

# Another Serious Matter

## Part 2: The Saga of the Diabolical Grasp

Two Related One Round AD&D Living City Adventures For Characters of All Levels

by Paul Pederson

It's time to rise, go forth, and conquer once again. The Wizards Guild needs your services for another far-flung mission. This tournament is part 2 of *The Saga of the Diabolical Grasp*. It has both a normal tier one through four adventure, along with a high risk/high reward adventure for very capable teams consisting of characters all at least 8th level, who want to risk it all in the pursuit of glory and adventure.

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This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour block of time has been set aside for this event. It is a good idea to ask each player to put a nametag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsule their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Complete the Judge's Summary before you collect the players' scoring sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their ratings and comments.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this module is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in *bold italics*. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, rather than reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

## Judge Background

This adventure is part 2 of an ongoing series of adventures known as "The Saga of the Diabolical Grasp". It is the sequel to *A Very Serious Matter* and builds on the events contained therein, laying more groundwork for future extraplanar adventures. It is comprised of two sections. The first is an adventure for parties of any level, while the second is a special version for high-level characters only. This high risk/high reward scenario is for characters who have achieved at least the 8th experience level and parties whose total levels number at least 50. There is a very real possibility of disaster for the characters, but this is offset by commensurately outstanding treasure and experience awards.

Unlike most adventures, this one occurs primarily on other planes of existence, namely the Astral plane and the first layer of Baator. There are a number of important considerations to keep in mind when judging, the most important of which is that magic behaves differently there. Refer to JUDGE AIDS #1 and #6 for more detail on these worlds.

Several appendices are included to assist in preparation:

**JUDGE AID #1: THE ASTRAL PLANE** is based on the *Planescape: A Guide to the Astral plane* and *Manual of the Planes* reference works. Because the Astral plane is a very foreign environment, the following key aspects merit special mention:

Movement is only effective if performed mentally, and this is similar to the wizard *fly* spell... but much faster.

To the chagrin of most warriors, strength does not improve fighting ability. Instead, intelligence is used to determine attack and damage bonuses on the strength table. Further, wisdom is used to determine defensive adjustment on the dexterity table.

All magical armor and weapons are reduced by one magical plus because the party is one plane removed from their plane of origin.

Certain magical effects do not work or are altered. Probably the most important example of this is that extradimensional spaces cannot be accessed (i.e. the contents of *bags of holding* and similar items are inaccessible while on the Astral plane).

**JUDGE AID #2: THE COLOR POOL** is an explanation of the color pool Astral conduit.

**JUDGE AID #3: THE FORMER GITHYANKI FORTRESS** is an overview of the old Githyanki fortress.

**JUDGE AID #4: PARTY DETAILS SHEET - ASTRAL PLANE** has been provided to help the judge track the astrally-modified character attributes of movement rate, armor class, and weapon bonus.

**JUDGE AID #5: PARTY DETAILS SHEET - BAATOR** enables tracking character attributes on Baator. Prior to beginning play, fill these out when reviewing characters and their magic item certificates. The easiest way to obtain the bulk of the information needed is to ask the players to list their PCs' modifiers to saving throws and armor class.

**JUDGE AID #6: AVERNUS** is an overview of the first plane of Baator, Avernus, and some features of the realm that the PCs will find themselves in.

**JUDGE AID #7: PRIEST LEVEL ADJUSTMENTS - BAATOR** lists the reduction in priest level that ordinarily occurs due to planar traveling to Baator. Note that the PCs will have access to magical means of offsetting this.

**JUDGE AID #8: THE HOLY RELIC OF JUST SEEING** details this device, which has changed substantially in recent days.

All Monstrous Compendium sheets for monsters not found in the Monstrous Manual can be found in the accompanying document “AnotherSeriousMatterMC.”

Important final note: this trip into these alien environments should be thrilling. The experience will be most memorable if the players stay “in character” and don’t discuss details that their characters do not know.

to understand and harness the awesome power of this device.

As it turns out, A’rinthorm is an old friend of Simon Regulus, the newly installed Chancellor of the Ravens Bluff Wizards Guild and Dean of Planar Studies. Regulus has begun working with Thorm, and hopes to similarly tap the power of the device for the betterment of Ravens Bluff in its battles with the tanar’ri. The fiends have been involved with Asphometh in numerous violent incursions into the new guild edifice, and Regulus is growing increasingly impatient to curtail this.

## Adventure Background

Not long ago, a rogue baatezu calling himself Asphometh was harboring grandiose plans of elevating himself into the very top echelon of Baatezu society. These plans were interfered with by a group of adventurers, who were able to banish him to his home on Baator. In the days since then, it has become increasingly clear that this creature is now a part of the threat posed to the city by fiends from the outer planes. It is believed that he made his presence known by breaking into the Wizards Guild with extreme force and removing numerous records and unspecified items. Thereafter, the thefts of numerous records from various city offices have been attributed to him.

His extensive information on the citizens of Ravens Bluff is dwarfed by other information he possesses, particularly in the area of Baatorian politics. Now an information broker par excellence, Asphometh has leveraged his knowledge into a vast network of alliances, blackmail victims, and indebted servants. In addition to this, he has built his powers dramatically and is far more powerful now than he was even one year ago. His whereabouts are unknown, and he is currently working with the Yugoloths under contract to the Tanar’ri.

Meanwhile, a former Githyanki fortress in the Astral plane was recently conquered and is now occupied by a host of Githzerai. The conquest was made possible through the efforts of a powerful group of adventurers that traveled there and liberated an enslaved Githzerai noble. In recent days, the fortress has increasingly been the subject of assaults by the forces of the vengeful Githyanki. Desperately seeking ways to drive their attackers away, the Githzerai stumbled upon an artifact within one of the fortress’ rooms. It is a huge machine of some kind, composed of many metallic glyphs and an activation device. An ancient Githzerai sage named A’rinthorm is leading the effort

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# Standard Version

For characters of all levels

**CRUCIAL NOTE:** This is a difficult adventure to judge properly. An experienced and well-prepared judge is required. It is important to note that sufficient time exists for role playing, but not for excessive planning.

Preparatory Note: take notice of any basis for intra-party conflict, including such things as differing PC character classes or races, and be attentive to issues that arise during the adventure. This information will come into play as the party journeys through Baator and the evil of this place manifests itself (in **ENCOUNTER 9: THE LAST STRAW**).

## Plot Synopsis

The adventurers are decoys, sent on a mission to distract those who may be interested in the mission assigned to the high-level adventurers. Their experience is very similar to that of the high-level party, though much less deadly. They embark before the other party, and return after it does.

As decoys, the party will fail. This is no fault of their own but the infernal powers have taken notice of the activities of the Wizards Guild - especially those involving the Great Machine.

## Encounter 1: Briefing

This is a long adventure, so get right to it...

*The last hour or so was a blur of activity. One moment you were relaxing, the next you were hurriedly being escorted to the Wizards Guild. The City Watch escort was particularly emphatic in its pleas to gain your acceptance of some mission to save the city. After joining several other adventurers, you were rushed through the streets in a taxpayers-owned wagon. Needless to say, the accommodations left something to be desired...*

Allow the players to introduce themselves and make brief preparations before getting underway. If the PCs do not want to honor an urgent request to aid the city, that is their prerogative. However, be sure that the remaining party is capable enough to deal with this adventure.

*Having arrived at the massive guild structure, you are soon led into the so-called Tower of Philosophy and up a few flights of stairs to a large oaken door. As the iron-barred portal swings open, you see a robed man with his back to you, furiously scribing equations onto a chalkboard. The man is obviously deep in concentration.*

This is Sir Alcides Von Tighe, a senior archmage and former leader of the Wizards Guild. The series of equations contain many symbols, some of which the PCs do not recognize. Allow any genius PCs (those having an Intelligence scores > 16) who wish to puzzle over the equations for a moment (while Von Tighe is busy) to make an intelligence check to determine the following from the impressive concepts expressed mathematically on the board:

X = pi raised to the 17th power

X' = any prime number greater than 53

X'' = square root of a negative one (also known as "i" - the imaginary number)

If the PCs do not interrupt him within a couple of minutes, the man will spin around in frustration and address the party.

*Turning crisply to greet you is a familiar, powerful man clad in blue robes. "Greetings, I am Sir Alcides Von Tighe," he begins with an irritated but refined accent, "Archmage of the Wizards Guild. And you are... the famed adventurers I sent for."*

Allow the PCs to introduce themselves if they choose to, but Von Tighe already knows all about them. He will be somewhat deferential to other Wizards Guild members - especially if they are high-ranking - but will press forward with his urgent message.

*He continues, "I've been studying these equations which - I think - prove a hunch that we've had for a while. There has been a confluence of circumstances in this time and place that make for extraordinary events... According to my calculations, this very day is important in the scheme of things. That is why you are here. You see, I need you to travel to a distant location to make a trade with someone. It involves substantial risk on your part. You must travel to the Astral plane and retrieve a*

*device from A'rinthorm, also known in certain circles as the Seeker. He is a Githzerai sage who resides in a fortress on that plane.*

**Note:** If a PC informs Alcides that he or she has figured out the values of some of the variables in his equations, read the following:

*Von Tighe nods agreement, but says, "Yes, Simon Regulus tells me that there must be other quasi-irrational factors. I need metaphysical constructs in order to solve this universally." He must be thinking on a level beyond that which you have ever considered.*

*"Time is of the essence, so we must move forward," he says as he produces an amulet containing a single intricate rune. "You must display this - Alrimb's heraldic device - to the Githzerai guards when you reach the fortress, and they will escort you to see Alrimb." Taking a small red lockbox from beneath his robe he adds, "Give him this box. It contains a substance that will help him with his research. He will give you a blue box to return to me."*

For the following questions, Von Tighe will answer as indicated.

- **Why should we help you? Is there a reward?** This is an important errand that our research (both temporal and dimensional) suggests may become dangerous, and I have confidence in your ability to carry out this errand. You will be handsomely rewarded for this.
- **What is this device we're supposed to obtain?** Within the lockbox is a device called a *planar compass*, a rare magical item that can locate interplanar gates. It is imperative that you return this device, or the consequences could imperil the city. Do not attempt to open the lockboxes, as you will not be able to safely do so. [It is beyond the PCs ability to open the mechanical and magical seals, and all such attempts will fail.]
- **Who is A'rinthorm? What's a Githzerai?** Githzerai are a race of humanoids that live on the Astral plane. They are more peaceful than their evil enemies (the Githyanki), and we have forged a relationship with them which promises great things for the city. A'rinthorm is their most knowledgeable researcher, and an ally of ours.
- **Why don't you go?** I must remain here to ensure that there are no further intrusions into the guild. We cannot afford any further thefts. A fiend

known as Asphometh has broken into this very building multiple times, for the apparent purposes of looting and pillaging. He has caused us a great deal of difficulty, and poses a great danger to the city. [Note: This information must precede any discussion of Asphometh, so be sure to highlight it early.]

- **Who is Asphometh?** Asphometh is a rogue baatezu, a devil, who is hunted in his homeland of Baator (a.k.a. Hell). He recently attempted to steal the *amulet of life protection* that belonged to the late Chief Prelate, SIRRUS Melandor. According to his journal, he was growing in power and even attempting to "evolve" himself. He tried to become a pit fiend on his own but failed, and is now trying other fiendish avenues - VERY fiendish avenues - to increase his power. He is also an increasingly powerful wizard. His true name has changed, as attempts to summon and bind him have all failed miserably. We still refer to him as Asphometh, but that name no longer has any power over him. He has an enormous amount of information on the politics of Baator, and has leveraged this into incredible power for himself. In addition, he has learned to use innate abilities simultaneously with other actions, including spell casting. Reading his journal, I was alarmed at the collection of powerful tomes he had accumulated. He even plans to obtain the *Cyrinishad*, and desires to become a god!
- **How does Astral travel work?** The Astral plane is a realm of the mind, so you simply concentrate on where you want to go and your mind takes you there. Distance is not a consideration. You will enter the Astral plane through an invisible gate known as a "color pool." [Alcides will sketch the Astral fortress on the chalkboard, to aid in visualizing their destination.]
- **What is the Fortress?** This is a large complex of chambers built into the body of a dead power. When the gods die, their remains drift in the Astral plane forever. Githyanki sometimes build their military garrisons into such things. The Githzerai recently captured this one.

This information is intentionally presented in a vague manner to avoid revealing too much to those who haven't yet played *A Very Serious Matter*. If the PCs seem to know what Alcides is talking about, he will nod agreement but is focused on the mission at hand and does not want to get into too much detail. Those PCs who participated in that adventure may want to share their experience or knowledge with their

cohorts. Allow them to do so as long as they keep the details sketchy enough so that the others can still play the adventure, and they are not speaking “out of character”.

*When the questioning has ended, Von Tighe leads you further into the tower to another large chamber. On the floor of this chamber are a number of concentric circles that are composed of many runes and glyphs. “Extraplanar travel can sometimes be harsh and dangerous. Each of you, please accept one of these rubies. They contain a powerful spell that will enable you to return here if something should go wrong. Just break them and say ‘Home’ to activate. However, they are very valuable, so PLEASE... don’t use them unless you must.” Pointing to the area inside the circles he adds, “The Astral plane awaits. Be sure to cooperate with Alrimb, he is our friend.”*

The rubies have each been enchanted with the 9th-level wizard spell *succor*.

## Encounter 2: The Astral Fortress

*Stepping within the concentric circles, you experience something akin to pushing past a soft silken curtain. Soon, you drift forward into a vast well-lit silver expanse. The range of your vision is a couple hundred yards, perhaps more for large objects. It is a bit disorienting at first, but after a moment’s concentration you learn to use your minds to control your movement.*

Allow the PCs to role-play this extraordinary event. The color pool is visible behind them as a large, flat silver disk. Refer to JUDGE AID #1: THE ASTRAL PLANE and JUDGE AID #2: THE COLOR POOL for details. No other objects are currently visible in the silver and gray expanse.

*Mindful of the urgency of your mission, you are soon on your way to the fortress that Von Tighe described. Concentrating on the sketched image of the fortress, and what you were told about it, you hurtle through the void. The silver Astral expanse is truly impressive, although largely empty.*

Again, allow the PCs to role-play here if they choose to.

*After perhaps three or four hours, you can make out a humongous shape in the distance. Roughly human-shaped with jutting battlements and numerous domes, it would seem to be the asteroid - the dead power - that you seek. You note that several distant formations of humanoids appear to be on patrol near the asteroid, and one approaches you at very high speed.*

A dozen Githzerai warriors will confront the PCs, who should remember to display Alrimb’s heraldic device. If they forget, the Githzerai will become semi-hostile and gesture that they should submit and give up their arms. They speak only Gith dialects, so be prepared to act this out. If combat actually occurs, consider them to be the equal of the Githyanki detailed in ENCOUNTER 4: CLUSTER!

When the PCs display the heraldic device, continue:

*Upon viewing the heraldic device, the Githzerai guards visibly relax, and escort you into an entrance in the forehead of the miles-long asteroid. Another dozen-or-so Gith guard a double portcullis which is opened to allow you in.*

Reference JUDGE AID #3: THE FORMER GITHYANKI FORTRESS for details on this place.

## Encounter 3: An Experiment

*Within the huge astral body you are led down some long hallways and into a large chamber. The wall opposite you contains many gleaming, silvery glyphs. The glyphs are configured in columns along each end of the wall, and compose some sort of design in its center.*

*Nearly unnoticed before this impressive sight, a drab-cloaked man with strange facial features moves rapidly toward you. “Welcome. I am A’Rinthorm, known as ‘The Seeker’ in certain circles,” he says in broken common tongue. “I understand that you have an offer for me, is this the case?”*

If the PCs choose to study the wall, allow them to learn the follow:

*In the center of the wall are thirteen unique glyphs which form a three-armed spiral pattern. Four such glyphs form each of the three arms, while another is located in their center. At each end of the wall are three columns of glyphs, containing nine glyphs each.*

*In front of the spiral pattern are two rectangular pylons about four paces from the wall. Each pylon is about four feet tall, and angled slightly away from the wall and inward. They are also crystal-tipped. Built into the floor between the pylons and the wall is a dark crystal which is a span high and a pace wide.*

Allow the PCs to inform him of their mission. He will strongly request that at least one of their number submit to experimentation with the device. He is under a lot of time pressure to catalog the nearly-infinite powers and effects of the device, and is mindful that powerful forces are plotting to recapture the fortress. Although he is very polite, he is primarily interested in completing the trade and getting on with his research. If asked about prior results, he will mention that one person grew a third arm, one was granted regenerative powers, another gained feathery wings, yet another was granted incredible speed, and there were many others.

A number of guards will wait near the door to ensure that the PCs do not cause a problem. A'Rinthorm is an accomplished wizard and can *plane shift* at will, in the event that the PCs cause trouble. The Gith will not allow the PCs to tinker with the machine or loiter.

Each subject, one at a time, will be asked to stand between the pylons and think about a particular glyph. This will cause the glyph to appear as a glowing image in the crystals atop the pylons. At this point, the subject will be asked to concentrate on two glyphs. Those standing in the area at this time will feel a tingling sensation, like standing next to something with a strong electric charge. The subject may continue to focus his concentration on the glyphs, and by successive invocations cause the machine to respond.

The glyphs in the center spiral and along the right-hand side of the device flash when invoked. The left-hand glyphs remain dark. Those who stand or step onto the stone disk are bathed in a white light and are subject to the effects of the device. A'Rinthorm will encourage the subject(s) to step onto it to activate the machine.

Have the player(s) roll 1d10, 1d6, and 1d4 and consult the table to determine results. A'Rinthorm will closely observe the PCs as they undergo their effects. Afterward, he will examine them briefly, taking notes on a parchment he carries in his robe.

The Great Machine's possibilities at this time and with its current settings are documented in JUDGE AID #9: "THE GREAT MACHINE" EFFECTS TABLE. All effects are considered cast at the 30th level of ability. No saving throw of ANY kind applies due to the power of the device. As soon as the experiment(s) have been performed, continue:

*Having exchanged lockboxes and submitted to experimentation, you are led to the doorway of the chamber. Just then, a tremor shakes the chamber. The small earthquake does not seem to bother A'Rinthorm, who goes back to fiddling with the machine as if he has come to expect this.*

Expected or not, this tremor is from the dead god itself, and it causes the psychic wind which will manifest after the following encounter. You see, dead gods still have some latent power associated with them.

The no-nonsense guards will escort the PCs out without taking time for pleasantries. They only speak Gith dialects, and seem just a bit nervous about something. **DO NOT LET THE PCs PLANE SHIFT OR TELEPORT FROM WITHIN THE FORTRESS.** Tell them that there is some chance the machine will go haywire if powerful magic is used that close to it. Make them go outside, so they get to Encounter Four.

**A'Rinthorm, Githzerai Captain, F4/W9:** Int Supra-Genius; AL CN; AC 3; MV 12, 96 in Astral plane; hp 40; THAC0 9 (high intelligence, magical weapon, specialization); # AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+12 (*silver long sword* +3); SA spell use; SD nil; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 14

Spells Remaining: *magic missile* x2, *enlarge*, *know alignment*, *item*, *lightning bolt*, *tongues*, *fire shield*, *wall of force*

## Encounter 4: Cluster!

Allow brief preparations if the PCs so choose, before continuing.

*With your trade now complete, it is time to journey home. As you emerge from one of the many portals on the body of the dead power, the vast silver expanse awaits you again. As before, large patrols of Githzerai pass rapidly by, joining others in formation.*

*In the distance you see many other forms hurtling toward the Githzerai patrols. You realize that these figures are in fact attacking the Githzerai. Just as this realization dawns, you notice that another group is approaching you as fast as thought itself!*

Time for intentions and initiative... The Githyanki have a -2 bonus to their initiative in the first round due to their incredible speed. These are shock troops in their Lich-Queen's army. They are of average competence, but will not fail morale no matter what

happens because they know their queen is monitoring their progress.

To properly track this complex battle, it is necessary to represent it using a map. Special attention must be paid to the three-dimensional relationships that Astral combat involves.

The Githyanki warriors arrive with blinding speed. They will melee the party using all three dimensions. Up to 8 attackers may melee a single opponent of the same size, in 3D combat. However, in this version of the adventure, the Gith combatants are not expert and will NOT gang up on the PCs beyond 2 per PC level. Therefore, a 1st level PC will not have more than 2 Gith warriors swarming him. The Githyanki wizards will remain at a distance, on opposite sides of the party. They will intelligently provide support to their warrior associates.

Continue with the onslaught, until round 6 or until the round after the third PC succumbs, whichever occurs first. Be sure to avoid killing all the PCs, should they prove very unlucky or “tactically challenged”.

**NOTE:** due to the approach of the psychic wind, it will grow progressively darker during the final two rounds of combat. For best effect, **be sure to describe this darkening as these rounds unfold.** By round 6, continue to ENCOUNTER 5: A GENTLE BREEZE.

#### **Party Levels 4-14:**

**Githyanki warriors (12):** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC 10; MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6 (short sword); SA none; SD none; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

**Githyanki wizards (2):** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC 10; MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 3; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA none; SD *detect invisibility*; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

Spells: 1st: *magic missile* x3; 2nd: ~~*detect invisibility*~~

#### **Party Levels 14 - 25:**

**Githyanki warriors (12):** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC 6; MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 3; hp 20; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 (two-handed sword); SA none; SD none; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

**Githyanki wizards (2):** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC 6 (high wisdom); MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 5; hp 20; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA none; SD *detect invisibility*; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

Spells: 1st: *magic missile* x3; 2nd: ~~*detect invisibility*~~; 3rd: *dispel magic*

#### **Party Levels 26 - 37:**

**Githyanki warriors (12):** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC 4; MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 7; hp 35; THAC0 14; #AT 3/2; Dmg 1d10 (two-handed sword); SA none; SD none; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

**Githyanki wizards (2):** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC 4 (high wisdom, *blur*); MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 7; hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA none; SD *detect invisibility*; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

Spells: 1st: *magic missile* x3; 2nd: ~~*detect invisibility*~~, ~~*blur*~~; 3rd: *fireball*, *dispel magic*; 4th: *fumble*

#### **Party Levels 38+:**

**Githyanki warriors (12):** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC 2; MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 7; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10+2 (specialized with two-handed sword); SA none; SD none; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

**Githyanki wizards (2):** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC 2 (high wisdom, *blur*); MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 10; hp 40; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA none; SD *detect invisibility*, *stoneskin* (8 attacks); MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

Spells: 1st: *magic missile* x3; 2nd: ~~*detect invisibility*~~, ~~*blur*~~; 3rd: *fireball*, *dispel magic*; 4th: *fumble*, ~~*stoneskin*~~; 5th: *cone of cold*

## **Encounter 5: A Gentle Breeze**

By this time, the normally well-lit Astral environment has become quite dark. The Gith know what is about to happen and will flee. Allow those physically fighting with Githyanki to succeed in surprise checks in order to make free attacks as they swiftly flee.

Continue with the following. If it aids in creating suspense, begin in a low voice and crescendo as events unfold. There is no time to take out the rubies, break them, and speak the command word to activate them.

*Azure streaks appear out of nowhere, showering the gloom with a strangely beautiful glimmer. Out of the murky darkness comes a ripple... a vibration of some kind. It seems to move through the fabric of the Astral like a wave on the sea, showing you roughly backward. Another follows it, and then others until the buffeting makes it impossible to keep track of those around you. Now barely able to maintain consciousness, you note that the entire sky to one side*

*is closing in as a wall of jet blackness rapidly approaches.*

*As you struggle to recover your equilibrium it slams into you! Tossed head over heels, you lose nearly all contact with your senses. Your perceptions are limited to those of being tossed - spinning like a top - through inky blackness for what seems like an eternity...*

Pause to allow the situation to sink in before continuing.

*After a time, you become aware of a distant sound. A whooshing noise, it grows louder as you feel a force pulling you from your spinning. Like gravity - only different - the force asserts itself. The darkness fades as your blurred vision reveals a spinning vortex that is miles across. As you accelerate into the spiral, your limbs ache under the crushing force and your ears register only a loud rushing sound which grows ever louder. Until it suddenly stops...*

Pause to allow the players to fully grasp the situation.

*You awaken with an aching head. But where are you now? Looking about, you find yourselves on a rock-strewn path in the side of a cliff, overlooking a series of mud pits directly below you. Wallowing in the pits are hundreds of fleshy blob-like humanoids. They don't appear to be aware of your presence as they slowly push and bump each other. The pits are perhaps 60' below, and this small bluff and the pits below pale in comparison to the enormous canyon that lies just beyond the pits. No life is evident - or seemingly likely - within this vast expanse. To the sides of the small bluff the arid and blasted plain appears harsh, but not nearly so bad as within the yawning canyon.*

*Distant explosions illuminate the sky, like random fireballs echoing above the din of battle. Your throat burns a little, victim of the harsh atmosphere.*

Be sure to diagram the surroundings from the PCs' perspective. Refer to JUDGE MAP #3: THE LEMURE PITS for more details on the layout of this area.

The PCs were carried a great distance by a psychic wind until they arrived at an Astral anomaly known as Nelseddi's Maelstrom. This black hole-like whirlpool tossed the PCs onto the first plane of Baator: Avernus.

All of the PCs are here regardless of their condition (dead, unconscious, whatever). Their *rubies of succor* have been confiscated, courtesy of the

followers of Set. Those PCs who were unconscious have had their wounds bound by the thieves, so that they will awaken to the horror of their situation. In the event that all the PCs were either unconscious or dead, one of the unconscious ones will have had a *cure light wounds* administered to him or her just as the thieves were leaving.

The area nearby is detailed in JUDGE AID #6: AVERNUS. In short, the lemure pits below are a festering sore on the blasted and arid plain, and the atmosphere contains noxious vapors that explode periodically. The ledge on which the PCs find themselves is in fact a path that follows the irregular cliff and descends. Behind them, the cliff rises another 20' to its peak. The ledge offers a great vantage point, and the view beyond the pits is of an enormous trench as far as the eye can see. Distant mesas and natural structures of unbelievable size dominate the unearthly view.

A small cave may be found on the path near where the PCs find themselves. This may be used to hide while resting and recovering spells. Refer to ENCOUNTER 7: SPENDING THE NIGHT for details.

Allow the PCs to take in their circumstances and inventory their items before continuing. The only things missing are the *rubies of succor*. Nothing else was taken because the thieves are following their orders exactly. They know that failure or bad judgment will mean certain death.

After the PCs have begun to deal with their predicament, continue to the next encounter.

## Encounter 6: Let's Make a Deal

This occurs after the PCs have had a chance to consider their predicament. Note that Lamaunia will also appear after any combat in which the PCs are in dire need of priest spells or weapon-enhancing magical oils and offer to deal as outlined below.

*"My, my, my... What have we here?" inquires a dry, raspy voice. Turning to its source, you note a beautiful, angelic woman who suddenly appears sitting comfortably on a nearby boulder. "These cannot be the same heroes who left my master's home of Ravens Bluff to perform an important service, can they? I fear it is them."*

*Her words convey both sincerity and resignation, as if she is used to sadness. Shifting to more directly regard you, she continues. "You are in need of some help, true? Berks who accidentally come to Baator*

*seldom leave. Perhaps you'd like to learn how to return to your home... Is this the case? I can provide help, but must always obtain a signature from my master..."*

The winged woman is Lamaunia, and will tell them that she is fallen planetar but will avoid discussing herself further. She will blame the harsh atmosphere for her raspy voice, and contend that she hates this place. She is actually an operative of Beliakas, a new lord in Ravens Bluff, and a red abishai baatezu polymorphed by Beliakas to appear as a planetar. She is currently wearing Beliakas' *amulet of proof vs. detection and location* so the party will not be able to refute her assertions. She poses no threat whatsoever to the party, and will gladly provide the PCs with information in exchange for their signatures on a contract. Provide the PCs with PLAYER HANDOUT #1: THE CONTRACT. Those who sign must be provided with the certificate entitled "Debt to Beliakas". [NOTE: Lamaunia will know in advance which PCs already have incurred a debt to Beliakas, and will not accept signatures from them.

Obviously, the information they are in most dire need of is how to get home, and their main chance of this is to find the *rubies of succor*. Once she has a signature, she will casually reveal the following, omitting all details regarding the realm's ruler and his followers (she dares not discuss them):

They are on Avernus, first layer of Baator, overlooking a canyon that has no name.

Their *rubies of succor* have been taken to the Pit of Pestilence, which is in the direction opposite the canyon. It is over a day's journey on foot, and its entrance may be found in the side of a small pyramid. Once inside, it doesn't matter which passageways you choose, they will all lead you to your goal. Be sure to avoid other travelers on Baator, else you may draw more attention than you can deal with.

Other ways home might include such things as selling themselves into slavery, trading their valuable magical items, or perhaps tricking a powerful fiend into banishing them. She will volunteer that Bel, a legendary pit fiend, maintains a fortress somewhere on this plane. She is referring to the Bel, the being who is the heart and soul of the Baatezu defense forces on Avernus. [For game purposes, the PCs cannot find this fortress.] Lamaunia will summarize that these courses of action are more likely to result in death than a return home. [She can use Bel's name without fear because she knows he will not harm her.]

"The fiend whose name begins with an 'A' is aware of your presence here. He may be planning to destroy you. Actually, what he really wants are your

magical rubies. He can use them to cause unimaginable harm to your city. If you care for Ravens Bluff at all, I suggest that you hurry on your way or all may be lost."

If the PCs are in need of priestly magic, she can also offer the following spells on scrolls (one-half of which must be paid for with magical items). In addition to the payment, she will require a signature from a different PC each time she makes a transaction until all have signed. In the event a PC refuses to sign, she will become disappointed and inform them that this means she must charge a premium of 50% above the standard prices. Note also that she will not accept IOUs. The PCs must pay on demand, even if they must liquidate magical items.

Heal	60,000 gp
Raise Dead	75,000 gp
Restoration	100,000 gp
Regeneration	100,000 gp
Resurrection	125,000 gp

If the PCs agree to purchase a spell(s), Lamaunia will accept their payment, teleport away, and return in a moment with the scroll(s). She will swear that the spells will work properly, and will even volunteer to read the scroll, if the PCs are unable to do so themselves.

These are in fact the standard prices for magical spells that the PCs would pay if they could deal with a temple in Ravens Bluff. Lamaunia is acting in the same capacity, and the spells she provides will work normally.

Lamaunia will also point out that the PCs' weapons will probably be much less effective, perhaps even useless, here. She will strongly recommend the following deals, but will note that these oils will expire and be useless within a week (they are not cert'ed, and are good for this adventure only):

<u>Per Dose:</u>	<u>Price:</u>
<i>Oil of impact</i> +2	-- any cert'ed magical item
<i>Oil of sharpness</i> +2	-- any cert'ed magical item
<i>Oil of heroic action</i>	-- any cert'ed magical item

The *oil of heroic action* restores any lost spellcasting ability lost by priests due to being a number of planes removed from their deity. For wizards, it bestows 1d4 temporary levels (effective level only, no new spells are learned). Lamaunia will freely explain these things.

If asked about her master she will state that he is Beliakas, a new lord in Ravens Bluff who is a learned

sage and dedicated demon hunter. He saved her life once, so she promised him 7 years of service. This story is essentially true, but she will decline to elaborate any further.

When her business with the PCs is complete, she will politely take her leave and disappear. She will monitor the party remotely, but will not interfere in their battles. However, she will return to them for more bargaining later if they are in need of help.

**Baatezu, Lesser - unique Red Abishai (Lamaunia):** Int exc; AL LE; AC 1; MV 9, Fl 12(C); HD 6+3; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d8+3 (long sword, strength) or 1d4/1d4/1d4+1; SA poison, dive; SD +1 or better weapon “to hit”, regeneration; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 12

Like all Abishai, Lamaunia has the following innate abilities: advanced *illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), *change self*, *command*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics*, and *scare*.

**FINAL NOTE:** There is very likely no way for the party to have learned that Beliakas is in any way affiliated with evil. His appearance in another tournament allowed for no such discovery, so do not allow any “out of character” knowledge to be used here. Similarly, Lamaunia is wearing an *amulet of proof vs. detection and location*, and has enchantments placed upon her to *contingency-teleport* away if she gets into trouble. Ensure that you do not reveal anything important about her true nature unless the party does something very unusual or spectacular, and even then they should be entitled only to a glimpse or brief revelation.

## Encounter 7: Spending the Night

This is the most likely first step for the party since they are in an alien environment and some spellcasters may well have been forced into unconsciousness. There is no need for boxed text here, just be sure to highlight the following areas:

- It should not be too hard for the PCs to realize that if they keep quiet and hidden that they should have a good chance to remain undiscovered. Those with the mountaineering non-weapon proficiency or any form of wilderness survival non-weapon proficiencies will be able to easily locate a cave that can provide shelter, protection from

explosions, and cover to minimize chance of detection.

- The PCs should take this situation seriously. Do not tell them that the night passes uneventfully until after they have planned, set up watches, used magical items to protect themselves, etc. [Note: there is no night, per se, in Ankhwugaht Prime, as there is no sun. The atmosphere itself provides “daylight” illumination.]
- The lemures wallow in the pits throughout the night. A low roar rises from them, with occasional atmospheric explosions nearby. The following morning, no changes will be apparent.

**OPTIONS:** The following options are available to the PCs. If they come up with something else, apply the guidelines in these encounters to determine what happens. Do not doom the PCs in encounter 8A without them being fully aware of the danger involved:

Investigate the lemure pits (it should be obvious that this is extremely dangerous). This will almost surely result in the swarming of the lemures, so proceed with ENCOUNTER 8: EXITING THE PITS and modify it as needed.

Do something unorthodox, such as using a unique magic item or attempting to engage a fiend that can send them home. Although extremely dangerous, this is possible through a bargain or even through an *unholy word*. It isn’t recommended that the option of contacting such a fiend be encouraged or pursued, but if the party makes a big enough deal about it this will eventually occur.

Such pursuits will draw the attention of the police force of Baator, as documented in ENCOUNTER 8A: INSPECTOR KRUSHLEEKEKAK. If something unusual happens, keep encounter flow in mind and try to work the party back into the adventure if that makes sense.

Flee. Proceed to ENCOUNTER 8: EXITING THE PITS. If appropriate and there is plenty of time, the dragons from ENCOUNTER 8B: OPTIONAL BATTLE may also visit the party.

Teleport directly to the Pit of Pestilence - a very risky proposition since they have never seen it. They won’t reach it, but will get as far as the pit’s entrance. Proceed to ENCOUNTER 10: TOWARD THE PIT.

Hide out and hope for rescue. In this case, the lemures will seek them out anyway. Proceed to ENCOUNTER

8: EXITING THE PITS, and modify it such that some of the creatures have noticed the party. If appropriate and there is plenty of time, the dragons from ENCOUNTER 8B: OPTIONAL BATTLE may also visit the party.

## ENCOUNTER 8: Exiting the Pits

The PCs may elect to travel or sneak down the path as it winds down and around the bluff. Use this boxed text for that. Otherwise, they may attempt to fly out, climb over the top of the bluff, or what-have-you. If so, they will be set upon by an equal number of creatures regardless of time or means of departure. Only in the event of a *teleport* (potentially risky) or similar means of escape should this encounter be easily avoidable. Note that these creatures are not fooled by *invisibility* and in the higher tiers some of them can fly.

*After traveling perhaps halfway down the bluff, you discover that a number of the fleshy blobs have become aware of you. They are blocking the path ahead, and look... “unfriendly.”*

The beasts can be shoved off of the cliff with a successful attack roll, or they can be combated normally. The numbers of lemures listed are only those which are actively involved at the start of the encounter. If the PCs demonstrate tactical incompetence or no sense of urgency in fleeing, they could allow the involvement of hundreds more.

### Party Levels 4-14:

**Baatezu, Lemures (6):** Int Semi; AL LE; AC 7; MV 3; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA battle drive; SD regenerate 1 hit point per round; MR nil; SZ M (5' tall); ML 20

Lemures regenerate damage except that from acid or holy sword/water/item attacks, which can kill them. They do not have the spell-like abilities common to other types of baatezu.

### Party Levels 14 - 25:

**Baatezu, Lemures (15):** Int Semi; AL LE; AC 7; MV 3; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA battle drive; SD regenerate 1 hit point per round; MR nil; SZ M (5' tall); ML 20

Lemures regenerate damage except that from acid or holy sword/water/item attacks, which can kill them.

They do not have the spell-like abilities common to other types of baatezu.

### Party Levels 26 - 37:

**Baatezu, Lemures (15):** Int Semi; AL LE; AC 7; MV 3; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA battle drive; SD regenerate 1 hit point per round; MR nil; SZ M (5' tall); ML 20

Lemures regenerate damage except that from acid or holy sword/water/item attacks, which can kill them. They do not have the spell-like abilities common to other types of baatezu.

**Baatezu, Red Abishai:** Int Ave; AL LE; AC 1; MV 9, Fl 12 (C); HD 6+3; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4+1; SA poison, dive; SD regenerate 1 hit point per round, +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12

Abishai are immune to fire, iron weapons, and poison, and take only half damage from cold or gas attacks. They may use one the following spell-like abilities each round: advanced *illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), and *suggestion*. The gate ability is not available to the abishai at this time.

### Party Levels 38+:

**Baatezu, Lemures (15):** Int Semi; AL LE; AC 7; MV 3; HD 2; hp 10; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d3; SA battle drive; SD regenerate 1 hit point per round; MR nil; SZ M (5' tall); ML 20

Lemures regenerate damage except that from acid or holy sword/water/item attacks, which can kill them. They do not have the spell-like abilities common to other types of baatezu.

**Baatezu, Red Abishai (3):** Int Ave; AL LE; AC 1; MV 9, Fl 12 (C); HD 6+3; hp 40; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d4+1; SA poison, dive; SD regenerate 1 hit point per round, +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12

Abishai are immune to fire, iron weapons, and poison, and take only half damage from cold or gas attacks. They may use one the following spell-like abilities each round: advanced *illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), and *suggestion*. The gate ability is not available to the abishai at this time.

## ENCOUNTER 8a: Inspector Krushleekekak

This encounter, which is also untiered, occurs if the PCs do something unorthodox which attracts the attention of the police force of Baator. Using the name “Asphometh” in a particularly careless or repetitive way may also draw Inspector Krushleekekak (allow a 50/50 chance).

Krushleekekak is a talented Osyluth who has been tasked with the apprehension of Asphometh (but seeks any information on this being). He reports directly to Zimimar, Minister of Morale for the Dark Eight. If he involves himself, or if the party does something unorthodox that could possibly attract him in his police duties, he will appear out of nowhere and confront the party. Flanked by his minions, he will demand to know who the PCs are, what they are doing here, etc.

Krushleekekak is a bit stuffy and very pretentious, and he takes exception to those who mispronounce his name. It is pronounced “Krush-LEE-keh-kak”. Play him as a sort of English “bobby” as he asks obvious questions of the PCs (e.g. “Hellllo, there... And who might you be?” and “All right... What’s this then?”).

He should eventually learn that they are from Ravens Bluff, and even if he doesn’t learn this he will ask them about Asphometh. If they profess to be unaware of the topic of Asphometh, he will be very skeptical but will explain who Asphometh is and that he is a renegade baatezu. If aware that the PCs hail from Ravens Bluff, he will also mention that Asphometh has been killing people there. If asked about Asphometh’s appearance, he will describe him as a “handsome, winged devil” who can alter his appearance at will.

Ultimately, he will agree to leave the party alone if they will pledge to do their very best to destroy Asphometh. If attacked, Krushleekekak and his team will fight to the death.

**Baatezu, Osyluth - “Inspector Krushleekekak”:** Int Exc.; AL LE; AC -8 (due to green steel plate mail and shield, and natural armor); MV 12; HD 5; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8/3d4; SA can generate *fear* in a 5’ radius (save vs. rods or flee for 1d6 rounds), tail sting carries poison which drains 1d4 points of strength for 1d10 rounds (save at -3 to negate); SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 30%; SZ L (9’ tall); ML 12

**Baatezu, Osyluths (12):** Int Very; AL LE; AC 3; MV 12; HD 5; hp 30; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg

1d4/1d4/1d8/3d4; SA *fear*, poison; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 30%; SZ L (9’ tall); ML 12

Like all osyluths, this group is part of the “police force” of Baator. They have the following innate abilities: *advanced illusion*, *animate dead*, *charm person*, *infravision*, *know alignment* (always active), *suggestion*, *fly*, *improved phantasmal force*, *invisibility*, and *wall of ice*.

All the Osyluths begin this encounter with their innate fear aura inactive, but will activate it if hostilities occur.

Krushleekekak is very pretentious and quite full of himself due to his important assignment. His lieutenants are similarly pompous. Although this encounter could easily prove fatal to the PCs, they should be able to agree that Asphometh must be destroyed and make their pledge. It may also be possible (though not advisable) to disengage and flee after beginning this combat, since the Osyluths cannot use their *gate* ability.

## ENCOUNTER 8b: Optional Battle

Use this only if there is plenty of time left in the slot, or if the party is floundering without direction. If the party is on its way to the Pit of Pestilence, it occurs shortly after the party makes its way off of the bluff and onto the plain in the direction of the Pit of Pestilence. If not, tailor this to fit the circumstances.

These beasts are flying away from the battle on the Field of Megiddo, having taken a severe beating from the electricity-resistant tanar’ri. They are in a foul mood and are famished. Unless preoccupied, allow those PCs with the alertness non-weapon proficiency to notice the dark shapes in the distance one round before they attack. Those with the observation non-weapon proficiency who were specifically looking around may also make a proficiency check. Otherwise, they won’t be sighted until they are making their approach (surprise check required).

*Descending from the blood-red sky are two gargantuan winged creatures, each approaching at high speed from different directions.*

### Party Levels 4-14:

**Hatchling Blue Dragons (2):** Int Very; AL LE; AC 3; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 8; hp 20; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4+1/1d4+1/1d8+1; SA nil; SD immune to electricity; MR nil; SZ L (10’ long including tail); ML 16

The dragons will land and attack without demonstrating much tactical skill. Their breath weapons have been overused, and they are now hoarse and unable to use them. Although their claws and teeth have been broken in the nearby bloodwar, they are all they have...

None of the dragons' scales are suitable for use in making armor or anything else, as they took severe beatings against the tanar'ri. However, their blood may be used in magical item creation if properly procured.

### **Party Levels 14 - 25:**

**Hatchling Blue Dragons (2):** Int Very; AL LE; AC 3; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 8; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1d8+1/1d8+1/2d8+1; SA nil; SD immune to electricity; MR nil; SZ L (16' long including tail); ML 16

The dragons will land and attack without demonstrating much tactical skill. Their breath weapons have been overused, and they are now hoarse and unable to use them. Their claws and teeth are all they have...

None of the dragons' scales are suitable for use in making armor or anything else, as they took severe beatings against the tanar'ri. However, their blood may be used in magical item creation if properly procured.

### **Party Levels 26 - 37:**

**Very Young Blue Dragons (2):** Int Very; AL LE; AC 2; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 10; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d8+2/1d8+2/3d8+2 or 4d8+2; SA nil; SD immune to electricity; MR nil; SZ H (25' long including tail); ML 16

The dragons will approach from different directions, making one pass in which they breathe on as many PCs as possible. They will then land and attack with claws and bite.

None of the dragons' scales are suitable for use in making armor or anything else, as they took severe beatings against the tanar'ri. However, their blood may be used in magical item creation if properly procured.

### **Party Levels 38+:**

**Very Young Blue Dragons (2):** Int Very; AL LE; AC 2; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 10; hp 50; THAC0 11; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d8+2/1d8+2/3d8+2 or 4d8+2; SA nil; SD immune to electricity; MR nil; SZ H (25' long including tail); ML 16

**Old Blue Dragon:** Int Very; AL LE; AC -4; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 18; hp 70; THAC0 3; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d8+8/1d8+8/3d8+8; SA dragon fear within 30

yards (saving throw vs. petrification or incur a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls), *create* or *destroy water* 3X/day, *sound imitation* once/day, *dust devil* once/day, *ventriloquism* once/day; SD pre-cast *invisibility*, *shield*, immune to electricity; MR 35%; SZ G (170' long including tail); ML 16

The two smaller dragons will make a pass every third round, so that they can breathe each time they approach. Their breath weapons are 5' wide x 100' long lightning bolts, and they will attempt to get as many PCs in them as possible. During the off-round they will attempt to stay out of spell range (maybe 150 yards) to avoid damage.

The largest dragon will remain at a distance, invisibly waiting for an opportunity to best plummet and pin as many PCs as possible. It can crush and pin up to 8 opponents with its claws and tail, and must make a successful attack for each. Those so struck take damage equal to its bite (3d8+8) and make a successful saving throw vs. petrification or be pinned. Each pinned character automatically takes crushing damage on the following round, and may make another saving throw vs. petrification to attempt to escape. The good news for the PCs is that this dragon cannot breathe or speak as it overused its breath weapon in the battle with the tanar'ri (dozens of times) and is very hoarse and sore.

None of the dragons' scales are suitable for use in making armor or anything else, as they took severe beatings against the tanar'ri. However, their blood may be used in magical item creation if properly procured.

## **ENCOUNTER 9: The Last Straw**

This is primarily a role-playing encounter, intended to force the players to cope with the subtle dangers in Baator. Alter the following as necessary:

*The trek across the bleak, arid landscape has been long and tiring. Occasional hot winds blow by you, howling like an angry spirit condemned to spend eternity in this godforsaken place. You have made good progress, but the entire situation is really starting to grate on your nerves.*

*Just ahead, an orange glow emanates from a narrow crevice. Upon closer examination, the crevice is only about two feet wide, but seems to stretch from horizon-to-horizon. A hot, humid aura emanates from within, where a stream of lava belches and bubbles, slowly flowing past you.*

The lava flow is actually a kind of “seam” in the construction of this realm, and its essence contains the concentrated evil that is woven into the plane. Its power is gradually overwhelming the PCs, such that no saving throw or other effect (even a holy sword) is allowed. The only exceptions are very powerful, continuously operating magic such as *mind blank*.

Its first effect is to cause the PCs to turn on each other in an accusatory manner, having become completely preoccupied by some annoyance. Pair the PCs off, and inform each that he/she is fed up with the other. If there are an odd number of PCs, have two of them gang up on another. This might best be done by taking them aside and explaining it privately, or possibly by handing them pieces of paper which describe their frustrations with the other. Cite “friction points” based on class, alignment, etc. Better yet, base this on existing animosity that you have noted in their earlier interactions. Be sure to have them role-play this sincerely, as their characters honestly feel this way. Allow them to focus on their differences and annoyances as long as they are having fun. This is all a distraction that sets up the second effect, of course.

As the PCs are discussing the situation, have them all roll for surprise. Those who have the alertness proficiency will not be surprised if they make a successful check. A smoky, transparent tendril has extended from the lava flow to grasp each PC (make normal attacks using the appropriate stats from the table below).

The tendrils will draw their PCs into the crevice steadily regardless of strength, and will require 4 rounds of steady pulling to get them there. They may be escaped by either destroying them or making a successful bend bars roll. On the fifth round, any PCs who haven’t escaped are subject to lava damage as they are held (on the surface, not deep within) in the lava. This will result in the same amount of damage as the tendrils’ squeezing.

The tendrils’ movement rate is 12”, and they will pursue the PCs until they are destroyed or the PCs move 100’ from the crevice. Only one set will harass the PCs unless they loiter within this range.

#### **Malevolent Tendrils**

<b><u>Tier</u></b>	<b><u>Hit Pts</u></b>	<b><u>AC</u></b>	<b><u>THAC0</u></b>	<b><u>Damage</u></b>
1	10	6	15	1d2 -1
2	20	3	12	1d2
3	30	0	9	1d4
4	40	-3	6	1d6

In tiers 1 and 2, allow the PCs to escape without dying if they really have no other means by which to

deal with the tendrils. This is not intended to be deadly.

When this situation is resolved, continue to the next encounter.

## **ENCOUNTER 10: Toward the Pit**

The Pit of Pestilence is located on the far side of the mountain. The PCs may learn of it by cooperating with Lamaunia, by questioning the blue dragons or other residents, or by stumbling across it. It is approximately one and one-half day’s travel on foot from the PCs’ starting point. There are no obvious places to camp/rest on the plain leading to the pit.

*Just as you were told, a pyramid composed of red stone blocks rises from the arid plain. As you approach it, you note a strong stench in the air. A huge stone entrance on its side greets you, with deeply-chiseled runes adorning the massive lintel above it. A light mist may be seen within the dark passageway down.*

The runes are written in Mulhorandi and state simply, *May the Jackal Feast on the Souls of the Infidels Who Invaded the Unholy Places*. If the PCs do not read Mulhorandi, they can learn this through the use of rogues’ read languages ability, *comprehend languages*, or similar magic. The stench is not overpowering, just unpleasant. It has no game effects until the party reaches the pit itself.

When the party is ready to proceed into the passageway be sure to establish a marching order. The passageway itself takes a couple of turns (right, then left) and widens to roughly 60’ x 60’. It is filled with reddish boulders, gravel, and occasional skeletal remains. The mist grows a little thicker, as they proceed down a mild slope.

*Continuing perhaps a mile down the passageway, the mist grows increasingly dense until your range of vision is hardly more than 10’. Judging from the increasing stench, you must be nearing the end of your quest.*

Allow the PCs to make any preparations or tactical moves as they see fit, then continue.

*As you continue forward, the mist suddenly parts, revealing a large domed cavern, perhaps 100’ in diameter. The majority of the chamber is taken up by*

*a depression, littered with all manner of stinking carcasses and bones. A walkway rings the pit, along the walls of the cavern. It smells strongly of death and decay here. Three hallways identical to the one you emerged from are equally spaced around the pit.*

Allow the PCs to make any preparations or tactical moves before continuing. However, each round they spend here beyond the first will subject them to a horrible disease. A successful Constitution check must be made each round after the first in order to avoid this effect.

Those who fail the check will begin to feel ill and will begin to suffer from hemorrhagic fever. These PCs will lose one point of Constitution per turn, until a *cure disease* spell is administered. If allowed to progress to 0 Constitution points, affected PCs will die. Describe the progression of this disease in stark terms, as the PCs' "insides" are eaten away by the virus. Of course, paladins are immune to disease.

Each hallway is in fact identical. Since the PCs do not know how to use the powers of this place, all of them lead to the Temple of Set and it doesn't matter which they choose. Other than the passageways, there is nothing of interest here (except possibly for necromancers or those interested in the dead - the corpses are of all manner of creatures).

When the PCs have chosen a passageway, the hallway ahead is roughly 20' wide x 10' high.

*Upon entering a dark passageway, a long, low hiss and snake's rattle announce your presence. Sarcophagi line the walls, hinting at what may be in store for you.*

The sarcophagi line the entire passageway, but contain only inanimate mummies. About one turn will pass en route to the temple, incurring a loss of one constitution point for all who suffer from hemorrhagic fever.

*You continue through the dark, tomb-like passageway. After a few minutes, the passageway opens up into a large chamber. You see several bodies scattered about the floor of the room, unmoving. They wear desert garb of white linen skirts and sandals, as well as impressive striped cloth headdresses and ornate pectoral collars adorned with serpent and jackal heads. All are torn, bashed, and bloody. Beyond them a huge jackal-headed statue and altar can be seen.*

Pause to allow actions, mostly entry into the room, before continuing.

*The eyes of the Jackal-headed statue begin to glow and flash. As if on cue, the corpses jump up and shuffle toward you.*

The ceiling height in this chamber is 20'. These corpses remain from the battle with the high-level party recently. Note that if there is a mixture of character levels in the party, the judge should match opponents so that lower-level PCs fight the least powerful monsters for their tier.

The creatures' tactics are simple, direct, and ferocious. All undead turn as if they are four hit dice higher than normal because they are in an evil temple dedicated to Set. They will pursue the party no further than 100' down the hallway, if the party flees.

THE UNDEAD: All intelligent undead in this encounter are "hellborn" and are aligned with Lawful Evil. Sunlight (and running water, for the hellborn vampire) does not harm them. For example, *sunray* spells and powers (such as from a *sun blade*) do not even hinder them.

THE ALTAR: The altar radiates an overwhelming amount of necromantic magic. If the party decides to desecrate or otherwise harm the altar or statue of Set, it saves as (magical stone) rock crystal, with a +5 bonus (rolls of "1" always fail). If the altar is destroyed, a deep rumbling will be heard as it bursts into a shower of sparks filling the room. In this version of the adventure, the sparks will cause the undead to reanimate at full strength regardless of their current state (even if they had been destroyed). Desecration of a Baatorian temple of Set is a dangerous activity.

#### **Party Levels 4-14:**

**Zombies (8):** Int non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA nil; SD standard undead immunities; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20

Zombies always attack last.

#### **Party Levels 14 - 25:**

**Zombies (8):** Int non; AL N; AC 8; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA nil; SD standard undead immunities; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20

Zombies always attack last.

**Hellborn Ghouls (4):** Int low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA touch causes paralyzation for 3-8 rounds; SD standard undead immunities; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12

### **Party Levels 26 - 37:**

**Hellborn Ghouls (8):** Int low; AL LE; AC 6; MV 9; HD 2; hp 16; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1d3/1d3/1d6; SA touch causes paralyzation for 3-8 rounds; SD standard undead immunities; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 12

**Hellborn Ghasts (4):** Int very; AL LE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 4; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8; SA touch causes paralyzation for 5-10 rounds (affects even elves), carrion stench in 10' radius (save vs. poison or incur -2 THAC0 penalty); SD standard undead immunities, take double damage from cold iron; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 14

### **Party Levels 38+:**

**Hellborn Ghasts (8):** Int very; AL LE; AC 4; MV 15; HD 4; hp 30; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8; SA touch causes paralyzation for 5-10 rounds (affects even elves), carrion stench in 10' radius (save vs. poison or incur -2 THAC0 penalty); SD standard undead immunities, take double damage from cold iron; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 14

**Hellborn Vampire:** Int exc; AL LE; AC 1; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8+3; hp 60; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+4; SA touch drains 2 levels, gaze acts as a *hold person* spell; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, regenerate 3 hit points per round, standard undead immunities, half damage from cold or electricity; MR nil; SZ M (6' tall); ML 16

As a hellborn vampire, he cannot fly or assume gaseous or animal form. However, this creature is both hideous and cunning, and will NOT demonstrate tactical impairment. Keep in mind that non-magical weapons cannot damage him and that initially he is difficult to distinguish from the hellborn ghasts. Likely tactics include concentrating his attacks on threatening opponents and delaying action until late in the first round in order to select the best opponent (or regain control of the ghasts). He may control the other undead as if a priest of 9th level and does not suffer a penalty to do so because he is a servant of Set. Therefore, he automatically controls them if he chooses to spend an action doing so. He turns as "special" in this place.

## **Conclusion**

This ending is to be used when the adventure has been completed, or in the event that the slot has ended. Alter

the following as necessary to suit the circumstances when this occurs. For example, if combat is underway, Von Tighe will arrive and aid the party in a most dramatic manner. Be sure to dramatically recount his skillful use of *time stop*, *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*, or similarly powerful spells to save the day.

### **In the event of a TPK**

If the entire party was killed, they will be rescued by Von Tighe soon afterward. This rescue will consist of recovery of the PCs and the possessions they had with them. It will NOT involve reversal of actions or removal of damage or disease that has already occurred. Von Tighe will instruct his staff to subsidize any *raise dead* or *resurrection* spells the party requires, by funding the monetary half (the PCs must still kick in the 50% payment in magic items). Consult the PCs' wills or next-of-kin for their desired method of paying the balance for any *raise dead* or *resurrection* spells.

Von Tighe's aides will debrief them about any open issues, but he is not available to talk with them. If the PCs complain about this treatment, they should be reminded that the Wizards Guild paid a handsome amount to bring them back. Further, they are eligible for a reward.

*Without warning, a familiar figure suddenly winks into existence in your midst. "It's time to go home. Please come with me," is all Von Tighe says as he invokes a powerful spell. Your surroundings fade away, to be replaced by the familiar setting of the Wizards Guild courtyard.*

*"It's unfortunate that you came to be on Baator, but I'm gratified that I was able to locate you. Please relate your experience to me," implores the archmage.*

Von Tighe will listen intently, asking questions and summarizing to ensure that he understands what occurred. When the explanation is complete, he will thank the PCs heartily and offer each of them a *Boon of the Wizards Guild* for their troubles. He will not brook any contemptible behavior, however, and will withdraw the offer if the party is rude to him.

The archmage's assistants will retrieve the blue lockbox from the PCs. If any of them contracted a disease, they must take care of it now (i.e. *cure disease*) or will soon die as the hemorrhagic fever runs its course.

## **The End**

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## High Level Version

**For character levels 8 or higher, total party levels of 50 or more**

**CRUCIAL NOTES:** This is a very difficult adventure to judge properly. An experienced and well-prepared judge is required. It is important to note that sufficient time exists for role playing, but not for excessive planning.

The judge must not allow a party to attempt this high-level adventure if they do not have a high probability of success. If this directive is not followed, the judge will be forced to either obliterate the party or relax this tournament's standards.

In this tournament, the players will not always be able to do things on their own terms. As the players' eyes and ears, the judge must carefully portray events such that the players will understand and accept that this adventure is for expert players of very capable heroes. Their opponents' tactics are pre-scripted to ensure tactical competence.

Consider asking to see each PC's *last will and testament*. This will reinforce the danger involved in this version of the adventure, and these documents may be needed later.

The setup for both versions of this adventure is very similar. If the party is clearly in over their heads during the first combat, they should be switched to the 4th tier of the standard version adventure for the remainder of the event.

### Plot Synopsis

The party is summoned to the Wizards Guild to perform a service for the newly-installed chancellor. As they leave, the PCs are given *rubies of succor* to enable them to return home if they get into trouble. Traveling to the Astral plane, they make a delivery to a Githzerai sage and help with his experimentation. As they begin the return voyage, they are attacked by a powerful force of Githyanki and foul beasts. Before resolving this combat, a huge psychic wind whisks the party an untold distance and deposits them onto the first layer of Baator in an unconscious state.

The party awakens to discover that the *rubies of succor* are missing. They must recover them - not only to return home, but to avoid allowing them to fall into enemy hands. The party will have to deal with deadly foes in the alien environment of Baator. Information and magical aid are available to them in the form of a servant of a demon hunter named Beliakas.

The adventure has a timer-pop ending to be used in the event that the slot ends before the mission is complete. The party will be rewarded based upon their performance.

### Encounter 1: Briefing

This is a long adventure, so get right to it...

*The last hour or so was a blur of activity. One moment you were relaxing, the next you were hurriedly being escorted to the Wizards Guild. The City Watch escort was particularly emphatic in its pleas to gain your acceptance of some mission to save the city. After joining several other adventurers, you were rushed through the streets in a taxpayers-owned wagon. Needless to say, the accommodations left something to be desired.*

Allow the players to introduce themselves and make brief preparations before getting underway. If the PCs do not want to honor an urgent request to aid the city, that is their prerogative. However, be sure that the remaining party is capable enough to deal with this adventure.

*Having arrived at the massive guild structure, you are soon led into the so-called Tower of Philosophy and up a few flights of stairs to a large oaken door. As the iron-barred portal swings open, you see a robed man with his back to you, furiously scribing equations onto a chalk board. The man is obviously deep in concentration.*

This is Simon Regulus, newly installed Chancellor of the Wizards Guild. The series of equations contain many symbols, some of which the PCs do not recognize. Allow any genius PCs (those having an Intelligence scores > 16) who wish to puzzle over the equations for a moment (while Regulus is busy) to make an intelligence check to determine the following from the impressive concepts expressed mathematically on the board:

X = pi raised to the 17th power

X' = any prime number greater than 53

X'' = square root of a negative one (also known as "i" - the imaginary number)

If the PCs do not interrupt him within a couple of minutes, the man will spin around in frustration and address the party.

*Turning crisply to greet you is a solid yet aged man clad in pulsing chromatic robes. "Greetings, I am Simon Regulus," he begins with an irritated but refined accent, "Dean of Planar Studies and Chancellor of the Wizards Guild. And you are... the famed adventurers I sent for."*

Allow the PCs to introduce themselves if they choose to, but Regulus already knows all about them. As the newly installed leader of Wizards Guild, he will be somewhat deferential to other Wizards Guild members - especially if they are high-ranking - but will press forward with his urgent message.

*He continues, "I've been studying these equations which - I think - prove a hunch that I've had for a while. There has been a confluence of circumstances in this time and place which make for extraordinary events. According to my calculations, this very day is important in the scheme of things. That is why you are here. You see, I need you to travel to a distant location to make a trade with someone. It involves substantial risk on your part. You must travel to the Astral plane and retrieve a device from A'rinthorm, also known in certain circles as the Seeker. He is an old friend of mine - a Githzerai sage who resides in a fortress on that plane."*

**Note:** If a PC informs Simon that he or she has figured out the values of some of the variables in his equations, read the following:

*Regulus nods agreement, but says, "Yes, but what of their quasi-irrational factors? I need metaphysical constructs in order to solve this universally." He must be thinking on a level beyond that which you have ever considered.*

*"Time is of the essence, so we must move forward," he says as he produces an amulet containing a single intricate rune. "You must display this - Alrimb's heraldic device - to the Githzerai guards when you reach the fortress, and they will escort you to see Alrimb." Taking a small red lockbox from beneath his robe he adds, "Give him this box. It contains a substance that will help him with his research. He will give you a blue box to return to me."*

For the following questions, Von Tighe will answer as indicated.

- **Why should we help you? Is there a reward?**  
This is an important errand which my research (both temporal and dimensional) suggests may become dangerous, and I have confidence in your ability to carry out this errand. You will be handsomely rewarded for this.
- **What is this device we're supposed to obtain?**  
Within the lockbox is a device called a *planar compass*, a rare magical item which can locate interplanar gates. It is imperative that you return this device, or the consequences could imperil the city. Do not attempt to open the lockboxes, as you will not be able to safely do so. [It is beyond the PCs ability to open the mechanical and magical seals, and all such attempts will fail.]
- **Who is A'rinthorm? What's a Githzerai?**  
Githzerai are a race of humanoids that live on the Astral plane. They are more peaceful than their evil enemies, the Githyanki, and I have forged a relationship with them which promises great things for the city. A'rinthorm is their most knowledgeable researcher, and a good friend of mine.
- **Why don't you go?** I must remain here to ensure that there are no further intrusions into the guild. We cannot afford any further thefts. A fiend known as Asphometh has broken into this very building multiple times, for the apparent purposes of looting and pillaging. He has caused us a great deal of difficulty, and poses a great danger to the city. [**Note:** This information must precede any discussion of Asphometh, so be sure to highlight it early.]
- **Who is Asphometh?** Asphometh is a rogue baatezu, a devil, who is hunted in his homeland of Baator (a.k.a. Hell). He recently attempted to steal the *amulet of life protection* which belonged to the late Chief Prelate, Sirrus Melandor. According to his journal, he was growing in power and even attempting to "evolve" himself. He tried to become a pit fiend on his own but failed, and is now trying other fiendish avenues - VERY fiendish avenues - to increase his power. He is also an increasingly powerful wizard. His true name has changed, as attempts to summon and bind him have all failed miserably. We still refer to him as Asphometh, but that name no longer has any power over him. He has an enormous amount of information on the politics of Baator, and has leveraged this into incredible power for himself.

In addition, he has learned to use innate abilities simultaneously with other actions, including spell casting. Reading his journal, I was alarmed at the collection of powerful tomes he had accumulated. He even plans to obtain the Cyrinishad, and desires to become a god!

- **How does Astral travel work?** The Astral plane is a realm of the mind, so you simply concentrate on where you want to go and your mind takes you there. Distance is not a consideration. You will enter the Astral plane through an invisible gate known as a “color pool”. [Simon will sketch the Astral fortress on the chalk board, to aid in visualizing their destination.]
- **What about the Fortress?** This is a large complex of chambers built into the body of a dead power. When the gods die, their remains drift in the Astral plane forever. Githyanki sometimes build their military garrisons into such things. The Githzerai recently captured this one.

This information is intentionally presented in a vague manner to avoid revealing too much to those who haven’t yet played *A Very Serious Matter*. If the PCs seem to know what Simon is talking about, he will nod agreement but is focused on the mission at hand and does not want to get into too much detail. Those PCs who participated in that adventure may want to share their experience or knowledge with their cohorts. Allow them to do so as long as they keep the details sketchy enough so that the others can still play the adventure, and they are not speaking “out of character”.

**Note:** If there is a holy warrior present (defined as a PC who cannot have more than 10 magical items, such as a paladin or specialty priest of Torm): Regulus will remark that he admires their strong beliefs and force of character. He will add that he feels such character is worthy of reward, so long as it is *truly* chivalrous. He is alluding to the potential reward he may grant for *exemplary* honor and duty.

*When the questioning has ended, Regulus leads you further into the tower to another large chamber. On the floor of this chamber are a number of concentric circles that are composed of many runes and glyphs. “Extraplanar travel can sometimes be harsh and dangerous. Each of you, please accept one of these rubies. They contain a powerful spell that will enable you to return here if something should go wrong. Just break them and say ‘Home’ to activate. However, they are very valuable, so PLEASE... only use them if you must.” Pointing to the area inside*

*the circles he adds, “The Astral plane awaits. Be sure to cooperate with Alrimb, he is an old friend.”*

The rubies have each been enchanted with the 9th-level wizard spell *succor*.

## Encounter 2: The Astral Fortress

*Stepping within the concentric circles, you experience something akin to pushing past a soft silken curtain. Soon, you drift forward into a vast well-lit silver expanse. The range of your vision is a couple hundred yards, perhaps more for large objects. It is a bit disorienting at first, but after a moment’s concentration you learn to use your minds to control your movement.*

Allow the PCs to role play this extraordinary event. The color pool is visible behind them as a large, flat silver disk. Refer to JUDGE AID #1: THE ASTRAL PLANE and JUDGE AID #2: THE COLOR POOL for details. No other objects are visible in the silver and gray expanse.

*Mindful of the urgency of your mission, you are soon on your way to the fortress that Regulus described. Concentrating on the sketched image of the fortress, and what you were told about it, you hurtle through the void. The silver Astral expanse is truly impressive, although largely empty.*

Again, allow the PCs to role play here if they choose to.

*After perhaps three or four hours, you can make out a gigantic shape in the distance. Roughly human-shaped with jutting battlements and numerous domes, it would seem to be the asteroid - the dead power - that you seek. You note that several distant formations of humanoids appear to be on patrol near the asteroid, and one approaches you at very high speed.*

A dozen Githzerai warriors will confront the PCs, who should remember to display Alrimb’s heraldic device. If they forget, the Githzerai will become semi-hostile and gesture that they should submit and give up their arms. They speak only Gith dialects, so be prepared to act this out. If combat actually occurs, consider them to be the equal of the Githyanki detailed in ENCOUNTER 4: CLUSTER!

When the PCs display the heraldic device, continue:

*Upon viewing the heraldic device, the Githzerai guards visibly relax, and escort you into an entrance in the forehead of the miles-long asteroid. Another dozen-or-so Gith guard a double portcullis which is opened to allow you in.*

Reference JUDGE AID #3: THE FORMER GITHYANKI FORTRESS for details on this place.

## Encounter 3: An Experiment

*Within the huge astral body you are led down some long hallways and into a large chamber. The wall opposite you contains many gleaming, silvery glyphs. The glyphs are configured in columns along each end of the wall, and compose some sort of design in its center.*

*Nearly unnoticed before this impressive sight, a drab-cloaked man with strange facial features moves rapidly toward you. "Welcome. I am A'Rinthorm, known as 'The Seeker' in certain circles," he says in broken common tongue. "I understand that you have an offer for me, is this the case?"*

If the PCs choose to study the wall, allow them to learn the follow:

*In the center of the wall are thirteen unique glyphs which form a three-armed spiral pattern. Four such glyphs form each of the three arms, while another is located in their center. At each end of the wall are three columns of glyphs, containing nine glyphs each.*

*In front of the spiral pattern are two rectangular pylons about four paces from the wall. Each pylon is about four feet tall, and angled slightly away from the wall and inward. They are also crystal-tipped. Built into the floor between the pylons and the wall is a dark crystal which is a span high and a pace wide.*

Allow the PCs to inform him of their mission. He will strongly request that at least one of their number submit to experimentation with the device. He is under a lot of time pressure to catalog the nearly-infinite powers and effects of the device, and is mindful that powerful forces are plotting to recapture the fortress. Although he is very polite, he is primarily interested in completing the trade and getting on with his research. If asked about prior results, he will mention that one person grew a third arm, one was granted regenerative powers, another gained feathery wings, yet another

was granted incredible speed, and there were many others.

A number of guards will wait near the door to ensure that the PCs do not cause a problem. A'Rinthorm is an accomplished wizard and can *plane shift* at will, in the event that the PCs cause trouble. The Gith will not allow the PCs to tinker with the machine or loiter.

Each subject, one at a time, will be asked to stand between the pylons and think about a particular glyph. This will cause the glyph to appear as a glowing image in the crystals atop the pylons. At this point, the subject will be asked to concentrate on two glyphs. Those standing in the area at this time will feel a tingling sensation, like standing next to something with a strong electric charge. The subject may continue to focus his concentration on the glyphs, and by successive invocations cause the machine to respond.

The glyphs in the center spiral and along the right-hand side of the device flash when invoked. The left-hand glyphs remain dark. Those who stand or step onto the stone disk are bathed in a white light and are subject to the effects of the device. A'Rinthorm will encourage the subject(s) to step onto it to activate the machine.

Have the player(s) roll 1d10, 1d6, and 1d4 and consult the table to determine results. A'Rinthorm will closely observe the PCs as they undergo their effects. Afterward, he will examine them briefly, taking notes on a parchment he carries in his robe.

The Great Machine's possibilities at this time and with its current settings are documented in JUDGE AID #9: "THE GREAT MACHINE" EFFECTS TABLE. All effects are considered cast at the 30th level of ability. No saving throw of ANY kind applies due to the power of the device. As soon as the experiment(s) have been performed, continue:

*Having exchanged lockboxes and submitted to experimentation, you are led to the doorway of the chamber. "I suggest that you wear this," says A'Rinthorm as he puts a chained amulet around the neck of (one of the party's priests, or another character if there are no priests). This is a very interesting device. It seems to be very helpful to priests. Take this back to Simon and express my gratitude, as I no longer need it."*

*Just then, a tremor shakes the chamber. The small earthquake does not seem to bother A'Rinthorm, who goes back to fiddling with The Great Machine as if he has come to expect this.*

Expected or not, this tremor is from the dead god itself, and it causes the psychic wind which will manifest after the following encounter. You see, dead gods still have some latent power associated with them.

The no-nonsense guards will escort the PCs out without taking time for pleasantries. They only speak Gith dialects, and seem just a bit nervous about something. **DO NOT LET THE PCs PLANE SHIFT OR TELEPORT FROM WITHIN THE FORTRESS.** Tell them that there is some chance the machine will go haywire if powerful magic is used that close to it. Make them go outside, so they get to Encounter Four.

**A'Rinthorm, Githzerai Captain, F4/W9:** Int Supra-Genius; AL CN; AC 3; MV 12, 96 in Astral plane; hp 40; THAC0 9 (high intelligence, magical weapon, specialization); # AT 3/2; Dmg 1d8+12 (*silver long sword* +3); SA spell use; SD nil; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 14

Spells Remaining: *magic missile* x2, *enlarge*, *know alignment*, *item*, *lightning bolt*, *tongues*, *fire shield*, *wall of force*

## Encounter 4: Cluster!

Allow brief preparations if the PCs so choose, before continuing.

*With your trade now complete, it is time to journey home. As you emerge from one of the many portals on the body of the dead power, the vast silver expanse awaits you once again. As before, large patrols of Githzerai pass rapidly by, joining others in formation.*

*In the distance you see many other forms hurtling toward the Githzerai patrols. You realize that these figures are in fact attacking the Githzerai. Just as this realization dawns, you notice that another group is approaching you as fast as thought itself!*

Time for intentions and initiative... The Githyanki have a -2 bonus to their initiative in the first round due to their incredible speed. They are military veterans, and agents of their Lich-Queen's machinations in this region of the Astral plane. She dispatched them here personally and they are aware that she is scrying the battle. They are competent in the extreme, and will not fail morale no matter what happens. It is the judge's obligation to portray their tactical capabilities properly, altering the following if necessary.

To properly track this complex battle, it is necessary to represent it using a map. Special attention must be paid to the three-dimensional relationships that Astral combat involves.

**Round 1:** The Githyanki warriors arrive with blinding speed. They will melee the party using all three dimensions, attempting to concentrate attacks on 2 PCs. Up to 8 attackers may melee a single opponent of the same size, in 3D combat. The Githyanki wizards will remain at a distance, on opposite sides of the party. They will target as many other PCs as possible, using spells such as *fireball* and *cone of cold*.

**Round 2:** Things will begin to get ugly as the Garmorms rapidly arrive. They come at the party from the opposite direction of the Githyanki warriors and cannot be noticed unless someone in the party explicitly declares an action which involves being observant in the direction from which they are approaching. They will each select a single, separate PC to rain their attacks upon. Along with this, they will innately create hemispherical *walls of force* behind the unfortunate PCs, who will be trapped in these invisible domes.

The Gith warriors will continue to three-dimensionally concentrate their attacks in order to remove a PC from the combat (yes, dead). The Gith wizards will attempt to prevent spellcasters from getting off their spells and/or provide support in an intelligent, effective manner. Other likely actions include casting *dispel magic* to remove spell effects from the PCs. They cannot remove the effects bestowed by The Great Machine.

**Round 3:** While continuing their vicious biting attacks (one maw and nine smaller faces), one of the Garmorms' faces will innately cast a *cloudkill* spell which will fill the domed *wall of force* which encircles the target PC. The trapped PC is now subject to 1d10 damage each round from the *cloudkill* along with melee and spell attacks. Because spellcasting is not possible while taking damage, the only escape from this is by sacrificing a round of actions in order to flee. Withdrawal (AKA "strategic retreat" at 1/3 normal rate) is not an option because each gigantic Garmorm completely blocks its entire dome. As a reminder, the rules for fleeing involve a free ROUND of attacks (in addition to the Garmorms' regular attacks, if they win initiative).

**Round 4 - 5:** Continue with the onslaught, until round 6 or until the round after the third PC succumbs, whichever occurs first. Be sure to avoid killing all the

PCs, should they prove very unlucky or “tactically challenged”.

**NOTE:** due to the approach of the psychic wind, it will grow progressively darker during the final two rounds of combat. For best effect, **be sure to describe this darkening as these rounds unfold.** By round 6, continue to ENCOUNTER 5: A GENTLE BREEZE.

### **Party Levels <75:**

**Githyanki warriors (16):** Int. Exc.; AL LE; AC 0; MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 7; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 2; Dmg 1d10+2 (specialized with two-handed sword); SA none; SD none; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

**Githyanki wizards (2):** Int. Exc.; AL LE; AC 2 (high wisdom, *blur*); MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 10; hp 40; THAC0 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1d4 (dagger); SA none; SD *detect invisibility, stonesskin* (8 attacks); MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

Spells: *magic missile* x3, ~~*detect invisibility, blur, levitate, fireball*~~ x2, *dispel magic, slow, fumble, stonesskin, cone of cold, wall of force*

**Enlarged Garmorm (2):** Int. Exc.; AL CE; AC 4; MV 54 in Astral plane; HD 10; hp 80; THAC0 11; #AT 11; Dmg 4d6, 2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4 (doubled due to pre-cast *enlarge*); SA spells; SD *detect invisibility, mirror image* (4 images), *stonesskin* (8 attacks); MR 25%; SZ L (24' long while enlarged); ML 20

Spells: *enlarge, magic missile* x3, ~~*detect invisibility, mirror image, hold person, stonesskin, wall of force, cloudkill*~~

These beasts will not sing their deadly song because they only recently absorbed a full complement of faces.

### **Party Levels 75+:**

**Githyanki warriors (16):** Int. Exc.; AL LE; AC 0; MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 7; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 4; Dmg 1d10+2 (specialized with two-handed sword); SA *haste* has been cast upon them; SD none; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

**Githyanki wizards (2):** Int. Exc.; AL LE; AC 2 (high wisdom, *blur*); MV 96 in Astral plane; HD 10; hp 40; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4+2 (dagger, intelligence); SA none; SD *detect invisibility, stonesskin* (8 attacks); MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

Spells: *magic missile* x3, ~~*detect invisibility, blur, levitate, fireball*~~ x2, *dispel magic, slow, fumble, stonesskin, cone of cold, wall of force*

**Enlarged Garmorm (2):** Int. Exc.; AL CE; AC 4; MV 54 in Astral plane; HD 10; hp 80; THAC0 11; #AT 11; Dmg 4d6, 2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4/2d4 (doubled due to pre-cast *enlarge*); SA spells; SD *detect invisibility, mirror image* (4 images), *stonesskin* (8 attacks); MR 25%; SZ L (24' long while enlarged); ML 20

Spells: *enlarge, magic missile* x3, ~~*detect invisibility, mirror image, hold person, stonesskin, stonesskin, wall of force, cloudkill*~~

These beasts will not sing their deadly song because they only recently absorbed a full complement of faces.

## **Encounter 5: A Gentle Breeze**

By this time, the normally well-lit Astral environment has become quite dark. The Gith and Garmorms know what is about to happen and will flee. Allow those physically meleeing with Githyanki to succeed in surprise checks in order to make free attacks as they swiftly flee.

Continue with the following. If it aids in creating suspense, begin in a low voice and crescendo as events unfold. There is no time to take out the rubies, break them, and speak the command word to activate them.

*Azure streaks appear out of nowhere, showering the gloom with a strangely beautiful glimmer. Out of the murky darkness comes a ripple... a vibration of some kind. It seems to move through the fabric of the Astral like a wave on the sea, shoving you roughly backward. Another follows it, and then others until the buffeting makes it impossible to keep track of those around you. Now barely able to maintain consciousness, you note that the entire sky to one side is closing in as a wall of jet blackness rapidly approaches.*

*Before you can recover your equilibrium it slams into you! Tossed head over heels, you lose nearly all contact with your senses. Your perceptions are limited to those of being tossed - spinning like a top - through inky blackness for what seems like an eternity...*

Pause to allow the situation to sink in before continuing.

*After a time, you become aware of a distant sound. A whooshing noise, it grows louder as you*

*feel a force pulling you from your spinning. Like gravity - only different - the force asserts itself. The darkness fades as your blurred vision reveals a spinning vortex that is miles across. As you accelerate into the spiral, your limbs ache under the crushing force and your ears register only a loud rushing sound which grows ever louder. Until it suddenly stops...*

Pause to allow the players to fully grasp the situation.

*You awaken with an aching head. But where are you now? Looking about, you find yourselves on a rock-strewn ledge in the side of an indescribably steep and huge mountain, overlooking an enormous valley swarming with creatures in battle. Distant explosions illuminate the sky, like random fireballs echoing above the din of battle. Your throat burns a little, victim of the harsh atmosphere.*

The PCs were carried a great distance by a psychic wind, until they arrived at an Astral anomaly known as Nelseddi's Maelstrom. This black hole-like whirlpool tossed the PCs onto the first layer of Baator: Avernus.

All of the PCs are here regardless of their condition (dead, unconscious, whatever). Their *rubies of succor* have been confiscated, courtesy of the followers of Set. Those PCs who were unconscious have had their wounds bound by the thieves, so that they will awaken to the horror of their situation. In the event that all the PCs were either unconscious or dead, one of the unconscious ones will have had a *cure light wounds* administered to him or her just as the thieves were leaving. Note that one of the PCs will likely be wearing the *holy relic of seeing justice*, which operates as an *amulet of life protection* in addition to its other powers.

Allow the PCs to take in their circumstances and inventory their items before continuing. The only things missing are the *rubies of succor*. Nothing else was taken because the thieves are following their orders exactly. They know that failure or bad judgment will mean certain death.

The area nearby is detailed in JUDGE AID #6: AVERNUS. In short, the battlefield below is a blasted and arid plain, and the atmosphere contains noxious vapors that explode periodically. The battlefield holds a few thousand combatants, and is only a skirmish in the scheme of things. Those who possess a spyglass, *eyes of eagle vision*, or similar tools can make out all manner of beasts and monstrosities violently participating in the battle. One side of the conflict (the

baatezu) is well organized, with phalanxes and rows of combatants. The other side (the tanar'ri) appears to be simply swarming.

The ledge offers a great vantage point, perhaps a mile up its slope. The top of the mountain is not evident from this location, and must be very far above. After the PCs have begun to deal with their predicament, continue to the next encounter.

## Encounter 6: Let's Make a Deal

This occurs after the PCs have had a chance to consider their predicament. Note that Lamaunia will also appear after any combat in which the PCs are in dire need of priest spells or weapon-enhancing magical oils and offer to deal as outlined below.

*“My, my, my... What have we here?” inquires a dry, raspy voice. Turning to its source, you note a beautiful, angelic woman who suddenly appears sitting comfortably on a nearby boulder. “These cannot be the same heroes who left my master’s home of Ravens Bluff to perform an important service, can they? I fear it is them.”*

*Her words convey both sincerity and resignation, as if she is used to sadness. Shifting to more directly regard you, she continues. “You are in need of some help, true? Berks who accidentally come to Baator seldom leave. Perhaps you’d like to learn how to return to your home... Is this the case? I can provide help, but must always obtain a signature from my master...”*

The winged woman is Lamaunia, and will say that she is fallen planetar but will avoid discussing herself further. She will blame the harsh atmosphere for her raspy voice, and contend that she hates this place. She is actually an operative of Beliakas, a new lord in Ravens Bluff, and a red abishai baatezu polymorphed by Beliakas to appear as a planetar. She is currently wearing Beliakas' *amulet of proof vs. detection and location* so the party will not be able to refute her assertions. She poses no threat whatsoever to the party, and will gladly provide the PCs with information in exchange for their signatures on a contract. Provide the PCs with PLAYER HANDOUT #1: THE CONTRACT. Those who sign must be provided with the certificate entitled “Debt to Beliakas”.

**NOTE:** Lamaunia will know in advance which PCs already have incurred a debt to Beliakas, and will not accept signatures from them.

Obviously, the information they are in most dire need of is how to get home, and their main chance of this is to find the *rubies of succor*. Once she has a signature, she will casually reveal the following, omitting all details regarding the realm's ruler and his followers (she dares not discuss them):

They are on Avernus, first layer of Baator, overlooking the Field of Megiddo. This is the true field of Megiddo, where it is said that the battle that will end the worlds will begin. Some call it Armageddon, others call it Ragnarok. It will begin here.

The *rubies of succor* have been taken to the Pit of Pestilence, which is on the far side of Mount Hellspeak. It is about a day's journey on foot, and its entrance may be found in the side of a small pyramid. Once inside, it doesn't matter which passageways you choose, they will all lead you to your goal. Be sure to avoid other travelers, as you could draw more attention than you can deal with.

Other ways home might include such things as selling themselves into slavery, trading their valuable magical items, or perhaps tricking a powerful fiend into banishing them. She will volunteer that Bel, a legendary pit fiend maintains a fortress on the far side of the battlefield. She is referring to the Bel, the being who is the heart and soul of the Baatezu defense forces on Avernus. No fortress is visible beyond the battle plain (even if using a spyglass or magical means of viewing). Any such fortress must be many miles away. Lamaunia will summarize that these courses of action are more likely to result in death than a return home. [She can use Bel's name without fear because she knows he will not harm her.]

"The fiend whose name begins with an 'A' is aware of your presence here. Even now, powerful forces are preparing to track and annihilate you. Actually, what he really wants are your magical rubies. He can use them to cause unimaginable harm to your city. If you care for Ravens Bluff at all, I suggest that you hurry on your way or all may be lost."

If the PCs are in need of priestly magic, she can also offer the following spells on scrolls (one-half of which must be paid for with magical items). In addition to the payment, she will require a signature from a different PC each time she makes a transaction until all have signed. In the event a PC refuses to sign, she will become disappointed and inform them that this means she must charge a premium of 50% above the standard prices. Note also that she will not accept IOUs. The PCs must pay on demand, even if they must liquid magical items.

Heal 60,000 gp

Raise Dead	75,000 gp
Restoration	100,000 gp
Regeneration	100,000 gp
Resurrection	125,000 gp

If the PCs agree to purchase a spell(s), Lamaunia will accept their payment, teleport away, and return in a moment with the scroll(s). She will swear that the spells will work properly, and will even volunteer to read the scroll, if the PCs are unable to do so themselves.

These are in fact the standard prices for magical spells that the PCs would pay if they could deal with a temple in Ravens Bluff. Lamaunia is acting in the same capacity, and the spells she provides will work normally.

Lamaunia will also point out that the PCs' weapons will probably be much less effective, perhaps even useless, here. She will strongly recommend the following deal, but will note that these oils will expire and be useless within a week (they are not cert'ed, and are good for this adventure only):

<u>Per Dose:</u>	<u>Price:</u>
<i>Oil of impact</i> +2	any cert'ed magical item
<i>Oil of sharpness</i>	any cert'ed magical item

If asked about her master she will state that he is Beliakas, a new lord in Ravens Bluff who is a learned sage and dedicated demon hunter. He saved her life once, so she promised him 7 years of service. This story is essentially true, but she will decline to elaborate any further.

When her business with the PCs is complete, she will politely take her leave and disappear. She will monitor the party remotely, but will not interfere in their battles. However, she will return to them for more bargaining later if they are in need of help.

**Lamaunia: Baatezu, Lesser - unique Red Abishai**  
Int. Exc.; AL LE; AC 1; MV 9, Fl 12(C); HD 6+3; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 1d8+3 (long sword, strength) or 1d4/1d4/1d4+1; SA poison, dive; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, regeneration; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 12

Like all Abishai, Lamaunia has the following innate abilities: *advanced illusion, animate dead, charm person, infravision, know alignment* (always active), *change self, command, produce flame, pyrotechnics, and scare*.

**FINAL NOTE:** There is very likely no way for the party to have learned that Beliakas is in any way affiliated with evil. His appearance in another tournament allowed for no such discovery, so do not allow any “out of character” knowledge to be used here. Similarly, Lamaunia is wearing an *amulet of proof vs. detection and location*, and has enchantments placed upon her to *contingency-teleport* away if she gets into trouble. Ensure that you do not reveal anything important about her true nature unless the party does something very unusual or spectacular, and even then they should be entitled only to a glimpse or brief revelation.

## Encounter 7: Spending the Night

This is the most likely first step for the party since they are in an alien environment and some spellcasters probably will have been forced into unconsciousness. There is no need for boxed text here, just be sure to highlight the following areas:

There is an epic battle going on not far away, which appears to have attracted the attention of all beings in the area. It should not be too hard for the PCs to realize that if they keep quiet and hidden that they should have a good chance to remain undiscovered for an evening. Those with the mountaineering non-weapon proficiency or any form of wilderness survival non-weapon proficiencies will be able to easily locate a small crevasse or overhang which can provide shelter, protection from explosions, and cover to minimize chance of detection.

The PCs should take this situation seriously. Do not tell them that the night passes uneventfully until after they have planned, set up watches, used magical items to protect them, etc.

**Note:** there is no night, per se, in Ankhwugaht Prime, as there is no sun. The atmosphere itself provides “daylight” illumination.

The battle rages throughout the night. A low roar echoes over the battlefield the entire time, with occasional atmospheric explosions nearby. The following morning, observational skills will reveal that the side which was smaller (the baatezu) seems to have gained a lot of additional forces and is now almost even in numbers with the invading horde (the tanar’ri).

**OPTIONS:** The following options are available to the PCs. If they come up with something else, apply the

guidelines in these encounters to determine what happens. Do not doom the PCs in encounters 8A or 8B without them being fully aware of the danger involved:

- Investigate or join the battle below (it should be obvious that this is extremely dangerous). Proceed to ENCOUNTER 8A: THE BATTLE HAS BEEN JOINED.
- Do something unorthodox, such as using a unique magic item or attempting to engage a fiend which can send them home. Although extremely dangerous, this is possible through a bargain or even through an *unholy word*. If something unusual happens, keep encounter flow in mind and try to work the party back into the adventure if that makes sense. The party may well attract the attention of Bel, the legendary pit fiend who is conducting the defense of Baator in the battlefield below. Proceed to ENCOUNTER 8B: BEL.
- Travel around the mountain on the road. Proceed to ENCOUNTER 8C: OPTIONAL BATTLE.
- Teleport directly to the Pit of Pestilence - a very risky proposition since they have never seen it. They won’t reach it, but will get as far as the pit’s entrance. Any other form of magical translocation (*dimensional folding, teleport without error*) only gets the characters as far as the pit’s entrance. Proceed to ENCOUNTER 9: TOWARD THE PIT.
- Hide out and hope for rescue. In this case, Asphometh’s minions will seek them out. Modify ENCOUNTER 9: TOWARD THE PIT to accommodate the circumstances, altering the tactics of the tanar’ri as appropriate to ensure they combat to the best of their ability. If appropriate and there is plenty of time, the dragons from ENCOUNTER 8C: OPTIONAL BATTLE will also visit the party.

## Encounter 8A: The Battle has been Joined

This encounter is almost certainly suicide, possibly glorious suicide for “over the top” holy warriors. There is almost no chance of survival. There are far more tanar’ri near Mount Hellspeak, so use these adversaries unless the party insists on flanking around toward baatezu positions. If they do pursue baatezu positions, proceed to ENCOUNTER 8B: BEL.

The number of opponents listed are those which disengage from the battle with the Baatezu to fight the PCs **every third round**. This encounter is untiered.

**Vrocks (4):** Int. High; AL CE; AC -5; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8/1d8/1d6; SA first attack, spore attack every 3 rounds (1d8 damage, automatically causes 1d2 points of damage for next 10 rounds), deafening screech once/battle (all within 30' must make a Con check or be stunned for one round), innate spell-like powers at 10th level of ability (*mass charm, telekinesis*); SD innate spell-like powers at 10th level of ability (*detect invisibility, detect magic, dispel magic, mirror image*), +2 or better weapons to hit; MR 70%; SZ M (8' tall); ML 18

It may be possible to disengage and flee after beginning this combat, if done well. The tanar'ri will return to the battle with the hated baatezu if presented with a situation in which they cannot easily pursue the PCs. However, if the PCs actually chose this route and didn't do anything that could reasonably alter the outcome, they will surely be slain. If a TPK (Total Party Kill) occurs, inform the players that their characters are dead and that their possessions have found new uses in the Blood War.

## ENCOUNTER 8B: Bel

This encounter, which is also untiered, occurs if the PCs do something to attract Bel's attention. Allow a base 50% chance that he will be attracted if the party does something such as:

- using the name "Asphometh" in a careless or repetitive way,
- carrying a *holy sword* without taking action to conceal it,
- doing something unorthodox and/or significant which might attract him.

This 50% likelihood of Bel's appearance includes a factor for the presence of the *holy relic of seeing justice*. Bel cannot directly detect it, but something about the PCs makes him uncomfortable.

Bel is a legendary pit fiend, having led his legions of baatezu against tanar'ri in "glorious" battles like the one occurring nearby since time immemorial. If he chooses to involve himself, or if the party chooses to engage the baatezu horde, he will appear as a huge column of flame (36' tall!). He is flanked by his minions, and is both *enlarged* and cloaked under *improved invisibility*. Since he is very agitated he is throwing off an incredible amount of flame.

Bel will immediately probe the minds of the party to understand the PCs and their circumstances. This is

a psionic ability (no saving throw allowed) which requires a single round and succeeds unless a character is under the effects of a *mind blank* or similar spell. Although he normally communicates telepathically, he will laugh deeply enough to shake the ground when he learns of their plight. He will also learn that Asphometh was recently in the party's thoughts, and will offer to leave them alone in exchange for a vow to do their best to destroy Asphometh.

When through with the PCs, Bel and his retinue will teleport back to the blood war, unless he is attacked. If the party is so foolish as to attack him, he will order his barbazu guard to attack and will personally slay or render helpless one PC before teleporting back to the fray with the tanar'ri. If he is personally harmed or affronted, he will slay or render helpless one PC before leaving.

**Bel (Baatezu) - Unique Pit Fiend:** Int. genius; AL LE; AC -9 (due to *improved invisibility*); MV 15, 24(C); HD 20; hp 145; THAC0 1; #AT 5/2; Dmg 1d8(\*2.5)+6 (*long sword of sharpness, enlarge*); SA severs limb on a roll of "18" or better, spells, 20' *fear* aura (save vs. rods with a -3 penalty or flee for 1d10 rounds), extensive psionic and mental abilities; SD regenerates 2 hit points per round, *improved invisibility*, +3 or better weapon to hit; MR 50%; SZ G (30' tall due to *enlarge*); ML 20

Bel is considered a "normal wizard", having achieved the 20th level of ability as a wizard without sacrificing any abilities or defenses.

**Note:** fiendish wizardry is discussed in the "Hellbound" Planescape supplement.

Like all pit fiends, Bel has the following innate abilities: *advanced illusion, animate dead, charm person, infravision, know alignment* (always active), *suggestion, detect magic, detect invisibility, fireball, hold person, improved invisibility, polymorph self, produce flame, pyrotechnics, wall of fire, wish* (1X/year), *symbol of pain* (1X/day).

Spells: *dispel magic* x2, *Evard's black tentacles, wall of force, chaos, ironguard, disintegrate, geas, limited wish, banishment, maze, incendiary cloud, Bigby's clenched fist, time stop*

**Baatezu - Barbazu (6):** Int. low; AL LE; AC 6 (while berserk); MV 30, Fl 18 (B); HD 6+6; hp 54; THAC0 4; #AT 3 (due to berserk, specialization, *haste*, +3 *saw-toothed glaive*); Dmg 5d6+11 (due to berserk, specialization, *enlarge, strength*); SA *enlarged, flying, berserker fury*, wounds bleed for 2 points of

damage/round until bound; SD nil; MR 30%; SZ L (15' tall while *enlarged*); ML 20

Like all barbazu, these have the following innate abilities: *advanced illusion, animate dead, charm person, infravision, know alignment* (always active), *suggestion, affect normal fires, command, fear* (by touch), and *produce flame*.

If ordered to attack (or if Bel is attacked), these fanatical and cruel fiends will each scream something obediently at the column of flame as they rabidly charge into melee. Their weapons are evilly sanctified and detect thusly. Anyone who picks one up will instantly feel the tug of its berserk nature on him, and must make a saving throw vs. spell to avoid being compelled to attack his friends for 1d3 rounds. Another saving throw is then granted and the cycle repeated until the PC succeeds in saving, kills a colleague, or is stopped. Even storing one of these weapons (including in a *bag of holding* or similar container) will cause the PC to feel increasingly uneasy about it. If the glaives are not left alone, further saving throws will be required to avoid succumbing to the compulsion to attack other party members. Ensure that the PCs realize they shouldn't try to keep these.

Although this encounter could easily prove fatal to the PCs, it may be possible to disengage and flee after beginning this combat, if done well. The baatezu will return to the battle with the hated tanar'ri if presented with a situation in which they cannot easily pursue the PCs. If the PCs don't do anything that could reasonably alter the outcome, they will surely be slain. If a TPK ("Total Party Kill") occurs, inform the players that their characters are dead and that their possessions have found new uses in the Blood War.

## ENCOUNTER 8C: Optional Battle

Use this only if there is plenty of time left in the slot or if the party is floundering without direction. If the party is on its way to the Pit of Pestilence, it occurs shortly after the party makes its way off of the mountain and onto the plain in the direction of the Pit of Pestilence. If not, tailor this to fit the circumstances.

These beasts are flying away from the battle on the Field of Megiddo, having taken a severe beating from the electricity-resistant tanar'ri. They are in a foul mood and are famished. Unless preoccupied, allow those PCs with the alertness non-weapon proficiency to notice the dark shapes in the distance one round before they attack. Those with the observation non-weapon proficiency who were

specifically looking around may also make a proficiency check. Otherwise, they won't be sighted until they are making their approach (surprise check required).

***Descending from the blood-red sky are two gargantuan winged creatures, each approaching at high speed from different directions.***

The two smaller dragons will make a pass every third round, so that they can breathe each time they approach. Their breath weapons are 5' wide x 100' long lightning bolts, and they will attempt to get as many PCs in them as possible. During the off-round they will attempt to stay out of spell range (maybe 150 yards) to avoid damage.

The largest dragon will remain at a distance, invisibly waiting for an opportunity to best plummet and pin as many PCs as possible. It can crush and pin up to 8 opponents with its claws and tail, and must make a successful attack for each. Those so struck take damage equal to its bite (3d8+8) and make a successful saving throw vs. petrification or be pinned. Each pinned character automatically takes crushing damage on the following round, and may make another saving throw vs. petrification to attempt to escape. The good news for the PCs is that this dragon cannot breathe or speak as it overused its breath weapon in the battle with the tanar'ri (dozens of times) and is very hoarse and sore.

### **Party Levels <75:**

**Juvenile Blue Dragons [injured] (2):** Int. very; AL LE; AC -5 (including *blur*); MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 15; hp 50; THAC0 7; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d8+5/1d8+5/3d8+5 or 10d8+5; SA breath weapon, dragon fear within 15 yards (+3 bonus to saving throw vs. petrification or incur a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls), *create or destroy water* 3X/day, *sound imitation* once/day; SD pre-cast *blur, shield*, immune to electricity; MR 20%; SZ G (100' long including tail); ML 16

**Hoarse Old Blue Dragon:** Int. very; AL LE; AC -4; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 18; hp 144; THAC0 3; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d8+8/1d8+8/3d8+8; SA dragon fear within 30 yards (saving throw vs. petrification or incur a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls), *create or destroy water* 3X/day, *sound imitation* once/day, *dust devil* once/day, *ventriloquism* once/day; SD pre-cast *invisibility, shield*, immune to electricity; MR 35%; SZ G (170' long including tail); ML 16

None of the dragons' scales are suitable for use in making armor or anything else, as they took severe beatings against the tanar'ri. However, their blood may be used in magical item creation if properly procured.

### **Party Levels 75+:**

**Juvenile Blue Dragons (2):** Int. very; AL LE; AC -5 (including *blur*); MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 15; hp 120; THAC0 7; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d8+5/1d8+5/3d8+5 or 10d8+5; SA breath weapon, dragon fear within 15 yards (+3 bonus to saving throw vs. petrification or incur a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls), *create* or *destroy water* 3X/day, *sound imitation* once/day; SD pre-cast *blur*, *shield*, immune to electricity; MR 20%; SZ G (100' long including tail); ML 16

**Hoarse Old Blue Dragon:** Int. very; AL LE; AC -4; MV 9, Fl 30 (C), Br 4; HD 18; hp 144; THAC0 3; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d8+8/1d8+8/3d8+8; SA dragon fear within 30 yards (saving throw vs. petrification or incur a -2 penalty to attack and damage rolls), *create* or *destroy water* 3X/day, *sound imitation* once/day, *dust devil* once/day, *ventriloquism* once/day; SD pre-cast *invisibility*, *shield*, immune to electricity; MR 35%; SZ G (170' long including tail); ML 16

None of the dragons' scales are suitable for use in making armor or anything else, as they took severe beatings against the tanar'ri. However, their blood may be used in magical item creation if properly procured.

## **ENCOUNTER 9: Toward the Pit**

The Pit of Pestilence is located on the far side of the mountain. The PCs may learn of it by cooperating with Lamaunia, by questioning the blue dragons or other residents, or by stumbling across it. It is approximately one-half day's travel beyond the far side of Mount Hellspeak, and a full day's journey on foot from the PCs' starting point. There are no obvious places to camp/rest on the plain leading to the pit.

*Just as you were told, a pyramid composed of red stone blocks rises from the arid plain. As you approach it, you note a strong stench in the air. A huge stone entrance on its side greets you, with deeply-chiseled runes adorning the massive lintel above it. A light mist may be seen within the dark passageway down.*

The runes are written in Mulhorandi and state simply, *The Eyes of the Serpent See All*. If the PCs do not read Mulhorandi, they can learn this through the use of rogues' read languages ability, *comprehend languages*, or similar magic. The *tongues* ability of the *holy relic of just seeing* grants verbal understanding, but will not help with such written communication. The stench is not overpowering, just unpleasant. It has no game effects until the party reaches the pit itself.

When the party is ready to proceed into the passageway, be sure to establish a marching order. The passageway itself quickly widens into a very large passageway - roughly 60' x 60' and filled with reddish boulders, gravel, and occasional skeletal remains. The mist grows a little thicker, as they proceed down the gentle slope. Along with the mist, the stench also grows increasingly stronger, the product of the horrid pit at the end of the passageway.

A master of scrying techniques, Asphometh has located the PCs and sent these horrible creatures to annihilate them. Their numbers are few enough so that they won't be noticed during the short time they are on the plane due to the thousands of other tanar'ri nearby. They will be on this plane for a short time regardless of what happens, and if destroyed, they will dissolve and fade away to be reformed in the Abyss.

**Combat:** Be sure to map this out in order to properly track this battle and avoid misunderstandings. These antagonists should be described in general terms as they approach through the mist. It should not be evident to everyone that 'the groups of horrid vulture men flying in unison' are actually vlocks utilizing *mirror image* spells.

Although these are tanar'ri, they have been instructed in the necessary tactics by Asphometh, and they fear him enough to control their chaotic impulses at the beginning of battle. They are divided into two equal "squads", which approach the party from each side as detailed below. Alter these tactics if it makes sense to do so, or if the players seem to have prior information about this adventure that they should not have.

**Round 1:** Those with the alertness non-weapon proficiency who make a successful proficiency check will notice that the earth is shaking subtly but rhythmically. Those who are aware of this may take an action this round. The creatures are approaching with their *detect invisibility* powers activated.

**Round 2:** The raspy-voiced Chasme arrive at the beginning of the round, followed by the Vrocks who arrive but cannot attack this round. The Chasme will attempt to penetrate well into the ranks of the party, probably diving into a vulnerable PC. All who view the Chasme must save vs. spell or flee, and all who hear their droning voices must save vs. spell or fall asleep. The battle-tested Vrocks will position themselves to their best advantage, which is also likely to be in melee with spellcasters. They are well aware that their spore attack can essentially neutralize spellcasters by causing ongoing damage. The shaking of the ground is now obvious to everyone as it is becoming clear that something really big is approaching, although it isn't obvious which direction the shaking is coming from.

**Round 3:** The Chasme and Vrocks will continue their attacks. Note that Vrocks always go first (even before speed weapons and *quarterstaves of rapid magery*). At this point it is clear that the shaking of the passageway is coming from both directions. At the end of the round, the Goristroi arrive and will likely position themselves near the first adversary. In tier 13, they are enlarged to an absolutely gargantuan size, and a Glabrezu rides the one coming from the direction of the entrance.

**Round 4+:** The creatures will attack to their best advantage. For tier 13, the Glabrezu will attempt to disable PCs using its *power word stun* ability (usable up to 7 times per day), and may resort to *reverse gravity* if in trouble. Neither effect allows a saving throw. The Vrocks and Glabrezu also have innate *dispel magic* abilities which may be useful (e.g. against *enlarged*, *hasted*, or *invisible* opponents).

**Post-Combat:** If the PCs survived and are in need of further aid, Lamaunia will arrive to bargain with them once again. Refer to ENCOUNTER 6: LET'S MAKE A DEAL for details.

### **Party Levels <75:**

**Chasme (2):** Int. very; AL CE; AC -5; MV 6, Fl 24 (D); HD 8+2; hp 50; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4/2d4/1d4; SA viewers must save vs. spell or flee for 1d4 hours, those who hear drone must save vs. spell or sleep 2d4 hours, claw wounds bleed for 2 points per round until magically healed, innate abilities at 8th level of ability (*insect plague*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *telekinesis*); SD *detect good*, *detect invisibility* (both always active), +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 50%; SZ M (7' long); ML 16

Note that claw wounds bleed for continuous damage, so no spellcasting is possible (until magically healed).

**Vrocks (2):** Int. high; AL CE; AC -5; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8/1d8/1d6; SA first attack, spore attack every 3 rounds (1d8 damage, automatically causes 1d2 points of damage for next 10 rounds), deafening screech once/battle (all within 30' must make a Con check or be stunned for one round), innate spell-like powers at 10th level of ability (*mass charm*, *telekinesis*); SD innate spell-like powers at 10th level of ability (*detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *mirror image* (already active: 5 images)), +2 or better weapons to hit; MR 70%; SZ M (8' tall); ML 18

**Goristroi (2):** Int. low; AL CE; AC -2; MV 15; HD 20; hp 100; THAC0 1; #AT 2 and 1; Dmg 6d4+6/6d4+6 and 5d8; SA stamp for 5d8 points of damage (opponents 6' tall or shorter within 10'), spell-like abilities (*fear* as a wand, by gaze), hurl boulders (2d12 points of damage, 240 yard range); SD spell-like abilities (*detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *levitation*, *spider climb*), regenerate 1 hit point/turn, 360' infravision, immune to cold, fire, acid, and gas, +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 60%; SZ H (21' tall); ML 16

In addition to the special defenses listed, all tanar'ri are immune to electricity, non-magical fire, and poison. They take only one-half damage from cold, magical fire, and gas.

### **Party Levels 75+:**

**Chasme (2):** Int. Very; AL CE; AC -5; MV 6, Fl 24 (D); HD 8+2; hp 50; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 2d4/2d4/1d4; SA viewers must save vs. spell or flee for 1d4 hours, those who hear drone must save vs. spell or sleep 2d4 hours, claw wounds bleed for 2 points per round until magically healed, innate abilities at 8th level of ability (*insect plague*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *telekinesis*); SD *detect good*, *detect invisibility* (both always active), +1 or better weapon to hit; MR 50%; SZ M (7' long); ML 16

Note that claw wounds bleed for continuous damage, so no spellcasting is possible (until magically healed).

**Vrocks (2):** Int. High; AL CE; AC -5; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8; hp 64; THAC0 13; #AT 5; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d8/1d8/1d6; SA first attack, spore attack every 3 rounds (1d8 damage, automatically causes 1d2

points of damage for next 10 rounds), deafening screech once/battle (all within 30' must make a Con check or be stunned for one round), innate spell-like powers at 10th level of ability (*mass charm, telekinesis*); SD innate spell-like powers at 10th level of ability (*detect invisibility, detect magic, dispel magic, mirror image* (already active: 5 images)), +2 or better weapons to hit; MR 70%; SZ M (8' tall); ML 18

**Enlarged Goristroi (2):** Int. Low; AL CE; AC -2; MV 15; HD 20; hp 200; THAC0 1; #AT 2 and 1; Dmg 12d4+12/12d4+12 and 10d8 (doubled due to *enlarge*); SA stamp for 10d8 points of damage (opponents 12' tall or shorter within 20' - all details doubled due to *enlarge*), spell-like abilities (*fear* as a wand, by gaze), hurl boulders (4d12 points of damage, 240 yard range); SD spell-like abilities (*detect invisibility, detect magic, levitation, spider climb*), regenerate 1 hit point/turn, 360' infravision, immune to cold, fire, acid, and gas, +1 or better weapons to hit; MR 60%; SZ G (44' tall due to *enlarge*); ML 16

**Glabrezu:** Int. Exc.; AL CE; AC -7; MV 15; HD 10; hp 80; THAC0 11; #AT 5; Dmg 2d6/2d6/1d3/1d3/1d4+1; SA hits by claws enable it to grab opponents of up to 150 lbs. (dex check to avoid, strength check to break free, else suffer -4 penalty to THAC0), spell-like abilities at 10th level of ability (*burning hands, charm person, confusion, enlarge, power word stun* (7 times/day), *reverse gravity*); SD spell-like abilities at 10th level of ability (*detect magic* (always active), *dispel magic, mirror image, and true seeing* (always active), +2 or better weapon to hit); MR 50%; SZ L (15' tall); ML 18

In addition to the special defenses listed, all tanar'ri are immune to electricity, non-magical fire, and poison. They take only one-half damage from cold, magical fire, and gas.

## ENCOUNTER 10: Recovering the Rubies

When the PCs are ready to continue, proceed.

*Continuing perhaps a mile down the passageway, the mist grows increasingly dense until your range of vision is hardly more than 10'. Judging from the increasing stench, you must be nearing the end of your quest.*

Allow the PCs to make any preparations or tactical moves as they see fit, then continue.

*As you continue forward, the mist suddenly parts, revealing a large domed cavern, perhaps 100' in diameter. The majority of the chamber is taken up by a depression, littered with all manner of stinking carcasses and bones. A walkway rings the pit, along the walls of the cavern. It smells strongly of death and decay here. Three hallways identical to the one you emerged from are equally spaced around the pit.*

Allow the PCs to make any preparations or tactical moves before continuing. However, at this point the stench is so intense that it is virulent. Each round beyond the first that is spent in this area will subject the PCs to a horrible disease. A successful Constitution check must be made each round after the first in order to avoid this effect.

Those who fail the check will begin to feel ill, and will begin to suffer from hemorrhagic fever. These PCs will lose one point of Constitution per turn, until a *cure disease* spell is administered. If allowed to progress to 0 Constitution points, affected PCs will die. Describe the progression of this disease in stark terms, as the PCs' "insides" are eaten away by the virus. Of course, paladins are immune to disease.

Each hallway is in fact identical. Since the PCs do not know how to use the powers of this place, all of them lead to the Temple of Set and it doesn't matter which they choose. Other than the passageways, there is nothing of interest here (except possibly for necromancers or those interested in the dead - the corpses are of all manner of creatures).

When the PCs have chosen a passageway, the hallway ahead is roughly 20' wide x 10' high.

*Upon entering a dark passageway, a long, low hiss and snake's rattle announce your presence. Sarcophagi line the walls, hinting at what may be in store for you.*

The sarcophagi line the entire passageway, but contain only inanimate mummies. About one turn will pass en route to the temple, incurring a loss of one constitution point for all who suffer from hemorrhagic fever.

*You continue through the dark, tomb-like passageway. After a few minutes, the passageway opens up into a large chamber. You see several men stand scattered throughout the room, watching you with angry expressions. They wear desert garb of white linen skirts and sandals, as well as impressive striped cloth headdresses and ornate pectoral collars adorned with serpent and jackal heads. A fluid of*

*some sort drips from their weapons... Beyond them a huge jackal-headed statue and altar can be seen. Beneath it stand four hulking and vile-looking winged creatures, all lined up as if in formation. They appear to be standing next to a stone table on which are a number of items.*

*“Infidels!” cries one of the desert-garbed men. They move toward you with menace in their eyes.*

The ceiling height in this chamber is 20'. The Lord High Jackal, a ranking priest of Set, has been bargaining with a Nycaloth for the *rubies of succor*. A dozen of these gems lie scattered on the table. If they are grabbed and broken while uttering 'home', the character doing this will be instantly transported back to the Wizards Guild.

The Nycaloth is representing Asphometh in the negotiation, although the followers of Set do not know this. The Lord High Jackal wears a very powerful ring (*green steel ring of protection +3, +5 for baatorians*).

**Round 1:** The elite followers of Set begin dispersed about the room such that most attack spells (e.g. *chaos, fireball, lightning bolt, hold person*) cannot affect more than two of them. They will charge as soon as their initiative arrives (under the influence of a *haste* spell in tier 13). The Aurak draconian becomes visible as he throws an energy blast from each hand at the rear ranks of the party. The Lord High Jackal completes his casting of *wither* (the reverse form of *regeneration*) while hiding within a secret passage near the entrance to the temple. The scimitars of the followers of Set are dipped in a fast-acting form of poison type D, so that all hits from them require a saving throw vs. poison. Failure to save results in 30 points of damage, while success results in 2d6 points of damage. The onset of this poison is immediate.

**Round 2:** The Lord High Jackal bursts out of a one-way secret door near the entrance to the temple. He will attack to *wither* the nearest PC's arm. The elite followers continue to melee with the PCs, and the Aurak draconian continues to launch volleys of energy blasts from each hand.

**Round 3:** The Lord High Jackal will cast *blade barrier* if he can position it in such a way as to affect numerous PCs. Note that it is maximally effective (maximum = 64 points of damage) within the temple of Set. If he cannot use an effective *blade barrier*, he will either *flame strike* one of the PCs (maximum = 48 points of damage) or pull out a poison-tipped scimitar and melee physically if that makes more sense.

**Round 4+:** Continue with the same tactics, until one side prevails. The followers of Set (including the Aurak draconian) will not fail morale while in their Temple of Set. The draconian will use its ranged attacks until directly engaged, at which time it will use its "exhale" power while meleeing. The Nycaloth will remain in the back and guard the rubies. Due to its *mirror images* and many abilities, it does not fear combat. It will counterattack fiercely against those attacking it personally, but will soon leave via *teleport without error* when all its allies have been defeated. It dares not take the rubies, as they are property of the followers of Set, upon whom it has great dependence for future plans.

**THE ALTAR:** The altar radiates an overwhelming amount of necromantic magic. If the party decides to desecrate or otherwise harm the altar or statue of Set, it saves as (magical stone) rock crystal, with a +5 bonus (rolls of "1" always fail). If the altar is destroyed, a deep rumbling will be heard as it bursts into a shower of sparks filling the room. In this version of the adventure, the sparks will cause all in the room or hallway to be subjected to a *fireball* spell (10d6 damage, save for half and make item saves if anyone fails). Desecration of a Baatorian temple of Set is a dangerous activity.

### **Party Levels <75:**

**Elite Followers of Set (4):** Int. high; AL LE; AC 4 (ceremonial garb, dexterity); MV 12; HD 10; hp 100; THAC0 8; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+5 (poison-tipped scimitar, strength, specialization); SA poison-tipped weapons; SD none; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

**Lord High Jackal (F15/Pr16):** Int. High; AL LE; AC -1/-3 to good (ceremonial garb, dexterity, *green steel ring of protection +3, +5 for Baatorians*); MV 12; HD 16; hp 146; THAC0 2 (specialized, strength); #AT 5/2; Dmg 1d8+9 (poison-tipped scimitar, specialized, strength); SA poison-tipped weapon, spells operate at maximum effect while in temple of Set; SD 60' infravision, pre-cast spells (*free action, protection from fire (192 pts), protection from lightning (160 pts)*), innate *protection from good, 10' radius*; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

Spells: *cure light wounds x4, ~~protection from good, 10' radius, protection from fire, dispel magic x2, free action, protection from lightning, slay living, flame strike, blade barrier, wither~~* (reverse of *regeneration*)

All of the Lord High Jackal's saving throws are successful on a roll of "2" or better. All of his spells

are cast at maximum effectiveness while in the Temple of Set.

**Draconian - Aurak (1):** Int. Exc.; AL LE; AC 0; MV 15; HD 8; hp 64; THAC0 13 (7 in lightning ball form); #AT 2 or 3; Dmg 1d8+2 (energy blast from each hand) or 1d4/1d4/1d6 (claws and bite); SA see below; SD +4 bonuses to saving throws, innate *invisibility*, detect hidden and invisible creatures within 40', *shield*; MR 30%; SZ L (7' tall); ML 15

The Aurak draconian has the following abilities that he is likely to use in this encounter:

Spells: *lightning bolt*, *shield* (already cast)

Innate abilities:

- Infravision to 60'.
- Become invisible at will.
- *Dimension door* 3X per day up to 60 yards.
- Exhale a noxious sulfur cloud, 5' in diameter, 3X per day (those in the cloud are blinded and suffer 2d10 points of damage, save vs. breath weapon for half and to avoid blindness).
- See through all illusions
- When it reaches 0 hit points, it does not die, but instead surrounds itself with green flames and enters a fighting frenzy (+2 bonus to attack and damage rolls). Anyone coming within three feet of the flames suffers 1d6 points of damage, unless a saving throw vs. petrification is successful. Six rounds later, or when the Aurak reaches -20 hit points, it transforms into a spinning ball of lightning, striking once per round as a 13-HD monster to cause 2d6 points of damage. Three rounds later, it explodes, stunning all within ten feet for 1d4 rounds. Those within ten feet also suffer 3d6 points of damage (no saving throw).
- It will not use its *mind control* ability.

**Yugoloth, Greater - Nycaloth:** Int. Exc.; AL NE; AC -6; MV 12, Fl 36 (C); HD 11+22; hp 100; THAC0 9; #AT 2; Dmg 1d8+8/1d8+8; SA each claw wound continues to bleed for 1d6 damage/round per wound until magically healed, see below for additional abilities; SD *mirror image* (3 images), +2 magical weapons to hit, immunities: acid, fire, iron weapons, poison, (half damage from gas); MR 70%; SZ L (9' tall and broad), ML 16

Yugoloths take double damage from cold attacks. All yugoloths have the following abilities, which operate at the 11th level of ability unless a higher level of ability is required: *alter self*, *animate dead*, *cause disease*, *charm person*, *improved phantasmal force*, *produce flame*, *teleport without error*. Their *gate*

ability will not work at this time. Nycaloths have the following additional abilities: *command* (3X/day), *dimension door* (3X/day), *dispel magic*, *enlarge/reduce*, *fear (by touch)*, *invisibility*, *mirror image* (3X/day), *polymorph self*, *project image*, *reverse gravity* (1X/day), *wind walk*, *word of recall* (1X/day). The following abilities are always active: *comprehend languages*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *read magic*.

Note that claw wounds bleed for continuous damage, so no spellcasting is possible (until magically healed).

### **Party Levels 75+:**

**Elite Followers of Set (6):** Int. high; AL LE; AC 4 (ceremonial garb, dexterity); MV 24; HD 10; hp 100; THAC0 8; #AT 4 (*hasted*); Dmg 1d8+5 (poison-tipped scimitar, strength, specialization); SA *haste*, poison-tipped weapons; SD none; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

**Lord High Jackal (F15/Pr16):** Int. high; AL LE; AC -1/-3 v good (ceremonial garb, dexterity, *green steel ring of protection* +3, +5 for Baatorians); MV 24; HD 16; hp 146; THAC0 2 (poison-tipped scimitar, specialized, strength); #AT 5 (*hasted*); Dmg 1d8+9 (poison-tipped scimitar, specialized, strength); SA *haste*, poison-tipped weapon, spells operate at maximum effect while in temple of Set; SD 60' infravision, pre-cast spells (*free action*, *protection from fire* (192 pts), *protection from lightning* (160 pts)), innate *protection from good*, 10' radius; MR nil; SZ M; ML 20

Spells: ~~*cure light wounds x4*~~, ~~*protection from good*~~, ~~*10' radius*~~, ~~*protection from fire*~~, *dispel magic x2*, ~~*free action*~~, ~~*protection from lightning*~~, *slay living*, *flame strike*, *blade barrier*, *wither* (reverse of regeneration)

All of the Lord High Jackal's saving throws are successful on a roll of 2 or better. All of his spells are cast at maximum effectiveness while in the Temple of Set.

**Draconian - Aurak (1):** Int. Exc.; AL LE; AC 0; MV 30; HD 8; hp 64; THAC0 13 (7 in lightning ball form); #AT 2 or 6 (*hasted*); Dmg 1d8+2 (energy blast from each hand) or 1d4/1d4/1d4/1d6/1d6 (claws and bite); SA *haste*, see below; SD +4 bonuses to saving throws, innate *invisibility*, detect hidden and invisible creatures within 40'; MR 30%; SZ L (7' tall); ML 15

The Aurak draconian has the following abilities that he is likely to use in this encounter:

Spells: *lightning bolt*, *haste* (already cast)

Innate abilities:

- Infravision to 60'.
- Become invisible at will.
- *Dimension door* 3X per day up to 60 yards.
- Exhale a noxious sulfur cloud, 5' in diameter, 3X per day (those in the cloud are blinded and suffer 2d10 points of damage, save vs. breath weapon for half and to avoid blindness).
- See through all illusions.
- When it reaches 0 hit points, it does not die, but instead surrounds itself with green flames and enters a fighting frenzy (+2 bonus to attack and damage rolls). Anyone coming within three feet of the flames suffers 1d6 points of damage, unless a saving throw vs. petrification is successful. Six rounds later, or when the Aurak reaches -20 hit points, it transforms into a spinning ball of lightning, striking once per round as a 13-HD monster to cause 2d6 points of damage. Three rounds later, it explodes, stunning all within ten feet for 1d4 rounds. Those within ten feet also suffer 3d6 points of damage (no saving throw). Items within the range of the explosion must roll successful saving throws vs. crushing blow or be destroyed.
- It will not use its *mind control* ability.

**Yugoloth, Greater - Nycaloth:** Int. Exc.; AL NE; AC -6; MV 24, Fl 72 (C); HD 11+22; hp 100; THAC0 9; #AT 4 (*hasted*); Dmg 1d8+8/1d8+8/1d8+8/1d8+8; SA *haste*, each claw wound continues to bleed for 1d6 damage/round per wound until magically healed, see below for additional abilities; SD *mirror image* (3 images), +2 magical weapons to hit, immunities: acid, fire, iron weapons, poison, (half damage from gas); MR 70%; SZ L (9' tall and broad), ML 16

Yugoloths take double damage from cold attacks. All yugoloths have the following abilities, which operate at the 11th level of ability unless a higher level of ability is required: *alter self*, *animate dead*, *cause disease*, *charm person*, *improved phantasmal force*, *produce flame*, *teleport without error*. Their gate ability will not work at this time.

Nycaloths have the following additional abilities: *command* (3X/day), *dimension door* (3X/day), *dispel magic*, *enlarge/reduce*, *fear* (by touch), *invisibility*, *mirror image* (3X/day), *polymorph self*, *project image*, *reverse gravity* (1X/day), *wind walk*, *word of recall* (1X/day).

The following abilities are always active: *comprehend languages*, *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *read magic*.

**Note:** Claw wounds bleed for continuous damage, so no spellcasting is possible (until magically healed).

## Conclusion A: Timer-pop

This ending is to be used in the event that the slot for this adventure has ended without the party finding its way home. Alter the following as necessary to suit the circumstances when this occurs. For example, if combat is underway, Regulus will arrive and aid the party in a most dramatic manner. Be sure to dramatically recount his skillful use of *time stop*, *Abi-Dalzim's horrid wilting*, or similarly powerful spells to save the day.

### In the event of a TPK

If the entire party was killed, Regulus will rescue them soon afterward. This rescue will consist of recovery of the PCs and the possessions they had with them. It will NOT involve reversal of actions or removal of damage or disease which has already occurred. Regulus will instruct his staff to subsidize any *raise dead* or *resurrection* spells the party requires, by funding the monetary half (the PCs must still kick in the 50% payment in magic items). Consult the PCs' wills or next-of-kin for their desired method of paying the balance for any *raise dead* or *resurrection* spells.

Regulus' aides will debrief them about any open issues, but the chancellor is not available to talk with them. If the PCs complain about this treatment, they should be reminded that the Wizards Guild paid a handsome amount to bring them back. Further, they are eligible for a reward.

*Without warning, a familiar figure suddenly winks into existence in your midst. "It's time to go home. Please come with me," is all Regulus says as he invokes a powerful spell. Your surroundings fade away, to be replaced by the familiar setting of the Wizards Guild courtyard.*

If the rubies were NOT recovered, continue with:

*Regulus looks at you, disappointment apparent in his eyes. "I thank you for your efforts in this noble task," he states before a long pause. "However, the implications of those rubies falling into the wrong hands could be cataclysmic. I shudder to think that a number of evil beings could arrive within our inner chambers at any time. Please explain what happened."*

Allow the PCs to offer their version of events.

*After listening silently, he strolls away from you, his head down as he ponders this information.*

The PCs should treat the archmage with respect, despite their ordeal. After all, he couldn't have known that they would be thrust into Baator. He will make an effort to understand the PCs, and is aware that they've been through an ordeal. Those who offend him will not receive a reward from the guild. For serious offenses by guild members, he may consider expulsion. Take care not to take such actions lightly, and it is much more likely that an infamy point (or negative chivalry point) is appropriate.

If polite, each PC will be awarded a dose of *Regulus' rosy extract* as a gift for their difficulties. The *armor enhancement for a renowned holy warrior* award is available only if one of the PCs qualifies AND PERFORMED IN AN EXEMPLARY MANNER. This should accompany a special request to the head of the Knights' Council for a special chivalry point to be appropriate. It is NOT an obligatory handout.

The archmage's assistants will retrieve the blue lockbox and *Holy relic of just seeing*. If any PCs contracted a disease, they must take care of it now (i.e. *cure disease*) or will soon die as the hemorrhagic fever runs its course.

## Conclusion B: Got Home but without Rubies

Use this conclusion if the PCs got home on their own, but the *rubies of succor* WERE LEFT BEHIND.

Depending upon how they returned, the PCs may find themselves outside of the Wizards Guild, within its courtyard, or elsewhere.

*Regulus looks at you, disappointment apparent in his eyes. "I sense that you do not have the rubies which were given you. I thank you for your efforts in this noble task," he states before a long pause. "However, the implications of those rubies falling into the wrong hands could be cataclysmic. I shudder to think that a number of evil beings could arrive within our inner chambers at any time. Please explain what happened."*

Allow the PCs to offer their version of events.

*After listening silently, he strolls away from you, his head down as he ponders this information.*

The PCs should treat the chancellor with respect, despite their ordeal. After all, he couldn't have known that they would be thrust into Baator. He will make an effort to understand the PCs, and is aware that they've been through an ordeal. Those who offend him will not receive a reward from the guild. For serious offenses by guild members, he may consider expulsion. Take care not to take such actions lightly, and it is much more likely that an infamy point (or negative chivalry point) is appropriate.

If polite, each PC will be awarded a dose of *Regulus' rosy extract* as a gift for their difficulties. The *armor enhancement for a renowned holy warrior* award is available only if one of the PCs qualifies AND PERFORMED IN AN EXEMPLARY MANNER. This should accompany a special request to the head of the Knights' Council for a special chivalry point to be appropriate. It is NOT an obligatory handout.

The archmage's assistants will retrieve the blue lockbox and *holy relic of just seeing*. If any PCs contracted a disease, they must take care of it now (i.e. *cure disease*) or will soon die as the hemorrhagic fever runs its course.

## Conclusion C: Complete Success

Use this conclusion if the PCs got home on their own, and the *rubies of succor* were NOT left behind.

*Upon your return, you startle Simon Regulus as he looks up from an ornate mirror. The mirror has an image of the Battlefield of Megiddo, as Regulus just located the plain you recently viewed. "Well hello there!" he beams. "I had nearly tracked you down, please tell me what occurred."*

Allow the PCs to recount their version of events.

*"Thank you so much for your very able assistance. I admire your competence."*

The PCs should treat the archmage with respect, despite their ordeal. After all, he couldn't have known that they would be thrust into Baator. He will make an effort to understand the PCs, and is aware that they've been through an ordeal. Those who offend him will not receive a reward from the guild. For serious offenses by guild members, he may consider expulsion. Take care not to take such actions lightly, and it is

much more likely that an infamy point (or negative chivalry point) is appropriate.

If polite, the PCs each will be awarded a dose of *Regulus' rosy extract* for their difficulties.

In addition, the following are provided for the party:

- a dose of *Regulus' dark derivative*
- Wizard scroll (created by Chancellor Simon Regulus, it contains common yet scalable spells which were all carefully chosen to take advantage of his great expertise)
- The *armor enhancement for a renowned holy warrior* award is available only if one of the PCs qualifies AND PERFORMED IN AN EXEMPLARY MANNER. This should accompany a special request to the head of the Knights' Council for a special chivalry point to be appropriate. It is NOT an obligatory handout.

The archmage's assistants will retrieve the blue lockbox and *holy relic of just seeing*. If any PCs contracted a disease, they must take care of it now (i.e. *cure disease*) or will soon die as the hemorrhagic fever runs its course.

**The End**

## Experience Point Summary

Experience in the Living City is now calculated as follows:

1. Sum the experience listed below for objectives.
2. Assign discretionary role-playing experience (0-500 points). These should reward accurate character portrayal throughout the adventure, not just how well the PC interacted socially. You may award different amounts based on performances.
3. Finally, multiply the total by the tier according to the chart:

### Standard Version

Levels 4-13	Tier 1
Levels 14-25	Tier 2
Levels 26-37	Tier 3
Levels 38+	Tier 4

### High-Level Version

Levels <75	Tier 10
Levels 75+	Tier 13

PCs should get the experience points of the tier for which they qualify, regardless of which tier is actually played. For example, if you have a Tier 3 group and you have to bump the combats by one tier to challenge them, they still get the experience points for a Tier 3 group, not for a Tier 4 group.

### Standard Adventure

**Encounter 2:**  
Experiencing Astral travel 50

**Encounter 3:**  
Participating in the experiment 100  
---> awarded only to those who took part

**Encounter 4:**  
Combating Githyanki 200

**Encounter 6:**  
Dealing with Lamaunia 50

**Encounter 7:**  
Dealing with predicament effectively 50

**Encounter 8:**  
Escaping the lemures 100

**Encounter 8A:**  
Dealing with or surviving Krushleekekak 100

**Encounter 8B:**  
Defeating the dragons 200

**Encounter 9:**  
Coping with the situation 100

**Encounter 11:**  
Defeating the undead 200  
Destroying the Altar of Set 50

Maximum Experience for Objectives 1,200 xp  
Role-playing Experience: 0 - 500 xp

**Total Base XP Available: 1,700 xp**  
Tier Two: 3,400 xp  
Tier Three: 5,100 xp  
Tier Four: 6,800 xp

### High-Level Adventure

**Encounter 3:**  
Participating in the experiment 300  
---> awarded only to those who took part

**Encounter 4:**  
Combating Gith and Garmorms 1,500

**Encounter 6:**  
Dealing with Lamaunia 150

**Encounter 7:**  
Dealing with predicament effectively 500

**Encounter 8A, 8B:**  
Surviving combat 1,500

**Encounter 8C:**  
Defeating the dragons 1,500

**Encounter 9:**  
Defeating the minions of Asphometh 3,000

**Encounter 10:**  
Avoiding ALL disease in the party 250  
Defeating followers of Set 3,000  
Recovering rubies without help 1,000  
Destroying the Altar of Set 400

Maximum Experience for Objectives 12,100 xp  
Role-playing Experience: 0 - 500 xp

**Total Base XP Available (Tier 10): 12,600 xp**

For Tier 13:  
---> 16,600 xp possible

Add 4,000 xp

## Treasure Summary

If it's not on this list, the PCs cannot keep it. This is a house rule which overrides what they may actually acquire in the scenario.

### Standard Adventure

#### Encounter 3: An Experiment

Effects of the machine (only effects which last beyond the tournament are certed)

- Save vs. Paralysis or frozen for 1d4 turns
- *Harm* on user
- *Symbol of Fear* placed on Right Palm - will activate against the PC if they look at it.
- **Permanent -1 saving throw vs spells**
- PC ages 1d10 years, system shock required
- **PC gains the Appraisal NWP**
- **PC gains +3 reaction vs opposite gender**
- **Permanent Luck in Combat +1 to all surprise rolls**
- May Lay on Hands once during the next week
- Removes all scars and signs of injuring from the PC
- **PC gains the ability to cast *feign death* at Will**
- Save vs. Spell at -10 or lose 1 life level
- **Cursed, when they die they raise up immediately as a spectre**
- A Portal opens in the machine to the elemental plane of air, then closes
- **PC gains the ability to detect stonework as a dwarf**
- **PC gains insatiable hunger. Must eat a full meal each hour or be at -2 per hour missed.**

#### Conclusion

*Boon of the Wizards Guild:* The named character may present this certificate at the Wizards Guild in Ravens Bluff and, if courteous, request the following spells to be cast. All such casting will be performed on the premises, at the 16th level of ability. If the holder of this boon is a member of the Wizards Guild with the rank "Circle Initiate Member" or higher, the spells will be cast at the 24th level of ability. Each spell may be requested only once: *stone to flesh*, *stoneskin*, *dispel magic*

## High-Level Adventure

#### Encounter 3: An Experiment

See Standard Adventure Chart – it is the same

#### Encounter 10: Recovering the Rubies

*Green steel ring of protection:* +3, +5 for *baatorians*: This Baatorian green steel ring bears the engraved image of a jackal-headed man and various evil runes. It provides +3 protection while on Baator, while conferring +2 protection on the Astral plane, and only +1 protection on the Prime Material plane. Beings native to the plane of Baator receive much greater protection from this ring. Although this ring does not radiate evil, good-aligned characters may find the use of this item distasteful. No player character may be considered a Baatorian.

#### Conclusion

*Regulus' rosy extract* (one dose each): This odorless, pink-hued oil may be applied to any permanent magic item, into which it will seep as it magically bonds with and strengthens the device. As a result, said device gains a +1 bonus to all item saving throws. To be valid, the item so augmented must be named below, and this certificate must be attached to it. Only one dose of *rosy extract* may be applied to a given magical item. A 1d20 roll is required when the extract is applied; a result of 1 indicates that the item is destroyed, and any other result indicates that the extract works properly.

ITEM AUGMENTED: \_\_\_\_\_

*Regulus' dark derivative* (one dose): This odorless, jet black oil may be applied to any permanent magic item, into which it will seep as it magically bonds with and strengthens the device. As a result, said device will survive ONE failed item saving throw, after its magic is expended and no longer effective. To be valid, the item so augmented must be named below, and this certificate must be attached to it. Only one dose of *dark derivative* may be applied to a given magical item.

ITEM AUGMENTED: \_\_\_\_\_

*Wizard Scroll:* This scroll was awarded by the Ravens Bluff Wizards Guild for meritorious service. It was scribed at the 24th-level of ability by Simon Regulus. It contains common yet scalable spells which were all carefully chosen to take advantage of his great expertise: *phantasmal killer*, *shades*,

*Snilloc's major missile, enlarge, cone of cold, Melf's acid arrow*

*Armor Enhancement for a Renowned Holy Warrior:*  
The named character performed an important service for the Wizards Guild and in so doing displayed great courage. As a reward for this meritorious service, Chancellor Simon Regulus has arranged to transfer the enchantment of the character's armor to a suit of full plate mail using the spell *steal enchantment*. Alternatively, the character may request that a magical shield be enchanted to +3 power.

Only those warriors and priests who are limited by their faith to a maximum of 10 magical items are eligible for this reward. Further, the beneficiary of this award MUST have personally performed in a courageous and valorous manner, without complaint or negative comment.

Choice of Enchantment:

- Transfer of Enchantment to Full Plate Armor
- Magical Shield Enchanted to +3

The judge must attach this certificate to the original certificate, and annotate the original certificate to indicate this enhancement.

*Note: only one of these will be awarded.*

## **Fame Awards**

### **Standard and High-Level Adventure**

1 point gained in either General or City Government

Note: If the party failed to recover the *rubies of succor*, award them one infamy point. In addition, award another infamy point for players exhibiting a disrespectful or unhelpful attitude to either Regulus or Von Tighe.

## Judge Aid #1: The Astral plane

The Astral is a plane of transit, a planar link between the prime material and outer planes. Another view is that it is not really a plane at all, but rather the void between all true planes. It is a realm of the mind which touches the Prime Material Plane as well as the first layer of each outer plane at all points. Lastly, it is the scaffolding upon which the true planes were built.

The Astral appears as a bright, well-lit grayness that extends endlessly in all directions like a thick, silver atmosphere. Although very big objects can be seen at great distance, both vision and hearing have effective ranges of 200 yards. Of the few breaks in this infinite silver expanse, the most common are conduits to/from other planes, along with small islands of matter which have broken off from their native dimensions. A very rare occurrence is the forgotten husk of a dead power. The Githyanki fortress in this adventure is built within such a structure.

The Astral plane has no gravity and direction. Objects have mass but not weight, so that they can be thrown at normal velocities. There is no up or down, or magnetic directions. There are only reference points. Further, concepts such as space, distance, time, movement, body, and even plane itself exist only as perceptions, not necessarily as reality.

The Astral plane may be traveled either physically or via *astral projection* magic. All creatures in this adventure are physically traveling, so the projection rules may be ignored for this tournament. Physical travel involves physically moving into the Astral plane, bringing along all of one's possessions. As occurs when traveling to the true planes, travelers and their possessions are translated into Astral material. That is, they are translated into constructs of the mind, composed only of mental energy. In this tournament, the PCs enter through a metallic-silver color pool (a form of Astral conduit - reference DM AID #2: THE COLOR POOL).

Time does not pass on the Astral plane. As a result, poison and aging attacks are ineffective and potions are permanent on the Astral plane. However, when a visitor returns home, all the time that he missed instantly catches up with him (although hungry, the visitors will not suffer from starvation). **For purposes of this tournament, ignore any time paradoxes which may occur.**

### Movement

Visitors to the Astral plane must become acclimated. Movement is accomplished in either of two ways, only one of which may be used in a single round:

Physical: accomplished by pushing off of objects, movement continues indefinitely at the following rates per round, all of which can be negated by force of will: A large object pushing off of a small object moves 10 feet per round, regardless of the rate of the small object. For example, a man firing an arrow moves backwards 10' per round.

Two similarly sized objects pushing off each other each move at a rate equal to  $\frac{1}{2}$  the total intelligence involved.

A small object pushing off a large object moves at a speed equal to its intelligence. The large object moves in the opposite direction at a rate of 10' per round.

Mental: accomplished by concentrating on where to go, with a movement rate equal to one's intelligence (measured in yards). This movement is similar to the *fly* spell, although sudden stops and maneuvers require a successful intelligence check. Once engaged in melee, differences in combatant speed will probably not make much difference. Rules for long distance travel do not apply for this adventure.

### Combat

Weightlessness and mentally-controlled movement govern combat.

Armor Class alterations: Dexterity provides no bonus. Instead Wisdom score is used to determine defensive adjustment on the Dexterity table.

Magical armor and protective devices are reduced in effectiveness by 1 bonus point (see the subsequent section entitled "Effects on Magical Items" for more detail).

Attack and Damage alterations:

Strength provides no bonuses. Instead the Intelligence score is used to determine these on the Strength table.

Missile Fire alterations:

Dexterity provides no bonus. Instead Wisdom is used to determine missile attack adjustment on the Dexterity table.

Those from planes with gravity suffer a -2 penalty on all their shots.

All ranges are double their prime material equivalents.

Beyond long range, all missiles miss their targets and continue moving until they strike something.

Engagement in melee can occur from above and below, as well as from the sides. The maximum numbers of attackers are:

<u>Defender</u> <u>Size</u>		<u>Size of Attackers</u>		
		<u>S</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>L</u>
<b>S</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>3</b>	
<b>M</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>L</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>8</b>	

Individual orientation is self-determined and can change each round. The “higher” opponent is usually granted a +1 THACO bonus, unless the combatants have opposing orientations (i.e. they are both “above” each other).

### Character Class Considerations

**Wizards**: Spells cannot be recovered normally due to the slow passage of subjective time.

**Priests**: Unless his deity resides in the Astral plane, the priest must find a plane with faster time flow to regain spells. None of the Forgotten Realms deities resides in the Astral plane.

**Rogues**: The chance to hide in shadows is virtually 0%, since light comes from the Astral plane itself.

The chance to move silently is virtually 100%, unless the PC purposefully moves in such a way as to create noise.

The ability to *climb walls* is usually of little value since most movement is by mental concentration. However, it can be used to move over an object’s surface without pushing off into space.

**Rangers**: Can still surprise others normally, but lose their advantage against being surprised. Tracking skills are only useful on solid objects.

### Effects on Magical Items

**IMPORTANT: Weapons, armor, and protective devices (except those that confer a particular armor class like *bracers of defense*) are reduced by one**

**magical bonus point.** This applies to attack, damage, AC, and saving throw protection.

Potions normally have the viscosity of ketchup and tend to cling to the sides of solid containers (such as vials but not wineskins), requiring 1d4 rounds to consume. Solid containers also have a 5% chance of causing choking which loses the effect of the potion. Magical oils are applied by dipping a finger into them and allowing them to flow over the user for a round.

Magical items are subject to the magical effects listed in the next section. For example, items involving extraplanar space, such as a *bag of holding*, do not function.

### Effects on Magical Spells

This magical plane is one in which spells are easily cast. Spells which have casting times of less than a round are reduced by one segment. Those spells which normally require more than one round only require one round to cast here.

All spell ranges are increased by 50%. Further, the duration of mind-affecting spells is increased by 50%, and a -1 penalty to saving throws applies (if such is allowed).

The modifications for each wizard school are listed below. Priest spells behave similarly, but function only if the cleric’s deity resides in the Astral, Prime, or Outer planes. Spells from the priest creation sphere behave like wizard alteration spells. Priest spells from the divination, necromancy, and summoning spheres behave similarly to spells from wizard schools of the same name.

**Abjuration** - work normally, but cannot affect the fabric of the Astral plane itself, which overwhelms all spells. For example, a *dispel magic* spell could disrupt a spell effect but would not disrupt the astral properties in its area of effect.

**Alteration** - have the following qualifications:

- Spells that deal with physical matter, time, or space must behave according to general rules for this plane.
- Spells cannot contact the ethereal or inner planes, or make use of extradimensional space.
- Objects that are animated by alteration spells have an intelligence of 0 for movement purposes.
- Spells can modify existing conditions, but cannot call conditions into existence.

**Conjuration/Summoning** - are 25% likely to fail, and:

Creatures of the Outer planes are aware of how the Astral plane functions and will not move into spells which ensnare, subjugate, or harm them.

*Monster Summoning* spells can call creatures from the Prime or Outer planes.

Spells which call for the direct intervention of a power work only if it is native to the Astral plane. No Faerunian deities are native to the Astral plane. Other deities may be beseeched but are reluctant to involve themselves.

**Divination** - operate normally, with exceptions:

- *Detect magic* causes the entire plane to radiate (due to a flaw in the spell), although with a little effort it is possible to detect other magic against this background.
- *True sight* reveals the infinite nature of the plane, possibly overwhelming the caster (with a 100% - 5%/viewer level chance of being stunned for 1d4 rounds) when first used.

**Enchantment/Charm** - operate normally with exceptions:

- The target creature(s) must be present in the plane.
- Extra-dimensional space cannot be called into being or manipulated.
- For example the *feblemind* spell works normally, resulting in an intelligence of zero for purposes of movement and combat.

**Evocation/Invocation** - operate normally except that materials created by evocation spells have physical properties appropriate to the Astral plane. Exceptions are those spells that deal directly with matter.

**Illusion/Phantasm** - very effective in the Astral environment since they may well be more believable here. Illusions are 30% likely to be usurped by “floating thoughts”, which randomly alter them.

**Necromantic** – these spells are not affected.

## Judge Aid #2: The Color Pool

This particular pool is a two-dimensional silver disk which ripples like mercury in a pan on its Astral side. On its Prime Material side, however, it is invisible. Those attempting to view it from the Prime Material plane will not see anything unusual. It is about 10' in diameter, and provides a bi-directional path between locations on the Prime Material and Astral planes. Travelers moving through the pool are instantaneously transported to the other plane. This travel is physical, as the adventurers are moved bodily into the other plane. It is unlike the projection travel conferred by the *Astral spell*.

Moving through the pool is like pushing through a soft, resilient membrane. Because it is not possible to coexist on the Astral and other planes, it is not possible to stick only part of an object through the pool.

Color pools may be used to view another plane without entering it. The viewer must be within 30' and concentrate to force the pool to become transparent. Only one viewer may control it at a time. This pool's Astral terminus is not fixed in location and may be moved mentally. For purposes of this tournament, the PCs won't have the time necessary to learn how to control the pool's location or viewing capabilities.

## Judge Aid #3: The Former Githyanki Fortress

During this adventure the PCs travel to the Astral plane, arriving at a fortress which was hewn out of a miles-long, irregularly-shaped, granite asteroid which is gently drifting through the Astral plane. This structure is in fact the remains of a dead power.

The corridors of this complex were designed to be extremely long for a very good reason. The Githyanki who built them favor hit-and-run tactics with which their tremendous speed may be used to great advantage. They are able to combat hordes of slower foes in this manner.

Ceilings are a uniform 20' above floors. PCs with the stonemasonry proficiency will recognize that the quality of all workmanship is quite good. Doors are large, strong, and wooden. All doors except those within the prison are unlocked. All areas are well-lit by the silver Astral environment itself. Note that visual range is limited to 200 yards, so the hallways in this complex generally stretch as far as the eye can see.

Only a small portion of the fortress is involved in this tournament. Should the party attempt to explore undocumented areas within or without the fortress, they will be confronted by numerous Githzerai military patrols.

## Judge Aid #4: Party Details Sheet - Astral Plane

<u>Character Name</u>	<u>Move</u>	<u>Armor Class</u>	<u>Saving Throw Bonus</u>	<u>Magical Weapon(s)</u>	<u>Attack/Dmg Bonuses</u>
1)					/
2)					/
3)					/
4)					/
5)					/
6)					/
7)					/

### Determining Astral Modifications

**Mentally-Based Movement** is equal to Intelligence score x 30'.

**Armor Class** is a product of the following considerations:

- 1) Defensive Adjustment is determined by applying the Wisdom score to this column on the Dexterity table. For example, a wisdom score of "18" confers an armor class bonus of -4, and a wisdom score of 6 confers a +1 penalty.
- 2) Magical protection items (such as enchanted armor, shields, rings/cloaks of protection, etc.) each have their bonuses reduced by one magical plus. This is because they are one plane removed from their plane of origin. Devices which confer a particular AC (e.g. *bracers of defense*) are unaffected.

**Saving Throw Bonuses** are also reduced by one "plus" for each magically-protective item.

**Magical Weapons**, like magical armor, these are reduced by one magical "plus".

**THAC0 and Damage Bonuses** are products of the following considerations:

- 1) Magical weapons are reduced by one magical plus.
- 2) Intelligence score is applied to the appropriate columns on the Strength table. For example, an intelligence score of 18 confers +1 THAC0 and +2 damage bonuses, while an Intelligence score of 6 or 7 confers a -1 penalty to THAC0.

## Judge Aid #5: Party Details Sheet - Baator

<u>Character Name</u>	<u>Armor Class</u>	<u>Saving Throw Bonus</u>	<u>Magical Weapon(s)</u>	<u>Attack/Dmg Bonuses</u>
1)				/
2)				/
3)				/
4)				/
5)				/
6)				/
7)				/

### Determining Baatorian Modifications

Oddly, Baator seems much more familiar to the PCs than the Astral Plane, despite being further removed.

**Armor Class** is worsened in that all magical protection items (such as enchanted armor, shields, rings/cloaks of protection, etc.) each have their bonuses reduced by two magical pluses. This is because they are two planes removed from their plane of origin. Devices which confer a particular AC (e.g. *bracers of defense*) are unaffected.

**Saving Throw Bonuses** are also reduced by two pluses for each magically-protective item.

**Magical Weapons**, like other magical devices, these are reduced by two magical pluses.

**THAC0 and Damage Bonuses** are similarly worsened by two pluses for each magical weapon.

Importantly, there are exceptions to these guidelines (such as the *planar voyager* short sword and *long sword of the planes*). Weapon bonuses can also be magically altered by such things as *oil of sharpness* or *oil of impact*.

## Judge Aid #6: Avernus

The first pit of the Nine Hells, Avernus is a rocky wasteland with a dark red and starless sky. Its few plants are stunted and twisted, and it contains great rocky crags which often serve as hiding places for astrally-projecting baatezu. Its atmosphere generates flammable vapor which gathers into glowing spheres, providing illumination. These spheres weave and flare into fiery explosions from time to time, especially when flame is present.

The blasted plain is scoured by savage legions, ready to repel invaders. This host is led by Bel, a pit fiend, eagerly earning honors from the infernal archduke of the plane. Tiamat, Queen of Darkness, guards the entrance to the next layer. The River Styx flows through this layer.

This adventure occurs in the realm of Ankhwugaht Prime, or “Little Ankhwugaht”, which is ruled by Set. The Mulhorandi Lord of Evil maintains this relatively small realm (and others like it) in addition to his home realm of Ankhwugaht on Baator’s fifth layer of Stygia.

### Physical Dangers on Avernus

- **Running:** Due to the sharp, blasted rocks on Avernus, each round spent running requires a dexterity check to avoid falling down for 1d3 points of damage.
- **Explosive Atmospheric Discharges:** The random fireballs may, on rare occasions, explode near the PCs but not so near them that they cause damage. For such occasions, the PCs will feel a forceful wave of heat which causes them to stumble backward and save vs. spell to avoid being blinded for 1d4 +1 rounds.

### SPECIAL NOTES

A small skirmish from the blood war has recently spilled over into this realm because it is relatively new (only a century or two old) and has not as yet been “stabilized”. The tanar’ri are seeking to exploit this. Because of the offensive underway here, the ruler of this realm, Set, is currently not honoring the *plane shift* and *gate* spells. These spells (and their innate ability counterparts) will NOT function if attempted.

### Effects on Magical Items

Weapons, armor, and protective devices (except those that confer a particular armor class) are reduced by **TWO** magical bonus points. This applies to attack, damage, AC, and saving throw protection. Those

adversaries in this tournament that require magical weapons to hit must consider this penalty.

Magical items are subject to the magical effects listed in the next section. For example, *wands of conjuration* will summon creatures native to Baator, as do the *Monster Summoning* spells.

*Wands of wonder* and related devices use wild magic and do not function in Ankhwugaht Prime.

### Effects on Magical Spells

Summoning spells are limited in that they can only summon creatures from Avernus. *The Monster Summoning I - IV* spells will draw nupperibos, lemures, spinagons, and black abishai respectively. These creatures will not serve the caster, and most likely will attack.

The following spells require contact with the inner planes and will not function: *aerial servant, chariot of Sustarre, conjure earth elemental, conjure elemental, conjure fire elemental, demishadow magic, demishadow monsters, distance distortion, elemental swarm, energy drain, estate transference, etherwalk, invisible stalker, Khazid’s procurement, Leomund’s secret chest, Lorloveim’s creeping shadow, Lorloveim’s shadowy transformation, major creation, minor creation, negative plane protection, reflecting pool, restoration, shades, shadowcat, shadow engines, shadow magic, shadow monsters, shadow walk, summon shadow, vanish.*

### Features of this Realm

Unless it chooses the somewhat risky route and teleports to its destinations, the party must travel overland to recover the magical rubies which will enable them to return home.

- **Mount Hellspeak:** The mountain the party begins on is enormous, many times bigger than any equivalent on Faerun. It is staggeringly huge, very steep and narrow, and composed of jagged red rocks. A single winding road wraps itself around the mountain many times on its way from base to summit. It can be traversed by walking around it, going down and around, or by climbing up and over (which would require weeks). The sensible approach, of course, is to follow the road as it winds one-half revolution down to the ground on the far side of the mountain. Care will have to be taken to avoid falling, as the results of a fall could easily be death on the steep slope. Of course,

spells such as *fly* and similar magical items can alter the experience and requirements for this trip.

- **The Plain**: Except for the mountain and others far in the distance, the landscape is a rolling plain similar to a bizarre alien desert.
- **The Pit of Pestilence**: The entrance to the pit is located in the side of a red-block pyramid about one-half day's walk on the far side of Mount Hellspeak. A foul stench emanates from this entrance, and grows stronger as the party descends the miles-long passage. At the end of the passage is a pit filled with corpses and bones, and any time spent here is likely to result in contracting diseases. Several passages lead away from the pit, but for the PCs all are in fact the same one, joined magically after a few hundred yards. The passage leads directly to a Temple of Set.
- **The Lemure Pits**: This rare muddy depression is fed by a polluted spring, creating dozens of wallows in which thousands of lemures make their home. The pits are located on the edge of an enormous canyon. Many miles deep, this severely inhospitable land has been layered and worn by eons of harsh Baatorian weather. [Imagine a horrid version of the Grand Canyon which is 10 times bigger.] The pits are overlooked by an outcropping of rock which forms a bluff. This bluff is the party's entry location into Baator during the standard version of this adventure. All lemures appear to be oblivious of any activity that is not in their immediate proximity.

## Judge Aid #7: Priest Level Adjustments - Baator

In terms of spellcasting ability, priests on an outer plane function at one level less than normal per “step” removed from their deity beyond the first. This is according to the latest published documentation, *Planescape: The Planewalker’s Handbook*. **Note:** in each version of this adventure this affect may be avoided through the use of magical items (either *oil of heroic action* or the *Holy Relic of Just Seeing*).

<b>God</b>	<b>Home Plane</b>	<b>Casting Levels Lost</b>
Azuth	Arcadia	2
Chauntea	Elysium	5
Denier	Beastlands	6
Eldath	Elysium	5
Gond	Outlands	0
Helm	Mechanus	1
Ilmater	Bytopia	4
Jergal	The Gray Waste	1
Kelemvor	The Gray Waste	1
Lathander	Elysium	5
Leira	Limbo	5
Lliira	Arborea	7
Mielikki	The Beastlands	6
Milil	The Beastlands	6
Mystra	Elysium	5
Oghma	Outlands	0
Selune	Ysgard	6
Silvanus	Outlands	0
Sharess	Arborea	7
Sune	Arborea	7
Tempus	Limbo	5
Torm	Mount Celestia	3
Tyr	Mount Celestia / Ysgard	3
Waukeen	Outlands (Arborea)	0 (7)

### Elven

Corellon Larethian	Arborea	7
Sehanine (Moonbow)	Arborea	7
Aerdrie Faenya	Elemental Plane of Air / Arborea	7
Fenmarel Mestarine	Limbo	5
Hanali Celanil	Arborea	7
Labelas Endoreth	Arborea	7
Solonor Thelandira	Arborea	7

### Dwarven

Moradin	Mount Celestia	3
Berronar Truesilver	Mount Celestia	3
Clangeddin Silverbeard	Arcadia	2
Dugmaren Brightmantle	Outlands	0
Dumathoin	Mount Celestia	3
Muamman Duathal	Mount Celestia	3
Vergadain	Outlands	0

**Gnomish**

Garl Glittergold	Bytopia	4
Baervan Wildwanderer	Bytopia	4
Baravar Cloakshadow	Bytopia	4
Flandal Steelskin	Bytopia	4
Gaerdal Ironhand	Mount Celestia	3
Segojan Earthcaller	Bytopia	4

**Halfling**

Yondalla	Mount Celestia	3
Arvoreen	Mount Celestia	3
Brandobaris	Elysium	5
Cyrrollalee	Mount Celestia	3
Sheela Peryroyl	The Beastlands	6

## Judge Aid #8: The Holy Relic of Just Seeing

This magical amulet is constructed of solid mithral inset with a single flawless diamond which sparkles and glows with its own warm light. Originally, it was simply an *amulet of life protection* possessed by Chief Prelate SIRRUS Melandor, who was altering it into its current state at the time of his death. With the help of powerful followers of Tyr from the House of Tyr's Hand in Milvarune (Thesk), Lady Lauren DeVillars completed this project on behalf of her true friend and presented it to his colleagues at the Temple of Tyr in Ravens Bluff.

Once per year, during a Tyrran high ritual of Seeing Justice, the wearer of this magical device may receive insight which could lead to the correction of an injustice. The information received is always cryptic, requiring interpretation and investigation. It is never direct and plain, and must be acted upon to be of value. It is said that the spirit of SIRRUS Melandor himself, now resident upon the slopes of Lunia, intercedes personally to obtain and deliver this information.

This device retains its original powers (those of an *amulet of life protection*).

In recent days, additional powers have been introduced into this device, due to a combination of unlikely events. First, the foul baatezu which once stole it tinkered with it extensively, making it susceptible to further enchantment. Second, the Githzerai sage A'rinthorm, who borrowed it for its abilities to record his experiments, exposed it to The Great Machine, an artifact of incredible power.

The following resultant powers are known, and are of a non-religious nature (that is, they aren't bestowed by a deity):

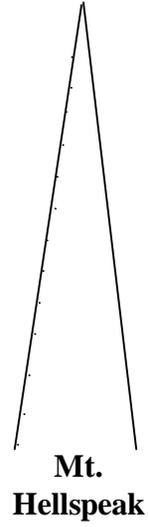
- (1) The relic functions as a special form of *power key*. A portion of some unknown life essence has been stored within it, enabling its bearer and all nearby priests to avoid any reduction in priestly experience levels due to planar traveling. While this relic is displayed (worn openly) by a member of the party, all priests in the vicinity (60' radius) will suffer no reduction of experience levels due to planar distance from their deities.
- (2) The relic confers *tongues* (as the 3rd level wizard spell) to all within voice range. This greatly facilitates spoken interaction with intelligent beings who speak foreign or "alien" dialects. It does not aid in reading unknown dialects.
- (3) The relic is undetectable by fiends.
- (4) Donning the relic is no longer injurious to any non-evil character. However, those of evil alignment who put it on suffer 3d8 points of damage per round, triple the damage inflicted prior to its recent modifications.

The *Holy Relic of Just Seeing* is now somewhat of an unknown quantity and as such has been given to the Wizards Guild for further research.

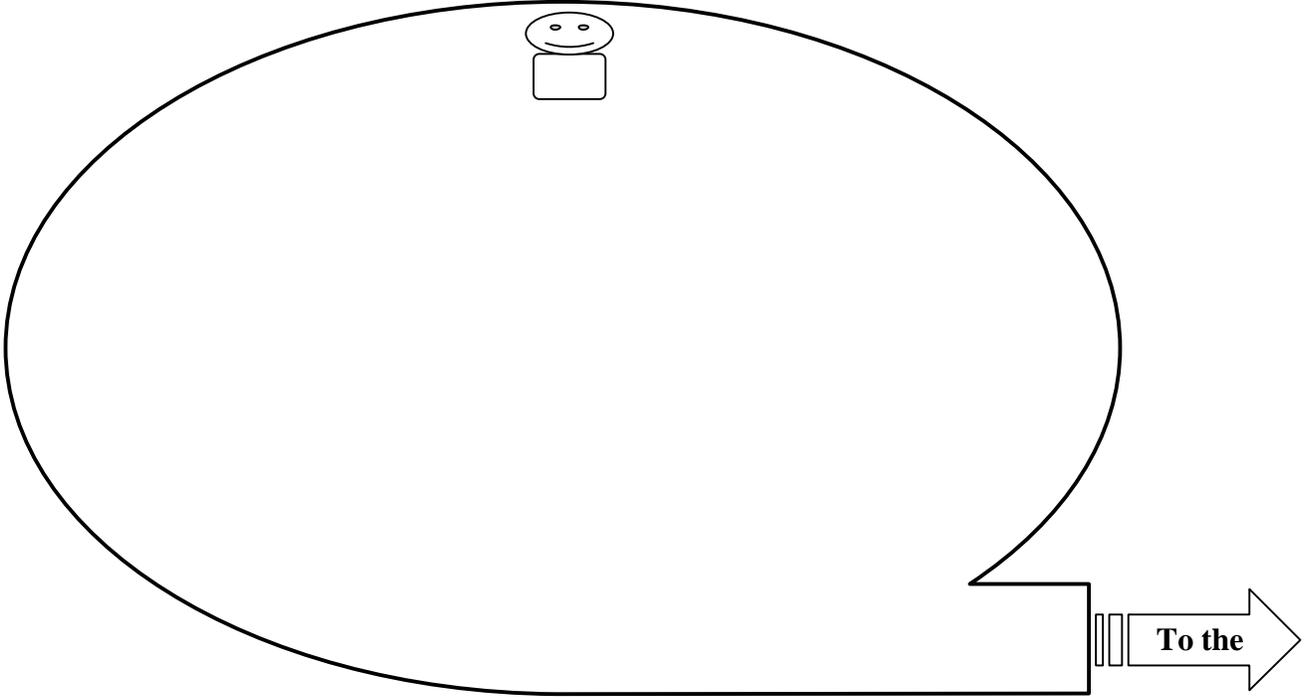
## Judge Aid #9: “The Great Machine” effects table

<b>Result</b>	<b>D10</b>	<b>D6</b>	<b>D4</b>
Save vs. Paralysis or frozen for 1d4 turns	1-5	1,3,5	1
Harm on user	6-10	2,4,6	1
Symbol of Fear placed on Right Palm - will activate against the PCs if they look at it.	6-10	1,3,5	1
Permanent -1 to saving throw vs. spells	1-5	2,4,6	1
PC ages 1d10 years, system shock required	1-5	1,3,5	2
PC gains the Appraisal NWP	6-10	2,4,6	2
PC gains +3 reaction vs. opposite gender	6-10	1,3,5	2
Permanent Luck in Combat +1 to all surprise rolls	1-5	2,4,6	2
May Lay on Hands once during the next week	1-5	1,3,5	3
Removes all scars and signs of injury from the PC	6-10	2,4,6	3
PC gains the ability to cast Feign Death at Will	6-10	1,3,5	3
Save vs. Spell at -10 or lose 1 life level	1-5	2,4,6	3
Cursed, when they die they rise up immediately as a spectre	1-5	1,3,5	4
A Portal opens in the machine to the elemental plane of air, then closes 4		6-10	2,4,6
PC gains the ability to detect stonework as a dwarf	6-10	1,3,5	4
PC gains insatiable hunger. Must eat a full meal each hour or be at -2 to THAC0, saves per hour missed.	1-5	2,4,6	4

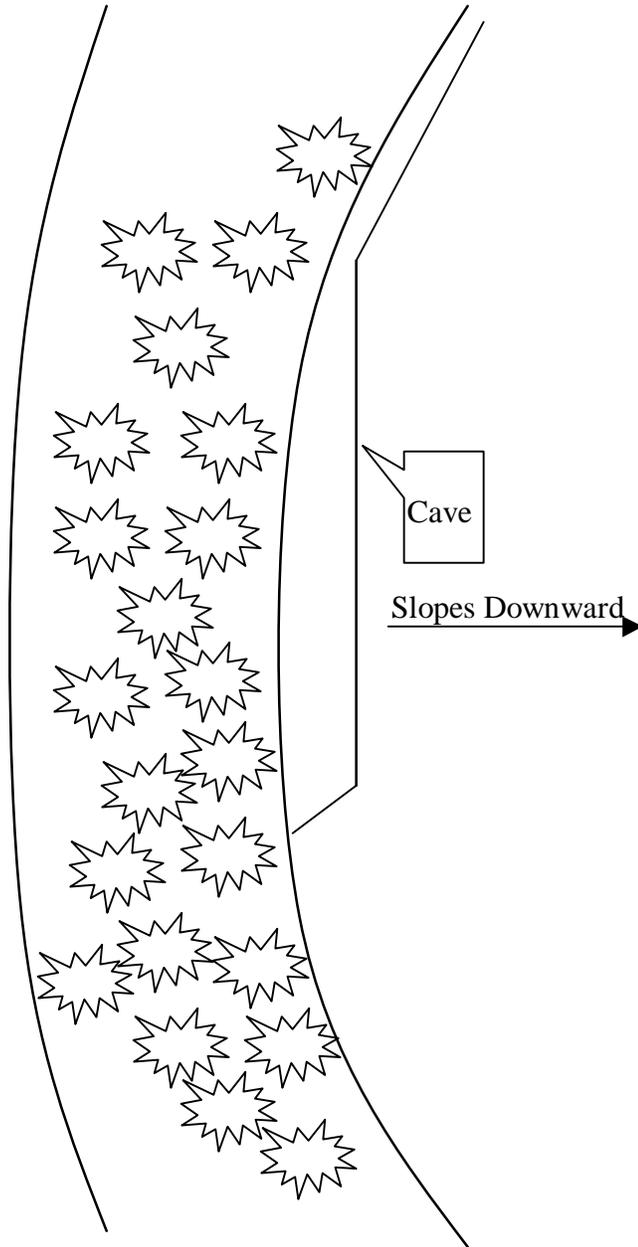
# Judge Map #1: "Little Ankhwugaht"



## Judge Map #2: The Pit of Pestilence



### Judge Map #3: The Lemure Pits



## Player Handout #1: The Contract

*The undersigned agrees to accept the beneficence of one Beliakas, of 10 Broadcross Ave., Ravens Bluff (hereafter referred to as the “benefactor”). In return for this aid and the considerable effort the benefactor has endured to offer it, the undersigned agrees to owe the benefactor a single service, to be determined at a later date.*

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(Signed)