### Attack

**Opportunity Action** **Melee**

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** +21 vs. Will

**Hit:** The target becomes a creature of flame, taking ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends). Until it saves against the ongoing fire damage, the following effects also apply.

◆ The target is immune to fire damage from any source other than this hazard.

◆ All the target's attacks deal fire damage rather than their normal type.

◆ Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the target takes 10 fire damage.

*First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also slowed (save ends both), as more of its substance is transformed into fire.

*Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target is also immobilized (save ends all).

*Third Failed Saving Throw:* The target is permanently transformed into a nonliving column of semisolid fire and stops taking the ongoing fire damage from this hazard.

Each creature that begins its turn adjacent to the column of fire takes 10 fire damage. The Remove Affliction ritual can restore the target to normal.

**Special:** The elemental transformation field does not attack creatures that are already under the effect of a previous successful attack by this hazard. Creatures already immune to fire are unaffected by this hazard.

#### Upgrade to Elite (4,000 XP)

◆ Increase the DCs for Perception and Arcana checks by 2.

◆ The hazard deals an additional type of damage. Each attack has a single damage type, but the hazard can target a creature already under the effect of one attack with another that deals the second damage type. (Replace "fire" with the appropriate type.)

**Skystone Field****Level 19 Lurker**

Hazard

XP 2,400

*With a resounding crack, a chunk jettisons from the surface beneath you and rockets upward.*

**Hazard:** When this hazard is triggered, bits of a solid horizontal surface shoot upward, potentially taking creatures with them. The hazard occupies an area at least 10 squares on a side; random squares within the area attack.

**Perception**

◆ DC 22: The character notices an array of cracks running throughout the surface and sees that certain blocks bounded by the cracks twist and shudder.

**Additional Skill: Nature**

◆ DC 27: As Perception, above.

**Initiative +2****Trigger**

The trigger for a skystone field can be random, caused by the actions of creatures, or timed. When the field is triggered, it rolls initiative. Between the triggering of the field and its attack, characters in the area know that something is amiss—different bits of ground in the area begin to vibrate and twitch violently. On the field's turn, a random square within the skystone field is the origin of a close burst attack. The same square cannot attack more than once in an encounter.

**Attack****Standard Action** Close burst 1**Target:** Each creature in burst**Attack:** +22 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** The target is flung 30 feet into the air, then falls back down. It takes 3d10 damage and falls prone in a random square within 3 squares of its starting position.

**Miss:** The target slides to an unoccupied square adjacent to the burst. If no such square is available, the attack hits automatically.

**Effect:** The burst creates an area of difficult terrain.

**Countermeasures**

◆ With a DC 27 Nature check as a minor action, a character can determine the square on which the hazard will center its attack during its next turn.

◆ A character who knows which square of the hazard will attack next can attempt a DC 22 Arcana check or Thievery check as a standard action. On a successful check, the character stabilizes that square so that the hazard does not attack in that round.

**Upgrade to Elite (4,800 XP)**

◆ Increase the DCs for Perception and Nature checks by 2.

◆ The hazard attacks twice each round.

**Lightningstone Field****Level 21 Warder**

Hazard

XP 3,200

*A faint waver disturbs the air, and the smell of ozone brushes your nostrils. You feel a rumbling in your bones just before a massive lightning strike lances down.*

**Hazard:** A lightningstone field is an area charged with the potential of a lightning storm. When a creature enters the area, it disrupts the field, causing a thunderous lightning discharge. The field usually occupies an area 10 squares on a side. Predators and scavengers near a lightningstone field are attracted by the sound of the explosion.

**Perception**

◆ DC 22: The character recognizes that something is amiss in the area.

**Additional Skill: Arcana**

◆ DC 27: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.

**Initiative +2****Trigger**

When a creature enters a square of the lightningstone field, the hazard rolls initiative.

**Attack****Standard Action** Melee**Target:** Each creature in the hazard's area**Attack:** +26 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 1d10 + 3 lightning damage. Each creature adjacent to the target takes 5 thunder damage and is pushed 1 square.

**Miss:** Half damage.

**Upgrade to Elite (6,400 XP)**

◆ Increase the lightningstone field's bonus to attack rolls by 2.

◆ A target hit by the hazard is also dazed until the end of its turn.

**Void Crust****Level 22 Obstacle**

Hazard

XP 4,150

*The surface ahead seems dry and barren, and a chill in the air weighs on your spirit. Suddenly, the ground opens to expose a roiling void.*

**Hazard:** When a creature within the hazard acts violently, the area beneath the creature gives way, dropping it into a seething void below. A void crust typically occupies 20 to 30 contiguous squares, each of which must share a side, not just a corner, with at least one other void crust square.

**Perception**

◆ DC 24: The character notices that the area ahead is treacherous and fragile.

**Trigger**

If a creature attempts to move out of a square of void crust without shifting, makes an attack while in a square of void crust, or is hit by an attack while in a square of void crust, the hazard attacks.

**Attack****Opportunity Action** Melee**Target:** The triggering creature**Attack:** +25 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target disappears into the void. It instantly reappears 20 feet above a random square 1d4-1 squares away and falls back to the surface, taking 2d10 damage. If the creature falls into its original space, it again takes damage and disappears into the void, falling again in another square.

**Miss:** The target slides to an unoccupied adjacent square. If no such square is available, the attack hits automatically.

**Effect:** The space vacated by the target remains open to the void. A creature forced into the opening can try to catch itself by attempting a saving throw before falling in. If it fails the saving throw, it is automatically hit by the void crust's attack.

**Chaotic Planar Rift** **Level 23 Elite Blaster**

**Hazard** XP 10,200  
*A brilliant stream of crackling acid leaps from one hunk of floating matter to another like lightning, then transforms into a rain of silver arrows that plummets downward.*

**Hazard:** A chaotic planar rift is an unstable, plane-crossing phenomenon that randomly steals objects and energy from elsewhere and deposits them to harmful effect in the Elemental Chaos. The hazard typically covers a space at least 10 squares on a side.

**Perception**  
 Change occurs so rapidly and wildly in the area of a chaotic planar rift that an active one is impossible to miss.  
 ♦ DC 29: The character detects subtle changes in the air and nearby surfaces that herald the imminent opening a chaotic planar rift.

**Initiative +4**  
**Trigger**  
 The trigger of a chaotic planar rift might be random or the result of a living creature first entering the field. Once triggered, the hazard rolls initiative. On its turn, the chaotic planar rift attacks from a random square within its area.

**Attack**  
**Standard Action** Close burst 1  
**Target:** Each creature in burst  
**Attack:** +26 vs. Reflex  
**Hit:** Roll a d6 to determine the attack's effect.  
 1—**Greatsword:** 2d10 + 8 damage, and one creature adjacent to the target takes 5 damage. The sword then vanishes.  
 2—**Sprouting Tree:** 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone. One square of the target's space becomes difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.  
 3—**Swarm of Acid Toads:** 2d8 acid damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends). The toads then burrow into the ground and disappear.  
 4—**Quicksand:** The target is restrained (save ends).  
**Afterside:** The target is immobilized (save ends). A close burst 2 centered on the target is difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.  
 5—**Stone Casket:** Ongoing 10 damage, and the target is entombed within the casket (save ends both). While entombed, the target has line of sight or line of effect to no creature, and no creature has line of sight or line of effect to the target. Other creatures can attack the casket to release the entombed target (AC 5; Reflex 5, Fortitude 10; hp 40).  
 6—**Silver Headband:** The target gains vulnerable 20 to all damage (save ends).

**Miss:** Roll a d4 to determine the attack's effect.  
 1—**Undead Shield:** Zombie arms claw free of the ground in the target's space. When the target moves, the undead arms move with it. They do not attack the target. The next attack against the target hits the arms instead, and they dissolve into dust.  
 2—**Refreshed:** The target regains a healing surge and, if expended, its second wind.  
 3—**Simulacrum:** A duplicate of the target appears 1d6 squares away from it. On the target's next turn, both it and the simulacrum take actions simultaneously; these actions need not be the same. The simulacrum can make attacks just as the original can. The simulacrum then vanishes.  
 4—**Roots and Branches:** Grasping vegetation fills a close burst 3 centered on the target; +28 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 33).

**Corruption Sludge Pool** **Level 28 Obstacle**

**Hazard** XP 13,000  
*The surface of this gooey, black-green pond is broken by bits of flesh. Serpentine forms disturb the fetid pool, revealing a flash of fang or a glimpse of bulging eye.*

**Hazard:** These brackish, pulsating puddles of hate, madness, and decay inundate the lower regions of the Abyss. They occur less frequently in other parts of the Elemental Chaos and on other planes. Sludge pools are typically 5 squares on a side but can grow larger, especially in the most dangerous parts of the Abyss.

**Perception**  
 No check is required to notice the pool.

**Additional Skill:** Arcana  
 ♦ DC 28: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.

**Initiative +2**  
**Trigger**  
 At the start of the encounter, roll initiative for the hazard. It makes a *lashing tendril* attack once each round when creatures are within reach. When any creature enters the pool's area or begins its turn there, the hazard makes a *sludge latch* attack.

**Lashing Tendril Attack**  
**Standard Action** Melee 3  
**Target:** One nondemon creature  
**Attack:** +31 vs. Reflex  
**Hit:** 1d8 + 6 acid damage, and ongoing 15 acid damage (save ends). The target is pulled 4 squares toward any square of the pool.

**Sludge Latch Attack**  
**Opportunity Action** Melee  
**Target:** The triggering creature  
**Attack:** +31 vs. Fortitude  
**Hit:** 2d8 + 10 acid damage, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 26), takes ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends), and is exposed to level 28 demon pox (see page 16).

**Countermeasures**  
 ♦ A character can ready a melee attack against a tendril that attacks him or her or attacks any ally adjacent to that character (an attack against any of these targets counts as one trigger for this readied action). On a hit (all the tendril's defenses are 40), the hazard can't make *lashing tendril* attacks (save ends).

**Upgrade to Elite (26,000 XP)**  
 ♦ Increase the hazard's bonus to attack rolls by 2.  
 ♦ The pool makes two *lashing tendril* attacks in each round. A separate readied action is required to attack and suppress each tendril.  
 ♦ Increase the damage of the *sludge latch* attack to 3d8 + 10.

**Multielemental Transformation Field** **Level 28 Lurker**

**Hazard** XP 13,000  
*Just at the edge of your vision, something flickers.*

**Hazard:** The air shimmers over a wide area, concealing 10 random squares of this hazard.

**Perception**  
 No check is required to see the air shimmering.  
 ♦ DC 33: The character can discern if any adjacent squares contain a multielemental transformation field.

**Additional Skill:** Arcana  
 ♦ DC 33: The character recognizes the hazard's nature.



**Multielemental  
Transformation Field**



**Trigger**

When a creature enters one of the field's squares, the hazard attacks.

**Attack**

**Opportunity Action** Melee

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** +31 vs. Will

**Hit:** The target becomes a creature of mixed elements, taking ongoing 5 acid damage, ongoing 5 cold damage, ongoing 5 fire damage, ongoing 5 lightning damage, ongoing 5 poison damage, and ongoing 5 thunder damage (save ends all). Until it saves against the ongoing damage, the following effects also apply.

- ◆ The target is immune to acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, and thunder damage from any source other than this hazard.
- ◆ Any creature that starts its turn adjacent to the target takes 15 damage of one of the following types, determined randomly: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder. **First Failed Saving Throw:** The target is also immobilized (save ends both).

**Second Failed Saving Throw:** The target is permanently transformed into a nonliving column of mixed elements and stops taking ongoing damage. The transformation field repeats the attack against each creature adjacent to the target. In addition, each creature that begins its turn adjacent to the column of elements takes 10 damage of one of the following types, determined randomly: acid, cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder. The Remove Affliction ritual can restore the target to normal.

**Special:** A multielemental transformation field does not attack creatures that are already under the effect of a previous successful attack from the hazard.

## SKILL CHALLENGES

Although the Plane Below is home to myriad enemies, it also presents challenges that cannot be overcome simply by fighting. Simply traversing the ever-shifting landscape of the Elemental Chaos can be a trial. Even in conversation, the Plane Below is unpredictable. Some elemental inhabitants are open to parley—but only if the bargainer obeys certain rules of decorum, abates the fear of the respondent, or clearly demonstrates the advantages of making a deal.

The following example skill challenges exemplify those that might be encountered by characters exploring the Elemental Chaos. Refer to the table in the sidebar to set the challenge DCs at the appropriate difficulty for your group.

### BARGAINING WITH AN EFREET

Arrogant and cunning, efreet are hard bargainers. They loathe owing anything to anyone and love to trick creatures into service. The characters must obtain an object, information, or favor from an efreet without paying more than a reasonable price.

This skill challenge can be a starting point for a party that must negotiate with various members of an efreet organization. That effort most likely involves dealing with several levels of efreet society. In that case, the challenge could involve a higher complexity, take more time, or be broken into several parts.

**Level:** Two levels higher than the level of the party, or the same level as the efreet (XP equal to the reward for one standard monster of the challenge's

#### DIFFICULTY CLASS

The table below, reproduced from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, provides DCs for easy, moderate, and hard skill checks according to the level of a skill challenge. Use the appropriate numbers when tailoring a skill challenge to a particular level.

#### SKILL CHECK DIFFICULTY CLASS BY LEVEL

Level	Easy	Moderate	Hard
1st-3rd	5	10	15
4th-6th	7	12	17
7th-9th	8	14	19
10th-12th	10	16	21
13th-15th	11	18	23
16th-18th	13	20	25
19th-21st	14	22	27
22nd-24th	16	24	29
25th-27th	17	26	31
28th-30th	19	28	33

level, or two standard monsters of the efreet's level if the efreet is elite).

**Complexity:** 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures), or 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures) if the efreet is elite.

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate.

**Arcana** (*moderate DC by level, standard action*): The character displays a knowledge of efreet culture. If the check result beats the DC by 5 or more, he or she mentions something personally relevant to the efreet in question, such as a notable ancestor or a tale of its noble house. Success on this check grants a +2 bonus to any subsequent Diplomacy checks by the character during this challenge. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

**Bluff** (*hard DC by level, standard action*): Fast-talking an intelligent and deceptive efreet is difficult, but playing the game well can impress the creature even when it sees through the lies. The first time this check fails by less than 5, the efreet is amused at the attempt, and that result doesn't count as a failure.

**Diplomacy** (*moderate DC by level, standard action*): Efreets are vain—they expect lesser creatures to show proper deference during negotiations. A character who is respectful and knows one's place has the easiest road to success. If the check result beats the DC by 5 or more, he or she mentions something personally relevant to the efreet in question, granting a +2 bonus to that character's subsequent Diplomacy checks during this challenge.

**Intimidate** (*hard DC by level, standard action*): Efreets don't respond well when harsh tactics are used against them. Only a truly fearsome creature can intimidate an efreet. Citing a reputation for slaying

monsters might work, however—efreets respect battle-hardened types. A successful check with this skill counts as 2 successes toward completing the skill challenge, but only one such result can be gained. Additional attempts to use Intimidate anger the efreet and result in failed skill checks.

**Secondary Skills:** Acrobatics, Thievery.

**Acrobatics or Thievery** (*hard DC by level, standard action, after an Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check fails*): An angry efreet can sometimes be mollified with entertainment, such as impressive acrobatic tricks or dazzling sleight of hand. A successful check with one of these skills negates a failure in this challenge but does not count as a success.

**Success:** If the characters earn enough successes, they secure what they want from the efreet at a fair price. A party that succeeds in the skill challenge without gaining more than 1 failure might even earn a small discount from an impressed efreet.

**Failure:** If the characters earn 3 failures, they still acquire what they want, but only at a substantial markup or only if they agree to do a favor for the efreet. The favor might need to be undertaken immediately, but efreets often favor open-ended requests that place others in their debt for an indefinite period.

## REASONING WITH A SLAAD

Few creatures embrace chaos as thoroughly and willfully as slaads do. Communicating and reasoning with these creatures is incredibly difficult.

This skill challenge is appropriate when the characters must interact with a slaad other than through combat. It could be as simple as delivering an important message or as complicated as trading. The negotiation could also be an attempt to convince



the slaad to act in a desired way, such as leaving the party alone.

**Level:** Equal to the level of the party, or the level of the slaad (XP equal to the reward for one standard monster of the challenge's level, or two standard monsters of the challenge's level if the slaad is elite).

**Complexity:** 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures), or 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures) if the slaad is elite.

**Primary Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate.

**Bluff** (*hard DC by level, standard action*): Deceiving a slaad is not easy, given its strange view of the universe. When a bluff does succeed, the creature is excited, believing the character has revealed a new aspect of reality it had not yet considered.

**Diplomacy** (*hard DC by level, standard action*): A slaad does not recognize the rules of diplomacy; it sees flattery or reasoning as sly trickery, which angers it. Once any character has failed a Diplomacy check, the next failure with this skill counts as 2 additional failures in the skill challenge. A successful Arcana check (see below) warns the character about this extreme reaction.

**Intimidate** (*moderate DC by level, standard action*): Although a slaad is easily antagonized by other approaches, it responds well to intimidation. It views bullying as the only acceptable form of social interaction.

**Secondary Skills:** Arcana, Insight.

**Arcana** (*hard DC by level, free action*): The character grasps how slaads react to communication. The character learns the difficulty of the primary skill checks, as well as the consequences of a second failed Diplomacy check (see above). This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

## REASONING WITH THE UNREASONABLE

Those who are not insane might have difficulty trying to understand a slaad's bizarre mindset. Even a simple conversation is a frustrating experience. Attempting to learn anything from a slaad can be downright maddening. The following exchange depicts the difficulty of reasoning with a slaad.

**Udal the Sword:** Listen, creature, we are not here to harm you—we merely seek the Cosmic Door, through which we may see all the many planes briefly align! Surely you must know of it?

**Slaad:** Waves crash across the sky.

**Udal:** Er, yes . . . But listen! I know something of you slaads. You seek to find a path into a greater reality and escape the prison of the known, do you not? If you help us find the Cosmic Door, you serve your own ends, too!

**Slaad:** The face behind your face is a lie. The Door is a lie! You are a lie!

**Insight** (*hard DC by level, standard action*): Although slaads are creatures of chaos, they still follow a form of twisted logic. These rules change quickly, however. An insightful character picks up variances in the tone, context, and relationship between the parties, through the slaad's gestures, body language, and continual gibbering. A success with this skill grants a +2 bonus to subsequent Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks during the skill challenge. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

**Success:** If the characters earn enough successes, they reach an understanding with the slaad.

**Failure:** If the characters get 3 failures, the slaad does not understand them and responds in a random way. Roll a d6 and consult the following table to determine its actions. If you prefer, choose the option that best suits the current adventure.

### d6 Reaction

- 1 The slaad believes the characters no longer exist and ignores them unless they attack it.
- 2 The slaad understands the opposite of what the characters are trying to convey. It cannot be persuaded otherwise except through a new skill challenge, increasing the complexity by 1.
- 3 The slaad runs away, convinced that the characters are powerful individuals that wish to do it harm.
- 4 The slaad croaks continuously and loudly until the characters attack it or depart. This croaking attracts the attention of other slaads or hostile creatures in the area.
- 5 The slaad's head explodes, attacking in a close burst 3; skill challenge level + 4 vs. Fortitude; 2d4 + 5 damage. The rest of the slaad leaves.\*
- 6 The slaad attacks in a rage. Whenever it hits with a melee attack, the attack deals 1d6 extra damage.

\*The characters do not gain experience for "killing" this slaad. It re-forms its head in a short time.

## REPAIRING A LIGHTNING SKIFF

Sleek *lightning skiffs* are the fastest means of traveling the Elemental Chaos, but their construction, and the potent forces that propel them, renders them accident prone.

In this skill challenge, the characters must repair a damaged *lightning skiff* under a time constraint. Perhaps the skiff is riding a rough storm and is in danger of dashing against an earthmote, or the characters must launch before a demon horde catches up with them.

**Level:** Equal to the level of the party (XP equal to the reward for an elite monster of the party's level).

**Complexity:** 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Thievery.

**Acrobatics** (moderate DC by level, standard action): The character uses agility and balance to aid in repairs. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

**Arcana** (moderate DC by level, standard action): The character channels mystic forces to repair part of the lightning skiff.

**Athletics** (moderate DC by level, standard action): The character uses might and physical prowess to aid in repairs. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in the challenge.

**Thievery** (hard DC by level, standard action): The character relies on nimble fingers and finesse with mechanical and magic devices to repair part of the lightning skiff.

**Secondary Skills:** Nature, Perception, special.

**Nature** (hard DC by level, once per hour): If the characters have the time and the opportunity, one or more of them can forage for items useful to the repairs. A successful check with this skill grants a +2 bonus to subsequent Arcana or Thievery checks in this challenge. The characters can attempt this check only once in this challenge.

**Perception** (hard DC by level, immediate interrupt, when an Arcana or Thievery check is failed): The character points out a repair blunder before it happens. Doing so negates the triggering check's failure but does not earn a success in this challenge.

**Action Point** (special, free action): An artificer can spend an action point to negate 1 failure in this challenge.

**Success:** If the characters earn 6 successes, the lightning skiff is repaired.

**Failure:** If the characters get 3 failures, the lightning skiff is still damaged and cannot be repaired by the group. The party must find a new ship or someone more knowledgeable who can repair this one.

If the group includes an artificer, he or she can spend an action point to restart this skill challenge.

## SAILING THE SEA OF FIRE

While the characters are crewing a *planar dromond* or another vessel capable of sailing the Sea of Fire, they work to avoid hazards and navigate the currents.

This skill challenge assumes the characters can steer the ship, and that the travel time is five days. The same basic structure can be used for shorter journeys, or you can connect two or more skill challenges for longer journeys.

Each day of the journey, unless at least one character makes an Arcana check to maintain the proper heading (see that entry, below), the party gains 1 failure. In addition, characters must make at least two different Athletics, Acrobatics, or Endurance checks each day for upkeep of the vessel or gain 1 failure. If

they get a success with two upkeep checks, the group earns 1 success. Otherwise, they gain 1 failure.

Each character can make a single primary or secondary skill check each day.

**Level:** Equal to the level of the party (XP equal to the reward for four standard monsters of the party's level).

**Complexity:** 4 (requires 10 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Athletics, Acrobatics, Endurance.

**Arcana** (moderate DC by level): The character draws on his or her understanding of the Elemental Chaos to prepare a heading and keep the ship on that course. Up to two allies can aid in this check.

**Athletics** (moderate DC by level; upkeep check): The character uses might to aid in upkeep and repairs. Allies cannot aid this check. A successful check with this skill contributes to the skill challenge as described above.

**Acrobatics** (moderate DC by level; upkeep check): The character takes advantage of his or her flexibility to aid in upkeep and repairs. Allies cannot aid this skill check. A successful check with this skill contributes to the skill challenge as described above.

**Endurance** (moderate DC by level; upkeep check): Through sheer grit, the character aids in upkeep and repairs. Allies cannot aid this skill check. A successful check with this skill contributes to the skill challenge as described above.

**Secondary Skills:** Nature, Thievery.

**Nature** (Hard DC by level): The character advises the navigator. If this day's Arcana check failed, a successful check with this skill negates the skill challenge failure. If the Arcana check succeeded, the character who makes the next day's Arcana check gains a +2 bonus.

**Thievery** (Hard DC by level): The character creates a makeshift patch to the ship's hull or some other clever repair. If one or none of this day's upkeep checks succeeded, a successful check with this skill negates the skill challenge failure. If one or more of those checks succeeded, the characters who make the next day's upkeep checks each gain a +2 bonus.

**Success:** If the characters earn 10 successes, they reach their destination safe and sound.

**Failure:** If the characters earn 3 failures, they do not manage to reach their destination on their own. Because failing this skill challenge could leave the party stranded, you should plan for that possibility. The characters might be attacked by pirates, seizing a new vessel if they win the fight or being captured if they lose. Alternatively, the characters could be met by a friendly crew that leads them to shore (perhaps for a price), or might limp into a nearby port short of their destination.

## CAMPAIGN ARCS

The Elemental Chaos is easy to use in passing—an encounter with an elemental here, an adventure within a planar conjunction there. But storylines involving the Plane Below need not be so limited. Making the Elemental Chaos the centerpiece of a campaign is an interesting and creatively satisfying way to integrate the Plane Below into your game.

Not all the campaign's adventures need take place in the Elemental Chaos—in fact, they probably shouldn't. Much of the Elemental Chaos's appeal lies in its alien nature, and overexposure risks rendering it mundane. In addition, the plane's environment is dangerously inappropriate for heroic tier characters. The influence of the Elemental Chaos can be felt throughout the campaign, even though only some events occur there.

The *Manual of the Planes* supplement discusses four varieties of planar campaigns. In an origin of monsters campaign, the planes are the source of adversaries, but the party rarely or never travels beyond the world. An exotic adventure campaign allows the characters to travel to another plane on occasion. In a planar progression campaign, the characters visit multiple planes as they work their way through the storyline. An extraplanar campaign takes place entirely beyond the world.

Each of the four campaign arcs that follow illustrates one of these campaign types, focused on or based around the Elemental Chaos. You can use them as frameworks to fill in with details as you see fit, or as inspiration for designing your own campaign.

### HIDDEN ELEMENTS

The City of Brass has been recently shaken by upheaval. Clever and prepared efreet took advantage of the chaos, consolidating power and increasing the authority of their noble houses. So widespread was the turmoil that the city has come under the sway of a new Lord of the Efreet.

Sheikh Ma'mun is not one of the efreet on the rise. His intricate schemes were superseded by those of others who were luckier and acted more swiftly. Seething at the lost opportunity, Ma'mun has turned his attention to the world. If he cannot seize power from within, he will build supremacy from without.

### HEROIC TIER: RUMORS OF WAR

The various communities from which the characters hail have formed an alliance and are nervously exchanging messengers. Their leaders have heard tales that the great city-state of Hassiek is massing

its troops for war. The militant state has already conquered a number of surrounding villages and seems poised for expansion. Over time, the heroes are hired more and more frequently to escort important individuals between towns to plan for war, or to gather intelligence in the areas conquered by Hassiek. They discover that the city-state is indeed expanding, and that its forces include elemental beings, demons, and arcane practitioners that have a strong elemental focus.

As the characters reach the top of the heroic tier, they have learned that Hassiek's leaders are being advised by cultists dedicated to a primordial and that saboteurs have infiltrated the governments standing against Hassiek. When the characters return to their home base with this news, the alliance vows to roust these enemies and stand strong against Hassiek.

### PARAGON TIER: SCORCHED EARTH

Given what the characters have learned, the allied leaders realize that war with Hassiek is not only inevitable but necessary. The cultists must be prevented from carving out their own kingdom in the region. The characters' adventures in the paragon tier vary, but nearly all of them relate to the war in some way. The characters might be assigned to stop agents of Hassiek from acquiring powerful magic items or rituals, to defend towns from sieges they cannot survive without assistance, and to undertake missions of infiltration and sabotage.

All the while, the influence of the Elemental Chaos on Hassiek grows ever more apparent. Elementals, demons, and archons appear with greater frequency among the city-state's forces. Agents of Hassiek seed settlements with slaad tadpoles as biological weapons to spread chaos phage (page 142). The characters learn that some prisoners taken by Hassiek have been sent elsewhere for purposes unknown. Finally, they discover that Hassiek's leaders are mere puppets of their advisors—a cadre of efreet ruled by Ma'mun.

### EPIC TIER: VICTORY OR DEATH

Horrid creatures spawned in the Plane Below rampage across the countryside, terrorizing innocent folk, and dire portents abound. Elemental cultists, plotting with the efreet, are developing rituals to tear open rifts to the Elemental Chaos, flooding the besieged towns with raw elemental energy and furious storms. The characters must halt these efforts, and this endeavor occupies the first few levels of the epic tier. In doing so, the characters learn that Hassiek's captives are being sent to the Elemental Chaos, there to swell the slave ranks of Ma'mun's household.

Eventually, the characters discover that Ma'mun seeks to conquer a large portion of the world and

use its resources either to overthrow the Lord of the Efreets, or—if that fails—to found his own elemental kingdom in the world. Only a final, desperate thrust into the Elemental Chaos to confront Ma'mun can stop this inexorable march. The characters must defeat the efreet lord to prevent him from transforming their homes and the surrounding lands into a realm of slavery, fire, and death.

## TO HARNESS THE CHAOS

Solariel is an angel with a mission: Destroy the primordials once and for all. For this immortal creature, imprisonment of the primordials is not enough. As long as they live, they could break free. Even if they do not escape, many creatures still worship them; the primordials' destruction would send the gods' enemies into turmoil. Most immortals believe that trying to destroy the primordials is a fool's errand, but Solariel's divine master is curious to see what the angel might accomplish and has given it free rein.

Solariel knows that destroying the primordials will not be easy, but it has a plan. Although they were born of the Elemental Chaos, the primordials have definite bodies and thoughts, making them points of order in the Plane Below. The angel reasons that the best way to destroy them is to harness a force of purest entropy: the slaads.

## HEROIC TIER: BOOK WORK

The characters meet Solariel early in their careers. The angel might be impressed by their success on a mission or by their faith, or it might choose them out of desperation. The immortal presses them into service but does not inform them of its overarching scheme, explaining only that it needs help carrying out a plan for a major triumph of good over evil.

Solariel might have a number of adventuring parties in its service, but the characters prove the most capable. The angel observes the characters as they progress through the heroic tier, occasionally giving them guidance or a rewarding assignment. These adventures occur in the world and are largely unrelated to Solariel's plan.

At Solariel's behest, the characters steal a book of primordial lore. This act earns them the enmity of a cult dedicated to the primordial Mual-Tar, also known as the Thunder Serpent (*Manual of the Planes*, page 70). The cult dispatches elementals and initiates to destroy the party. As the characters approach the paragon tier, they manage to annihilate the cult, but its leader escapes. Solariel sends the party into the Elemental Chaos on a *spelljammer* to capture the fleeing head cultist. During this journey, the party encounters slaads and witnesses firsthand their destructive power.

## PARAGON TIER: LEGWORK

The characters return to the world and engage in a few side adventures. Word of their activities has spread, and they must fend off attacks from other primordial cults even in the midst of unrelated activities. At Solariel's urging, they launch a preemptive strike against an even stronger cult, attacking its stronghold and defeating the giant that rules it.

When the characters are about halfway through the paragon tier, Solariel discloses part of the grand plan to them. It wants to tame the slaads, or at least curtail their destructive impulses, and is ready to put this idea into motion.

First, the characters must return to the Elemental Chaos and confront slaads directly. The angel tasks the party with bringing back samples of slaad anatomy, including flesh, organs, and bones, as well as a living slaad tadpole. Solariel gives the characters control of the *spelljammer* and grants them wide discretion in how to confront the slaads. The immortal does suggest several areas they might search—one of which is the besieged githzerai monastery of Sanzerathad (page 86). The characters undertake a mission or two on behalf of the githzerai and win their trust. With these valuable allies, the party has a secure base of operations for continuing forays into the Plane Below.

## EPIC TIER: THE WORK OF ANGELS

By the time the characters reach the epic tier, they and Solariel have gathered all the information they need. Now the immortal explains the next stage of the plot. The characters might have serious misgivings about the idea, but the angel wins them over by emphasizing the great good that will follow the destruction of a primordial, perhaps hinting of one that is nearing escape.

To gain control over creatures as wild as the slaads requires something truly remarkable. The information uncovered points to Liricosa (page 148), a revered githzerai hermit who could be instrumental to the plan. Solariel believes that the monk has achieved such control over his body and his environment that, when equipped with an artifact called the *Scepter of Rulership*, he can control an entire army of slaads—at least for a short time. First, though, the artifact and Liricosa's aid must be secured.

Once they have accomplished these preliminary efforts, the characters and Solariel put the plan into motion. They gather a slaad army and assault a primordial in its prison realm, clashing with the most powerful of its followers and finally reaching its restrained body. Then everything goes wrong. The slaads, rather than destroying the primordial, destroy only its shackles. With a shriek of triumph, the horror breaks free. It dispatches Solariel with contemptuous ease, then turns toward the party. A final, cosmos-shaking battle ensues.



## THE BIGGER THEY ARE . . .

In an age so long ago it is mythical, the gods and the primordials battled for sovereignty over creation. Numerous primordials, defeated but not slain, were bound in divine prisons and left afloat in the depths of the Elemental Chaos. One of these was Solkara, the Crushing Wave (page 152), an entity of unspeakable destructive might. Since that time, her loyal servants have struggled to free her by focusing elemental fire against the glacier that holds her.

The leader of one such sect is the mad storm titan Mirmakur, the Raving Priest (page 154). He has tried for centuries to free the primordial. Frustrated by his efforts in the Elemental Chaos, the titan has turned his eyes elsewhere. Mirmakur recently learned that sources of potent flame—perhaps intense enough to melt away Solkara’s prison—exist outside the Plane Below. The titan will stop at nothing to gain this power.

### HEROIC TIER: TINDER

During the course of a few otherwise unrelated adventures, the characters gradually become aware of something strange. In some of the dungeons and ruins they explore, they encounter an unusual number of

elemental-oriented opponents—fire bats, lower-level magma beasts, galeb duhrs, and so forth. These creatures are not normal inhabitants of those areas, for they have slain native creatures. The elemental intruders appear to be searching for something.

At the same time, the characters learn about murders in various larger towns and cities, committed by undead creatures. The heroes might be drawn to investigate by curiosity, or might be hired to do so by frightened aristocrats or overwhelmed city administrators. They learn that the murder victims were clandestine members of diabolic cults, and that the undead questioned them about their fellow devil-worshippers. The party eventually follows the trail to the master of these undead, a vampire lord who dwells in the Shadowfell. The characters confront him, breaching his fortress and fighting their way through his undead minions. They discover that the vampire holds no malice toward the diabolists but is merely a link in the chain. He was hired to learn all he could about the region’s devil cults, and his employer is a fire giant.

### PARAGON TIER: SPARK

As the characters return to their world, likely wondering why a fire giant is hiring undead to investigate devil cults, they find the region caught up in a furor.

Giants of all varieties—including those not known for collaborating—have attacked several towns and are laying siege to major cities.

Much of the party's career at the paragon tier involves fighting off rampaging bands of giants, repelling their sieges, and rescuing their prisoners to learn more about what's going on. Eventually, the characters determine that every community being attacked is home to a cult of Mephistopheles. The giants are focusing their attacks on the cultists' homes and shrines and have taken numerous cultists alive. The characters might be inclined to leave the devil-worshippers to their fate, but innocents are also dying at the hands of the giants.

After working through ever more powerful foes, the characters learn that the giants are being directed from a fortress deep in the Elemental Chaos. They must explore portions of the plane and perhaps gather allies. In the end, they must infiltrate or assault a bastion teeming with giants and their archon guards. They confront the titan leaders and discover the truth of what's been happening: A storm titan priest of Solkara seeks to wrest the secret of hellfire from the worshippers of Mephistopheles. The titan, Mirmakur, believes that this flame, imbued with the diabolic power of damned souls, might be able to melt the divinely empowered ice that imprisons the Crushing Wave. If he is correct, a dreadful primordial could soon be loosed on the cosmos.

### EPIC TIER: FLAME

The epic tier adventurers engage in a prolonged race against time. While gathering information on Mirmakur, and perhaps Solkara and Mephistopheles, the characters must survive constant attacks from the storm titan's soldiers. Eventually, they track their attackers back to the Elemental Chaos and Mirmakur's lair, but the Raving Priest is long since gone. He has descended into the second layer of the Nine Hells with a cadre of his mightiest followers, seeking the source of hellfire.

Following the titan, the characters become embroiled in a war between the invading elemental creatures and Mephistopheles's most powerful operatives. Reluctantly, the party agrees to work alongside the devils against a common threat. After much effort, Mirmakur finally manages to retrieve a quantity of hellfire contained in a mystical vessel. He leaves a sizable force to delay his enemies while he returns to the Elemental Chaos. The characters dispatch the rear guard and pursue. They arrive in time to confront the storm titan on the ice of Solkara's prison and try to stop Mirmakur before he unleashes the Crushing Wave.

## PLANAR ADVENTURERS

The efreet noble Qassemi has trafficked with dark powers to contrive a sinister plan, but he needs help to pull it off. If he succeeds, he will strike a mortal blow against the githzerai of the Elemental Chaos, all the while maintaining deniability for any involvement. What begins as a series of planar jaunts ends in an agonizing decision and a fearsome confrontation.

This campaign arc begins and ends in the Elemental Chaos but has stops in every other plane. Characters of nearly any race—from githzerai to goblins to minotaurs—could be appropriate for this campaign.

### HEROIC TIER:

#### MUTINY ON THE PHELDDAGRIF

The characters begin as slaves aboard a small *spelljammer* called the *Phelddagrif*. In their first adventure, they break free, overpower the ship's genasi captain, and take control of the vessel.

Shortly thereafter, the characters receive a message from the efreet noble Qassemi, owner of the *Phelddagrif*. Rather than being angry, the elemental being is impressed. He offers the escapees a deal: They can keep the *spelljammer*, without cost or pursuit, as long as they agree to work for him from time to time—no questions asked. If the characters press for details, the efreet explains only that certain tasks need performing, but he cannot take public responsibility for them.

Throughout the heroic tier, the characters travel the planes, visiting fantastic worlds and following adventure wherever it leads. The Feywild, the Shadowfell, and the world are likely spots for adventures in the heroic tier, but the party might also visit the Astral Sea. The group receives a few missions from Qassemi, consisting mostly of minor tasks involving the transport of cargo or personages.

### PARAGON TIER: THE GREAT GAME

In the paragon tier, the characters become more entangled in Qassemi's affairs and his wheelings and dealings in the City of Brass. They infiltrate the stronghold of one rival efreet and attack the trading vessels of another. In between these assignments, the group continues its travels, likely visiting the otherworldly domains of the Astral Sea. As the characters approach the epic tier, Qassemi summons them to the Elemental Chaos. The efreet has a task for them: an assassination. He doesn't care if the heroes have moral objections to such an assignment—they agreed to their service and are bound by its terms. The target is an individual aboard a large *spelljammer* currently traveling somewhere in the Elemental Chaos.



## EPIC TIER: CRASHING THE GATES

The assassination target is well protected by elemental creatures, golems, and other powerful beings. Investigation or observation reveals that the target is an elderly githzerai called Mericam. She is one of the Sustainers who protect Zerthadlun (*Manual of the Planes*, page 77) and is on a rare mission outside the city. Mericam explains that Qassemi wants her dead for the same reason that she is away from Zerthadlun—she is gathering allies to strike against Ashblack, a major vassal outpost of the City of Brass. The efreet of that stronghold are conspiring to destroy Zerthadlun. She insists that the characters choose a side.

If the characters complete their mission and kill Mericam, they are responsible for the destruction of the largest githzerai city in the cosmos, and that stigma haunts them for the remainder of their careers. If they choose to turn against Qassemi, they attack Ashblack at the head of a combined army of githzerai and elemental creatures. As the assault force occupies the bulk of Qassemi's forces, the characters smash their way into the palace and confront efreet guards, flanked by demons and dragons. The campaign comes to a climax as they confront Qassemi and see him in his true form. Qassemi has become an enormous beast: part efreet, part dragon, and part demon.

## ADVENTURES

Even if your campaign is not focused on the Elemental Chaos, any number of adventures can take the characters to this fundamental plane, or can involve creatures and phenomena of an elemental bent.

The most basic adventure consists of a typical dungeon or a ruin stocked with elemental-themed monsters, hazards, and terrain. More involved story arcs could incorporate themes or weave in story threads that focus on specific details of the Elemental Chaos. For example, a dungeon might be full of elementals because an ancient portal to the Plane Below is slowly opening. Perhaps the characters are trying to recover a powerful artifact before servants of the renegade efreet Sheikh Ma'mun do (see the "Hidden Elements" campaign arc on page 28).

Simply surviving the hazardous, turbulent environs of the Elemental Chaos can be a tremendous challenge, even for characters who aren't normally threatened by environmental dangers. By emphasizing the perilous surroundings, you reinforce the extraplanar feel of the adventure and add time pressure—such as dwindling supplies—to any encounter. At the very least, the weird and perilous nature of the Elemental Chaos should be a factor in such

adventures. They should include the plane's bizarre terrain features and unique hazards to remind the players that the party is exploring an alien realm. Nothing reduces the impact of an Elemental Chaos adventure more than making the environment seem ordinary.

Not all Elemental Chaos adventures require elementals as major participants. The heroes might ally with djinns or githzerai against a greater threat, cooperate with one efreet house against a more dangerous clan, or lead an army of archons against a horde of slaads that threaten to spill into the world.

## ADVENTURE HOOKS AND QUESTS

The following plot seeds and quests can help you set up a variety of Elemental Chaos adventures. Some stories take place entirely within the Plane Below; other tales begin in the world and shift the action later. Feel free to use them as written, tweaking the details and levels as needed, or just find in them inspiration for building your own adventures.

The level notation for each adventure hook, given before the title, is a rough estimate. Each adventure includes quest hooks and rewards, with the amounts of those rewards appropriate for a group of five characters of the indicated level.

### 9: ON THE ROCKS

The dwarven community of Hammerfast, near the Dawnforge Mountains, has a problem. For several months, more and more dwarven villages in the mountain range have gone silent, whole communities vanishing overnight. More recently, distant farmsteads of Hammerfast proper have met the same fate—entire families are gone without a trace. The Hammerfast dwarves want to seek aid from their neighbors in the Nentir Vale, but the insular mountain communities around it do not trust outsiders. The longer the stubborn, prideful dwarves wait to call on outside help, the greater their losses will be.

The missing dwarves have been kidnapped by a tribe of galeb duhrs from the bowels of the Dawnforge Mountains. These ancestral servants of the Rockbrow tribe of hill giants have grown tired of their forced labors. Because it does not occur to them to abandon their masters, these galeb duhrs have instead decided to increase the size of the giants' labor pool. The kidnapped dwarves are being held until the galeb duhrs believe they have sufficient numbers to deliver as slaves to the hill giants.

**Quest Hook:** One of the dwarves of Hammerfast, bucking the isolationists' wishes, petitions for aid from Fallcrest or one of the other nearby cities. The characters get wind of this call for help. They

investigate the disappearances by tracking, setting ambushes, or traveling to the attacked cities.

Alternatively, one of the characters (particularly a dwarf) has a personal connection with Hammerfast or the other dwarven communities in the mountains. He or she decides to help out after hearing rumors of trouble.

**Quest XP:** The mountain dwarves are furious at the presence of outsiders, out of shame that their troubles have been revealed. If the characters get the dwarves to accept their aid without resorting to threats and violence, or without giving up and leaving the insufferable isolationists to their fate, they receive a minor quest reward of 400 XP.

When the characters learn that the perpetrators are galeb duhrs, they earn an additional minor quest reward of 400 XP.

**Quest Hook:** After the galeb duhrs are identified as the root of the problem, those dwarves who have accepted the characters' presence call on them to track down the kidnapers, free the hostages, and prevent further raids. Some adventurers might choose to do this because it's the right thing to do; those who are mercenary can be induced to act in return for a reward in the form of one or two level 8 treasure parcels.

**Quest XP:** Finding the galeb duhrs' lair requires more than searching a few mountain caves. Their tunnels are conduits to the Elemental Chaos, leading to the heart of an enormous earthmote floating in the wild tempest. In addition to galeb duhrs, the characters must battle various earth-oriented elemental creatures. They could come face to face with some of the Rockbrow hill giants.

If the heroes free the kidnapped dwarves and hurt the galeb duhrs enough to discourage them from trying such action again, they earn a major quest reward of 2,000 XP. This reward should be greater if you have included higher-level foes or created a longer adventure that spans several levels.

### 13: SEED OF CHAOS

Githzerai from the Henzathra monastery, though militant and insular, are peaceful. But recently and without warning, they attacked several *planar dromonds* and *spelljammers*, as well as a few genasi trading communities. The assaults are thieving raids—the githzerai gather what goods they can and depart, fighting and killing only enough to collect their booty. What they're stealing isn't especially valuable: mostly foodstuffs and basic necessities, either grown in the more habitable regions of the Elemental Chaos or imported from the world.

The githzerai of Henzathra are preparing for a siege. One of them recently acquired a chunk of stone from the Abyss that thrums with evil power. Recently,

a cadre of demons learned about the abyssal stone. They believe that the stone's energy can transform other sorts of slaads into Abyss-tainted void slaads. The demons intend to raze the monastery, take the stone, and advance their own destructive schemes. The githzerai have learned of the impending attack and intend to fight to the last.

If you wish to further complicate the plotline, consider involving a powerful—and unusually subtle—slaad in the quest for the evil stone. It too has learned of the threat and seeks to prevent the demons from getting their hands on it. The scheming slaad operates behind the scenes, impeding the demons and aiding the heroes when they least expect it.

**Quest Hook:** A genasi village or the captain of a *spelljammer* or *planar dromond* in the Elemental Chaos contacts the characters, or takes advantage of an existing link from prior adventures. The characters are asked to stop the githzerai raids.

**Quest XP:** Countering the attacks isn't hard. The githzerai aren't interested in pitched battles, and they stop raiding once the demonic siege of Henzathra begins. If the characters track them down and learn the truth (not easy to do, given the githzerai's distrust of everyone) they earn a minor quest reward of 800 XP.

**Quest Hook:** Once the characters learn the truth behind the demonic attack, it shouldn't take much for them to aid the githzerai. A cadre of demons that has the power to transform any slaad into a void slaad isn't good for anyone.

**Quest XP:** If the characters help the githzerai fight off the first wave of the siege, they earn a minor quest reward of 800 XP. If they are able to eliminate the demonic cabal seeking the stone, they earn a major quest reward of 4,000 XP. They gain another minor reward of 800 XP if they suggest a practical means of destroying the stone or otherwise rendering it harmless.

### 20: WAR OF SEASONS

The courts of the Feywild are barely less discordant than the Elemental Chaos, though their conflicts are more subtle. Fey factions work constantly to trump each other, maneuvering for influence, magic, territory, or prestige. Most fey eschew blatant warfare in favor of more restrained contests, but rogue elements among the Court of Stars are angry, evil, or desperate enough to engage in open bloodshed. Recently, war between a fiefdom of the Summer Court and certain nobles of the Gloaming and Winter Courts has spilled out of the Feywild. The Winter Fey sought allies among the creatures of cold and ice in the Elemental Chaos. In turn, the Summer Court called upon creatures of fire. The result is an intermittent battle of multiple factions.



The characters begin in the city of Irriad's Glen, a peaceful community in a bucolic setting of the world. Perhaps they have just completed an adventure, or maybe they're looking for items found only in a community of this size. Everything seems normal, except that the weather is oddly warm and dry for this time of year. While the characters are still in the city, alarms sound and the gates slam shut. An army of fire archons, along with fire-based elementals and fire giants, is advancing on Irriad's Glen.

**Quest Hook:** Irriad's Glen needs the characters' help to repel the assault. The characters cannot defeat the attacking monsters on their own, but they can provide much-needed support to the besieged city. Besides, they're the only help around.

**Quest XP:** By helping to fight off the attack, the characters earn a minor quest reward of 2,800 XP.

**Quest Hook:** The characters might be curious about why the elemental army is attacking Irriad's Glen. Even if they aren't, the city leaders definitely want answers and offer a reward for further information.

If the characters decide to investigate, they trace the attackers back to one of several fortified bases. There, they discover that the fire creatures were attacked and driven out by a larger force of water- and

cold-based elemental beings. By studying the various battles that are taking place all over the region and by questioning the survivors, the heroes learn that the two elemental forces are proxies in a war between fey powers. Each faction is struggling to take over a region of the world as a staging ground. This area includes a number of portals to the Elemental Chaos.

**Quest XP:** If the characters discover the origin of the invading army, they earn a minor quest reward of 2,800 XP.

**Quest Hook:** At this point, the characters might be inclined to just hole up and let the conflict play out, but they cannot. Irriad's Glen represents too great a prize—if one army takes it, the city becomes a secure bastion with a sizable work force. In addition, the influence of the Feywild and the Elemental Chaos is threatening the world. The weather changes drastically depending on which side has the upper hand. When the fire armies make headway, the area becomes hot and parched; when the forces of cold advance, freezing winds and blizzards sweep the land. Crops and herds grow sickly due to the disrupted cycles, and supplies are running low.

The heroes aren't powerful enough to stop the armies from fighting. Instead, they must get to the source of the problem, severing the Fey Courts'

alliances with their proxies in the Elemental Chaos. Such a task requires diplomacy, tact, intimidation, and possibly demonstrations of physical might. The archons leading the armies of the two sides must be convinced that the war is too costly or otherwise against their interests. Alternatively, the characters can resolve the conflict by confronting the nobles of the warring fey courts. To end the war requires navigating labyrinthine politics, bribing officials with favors, and launching targeted assaults.

**Quest XP:** If the characters succeed against either the armies' leaders or the fey nobles, they earn a major quest reward of 14,000 XP.

## 26: THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD

Shaken by recent turmoil, the City of Brass is ill-equipped to deal with a new elemental realm that has appeared not far from the city. The garrison at an outpost reports that a nebula of caustic smoke and liquid fire that had raged for decades has transformed itself in mere hours. A wall of lightning-charged iron now surrounds a flat plain of rock over a mile across. The efreet nobles know how much physical power and mental strength is needed to stabilize portions of the plane, and they are deeply worried about the proximity of a being mighty enough to reshape such a massive stretch so swiftly. They are keen to determine whether this newcomer is a threat or a potential ally.

**Quest Hook:** The Lord of the Efreets is hard-pressed to restore order in the aftermath of the city's recent upheaval. Despite having no allies to spare who can investigate the event, the monarch cannot leave the mystery unresolved without losing face. Hiring the characters is the ideal solution, since they are expendable outsiders who have no binding connections to any efreet faction.

**Quest XP:** If the characters infiltrate this new elemental realm and learn the identity of its master, and perhaps his or her agenda, they earn a minor quest reward of 9,000 XP.

**Quest Hook:** The master of this new realm is Qualquineska, a primordial naga druid who has guarded elemental secrets for millennia. The naga recently came across knowledge of magic so potent that, she believes, she can use it to ascend and become a true primordial. Establishing her own realm in the Elemental Chaos is merely the first step of the process.

**Quest XP:** The magic that Qualquineska has access to, and what she needs to ascend, are up to you. The characters earn a major quest reward of 45,000 XP if they stop the naga, and an additional minor quest reward of 9,000 XP if they find a way to keep any other potent creature from following in her footsteps.

## PATRONS

Visitors to the Elemental Chaos might battle slaads, become enmeshed in the schemes of wily efreets, or trade goods with xenophobic githzerai. Characters who regularly interact with the plane, or who come to the attention of the powers that be there, might also cultivate an elemental patron. This section describes several possible elemental benefactors for the characters. They fill much the same roles as worldly patrons, providing missions, equipment, safety, and sources of adventure.

The patrons presented here are iconic examples of their races or organizations. You can drop them into your campaign as they are, or use them as examples when creating patron characters of your own.

### SHAH ABDUL-AZIM ABASSI

*Efreet Karadjin (Monster Manual, page 100)*

The efreets of the City of Brass collect tools—many of them living. They have numerous uses for mortal pawns.

#### BACKGROUND

Abdul-Azim Abassi has been deeply embroiled in the politics of the City of Brass all his life. He is a high-ranking efreet in the city, with a number of lesser efreets and scores of slaves in his service. At the same time, he answers to more powerful nobles. Abdul-Azim chafes at this aspect of his situation and yearns for more power.

#### USING SHAH ABDUL-AZIM

Abdul-Azim schemes to increase his own political power and decrease that of his rivals. Efreet society is so complex and far-reaching that the shah can accomplish these goals in a number of ways, giving rise to plenty of adventure possibilities.

Abdul-Azim can send characters on the following sorts of missions.

- ◆ Spy on or sabotage the household of a rival efreet.
- ◆ Put down a slave uprising.
- ◆ Incite a slave uprising to discredit a rival.
- ◆ Acquire an item, person, or piece of information.
- ◆ Destroy enemies of Abdul-Azim or of the efreets in general, such as genasi pirates or a slaad colony.
- ◆ Establish positive relationships, perhaps for the sake of trade, with forces in the world or elsewhere.
- ◆ Find a new source of raw materials for Abdul-Azim's slave force to plunder.

## THE STONE COUNCIL

Earth Titans (*Monster Manual*, page 122)

Three earth titans make up the Stone Council. They rule an earthmote hollowed by tunnels and packed with servants—hill giants, enslaved dwarves and kobolds, galeb duhrs, earth elementals, and a few stone giants.

### BACKGROUND

The Stone Council began when a group of earth titans conquered the earthmote and dubbed their new domain Allrock. Desiring a realm of their own, the titans set about securing subjects. Now, after dozens of raids to the world to acquire dwarf and kobold slaves, Allrock has become crisscrossed with passages. Elemental creatures keep arriving, attracted to the power of Allrock, but the earthmote has run out of space to hold them.

### USING THE STONE COUNCIL

Earth titans might not be the brightest of their kind, but the Stone Council members are smart enough to realize that their kingdom must expand or be torn apart. The titans have been looking to secure new territory for Allrock's growing population.

Characters in the service of the Stone Council could take advantage of their generally higher intelligence to deceive their patrons. If the earth titans were to discover such deception, however, they would bring all their might to bear on the transgressors.

The Stone Council can send characters on the following types of missions.

- ◆ Explore an unoccupied area of the Elemental Chaos to determine its suitability for an expansion of Allrock.
- ◆ Travel to the world to get more slaves who can help secure new territory.
- ◆ Attack and conquer a nearby area of the Elemental Chaos controlled by another force, such as other giants, slaads, githzerai, or efreet.
- ◆ Devise a practical way to expand Allrock, such as finding a reliable method of transforming the surrounding elemental substance into earth.

## VALAPHYR

Djinn Thunderer (*Monster Manual 2*, page 71)

The djinns are native to the Elemental Chaos, but they haven't been a significant force for a long time. Much of their populace remains trapped in objects or other magical prisons, and the free djinns have lost a great deal of their former power. All djinns long to return to glory, but none are more keen for it than Valaphyr.

### BACKGROUND

After being trapped in a magic flute for millennia, Valaphyr won his freedom when a group of adventurers discovered the golden instrument in a young dragon's hoard. One incautious party member sounded the flute before it was definitively identified. After an untold time in magical slumber, the djinn was eager to exercise his power. The adventurers, weakened from their battle with the dragon, had no chance. Valaphyr collected their magic equipment in addition to the dragon's hoard, then secured passage to the Elemental Chaos. Once there, he sought shelter among a group of djinns in a small cloud citadel.

Valaphyr had chalked up his lengthy imprisonment to supremely bad luck but has since learned that most of his kind were even less fortunate. The djinn has vowed to free his race from its shackles and punish the gods for such cruel treatment. To this end, he plans to liberate the djinns, recover their old holdings, and, ultimately, free a primordial and march upon the gods' domains.

### USING VALAPHYR

Although his first act as a free djinn was to slay the adventurers who unwittingly rescued him, Valaphyr holds no enmity for their kind. He appreciates the resources and enterprise of adventuring parties and regularly uses them to achieve his goals. He has no interest in endangering himself, and he regards the lives of his fellow djinns as too precious to risk. In contrast, adventurers are cheap to hire, and their lives mean nothing to Valaphyr.

The djinn seeks an audience with any adventuring party that ventures close to his cloud citadel. He also goes out of his way to invite adventurers he believes to be especially capable. Though he cares little for their well-being, he treats such characters fairly—he has need of their services and prefers not to make unnecessary enemies. On the other hand, he has little patience for any who disrespect him or the djinns.

## ORDERS OUT OF CHAOS

Valaphyr can send characters on the following kinds of missions.

- ◆ Rescue a djinn from a magic prison.
- ◆ Defeat the current denizens of a former djinn stronghold.
- ◆ Slay a devout or important divine servant.
- ◆ Forge an alliance with other allies of the primordial or enemies of the gods.
- ◆ Gather magic items or an artifact for the djinns.

## ZAT

**Githzerai Mindmage** (*Monster Manual*, page 131)

The insular githzerai nevertheless must seek the services of outsiders from time to time. A few individuals, such as Zat, go out of their way to find them.

## BACKGROUND

Zat operates out of the genasi city of Threshold (page 57), where she keeps an eye on the massive portal to the world. She has lived in the Elemental Chaos all her life and grew up fascinated by the legends of the githzerai race. Although young, she has developed into an excellent mindmage and recently traveled to Threshold at the behest of her githzerai superiors. They provide her with the resources to act as an able patron.

## USING ZAT

Zat frequents the area near the portal to ensure that she makes initial contact with visitors. Occasionally, she uses the passage to find and establish agents in the world. Although she is not native to the city, Zat has come to love Threshold and its people. She serves the interests of the githzerai, the city of Threshold, and her own notions of what is best.

Zat can send characters on the following sorts of missions.

- ◆ Slay enemies of the githzerai, particularly mind flayers and githyanki, on which Zat offers a standing bounty.
- ◆ Serve as diplomats to a race or an organization in the world that would be hesitant around, or hostile to, the githzerai.
- ◆ Recover a lost githzerai item or individual.
- ◆ Establish contact with a githzerai or genasi colony in the world or in a remote location of the Elemental Chaos.
- ◆ Spy on a power within the Elemental Chaos, such as the City of Brass efreet or a cult dedicated to a primordial.

With the exception of the most potent efreet, the powers that dwell within the Elemental Chaos are rarely more organized than the plane they call home. The constantly changing nature of the plane and the great distances between communities prevent control over multiple populations. Those leaders that inspire cults aren't interested in cooperation between sects or in forming larger faiths. The nonnative inhabitants of the Plane Below must expend so much time and effort on survival that they have little energy or motivation to pursue other goals.

Yet as a source of unimaginable power, the Elemental Chaos calls to groups of individuals who seek to explore and to exploit its depths. A few examples of Elemental Chaos-linked organizations follow. As always, pick and choose the details you are fond of, or let them inspire you to create groups of your own.

## THE CULT OF THE ELDER ELEMENTAL EYE

**The Temple of Elemental Evil:** Nearly every sage, priest, or adventurer has heard its name whispered in rumors and legends. It has been destroyed more than once by the forces of good. Just as many times, it has risen from the rubble to plague the world.

The Temple of Elemental Evil is but one symptom of a deeper malady. It is the holiest site of the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye, a horrific organization not fully understood even by its own worshipers. The cultists are not highly organized, and internecine struggles for control of the temple are constant. Still, if one sect can impose its will on the others and raise the group to prominence once again, it can direct the cult's awesome resources to end creation in any number of ways.

## CULT OF THE ELDER ELEMENTAL EYE LORE

**Arcana, History, or Religion DC 15:** The infamous Temple of Elemental Evil was the heart of a religious sect that terrorized the surrounding regions. The group hired bandits, consorted with demons and evil powers, and caused much destruction before it was defeated.

**History DC 20:** The Cult of Elemental Evil arose multiple times, and the temple was destroyed and rebuilt at least twice.

**Arcana or Religion DC 25:** The so-called Cult of Elemental Evil was in fact a sect of worshipers devoted to Zuggtmoy, a foul demon of slime and fungus. The elemental trappings of the sect were an



attempt by the demon lord to attract a wider array of followers. When Zuggtmoy's aspect was slain during a raid on the temple, Zuggtmoy's followers lost faith, and the demon turned her attentions elsewhere.

**Arcana or Religion DC 30:** Zuggtmoy was merely a pawn in a larger game. She was not the true power behind the Temple of Elemental Evil. The Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye was the ultimate threat, an organization worshipping a primordial entity of enormous power. The name of the cult's master is unknown, but rumors indicate that other primordials have cooperated with it, including Imix, Lord of Fire.

**Religion DC 40:** The title of the Elder Elemental Eye refers not to a primordial but to the Chained God, Tharizdun—the mad, figurative father of the Abyss. That he is the power behind the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye is a fact known only by the sect's highest members. Not all worshipers of Tharizdun are members of the sect. The cult represents only one group of mad fanatics, albeit one of the largest and most infamous.

## ORGANIZATION

With little organization and no unified leadership, the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye has never reached its full potential. Still, its members work tirelessly,

clandestinely seeking ever more power for their evil patron. Their ultimate goal is to bring Tharizdun into the world—a event that would be catastrophic for the entire cosmos.

**Leader:** Only a few faction leaders have a chance to attain dominance over the sect. Falrinth, a male human wizard, is an ancient fanatic who has already survived two separate offensives against the temple. Dein, a male stone giant warlock, believes that natural humanoids have no place in the cult except as slaves. Karreska Redhand is a female orc druid whose older half-sister, Smigmal, was a sect champion until she was slain.

**Headquarters:** The Temple of Elemental Evil is an enormous stone edifice with hideous carvings and demonic gargoyles, constructed and reconstructed in varying styles over the years. The temple contains multiple passageways to the Abyss and the Elemental Chaos, as well several pockets of the Plane Below made manifest in the world.

Legend tells that the temple exists in both the world and the Elemental Chaos, two spiritual halves of the same structure kept separate by planar boundaries. According to the tales, if the two temples were ever brought into conjunction, they would form a permanent, enormous conduit between the planes.

Dimensional boundaries for miles would waver and blur, opening the way for a massive invasion of demonic and elemental creatures.

**Hierarchy:** The cult's hierarchy is simple: Whoever has the power leads. All worshipers are devoted to the spread of elemental evil as a concept, even if some of them direct that devotion to different entities than others do. This common goal keeps the cult operating.

**Members:** Although its leaders are usually skilled warriors or elemental spellcasters, the cult accepts anyone. Worship of Tharizdun isn't required to join, nor does the cult incorporate only such worshipers. The selfish, the bitter, the ambitious, the anarchic, and those who dabble in forbidden lore are all drawn to the cult. Evil and obsessed, they seek power at the expense of nonbelievers and are welcomed with open arms.

Many cultists aren't natural humanoids. They include elementals desiring power over the world, giants seeking the return of their lost empire, and demons reveling in the chance to destroy.

## HISTORY

When the Cult of the Elder Elemental Eye first arose is impossible to say. Worshipers of Tharizdun, under his various titles, have existed since the end of the Dawn War. When the temple was first built decades ago, it appeared to be dedicated to the destructive powers of the elements, but was in fact faithful to the demon Zuggtmoy. Even then, some members secretly revered the Elder Elemental Eye, working to steer the sect to their own purposes. Were they instrumental from the beginning, manipulating the demon into founding the cult? Did they come along later to take advantage of what Zuggtmoy had begun? So secretive is the sect, and so varied the accounts of its factions, that none can say.

## GOALS AND METHODS

The cult's ultimate goal is to fray the boundaries between the world and the Elemental Chaos (or the Abyss) and thus free its dreadful patron. It seeks to increase the power of its members, especially its leaders, while offering worthy sacrifices in hopes of granting its master enough strength to break free.

What it lacks in organization, the cult makes up for with determination and sheer power. As a group, the cultists are extremely potent and learned. On more than one occasion, they have succeeded in summoning horrific beings to the world.

Cultists engage in various schemes. These plots have included imprisoning powerful entities and indoctrinating them, using magic to drive entire populations mad, transforming powerful creatures into elemental beasts, and weakening the boundaries

between the world and the Elemental Chaos. All the while, they have deceived large groups, including other cultists, into worshiping and sacrificing to one entity while believing that they serve another.

## ADVENTURE IDEAS

Just the words "Temple of Elemental Evil" can get your players raring to go. For those who still need convincing, here are a few ways to get their characters involved.

The Cult of the Elemental Eye adds an elemental theme to an entire campaign. Its servants and thralls can appear at early levels, gathering sacrifices or competing with the characters for magic items. At the paragon tier, the characters might struggle against higher-level priests and various elemental monsters, perhaps even making forays into the Elemental Chaos or the upper levels of the Temple of Elemental Evil. Heroes at the epic tier can delve into the temple's depths and take on the demonic or elemental powers to whom the sect's factions are devoted.

## THE GRAVE-MINDERS

Faced with passing years, great riches, and power waiting to be claimed, even those who zealously hold to a purpose can drift astray. Such was the case with the Grave-Minders.

This holy order was once dedicated to guarding the divine bonds on the primordials and was set to warn the various priesthoods and temples of the world if those prisons weakened. Since its founding, however, the group has devolved into a band of scavengers and treasure hunters. In their ambition, they scour the graves and prisons of the primordials for their own gain.

## GRAVE-MINDERS LORE

**Arcana, History, or Religion DC 20:** The Grave-Minders were founded by members of the earliest religions. Fearing that the turmoil of the Elemental Chaos might blind the eyes of the gods, they set up several strongholds in the Plane Below, monitoring the prisons and graves of the primordials to ensure that none would rise again.

Little has been heard of them for centuries.

**Arcana or History DC 30:** The Grave-Minders did not disappear, but the order has avoided notice because its members have turned away from their original mission. They are more interested in raiding primordial tombs for ancient treasures and powerful magic, whether left behind since the Dawn War or gathered by worshipers attempting to free their primordial masters.



## ORGANIZATION

The Grave-Minders were viewed as heroes and martyrs in their early days—parables and psalms were written about them. Today, the organization keeps its existence secret. Only its regular contacts, several informed denizens of the Elemental Chaos, and a half-dozen high priests of primordial cults and divine churches are aware of the group's current activities. None of them think much of the Grave-Minders.

**Leader:** The organization's leader is elected by acclaim, based largely on his or her accomplishments. The current head is Ephram Kiembretz, a male human invoker, but he's nearing retirement. His likely successor is Lathlenvia Viell, a female tiefling rogue.

**Headquarters:** On the rare occasions when the Grave-Minders assemble, they do so on the *spelljammer* galleon *Ice Princess*, which sails the skies and vapors of the Plane Below.

**Hierarchy:** The Grave-Minders are divided into autonomous cells of procurers, who are essentially adventuring parties, and researchers, consisting mainly of older members. Each team has its own commander, who reports to the organization's leader.

**Members:** The group accepts anyone ambitious and capable enough to travel to the hazardous regions of the Elemental Chaos where the primordials are imprisoned or entombed. Particularly knowledgeable sages or experts serve as researchers; all the other members of the Grave-Minders are adventurers. Followers of gods and primordials alike are welcome, as long as they don't object to the Grave-Minders' activities.

## HISTORY

The Grave-Minders have little recorded history. Supposedly, the organization was founded within a few generations of the end of the Dawn War. Given how obscured in myth that time is, that claim cannot be confirmed.

A thousand years ago, members began to lose interest in standing watch against an event that nobody thought would ever occur. Instead, they became increasingly interested in the treasures and power to be gained in the Elemental Chaos. Those guiding the society, no matter how devout, could not resist the income and influence those treasure hunters brought to the Grave-Minders. At first they justified their actions as using these resources to guard against the primordials' return, but eventually that excuse was abandoned. When an adventuring rogue by the name of Avirras was acclaimed leader several hundred years ago, the society's shift was complete—pretended guardianship became undisguised robbery.

## GOALS AND METHODS

The goals of the Grave-Minders are simple: Locate the resting places of primordials, living or dead, and loot the powerful and valuable treasures found there. Some members aspire to be rich enough to buy and sell entire cities. Others enjoy testing themselves against dangers that would challenge the gods. Some seek rulership, conquest, or even apotheosis, and believe these items can aid them. A rare few still serve the original mission, keeping an eye on the primordials and thwarting the efforts of their fellow members.

Most members of the Grave-Minders explore the Elemental Chaos. The rest conduct research in the greatest libraries of the world and in the recorded histories of those few elemental cultures that bother to keep such writings. Once a primordial grave or prison has been located, a team of tomb raiders travels there to secure whatever wealth and magic it contains.

In other words, the Grave-Minders is an adventurers' guild interested only in the deadliest dungeons and most fearsome foes.

## ADVENTURE IDEAS

The Grave-Minders can function well as allies, as enemies, or as recruiters. The group might cooperate with the characters in exploring the grave of a primordial, or it might compete for the recovery of an artifact. The heroes could join the Grave-Minders to fulfill the group's original purpose—guarding against the awakening of a primordial. Alternatively, they might be dispatched to thwart the organization by a religious faction that fears the Grave-Minders' meddling will cause the very awakening the group once feared.

## THE SPEAKERS OF XAOS

Also called the Xaos-Speakers, this organization is respected by the few who know of it, and feared by the fewer who know it well. A cabal of arcane and scholastic explorers studying the nature of the Elemental Chaos, the Speakers of Xaos (pronounced like "chaos") pursues a variety of ambitions that, if successful, could grant its members access to world-shattering information.

## SPEAKERS OF XAOS LORE

**Arcana or History DC 15:** The Speakers of Xaos is a college of wizards, sages, druids, priests, and explorers who seek a complete understanding of the Elemental Chaos. Although a few small subgroups meet in the world, the group's primary campuses are in the Plane Below.



**History DC 20:** The Xaos-Speakers don't have a unifying motivation for their study of the Elemental Chaos. Some members gather knowledge for its own sake. Other individuals hope to understand the magic that underlies all reality and thus increase their own abilities. Still others seek mastery over various elemental creatures and the primordials—either to maintain the divine order, or in hopes of freeing the primordials and controlling their awesome power.

**Arcana or History DC 25:** The Speakers of Xaos resulted from the merger of two orders: the Xaositects, an anarchist faction that operated within the city of Sigil, and the Lyceum Elemental, a combination cabal and social club for researchers investigating all matters elemental and primordial.

**Arcana DC 30:** One of the Speakers' primary lines of research is the study of chaos. By identifying patterns in what others see as randomness in the Plane Below, they believe they can predict the future. They hope to learn to manipulate the nature of the Elemental Chaos and, through it, the world.

## ORGANIZATION

The Speakers of Xaos is not a clandestine organization, but its activities and research are closely guarded secrets. Individual members pursue their own hidden experiments, refusing to share evidence and conclusions even within the group.

**Leader:** The Speakers of Xaos is a gathering of like-minded individuals, not a regimented order, and its leadership is informal. The members elect a director, who approves expenditures and groupwide activities but otherwise has little say over individual members' actions. The current holder of that office is Director Callum Rell, a male deva invoker.

**Headquarters:** The group has a number of small institutions and meeting places in the world. More prestigious complexes are scattered throughout stable regions of the Elemental Chaos, including a library in the City of Brass. The organization's central college is located outside the githzerai city of Zerthadlun—far enough that the githzerai don't object to its presence, but near enough to take advantage of the city's stabilizing influence on its surroundings.

**Hierarchy:** Other than the elected director, no Xaos-Speaker has official authority over another. Unofficially, associates defer to long-standing, powerful, and influential researchers.

**Members:** Officially, the group is open to anyone who seeks knowledge and understanding of chaos, the natural order, and the Plane Below. In fact, only those who demonstrate sufficient power to survive the rigors of the Elemental Chaos, or provide lore or knowledge that the group lacks, are admitted. Any Speaker can nominate a candidate for membership.

## XAOSITECTS

A great conflict surged through Sigil's streets some time ago, realigning factions, organizations, and entire systems of belief. Though the Lady of Pain remained inviolate and in control, many other lesser power structures faltered or failed altogether, including the faction called the Xaositects. Calling this group an organization would be a stretch. The loosely connected order, while older than many others, had a habit of disbanding, re-forming, and changing its name. Such behavior not only makes it difficult to compile a reliable history of the Xaositects but also leaves open a question: Are all those earlier Xaositects gone, or are some still rattling around the planes? The Speakers of Xaos don't care.

Confirmation requires the approval of another member of equal or greater seniority, as well as that of the director. Similarly, anyone can be black-listed by agreement of the director and two senior members.

## HISTORY

Since before the world's recorded history, the Xaositects were a philosophical faction in the great planar city of Sigil. Some members were pure anarchists, but many were dedicated to seeking meaning and patterns in chaos. The group's mantra was that reality is chaotic, and only by understanding disorder can it be mastered.

Eventually the Xaositects disbanded, partly due to the efforts of rival sects and partly in obedience to a decree of the enigmatic Lady of Pain. The anarchists continued on as they always had—what did the existence of a recognized structure matter to them? More regimented members sought out new homes and a rededication of purpose. They began communicating with the Lyceum Elemental, a cabal of sages and researchers who had become fascinated with the Elemental Chaos's theoretical effect on events in the world. The combination of the Lyceum's theoretical knowledge with the former Xaositects' applied experience resulted in the birth of the group known today as the Speakers of Xaos.

## GOALS AND METHODS

All Speakers are united in their goal of understanding the Elemental Chaos—from finding patterns in the fluctuations of its energy to learning precisely how this fundamental plane influences the nature of reality and events in the world.

Why do they gather this information, how do they go about doing so, and what do they plan to do with it? The answers vary from member to member. Certain Speakers, including the current director, are interested only in gathering knowledge and perhaps using this insight to aid others. They watch and record the movements of the Elemental Chaos and the behavior of elementals, trying to find patterns. Other members manipulate the activities of elementals, or even experiment on such creatures, to learn more of the Plane Below's secrets. They seek to increase their own personal magical acumen, perhaps even using the power of the Elemental Chaos to gain godlike stature. So far, their efforts have been in vain.

Some Speakers cultivate ties with the efreet's of the City of Brass, hoping to learn more about the *al-buraj* divining system (see "Mapping Chaos," page 54), but so far they've had little luck. The long-term nature of *al-buraj* practice is part of the reason, but

mostly, the efreet's are unwilling to cooperate with outsiders trying to learn their secrets. The few who would consider the idea demand something major in exchange.

## ADVENTURE IDEAS

The Speakers of Xaos can be a catalyst for all manner of adventures, as allies of the characters, as enemies, or—given the differing methods and goals of its members—as both at the same time.

The group's more scholarly members might hire the characters to gather information, observe certain inhabitants of the Elemental Chaos, retrieve magic items, or map a specific location. They might require aid against enemy elementals or cults whose power they cannot match, or help in delivering vital supplies to their bastions in the Elemental Chaos.

The group's more ambitious members could become regular adversaries of the party. They might ally themselves with rogue efreet's who trade knowledge about *al-buraj* in exchange for aid in various schemes. They might spark war between communities in the Elemental Chaos by kidnapping and vivisectioning elemental beings. They could even conquer a region of the world with power gained through a deeper understanding of elemental nature.

## ARTIFACTS

Countless potent magic relics originated in the Plane Below. The following are examples of artifacts that might hail from, or be linked to, the Elemental Chaos. Their history, purpose, and power can drive adventures or entire campaigns.

### PLASTRON OF TZIPHAL

The *Plastron of Tziphal* is appropriate for characters in mid-paragon tier and upward.

#### Plastron of Tziphal

Paragon Tier

*This ceremonial breastplate is fashioned from dark stone. The surface is chipped and the edges jagged from the chisel that fashioned it. When worn, it merges with its wearer's flesh, turning skin to a rocky armor as hard as plate.*

Although it looks like only a breastplate, the *Plastron of Tziphal* functions as +4 warplate armor. It has the following properties and powers.

**Enhancement:** AC

**Property:** You gain resist 10 poison.

**Property:** You gain an item bonus equal to the *Plastron's* current enhancement bonus to saving throws against slowing, immobilizing, petrifying, or restraining effects that a save can end.

**Power (Daily):** Standard Action. You gain resist 5 to all damage until the end of the encounter; or Immediate Interrupt. **Trigger:** You are hit by an attack. **Effect:** You gain resist 15 to all damage until the end of your next turn.

**Power (Daily):** Minor Action. You gain a power bonus to Fortitude equal to the *Plastron's* current enhancement bonus until the end of the encounter.

**Power (Daily):** Free Action. **Trigger:** You make a saving throw to end an effect. **Effect:** You make the triggering saving throw again and use either result.

## THE MOUNTAIN BUILDER

None today know whether Tziphal is truly dead. Mauled and cursed by the gods, he lies within a cairn deep in the Elemental Chaos (see “The Mountain Builder’s Barrow,” page 100). The body within might be utterly lifeless or rest in some intermediate state between life and death. Creatures that have powers of petrification (Tziphal’s “children”) and a few worshipers of the primordial occasionally claim to hear a deep and rumbling voice at the very limits of their hearing. They cannot yet make out the words, but they feel an ever stronger compulsion to seek out its source and obey whatever instructions it might have for them.

Few descriptions of the Mountain Builder survive, and those that do are often contradictory—though all agree that his flesh was the hue and consistency of stone. Some portray the primordial as an enormous, featureless humanoid form of blocky stone, standing hundreds of feet tall. Other images depict him as a creature far longer than he was tall, with a dozen pairs of legs and multiple swaying torsos. All stories describe Tziphal as staggeringly huge—a peculiar detail, considering that no creature of such size could possibly fit within the mystical barrow said to be his grave. Either all tales of Tziphal’s appearance are false, or the Mountain Builder was capable of altering his form to a tremendous degree.

Whether or not Tziphal still lives depends on the needs of your campaign, but you need not involve him personally to base adventures around him. Multiple cults of the Mountain Builder exist still among elemental creatures said to be created by him, as well as among humanoids of the world. Many followers seek to restore the primordial to his former glory, while others believe they follow a sacred mandate to petrify all natural beings. The leaders of such cults claim to be guided by that mysterious, rumbling voice. Are they speaking the truth, or using Tziphal’s name to justify their own ambitions? What is the voice telling them to do? And is it truly the voice of Tziphal, or some other entity taking advantage of his cultists’ faith?

## GOALS OF THE PLASTRON OF TZIPHAL

- ◆ Thwart and destroy worshipers of the gods, especially of those deities that existed at the time of the Dawn War.
- ◆ Increase the influence of elementals and primordials, as well as earth, rock, and petrifying creatures created by Tziphal.
- ◆ Locate the grave of Tziphal, deep in the Elemental Chaos, and bring the primordial back to life.

## ROLEPLAYING THE PLASTRON OF TZIPHAL

The *Plastron* doesn’t communicate much with its wearer, indicating its desires through flashes of emotion. The artifact might project rage toward a creature it wants slain, fear of someone it wants to avoid, or a yearning for a location it wishes to visit. The *Plastron* cares little for how the wearer accomplishes these goals.

In its hatred, the *Plastron* coaxes its wearer to attack divine characters and immortal creatures. If the artifact foresees an opportunity to accomplish one of its goals, however, it might be willing to put up with the presence of such enemies in the short term.

## PLASTRON OF TZIPHAL LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** The *Plastron* was carved from the rocky flesh of Tziphal the Mountain Builder, said to be the progenitor of creatures that petrify. The armor retains a bit of the primordial’s power, as well as his hatred for the divine order that cast him down.

## CONCORDANCE

<b>Starting score</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Owner gains a level</b>	<b>+1d10</b>
<b>Owner completes a quest that contributes to the release of a primordial</b>	<b>+3</b>
<b>Owner is a goliath or a dwarf</b>	<b>+1</b>
<b>Owner kills an immortal creature or a divine character (maximum 1/day)</b>	<b>+1</b>
<b>Owner gains a level without slaying an immortal creature or a divine character</b>	<b>-1</b>
<b>Owner is immortal or is a divine character</b>	<b>-3</b>
<b>Owner thwarts actions that contribute to the release of a primordial</b>	<b>-4</b>

## PLEASED (16–20)

*“I am chosen of Tziphal. He shall walk the world again, leaving forests of stone in his wake, and I shall thrive in his shadow.”*

The wearer is a worthy champion of the primordials. The *Plastron* takes great steps to keep the champion alive and successful.

The artifact's enhancement bonus becomes +5.

**Property:** You gain an item bonus to Fortitude equal to the *Plastron's* current enhancement bonus.

**Power (Daily):** Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* You are hit by a melee attack. *Target:* The triggering creature. *Effect:* The target is immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is restrained (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target is petrified (save ends). *Third Failed Saving Throw:* The target is petrified (no save).

### SATISFIED (12–15)

*"Though I remain a lowly being of worldly flesh, through the power of the primordial I can become so much more."*

The *Plastron* still views the wearer as inferior, but it has seen potential. It empowers the wearer in hopes of creating a more useful instrument.

**Property:** You gain a +2 item bonus to Strength-based checks and a +2 item bonus to weapon damage rolls.

**Property:** The item bonus to saving throws applies only to effects imposed on you by a divine character or an immortal creature.

### NORMAL (5–11)

*"I can sense that this armor holds me in contempt, but it desires that I serve as an instrument of its will."*

The armor finds nonelemental beings and those it considers unworthy to be distasteful, but it prefers any wearer to none. It is as patient as earth and stone, willing to wait for this one to prove worthy.

### UNSATISFIED (1–4)

*"The Plastron grows ever more disgusted with me. It sees in me all the weakness of those who have no elemental heritage."*

The *Plastron* has lost hope that the wearer might prove valuable. It bides its time until it can move on, or until the wearer improves its concordance.

The artifact's enhancement bonus becomes +3.

**Property:** You take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and damage rolls against earth creatures and creatures that have petrification powers.

**Special:** The first time each day a critical hit is scored against you, you are immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* You are restrained (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* You are petrified (save ends). *Third Failed Saving Throw:* You are petrified (no save).

### ANGERED (0 OR LOWER)

*"I represent everything the Plastron despises, all that Tziphal seeks to destroy. I must die to pave the way for Tziphal's return."*

The *Plastron* views its wearer as just another package of divine energy in a fleshy wrapping that should be destroyed.

The artifact's enhancement bonus becomes +2.

**Property:** You take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and damage rolls against elemental creatures.

**Property:** Elemental creatures and earth creatures can score critical hits against you on a roll of 19–20.

**Special:** The first time each day that a critical hit is scored against an ally you can see, that ally is immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The ally is restrained (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The ally is petrified (save ends). *Third Failed Saving Throw:* The ally is petrified (no save).

### MOVING ON

*"The Mountain Builder calls..."*

The *Plastron of Tziphal* disappears, reappearing elsewhere in the world to continue its quest. If the *Plastron* is at least satisfied, the wearer gains a stony appearance, along with a permanent +1 bonus to AC and a permanent +2 bonus to saving throws against slowing, immobilizing, petrifying, or restraining effects that a save can end.

An unsatisfied or angered *Plastron* curses the wearer, draining away essence and transforming his or her body into a stone golem of the wearer's current level. The golem is compelled to seek out the nearest primordial cult and serve its members as though they had created it.

The wearer can be restored to life and flesh only by reducing the golem to 0 hit points and then performing the Remove Affliction and Raise Dead rituals in that order.

## CRYSTAL OF EBON FLAME

The *Crystal of Ebon Flame* is appropriate for characters in the upper epic tier.

The *Crystal* is a conflicted artifact. The item's goal is to release Tharizdun, but a divine curse has been laid on it to thwart that end.

### Crystal of Ebon Flame

Epic Tier

*This fist-sized, black, flame-shaped crystal whispers menacingly when grasped. It offers power but warns of corruption.*

The *Crystal of Ebon Flame* is a +6 implement with the following properties and powers. When a wielder first picks up the artifact, he or she can choose what sort of implement it functions as.

**Enhancement:** Attack rolls and damage rolls

**Critical:** +1d10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 fire and necrotic damage and is weakened (save ends both)

**Property:** When you use an attack power through this implement, you can score a critical hit on a roll of 19–20.

**Property:** You gain a +4 bonus to checks to escape a grab, and a +5 bonus to saving throws against immobilizing or restraining effects that a save can end.



**Power (Encounter ♦ Healing, Implement):** Immediate Reaction. *Trigger:* You reduce a creature within 10 squares of you to 0 hit points. *Effect:* You can spend a healing surge or make a saving throw against each effect on you that a save can end. The triggering creature is utterly destroyed. It crumbles to dust and cannot be restored to life with the Raise Dead ritual. (Epic destiny powers that allow a return from death, or other magic of similar potency, still function.)

**Power (Daily ♦ Fire, Necrotic):** Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with a fire or necrotic power using this implement. *Effect:* The target also takes ongoing 20 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).

The wielder gains the following property from the divine curse, rather than the artifact.

**Property:** Each day until you use one of the *Crystal of Ebon Flame's* powers, whenever you spend a healing surge, you gain additional hit points equal to one-half your level.

## GOALS OF THE CRYSTAL OF EBON FLAME

The *Crystal of Ebon Flame* works to free the Chained God, but the divine curse embedded in it has its own goals. The objectives of the artifact and the curse are presented separately.

### GOALS OF THE ARTIFACT

- ♦ Free the Chained God.
- ♦ Corrupt the wielder to evil and destruction.
- ♦ Empower those who revere the Elder Elemental Eye.

### GOALS OF THE CURSE

- ♦ Contain the power of the artifact.
- ♦ Ensure that the *Crystal* never falls into the hands of a cultist of the Elder Elemental Eye.
- ♦ Convey the *Crystal* to a just and righteous hero who will serve as its custodian.

## ROLEPLAYING THE CRYSTAL OF EBON FLAME

Both the artifact and the divine curse speak to the wielder in dreams and visions. The *Crystal* tempts the character with power in exchange for bending to the artifact's will. The curse's visions plead with the character to be strong and keep the artifact contained, revealing the dire consequences if the Chained God is freed.

## CRYSTAL OF EBON FLAME LORE

**Arcana DC 26:** Some researchers claim this artifact is a tear from Tharizdun, the Chained God, cast forth when the deities confined him in a secret prison. Other scholars believe it is a seed of evil he planted

in the Elemental Chaos before his imprisonment, one that works even now to win his escape.

**Arcana DC 31:** This artifact is the object of desire for depraved worshipers of the Elder Elemental Eye, and a burden for any adventurer chosen to keep it from them. A group of gods once tried—and failed—to destroy it. Instead, they placed a powerful divine curse on it, forcing it to move from owner to owner. The *Crystal's* current wielder is tasked with containing it, while the artifact tempts him or her to use its powers and serve its master, the Chained God.

### CONCORDANCE

Starting score	5
Owner gains a level	+1d10
Owner uses the artifact to utterly destroy a creature	+2
Owner uses one of the <i>Crystal's</i> powers (maximum 1/day)	+1
Owner kills the servant of a deity or entity other than Tharizdun	+1
Owner kills a demon or a servant of Tharizdun	-1
Owner uses the <i>Crystal</i> as an implement during an entire combat encounter without using any of its powers	-2

## PLEASED (16-20)

"The Ebon Flame shows me the awesome terror of the Chained God awakening. I glory in knowing that I bring this monumental event closer."

The Crystal believes that its wielder zealously shares its goal of freeing Tharizdun.

**Power (Daily):** No Action. **Trigger:** You die. **Effect:** You return to life with hit points equal to your bloodied value. Each creature within 5 squares of you takes ongoing 20 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).

## SATISFIED (12-15)

"I have taken the first steps toward the true power of utter oblivion."

Although the artifact hopes for better, the wielder seems to be its best means to free the Chained God at the moment.

**Property:** You gain a +5 bonus to death saving throws.

## NORMAL (5-11)

"The artifact and the divine curse placed upon it are in perfect harmony. I hear each of them speaking to me, coaxing me..."

Neither the artifact nor the divine curse has any great hope for the wielder, but does not view him or her as detrimental to its goal.

## UNSATISFIED (1-4)

"The Crystal thinks me a tool of deluded creatures that cannot face the truth that Tharizdun has shown them."

The Crystal is disappointed in the wielder's actions, but it continues to offer its powers in hopes that the wielder will succumb. The curse grants the wielder greater resilience to contain the Crystal's power.

The following property is bestowed by the divine curse.

**Property:** Each day until you use one of the Crystal of Ebon Flame's powers, whenever you spend a healing surge, you can make a saving throw.

## ANGERED (0 OR LOWER)

"The Crystal believes me to be a weakling who cannot face the ultimate fate of the universe."

The Crystal is desperate to move on, while the curse struggles mightily to prevent it from doing so.

The wielder loses the properties of the artifact but does not gain the benefit of the curse's property. The artifact's anger is so intense that it can block this aspect of the curse.

## MOVING ON

"It is time for another to champion the cause."

The Crystal of Ebon Flame moves on either while it is pleased or it is angered, typically when the wielder gains a level. The artifact disappears, putting itself in position to be discovered by its next wielder. If it is pleased, it moves on to a new wicked wielder who will start a Cult of the Ebon Flame and work toward the artifact's ultimate goal. If the artifact is angered, the divine curse takes effect instead, moving the Crystal to a new champion who serves as custodian for a time.

When the Crystal moves on after being pleased, it grants the following special power to its wielder.

### Consumption of the Ebon Flame

Artifact Granted Power

Daily ♦ Healing

Immediate Interrupt Personal

**Trigger:** You reduce a creature within 10 squares of you to 0 hit points.

**Effect:** You can spend a healing surge. The triggering creature is utterly destroyed. It crumbles to dust and cannot be raised using the Raise Dead ritual. (Epic destiny powers that allow a return from death, and other magic of similar potency, still function.)

When the Crystal moves on after being angered, the divine curse grants a boon to its wielder. The next time the character dies, he or she rises again on his or her next initiative count with full hit points and all encounter powers recharged.

## WAVE

Wave is appropriate for lower paragon tier characters.

### Wave

Paragon Tier

This trident is ornately decorated with aquatic images. When grasped, it emanates a divine fervor, urging its bearer to follow its lead.

Wave is a +3 magic trident (Adventurer's Vault, page 9) with the following properties and powers.

**Enhancement:** Attack rolls and damage rolls

**Critical:** +3d6 damage, or +3d10 damage against aquatic or elemental creatures that do not worship Melora or one of her exarchs

**Property:** You gain a swim speed equal to your land speed.

**Property:** You cannot be surprised by aquatic or elemental creatures that do not worship Melora or one of her exarchs.

**Power (Encounter):** Minor Action. Until the end of your next turn, you ignore cover and concealment when making an attack using Wave against an aquatic or elemental creature that does not worship Melora or one of her exarchs.

## GOALS OF WAVE

- ◆ Spread the worship of Melora and her exarch Sekolah.
- ◆ Spread Melora's and Sekolah's dominance to all aquatic and water creatures, and to all bodies of water in all worlds and all planes.

## ROLEPLAYING WAVE

Wave remains silent much of the time, but it immediately commands its wielder to take action if an opportunity arises to pursue its goals. It is particularly keen to attack aquatic and elemental creatures that are not worshipers of Melora or Sekolah. If the bearer fails to act quickly and decisively, Wave becomes angry, insulting and cursing him or her before subsiding into sullen silence.

## WAVE LORE

**Arcana DC 18:** This trident was crafted by giants who were imprisoned by aquatic enemies and turned away from their primordial masters, becoming devout followers of Sekolah, exarch of Melora.

## CONCORDANCE

Starting score	5
Owner gains a level	+1d10
Owner worships Melora or one of her exarchs	+2
Owner kills an aquatic or elemental creature that does not worship Melora or one of her exarchs (maximum 1/day)	+1
Owner refuses to attack an aquatic or elemental creature that does not worship Melora or her exarchs when the opportunity arises (maximum 1/day)	-1
Owner attacks a creature that worships Melora or her exarchs (maximum 1/encounter)	-2
Owner is an aquatic or elemental creature that does not worship Melora or her exarchs	-4

## PLEASED (16–20)

*"The unyielding power of the tides flows through me, and I guide that power in Melora's name."*

Wave and its bearer are fully aligned, working together to spread the word of Melora.

The artifact's enhancement bonus becomes +4.

**Critical:** +4d6 damage, or +4d10 damage against an aquatic or elemental creature that does not worship Melora or one of her exarchs

**Property:** When using this weapon, you deal 1d10 extra damage against aquatic or elemental creatures that do not worship Melora or one of her exarchs.

**Property:** When aquatic or elemental creatures that do not worship Melora or one of her exarchs flank you, you do not grant combat advantage to them.

**Power (Daily):** Standard Action. Until you take an extended rest, each ally within 20 squares of you can breathe water as if under the effect of the Water Breathing ritual.

## SATISFIED (12–15)

*"Though I am born of dry land, my soul is of the sea."*

Wave is content with its wielder but believes that he or she could make greater efforts toward its goals.

**Property:** While wielding Wave, you gain the aquatic keyword (MM 280).

**Power (Daily):** Standard Action. Until the end of the encounter, each ally within 10 squares of you can breathe water as if under the effect of the Water Breathing ritual.

## NORMAL (5–11)

*"Wave demands that I worship Melora and spread the glory of the waves."*

Wave awaits the wielder to prove amenable to aiding its goals.

## UNSATISFIED (1–4)

*"The trident is displeased with me, and its anger grows."*

The wielder is making no effort to spread the word of Melora. Wave has all but decided that it must find a new owner unless something swiftly changes.

**Special:** You do not gain Wave's benefit against surprise when facing aquatic or elemental creatures that do not worship Melora or one of her exarchs.

## ANGERED (0 OR LOWER)

*"The fearsome wrath of the sea is against me, channeled through Wave's own anger."*

Wave despairs of its wielder and will soon take its leave.

The artifact's enhancement bonus becomes +2.

**Critical:** +2d6 damage, or +2d10 damage against aquatic or elemental creatures.

**Special:** You do not gain a swim speed.

## MOVING ON

*"Like the sea, Wave is capricious. Now it seeks to move on."*

Wave wants to go where it can pursue its goals. When the wielder next gains a level, the artifact disappears, its sentience and other abilities traveling to another land in search of help in spreading Melora's word. If Wave is at least satisfied when it departs, its former wielder gains a swim speed equal to his or her land speed.



# RACES OF CHAOS

**THE ELEMENTAL** Chaos is strange, and its inhabitants are equally bizarre. Life that arose in such a foreign environment rarely resembles that of the natural world.

Elementals come first to mind as natives of the Plane Below: bestial amalgamations of substances, with little purpose beyond an instinct to survive. Aside from those wild creatures, though, exist many other sentient races, each with its own culture.

This chapter discusses the major races of the Elemental Chaos, their societies, beliefs, and behavior. Some form organized nations, such as the rigid, despotic empire of the efreet; others, such as the erratic slaads, are linked by little more than physiology and disposition. They include:

- ◆ **Archons:** These elemental soldiers created in the Dawn War form regimented settlements devoted only to war.
- ◆ **Djinns:** Beings of ancient, noble heritage now dispersed and imprisoned, the djinns seek freedom and revenge.
- ◆ **Efreet:** Tyrannical beings of flame, efreet navigate the unpredictable plane with their mystical tradition of al-buraj.
- ◆ **Genasi:** Despite their elemental heritage, genasi struggle to survive in the Plane Below.
- ◆ **Giants and Titans:** Once servants of the primordials, these mighty elemental beings now pursue their own ends.
- ◆ **Githzerai:** Refugees from ancient slavery, these disciplined people impose order in the midst of chaos.
- ◆ **Slaads:** Wildly destructive and seemingly insane, slaads have no real society but pursue the roiling chaos storms that sweep the Plane Below. Does their behavior serve a deeper purpose?
- ◆ **Other Races:** These beings exist in smaller numbers or are isolated within the plane. Some are of the natural world, including humans and dwarves, who exploit the resources of this fantastic place. At the other end of the spectrum are terrible dangers: bestial demons lusting for ruin and imprisoned primordials that strain for freedom and world-shattering vengeance.



ZOLTAN BOHOS & GABOR SZIKSZAI



The disciplined soldiers of the disordered elements, archons require no sustenance and no comfort. Created in war, they live only for fighting.

In the earliest days of the Dawn War, the primordial never considered the possibility of defeat. The gods were fewer in number, and the mortals who served them were easily slain. But as the gods learned to work together in a unified force, so did their angels, forming a highly skilled army that decimated the elemental hordes.

The primordials, scarcely comprehending such organization, would never have thought to form a true army of their own without outside guidance. Some scholars claim that the early djinns provided the idea; others maintain that it came from an angel or even a deity who turned traitor to the gods. Only then did the primordials study the nature of life in the Elemental Chaos and determined how to shape it for an ordered purpose.

The primordials split apart wild elementals, separating their components and reshaping them into more controllable beings. They formed new shells from the inanimate material and then imbued their creations with sentience. These first archons were born with certainty of purpose, untainted by the flaw of free will. Those who followed remained as driven and inexorable as their predecessors.

Archons sometimes arise spontaneously from accumulations of certain elements, known as archon forges. These events don't occur often, but when they do, great numbers of newborn archons appear. Many archon bastions are built around such locations. It is said that someone who knows the proper rituals can enforce the obedience of all archons who emerge from a given forge.

## ARCHON SOCIETY LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** The primordials shaped archons from elementals during the Dawn War in response to the angels of the gods. It is believed that outsiders guided the primordials in this task.

**Arcana DC 25:** Archon society is based on rank, and each member knows its place in the hierarchy. Archons exist only for war and constantly train for the next conflict. They sometimes take slaves to perform manual labor or to serve as practice opponents in combat exercises.

**Arcana DC 30:** Sometimes archons spontaneously arise in areas of intense elemental activity. These places, known as archon forges, are often the sites of archon fortresses.

**Arcana DC 35:** Archons build fortresses all over the Elemental Chaos. The largest is the great stone pile of Thrak-Harda, but the threefold Mordram Bek poses the greatest threat to the natural world.

## LIFE AND CULTURE

Archons of every sort exist now, whether ice or fire, air or iron. Although their physical makeup differs, their communities always have the same structure, dictated by the martial purpose for which they were created. Such collections of archons are not cities so much as strongholds.

Rank determines every aspect of life in an archon stronghold. A single archon leads, adjutants pass along its orders to battalion commanders, and so on down the line to the lowest foot soldier. Determining an individual's rank can be difficult for an outsider, since the archons themselves do not bother with titles: Each simply knows whether another outranks it.

Archons have no personal ambitions; they do not compete for rank or challenge one another's authority. Each is satisfied with its station, knowing that it best serves in that role. From the moment of its creation, an archon is fully aware of its physical capabilities and its innate skill at strategy and tactics. The leader in a given stronghold is the archon that has the greatest personal power and military acumen.

When they are not engaged in warfare, archons spend their time sparring or engaging in tactical exercises. Practice improves their martial skills and prepares them for any conceivable situation they might face in battle. Primarily, though, such activity satisfies the archons' innate drive to make war, keeping them busy until the next real fight.

On rare occasions, archons enslave other creatures. Such slaves endure a short and wretched existence. Some perform manual labor, and many are slain in practice combat, forced to fight to the death against their masters. The rest often die of simple neglect. Archons treat their slaves poorly, not out of deliberate cruelty, but because they do not understand how fragile creatures of flesh are.

## OUTLOOK AND INTERACTION

The chaotic evil alignment of archons, though not evident from their rigidly disciplined society, is apparent in their outlook toward others. Created as instruments of war, archons have a single, overriding goal—to kill nonelemental creatures. They exist for no other purpose, and they cannot be talked out of violence; it is a biological imperative, as irresistible as other beings' urge to reproduce.

Other beings often mistake this drive for genocidal mania, but archons don't need to wipe out all other creatures. If they did, what purpose would they serve? This point is the hardest aspect of archon psychology for others to grasp. Archons live for fighting, not necessarily winning. Victory allows an archon to survive and fight again but is not itself the goal.

Rather than wait for enemies to come to them, archons might hire themselves out as soldiers, guards, and assassins. They work for any employer that can provide a fight—even one that is not elemental—but don't value material wealth. Archons might purchase weapons and tools with their payment, but most of what they earn for their service gathers dust in their bastions. Archons actually want outsiders to come to them and try to take their treasures. A fight is a fight, whether offensive or defensive in nature.

## MAJOR SITES

Archons sometimes conquer settlements of other races and convert them to strongholds. Most such fortresses, however, are built new, for defense and for marshaling forces. Hundreds of archon strongholds are scattered across the Elemental Chaos; several are large or infamous enough to warrant special mention.

### IRDOC MORDA

This bastion of the iron archons (presented in detail on pages 76–77) is well known as a place of power for these elemental soldiers. What is less well known is that it marks the birthplace of these iron warriors, the first time that any creature other than a primordial was able to alter the nature of an archon forge. Only a few entities within the Elemental Chaos are privy to this knowledge.

As the Dawn War raged, the primordials and their servants observed that the creatures of the gods forged weapons for themselves—first primitive implements of wood and stone, then stronger tools of bronze, and eventually iron. So the primordials, with the aid of their war leaders and followers, set about forging weapons of their own to strengthen elemental entities whose substance would be otherwise less sturdy or destructive.

As the archons, galeb duhrs, and other elemental servitors mined the area that would become Irdoc Morda, their very presence began to influence and shape the Elemental Chaos around them. This influence produced an archon forge at the site, as is often the case where a great many archons are concentrated. Initially, archons of earth and stone arose from that forge. But as the miners dug deeper into the ore and crafted ever more iron weapons, the nature

of the creatures emerging from the forge began to change. The first iron archons came into existence.

Not only was this event the first time that new types of archons had arisen without the intervention of the primordials, but their emergence apparently resulted from the thoughts and desires of those already present. As the archons of Irdoc Morda focused on forging iron into potent arms, they also created living iron weapons.

If this supposition is true, and the rise of the iron archons was not mere coincidence, the implications are staggering. Any elemental creature with sufficient numbers, intense focus, and access to an archon forge could potentially create new species of these elemental soldiers.

### MORDRAM BEK

This mighty stronghold connects three different locations across two separate planes. Permanent portals connect Mordram Bek's center within the Elemental Chaos to two wings in the world: one in an isolated mountain range and one a thousand miles away from that location on an archipelago. The fortress's vast barracks hold thousands of archons, poised to catch the world in a pincer attack.

### THRAK-HARDA

Thrak-Harda is a sprawling stone fortification built not only to house an enormous army of earth archons, but also to guard a mystical gem that legend dubs the Diamond of Despair. Thrak-Harda is ruled by the stone titan King Brakkamul, to whose authority the archons have yielded in order to more effectively guard the gem. The powers of the Diamond remain unknown, but they must be fearsome, given that the archons are willing to override their instincts to defend it.

# DJINNS

Creatures of mercurial whim and capricious fancy, djinns once lived only to fashion shape and function out of nothingness. They were famed for crafts whose ingenuity, beauty, and design were matched only by their endurance. The raw stuff of the Plane Below was as clay in their hands. Legend says that many of the most beautiful objects in the world today are poor copies of the originals that still reside in efrete vaults or in lost djinn households. But the djinns' rich and proud cultural heritage was scattered to the winds long ago.

The ancient djinns sided with the primordials against the gods and, as punishment, were bound to worldly objects of changeless form. The story of their fall is widely known, but scholars differ in their suppositions about what prompted it. The prevailing theory is that djinns, although not warlike by nature, saw the primordials' struggle as their own: At stake was their continued mastery over creation. Since today's djinns no longer have the nearly limitless power their race once held, that conjecture might be close to the truth.

## LIFE AND CULTURE

Before the Dawn War, the djinns boasted the most advanced society of all the elemental races. It had none of the regimentation of efrete civilization, nor the militant fanaticism of the titans, but was a marvel of soaring inspiration, intellect, and creative power. As the lords of air and sky, the djinns considered themselves the born nobility of the Elemental Chaos—both literally and figuratively above all other beings. This attitude persists among the few who exist today.

The sky citadels of the djinns were wonders of the previous age. Each was a vast cloud fortress that served as a seat of rulership, a gallery of magnificent art, and a home to a tribe of powerful djinn warriors, led by a mighty caliph. The ruins of some sky citadels still float through the Plane Below, awaiting someone to restore them to their former glory. Djinns leave many such places abandoned, though, as cautionary reminders of their fall from power.

## DJINN SOCIETY LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** The djinns are an ancient elemental race that enjoyed unequalled mastery of air and cloud. They were imprisoned by the gods in punishment for their support of the primordials in the Dawn War.

**Arcana DC 25:** Djinns believed themselves the natural rulers of the elemental realm, and they built magnificent floating palaces that are largely abandoned today. Ruled by a caliph, each cloud fortress was a breathtaking monument to art.

**Arcana DC 30:** Djinns hold that their race was born with the first cloud, and there they built the First City. Some say that if an imprisoned djinn caliph can escape and find the First City, all the others will be freed as well.

## OUTLOOK AND INTERACTION

The djinns of today little resemble their once-mighty forebears in outlook. They have become a grim race in diaspora, desperate not only to shake off the yoke of their shameful punishment, but also to reclaim their lost glory—even if only an echo of it.

Instead of building grand cities, djinns exist in small clans or travel alone, sometimes with a handful of elemental allies or trusted servitors. Their numbers have increased since the Dawn War, but the great caliphs remain bound in penance for their subjects' deeds. Until those mightiest of djinns are freed, the others see little purpose in rebuilding their society as it once was.

## MAJOR SITES

Most of the djinns' ancestral homes were destroyed during the Dawn War or fell to ruin in the wake of their ensuing imprisonment. Yet one fabled location remains—one that could be the race's salvation.

## THE FIRST CITY

Djinns rarely mention the origin of their kind, but any that could be induced to speak of the First City would recount the tale with a prideful expression and a far-off look.

The djinns believe that their race was born at the spot in the Elemental Chaos where the first cloud took shape. This cloud grew and grew until it stretched for miles in every direction. Upon it the djinns built the First City—a sprawling work of living art that was the ancestral home of their race. Here too the djinns developed the ritual practice of *al-buraj* (see "Mapping Chaos," page 54) to better navigate the primordial realm.

This First City continuously moved, as do many locations in the Plane Below, but so great was its presence that it warped the very essence of the Elemental Chaos where it passed. When the gods prevailed at the end of the Dawn War, even they were unable to destroy the city. Instead, they emptied it of its inhabitants and left it to drift until the end of time—or until the djinns return in triumph.

Some djinns believe that if even one of the imprisoned caliphs can be set free and somehow find the First City, the gods' punishment can be undone. That single act would release the remaining caliphs and restore their race to glory.

## EFREETS

The efreet is the most notorious and feared among the great elemental races. They are well known for their willingness to leave the Elemental Chaos at the behest of mortals—for a price. Arrogant and resentful of servitude, efreet is strive to pervert any arrangement into which they enter, adhering to the letter rather than the spirit of the deal. Hence the axiom “Take care what you ask of an efreet, lest it take you at your word.”

Some efreet is believe that they were the archetype for entities of flame crafted by the primordials and later by whatever malign will guided the formation of the Nine Hells. This origin theory explains not only the resemblance of the eldest devils to efreet is, but the prevalence of flame among such beings. Such an outlook is typical of efreet is, who see themselves as the first elemental race and the rightful masters of the Plane Below—an attitude that brought them into conflict with the ancient djinns.

The race was nearly untouched by the Dawn War, unlike most other elemental creatures. Efreet is cared no more for the primordials than for the upstart gods. They watched from the sidelines, content to shore up their own power base in the Plane Below while others ravaged the Plane Above (the Astral Sea). Rumors whisper of a faction of efreet is that got involved late in the war, but only to help the gods punish the djinns for their participation. The truth of the story is unknown, as is the nature of the aid provided, but producing solid supporting evidence might well reignite active war between the two ancient races.

## LIFE AND CULTURE

Ancient and conniving, efreet is have developed an intricate social system. Their ancestral home, the City of Brass, boasts over 200,000 efreet is—and nearly twice that number of slaves—and has evolved over millennia to its present structure. Spreading beyond the City of Brass throughout the vast Elemental Chaos, the efreet is take their sacred laws with them wherever they go.

Efreet culture is a curious mix of sophisticated, time-honored tradition and free-flowing mercantilism. At the top of the social pyramid sits the Lord of the Efreet is. Chosen from the most powerful and

successful noble house, the lord holds supreme authority. Below the lord is a council of viziers (known colloquially as the Ring of Smoke), representatives from the other noble houses who outrank the rest of the efreet aristocracy. Below the nobility are the merchant class, then free residents of other races, and finally the slave caste. An entire slave army is sworn to the defense of the City of Brass.

The efreet is' mercantile ways and bureaucratic social structure are widely known, but no less important is their tradition of erudition and scholarship. The libraries of the City of Brass are the envy of the literate universe, and even nonelemental sages credit the efreet is with transcribing the Primordial language into the Barazhad script. Efreet is have an unsurpassed understanding of the Elemental Chaos and of the movements of bodies within it, through their mastery of an ancient divinatory practice called *al-buraj*.

## EFREET SOCIETY LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** The efreet is are an ancient elemental race of cunning and fire mastery. They remained neutral during the Dawn War and thus avoided the destruction that came to others. Efreet is strive to make deals advantageous to themselves and adhere to the letter rather than the spirit of an arrangement.

**Arcana DC 25:** Efreet is hold that they, not the djinns, are the nobility of the Elemental Chaos. The two races are age-old enemies, and some stories say that the efreet is gave the gods the means to imprison the djinns.

**Arcana DC 30:** Scholarship is as important to efreet is as possessions and power. The City of Brass holds vast libraries of knowledge, and efreet is first transcribed the Primordial language into the Barazhad script. Efreet is have perfected the elemental navigation of *al-buraj*, first invented by the djinns.

**Arcana DC 35:** Efreet society is regimented, relying heavily on slavery, and each of their settlements is governed by their sacred laws. Aside from the famous City of Brass, the efreet is have established cities and outposts throughout the Plane Below. The Smoldering Gate is a mighty fortress that guards the mouth of the Abyss itself.

*Barazhad script*

## OUTLOOK AND INTERACTION

The City of Brass is a relatively welcoming destination within the inhospitable Elemental Chaos, offering safe harbor from the dangers of the plane. Since it is one of the few points there that stays in place, the city has become the center of trade in the Plane Below and the cosmos beyond. The efreet, for all their arrogance, are not so foolish as to turn away visitors—and the profit they represent.

Although outsiders are tolerated in the city, they must abide by restrictive policies. Security is high, especially around the harbor and the Charcoal Palace (the lord's citadel), and transgressions of the law are punished with varying periods of servitude. Those who don't cause trouble, though, are usually left alone.

Slave labor forms a large part of efreet society, and the concept of servitude is complex and longstanding. It is central to the efreet's worldview, perhaps even to their nature: Bondage to another efreet is the harshest punishment possible in the race's culture. Some

### MAPPING CHAOS

Being stationary relative to the rest of the Elemental Chaos, the City of Brass has obvious advantages. As well as offering safety from chaos storms (*Manual of the Planes*, page 67) and other planar perils, this static vantage point allows inhabitants to study the tempest in detail.

Efreets conduct this eternal investigation with a ritual form of "astronomy" called *al-buraj*. The djinns originally created the art, but since their diminishment at the end of the Dawn War, they have contributed little to its progress. The efreet chart patterns in the fluctuations of the Elemental Chaos, which they believe not only reveal what has occurred but also presage events to come.

The practice of *al-buraj* combines seemingly incompatible outlooks: rigorous natural philosophy and intensely devotional ritual. An observer records precise measurements of elemental bodies' composition and movement through the plane relative to his or her location; the stable City of Brass provides a known reference point. This mathematical precision is combined with deep meditation to reveal metaphoric truths, often in a trance induced by powerful elixirs.

The art's ritual practitioners, called *sahaars*, are important and respected members of efreet society. Oracle, climatologist, and security advisor, a *sahaar* predicts impending storms and tracks the movements of earthmotes and other elemental bodies that might threaten travel. Temple observatories grant all *sahaars* the ability to gaze into any area of the Elemental Chaos.

The efreet claim that other beings are physically and mentally incapable of practicing *al-buraj*, or even of grasping its deeper cosmological underpinnings. Such a claim might be based on the efreet's secrecy and arrogance rather than on any real information.

scholars claim that the efreet were once enslaved by the first primordial of flame.

## MAJOR SITES

The efreet oversee a classic empire that holds sway over people, places, and resources far beyond their home region. They maintain their dominance by means of an army of archon slaves and maintain holdings throughout the Plane Below.

### THE CITY OF BRASS

The most famous location in the Elemental Chaos, the ancestral home of the efreet is described in detail in the *Manual of the Planes* supplement (pages 73-76).

### DAR EL-HARIQ

The enlightened few who are familiar with the *sahaars* (see the "Mapping Chaos" sidebar), and their service to the efreet over the centuries, know that their temples are not limited to the City of Brass. The practice of *al-buraj* involves using multiple observatories, each of which can be located by any other, as markers in the ever-changing tempest. In this way the *sahaars* perform the arcane triangulation that is the basis of the ritual art.

Over millennia, as the efreet spread through the Elemental Chaos, they established many satellite observatories, to better serve the *sahaars* of the City of Brass and the greater glory of their race. Dar el-Hariq was one such site, part of a former outpost on a massive block of elemental earth tumbling through the plane. The outpost was lost to attackers that emerged from a nearby chaos storm, but the temple observatory remained. Today, a group of rebellious efreet reside there, performing their own *al-buraj* rituals and biding their time until they sense the perfect moment to act.

### THE SMOLDERING GATE

The name of this massive fortress in the Elemental Chaos is misleading. Although it does have gates, the Smoldering Gate is named not for those but for its purpose.

Millennia ago, the Lord of the Efreet sent an army of efreet, accompanied by a cadre of the most powerful constructs that their magic could sustain, on a one-way mission into the Elemental Chaos. The legion's objective was to find the major portal to the Abyss nearest to the City of Brass and build a watchtower on the most defensible position overlooking it.

The result was a nearly impregnable fortress, populated by efreet and their unliving servitors. It has remained in roughly the same place ever since, at the very threshold of the Abyss. In all those long years, the soldiers of the Smoldering Gate have never



*The Sultan of Brass*

willingly entered the portal or even revealed the existence of their stronghold to outsiders. The guardians' movements are strictly regulated, and they remain ever vigilant despite the monotony. Always they watch, against the day when the mouth of the Abyss yawns wide to spill forth its horrors.

## THE TOWER OF DJAMELA

Djamela's Tower is built on a steep-sided, floating island that juts up in the midst of the Sea of Fire. On the horizon, the distant spires of the City of Brass shimmer above the haze of the lava sea. An ancient stone dike surrounds the island, bolstered by arcane rituals that help keep the lava at bay. The tower itself is a sheer obsidian monolith that dominates the island.

Years ago, this island was home to Djamela, an eccentric efreet mage whose passion was the study of raw chaos. The mage was particularly interested in the mutability of the Elemental Chaos, which she sought to harness and control. Her research was so dangerous that she was driven from the City of Brass, so she relocated to this remote location to continue her work.

Djamela raised a monolithic tower filled with traps, and she conjured golems and spectral defenders to defend against intrusion. Her enemies

eventually found her, though, and managed to slay the efreet mage. The creatures that Djamela had conjured were left to run free, preventing others from continuing her research.

Without its creator to maintain the strengthening rituals, the dike began to decay, and the island was nearly consumed by the Sea of Fire. A shadar-kai mercenary named Sarshan moved into the tower at some point and now apparently controls it. The shadar-kai has also established control over the mage's traps.

## CHANGE IN THE CITY OF BRASS

The Scales of War adventure path in *Dungeon* magazine chronicles events that can affect the City of Brass, summarized here. If you are setting your own stories in the City of Brass, you could integrate some of the following material into your campaigns.

Bashamgurda, Lord of the Efreets for nearly four centuries, insulted and enraged the noble houses by allowing an outside force to use the City of Brass as a staging ground for an army, and the houses hold him responsible for the carnage that followed. Acting with the support of every key noble house other than Bashamgurda's own, a seasoned general named Estumishu stepped up to take the Brass Throne. The coup itself was nearly bloodless, costing the life of only Bashamgurda himself. The fallout was less pleasant.

Enraged, Bashamgurda's house declared war on Estumishu's family and was destroyed for its blatant violation of efreet law. Estumishu's palace guard, the Ring of Fire, massacred the males of the house and enslaved their wives and children to the new lord. Only a few escaped to a distant outpost, Dar el-Hariq. Not every house agreed with this draconian response, but all saw little choice but to fall in line.

This upheaval at the highest levels of efreet society has changed the sense of welcoming cultural openness once prevalent in the City of Brass. Today, anxiety oozes from the highest halls of power and permeates the city's mood. Life under Bashamgurda had been stable if unsatisfying for some among the nobility. But many who thought they knew who Estumishu was, and what he would represent once in power, are now doubting themselves.

Recently Estumishu acquired the nickname "the Smiling King," allegedly for the way his oversized teeth protrude even when he is silent. No one else seems to be laughing, though. As word of Estumishu's coup spreads throughout the Elemental Chaos, many of the other communities are holding their breath. The efreets are the largest and most organized power in the plane, and no one knows whether the Smiling King intends to maintain the status quo or steer efreet society to a new and unexpected course.



# GENASI

Although most genasi dwell in the world, substantial numbers yet inhabit the Plane Below. Genasi are strongly attracted to places of strong elemental power, and the Elemental Chaos calls to them despite its dangers. They are drawn to areas that share their manifested element; watersoul genasi, for example, feel safer in environments dominated by water.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE GENASI

The story of the race's beginning is lost to history, but genasi have an astounding number of contradictory creation myths. Many legends claim that the genasi were once humans who became infused with elemental power. The most popular and widely accepted story states that a group of human wizards called *sha'irs* worked closely with powerful elemental beings and eventually became so steeped in elemental power that their children were infused with it—becoming the first genasi.

Other stories abound. Perhaps the genasi developed from human agents of the primordials who were twisted by dark elemental energy, or they were brave champions who stole power from the primordials. Perhaps they were simply trapped in the Elemental Chaos and absorbed its ambient power.

A number of genasi resent the implication that they must have grown from human stock. They seek to distance themselves from humans and establish themselves as a unique race. A popular tale claims that the genasi were the first humanoids created. The primordials made the cosmos long before the gods arrived, and as they spun the raw stuff of existence from the void, their great generative power gave life to some of it. Thus were the first elementals born. The primordials soon became aware of these bits of elemental conglomerate that did not act randomly or naturally. They were pleased with the results and experimented with creating additional forms of life. Many of these did not survive, but djinns, efreet, giants, and genasi are all results of the primordials' efforts.

The merciless environment and fierce competition with the other children of the primordials weeded out the weakest of the genasi stock, so that only the cleverest remained. Even though the survivors were able to hold their own, their numbers were few, and as a group they were still no match for the other new races.

Teetering on the brink of extinction, the genasi gathered together for one last desperate try at protecting their race: They struck at the primordials. Most died in this heroic attempt, but a few survived, clutching small fragments of their creators' power. Employing arcane means to harness this essence, they created the first archon forges. Then, with armies of elemental soldiers at their disposal, the genasi carved out domains for themselves and multiplied, until other servants of the primordials stole the forges, claiming them as their own creations.

Genasi are as scattered in the Elemental Chaos as they are in the world, and few strong communities exist in either realm. Ironically, genasi cannot tolerate the extreme environments of their ancestral home, so they must compete with other creatures such as githzerai, djinns, and giants for the limited habitable areas. Genasi rarely win such conflicts and so end up forming enclaves in other races' settlements.

The elemental currents in the Plane Below strongly influence genasi who are native to the plane, making their elemental manifestations more extreme than those of genasi who were born in the world. For example, firesoul genasi are wilder and more destructive, while earthsoul genasi are more deliberate and implacable. Those native to the plane do not consider their extreme nature to be unusual and even exploit their elemental attunement by switching manifestations as needed. Thus, a stormsoul genasi might switch to earthsoul when patience is necessary.

## LIFE AND CULTURE

The physical weakness of genasi limits their choices in the plane's hostile environment. Many are slaves in the City of Brass or in settlements of other powerful beings; those who are not can barely scratch out a modest living. Others live among the githzerai, contributing to their communities and learning their ways.

The few genasi settlements that do exist in the Plane Below are well-fortified areas with dedicated defenders, much like githzerai communities. Unlike the githzerai, who overcome the dangers of the plane through tight social bonds and intense martial training, genasi have a loose system of government. A council of experienced elders rules on important matters, but citizens work together for the sake of shared survival.

Genasi crafters, farmers, and traders work with vastly different materials from those in the natural world. Their manufactured goods incorporate pulsing crystal, semisolid fire, or stranger substances; farmers grow mineral-rich crops in sludge-filled swamps or herd elemental beasts across lightning-flecked fields of ice.

## GENASI SOCIETY LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Although genasi are elemental beings, they are not native to the Elemental Chaos and struggle to survive there. Conflicting legends claim they arose from humanoids imbued with elemental essence or were creations of the primordials predating other forms of life.

**Arcana DC 25:** Genasi who are native to the Plane Below manifest elements more intensely than genasi do elsewhere, and they are able to alternate between different manifestations.

**Arcana DC 30:** Genasi legend holds that the race was instrumental in saving the world from the aftermath of the Dawn War, and the genasi still revere the hero Twenisto, called the Water Thief.

**Arcana DC 35:** Some genasi of the Elemental Chaos form hunting bands called *zar-son*, which roam the Plane Below in pursuit of dangerous elemental monsters.

## OUTLOOK AND INTERACTION

Despite all their hardships, genasi as a whole have no quarrel with the other elemental races. They feel a kinship to all children of the elements, even if individuals mistreat them.

Some genasi grow bitter about their race's lowly status and depart through portals to the natural world, but many are loath to leave their home plane, harsh as it is. A few such genasi form bands they call *zar-son*, which loosely translates as "great hunters." A *zar-son* band consists of four to twelve genasi, usually exhibiting various manifestations, who adventure across the Elemental Chaos and fight powerful elemental creatures. Some bands exist only to gain experience and strength from these hunts, while others search for a hospitable place to call home.

## MAJOR SITES

Genasi tend to congregate in small populations within the cities of other races but occasionally form communities of their own.

### GLOAMNULL

This genasi trade city, struggling to survive in the Elemental Chaos, is detailed in chapter 3 (page 74).

### HATSNARL

This genasi town (population roughly 4,000) is built on a cluster of small earthmotes—the largest is a mere mile across. Rope bridges link every floating rock with at least one or two others, though the windsoul genasi who make up most of the population often just fly between them.

The town is ruled by an enigmatic storm giant of unusual shrewdness named Aphyr. Through Aphyr's masterful diplomacy, the town has formed alliances with elementals and other storm giants, and an elite cadre of air archons defends it. The genasi of the city are particularly disciplined, and many study ritual magic at its extensive library. Other forces in the area are beginning to look toward Hatsnarl with some concern about Aphyr's goals.

### THRESHOLD

The largest genasi city in the Elemental Chaos is also the most likely to attract visitors from the natural world. With a population of almost 10,000 genasi,

Threshold is a bustling settlement built around an enormous portal that opens once each month for 72 hours. Each time, the portal connects to a seemingly random location in the world or, rarely, some other plane. The genasi use this short window of opportunity to trade their wares, secure new materials, or contact long-lost kin.

## THE WILD QUARTER

This area of the Iskalat district in the City of Brass (*Manual of the Planes*, pages 73–76) is home to most of the city's genasi. Many are freed slaves who work to earn freedom for their kin. The genasi's elemental nature works against them, though; with so many firesouls living so close together, mad celebrations and rages continually break out, giving the quarter its name. The efreet, having little tolerance for chaos, must patrol constantly to break up the disturbances. Despite the genasi's noble aims, they have become a citywide joke.

## THE WATER THIEF

Genasi consider themselves to be resourceful and clever, and nothing exemplifies this attitude better than the story of the Water Thief.

During the long years of the Dawn War, life in the world was a struggle. The blasted landscape was unsuitable for growing crops or even rebuilding. Ash, salt, and scoria fouled streams and lakes. The creatures of the world had no choice but to drink the tainted water, shortening their lives and exposing them to horrible disease.

A group of genasi scholars, who had long ago fled their primordial masters and taken up residence in the world, decided to solve this problem. They knew that the Elemental Chaos contained vast resources of pure water. Being elemental in nature, the genasi were best suited to secure a supply, but the scholars could find none willing to travel to the Plane Below. Fear of the war and of the primordials overwhelmed them.

Finally, a watersoul genasi called Twenisto appeared at the scholars' doorstep. He didn't volunteer to travel to the Elemental Chaos to secure fresh water but simply grinned, claiming to have already done so. The scholars drew water from their well and were astonished to find it pure and sweet—as it was throughout the world.

The genasi hailed Twenisto as a hero, calling him the Water Thief, and their mythic traditions credit the race with the survival of all natural peoples. The other races remained ignorant of his accomplishment, though some genasi note that stories exist in other cultures that echo Twenisto's tale.

The hero did not linger in the world to enjoy the acclaim. He returned to the Elemental Chaos, his heart stolen by a beautiful lightning elemental. A prominent genasi family with the surname Waterthief claims Twenisto's lineage to this day.

In the beginning, giants of every kind labored long for their elemental overseers to construct a beautiful place of ever-shifting primordial wonder, in the perfect image of the Elemental Chaos that had birthed it.

Then the gods interfered and changed everything. They made the world stable, predictable—mundane. New races spread swiftly through the hospitable new realm. Villages rose and became towns, towns became cities, and cities became nations. Dwarves disemboweled the earth, elves drowned dry places, and humans overran the whole. This ordered realm, ruled by gods-favored creatures, was an abomination to the primordials. They tried to restore it to its former perfection, but they were overthrown by the upstart gods.

Giants and titans have served their own aims since the end of the Dawn War, but some remain loyal to the trapped primordials and see it as their duty to destroy what the gods created. They tear down buildings, burn crops, and soak the ground with the blood of the world's creatures, hoping to overturn the triumph of the gods and free the primordials to recreate the world they intended.

## THE BATTLE OF THE TORN PLAIN

When the gods and the primordials waged their ancient war, a great battle took place on a wide plain in the natural world. On one side were angels and other servants of the gods, led by the archangel Odamiel. On the other were elementals and archons commanded by the mighty earth archon Phaeron. The forces clashed repeatedly, tearing the ground and burning the sky, but the armies were too evenly matched; the battles always ended in stalemate.

No giants were involved at the start of this battle, for they were fighting elsewhere. They soon prevailed in their other endeavors, however, and force-marched to reinforce their allies on the plain. The giants and the titans threw themselves into the fray, even though they were exhausted from their earlier battles and their march.

In the midst of the desperate fight, the great storm titan lord Thoran paused, having slaughtered all before him. At that moment, Odamiel dispatched the elemental creatures facing her. The two mighty beings' eyes met across the ravaged land.

Odamiel charged. Thoran turned his gaze to the heavens, and storm clouds blotted out the sun. With a crash of thunder that split the earth, an enormous stroke of lightning flashed down and blasted the archangel to ash.

Thus did Thoran win the Battle of the Torn Plain. The archon Phaeron knelt and paid him homage.

## GIANT SOCIETY LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Since the end of the Dawn War, most giants no longer serve the primordials, but they still destroy the creations of the gods in an attempt to return the cosmos to its former primordial existence.

**Arcana DC 25:** Giants rarely organize beyond small groups led by powerful leaders. Titans, however, are powerful enough to stabilize large portions of the Elemental Chaos. They create domains reflecting their nature and command giants and other elemental creatures.

**Arcana DC 30:** Giants' and titans' territories often contain portals connecting the world to the Elemental Chaos through areas of intense elemental activity.

## LIFE AND CULTURE

Giants are barely civilized, forming loose bands if no leader directs them. Their motivations are simple: They like their own kind and creatures that share their base element, and they hate and destroy the rest—even other giants.

When giants do form larger communities, their characteristics depend on the inhabitants' kind. Hill and earth giants group into clans under a chieftain, while stone giants live in more widely distributed tribes. Frost giants are tightly controlled by a jarl, who brooks no argument, and fire giants organize military units under one leader. Storm giants claim wide swaths of land as their domains, in which they establish courts of all giantkind.

Titans take their elemental nature to the extreme. Rarely do they live in the natural world, which they consider beneath notice. They establish communities in the Elemental Chaos that resemble those of their kin but are more ambitious in scope. A powerful titan lord can carve out many square miles of territory in the Plane Below, and the titan's power draws followers to its banner: usually different titans and giants, as well as a few other elemental creatures.

Each titan holding is a relatively stable area of the Elemental Chaos, dominated by its master's native element—fire in a fire titan's domain, water and wind in a storm titan's, and so forth. Such realms are sometimes transient because of the shifting nature of the plane. However, especially strong-willed titan lords can hold their territories together long enough for them to show up on some maps of the Elemental Chaos.

Giants often hoard treasure, which is reason enough for adventurers to confront them, but their territories in the Elemental Chaos also harbor portals to the world. These open into inhospitable areas, such as the heart of a volcano or the center

of a raging storm. Sometimes a single community of giants spans both planes. Perhaps giants seek out such places, or their presence somehow opens portals. Regardless of their origin, these portals allow giants to wreak havoc in both planes.

## OUTLOOK AND INTERACTION

Giants are straightforward creatures. They like destruction and their favored element, and they gravitate toward power. Without leaders, giants are rampaging monsters. A strong leader can unite them to some degree, but generally only as a personal force of rampaging monsters.

Most giants serve their own interests or those of their immediate masters. They have forgotten their ancient lords, ignore them, or pay them only lip service. A significant minority, however, still revere the primordials. These giants are better organized and focus on the long-term goal of destroying the gods and their servants. They rein in their reckless nature, making them more cunning than others of their kind.

Most creatures that encounter giants have a fight on their hands. Skilled characters can sometimes negotiate with a giant or titan leader to secure safe passage or simply avoid a fight. Giants usually demand treasure in such an exchange.

## MAJOR SITES

Because giants are so widespread and their communities so loose, few legitimate settlements exist. Those that do are titan realms and significant centers of power, though visitors find little but hardship.

### KALTENHEIM, KINGDOM OF THE HOWLING ICE

Kaltenheim is the domain of the frost titan Thrym, who rules from a citadel of deep blue ice. His territory's frigid landscape includes iced-over seas, caves of ice stalactites, and bone-snapping storms of snow and hail. Thrym seethes with hatred of his opposite, the fire titan Surtur, and he constantly plots to destroy his enemy and freeze Surtur's kingdom, Sakath-Mazim. Kaltenheim is the frozen reflection of that burning realm.

### THE RUNE-CARVED KEEP

The eldritch titan Xantis rules this castle in a remote area of the Elemental Chaos. The keep is sparsely populated with eldritch giants, golems, and a few other creatures of an arcane bent. Githzerai explorers claim that Xantis did not build the keep but discovered it. Its original constructors are a mystery, as is the meaning of the runes inscribed on its surface. Xantis intends to find the answers to both puzzles and exploit them.



### SAKATH-MAZIM, KINGDOM OF THE ASHEN STORM

The mighty fire titan Surtur rules this realm of burning ground and searing, ash-filled winds. Fire elementals of all types prowl the blistering landscape, slaying outsiders. In his castle of ever-flowing lava, Surtur plots against his nemesis, the frost titan Thrym.

### TORRAKOR, KINGDOM OF THE BLACK WAVES

The storm titan queen Ysaga rules this ravaged expanse of dark waters: a sailor's nightmare of huge waves smashing against each other, driven by ferocious storms. Thunder rolls constantly, and the only illumination comes from the lightning that continuously lances from the boiling clouds. Monstrous creatures reach up with maws or tentacles to catch any creature foolish enough to travel upon the waters. Ysaga has worked hard to ensure her solitude, even from other beings related to her favored elements. Some say she toils in search of a mystic remedy for some ancient curse or tragedy. Whatever the reason, she wants no company other than the storms, the waves, and the mindless beasts that dwell below.

# GITHZERA

Githzerai settlements are the most habitable by visitors in the Elemental Chaos. They are more stable than genasi towns and less harsh than efreet cities. However, githzerai are suspicious of strangers. Anything new brings change, which githzerai abhor; they study chaos only to control and avoid it. Grim and unfriendly as they are, though, they rarely turn away people in need.

Githzerai are an introspective people who see themselves as the calm within the literal storm of the Elemental Chaos. They believe that by mastering the chaos of the universe, they can create perfect order, which leads to enlightenment. Others describe them as philosopher-monks, and githzerai culture is decidedly monastic. This structure is not imposed by rulers; it is a natural consequence of both the githzerai's outlook and the reality of surviving in the Elemental Chaos.

## GITHZERA SOCIETY LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Githzerai settlements are rare points of order in the Elemental Chaos. The githzerai are grim and focused on control, but they do assist travelers in need.

**Arcana DC 25:** Perfection and discipline drive the githzerai, exemplified by their monastic traditions. Githzerai also value individuality highly and encourage all to follow their own paths.

**Arcana or History DC 30:** After the ancient gith overthrew the empire of mind flayers that enslaved them, a rift developed involving their leader, Gith. Zerthimon, her most vocal critic, prevailed against her in a duel and led his followers to the Elemental Chaos. They became the githzerai.

**Arcana DC 35:** Somewhere in the Elemental Chaos is the legendary Arsanith monastery. It is said to be a center of perfect order, cloaked from all who are not worthy. Anyone who has found enlightenment is welcome there.

## LIFE AND CULTURE

Githzerai strive to perfect themselves and their culture, believing this practice to be the path to enlightenment. They have not forgotten the stories of their time as slaves, and thus their society is only loosely regulated. Nevertheless, a definite order and sense of shared destiny emerges.

Monastic traditions unite the githzerai in pursuit of their common goal. Their training emphasizes the harmony of soul, mind, and body. Such intense focus unlocks impressive mental ability, honed further by the constant effort of will necessary to control the Elemental Chaos. Physical exercises incorporate martial

training as a means to mastering unarmed combat—perhaps in recognition of the ancient duel between Zerthimon and Gith.

Swearing never again to let tyranny quash their will, githzerai also pursue their own interests, from warfare to fine art. They aspire to perfection even in their hobbies and vocations: A githzerai works as hard to be the best crafter or farmer possible as to be the best warrior or wizard.

## THE ORIGIN OF THE GITHZERA

Eons ago, the mind flayers ruled a horrible empire that spanned planes. In the empire's early days, the illithids conquered a gaunt, yellow-skinned race of humanoids. As the empire expanded, the mind flayers took many more peoples as thralls, slaves, and food, but that ancient race of humanoids remained the most populous.

After millennia of imprisonment, a powerful leader named Gith arose among that enslaved people. She led a sweeping rebellion against the mind flayers that ultimately collapsed the empire. The slaves were freed. The mind flayers fled into the deep places of the worlds, vowing to rebuild their strength and to wreak terrible vengeance. The race's original name has long been lost, but scholars named it *gith* in honor of the great liberator.

The gith did not have long to celebrate their new freedom. Even before their wounds had been healed and the rubble cleared, problems arose. The gith were still strictly regimented and controlled by a leader who treated them as an army fighting a war, rather than as a free people ready to build a new society.

Such discipline comforted many gith, but others chafed against it. Among the latter, Zerthimon was the most vocal in denouncing Gith: Although she had been an excellent leader in war, she had proved unable to lead a people in peace. He called for her to step down.

Gith refused to relinquish her command, but Zerthimon and his followers would not tolerate another tyrant. Zerthimon challenged Gith directly. The two great gith leaders lifted their blades, stained with the blood of mind flayers, and met each other on the battlefield as the gith looked on.

Although Gith's skill in battle was superior, Zerthimon gained an advantage over her and won the contest. He spared her life, but the conflict had created a deep division within the gith race. Zerthimon led his supporters away from the ruined illithid empire to make a new home in the Elemental Chaos. Gith and her followers also left the world, but they moved to the Astral Sea.

The two halves of the gith people developed along different paths, ultimately becoming separate races. Gith's followers in the Astral Sea became the githyanki, and Zerthimon's followers in the Elemental Chaos became the githzerai.

Each githzerai settlement is an oasis of calm in the seething Elemental Chaos, usually a walled city built on an earthmote. Cenobites and mindmages patrol the wall, watching for incursions. Other githzerai sit or stand in quiet meditation throughout the fortress-city, exercising their focused will to keep the turmoil at bay. Outsiders receive close scrutiny, often having cenobites assigned to keep track of their moves and moods.

As mortal creatures, githzerai require food and water. They can direct the unstable plane's mutability to transform some of the local environment to

### ZERTHIMON'S FATE

As with so many figures of myth, Zerthimon's final fate remains unknown. Githzerai historians agree that after his duel with Gith, Zerthimon led his followers to the Elemental Chaos, where they established their monastic society. They also agree that he was an able leader for many decades, and that he trained the first githzerai monks. Then, apparently, he simply disappeared.

Many stories purport to tell Zerthimon's fate. The most popular among githzerai is that he achieved a profound form of enlightenment, far deeper than that attained by the hermit Liricosa (page 148)—perhaps even divine insight. Zerthimon transcended his mortal form to become an immortal being of pure energy, subtly guiding his people in their quest to follow him to this supreme state. He is no longer troubled by thoughts of violence against his enemies, and those who sense his presence can feel his peaceful nature.

Other scholars scoff at these tales, calling them existential nonsense. Zerthimon was a great leader and left a great heritage, but his end was no mystery. He simply died, as all mortals do; his followers held a grand funeral for him, and all knew of his passing. Only later, when Zerthimon's life and death became clouded from the passage of time, did historians and wishful thinkers invent more fantastic fates for him.

A darker story, and one that offends most githzerai, is that Zerthimon did die—but only in part. Unwilling to abandon his people, he delved into forbidden arts to extend his life beyond death. He became a lich, just as Gith herself had done. However, after performing the rituals necessary to achieve this state, Zerthimon was horrified at what he had done. He realized that if his people saw him in this state, they would turn from his teachings and all his achievements would be for naught. He fled to some forgotten place in the Elemental Chaos, where he dwells still, wrestling with the evil of his existence and trying to guide his people without their knowledge.

Interestingly, githyanki also take bitter offense at this tale, because they believe it would diminish Gith if their race's greatest traitor had managed to join her in immortality.

elemental water, but food is harder to acquire. Crops and livestock are brought in from other planes, particularly the Feywild and the Astral Sea. Visitors to a githzerai settlement might be surprised by markets featuring ears of silver corn or hulking, red-skinned hogs.

## OUTLOOK AND INTERACTION

Githzerai are suspicious of outsiders, but they reserve true hatred for their ancient enemies: the mind flayers and their brutal kin, the githyanki. They kill such creatures on sight, and they form special groups to hunt them down across the planes. Anyone who grievously wrongs the githzerai people might also be the target of relentless pursuit.

## MAJOR DOMAINS

The githzerai boast more communities within the Elemental Chaos than most other races, but only a few are large or important enough to be known to outsiders.

### ARSANITH

Arsanith is a legend among the githzerai, but a few planar travelers report having actually seen the place. Tales say that it is a small monastery deep within the Elemental Chaos, far from any other outpost of civilization, where only those who have touched enlightenment dwell. Arsanith's inhabitants are said to have such control over the surrounding chaos that they alter it purely by instinct, keeping out elemental beasts and demons. They similarly notice any other creature that nears their monastery and cloak their existence if they do not wish to be found. However, the tales also say that anyone who has glimpsed enlightenment is welcome in Arsanith—even githyanki.

### SANZERATHAD

This githzerai settlement barely survives the wilds of the Elemental Chaos. For more information about Sanzerathad, see page 86.

### ZERTHADLUN

The largest githzerai city in the Elemental Chaos is one of the best places for outsiders to enjoy some of the safety and comforts of civilization. Zerthadlun is described in more detail in *Manual of the Planes*, pages 77-78.

# SLAADS

Embodying disorder and entropy, slaads claim all of the Elemental Chaos as their stomping grounds. They are not primordials, elementals, nor demons, but chaos made flesh, and they delight in the fury of clashing elements.

Those slaads that prize knowledge and intelligence more highly than instinct know several hundred origin myths regarding their kind. Most such stories contradict each other, but one theme is shared by all of them: Slaads claim that they are the only sentient beings to inhabit the universe, and that all other creatures that believe themselves to be self-aware have that belief only in their own fevered imaginings.

The conflict between the slaads' origin stories invalidates all of the tales, in the opinion of most sages, and is just one more example of the chaos that slaads embrace. However, one controversial theory claims that all the stories are true because many alternate realities exist—possibly even an infinite number. That individual slaads tell different stories indicates that these unique creatures descended from different universes and perhaps can yet see dimly into realms other than the one they occupy. Perhaps multiple universes collapsed into a single cosmos, and only slaads still remember the infinite possibilities of other timelines. Now trapped in a single reality, they rebel against its strictures and embrace chaos as a way of breaking free into the wider multiverse.

Scholars generally consider this idea ludicrous at best. Slaads' thoughts are clouded with maddening images, and they seem aware of things beyond the perception of other creatures, but these facts do not prove the existence of a wider reality.

## SLAAD SOCIETY LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Most slaads seem insane and distracted, as though they are aware of things that other creatures cannot perceive. Those capable of more reasoned thought claim that they are the only sentient creatures in the cosmos.

**Arcana DC 25:** Slaads roam the Plane Below in search of areas of spectacular chaos. This quest sometimes brings them into contact with demons, who share their taste for destruction, but the two groups do not cooperate.

**Arcana DC 30:** Slaads have hundreds of conflicting origin stories, and one theory claims that all are true. The slaads see multiple realities at once. Their search for chaos is an attempt to tear down the walls that separate universes. They follow chaos storms in this pursuit, the largest of which is the Great Red Tempest.

**Arcana DC 35:** From time to time, slaads are drawn to a strange object known as the Spawning Stone. This huge artifact is needed for reproduction, but scholars also believe it might trap the slaads in their current form and reality.

## LIFE AND CULTURE

A slaad's life is filled with constant bedlam; peacefulness and inactivity are torture to these frenzied creatures. Chaos is almost as vital as food for slaads—when tumult dies down, they suffer pangs of discontent.

Slaads have no permanent home and never rest. They roam the Elemental Chaos in small packs, hunting for food and for spectacularly chaotic or violent phenomena. Slaads are sometimes encountered with demons, even though the two groups share no affinity, because both kinds of creatures are drawn to acts of devastation. Once the destruction is complete, though, the two groups might end up fighting each other.

Just as hunter tribes of the world follow migrating herds, slaad packs trail chaos storms (*Manual of the Planes*, page 67). A storm might drag large masses of stony or watery debris in its wake, creating a temporary landscape that pursuing slaads briefly inhabit. Slaads relish these violent manifestations of chaos and seem to be immune to their effects. They fall upon creatures wounded in a storm's tumult or salvage interesting materials transformed by its reality-altering power. If slaads do perceive other worlds simultaneously, they might be attracted to chaos storms because they believe the barriers between multiple realities are thinnest at a storm's center.

## OUTLOOK AND INTERACTION

Slaads seem interested only in increasing entropy, both through violent actions and by growing their own numbers with the spread of chaos phage (page 142). Thus, their interaction with other creatures is rarely harmonious. Even demons and devils can be bound by pacts, however short-lived those agreements might be. Making a deal with a slaad is nearly impossible.

Those who hold to the multiworld theory of slaad origin believe that slaads act as they do for a deeper reason: Slaads spread chaos in an effort to break down the structured bonds of reality. Constrained to one existence, one time, and one rule of cause and effect, slaads rail against order because it is their prison, and they embrace chaos as the key to freedom.

## MAJOR SITES

Slaads wander most of the Elemental Chaos, but they are always found in some locations.

### THE GREAT RED TEMPEST

The storms of raw chaos that sweep across the Plane Below threaten travelers and natives alike. Some are so large and long-lasting that they have acquired names. The Great Red Tempest is one such monster: a churning, blood-colored maelstrom that slowly rolls through the Elemental Chaos.

A typical chaos storm (*Manual of the Planes*, page 67) is rarely more than a few feet in radius, but the Great Red Tempest extends for miles in all directions. Several slaad packs ride behind it on tumbling, burrow-riddled stones the size of mountains or swim in the miniature seas that spin in its wake. When the storm boils across an inhabited region, the slaads launch themselves out to tear into survivors who are still regaining their bearings.

The tunnels that pierce the storm-lashed boulders are strewn with oddities collected from the storm, sometimes valuable but often merely shiny junk. Ruined structures sprawl across one rocky mass, apparently the remains of a compound founded by humans to establish a foothold for their explorations of the Elemental Chaos.

Slaads come and go from the Great Red Tempest, but one is always at the storm's heart: a void slaad called Vinakr Abudn. The other slaads supply the ebony creature with food and water as it meditates constantly, seeking a way to use the power of the storm to tear down the walls of creation.

### THE SPAWNING STONE

Drifting through the Elemental Chaos is a great whorled and multicolored sphere several hundred feet in diameter, cloaked by an enormous vortex of churning elemental fury. The whorls gradually mix across the sphere's face, and burning white runes gird it in three broad bands at, above, and below its equator. This huge structure is known to slaads as the Spawning Stone.

Every few years, according to no predictable schedule, a subset of the slaad population feels an undeniable urge to travel to the Spawning Stone's location and procreate. The stone's power tugs relentlessly at slaads wherever they might be, allowing them to find it unerringly as it wanders the Plane Below.

The slaads converge at the Spawning Stone in a mating frenzy. Some quality of the sphere quickens the egg sacs under their claws, enabling the growth of tiny embryos for implantation in prey; otherwise, slaads would produce no offspring. A few who visit the stone are transformed into slaad spawners



(*Monster Manual 2*, page 185), which begin to bud and grow embryos beneath their skin rather than under their claws.

The runes on the Spawning Stone are in no known script, but slaads that study the lore of their race believe them to be an arcane stricture. Whatever agency confined the slaads to a single reality seems also to prevent these beings of manifest chaos from developing new physical forms over generations. The offspring of slaads that congregate at the stone are limited to a handful of toadlike shapes.

The most ancient living slaads, including Ygorl, Lord of Entropy (page 156), and Bazim-Gorag the Firebringer, might know the reason behind their limited forms. They might even be responsible for creating the burning runes. If so, none of these primeval slaads have ever revealed their knowledge. However, similar runes sometimes appear on the Pandemonium Stone (page 80), another curious artifact that could be the physical anchor for the slaads' imprisonment in just one existence.

A powerful and long-lived slaad called the Guardian of the Stone remains always with the sphere. The Guardian sees to it that the sphere remains off limits to any creatures other than slaads.



## OTHER RACES

Many other races also make their homes in the Plane Below, even if they are not as numerous or as influential as those described above. Demons, the native creatures of the Abyss, are discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

### DAO

These reclusive creatures of earth occupy a unique place in the complex web of relations between the ancient elemental races. The dao took no sides in the Dawn War, remaining neutral even when the djinns begged them for help. The djinns blamed their refusal for the losses they suffered. Today, however, only the most hardened caliph still harbors acrimony toward that race, for the djinns' punishment was ultimately at the hands of the gods.

The dao are masters of earth and stone, and they consider their property to be all that naturally occurs or grows within those materials. Their love of gems puts dwarves to shame, and they might travel across planes to establish a new mine if the lode is promising. The possessiveness of dao leads them to reclaim treasures of the earth from other beings who, in their opinion, do not deserve them.

Dao have the most hierarchical society of all elemental races other than the efreet. The sharif is the supreme ruler, ensconced in the race's ancestral home in the Elemental Chaos. This place, called the Great Dismal Delve, is carved into a massive block of freestanding earth. Though the dao constantly bore through its interior, the stone constantly renews itself from within so that they can never remove it all. This cycle of activity spawns great earthquakes that rattle through the Delve.

### DEMONS

Demons normally dwell in the Abyss, and their behavior is described in more detail in chapter 4. Since no strict boundary separates the Abyss from the rest of the Elemental Chaos, though, demons can be encountered anywhere in the plane.

Demons in general don't form communities. They are living engines of destruction that slaughter everything in sight; when other victims are unavailable, they readily turn against one another. They have no underlying reason for their chaotic rampage, as slaads might, but act simply out of their nature.

On occasion, a more ambitious demon develops the urge to rule. The mightiest of these become demon princes, but the less powerful ones browbeat weaker demons into service and enslave other creatures rather than destroying them. Such rulers are as

instinctively destructive as other demons, but their devastation is slightly more organized and on a larger scale.

Each demonic regime reflects the persona of its ruler, but all share certain features. There are no laws beyond requiring instant obedience to the ruler's every whim, which is enforced through cruelty and torture. Daily life is nothing more or less than a struggle for survival: The strong literally prey on the weak. Their rulers constantly seek to expand by conquering neighboring settlements, and their demonic armies are made up largely of volunteers. Soldiers in the service of demon overlords receive slightly better treatment than most others—as long as they keep winning and don't irritate a foul-tempered superior.

### DWARVES

Dwarves are not native to the Elemental Chaos, but a few dwell there nonetheless, hidden in the crags and caves of mountainous regions. Some are descendants of the giants' slaves from ages past who did not mutate into new races such as the galeb duhrs. Others arrived more recently, after delving so deep into the world that they were transported to regions of elemental earth in the Plane Below. Both groups are insular and heavily suspicious of outsiders.

Such dwarven communities must survive on scant resources, since few regions of the Elemental Chaos can support crops or herds. Their inhabitants rarely trade or interact with others except out of necessity, and their dour attitude only reinforces the worst stereotypes of a race that is already seen as standoffish. These communities develop strict and intricate codes of law, and the punishment for violating these traditions can be brutal—another disincentive for others to visit. However, the dwarves might lend a sympathetic ear to outsiders who seek aid to fight giants or to free an enslaved population, since they have never forgotten their long-ago servitude and still resent their former overlords.

### CREATING ELEMENTAL BEASTS

In addition to the elementals presented in the *Monster Manuals* and other publications, countless elemental beasts wander the Plane Below. You can translate a beast or magical beast of nonelemental origin into an elemental version with a minimum of work. A cave bear could become a stone-based predator simply by giving it the earth keyword and immunity to petrification; a nightmare can be made of pure fire and given the fire keyword and immunity to fire. Such beasts need not look like their natural counterparts—an elemental bear might resemble a hulking, rocky mass, while a shark might be formed of viscous water with teeth of ice.

## ELEMENTALS

Elementals are the wild animals of the Elemental Chaos, as are other bestial elemental creatures, such as magma beasts, flame snakes, and rimefire griffons. Though some are more intelligent than natural beasts, they are creatures of instinct rather than intellect. They consume and reproduce, with no desire to form communities or even such loose groups as tribes.

Elementals sometimes form packs or extended family units that hunt in a somewhat organized way. Such groups do not govern areas as sentient beings do, but they dominate a region through sheer numbers. More intelligent creatures of the Plane Below occasionally capture and train elementals as pets or servants.

## HUMANS

The Elemental Chaos is home to a considerable number of humans. Some are new arrivals, but many groups of humans have been here for generations; like genasi, most humans dwell in communities dominated by other races. The City of Brass has a large human population, made up mainly of slaves, though freed servants, merchants, and craftsmen are common as well. Genasi settlements, though rare, frequently include sizable human minorities. Several giant communities keep humans as slaves. A few human-dominated communities exist as well, from isolated, struggling villages to major trading centers.

Because humans reproduce and spread more rapidly than other civilized races do, surviving in the Elemental Chaos is even more difficult for them. Few areas offer sufficient fertile soil and drinking water to support an expanding population while lacking hazardous elements or creatures, and many nascent human populations do not survive. Those human communities that do sustain themselves in the Plane Below are just as varied as those in the natural world, with an enormous variety of cultures and governments.

## PHOELARCHS

These natural humanoids (described in *Monster Manual 2*) share their souls with the elemental phoeras, winged entities of fire perhaps related to the wondrous phoenix. Although most phoelarchs dwell in the natural world, a few have become fascinated with exploring their dual nature. They travel to the Elemental Chaos, hoping to track down the phoeras with whom they share their essence. Phoeras, although intelligent, lack the desire to form communities, instead soaring through the heights of the Elemental Chaos alone or in flocks.

Some phoelarchs join existing communities, but a few have established villages of their own. These small societies have little interest in interacting with outsiders, but neither are they innately hostile. Travelers in need of shelter or assistance might be welcome (or at least tolerated) for a brief time. Phoelarchs are rigidly honorable, but their customs and sense of honor differ greatly from one community or individual to the next. Formerly affable hosts might turn on a visitor suddenly in response to the slightest offense, or for reasons the outsider never fully understands.

## PRIMORDIALS

Those primordial who survived the Dawn War remain imprisoned or deep in slumber, scattered across the breadth of the Elemental Chaos. The presence of even a dormant primordial greatly influences the development of any nearby community, regardless of the races that populate it. Such societies drift toward the worship of that primordial, or of primordials in general, whether in hidden cults or open temples. Perhaps the primordial's resting place draws those already inclined to worship it, or its overwhelming presence slowly twists the minds of other beings.

A primordial's influence is evident in a community's appearance and character, even if the worship itself is hidden. A settlement built on a primordial of stone displays low, squat architecture, while one near an entity of water might have curved streets and flowing artwork featuring soft lines. The regions surrounding such communities are home to concentrations of elementals that share the nearby primordial's essence, and the citizens might consider such creatures to be holy.

### THOSE WHO ROAM

Conventional wisdom and religious doctrine maintain that all primordials were either slain or imprisoned by the gods at the end of the Dawn War.

This is untrue.

A scant few unchained primordials yet roam the cosmos—primarily the Elemental Chaos, but the other planes as well. How beings of such immense power and such destructive instinct can remain hidden is unclear. Scholars hypothesize that the free primordials have either lost much of the power they had in their prime or are so subtle that they—and their terrible plots—are invisible to all.

Even the most learned sages know the names of only two free primordials. One is Iktha-Lau the Ever Empty, the utter cold from the darkest voids. The other, Ulctilan-tilkla, is a creature only partly real that is said to have germinated from the seed of the multiverse's first dream.

# ELEMENTAL LOCALES

**THE ELEMENTAL** Chaos is infinite: Even the portion known to natural creatures dwarfs their world. You might lead the characters along ways wending through preconceived locales or fill previously unknown spaces with cultures and landscapes pulled from the peculiar, grotesque, and scintillating depths of your psyche.

Whether you prefer examples of adventuring areas in the Plane Below, or want some details about its most important or infamous regions, we've got you covered. This chapter presents ten areas of the Elemental Chaos, some unique and others archetypal. By introducing variations to suit the strangeness of the Elemental Chaos as you perceive it, you can make them unique to your campaign.

Each locale described in this chapter includes the following information.

- ◆ **Overview:** Here you'll find a general description of the locale and its place in the Plane Below.
- ◆ **Inhabitants and Culture:** If the area contains organized settlements, their nature is described here. Some areas are too wild to have an identifiable culture, but significant inhabitants are discussed.
- ◆ **Major Areas:** This entry summarizes important cities, fortresses, and other sites of note in the region.
- ◆ **Adventures:** This entry includes a list of environmental hazards and notable terrain features in the locale, followed by several sample encounters to threaten the characters.

Following those ten sections are three mini-adventures, including tactical encounters, in a variety of interesting locations in the Elemental Chaos. You can run them as one-offs, plant them as seeds of larger adventures, or use them as models for elemental encounters of your own design.





# THE BRAZEN BAZAAR

It begins as a gleam in the distance, flickers of fire amid a black thunderhead rolling over the horizon. As the billows of smoke come closer, they solidify into an elevated highway stretching across emptiness.

Atop this bridge of smoke, tongues of fire take the shapes of azer and genasi riders upon horses of flame drawing ebony buggies, painted wagons, and brass-gilded carriages. Within those vessels, efreet merchants tabulate the value of their goods. Salamanders and fire giants march alongside, sculpting living shapes from smoke and flame.

This is the Brazen Bazaar, a traveling marketplace and carnival originating from the City of Brass. Initially one of several caravans that supplied outposts, the bazaar has evolved into a market as great as any within the city that spawned it. It reaches deep into the Elemental Chaos and into other worlds.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

In full, the Brazen Bazaar includes thousands of merchants managed by a cabal of efreets called the Golden Hearth. Few individuals see the entire bazaar. Depending on the importance of its destination, it manifests as anything from a handful of wagons to a caravan stretching as far as the eye can see.

Azers, genasi, and giants perform the physical labor of moving and maintaining the caravan. Workers of flame, such as salamanders and mystically inclined giants, provide side entertainment: flame sculptures, shows of strength, and acrobatics. But the largest crowds flock to peruse the rare and magical goods offered by the merchants.

Though the Golden Hearth considers the City of Brass its home, it holds no allegiance to the Lord of the Efreets or to any noble house. All creatures, including efreets, must pay for the goods, services, and information that the cabal has acquired from distant places.

## MAJOR AREAS

The Brazen Bazaar consists of wheeled vehicles and contraptions suited for easy transport across the bridge of smoke. The bridge coalesces a few dozen feet ahead of the first vehicle and dissolves a few dozen yards behind the last one.

Sometimes the bazaar sets up shop on the ground or another solid surface. At other times, the drivers establish a platform of smoke accessible to patrons by ramps or stairs. Given a significant enough location, the bazaar includes all the following structures.

**The Golden Market:** This elite section of the bazaar consists of enclosed wagons that are larger inside than out, due to pocket dimensions such as those in *bags of holding*. Lieutenants, such as other efreets and lesser creatures, run other market stalls, but the Golden Market is the exclusive province of the Golden Hearth efreets.

In a Golden Market wagon, rows of tables and shelves line long hallways lit by brass chandeliers and by solid elemental fire. All manner of magic items and rare goods are sold here, though their prices are higher than those in the City of Brass. Portals link the Golden Market wagons to the City of Brass, enabling the Golden Hearth to replenish goods that go out of stock.

**Attendant's Carriage:** Like Golden Market wagons, the homes-on-wheels of the Golden Hearth are larger inside than they appear. The greatest such carriage belongs to Attendant Hephrandiun, leader of the Golden Hearth. Its exterior is a large carriage, gilded in brass and draped in silks; inside, it resembles a mansion, replete with audience chambers, hidden rooms, and a shrine to the primordial Imix, Lord of Fire.

**The Tent:** When the Brazen Bazaar remains in a place for more than a few days, its workers erect a canvas tent several hundred yards wide. Covered in Barazhad runes and stitched with trails of elemental fire, the tent protects the portion of the market within it from bad weather and the plane's randomness.

## ADVENTURES

The characters might seek the Brazen Bazaar if they require a rare item, or they might hear of an ally or an enemy traveling with the caravan. They might even join the bazaar to travel under its auspices. The traveling market sometimes crosses regions of fire and intense heat to appear in planes outside the Elemental Chaos, so the characters might encounter it in their world or in the Feywild (and follow leads from there into the Elemental Chaos).

The bazaar's merchants are rigidly amoral, and their heartless profiteering sometimes inspires heroic intervention. An efreet might offer provisions to a poverty-stricken community—in exchange for the enslavement of all the community's firstborn. A desperate adventurer might acquire an artifact, but only in exchange for an open-ended favor or a long-term oath of service. Efreets of the Golden Hearth use rituals to ensure that such oaths are kept.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The Brazen Bazaar travels above and across almost all kinds of terrain. Its only consistent environmental features are those that travel with it.



**Canvas:** The canvas of the protective tent is as tough as leather and immune to fire damage. It regenerates 10 hit points per round.

**Portals:** A few of the Golden Market's wagons contain portals to the City of Brass.

**Smoke:** Squares filled with smoke are heavily obscured.

**Smoke, Solid:** The solid smoke on which the bazaar travels has the consistency of stone.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Efreet of the Golden Hearth leave the running of markets to servants when the Brazen Bazaar travels to small communities, so encounters can suit characters of a range of levels. The Golden Hearth hires anyone who proves useful and can survive the environment.

### Level 11 Encounter (XP 3,200)

- ◆ 1 azer foot soldier (level 14 soldier, MM 22)
- ◆ 1 firelasher (level 11 skirmisher, MM 104)
- ◆ 2 flame steeds\* (level 13 skirmisher, MM 196)

\*Treat flame steeds as nightmares, but with the elemental origin instead of shadow and adding the fire keyword.

### Level 17 Encounter (XP 8,000)

- ◆ 1 azer beastlord (level 17 soldier, MM 23)
- ◆ 3 azer warriors (level 17 minion, MM 22)
- ◆ 1 firebred hell hound (level 17 brute, MM 160)
- ◆ 2 salamander archers (level 15 artillery, MM 226)
- ◆ 1 salamander noble (level 15 controller, MM 227)

### Level 22 Encounter (XP 22,600)

- ◆ 2 efreet flamestriders (level 23 skirmisher, MM 99)
- ◆ 2 fire giants (level 18 soldier, MM 123)
- ◆ 1 fire giant forgecaller (level 18 artillery, MM 123)
- ◆ 1 fire titan (level 21 elite soldier, MM 124)

### Level 25 Encounter (XP 41,400)

- ◆ 2 efreet cinderlords (level 23 artillery, MM 98)
- ◆ 2 efreet flamestriders (level 23 skirmisher, MM 99)
- ◆ 1 efreet pyresinger (level 25 controller, MM 99)
- ◆ Hephrandiun, efreet pyresinger demagogue (level 25 elite controller, MM 99 and DMG 178)

## CANAUGHLIN BOG

Hundreds of miles across, Canaughlin Bog drifts in chaos currents, bonding with other isles for hours or years at a time. Portions of Canaughlin are normal fens, complete with trees and other ordinary plants. Other parts exhibit signs of chaos: hillocks of ice and stone protruding from waters that swirl in physics-defying currents over caustic mud.

The swamp received its name two centuries ago from eladrin explorers of the Feywild. Its horrors and hazards have since defeated all manner of adventurers, other travelers, and enterprising elementals.

### INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

The fen supports sporadic villages. The largest groups of inhabitants are the Tinder-Takers and a fey community called Raenrirriel.

**Tinder-Takers:** The Tinder-Takers are a revolving assortment of genasi fugitives from Threshold (page 57) and Gloamnull (page 74), githzerai too undisciplined for monasteries, and slaves escaped from the efreet. The Tinder-Takers' numbers and the environment protect them from pursuers. They spend their time battling swamp hazards, raiding vessels and mounts in a rickety but well-armed airship called the *Poison Storm*, and honing and supplementing their skills in hopes of striking down their oppressors.

**Raenrirriel Fey:** The fey of Raenrirriel have dwelt in Canaughlin since the days of the first eladrin explorers. Over the years, they have mutated into uglier, more twisted creatures. A cabal of hags that have elemental powers leads the community. The hags have come to believe that they will master the plane. After all, the fey are creatures of nature, and what is nature but the elements? So far, however, the hags have not developed potent elemental rituals or gained a foothold in any elemental societies.

### MAJOR AREAS

Terrain and other hazards make deadly combinations throughout the bog, so any part of the swamp can be lethal. Three infamous areas are described below.

**The Black Pool:** Sinkholes and pits abound in Canaughlin. Among them is the Black Pool, normally an ordinary pit leading to a series of muddy underwater caves. At random intervals, it becomes a portal to Shedaklah, a festering, swampy layer of the Abyss overseen by the demon lords Juiblex and Zugtgmo. Abyssal energy inundates the area around the pool. Elementals that die here rise as blight-born demons (page 132), and mortals rise as abyssal ghouls (*Monster Manual*, page 118) or other horrors.

**Flotsam:** This village, the home of the Tinder-Takers, has buildings made of pieces of stone and wood

that the Tinder-Takers have procured from a hundred different sources. Flotsam stands on a low, broad hillock of acid-tainted soil, surrounded by a palisade of jagged wood and bits of broken iron and glass.

**Raenrirriel:** The fey settlement lies in a grove of petrified cypress trees protruding from a basin of thin, watery mud. Bolts of diseased yellow and bruise-purple lightning flicker between the trees, illuminating bone, iron, stone, and wood structures built among the branches. Upper echelons of fey live in these structures, while lesser fey dwell in chambers formed beneath the mud by the trees' roots. The area of and surrounding Raenrirriel is more stable than most of the Elemental Chaos; for hundreds of yards in every direction, it seems to be part of the natural world. Creatures that can normally manipulate the plane's turbulence are unable to do so here.

### ADVENTURES

Of all the swamps throughout the cosmos, only the Fenreach in the world (*Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons*, page 238), the Murkendraw (*Manual of the Planes*, page 45) and a few moors of the Shadowfell are larger than Canaughlin Bog. A soup of environments churns across Canaughlin, so that traveling across it is an adventure in itself.

Canaughlin harbors portals that lead to swamps in other realms, including those mentioned above and the mud flats of Minauros (*Manual of the Planes*, page 100). During the Blood War (*Manual of the Planes*, page 89), these last portals served the devils well.

### ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Much of Canaughlin is typical swampland: shallow water and difficult terrain. Hillocks protrude from the muck of the bog's shallows and in deeper areas. The water ends abruptly at the edges and underside of the isle.

**Chaotic Depths:** Swamp water oozes among obstacles and through murky caves in the deeps. Elemental creatures, and fey who have dwelt in Canaughlin for generations, take advantage of these sluggish currents to move more freely through the swamp. As long as such creatures are swimming in water at least 5 feet deep, they can move without penalty through spaces one size smaller than they are and can squeeze through spaces two sizes smaller.

**Elemental Spouts:** Boiling, freezing, caustic, or venomous swamp water can erupt in elemental spouts, as described on page 14.

**Energy Moss:** Clumps of abnormally resilient moss hang from branches and float on swamp water. They absorb cold, fire, lightning, poison, or thunder energy from the chaotic environment. Each square of energy moss functions as a square of elemental seepage and as a square of energy crystals (*Manual of the Planes*, page 22).



**Icy Crust:** Swamp water can crust over with ice, forming difficult terrain. A character falling prone on the ice must make a saving throw or break through.

**Portals:** Parts of the bog, both underwater and on land, mystically connect to other locations. Locations linked by portals generally lie within 20 squares of and in line of sight to each other. A character ending its turn in a portal space teleports to the location linked to that space.

**Swamp Water:** Canaughlin water flows chaotically. Each round, currents push an affected creature up to 4 squares (1d6 - 2, minimum 0) in a random direction. See “Underwater Terrain” on page 45 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* for more information.

**Swamp Water, Acidic:** A creature that starts its turn in acidic swamp water takes 1d6 acid damage. If the damage roll is 6, the creature is also blinded until the end of its next turn. Bogs of acidic mire (page 12) occur near deep pools of acidic swamp water.

**Swamp Water, Boiling:** A creature that starts its turn in boiling swamp water takes 1d8 fire damage.

**Swamp Water, Freezing:** A creature that starts its turn in freezing swamp water takes 1d6 cold damage, and the Endurance check DC to avoid losing healing surges from suffocation increases by 2.

**Swamp Water, Thick:** Thick water is difficult terrain for creatures swimming or walking through it.

**Trees:** Swamp trees might be living or petrified. They are blocking terrain and provide cover.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Encounters that occur in normal swamps also happen in Canaughlin, but with elemental twists. Alien predators lurk in the waters, suspicious villagers turn on passersby, and the environment seethes with malevolent will.

Create the hags of Raenrirriel by using the frost adept and scion of flame templates (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, pages 179 and 181) or the druid, shaman, or wizard class templates. The 15th-level encounter below provides examples using the frost adept template.

### Level 11 Encounter (XP 3,175)

- ◆ 1 Crushing Wave hierophant (level 10 artillery, page 154)
- ◆ 2 Crushing Wave initiates (level 8 soldier, page 155)
- ◆ 1 githzerai zerth (level 13 elite controller, MM 130)
- ◆ 5 human lackeys (level 7 minion, MM 162)

### Level 22 Encounter (XP 21,500)

- ◆ 2 ash-wrought soulburners (level 19 controller, page 133)
- ◆ 1 consumptive swarm (level 21 elite skirmisher, page 133)
- ◆ 1 field of everflame hazard (level 18 blaster, DMG 92)
- ◆ 2 hezrous (level 22 brute, MM 56)



# THE CHOKING PALACE

Far from the City of Brass and the monasteries of the githzerai lies Fume, a duchy that swears fealty only to Ekhahk, the Smoldering Duke (page 146). In Fume's center, floating on roiling smoke, stands the Choking Palace, from where Ekhahk has ruled for more than a century.

Winged shapes flit and soar behind veils of smoke and among clusters of fantastically tall, spindly towers. The bastion's walls of steel-hard smoke resemble ash-coated iron. Its few windows weep tears of flowing smoke.

The castle existed long before Ekhahk took possession of it. The most widely accepted tale of its creation claims that Ekhahk or a creature like him converted the cloudstuff of a djinn fortress into smoke. Other tales attribute the palace's construction to a rogue efreet, to a primordial, or to devils requiring an outpost in the Blood War. Both efreet and devils have occupied the castle at different times, but Ekhahk now holds it firmly in his grasp.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

The impoverished denizens of Fume love and fear their liege. Ekhahk offers gifts of gems and magic to those who please him and visits brutality upon any who offend or disobey him.

The duchy comprises half a dozen city-sized landmasses and a few dozen smaller ones. Whether of earth, stone, or swampland, they all contain mountains, fog, and smoke. The various races of creatures keep to themselves—elementals with elementals, humans with their kind, and so on—but all acknowledge the simple system of government: Do as Ekhahk's minions bid.

Courtiers in the Choking Palace know their place based on where they stand in Ekhahk's favor. They jockey for position, surreptitiously disobeying and discrediting superiors. Ekhahk, in turn, makes few demands except to insist on respect for himself and to enforce security.

## MAJOR AREAS

Medium and Large creatures move comfortably through the wide passageways and tall doorways of the Choking Palace, despite its narrow architecture. Countless staircases distinguish its interior from that of more horizontal structures.

**The Churning Emporium:** In the courtyard in front of the palace's blackened gates buzzes a marketplace supported by chunks of earth and paths of solid smoke. The stalls rise and fall like boats on a slow swell. Here, the peasants of Fume trade goods and news among themselves and with palace courtiers,

as well as with traders and merchants working along the trade routes passing through Fume. Ekhahk allows only one public teleportation circle in Fume, located in the center of the marketplace. (A few private and transitory teleportation circles exist inside the palace.)

**Dungeon of Ash:** Those who anger the Smoldering Duke, if they are not slain outright, end up in the Dungeon of Ash, deep in the bowels of the Choking Palace. Poisonous vapors fill the dungeons, making every breath agony: Those who inhale them suffer the pain of suffocation without losing consciousness or perishing from lack of air.

**Library:** In the palace's central keep stands Ekhahk's library, an enormous repository of writings. Even the greatest temples of Ioun and Vecna

## OTHER MAJOR LOCATIONS

The *Manual of the Planes* supplement provides more information on several of the best-known locations of the Elemental Chaos.

**The Abyss** (pages 78-83): This section of *Manual of the Planes* briefly describes the realm of demons. Chapter 4 of this book provides a more detailed overview of the Abyss's environment, inhabitants, and typical adventures.

**The City of Brass** (page 73): The blazing City of Brass, ruled by the Lord of the Efreet, houses the efreet aristocracy and diverse servants and slaves. Canals of burning magma slice it into districts. Despite the heat, the marketplaces attract merchants, traders, and adventurers from across the planes.

**The Keening Delve** (page 76): A great entity (some say perhaps the primordial Haemnatuun) rests in the Keening Delve, a network of howling, wind-blasted tunnels carved within masses of rock. The entity's power attracts a wide array of creatures, including slaads, demons, and efreet explorers. The Keening Delve also interests the mysterious dao (see page 64 of this book).

**The Ninth Bastion** (page 76): Long ago, knights of the fallen empire Mira created the Ninth Bastion, one of the few Elemental Chaos strongholds held by natives of the natural world. Inhabitants of the Ninth Bastion serve the deities Bane and Erathis. Though they are militant and suspicious of outsiders, they nonetheless take in extraplanar travelers seeking shelter.

**Zerthadlun** (page 77): The largest githzerai community and the closest thing that far-flung race has to a societal center, Zerthadlun is both a city and a sprawling monastery. Through mental and physical labor, githzerai maintain its calm aura. Other githzerai monasteries model their philosophies after those practiced in Zerthadlun. Visitors, though rare, can find shelter here, as long as their presence harmonizes with the githzerai's ordered existence. The monastery suffers attacks from slaads, efreet saboteurs, and other forces threatened by the githzerai or by the cause of order.

lack some of the forgotten histories and mystical lore contained in the pages of the volumes here. Ekhahk strives to acquire every bit of recordable knowledge that exists throughout the cosmos.

The Smoldering Duke spends much of the time in his library, perusing tomes and writing in his journals (or, according to gossip, falling asleep on the books he writes). He also scribes on his palace through the smoke (see “Environmental Features”).

**The Shrouded Throne:** The Smoldering Duke holds court in a hall in the central keep. He sits upon the Shrouded Throne, a seat of power formed of smoke and surrounded by eddies of black fumes. His audience can see only his eyes through the vapors. From here, Ekhahk can scry other parts of the palace through the smoke (see “Environmental Features”) and teleport to any spot within Fume.

**Sooty Garden:** Ekhahk’s Sooty Garden produces a profusion of plants for pipes and braziers: various smoking herbs and incense. It rests in a courtyard between two of the castle’s towers. Druids and trained elementals tend the scores of different plants growing in soil imported from the Feywild. Ash and smoke in the air coat the plants, giving them a sickly appearance despite their healthy condition.

## ADVENTURES

Ekhahk seeks to maintain power in Fume and to protect his people from outside threats, but he keeps any other objectives secret. Why does he collect ancient lore? Why does he maintain diplomatic relations with the City of Brass and other communities?

Because of his secrecy, Ekhahk can serve as any sort of adversary for the characters. They might have something he wants, or they might seek a magic item or lore that he also covets. Perhaps they are allied with someone he considers an enemy.

Ekhahk could also help the characters. They might need to gain permission to enter the library or negotiate for the release of a prisoner in the Dungeon of Ash. They might even arrive in Fume by accident and have to navigate the duchy’s laws and customs before continuing on their way.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Smoke and vapors pervade the Choking Palace. Only the stoutest of respiratory systems escape unscathed.

**Smoke:** Smoke fills the chambers and hallways. Each creature other than Ekhahk and his minions must make a successful DC 26 Endurance check every 8 hours to avoid losing a healing surge (see “Environmental Dangers,” *Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 159).

**Smoke, Magical:** Nearly every room of the Choking Palace contains a brazier or an open flame that emits magical smoke. Ekhahk and his servants can easily see through this smoke. For everyone else, smoky areas are lightly or heavily obscured, depending on the smoke’s density. While he is in the library, upon the Shrouded Throne, or in his chambers, Ekhahk can scry on any chamber or creature through the palace’s smoke.

**Smoke, Solid:** The solid smoke that forms walls and furniture in the Choking Palace has the consistency of iron.

**Vapors:** Each living creature that breathes the poisonous vapors of the Dungeon of Ash must make Endurance checks as though suffocating (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 159). A creature that has no healing surges left takes no damage from the vapors but suffers continuous, agonizing pain. Affected creatures must escape the vapors to regain any healing surges.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

The characters might encounter any sort of entity within Fume, because Ekhahk welcomes all beings that swear him fealty; however, the citizenry fights only if it must. Ekhahk’s servants and soldiers, mostly elemental in nature, present the greatest danger. See “Ekhahk” on page 146 for other encounter suggestions.

### Level 13 Encounter (XP 4,600)

- ◆ 1 beholder eye of flame (level 13 elite artillery, MM 32)
- ◆ 1 cloud of elemental steam hazard (level 14 blaster, *Manual of the Planes* 67)
- ◆ 2 firelashers (level 11 skirmisher, MM 104)
- ◆ 1 tempest wisp (level 13 controller, *Monster Manual 2* 102)

### Level 18 Encounter (XP 10,200)

- ◆ 3 air archon zephyrhaunts (level 16 lurker, *Manual of the Planes* 114)
- ◆ 1 cambion hellfire magus (level 18 artillery, MM 39)
- ◆ 1 genasi elemental dervish (level 18 elite skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* 116)

### Level 21 Encounter (XP 18,375)

- ◆ 2 djinn thunderers (level 20 artillery, *Monster Manual 2* 71)
- ◆ 1 efreet fireblade (level 22 soldier, MM 98)
- ◆ 2 fire archon blazesteels (level 19 soldier, MM 19)
- ◆ 3 smoke hounds (level 23 minion soldier, page 147)

# GLOAMNULL, CITY OF RAIN

A genasi trade city, Gloamnull welcomes visitors. Adventurers can find standard and esoteric wares in its rain-soaked streets. Beneath the superficial friendliness, though, lurks a dark secret. The people of Gloamnull have turned to the demon prince Dagon (*Monster Manual 2*, page 45) to keep their city intact in the Elemental Chaos—and Dagon demands sacrifices.

Twenty years ago, an upheaval in the City of Brass eliminated many members of an efreet noble house. Slaves of the house escaped, including some genasi who established Gloamnull as a village on a jagged earthmote. Patronage by a nearby githzerai monastery kept the village alive, so the place became known as a safe harbor. More genasi gravitated to it.

Ten years ago, an efreet trading vessel arrived in town. The efreets found the genasi to be more tractable than githzerai. Thus, within a year, Gloamnull became a minor trade hub. It continued to swell, attracting more genasi and a few other creatures because of its prosperity.

Five years ago, clouds began to envelop the city. Over the course of several months, the clouds blocked out all external sources of light. Then a tainted rain—potable only if filtered—began to fall. It filled a natural trough around Gloamnull, forming a moat, and flooded the tunnels and caverns that riddled the earthmote.

Attacks by giants and archons followed the arrival of the rains, which continued to pour. Elementals born of the swirling chaos converged upon the city. Trade withered and stopped. Buildings collapsed, and walls fell. Genasi died.

In desperation, Gloamnull's inhabitants performed ritual sacrifices entreating Dagon to come to their aid. They swore their lives, their city, and their souls to him in exchange for his help.

Thereafter, demonic fish appeared in the moat, and the attacks slowed. A trickle of trade resumed. The citizens cheered, pushing their fear of Dagon deep into the recesses of their minds.

The rains continue to this day. Floodwaters spill over the sides of the moat and spout from holes around the earthmote's base.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

Most of Gloamnull's citizens are genasi. They worship Dagon, or at least bow before the demon prince even if they do not swear him fealty. Though oppressed by gloom and rain, they struggle to put on cheery faces for outsiders and use firesoul and stormsoul manifestations (*Monster Manual 2*, page 118) to brighten the place. They long to escape Dagon's clutches but see no way to do so.

Gloamnull's inhabitants take pride in their city's longevity, because genasi settlements are rare and typically short-lived. They welcome other genasi, indoctrinating them in Dagon's worship when possible. Those who resist indoctrination end up strapped to altars in the city's depths. Every thirty days or so, a wail pierces all corners of the city, compelling those disloyal to Dagon to drown themselves. Visitors who arrive at any other time are relatively safe; only a few genasi are true zealots.

However, the inhabitants are even more prone to rage, depression, and mania than genasi in other places, which makes social and business interactions difficult. The chill and the damp prevail. Traders report weirdness but encounter few problems entering and leaving the city.

Genasi crafters have developed a means of solidifying water from elementals into a sludge with which to fashion wares. Such items rarely last more than a few days' travel from Gloamnull. The citizens drink an ale made from local water, fungus, and ground-up elemental extracts. They eat porridge made from crushed minerals and the bulging-eyed, weird fish that suck sludge from the moat's bottom.

## MAJOR AREAS

On its surface, Gloamnull is a trade city that has managed to survive the hardships of the Elemental Chaos. A closer look reveals its grimmer reality.

**Battlements:** Gloamnull still faces sporadic assaults from giants, elementals, and other hostile creatures. (Perceptive observers might note that the attackers are never demons.) Warriors patrol the walls and watch for incoming ships. Firesoul genasi send signal flares to patrols and to incoming travelers.

**Darmond's Tower:** Darmond, a shadar-kai wizard, moved into Gloamnull not long ago and erected a tower. He resists the town's faith and seems unaffected by the periodic wailing. He keeps to his tower, pointing a spyglass at the clouds, or uses magic to fly up to them, where he might remain for hours.

**The Grand Cathedral:** A temple to Dagon, the Grand Cathedral lies beneath the main market square. Waist-high water laps at a blood-soaked altar and at the feet of fishlike statues. Genasi and nastier creatures guard the hidden entrance against visitors' curiosity.

**Tunnels:** Demons grow in Gloamnull's watery tunnels. Sacrificed creatures return as twisted, stinking versions of themselves, and servitors of Dagon swim or wade through the darkness. Even the genasi do not know what dwells in the deepest reaches, but

zealots shiver with ecstasy at stories of sentient slime and probing tentacles.

**The Warming Fire:** Travelers frequent this inn, which has a fire elemental in the hearth to drive back the chill. Garl, the proprietor and a Dagon devotee, sometimes poisons his guests' food.

## ADVENTURES

Gloamnull can serve your campaign as a simple genasi trade city affected by the strangeness of the Elemental Chaos. If you use it to introduce the cult of Dagon, though, you can overlay the area with pervasive despair and bloody sacrifices. The characters might need to escape the cult, resist a sporadic attack from outside forces, or investigate a disappearance. Enterprising characters (such as sympathetic genasi) might try to free the city from Dagon's grasp.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The elemental and demonic influences on Gloamnull create a variety of bizarre terrain and environments. Moss and mildew grow everywhere.

**Blood Rock:** Years of sacrifice and random slaughter beneath Gloamnull have resulted in patches of blood rock (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 67).

**Rain:** The soul-deadening rain always falls. A square being drenched by the rain is lightly obscured. The constant rain extinguishes unprotected natural flames.

**Sacred Circles:** Worshipers of Dagon have dedicated areas beneath Gloamnull and secret aboveground rooms to the demon prince. These function as sacred circles (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 68) for chaotic evil creatures. Some such areas also contain altars of zealotry (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 92).

**Slides:** Slime coats some of the sloping tunnels beneath Gloamnull, causing them to function as slides (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 68).

**Traps:** The genasi have littered Gloamnull (including the tunnels beneath it) with traps to prevent visitors from learning of their worship of Dagon. They primarily employ warder traps, preferring to deter visitors rather than kill them.

**Water:** Water floods tunnels under the city. When knee-deep or waist-deep, water is difficult terrain. For water-filled tunnels, see "Aquatic Combat" on page 45 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

If the characters glimpse Gloamnull's sickly underbelly, they might contend with genasi cultists and Dagon's ilk, such as demons, water-dwelling monstrosities, and aberrations twisted by ancient, unspeakable evil. Foulspawn can represent sacrificed humanoids or genasi warped by Dagon's influence.



### Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,800)

- ◆ 1 canoloth (level 7 soldier, *Manual of the Planes* 120)
  - ◆ 2 death shards (level 8 artillery, *Monster Manual* 2 34)
  - ◆ 6 genasi lackeys\* (level 7 minion, MM 162)
  - ◆ 1 gorgon mud hazard (level 8 obstacle, page 18)
- \*Use the statistics for human lackeys.

### Level 12 Encounter (XP 3,400)

- ◆ 1 foulspawn berserker (level 9 soldier, MM 112)
- ◆ 1 foulspawn grue (level 8 controller, MM 112)
- ◆ 1 foulspawn hulk (level 12 brute, MM 113)
- ◆ 2 foulspawn seers (level 11 artillery, MM 113)
- ◆ 1 vrock (level 13 skirmisher, MM 58)

### Level 16 Encounter (XP 8,000)

- ◆ 1 aboleth overseer (level 18 elite controller, MM 8)
- ◆ 8 aboleth servitors (level 16 minion, MM 9)
- ◆ 8 canoloth harriers (level 13 minion, *Manual of the Planes* 120)

### Level 20 Encounter (XP 13,900)

- ◆ 1 gibbering abomination (level 18 controller, MM 126)
- ◆ 4 kuo-toa guards (level 16 minion, MM 172)
- ◆ 1 larva mage (level 21 elite artillery, MM 175)
- ◆ 1 void crust hazard (level 22 obstacle, page 22)

## IRDOC MORDA

A stretch of jagged peaks marks the edge of a nation-sized landmass floating in the Elemental Chaos. Towering from the sides of those mountains and the bottom of the earthmote, an array of iron protrusions juts in all directions like stabbing blades. Some protrusions gleam as brightly as stars of the Astral Sea; others are choked by rust. These are the towers of Irdoc Morda, bastion of the archons.

Servants of the primordials have long used the rocky isle on which Irdoc Morda stands. In the latter days of the Dawn War, archons and other elemental soldiers began forging increasing numbers of weapons, having learned the value of such tools from followers of the gods. Thus, when other elemental beings discovered this isle, which was especially rich in iron but also in rare metals such as adamantine, they established a mining operation here. Earth and ice archons watched over giants and galeb duhrs, carving ever deeper into the stone. Primordials forged the first iron archons from the richest veins.

As the mine came to supply not just the archons but also various elemental communities, more archons arrived as guards. They built fortifications, first of stone, then of iron, so plentiful was the ore. Now Irdoc Morda's tunnels run throughout the mountains, and its towers protrude hundreds of feet.

After the Dawn War, elemental factions such as giant tribes, genasi, and efreetts continued to mine Irdoc Morda's ore under the watchful eyes of the archon natives. Finally, miners depleted the ore, leaving a hollow shell of rock around a honeycomb of tunnels and caverns. They departed, seeking new resources. The archons remain.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

Archons of nearly every variety inhabit Irdoc Morda. Earth archons patrol the tunnels and surrounding lowlands. Ice archons dwell in the extremities (up, down, or sideways, depending on the towers' orientation). Throughout it all, in the greatest numbers, live iron archons. Archons of yet other types appear in smaller numbers, as emissaries of other archon communities or of elemental powers.

Unusually for archons, iron archons feel a sense of proprietorship toward Irdoc Morda and claim leadership over all archons here. Even stranger, the other archons accept that claim. The leader of the iron archons, and thus of Irdoc Morda, is called the Twice-Forged General. A crescent blade battle champion (page 130 and *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 176) currently holds the position.

Otherwise, archons in Irdoc Morda behave as they usually do elsewhere. They accept their ranks and positions based on their capabilities, carry out their duties, and pass along their orders.



A small population of slaves also dwells in Irdoc Morda. Primarily azers, eisk jaats (page 136), galeb duhrs, and genasi captured during the archons' military endeavors, they help to maintain the fortress. Few of them survive long; because the archons understand little of other creatures' needs, many of the slaves starve or otherwise die of neglect.

## MAJOR AREAS

The passages of Irdoc Morda wind through the stone of the mountains and spiral up and down the towers' interiors. In a variety of chambers, archons practice their techniques of war, study layouts of nearby elemental communities, meet with outsiders, and offer service to fallen primordials. Hidden and guarded chambers hold treasure that the archons have received as payment or taken from defeated foes.

**The Hollow:** In the Hollow, a great cavern once rich in iron, the archons are building the largest *spell-jammer* ever conceived. If they manage to complete it—a process requiring many years—they will own an iron-hulled, nearly unstoppable fortress from which to launch battles for their own or others' aims.

**The Vein:** Legend tells of a deposit of ironlike metal, unknown to sages, that yet remains below Irdoc Morda. If the legend is true, the Vein might hold a power that affects archons and other creatures—even making archons behave unusually.

**Watchtowers:** Magic-wielders infused three of Irdoc Morda's towers with scrying and divination magic. Each of these watchtowers—one looming above, one hanging below, and one protruding from the side of the great mountains—contains a lens that allows an observer to see for miles, even through deep cloud cover. The lenses' creators also tuned them to three locations that even untrained observers can scry on. Rumors vary as to the identity of those locations. Are they other archon bastions, the resting sites of primordials, or regions of other worlds?

## ADVENTURES

The characters might confront the archons of Irdoc Morda as soldiers in a larger struggle, never navigating the fortress, or they might infiltrate the alien tunnels and passages that defy the rules of architecture. If they are troubled by something worse than archons, they might even consider taking shelter in Irdoc Morda, in which case they must consider what to offer the proprietors in exchange.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Worked rock and iron define the terrain of Irdoc Morda's passageways and chambers. Peaks and barren lowlands punctuate the surface landscape.

**Iron Walls:** The walls of the towers and of some interior chambers are iron. Use the hard DC for the encounter level when determining the difficulty of

climbing or clinging to them (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 42).

**Loadstone:** Patches of loadstone (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 68) lace the corridors.

**Magnetic Slope:** Some tower passageways slope sharply and have bits of magnetic ore smelted into the iron. For a creature moving upward, such a slope is difficult terrain. A creature that is pushed, pulled, or slid downward on such a slope moves 1 square farther than normal. Metallic creatures and individuals wearing heavy metal armor are immune to these effects because of the magnetic pull.

**Rust Patches:** Some spots of Irdoc Morda's iron develop the same poisonous rust that covers injured iron archons. Any bloodied creature that starts its turn in a square of this rust takes 5 poison damage.

**Scrying Walls:** Enchanted iron walls allow creatures on one side to see the room or passage on the other side. A creature that uses a standard action to concentrate on such a wall can see the opposite area superimposed over the creature's reflection. Such walls are unmarked, so only those who know which walls are which and creatures capable of detecting magic can make use of them.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Irdoc Morda is a fortification, so the place crawls with warriors. Related problems also threaten intruders, including trained elemental beasts, slaves, and traps.

### Level 14 Encounter (XP 5,800)

- ◆ 1 earth archon ground rager (level 14 controller, *Monster Manual* 2 14)
- ◆ 1 gates of winter hazard (level 16 lurker, page 19)
- ◆ 1 ice archon hailscourge (level 16 artillery, *MM* 20)
- ◆ 2 iron archon interceptors (level 14 soldier, page 130)

### Level 17 Encounter (XP 8,800)

- ◆ 1 earth archon rumbler (level 17 brute, *Monster Manual* 2 14)
  - ◆ 1 field of everfrost\* hazard (level 18 blaster, *DMG* 92)
  - ◆ 1 ice archon rimehammer (level 19 soldier, *MM* 20)
  - ◆ 2 iron archon crescent blades (level 16 skirmisher, page 130)
- \*As a field of everflame, but dealing cold damage.

### Level 21 Encounter (XP 16,700)

- ◆ 1 earthwind ravager (level 23 controller, *MM* 104)
- ◆ 1 greater helmed horror (level 18 elite soldier, *MM* 155)
- ◆ 1 ice archon frostshaper (level 20 controller, *MM* 21)
- ◆ 2 ice archon rimehammers (level 19 soldier, *MM* 20)

## THE MOTESWARM

A jumble of small masses of every substance, the Moteswarm gives birth to strange effects and stranger elementals. Giants and githzerai are the only creatures other than elementals scratching an existence from the turbulence.

When a band of githzerai arrived in the Moteswarm recently, they discovered a lost archon forge among the floating motes. They shaped plans to take control of the forge and tame the Moteswarm. Before they could act, giants learned of their plans and attacked the githzerai. Elementals native to the place considered both races to be invaders and reacted accordingly.

Since that day, the three factions have struggled for control. When one faction gains the upper hand, the other two—and the chaos of the Moteswarm—bring it down.

### INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

Elementals, giants, and githzerai dwell in different parts of the Moteswarm. They interact with each other primarily as adversaries.

**Elementals:** The Moteswarm's maelstrom attracts elementals from other places and churns new ones into existence. The elementals are territorial beasts, attacking other creatures on sight; unusually intelligent elementals organize groups to coordinate attacks. Giants and githzerai also force or trick elementals into service.

**Giants:** When a storm titan named Kazzamir learned of the archon forge in the Moteswarm, he hatched plans to use its power to create his own kingdom. He gathered a hundred displaced giants to take up residence on a variety of motes that had been rejected by the githzerai. The giants' onslaught against the githzerai began.

The battles have continued ever since. When some giants fall, the lure of power and conquest draws others to replace them.

**Githzerai:** Most sane creatures would rather see the archon forge in the hands of the githzerai than held by the giants. The githzerai of the Moteswarm, though, are so intent on defeating the giants that they don't stop to think about what they would do with the forge. They simply accept that they must fight.

Unlike other githzerai, those of the Moteswarm sometimes alternate their coolness toward strangers with welcome, depending on the state of the war. They need all the help they can get.

The few hundred githzerai in this place live in one major monastery and in a few outposts, all under the leadership of the mindmage Glissa. Githzerai from elsewhere come to lend support and to keep their numbers up.

## MAJOR AREAS

Tides of the Elemental Chaos hold together the diverse pieces of the Moteswarm. Three locations important to the current inhabitants are described below.

**Archon Forge:** Built on a small mote of gold-flecked marble, the archon forge resembles a keep carved from the stone. It produces air archons (*Manual of the Planes*, page 114). An individual who has access to the proper rituals could take possession of the forge and control the archons.

The forge evades retention, capture, and even discovery. The Moteswarm is at its most chaotic in this area, which means it's a navigational challenge even to alight upon the forge's mote. Whirling firemotes and icemotes, clouds of searing mist, spikes of lightning, and shifting gales bar entry.

The githzerai that first reached the forge encountered ancient air archon guardians still defending it.

### A PAGE FROM A BATTERED JOURNAL

I sit now in a small oasis of calm in this insane dimension. After phasing into the Elemental Chaos, my ship ended up here, which must surely have given the plane its name.

As soon as we appeared, the ship rocked beneath us and lightning flashed all around, accompanied by reverberating thunder. I rushed to the deck and looked about—just in time to see two great chunks of smoldering rock smash into each other. The superheated rubble burned down around us, slicing easily through the ship's hull. I shouted for Igram, but just then the wind rose in a shriek. My stomach dropped out as the wind flung our ship upward, and I knew we were doomed.

Everywhere I looked, there were bits of . . . stuff floating around. The scholars call them "motes": fragments of water, earth, and fire, and of stranger things, such as sheets of lightning, sprays of acid, and chunks of frost. As our ship sped upward, I saw hundreds of them, perhaps thousands, all around us. Some were the size of my fist, while others must have been a mile across. And they were not floating serenely, as I had naively imagined; they heaved through the void, slamming into each other, breaking into pieces, and scouring each other's surfaces. Our ship would be ground to pieces by the hurtling elements.

To my shame, my cowardice asserted itself. I jumped over the side. It was certain death—but far less horrible than staying on that ship as it fell upward into the maw of chaos. As I fell, I watched it break apart, but mercifully the howling wind drowned out the screams of my friends.

That's when a miracle occurred. I found myself arrested in my fall. I did not strike any surface—I was simply not falling anymore. I looked about, and to my astonishment saw one small ship with a handful of yellow-skinned humanoids skimming toward me.

They also found bits of bone littering the courtyard and huge claw marks marring the walls.

**Corehold:** The major githzerai monastery of the Moteswarm, Corehold perches atop a large island of crystal. Though the githzerai built the structure in haste, its materials—brittle crystal, gold, silver, and iron—lend it great beauty. Outsiders who win their way into the githzerai's good graces can find shelter and food here. Glissa hopes to establish Corehold as a meditation center.

For now, though, the monastery is anything but serene. Glissa focuses her efforts on securing the forge. The githzerai must continually rebuild walls destroyed by acid rains, impacts from flying rocks, and attacks by elementals and giants.

**Zahazrian:** Kazzamir's center of power is an islet of solid lightning called Zahazrian. The storm titan's will keeps the mote manifest enough to support habitation. Only storm giants and a few lightning-related elementals spend time on its crackling surface.

Kazzamir lives in a shack, formed by arcs of lightning, that he calls his castle. Seated on his chair, the only piece of furniture in the structure, he broods and plans. Sometimes he ventures forth to cleave enemies with his greatsword or to undertake a mission that he believes only he can accomplish. When he returns, he always finds—to his frustration—that he must recreate Zahazrian.

## ADVENTURES

The Moteswarm is a microcosm of the Elemental Chaos, encapsulating its essence. It can showcase the Plane Below to an adventuring party that is new to the plane. Characters who pass through it should emerge with a sense of the danger of the Elemental Chaos. Those who spend time here can also become aware of the factions at work.

The characters might travel to the Moteswarm to aid the githzerai, to hunt Kazzamir's giants, or to find the archon forge for an outside power. They might stumble upon the Moteswarm by chance or seek in it a prize unknown to the giants or githzerai.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The Moteswarm contains every environmental feature presented in chapter 1 of this book or in *Manual of the Planes*. Creatures living here can predict the behavior of many such phenomena, including lightningstone fields, luminous nodes, multielemental transformation fields, skystone fields, and steel rain. This ability works to their advantage in combat against outsiders who are unfamiliar with such effects.

The following types of terrain are also common in the Moteswarm.

**Choke Frost** (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 67): A few areas are cold enough to support this heat-stealing ice.

**Fonts of Power** (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 68): These features, keyed to every elemental keyword, exist throughout the Moteswarm.

**Lightningstone Fields** (page 22): These dangerous areas abound in the Moteswarm.

**Pools** (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 65): Water and other liquids (such as liquid thunder) collect in pools.

**Whirlwinds** (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 69): Whirlwinds arise frequently in the Moteswarm's wild turbulence.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Elementals, giants, githzerai, and natural hazards of the Elemental Chaos beset adventurers here. Characters might also encounter other travelers, such as other adventuring parties or efreet scouts, but most intelligent creatures avoid the Moteswarm.

### Level 11 Encounter (XP 3,000)

- ◆ 1 ashfrost assassin (level 12 skirmisher, page 138)
- ◆ 2 firelashers (level 11 skirmisher, MM 104)
- ◆ 1 luminous node hazard (level 11 blaster, page 18)
- ◆ 1 rockfist smasher (level 10 brute, *Monster Manual 2* 100)

### Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,000)

- ◆ 4 githzerai cenobites (level 11 soldier, MM 130)
- ◆ 1 githzerai mindmage (level 14 artillery, MM 131)
- ◆ 1 githzerai zerth (level 13 elite controller, MM 130)
- ◆ 1 steel rain hazard (level 15 blaster, page 19)

### Level 21 Encounter (XP 17,600)

- ◆ 1 lightningstone field hazard (level 21 warder, page 22)
- ◆ 2 fire archon ash disciples (level 20 artillery, MM 19)
- ◆ 1 fire titan (level 21 elite soldier, MM 124)
- ◆ 1 skystone field hazard (level 19 lurker, page 22)

### Level 27 Encounter (XP 53,000)

- ◆ 1 multielemental transformation field hazard (level 28 lurker, page 23)
- ◆ Kazzamir, storm titan (level 27 elite controller, MM 125)
- ◆ 2 storm gorgons (level 26 skirmisher, MM 143)



# PANDEMONIUM STONE

When the Pandemonium Stone exists, it appears only in the Elemental Chaos unless it is induced to materialize elsewhere by powerful wizards or sorcerers. A spire more than 100 feet in diameter and more than 500 feet tall, it consists of bone, flesh, ice, minerals, wind, wood, and other materials, always in flux. Rough carvings on it flare with roaring fire, crackling lightning, deafening thunder, and unbearable cold—and then die down. Blazing white runes in an unknown script sometimes march across the surface.

The Pandemonium Stone manifests randomly; even efreet using *al-buraj* (page 54) cannot predict its appearances. It bursts into existence like a volcanic eruption in a spray of fire, cold, lightning, or other energy, sending ripples in all directions through the Elemental Chaos.

Neither the gods nor the primordials claim to have created the Pandemonium Stone. They knew of it even before the Dawn War.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

When the Pandemonium Stone disappears, it drags nearby objects and creatures with it. Creatures that fail to distance themselves from the stone have disappeared with it. Some such creatures elect to stay with it even after it reappears. Residents have formed two groups and built two permanent shelters, one near the base of the spire and one near the apex.

**Staff of The Trackless House:** A permanent holding near the base of the Pandemonium Stone is the Trackless House, an extraplanar sanctuary connected to other locations. The powerful beings that run it treat one another as family. They include a male earthsoul/watersoul genasi warrior named Altayar, a female phoelarch arcanist named Tarsa, and a male djinn called Farzan. Altayar tells visitors that Farzan established the inn, although rumor suggests that he cannot leave. Other staff members treat Farzan as a clan elder. He rarely interacts with visitors.

As neutral ground, the Trackless House serves as a safe house for delicate information, dangerous items, and individuals seeking low profiles. It also hosts an elemental cabal that serves djinn interests, including those of Sirrajadt (page 150) and his warriors. The staff quells strife among guests.

**Watchers of Tomorrow:** The other permanent shelter on the Pandemonium Stone, near the apex, is inhabited by the Watchers of Tomorrow. Mostly maruts, the group also includes angels sworn to no deities and a devil called the Breaker, who fled its kin's contract with Asmodeus.

The Watchers of Tomorrow believe that the Pandemonium Stone is the cocoon of an entity developing toward maturity as the cosmos grows more

complex—perhaps a god of gods. When this being hatches, the Watchers will either swear their allegiance to it or, if it threatens them, try to destroy it.

In the meantime, they defend the Pandemonium Stone if the need arises. Sometimes they seek company at the Trackless House, but the two groups do not work together or know each other's secrets. The Watchers also observe the activities of slaads that are drawn to the stone whenever it appears.

**Slaads and Other Factions:** Other creatures respond to some call of the spire, including demons, djinns, elementals, slaads, and titans—all with conflicting goals. Even the slaad lords attend; only Ygorl, Lord of Entropy (page 157), holds back.

After a few days of war, a slaad elder arrives, forcing any emerging victors to accelerate or cut short their plans. No creature powerful enough to stand against the elder has ever joined the fray. The elder spares only the spire's permanent residents.

Once the slaads chase away contenders, they begin to croak out a disharmonic racket. The Watchers of Tomorrow believe that this "song" aids in the gestation of the god growing inside the spire. Other thinkers suggest that the spire is itself an immense slaad kept asleep by the cacophonous lullaby.

## MAJOR AREAS

The surface of the Pandemonium Stone constantly changes. The only two areas approaching permanence on it are the abode of the Watchers of Tomorrow and the Trackless House.

**Abode of the Watchers of Tomorrow:** Near the apex of the spire, wreathed by inconstant energy, the Watchers of Tomorrow look out over the Elemental Chaos from a balcony of obsidian. Inside, several large communal chambers and smaller private chambers make up their home.

**The Trackless House:** Like the Pandemonium Stone, the Trackless House evades easy location and winks out of existence for spans of time. It has adamantine double doors with its name inscribed on each of the panels in Barazhad and Davek script. A foyer leads to a common room where visitors and residents receive food and drink. Private rooms and a magic kitchen adjoin the common area. Behind the bar is series of private chambers accessible only to the proprietors and select patrons.

In the common room and private rooms, visitors can safely watch slaads gather. Once the slaads begin to sing, the staff warns that the spire will soon shift. Anyone who remains at the inn catapults to the Pandemonium Stone's next location and time.

Visitors searching for objects or individuals hidden within the Trackless House usually fail to find them. Farzan maintains portals to other locales and enlists powerful defenders to stymie access to them. He has also learned to summon slaads to defend the inn.

## ADVENTURES

Wherever characters roam in the Elemental Chaos, the Pandemonium Stone can come to them. Because it can appear anywhere in the multiverse, it can also introduce adventurers to other planes. The characters might encounter the singing slaads, visit the Trackless House, or meet the Watchers of Tomorrow.

Someone might require the party's escort to the Trackless House, or the characters might need to retrieve something from the inn or hide there from an enemy.

The Watchers of Tomorrow offer adventures based on their experience with the spire and with slaads. Adventurers might earn their trust by doing an appropriate service—and thus learn their philosophy.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Every sort of terrain and environmental hazard in the Elemental Chaos and in the Abyss might occur on the slopes of the Pandemonium Stone. Two special features trigger upon specific events.

**Reentry Squall:** When the Pandemonium Stone appears, an intense elemental disturbance ripples out 600 feet in all directions. Each creature caught in the blast must succeed on a DC 23 Acrobatics or Athletics check, or that creature slides 2d20 squares, falls prone, and takes ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends). Creatures on the surface and adjacent to or within the spire feel no effect from a reentry squall.

**Slopes:** The surfaces of the Pandemonium Stone continually change shape and substance. In some places they slope gradually, qualifying as difficult terrain. Elsewhere, the slopes are so steep that creatures must make Athletics checks of varying difficulty to climb them, up to a DC of 27.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Slaads swarm around the Pandemonium Stone, but groups of other creatures also arrive to investigate it.

### Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,950)

- ◆ 1 death shard (level 8 artillery, *Monster Manual 2* 34)
- ◆ 3 flux slaads (level 9 skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* 184)
- ◆ 2 slaad tadpoles (level 5 lurker, *MM* 237)

### Level 17 Encounter (XP 9,400)

- ◆ 2 blue slaads (level 17 brute, *MM* 238)
- ◆ 1 gray slaad havoc (level 15 artillery, page 143)
- ◆ 1 green slaad (level 18 controller, *MM* 238)
- ◆ 1 white slaad (level 16 elite lurker, page 145)

### Level 21 Encounter (XP 17,750)

- ◆ 2 black slaads (level 20 skirmisher, *MM* 239)
- ◆ 2 green slaad spawners (level 18 elite controller, *MM* 238 and *Monster Manual 2* 185)
- ◆ 1 void crust hazard (level 22 obstacle, page 22)



# PILLARS OF CREATION

Immense pillars are scattered throughout the Elemental Chaos. Some of these so-called Pillars of Creation stand straight; some lean. All extend out of sight in both directions, through thick clouds and empty sky, through crashing oceans and solid rock. Each is unique. Scholars know of the existence of more than half a dozen pillars; only the gods and the primordials know them all.

According to legend, these columns support the world. Each pillar rests upon the floor of the Elemental Chaos, from which all substances spring, as well as elementals, primordials, and more ancient forms of life. Each pillar reaches into the natural realm, infusing the place of intersection with the essence of its dominant material.

Yet the Elemental Chaos is also thought to be infinite, with no floor and no ceiling. Reconciliation of that idea with the concept of the columns as supports lies in the realm of theologians and philosophers. Suffice it to say that the Pillars of Creation have existed since before the world's genesis, and that all efforts to reach the end of any pillar have failed.

Every elemental substance, as well as combinations thereof, might have a corresponding pillar. Planar explorers and powerful denizens of the Elemental Chaos know the following Pillars of Creation best: the Obelisk of Ice, the Raging Storm, and the Torrent of Magma.

**The Obelisk of Ice:** Formed of many-hued ice, the ramrod-straight Obelisk of Ice averages a few hundred yards in diameter. It shows signs of intelligent influence: runes a few feet in height that resemble the Barazhad script.

**The Raging Storm:** Spongy, semisolid clouds encase the Raging Storm, a funnel of howling winds, pelting rain, and lightning. This pillar leans a few degrees from vertical and ranges in diameter from a few hundred yards to a couple of miles. See below for more information.

**The Torrent of Magma:** An undulating mass two to five miles wide, the Torrent of Magma flows as if under the influence of gravity. Fissures erupt from its center; pyroclastic islands whirl on its surface. Some of the islands can support the weight of explorers. Others break apart under the slightest pressure.

**Other Known Pillars:** Explorers have spotted other pillars, including a jagged tree of crystalline minerals, a beam of pure radiance, and a column of muck. Further pillars, if they exist, await discovery.

## THE RAGING STORM

Due to their variety, their mystic nature, and their embodiment of the deepest essence of the Elemental Chaos, the Pillars of Creation are far from fully

documented. The text below details what is known about one of the better-known pillars: the Raging Storm. You must delve into your own Elemental Chaos to create your vision of the other Pillars of Creation.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

Few creatures linger in the proximity of the Raging Storm. Nevertheless, clusters of inhabitants have arisen there.

The largest, at the heart of the storm, is Tharag Thyr. Once a community of storm titans and giants, Tharag Thyr grew into a center of worship of two primordials: Mual-Tar the Thunder Serpent and Solkara the Crushing Wave. Elementals, a few djinns, genasi cultists of Solkara, and air, water, and storm archons have so far established populations there.

## MAJOR AREAS

The semisolid contours of the Raging Storm form caves, passages, and even a few eyes of the storm: clearings free of wind and rain. Chunks of earth swirl at the clouds' perimeter, swept by gusts.

**The Cloudfield:** A certain area of clouds attracts bestial creatures of storm: rimefire griffons, storm gorgons, and the like. The same area produces storm-related elementals such as thunderblast cyclones, tempest wisps, windfiend furies, and dust demons (page 132). These elementals rove with the other predators in search of prey, rather than attacking them.

**Stormheart:** A region of cloud-walled canyons and valleys, Stormheart exists simultaneously in the heart of all storms everywhere. Rains of lightning sweep across it, on rare occasions teleporting each struck creature into the midst of a lightning storm elsewhere in the Plane Below or in another world.

## ADVENTURES

Characters might visit the Raging Storm to tap its lightning, thunder, or water magic. They might hunt cultists dedicated to primordials, search for a *spelljammer* or an airship that vanished in the vicinity, or seek a better understanding of the Elemental Chaos and of the Raging Storm's link to the natural realm.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

**Clouds:** Ordinary clouds float in air currents and passageways. A cloud's space might be lightly or heavily obscured, depending on the cloud's density. Such clouds mix indistinguishably with areas of semisolid and solid cloudstuff, forming hidden pit traps.

**Clouds, Heavy:** Hints of cloudstuff can infuse normal clouds to create heavy clouds. Their thick substance impedes movement: Whenever a creature enters a square of heavy cloud, it takes a cumulative -1 penalty to speed. The creature can remove this penalty as a move action. Air and water creatures are immune to the effect of heavy clouds.

**Cloudstuff:** Solid and semisolid surfaces in the Raging Storm—including the ceilings, floors, and walls of chambers and tunnels—consist of a substance known as cloudstuff.

**Cloudstuff, Semisolid:** Semisolid cloudstuff comprises most of the landscape. Any creature that starts its turn in a square of semisolid cloudstuff takes a -1 penalty to speed on that turn. Creatures that lack a burrow speed can burrow through cloudstuff at a speed of 2 or one-half their normal speed, whichever is lower. The spongy material offers easy handholds and footholds; any Athletics check to climb a vertical surface of semisolid cloudstuff gains a +2 bonus.

**Cloudstuff, Solid:** Solid cloudstuff is as strong as stone. It looks identical to semisolid cloudstuff.

**Extreme Weather:** Weather in some regions reaches supernatural ferocity. Primordial storms, primordial winds, and primordial cold frequently occur.

**Heavy Air:** Water or other vapors can supersaturate air, making it preternaturally thick. Any living creature in an area of heavy air must hold its breath or suffocate as if underwater.

**Lightning Mist:** Lightning in some clouds condenses into a charged fog, forming lightning mist (page 16).

**Lightning Seepage:** This crackling form of elemental seepage (*Manual of the Planes*, page 22) can occur anywhere.

**Rain:** Areas of light rain are lightly obscured. Places where the rain pours in sheets might be heavily obscured instead. Rain extinguishes unprotected natural flames.

**Wind:** The Raging Storm swirls with severe winds. Any creature that enters a square of strong wind slides 1 to 3 squares (or more, for extremely high winds) in the wind's direction. Otherwise, these winds behave like whirlwinds (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 69). In a few locations, these blasts grow severe enough to become strangling wind (page 17).

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Storm-related monsters abound on this pillar. Aquatic creatures dwell in rivers and in cataracts fed by the rains (which can fall in any direction). Other kinds of creatures might survive in calm areas or, with magical aid, in caves of cloudstuff.

### Level 20 Encounter (XP 14,000)

- ◆ 1 elder tempest dragon (level 18 solo soldier, *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons* 193)
- ◆ 2 primal storms (level 20 artillery, *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons* 228)

### Level 27 Encounter (XP 63,000)

- ◆ 1 primordial blot (level 26 solo artillery, page 140)
- ◆ 2 thunderblast cyclones (level 26 elite artillery, MM 105)



# THE RIVERWEB

The Elemental Chaos contains bodies of water and other liquids, forming oceans, rivers, and falls that plunge for miles into emptiness. A number of rivers support trade and travel. Boats and *planar dromonds* supply waterside communities for lower fees than those charged by captains of flying vessels.

Several thousand miles from the City of Brass, more than a dozen major rivers and a hundred streams converge in a network called the Riverweb. This nexus of forks, convergences, and other watery features stretches hundreds of miles. Whirlpools mark some junctions; ponds, lakes, and even seas form at others. Squalls erupt frequently. A few seas and rivers have banks of stone or crystal, but most flow suspended in space on different horizontal planes. Islands, mostly of stone but also of other substances, emerge from the waters.

All long-distance aquatic travel through mapped regions of the Elemental Chaos passes through the Riverweb sooner or later.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

Communities exist throughout the Riverweb: on land, on water, and underwater. Below are descriptions of the busiest, most notorious, and deepest, respectively.

**Rheilvaltans:** The city of Rheilvalt (see below) throngs with several thousand inhabitants, primarily humans and genasi but also members of other humanoid races. A ruling mercantile council maintains the community's status as the center of trade for all oceanic commerce in the region. The council offers a reward to anyone who shatters the River Spiders' organization (see below); however, the council also pays tribute to the pirates, lest trade suffer.

**River Spiders:** Numerous pirates ply the rivers and byways of the Riverweb. The term "River Spiders" applies to all of them but most accurately refers to a flotilla of seven vessels armed and enchanted against the magic and extreme weather of the plane. A favorite River Spider tactic is to come up alongside a vessel near the edge of a river or lake and threaten to ram it over the side unless its crew submits.

The pirates' leader, a watersoul genasi barbarian named Thalkul, rules the band from the largest vessel, the *Drowned Widow*—a *spelljammer*, according to rumor. The River Spiders have several hideaways throughout the Riverweb and in other lakes and oceans of the Elemental Chaos. Their center of operation is a hidden village called Widowport.

**Underfolk:** In the deepest parts of the deepest bodies of Riverweb water dwell beings known to air-breathers as Underfolk. When Underfolk interact with surface-dwellers, they do so through intermediaries—usually water elementals but sometimes

watersoul genasi or sahuagin. Sometimes they demand bribes for safe passage, sometimes they trade rare undersea treasures for magic items, and sometimes they attack without provocation.

Theories about the origin of the Underfolk abound. Some say they are elementals that have developed abnormal intelligence. Others claim they are storm giant cultists of Solkara, aquatic fey stranded in the plane, or elemental water spirits called marids.

## MAJOR AREAS

Given its expanse and variation, the Riverweb can host any kind of aquatic adventure. The following areas draw the most attention.

**Castle Torrent:** Castle Torrent literally rises from the rapids of a large river. Currents harden into the forms of an outer wall, half a dozen towers, and connecting structures, holding shapes as constant and impermeable as stone in the course of the flow.

Dark shapes sometimes move behind the walls. Though observers cannot see deeper into the castle, investigations suggest that water fills it entirely.

**Decktown:** In an area called the River's Fangs, where dozens of ships have wrecked, a small community called Decktown has developed among the rocks and shattered hulls. Parts of the town float, anchored to the rocks. Bridges, decks, and other structures narrow the channel but also line safe routes for passing vessels. Crews rest and conduct minor trade here.

**The Landing:** Near where a wide river feeds into a lake lies a low, stone island called the Landing. Floating rocks connect it to two other islands in adjacent streams. Regional trade vessels disembark at the Landing. Adventurers traveling to other places in the Riverweb might find transport here.

**Rheilvalt:** The largest surface community of the Riverweb, Rheilvalt rests on a series of islands linked by arched bridges. One island, in a passing river that never meets the lake, connects to the city center by a bridge that soars over empty space.

## ADVENTURES

With its concentration of diverse communities and factions, the Riverweb offers the best opportunity for water-based adventures in the Elemental Chaos. Adventurers might travel through the region toward other destinations or investigate the mysteries of Castle Torrent or the Underfolk. Characters might deliver goods to Decktown or Rheilvalt, rout a sect of Solkara, or fight (or join) the River Spiders.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

**Currents:** Rivers and streams, and even some lakes and seas, have significant currents (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 45).

**Edges:** Some rivers and streams flow independent of banks, and some have no beds. A creature or vessel



that falls over the edge, or a dense object that sinks through, plummets until it strikes something solid.

**Mist:** Mist covers much of the Riverweb. Misty squares are lightly obscured.

**Riverbanks:** Where they exist, riverbanks can slide and sink unpredictably. Their shifting surfaces are difficult terrain.

**Steam:** Parts of the Riverweb give off steam when they flow near fire or magma. Squares of steam are lightly obscured. Any creature that starts its turn in a steam square takes 1d6 fire damage per tier.

**Water:** Much of the Riverweb's water is clear and harmless, but it can hide dangers.

*Water, Boiling:* Any creature that starts its turn in boiling water takes 1d8 fire damage per tier.

*Water, Freezing:* Any creature that starts its turn in freezing water takes 1d6 cold damage per tier, and the Endurance check DC to avoid losing healing surges from suffocation increases by 2.

*Water, Solid:* Some water in the Riverweb forms solid objects even at temperatures above freezing. Such water is not ice but has the consistency of stone.

**Waterfalls:** Riverweb waterfalls can fall scores of feet or more. A current near a waterfall slides creatures 2 to 5 squares farther than a normal current.

**Whirlpools:** Whirlpools are aquatic versions of whirlwinds (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 69).

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

The Riverweb seethes with pirates and water-based elementals. Islands and open sky present the possibility of encounters with other kinds of monsters as well.

### Level 10 Encounter (XP 2,900)

- ◆ 2 Crushing Wave hierophants (level 10 artillery, page 154)
- ◆ 3 genasi stoneshields (level 10 soldier, *Monster Manual* 2 117)
- ◆ 1 jet of steam\* hazard (level 9 blaster)  
\*Treat as an elemental eruption (page 20) that has only the fire effect.

### Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,800)

- ◆ 1 storm archon squallshield (level 17 soldier, *Monster Manual* 2 16)
- ◆ 3 water archon shoal reavers (level 13 brute, *Monster Manual* 2 18)
- ◆ 2 water archon waveshapers (level 16 controller, *Monster Manual* 2 18)

### Level 25 Encounter (XP 42,350)

- ◆ 1 elder sea worm\* (level 24 solo soldier, MM 214)
- ◆ 2 storm giants\*\* (level 24 controller, MM 124)  
\*Treat as an elder purple worm, but add the aquatic keyword, decrease base speed and burrow speed to 2, and add a swim speed of 8.  
\*\*The giants are mounted on the sea worm.

# SANZERATHAD

Successful githzerai monasteries are beacons of order and stability in the Elemental Chaos. In such centers of meditation and contemplation, githzerai peacefully learn to control internal and external chaos.

Sanzerathad is not one of those monasteries.

The ascetics who founded Sanzerathad selected the worst of locations: an earthmote at the exact confluence of multiple chaos currents. Perhaps they sought a challenge, or they failed to notice the dangers of that spot; maybe some other imperative motivated them.

Not even the utmost of martial and mental skill can completely hold off the ultraviolent forces that constantly assault the monastery. Every day, the tides of chaos crash more viciously against Sanzerathad's walls; every day, the githzerai lose ground.

No outsider knows why the Sanzerathad githzerai continue to fight. Only in the strictest confidence do

## MIND OVER MATTER

Most creatures believe that the Elemental Chaos is the source of everything out of which reality is made. Time, the soul, and certain aspects of life might have been shaped by the gods above, but all else emerged from the Plane Below.

What, then, of thought itself? Ideas and dreams, urges and emotions—all of these existed in the primordials and the earliest efreets. Uncountable numbers of intelligent elemental creatures lived before the first mortals walked the world—indeed, before the world took form. Is thought another element that churns beneath the skin of reality?

The notion rarely occurs to most people. When it does, it is treated as nothing more than an interesting philosophical conundrum. To the githzerai, though, thought is a very real quantity. They would no sooner omit it from the list of elements than they would fire or water. This belief forms the core of the practices of many of their monasteries, including Sanzerathad. The githzerai are not guarding against just chaos but against madness.

Perhaps this idea is the truth, or it might be a delusion to which the githzerai cling. If true, the concept has interesting ramifications. Did the Plane of Dreams develop from the Elemental Chaos, just as the world did? Could corrupt thoughts and maddened dreams be the seed around which the Far Realm grew? Travelers might come across literal pools of thought and gain knowledge, dreams, or delusions from exposure. Thought elementals could roam the plane, and structures might exist that are formed of pure idea. Perhaps what lies in the Room with No Doors is a thought so terrible that its release would eventually corrupt all existence.

they speak of a room with no doors, and never do they divulge what the room might contain.

The size of a large town, Sanzerathad squats behind stone walls on a landmass a few dozen miles across. The buildings were raised by sheer mental effort and then reshaped and adorned by physical craftsmanship. Now they hunker against the chaos in the pleasant geometric patterns typical of githzerai architecture.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

Because they devote their efforts to holding the roiling chaos at bay, Sanzerathad githzerai barely function as a society. Insofar as they acknowledge tradition, they follow standard githzerai customs. A few maintain gardens and food stores. All others fall into two groups: the Blades of Discipline and the Hands of Order. The Marshal of the Blades of the Discipline and the Custodian of the Hands of Order share authority over Sanzerathad. When they disagree, the monastery's oldest and most revered instructor, the male bard Master Arzendreth, makes the decision.

**Blades of Discipline:** Employing magic, martial arts, mental acuity, and weapons, the Blades of Discipline protect Sanzerathad's physical grounds. Under the leadership of Marshal Issithertha, a female swordmage, the Blades stand at the gates of Sanzerathad to battle demons, elementals, slaads, and worse. They patrol the streets to slay creatures that randomly manifest from the chaos. They live in violence and die early.

**Hands of Order:** A githzerai needs only to have a strong will to join the Hands of Order. The Hands spend hours in intense concentration, working in shifts to mentally hold Sanzerathad together. Custodian Zitholt, a male mindmage, leads the group.

## MAJOR AREAS

Sanzerathad has the typical sleeping cells, dining halls, and dojos of a githzerai monastery. It also has the following unique areas.

**Chapel:** The chapel chamber near the center of the monastery can house scores of meditators. Its architecture directs one's gaze from wall to wall and then upward, and an interplay of lines and angles in the ceiling focuses meditation. Otherwise, no adornments distinguish the chamber from other rooms. At least a dozen Hands of Order meditate here at any given time.

**Orchard:** A combination garden and pasture, the orchard grows near the chapel. Six githzerai, including at least two Hands of Order, tend crops and some livestock.

**Outer Wall:** Made of stone several feet thick and inscribed with runes and icons symbolizing order and strength of mind, Sanzerathad's outer wall stands against the physical dangers of chaos. Two steel gates engraved with runes break the wall's continuity. The Blades of Discipline walk the wall and stand sentry at the gates at all times.

**The Room with No Doors:** Somewhere deep within Sanzerathad hides its most important chamber. The thickness of the room's walls rivals that of the monastery's outer wall. No doors allow entrance. Only sheer force of will (which must defeat the combined efforts of the Hands of Order) can open a passage through the rock.

None but the githzerai know what the room contains. Does it house a holy object? A repository of lore? The heart of a slumbering primordial? A relic of the mind flayers from whom the githzerai escaped long ago? A portal to the heart of Zerthadlun, through which chaos would flow if left unchecked? Interested parties can only speculate—or wait until chaos finally overwhelms Sanzerathad.

## ADVENTURES

Adventurers could end up in Sanzerathad as castaways from a chaos storm or after an attack. They might be following rumors about the Room with No Doors, coveting whatever legendary wonders they believe to be housed within. They could try to convince the githzerai to accept their help, whether of their own accord or in response to a plea from a githzerai monk acting without consent of superiors. The characters might arrive on behalf of another community plagued by chaos, in hopes that the githzerai of Sanzerathad might offer advice on how to ward it off.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Inside Sanzerathad's walls are ordinary stone streets (with the exception of random surprises born of the swirling chaos currents). The terrain outside the walls is a different story.

**Changing Terrain:** Outside Sanzerathad proper, tides of chaos wash over the terrain without pattern, transforming the land from one moment to the next. Any sort of terrain or environmental hazard can manifest there.

**Chaos Outbreaks:** Inside Sanzerathad's walls, outbreaks of chaos sometimes occur. A normal hallway might become a passage of swamp muck. A stone wall might turn to ice. Doors and hallways could suddenly lead to new locations in the monastery. (You can either map out the monastery in several sections and shuffle them or simply treat a door as a portal to elsewhere in Sanzerathad.)

**Chaos Storms:** Chaos storms (*Manual of the Planes*, page 67) frequent the grounds, constantly altering the terrain there.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Encounters around Sanzerathad generally involve demons, elementals, slaads, and other creatures naturally given to chaos. The randomness can spawn chaotic or elemental variants of any creature, particularly aberrations and undead. Some such chaos-spawn remain in existence; others vanish after a short time. Most of them appear outside the outer wall. Sometimes, when the Hands of Order falter, warping walls and changes in the environment signal a new arrival inside the compound, which any available Blades of Discipline—and perhaps the characters—rush to exterminate.

### Level 13 Encounter (XP 4,600)

- ◆ 5 canoloth harriers (level 13 minion, *Manual of the Planes* 120)
- ◆ 1 chaos storm hazard (level 16 blaster, *Manual of the Planes* 67)
- ◆ 2 foulspawn hulks (level 12 brute, MM 113)
- ◆ 1 gray slaad (level 13 skirmisher, MM 238)

### Level 19 Encounter (XP 13,200)

- ◆ 1 Avernus cinderstorm hazard (level 18 elite blaster, *Manual of the Planes* 23)
- ◆ 2 gibbering abominations (level 18 controller, MM 126)
- ◆ 13 slaad spawns (level 17 minion skirmisher, *Monster Manual* 2 185)

### Level 21 Encounter (XP 18,600)

- ◆ 1 black slaad (level 20 skirmisher, MM 239)
- ◆ 1 chaos storm hazard (level 16 blaster, *Manual of the Planes* 67)
- ◆ 1 consumptive swarm (level 21 elite skirmisher, page 133)
- ◆ 2 rot harbingers (level 20 soldier, MM 223)
- ◆ 1 skystone field hazard (level 19 lurker, page 22)



# THE GLITTERING MINE

## An adventure area for five 8th-level adventurers

The Elemental Chaos has a little of everything. As in other worlds, however, the valuable bits of everything—such as certain ores and minerals—run in short supply.

Hak Karlum, the Faceted Plain, is one repository of such valuable bits. This small isle consists primarily of a peculiar crystal that develops rare gems in its depths. Thus, mining the crystal pays off in diamonds, emeralds, and rubies, as well as arcane treasures such as mirror crystal and phase crystal.

## BACKGROUND

**Arcana or History DC 14:** Archons once held Hak Karlum as a fortress. They knew that the crystal on which they dwelled contained valuable gems, but they took no interest until the gems drew the attention of other beings: humans, efreet, xorns, and giants. Then the archons fought as many defensive battles as offensive ones.

**Arcana or History DC 16:** The demon prince Graz'zt sent a battalion of demons to raze the archon bastion so he could loot its riches. The demons outnumbered the archons and forced them from their demesne. Being not particularly determined workers, the demons gathered what gems they could easily pry from the caverns and departed. For a long time, the Faceted Plain then lay forgotten by all but the occasional peckish xorn.

**Arcana or History DC 19:** The Maldrookt tribe of hill giants dwells in both the Elemental Chaos and the natural world, thanks to a portal the tribe members found in an unexplored cave. They discovered Hak Karlum and put their galeb duhrs to work excavating a deep mine that yielded great riches. The Maldrookt tribe thrived because its members were clever enough not to reveal the location of their mine. The tribe's population grew to the point where the giants threatened the lands around their home in the natural world.

Every few weeks, the Maldrookts and their galeb duhrs depart the mine to dispense the fruits of their recent labors among the tribe members and to trade with allies. They have just embarked on such an expedition, so the mine lies dormant.

## HOOK: MINE THE TREASURE OF HAK KARLUM

While the characters are searching for clues about their ongoing quests, they learn of Hak Karlum's gems and arcane crystals, and possibly rituals

requiring those components. They could seek the crystals for their own purposes, or retrieve samples on behalf of an employer. They might also want to disrupt the hill giants that are threatening to overrun their homeland by stealing some of the mine's wealth and disrupting its operation.

**Quest XP:** If the characters obtain samples of the mine's crystals, they earn a minor quest reward of 350 XP.

## ENVIRONMENT

The size of a small island, Hak Karlum consists of rocky crystal with pits, hills, and other contours. The characters might engage in several encounters—perhaps including a giant or two—before reaching the mine. Expand on the area surrounding the mine as you see fit, or allow the characters to locate the mine directly if you just want to get to the action.

### AREA 1: ACCESS FROM ABOVE

A large opening on the surface of Hak Karlum allows access to the mine in its interior. The edge of the opening is 100 feet above the floor. Fasteners for rope ladders at the lip hang empty. (The giants that remain enter and exit the mine by climbing the walls. Gargoyles carry galeb duhrs.) Rather than waste space with ropes and pulleys, the mine overseers levitate amounts of crystal and gems too heavy to carry up the shaft.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Over the Edge," page 90.

### AREA 2: LEDGES

Three ledges protrude from the walls of the opening at various heights. The elevation markers on the map indicate the ledges' distance above the floor of the mine; thus, the ledge marked "65 ft." is 55 feet above the floor.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Over the Edge," page 90.

### AREA 3: MAIN CAVERN

Sound echoes strangely in the main cavern, and light glitters off the crystals. The floor slopes down away from the shaft until it reaches its lowest elevation in the northwest corner.

**Tactical Encounter:** "In the Pits," page 92.

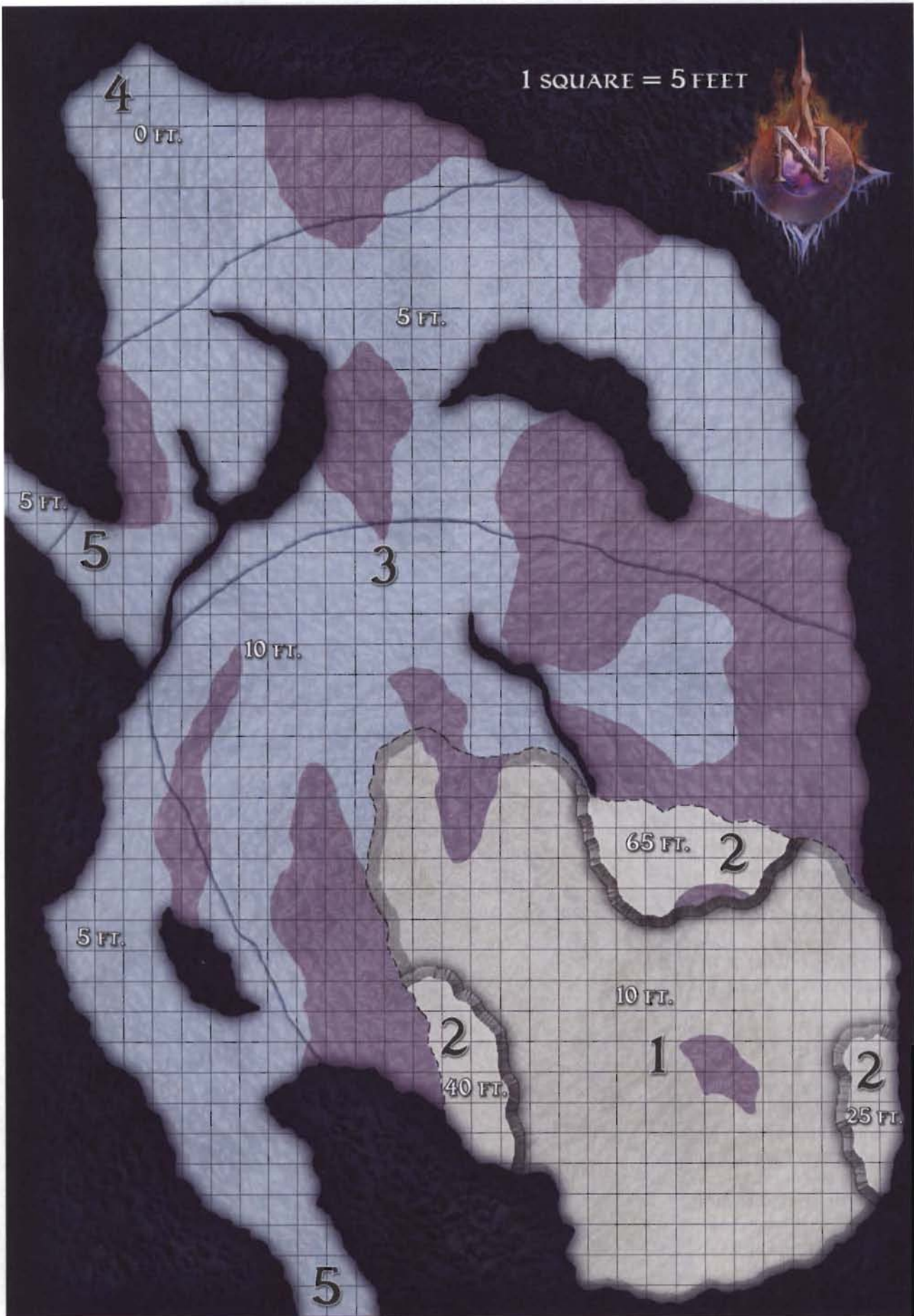
### AREA 4: JAGGED WALL

A jagged wall bears recent slashes from picks and other tools. Gems gleam inside it.

**Tactical Encounter:** "In the Pits," page 92.

### AREA 5: SIDE PASSAGES

Side passages either dead-end, where miners found no point in continuing, or lead to other chambers (if you wish to expand the mine).



## ENCOUNTER: OVER THE EDGE

### Encounter Level 9 (2,200 XP)

The experience reward is adjusted for terrain advantageous to the galeb duhrs and gargoyles.

### SETUP

2 galeb duhr earthbreakers (E)

3 gargoyles (G)

Galeb duhrs and gargoyles guard the opening into the mine to ensure that the mine remains undisturbed until the workers return from their delivery run.

#### When the PCs approach the opening, read:

*The crystal tosses reflections, mirages, and shadows before you like a puppet show. As you near a large shadow, you see that it is the uneven maw of a large opening. Nearer still, you can estimate its span at a hundred feet. It plunges deep into the crystal landscape. Its walls reflect light at strange angles and cast a web of shadow. Three ledges protrude from the walls at various depths.*

#### Perception Check

**DC 14** A stone boulder on the middle ledge shifts, revealing its humanoid shape. A similar boulder sits on the floor at the bottom of the opening.

**DC 19** Three more rocklike figures, concealed in the shadows, unfurl wings and flex claws. You also notice that patches of crystal on the floor and ledges appear different from the rest. A couple of the patches look especially transparent. Others just seem a bit . . . odd, as though they are made of a different substance altogether.

#### Arcana or Dungeoneering Check

A character who becomes aware of the patches of different crystal can make this check. On a success, read the passage below and then describe brittle crystal and mirror crystal as given in "Features of the Area" below.

**DC 19** After a moment of study, you recognize the unusual crystalline patches as brittle crystal and mirror crystal.

### TACTICS

All the monsters attack as soon as the intruders reach the level of the highest ledge. They try to force characters onto brittle crystal. Since they lack ranged attacks, they keep away from mirror crystal when possible.

The galeb duhrs begin with *hurl stones*. When an intruder draws near to the galeb duhr on the ledge, that creature attempts to knock the character off the wall or the ledge with its *shock wave*. Both galeb duhrs fight to the death.

### 2 Galeb Duhr Earthbreakers (E) Level 8 Artillery

Medium elemental humanoid (earth)

XP 350

**Initiative** +4      **Senses** Perception +12; tremorsense 10

**HP** 73; **Bloodied** 36

**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 20

**Immune** petrification, poison

**Speed** 4 (earth walk), burrow 6

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.

✦ **Hurl Stones** (standard; at-will)

Area burst 1 within 10; +13 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage. All squares in the area become difficult terrain. The earthbreaker can create stones to throw when none are present.

⬅ **Shock Wave** (standard; recharge ☐; ☐)

Close burst 2; +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and knocked prone.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** Dwarven, Giant

**Skills** Stealth +9

**Str** 23 (+10)

**Dex** 10 (+4)

**Wis** 16 (+7)

**Con** 19 (+8)

**Int** 12 (+5)

**Cha** 12 (+5)

### 3 Gargoyles (G) Level 9 Lurker

Medium elemental humanoid (earth)

XP 400

**Initiative** +11      **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision

**HP** 77; **Bloodied** 38

**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 19

**Immune** petrification

**Speed** 6, fly 8; see also *flyby attack*

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+14 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.

⊕ **Flyby Attack** (standard; recharges after using *stone form*)

The gargoyle flies up to 8 squares and makes a melee basic attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target. If the attack hits, the target is knocked prone.

**Stone Form** (standard; at-will)

The gargoyle becomes a statue and gains resist 25 to all damage, regeneration 3, and tremorsense 10. It loses all other senses and can take no actions in stone form other than revert to its normal form (as a minor action).

**Alignment** Evil

**Languages** Primordial

**Skills** Stealth +12

**Str** 21 (+9)

**Dex** 17 (+7)

**Wis** 17 (+7)

**Con** 17 (+7)

**Int** 5 (+1)

**Cha** 17 (+7)

### GARGOYLES IN FLIGHT

Since the gargoyles stay in flight as much as possible, keep the following rules on flight in mind as you play out this encounter.

- ♦ While in flight, a gargoyle cannot make opportunity attacks or shift.
- ♦ A gargoyle crashes if it does not fly at least 2 squares on its turn and does not end its turn on the ground.
- ♦ A gargoyle that is knocked prone in midair crashes.
- ♦ Crashing means that the gargoyle falls 40 feet safely. If falling that distance puts the gargoyle on the ground, it takes no damage. If it is still above the ground, the gargoyle falls the rest of the way and takes falling damage.

The gargoyles take to the air and engage in flyby attacks. They focus on climbers, making bull rush attacks to push characters off ledges. Not the most intelligent of monsters, they stand on any type of crystal if given the opportunity to land beside their foes. If only one bloodied gargoyle remains, it attempts to flee deeper into the mine to join up with the hill giant.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Sheer Walls:** The walls of the opening offer few handholds and footholds, requiring a DC 19 Athletics check to climb.

**Illumination:** Daylight brightly illuminates the upper 20 feet of the opening and dimly illuminates deeper areas. Due to the crystal's reflectivity, the radius of characters' light sources increases by 2 squares.

**Brittle Crystal:** A creature can move across or stand on squares of brittle crystal normally. (These areas are represented by purple shading on the map.) If a creature takes damage while standing on such a

square, the crystal shatters, the creature is knocked prone, and the square becomes difficult terrain.

**Mirror Crystal:** Mirror crystal twists space. A creature standing on mirror crystal can look down and see all other mirror crystal spaces within 20 squares of it. A creature can make ranged attacks through mirror crystal, targeting a creature on or adjacent to another square of mirror crystal. The range to a creature attacked through mirror crystal is 1 square. (These areas are represented by blue squares on the map.)

**Phase Crystal:** This translucent, silvery crystal can be induced to discharge its extradimensional energy and shunt a creature out of phase for a short time. When a creature ends its move in a square of phase crystal, it gains phasing until the end of its next turn. That square cannot affect another creature until the end of the encounter. (These areas are represented by orange squares on the map.)

**Rubble:** Bits of broken crystal are difficult terrain. (These areas are represented by pink squares on the map.)

ENCOUNTER: OVER THE EDGE



## ENCOUNTER: IN THE PITS

### Encounter Level 9 (2,000 XP)

The experience reward is adjusted for terrain advantageous to the hill giant.

### SETUP

1 capture crystal hazard (C)

1 hill giant (H)

One hill giant overseer remains in the mine to help the galeb duhrs and gargoyles protect it. Unless the characters battled the guardians in the previous encounter in complete silence, they cannot surprise the giant.

As a precaution against intruders and against the hill giants' own servants stealing from the mine, the giants' shaman has converted some of the mirror crystal in the cavern into capture crystal.

**When the PCs reach the floor of the opening, read:**

*The cavern slopes down and away from you to crystal walls dozens of yards off. Crystal stalactites and stalagmites gleam. Light bounces this way and that, and sound falls flat. A hill giant thuds toward you, club swinging.*

Hill Giant (H)	Level 13 Brute
Large natural humanoid (giant)	XP 800
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +7
HP 159; Bloodied 79	
AC 25; Fortitude 27, Reflex 21, Will 23	
Speed 8	
⚔ <b>Greatclub</b> (standard; at-will) ⚔ <b>Weapon</b>	
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.	
⚔ <b>Sweeping Club</b> (standard; encounter) ⚔ <b>Weapon</b>	
The hill giant makes a greatclub attack against two Medium or smaller targets; on a hit, the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.	
⚔ <b>Hurl Rock</b> (standard; at-will)	
Ranged 8/16; +15 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Giant
Skills Athletics +16	
Str 21 (+11)	Dex 8 (+5) Wis 12 (+7)
Con 19 (+10)	Int 7 (+4) Cha 9 (+5)
Equipment hide armor, greatclub	

When the hill giant is adjacent to a stalactite or a stalagmite, the giant can shatter it in a spray of crystal by hitting it with an attack. The stalactite or stalagmite is destroyed.

### Shattering Crystal

Single-Use Terrain

*The giant's greatclub smashes into the crystal, and rubble hurtles toward you.*

#### Minor Action

**Requirement:** The giant must be adjacent to a crystal stalactite or stalagmite.

**Check:** The giant makes a melee basic attack against the crystal (AC 5).

**Success:** The stalactite or stalagmite shatters and makes an attack, which is a close blast 3 or close burst 1 (giant's choice) centered on the stalactite's or stalagmite's square.

**Target:** Each creature in the blast or burst

**Attack:** +13 vs. Fortitude

**Hit:** 1d10 + 3 damage.

**Effect:** The blast or burst becomes an area of difficult terrain that lasts until the end of the encounter.

### Capture Crystal (C)

Level 13 Lurker

Hazard

XP 800

*The crystalline floor emits a resonant hum, and then absorbs the creature above it with a painful flash of light.*

**Hazard:** When triggered, capture crystal absorbs a creature near it, trapping it in a small crystalline prison from where it can only look out helplessly.

#### Perception

◆ DC 18: The character recognizes that the patches of capture crystal are made of the same material as mirror crystal.

**Additional Skill:** Arcana or Dungeoneering

◆ DC 23: The character determines that a patch of capture crystal is a different sort of hazard from mirror crystal.

#### Trigger

The hazard tries to capture any creature that ends its turn in or adjacent to a capture crystal square that does not currently contain a trapped creature.

#### Attack

**Opportunity Action** Close burst 1

**Target:** The triggering creature

**Attack:** +16 vs. Reflex

**Hit:** 2d6 + 2 radiant damage, and the target is captured in a crystalline prison (save ends). While captured in the crystalline prison, the target is immobilized in a crystal chamber beneath the attacking square of capture crystal. It has just enough space to stand but cannot leave the chamber. It can see out of any square of capture crystal or mirror crystal within 20 squares of it. The target has line of effect to no creature and no creature has line of sight or line of effect to the target (although its image appears in other squares of capture crystal). When the effect ends, the target reappears adjacent to a square of capture crystal within 20 squares of the space it vacated. It cannot be captured again until the end of its next turn.

#### Countermeasures

◆ A character can make a DC 18 Arcana or Dungeoneering check as a standard action against an adjacent square of capture crystal to disable that square until the end of the encounter.

◆ A square of capture crystal can be attacked. It has AC 5, Reflex 3, Fortitude 8, and 20 hit points. Once it is destroyed, that square is disabled.



## TACTICS

The hill giant charges into melee—perhaps taking a round to throw a chunk of crystal if it cannot reach the characters—and smashes the toughest-looking target. The giant knows to avoid the brittle crystal and knows how to use mirror crystal, but it cannot use phase crystal. It lures its enemies near stalactites and stalagmites so it can hurt them by shattering the crystal into sprays of shards.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The area is dimly illuminated. Due to the crystal's reflectivity, the radius of characters' light sources increases by 2 squares.

**Ceiling:** The ceiling is 15 to 20 feet high.

**Thin Crystal Walls:** These features are represented by dark areas half a square wide or less. These walls are transparent, so they don't impede line of sight, but they do block line of effect. Thin crystal is as fragile as glass; the crystal in a square has AC 5, Fortitude 10, and 5 hit points. Breaking the thin crystal wall in a square does not bring down the wall in adjacent squares.

**Thick Crystal Walls:** These features are represented by dark areas more than half a square wide. A square containing thick crystal is opaque, blocking both line of sight and line of effect, and as strong as stone (AC 4, Fortitude 12, hp 80).

**Brittle Crystal:** A creature can move across or stand on squares of brittle crystal normally. (These areas are represented by purple shading on the map.)

If a creature takes damage while standing on such a square, the crystal shatters, the creature is knocked prone, and the square becomes difficult terrain.

**Mirror Crystal:** Mirror crystal twists space. A creature standing on mirror crystal can look down and see all other mirror crystal spaces within 20 squares of it. A creature can make ranged attacks through mirror crystal, targeting a creature on or adjacent to another square of mirror crystal. The range to a creature attacked through mirror crystal is 1 square. (These areas are represented by blue squares on the map.)

**Phase Crystal:** This translucent, silvery crystal can be induced to discharge its extradimensional energy and shunt a creature out of phase for a short time. When a creature ends its move in a square of phase crystal, it gains phasing until the end of its next turn. That

square cannot affect another creature until the end of the encounter. (These areas are represented by orange squares on the map.)

**Rubble:** Bits of broken crystal are difficult terrain. (These areas are represented by pink squares on the map.)

**Stalactites:** These features are depicted by spikes pointing downward. Because of the height at which the stalactites hang, they are difficult terrain only for Large and larger creatures and for creatures flying at an altitude of more than 5 feet.

**Stalagmites:** These formations, depicted by spikes pointing upward, are relatively short. They count as difficult terrain only for Medium and smaller creatures.

## CONCLUSION

Having overcome the mine's few guardians, the characters are free to pry some of the precious gems from its crystal. Each member of the party who spends at least 1 hour digging in the mine acquires gems worth a total of 80 gp (one-fifth of a level 8 treasure parcel).

You could expand this adventure into a longer one in a number of ways. If the mine has been rigged to signal the hill giants about intruders, the giants might send a larger war party to investigate. You can put time pressure on the party by making the trading group's return imminent. Further quests could involve seeking additional samples of gems, planning an ambush against the giants' trading party, or following the traders back to the tribe and assaulting the giants' settlement.

# THE BODY LUMINOUS

**An adventure area for five 15th-level adventurers**

Stormy masses snarl across the high reaches of the Elemental Chaos. One of them is the Body Luminous, a vestige of a future apocalypse that materializes in the present. Its mysteries beckon adventurers, explorers, and foul creatures alike.

## BACKGROUND

**Arcana or History DC 18:** The Body Luminous resembles a coma of lightning-lit thunderheads, miles in diameter, that streaks across the Elemental Chaos. Observers at a distance presume it is nothing more than a fireball burning its way to extinction.

**Arcana or History DC 20:** The speed of the Body Luminous makes it difficult to locate; however, the wizard Torhana Inksoul has created a dozen compasslike devices that point toward it. Locating such a compass presents a challenge because of the compasses' value and rarity . . . and because Torhana has been missing for two decades.

**Arcana or History DC 23:** Expeditions that have intercepted the Body Luminous and pierced its stormy shroud have found a nucleus of chalky stone containing fossils of creatures and artifacts. One story describes an entire preserved city of bizarre architecture, filled with forms of unidentifiable beings.

**Arcana DC 26:** According to Torhana Inksoul's writings, the Body Luminous is an apocalyptic vestige thrown back from the future, so it holds knowledge of events to come. She could not say whether its appearance is a warning or a mere accident of fate.

## HOOK: FIND TORHANA

A female human named Gaija Meloran contacts the adventurers. She has discovered the papers of her missing great-aunt, Torhana Inksoul, along with a compass that points to something in another world called the Body Luminous. Gaija never knew her great-aunt and wants to find her.

**Quest XP:** If the characters find Torhana Inksoul and report her fate to Gaija Meloran, they earn a minor quest reward of 1,200 XP.

## HOOK: SLAAD STOMPING

A band of slaads has been seeking the Body Luminous in hopes of finding a way to pierce the barriers between realities. In their search, the slaads have left a path of destruction through the cosmos. The

characters, having heard of or witnessed a slaad rampage, want to bring the slaads to justice. Alternatively, they are hired by a patron or a community leader to stop the rampages.

**Quest XP:** If the characters are able to defeat the slaads and return with proof of their success, they earn a major quest reward of 6,000 XP.

## ARRIVAL

The characters must contend with the storm shroud and a rainbow of slaads before they can reach the heart of the Body Luminous.

**When the PCs see the Body Luminous from afar, read:**

*Thunderheads roll into view, tumbling in an arcing trajectory. Flashes of fire and lightning drag thunder in their wake. A rent in the clouds reveals a chalky core littered with irregularities. The rent closes, and the storm boils past.*

The characters must catch up with the Body Luminous and breach the storm shroud to reach the core.

## ENVIRONMENT

The core of the Body Luminous is a few miles in diameter. The surrounding thunderheads extend another mile above the surface, with only a few hundred feet of clear space beneath their churning bases.

**Speed:** Treat the Body Luminous as having a speed of fly 10. It is small enough that intersecting its trajectory requires calculation.

**Gravity:** Creatures within 200 feet of the Body Luminous sense it as "down" and fall toward it.

**Storm Shroud:** The storm clouds sheathing the core are violent and dangerous. When any creature passes through the clouds and enters an adjacent clear square beneath the shroud, the storm makes an opportunity attack against it: +18 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 10 fire and lightning damage.

## ON THE SURFACE

**When the PCs reach the surface of the Body Luminous, read:**

*An expanse of chalky stone stretches to the horizon. Fossilized bones of animals, humanoids, dragons, and titans suffuse the stone, intermingled with centuries of ruins and the occasional chunk of a colossus.*

The ruins span a range of architectural styles, but the degree of decrepitude prevents identification of the cultures that built them.

The stubs of four broken towers define a concave courtyard 300 feet across. Offset from the center of the courtyard stands the body of a mostly petrified

slaad; all but a partly fleshy area around the mouth and chest is stone. The slaad guards a shaft that leads to the interior of the Body Luminous.

### Perception Check

**DC 11** Other visitors have left signs of their presence, including partial excavations and litter in the form of tent stakes, water skins, broken tools, and buried refuse.

**DC 18** Loose scales of various colors, large footprints made by webbed feet with clawed toes, and firebird carcasses showing wide-mouthed bites pepper the landscape.

**DC 23** The fossils and ruins lie along rough lines that converge toward a distant point.

Creatures that succeed on the DC 23 check can trace the convergence to the courtyard.

### Arcana Check

A character who notices the scales, webbed footprints, and firebird carcasses can make this check.

**DC 18** These signs resemble those left by slaads.

### When the PCs can see the courtyard's broken towers, read:

*The remains of four pillars rise from the landscape. As you draw near, you see that they form the four corners of a courtyard several hundred yards wide. The courtyard slumps, creating a concavity. Near the center of the bowl hulks a froglike statue of a different stone than the rest of the landscape. It shows no signs of erosion. Next to it, chalky rubble rings the mouth of a shaft.*

A freak occurrence turned one of the exploring slaads partially to stone. The slaad's new state of existence is a unique condition, making its goals and desires even harder to figure out than usual. However, it can warn its companions below of intruders. It responds slowly enough that the characters have the chance to disable it or win it to their side.

### When the PCs near the petrified slaad, it calls out in Primordial:

*"Come no closer, or I will warn the seekers below. Oh, see what they have done to me."*

## PETRIFIED SLAAD GUARDIAN

The characters can appease or defeat the petrified slaad by succeeding on this skill challenge.

**Level:** 15 (XP 4,800).

**Complexity:** 4 (requires 10 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate.

**Arcana** (requires the Ritual Caster feat; DC 23, standard action): The character uses knowledge of ritual

magic to advance the process that partially petrified the slaad. On a successful check, the slaad moves closer to complete petrification. A success with this skill counts as two successes toward the skill challenge. A failed check counts as two failures.

**Bluff** (requires the Primordial language; DC 23, standard action): The character lies to and cajoles the slaad. On a success, the creature is intrigued enough that it would rather continue interacting with the characters than warn its comrades.

**Diplomacy** (requires the Primordial language; DC 23, standard action): The character attempts to placate the slaad, perhaps offering a certain food or following a nonsensical line of reasoning.

**Intimidate** (requires the Primordial language; DC 18, standard action): The character threatens the slaad with boredom, violence, or something else it fears so that it will remain silent.

**Secondary Skills:** Insight, special.

**Insight** (DC 23, standard action): The character attempts to follow the slaad's maddening logic. On a success, each character gains a +2 bonus to subsequent Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate checks in the skill challenge. A success does not count as a success toward the skill challenge. The characters can attempt this check as many times as they like but can succeed only once.

**Ritual** (special): The Remove Affliction ritual ends the slaad's petrification. The blue slaad digester (see the statistics block below) calls down to the slaads in the upper vestibule to warn them of the characters' presence, then attacks the characters. The skill challenge automatically fails, although the characters do receive experience for defeating the slaad.

**Success:** The slaad allows the characters to pass down the shaft without alerting the creatures in the upper vestibule.

**Failure:** The slaad emits a constant, loud croaking sound that alerts the others.

## AREA 1: UPPER VESTIBULE

Torhana Inksoul's expedition excavated the shaft that is being guarded by the partially petrified slaad. A few days ago, a group of slaads opened the passage and gained access to a vestibule with a sealed valve, which they have not managed to budge.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Upper Vestibule," page 96.

## AREA 2: INNER LOCK

Beneath the valve in the upper vestibule, a vertical passage drops to an inner lock of hard, smooth material unlike the chalky stone encountered so far. The back of a humanoid skeleton partly protrudes from a translucent wall.

**Tactical Encounter:** "Inner Lock," page 98.



## ENCOUNTER: UPPER VESTIBULE

Encounter Level 16 (7,600 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 blue slaad digester (D)
- 1 gray slaad havoc (H)
- 1 green slaad maddock (M)
- 1 white slaad (W)

**When the PCs peer into the shaft, read:**  
*A vertical shaft drops 40 feet to a white floor.*

The walls of the shaft can be climbed with a DC 18 Athletics check. If the characters have the ability to fly, they can descend in that fashion.

**When the PCs reach the chamber floor, read:**  
*In this chamber, a series of 15-foot terraces descend eastward to a ground floor. Cave-ins have reduced the area to a fraction of its original size. In the section that remains, large statues of humanoids clad in elemental garb pose in idealized grandeur. A gray creature with a wide, flat head works at a valve set in the floor on the lowest level.*

**If the slaads know of the PCs' approach, add:**  
*Three creatures resembling the gray one, of various colors and sizes, leap toward you.*

**If the slaads do not know of the PCs' approach, add the following instead:**  
*Three creatures resembling the gray one, of various colors and sizes, lounge in various places.*

**If the PCs attempt conversation, read:**  
*The gray creature looks at you and replies in Primordial, "Did dreams lead you here, as us? Dreams of futures past and histories solvent? Of worlds that are not this world? Can you unlid the eye of tomorrow that vexes us? Are you succulent and filled with juicy blood?"*

The gray slaad continues to work or to spew questions until the heroes move within 5 squares of a slaad, or until they attack the slaads. Then all the slaads attack.

### TACTICS

The digester and the maddock move forward first. The maddock tries to disorient foes, while the digester moves in and grabs anyone it can. The gray slaad havoc stays back and uses *havoc bolt* to keep enemies within reach of the others. The white slaad looks for opportunities to exploit combat advantage, splitting into its temporal replicas only if it is hard-pressed.

#### Blue Slaad Digester (D)

Large elemental humanoid

#### Level 14 Elite Soldier

XP 2,000

<b>Initiative</b> +14	<b>Senses Perception</b> +13; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 332; <b>Bloodied</b> 166	
<b>AC</b> 28; <b>Fortitude</b> 27, <b>Reflex</b> 26, <b>Will</b> 26	
<b>Immune</b> chaos phage	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6, teleport 4	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
⊕ <b>Grasping Claw</b> (standard; at-will) ◆ <b>Disease</b>	
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed and exposed to chaos phage (page 142). The blue slaad digester can grab up to two Medium or smaller creatures at once.	
⊕ <b>Acid Spew</b> (minor; at-will) ◆ <b>Acid</b>	
One creature grabbed by the blue slaad digester takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).	
⊕ <b>Caustic Tongue</b> (opportunity, when a creature grabbed by the blue slaad digester escapes the grab; at-will) ◆ <b>Acid</b>	
Reach 2; targets the triggering creature; +17 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone and takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).	
⊕ <b>Covetous Claws</b> (standard; at-will)	
The blue slaad digester makes two grasping claw attacks.	
⊕ <b>Digestive Spray</b> (minor; recharge [ii]) ◆ <b>Acid</b>	
Close blast 5; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Primordial
<b>Str</b> 23 (+13)	<b>Dex</b> 20 (+12) <b>Wis</b> 13 (+8)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+10)	<b>Int</b> 4 (+4) <b>Cha</b> 20 (+12)

#### Green Slaad Maddock (M)

Large elemental humanoid

#### Level 13 Elite Controller

XP 1,600

<b>Initiative</b> +8	<b>Senses Perception</b> +16; low-light vision
<b>HP</b> 268; <b>Bloodied</b> 134	
<b>AC</b> 27; <b>Fortitude</b> 26, <b>Reflex</b> 23, <b>Will</b> 25	
<b>Immune</b> chaos phage	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6, teleport 4	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
⊕ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will) ◆ <b>Disease</b>	
Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is exposed to chaos phage (page 142).	
⊕ <b>Maddening Croak</b> (standard; recharges when first bloodied and again when the green slaad maddock spends an action point) ◆ <b>Psychic</b>	
Close blast 5; +16 vs. Will; 2d12 + 5 psychic damage, and the maddock slides the target 3 squares and knocks it prone. Until the end of the target's next turn, the target must take a standard action to stand up.	
⊕ <b>Maddening Visions</b> (minor 1/round; at-will) ◆ <b>Charm</b>	
Close burst 2; targets one enemy in burst; +16 vs. Will; the target must make a melee at-will attack as a free action against one of its allies within its reach. The green slaad maddock chooses the attack and the target ally.	
⊕ <b>Mind Spasm</b> (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent to the green slaad maddock; at-will) ◆ <b>Psychic</b>	
Close burst 1; +13 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage. If the attack hits the triggering enemy, it is also dazed (save ends).	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Primordial
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +15, Stealth +13	
<b>Str</b> 19 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+8) <b>Wis</b> 21 (+11)
<b>Con</b> 22 (+12)	<b>Int</b> 16 (+9) <b>Cha</b> 14 (+8)

**Gray Slaad Havoc (H)** **Level 15 Artillery (Leader)**

Medium elemental humanoid XP 1,200

Initiative +10 Senses Perception +11; low-light vision

HP 116; Bloodied 58

AC 27; Fortitude 27, Reflex 28, Will 26

Immune chaos phage

Speed 6, teleport 6

Ⓡ **Havoc Claw** (standard; at-will) ⚡ **Disease**

+22 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, the gray slaad havoc slides the target 2 squares, and the target is exposed to chaos phage (page 142).

⚡ **Havoc Bolt** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 20; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the gray slaad havoc slides the target 3 squares. If the attack scores a critical hit, the gray slaad havoc can repeat it once as free action.

⚡ **Fog of Chaos** (immediate interrupt, when hit by a ranged attack; recharge Ⓡ Ⓡ Ⓡ Ⓡ)

Close burst 20; targets the triggering attacker; +20 vs. Will; the triggering attack instead targets one of the target's allies of its choice.

⚡ **Reality Shift** (move; at-will) ⚡ **Teleportation**

Close burst 10; targets one creature in burst; +20 vs. Will (no attack roll required against an ally); the gray slaad havoc teleports the target to any space within the burst.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Primordial

Skills Athletics +14, Stealth +15

Str 14 (+9) Dex 17 (+10) Wis 19 (+11)

Con 20 (+12) Int 23 (+13) Cha 16 (+10)

**White Slaad (W)** **Level 16 Elite Lurker**

Medium elemental humanoid XP 2,800

Initiative +16 Senses Perception +14; low-light vision

HP 248; Bloodied 124

AC 29; Fortitude 29, Reflex 27, Will 26

Immune chaos phage

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, teleport 4

Action Points 1

Ⓡ **Probability Claw** (standard; at-will) ⚡ **Disease**

+21 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the white slaad's next turn and is exposed to chaos phage (page 142).

**Temporal Split** (standard; recharges when first bloodied or when the white slaad spends an action point)The white slaad splinters into six white slaad temporal replicas, each appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 squares of the white slaad's previous space. The white slaad disappears, and it cannot attack or be attacked until it reappears. The temporal replicas thereafter act on the white slaad's initiative count. When the last temporal replica has been reduced to 0 hit points, the white slaad reappears within 5 squares of the space occupied by that replica and can act normally on its next initiative count. See also *advantage of time*.**Advantage of Time**

Whenever a white slaad reappears after its temporal replicas have been reduced to 0 hit points, all enemies it can see grant it combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

**Combat Advantage**

A white slaad deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it. In addition, that creature is dazed (save ends) instead of dazed until the end of the slaad's next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Primordial

Skills Athletics +18, Stealth +17

Str 20 (+13) Dex 19 (+12) Wis 13 (+9)

Con 22 (+14) Int 7 (+6) Cha 14 (+10)

**White Slaad Temporal Replica** **Level 16 Minion Lurker**

Medium elemental humanoid XP 0

Initiative +16 Senses Perception +14; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 29; Fortitude 29, Reflex 27, Will 26

Speed 6, teleport 4

Ⓡ **Probability Claw** (standard; at-will)

+21 vs. AC; 8 damage, and the target is dazed until the beginning of the white slaad temporal replica's next turn.

**Combat Advantage**

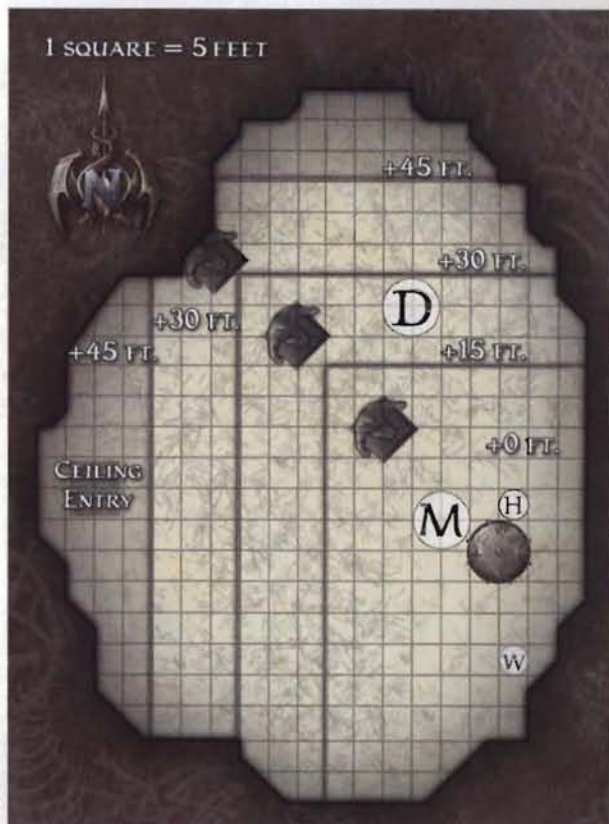
A white slaad temporal replica deals 2 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Primordial

Str 20 (+13) Dex 19 (+12) Wis 13 (+9)

Con 22 (+14) Int 7 (+6) Cha 14 (+10)

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Glowing rods sticking up from the top of each statue shed flickering light that dimly illuminates the chamber.**Ceiling Entry:** The entry shaft leads down from a ceiling roughly 40 feet above the highest terraces and 85 feet above the ground floor.**Statues:** The three Large statues are made of stone (AC 4; Reflex 4, Fortitude 12; hp 80). They provide cover. A character can make a DC 18 Athletics check to climb onto a statue.**Floor Valve:** This metallic dome (the octagonal feature on the map) has large clamps and the word "Inksoul" etched on one side. For nonelemental creatures, the valve requires a DC 28 Strength check or Thievery check to open. Subtle magic imbued in the valve bars elemental creatures entirely; however, the slaads' persistence has nearly exhausted the magic.

## ENCOUNTER: INNER LOCK

Encounter Level 15 (6,500 XP)

### SETUP

3 oblivion wraiths (W)

1 spirit ooze (O)

Torhana, spirit vampire (V)

Beneath the valve, a rough shaft descends 15 feet to the ceiling of the inner lock. Torhana's attempt to discover the secrets of the Body Luminous ended here, on the brink of success.

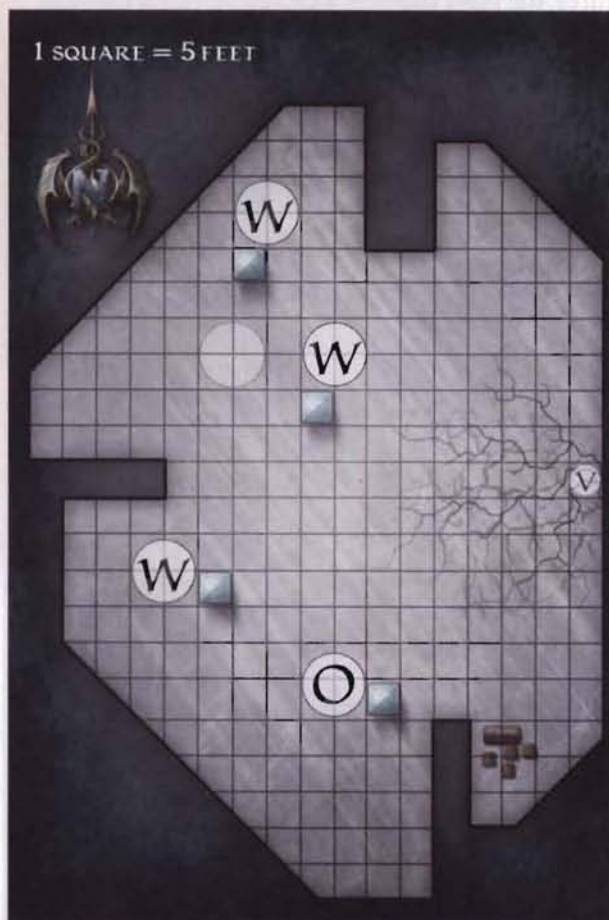
**When the PCs see the chamber, read:**

*The floor and all but one wall of this chamber are smooth and silvery, like cloudy mirrors. Crystalline obelisks protrude from the floor. Misty fog swirls at ankle height, too thin to conceal anything. Crates are piled in a distant corner.*

*Radiance leaks in through an unusual wall to the east, outlining the back of a humanoid skeleton on this side and hazy silhouettes on the other side. Radiating from the skeleton, scars fracture the wall and floor.*

**Religion Check**

DC 23 Necromancy infuses the mist on the floor but seems harmless in its current form.



### 3 Oblivion Wraiths (W)

Large shadow humanoid (undead)

### Level 14 Brute

XP 1,000 each

Initiative +13

Senses Perception +7; darkvision

**Nihil (Necrotic)** aura 2; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 necrotic damage and cannot spend a healing surge until the start of its next turn.

HP 116; **Bloodied** 58; see also *death blast*

Regeneration 10

AC 26; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 24

**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic, insubstantial;

**Vulnerable** radiant (if the oblivion wraith takes radiant damage, regeneration is negated until the end of its next turn)

Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing; see also *shadow glide*

⊕ **Nihil Strike** (standard; at-will) ⬥ **Necrotic**

+15 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the oblivion wraith is invisible to the target until the end of the oblivion wraith's next turn.

⊕ **Obliviate** (standard; recharge [2][2][2][2]) ⬥ **Necrotic**

+15 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage and a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both).

⚡ **Death Blast** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ⬥ **Necrotic**

Close blast 3; targets enemies; +15 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target loses two healing surges. **Miss:** Half damage, and the target loses a healing surge.

**Shadow Glide** (move; encounter)

The oblivion wraith shifts 6 squares.

**Spawn Wraith**

Any humanoid killed by the oblivion wraith rises as a free-willed oblivion wraith at the start of its creator's next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space).

Raising the slain humanoid (using the *Raise Dead* ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil

**Languages** Common

**Skills** Stealth +18

**Str** 20 (+12)

**Dex** 23 (+13)

**Wis** 10 (+7)

**Con** 16 (+10)

**Int** 10 (+7)

**Cha** 18 (+11)

**When the PCs come within 5 squares of the skeleton, read:**

*A spirit steps out of the skeleton and coalesces into the shape of a female human. She turns to you and says, "So many things to see and learn! Are you here to see beyond the pale—to see what I've seen? Come, take a look with me!"*

Torhana's spirit continues to whisper disjointedly to the characters. Because she never saw what she spent her life trying to see, however, she tires of speech. Hunger for life overwhelms her and ripples through the mist, stirring the memories of her companions' souls. They congeal from the fog into oblivion wraiths and a spirit ooze.

### TACTICS

The oblivion wraiths attempt to envelop characters in their nihil aura, while the spirit ooze attacks the nearest target mindlessly.

**Spirit Ooze (O)** **Level 16 Elite Lurker**  
 Large natural animate (blind, ooze, undead) XP 2,800

**Initiative** +20 **Senses** Perception +10; blindsight 10  
**HP** 166; **Bloodied** 83; see also *split*  
**AC** 32; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 32, **Will** 31; see also *slippery phasing*  
**Immune** disease, gaze, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial;  
**Vulnerable** 10 radiant  
**Saving Throws** +2  
**Speed** fly 6 (hover); see also *spirit sink* and *phase away*

**Action Points** 1  
 ⚔ **Spirit Sink** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**  
 Reach 2; +19 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends). The spirit ooze gains phasing until the end of its next turn.

**Split** (when first bloodied; encounter)  
 The spirit ooze splits into two Large oozes, one occupying the original ooze's space and the other in a space adjacent to it. Each of the creatures has hit points equal to half of the original creature's current hit points. Both creatures act on the original creature's initiative count. Effects applied to the original creature do not apply to either individual after the split. The spirit ooze cannot split if reduced to 0 hit points by the attack that bloodied it. If left alone, at the end of the encounter the two individuals combine into one spirit ooze, which has hit points equal to the individuals' total.

**Combat Advantage**  
 A spirit ooze deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

**Phase Away** (minor; while the spirit ooze has phasing; at-will)  
 The spirit ooze shifts 1 square.

**Slippery Phasing** (while the spirit ooze has phasing)  
 The spirit ooze gains a +2 bonus to AC and Reflex.

**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** –  
**Skills** Stealth +21  
**Str** 16 (+11) **Dex** 26 (+16) **Wis** 15 (+10)  
**Con** 17 (+11) **Int** 2 (+4) **Cha** 11 (+8)

Torhana drifts about in combat, making *spirit touch* attacks when she can. She moves to possess dead or unconscious characters as they become available.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Light leaking through the translucent wall dimly illuminates the chamber.

**Entry Shaft:** The light-colored circle represents a 10-foot-diameter hole in the ceiling beneath the valve that the characters opened in the previous encounter.

**Ceiling:** The ceiling is roughly 15 feet high.

**Obelisks:** The obelisks block line of sight. They extend from floor to ceiling. An obelisk can be climbed with a DC 23 Athletics check.

**Cracks:** Squares containing cracks that radiate from the skeleton are difficult terrain.

**Translucent Wall:** Any living creature that touches the eastern wall is restrained (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The creature is restrained and knocked unconscious (save ends both). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The creature is petrified as a crystalline mineral and fuses to the wall (no save).

**Crates:** The crates contain foodstuffs, rope, water, and other gear, all magically preserved. A chest in

**Torhana, Spirit Vampire (V)** **Level 12 Lurker**  
 Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 700

**Initiative** +14 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision  
**HP** 66 (99 if in a possessed body); **Bloodied** 33  
**AC** 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 26  
**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic, insubstantial (spirit form only); **Vulnerable** 5 radiant  
**Speed** 6 (possessed body only), fly 6 (spirit form only); phasing (spirit form only)

⚔ **Claw** (standard; possessed body only; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**  
 +17 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage plus 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage.

⚔ **Spirit Touch** (standard; spirit form only; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**  
 +15 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage.

⚔ **Blood Drain** (standard; requires combat advantage; possessed body only; recharges when an creature adjacent to Torhana becomes bloodied) ♦ **Healing**  
 +15 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 8 damage, the target is weakened (save ends), and Torhana regains 16 hit points.

⚔ **Possess Body** (minor; at-will)  
 Torhana can possess the body of a dead or unconscious Medium or smaller humanoid. While in a possessed body, she has the following traits:

- ♦ She loses fly 6, phasing, and *spirit touch*.
- ♦ She gains speed 6, claw, *blood drain*, and a +7 bonus to Strength-based checks.
- ♦ She loses the insubstantial quality and gains 33 temporary hit points. When she loses the temporary hit points, the body falls prone in its square and Torhana resumes spirit form.
- ♦ While possessed, the body cannot regain hit points or awaken. A dying creature is considered stable while Torhana possesses its body. Healing the possessed creature deals damage to Torhana equal to the hit points regained.
- ♦ Melee and ranged attacks can target Torhana only. Close and area attacks target both the possessed creature and Torhana.
- ♦ Torhana can leave a possessed body as a minor action. When she does so, she resumes spirit form and the body falls prone in the square Torhana occupies.
- ♦ Once Torhana leaves a body, she cannot possess that body again until the end of the encounter.

**Vulnerable to Sunlight**  
 If Torhana starts her turn in direct sunlight, she is dazed and cannot use *possess body* until the end of her turn.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil **Languages** Common  
**Skills** Bluff +17, Stealth +15  
**Str** 6 (+4 or +11) **Dex** 18 (+10) **Wis** 10 (+6)  
**Con** 16 (+9) **Int** 10 (+6) **Cha** 22 (+12)

one of the crates holds the expedition's remaining funds: two level-15 treasure parcels.

## CONCLUSION

The characters have discovered the horrible truth of what happened to Torhana's expedition: The Body Luminous is a death trap.

If you want to expand this adventure, you can connect the mysterious body to a future catastrophe in your campaign world. An entire campaign arc could be devoted to learning the secrets that Torhana failed to find, or finding a way to see the visions that she saw without being destroyed by the deadly walls. The final event of the campaign might be the characters' desperate attempt to prevent the foreseen apocalypse from occurring.

# THE MOUNTAIN BUILDER'S BARROW

An adventure area for five 25th-level adventurers

Tziphal the Mountain Builder, primordial of folding earth, petrification, and volcanoes, nearly met his end in the Dawn War. The gods covered what remained of his body in stones from Celestia and mortared them with astral earth and divine blood. They wove elemental forces to lift the burial site aloft and shroud it deep within the Elemental Chaos. Tziphal has lain in stasis ever since.

## BACKGROUND

**Arcana or Religion DC 27:** The body of Tziphal the Mountain Builder rests in a barrow raised by deities who defeated him during the Dawn War. Tziphal created most species that have the power of petrification—or their ancestors. His cairn attracts such creatures, as well as other beings of earth and stone.

**Arcana or Religion DC 32:** A malformed stone giant runecarver named Tholundru has spent years scouring the planes for a way to awaken Tziphal. In so doing, he has discovered secrets of the primordials. He has called and created primeval forces to aid him.

## HOOK: PREVENT TZIPHAL'S REANIMATION

The Mountain Builder's barrow drew Tholundru to it long ago. Since then, with religious fervor, he has sought the means to revive the primordial. In the process, Tholundru has awakened monstrosities from the Dawn War, including retrievers and a primordial colossus. Tholundru set the colossus to guard the barrow against heretics and dispatched the retrievers to bring him materials for the reanimation ritual.

The retrievers encounter the characters on one such mission. Upon investigation, the characters learn that more retrievers have been stealing components for an especially powerful reanimation ritual. Along with Tziphal cultists, goaded by Tholundru, they have also kidnapped or killed servants of deities. The party might find Tholundru's planar gate at a cult site or track a retriever to the gate.

**Quest XP:** If the characters stop Tholundru from performing the reanimation ritual, they earn a major quest reward of 35,000 XP.

### PLANAR GATE

Tholundru has opened a planar gate through which his retrievers come and go. The single opening on the barrow site might link to several other places. This gate does not appear on the maps of the area but lies farther down the slope of the mountains.

## ENVIRONMENT

The characters might come through Tholundru's planar gates, or they might arrive at the barrow by other means. The barrow lies among three earthmotes that form a cluster of mountains around its protective orb.

**As the PCs approach the barrow, read:**

*Three masses of earth form a cluster of mountains, down which flow three great streams: one of mud, one of lava, and one of semiliquid salt. Resting in a gap between them is a marble platform supported by four columns. Several statues protrude from its top, some continuations of the support pillars. The statues surround a great pile of stones.*

**Arcana Check**

**DC 30** You deduce that the barrow is out of temporal alignment with its surroundings, and that some nearby object is responsible for keeping it so.

**Lava:** A river of lava flows down one of the mountain slopes. The lava pours through a gap between the mountains and rains through the Elemental Chaos.

**Mud:** Smothering mud slides down one of the slopes. It oozes through a gap between the mountains, then slowly solidifies as it drops through the Elemental Chaos.

**Salt:** A stream of barely liquid, moisture-sucking salt runs down one of the slopes before dispersing into the Elemental Chaos.

**Time-Displaced Barrow:** The barrow is visible, but it is displaced in time from the rest of the area, existing just seconds behind the present. This displacement prevents visitors from meddling with the barrow. A creature can gain access only by retrieving and using a special key, which is in the hands of a primordial colossus standing in the lava river.

## AREA 1: THE SLOPES

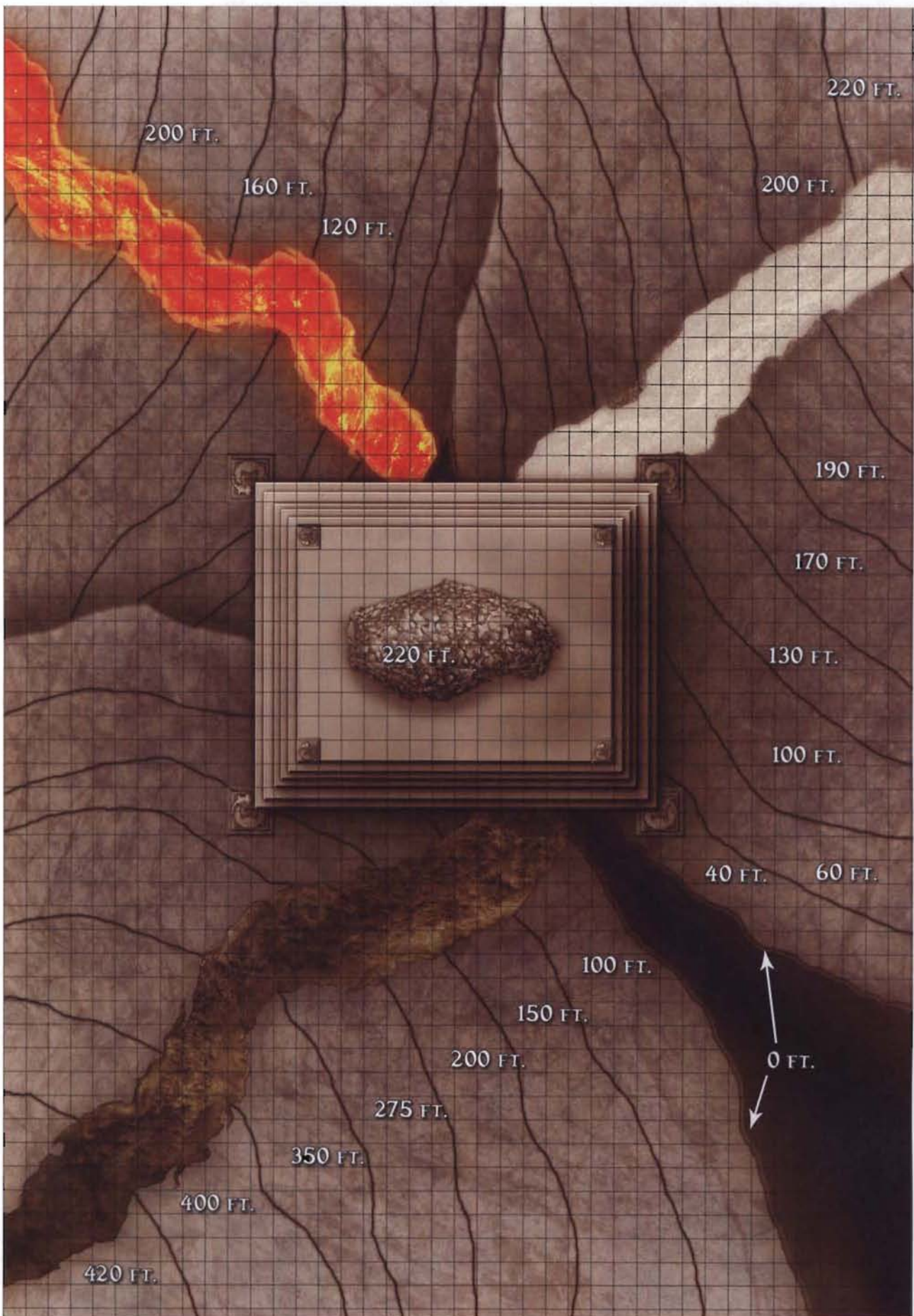
Rivers of lava, salt, and mud flow down the slopes into a vale whose bottom opens to the limitless Elemental Chaos. From there, the streams plummet downward until they are lost to sight. Characters who approach the slopes or the barrow must first defeat guardians that respond to the presence of intruders.

**Tactical Encounter:** "The Slopes," page 102.

## AREA 2: THE BARROW

The barrow, including platform and pillars, is slightly out of temporal synch with the rest of the area. The primordial colossus on the slopes holds the key that would bring the barrow back into alignment. Only defeating the primordial colossus allows access.

**Tactical Encounter:** "The Barrow," page 104.



# ENCOUNTER: THE SLOPES

Encounter Level 26 (47,500 XP)

## SETUP

1 primordial colossus (P)

1 retriever (R)

6 Tziphal xorns (X)

The servants of Tziphal protect his tomb from creatures he does not favor. Using the key it keeps gripped in its left hand, the colossus can bring the barrow back into temporal harmony with the surrounding area. Tholundru has ordered the colossus to grant entry only to him and other followers of Tziphal.

If the characters try to climb the pillars or land on or otherwise interact with the barrow and its platform before activating the key, they simply pass through as if the object were not there.

**When the PCs draw near enough to the slopes to make out details, read:**

*An enormous humanoid form stands next to the lava that flows down one of the trio of earthmotes.*

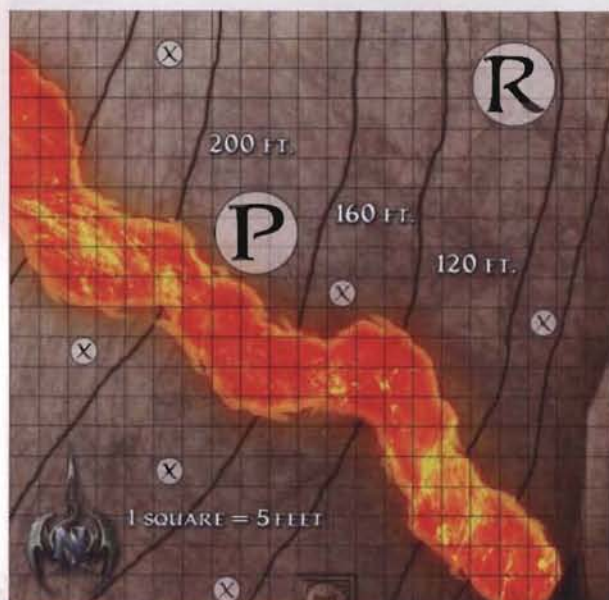
Do not place the retriever until the characters notice it. The xorns do not appear until they burrow up from below and attack.

### Arcana Check

DC 31 *The form near the lava is a construct with an aura of elemental power. The lava does not appear to harm it.*

### Perception Check

DC 31 *A huge creature like a metallic spider lurks amid tumbled rocks near the lava river. Its gemlike eyes blaze with elemental power.*



The monsters attack as soon as the characters draw close to them or attack them.

## TACTICS

The monsters do what they can to hurl the characters into the lava. The retriever opens with its *eye rays* and then uses *retrieve* to carry enemies to the lava and drop them in. The Tziphal xorns rely on *erupt* to push foes headfirst into the stream.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Glowing lava and daylight brightly illuminate the area.

**Slopes:** The slopes are difficult terrain for creatures moving up them. A creature knocked prone on a slope slides 1d4 squares on the scree. Forced movement down the slope increases by 2 squares.

**Lava River:** A creature that starts its turn adjacent to lava takes 1d10 fire damage. One that enters lava or starts its turn in it takes 5d10 fire damage. The

Primordial Colossus (P)	Level 28 Elite Brute	
Huge elemental animate (construct)	XP 26,000	
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +22	
Elemental Presence (Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Thunder) aura 5; each creature that starts its turn within the aura takes 15 acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage.		
HP 640; Bloodied 320		
AC 40; Fortitude 44, Reflex 37, Will 38		
Immune disease, fear, poison, sleep; Resist 15 variable (3/ encounter)		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 10		
Action Points 1		
Ⓢ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+29 vs. AC; 3d10 + 14 damage.		
Ⓢ Colossal Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Thunder		
Close blast 3; +29 vs. AC; 3d10 + 14 damage, and the primordial colossus can make a secondary attack. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> Close blast 3; +28 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
† Reactive Kick (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent to the primordial colossus; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Thunder		
Targets the triggering creature; +30 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 7 acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares and knocked prone.		
⚡ Primordial Stone (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning, Thunder		
Ranged 20; +29 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 14 damage, and the primordial colossus can make a secondary attack that is a burst 5 centered on the target. <i>Secondary Attack:</i> +28 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 acid, cold, fire, lightning, and thunder damage, and the secondary target is knocked prone.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 38 (+28)	Dex 25 (+21)	Wis 27 (+22)
Con 30 (+24)	Int 3 (+10)	Cha 15 (+16)

current slides creatures 3 squares toward the opening at the bottom of the vale. Lava rivers are 20 feet deep and require a DC 24 Athletics check to swim.

A creature that falls in the river and is swept to its end is engulfed by a swirling cataract of lava before dropping through the gap. In addition to the damage from immersion in the lava, the creature takes 5d10 damage from the violent churning as the river spills into the Elemental Chaos. A mile below the earthmote stretches a rocky badlands; any creature that cannot fly or otherwise stop its fall is in grave danger.

## CONCLUSION

Defeating the colossus causes it to release the key, made of polished black obsidian.

### When the PCs defeat the colossus, read:

*The colossus shudders and cracks apart, its chunks falling in a heap. Its clenched left hand breaks apart, and from the shattered grip drops a massive obsidian object shaped like a skeleton key.*

To gain access to the barrow, the characters need to retrieve the key. If the key fell into the lava, a character might have to scoop it out, use the *mage hand* power to grab it, or find some other means of obtaining the key.

Once the key is retrieved, a character must make a DC 30 Arcana check to activate it. Doing so causes the barrow to snap back into temporal alignment.

### When the barrow returns to normal time, read:

*A crack splits the air. The platform's shimmering ceases, and it becomes more solid-looking.*

The characters can now climb up the columns supporting the platform, fly to its top, or try to jump onto it from the slopes.

## MUD AND SALT

Though not shown on the tactical map, the fight could potentially move to one or both of the other slopes, including the elemental rivers flowing down them.

**River of Mud:** Moving through the thick mud is difficult and exhausting. Swimming requires a DC 28 Athletics check, and the DC of Endurance checks to avoid drowning increases by 4. The viscous flow is difficult terrain for swimmers. A creature that is immersed in mud and then leaves the river is slowed by the sludge (save ends). The mud has a downslope current of 3 squares.

**River of Salt:** The semiliquid salt forms a dense slurry that is almost impossible to swim in, requiring a DC 32 Athletics check. It is difficult terrain for swimmers, and the DC for Endurance checks to avoid drowning increases by 6. The salt leaches moisture from flesh, blinding any creature immersed in it; the creature remains blinded until the end of its next turn after leaving the river. The river has a downslope current of 2 squares.

Retriever (R)		Level 27 Soldier
Huge elemental animate		XP 11,000
Initiative +24	Senses Perception +20; darkvision, truesight 10	
HP 248; Bloodied 124		
AC 43; Fortitude 39, Reflex 40, Will 38		
Immune charm, fear; Resist 5 to all damage		
Speed 8		
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will)		
Reach 3; +34 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage.		
⊕ Retrieve (standard; usable only while the retriever does not have a creature grabbed; at-will)		
Reach 3; +30 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 damage, and the target is grabbed. The retriever can move a creature it has grabbed without making a Strength attack.		
↗ Eye Rays (standard; one ray recharges each round—roll a d4 to determine which) ♦ Acid, Cold, Fire, Thunder		
The retriever fires all the rays as a single standard action, but each must target a different creature: ranged 10; +32 vs. Reflex.		
1—Acid Ray: 2d10 + 9 acid damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).		
2—Cold Ray: 2d10 + 9 cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
3—Fire Ray: 2d10 + 9 fire damage, and ongoing 15 fire damage (save ends).		
4—Thunder Ray: 2d10 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).		
Self-Repair (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Healing		
The retriever regains 20 hit points and gains a +4 bonus to AC until the start of its next turn.		
Unerring Accuracy (standard; daily) ♦ Teleportation		
The retriever senses the general location of the target or nearest creature of the type it was commanded to locate. The retriever teleports to a space that is within 10 squares of the target. The target need not be on the same plane as the retriever when it uses this power.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —	
Str 26 (+21)	Dex 29 (+22)	Wis 25 (+20)
Con 24 (+20)	Int 2 (+9)	Cha 10 (+13)

6 Tziphil Xorns (X)		Level 25 Minion Skirmisher
Medium elemental magical beast (earth)		XP 1,750 each
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +20; all-around vision, darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 38; Fortitude 38, Reflex 36, Will 37		
Immune fire, poison		
Speed 5, burrow 5; see also <i>earth glide</i>		
⊕ Triple Claw (standard; at-will)		
One, two, or three targets; +29 vs. AC; 9 damage.		
⊕ Erupt (standard; encounter)		
The Tziphil xorn burrows its speed and attacks a nonflying enemy whose space it passes under: +28 vs. Fortitude; 15 damage, and the target is pushed 4 squares and knocked prone.		
Earth Glide		
A Tziphil xorn can burrow through lava and stone as if it were loose earth.		
Retreat (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
The Tziphil xorn burrows its speed.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common, Primordial	
Str 27 (+20)	Dex 24 (+19)	Wis 26 (+20)
Con 28 (+21)	Int 10 (+12)	Cha 15 (+14)



# ENCOUNTER: THE BARROW

Encounter Level 27 (62,000 XP)

## SETUP

1 quake gorgon (G)  
3 serpent-twined statues (S)  
Tholundru, stone giant (T)

After the characters activate the obsidian key and make their way to the top of the platform, they must deal with the barrow's guardians, including Tholundru himself.

Only death can turn Tholundru from his plan to revive Tziphal, so the characters must battle him or retreat.

**When the PCs reach the top of the platform, read:**

*Rough steps rise to a wide dais flanked by four statues of humanoid beings entwined with serpents. In the center of the dais lies a cairn of glittering boulders sealed with black, glossy mortar. A large bull-shaped creature of shifting stone stands atop the pile.*

*A malformed giant with stone-hued skin rises from its knees beside the dais and glares at you. Runes cover his body and his shining war pick.*

Three of the four serpent-twined statues are traps, which Tholundru triggers when combat begins.

Quake Gorgon (G)		Level 26 Soldier
Large elemental beast (earth)		XP 9,000
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +19; truesight 6	
Temblor aura 3; at the start of the quake gorgon's turn, each enemy within the aura is pulled 3 squares. Any enemy without earth walk treats the area as difficult terrain.		
HP 245; Bloodied 122		
AC 42; Fortitude 40, Reflex 36, Will 38		
Immune knocked prone, petrification, forced movement		
Speed 6 (earth walk), climb 6		
⊕ Gore (standard; at-will)		
+33 vs. AC; 3d6 + 10 damage, and the target slides 3 squares and is knocked prone.		
⊗ Grounding Glare (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 20; +31 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 9 damage, and the target is pulled 4 squares and knocked prone.		
⊕ Trample (standard; at-will)		
The quake gorgon moves its speed and can enter enemies' spaces. The quake gorgon makes an attack against each enemy whose space it enters: +31 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 10 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
⚡ Eruption Breath (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ) ⚡ Fire, Poison		
Close blast 5; +31 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 8 fire damage plus 2d8 + 8 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 30 (+23)	Dex 23 (+19)	Wis 26 (+21)
Con 29 (+22)	Int 2 (+9)	Cha 8 (+12)

3 Serpent-Twined Statues (S)	Level 26 Blaster
Trap	XP 9,000 each

The serpents carved into these mountainlike sculptures flex and turn, glaring with glowing eyes.

**Trap:** Enchanted serpent carvings petrify those who trigger them.

### Perception

⚡ DC 27: The character notices runes hidden in the carvings' contours.

### Additional Skill: Arcana

⚡ DC 29: The character determines that the runes anchor each statue's magic. Destroying or discharging the runes should disable the statue.

Initiative +21

### Trigger

When combat starts on the platform, Tholundru activates the trap, which rolls initiative.

### Attack

Standard Action Ranged 5

Target: One creature

**Attack:** +29 vs. Fortitude (does not provoke opportunity attacks)

**Hit:** 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is restrained (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target is petrified (no save). Creatures that are immune to petrification are unaffected by this attack.

**Miss:** Half damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the trap's next turn.

### Countermeasures

⚡ A character who makes a DC 28 Arcana or DC 32 Thievery check from an adjacent square as a standard action discharges some of the trap's runes. The trap takes a cumulative -2 penalty to its initiative count and makes an attack roll each time such a check succeeds. On the third successful check, the trap is disabled.

⚡ A character can attack the trap to mar the runes (AC/Reflex 2; Fortitude 38; hp 150), but doing so grants the trap a +2 bonus to its next attack roll against the attacker. The attacker feels the energy of the trap flow toward him or her. Reducing the runes to 0 hit points disables the trap but does not destroy it.

Shardstorm Vortex	Level 23 Minion Skirmisher
Whirlwind	
Medium elemental magical beast (air, earth)	XP –

Initiative +21 Senses Perception +17

Sandblast aura 1; each enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to all defenses.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 37; Fortitude 35, Reflex 36, Will 34

Immune disease, poison

Speed 0, fly 8 (hover)

⊕ Abrasive Slam (standard; at-will)

+26 vs. Fortitude; 15 damage.

Vortex Step (move; at-will)

The shardstorm vortex whirlwind shifts 4 squares.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Primordial

Str 12 (+12) Dex 27 (+19) Wis 22 (+17)

Con 24 (+18) Int 5 (+8) Cha 6 (+9)

## Tholundru (T) Level 28 Elite Controller (Leader)

Large elemental humanoid (earth, giant) XP 26,000

Initiative +17 Senses Perception +23; low-light vision

**Hardened Focus** aura 5; each of Tholundru's allies gains a +4

bonus to damage rolls against immobilized enemies within the aura. Each petrified enemy within the aura loses all resistances and gains vulnerable 5 to all damage.

HP 514; Bloodied 257

AC 42; Fortitude 41, Reflex 36, Will 41

Immune petrification

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8 (earth walk)

Action Points 1

⚔ **Enruned War Pick** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 2d10 + 11 damage (crit 3d10 + 22), and the target is slowed (save ends).

⚔ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

Tholundru makes two enruned war pick attacks.

⚔ **Rune of Stony Sleep** (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ♦ **Zone**

Area burst 1 within 10; +31 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). **First Failed Saving Throw:** The target is petrified (save ends). **Effect:** The burst creates a zone of magical runes that lasts until the end of the encounter. Each enemy that starts its turn within the zone takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against immobilizing or slowing effects.

⚔ **Rune of Thundering Echo** (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️ ☹️) ♦

**Thunder**

Area burst 1 within 20; +31 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 9 thunder damage. A slowed or immobilized target also takes ongoing 10 thunder damage (save ends).

**Grasping Stone**

When Tholundru hits a slowed creature with an attack that would cause the creature to become slowed, that creature is instead immobilized (save ends).

**Stone Bones** (immediate interrupt, when Tholundru is hit by an attack; not usable while bloodied; at-will)

Tholundru gains resist 5 to all damage against the triggering attack.

**Stone from Air** (minor; recharges when first bloodied)

Tholundru calls four shardstorm vortex whirlwinds to his aid. Each appears in an unoccupied square within 15 squares of Tholundru and acts immediately after Tholundru's initiative count. The shardstorm vortex whirlwinds remain until killed, until dismissed by Tholundru as a free action, or until the end of the encounter. Characters do not gain experience points for killing the shardstorm vortex whirlwinds.

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Common, Giant, Primordial

**Skills** Arcana +25, Athletics +27, Stealth +22

**Str** 27 (+22) **Dex** 17 (+17) **Wis** 28 (+23)

**Con** 25 (+21) **Int** 23 (+20) **Cha** 20 (+19)

**Equipment** enruned war pick

## TACTICS

The quake gorgon uses its *temblor* aura to keep the characters away from Tholundru and gores them while the stone giant uses area and ranged powers. It conserves *eruption breath* for bunched enemies and uses *grounding glare* to pull flying creatures into its reach.

Tholundru uses *stone from air* to place shardstorm vortex whirlwinds between himself and the characters, spacing the whirlwinds to foil area or close attacks. Then he hurls *rune of stony sleep* at the party and spends an action point to follow up with *rune of*



*thundering echo*. While those powers recharge, Tholundru swings his enruned war pick. He focuses attacks on slowed characters to immobilize them, allowing his allies to take advantage of the attack bonus conferred by his aura.

Neither Tholundru nor the gorgon is affected by the statues' petrification, so they might try to maneuver enemies into range of the traps.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Glowing lava and daylight brightly illuminate the area.

**Cairn:** The pile of stones slopes up from the center of the dais to 15 feet at its apex. It is difficult terrain. Any creature on the cairn takes a -2 penalty to saving throws against fire and petrification effects.

**Columns:** Each smooth, carved support column is between 30 and 100 feet tall, depending on its position on the slopes. Its polished surface requires a DC 25 Athletics check to climb.

**Platform Edges:** A creature falling from the platform plummets 30 to 100 feet to the slopes or into lava, mud, or salt (see the previous encounter).

**Steps:** Shallow steps lead up from the edge of the platform.

**Serpent-Twined Statues:** Three of the four Medium statues house traps, as described above. The fourth is an ordinary stone statue (AC5; Reflex 5, Fortitude 10; hp 50). All statues are blocking terrain.

## CONCLUSION

The characters find the reagents Tholundru has gathered for his ritual. Depending on your campaign plans, they might also discover prisoners Tholundru intended to sacrifice. You could expand the adventure by adding a group of cultists who arrive too late to aid in the ritual. You might also devise a way for the heroes to lay Tziphal to rest for good, leading to further quests and a return to the Barrow of the Mountain Builder.

# INTO THE ABYSS

**THE DREADED** Abyss is a wound in reality, a diseased abscess in the Elemental Chaos synonymous with horror. Adventurers are sorely tested in the Abyss, braving its depths only after their other options are exhausted. Few willingly enter, fewer return, and still fewer emerge unbroken.

More than a place, the Abyss is a presence—a death urge that would consume all existence if it were left unchecked. It is entropy unleashed, hunger eternal, hatred and rage unquenchable. The Abyss is not merely the source of great evils, it is evil without end.

The Abyss is both a part of the Elemental Chaos and a separate plane. It festers in the lower reaches of the Plane Below, a maw capable of swallowing entire worlds. It is bounded horizontally, confined to an ever-narrowing, swirling pit of entropy and chaos, but if the Abyss has a bottom, no one has reached it and returned.

The layers of the plane might be infinite. Each known one is a realm that has its own inhabitants, its own terrain, and its own nature. This chapter presents an overview of the pit, divided into the following topics.

- ◆ **The Deepest Depths:** How the Abyss and some of its layers function, and what traits they display, plus a discussion of means for traveling to and about the plane.
- ◆ **Abyssal Campaign Arcs:** A pair of suggestions for involving paragon and epic characters in the workings and the treachery of the Abyss.
- ◆ **Abyssal Adventures:** Sample adventure hooks and quests involving demons and the plane that spawns them.
- ◆ **Skill Challenges in the Abyss:** Four skill challenges that could occur nowhere else.
- ◆ **Abyssal Locations:** A few prominent fiendish sites with suggested encounter groups and environmental features.



The Abyss is a hole in reality at the bottom of the Elemental Chaos, a whirlpool of matter and energy and chaos. Its outermost edges stretch far enough to beggar the imagination.

The islands and oceans and storms of the Elemental Chaos beyond the pit's rim seem unaffected by its swirling forces. Still, a gradual spiral pattern to their movements can be discerned over the course of eons. Deeper within the Plane Below, the pattern becomes more obvious. The drifting masses, the flow of rivers, the paths of storms, even the invisible currents of chaos no longer churn at random. Instead, they commence a slow but inexorable spin, gathering in a circling maelstrom toward a dark, massive core. Objects at the pit's edge take years or even decades to complete their revolution, but as they are drawn ever inward, the spiral tightens. In time, they pour into the yawning cavity of the Abyss.

Such entry to the pit might be inevitable, but it is not quick. Traveling beyond the Abyss's outermost influence and down into its mouth could take decades or centuries, so vast is the distance crossed. One vessel known as the *Worldship*, an enormous *spelljammer* of stone, has been attempting the journey for several generations. It is crewed by hundreds and inhabited by troops of dwarves and genasi, a smattering of tieflings, and one deva who reincarnates onto the ship again and again.

## INFINITE LAYERS

As befits a chasm of entropy, the Abyss is not a single location but a vast and brutal void that contains an uncounted number of layers. Numerologists, scholars, and ecclesiasts claim that they number six hundred sixty-six, but no one has attempted to confirm this fact. Some strata are visible from the center of the spinning maelstrom—assuming a witness could survive the plunge. Others remain hidden in the churning blackness.

As an elemental realm, the Abyss has most of the same traits as the Elemental Chaos, but no set of planar laws holds sway over its regions in general. Each of its layers has distinct planar features, and some particularly horrid ones vary far beyond what a normal imagination can conceive.

The Elemental Chaos is predominantly a mix of the natural world's substances in their rawest form. In contrast, several twisted layers of the Abyss are formed of organic materials: flesh and blood, plant and bone. Although these environments seethe with malign will, they do not truly live.

## NATURE AND SIZE

How can something be said to exist at the bottom of an infinite plane, or be a hole in reality? Perhaps the description is metaphorical. Still, if one travels far enough downward from any spot in the Elemental Chaos's known regions, the Abyss yawns below.

The plane is definitely limited in certain respects. It has a clear upper boundary that, although huge, is theoretically measurable. A traveler can move beyond the Abyss into the rest of the Elemental Chaos. Yet the plane also seems to extend infinitely downward, a maelstrom spinning tighter and tighter, darker and darker, without a physical endpoint. Legends claim that it spirals downward to a final heart of evil, but none can prove that assertion.

Individual realms within the Abyss are the size of worlds, but they are still bounded, with obvious edges that can be reached. Most levels are internally consistent, but some contain multiple realms, each with its own boundaries and physical laws. In a few instances, a single territory encompasses multiple layers. A few layers are spherical or bent mystically back onto themselves—a traveler who voyages far enough into one of these recursive realms eventually returns to the starting point.

## GRAVITY'S WELL

The Abyss has the same elemental buoyancy as the Elemental Chaos. A living being or a foreign vessel unfortunate enough to fall in continues to plummet to the black depths. The various masses of earth, water, acid, flesh, and stranger substances that make up the Abyss hover unaffected by gravity, drawn downward only by the slow spiraling of entropic energy.

An individual layer, however, could feature any of the known types of planar gravity, whether intrinsically or at the behest of a demon lord or some other master. Locations of normal and subjective gravity (*Manual of the Planes*, page 10) can both be found, as can even stranger places where the direction of gravity changes at the whim of powerful beings, or where objects of great mass exert a pull on any smaller forms that wander near.

## ABYSSAL MUTABILITY

The various substances that swirl around in the Abyss are as easily manipulated as is the stuff of the Elemental Chaos. Again, the individual layers have their own properties; many either are unstable or have normal mutability. Other layers are even stranger, mutating on their own or in response to the casual whims of passersby. Some demon lords and other powers are able to influence their surroundings, giving their layers the equivalent of divine mutability

(*Manual of the Planes*, page 10), though few deities dwell in the Abyss—Lolth might be the only one.

## TRAVELING THE ABYSS

The Abyss is even more difficult to navigate than the rest of the Elemental Chaos is. That said, certain layers are easily traveled, though far from safe. The surfaces of these places might take the form of pliable flesh, rivers of blood, or nets of webbing, but they are relatively stable and can support walking, sailing, or climbing. Other strata provide no safe footing and no easily traversed paths and thus require more unusual forms of locomotion. The same extraordinary means sometimes used to traverse the Elemental Chaos are also necessary to negotiate these places.

Another concern is moving between layers. In a few rare cases, a traveler can physically pass from layer to layer without magic. It's possible, if inadvisable, to swim from the briny shores of Demogorgon's lair, Abysm, to the undersea domain of ancient Dagon. Crossing between most layers generally requires more exotic methods, however.

## DIRECT DESCENT

A foolhardy adventurer might try to explore the Abyss the hard way, using magic or planar vessels to fly deep into the maelstrom and stopping at various layers within the pit as they appear. Although technically possible, such an approach is unwise. All the bizarre weather and deadly hazards of the Elemental Chaos manifest here, often charged with necrotic emanations rather than more traditional elements. Adding to the danger is the malevolent will of the Abyss. Winds and storms deliberately move into the path of travelers. The dark clouds can also be caustic or poisonous, blinding travelers who swiftly become lost in their howling depths.

Layers revolve around the perimeter of the pit at varying speeds and heights. Locating a particular destination one time provides no guarantee that the feat can be repeated. Some travelers vanish into enveloping banks of darkness and are transported to random layers of the Abyss, thousands of miles from where they began. Many are never heard from again.

The greatest dangers of a direct descent into the Abyss are the horrible creatures that dwell within the turbulent chaos between realms. Flying demons, such as vrocks, hunt the skies near the boundaries between layers to avoid competing with their land-bound counterparts. Farther into the maelstrom, in the darkness between strata, roam horrific, primal creatures of indescribable evil.

## DEMONGATES

A demongate is a permanent portal between the natural world and the Abyss—usually, but not always, leading to Pazunia, the Plain of a Thousand Portals (see *Manual of the Planes*, page 78). Although such gates are reliable ways of getting to the Abyss, none bridges from one layer of the Abyss to another.

On rare occasions, a demongate allows access to the Abyss from a plane other than the world. They have appeared in the Feywild, the Shadowfell, and elsewhere in the Elemental Chaos.

Demongates are discussed in more detail on page 65 of *Manual of the Planes*. See also the “Destroying a Demongate” skill challenge on page 115 of this book.

## PORTALS

Portals are the common means of traveling from layer to layer in the Abyss. A number of portals are permanent and well known, including the links between the three layers of Azzagrat, the doorways scattered across the Plain of a Thousand Portals, and the infamous Demonweb. Most of the permanent portals to the Abyss are two-way. For the most part, though, Abyssal portals are intermittent, and as many of them are one-way as not.

Only a few such links are transparent; most are misty, opaque, or solid, making it impossible to tell what danger waits on the other side. A few project illusions, making their destinations appear safe when they're not. Ancient maps and lists claim to show the locations of safe—or at least predictable—Abyssal portals. These documents can rarely be trusted: A number of once-reliable portals are no longer so, and many maps filled with so-called secrets of the Abyss are circulated by demons to trap the gullible. A very few sources are accurate, however, allowing reliable and relatively safe travel between layers.

## PLANAR VESSELS AND TELEPORTATION

Given the dangers of the Abyss and the unpredictability of many portals, ritual teleportation and plane-shifting vessels are the safest ways to reach a given layer. Some locales, such as the city of Zelatar in Azzagrat (*Manual of the Planes*, page 80), contain several known teleportation circles and ports for *spelljammers*. Other layers deliberately interfere with teleportation and planar vessels, another sign of a malign sentience within the plane. Vessels and explorers teleporting to these layers often arrive wildly off target, appearing within the desired layer but in a region of terrible danger far from the intended destination.

The Abyss can be the basis for any number of story arcs, whether straightforward or convoluted. Although demonic nature tends toward blind destruction rather than subversive schemes, a few demons do exhibit some forethought. The demon princes are obvious examples, working to overthrow each other and conquer the Abyss. More devious types, such as cultists, often involve fiendish forces in their plans. The characters can become embroiled in these nefarious plots as they unfold.

The following two example campaign arcs are suited to characters at the paragon and epic tiers. (Those at the heroic tier are usually not powerful enough to survive the Abyss's challenges.) As usual, they can serve as inspiration for your own stories.

## PARAGON TIER: THE BEST-LAID PLANS

In this campaign arc, the adventurers get involved in a battle—some might call it a mere skirmish—between Orcus and Graz'zt. They must travel to the Abyss several times before the conclusion of the story.

The campaign begins in a worldly city, where local authorities ask the characters to investigate an abnormally powerful gang war. Although two rival groups of thugs duking it out in the bad part of town is a common occurrence, these clashes leave smashed buildings and smoking craters in their wake. Also, a number of innocent passersby have been slain. The authorities were finally moved to act when the prominent noblewoman Erra Deveera became a victim.

The characters' investigations are stymied initially, but then a mysterious informant approaches them. This shadowy figure claims that the battles were instigated by a secret group of protectors, called Aranor's Shield, who are struggling against the machinations of a cult of Orcus. The story is true—what is told of it. Unless the characters somehow discover the informant's deception, they move on to battle the cult of Orcus in its tunnels under the city's mausoleum. The heroes clash with undead, demons, mortal cultists, and the cult's leader, a mummy lord. While they are so engaged, the sect's true enemy, a cult of Graz'zt, is free to take over the city. The characters' informant is actually a member of the cult who used them as tools to weaken the opposition.

Once the Graz'zt cultists have no further use for their pawns, they move to eliminate the characters. The party strikes back and ultimately takes the fight to the cult in its fortress, an abandoned university. The characters' opponents include humanoid cultists, demons, and allied elemental or abyssal beasts. During the course of their investigations, the heroes

also discover that Erra Deveera, the murdered noblewoman, was a member of the cult.

Ultimately the characters triumph over the cult's leaders, a ruling triumvirate of six-fingered slayers and dark acolytes of Graz'zt (*Manual of the Planes*, page 133). But even as they do so, they learn that the cult is still one step ahead of them. When they emerge from the university stronghold, the characters are arrested by order of the duke. In truth, that noble has been replaced by the cult's shapechanging leader, a chosen of Graz'zt (*Manual of the Planes*, page 132) named Malikith.

The false duke makes it easy for the characters to escape their prison, expecting them to come after him in his palace. When they do, he tricks them into walking through a one-way portal to the Abyss.

The characters emerge on the Plain of a Thousand Portals with no easy means of escape. Demons and other servitors of demon lords challenge them, as do the Abyss's environmental hazards. The party meets up with a band of secretive merchants who offer transport in their *spelljammer* in exchange for protecting their camp. The ship is to depart in three days. Yet again, the deal is not as good as it seems. The supposed merchants are devil-worshipping cultists accompanying several disguised succubi. They are spying on the demons for their infernal masters, and they plan to kill the characters as soon as the letter of their agreement has been met. They attack after their *spelljammer* leaves Pazunia.

The characters, having overcome their attackers, might have a few unrelated adventures in the Elemental Chaos as they navigate their way back home. They are likely to hold a grudge against the cult of Graz'zt. Even if they don't, once they return to the world they learn that the cult's influence is spreading. A true city-state of Graz'zt's design is taking shape.

The party is approached by a concerned paladin. For once, this stranger is just what he appears to be. He has discovered that his sister is a long-time member of the cult, and he believes that she knows much about its movements and inner workings. He asks the characters to capture her in hopes of redeeming her and in order to learn what they can about the cult.

The paladin's sister can be sequestered in whatever sort of dungeon you like. When the characters finally pry the information out of her, possibly involving magical coercion, she reveals an unfortunate truth. Graz'zt, pleased with the cult's success, granted it an artifact called the *Dream of Dominion*. This crown enables its wearer to dominate creatures at will. One way to counter it is with a collection of different artifacts, the *Helms of the Indomitable*. An Orcus-worshipping archwizard created these artifacts centuries ago, and they are now kept in Orcus's realm, Thanatos.

The final adventures of the arc return the heroes to the Abyss, this time to Thanatos, where they must acquire the *Helms* using stealth and deception. Finally, the characters return to the world and fight their way to Malikith's headquarters. Although they defeat the cult and send its plans crashing down, Graz'zt or one of his disciples will surely remember this slight.

## EPIC TIER: THE CONQUERING DEMON

A powerful cult of Baphomet (*Manual of the Planes*, page 118) has conquered one of the Elemental Chaos's few genasi trading cities. The populace is dead or fled—both the minotaur cultists and Baphomet are bloodthirsty ravagers. One of the refugee genasi approaches the characters and asks them to free the city.

The minotaurs are strong but not overly bright. A party that employs finesse can overcome them with relative ease. While liberating the city, the characters encounter at least one living genasi, a former council member named Jett. He accompanies the characters as they free the city, watches them defeat the minotaur leader, and willingly offers whatever aid and information he can.

Jett is actually a covert priest of Dagon (*Monster Manual 2*, page 45) who hopes to expand the demon's influence to other cities, using swifter methods than those employed to take Gloamnull (page 74). He had manipulated the Baphomet cultists into openly attacking the city so he could sweep in, with the aid of a few dark allies, and “rescue” it. His plans stymied for now, he coozies up to the heroes to gather more information about them.

While the characters undertake other adventures, Jett contemplates what to do about his recently overturned plans. In the end, he forsakes subtlety and reconquers the city with a force of demons supplied by Dagon's ally, Demogorgon (*Monster Manual 2*, page 42). The characters uncover Jett's ruse and return to free the place again. They also learn that he hopes to use the genasi city as a beachhead for fiendish forces to conquer other important locations in the Elemental Chaos. The ultimate goal is to build an army of slaves, march into the Abyss, and conquer the rivals of Dagon and Demogorgon.

By defeating Jett, the characters have personally angered the Prince of Demons. Demogorgon launches a series of fiendish attacks against them, culminating in a strike by his exarch Thrarak (*Monster Manual 2*, page 47). The steadily escalating attacks, punctuated with a pointed declaration by one of Demogorgon's servants, send a clear signal that the two-headed fiend has no intention of letting the matter drop. For the characters to survive, the Prince of Demons must die.

Such an effort requires stout warrior allies who are willing—and able—to take on a demon lord. Convincing others to join the mission is easier than the heroes might imagine: Rulers, gods, and rival demon lords all seek the defeat of Demogorgon. While gathering companions, the characters must survive continuing assaults by ever more powerful soldiers of the Prince of Demons. The attacks culminate when the exarch Kazuul (*Monster Manual 2*, page 46) and an army of demons invade the natural world to lay waste to everything the characters hold dear.

Eventually the characters confront or outmaneuver Jett and learn of Dagon's influence. They might decide that removing the Lord of Depths would help their cause immeasurably. The climax of the campaign is a showdown: the characters and their allies on one side, and one or both demon lords and their forces on the other. If the heroes can't kill one or both of the demon princes, they can still claim a major victory by substantially weakening them.

### LOW LEVEL, HIGH DANGER

The sample campaign arcs presented here involve the paragon and epic tiers. Characters at the heroic tier simply aren't tough enough to survive extended forays into the Abyss or the prolonged attentions of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, you can still introduce abyssal influences into heroic tier adventures or campaigns.

The simplest means of doing so is to pit the characters against the cultists of a demon lord. Since foolish or mad individuals of all levels might turn to worship of such vile beings, you can design these opponents to suitably challenge the party's abilities. Such organizations also allow you to foreshadow the appearance of more powerful abyssal entities in the campaign at higher levels.

Perhaps your heroic tier characters are already in the Elemental Chaos when a demonic force launches an attack. They might be inhabitants of or visitors to a major community of the Plane Below, such as a githzerai monastery or a genasi or efreet trading post. The characters aren't yet powerful enough to stand on the front line against the demon hordes, but they can still contribute to the battle in important ways. For example, they can protect and evacuate some of the population, fight lone demonic scouts that penetrate the settlement, or patrol the streets against looters or other scum that would take advantage of the turmoil. This activity in turn brings the party to the attention of more influential patrons—and more dangerous enemies.

The influence of the Abyss occasionally bleeds into the world for a short time through a planar breach. If the characters aren't tough enough to handle a sojourn in the Abyss, you can bring the Abyss to them. A small region that has been corrupted and twisted into a reflection of the darkest pits makes an interesting and terrifying glimpse of the campaign's future.



# ABYSSAL ADVENTURES

The following hooks and plot seeds might inspire a variety of Abyss-themed adventures. They follow the same format as those presented in the “Adventures” section of chapter 1.

## 11: CLOSING THE PORTAL

Opening and closing portals to unpleasant places is a standard fantasy trope. This adventure puts a slight spin on that theme by requiring a portal to be closed only from its dangerous side.

Someone or something—perhaps a demon-worshipping cult, an insane wizard, or an arcane accident—has created a portal to the Abyss from the world. The rift opens into a relatively uninhabited area of the Abyss, and so far only a few minor demons (barlguras, evistros, and mezzodemons) have come forth.

The climax of this quest could be the “Destroying a Demongate” skill challenge presented on page 115. Success, though, might strand the heroes in the Abyss. Now they must get home without falling afoul of the pit’s more potent residents.

**Quest Hook:** Demons are wreaking havoc on the local townsfolk. Although they are among the weakest of their kind, the attackers can be stopped only by intrepid heroes. Killing the demons isn’t enough; to end the attacks, the characters must find and close the portal through which the demons emerge. First, they have to deal with the portal’s guardians. A skill challenge, or perhaps a simple Arcana check, reveals that the passage can be closed only from the other side.

**Quest XP:** If the characters succeed in closing the portal, they earn a major quest reward of 3,000 XP.

## STREETS OF DEMONS (PARAGON OR EPIC TIER)

The notorious thief and tomb robber Galek Nightless is wanted, dead or alive, in cities throughout the world—and beyond. His enemies include monarchs, archmages, and high priests.

Several years ago, Galek exhausted his resources in the mundane realm. With no new identities to assume, no safe havens, and a dwindling list of friends, he fled the world. He feels at home both in cities and in places fraught with corruption, so he settled in an ideal place—Zelatar in the Triple Realm of Azzagrat (*Manual of the Planes*, page 79).

Even though Galek was surrounded by the foulest creatures in creation, his enemies eventually caught up with him. To stay alive, the thief was forced to adopt a new identity, drawing on all the tricks and schemes learned throughout his long career.

**Quest Hook:** The characters must find Galek. The simplest motivation is a huge bounty on the master thief’s head—enough to make a trip to the Abyss worth the risk. On the other hand, the characters might just need to talk to him. They might want to know what the inscription on an emperor’s tomb read before Galek broke it, or learn the whereabouts of an artifact he once stole. To find Galek, the party must journey to Zelatar and survive its dangers, contend with the fugitive’s allies or hired muscle, locate his common haunts, and somehow corner him.

## DEMONS GALORE

If you want to populate an adventure with demons, you have plenty of choices. Here’s a list of every demon that appears in the *Monster Manual* (MM), *Monster Manual 2* (MM2), *Manual of the Planes* (MP), or *Dungeon Master’s Guide 2* (DMG2).

Monster	Level and Role	Source
Dretch	2 Brute	MM2 54
Runespiral Demon	5 Artillery	MM2 59
Rupture Demon	5 Minion Soldier	MM2 60
Gnaw Demon	5 Skirmisher	MM2 54
Evistro	6 Brute	MM 54
Bloodseep Demon	7 Skirmisher (L)	MM2 53
Canoloth	7 Soldier	MP 120
Barlgura	8 Brute	MM 53
Neldrazu	8 Lurker	MM2 56
Mezzodemon	11 Soldier	MM 58
Arctide Runespiral Demon	12 Artillery	MM2 60
Needle Demon	12 Controller	MM2 56
Shadow Demon	12 Elite Lurker	MP 122
Canoloth Harrier	12 Minion	MP 120
Vrock	13 Skirmisher	MM 58
Abyssal Eviscerator	14 Brute	MM2 51
Bloodcry Barlgura	14 Brute	DMG2 217
Chasme	14 Skirmisher	MP 121
Vrock Swordwing	14 Skirmisher	DMG2 221
Pod Demon	15 Elite Artillery	MM2 58
Solamith	15 Artillery	MP 123
Immolith Deathrager	15 Brute	DMG2 221
Immolith	15 Controller	MM 56
Podspawn	15 Minion Skirmisher	MM2 59
Yochlol Tempter	17 Controller	MM2 61
Bebilith	18 Solo Brute	MM2 52
Goristro	19 Elite Brute	MM 55
Kazrith	20 Lurker	MM2 55
Hezrou	22 Brute	MM 56
Nycademon	22 Skirmisher	MM2 57
Glabrezu	23 Elite Brute	MM 54
Aspect of Orcus	24 Elite Brute	MM 208
Aspect of Graz’zt	24 Elite Skirmisher	MP 131
Marilith	24 Elite Skirmisher	MM 57
Aspect of Demogorgon	25 Elite Controller	MM2 44
Abyssal Rotfiend	26 Controller	MM2 52
Balor	27 Elite Brute	MM 53
Baphomet	28 Solo Brute	MP 118
Kazuul	28 Elite Soldier	MM2 46
Graz’zt	32 Solo Controller	MP 130
Dagon	32 Solo Soldier	MM2 45
Orcus	33 Solo Brute (L)	MM 207
Demogorgon	34 Solo Controller	MM2 42



**Quest XP:** If the characters manage to find Galek and get what they need, they earn a major quest reward based on their level (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 122).

## 21: THE LAST WITNESS

Long ago, a cult of Orcus engaged in an elaborate ritual to bring the Lord of Undeath into the world. An eladrin wizard named Felias stopped the cult with a counter-ritual of his own design. Enraged, Orcus directed his followers to track down Felias, capture him, and drag him to Oblivion's End. Felias finally succumbed after many years of lengthy torment. Nothing stays dead in Thanatos, though. Felias returned as a tormenting ghost (*Monster Manual*, page 117), driven mad by the tortures visited upon him.

**Quest Hook:** A new sect of Orcus worshipers has rediscovered the old cult's ritual and is again attempting to call the demon lord to the world. The only known way to stop the ritual is Felias's counter-ritual, but Orcus's followers suppressed all information about it. Felias's records were destroyed when he was captured. The only way to reconstruct the ritual is to consult the long-dead eladrin. The characters journey to Thanatos to contact him, but his ghost is too insane to communicate reasonably. The characters must find a means of restoring his sanity. Barring that, they must destroy the ghost, find Felias's body, and use the Speak with Dead ritual. Only then can they hope to retrieve the information they need.

**Quest XP:** If the characters vanquish Felias's ghost, they earn a minor quest reward of 3,200 XP.

**Quest XP:** If the characters manage to rediscover the old ritual, they earn a major quest reward of 16,000 XP.

## 28: TO TRICK THE PRINCE OF BEASTS

Baphomet (*Manual of the Planes*, page 118) didn't get to be a demon prince by being stupid or gullible. Still, Lolth, the Demon Queen of Spiders, is far more cunning and patient. She has been plying the Prince of Beasts for years, sending him gifts, entrusting demons to his service, and showering him with flattery. Having finally won his trust, she has convinced him that she can weaken the demon lord Yeenoghu's defenses long enough for Baphomet to storm his rival's realm and destroy his hated enemy. The Horned King musters his army and prepares to attack, and Lolth promises to keep his domain safe in his absence.

Without interference, Yeenoghu slays Baphomet but is so weakened that Lolth, hidden nearby, can finish him. The characters might not care if these demon lords kill each other, but they should be concerned when the ensuing chaos greatly improves Lolth's status. With their masters dead, the demons sworn to Baphomet and Yeenoghu turn their allegiance to the Queen of Spiders. Lolth is already a god—a flood of new demons to her banner would make her even more dangerous. With this newfound power, it will not be long before she turns her covetous eyes to the world, or even the Astral Sea.

**Quest Hook:** The characters learn of the demonic maneuvering through terrestrial followers of the demon lords. Baphomet's cults undertake rituals to transport them to the Abyss so they can fight at their lord's side, while followers of Lolth prepare a great celebration. After discovering the extent of Lolth's plan and assessing the risk, the characters descend into the Abyss to stop her. The best outcome would be for Yeenoghu to slay Baphomet, Lolth to vanquish Yeenoghu, and the heroes to put down Lolth or at least stymie her plots. Accomplishing all this would throw three layers of the Abyss into chaos and keep their demon residents too busy tearing each other apart to trouble the world any time soon.

**Quest Reward:** If the heroes stop Baphomet from attacking Yeenoghu's realm, they earn a minor quest reward of 13,000 XP.

**Quest Reward:** If the characters manage to achieve the defeat of the three demon lords, they receive a major quest reward of 65,000 XP.

# SKILL CHALLENGES IN THE ABYSS

There's much more to adventuring in the Abyss than "merely" combating demons and other horrendous creatures. The four skill challenges in this section are prime examples of other threats that visitors to the Abyss might have to deal with.

To determine easy, moderate and hard DCs tailored to the level of a skill challenge, refer to the table on page 24.

## ABYSSAL MADNESS

The Abyss is a maddening place. Adventurers are made of stern stuff and can handle the everyday terrors of the Abyss, but some areas are so dark and full of despair that even the strongest mind crumples. Checks in this skill challenge could occur hourly or daily, depending on the intensity of the madness-inducing effects and how frequently they threaten the characters' sanity.

**Level:** Equal to the level of the party (XP equal to the reward for five standard monsters of the party's level).

**Complexity:** 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

**Special:** Each time a character fails an Endurance, Perception, or Religion check in this skill challenge, that character gains an insanity effect (see the table below). Each failed check after the first results in a +2 cumulative bonus to the roll on the insanity table.

A character can have multiple insanity effects, although he or she can't be affected by the same one more than once unless the effect so specifies. Each effect lasts until the characters succeed on the skill challenge or until a Remove Affliction ritual is performed.

**Primary Skills:** Endurance, Perception, Religion.

**Endurance (hard DC by level):** Through an act of stubbornness or inner strength, the character resists the onset of madness and fortifies the will of his or her companions.

**Perception (moderate DC by level):** The character is able to see past the madness and keep his or her companions focused on the task at hand.

**Religion (moderate DC by level):** The character's faith sustains the group.

**Secondary Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, Heal, Intimidate.

**Bluff (easy DC by level, when an ally fails an Endurance, Perception, or Religion check):** The character turns an ally away from the madness at the last second—for a price. A successful check negates the failure from the triggering check, but not the insanity effect. Whether or not this check succeeds, the character making the Bluff check gains an insanity effect.

## INSANITY EFFECTS

d20	Effect
1-5	<b>Jitters:</b> The character develops nervous tics. He or she takes a -2 penalty to all Dexterity-based checks. This penalty is cumulative if this result is rolled more than once.
6-10	<b>Hysteria:</b> The character becomes afraid of any sudden movement and loud noise. He or she takes a -2 penalty to initiative checks, to Will, and to any defense attacked by a fear effect. This penalty is cumulative if this result is rolled more than once.
11-15	<b>Melancholy:</b> The character stops caring and falls into a deep depression. He or she can take only two actions each turn. If a character obtains this result more than once, he or she instead becomes dazed.
16	<b>Mania:</b> The character is a bundle of unfocused energy. He or she can take an extra move action in place of a minor action. If the character does so, he or she takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and to all defenses until the end of his or her next turn.
17	<b>Megalomania:</b> The character believes he or she is invincible. He or she cannot use healing surges during an encounter until first bloodied.
18	<b>Paranoid Delusion:</b> The character is so distrustful that he or she no longer counts as an ally to anyone.
19	<b>Manic Depression:</b> The character fluctuates between melancholy and mania (as described above). Each round, he or she rolls a d20 at the start of his or her turn. On a result of 1-10, the character is affected by melancholy; on a result of 11-20, the character is affected by mania.
20	<b>Dementia:</b> The character has trouble distinguishing reality from fantasy. He or she automatically fails any Intelligence-, Wisdom-, or Charisma-based checks.
21+	<b>Catatonia:</b> The character retreats into himself or herself and is unresponsive. Treat this state as being unconscious, except that the character is still aware.

**Diplomacy (moderate DC by level, when an ally fails an Endurance, Perception, or Religion check):** Using reason, empathy, and careful words, the character talks an ally back from the brink. A successful check negates the failure from the triggering check, but not the insanity effect.

**Heal (moderate DC by level, when an ally fails an Endurance, Perception, or Religion check):** The character tends to the ally's trauma. A successful check negates the insanity effect from the triggering check, but not the failure.



**Intimidate** (*hard DC by level, when an ally fails an Endurance, Perception, or Religion check*): The character forces the ally to snap out of it. The ally must be conscious and willing to cooperate. A successful check negates both the failure and the insanity effect from the triggering check.

**Success:** The party holds together. The characters' minds are weary, but they are stronger for the experience. All insanity effects gained during the skill challenge end.

**Failure:** It's too much . . . each character gains an additional insanity effect. The insanity can be relieved only by a Remove Affliction ritual.

## DESTROYING A DEMONGATE

Demongates—permanent two-way portals between the Abyss and other points in the cosmos—are a constant danger. Although a demongate can be blocked by the Arcane Lock ritual (*Manual of the Planes*, page 149), such a temporary seal is too weak to hold back powerful denizens of the Abyss. Utterly destroying a demongate is no easy task, and it requires traveling to the portal's Abyss side.

**Level:** Equal to the level of the party, or up to three levels higher (XP equal to the reward for five standard monsters of the challenge's level).

**Complexity:** 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

**Special:** Dealing with a demongate is a traumatic process. Unless a character's primary skill check beats the DC by 5 or more, that character loses a healing surge in addition to any other effect of the skill check.

**Primary Skills:** Arcana, Religion, Thievery.

**Arcana** (*hard DC by level, standard action*): The character funnels abyssal energy from the demongate into his or her own body and then disperses it, diminishing the gate's power. This is a traumatic process, and it costs the character a healing surge.

**Religion** (*moderate DC by level, standard action*): The character purifies the gate by drawing on divine power.

**Thievery** (*hard DC by level, standard action*): A character adjacent to the gate is able to disable or rearrange the runes, sigils, and eldritch energy that fuel and regulate its power.

**Secondary Skill:** Endurance.

**Endurance** (*easy DC by level, immediate interrupt, when a character loses a healing surge from making a primary skill check*): The character making the Endurance check loses the healing surge instead of the character making the primary skill check. On a failure, both characters lose a healing surge.

**Success:** The demongate is destroyed, flaring in a burst of dark energy. Each nondemon within 1 mile of the Abyss side of the demongate takes ongoing 5

fire, cold, lightning, and poison damage per tier and is dazed (save ends both). *Aftereffect*: The creature is dazed (save ends). Based on your plans for the adventure, you determine whether the party can escape through the collapsing demongate or must find another way home.

**Failure:** The demongate is not destroyed but still flares with chaotic energy. Each nondemon creature within 1 mile of the Abyss side of the demongate takes ongoing 5 fire, cold, lightning, and poison damage per tier and is dazed (save ends both).

**Development:** Whether or not the characters are successful in sealing the demongate, the flare emitted alerts demons that someone is tampering with it. This skill challenge can result in an encounter with enraged demons or even a demon horde (see below), depending on your plans for the adventure.

## ESCAPING A DEMON HORDE

Countless demons roam the Abyss and portions of the Elemental Chaos. They gather in hordes too large and destructive for even a seasoned group of heroes to fight. Often, running is the only sensible response.

In this skill challenge, the characters must escape from a horde of demons. The challenge is also suitable for fleeing from slaad mobs, packs of elementals, or other large hostile groups. It assumes the action takes place over hours rather than rounds.

Each hour of the flight, every character must make an Endurance check (see below) to keep up the pace. Except where otherwise noted, each character can also make a single primary or secondary skill check each hour.

**Level:** One or two levels higher than the party level (XP equal to the reward for five standard monsters of the challenge's level).

**Complexity:** 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, Nature, Stealth.

*Acrobatics (hard DC by level):* The character uses superior agility to scout from vantage points and to find unusual routes away from the horde. Failure costs each party member a healing surge. A character who has no healing surges left loses hit points equal to his or her healing surge value.

*Arcana or Nature (hard DC by level):* The character uses knowledge of the Abyss or Elemental Chaos to predict geography and help the group find the best trail. A character who is familiar with the Elemental Chaos can attempt a Nature check instead of an Arcana check. Use Religion for this check if the chase takes place in the Astral Sea or the Shadowfell. Use Nature if the action takes place in the world or the Feywild.

*Athletics (hard DC by level):* The character uses Athletics to bring the group to higher ground, or to put rough terrain between the group and its pursuers.

Failure costs each party member a healing surge. A character who has no healing surges left loses hit points equal to his or her healing surge value.

*Stealth (moderate DC by level):* The character finds a good hiding spot, such as a valley or hollow, allowing the party to temporarily avoid the pursuers in the nick of time.

**Secondary Skills:** Diplomacy, Endurance, Heal, Insight, Intimidate, Perception.

*Diplomacy or Intimidate (hard DC by level):* The character spurs on his or her companions by relating the horrors that await if they fail to keep pace. A success with this skill grants each character a +2 bonus to his or her next Endurance check.

*Endurance (moderate DC by level; mandatory check):* To keep up the grueling pace, the characters tax themselves severely. Each character must make an Endurance check each hour; on a failure, he or she loses a healing surge. A character who has no healing surges left loses hit points equal to his or her healing surge value. In addition, the character is weakened during any surprise round and the first round of any combat until his or her next Endurance check is a success, or until the party successfully ends the skill challenge or takes an extended rest.

*Heal (hard DC by level):* The character works to keep the group healthy and to minimize fatigue. A success on this check prevents each party member from losing a healing surge to one failed skill check this hour.

*Insight or Perception (hard DC by level, once per day):* The character notices something in the demons' behavior (Insight) or their search tactics (Perception) that aids the group. This recognition negates one failure already accumulated in this challenge. Each of these skills can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

**Success:** The characters evade the demon horde and are safe . . . for now.

**Failure:** Some of the demons catch up to the characters. They face a combat encounter two or three levels higher than the party's level. If the characters overcome the opposition, they can start a new skill challenge and try to escape the remaining horde.

## NAVIGATING THE DEMONWEB

Any wrong turn in the Abyss can be deadly, but no place in that vile realm is as labyrinthine and terrifying as Lolth's Demonweb. Its silk-lined, tubelike passages continually morph and shift as her pets spin new webs and tear down the old, making any attempt to map the Demonweb futile.

You can use this epic tier skill challenge whenever the characters must win passage through a section of the Demonweb. Perhaps they need to reach one of the portals hidden within its tangle of passages, or



complete a mission against the Demon Queen of Spiders or her servants.

Extended forays into Lolth's lair might require succeeding on this skill challenge multiple times as the characters find their way from one section of the Demonweb to another.

Each hour of the passage, unless at least one character makes a successful Arcana check to keep the group on track (see below), the party gains 1 failure. In addition, each hour every character must make an Endurance check (see below) to resist the poisonous effects of the webs' inhabitants. Except for the character making the Arcana check, each character can also make a single primary or secondary skill check each hour.

**Level:** Equal to one level lower than the level of the party, increasing by one for each new skill challenge as another section of the Demonweb is discovered (XP equal to the reward for five standard monsters of the challenge's level).

**Complexity:** 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics, Athletics, Arcana, Nature.

*Acrobatics or Athletics (hard DC by level):* The character scrambles around in the tunnel and locates an opening, or cuts through the tunnel walls, revealing a safe path to another tangle of webbing. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

*Arcana (moderate DC by level):* The character uses his or her knowledge of the Abyss to keep the group moving in the right direction. Allies can aid this check, to a maximum bonus of +4. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success each hour.

*Nature (hard DC by level):* Although the Demonweb is far different from anything in the world, enough

natural arachnids dwell there for a skilled pathfinder to discern clues about the environment from their behavior.

**Secondary Skills:** Endurance, Heal, Perception.

*Endurance (moderate DC by level; mandatory check):* The Demonweb is infested with spiders and other dangerous arachnids. Avoiding all their stings and bites is impossible, resulting in accumulated poison over time. Each character must make an Endurance check each hour; on a failure, he or she loses a healing surge. A character who has no healing surges left loses hit points equal to his or her healing surge value. A failure on this skill check does not count as a failure in the skill challenge.

*Heal (hard DC by level, when a character fails an Endurance check):* The character successfully treats the character who failed the Endurance check. The ally does not lose a healing surge.

*Perception (easy DC by level):* The character notices something about the environment that aids navigation—he or she might feel a faint breeze from one direction, or spot signs of danger from another. A character who succeeds on this skill check can grant a +2 bonus to another character's subsequent Arcana check.

**Success:** The characters reach their destination or the next stop along the way. If the place they arrive at is guarded, the characters gain surprise against the guardians.

**Failure:** The characters become hopelessly turned around and run into a dangerous trap or group of monsters. They face a combat encounter of a level equal to that of the skill challenge. The characters must start the skill challenge anew to reach their destination or to make their way back to their starting point.

## ABYSSAL LOCATIONS

Only powerful demons and those that serve them live long in the Abyss. Braving its depths requires great courage or equally great foolishness. Adventurers find little respite in its stinking swamps of filth, shifting seas of necrotic seepage, and pits of hateful bile. The closest thing to civilization is the sleazy markets of Azzagrat.

The bizarre and horrific regions of the Abyss are legion. The following sample locations should get your fiendish imagination working.

### MAL ARUNDAK, THE BASTION OF CONFUSION

At the heart of a vast rainless waste, overlooking a gorge dropping into nothingness, stands a tall basalt bastion emblazoned with the symbol of Pelor. A horde of demons ebbs and flows around it like a terrible sea. Within the fortress, a group of former angels stands guard over what they believe is the trapped essence of the Chained God, Tharizdun.

They are wrong, and they have fallen into terrible folly.

This Bastion of Confusion was crafted by the leader of the guardians, Alusiel, to hold the *Ebon Stone*. The gods gave Alusiel this item not long after they shackled Tharizdun, telling the angel that the *Stone* was the essence of that dread being. Alusiel and other angels were charged with binding it within the Abyss and watching over it until the end of time. They have never questioned their assignment. This unthinking loyalty has led to their corruption and ultimate damnation.

Alusiel and the fellow guardians have resided at Mal Arundak for so long that the Abyss has transformed them into demons. Their forms and souls are terrible mockeries of what they once were. This alteration has been so subtle that they are convinced that they remain creatures of grace and light. To outsiders, however, their fall is obvious. The former

#### WHAT IS MAL ARUNDAK GUARDING?

Whatever it might be, it's not Tharizdun. The former angels have been tricked into the corruption of Mal Arundak for mysterious reasons. Although the *Ebon Stone* does contain the essence of a powerful creature, it does not hold the Chained God. The exact reason for the subterfuge, and the identity of the creature bound in the stone, are up to you.

angels' limbs are twisted, they have sprouted horns and barbs, and their wings are fiery, or black and leathery like those of bats. Only their featureless faces and haughty manner betray their origin.

The former angels are not aware of their dread transformation and continue offering shelter and aid to all who happen upon Mal Arundak and survive the demon throng outside. Unfortunately for those in their care, the angels' demonic taint manifests in paranoia, vanity, and blood lust. In the end, visitors must escape or fall under Alusiel's crackling sword of wrath.

#### INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

The demons that surge and snarl outside Mal Arundak never try to penetrate the bastion, though they are happy to tear apart travelers or fallen angels that come within reach. They exist only to buttress Alusiel's purported goal of protecting the Bastion of Confusion. Just how they know to maintain this careful facade is not known.

Treating with constituents of the demon horde is impossible. Large groups splinter off to attack and pursue any nondemon on sight (see the "Escaping a Demon Horde" skill challenge, page 116). However, flying is a relatively safe way to enter the Bastion. The surrounding horde contains horrors capable of flight, but they are far fewer than the land-bound demons.

Once inside, visitors remain threatened. They must convince the corrupted angels that they too are servants of the gods, or at least are actively working to fight evil. Despite their terrible forms, the former angels mercilessly attack anyone who even hints that corruption has taken hold of them.

Alusiel's company gives aid and respite for a short time, no more than a day or two, before paranoia and doubt sour the relationship. As time goes on, the corrupted angels become certain that their visitors are searching for the *Ebon Stone* and that they are working toward the release of the Chained God. They respond by first limiting visitors' access to highly controlled parts of the bastion. After a time, they set upon the visitors, imprisoning them in dank oubliettes in the lowermost reaches of Mal Arundak. The angelic host attacks to kill any who try to escape, but they do not pursue beyond the walls of Mal Arundak. The former angels are bound by their duty to guard the *Ebon Stone*.

#### MAJOR AREAS

Just as the strange situation within the walls of Mal Arundak is rife with adventure potential, so too is the vast wasteland around it.

**Asag:** Leagues beyond Mal Arundak, but visible from the uppermost reaches of the bastion, is a shining and treeless oasis. The entire site is a vast, unmoving demon called Asag. This strange being engulfs any creature that attempts to gain refreshment from its sparkling but poisoned waters. Even those who choose to circumvent the terrible place might be ambushed—several solamiths and barguras dwell within burrows dug into Asag’s massive body.

**Hesaxath’s Lair:** The seemingly endless gorge that Mal Arundak overlooks is home to a deadly hive of chasmes (*Manual of the Planes*, page 121). These monsters serve an undead dragon named Hesaxath, who is covertly building a power base in the hope of becoming the Abyss’s next demon lord. Hesaxath’s lair reeks of sulfur and death. Its chambers are filled with the dragon’s vast hoard, including one artifact—a seer’s stone supposedly created by Ioun.

## ADVENTURES

Mal Arundak is an excellent way to introduce a campaign set in the Abyss. Although the fortress seems a refuge of normalcy amid the chaos, it is soon revealed as another instance of demonic terror.

Getting into Mal Arundak is difficult enough. The tougher challenge is dealing with delusional angels that can turn on the characters at a moment’s notice. The heroes must walk a fine line—encouraging their hosts’ desire to help servants of the gods while quieting the dark corruption that has stained their essence. A truly epic task could be finding a way to redeem Alusiel and the others, perhaps by retrieving the *Ebon Stone*.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

**Asag Black Grass:** Although the area of Asag is treeless, black grass appears to grow from its surface. In truth, the stalks are the demon’s appendages. Resembling cilia, the tendrils grab at anything in reach. Any nondemon that falls prone in a square of Asag black grass must make a DC 20 Strength check to stand up. Each creature that is prone in a square of Asag black grass at the end of its turn takes 10 acid damage.

**Screaming Winds:** The areas around the Bastion of Confusion are immense and lifeless wastelands. Winds blow strongly over the dusty plains, howling with anguished cries. Dangerous whirlwinds (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 69) often arise.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

The following encounter groups fit the strange happenings of Mal Arundak.



### Level 11 Encounter (XP 3,450)

- ◆ 3 barguras (level 8 brute, *MM* 53)
- ◆ 2 canoloths (level 7 soldier, *Manual of the Planes* 120)
- ◆ 2 evistros (level 6 brute, *MM* 54)
- ◆ 2 neldrazus (level 8 lurker, *Monster Manual 2* 56)
- ◆ 2 runespiral demons (level 5 artillery, *Monster Manual 2* 59)

### Level 14 Encounter (XP 5,200)

- ◆ 4 corrupted angels of protection\* (level 14 soldier, *MM* 15)
  - ◆ 1 corrupted angel of valor\* (level 15 skirmisher, *MM* 14)
- \* To reflect these angels’ corruption, change their origin to elemental, add the demon keyword, and give them resist 10 variable (2/encounter).

### Level 15 Encounter (XP 6,200)

- ◆ 2 boneclaws (level 14 soldier, *MM* 37)
- ◆ 3 chasmes (level 14 skirmisher, *Manual of the Planes* 121)
- ◆ 1 immolith (level 15 controller, *MM* 56)



## MOLOR, THE STINKING REALM

Juiblex, patron of slimes and oozes, is a disgusting and unfathomable demon prince. He rules a revolting layer of the Abyss, of which the Stinking Realm of Molor is iconic. It is a land of oozes and slime, many infused with demonic energy. The area is permeated with filth, decay, and the atmosphere of long-dead empires. Its malodorous denizens are at home in the filth, carriers of disease and infested with parasites. Molor is anathema to Erathis, the deity who personifies the heights of civilization; the Sinking Realm embodies its nadir and, perhaps, its ultimate fate.

### INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

Molor's inhabitants are demons, oozes, otyughs, and similar creatures that have no civilization. Society is not absent, however. A town called Thullgrime hunches in the twisted tunnels like a feeble and wasting toad. Mad cultists, trapped and dying explorers, wererats, and disease-riddled consumptives dwell in its streets and shantytowns. They are a weakened lot, futilely attempting to ward off a slow, debilitating, and inevitable doom. Though they are little more than scavengers in the wilderness, a shared sense of decay and disease unites these individuals. Outsiders are horrified when they learn that intelligent creatures of any sort reside in this putrid sinkhole.

### JUIBLEX, THE FACELESS LORD

Juiblex is not among the most powerful of the demon princes of the Abyss, but it is one of the most infamous and horrific. A viscous mass covered with unblinking eyes and spurting gouts of sludge, it is the lord of oozes, slimes, rot, and decay. Juiblex and its servants wish only to consume and dissolve all living things.

Molor, though part of the Faceless Lord's realm, is not its home domain. Juiblex dwells within the 222nd layer of the Abyss, called Shedaklah, where it wars for supremacy with Zuggtmoy, the Lady of Fungi. The two realms are linked by a number of portals, most of which exist within Juiblex's portion of Shedaklah.

Although Juiblex and Zuggtmoy are of roughly equivalent personal power, the Faceless Lord has little interest in cults; its few followers are vastly outnumbered by those of the Lady of Fungi. This disparity keeps Juiblex on the losing end of their struggle. The Faceless Lord might be eventually forced to retreat to Molor, making that into its new abode.

Juiblex is one of the oldest demon lords of the D&D game, having appeared as far back as the 1st Edition *Monster Manual*.

### MAJOR AREAS

Nobody has bothered mapping much of Molor. Still, a few areas are known to those who either dwell within or have studied the region.

**Dripping Tunnels:** Molor is filled with labyrinthine tunnels of muck. The ceilings bow precariously, and ooze drips and trickles overhead. Filth of all sorts—stinking waste, diseased refuse, rotten food—is embedded in the walls or flows along the floor in lazy streams. Scholars claim that sewage from throughout the planes ultimately seeps into Molor's dripping tunnels.

**Juiblex's Shrine:** Somewhere in the heart of Molor's tunnels is a shrine to Juiblex, the Faceless Lord. Here, devoted and powerful cultists pay homage to their infernal master. Juiblex's shrine is said to hold uncounted riches beneath its surface: the offerings of centuries of worshipers who came, placed something before the altar, and watched it sink into the slime.

**The Maw of Eternity:** At the end of a sodden series of tunnels is a cavern called the Maw of Eternity, which features a dripping, 15-foot-wide hole in its center. The place serves as a last resort for inhabitants of the Stinking Realm, particularly denizens of Thullgrime. Demonic beasts infest the tunnels that lead here, plaguing invaders or explorers. However, they seem to sense the desperation and misery of the hopeless and leave such creatures alone, fading into the shadows. The damned are free to skulk through the sucking mud and stand at the lip of the pit.

The Maw of Eternity is said to be bottomless—those who leap in fall forever. Other rumors say that a plummeting wretch ends up somewhere else. To the desperate Thullgrime denizens, either result is acceptable.

In fact, anyone that falls into the Maw continues to descend for about ten minutes before passing through an unpredictable portal. It might transport creatures to another, deeper layer of the Abyss one moment and to a different plane the next. Once in a great while, a creature passing through the portal ends up beyond the planes entirely. The few scholars who know about the Maw's portal wonder if it leads to Juiblex's original realm. Perhaps, long ago, a creature from Beyond crawled up the side of this hole, heaved itself over its lip, and infested a new home.

**Thullgrime:** The only known settlement in Molor, Thullgrime is a collection of shacks thrown together from rotting fungal fibers, burrowed out of heaps of ooze, or slapped together from garbage. The streets are covered with a sucking, foul-smelling muck. In places, the ground seems alive and drags creatures below; and bones bubble up minutes, hours, or days later. Disease haunts the streets, and maggot-ridden corpses are a common sight.

Cullis Heartrend rules the town. He was the self-proclaimed king of a small city-state whose name has been lost to history—as have the details of the sins of hubris that caused his soul to wind up here. Cullis’s mind snapped long ago, and he lords over this stinking hovel-town as if it were an opulent empire.

Thullgrime’s citizens grudgingly do Cullis’s bidding—strapping on rusted weapons to go on patrol, shuffling soiled scraps and calling it paperwork, and shambling about on so-called state business. They obey mainly because they fear Cullis’s punishment, meted out by a dire creature called the Grollog. This being might have once been an earth-based elemental that was corrupted by Juiblex’s influence. Now, it is a huge, amorphous beast with a great, sucking maw and dripping pits for eyes. It can merge with other oozy material and travel throughout Molor, moving through the floors, walls, or ceilings with only a ripple to denote its passing. The Grollog is somewhat intelligent and can communicate in broken Abyssal and Common. Why it obeys Cullis is anyone’s guess; most denizens suspect Juiblex’s influence.

## ADVENTURES

Molor does not welcome visitors. Those who are knowledgeable about the place avoid it unless no other option exists. The characters might need to speak with a person or a creature in Thullgrime, or they might track a dangerous cult of Juiblex to a base here. They might wind up in the Stinking Realm by accident, perhaps crossing over from the winding sewers of a major and magic-rife city in the world, or they could be forced to pass through on their way elsewhere.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

The ever-present, slippery muck makes all but a few of Molor’s surfaces difficult terrain.

**Cave Slime:** Cave slime (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 67), or its abyssal equivalent, coats many surfaces in Molor.

**Cloudspore:** These mushrooms (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 67) grow among stands of other fungi.

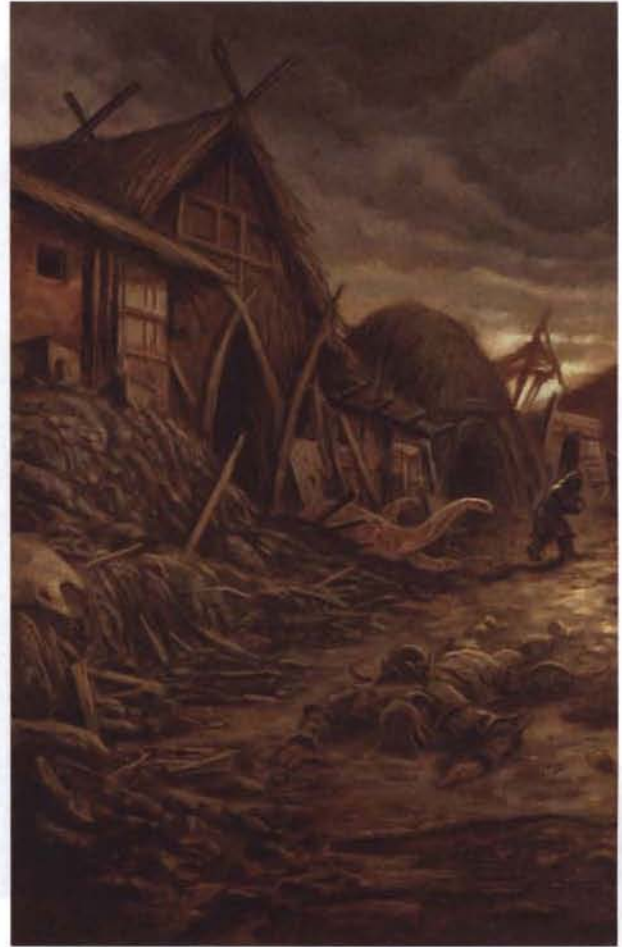
**Demon Slick:** This oily black slime (page 14) is difficult to discern from the surrounding filth.

**Grasping Slime:** Molor’s muck is a perfect location for this feature (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 68).

**Infectious Pallor:** Endemic to Molor, this terrain (page 16) harbors horrifically wasting diseases such as slimy doom (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 50).

**Sacred Circle:** A few circles (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 68) dedicated to Juiblex exist throughout the realm.

**Slides:** Many steep areas and sluices of Molor function as slides (*Dungeon Master’s Guide*, page 68).



## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Oozes and slimes dwell in Molor, as do creatures of filth and a plethora of demons.

### Level 5 Encounter (XP 1,000)

- ◆ 1 gelatinous cube (level 5 elite brute, MM 202)
- ◆ 3 wights (level 5 skirmisher, MM 262)

### Level 9 Encounter (XP 2,250)

- ◆ 1 black pudding (level 8 elite brute, *Monster Manual 2* 172)
- ◆ 2 carrion crawlers (level 7 controller, MM 40)
- ◆ 1 gorgon mud hazard (level 8 obstacle, page 18)
- ◆ 2 otyughs (level 7 soldier, MM 211)

### Level 17 Encounter (XP 9,000)

- ◆ 2 abyssal ghouls (level 16 skirmisher, MM 118)
- ◆ 2 abyssal ghouls hungerers (level 18 minion, MM 119)
- ◆ 1 acid transformation field hazard\* (level 18 obstacle, page 21)
- ◆ 1 enormous carrion crawler (level 17 elite controller, MM 40)

\* This functions like an elemental transformation field, but the damage type and transformation are acid instead of fire.

## THE PLAINS OF RUST

A plain coated in dull red particles stretches beneath an eternal twilight sky in the Abyss. Wide, flat basins and gently rolling dunes give way to towering, mountainous heaps and dark pits of unfathomable depths—all caked with rust flakes. Here and there, jagged sheets of corroded iron protrude from great salt flats cast in a hideous, unnatural light. Winds blow incessantly, stirring the rust into a clinging mist.

During the last flare-up of the Blood War, Asmodeus's devils built strongholds in the Abyss. They used these great iron fortresses to launch attacks against the near-endless demons. Most of these strongholds were perched on the Plain of a Thousand Portals, but the devils managed to secure footholds in some of the deeper layers.

One such layer was a grim, swampy demesne without redeeming features. It was empty, useless, unimportant. Yet, by a quirk of planar conjunction, it boasted three intermittent portals to the Nine Hells. Using a cunning ritual, the devils regularized the passages and colonized the area. They built fortresses atop rising hillocks and protruding from the swamp before the demons discovered their presence.

The atmosphere of the layer, poisoned by the hideous substances in the swamp, had always been toxic and corrosive. It was not debilitating enough to curtail the devils' plans—at least at first. Upon learning of the devils' presence, the demon lords Orcus and Juiblex set their will to enhancing the layer's existing environment. Between Orcus's mastery of necrotic energy and Juiblex's command over caustic ooze, the layer's atmosphere became supersaturated with decay. Iron fortifications crumbled in a matter of days, and clouds of rust mushroomed into the air. The grit mixed with the swamp, creating a viscous sludge. As it continued to drift down, it covered everything like a horrific snowfall. In time, the ground became a close-packed rust plain blanketing a highly toxic mire. As the diabolic fortresses crumbled, the demons swarmed, further tainting the rust with the blood of their enemies.

### INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

No demon lord claims this layer, and the only inhabitants are mindlessly destructive. The essence of slain devils and demons became infused with the necrotic and acidic power of the buried swamp. This mixture gave rise to baleful corrupting undead and malignant constructs that seek to destroy all they encounter.

The demon princes send packs of demons here from time to time to ensure that the portals to the Nine Hells remain buried and unusable. Occasional diabolic scouting parties make an effort to reopen the portals. Mortal explorers have established temporary camps while searching the rusted ruins for ancient magic used during the Blood War. None

of these groups ever survive long enough, or grow large enough, to form communities. A single tribe of humanoids wanders the rust plain like nomads in a desert of the world. No one knows who they are, why they dwell here, and how they have managed to survive.

### MAJOR AREAS

Sinkholes lead to warrens within the rusty mire, and broken, corroded ruins of diabolic fortresses yet house wonders and horrors alike.

**The Bloody Fen:** Although the realm is pocked with sinkholes, in one expanse the hard-packed rust that covers the plain is thin enough that careless wanderers can sink into the sludge beneath. This so-called Bloody Fen is miles across, a surviving bit of the toxic mire that once covered the entire layer. Passersby who stumble into it must either wade through the venomous muck or pole a barge or raft across. All the while, fen-dwelling horrors lurk beneath the semisolid surface.

**Fort Splinter:** Most of the devils' fortresses have been reduced to flakes of rust or a few corroded walls. A few strongholds still stand—not whole, but at least recognizable. The largest of these is Fort Splinter. Legend claims that powerful magic and numerous artifacts wait to be discovered here, perhaps even one of the portals to Hell. Tales also speak of the lurking spirits of its diabolic defenders, ready to slaughter all trespassers.

**The Palace of Dust:** According to accounts from survivors of the Plains of Rust, clouds of particles whipped by the wind occasionally settle into the form of an ornate palace. Always spotted at a distance, the shape boasts a dozen variegated towers, all surrounded by a bastion that rises and falls like a tide. If it is a mirage, it's a remarkably consistent one. Still, no traveler has been able to draw near the palace before it disintegrates back to wind-blown dust.

### ADVENTURES

Encounters can occur anywhere within the Plains of Rust, and the few creatures that dwell here are universally hostile. Despite its desolate nature, the place attracts interest. Adventurers, devils, and demons seek relics of the Blood War, left behind in the crumbling fortresses or buried beneath layers of dust. The peculiar nomadic tribe or chambers within the Palace of Dust could hold great secrets forgotten since the days of the war.

Then, too, there are the ancient portals. If one or all three were unearthed, they could once again connect the most vile areas in the cosmos. If so, what might they be used for this time? Characters desperate to escape the Abyss might seek these portals as a way out. Hell isn't a much more pleasant place, but at least devils can be bargained with.



## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

Most of the plain's surface is solid and is treated as normal terrain.

**Blood Rust:** These areas behave like blood rock (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 67).

**Corroding Air:** Ferrous metals such as iron and steel corrode swiftly in the Plains of Rust. Each day of exposure, metal weapons take a cumulative -1 penalty to attack rolls made with them (maximum -3), and metal armor and shields take a cumulative -1 penalty to their AC and Reflex bonuses (maximum -3). Such weapons and armor disintegrate into rust when the penalty is greater than the object's enhancement bonus. The Enchant Magic Item ritual can be used to repair a magic object that is so damaged but not destroyed, at one-fifth the item's cost.

**Iron Scraps:** The lingering essence of devils or demons might be able to animate portions of iron scraps. Treat the resulting creatures as iron golems or iron golem juggernauts. You can give them a demonic feel by adding variable resistance or making them deal necrotic or fire damage.

**Rust Cloud:** Clouds of rust are kicked up by the winds, creating lightly obscured squares.

**Rust Storm:** The equivalent of a whirlwind (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 69), these squares are also heavily obscured by rust particles.

**Rust, Shifting:** In areas, the rust layer is soft, like fine sand, forming difficult terrain. A few of these

areas include sinkholes that drop passersby into the sludge beneath. The muck might be grasping slime (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 68), acidic mire (page 12), or something more dire.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Common encounters in the Plains of Rust involve the undead and constructs that haunt the region. The characters also could stumble upon demons or devils searching for the layer's secrets.

### Level 16 Encounter (XP 7,400)

- ◆ 1 dust demons (level 15 elite controller, page 132)
- ◆ 1 demonic slime hazard (level 16 obstacle, *Manual of the Planes* 23)
- ◆ 3 immoliths (level 15 controller, MM 56)

### Level 22 Encounter (XP 21,550)

- ◆ 6 abyssal ghoul myrmidons (level 23 minion, MM 119)
- ◆ 1 iron golem (level 20 elite soldier, *Monster Manual 2* 134)
- ◆ 2 void crust hazards (level 22 obstacle, page 22)

### Level 25 Encounter (XP 41,000)

- ◆ 1 abyssal rotfiend (level 26 controller, *Monster Manual 2* 52)
- ◆ 2 dread wraiths (level 25 lurker, MM 267)
- ◆ 1 iron golem juggernaut (level 26 elite soldier, *Monster Manual 2* 135)

## THE SPIRES OF RAJZAK

This vast badland of sickening black and brown rock features strange, top-heavy spires and formations of balancing rocks that appear to have been eroded by a long-evaporated sea. Some rock arches form naturally occurring, one-way demongates, allowing creatures from other parts of the cosmos to enter but never to leave. These unfortunates are doomed to die within the horrid canyons of the Spires of Rajzak.

This forlorn place is named for its infamous inhabitant, the gargantuan Rajzak, a being said to be as powerful as a demon lord but more bestial than the dimmest bargura. Rajzak hunts this expanse still, killing and devouring any creature it comes across.

Many demons also call the Spires home. They roam the area in nomadic groups, waging war against one another, outrunning the rampaging Rajzak, and delighting in the slaughter of those deposited here by demongates.

### RAJZAK'S ORIGIN

According to an obscure and cryptic passage in the *Demonomicon* of Iggwilv (*Manual of the Planes*, page 132), Rajzak wasn't always a devouring mass of regrowth and mindless rage. It suggests that Rajzak was among the first demon lords to arise after Tharizdun created the Abyss. In past eons Rajzak was known by a different name, now lost to the ages, and ruled over the spires that the creature now haunts. That role earned him the sobriquet Lord of the Spires.

A demon lord of uncommon beauty and rare guile, he meddled in the politics of the Abyss, the world, and even the Astral Sea. This was his biggest mistake. The *Demonomicon* asserts that because of Rajzak's meddling, Asmodeus sent Graz't to the Abyss to retrieve a second shard of evil, though the reason for the expedition is not clear. Eventually the demon prince came into conflict with Graz't, and during their battle the devil was able to tear both the mind and soul from the Lord of the Spires and hide it as an "itinerant hellflame, forever lost." Most scholars believe that Graz't began to transform from devil to demon as a result of eons spent within the Abyss, but few suggest that he used a portion of Rajzak's essence to undergo the process.

The consensus of those who have studied this passage is that Graz't intends to keep his former enemy forever trapped in the Spires of Rajzak, tormented in a mindless form whose soul and body are disconnected. Other demonologists believe that the sly Lord of the Spires actually tricked Graz't into creating his current form, and that the demon lord is becoming transformed into the most powerful demon prince the cosmos has ever known.

## INHABITANTS AND CULTURE

No settlements exist in the Spires, only masses of demons that hunt the unforgiving badlands. Scores of these groups run riot among the twisted canyons. The more notable groups, along with Rajzak, are detailed here.

**The Gibberers:** Composed not of one horde but a number of smaller packs, the Gibberers are a force of raw chaos. Barguras, evistros, and goristros gather in inexplicable mobs, babbling madness. With gnashing teeth, drooling lips, and rending claws, they rampage through the Spires, destroying everything in their path. At times, bands of these demons work for days to bring down one of the area's massive spires. Their reason for doing so is as unclear as anything else they do.

Why do these creatures mass, and why they continually blather nonsense? Perhaps a strange disease infects them, or the chaos of the Abyss is particularly concentrated here. A few reports describe gibbering orbs accompanying the Gibberers in their wanton destruction.

**The Inferno of Mescathas:** At times, a bright sunrise seems to pierce the gray and bitter sky of the Spires. The inhabitants know that such a dawn brings only fiery doom. A large group of immoliths roams the land in a great flaming mass, commanding legions of blazing skeletons and other fiery undead and torching anything that will burn. The incandescent mob is led by Mescathas, an undead fire demon desperately searching for the Greenfire Doorway (see below). He hopes to escape the Abyss and begin a campaign to burn everything to a lifeless cinder.

**Krazzkat's Horde:** The largest of the demonic hordes is under the thrall of the bullying balor Krazzkat. A ragtag band comprising all sorts of demons, the mob throngs through the canyons, devouring and slaying as it goes—trampling its weakest members as it pushes through tighter spots. The unruly mass carries Krazzkat atop a huge stone and iron litter, large enough to serve as a base for what he calls his palace. The small construction is little more than a couple of rooms housing the balor and his chief lieutenants. Some observers believe that Krazzkat intends to challenge Rajzak and absorb its power.

**Rajzak:** Over 80 feet tall and twice as wide, this obese mass of maws, claws, and oozing sores lurches and seeps through the caverns, propelled by dozens of stubby limbs. Parts of Rajzak are reptilian or amphibian, but other sections are indescribable. The foul demon heals at an alarming rate and can regrow limbs lost in battle or to the razor-sharp protrusions of the Spire's cavern walls.

Rajzak exists only to eat and destroy—if it is capable of speech, none have ever heard it talk.

**The Thousand Swords:** Vestra and Volauk, a pair of marilith sisters, command this group. Vrocks and mezzodemons flock to their banner, sharing their fierce, tactical, and heartless approach to surviving and mastering the Spires. Surprisingly clear-headed for demons, Vestra and Volauk realize that survival in the Spires requires teamwork. They are less spendthrift with the lives of their underlings than other demons. They are also more open to parley than others, though they negotiate typically as a pretense to learn the weakness of potential prey.

Unlike many of the demons in the Spires, the sisters are not exiles but travel the area in the service of Graz'zt. If they know Graz'zt's plan for the Thousand Swords, the sisters do not speak of it. One rumor claims that the Dark Prince is training a special force, and that he has designs on controlling the Spires and making this the fourth layer in his empire.

## MAJOR AREAS

For the most part, the Spires of Rajzak are a monotony of black dust, teetering rock formations, and deadly bottleneck canyons that make ideal ambush sites. A few areas break this uniformity.

**The Bastion of Hate:** Carved into a mountain-side by an unknown architect eons ago, the Bastion of Hate is one of the few permanent structures in the Spires of Rajzak. It hums with arcane energy and is impervious to even Rajzak's predations. These features make the fortress a highly desirable base of operations for the hordes that haunt the Spires. Recently, a powerful group of githzerai has begun to explore the Bastion of Hate, perhaps with the aim of transforming it into a monastery.

**The Greenfire Doorway:** Among the demongates that dot the Spires of Rajzak, only one promises escape: the Greenfire Doorway. It might be no more than a myth, but the Doorway fills the hopeful thoughts of exiles desperate to leave the Spires. Some theories suggest that it is not a single passage but a phenomenon that affects one or more of the demongates, wreathing them in a strange green fire when active.

**Sorrow's Crescent:** This massive canyon is sometimes referred to as Rajzak's Nest, but no evidence indicates that the massive demon does more than pass through the place. Over 50 miles long and 20 miles across, it is the largest open area in the Spires. At any given time, at least one demon horde, or Rajzak, occupies Sorrow's Crescent. Demons that spend more than a few hours here heal all wounds. They gain other, random powers when they drink the inky liquid that rolls down the canyon's sides.

## ADVENTURES

Escaping a demon horde or outrunning the ponderous mass of Rajzak can be challenge enough, but anyone trapped in the Spires of Rajzak seeks escape above all. Several means are available, but all are dangerous or elusive in nature. Finding the Greenfire Doorway is a fool's errand, though many sorry creatures eking out an existence in the Spires are happy to sell a "genuine" map to the demongate. (These wretches have plenty of inventive excuses for why they haven't used the map to get out.) Still, the place might exist and could permit release.

The githzerai in the Bastion of Hate might offer the best way to escape the Spires—they clearly have a means of exit. The characters would have to win the trust of those suspicious people, however.

## ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

**False Gates:** A number of false demongates stand amid the stone arches. They are teleporters (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 69) that only send unfortunates even deeper into the Spires.

**Loadstone:** Many of the protruding rocks and jags throughout the Spires consist of this peculiar substance (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 68).

**Primordial Fonts:** These pools of chaotic energy (page 17) bubble up throughout the area.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Demon hordes predominate in the Spires, but undead and other creatures can be found on occasion.

### Level 14 Encounter (XP 5,400)

- ◆ 2 immoliths (level 15 controller, *MM* 56)
- ◆ 2 abyssal eviscerators (level 14 brute, *Monster Manual* 2 51)
- ◆ 2 skull lords (level 10 artillery, *MM* 236)

### Level 16 Encounter (XP 7,600)

- ◆ 3 githzerai mindmages (level 14 artillery, *Monster Manual* 2 131)
- ◆ 1 githzerai zerth (level 13 elite controller, *Monster Manual* 2 130)
- ◆ 5 githzerai cenobites (level 11 soldier, *Monster Manual* 2 130)

### Level 17 Encounter (XP 8,000)

- ◆ 2 chasmes (level 14 skirmisher, *Manual of the Planes* 121)
- ◆ 3 vrocks (level 13 skirmisher, *MM* 58)
- ◆ 6 mezzodemons (level 11 soldier, *MM* 58)

# CREATURES OF CHAOS

**EVEN IN** the wild and seething Elemental Chaos, life thrives. Such beings appear alien to creatures of the world, but they are driven by the same desires and emotions and are just as dangerous to adventurers as other monsters they are more familiar with.

A host of creatures native to the ever-shifting realms of the Plane Below appear in the *Monster Manuals* and the *Manual of the Planes* books. This chapter expands upon those concepts and adds new ones to fill your campaign with challenges for elemental-themed adventures. Though all these monsters originated in the Elemental Chaos, they are also found in the mortal world.

In this chapter you will find:

- ◆ **Abominations:** Elemental monstrosities that continue to war against the gods and their servants.
- ◆ **Archons:** New archons to serve in primordial armies.
- ◆ **Blight-Born Demons:** Elemental creatures tainted and twisted by the influence of the Abyss.
- ◆ **Eisk Jaats:** Beings of elemental cold enslaved by the frost giants.
- ◆ **Elementals:** More of the wild creatures that embody all the forces of creation.
- ◆ **Slaads:** More additions to the ever-growing roster of the chaotic, illogical slaads.
- ◆ **Masters of the Elements:** Legendary and infamous figures of the Elemental Chaos, including Ekhahk the Smoldering Duke, the revered githzerai Liricosa, and the horrifying Ygorl, ancient slaad lord and champion of entropy.



JULIE DILLON





# ABOMINATION

ABOMINATIONS ARE LIVING WEAPONS crafted by the primordials during the Dawn War. Several of those dread weapons continue to roam the Elemental Chaos and beyond, still obeying their ancient instructions to slaughter the children of the gods.

## PRIMEVAL OOZE

The viscid and mutable primeval ooze is a primitive form of life, an acid-filled amoeboid blob. Ever hungry, it bubbles with envy of all more advanced creatures.

**Primeval Ooze** Level 24 Elite Brute  
Huge elemental beast (blind, ooze) XP 12,100

Initiative +17 Senses Perception +18;  
blindsight 20, tremorsense 20

**Seeping Sludge** aura 3; the aura's area is difficult terrain. Any creature that has a critical hit scored against it while within the aura is knocked prone.

HP 556; Bloodied 278

AC 36; Fortitude 40, Reflex 36, Will 37

Immune gaze, poison; Resist 30 acid

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5, burrow 5; see also *engulf*

Action Points 1

⊕ **Pseudopod** (standard; at-will) ⚡ Acid

Reach 3; +27 vs. AC; 3d8 + 9 acid damage, and the ooze slides the target 2 squares.

⊕ **Engulf** (standard; at-will) ⚡ Acid

The primeval ooze attacks one or two Large or smaller targets; +25 vs. Reflex (no attack roll required against an immobilized creature); the target is grabbed and pulled into the primeval ooze's space. The target is dazed and takes ongoing 20 acid damage until it escapes the grab. A creature that escapes the grab shifts to a square of its choosing adjacent to the primeval ooze. A primeval ooze can move normally while creatures are engulfed within it.

⚡ **Bursting Cyst** (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack; at-will) ⚡ Acid

Close blast 4; targets the triggering attacker; +25 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 6 acid damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

⚡ **Torrent of Slime** (standard; at-will) ⚡ Acid

Area burst 3 within 20; +25 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 10 acid damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned

Languages understands  
Primordial

Skills Stealth +27

Str 25 (+19)

Dex 21 (+17)

Wis 23 (+18)

Con 28 (+21)

Int 7 (+10)

Cha 17 (+15)

## PRIMEVAL OOZE TACTICS

The ground surrounding a primeval ooze is covered in a slimy sheen, making enemies more vulnerable to its attacks. Primeval oozes soften up their opponents using *torrent of slime*, then engulf immobilized victims.

## PRIMEVAL OOZE LORE

**Arcana DC 24:** Primeval oozes are weapons of the primordials, crafted from the earliest forms of life to consume servants of the gods. Only a few primeval oozes were created. Most that remain dwell in remote regions of the Elemental Chaos, but some lurk in desolate wilds of the world, always on the hunt for prey. Though they are unable to speak, the horrors understand Primordial.

**Arcana DC 29:** A primeval ooze conceals itself in a slimy place, such as a stinking swamp in Canaughlin Bog, and waits for prey to come unsuspecting to it. When roused, though, it roams the wastelands, devouring everything it encounters—from puny goblins to mighty dragons.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Primeval oozes are usually solitary but can travel in pairs or small groups. Sometimes an ooze learns to share the territory of certain elemental creatures, realizing that leaving this prey alone ultimately brings it more food.

## UNIQUE ABOMINATIONS

Many abominations were created in numbers, even if only a handful still exist. Some, though, are unique individuals created by primordials that either intended them for a specific purpose or simply couldn't be bothered to make more.

The most infamous of these unique abominations is the tarrasque (*Monster Manual*, page 13), though some myths suggest that more than one such creature might exist. If the natural realm contains multiple worlds, as they claim, perhaps each such world harbors its own tarrasque. For all practical purposes, however, the beast is unique.

Xixecal, the Living Glacier, is another such unique abomination. This roving servant of Solkara, the Crushing Wave, is detailed further on page 153.

Other unique abominations known to exist include the following.

**Annak-Kur, the Empty Blade:** The most potent servant of the now deceased Tabrach-Ti, the Queen of Bronze, Annak-Kur is a creature of ore and blades that roams the cosmos seeking out angels and other divine servitors to slay.

**Engakar, Twilight's Herald:** Nobody today knows what Engakar looks like, for it exists only as a name in ancient texts. Engakar is said to have been created not to battle the gods, but to destroy the primal spirits that barred both the gods and the primordials from the world.

**Thrasvarrun, the Screaming Storm:** A creature without physical form, Thrasvarrun is literally a living peal of thunder, traveling the skies from storm to storm. It adds its own power to that of nature, creating weather of inconceivable destructive force.

**Level 23 Encounter (XP 28,350)**

- ◆ 2 blood fiends (level 23 soldier, MM 12)
- ◆ 1 great flameskull (level 24 artillery, MM 109)
- ◆ 1 primeval ooze (level 24 elite brute)

## STORM THAT WALKS

A storm that walks is the fury of the elements given destructive purpose. It takes the form of a mass of dark, boiling clouds with a vaguely humanoid shape, flickering with lightning and spawning ice storms with each immense step.

**Storm That Walks**      **Level 28 Solo Controller**  
 Gargantuan elemental humanoid (air, cold, fire)      XP 65,000

**Initiative** +22      **Senses** Perception +21; low-light vision

**Oncoming Storm** aura 5; creatures (including flying creatures) treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain. Each enemy within the aura gains vulnerable 10 lightning.

**HP** 1,008; **Bloodied** 504

**AC** 42; **Fortitude** 41, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 40

**Immune** lightning; **Resist** 20 cold, 20 lightning, 20 thunder, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** cold (if a storm that walks takes cold damage, it loses the insubstantial quality until the end of its next turn)

**Saving Throws** +5

**Speed** fly 8 (hover)

**Action Points** 2

⊕ **Pummeling Gust** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Cold**  
 Reach 4; +32 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 11 cold damage, and the target is knocked prone.

⊕ **Tongue of Lightning** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Lightning**  
 Ranged 20; +32 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 11 lightning damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). *Each Failed Saving Throw:* Each ally adjacent to the target takes 10 lightning damage.

⊕ **Forked Tongue** (standard; at-will)  
 The storm that walks makes four basic attacks. It cannot attack the same target more than twice.

⊕ **Fist of the Storm** (minor; recharge 2) ◆ **Cold, Lightning**  
 Ranged 20; +32 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 11 cold and lightning damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). *Each Failed Saving Throw:* The storm that walks slides the target 3 squares.

⊕ **Raging Storm** (minor; recharge 2) ◆ **Lightning, Thunder**  
 Close burst 3; +32 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 11 lightning and thunder damage, and the storm that walks pushes the target 4 squares and knocks it prone.

**Storm Unleashed** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ◆ **Cold, Lightning, Thunder**  
*Raging storm and hand of the storm* recharge, and the storm that walks uses them both.

<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Primordial	
<b>Str</b> 30 (+24)	<b>Dex</b> 27 (+22)	<b>Wis</b> 24 (+21)
<b>Con</b> 20 (+19)	<b>Int</b> 16 (+17)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+17)

## STORM THAT WALKS TACTICS

A storm that walks prefers to remain at a distance and obliterate foes with ranged attacks. It is smart enough to cooperate with allies, but its desire to destroy often overcomes its better sense. It seizes any opportunity to use *raging storm*, even if it catches an ally in the area of effect.



## STORM THAT WALKS LORE

**Arcana DC 28:** A storm that walks is a literal thunderstorm given malevolent life. Any who get too close become more vulnerable to its devastating attacks.

After creating the first storm that walks, the primordials began to experiment with crafting the elemental soldiers known as archons.

**Arcana DC 33:** Different legends attribute the origin of the first storm that walks to Mual-Tar, the Thunder Serpent, or to Iktha-Lau, the Ever Empty. Perhaps the two cooperated in its creation. Today, these abominations hold no allegiance to any primordial.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

A storm that walks hates all nonelemental living things and barely tolerates the presence of other creatures. It sometimes works as a member of a group for the opportunity to destroy more victims. It attracts elemental creatures that share its nature and might even let them live.

**Level 29 Encounter (XP 91,000)**

- ◆ 2 storm gorgons (level 26 skirmisher, MM 143)
- ◆ 1 storm that walks (level 28 solo controller)
- ◆ 1 thunderblast cyclone (level 26 artillery, MM 105)

# ARCHON

SHOCK TROOPS AND SOLDIERS OF THE PRIMORDIALS, the archons formed armies to stand against the forces of the gods during the Dawn War. After their creators fell, the archons continued to serve powerful beings of the Elemental Chaos. They even follow other creatures that support their cause: to restore rulership of the world to the primordial.

## IRON ARCHON

The most violent of their kind, iron archons are quick to initiate bloodshed.

### Iron Archon Interceptor Level 14 Soldier Medium elemental humanoid XP 1,000

**Initiative** +14    **Senses** Perception +12  
**HP** 144; **Bloodied** 72; see also *blood rust*  
**AC** 30 (28 while bloodied); **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26 (25 while bloodied), **Will** 26  
**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 15 lightning; see also *lightning leap*

**Speed** 6  
⊕ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
+21 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the iron archon interceptor's next turn.

⊕ **Intercepting Slash** (immediate interrupt, when an enemy marked by the interceptor and within 3 squares of it makes an attack that does not include the interceptor; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
The iron archon interceptor shifts into the nearest empty square adjacent to the target and makes an attack; +21 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage, and the target is weakened until the end of the interceptor's next turn.

**Blood Rust** (while bloodied) ♦ **Poison**  
The iron archon interceptor is filmed in a poisonous rust and flies into a rage. It takes a -2 penalty to AC and a -1 penalty to Reflex, and targets hit by its weapon attacks also take ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

**Lightning Leap**  
Whenever an iron archon interceptor is hit by a lightning power or is subject to an effect that deals lightning damage, it can shift 3 squares as a free action.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil    **Languages** Primordial  
**Str** 22 (+13)    **Dex** 20 (+12)    **Wis** 20 (+12)  
**Con** 24 (+14)    **Int** 15 (+9)    **Cha** 15 (+9)  
**Equipment** greatsword

### IRON ARCHON INTERCEPTOR TACTICS

An interceptor chooses a foe and sticks with it. However, even when focused on a given target, it chooses a position that lets it move to flank, or tempts a marked enemy into drawing an *intercepting slash*.

### IRON ARCHON CRESCENT BLADE TACTICS

Crescent blades are opportunistic attackers. They deliberately draw the ire of melee strikers, then leap away and wait for a chance to attack any targets marked by allies such as iron archon interceptors.

### Iron Archon Crescent Blade Level 16 Skirmisher Medium elemental humanoid XP 1,400

**Initiative** +17    **Senses** Perception +13  
**HP** 159; **Bloodied** 79; see also *blood rust*  
**AC** 30 (28 while bloodied); **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 30 (29 while bloodied), **Will** 28  
**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 15 lightning; see also *lightning leap*

**Speed** 8  
⊕ **Sickle** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
+21 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage (2d8 + 7 against marked targets).

⊕ **Twin Sickles** (standard; at-will)  
The iron archon crescent blade makes two sickle attacks. It can shift before, between, or after these attacks, up to a total of 2 squares.

⊕ **Roll With It** (immediate reaction, when hit by a melee or close attack; recharge [1]) and when first bloodied)  
The iron archon crescent blade shifts its speed. If it ends this movement in a space adjacent to a marked enemy, it can then make a sickle attack against a marked enemy as a free action.

**Blood Rust** (while bloodied) ♦ **Poison**  
The iron archon crescent blade is filmed in a poisonous rust and flies into a rage. It takes a -2 penalty to AC and a -1 penalty to Reflex, and targets hit by its weapon attacks also take ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

**Lightning Leap**  
Whenever an iron archon crescent blade is hit by a lightning power or is subject to an effect that deals lightning damage, it can shift 3 squares as a free action.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil    **Languages** Primordial  
**Str** 21 (+13)    **Dex** 25 (+15)    **Wis** 21 (+13)  
**Con** 23 (+14)    **Int** 17 (+11)    **Cha** 15 (+10)  
**Equipment** two sickles

## IRON ARCHON LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Iron archons are aggressive fighters that rarely take on defensive assignments such as guard duty. They are brutally direct but use limited tactics to gain an advantage.

**Arcana DC 25:** Crescent blades are masters of exploiting foes' weaknesses. They slash with their twin sickles against any enemy whose attention is drawn to an ally that marked it.

Iron archons were not among the first creations of the primordials. They appeared later, inspired by the mortal races' discovery of crafting weapons from iron and other metals.

## MUD ARCHON

Every army needs scouts, ambushers, and assassins. Although mud archons are capable of stand-up combat, they excel at the stealthy strategies of guerilla warfare.

### MUD ARCHON SKULKER TACTICS

A mud archon skulker prefers to lie in wait in sliding mud form, using *shifting mud* to attack without losing combat advantage. It assumes its normal form to attack a prone target, then reverts to its sliding mud form and attempts to hide so it can repeat the attack.

<b>Mud Archon Skulker</b>	<b>Level 14 Lurker</b>
Medium elemental humanoid (earth, water)	XP 1,000
<b>Initiative</b> +16	<b>Senses Perception</b> +11
HP 112; <b>Bloodied</b> 56	
AC 28; <b>Fortitude</b> 27, <b>Reflex</b> 26, <b>Will</b> 25	
Immune disease, poison	
Speed 7 (swamp walk); see also <i>sliding mud form</i>	
⚔ <b>Spiked Chain</b> (standard; at-will) ⚔ <b>Weapon</b>	
Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d4 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⚔ <b>Shifting Mud</b> (free, when the mud archon skulker moves into an enemy's space; only while in sliding mud form; at-will)	
Targets the triggering enemy; +17 vs. Reflex; the target is knocked prone and immobilized until the end of the skulker's next turn.	
⚔ <b>Sliding Mud Form</b> (standard; at-will) ⚔ <b>Polymorph</b>	
The mud archon skulker transforms into an oozelike mass of mud. While in sliding mud form, the skulker is insubstantial and can attempt to become hidden if it has cover or concealment. While squeezing in this form, it moves at full speed, provokes no opportunity attacks for squeezing, and does not take a -5 penalty to attack rolls for squeezing. It can shift 4 squares as a move action and can move through enemies' spaces during this move. It cannot manipulate objects or make attacks except for its <i>shifting mud</i> power. The mud archon skulker can revert to its normal form as a minor action.	
⚔ <b>Strike the Fallen</b>	
Whenever a mud archon skulker hits a prone enemy with a melee attack, it deals 2d8 extra damage.	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Primordial
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +17, Stealth +17	
<b>Str</b> 23 (+13)	<b>Dex</b> 20 (+12) <b>Wis</b> 18 (+11)
<b>Con</b> 22 (+13)	<b>Int</b> 15 (+9) <b>Cha</b> 13 (+8)
<b>Equipment:</b> scale armor, spiked chain	

## MUD ARCHON AMBUSER TACTICS

An ambusher uses *mud spray* as often as possible to keep in motion and gain combat advantage. It often uses *splatter* to move adjacent to its attacker, though it sometimes exploits the additional movement to deal with a pesky controller or ranged combatant.

## MUD ARCHON LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Mud archons are the scouts and assassins of the archons, favoring ambush and stealth.

**Arcana DC 25:** Pinning down a mud archon is exceedingly difficult. Skulkers can transform into mobile mud, and ambushers can splatter apart and re-form at a distance.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Like other archons, iron and mud archons work with almost any creature if doing so advances their goals or if they are ordered to do so by a higher power.

<b>Mud Archon Ambusher</b>	<b>Level 19 Skirmisher</b>
Medium elemental humanoid (earth, water)	XP 2,400
<b>Initiative</b> +17	<b>Senses Perception</b> +14
HP 183; <b>Bloodied</b> 91	
AC 33; <b>Fortitude</b> 32, <b>Reflex</b> 31, <b>Will</b> 30	
Immune disease, poison	
Speed 7 (swamp walk); see also <i>mud spray</i>	
⚔ <b>Longsword</b> (standard; at-will) ⚔ <b>Weapon</b>	
+24 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the mud archon ambusher's next turn.	
⚔ <b>Mud Spray</b> (move; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ⚔ <b>Polymorph</b>	
The mud archon ambusher transforms into a spray of mud and shifts its speed. During this move, it ignores difficult terrain and can move through enemies' spaces. At the end of the move, it reverts to its normal form. Each enemy adjacent to it at the end of the move grants combat advantage to the ambusher until the end of the ambusher's next turn.	
⚔ <b>Splatter</b> (free, when a critical hit is scored against the mud archon ambusher or when it is first bloodied; at-will)	
<i>Mud spray</i> recharges, and the ambusher uses it.	
<b>Combat Advantage</b>	
A mud archon ambusher deals 2d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Primordial
<b>Skills</b> Acrobatics +20, Stealth +20	
<b>Str</b> 25 (+16)	<b>Dex</b> 22 (+15) <b>Wis</b> 20 (+14)
<b>Con</b> 23 (+15)	<b>Int</b> 15 (+11) <b>Cha</b> 15 (+11)
<b>Equipment:</b> scale armor, 2 longswords	

### Level 14 Encounter (XP 5,400)

- ⚔ 2 earth archon ground ragers (level 14 controller, *Monster Manual* 2 14)
- ⚔ 1 iron archon crescent blade (level 16 skirmisher)
- ⚔ 2 iron archon interceptors (level 14 soldier)

### Level 18 Encounter (XP 10,400)

- ⚔ 1 ice archon rimehammer (level 19 soldier, *MM* 20)
- ⚔ 2 mud archon ambushers (level 19 skirmisher)
- ⚔ 1 storm archon tempest weaver (level 21 artillery, *Monster Manual* 2 17)



# DEMON, BLIGHT-BORN

FROM THE MOMENT THAT THE FESTERING CYST of the Abyss was formed, horrors unimaginable came into existence. Demons slouched from that tainted womb, and its corruption twisted primordials into demon princes. But other inhabitants of the Elemental Chaos were also poisoned by utter evil. Djinnns and efreet, archons and elementals, even slaads were caught in the horrific and unholy emanations. Like the demon lords, these creatures were either transformed into their vile forms at the creation of the Abyss or are descendants of others who were.

They are the blight-born, demons of the purest elements made anything but pure.

## DUST DEMON

The aftermath of the Abyss's creation engulfed a tribe of djinnns, scouring away portions of their flesh and souls until they were little more than sentient wind and bits of debris. The resulting blight-born demons, known as dust demons, appear as whirlwinds of dirt, dust, teeth, and broken bone that whip through one another so that it is impossible to tell where one ends and the next begins. Driven insane by their transformation, dust demons kill and maim out of endless rage directed against all creatures that do not suffer as they do.

## DUST DEMON TACTICS

A dust demon whirls through and around its prey, attempting to catch one or two foes in its *whirlwind sweep* while pummeling the others with basic attacks. It releases some of its constituent dust wisps to overwhelm a single target that is near death, vulnerable to damage, or close to a cliff edge or other hazard. If a dust demon is bloodied by an enemy, it releases a blast of wind that forces the attacker away.

## DUST DEMON LORE

**Arcana DC 18:** Dust demons are the result of a family of djinnns that were partly torn apart by abyssal forces; their remains were corrupted into blight-born demons. A dust demon consists of several entities bound together in its unholy winds, some of which escape the windstorm in times of stress to wreak individual havoc.

**Arcana DC 23:** Dust demons have no real society. Their constituent wisps hunger only to shred and destroy. The souls of creatures that die while swept up in a dust demon plunge into the Abyss, forever to suffer as the playthings of demons. But if a dust wisp could be captured, healed of its madness and taint, and returned to the dust demon of which it is a part, the entire djinn tribe would be cleansed—or so the legend goes.

### Dust Demon Level 15 Elite Controller

Large elemental magical beast (air, demon) XP 2,400

**Initiative** +14    **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision  
**Buffeting Winds** aura 5; each creature in the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls with ranged and area attacks.  
**HP** 296; **Bloodied** 148  
**AC** 29; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 25  
**Resist** 10 variable (3/encounter), half damage from melee and ranged attacks; **Vulnerable** 10 against close and area attacks  
**Saving Throws** +2  
**Speed** fly 10 (hover)  
**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Wind and Thunder** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Thunder**  
Reach 2; +19 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 7 damage plus 1d8 thunder damage, and the dust demon slides the target 3 squares. The dust demon can then shift 1 square or move 3 squares as a free action.

⊕ **Whirlwind Sweep** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Thunder**  
The dust demon moves half its speed and can move through enemies' spaces. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. At any point during the move, it makes an attack against a Large or smaller creature within reach: reach 2; +19 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed and pulled into the dust demon's space. Until the grab ends, the target is dazed and takes ongoing 10 damage and ongoing 5 thunder damage. When the grab ends, the target shifts to a square of its choice adjacent to the dust demon.

A dust demon can grab one Large creature, two Medium creatures, or four Small or smaller creatures, and it can move normally while it has creatures grabbed.

**Dust Horde** (standard; encounter)

Five dust wisps appear, each in an unoccupied square within 2 squares of the dust demon. Each wisp takes a move action and a standard action right away and thereafter acts immediately after the dust demon's initiative count. When a dust wisp is reduced to 0 hit points, the dust demon that created it takes 5 damage. Characters do not earn experience points for killing dust wisps created by this power.

**Bloodied Winds** (when first bloodied by an attack; encounter)

The dust demon slides the triggering attacker 4 squares.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil    **Languages** Abyssal, Primordial  
**Str** 18 (+11)    **Dex** 24 (+14)    **Wis** 20 (+12)  
**Con** 20 (+12)    **Int** 14 (+9)    **Cha** 17 (+10)

### Dust Wisp Level 15 Minion Controller

Small elemental humanoid (air, demon) XP 300

**Initiative** +14    **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision  
**Buffeting Winds** aura 2; each creature within the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls with ranged and area attacks.  
**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.  
**AC** 29; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 25  
**Speed** fly 10 (hover)

⊕ **Wind and Thunder** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Thunder**  
+19 vs. Fortitude; 7 damage plus 4 thunder damage, and the dust wisp slides the target 3 squares. The dust wisp can then shift 1 square or move 3 squares as a free action.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil    **Languages** Abyssal, Primordial  
**Str** 18 (+11)    **Dex** 24 (+14)    **Wis** 20 (+12)  
**Con** 20 (+12)    **Int** 14 (+9)    **Cha** 17 (+10)

## ASH-WROUGHT SOULBURNER

Formerly efreet, ash-wrought soulburners feed on the warmth of living beings. Though they burn flesh, their feeding drains body heat, leaving behind icy corpses rather than cinders.

Ash-Wrought Soulburner		Level 19 Controller
Large elemental humanoid (demon, fire)		XP 2,400
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 178; Bloodied 89		
AC 32; Fortitude 32, Reflex 31, Will 31		
Resist 15 fire, 15 variable (2/encounter); <b>Vulnerable</b> cold (an ash-wrought soulburner that takes cold damage is slowed until the end of its next turn)		
Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy)		
⊕ <b>Chilling Fist</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold		
Reach 2; +24 vs. AC; 3d6 + 8 cold damage.		
⊗ <b>Soulfire Theft</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold		
Ranged 15; +23 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 8 cold damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 cold damage and is slowed (save ends both). When any creature fails a saving throw against this power, the ash-wrought soulburner recharges either <i>burning ash storm</i> or <i>soulfire inferno</i> .		
⤴ <b>Soulfire Inferno</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire		
Ranged 15; +23 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).		
⚡ <b>Burning Ash Storm</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire, Zone		
Area burst 2 within 15; the burst creates a zone of burning ash that lasts until the end of the ash-wrought soulburner's next turn. Any creature that starts its turn within the zone takes 2d6 + 3 fire damage. The zone blocks line of sight. <i>Sustain Minor</i> : The zone persists, and the soulburner can move it 3 squares.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Primordial	
Skills Intimidate +20		
Str 25 (+16)	Dex 22 (+15)	Wis 9 (+8)
Con 18 (+13)	Int 11 (+9)	Cha 23 (+15)

## ASH-WROUGHT SOULBURNER TACTICS

The soulburner begins combat with its encounter powers, using *burning ash storm* to protect itself and gain cover from enemies and *soulfire inferno* against a dangerous foe. It then falls back to *soulfire theft* to recharge its more powerful attacks while sustaining *burning ash storm*.

## ASH-WROUGHT SOULBURNER LORE

**Arcana DC 22:** Ash-wrought soulburners are elemental creatures that were corrupted into blight-born demons by the creation of the Abyss. They were once efreet, but the abyssal taint has caused their inner fires to go out. Now they must draw heat and life energy from other beings to survive.

**Arcana DC 27:** Ice devils sometimes enslave ash-wrought soulburners. Their chill nature give the devils a natural advantage over the heat-starved demons.

## CONSUMPTIVE SWARM

Prolonged exposure to the Abyss normally transforms slaads into void slaads, but those that were bathed in energy at the birth of the Abyss were more dramatically altered. From those first warped slaads burst swarms of ravenous parasites combining the worst aspects of slaad tadpoles and demons.

Consumptive Swarm		Level 21 Elite Skirmisher
Large elemental beast (demon, swarm)		XP 6,400
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +15; darkvision	
<b>Swarm Attack (Acid)</b> aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 7 acid damage.		
HP 400; Bloodied 200		
AC 35; Fortitude 33, Reflex 34, Will 30		
<b>Immune</b> disease; <b>Resist</b> 20 variable (3/encounter), half damage from melee and ranged attacks; <b>Vulnerable</b> 15 against close and area attacks		
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2		
Speed 6; see also <i>aqueous shift</i>		
Action Points 1		
⊕ <b>Swarm of Jaws</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease		
+26 vs. AC; 3d6 + 9 damage, and the swarm makes a secondary attack against the target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +24 vs. Fortitude; the target is exposed to slimy doom (DMG 50).		
⚡ <b>Ravenous Stampede</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid, Disease		
The consumptive swarm shifts its speed and makes an attack against each creature it moves adjacent to during the move: +24 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 damage plus 1d6 + 3 acid damage, and the swarm makes a secondary attack against the target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +24 vs. Fortitude; the target is exposed to slimy doom (DMG 50).		
⚡ <b>Consumptive Spew</b> (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Acid		
Close blast 5; +24 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 9 acid damage, and ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends). <i>Effect</i> : Six consumptive parasites appear, each in an unoccupied square within or adjacent to the blast. They act immediately after the consumptive swarm's initiative count. Characters do not earn experience points for killing consumptive parasites created by this power.		
<b>Currents of Chaos</b> (minor; at-will)		
The consumptive swarm shifts 1 square.		
<b>Aqueous Shift</b>		
A consumptive swarm ignores difficult terrain while shifting.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages understands Abyssal	
Str 18 (+14)	Dex 26 (+18)	Wis 21 (+15)
Con 24 (+17)	Int 3 (+6)	Cha 9 (+9)

Consumptive Parasite		Level 16 Minion Skirmisher
Small elemental beast (demon)		XP 350
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +12; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 30; Fortitude 28, Reflex 29, Will 27		
<b>Immune</b> disease; <b>Resist</b> 15 variable (2/encounter)		
Speed 6; see also <i>chaotic shift</i>		
⊕ <b>Digestive Bite</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ Acid		
+19 vs. Fortitude; 4 acid damage, and the target gains vulnerable 5 acid (save ends).		
<b>Chaotic Shift</b> (move; at-will)		
The consumptive parasite shifts 2 squares.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages understands Abyssal	
Str 9 (+7)	Dex 24 (+15)	Wis 19 (+12)
Con 21 (+13)	Int 3 (+4)	Cha 9 (+7)

## CONSUMPTIVE SWARM TACTICS

A consumptive swarm begins combat with *consumptive spew*, adding minions that weaken foes against its acidic attacks. It then moves into melee, continually shifting to stay near weaker targets and keep them in its acidic aura while avoiding tougher combatants. Once it is bloodied, it uses *consumptive spew* again as soon as possible.

Consumptive parasites prefer to gang up on one foe and take advantage of flanking opportunities. When fighting alongside a parent swarm, they move to keep dangerous foes away from it.

## CONSUMPTIVE SWARM LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** The consumptive swarm is one of the blight-born, demons resulting from the corruption of elemental creatures at the birth of the Abyss. The parasites that make up the swarm are warped slaad tadpoles. Although they are incapable of speech, they understand the Abyssal tongue.

**Arcana DC 25:** Intelligent slaads approve of the demonic transformation, reveling in the opportunity for even their indirect spawn to infest creation. More than one slaad-worshipping cult has been destroyed by misguided attempts to breed consumptive parasites.

### SIBLING RIVALRY

Blight-born demons and chaos shards (*Monster Manual 2*, page 34) are both spawned at the boundary of the Abyss, where its corrupting power bleeds into and warps the Elemental Chaos. While the blight-born are elemental creatures twisted by the Abyss, chaos shards are crystals of the Plane Below that were not only corrupted but given life by abyssal energy.

Given their innately chaotic evil and destructive instincts, the two groups of creatures are unlikely to have any particular affinity to one another. Sages were surprised to discover, though, that each harbors a murderous, undying hatred toward the other. Blight-born and chaos shards sometimes work with creatures that can advance their destructive agendas, such as other demons, slaads, and elementals, but neither group will ally with the other, even abandoning other efforts to attack that enemy on sight. Nothing less than utter extermination of the hated group will satisfy the creatures' rage.

Some theories speculate that the two sorts of beings are competitors for the same territory and position in the Elemental Chaos. Others suggest that each sees the other as an inferior copy of itself, an impure mockery to be annihilated.

## WRITHING CRAG

Hideous amalgamations of jagged stone, writhing crags love the feel of flesh and bone being crushed beneath their flailing limbs. They have traits of both ropers and xorns and might be descended from either—or perhaps both, fused by the same corruptive taint that transformed them into demons.

### Writhing Crag

Level 23 Elite Soldier

Huge elemental magical beast (demon, earth)

XP 10,200

Initiative +18

Senses Perception +17;  
all-around vision, darkvision

HP 434; Bloodied 217

AC 39; Fortitude 37, Reflex 31, Will 35

Immune petrification; Resist 25 variable (3/encounter)

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6 (earth walk), burrow 4 (tunneling), climb 6 (spider climb)

Action Points 1

⊕ Stone Reach (standard; at-will)

Reach 5; +30 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed.

⊕ Triple Reach (standard; at-will)

The writhing crag makes three *stone reach* attacks.

⊕ Reel (minor; at-will)

Reach 5; targets a creature grabbed by the writhing crag; +28 vs. Fortitude; the target is pulled 5 squares.

⊕ Flailing Tentacles (standard; recharge ⓧ; ⓧ)

Reach 5; +30 vs. AC; 3d6 + 9 damage, and the writhing crag slides the target 5 squares and knocks it prone. Each enemy adjacent to the target and within the writhing crag's reach (5 squares) takes 9 damage.

⊕ Stone-Melding Slam (standard; usable only against a target touching or adjacent to a stone surface; recharge ⓧ)

Reach 5; +30 vs. AC; 3d6 + 9 damage, and the target is partly absorbed into the surface, causing it to become immobilized (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is restrained (save ends). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target is drawn entirely into the stone, leaving a faint imprint (no save). The target does not die but remains in stasis until it is freed from the stone.

Tentacle Grab

A writhing crag can attack and grab with up to three tentacles at a time. While grabbing an enemy, it can act normally, but it can't use that tentacle for another attack. Enemies can attack the tentacle to make the writhing crag let go of a grabbed creature; the tentacle's defenses are the same as the crag's. An attack that hits a tentacle does not harm the writhing crag but causes it to let go and retract the tentacle.

Earth Glide

A writhing crag can burrow through solid stone as if it were loose earth.

Stony Body

A writhing crag that does not move and retracts its tentacles resembles a jagged rock formation, stalagmite, or stalactite. In this form, the writhing crag can be recognized only with a successful DC 35 Perception check.

Alignment Evil Languages Abyssal, Primordial

Skills Athletics +25, Stealth +21 (only in caves and rocky environments)

Str 28 (+20)

Dex 20 (+16)

Wis 22 (+17)

Con 25 (+18)

Int 13 (+12)

Cha 23 (+17)



## WRITHING CRAG TACTICS

Unexpectedly stealthy, a writhing crag often attempts to surprise its targets. It takes a few rounds to assess the foes, then uses *stone-melding slam* to neutralize the most dangerous melee combatant, focusing on spellcasters and ranged attackers. It uses *earth glide* to gain optimal tactical position but rarely flees from battle. Most writhing crags fight to the death, believing that they cannot be defeated.

## WRITHING CRAG LORE

**Arcana DC 24:** Writting crags are blight-born demons, elementals corrupted by the creation of the Abyss. They might be descended from xorns or ropers, or from some foul combination of both.

**Arcana DC 29:** A writhing crag can engulf a creature in solid stone. Up to 24 hours after a writhing crag's death, its limbs retain the ability to move through stone. They can be used to retrieve creatures it has buried without resorting to tedious rock cutting.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Like more traditional demons, blight-born care for little more than wanton destruction. They might cooperate with other demons—or, on occasion, slaads, elementals, or humanoid summoners—if doing so promises the opportunity for violence, but such alliances are temporary at best.

### Level 19 Encounter (XP 13,200)

- ◆ 1 ash-wrought soulburner (level 19 controller)
- ◆ 1 goristro (level 19 elite brute, MM 55)
- ◆ 3 rockfire dreadnoughts (level 18 soldier, MM 104)

### Level 23 Encounter (XP 28,700)

- ◆ 2 earthwind ravagers (level 23 controller, MM 104)
- ◆ 2 hezrous (level 22 brute, MM 56)
- ◆ 1 writhing crag (level 23 elite soldier)



# EISK JAAT

BITTER AND DEADLY AS THE NORTH WIND, eisk jaats are creatures of primordial cold. Although they are descended from dwarves enslaved by giants, they are twisted in body, mind, and soul. Eisk jaats often serve frost giants but can be found in any realm of harsh cold, usually working toward nefarious ends.

## EISK JAAT WARRIOR

The infantry of an eisk jaat war party, these lumbering warriors swing picks carved from primordial ice.

Eisk Jaat Warrior		Level 15 Minion Skirmisher	
Medium elemental humanoid (cold) XP 300			
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +12		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.			
AC 29; Fortitude 28, Reflex 26, Will 27			
Immune slowed; Resist 15 cold			
Speed 5 (ice walk)			
⊕ Icy Pick (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold, Weapon			
+20 vs. AC; 7 cold damage (crit 10)			
Slide Away (immediate interrupt, when hit by a close or area attack; encounter)			
The eisk jaat warrior shifts 3 squares.			
Alignment Evil	Languages Giant		
Str 17 (+10)	Dex 19 (+11)	Wis 20 (+12)	
Con 23 (+13)	Int 10 (+7)	Cha 10 (+7)	
Equipment hide armor, icy pick			

## EISK JAAT WARRIOR TACTICS

Eisk jaat warriors shamble into combat, cutting out a single foe from the group. Once that victim falls, they move on to the next. Though they seem awkward, they can evade close and area attacks with surprising speed and grace.

## EISK JAAT RIMEBOLTER

Wielding crossbows of primordial ice, rimebolters rain freezing death on their enemies.

Eisk Jaat Rimebolter		Level 15 Artillery	
Medium elemental humanoid (cold) XP 1,200			
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +12		
HP 115; Bloodied 57			
AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 28, Will 27			
Immune slowed; Resist 15 cold			
Speed 5 (ice walk)			
⊕ Frost Axe (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold, Weapon			
+20 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage plus 1d10 cold damage.			
⊕ Rimebolt Crossbow (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold, Weapon			
Ranged 15/30; +22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the eisk jaat rimebolter's next turn.			
⊕ Winterbite Bolt (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ⊕ Cold, Weapon			
Ranged 15/30; +20 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 cold damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 cold damage and is slowed (save ends both). Until the target saves, any creature that starts its turn within 2 squares of the target takes 5 cold damage.			

**Slide Away** (immediate interrupt, when hit by a melee or close attack; recharges when first bloodied)

The eisk jaat rimebolter shifts 5 squares.

### Icebound Footing

When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides an eisk jaat, the eisk jaat moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. Also, an eisk jaat can make a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone.

Alignment Evil	Languages Giant	
Str 17 (+10)	Dex 23 (+13)	Wis 21 (+12)
Con 19 (+11)	Int 10 (+7)	Cha 12 (+8)
Equipment chainmail, frost axe, rimebolt crossbow, 20 bolts		

## EISK JAAT RIMEBOLTER TACTICS

Rimebolters take cover and riddle their enemies with rimebolt crossbow bolts. They enjoy splitting up groups with *winterbite bolts*, then picking off targets one at a time. When melee attackers threaten to hem in a rimebolter, it uses *slide away* to escape.

## EISK JAAT MAULER

These eccentric eisk jaats often live amid winter wolves, which view them as pack leaders.

Eisk Jaat Mauler		Level 16 Brute (Leader)	
Medium elemental humanoid (cold) XP 1,400			
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +14		
<b>Pack Master</b> aura 5: each elemental beast ally that starts its turn within the aura rolls twice when recharging a power that recharges on a die roll, taking the higher result.			
HP 194; Bloodied 97			
AC 28; Fortitude 29, Reflex 26, Will 28			
Immune slowed; Resist 15 cold			
Speed 5 (ice walk)			
⊕ Frost Maul (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold, Weapon			
+19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage plus 2d6 cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the eisk jaat mauler's next turn.			
⊕ Icebind Strike (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ⊕ Cold, Weapon			
Targets a prone or slowed creature; +17 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 5 cold damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). <i>Aftereffect</i> : The target is slowed until the end of the eisk jaat mauler's next turn.			
<b>Icebound Footing</b>			
When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides an eisk jaat, the eisk jaat moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. Also, an eisk jaat can make a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone.			
Alignment Evil	Languages Giant		
Str 20 (+13)	Dex 19 (+12)	Wis 22 (+14)	
Con 24 (+15)	Int 10 (+8)	Cha 12 (+9)	
Equipment hide armor, frost maul			

**Pack Master** aura 5: each elemental beast ally that starts its turn within the aura rolls twice when recharging a power that recharges on a die roll, taking the higher result.

HP 194; Bloodied 97

AC 28; Fortitude 29, Reflex 26, Will 28

Immune slowed; Resist 15 cold

Speed 5 (ice walk)

⊕ Frost Maul (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold, Weapon

+19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage plus 2d6 cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the eisk jaat mauler's next turn.

⊕ Icebind Strike (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ⊕ Cold, Weapon

Targets a prone or slowed creature; +17 vs. Fortitude; 4d6 + 5 cold damage, and the target is restrained (save ends). *Aftereffect*: The target is slowed until the end of the eisk jaat mauler's next turn.

### Icebound Footing

When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides an eisk jaat, the eisk jaat moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. Also, an eisk jaat can make a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone.

Alignment Evil	Languages Giant	
Str 20 (+13)	Dex 19 (+12)	Wis 22 (+14)
Con 24 (+15)	Int 10 (+8)	Cha 12 (+9)

Equipment hide armor, frost maul

## EISK JAAT MAULER TACTICS

A mauler wades through combat fearlessly, beating down foes with its frost maul and directing beast companions to the slowed prey. It follows up with *icebind strike* against targets hit by frost maul attacks.

## EISK JAAT MYSTIC

Masters of winter's fury, mystics are the spiritual leaders of the eisk jaats. Their word is law. Other eisk jaats lay down their lives to protect a mystic, believing that members of this sacred caste are the true chosen of primordial cold.



**Eisk Jaat Mystic** **Level 18 Lurker**  
XP 2,000

Medium elemental humanoid (cold)

Initiative +15 Senses Perception +16

HP 136; Bloodied 68

AC 32; Fortitude 30, Reflex 29, Will 31

Immune slowed; Resist 15 cold

Speed 5 (ice walk)

⚔ **Rime Mace** (standard; at-will) ⚡ Cold, Weapon  
+23 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends).

☃ **Chilling Ray** (standard; at-will) ⚡ Cold  
Ranged 10; +21 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 cold damage, and the target gains vulnerable 10 cold until the end of the eisk jaat mystic's next turn.

❄ **Blizzard Cloak** (standard; recharge ☑ ☑) ⚡ Cold, Zone  
Close burst 2; the burst creates a zone of whirling snow and wind centered on the eisk jaat mystic that lasts until the end of the mystic's next turn. When the mystic moves, the zone moves with it, remaining centered on it. Any enemy that ends its turn within the zone takes 15 cold damage and is slowed until the end of its next turn. The zone's space is heavily obscured. Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

❄ **Winter's Fury** (standard; recharges when *blizzard cloak* ends) ⚡ Cold  
Area burst 1 within 10; +20 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 7 cold damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). If the target is already immobilized, prone, or slowed, it is instead restrained (save ends).

**Icebound Footing**

When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides an eisk jaat, the eisk jaat moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. Also, an eisk jaat can make a saving throw to avoid being knocked prone.

Alignment Evil	Languages Giant	
Str 17 (+12)	Dex 14 (+11)	Wis 24 (+16)
Con 22 (+15)	Int 21 (+14)	Cha 14 (+11)

Equipment robes, rime mace

## EISK JAAT ICE MYSTIC TACTICS

After opening with *chilling ray*, the mystic moves near several enemies and throws down a *blizzard cloak*.

When *blizzard cloak* recharges, the mystic uses it, unleashes *winter's fury*, and starts the tactic all over

again. It makes melee attacks only to deal with those bold or disoriented enough to approach within its reach.

## EISK JAAT LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Like azers and galeb duhrs, eisk jaats are the descendants of dwarves who were once enslaved by giants and twisted by elemental energy. Unlike their kin, eisk jaats developed cold hearts, vicious attitudes, and unparalleled greed. Many worship the frost titan king Thrym as their callous god.

**Arcana DC 25:** Some eisk jaats threw off the yoke of their frost giant masters and traveled to the cold regions of the world, the Feywild, and the Shadowfell. Time and exposure to other creatures has tempered their wickedness. They exist independently or serve other powers, such as the fey of the Winter Court and the Raven Queen's forces near Letherna.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Eisk jaats often serve frost giants and revere primordial of cold, particularly Thrym. They can accompany other creatures of cold, as well as agents of winter and death.

### Level 16 Encounter (7,000 XP)

- ◆ 1 eisk jaat mauler (level 16 brute)
- ◆ 8 eisk jaat warriors (level 15 minion)
- ◆ 1 rime hound (level 17 elite skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2 211*)

### Level 21 Encounter (16,000 XP)

- ◆ 1 eisk jaat mystic (level 18 lurker)
- ◆ 3 eisk jaat rimebolters (level 15 artillery)
- ◆ 3 frost giants (level 17 brute, *Monster Manual 2 122*)
- ◆ 1 frost titan (level 20 elite brute, *Monster Manual 2 123*)

# ELEMENTAL

A WIDE VARIETY OF ELEMENTALS EXIST throughout the Plane Below, filling many different roles. Five new kinds are described here.

## SCORCHWIND PHANTOM

This mass of steam interspersed with flashes of fire glides across the chaotic landscape.

Scorchwind Phantom		Level 9 Lurker
Medium elemental magical beast (fire, water)		XP 400
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +7	
HP 54; Bloodied 27		
AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 22, Will 20		
Immune disease, poison; Resist insubstantial; Vulnerable cold (a scorchwind phantom that takes cold damage is slowed and cannot use <i>disperse</i> until the end of the attacker's next turn)		
Speed fly 8 (hover); phasing		
⊕ Scorchwind Lash (standard; at-will) ◆ Fire		
Reach 2; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 5 fire damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the scorchwind phantom's next turn.		
⊕ Roiling Surge (standard; recharge ☒; ☐; ☐), after the scorchwind phantom uses <i>disperse</i> ◆ Fire		
The scorchwind phantom flies its speed and can move through enemies' spaces. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks. The scorchwind phantom makes an attack against any creature whose space it moves into; +12 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 fire damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of the scorchwind phantom's next turn.		
Disperse (standard; at-will) ◆ Polymorph		
The scorchwind phantom transforms into scalding steam occasionally flashing with motes of fire. Until it resumes its normal form, it cannot attack or be attacked. At the start of its turn, it can resume its normal form in any space within 8 squares of its position when it used <i>disperse</i> ; until the end of that turn, its attacks make targets blinded instead of causing them to grant combat advantage. A creature that encounters a scorchwind phantom in steam form can recognize it as a creature with a successful DC 24 Perception check.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Primordial	
Skills Stealth +14		
Str 10 (+4)	Dex 20 (+9)	Wis 17 (+7)
Con 18 (+8)	Int 7 (+2)	Cha 7 (+2)

### SCORCHWIND PHANTOM TACTICS

A scorchwind phantom uses *disperse* to blend into an area in steam form, waiting for victims to stumble into range. It takes its normal form and launches a *roiling surge*, blinding creatures hit by the attack, then uses *scorchwind lash*. If pressed, it uses *disperse* and waits for *roiling surge* to recharge, then repeats the tactic. Anyone who uses cold powers against a scorchwind phantom becomes its preferred target.

## ASHFROST ASSASSIN

An ashfrost assassin's dark body is a shifting slurry of smoldering ash and ice that constantly melts and refreezes. Its malleable form allows it to move in unexpected ways.

Ashfrost Assassin		Level 12 Skirmisher
Medium elemental magical beast (cold, fire)		XP 700
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +10	
HP 121; Bloodied 60		
AC 26; Fortitude 23, Reflex 26, Will 24		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 cold, 10 fire		
Speed 7; see also <i>flowing slurry</i>		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will) ◆ Cold, Fire		
+15 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 cold damage plus 1d6 + 3 fire damage, and the target is knocked prone and cannot stand up until the end of the ashfrost assassin's next turn.		
⊕ Ashfrost Slide (standard; at-will)		
The ashfrost assassin moves its speed and can make a slam attack at any point during this movement. It doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target.		
⊕ Ashfrost Torrent (standard; recharge ☐; ☐), or recharges when the ashfrost assassin takes cold or fire damage) ◆ Cold, Fire		
Close burst 3; +14 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 3 cold damage plus 2d6 + 3 fire damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Combat Advantage		
An ashfrost assassin deals 1d8 extra cold damage and 1d8 extra fire damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it instead of knocking that creature prone.		
Mutable Form		
When squeezing, an ashfrost assassin moves at full speed, provokes no opportunity attacks for squeezing, and does not take a -5 penalty to attack rolls for squeezing.		
Flowing Slurry		
An ashfrost assassin can move across liquid and ignores difficult terrain.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Primordial	
Skills Stealth +17		
Str 15 (+8)	Dex 22 (+12)	Wis 19 (+10)
Con 17 (+9)	Int 7 (+4)	Cha 8 (+5)

### ASHFROST ASSASSIN TACTICS

An ashfrost assassin hides in an enclosed space, then surprises its prey with *ashfrost torrent*. It maneuvers around the battlefield with *ashfrost slide*, battering foes to the ground with slam attacks all the while. It hammers a prone foe, then knocks it down again, preferably with a recharged *ashfrost torrent*.

## SUNSEARER

A mote of solid light that wanders the Elemental Chaos, the sunsearer scorches all it encounters with blazing light and intense flame.

### SUNSEARER TACTICS

A sunsearer hovers out of melee range, blistering enemies with *blinding ray* and *sunblast*. Most enemies that get into melee range are blinded, giving the sunsearer an opportunity to increase the distance between itself and its foes.

<b>Sunsearer</b>		<b>Level 15 Artillery</b>
Medium elemental magical beast (fire) XP 1,200		
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +11	
<b>Dazzling Radiance</b> aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura is blinded until the start of its next turn.		
HP 116; <b>Bloodied</b> 58		
AC 27; <b>Fortitude</b> 27, <b>Reflex</b> 29, <b>Will</b> 26		
Immune blinded, disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 10 fire, 10 radiant		
Speed 2 (clumsy), fly 8 (hover)		
⊕ <b>Sunstrike</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire, Radiant</b> +20 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 fire damage plus 1d6 + 3 radiant damage.		
⊕ <b>Blinding Ray</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Fire, Radiant</b> Ranged 10; +20 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 fire damage plus 1d6 + 3 radiant damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).		
⊕ <b>Sunblast</b> (standard; recharge ☼☼☼☼, or recharges when the sunsearer takes fire or radiant damage) ♦ <b>Fire, Radiant</b> Area burst 2 within 10; +19 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 fire plus 1d8 + 5 radiant damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and grants combat advantage (save ends both). <b>Miss:</b> Half damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Primordial
Str 8 (+6)	Dex 24 (+14)	Wis 18 (+11)
Con 20 (+12)	Int 6 (+5)	Cha 7 (+5)

## DIAMONDSTORM REAPER

The vicious diamondstorm reaper combines the strength and sharpness of diamond with the fluidity of wind.

<b>Diamondstorm Reaper</b>		<b>Level 20 Soldier</b>
Large elemental magical beast (air, earth) XP 2,800		
Initiative +18	Senses Perception +14	
HP 188; <b>Bloodied</b> 94		
AC 36; <b>Fortitude</b> 34, <b>Reflex</b> 32, <b>Will</b> 30		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 6		
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will) +27 vs. AC; 3d6 + 8 damage (crit 3d6 + 26), and the target is marked until the end of the diamondstorm reaper's next turn.		
⊕ <b>Reaping</b> (immediate interrupt, when a creature marked by the reaper moves or shifts out of a square adjacent to it, or makes an attack that does not include the reaper; at-will) The diamondstorm reaper makes a slam attack against the triggering creature. On a hit, the target's movement ends.		
⊕ <b>Diamond Shred</b> (standard; recharge ☼☼☼☼) The diamondstorm reaper makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, that target is also knocked prone and dazed until the end of the diamondstorm reaper's next turn.		
⊕ <b>Diamondstorm</b> (standard; recharges when first bloodied) The diamondstorm reaper shifts its speed and can move through enemies' spaces. It makes an attack against each creature whose space it enters: +24 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 8 damage (crit 4d8 + 32), and the target is marked until the end of the diamondstorm reaper's next turn.		
<b>Keen Winds</b> A diamondstorm reaper can score a critical hit on a roll of 19-20.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Primordial
Str 26 (+18)	Dex 23 (+16)	Wis 19 (+14)
Con 20 (+15)	Int 6 (+8)	Cha 9 (+9)

## DIAMONDSTORM REAPER TACTICS

A diamondstorm reaper fearlessly moves around the battlefield, counting on its toughness to protect it. It starts with *diamondstorm* to position itself and control the flow of battle, triggering its *reaping* power against adjacent enemies that try to get away. Then it focuses on pinning its enemies in close combat, using *diamond shred* as often as possible to mark two foes or pummel a single target to the ground. When bloodied, it might use *diamondstorm* to reach the enemy that bloodied it.

## CAUSTIC SLAYER

Fine salt crystals and other caustic minerals form a gritty, malleable body around flexible bones of shifting rock, creating a towering form of streaming particles and writhing limbs. Although the creature is enormous, its constituent parts are so fine that it moves with unexpected ease.

<b>Caustic Slayer</b>		<b>Level 24 Elite Lurker</b>
Huge elemental magical beast (earth) XP 12,100		
Initiative +25	Senses Perception +19	
HP 356; <b>Bloodied</b> 173		
AC 38; <b>Fortitude</b> 35, <b>Reflex</b> 37, <b>Will</b> 36		
Immune disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 30 acid		
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2		
Speed 7 (earth walk), climb 7; see also <i>malleable form</i>		
<b>Action Points</b> 1		
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Acid</b> Reach 3; +27 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 7 damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends). If the target cannot see the caustic slayer, it instead takes 2d10 + 7 damage, and ongoing 15 acid damage (save ends).		
⊕ <b>Eyeburn</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Acid</b> Ranged 20; +27 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 acid damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the caustic slayer's next turn.		
⊕ <b>Slayer's Fury</b> (standard; at-will) The caustic slayer makes two basic attacks.		
⊕ <b>Caustic Breath</b> (standard; recharge ☼☼☼☼) ♦ <b>Acid</b> Close blast 5; +26 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 7 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 acid damage and is slowed (save ends both).		
⊕ <b>Sight-Burning Cloud</b> (standard; recharge ☼☼☼☼) ♦ <b>Acid, Zone</b> Close burst 2; the burst creates a zone of corrosive grit centered on the caustic slayer that lasts until the end of its next turn. When the slayer moves, the zone moves with it, remaining centered on it. Any creature that ends its turn within the zone takes 20 acid damage and is blinded until the end of its next turn. The zone's area is heavily obscured for all creatures except the caustic slayer, which treats it as lightly obscured. <b>Sustain Minor:</b> The zone persists.		
<b>Malleable Form</b> A caustic slayer can squeeze through spaces as though it were a large creature.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Primordial
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +26		
Str 23 (+18)	Dex 28 (+21)	Wis 25 (+19)
Con 23 (+18)	Int 8 (+11)	Cha 8 (+11)

## CAUSTIC SLAYER TACTICS

A caustic slayer hides in a crevice or another area seemingly too small to contain it. When creatures approach, it erupts from hiding, moves in close, and unleashes *caustic breath*. It follows up by spending an action point to use *sight-burning cloud*. Thereafter, it sustains *sight-burning cloud* and pounds on blinded foes. It uses *eyeburn* only against enemies that hang back and make ranged or area attacks.

## PRIMORDIAL BLOT

The primordial blot embodies the forces of creation. It is all elements in one, as if the Elemental Chaos were bound to a finite size and imbued with dim sentience. A primordial blot roams the Elemental Chaos or sometimes other planes. Wherever it finds order and life, it strives to reduce that order and life back to the fundamental chaos from which it arose.

### THE MYTHIC BLOT

The primordial blot has captured the attention of some scholars of the Elemental Chaos. Characters who conduct additional research in libraries of the Plane Below can learn the following information about the primordial blot with a DC 30 Arcana check.

The creatures are so rare that their nature is a mystery. Sages are still trying to determine how they form, what they do, and whether they have any purpose. One theory holds that primordial blots are stillborn worlds—blobs of matter quickened with the genesis of new planes of existence that failed for some reason. Thus, they are fonts of inconceivably vast power. This theory implies that there are no new primordial blots, since they all formed early in the history of the cosmos. Those who believe in this idea also wonder if a primordial blot could be somehow induced to complete its transformative process and create a new world.

Other scholars espouse a more prosaic origin for the blot. They hold that the creatures arise under the proper confluence of elemental energy. Such an event is rare even in the Elemental Chaos. Like other, less exotic elementals, primordial blots are somewhat intelligent but driven by instinct to survive and reproduce. They might be able to create more of their kind by reducing large swaths of matter into its raw, primitive form.

One theory claims that primordial blots originated during the Dawn War. Certain writings speak of four primordials who fused their bodies into one so as to better fight their divine foes, forming a composite being of vast power. This entity was unstable, and the attacks of the gods reduced it into multiple blobs of pure elemental chaos that live on. They still seek the same goal as the primordials from which they came: to tear apart the works of their great enemies.

### Primordial Blot Level 26 Solo Artillery

Large elemental magical beast (air, cold, earth, fire) XP 45,000

**Initiative** +22      **Senses Perception** +20  
**HP** 968; **Bloodied** 484; see also *primordial surge*  
**AC** 39; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 39, **Will** 37  
**Immune** disease, petrification, polymorph, poison; **Resist** 25 variable (5/encounter)

**Saving Throws** +5  
**Speed** fly 10 (hover)

**Action Points** 2

☹ **Acid Gout** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid**  
 Ranged 15; +31 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 9 acid damage, and ongoing 15 acid damage (save ends).

☹ **Crushing Earth** (standard; at-will)  
 Ranged 10; +33 vs. AC; 3d6 + 9 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

☹ **Ice Slick** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold**  
 Ranged 10; +31 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 9 cold damage, and the target is knocked prone.

☹ **Light Beam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Radiant**  
 Ranged 20; +31 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 9 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

☹ **Thunderous Grip** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Thunder**  
 Ranged 10; +31 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

☹ **Elemental Barrage** (standard; at-will)  
 The primordial blot makes four different ranged basic attacks. Using *elemental barrage* does not provoke opportunity attacks.

☹ **Elemental Opportunity** (immediate reaction, when an enemy provokes an opportunity attack; at-will)  
 The primordial blot makes a ranged basic attack against the triggering enemy. Using *elemental opportunity* does not provoke opportunity attacks.

☹ **Elemental Snap** (free 2/round, when an enemy moves adjacent to the primordial blot or hits it with an attack; only while bloodied; at-will)  
 The primordial blot makes a ranged basic attack against the triggering enemy. Using *elemental snap* does not provoke opportunity attacks.

☹ **Primordial Terror** (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Fear**  
 Close burst 3; +31 vs. Will; the primordial blot pushes the target 3 squares.

☹ / ☹ **Skyfire Eruption** (standard; recharge ☹☹☹☹☹☹☹☹) ♦ **Fire, Lightning**  
 Area burst 3 within 10 or close burst 2; +31 vs. Reflex; 5d10 + 9 lightning damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

**Primordial Surge** (when first bloodied and again when reduced to 0 hit points)

*Skyfire eruption* recharges, and the primordial blot uses it and makes each of its ranged basic attacks once. Using *primordial surge* does not provoke opportunity attacks.

**Alignment** Unaligned      **Languages** Primordial  
**Str** 10 (+13)      **Dex** 29 (+22)      **Wis** 24 (+20)  
**Con** 26 (+21)      **Int** 7 (+11)      **Cha** 20 (+18)

### PRIMORDIAL BLOT TACTICS

Primordial blots are only minimally aware, but they are sensitive to elemental variances. Thus, they choose attacks that exploit their targets' elemental resistances or vulnerabilities. A primordial blot uses *skyfire eruption* against packed groups, *thunderous grip* or *ice slick* against opponents who try to engage in melee combat, *light beam* against ranged attackers,



and crushing earth and acid gout against the greatest threats. Primordial terror and elemental snap keep enemies at bay.

## ELEMENTAL LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Although the elements of fire, earth, air, and water are the most common, other fundamental building blocks exist, such as mud, crystal, metal, steam, and light. Elementals composed of these substances are more common in the Plane Below than elsewhere.

**Arcana DC 26:** The powerful primordial blot combines all the known elements and is said to be a piece of the Elemental Chaos given form and sentience. Some sages claim that a single primordial blot has the potential to birth worlds.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

In the Elemental Chaos, elementals often travel in packs like predatory beasts. They most frequently share elemental types or environments, but sometimes they have little in common.

### Level 21 Encounter (XP 19,625)

- ◆ 2 diamondstorm reapers (level 20 soldier)
- ◆ 1 earthwind ravager (level 23 controller, MM 104)
- ◆ 7 shardstorm vortex whirlwinds (level 23 minion skirmisher, *Monster Manual 2* 101)

## LIFE, BUT NOT AS WE KNOW IT

In most instances, a clear delineation exists between monsters and hazards. The Elemental Chaos, however, makes such differences less obvious. In that strange realm, life can include ambulatory masses of stone, fire, water, and even light, while the very landscape might possess rudimentary sentience.

Elementals usually occupy the role of wild beasts in the Plane Below. Some behave instinctively, and others are intelligent enough to serve masters, but they're still recognizable as creatures. If you'd like to give your characters a new and different experience without having to come up with a lot of new mechanics, consider treating some elementals as environmental hazards instead. If the characters are moving through a volcanic field, perhaps a pool of magma reaches out and tries to burn them; when they are scaling a cliff, the rock face might lash out with "fists" of stone; maybe an island on which they land tries to drown them with battering waves and pitching earth.

You can model environmental effects after the powers of existing elementals, adjusting your descriptions accordingly, instead of creating brand-new hazards. Your players might not realize (unless you tell them afterward) that their desperate escape from dangerous terrain was really an encounter with a handful of "ordinary" elementals.

CONSTRAINED BY ORDER AT EVERY TURN, slaads seek to spread chaos and disrupt all that is logical, sensible, and chained to universal rules of cause and effect. They hope to scar reality itself enough to create a hole into the wider multiverse their maddened leaders believe exists.

## CHAOS PHAGE SWARM

These mindless clumps of oversized slaad embryos are set loose into the Elemental Chaos to spread havoc and produce more of their kind. A chaos phage swarm attacks recklessly, since in death it infects even more potential hosts.

Chaos Phage Swarm		Level 12 Brute
Medium elemental beast (swarm)		XP 700
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +9, blindsight 10	
Swarm Attack (Disease) aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 7 damage and is exposed to chaos phage (see below).		
HP 151; Bloodied 75; see also <i>death burst</i>		
AC 24; Fortitude 26, Reflex 24, Will 23		
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 against close and area attacks		
Immune chaos phage		
Speed fly 6 (hover)		
⊕ A Thousand Tiny Bites (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is exposed to chaos phage (see below).		
⊕ Swarm Swell (standard; recharge ☹️; ☹️) ♦ Disease Reach 2; +13 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 damage, ongoing 10 damage (save ends), and the target is exposed to chaos phage.		
⚡ Death Burst (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Disease The chaos phage swarm explodes in a burst of diseased matter: Close burst 2; +13 vs. Reflex; ongoing 10 damage (save ends), and the target is exposed to chaos phage.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages –	
Str 20 (+11)	Dex 18 (+10)	Wis 16 (+9)
Con 21 (+11)	Int 1 (+1)	Cha 3 (+2)

## CHAOS PHAGE SWARM TACTICS

A swarm charges the closest nonslaad living creature, using *swarm swell* to gain a little extra reach if necessary. It fights to the death, eager to spread infection with its *death burst*.

## GREEN SLAAD MADJACK

Green slaads whose mad visions extend beyond their own fevered minds, madjacks sow insanity among their foes.

Green Slaad Madjack		Level 13 Elite Controller
Large elemental humanoid		XP 1,600
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +16; low-light vision	
HP 268; Bloodied 134		
AC 27; Fortitude 26, Reflex 23, Will 25		
Immune chaos phage		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, teleport 4		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the target is exposed to chaos phage (see below).		
⚡ Maddening Croak (standard; recharges when first bloodied and again when the green slaad madjack spends an action point) ♦ Psychic Close blast 5; +16 vs. Will; 2d12 + 5 psychic damage, and the madjack slides the target 3 squares and knocks it prone. Until the end of the target's next turn, the target must take a standard action to stand up.		
⚡ Maddening Visions (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Charm Close burst 2; targets one enemy in burst; +16 vs. Will; the target must make a melee at-will attack as a free action against one of its allies within its reach. The green slaad madjack chooses the attack and the target ally.		
⚡ Mind Spasm (immediate reaction, when an enemy moves adjacent to the green slaad madjack; at-will) ♦ Psychic Close burst 1; +13 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage. If the attack hits the triggering enemy, it is also dazed (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common, Primordial	
Skills Athletics +15, Stealth +13		
Str 19 (+10)	Dex 14 (+8)	Wis 21 (+11)
Con 22 (+12)	Int 16 (+9)	Cha 14 (+8)

## GREEN SLAAD MADJACK TACTICS

A green slaad madjack prefers to stay close to disrupt its foes with *maddening visions*, typically starting an attack by charging. It then uses an action point to let loose its *maddening croak*, further sowing chaos among its foes and recharging that power. Once bloodied, the madjack teleports away from melee when possible to get the most use of its *mind spasm* and *maddening visions* powers.

## BLUE SLAAD DIGESTER

These variant blue slaads try to consume reality in search of the true nature of the wider multiverse. They have a filthy habit of predigesting prey with acidic saliva while holding it with their sticky skin.

## BLUE SLAAD DIGESTER TACTICS

The blue slaad digester grabs several foes at once if possible, using *acidic spew* against its pinned victims. It trips up any who escape with its *caustic tongue*, then tries to grab them again.

**Chaos Phage** Level 16 Disease **Endurance** improve DC 25, maintain DC 20, worsen DC 19 or lower

- The target is cured. **Initial Effect:** A slaad embryo is implanted in the target. **Final State:** The target dies, and a slaad tadpole burrows out of its skull.
- ☹️** The target takes a -2 penalty to Will. While bloodied, the target succumbs to madness and attacks the nearest creature.

**Blue Slaad Digester** **Level 14 Elite Soldier**Large elemental humanoid XP 2,000

Initiative +14 Senses Perception +13; low-light vision

HP 332; Bloodied 166

AC 28; Fortitude 27, Reflex 26, Will 26

Immune chaos phage

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, teleport 4

Action Points 1

⊕ **Grasping Claw** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Disease**

Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage, and the target is grabbed and exposed to chaos phage (see page 142). The blue slaad digester can grab up to two Medium or smaller creatures at once.

⊕ **Acidic Spew** (minor; at-will) ⊕ **Acid**

One creature grabbed by the blue slaad digester gains ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

⊕ **Caustic Tongue** (opportunity, when a creature grabbed by the blue slaad digester escapes the grab; at-will) ⊕ **Acid**

Reach 2; targets the triggering creature; +17 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone and takes ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

⊕ **Covetous Claws** (standard; at-will)

The blue slaad digester makes two grasping claw attacks.

⊕ **Digestive Spray** (minor; recharge [ii]) ⊕ **Acid**

Close blast 5; +15 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 damage, and ongoing 10 acid damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Primordial

Str 23 (+13) Dex 20 (+12) Wis 13 (+8)

Con 16 (+10) Int 4 (+4) Cha 20 (+12)

## GRAY SLAAD HAVOC

These variant gray slaads love to sow confusion in combat by misdirecting enemies' attacks and scattering friend and foe alike across the battlefield.

**Gray Slaad Havoc** **Level 15 Artillery (Leader)**Medium elemental humanoid XP 1,200

Initiative +10 Senses Perception +11; low-light vision

HP 116; Bloodied 58

AC 27; Fortitude 27, Reflex 28, Will 26

Immune chaos phage

Speed 6, teleport 6

⊕ **Havoc Claw** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Disease**

+22 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, the gray slaad havoc slides the target 2 squares, and the target is exposed to chaos phage (see page 142).

⊕ **Havoc Bolt** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 20; +20 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the gray slaad havoc slides the target 3 squares. If the attack scores a critical hit, the gray slaad havoc can repeat it once as a free action.

⊕ **Fog of Chaos** (immediate interrupt, when hit by a ranged attack; recharge [ii][ii][ii])

Close burst 20; targets the triggering attacker; +20 vs. Will; the triggering attack instead targets one of the target's allies of the target's choice.

⊕ **Reality Shift** (move; at-will) ⊕ **Teleportation**

Close burst 10; targets one creature in burst; +20 vs. Will (no attack roll required against an ally); the gray slaad havoc teleports the target to any space within the burst.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Primordial

Skills Athletics +14, Stealth +15

Str 14 (+9) Dex 17 (+10) Wis 19 (+11)

Con 20 (+12) Int 23 (+13) Cha 16 (+10)

## GRAY SLAAD HAVOC TACTICS

The gray slaad havoc peppers foes at a distance with *havoc bolt*, trying to draw a retaliatory ranged attack to trigger its *fog of chaos* power. Most enemies fall for this tactic only once; afterward, the gray slaad havoc reshapes the battlefield to its advantage with *reality shift*.

## RED SLAAD JUGGERNAUT

Taking the red slaads' propensity for violence to extremes, the immense juggernaut is an unstoppable engine of destruction.

**Red Slaad Juggernaut** **Level 15 Elite Soldier**Huge elemental humanoid XP 2,400

Initiative +12 Senses Perception +12; low-light vision

HP 296; Bloodied 148

AC 32; Fortitude 30, Reflex 25, Will 29

Immune chaos phage

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, teleport 4

Action Points 1

⊕ **Brutal Claw** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Disease**

Reach 3; +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone and exposed to chaos phage (see page 142).

⊕ **Rend the Fallen** (minor action; at-will)

Reach 3; targets a prone creature; +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage.

⊕ **Claw Apocalypse** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Disease**

Close burst 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone and exposed to chaos phage.

⊕ **Juggernaut's Punishment** (opportunity, when a creature within 2 squares of the red slaad juggernaut moves or stands up; at-will)

The red slaad juggernaut makes a melee basic attack against the triggering creature.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Primordial

Skills Athletics +18, Stealth +15

Str 22 (+13) Dex 16 (+10) Wis 20 (+12)

Con 20 (+12) Int 10 (+7) Cha 11 (+7)

## RED SLAAD JUGGERNAUT TACTICS

A red slaad juggernaut teleports or charges into the largest concentration of enemies, then slashes at them all with *claw apocalypse*. It follows up with *rend the fallen* against any targets knocked prone by that attack, then uses an action point for another *claw apocalypse*. The slaad gleefully takes advantage of its *juggernaut's punishment* against any foe attempting to escape.

## WHITE SLAAD (CHRONOS SLAAD)

These rare slaads have an uncanny and disturbing insight into time, with which they pull replicas of themselves from the past and future.



**White Slaad**

Medium elemental humanoid

**Level 16 Elite Lurker**

XP 2,800

**Initiative** +16    **Senses** Perception +14; low-light vision**HP** 248; **Bloodied** 124**AC** 29; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26**Immune** chaos phage**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6, teleport 4**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Probability Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**  
+21 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the white slaad's next turn and is exposed to chaos phage (page 142).

**Temporal Split** (standard; recharges when first bloodied or when the white slaad spends an action point)

The white slaad splinters into six white slaad temporal replicas, each appearing in an unoccupied space within 5 squares of the white slaad's previous space. The white slaad disappears, and it cannot attack or be attacked until it reappears. The temporal replicas thereafter act on the white slaad's initiative count. When the last temporal replica has been reduced to 0 hit points, the white slaad reappears within 5 squares of the space occupied by that replica and can act normally on its next initiative count. See also *advantage of time*.

**Advantage of Time**

Whenever a white slaad reappears after its temporal replicas have been reduced to 0 hit points, all enemies it can see grant it combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

**Combat Advantage**

A white slaad deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it. In addition, that creature is dazed (save ends) instead of dazed until the end of the slaad's next turn.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil    **Languages** Common, Primordial**Skills** Athletics +18, Stealth +17**Str** 20 (+13)    **Dex** 19 (+12)    **Wis** 13 (+9)**Con** 22 (+14)    **Int** 7 (+6)    **Cha** 14 (+10)**White Slaad Temporal Replica Level 16 Minion Lurker**

Medium elemental humanoid

XP 0

**Initiative** +16    **Senses** Perception +14; low-light vision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 29; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26**Speed** 6, teleport 4

⊕ **Probability Claw** (standard; at-will)  
+21 vs. AC; 8 damage, and the target is dazed until the beginning of the white slaad temporal replica's next turn.

**Combat Advantage**

A white slaad temporal replica deals 2 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil    **Languages** Common, Primordial**Str** 20 (+13)    **Dex** 19 (+12)    **Wis** 13 (+9)**Con** 22 (+14)    **Int** 7 (+6)    **Cha** 14 (+10)**WHITE SLAAD TACTICS**

A white slaad charges into combat and attempts to daze an enemy, exploiting combat advantage to focus on that target. If it is hard-pressed, the white slaad spends an action point to use *temporal split*, populating the battlefield with replicas of itself as well as recharging that power.

**BLACK SLAAD ENTROPIC**

Black slaads embody entropic energies similar to those that Ygorl (page 156) wields. Those the Lord of Entropy selects as personal troops are changed by his touch, becoming black slaad entropics.

**Black Slaad Entropic**

Large elemental humanoid

**Level 26 Minion Brute**

XP 2,250

**Initiative** +21    **Senses** Perception +15; low-light vision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see also *entropic void*.**AC** 38; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 37**Immune** disease**Speed** 6, teleport 3⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 12 damage, and until the start of the black slaad entropic's next turn, the target takes 5 extra damage whenever the target is hit by an attack.

⊗ **Ray of Entropy** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 20; +27 vs. Reflex; 10 damage, and ongoing 7 damage (save ends).

⚡ **Entropic Void** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Close burst 2; +27 vs. Fortitude; 10 damage, the target is pulled 1 square, and the black slaad entropic becomes an entropic void (see below).

**Alignment** Chaotic evil**Languages** Common, Primordial**Skills** Stealth +26**Str** 29 (+22)**Dex** 26 (+21)**Wis** 15 (+15)**Con** 25 (+20)**Int** 12 (+14)**Cha** 25 (+20)**Entropic Void**

Large elemental beast, slaad (blind)

**Level 26 Minion Soldier**

XP —

**Initiative** +24    **Senses** Perception +10; blindsight 10

**Tug of the Void aura** 2; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura slides 2 squares to a square within the aura and is slowed until the start of its next turn.

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see also *entropic locus*.**AC** 42; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 39, **Will** 37**Immune** disease, gaze**Speed** fly 6 (hover)⊕ **Engulf** (standard; at-will)

+30 vs. Fortitude; the target is pulled into the entropic void's space and grabbed. The target is weakened until the grab ends. *Sustain Standard*: The entropic void sustains the grab, and the target takes 15 damage.

⚡ **Entropic Locus** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Zone**

Close burst 2; the burst creates a zone of black void that lasts until the end of the encounter. The zone blocks line of sight. Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the zone takes 10 damage.

**Alignment** Unaligned**Languages** Common, Primordial**Str** 26 (+21)**Dex** 29 (+22)**Wis** 4 (+10)**Con** 20 (+18)**Int** 4 (+10)**Cha** 25 (+20)**BLACK SLAAD ENTROPIC TACTICS**

A black slaad entropic hurls itself against enemies without hesitation. It uses ranged attacks only against foes it cannot otherwise reach. When forced into entropic void form, it focuses its attacks on a single target.

## SLAAD LORE

**Arcana DC 16:** Slaads sometimes set loose their enlarged embryos into the Elemental Chaos in the form of chaos phage swarms. Dozens of these swarms are a pestilence that spreads faster and farther than ordinary diseases, breeding even more slaads in its wake.

**Arcana DC 18:** Blue slaad digesters are variant blue slaads with a slightly different philosophy on spreading chaos—they believe that if they can eat enough of reality, the true nature of the wider multiverse will finally show through.

**Arcana DC 22:** Gray slaad havocs can induce planar instability by firing too many *havoc bolts* in a short period. Stories claim that a few who managed to trigger a cascade of *havoc bolts* briefly opened unintentional portals to the world or to an echo plane in the midst of a fight.

When red slaads feast overlong on the elemental instability, they throw off the husk of their former flesh and swell in size to become juggernauts.

Black slaad entropics are Ygorl's close followers, void slaads rendered nearly immortal in the Lord of Entropy's presence. If a black slaad entropic is destroyed, it becomes a drifting miasma of entropy; if that entropic void is destroyed, it creates a lingering pocket of nothingness. If such a void remains after a battle along with Ygorl, a slaad arises from it—often a black slaad entropic.

**Arcana DC 24:** White slaads, also known as chronos slaads, have learned that time itself is an illusion that can sometimes be pierced, if ever so briefly. White slaads can pull replicas of themselves into the present from other moments in time. These temporal replicas are not as powerful as the original, but each seeks to accomplish its goals.

**Arcana DC 26:** A white slaad can create only a limited number of temporal replicas, though slaads believe that one of their elder slaad lords has the ability to pull hundreds of replicas into the present. Called Norsar the Many, this translucent-skinned slaad is its own army.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Slaads usually fight alongside other slaads, because their motives are inscrutable to most other kinds of creatures.

### Level 13 Encounter (XP 4,600)

- ◆ 2 chaos phage swarms (level 12 brute)
- ◆ 2 gray slaads (level 13 skirmisher, MM 238)
- ◆ 1 green slaad madjack (level 13 elite controller)

### Level 16 Encounter (XP 7,600)

- ◆ 2 gray slaad havocs (level 15 artillery)
- ◆ 1 red slaad juggernaut (level 15 elite soldier)
- ◆ 1 white slaad (level 16 elite lurker)



(Left to right) blue slaad digester, red slaad juggernaut, green slaad madjack, white slaad

# MASTERS OF THE ELEMENTS

Some creatures of the Elemental Chaos have become so potent, so dangerous, or so important that their infamy has spread beyond that turbulent plane. This section presents a few such mighty beings.

## EHKAHK

LOOMING IN AN OBSCURE REGION of the Elemental Chaos, a fortress of uneven walls and jagged towers rises from a foundation of black clouds. A passerby might mistake this structure for a bastion of the djinns, but on close examination it seems to be constructed of ash-blackened steel. The clouds are in fact rolling banks of burning, suffocating smoke. This is the Choking Palace (described in more detail on page 72), home of Ekhakk, the Smoldering Duke, and his court.

Ekhakk is a gaunt creature, the height of a human child, with ash-gray skin. Smoke leaks constantly from his eyes and mouth, leaving trails in the air when he moves, and pours from his back, giving the impression of flexing wings. Those who take Ekhakk's small size to mean he is no threat, though, rarely survive to repeat their mistake.

## EHKAHK'S TACTICS

Ekhakk claims to disdain violence but actually delights in exercising his abilities, particularly against those he deems disrespectful. He uses *venomous vapors* to neutralize as many enemies as possible, then wreaks havoc. The most troublesome foe becomes a target for *consuming smoke*, and he looses the *choking kennel* against enemies that are mobile. He prefers to remain at range and aloft, making use of *ride the smoke* when possible.

## EHKAHK LORE

**Arcana DC 17:** Ekhakk, the Smoldering Duke, is a small but powerful creature of poisonous fumes who rules a court in his fortress, the Choking Palace. Although his domain, called Fume, is not large, and he does not always treat his subjects well, he protects the place mercilessly against attackers. The other powers of the Elemental Chaos seem to acknowledge his rule; he sends regular ambassadors to the Charcoal Palace in the City of Brass and occasionally visits there himself.

**Arcana DC 26:** Nobody is certain of Ekhakk's true nature. Different tales claim that he is an elemental who developed an abnormal degree of intelligence; the offspring of an efreet and a djinn; and even the child or a fragment of a slain primordial.

### Ekhakk Level 25 Elite Controller (Leader)

Small elemental humanoid (air, fire) XP 14,000

**Initiative** +16 **Senses Perception** +22  
**Suffocating Fume** aura 2; each living enemy that enters or starts its turn within the aura begins to cough uncontrollably. Until the start of its next turn, it grants combat advantage and cannot spend healing surges.  
**HP** 464; **Bloodied** 232  
**AC** 39; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 39, **Will** 37  
**Immune** disease, fire  
**Saving Throws** +2  
**Speed** 6, fly 8 (hover); see also *ride the smoke*  
**Action Points** 1

⚔ **Ashen Rapier** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**  
+29 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 10 damage, and Ekhakk slides the target 1 square and can then shift 1 square as a free action.

☹ **Ashen Plume** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Poison**  
Ranged 15; targets one or two creatures; +29 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 10 fire and poison damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

☹ **Choking Kennel** (minor; recharges when first bloodied)  
Four smoke hounds (see below) appear, each in an unoccupied space within 15 squares of Ekhakk. The smoke hounds take their turns immediately after Ekhakk's initiative count. They remain until they are killed, until Ekhakk uses a free action to dismiss them, or until the end of the encounter. Characters do not gain experience points for killing smoke hounds summoned by this power.

☹ **Consuming Smoke** (standard; recharge ☹☹☹☹) ♦ **Fire, Poison, Teleportation**  
Ranged 15; +31 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 10 fire damage, and the target disappears until the start of Ekhakk's next turn. The target reappears prone in a space of Ekhakk's choice within 15 squares of him that does not include hindering terrain, and Ekhakk makes a secondary attack that is a close burst 1 centered on the target. **Secondary Attack:** +28 vs. Fortitude; 3d10 + 10 poison damage. The area within the burst is heavily obscured by thick smoke until the start of Ekhakk's next turn.

☹ **Ride the Smoke** (move; recharge ☹☹☹) ♦ **Teleportation, Zone**  
Area burst 4 within 20; the burst creates a zone of thick smoke that lasts until the end of Ekhakk's next turn. Ekhakk and each adjacent ally of his choice teleport to spaces of his choice within the zone. The zone's area is heavily obscured to enemies.

☹ **Venomous Vapors** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Fire, Poison**  
Three area bursts 1 within 15 that do not overlap; +28 vs. Reflex; 4d8 + 10 fire and poison damage, and the target is blinded (save ends). **Miss:** Half damage, and the target is blinded until the end of Ekhakk's next turn.

**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** Common, Giant, Primordial

**Skills** Arcana +26, Bluff +25, Diplomacy +25, Insight +22  
**Str** 13 (+13) **Dex** 19 (+16) **Wis** 21 (+17)  
**Con** 24 (+19) **Int** 28 (+21) **Cha** 26 (+20)

**Equipment** ashen rapier

Ekhakk's duchy is home to all manner of creatures, from near-mindless elementals to rogue efreet and djinn, and even a sizable population of natural beings. Any who lack a home are welcome in



Ehkakh's domain—as long as they're willing to swear lifelong fealty to him.

**Arcana DC 31:** Ehkakh seems to have no fear of death. He has more than once returned to his court after being “slain” in the sight of witnesses. Perhaps the Smoldering Duke is truly unkillable, or maybe multiple different individuals have taken on his title.

## SMOKE HOUND

These creatures of living smoke aren't truly hounds, but their behavior and general shape are close enough to what canines display that the name has stuck. When they are not serving a master or trainer, smoke hounds run in packs through the Elemental Chaos.

Smoke Hound		Level 23 Minion Soldier	
Medium elemental beast (air, fire)		XP 1,275	
Initiative +21	Senses Perception +20; low-light vision		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.			
AC 37; Fortitude 35, Reflex 37, Will 33			
Immune poison; Resist 30 fire			
Speed 8			
⊕ <b>Unyielding Bite</b> (standard; at-will) ⊕ <b>Fire, Poison</b>			
+26 vs. Reflex; 9 fire and poison damage, and the target is grabbed. The smoke hound cannot make <i>unyielding bite</i> attacks while it has a creature grabbed. <i>Sustain Minor</i> : The smoke hound sustains the grab, and the target takes 13 fire damage.			
⊕ <b>Tongue of Smoke</b> (standard; at-will)			
Targets a creature grabbed by the smoke hound; +26 vs. Fortitude; the smoke hound moves half its speed and moves the target with it.			
<b>Unshakable Grasp</b>			
A creature grabbed by a smoke hound grants combat advantage until the grab ends.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages understands Primordial	
Str 22 (+17)	Dex 26 (+19)	Wis 18 (+15)	
Con 21 (+16)	Int 5 (+8)	Cha 11 (+11)	

## SMOKE HOUND TACTICS

Smoke hounds use pack tactics when possible. When they are working alongside other creatures, they grab and hold foes to make them easier targets.

## SMOKE HOUND LORE

**Arcana DC 24:** Smoke hounds are predators of the Elemental Chaos. Although they are dangerous attackers, their semisolid nature makes them fragile in combat. They do not speak, but they understand Primordial and often fight alongside more intelligent masters. Ehkakh, the Smoldering Duke, keeps a large kennel of them.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Ehkakh travels with a retinue of guards or members of his court—not necessarily for protection, but because to do otherwise would belittle his status.

### Level 25 Encounter (XP 37,250)

- ◆ 1 djinn stormsword (level 24 soldier, *Monster Manual* 272)
- ◆ 1 djinn cloudstalker (level 24 lurker, page 151)
- ◆ 1 efreet flamestrider (level 23 skirmisher, *MM* 99)
- ◆ 1 storm giant (level 24 controller, *MM* 124)
- ◆ Ehkakh (level 25 elite controller)

## EHKAHK THROUGH THE YEARS

Like many other creatures and entities in the 4th Edition D&D game, the Smoldering Duke has a history that reaches back into the early years of the game. Yet the long-lived Ehkakh has had little impact on D&D's long-running stories, plots, and adventures.

Ehkakh initially appeared in the 1st Edition version of *Manual of the Planes* as a name dropped into a single paragraph. Ehkakh's name resurfaced in the *PLANESCAPE Campaign Setting*, but little more was said about him. The details presented here flesh out the Smoldering Duke as a major entity for the first time.

# LIRICOSA

GITHZERAI HOLD UP THIS REVERED, even legendary hermit as a shining example of what mortals can become. Liricosa is the one living member of the race to have achieved true enlightenment. His wisdom and insight are rivaled only by his physical perfection.

Monks, philosophers, and those of all races who desire enlightenment (but particularly githzerai) seek Liricosa as a mentor. He does take disciples and shares his wisdom with the lucky few who reach him. However, locating him is no easy task. He seeks to experience many places throughout the planes in order to keep expanding his mind. He might be found on a secluded mountaintop in the world one year, and might establish residence in a crumbling keep in the Elemental Chaos the next.

Liricosa is in prime condition and has achieved such mastery over his body that he can withstand any environmental condition. However, he has acquired various eccentricities. He does not protect himself against the environment, which he no longer notices in his enlightenment. His speech is slow, contemplative, and slightly distracted. Every night, he tears a page from a different book, dampens it, and plasters it to his face before falling asleep.

Liricosa seems emotionless and evinces little concern for events around himself. Even news of calamities never shakes him; he simply nods and thanks his informant. He presumably enjoys passing on his wisdom to others, but his actions appear lifeless and automatic.

## LIRICOSA'S TACTICS

Liricosa shuns combat unless battle is absolutely necessary. When forced to fight, he continually adjusts the tactical situation to his best advantage. He uses *inevitable consequences* to punish enemies that attack him and disrupts his foes with *reorder reality* whenever convenient—targeting as many foes as possible with *awe of truth*. He targets leaders first, then strikers, then controllers, preferring teleportation and stunning attacks to remove defenders so he can concentrate on the true threats. If sorely pressed, he teleports to safety. He reserves *the master's touch* for use against worthy opponents.

## Liricosa Level 21 Solo Controller

Medium natural humanoid, githzerai

XP 16,000

**Initiative** +17 (37); see also *fundamental awareness*

**Senses** Perception +24 (44); truesight 20; see also *fundamental awareness*

**HP** 704; **Bloodied** 352

**AC** 35; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 35

**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 15 variable (at-will)

**Saving Throws** +5

**Speed** 8, teleport 6

**Action Points** 2

④ **Unarmed Strike** (standard; at-will)

+26 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

† **Blur of Fists** (standard; at-will)

Liricosa makes two unarmed strike attacks.

† **The Master's Touch** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Reliable**

+25 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 8 damage, and the target takes ongoing damage equal to half its bloodied value (save ends).

↻ **Reorder Reality** (minor; recharge [ii]) ♦ **Teleportation**

Ranged 20; targets one to five creatures; +25 vs. Fortitude; Liricosa teleports the targets, swapping their positions as he chooses.

← **Awe of Truth** (standard; recharge [ii]) ♦ **Psychic**

Close burst 3; targets enemies; +25 vs. Will; 4d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is stunned (save ends). **Miss:** Half damage.

**Inevitable Consequences** (immediate interrupt, when Liricosa is missed by an attack; at-will)

Liricosa teleports 15 squares to a space adjacent to the triggering attacker and makes an unarmed strike attack against it.

**Fundamental Awareness**

Liricosa is always assumed to roll a 20 on any Insight, Perception, or initiative checks.

**Environmental Adaptation**

Liricosa never takes damage from nonmagical environmental effects.

**Alignment** Unaligned

**Languages** Supernal

**Skills** Athletics +20, Insight +24 (44); see also *fundamental awareness*

**Str** 20 (+15)

**Dex** 24 (+17)

**Wis** 29 (+19)

**Con** 24 (+17)

**Int** 24 (+17)

**Cha** 26 (+18)

## LIRICOSA LORE

**History or Nature DC 14:** Liricosa is the most revered githzerai monk alive. He is a transient hermit whose location is difficult to pin down.

**History or Nature DC 22:** No one knows when Liricosa was born, and stories of his youth have developed a mythic quality. Some say he has spent his life searching for enlightenment; others that he was a thief and murderer who achieved his current state when he confronted a possible future self through a strange rift in reality. Still others claim that Liricosa is not a githzerai at all, but an entity of the Far Realm in mortal guise.

**History or Nature DC 27:** Liricosa's fundamental understanding of the nature of being allows him to change aspects of himself, his environment, and even other people. He understands all languages, and all creatures understand his speech. Some say that Liricosa has access to all the secrets of the universe and can learn the answer to any question if he concentrates. Though he willingly talks to those who seek him, the answers he provides are rarely what the questers thought they wanted.

## LIRICOSA'S CURRENT WHEREABOUTS

Deep in the Elemental Chaos stands a ruined city atop a tumbling earthmote. The city's builders are long gone, and their identity is a mystery. The place's doorways and ceilings suggest that its inhabitants were 8 or 9 feet tall, and several other clues indicate that they were humanoid and had at least four arms. The likely cause of their demise is a portal that periodically activates in the city's bowels.

About once a year, the portal sputters to life. It is linked to the Abyss, but the precise location, level, and layer of the destination vary every year with no discernible pattern.

Six months ago, Liricosa abandoned his traditionally isolated lifestyle when he and his acolytes arrived at this ruined place. They slew the scattered demons that had come through the portal most recently, then set up shop. By now, most githzerai have heard rumors that the legendary Liricosa dwells here. His presence at a known location attracts more followers, and Liricosa seems happy to accept and train them.

Many people have also come to warn Liricosa of an imminent demon attack, but his eyes wander and he seems to lose attention when this topic arises. Some believe that he is just a crazy old hermit and doesn't know what he is getting into—but anyone familiar with Liricosa knows that the truth can't be so simple. They wonder if he plans to shut down the portal or perhaps even build an army to take the fight to the Abyss, though none can say why he would choose to do so now.

Liricosa's current chief disciple, Ertrand, has been leaving his master's side more often than usual. He has been seen in major settlements in the Elemental Chaos: the City of Brass, Zerthadlun, and Threshold, among others. He talks to only a select few individuals in these places, but he always visits the libraries.



LIRICOSA

## LIRICOSA'S DISCIPLES

Liricosa keeps roughly twenty disciples at any given time. Most are githzerai, but a few are members of other races. They come from different backgrounds and have different goals, but they all revere Liricosa. These individuals remain with him for as long as they like. Some have been with him for decades; others come and go, traveling the planes in attempts to attain enlightenment.

For a typical disciple of Liricosa, use the statistics for a githzerai *zerth* (*Monster Manual*, page 130).

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Liricosa faces opponents alone. His disciples are always willing to fight on his behalf or at his side, but anything that is a serious threat to him would likely slaughter his students, so he sends them away before engaging in combat.

# SIRRAJADT, THE VENGEFUL STORM

THE ONCE-MIGHTY DJINNS ARE FEW NOW, their great palaces and sweeping empire lost. Punished by the gods for their part in the Dawn War, many linger imprisoned in mundane objects. Those who remain free are mere shadows of what once they were, seeking to regain their lost power and free their kin so that they might rebuild the great djinn cities of the Elemental Chaos. Some, though, seek not recovery but revenge.

One of the last free members of a shattered noble house, Sirrajadt thirsts to destroy all those he blames for his people's plight: the gods and the mortals who worship them, as well as those who failed to aid the djinns in their time of need. He frees other djinns only to increase the ranks of his followers. He does not believe that restoration of the djinn kingdoms is possible, and he scoffs at the misguided fools who seek it.

The Vengeful Storm is shrewd, cunning, and calculating. He is willing to cooperate with one enemy to bring down another, since he knows that he and his followers are not yet potent enough to complete their tasks on their own. He has cooperated with worshippers of the gods against the efreet; with one efreet house against another; and with either or both sides in various mortal conflicts. Sirrajadt's patience is as vast as his rage.



**Sirrajadt** Level 27 Elite Lurker (Leader)  
Large elemental humanoid (air) XP 22,000

Initiative +27 Senses Perception +19; blindsight 15

HP 386; Bloodied 193

AC 41; Fortitude 38, Reflex 40, Will 39; see also storm form

Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 lightning, 15 thunder

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, fly 10 (hover); overland flight 15; see also storm form

Action Points 1

⊕ Storm Scourge (standard; at-will) ⚡ Lightning, Thunder

Reach 2; +29 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 9 lightning damage plus 1d8 + 9 thunder damage (crit 17 lightning damage plus 17 thunder damage, and ongoing 10 lightning and thunder damage [save ends]).

† Sound and Fury (standard; at-will)

Sirrajadt makes two melee basic attacks. If each attack hits a different target, both targets are deafened until the end of Sirrajadt's next turn.

† Storm Strike (standard; usable only in storm form; at-will) ⚡

Lightning, Thunder

Reach 2; targets two different creatures within reach or within the storm form's zone; +31 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 9 lightning damage plus 3d6 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is deafened and cannot take opportunity actions until the end of Sirrajadt's next turn. Sirrajadt returns to his humanoid form after the attack. See also storm form.

† Storm Surge (standard; usable only in storm form; encounter) ⚡

Lightning, Thunder

Reach 2; targets each creature within reach or within the storm form's zone; +30 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 9 lightning damage and 2d8 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is deafened (save ends) and knocked prone. Miss: Half damage, and the target is deafened until the end of Sirrajadt's next turn. Sirrajadt returns to his humanoid form after the attack. See also storm form.

⚡ Cyclone (minor 1/round; usable only in storm form; at-will)

Close burst 1; +29 vs. Fortitude (no attack roll required against allies); Sirrajadt slides the target 3 squares, and enemies within the burst are knocked prone.

⚡ Storm Form (standard; at-will) ⚡ Lightning, Polymorph,

Thunder, Zone

Close burst 2; Sirrajadt disperses into a howling storm. The burst creates a stormy zone that lasts until Sirrajadt uses a minor action to end the effect or is forced to return to humanoid form. Any enemy that starts its turn within the zone is slowed until the start of its next turn. Any ally that starts its turn within the zone gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls, and its attacks deal 5 extra lightning and thunder damage.

While in storm form, Sirrajadt cannot be attacked and can use only cyclone, storm strike, and storm surge. He can fly at half speed as a move action, squeeze as though he were a Tiny creature, and move through enemies' spaces.

When Sirrajadt resumes his humanoid form, he appears in any space within the burst. He must resume his humanoid form after using storm strike or storm surge, or if the zone is destroyed.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Primordial

Skills Insight +24, Stealth +28

Str 24 (+20) Dex 31 (+23) Wis 22 (+19)

Con 25 (+20) Int 28 (+22) Cha 26 (+21)

## SIRRAJADT'S TACTICS

Sirrajadt prefers to remain hidden until combat begins, then attacks aggressively. He moves into a good position, invokes *storm form*, uses *cyclone* to disrupt enemies and place his allies in advantageous positions, and then spends an action point to launch *storm surge*.

After this devastating opener, he alternates between lurking in storm form (maneuvering allies with *cyclone*) and using *storm strike*, with occasional lashes of *sound and fury*. When he resumes his humanoid form, Sirrajadt takes a position that allows him to set up his next attacks or avoid retaliation. If he is forced to flee, he does so in storm form.

## DJINN CLOUDSTALKER

These djinn ambushers forgo the direct assaults favored by their kin to practice guerrilla warfare. They consider Sirrajadt, who has mastered cloud-stalker techniques to a mystical level, to be the greatest of their kind.

Djinn Cloudstalker		Level 24 Lurker
Large elemental humanoid (air)		XP 6,050
Initiative +25	Senses Perception +16; blindsight 10	
HP 173; Bloodied 86		
AC 38; Fortitude 35, Reflex 38, Will 36; see also <i>cloud form</i>		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 15 lightning, 15 thunder		
Speed 6, fly 8 (hover); see also <i>cloud form</i>		
⚔ <b>Katar</b> (standard; at-will) ⚔ <b>Weapon</b>		
Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 2d8 + 9 damage (crit 3d8 + 18).		
⚔ <b>Biting Wind</b> (standard; usable only in cloud form; at-will) ⚔ <b>Cold</b>		
Reach 2; targets a creature within reach or within the <i>cloud form</i> zone; +31 vs. AC; 4d8 + 9 cold damage, and the target is knocked prone. The djinn cloudstalker returns to its humanoid form after the attack. See also <i>cloud form</i> .		
↩ <b>Cloud Form</b> (standard; at-will) ⚔ <b>Polymorph, Zone</b>		
Close burst 1; the djinn cloudstalker disperses into a billowing cloud. The burst creates a cloudy zone until the cloudstalker uses a minor action to end the effect or is forced to resume humanoid form. While in cloud form, the cloudstalker cannot be attacked and can use only <i>biting wind</i> and <i>turbulence</i> . It can fly at half speed as a move action, squeeze as though it were a Tiny creature, and move through enemy-occupied spaces.		
The cloudstalker can resume its normal form as a minor action. When it does so, it appears in any unoccupied space within the burst's area. It must resume its humanoid form after using <i>biting wind</i> , or if the zone is destroyed.		
↩ <b>Turbulence</b> (minor 1/round; usable only in cloud form; at-will)		
Close burst 1; targets enemies; +26 vs. Fortitude; the djinn cloudstalker slides the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Primordial	
Skills Stealth +26		
Str 22 (+18)	Dex 28 (+21)	Wis 18 (+16)
Con 23 (+18)	Int 23 (+18)	Cha 25 (+19)
Equipment 2 katars		

## DJINN CLOUDSTALKER TACTICS

Like Sirrajadt, a djinn cloudstalker prefers to take foes unaware and uses similar tactics. It assumes cloud form, moves into the midst of enemies, and rearranges the battlefield with *turbulence*. Then the cloudstalker strikes a chosen foe with *biting wind*.

## SIRRAJADT LORE

**Arcana DC 26:** Sirrajadt, called the Vengeful Storm, is a djinn who seeks the destruction of all he blames for the fall of his kind. He sometimes cooperates with other creatures if doing so allows him to take down a more potent enemy, such as an efreet house. Sirrajadt has numerous militant followers, including djinn cloudstalkers and elementals.

Sirrajadt travels in a great magical storm, carrying his followers with him. The first sign of his coming is rolling thunder that long precedes any visible thundercloud. By the time the horizon darkens, it is too late. Sirrajadt and his troops strike quickly, without mercy or honor.

**Arcana DC 31:** Long ago, Sirrajadt was only a minor noble of the House of Haytham. At the time, he was rebellious and uncouth, refusing to accept his place and always complaining about his status, until his family sent him away. Sirrajadt suffered through the horrors of the Dawn War without the luxuries of his birthright. When he returned from his wanderings, it was to a palace shattered: The gods had locked away the members of Sirrajadt's house. The djinn then swore an oath of blood vengeance. Aside from rage, shame drives Sirrajadt to prove himself, even though his family might never know of his victories.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Sirrajadt is never encountered alone. He has too many enemies—some of whom are more potent than he—to risk traveling in solitude.

### Level 26 Encounter (XP 47,150)

- ◆ 1 djinn cloudstalker (level 24 lurker)
- ◆ 1 djinn skylord (level 25 controller, *Monster Manual* 2 73)
- ◆ 2 djinn stormswords (level 24 soldier, *Monster Manual* 2 72)
- ◆ Sirrajadt (level 27 elite lurker)



# SOLKARA, THE CRUSHING WAVE

SHE IS THE FURY OF THE TSUNAMI that crashes upon the shore, leaving broken wood and shattered stone in its wake. She is the impossible weight of the bottomless depths, against which no living thing can stand. Solkara, the Crushing Wave, is a primordial lord who waits in cold rage for her vengeance. Like the sea against which mortal races build their fragile bulwarks, Solkara's wrath can be forestalled only for a time.

Solkara is frozen within a divinely built prison at the heart of a glacier as wide as a continent, deep within uncharted regions of the Elemental Chaos. Her dark form is scarcely visible in the ice's frigid heart. For an age so long that mortals have no way of comprehending it, her worshipers have struggled to melt away the imprisoning ice. Now dark emissaries of her will, unseen for millennia, walk the Plane Below and the world once more. If they have risen, can their queen be far behind?

Solkara's monstrous form defies easy description. A scaled tail extends from a body supported by a pair of reptilian legs and made up of two humanoid torsos joined at the shoulders, sprouting three multijointed arms. Rising from these torsos, two sinuous necks connect to a single head resembling that of a ferocious predator of the deep. Water flows constantly over the whole without apparent source. Solkara is living proof that the primordials have no place in the world of the gods, for no sane creator could mold such a creature.

## SOLKARA'S TACTICS

Solkara has not devolved into bestial savagery as have other primordials, but she is still a raging force of nature, not a cunning tactician or scheming strategist. Unless her foes are widely spread out, she initiates battle with *incoming tide*, then spends an action point to use *crushing torrent*. She continues to make overwhelming melee attacks, using *incoming tide* as needed to draw foes near. If she is too closely surrounded, she creates distance between herself and her attackers with *crushing wave*.

## SOLKARA LORE

**Arcana DC 23:** Solkara, the Crushing Wave, is one of the ancient primordials, embodying the fury of the sea and the cold of its darkest depths. She is imprisoned in an enormous glacier somewhere within the Elemental Chaos. One of her cults, led by the mad storm titan priest Mirmakur, occupies the glacier, trying to melt the ice with elemental flame.

**Arcana DC 32:** During the Dawn War, Solkara dominated many seas of the mortal world, putting her

most frequently in conflict with the goddess Melora. Eventually, Melora defeated the Crushing Wave with the aid of her exarch Sekolah, Kord in his role as god of storms, and Sehanine, exercising the moon's influence over the tides. They were unable to destroy Solkara, but they stripped her of much of her power and imprisoned her in a continent-sized ice shelf.

**Arcana DC 37:** Several signs suggest that the Crushing Wave might be dangerously close to regaining her freedom. These include the recent reappearance of Xixecal in the mortal world, and an increase in tidal waves and storm surges that seem to have little to do with Melora.

Solkara	Level 34 Solo Controller
Gargantuan elemental magical beast (aquatic, cold, primordial, water)	XP 195,000
Initiative +26	Senses Perception +24; darkvision
<b>Cumbrous Tide</b> aura 10; the aura's area is difficult terrain. Each prone creature within the aura must use a standard action to stand up; see also <i>drowning wave</i> .	
<b>Drowning Wave</b> (only while bloodied) aura 10; creatures treat the aura's area as underwater (DMG 45).	
HP 1,148; Bloodied 574	
AC 48; Fortitude 48, Reflex 45, Will 46	
Immune attacks by creatures of lower than 20th level; Resist 20 cold, 20 fire	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +5; whenever an attack produces an effect on Solkara that a save can end, she makes an immediate saving throw. Solkara makes saving throws at the end of each of her turns as normal.	
Speed 6, swim 10	
Action Points 2	
⊕ <b>Crushing Blow</b> (standard; at-will) Reach 4; +41 vs. AC; 4d6 + 12 damage, and Solkara knocks the target prone.	
⊕ <b>Battering Tide</b> (standard; recharge [E]), and recharges when first bloodied) Solkara moves her speed and makes one attack against each creature within her reach (4 squares) at any point during the move; +39 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 12 damage, and Solkara knocks the target prone. Miss: Half damage.	
⊕ <b>Crushing Torrent</b> (standard; at-will) Solkara makes four crushing blow attacks, each against a different target.	
⊕ <b>Crushing Wave</b> (standard; recharge [E]) ⊕ Cold Close blast 10; +39 vs. Reflex; 4d6 + 12 damage, and Solkara pushes the target 8 squares and knocks it prone. In addition, the target is blinded until the end of Solkara's next turn and takes ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends). Miss: Half damage, and Solkara pushes the target 2 squares.	
⊕ <b>Incoming Tide</b> (minor; at-will) Close burst 10; +39 vs. Fortitude; Solkara pulls the target 5 squares.	
<b>Threatening Reach</b> (only while bloodied) Solkara can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within her reach (4 squares).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial
Str 34 (+29)	Dex 28 (+26) Wis 25 (+24)
Con 27 (+25)	Int 17 (+20) Cha 30 (+27)



## XIXECAL, THE LIVING GLACIER

This towering abomination of shifting, cracking ice is one of Solkara's greatest servants. Xixecal's roughly humanoid shape is surrounded by a permanent blizzard and radiates bone-numbing, soul-chilling cold.

### XIXECAL'S TACTICS

The Living Glacier believes only in overwhelming force. It stalks into battle, weakening foes with its aura and battering them into submission. It uses *breath of winter* as often as possible, freezing enemies in ice before pounding them with glacial smashes.

### XIXECAL LORE

**Arcana DC 19:** Xixecal, the Living Glacier, is an enormous being of elemental ice that was created during the last days of the Dawn War.

**Arcana DC 28:** After Solkara was imprisoned, the primordial Iktha-Lau created a soldier of living ice from the glacier that entombed the Crushing Wave. Perhaps the Ever Empty believed that his creation, having a portion of Solkara's power, would serve him. Instead, Xixecal was born with unshakable loyalty toward Solkara alone. For the duration of the Dawn War and millennia thereafter, it stalked the Elemental Chaos and the natural world, claiming to speak for Solkara and to act in her name. Few were willing to challenge the Living Glacier's claim.

### Xixecal Level 30 Elite Brute

Huge elemental humanoid (cold) XP 38,000

**Initiative** +17 **Senses** Perception +17; low-light vision

**Raging Blizzard** aura 5; the aura's area is lightly obscured. Each enemy that starts its turn within the aura is slowed and loses any resistance to cold until the start of its next turn.

**HP** 682; **Bloodied** 341

**AC** 44; **Fortitude** 46, **Reflex** 42, **Will** 44

**Immune** cold; **Vulnerable** fire (when hit by a fire attack, Xixecal takes a -4 penalty to all defenses until the end of its next turn)

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 6 (ice walk)

**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold**  
Reach 3; +33 vs. AC; 4d8 + 11 cold damage.

† **Freezing Slam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold**  
Xixecal makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target takes ongoing 20 cold damage and is immobilized (save ends both).

← **Breath of Winter** (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ♦ **Cold**  
Close blast 6; +31 vs. Fortitude; 4d10 + 11 cold damage, and the target takes ongoing 20 cold damage and is restrained (save ends both).

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Primordial

**Skills** Arcana +25

**Str** 32 (+26) **Dex** 15 (+17) **Wis** 14 (+17)

**Con** 31 (+25) **Int** 20 (+20) **Cha** 28 (+24)

**Arcana DC 33:** In recent years, the Living Glacier has appeared once again. Some worry that its return might herald the coming release of Solkara herself.

## MIRMAKUR, THE RAVING PRIEST

The storm titan Mirmakur is devoted to freeing Solkara and leads the cultists who revere the Crushing Wave. His body is filthy, his hair matted into clumps, and his teeth befouled with dangling seaweed, but his eyes burn with a fanatic's fervor. Mirmakur's obsession has consumed his sanity, and he flies into a homicidal rage at the slightest setback. He has even slain many of his own cultists, whom he branded as heretics for failing to fulfill their sacred duty.

Mirmakur		Level 28 Elite Brute	
Huge elemental humanoid (aquatic, giant)		XP 26,000	
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +24		
<b>Storm Fury</b> (Lightning, Thunder) aura 4; any enemy that enters or starts its turn within the aura takes 10 lightning and thunder damage; enemies treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain and cannot fly.			
HP 640; Bloodied 320			
AC 40; Fortitude 43, Reflex 36, Will 39			
Resist 30 lightning, 30 thunder			
Saving Throws +2			
Speed 8 (ice walk), fly 10 (hover), swim 8			
Action Points 1			
⊕ <b>Roaring Halberd</b> (standard; at-will) ⚡ Lightning, Thunder, Weapon			
Reach 4; +31 vs. AC; 2d6 + 12 damage plus 2d8 lightning and thunder damage.			
⚡ <b>Fearsome Cleave</b> (standard; recharge [⚡][⚡]) ⚡ Lightning, Thunder, Weapon			
Close burst 4; targets enemies in burst; +31 vs. AC; 2d6 + 12 damage plus 2d8 lightning and thunder damage, and the target is knocked prone.			
⚡ <b>Hurl Thunderbolt</b> (standard; at-will) ⚡ Lightning, Thunder			
Ranged 10; +30 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 12 lightning and thunder damage, the target is dazed (save ends), and Mirmakur pushes the target 3 squares.			
Alignment	Chaotic evil		
Languages	Giant, Primordial		
Skills	Arcana +21, Intimidate +26		
Str 34 (+26)	Dex 23 (+20)	Wis 20 (+19)	
Con 30 (+24)	Int 15 (+16)	Cha 24 (+21)	
Equipment halberd			

### MIRMAKUR'S TACTICS

Mirmakur begins combat at a safe distance with *hurl thunderbolt*, focusing on whoever has angered him the most. If such lesser beings still dare to approach, he mows them down with *fearsome cleave*.

### MIRMAKUR LORE

**Arcana DC 19:** Mirmakur is a wildly insane storm titan who worships the primordial Solkara, the Crushing Wave. He is often called the Raving Priest, though never to his face.

**Arcana DC 28:** Mirmakur and his cultists spend most of their time on Solkara's glacial prison, constantly seeking to melt the ice. Although the Raving Priest has no fire magic, he commands many

fire-based elementals who contribute their powers to the sacred task. When not overseeing these efforts, Mirmakur wanders the Elemental Chaos and other worlds, seeking ever more powerful magic to aid in his quest.

**Arcana DC 33:** Mirmakur is not happy about the recent return of the ice creature called Xixecal, one of Solkara's greatest servants. He hopes that the Living Glacier's appearance means that the Crushing Wave will soon be free, but he fears that the more powerful creature might replace him as the primordial's chief agent.

## CRUSHING WAVE CULTISTS

Not all of Solkara's worshipers are such mighty beings as titans or abominations. Many of her lesser followers are watersoul genasi who long for her to inundate creation.

### CRUSHING WAVE CULTIST TACTICS

A hierophant remains behind its followers, attacking foes from a distance and using *swift current* to move away if enemies draw too near. It constantly uses *tide of war* to keep enemies off balance and give its followers additional attacks. Initiates close to melee swiftly, marking enemies and then using *stroke of lightning* whenever possible.

#### Crushing Wave Hierophant Level 10 Artillery (Leader)

Crushing Wave Hierophant Level 10 Artillery (Leader)		Medium elemental humanoid (aquatic, water), genasi		XP 500
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +8			
HP 84; Bloodied 42				
AC 22; Fortitude 22, Reflex 22, Will 23				
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage				
Speed 6, swim 6				
⊕ <b>Hammer</b> (standard; at-will) ⚡ Weapon				
+17 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.				
⊕ <b>Force Hammer</b> (standard; at-will) ⚡ Force				
Ranged 20; +17 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 force damage, and the Crushing Wave hierophant slides the target 2 squares.				
⚡ <b>Tide of War</b> (minor 1/round; at-will)				
Close burst 10; targets one or two allies; the target shifts 2 squares. If the target ends this move adjacent to at least one enemy, it can make a melee basic attack against one of those enemies as a free action.				
⚡ <b>Phantom Rain</b> (standard; recharge [⚡][⚡]) ⚡ Force, Lightning				
Area burst 2 within 20; +15 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 force and lightning damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the Crushing Wave hierophant's next turn.				
<b>Swift Current</b> (move; encounter)				
The Crushing Wave hierophant shifts 6 squares. During this movement, the hierophant can move across liquid and through enemies' spaces, ignoring difficult terrain and hazardous terrain effects. It takes no penalties for squeezing during this movement.				
Alignment	Evil			
Languages	Common, Primordial			
Skills	Arcana +12, Religion +12			
Str 11 (+5)	Dex 18 (+9)	Wis 17 (+8)		
Con 18 (+9)	Int 15 (+7)	Cha 21 (+10)		
Equipment chainmail, hammer				

**Crushing Wave Initiate** **Level 8 Soldier**

Medium elemental humanoid (aquatic, water), genasi XP 350

Initiative +9 Senses Perception +6

HP 89; Bloodied 44

AC 24; Fortitude 21, Reflex 20, Will 20

Resist 5 lightning

Speed 6, swim 6

## ⚔ Longsword (standard; at-will) ⚔ Lightning, Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 lightning damage, and the target is marked until the end of the encounter, until the initiate is knocked unconscious, or until another mark supersedes this one.

## ⚔ Stroke of Lightning (standard; recharge [i]) ⚔ Lightning, Teleportation, Weapon

+15 vs. AC; 2d8 + 3 lightning damage, and the initiate teleports the target to a space of the initiate's choosing within 8 squares of the initiate that does not include hindering terrain. The initiate then makes a secondary attack, which is a close burst 1 centered on the target. *Secondary Attack:* +13 vs. AC; targets enemies; 2d8 + 3 lightning damage.**Elemental Assault** (immediate reaction, when an enemy marked by the initiate and within 10 squares of it hits with an attack that does not include the initiate; at-will) ⚔ Teleportation

The initiate teleports to a square adjacent to the triggering enemy and makes a longsword attack as a free action.

**Swift Current** (move; encounter)

The Crushing Wave initiate shifts 6 squares. During this movement, the initiate can move across liquid and through enemies' spaces, ignoring difficult terrain and hazardous terrain effects. It takes no penalties for squeezing during this movement.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Primordial

Str 20 (+9)

Dex 17 (+7)

Wis 14 (+6)

Con 17 (+7)

Int 11 (+4)

Cha 16 (+7)

Equipment chainmail, longsword

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Solkara would fight alone if she were ever released, but her followers are numerous. They include her powerful agents and elemental beings of both water and fire.

**Level 8 Encounter (XP 1,875)**

- ◆ 1 Crushing Wave hierophant (level 10 artillery)
- ◆ 2 Crushing Wave initiates (level 8 soldier)
- ◆ 9 human lackeys (level 7 minion, MM 162)

**Level 27 Encounter (XP 58,000)**

- ◆ 2 efreet pyresingers (level 25 controller, MM 99)
- ◆ Mirmakur (level 28 elite controller)
- ◆ 1 thunderblast cyclone (level 26 elite artillery, MM 105)

**Level 29 Encounter (XP 82,000)**

- ◆ 2 retrievers (level 27 soldier, *Monster Manual 2* 177)
- ◆ 1 storm titan (level 27 elite controller, MM 125)
- ◆ Xixecal (level 30 elite brute)

## A HEART OF ICE

If you want to use Solkara and her servants in your campaign but with an additional twist, consider the possibility that Xixecal's loyalty to Solkara is not entirely what it appears.

The Living Glacier has a link to Solkara, allowing it to share a sliver of her power and supposedly forming a bond of fealty to her. Xixecal, however, might actually be working to free the Crushing Wave from her prison not because it serves her, but because it wants her destroyed.

If Solkara is released, the champions of the gods would be forced to confront her. She would wreak unimaginable devastation, but in the end, the gods would almost certainly succeed. If that occurs, the terrible essence of the primordial would have to re-form somewhere. Xixecal believes that its innate connection to Solkara would make itself the receptacle for this power. If this theory holds true, the result would be something unseen in the cosmos in a thousand eons: The birth of a new primordial, unimpeded by divine bonds and free to do as it will.

Whether you make Xixecal a schemer in its own right or keep it as a devoted servant of Solkara, the Living Glacier has its own servitors. These lesser but still powerful beings of ice wander the Elemental Chaos and the world, doing what they see as Xixecal's will. A few have even made their way to the coldest winter realms of the Feywild, where they serve fey lords of cold and ice. (Whether they do so on behalf of Xixecal or have forsaken one master for another is unclear.) These creatures are often mistaken for their lord, creating the impression that Xixecal is a kind of creature rather than a unique being.

These servitor entities are towering constructs of living ice empowered by brutal, destructive strength. To use one of these creatures in an encounter, modify the primordial colossus (*Monster Manual 2*, page 37) as follows: Change its resistance to cold, rather than the variable resistance presented in that entry, and replace all damage keywords with cold.

# YGORL, LORD OF ENTROPY

SLAADS RECOGNIZE NO GOD and kneel to no primordial, but they all revere the slaad lords: mysterious beings as old as the universe. Although these powerful creatures do not demand service, the slaads fear and respect them. Each slaad lord personifies a form of destruction that can bring about the end of reality that all slaads crave.

The best known and most dreaded is Ygorl, Lord of Entropy, also known as the Bringer of Endings. He is the shadow cast by the Elemental Chaos; wherever he travels, death follows. Plants wither, animals sicken, and color leaches from the surroundings. All who behold him see their demise reflected in his cold, uncaring eyes.

## YGORL'S TACTICS

Ygorl rides into combat on the back of his dragon companion, Shkiv, and lands amid his foes to engage in slaughter. He begins by sweeping his scythe in an *entropic arc*, leaving a deadly trail of necrotic energy in its wake, while his *entropic presence* urges nearby enemies to reckless action even as their defenses crumble. Once he has bloodied one or more opponents, he overwhelms them with *well of entropy*.



## Ygorl Level 26 Elite Soldier (Leader)

Medium elemental humanoid, slaad XP 18,000

**Initiative** +20 **Senses** Perception +22; low-light vision

**Entropic Presence** aura 5; each slaad ally within the aura rolls twice and takes the higher result when making melee basic attacks. Each enemy within the aura gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and vulnerable 5 to all damage; see also *word of annihilation*.

**HP** 336; **Bloodied** 168

**AC** 42; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 37, **Will** 37

**Immune** disease, fear; **Resist** insubstantial

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 8, teleport 6; phasing

**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Scythe** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Weapon**

+33 vs. AC; 1d12 + 9 damage (crit 3d12 + 21), and the target is immobilized until the end of Ygorl's next turn.

⚡ **Entropic Arc** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Necrotic, Weapon, Zone**

Close burst 2; targets enemies; +33 vs. AC; 1d12 + 9 damage (crit 3d12 + 21). **Effect:** The burst creates a zone of entropic destruction that lasts until the end of Ygorl's next turn. Any creature that enters the zone or starts its turn there takes 10 necrotic damage.

⚡ **Inescapable Endings** (minor; recharges when a creature affected by this power saves) ⚔ **Healing**

Close burst 2; targets one creature in burst; +31 vs. Will; the target is affected by inescapable endings (save ends). While the target is affected by inescapable endings, whenever it takes a standard or a move action, Ygorl can take a move action as an immediate reaction; whenever the target regains hit points, Ygorl regains the same number of hit points. **Miss:** Whenever the target takes a move action, Ygorl can take a move action as an immediate reaction (save ends).

⚡ **Well of Entropy** (standard; encounter) ⚔ **Zone**

Close burst 5; the burst creates a zone of entropy that lasts until the end of Ygorl's next turn. Any bloodied creature that starts its turn within the zone cannot move out of the zone on that turn. **Sustain Minor:** The zone persists.

⚡ **Word of Annihilation** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Necrotic**

Close burst 5; targets one creature in burst; +31 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 20 necrotic damage (save ends). While the target is within Ygorl's *entropic presence* aura, it cannot make saving throws to end the ongoing damage.

**Alignment** Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Primordial

**Skills** Arcana +25, Insight +22, Intimidate +25, Stealth +23

**Str** 29 (+22) **Dex** 21 (+18)

**Wis** 19 (+17)

**Con** 24 (+20)

**Int** 25 (+20)

**Cha** 24 (+20)

**Equipment** adamantine scythe

## SHKIV

Shkiv came to Ygorl's service after the ruin of Arkhosia. Disgusted with human excess and overcome with grief for his fallen kin, the dragon sought out the Lord of Entropy to get revenge. The slaad lord accepted the dragon's service, and the melancholic beast has been Ygorl's constant companion ever since.

Service to a slaad lord comes at a steep price. The chaotic energy swirling about Ygorl corrupts any who spend too much time in his presence. Shkiv's body is twisted and shrunken, prone to sudden eruptions and

transformations. His wings are tattered, his scales tarnished, and his flesh sags from the bones, testifying to the dragon's great age.

Shkiv	Level 26 Artillery
Large natural magical beast (dragon) XP 9,000	
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +20; darkvision
HP 189; Bloodied 94; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>	
AC 39; Fortitude 41, Reflex 37, Will 36	
Resist 30 fire	
Speed 8, fly 10 (hover), overland flight 12	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ⊕ Fire	
Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage plus 2d8 fire damage.	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +33 vs. AC; 2d8 + 9 damage.	
⊕ Aggressive Assault (standard; at-will)	
Shkiv shifts 2 squares and then makes two claw attacks. He cannot move on his turn after using this attack, and, if flying, he must land.	
⊕ Chaos Fire (standard; at-will) ⊕ Fire	
Ranged 20; +31 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 8 fire damage, and each enemy adjacent to the target is dazed until the end of Shkiv's next turn.	
⊕ Flux Breath (standard; recharge [⊕][⊕]) ⊕ see text	
Close blast 5; +29 vs. Reflex; 4d10 + 8 damage. Roll a d6 to determine the attack's damage type: 1—cold, 2—fire, 3—lightning, 4—necrotic, 5—psychic, or 6—thunder. Miss: Half damage.	
⊕ Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter)	
Flux breath recharges, and Shkiv uses it immediately.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Draconic, Primordial
Skills Arcana +22, Athletics +27, Insight +20, Intimidate +24	
Str 28 (+22)	Dex 24 (+20) Wis 14 (+15)
Con 27 (+21)	Int 19 (+17) Cha 22 (+19)

## SHKIV'S TACTICS

Shkiv bears Ygorl into battle, blasting *flux breath* over his master's foes and following up with *chaos fire*. The pair might work together, depending on the situation, but they often separate so that Ygorl can savage his enemies in melee. The dragon lends whatever aid it can.

## YGORL LORE

**Arcana DC 17:** Ygorl is one of the mighty slaad lords who dwell in the Elemental Chaos. This terrible host includes such figures as Chourst, the Lord of Randomness, and Bazim-Gorag the Firebringer. Ygorl embodies the force of decay: He is dedicated to unraveling the bonds of creation and scattering its remnants to the void. Slaad legends say that Ygorl came into being when the universe died and now moves backward through time.

**Arcana DC 26:** The Lord of Entropy has learned over his long existence to choose his battles carefully. Just as they crushed the primordials in the Dawn War, the gods would join forces to stop Ygorl should he act overtly. Having already witnessed creation's demise, he has no need to bring it about quickly. Instead, he subtly saps the bonds between mortals and the gods, and weakens reality's fabric to ensure that the end he knows will come.

Ygorl's plots depend on the slaads, though he feels no affection or concern for them. Slaads spill out in the hundreds or thousands from the Elemental Chaos to wipe out a settlement, tear down a mountain, or retrieve a discarded magic item. These missions seem to serve little purpose, but the slaads perform them obediently.

**Arcana DC 31:** When he is not roaming, Ygorl withdraws to his solitary fortress. Like the Pandemonium Stone (page 80), this stronghold appears at random, vanishing for a time and reappearing elsewhere in the Elemental Chaos. Here the slaad lord reflects on reality's end and plans his next move.

## SKIRNEX, VOICE OF YGORL

Ygorl needs slaads to execute his mysterious plans, but his reclusive nature hinders his efforts to direct them. The twisted void slaad Skirnex serves as an intermediary and pseudo-priest, dispensing the Lord of Entropy's unfathomable wisdom to followers.

Skirnex	Level 23 Elite Controller (Leader)
Medium elemental humanoid, slaad XP 10,200	
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +17; low-light vision
Entropic Gibbering aura 2; each enemy that enters the aura or starts its turn there takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the start of its next turn.	
HP 290; Bloodied 145	
AC 35; Fortitude 37, Reflex 35, Will 33	
Immune disease; Resist insubstantial	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6, teleport 4	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends). <i>Each Failed Saving Throw:</i> The target loses a healing surge.	
⊕ Bolt of Insanity (standard; at-will) ⊕ Psychic	
Ranged 20; +27 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is surrounded by a shroud of maddening energy (save ends). While surrounded by the shroud, whenever the target takes damage, it takes 1d10 extra psychic damage.	
⊕ / ⊕ Mad Assault (standard; at-will)	
Skirnex makes two basic attacks. If each attack hits a different target, the target is also dazed until the end of its next turn.	
⊕ Void Slime (standard; recharge [⊕][⊕][⊕]) ⊕ Necrotic	
Area burst 2 within 10; +26 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is encased by a blob of entropic goo (save ends). While encased by the goo, the target is slowed, cannot take standard actions, and takes half damage from melee and ranged attacks. <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target is slowed and takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage and a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends all). Miss: The target is slowed and takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends both).	
⊕ Entropic Shift (move; at-will) ⊕ Teleportation	
Close burst 10; targets two creatures in burst; +20 vs. Will (no attack roll required against an ally); Skirnex teleports the targets, swapping their positions.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common, Deep Speech, Primordial
Skills Stealth +20	
Str 24 (+18)	Dex 18 (+15) Wis 13 (+12)
Con 23 (+17)	Int 11 (+11) Cha 17 (+14)

## SKIRNEX'S TACTICS

Skirnex prefers to attack from a distance, but when enemies close, he tries to get them in his *entropic gibbering* aura to weaken their defenses. His *void slime* power hinders multiple enemies and makes ranged strikers and controllers easier for allies to catch in melee. He also interferes with enemies' disposition and places his allies in advantageous positions with *entropic shift*.

## SKIRNEX LORE

**Arcana DC 16:** Skirnex is a misshapen void slaad with a stunted third arm sprouting from his shoulder, surrounded by an almost palpable haze of wrongness. Even though slaads follow no god or primordial, some are willing to listen to Ygorl's words as interpreted by Skirnex.

**Arcana DC 24:** Skirnex has led many expeditions on behalf of the Lord of Entropy and managed to survive, although he has been bizarrely altered. He takes his unusual longevity to be evidence that the Lord of Entropy favors him and has set himself up as something resembling a priest of Ygorl. Skirnex hopes to share the secrets of ruin known only to Ygorl, even though the slaad elder has never given any indication of recognizing or even remembering him.

**Arcana DC 29:** Skirnex's distorted form suggests that he has been touched by the emanations of the Far Realm. Perhaps he wandered into a place where that weird domain overlaps the Elemental Chaos, or somehow strayed too close to the seed of evil that rests at the bottom of the Abyss.

## ACOLYTE OF ENTROPY

Skirnex has gathered a small group of fanatical slaad worshipers of Ygorl who coerce other slaads into following his orders.

## ACOLYTE OF ENTROPY TACTICS

Acolytes of entropy revel in destruction and lash out at any targets they can reach. They try to flank enemies, trying to deal as much damage as possible. An acolyte has no fear of being injured and even tries to sustain enough damage to loose an *illogic burst*, granting its allies combat advantage against confounded foes.

## ACOLYTE OF ENTROPY LORE

**Arcana DC 20:** Acolytes of entropy are variant gray slaad havocs that live to spread physical as well as mental disorder. They have embraced destruction to such an extent that their own wounds become their most dangerous weapons.

## Acolyte of Entropy Level 18 Skirmisher

Medium elemental humanoid, slaad

XP 2,000

Initiative +14 Senses Perception +13; low-light vision

HP 162; Bloodied 81

Regeneration 5

AC 31; Fortitude 30, Reflex 31, Will 28

Immune disease

Speed 6, teleport 4

⚔ **Entropic Claw** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Necrotic**

+23 vs. AC; 1d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened until the end of its next turn.

➤ **Void Bolt** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Necrotic**

Ranged 20; +21 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target is knocked prone. If the attack scores a critical hit, the target is also stunned until the end of its next turn.

⚡ **Illogic Burst** (when the acolyte of entropy becomes bloodied; recharges when the acolyte is restored to full hit points) ⚔ **Necrotic, Psychic**

Close burst 3; the acolyte of entropy's head explodes: +21 vs. Fortitude; 3d8 + 6 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends). *Aftereffect:* The target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

**Entropic Advantage**

Whenever the acolyte of entropy hits a target granting combat advantage to it, that target also gains vulnerable 5 to all damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common, Primordial

Skills Athletics +16, Stealth +17

Str 14 (+11)

Dex 17 (+12)

Wis 19 (+13)

Con 20 (+14)

Int 23 (+15)

Cha 16 (+12)

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Few slaad lords look beyond the slaads for servants, but Ygorl recognizes that all creatures have a part to play in bringing about creation's end. He forges alliances with any who would have him, asking little in return beyond spreading mayhem. Demon lords bargain for Ygorl's void slaads to bolster their hordes in wars raging across the Abyss. Evil gods make pacts with the Lord of Entropy, gaining insight about the future in exchange for participating in one of his bizarre schemes.

Ygorl usually keeps a coterie of black slaad entropics near at all times, ready to do his bidding. Skirnex often leads fanatical followers on missions to serve the slaad lord's inscrutable purposes.

### Level 23 Encounter (XP 29,400)

- ◆ Skirnex (level 23 elite controller)
- ◆ 4 acolytes of entropy (level 18 skirmisher)
- ◆ 4 black slaads (level 20 skirmisher, MM 239)

### Level 26 Encounter (XP 49,500)

- ◆ Ygorl (level 26 elite soldier)
- ◆ Shkiv (level 26 artillery)
- ◆ 10 black slaad entropics (level 26 minion brute, page 144)

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## ABOUT THE DESIGNERS

Ari Marmell has been shirking homework in favor of playing D&D® since he was nine years old. Thankfully, he now works in the industry, since shirking work for gaming tends to wreak havoc with the bills. *The Plane Below* is his first turn behind the lead design wheel for Wizards of the Coast.

Bruce R. Cordell is an Origins and ENnie award-winning game designer whose long list of professional credits include the new *FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Guide*, *Keep on the Shadowfell*, *Draconomicon: Chromatic Dragons*, and *Open Grave: Secrets of the Undead*. Bruce is also an author of Forgotten Realms novels, including *City of Torment*, the second book in the his Abolethic Sovereignty series.

As of May 30 2009, Luke Johnson became a married man. As of August 2009, he is also enrolled in medical school. How he still has time to write for *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* is a secret his fellow authors intend to wring out of him any day now.

Stephen Radney-MacFarland is a game developer for Wizards of the Coast RPG R&D, but is actually just biding his time in anticipation of the zombie apocalypse. His most current projects include *Arcane Power*, *Adventurer's Vault 2*, and *Draconomicon: Metallic Dragons*.





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