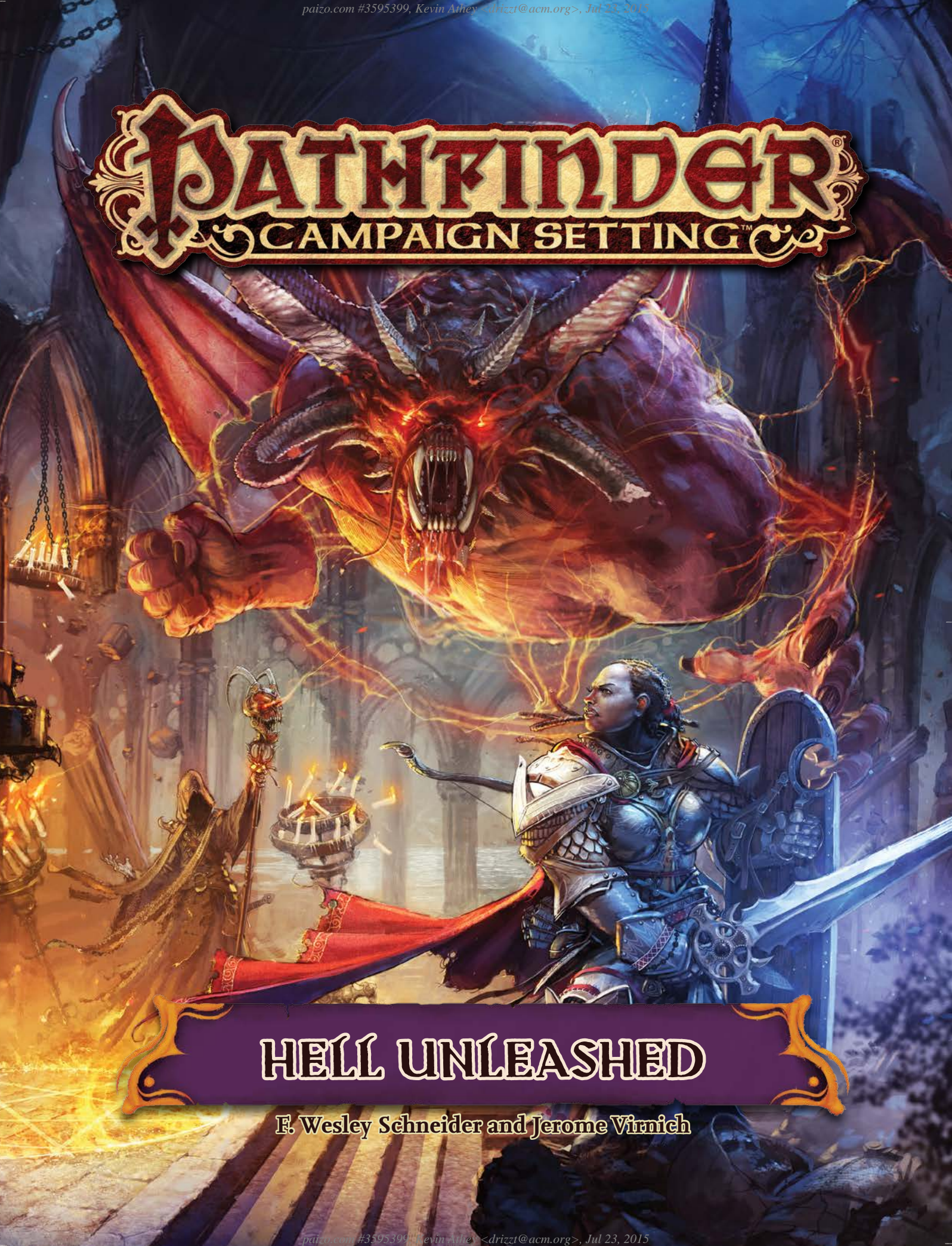


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HELL UNLEASHED

E. Wesley Schneider and Jerome Vimmich

paizo.com #3595399, Kevin Athey <drizzt@acm.org>, Jul 23, 2015

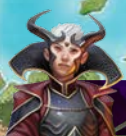
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Karcav, Ustalav



Darukarex
Nystra, River Kingdoms



Cult of Lies
Western Fog Peaks, Galt



Benabak
Misarius, Chelixa



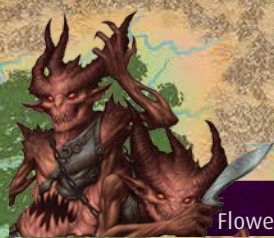
Dinya's Possession
Swiftrun, Isger



Hellknights
Citadel Rivad, Chelixa



Mardehzuk
Deep beneath Khoka, Qadira



Miranksha
Flowering Jasmine Monastery, Jalmeray



Book of the Damned
Demiplane



Emporium Isitalba
Market of Breaths, Dis



Furcas
Hanging Marches, Avernus



Vipostix
Spike of Suffering, Caina

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Reference

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<i>Advanced Class Guide</i>	ACG	<i>Ultimate Combat</i>	UC
<i>Advanced Player's Guide</i>	APG	<i>Ultimate Equipment</i>	UE
<i>Bestiary 2</i>	B2	<i>Ultimate Magic</i>	UM

On the Cover



Seelah refuses to back down from evil, even in one of its most terrifying forms—that of a monstrous pit fiend—in this diabolical cover by Remko Troost.



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Infernal Apostles

Most Worthy One,

Warmest greetings from the Fallen Fastness, the grandest repository of wisdom and records in all of Dis. As per the terms of our agreement, I have collected a list of names and details of several of the most colorful representatives of devilkind currently or recently operating on the mote you call Golarion. The following reflects the most up-to-date information in our order's records—though more than one redaction hides details from even my eyes. In any case, the following specifics meet the requirements of your demanded service.

Ceikael: Calling himself the Angel of the Skies, the apostate devil Ceikael has been a faith, a myth, and a nightmare that has prevented anyone from entering or leaving the Valley of the Sky in the northwestern Tusk Mountains for centuries. Generations of the Kellid inhabitants have lived and died under his petty rule, knowing no other deity than “It that Knows.”

Eshen Theba: A handmaiden devil in the service of Hakotep the Sky Pharaoh, Eshen Theba seeks to learn more of the ancient Osirian deity Osiris, who knew and indulged in the mysteries of death and rebirth. She has never shared with a mortal that she, at least once, served the fallen archdevil Typhon. (See *Pathfinder Adventure Path #84: Pyramid of the Sky Pharaoh* for details.)

Daarag the Unflensed: Daarag held the title Blood Lord of Gnawing Winter in Geb before rivals destroyed her winterwight body. Eventually her soul found its way to Hell and she swiftly rose to the status of a true devil—albeit a repulsive lemure. Although death has cleansed her mind of most of her mortal memories, her old rival, Blood Lord Aholfein, has since bound her in his dungeons, where she languishes as both a trophy and an anomaly. Daarag remains the only prisoner in the mummy's custody to retain her skin—though not for her captor's lack of effort.

Gamigin: The ice devil Gamigin has wandered across Golarion since the fall of Thassilon, sowing woe and planting far-reaching plots since the Age of Darkness. Eventually, he returned to the ruins of Xin-Shalast, where he casts his mind forth from his lair, the Heptaric Locus. (See *Pathfinder Adventure Path: Rise of the Runelords Anniversary Edition* for more details.)

Gorthoklek: Most who have attended the Chelish royal court don't realize that the most bored-looking of Queen Abrogail's advisors is actually the pit fiend Gorthoklek, an emissary of Asmodeus himself. Although the mighty devil's exact orders remain a mystery, he seems entirely devoted to House Thrune and furthering Cheliah's power.

Iuleeze: This oryx-horned imp haunts the fringes of Osibu in the Mwangi Expanse, having followed historians obsessed with the journeys of the legendary

explorer Dervin Gest. The tiny devil often disguises himself as a colorful giant spider and tempts fools into attempting to recover the lost *Lens of Galundari*. (See *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts & Legends* for details.)

Koalthz: From the Blind Sphinx, one of Stygia's Academies of Lies, the bone devil sage Koalthz eternally watches Golarion, chronicling the greatest atrocities and noting when exceptional souls appear upon that world. A legion of host devils carries his discoveries to the courts of archdevils Geryon (his liege lord) and Dispater (who rewards him well for his service).

Kzei: One of the most ancient scholars of the prison-library of Ghasterhall, Ambassador Kzei oversees the exchange of tomes between the Whispering Tyrant's antiquated annex and the Fallen Fastness in Dis. Several aynghavhaul curators assist him in his work.

Liebdaga the Twin: Formerly the infernal duke ruler of Gallow, a demesne of Avernus, Liebdaga was bound by Chelish diabolists exploiting his true name. He was then confined within the Nessian Spiral, a kind of infernal engine in the city of Westcrown. (See *Pathfinder Adventure Path #28: The Infernal Syndrome* for more details.)

Lords of Mold: A troop of six warmonger devils has stood at quiet attention since their discovery in the bogs of the Sodden Lands' Blackflow River over 200 years ago. Surrounding detritus suggests the devils have been here since the fall of Lirgen. The devils defend themselves, but otherwise remain stationary, following some ancient, forgotten order, or anticipating some mysterious coming.

Lrilatha: Some in Hell were surprised by Asmodeus's choice to send the erinyes Lrilatha—her close association with Ardad Lili and Asmodeus's rivalry with that whore queen being well known—to advise House Thrune, the rulers of devil-sworn Cheliah. Still, Lrilatha seems to have served well, helping to guide the mortal nation into a new age of order.

Molikandus: This bearded devil servant of Dargentu Vheed, the second mayor of Westcrown, led his master to believe he served the nobleman alone. Eventually his double-dealing was revealed, much to his false master's rage. Vheed saw the barbazu transformed into a horrific devil-otyugh amalgam for his trickery—a fate the monstrous fiend suffers still. (See *Pathfinder Adventure Path #26: The Sixfold Trial* for more details.)

Sermignatto: Referred to in ancient texts as Lord of the Bloody Sands, the bdellavritra devil Sermignatto once served Sorshen, Thassilonian runelord of lust. In the ages since her disappearance, the leech master has continued to manipulate events in Varisia. This has become even more interesting since the founding

HELL UNLEASHED



of Korvosa. (See *Pathfinder Adventure Path #12: Crown of Fangs* for details.)

Shoatvars: This bone devil servant of the infernal duke Xhasnaphar seeks the pages of the *Book of the Damned*. He currently tracks one Elliot Bracker in Eleder, Sargava's capital, believing the depraved ex-soldier bears a tome that holds at least one of the true book's pages.

Uol the Coin Counter: The barbed devil Uol serves as the fiendish accountant of Lady Kaltessa Iyis—the leader of one of Mammon's most powerful cults on Golarion. He serves as financial council to the Widow Queen and guardian of her vast fortune. His watch over the vaults of the palace Iron Rose is assisted by several troves of animate coins. The fastidious fiend hates employing these guardians, though, as doing so forces him to count and restack them afterward.

Voulgarghas: Though he prefers his fortress of frozen bile on Cocytus, the ice devil Voulgarghas regularly visits Golarion at the constant summons of high-ranking Hellknight signifiers. Most of these conjurers believe that he knows the final fate of the Hellknights' founder, Daidian Ruel. He doesn't dissuade these beliefs—since they're true—but has never shared his secret.

While this is far from an all-inclusive catalog of my brethren, it fulfills the conditions of our arrangement. Upon your acceptance of this message, I am released from your scholarly service.

As an additional courtesy, which was not expressly proscribed against in the terms of our bargain, I have added a bit of arcane gilding to the seal binding this letter. Upon its breaking, a most industrious aide of mine will receive notice. I assume that occurred a few moments ago. If such is the case, that aide—who has been apprised of these contents and the dwellings of those noted above—should now be in the midst of delivering only slightly amended copies of this missive to the aforementioned individuals. The difference between those letters and this is that they include your name and the location where this seal was broken.

I doubt that they will appear imminently, but odds are that you should expect several visitors. As you know, my kind are notorious for being less than favorably inclined toward those who heedlessly pry into our affairs.

Always a Pleasure to Serve,

Vanchient Lor
Chronicler and Ink Taker
Order of the Thirsty Well
The Fallen Fastness, Dis



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Diabolical Influences

All bleak poetry fails at the sight of spires rising—lording—over channels of ageless fire. Even the Styx forgets its fearless ignorance and bows, languid waters becoming a stream of sacrifice. They greet me at iron shores, warm and resplendent. Horns drip gold, velvet sheathes claws, and something deeper than my heart tries to flee. They play mortal pride like grass whistles. I vow I won't be their instrument, I swear on my scars and the scorched roads behind. The cobbles quiver, and I know Dis will make me a liar.

—From the *Book of the Damned*,
“The Account of Pious Mer”



Roads to Hell

Far more than good intentions pave the road to Hell. Whether led by guides on secret paths between the planes or by daring rifts in the fabric of reality, those characters intent on finding their way to Hell don't lack for options.

Ferrymen: Intermediaries might help facilitate the passage of travelers without the power to slip between the planes. Even among the natives of other planes, few willingly journey to Hell, rightfully fearing its myriad dangers. Yet Hell is not without its hubs and neutral grounds, the greatest of these being the planar metropolis of Dis. Many who might balk at setting foot elsewhere in Hell consider Dis part of that plane in name only. Creatures such as nightmares and thanadaemons (with their infamous skiffs) most openly barter their services—having ancient reputations for conveying travelers between the planes—with only a modicum of duplicity. Other fiends such as contract devils and kyton ostiariususes also welcome the chance to convey mortals to such tempting realms as Hell. Those who don't wish to traffic with fiends until they arrive in the Pit might convince other outsiders such as couatls to convey them to Hell, but will likely have to convince such good-aligned beings of the sanity or worthiness of the course.

Gates: Passages between the planes perforate all of existence. Some are short-lived anomalies, while others are permanent gateways, but all are coveted as thoroughfares of singular danger and power. While portals to wild realms might belch forth an endless stream of deadly creatures, passages to Hell are usually quickly claimed by devils. Infernal dukes don't leave entrances into their demesnes untended for long, hastily setting guardians and sending forth explorers to gauge what possibilities lay beyond. Rarely does a gateway's opening foreshadow an invasion by Hell—such marches happen on the terms of diabolical generals, not planar whims. Yet these passages are like the eyes of Hell itself, and infernal influence inexorably seeps forth. See page 48 for one example of a portal under diabolical control.

Hellmouths: Wormlike ancients that infest Hell's depths, hellmouths are amphisbaenic beings that partially

dwell in the mysterious “between places” separating the planes. Most appear as gigantic, monstrous heads—one at each end of their massive bodies—that protrude from the depths. Within each mouth is a permanent portal that connects with the opposite head, allowing creatures that enter one mouth to emerge from the other. This method of travel can be just as dangerous as it sounds, but a hellmouth's hungers work at a glacial rate, causing them to lead largely sedentary existences. Hell's rulers have put this lethargy to great use, exploiting ancient methods of coaxing hellmouths to the places they desire and keeping them satisfied once they're there.

Most hellmouths are Colossal CR 24 creatures with abilities that function like a permanent *gate* spell. Many also have abilities that make them appropriate challenges for mythic characters. Slaying one of a hellmouth's heads destroys the portal it contains, but does not necessarily kill the other head.

Spells: Although they are by no means mundane, spells provide the most frequently used passages into Hell. The spells *gate* and *plane shift* provide the easiest ingress, although each requires the caster to have a concrete destination in mind. This could require considerable research to narrow in on a location that will prove survivable, if not hospitable. Those who open a passage to Hell without a specific location in mind typically form a connection to Avernus, the first layer of Hell.

Talismans: Numerous magical items grant their users the ability to slip the bonds of reality—*amulets of the planes*, *robes of stars*, and *staves of the planes*, for example. These well-known relics prove to be among the most reliable methods of planar travel, as well as the most expensive. There are more affordable methods, however. Several varieties of devil talisman bear the power to convey the user to Hell (see page 40 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Princes of Darkness, Book of the Damned Vol. 1*). Alternative versions of plane-shifting magic items might also be constructed with limitations as to where they can travel—like an *amulet of the planes* that can transport the user only to Hell. The bearers of such items should always consider the agenda of such an item's creator and ensure that their key to Hell also unlocks the way back.



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Manifestations

The faithful pray endlessly for expressions of the divine, and sometimes their prayers are answered in the form of manifestations. Manifestations are unique and broadly defined demonstrations of otherworldly power. Typically created by beings of demigod status or greater, such displays serve to awe mortals and exert influence through methods as varied as the unfathomable deities that produce them.

A deity's worshipers typically have little influence over a manifestation's appearance or effects unless the manifestation's description says otherwise. Many greater deities forgo the creation of manifestations, relying instead on worshipers and divine servants to execute their whims. Most manifestations are the result of demigods (archdevils, demon lords, empyreal lords, and so on) directly exerting their wills. As such, a wide variety of manifestations exist.

Running a Manifestation

Manifestations function similarly to haunts (see page 242 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*), but with several differences. Complete rules for running manifestations follow.

Locations and Effects: Manifestations typically occur in places sacred to a deity or where such beings wish to exert control, such as around an altar, in a congregation's place of worship, or in an area affected by a *hallow* or *unhallow* spell (as appropriate). A manifestation can occupy an area with a maximum radius equal to 5 feet × the manifestation's CR, but the actual area is usually limited by the size of the room in which the manifestation is located.

A manifestation can have virtually any effect produced by an existing spell, but often with dramatically different sensory or physical characteristics than that spell normally has. Manifestations with effects that don't correspond to existing spells require the GM to design new spell-like effects. Unlike a haunt, a manifestation's effects are not always mind-affecting fear effects. See pages 9–11 for examples of the variety of effects a manifestation might produce.

Before a Manifestation Activates: As manifestations are lingering otherworldly presences, they typically don't exhibit visual or other sensory cues that might betray their presence. As such, they can be difficult to detect. They do, however, possess the same alignment as the deities that create them, making castings of *detect alignment* of the appropriate type helpful in revealing them. Such magic doesn't necessarily reveal the manifestation, but it does grant the character the chance to notice the manifestation before it activates and, perhaps, before entering the area it affects. The check to notice a manifestation in this way (the skill used and DC of which is detailed in the manifestation's description)

is at a –4 penalty, as even this magic detects only traces of unmanifested power. If the character succeeds at the check, he notices the manifestation before it activates. If he fails, the spell reveals nothing.

Activating a Manifestation: Unless otherwise noted, a manifestation activates when living creatures enter the area it occupies. On the round after creatures enter a manifestation's area, roll initiative—this is a surprise round, though creatures still might have a chance to act. In this surprise round, a manifestation's effects materialize at initiative rank 10. All characters in the affected area can attempt to notice the manifestation at the start of the surprise round by succeeding at the check described in each manifestation's Notice entry. If a character succeeds at this check, she notices some hint of the manifestation. After noticing a manifestation (or when a manifestation acts), a character aware of the manifestation can attempt a Knowledge (religion) check to identify the manifestation and determine how to permanently destroy it (DC = 15 + the manifestation's CR). However, to do anything about what she's noticed, the character must still act before the manifestation; see Combating a Manifestation below. It's possible to notice a manifestation and, because of a low initiative rank, not be quick enough to act.

Some manifestations are persistent, and affect targets beyond the surprise round in which they first activate. Persistent manifestations continue to trigger their effects once per round on their initiative rank until destroyed or until they no longer have a target. Other manifestations are infectious, and their effects may continue after the surprise round in which the manifestation activates. The effects of an infectious manifestation can be removed with *remove curse* or by casting *protection from evil* (or associated alignment) on the affected target (DC = 10 + the manifestation's CR).

Combating a Manifestation

Through forceful displays of faith, manifestations can be neutralized, delayed, or even destroyed. However, a deity will never allow one of her faithful to oppose her own manifestation. As such, channeled energy, divine spells, and rebuke attempts originating from a member of a deity's own faith cannot negatively affect (or aid in negatively affecting) her manifestations. A deity who shares the same alignment as a manifestation but who isn't the manifestation's creator can still grant worshipers the power to oppose that manifestation.

A manifestation can be interacted with only during the rounds in which it activates. In most cases, this means prior to initiative rank 10 during a surprise round, but a persistent manifestation can be affected as long as it persists. While the effects of an infectious manifestation may last multiple rounds, the manifestation itself is present for only a single round. A delayed manifestation



can be affected despite not acting in a given round. Delay durations from multiple sources do not stack. Manifestations that don't cause harm or impart obvious negative effects might not need to be fought in any of the following ways, but can still be destroyed with the proper actions.

With Holy or Unholy Water: A flask of holy water or unholy water scattered within the area of a manifestation delays it for 1d4 rounds. Holy water affects evil- and neutral-aligned manifestations. Unholy water affects good- and neutral-aligned manifestations.

With Positive or Negative Energy: A manifestation can be damaged by the power of any deity, typically through the channeling of negative or positive energy or through divine spells that deal similar damage. On the surprise round in which a manifestation activates, negative or positive energy applied to the manifestation can damage its hit points. A manifestation never receives a Will saving throw to reduce the damage dealt by such effects, and effects that require an attack roll must hit AC 10 in order to affect the manifestation and not merely the physical structure it inhabits. Unless the manifestation has an unusual weakness, no other form of attack can reduce its hit points. If the manifestation is reduced to 0 hit points, it is neutralized for the duration described in its Reset entry—if this occurs before the manifestation takes its action at initiative rank 10, its effect doesn't occur.

With a Forceful Display of Faith: Manifestations might also be delayed or damaged by a zealous display of faith. A worshiper of a deity other than the manifesting deity can attempt to rebuke a manifestation by stridently presenting her deity's symbol and invoking the name of her deity. This is a standard action that provokes attacks of opportunity, and it must be performed within 10 feet of the manifestation's area. If a character does this, she can attempt an opposed Charisma check against the manifestation. A manifestation's Charisma score is always considered to be equal to 11 + its CR for the purposes of this check. If the character fails this check, the manifestation continues to operate as normal. If she succeeds by 9 or fewer, the manifestation is delayed for 1d4 rounds but takes no damage. If she succeeds by 10 or more, the manifestation is delayed for 1d4 rounds and takes 1 point of damage for each point by which the character's check result exceeded the manifestation's Charisma check (minimum 10 points). An individual can rebuke a particular manifestation in this way only once per day; all subsequent attempts to do so fail.

Multiple characters of faith can attempt to help rebuke a manifestation using the aid another action. As part of this action, the assisting character must brandish his deity's holy symbol and attempt a DC 10 Charisma check. If he succeeds, he grants the character he's assisting a +2 bonus on her Charisma check to oppose

CR Modifiers of Manifestations

The following abilities and properties affect a manifestation's final Challenge Rating.

Feature Type	CR Modifier
Infectious	+1
Persistent	+2
Notice DC	
15 or lower	-1
16-20	+0
21-25	+1
26-29	+2
30 or higher	+3

Reset Time	CR Modifier
1 minute	+2
1 hour	+1
1 day	+0
1 week	-1

Modifiers to Attack Bonuses or Save DCs	
-1 to -4	-1
+0	+0
+1 to +4	+1
+5 to +8	+2
+9 to +12	+3

Example Weaknesses	
Slow (manifests at initiative rank 0)	-2
Susceptible to an additional type of damage	-1 per additional type
Can't affect blessed creatures	-1
Tricked by <i>undetected alignment</i>	-1
Tricked by invisibility	-1
Tricked by Stealth*	-3
Triggered by touch	-2

* The manifestation attempts a caster level check instead of a Perception check to notice a target using Stealth.

the manifestation. A worshiper of any deity can assist in this way (not just worshipers of the deity already being invoked). Assisting in this way doesn't count as a character's one daily attempt to rebuke a manifestation.

For the purposes of determining who can attempt to rebuke a manifestation, a character of faith is any NPC the GM decides is appropriately faithful, or a PC who worships a deity and carries that deity's symbol.

Neutralization and Destruction: A neutralized manifestation is not destroyed, and can activate again after its reset duration has passed. To destroy a manifestation, a specific action must be taken in the area it affects to dismiss it forever. This specific act is different for every manifestation and is detailed in the Destruction entry of the manifestation's description.

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Elements of a Manifestation

Manifestations are presented with the following elements.

Manifestation Name: The name of the manifestation, followed by its CR.

XP: The amount of XP to award the PCs for surviving the manifestation, as determined by its CR.

Alignment, Deity, and Area: The manifestation's alignment, its associated deity, and the dimensions of the area it infuses (maximum radius of 5 feet \times the manifestation's CR). The alignment is always the same as that of the associated deity. If the manifestation is infectious or persistent, this is noted here as well.

Caster Level: This is the manifestation's effective caster level for the purposes of dispelling any ongoing effects with *dispel magic*, and for determining the results of spell effects it creates.



Notice: This is the skill and DC of the check required to notice the manifestation before it activates in the surprise round. A character who succeeds notices the effect described in parentheses after the DC.

hp: This lists the manifestation's effective hit points for the purposes of resolving damage (see Combating a Manifestation on page 7). A manifestation's hit points are equal to twice its CR. A persistent manifestation instead has hit points equal to its CR \times 4.5 (rounded down).

Trigger: Conditions that can cause the manifestation to activate are given here. Proximity-triggered manifestations activate as soon as a creature enters the manifestation's area. A manifestation triggered by touch does not activate until a creature touches a specific object or location in its area, but it can sense (and thus target with its effects) any creature in its area.

Reset: This is the amount of time that must pass before a manifestation can attempt to reset after being neutralized. Until it is destroyed, a manifestation can reset after this period by succeeding at a DC 10 caster level check—failure indicates the manifestation must wait the listed amount of time again before making another attempt to reset.

Weakness: Any weaknesses the manifestation has, such as the ability to be tricked by spell effects or damaged by unusual energy types, are noted here.

Invocation: This is the act that must be performed to create the manifestation. This act must be performed by a worshiper of the manifestation's deity of a character level equal to or higher than the manifestation's caster level. The patron deity must consent to the manifestation's creation or the invocation fails.

Effect: This details the manifestation's exact effects, including a description of how the manifestation activates.

Destruction: This describes the act needed to permanently destroy the manifestation.

Creating a Manifestation

To create a manifestation, follow these steps.

Step 1—Determine Base CR: A manifestation's base CR is equal to 1 + the level of the spell it replicates.

Step 2—Determine Actual CR: Select the elements you want the manifestation to have and add up the adjustments to its CR to arrive at the manifestation's final CR (see the CR Modifiers of Manifestations sidebar on page 7).

Step 3—Determine Caster Level: A manifestation's caster level is equal to its actual CR.

Step 4—Determine Hit Points: A manifestation's hit points are equal to twice its CR (or to its CR \times 4.5 if the manifestation is persistent).

Step 5—Calculate Attacks and Save DCs: A manifestation's attack modifier (if one is needed) is equal to its CR. If a manifestation's spell effect allows a saving throw to resist or negate the effect, the save DC is equal to 10 + the level of the spell + the ability modifier of the minimum ability score needed to cast that level of spell.



Diabolical Manifestations

The following unholy displays are favored manifestations of various archdevils and infernal dukes.

HELL'S GRIP CR 2

XP 600

LE manifestation of an infernal duke (10-ft. square)

Caster Level 2nd

Notice Perception DC 16 (to notice warmth around the infernal duke's symbol)

hp 4; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Weakness The manifestation can't affect creatures under the effects of *bless*.

Invocation Sacrifice an infernal duke's sacred animal using the duke's favored weapon, then draw the fiend's symbol with the blood.

Effect When any sentient nonevil creature that doesn't worship the associated infernal duke enters the area, that creature must succeed at a DC 13 Will saving throw. If the target fails, it is affected as per the spell *levitate* and floats 20 feet into the air for 1 round before falling to the ground. While levitating, the target is twisted by massive, invisible hands and takes 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage.

Destruction The infernal duke's symbol must be removed with *erase* or scrubbed away with holy water; this takes 10 minutes.

CLAWS OF EREBUS CR 3

XP 800

LE persistent manifestation of Mammon (10-ft. cube)

Caster Level 3rd

Notice Perception DC 14 (to hear something grinding in the darkness)

hp 13; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Weakness The manifestation is neutralized by bright light (4th level or higher).

Invocation Dig a pit at least 15 feet deep. A sentient creature must have its eyes plucked out, then be killed by being dropped into the pit. The eyes must then be burnt and the ashes scattered into the pit amid prayers to Mammon.

Effect No natural light can permeate this cube of persistent unnatural blackness, which renders any creature within the area unable to see. Additionally, every round on the manifestation's initiative, creatures within the area take 2d6 points of damage from unseen claws and teeth (Reflex DC 13 half). No magical source of light created by a spell weaker than 3rd level can pierce this darkness—casting a spell with the light descriptor of a higher level neutralizes the manifestation. Creatures with the see in darkness ability are unaffected by this manifestation. This manifestation typically occupies the bottom of a pit trap. 2d12 hours after a creature is killed by this manifestation, any equipment it possessed appears atop the disguised pit trap (or otherwise just outside the manifestation's

area), though it carries only half of any coins it possessed, the other half of which vanish into the shadows forever.

Destruction A creature must drop 1,000 gp worth of coins into the pit while clearly stating that it's paying the darkness to depart. Then, a spell with the light descriptor must be cast into the darkened area. If the spell's caster succeeds at a DC 14 caster level check, the darkness vanishes. In either case, the coins disappear.

MASTER IN SKIN CR 4

XP 1,200

LE infectious manifestation of Belial (up to a 20-ft. square)

Caster Level 4th

Notice Perception DC 16 (to feel the sensation of invisible hands caressing your skin)

hp 8; **Trigger** proximity; **Rest** 1 hour

Weakness The manifestation can't affect creatures immune to mind-affecting effects or affected by *freedom of movement*.

Invocation Burn the severed hands of 10 sentient creatures in a brazier with enough incense to make the smoke smell good.

Effect When a creature that doesn't worship Belial enters the area, a malicious presence attempts to take control of that creature's limbs. Targets who fail a DC 14 Will save are forced to do the manifestation's will for 1d6 rounds. This effect does not subvert a creature's control of itself. Rather, at initiative rank 10, the manifestation takes control of the creature and causes it to take a standard action of the manifestation's choice (this grants the creature one additional standard action for the round, which doesn't count against the number of actions it can take in the round). The manifestation usually causes the creature to move, attack itself (dealing 1d8 points of damage + its Strength modifier to itself with an item in its hand), attack an adjacent ally, or perform some other simple action. The manifestation cannot compel a creature to do something obviously suicidal, though it can put the creature into a dangerous situation.

Destruction Chilled holy water must be splashed into the area, followed by a *calm emotions* spell cast into the area by a good-aligned creature.

ALTAR OF TRUTH CR 5

XP 1,600

LE infectious manifestation of Mephistopheles (15-ft. square centered on a surface)

Caster Level 5th

Notice Sense Motive DC 20 (to notice the diabolical possibilities of the deal)

hp 10; **Trigger** touch (signing on the surface); **Reset** 1 day

Invocation Hire an individual to create a table, desk, altar, or other flat-surfaced piece of furniture, and pay him 10 times its value. Recover that money from him through legal means, blackmail, or extortion. At least 1 week later, sacrifice that craftsman on the item's surface.

Effect Two creatures can make a promise, seal a vow, or sign a contract over the surface bearing this manifestation.

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Upon doing so, both are affected as per the spell *mark of justice*. The mark appears as the symbol of Mephistopheles on the creatures' tongues. If the terms of the agreement are broken, the creature in violation takes 2d4 points of Charisma drain and 1d6 points of damage as its tongue tears free from its mouth and vanishes. The tongue appears on the manifestation's surface—potentially revealing the broken agreement. The creature cannot speak or use abilities that have a verbal element (such as many spells or the countersong bardic performance). A creature's tongue can be restored only if its original tongue is reclaimed or destroyed, after which *regeneration* must be cast on the creature.

Destruction The price paid for the furniture must be placed on the surface and *consecrate* (or a similar spell) cast on the area by a lawful good spellcaster.

STYGIAN SLOUGH CR 6

XP 2,400

LE manifestation of Geryon (up to a 15-ft. square)

Caster Level 6th

Notice Perception DC 19 (to see movement in the waters)

hp 12; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Invocation Prepare a basin deep enough to submerge a humanoid by placing within it 2,000 gp worth of rare tomes and filling the rest of the space with snake blood. Heat and stir the basin for 2d6 days, after which the books disincorporate into a pulp.

Effect Any creature that submerges itself in the basin can concentrate on up to three questions. For every minute that the creature holds its breath and remains submerged, one question is answered as per the spell *divination*. When the creature emerges, the answers are written on its skin in poetic and metaphor-laden, but clear, text. These tattoos are clearly of evil origin, cover the creature's body, and fade after 1d4+1 days.

Destruction The basin must be emptied. Two emperor cobras (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 252) then appear, which must be destroyed. (Grant XP for destroying the manifestation, not the individual cobras.)

MOLTEN THRONE CR 8

XP 4,800

LE manifestation of Dispater (15-ft. square surrounding throne)

Caster Level 8th

Notice Perception DC 24 (to see fiery cracks on the ground)

hp 16; **Trigger** proximity or seated individual's will (see text); **Reset** 1 minute

Invocation Kill a good-aligned member of a noble family in the chair to be used as the focus of this manifestation, and then etch the seat with Dispater's symbol. Cast *make whole* on the seat, transforming it into an impressive throne of rich silk and dark iron.

Effect Any good-aligned creature that enters the manifestation's area causes the chair to erupt in flame, dealing 4d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 16 half) to all

creatures in the area. Good-aligned creatures that touch the throne take the same amount of fire damage.

If a lawful evil creature attempts to sit upon the throne, it must succeed at a DC 16 Charisma check. If the creature fails, it takes fire damage as above. If it succeeds, the throne accepts the creature; that creature never has to attempt another Charisma check to sit upon the throne. While seated upon throne, any creature accepted by the throne is wreathed by a halo of fire. The halo grants the creature a +4 profane bonus on all Charisma-based skill checks, immunity to fire, and control over the manifestation's ability to fill the area with flame (usable once per minute).

Destruction A lawful evil creature must be killed upon the throne, then *magic circle against law* cast on the throne and corpse. This reduces the throne to a charred version of the furnishing it once was.

THE SHEPHERD CR 10

XP 9,600

LE manifestation of Barbatos (throne made of bone)

Caster Level 10th

Notice Perception DC 26 (to hear the throne whisper)

hp 20; **Trigger** touch; **Reset** 1 day

Invocation The bones of a cleric of Barbatos must form the framework of a throne, supplemented by the remains of at least 10 good-aligned creatures.

Effect Once per day, the throne casts *awaken* on an animal placed upon it—usually a goat, rooster, or boar. The animal's personality is lawful evil and utterly devoted to Barbatos. It speaks Common and Infernal and works to further Barbatos's goals by leading or advising his servants. Additionally, it has access to the bardic performance ability as though it were an 8th-level bard (usable 18 rounds per day + the creature's Charisma modifier) with 10 ranks in Perform (oratory) adjusted by its Charisma modifier. The manifestation's *awaken* effect lasts for 24 hours, though the affected animal's last conscious act is typically to return to the throne so the effect can be renewed.

Destruction The bones of the Barbatos cleric within the throne must be removed, blessed, and buried on holy ground.

EARWORM CR 11

XP 12,800

LE infectious manifestation of Baalzebul (up to a 30-ft. square)

Caster Level 11th

Notice Perception DC 19 (to hear the flies repeating Baalzebul's name)

hp 22; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Invocation Create a charnel pit composed of the bodies of at least 20 sentient creatures. Over the next week, encourage flies to feed on and breed amid the corpses. At the center of the mass, draw the symbol of Baalzebul in your own blood and cast *magic circle against evil*. Then use *planar binding* to conjure a hellwasp swarm (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 146; treat the swarm as an outsider for the purposes of these



spells). If the swarm is successfully conjured, the manifestation is created (the summoned vermin do not appear).

Effect A column of buzzing flies fills the manifestation area. Any creature that enters the area can fly as per the spell of the same name, and is treated as having cover.

At the command of a worshiper of Baalzebul, a 5-foot diameter sphere of maggot-covered flesh levitates out of the charnel pit (to a height of the cultist's choosing). The sphere can be summoned once per day and has hardness 5 and 20 hit points. After 1 minute, it vanishes back into the charnel pit. During this time, up to 3 black maggots can be harvested from the sphere. Any creature that consumes one of these maggots benefits from a permanent *telepathic bond* with whoever invoked the manifestation (the manifestation's creator can share *telepathic bonds* with up to 10 creatures at a time). Helpless creatures can be force-fed a maggot, but are allowed a DC 24 Will saving throw to avoid the manifestation's effects. The manifestation's creator can suppress or reactivate the *telepathic bond* at will. Creatures who have consumed maggots don't share a bond with one another, just with the manifestation's creator.

If a creature participating in this *telepathic bond* is killed, its body dissolves into a black stain and unleashes a hellwasp swarm. Although the creature's gear is unharmed, no part of his body remains, making identification and resurrection difficult. If the manifestation's creator is slain, another servant of Baalzebul (or a more mysterious entity) can take control of the *telepathic bond*.

Destruction *Dismissal* must be cast on the charnel pit, as if targeting an extraplanar hellwasp swarm. If the spell succeeds, three hellwasp swarms emerge from the pit and must be destroyed. (Grant XP for destroying the manifestation, not individual hellwasp swarms.)

FORGE IN FLESH

CR 13

XP 25,600

LE infectious manifestation of Moloch (font)

Caster Level 13th

Notice Perception DC 27 (to notice the fluid moving in strange ways, creating sharp angles)

hp 26; **Trigger** touch (drinking from the font); **Reset** 1 minute

Invocation Pour vials of mercury worth 700 gp in total over seven different magic blades. Boil the liquid for 7 days, killing a small animal each day by submerging it in the liquid. Pour the mercury over the same seven blades and into the font along with one drop of blood from a worshiper of Moloch.

Effect Any sentient creature that drinks from the font activates the manifestation. After 1d4 minutes, the drinker feels intense pain and takes 1 point of bleed damage. The drinker takes 1 cumulative point of bleed damage every round until it dies. The damage can be delayed by magical healing, but unless *regenerate* or a more powerful healing spell is cast on the drinker, the damage

eventually kills it. The drinker can also end this damage herself. As soon as the pain begins, the drinker feels a weight in her throat. If she succeeds at a Will saving throw with a DC equal to 15 + her Constitution modifier, she can reach far enough down her throat to begin to remove the sharp blockage, dealing 1d6 points of damage to herself in the process (in addition to the bleed damage). After three consecutive successful Will saves, as long as the drinker has survived the damage, she tears loose a dagger from her own esophagus. She takes 1d4 points of Constitution drain, but ceases to take additional bleed damage (though this doesn't negate any ongoing bleed effects). The dislodged weapon is an evil-aligned +1 dagger; if the drinker has 7 or more Hit Dice, the dagger's enhancement bonus is instead +2, and is +3 if the drinker has 14 or more Hit Dice.

Destruction Pouring the blood of a good creature into the font over a good-aligned blade causes the liquid in the font to dry up, leaving nothing but rusty powder and animal bones.



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Benabak

Imps are among the least of true devils. These tiny winged sycophants are just a small step up in status from lemures; they lack any real authority in Hell's hierarchy. Their lowly positions make them easy tools for the machinations of more powerful devils. However, their lack of responsibility also affords them a high degree of freedom, especially when it comes to interactions with residents of the Material Plane. Powerful devils dispatch imps to Golarion in droves to corrupt mortals and tempt their souls to Hell. One of the most long-standing of Hell's imp recruiters is the gambler Benabak.

Dispatched to the Material Plane in 4060 AR as a Taldan wizard's familiar, Benabak has remained on Golarion ever since. Normally, after serving—and hopefully damning—their mortal masters, imps are left to fend for themselves on a hostile plane. However, through a twist of ingenuity, Benabak convinced his Taldan master to bequeath him as inheritance to her son. Thus, the groveling Benabak became akin to a family pet.

Over subsequent generations, Benabak worked to damn each descendant in turn. In a twisted way, he became part of the family. He first befriended the children, capering and japing for laughs, and teaching them how to steal sweets from local vendors. As the children grew to adulthood, Benabak introduced them to whatever vices seemed most likely to prove destructive. Eventually, when overindulgence in these vices led his masters into unfortunate situations, the imp brokered an infernal contract between the mortal and a more powerful devil. Benabak idolizes the infernal duke Bifrons, lord of fate, luck, and patterns, and hopes to one day join his service.

Benabak's efforts to tempt his last noble master were a little too successful. His master Epitarus's vice of choice was gambling. Epitarus hosted games of chance at his villa every evening, and Benabak used his flight and invisibility to give his master substantial advantages at the gambling table. Benabak paid close attention to the strategies of every player, and developed his own skills. However, Epitarus's gambling ambitions were larger than fleecing a few nobles in his parlor, and he moved from small, private games to high-stakes betting at prominent local casinos. These casinos had protections in place to prevent cheating, such as Benabak's invisible assistance. As his addiction spiraled out of control, the wizard ruined himself and several relatives financially. Even after he signed away his soul for wealth, he continued to wager away every gold piece he could find. Epitarus became a pariah in his own family, and Benabak was also cast aside. Eventually, the wizard began using the imp as a marker, counting on the fact that his fellow gamblers would trust a familiar as collateral.

The time came when Epitarus could not pay back his debts, and Benabak became the property of a particularly disreputable casino—or so the imp claimed. He worked as a part of the casino's security for decades, using his stealth and magic to catch cheaters. However, the terms of Benabak's original contract were not transferrable, and over time, he sowed corruption and skimmed money for himself. The casino took a long time to detect his treachery, and when they finally discovered it, the imp barely escaped with his life.

Benabak fled to an abandoned watchtower on the edges of his former family's holdings, north of Misarias, now a part of Cheliox. Luckily for the imp, Her Infernal Majestrix kept a large contingent of her standing army near the city. Benabak began to visit the garrison, bowing and scraping and performing menial chores. Most of the Chelish soldiers were suspicious of the imp at first, but they eventually came to believe his tale that he served a military officer in Ostenso, and that he had been sent to do their chores as punishment for his failures. Over time, Benabak opened up to the soldiers, and began telling bawdy tales around the nightly campfires.

Imps are not known for their skill at betting, and it didn't take much for Benabak to convince the soldiers to join him in games of cards. As it turned out, the bored soldiers loved gambling just as much as the imp. Once his apparent haplessness had sufficiently disarmed his marks, the imp lured them back to his abandoned watchtower for a small private game, far from the prying eyes of company commanders. There, the imp unleashed his full prowess, fleecing his victims and building up a sufficient stake to tempt even the most cautious gamblers into betting more than they could afford.

Over the next several years, word of Benabak's depredations spread, and he was no longer welcome at the army garrison. However, his notoriety ended up being a blessing in disguise. Though he was no longer able to prey on common soldiers, tales of his treasure trove began to lure professional gamblers, hardened rogues, and other card sharps to his games. As the prowess of his opponents increased, so too did his winnings. Instead of the barrels of ale, suits of armor, and copper coins that he won from the soldiers, Benabak began to see gold, jewels, and magical baubles swell his coffers. However, his biggest treasures were the gullible fools he forced into profound debt. Those who became too deeply beholden to Benabak soon learned that the only way to repay the imp was to indulge themselves in their worst vices, thereby damning their souls. Slowly but surely, Benabak turned gambling addicts into murderers, thieves, traitors, and worse.



Benabak

This tiny, crimson-skinned creature possesses a pair of horns, a stinger-tipped tail, and batlike wings.

BENABAK

CR 2

XP 600

Male variant imp (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 78*)

LE Tiny outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*, *detect magic*, see in darkness; **Perception** +6

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +1 natural, +2 size)

hp 16 (3d10); fast healing 2

Fort +1, **Ref** +6, **Will** +3

DR 5/good or silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (perfect)

Melee sting +8 (1d4 plus poison)

Ranged dart +8 (1d2 plus poison)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Special Attacks infernal jinx

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th; concentration +8)

Constant—*detect good*, *detect magic*

At will—*invisibility* (self only)

1/day—*augury*, *seek thoughts*^{APG} (DC 15)

1/week—*commune* (6 questions, CL 12th)

STATISTICS

Str 10, **Dex** 17, **Con** 10, **Int** 15, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +3; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

Feats Skill Focus (Profession [gambler]), Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +8, Fly +21, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge

(local) +6, Knowledge (planes) +6, Perception +6,

Profession (gambler) +9, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +17, Use

Magic Device +8

Languages Common, Infernal

SQ change shape (bat, rat, or raven, *beast shape I*)

Combat Gear *wand of command undead*

(7 charges); **Other Gear** dagger,

darts (20) with imp poison

SPECIAL ABILITIES

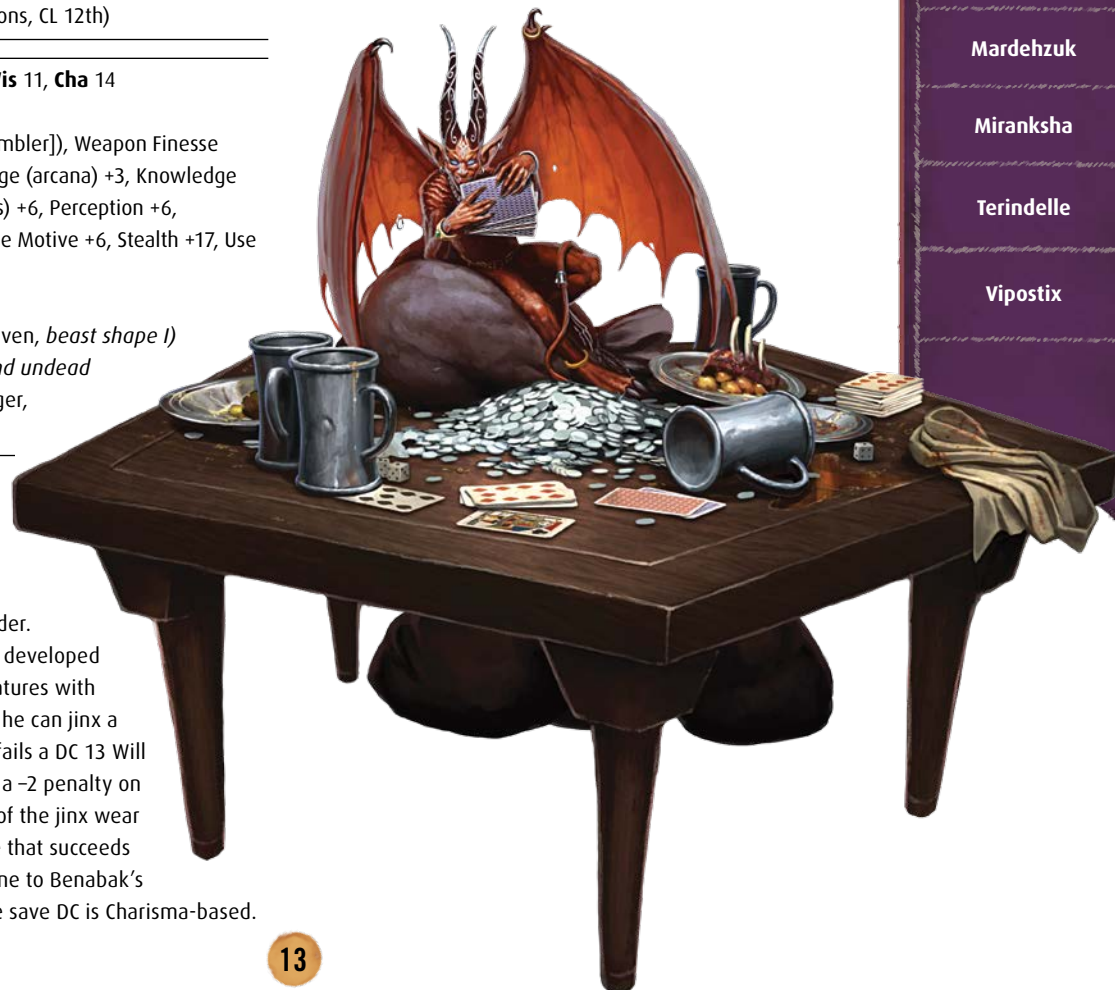
Change Shape (Su) Unlike a standard imp, Benabak's change shape ability allows him to take the form of a bat instead of a boar or giant spider.

Infernal Jinx (Su) Benabak has developed the ability to curse other creatures with ill luck. As a standard action, he can jinx a creature within 30 feet who fails a DC 13 Will save. A jinxed creature takes a -2 penalty on its next d20 roll. The effects of the jinx wear off after 1 minute. A creature that succeeds on the saving throw is immune to Benabak's infernal jinx for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Poison (Ex) Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 13; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d2 Dex; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based, and includes a +2 racial bonus.

Over the decades since his emancipation, more than a few thugs have attempted to divest Benabak of his hard-earned winnings. The imp's elusiveness, arcane defenses, and mobility often best those who attempt to seize his hoard by force. To protect his tower home, Benabak hung a trio of zombie soldiers upside down from a pair of beams on the third floor. He used a *wand of command undead* that he won from a down-on-her-luck arcanist to procure the zombies, who were the unfortunate victims of an ill-fated training exercise against a devil. The zombies gnash their teeth, and lash out at any living creatures in reach, serving as warnings to potential pilferers, as well as last-ditch security. Whenever would-be thieves attempt to steal the imp's treasures, Benabak kills them and strings their bodies up with the zombies. Two such corpses currently hang among the undead. Benabak hopes to one day gain the resources to raise these corpses as zombies as well.

Those who wish to end Benabak's tiny reign of corruption may do best to outwit him by beating the imp at his own game.



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Benabak's Tower

Part gambling den and part treasury, Benabak's stone tower is a local legend among Chelish gamblers. The former army watchtower sat abandoned for decades before the devil adopted it. Rubble and weeds obscure the base, while thick ivy crawls up the exterior of the structure. The PCs can scale the ivy with a DC 20 Climb check. The 60-foot-tall tower's only windows are on the third floor. The tower's wooden floors are rotting and unstable, as are the rickety stairs that circle their way up the interior of the spire.

If the PCs arrive by the imp's invitation, they find Benabak waiting for them on the betting floor (area 2). If the PCs arrive unexpectedly, or attempt to sneak into the tower, the imp uses his change shape ability to disguise himself as a bat. He then hangs amidst the bat swarm to determine the PCs' intentions. If the PCs start looting the tower, he cautiously but casually approaches them and tries to spark their interest in a gambling game. If they persist in taking his belongings, he attacks them.

1. Foyer

This entryway was once the commons for the soldiers garrisoned in the tower. Benabak keeps the foyer in disrepair to discourage casual passers-by from entering. A ruined table and several scattered chairs are bunched together in the center of the room. Empty barrels sit unused along the northern wall, and two heavily rusted suits of armor lean against the southern wall. Of these objects, only the gauntlets and the light wooden shields from the suits of armor are salvageable.

2. Betting Floor

This spacious ground-floor room is where Benabak hosts most of his games. A large table in the eastern portion of the room is strewn with cards, half-empty tankards, and a few scattered copper pieces. The edges of the windowless stone area are lined with crates of foodstuffs, kegs of alcohol, and chests full of mundane gear, which includes several compasses, a length of silk rope, superior loaded dice (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 92), and a cache of nonmasterwork weapons and armor bearing the symbol of the Chelish Army. Hanging upside down from the center of the room are three zombies, their heads just a few feet off the floor. The zombies grab and bite any creature within 5 feet, but are generally docile the rest of the time. Two corpses hang among the zombies. These corpses are not undead, but distinguishing them from zombies requires a successful DC 15 Heal or Perception check, or a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check.

ZOMBIES (3)

CR 1/2

XP 200 each

hp 12 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 288)

3. Second Floor

Once the sleeping quarters for the garrisoned soldiers, the majority of the second floor has since fallen away. The splintered remains of bunks are piled haphazardly around the edges of the room. Any creature wishing to access the third floor must navigate the gap that separates the descending stairs from those leading to the upper floor. The smallest section of the gap is 7 feet across. Unfortunately, there is insufficient space to get a running start, requiring a standing long jump (DC 14 Acrobatics check) to leap across. Any PC that fails the check by 4 or less can attempt a DC 20 Reflex save to grab hold of the other side. Any PC who fails the Acrobatics check by 5 or more falls 20 feet to the betting floor (area 2), taking 2d6 points of damage. The PCs can construct a stable bridge across the gap using the remains of the soldier's bunks with one minute's work and a successful DC 20 Craft (woodworking), Disable Device, or Knowledge (engineering) check.

Some portions of the remaining floor are too weak to support much weight. The PCs can spot these flimsy areas with a successful DC 20 Perception check. If a Medium or larger creature steps on a weakened section of the floor, it gives way, causing any creature in that area who fails a DC 15 Reflex save to fall 20 feet to the level below (area 2), taking 2d6 points of damage.

4. Third Floor

The third floor of the tower has four windows that provide clear views of the surrounding countryside. A swarm of bats roosts among the rafters here, attacking anyone who makes too much noise. Benabak stores all of his best treasures in the southeastern corner of this floor. His stash includes coins, jewels, minor magical baubles, dozens of letters written in blood, and copies of several infernal contracts which the imp helped broker. This level also has weak flooring. These weak spots function like those on the second floor, except that a fall from the third floor sends a creature crashing 40 feet to the ground, causing it to take 4d6 points of damage. The third floor also features a large gap. However, on this level, crossing the gap requires a 10-foot standing long jump (DC 20 Acrobatics check) or an 18-foot running long jump (DC 18 Acrobatics check). Unfortunately, the run-up to the longer jump passes over a section of weakened flooring. Alternatively, a PC can climb along the tower's crumbling walls with a DC 20 Climb check.

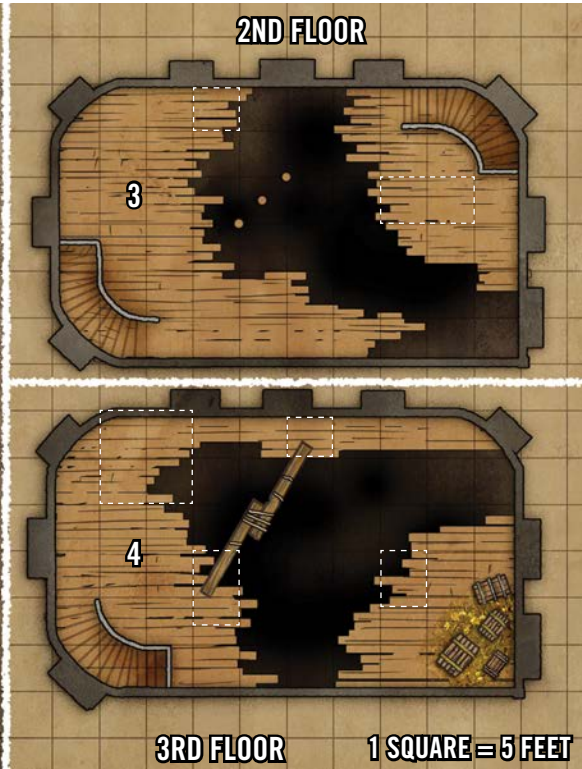
A pair of fallen crossbeams span the center of the room, and support the ropes that hold the zombies aloft. If the flooring that support the crossbeams give way, the crossbeams fall, freeing the zombies.

BAT SWARM

CR 2

XP 600

hp 13 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 30)



Defeating Benabak: Bloodshed or Brains?

As a combat opponent, Benabak isn't especially intimidating. His flight, agility, and at-will *invisibility* make him elusive, but he lacks offensive might. However, as the corpses hanging from the third-floor crossbeams attest, Benabak is well prepared to defend his turf.

Bloodshed

Benabak's first line of defense is the instability of his crumbling tower. In desperate situations, Benabak turns to the tower's other inhabitants for defense. If the PCs attempt to rough up Benabak, he turns invisible and uses his dagger to cut the zombies loose from the crossbeams. It takes the devil one standard action to free a zombie. The zombies fall prone if they hit the ground. Benabak tries to use the two rotting corpses that hang from the crossbeams with the zombies to confuse the PCs. He invisibly moves the corpses' limbs and jaws to mimic a zombie's motion. Additionally, if combat erupts, the bats in the rafters swarm around intruders.

Brains

Benabak knows almost every betting game on Golarion, and he prides himself on his gaming acumen. He prefers games of skill to games of pure chance. When he first sits down at a gambling table, he wagers small trinkets, and asks the PCs for small stakes in return. After he allows the PCs to win a few games in a row, he begins to try his best to win. For these matches, he bets more valuable goods, such as gold, gems, or small magical

baubles. Unless the PCs have an exceptional item that the devil covets, the imp is likely to propose that the PCs do something damning or harmful as their stake. For instance, he might demand that a cleric insult her god, or a druid burn down a living tree.

While Benabak always abides by the results of his games, he stacks the deck in his favor. The imp's house rules do not prohibit the use of magic (like his infernal jinx or *seek thoughts*), and opponents are free to use their own magical abilities. Though the imp may tilt the game in his favor, he honors his losses.

The simplest way to run a gambling game against Benabak is as a series of skill checks. Benabak uses his Profession (gambler) skill, together with strategic use of his infernal jinx ability. A PC can oppose Benabak's Profession (gambler) check with Bluff, Profession (gambler), Sense Motive, or Sleight of Hand. Spells and clever tactics grant circumstance bonuses on these skill checks. For example, a PC could gain such a bonus on a gambling check by casting *hypnotism* to distract the imp. Alternatively, a character can succeed on a DC 15 Diplomacy check to flatter his ego or a DC 12 Intimidate check to demoralize him. For more information on running gambling games, see page 240 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.

If a Golarion-themed gambling game is preferable to a set of skill checks, the rules of golem and skiffs appear on pages 58–59 of *Pathfinder Adventure Path #13: Shadow in the Sky*, and the rules of illusionist and other harrow-based games appear on pages 12–13 of *Pathfinder Player Companion: The Harrow Handbook*.

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Book of the Damned

In all the multiverse, no text is more dangerous than the *Book of the Damned*. Not a single tome, but a divided collection of volumes, the *Book of the Damned* presents an unflinching, comprehensive catalog of reality's endless bounty of outrages. Upon its pages these evils are laid bare, presented with no hint of condemnation or exultation. The lore within the *Book of the Damned* is terrible, but it is true—and it's still being written.

Legend

The legend of the angel Tabris, who accepted Heaven's charge to create a complete accounting of all knowledge in existence, is a familiar tragedy among the Outer Planes. Tabris wandered through all existence, but vanished into evil realms. For eons he was presumed lost, but finally staggered, bare and bleeding, back to the shores of Heaven. Before the celestial choirs he presented three ragged, hand-penned tomes: the *Chronicle of the Righteous*, the *Concordance of Rivals*, and the *Book of the Damned*. These, he claimed, fulfilled his charge.

Tabris's peers marveled, but once they investigated the *Book of the Damned*, the wayward angel's homecoming became his trial. Heaven's highest court renounced Tabris and his masterwork, judging that the *Book of the Damned* was too dangerous to exist. It would be destroyed, and Tabris eternally barred from Heaven.

Yet the *Book of the Damned* never reached the Great Library's vault-kilns. Somehow, from the heart of Heaven itself, the tome vanished. For ages it was lost, but an epoch later, pages from the accursed volume began appearing among the ruins of worlds on the Material Plane. Quietly, servants of evil collected these scraps, and, over time, recollected the work into at least three volumes known by the essence of their profane contents: daemonic, demonic, and diabolic. Despite pursuit by agents both of purity and corruption, the *Book of the Damned* has evaded capture for any significant period. Gradually the folios have migrated across the Material Plane, and now the majority of the *Book of the Damned's* chapters gather upon a single, unsuspecting mortal world.

Artifact

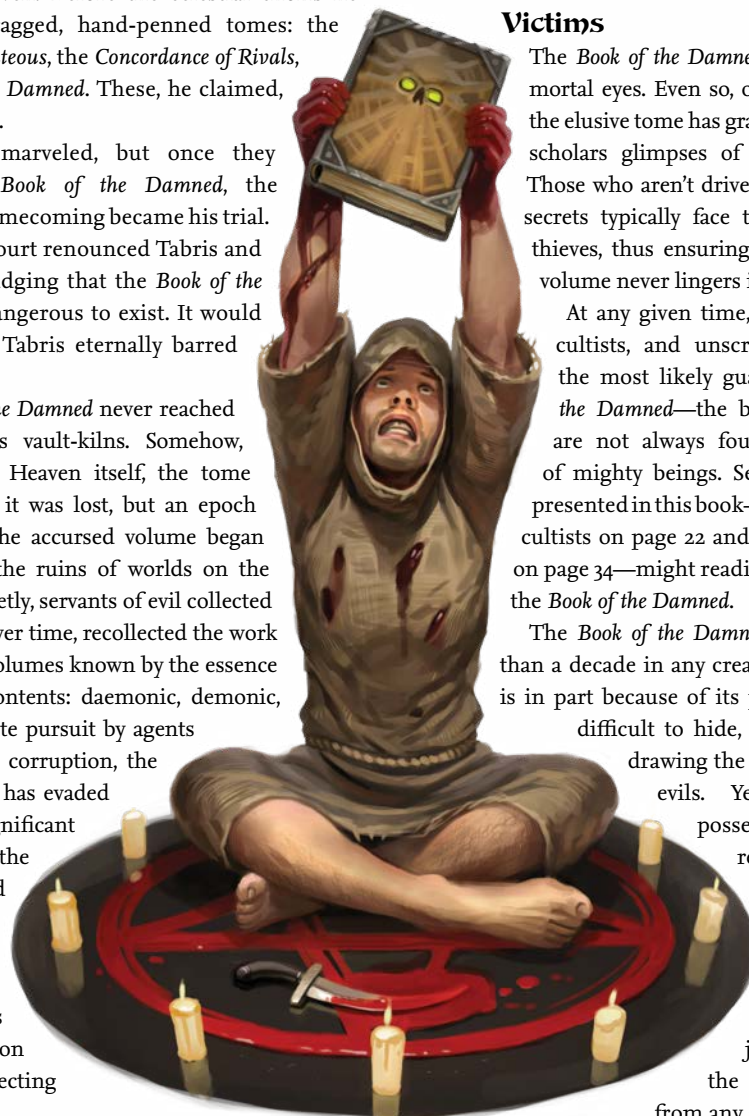
The *Book of the Damned* has thus far been defined as both three separated artifacts and a single united tome—for details, see the *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Book of the Damned* series and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Artifacts & Legends*. The complete tome grants access to a host of evil spells and knowledge of practically any evil topic, while attracting the attention of the planes' foulest inhabitants and damning the bearer's eternal soul. The book can be a source for any evil rite, knowledge, or secret the GM wishes—no matter how current. Yet these pages are mere windows into the *Book of the Damned's* true nature. Those who gather all of the book's pages hold the power to open the way to an endlessly expanding repository plane within the book—a nexus from which one can watch all the evils of eternity as they unfold (see *Beyond the Book* on page 17).

Victims

The *Book of the Damned* was never meant for mortal eyes. Even so, over ages of wandering, the elusive tome has granted countless reckless scholars glimpses of reality's deepest evils. Those who aren't driven to ruin by the book's secrets typically face the knives of covetous thieves, thus ensuring that the blasphemous volume never lingers in one place for long.

At any given time, ambitious fiends, evil cultists, and unscrupulous arcanists are the most likely guardians of the *Book of the Damned*—the book's disparate pieces are not always found in the possession of mighty beings. Several of the creatures presented in this book—such as the Asmodean cultists on page 22 and the handmaiden devil on page 34—might readily serve as guardians of the *Book of the Damned*.

The *Book of the Damned* rarely spends more than a decade in any creature's possession. This is in part because of its power, which makes it difficult to hide, and its propensity for drawing the scrutiny of extraplanar evils. Yet most who have possessed and lost the book refuse to let it go. Over the ages, the blood of a thousand cultists has spilled upon the tome, giving rise to a vicious haunt that jealously tries to tear the *Book of the Damned* from any single owner's grip.





SERVANTS OF THE BOOK

CR 10

XP 9,600

NE haunt (20-ft.-radius circle centered on the tome)

Caster Level 10th

Notice Perception DC 28 (to hear faint screams and sinister chanting)**hp** 20; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Effect This haunt activates at the whim of the multitude of spirits and foul impressions it comprises (at the GM's discretion). When it does, the creature with the highest Charisma within 20 feet of the *Book of the Damned* must attempt a DC 21 Charisma check. If the creature succeeds and is evil, there is no effect—the spirits surrounding the tome accept the newcomer's dominance. If the creature succeeds and is not evil, all creatures within 20 feet of the tome must succeed at a DC 21 Will saving throw or be affected as per the spell *nightmare*. If the creature attempting the Charisma check fails, all creatures within the area must save to resist the *nightmare* effect (as above) and the haunt uses the *telekinesis* spell either to harm a creature or to fling the *Book of the Damned* out of its possession. The intensity of the spirits that constitute this haunt makes the DCs to resist its effects higher than usual. The haunt cannot trigger while in the area of a *hallow* effect.

Destruction To end the haunt, the *Book of the Damned* must be destroyed.

Beyond the Book

Once per day, the bearer of the *Book of the Damned* can cause the tome to disappear into itself, leaving behind an ominous, rippling portal. This passage leads to a demiplane of near-infinite space that contains the countless records and confessions that make up the knowledge contained within the *Book of the Damned*. In effect, the artifact serves as a window into this realm, its pages being changeable glimpses into a sweeping range of profane topics. The plane itself appears as a vast miasma of mists and shadowy vapors, billowing endlessly as though moved by some gigantic lung. Within this expanse, layer upon layer of bone-white platforms move like the pieces of some fantastically complex, exploded clockwork device. Each island bears evenly spaced rows of dark crystal tablets that, upon being touched, unleash a series of images, writings, diagrams, voices, and illusory recreations pertaining to a single blasphemous topic. These tablets are library stacks of celestial design, any one of which is capable of holding vast stores of information. As every tablet has a topic, every platform has an organizational schema, though the systems can be difficult for mortal minds to comprehend.

At the center of the demiplane lies a chamber housing the largest crystalline tablet, and entombed within that lies a single signed parchment inscribed with a forgotten rune. Those who used the *Book of the Damned* to enter

the demiplane or who seek to leave find the tome here, manifested on a ledge carved into the tablet. A path leads from this room to the literal heart of the plane, the Unspeakable Word.

What some call the final page of the *Book of the Damned*, the Unspeakable Word is Tabris's ultimate crime made manifest, a diseased heart of titanic size bound in chains of eternal iron and burning runes. Through this profane organ, evil thoughts from across the multiverse are drawn into the demiplane and merge with the tablets throughout the expanse, adding an endless litany of evils to the *Book of the Damned*'s contents. The Unspeakable Word has hardness 20, 900 hit points, and DR 25/epic and good. Any creature that attacks the heart must succeed at a DC 30 Will saving throw or take 1d6 points of Wisdom drain and be panicked for 1d10 minutes. Additionally, the Unspeakable Word is not without protection. The Voice of the Damned (see page 20) manifests if the heart is damaged. If it witnesses a creature threatening the heart, it relentlessly attacks until the trespasser is neutralized. The Voice of the Damned is slain if the Unspeakable Word is destroyed.

Even if the Unspeakable Word is destroyed, it remains so only for a time. One year after its destruction, it reappears and begins processing the backlog of sins it left unrecorded—a process that takes 1d4 months. This is perhaps the only way for the *Book of the Damned* to fail to chronicle an evil deed—and even then, the reprieve is only temporary. The Unspeakable Word's restoration also brings the Voice of the Damned back into being.

Beyond these elements, the demiplane has the following planar features (as described on pages 184–188 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*).

- Subjective directional gravity.
- Strongly evil-aligned.
- **Enhanced Magic:** Spells and spell-like abilities with the evil descriptor are enhanced.
- **Impeded Magic:** Spells and spell-like abilities with the good descriptor are impeded.
- **Nightmares:** Any nonevil creature that attempts to rest within the demiplane must succeed at a DC 30 Will save or be affected by the spell *nightmare*.
- **Nondetection:** Creatures within the demiplane are shielded from all forms of magical detection, even by divine sources.
- **Unholy Manifestation:** The evil essences within the demiplane occasionally condense into exaggerated manifestations of evil creatures (particularly fiends). These beings usually exist for only 1d10 hours, but during that time they function exactly as true versions of the creatures they imitate, save that upon being defeated, such creatures dissolve into noxious vapor. Visitors to the demiplane have at least a 10% chance of encountering such a manifestation in any 24-hour period.

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Research within the Book

Those who enter the demiplane within the *Book of the Damned* can use the tablets arrayed throughout to research any evil topic. The sheer volume of information and the galaxy-like complexity of its organization make doing so a challenge. As such, research in the *Book of the Damned* is performed as it might be within a massive library. To simulate this, use the following system (derived from that presented in *Pathfinder Adventure Path #81: Shifting Sands*).

The interior contents of the *Book of the Damned* have two statistics: a Complexity rating (the intricacy of its organization) and its knowledge points (abbreviated kp, knowledge points represent the sum of its information). To research inside the *Book of the Damned*, a character must use one of the skills listed in the Research Check entry below. The collection's Complexity rating serves as the DC for research-related skill checks. A PC can attempt one Research check for each uninterrupted 12-hour period of research. Characters cannot take 10 or 20 on Research checks, but such checks can be made untrained due to the collection's organization. Each 12-hour period of research grants a cumulative +1 bonus on Research checks. Up to two characters can use the aid another action to assist a researcher.

Succeeding at a Research check reduces the collection's knowledge points, similar to dealing damage to a creature's hit points. As the knowledge points decrease, the collection reveals its secrets. The PCs learn information when the collection's knowledge points reach various trigger points. By how much a successful check decreases the collection's knowledge points depends on the researching character's class. A character with the ability to attempt any Knowledge check untrained (such as a bard, loremaster, or skald) reduces the collection's knowledge points by $1d12 +$ the character's Intelligence modifier. Particularly scholastic characters (alchemists, arcanists, investigators, wizards, and so forth, at the GM's discretion) reduce the collection's knowledge points by $1d8 +$ the character's Intelligence modifier. All others reduce the collection's knowledge points by $1d4 +$ the character's Intelligence modifier. For every 5 by which a Research check exceeds the library's Complexity rating, the collection's knowledge points are reduced by 1 additional point. Rolling a 20 on a Research check acts like a critical threat. If the researcher confirms the critical hit by succeeding at a second Research check with all the same modifiers, the resulting knowledge point reduction is doubled. Conversely, rolling a natural 1 on a Research check results in failure and the collection's knowledge points increase by $1d8$.

Because of the vast and ever-expanding nature of the *Book of the Damned*, it is impossible for a mortal to ever learn all the secrets within. As such, research within the *Book of the Damned* is defined by what the PCs seek to discover. A PC must define what she's looking for before she begins her research. The GM must then determine at

which of the trigger points noted below that information might be categorized. Once the PC reduces the collection's knowledge points to the predetermined amount, she gains the knowledge she's seeking. If the PC then begins researching another topic, the collection's knowledge points return to full and the PC loses any bonuses she gained for repeatedly attempting Research checks. In effect, she is treated as though she were researching in an entirely new library.

XP Award: Successfully reducing a collection in the *Book of the Damned* to 1 kp grants the PCs the XP award listed below. A given character can gain this experience only once, no matter how many times he uses the book for research.

THE BOOK OF THE DAMNED

CR 20

XP 307,200

Complexity 40

Research Check Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), Knowledge (planes), Knowledge (religion) (or any other Knowledge check pertinent to a specific topic being researched)

kp 100

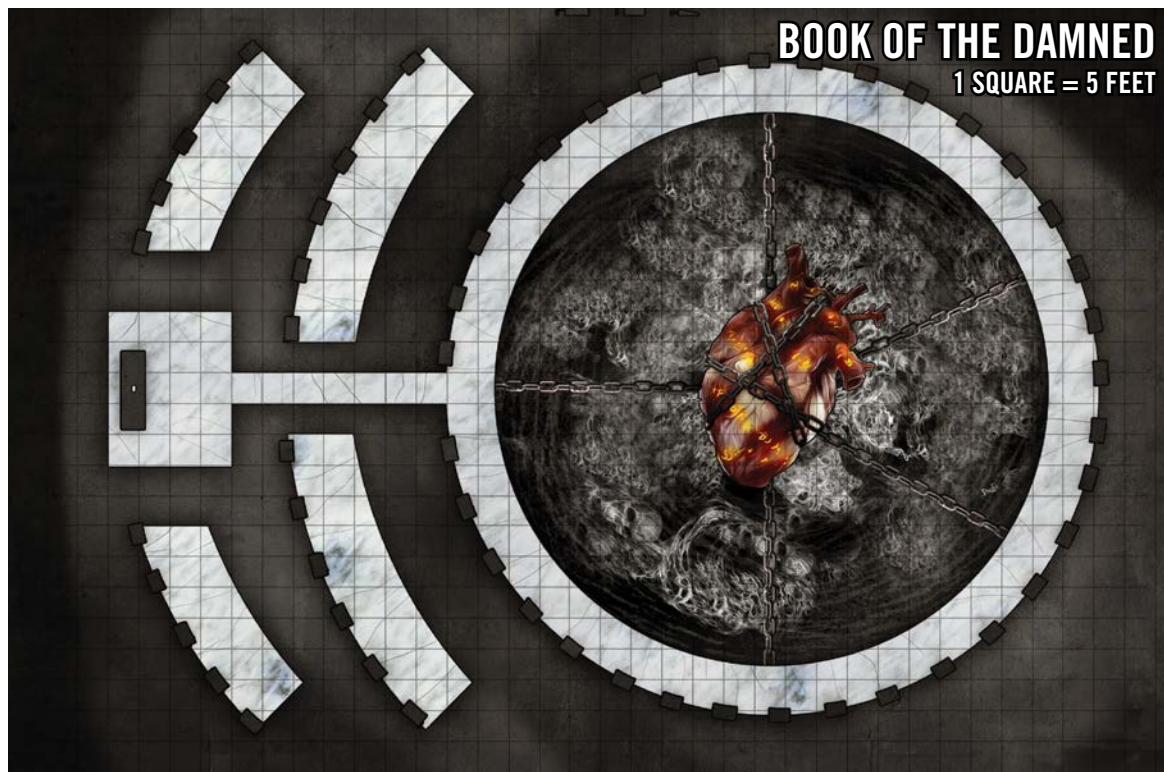
The information below can be learned from the *Book of the Damned* at the specified kp trigger points, along with any other blasphemous secret the GM wishes to include.

Every revelation discovered within the *Book of the Damned* has the potential to harm, corrupt, or unhinge the researcher. The DCs to resist these effects are defined relative to the researcher, and are equal to $10 +$ the number of 12-hour periods the researcher has been investigating the particular topic + the researcher's Intelligence modifier. The effects associated with these discoveries affect even creatures normally immune to mind-affecting effects. All information obtained and effects incurred as a researcher reduces the collection's knowledge points are cumulative.

kp 90: Detailed historical accounts of famous villains and atrocities from the researcher's world, enough information to copy any spell of 1st through 3rd level into a spellbook. The researcher begins to feel as though she's being watched. She must succeed at a Will saving throw or be compelled to insult, scream at, or otherwise nonviolently abuse an ally, as though affected by the spell *command*.

kp 80: Truths and conspiracies behind infamous events from the researcher's world, details on common species of evil mortal creatures, enough information to copy any spell of 4th or 5th level into a spellbook. The researcher's mind begins to feel heavy, as though something alien has taken root in her mind. She must succeed at a Will saving throw or spontaneously take $1d4$ points of bleed damage.

kp 70: Details of ancient dooms and the villains of other worlds, ecologies of rare species of evil mortal creatures, enough information to copy any spell of 6th or



7th level into a spellbook. The researcher's mind begins to feel thick with sludge. She must succeed at a Will saving throw or take 1d4 points of Intelligence damage.

kp 60: Cryptic reports of primeval foulness and secret histories from the researcher's world, corruptive mysteries from other planets, studies into the natures and binding of fiends, revelations on cosmic horrors, enough information to copy any spell of 8th level into a spellbook. The researcher begins to make blasphemous subconscious connections, giving rise to foul imaginings. She must succeed at a Will saving throw or her alignment permanently shifts one step toward evil.

kp 50: Overviews of evil-aligned planes and their inhabitants, revelations on the natures and binding rituals of powerful varieties of fiends, the location of portals to evil-aligned planes, truths regarding unfathomable inhabitants of the Material Plane, enough information to copy any spell of 9th level into a spellbook. Some note sparks a dark fascination unrelated to the researcher's investigation. She must succeed at a Will saving throw or be affected by the spell *geas/quest* to research another more difficult topic in the *Book of the Damned* at a later point.

kp 40: Details on specific sites of great evil throughout the planes, biographies of extraplanar villains, notes on how to destroy good-aligned artifacts, revelations on lichdom. The researcher's imagination is tainted further. She must succeed at a Will saving throw or her alignment permanently shifts one step toward evil.

kp 30: Maps to sites of evil power across the planes, secrets of non-deity fiends (including true names), notes on how to destroy any artifact, the deepest secrets of mortal evils, rituals of incomparable profanity. The researcher opens herself to the spirits drawn to the *Book of the Damned*. She must succeed at a Will saving throw or be affected as if a ghost had used its malevolence ability on her. This spirit departs if it is driven out—it usually does not attack as a ghost.

kp 20: The secret biographies of evil demigods, the dwellings and agendas of Great Old Ones, the location of any evil artifact, accounts of sins valuable to specific planar rulers. The researcher gradually ceases to believe in the distinction between good and evil. She must succeed at a Will saving throw or her alignment permanently shifts one step toward evil.

kp 10: Secrets the gods don't wish mortals to know—divine failures, specifics of the rebellion in Heaven and the wars against the titans, the fate of dead deities. Just before the PC gains this knowledge, the Voice of the Damned (see page 20) appears and demands that the character leave forever. If she refuses, the entity attacks.

kp 1: The darkest truths of reality. Any researcher of less than deity-level power must succeed at a Will saving throw or be permanently affected as per the spell *insanity*. This condition can be removed only if the character loses her memory of whatever truth she's discovered. If the character shares this secret, no one truly believes her. If she somehow presents irrefutable proof, those exposed to this knowledge risk insanity as well.

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Keeper of the Book

No physical tome, no matter how magical, could ever hope to contain every facet of the multiverse's endless capacity for evil. Even if it could, the moment of the work's completion would also be the moment it became outdated. Realizing this, Tabris employed an audacious solution. He sacrificed a vestige of himself into the library-cathedrals hidden within each of his masterworks. These shades of Heaven's scribe were the embodiments of all he had learned of chaos, evil, good, and law, and so were perfectly suited to judge and record new developments across the planes. Thus, Heaven's wanderer ensured that his works would remain ever relevant and ever complete.



Yet this act, while perfectly fulfilling Tabris's charge to record all there is to know in the multiverse, also ensured the angel's eternal exile from Heaven. The celestial choirs simply could not accept their brother's decision to corrupt a piece of himself into an entity they dubbed the Voice of the Damned, which serves as the *Book of the Damned's* hidden caretaker and the intelligence that sorts the information collected by the Unspeakable Word. When the *Book of the Damned* vanished from Heaven's Great Library, many took that as proof that the Voice might be even more dangerous and obsessed with Tabris's charge than they'd already imagined. And in the eon since, the Voice's knowledge, obsession, and power have only grown.

The Voice of the Damned is a unique entity bound to the *Book of the Damned's* hidden demiplane repository. It can never bodily leave that demiplane (except through its malevolence ability), and it always knows the location of every piece of the *Book of the Damned*. It seeks to guard the book, its repository, and the Unspeakable Word at the demiplane's center. As long as the Unspeakable Word is active, the Voice of the Damned cannot be slain for long, resurrecting 24 hours later. It can permanently be killed only if the *Book of the Damned* itself is destroyed.

Voice of the Damned

Blasphemous pages cloak this creature's gaunt winged form. Within its depthless hood burns a vortex of otherworldly flame.

VOICE OF THE DAMNED

CR 25

XP 1,638,400

NE Large outsider (evil, native)

Init +16; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*, see in darkness, *true seeing*; Perception +44

Aura frightful presence (100 ft., DC 32), *unholy aura* (DC 26)

DEFENSE

AC 43, touch 35, flat-footed 31 (+12 Dex, +8 natural, +14 profane, -1 size)

hp 565 (29d10+406); regeneration 25 (deific or mythic)

Fort +23, **Ref** +28, **Will** +28

Defensive Abilities *freedom of movement*; **DR** 20/epic, good, and silver; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, charm effects, compulsion effects, cold, death effects, disease, energy drain, mind-affecting effects, petrification, poison, sonic; **Resist** acid 25, electricity 25, fire 25; **SR** 36

OFFENSE

Speed 60 ft., fly 180 ft. (perfect)

Melee 2 claws +42 (1d6+14), 4 slams +42 (1d6+14/19-20), 2 wings +40 (1d8+7) or swarm (8d6 plus distraction)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks blasphemous embrace, consume, malevolence, wracking gaze

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 25th; concentration +33)

Constant—*detect good*, *dimension door*, *freedom of movement*, *true seeing*, *unholy aura* (DC 26)



At will—*blasphemy*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater shadow evocation*, *greater teleport*, *legend lore*, *mirage arcana*, *persistent image*, *shapechange*, *symbol of fear* (DC 24), *telekinesis*, *unholy blight*
 3/day—*mislead*, *symbol of insanity* (DC 26), *symbol of weakness* (DC 25)
 1/day—quicken *symbol of death* (DC 26), summon (level 9, 1 balor, 1 olethrodaemon⁸², or 1 pit fiend 100%), *weird* (DC 27)

STATISTICS

Str 38, **Dex** 35, **Con** 38, **Int** 35, **Wis** 34, **Cha** 27

Base Atk +29; **CMB** +44 (+52 grapple, +48 trip); **CMD** 84 (86 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Flyby Attack, Greater Trip, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Critical (slams), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Vital Strike, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*symbol of death*), Staggering Critical, Vital Strike

Skills Acrobatics +41 (+53 when jumping), Bluff +40, Diplomacy +40, Disguise +37, Fly +50, Intimidate +40, Knowledge (arcana) +44, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +41, Knowledge (history) +41, Knowledge (local) +41, Knowledge (nobility) +41, Knowledge (planes) +44, Knowledge (religion) +41, Perception +44, Sense Motive +44, Spellcraft +44, Stealth +40, Use Magic Device +37

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 300 ft.; *tongues*

SQ discorporate, master of symbols, tenacious

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Blasphemous Embrace (Ex) If the Voice of the Damned grapples a foe, it can, as a swift action, cause its blasphemy-stained pages to flense the grappled creature. The pages deal the Voice of the Damned's swarm damage. If a creature takes damage from the pages, it is also subject to the swarm's distraction ability, and must succeed at a DC 38 Fortitude saving throw or be nauseated for 1 round. The Voice of the Damned can have only one embraced target at a time, but it doesn't have to continue grappling in order to maintain the embrace. If the Voice of the Damned moves more than 5 feet from the pages or dismisses them (a free action), the pages are rendered inanimate. Any area attack that would damage a swarm or any severe or stronger wind effect ends the blasphemous embrace.

Consume (Su) If the Voice of the Damned begins its turn with an opponent in its blasphemous embrace, it can attempt a new combat maneuver check, as though attempting to pin the opponent. If it succeeds, its foe takes swarm damage and vanishes into a nightmare realm of slashing pages and murderous blasphemies within the Voice of the Damned. The target must be of Large size or smaller. The Voice of the Damned can't consume a creature that has the good subtype or that is affected by *holy aura*.

A consumed creature takes 8d6 points of damage each round as it drifts within the Voice of the Damned's accumulated heresies. Nonevil creatures must each also

succeed at DC 32 Will saving throws each round or be affected as per the spell *insanity*. The Voice of the Damned can expel any consumed creature as a move action, causing it to appear in any square adjacent to it. Any creature that is deafened or affected by *silence* or a similar effect is immune to the *insanity* effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Each round on its turn, a consumed creature can attempt a DC 20 Wisdom check as a full-round action. If the subject succeeds at this check on two consecutive turns, it escapes, emerging into a space adjacent to the Voice of the Damned. The Voice of the Damned cannot attempt to consume an escaped creature again until 24 hours have passed. A consumed creature can also escape by using *plane shift* or similar magic. The Voice of the Damned is stunned for 1 round and forced to expel all consumed creatures if a creature inside casts *holy aura* or summons a creature with the good subtype, or if a creature (either inside or out) targets it with *atonement*, *freedom*, or *holy word*.

Discorporate (Su) The Voice of the Damned can collapse into a cyclone of whirling pages as a free action. All held, worn, and carried items fall to the ground, and its Strength score drops to 1. The Voice of the Damned functions as a swarm of Diminutive creatures while discorporated, with a reach of 0 feet (its space remains unchanged). While discorporated, the Voice of the Damned maintains its defensive abilities. It loses its claw, slam, and wing natural attacks, but can make a swarm attack and use its spell-like abilities. The Voice of the Damned can reform into its true form as a full-round action as long as it has at least 1 hit point.

Malevolence (Su) As an immediate action, the Voice of the Damned can attempt to merge its body with a creature it has consumed. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 25th), except that it does not require a receptacle. The target can resist the attack with a successful DC 32 Will saving throw. If the creature fails, the Voice of the Damned vanishes and the possessed creature reappears in its space (along with any other creatures the Voice of the Damned had consumed). A creature that successfully saves is immune to the Voice of the Damned's malevolence for 24 hours. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Master of Symbols (Su) The Voice of the Damned can speak, read, and write all languages, as per the spell *tongues*. It casts any spell with the word "symbol" in its name as though its casting time were a standard action. Additionally, it does not need a surface on which to inscribe symbols—they merely float in the air for their duration.

Tenacious (Ex) The Voice of the Damned gains a +8 racial bonus on combat maneuver checks to grapple and a +4 racial bonus to its CMD.

Wracking Gaze (Su) The Voice of the Damned has a gaze attack with a range of 50 feet that deals 8d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Strength damage. A successful DC 32 Fortitude saving throw negates the Strength damage but not the physical damage.

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Cult of Lies

For nearly six centuries, the Inner Sea nation of Galt was a productive province of Cheliah. However, in 4640 AR, the ascendency of Queen Abrogail of House Thrune to the Chelish throne was the catalyst for a period of tumult.

This period of Thrune rule in Galt was a major boon for diabolical cults in the region. Unfortunately for the devil worshipers, Galt was a center for the arts and philosophy, and its wellspring of unconventional ideas clashed sharply with the harsh order and cruel justice of Thrune rule. Soon, Galtan discontent graduated into a full-blown revolution. The Chelish government eventually lost political control of Galt, where a series of bloody revolutions began. To survive, diabolists had to conceal their allegiances and act with subtlety—the mere

accusation of harboring Chelish sympathies could be a death sentence. Some of these individuals perished to Galt's famous guillotines, the *final blades*. Many fled the country, but a few believed that it was their sacred duty to impose infernal order in place of the chaos engulfing Galt. A powerful young priestess of Asmodeus named Zoudra ordered her subordinates to build a temple of Asmodeus deep in the western reaches of the mist-shrouded Fog Peaks. There, far from cities and the government's notice, she could gather followers and bring forth devils to enact her god's dark will in Galt.

Zoudra has performed a variety of tasks in service to Asmodeus in Galt since the days of the first revolution. Her most recent goal is her most ambitious yet—it requires stealing one of the *final blades* and performing a ritual fueled by the souls within. She has been gradually calling devils to the Material Plane to assist in the task. Every successful infernal ceremony empowers the cult with more infernal knowledge, devil servitors, and planar influence. As the cult grows more powerful, it also becomes more conspicuous, but so far, its activities have gone unchecked.

This encounter could easily be used to represent a cult of Asmodeus anywhere on Golarion. To make this substitution, replace the list of blackmail targets found in the altar's secret compartment with a list of names for another nefarious purpose. This encounter is also suitable for a cult of any of the archdevils, with the minor change of swapping out Lucorian's domains to match those of the alternative deity. A full description of how to modify this encounter to substantially decrease or increase its difficulty appears on page 25.

The Ritual

The PCs arrive at the Temple of Asmodeus just as the cult is finishing a pair of its most ambitious summoning rituals to date. In the first and more conspicuous of these rituals, a priest and four acolytes stand inside the points of a flaming pentagram, chanting prayers to Asmodeus. If the cultists are not disrupted, they complete their summoning ritual at initiative rank 10 on the 6th round after the PCs enter the temple. For each cultist the PCs knock unconscious, incapacitate, or kill, the ritual takes 1 additional round to complete. If the PCs incapacitate all of the cultists, the ritual fails. If the ritual succeeds, a pair of bearded devils appears in the center of the flaming glyph. While the cultists would love to destroy the PCs, their main goal is to stall the heroes long enough for Zoudra to complete a more significant summoning ritual. If the PCs do not disrupt the high priestess' spell, she finishes casting *planar binding* 10 rounds after the PCs enter the temple, and summons a barbed devil.





Zoudra, High Priestess of Asmodeus

This ageless, commanding woman's ruby eyes burn with a singular focus.

ZOUDRA

CR 12

XP 19,200

Female venerable human conjurer 13

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13 (+2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)

hp 100 (13d6+52)

Fort +10, **Ref** +8, **Will** +13

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk dagger +6/+1 (1d4-1/19-20)

Ranged mwk dagger +9 (1d4-1/19-20)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +20)

At will—dimensional steps (390 feet/day)

8/day—acid dart (1d6+6 acid)

Conjurer Spells Prepared (CL 13th; concentration +20)

7th—quicken *dispel magic*, quicken *haste*, *summon monster VII*

6th—quicken *acid arrow*, *planar binding* (DC 25), quicken *resist energy*, *summon monster VI*

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 24), *lesser planar binding* (DC 24), quicken *shield*, *summon monster V*, *teleport*

4th—*acid pit*^{APG} (DC 23), *confusion* (DC 21), *black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *stoneskin*, *summon monster IV*

3rd—*ablative barrier*^{UC}, *dispel magic*, *fireball* (DC 20), *fly*, *spiked pit*^{APG} (DC 22), *summon monster III* (2)

2nd—*false life*, *glitterdust* (DC 21), *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *summon swarm*, *web* (DC 21)

1st—*cause fear* (DC 18), *charm person* (DC 18), *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *summon monster I*

0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*

Opposition Schools divination, illusion

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 24, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 20

Feats Augment Summoning, Combat Casting, Craft

Wondrous Item, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (conjunction), Iron Will, Quickened Spell, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (conjunction), Toughness

Skills Bluff +18, Diplomacy +18, Fly +11, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana, planes, religion) +23, Knowledge (dungeoneering, engineering, geography, history, local, nature, nobility) +11, Perception +14, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +23

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Ignan, Infernal

SQ arcane bond (*staff of fire*), infernal pact, summoner's charm (6 rounds)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of invisibility*, *potion of fly*, *staff of fire*; **Other Gear** mwk dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *circlet of persuasion*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, *ring of protection* +2, spellbook (contains all 0-level spells, all prepared spells, and 14 spells of up to 7th level of the GM's choice), small rubies worth a total of 100 gp

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Infernal Pact (Ex) Zoudra sold her soul to Asmodeus for eternal youth. She gains the mental ability score bonuses from her age but takes none of the physical ability score penalties, and she cannot die from old age.

Zoudra was born in 4619 AR in Galt to the nobleman Alixanis and the wizard Vivenia. Zoudra's mother possessed a burning thirst for knowledge—an obsession that at times led her down dark paths. Eventually, Alixanis grew suspicious of his wife's frequent disappearances, and followed her one night as she slipped off. As he looked on in horror, she summoned a devil to trade some of its knowledge for information she acquired from infernal tomes. The following morning, he confronted her and demanded that she never return to their villa.

A few weeks later, Vivenia discovered that she was pregnant and resolved to halt her infernal dealings forever. However, the tempting whispers and hints that she had gleaned from her infernal dealings only echoed louder in her mind as the years passed. When Zoudra was old enough, Vivenia sent her to a boarding school and launched into her research with renewed vigor. One of Vivenia's infernal contacts learned about Zoudra, and tasked the imp Kurubex with corrupting the girl. Kurubex appeared to the girl in the guise of an intelligent raven and befriended her. The imp took advantage of young Zoudra's fierce admiration for her mother, and tutored her in magic and infernal matters. By the time Zoudra deduced the imp's true nature, she felt more than capable of handling his influence.

Eventually, Zoudra grew confident enough in her discoveries to present them to her mother. Vivenia's attempts to dissuade her daughter from dealing with Hell fell on deaf ears, and she eventually came to work by Zoudra's side, sharing her own knowledge of precautions.

When House Thrune came to power in Chelias, Zoudra and her mother began conducting their research in the open. During this time, Zoudra joined Asmodeus' church, and became a devout follower. When revolution came to Galt, many people accused of the crime of Chelish sympathies lost their heads. In this purge, Zoudra lost many people who were dear to her, including her mother. She resolved to restore order to Galt and bring Asmodeus' justice to the revolutionaries. As the years wore on, she feared that she would die before she succeeded at her mission. To forestall her descent to Hell, she formally sold her soul to Asmodeus in return for eternal youth.

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Temple of Asmodeus

The temple of Asmodeus is carved into a cave in the side of a volcano, deep in the Fog Peaks. The volcano is covered in porous flows of long-cooled basalt, and its summit still smolders with pools of lava. The temple consists of several interconnected platforms, each of which sits under a cavernous ceiling that soars to a height of 50 feet.

1. Vestibule

At the top of the stairs is a wide basalt platform, flanked by grotesque statues of roaring bearded devils. The PCs can discover true names of these devils amidst the infernal tomes hidden in the cult's secret stash in area 3.

As soon as the PCs reach the lowest platform, a cleric of Asmodeus and his two cerberi companions confront them. The cerberi attack the PCs immediately, attempting to deal as much damage as possible. The Asmodean cleric hides behind his *fire shield* and *blade barrier* and uses damaging area-of-effect spells to harry the PCs.

LUCORIAN CR 10

XP 9,600

Fire cleric (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 52)

hp 75

CERBERI (2) CR 6

XP 2,400 each

hp 76 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 51)

2. Flaming Glyph

The middle platform lies 10 feet above the vestibule. An intricate flaming glyph of Asmodeus' unholy symbol covers the platform. Five robed priests chant in unison as they loom over sacrificial victims. Most of the sacrifices are charred into smoldering lumps, though a few still cry feebly for deliverance. If anyone who does not worship Asmodeus attempts to cross the low circle of flames surrounding the pentagram, the hellfire barrier manifestation activates, as described below. The rules for manifestations appear on page 6.

ASMODEAN ACOLYTES (4) CR 3

XP 800 each

LE investigator wizard (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 179)

hp 22 each

KORISTA CR 8

XP 4,800

LE cultist (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 249)

hp 45

BEARDED DEVILS (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 57 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 73)

HELLFIRE BARRIER CR 9

XP 6,400

LE persistent manifestation of Asmodeus (15-ft. radius surrounding a pentagram)

Caster Level 9th

Notice Perception DC 20 (to feel the temperature of the room rising slightly, and smell a whiff of sulfur)

hp 40; **Trigger** proximity; **Reset** 1 day

Invocation Stand at one of the five points of a pentagram and sacrifice a sentient creature to Asmodeus, while four other individuals perform a similar sacrifice.

Effect A wall of hellfire bursts forth from the circle to the ceiling above. For one round, the circle repels any creature that does not worship Asmodeus as per the *repulsion* spell (Will DC 19 negates). The wall of hellfire acts as a *wall of fire* pointing outward, except that half of its damage is fire, and half of its damage results directly from divine power and cannot be reduced. The wall incinerates any projectiles that pass through it.

Destruction A *hallow* spell must be cast upon the pentagram while a creature with a good aura stands at each of the five points.

3. Zoudra's Altar

The final tier of the Temple of Asmodeus is a round platform that rises 10 feet above the flaming glyph (area 2). Pools of bubbling lava flank the circular terrace. If Zoudra successfully summons the barbed devil, it fights strategically, attempting to push the PCs off the platform into the lava below. Any creature pushed into a pool is immersed in lava and takes 20d6 points of fire damage per round. The lava continues to deal 10d6 points of fire damage for 1d3 rounds after exposure ceases.

BARBED DEVIL CR 11

XP 12,800

hp 138 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 72)

ZOUDRA CR 12

XP 12,900

hp 115 (see page 23)

The cultists hid their most precious documents beneath the brazier on Zoudra's platform. The magic trap placed on the cache triggers if any PC attempts to move the brazier.

DEADLY SHOVE CR 11

Type magic; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 30

EFFECTS

Trigger proximity (*alarm*); **Reset** none

Effect A *forceful hand* appears and attempts to push creatures into the nearby pools of lava. The hand targets the smallest creature on the platform with a bull rush attempt each round (CMB +21). The hand has AC 20 and 180 hp, and it lasts for 11 rounds.



TEMPLE OF ASMODEUS

1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



The compartment under the brazier contains a set of *shackles of compliance* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 274) and several handwritten tomes detailing the cult's activities. A sheet of paper wedged in one of these tomes contains a list of names—the identities of several Gray Gardeners that Zoudra has been attempting to blackmail to gain possession of a *final blade*. The PCs can use the tomes to learn the true names of the bearded devils whose statues adorn the vestibule (area 1). Further information on true names appears on pages 42–43 of *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Princes of Darkness, Book of the Damned, Vol. 1*.

Level Adjustment

Make the following adjustments to accommodate lower- or higher-level parties.

APL 6: To lower the difficulty of the encounters, replace the pair of cerberi in the vestibule (area 1) with a pair of hell hounds (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 173). Next, change Lucorian to a bloodfire sorcerer (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 164). Change the statues in the vestibule from bearded devils to imps.

Replace the cultists on the flaming glyph platform (area 2) with a heretic (*NPC Codex* 247) and four initiates (*NPC Codex* 245) attempting to summon an accuser devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 84). Remove the *repulsion* effect from the manifestation.

For the encounter on Zoudra's altar (area 3), replace Zoudra with a conjurist (*Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide* 279), who is using *lesser planar binding* to call a bearded devil (*Bestiary* 73). Finally, change the trap under

the brazier to a *flame strike* trap (*Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook* 421), and replace the lava with a continually burning flame that deals 5d6 points of fire damage per round to anyone standing within it.

APL 16: To raise the difficulty of the encounters, replace the pair of cerberi in the vestibule (area 1) with a trio of barbed devils (*Bestiary* 72). Change Lucorian to a death master (*NPC Codex* 230), replacing his Death domain with the Fire domain. Also, change the statues in the vestibule from barbed devils to ice devils.

On the flaming glyph platform (area 2), change Korista to a diabolical charmer (*NPC Codex* 172) and the four Asmodean acolytes to nine cultists (*NPC Codex* 243). The ritual in area 2 summons a pair of ice devils (*Bestiary* 77). Unless the PCs defeat five of the participants in the ritual, the ritual is unaffected. If the PCs defeat five of the participants, the ritual can summon only one ice devil. For each cultist beyond five that the PCs defeat, the ritual takes longer to complete, as described on page 23.

For the encounter on Zoudra's altar (area 3), change Zoudra to an ancient underworld dragon (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 103) with the devilbound template (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 56). Zoudra is bound to an immolation devil (*Bestiary* 2 87) that she is currently summoning. Her ritual is essentially complete; the immolation devil appears 10 rounds after the PCs enter the temple if they do not kill Zoudra. Replace the deadly shove trap with an empowered *disintegrate* trap (*Core Rulebook* 422). Replace the set of *shackles of compliance* in the secret compartment with a set of *shackles of durance vile* (*Ultimate Equipment* 274).

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Darukarex

On the southeastern edges of the River Kingdoms, in a sparsely populated wood, lies the abandoned town of Nystra. Slightly over a century ago, Count Nys, a greedy and ambitious silk merchant from Galt, learned of a strange creature native to the region that he believed would be his key to fame and fortune—the silk gargoyle. Silk gargoyles resemble gargoyles with insectile faces and wings. They grow from eggs to human-sized caterpillars, then undergo a metamorphosis into adult silk gargoyles within massive cocoons of high-quality silk. Count Nys and a group of business partners hired an army of mercenaries to enslave and subjugate these creatures, turning them into a source of profit. The army quickly succeeded at its task, and in a few short years, the town of Nystra grew into one of the most prominent silk producers in Avistan.

While the town possessed great wealth, this bounty was concentrated in the hands of the silk merchants, who enjoyed substantial authority. Several of these merchants took advantage of this power to play cruel tricks on the townsfolk. The druid Tharl Grimull led

a relatively peaceful life in Nystra, tending to the silk gargoyle larvae, until one of these callous pranks claimed the lives of his entire family in 4664 AR. The desperate and grief-stricken druid wandered the forest around Nystra for weeks. As if summoned by desperation itself, a contract devil named Darukarex appeared in a puff of smoke and filled Grimull's mind with promises of power and vengeance, at a cost that was the furthest thing from the druid's clouded mind. The devil granted Grimull the ability to augment his natural allies with infernal magic. So armed, the druid created a twisted amalgam of yellow musk creeper and violet fungus—the violet musk creeper. This virulent new flora grew to the size of a house, and when the time was right, it released a cloud of pollen that drew the entire town to its side. The plant consumed the majority of the enchanted townsfolk, and the remainder fled into the forest in terror. Once the town was emptied, Grimull despaired at his victory. The guilt of ending innocent lives in his pursuit of vengeance drove him mad. His own creations consumed him, and his soul was forfeit to the cunning Darukarex. In the subsequent decades, the druid's handiwork evolved. Intelligent plants guard against intrusions, and only the silk gargoyles may come and go in peace. The greatest of these plants is the violet musk creeper itself, which now draws sentience from pieces of Grimull's tormented spirit.

As a condition of the damned druid's contract, Darukarex was bound to return once annually to the ruins of Nystra for the next 50 years. Grimull mistakenly thought he would outlive his coup, and he brokered the devil's periodic return in the hopes that he could one day renegotiate the terms of his contract. At midnight on each vernal equinox, Darukarex appears at the outskirts of town in Nystra's abandoned graveyard.

For the first few decades, the devil's annual visits were perfunctory. Over the years, word of his scheduled appearance began to spread through the region—first as legend, and later as occult wisdom. Now, desperate folk from as far away as northern Galt pilgrimage to Nystra each muddy spring, in the hopes of striking a dark deal of their own. Many fall prey to the wild beasts and carnivorous plants that prowl the surrounding woods. The few that complete the journey thron to the grave of Count Nys, hoping to negotiate an infernal contract with Darukarex. Although the devil is no longer obligated to return to Nystra, he plans to return each year until desperate people stop flocking to meet him.





Darukarex

Clusters of black spines covered in swirling reams of Infernal writings emerge from the back of this muscular red devil.

DARUKAREX

CR 11

XP 12,800

Male variant contract devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 76)

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness;

Perception +24

DEFENSE

AC 26, touch 18, flat-footed 18 (+7 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 147 (14d10+70)

Fort +9, **Ref** +16, **Will** +16

DR 10/good; **Immune** fire, mind-affecting effects, poison;

Resist acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 22

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee binding contract (whip) +22/+17/+12 (1d4+8/×3 plus grab), gore +13 (2d6+2)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with binding contract)

Special Attacks binding contract, impale (2d8+6)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +21)

Constant—*tongues*

At will—*arcane mark*, *charm person* (DC 18), *detect thoughts* (DC 20), *dimension door*, *erase*, *honeyed tongue*^{APG}, *illusory script* (DC 20), *lesser geas*, *major image* (DC 20), *sending*

3/day—*analyze dweomer* (DC 23), *arcane eye*, *break enchantment*, *charm monster* (DC 21), *fly*, *greater command* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *hold monster* (DC 21), *mage's private sanctum*, *mass cacophonous call*^{APG} (DC 22), *scorching ray*, *true seeing*, *vision*

1/day—*contact other plane*, *dismissal* (DC 22), *geas/quest*, *plane shift* (DC 24), *spell turning*, *summon* (level 5, 1d4 erinyes 50%), *symbol of pain* (DC 22)

STATISTICS

Str 18, **Dex** 25, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +18 (+20 disarm, +20 trip); **CMD** 36 (38 vs. disarm, 38 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Mobility, Persuasive

Skills Bluff +27, Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Knowledge (planes) +22, Knowledge (religion) +13, Linguistics +23, Perception +24, Profession (scribe) +21, Sense Motive +24, Sleight of Hand +24, Spellcraft +23

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Halfling, Ignan, Infernal, Orc, Sylvan, Terran, Undercommon; telepathy 100 ft.; *tongues*

SQ infernal contract, infernal investment

Gear *circlet of persuasion*, *horn of goodness/evil*, *ring of mind shielding*

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Binding Contract (Su) Darukarex is surrounded by a gentle whirlwind of parchments. At Darukarex's will, these parchments fuse together into a long whip, which he can use to attack, disarm, and trip foes. The binding contract functions as +1 *whip*, except that unlike a normal whip, it always deals lethal damage and doesn't provoke attacks of opportunity when used. Darukarex adds his Wisdom modifier instead of his Strength modifier to attack and damage rolls with his binding contract. When the binding contract hits its mark, it wraps around the target, providing Darukarex with a free grapple attempt. If he succeeds at the grapple attempt, the restrained creature is considered grappled, though Darukarex is not. Additionally, Darukarex takes only a –10 penalty on his CMB check to maintain the grapple in subsequent rounds, instead of the normal –20 penalty. If Darukarex is disarmed, he can produce a new binding contract as an immediate action.

Impale (Ex) As a swift action, Darukarex can impale an opponent grappled by his binding contract, dealing 2d8+6 points of piercing damage.

Infernal Contract (Su) As a full-round action, Darukarex can produce an infernal contract for a single living mortal creature. This contract can grant a wide range of abilities and effects. To receive any of these bonuses, however, the mortal must sign its true name upon the document of its own free will. Upon doing so, that mortal's soul is sworn to the contract devil, condemning the soul to an eternity of servitude in Hell. Only a *miracle* or *wish* can restore such a damned creature to life, and if anyone casts a spell for that purpose, Darukarex automatically gains the benefits of a *discern location* spell with the caster as the target. Breaking a contract with Darukarex is difficult and dangerous (see page 29 for more on such contracts).

Infernal Investment (Su) Darukarex can use *greater scrying* at will upon any creature that has signed one of his infernal contracts. The target creature always fails its save against the devil's scrying attempt—this ability otherwise functions at caster level 20th.

There are several reasons that the PCs might seek Darukarex. Perhaps they seek aid against a seemingly unstoppable foe, and are willing to turn to dark sources. On the other hand, perhaps the PCs have come across someone who signed an infernal contract with Darukarex in the past and now wishes to escape damnation. These regretful folks often need escorts through the deadly woods, and help convincing the cunning devil to change the terms of the agreement. Alternatively, the party may seek out Darukarex to destroy him. Those wishing to vanquish the devil may find more mortal resistance than anticipated from those who risked their lives to speak to the devil. Regardless of their reasons for seeking out Darukarex, any party wishing to deal with the devil must arrive armed with sharp blades or even sharper wits.

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Nystra's Graveyard

In the decades after the town's abandonment, the ancestors of Tharl Grimull's botanical abominations have overrun Nystra's graveyard. Each vernal equinox, Darukarex makes his annual pilgrimage to the gravesite of the town's founder, and those desperate to sell the devil their souls flock to the site.

There are three large stone pedestals in the graveyard, each of which holds a silk gargoyle that is standing in place using its freeze ability. If the PCs attack Darukarex, the silk gargoyles fight on the devil's side. Otherwise, if the PCs leave them alone, they remain frozen.

SILK GARGOYLES (3) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

Advanced variant gargoyles (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 137)

DEFENSE

hp 52 each

OFFENSE

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d6+4), bite +9 (1d4+4), sting +9 (1d4+4 plus poison)

Special Attacks web (+9 ranged, DC 17, hp 5)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Poison (Ex) Sting—injury; *save* Fort DC 17; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d3 Dex; *cure* 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.

1. Graveyard Gate

A wrought-iron fence once secured Nystra's graveyard. The gate is now unlocked and partly unhinged, though it still bears the masterfully fashioned crest of Count Nys. Over the years, many sections of the fence also have rusted away, or been overrun by rampant foliage.

A pair of ragged oak trees whose limbs are filled with dead leaves, even in the early springtime, stand just inside the gates. The oak trees are actually quickwoods, which migrate annually to Nystra's graveyard to prey upon the contract devil's would-be petitioners. Differentiating the quickwoods from benign oak trees before the carnivorous plants attack requires a successful DC 20 Knowledge (nature) or Perception check.

QUICKWOODS (2) CR 8

XP 4,800 each

hp 95 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 228)

2. Merchant's Mausoleum

This mausoleum houses the bodies of Nystra's silk magnates and their families. Reliefs of silk gargoyles adorn its exterior. Now, the mausoleum is home to an undead bhuta—the remains of Count Nys's granddaughter, the last ruler of Nystra. After the druid Tharl Grimull's violet musk creeper annihilated the town, Lady Elarine arose as a bhuta, propelled into undeath by her horrifying and sudden demise.

The bhuta despises the contract devil, and her hatred peaks each year as she listens to him trick more hapless mortals into signing his contracts. If an adventuring party intends to capture, kill, or chase away the contract devil, they may find the bhuta an unlikely ally. However, if the party intends to strike their own bargain with the devil, she becomes a formidable foe. If she believes that the PCs might win in a fight against her, she possesses an animal with her *magic jar* ability and runs away.

LADY ELARINE CR 11

XP 12,800

Bhuta (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 3 41)

hp 147

3. Count Nys's Grave

Count Nys commissioned a large granite obelisk to mark his grave. The monolith has since toppled over. It is here that the contract devil Darukarex holds his annual court.

A small band of mortals has traveled from far and wide in hopes of striking their own infernal bargains. Though dozens attempted the trek, few survived.

If the PCs arrive before midnight, the group of petitioners is already waiting by the obelisk. It is difficult to convince them not to deal with the devil; their attitude is unfriendly, and their determination increases the DC of Diplomacy checks to change their attitudes by 10. If conversation becomes loud and heated, the sargassum fiend (see area 4) emerges from the water, using its mirage ability to appear as whatever those gazing upon it most wish to see. To the NPCs, and perhaps some of the PCs, it appears to be Darukarex himself. If the PCs save the petitioners from the sargassum fiend, the petitioners' attitude changes to friendly.

BLOODFIRE SORCERER CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 60 (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 164)

CONNIVING MINSTREL CR 7

XP 3,200

LE street artist (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 31)

hp 43

FREELANCE THIEF CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 42 (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 147)

At the stroke of midnight, Darukarex appears in a puff of smoke. If the PCs attempt to stop the devil from conducting his business, he attacks. A petitioner whose attitude is unfriendly or worse fights alongside the devil.

DARUKAREX CR 11

XP 12,800

hp 147 (see page 27)



4. Blooming Lake

The western edge of the graveyard is bordered by several 5-foot cliffs, which drop in to an adjacent lake. Beneath the opaque surface, a sargassum fiend lurks about 100 feet off the shore. This sargassum fiend's body is formed from lake algae and duckweed, but it is otherwise identical to a normal ocean-dwelling sargassum fiend. If the PCs arrive in the graveyard before the devil, the sargassum fiend may attempt to trick them (see area 3). Otherwise, it waits to attack until after the devil departs.

SARGASSUM FIEND

CR 9
XP 6,400
hp 123 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 235*)

Infernal Contracts

Infernal contracts are simple arrangements: the contracted mortal receives a boon from the devil, and in return, the devil gains possession of the mortal's soul after her death. Contract devils specialize in drafting and negotiating such arrangements. In fact, contract devils are the inspiration for the common depiction of devils as horned, red-skinned, smooth-talking scoundrels.

Each contract devil specializes in a different type of infernal contract. Some phistophiluses sell lesser devils into mortal slavery. Though these infernal servants are bound to obey the commands of their mortal masters and refrain from harming them, many bound devils secretly twist their masters' orders to suit their own cruel ends.

Other contract devils, like Darukarex, specialize in granting evil wishes to mortals. Those who sign such contracts receive three wishes, as per the spell *wish*, all of which must be used within 24 hours of signing the contract. While a mortal can set the intentions of her wishes, it's up to the contract devil to decide upon the specifics, allowing the devil to twist imprecisely worded requests. By far, the most common mortal wish is to restore a loved one to life, though other mortals desire to cure afflictions or gain esoteric extraplanar knowledge.

Most mortals who sign an infernal contract live to regret the decision. Breaking an infernal contract is certainly difficult, but not impossible. The simplest method of breaking a diabolical agreement is to destroy both copies of the contract. When an infernal contract is signed, both the mortal and the devil retain a copy. If the damned mortal is somehow able to get her hands on the devil's copy, she can free herself from the contract. Luckily, a phistophilus always keeps all his contracts on hand, so anyone able to convince, persuade, or compel the devil into giving up his copy may reclaim her soul. The second method of breaking an infernal contract is to convince another mortal to take the signee's place in Hell. In this case, the original signee retains all of the boons granted, while the substitute pays the entirety of the price. Contract devils are quite savvy, and allow such substitutions only if the replacement soul is more valuable, or in exchange for a service that is more valuable than the difference in worth between the souls. In general, devils value the souls of the righteous, pious, and innocent over those of the corrupt.

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Dinya's Possession

When making deals with devils, even the most advantageous-sounding arrangements always have hidden costs for the mortals involved—and hidden boons for their infernal counterparts. Yet countless diabolists delude themselves into thinking that they hold the balance of power in their own hands, and that they are immune to the trickery that Hell so infamously uses to ensnare the souls of the foolish. Delusional and greedy are mild words to describe Darris Ervind, failed cultist of Baalzebul. Darris's broken contract with that archdevil has resulted in a heinous repercussion: his 10-year-old nephew Dinya is now the host of a vicious accuser devil named Xerraxus. The devil will stop at nothing until he has achieved redress for his infernal patron or pushed Dinya's fragile form beyond its breaking point.

The son of middle-class boat builders, Darris was a naturally rude and unruly teen who left his family in Swiftrun, a superstitious village on the Conerica River in Isger, at an early age. He soon fell in with an Isgeri Asmodean order, and from there he initially sought a spot in the Dark Prince's priesthood. However, in the course of his unholy devotions, he became convinced that Baalzebul, Lord of the Flies, was the rightful heir of Hell and would one day rise to claim the Prince of Lies' throne.

So fervent were his prayers that the archdevil himself took notice and sent a zebub minion to offer Darris a deal. If Darris established a cult devoted to Baalzebul in Isger, thereby strengthening Hell's hold on the region and bolstering his own infernal status, the archdevil promised Darris wealth and power rivaling the Asmodean priesthood's most prominent leaders. An eager Darris readily agreed, even though failure in Baalzebul's eyes would require him to give his firstborn child in sacrifice to the archdevil.

In Darris's passion for the task, however, he ignored the fact that diabolism of any stripe is unpopular in Saringallow, the place where the fool tried to build his cult. Still stinging from the memories of diabolists who exsanguinated many of the town's young women before the rise of House Thrune, not a single resident of Saringallow would hear Darris's dark evangelizing. The town instead ran off the would-be cult leader. Realizing he had utterly failed, a panicked Darris took a vow of chastity in the hopes that it would render Baalzebul's contractual reward uncollectible.

For a year or so, Darris's plan worked, as Baalzebul and his minions seemingly ignored the man. Destitute and without any friends, though, Darris still struggled—until his brother and sister-in-law accepted him into their home. **Daneth** and **Alveria Ervind** (LG male and female human experts 3) believed that Darris didn't

deserve the ire leveled his way, and for a while, all was indeed happy. Darris even became an attentive uncle to his nephew, Dinya. He nearly forgot his days as a failed cultist; however, the archdevil's memory is long, and it turns out that Baalzebul is not so easily stymied.

Three weeks ago, just a few days before Dinya's tenth birthday, he inexplicably fell into a coma. When he awakened 3 days later, the boy his family knew as kind and caring had changed. Dinya's skin was papery and pale, his veins coursed black, and his eyes were cold and dead. His cheery tones were replaced with the shrill buzz of swarming flies, and his words were sometimes incomprehensible, as if spoken in a cruel-sounding foreign tongue. He even lashed out at his parents and anyone else who tried to determine what was amiss. Thinking him sick, Dinya's parents summoned the town's only healer, **Bernand Lowend** (NG male human adept 3). Left in charge of Swiftrun's temple after his predecessor's death in the Goblinblood Wars, Lowend unfortunately lacked the skills to provide any help.

Fearing his contract with Baalzebul was to blame for his nephew's horrific transformation, Darris fled Swiftrun. The uncle disappeared for good reason, for Dinya's possession is indeed his fault. Since there is no firstborn child to claim, Baalzebul has unleashed Xerraxus, the accuser devil who offered Darris his initial contract, upon the nephew's innocent form. The archdevil insists on exacting his payment, and Dinya happens to be the closest thing Darris has to a child.

While he possesses Dinya's body, Xerraxus is under orders to corrupt as many souls as possible before ultimately goading someone into killing the poor boy. The devil also looks for ways to leverage the possession into a more rewarding situation for his patron. Along the way, Xerraxus plans to gleefully mutilate his assumed form and mentally torture the child's parents as much as he can.

Only vaguely aware of the accusations made against Darris in Saringallow, Daneth and Alveria know nothing of their brother's involvement with Baalzebul, nor do they fully understand that Dinya is possessed with a zebub, as Lowend hasn't shared his suspicions. Instead, the acolyte has been discreetly seeking help from outside sources, since magic use is practically nonexistent in Swiftrun.

Dinya's parents have also put a call out to anyone with experience dealing with strange afflictions of any type. Even they have begun to suspect that something other than illness is behind Dinya's plight. Meanwhile, time is running out for the young boy, who says more terribly blasphemous things and commits more heinous acts of self-mutilation every day.



Dinya Ervind

The pale form of this human child is held in an unnatural, rigid pose, and flies swarm from its gaping mouth.

DINYA ERVIND CR —

Male possessed young human commoner 1 (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Campaign* 194)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +9

DEFENSE

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10

hp 4 (1d6+1)

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +4 (1d3 nonlethal)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +9)

At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *invisibility* (self only)

3/day—*grease*, *levitate*, *spider climb*, *suggestion* (DC 14), *vomit swarm*^{APG}

STATISTICS

Str 11, **Dex** 10, **Con** 10, **Int** 9, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +4; **CMD** 14

Feats Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills Bluff +8, Fly +17, Knowledge (planes) +6, Perception +9, Stealth +11

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ infernal eye

Xerraxus, an accuser devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 2 84) with variant spell-like abilities and feats, possesses Dinya's body. The devil has used *greater possession* (*Pathfinder RPG Occult Adventures* 181) to do so, even though he cannot normally cast that spell. Baalzebul has granted Xerraxus the ability to mimic that spell's effects (CL 8th) once to possess Dinya because of Darris's broken deal with the archdevil. The effect is permanent until the PCs expel the devil or Dinya dies.

Xerraxus's Tactics

While Xerraxus possesses Dinya, the devil uses the boy's body to carry out the following schemes.

Corrupting Souls

Xerraxus's ultimate aim is to corrupt as many souls as possible during the possession, and so he spews horrific blasphemies in both Common and Infernal whenever he has an audience. He also uses *suggestion* to try to convince anyone who will listen to commit various crimes or join the Asmodean orders in the area. If he's unsuccessful, Xerraxus becomes enraged and screams death threats or attempts to attack those who shook off his spell.

Self-Mutilation

Xerraxus sees Dinya's body as his puppet and enjoys inflicting physical harm on it, thereby upsetting the boy's parents.

Burning: Xerraxus has smuggled candles into the room and inflicts burns all over his host's body, laughing and staring in wicked fascination while the flesh scorches.

Choking: He chokes himself with any long pieces of cloth he can find, and has even tried to hang himself with his own bed sheets. He also uses stolen rags to gag himself, often to the point where his face turns blue.

Cutting: The possessed boy inflicts deep scores into his flesh whenever he manages to obtain any sharp household implement. He uses the blood to draw pentacles, images of bloated flies, and threatening messages on his room's walls.

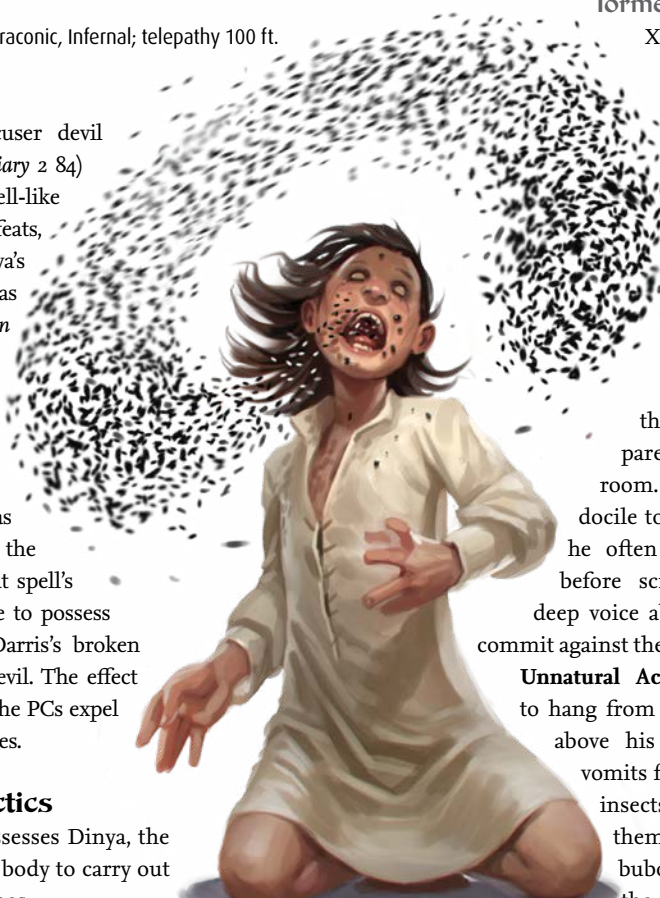
Tormenting Dinya's Parents

Xerraxus tries to inflict as much agony on Dinya's parents as he possibly can.

Infernal Eye: He uses his infernal eye supernatural ability to show Daneth and Alveria what Dinya does when they're not watching, such as swallowing glass and cutting his arms and legs with stolen razors.

Threats: He colorfully threatens to murder Dinya's parents as well as anyone else in the room. Xerraxus delights in appearing docile to those who have visited before; he often waits until they come close before screaming in a preternaturally deep voice about the atrocities he plans to commit against their persons and their loved ones.

Unnatural Activities: He uses *spider climb* to hang from the ceiling and *levitate* to float above his parents' reach. He regularly vomits flies and generally fixates on the insects, speaking to and often eating them. He sometimes manifests buboes and weeping sores on which the flies feast.



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The Ervind Home

Daneth and Alveria's home is located on the northern side of Swiftrun, about 50 miles east of Saringallow. It is a comfortable, rather unremarkable wooden two-story home. When the PCs arrive, Daneth and Alveria plead with the PCs to find out what ails Dinya and end the affliction—without harming their son—as quickly as possible. They are willing to do anything to help accomplish this.

1. Library

The library contains the sum of the Ervind family book collection, including several esoteric tomes about magic that belonged to Alveria's grandmother, an accomplished researcher. It takes the PCs 1 hour and a successful DC 20 Perception check to discover that a dry text called *Manipulating Magical Outcomes* includes a chapter about dispelling permanent magical effects, including those cast by evil outsiders. Although the text says that casting *dispel evil* is the best strategy, it recommends that lower-level casters use *dispel magic*. It mentions that brandishing certain items, such as silver and holy symbols, may be helpful when attempting to dispel the evil effect. Sprinkling holy water on the affected person or object and condemning the caster behind the effect may also help.

2. Dining Room

This is clearly where Daneth and Alveria have been spending much of their time recently, as the remnants of quickly prepared meals are scattered throughout the room.

3. Kitchen

Several drawers along the northeast wall of this room are padlocked (Disable Device DC 20). If questioned, Daneth and Alveria explain that Dinya has recently begun to delight in mutilating himself.

The Ervinds unlock the drawers and allow the PCs to search them if they ask. Inside one is a set of silver cutlery. If the PCs brandish any of the silver items while attempting to dispel the *greater possession* affecting Dinya, they receive a +1 bonus on their caster level checks and to the saving throw DCs of other attempts to expel him.

4. Upstairs Bedrooms

The northern room is the guest bedroom, while the southern room belongs to Daneth and Alveria. Both bedrooms are remarkably neat yet slightly dusty, as if no one had set foot in them for days.

In the Ervinds' room, a successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a thin silver chain with a pendant dangling from the open jewelry box on the northwest table. A successful DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that this is a holy symbol. The jewelry box actually contains four tangled holy symbols—necklaces that belonged to Daneth's late mother.

If the PCs brandish all of the holy symbols while attempting to dispel the *greater possession* affecting Dinya,

they receive a +1 bonus on their caster level checks and to the saving throw DCs of other attempts to expel him.

In the spare bedroom, a successful DC 20 Perception check reveals a dust-covered veil haphazardly tossed over several glass bottles on the southern table. The bottles are imprinted with Erastil's holy symbol, and two are filled with clear liquid. This is holy water, and the Ervinds explain that their cousins stayed with them about a month ago while attending a great aunt's funeral.

If the PCs sprinkle Dinya's forehead with holy water while attempting to dispel the *greater possession* affecting him, they receive a +2 bonus on their caster level checks and to the saving throw DCs of other attempts to expel him.

5. Sitting Room

This room is cluttered with piles of books, notes, inkwells, and pens. The Ervinds explain that Daneth's brother, Darris, used this room as his study while he recently stayed with the family. The Ervinds explain that Darris left the home abruptly, without an explanation, about 2 weeks ago.

Darris told the Ervinds that he was studying to apply to a military academy in Canorate in Molthune. However, a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals that, while the top page of each stack of paper is indeed covered in notes about various military tactics, the pages underneath are blank, as if Darris simply created the illusion of engaging in scholarly work. If this is pointed out to the Ervinds, they reluctantly explain the rumors about Darris's diabolism in Saringallow, although they insist the rumors are untrue.

Behind a bookshelf on the eastern wall is a secret door that a character can spot with a successful DC 20 Perception check. The door once led to an office, but since the Ervinds moved their business into another building last year, they blocked off the door to the unused room. If the bookshelf is moved (Strength DC 12), it becomes clear that someone has been using the door and the room beyond.

6. Darris's Workshop

Once Dinya became possessed, Darris unsuccessfully tried to bargain with Baalzebul here to try to save his nephew. Paperwork written in Infernal and covered in strange sigils is strewn about, and red pentacles are painted on the walls. Many of the papers are adorned with jerky sketches of enormous, engorged flies and fly swarms.

Anyone who can read Infernal can tell that the papers detail Darris's failed deal with an archdevil, as well as the contract's details, including the name of his zebub contact and Darris's agreement to relinquish his firstborn child should he fail. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (planes) check reveals that the sigils indicate that the archdevil is Baalzebul, Lord of the Flies and ruler of the seventh circle of Hell. If the PCs condemn Xerraxus or Baalzebul while attempting to dispel the *greater possession* affecting Dinya, they receive a +2 bonus on their caster level checks and to the saving throw DCs of other attempts to expel him.



7. Dinya's Room

Dinya's parents have locked this door (Disable Device DC 20), although they gladly unlock it if the PCs ask. The scent of rot and feces wafts from the room, as do overwhelmingly loud flylike buzzing sounds. When the PCs enter, they each must succeed at a DC 12 Fortitude saving throw or be sickened for 1d6 rounds.

When the PCs arrive, Dinya sits on his bed carving bloody lines into his arm with his fingernails. If the PCs try to engage him, he responds in any of the ways described on page 31, including attacking them if they touch him.

When Xerraxus leaves his host, the devil is expelled into the room and the PCs must fight him. A confused Dinya scampers out of the way during any fight.

There are several ways for the PCs to exorcise Xerraxus from Dinya, as detailed below. GMs should reward creative play by assigning bonuses as appropriate to help the PCs complete the method chosen.

Magic: Magical effects including *dispel evil*, casting *possession* (*Occult Adventures* 180) on Dinya again, and using a ritual exorcism (*Occult Adventures* 212) can cast Xerraxus out, but these are likely beyond the PCs' means. *Protection from evil* does not eject Xerraxus, as Baalzebul ensured Dinya received no save against Xerraxus, but it does prevent him from controlling Dinya for the spell's duration.

The best option for the PCs will likely be *dispel magic* (DC 19), particularly with any bonuses they can gain from the useful items found throughout the house. The PCs can buy holy water from Bernard Lowend, the town's

healer, but it does not provide any additional help if they also use the holy water they found in the house when trying to expel Xerraxus.

Roleplaying: If the PCs claim they'd like to offer Xerraxus an incentive to leave the boy's body (Diplomacy DC 15), he may consider it. Succeeding at any of the methods below results in Xerraxus leaving Dinya's body. Each failed check adds a cumulative +3 to the DCs of subsequent checks.

Bargaining (Diplomacy DC 20): A PC could convince Xerraxus to leave Dinya's body and inhabit his or her own. The power of Baalzebul allows the accuser devil to do this, again mimicking *greater possession*, but the PCs must then deal with a possessed ally. Attempts to convince the devil to leave the PC's body automatically fail, and only magic can drive Xerraxus out.

Misdirection (Bluff DC 20): The PCs might try to convince Xerraxus that he is wasting his time with Dinya, and that they have brought him, for example, the child of a prominent cleric for him to possess instead. Alternatively, they could claim to carry a special message for Xerraxus from Baalzebul. Whatever the bluff, the PCs should require Xerraxus to leave Dinya first before they give him the promised "reward."

Threats (Intimidate DC 20): The PCs could claim to be emissaries from Asmodeus, who requires Xerraxus's presence in Hell immediately on pain of instant destruction, or claim to possess a magic item that can destroy possessing devils immediately, prompting him to flee Dinya's body and attempt to teleport back to Hell.

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Emporium Isitalba

One of the multiverse's largest cities, the sprawling infernal metropolis of Dis is as darkly beautiful as it is terrifying. Its architecture defies mortal comprehension, its population is as diverse as the planes themselves, and its economy is utterly and proudly immoral. Dis's limitless potential makes it a major hub for outsiders and interplanar travelers from across the multiverse. Many who wander the labyrinthine streets are the damned souls of usurers and gluttons, though others are visitors come to trade or purchase esoteric wares in the city's famed bazaars, including the notorious Market of Breaths.

Located on the upper portico of a floating tower, this mysterious market is known as the place where years of life are sold, often in the oddest forms. In addition to the hooded figures hawking those wares, the area hosts all manner of other unscrupulous merchants, who sell everything from soul-corroding drugs to books of nihilistic spellcraft. Pergolas covered in thorny vines and quivering flesh loom over the walkways, and predatory shopkeepers view passersby as both customers and potential merchandise. Some opportunistic entrepreneurs trade in both quantifiable goods and more abstract offerings, up to and including souls. These are exchanged only on the most clandestine terms, and only those who know exactly how to access these wares engage in the trade.

One of the best-known shops in the Market of Breaths is the Emporium Isitalba, owned by Mahathallah, a whore queen referred to as the Dowager of Illusions. Mahathallah was once a handmaiden to Pharasma, who showed the psychopomp the moment of her own death at Mahathallah's request. Hoping to escape the horrible fate she foresaw, Mahathallah fled to Asmodeus's side; soon, though, she found that Hell was not the welcoming kingdom that the Prince of Lies had promised. What's more, Mahathallah found herself suffering from a strange ailment—apparently a punishment for forsaking her mistress. Now she ages thousands of years over the course of each day until she's nothing more than a desiccated skeleton, only to begin anew the next day as the beautiful psychopomp she once was.

Mahathallah now cloaks herself in layers of illusion to hide her terrible curse. For untold centuries, though, the whore queen has been looking for any way—be it a priceless artifact, a rare tome, or a more mundane item—to end this eternal reminder of the fate that still may await her. Eventually, in her desperate search, Mahathallah procured enough items to fill a store. Thinking that buying and selling merchandise might get her closer to finding an item that could finally end her affliction, she opened a shop in the Market of

Breaths. So far, Mahathallah hasn't found anything to alleviate her torment, but that doesn't stop her from continuing to barter, procure, and sometimes steal the most esoteric contraband in the multiverse.

To deflect suspicion from her shop's true purpose, and so she can seek out promising alliances and trading opportunities as she likes, Mahathallah installed a handmaiden devil named Isitalba as the emporium's proprietor and named the shop after her. It should come as no surprise that Isitalba is a particularly dangerous and cruel example of her kind, as she was once a mortal slave-trader. Her tongue was so guileful, it's said, that she was able to convince even the most protective parents to sell their children into forced labor, and she prided herself on being able to quickly and astutely determine every parent's price, monetary or otherwise. Now, as a devil, she continues to trade in suffering, buying and selling unfortunate mortals' souls. Her business acumen combined with her strength at arms makes her an ideal proprietor for Mahathallah's emporium. For her part, the handmaiden devil was happy to pledge her services to such a powerful queen of Hell—who also happens to be able to provide Isitalba with the wealth and prestige she craves.

Under the handmaiden's guidance, the Emporium Isitalba has become a premier destination for traders across the multiverse. Part of what makes the Emporium Isitalba so successful is the air of exclusivity that the handmaiden devil cultivates around the enterprise. From the exterior, the building appears to be just another run-down storefront stocked with overpriced merchandise. A surly mercane ostensibly attends the wares. Only by presenting increasingly more valuable items for trade can the most persistent of customers make their way inside and to the second floor. There, a particularly dangerous barbed devil looks after the emporium's mid-range items. Serious clients who convince the barbed devil that they are earnestly seeking the most rare goods may be ushered to a locked office, where a ramp leads down to the basement. There, Isitalba guards the most valuable merchandise in the whore queen's collection.

Although few know the true nature of the emporium's wares, there are several reasons why especially courageous heroes might visit the Emporium Isitalba. The first is to purchase an item impossible to find elsewhere. The less common, but more desperate, reason is to reclaim a stolen soul. Many of the souls in the Emporium Isitalba were torn from hapless mortals by repulsive creatures such as night hags, shinigami, and various daemons. Normally, the only way to rescue a soul from Isitalba is to barter something even more valuable. However, those unable to pay such a steep price must find another way.



Isitalba

Tentacles emerging menacingly from her elaborate gown, this woman sneers at all but the wealthiest potential customers.

ISITALBA

CR 16

XP 76,800

Variant handmaiden devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 86)

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; **Perception** +25

DEFENSE

AC 33, touch 17, flat-footed 26 (+7 Dex, +16 natural)

hp 229 (17d10+136)

Fort +18, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

DR 10/good and silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 27

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +26 (2d8+9),
2 tentacles +24 (1d6+4 plus grab)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tentacles)

Special Attacks constrict (2d8+9), strangle, tentacle cage (4d8+10 bludgeoning, AC 18, 18 hp)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +20)

Constant—*fly*, *spider climb*, *true seeing*

At will—*alter self*, *dispel good* (DC 20), *enthrall* (DC 17), *greater teleport* (self plus 1 entrapped creature and 50 lbs. of goods only), *prying eyes*

3/day—*black tentacles*, *charm monster* (DC 19)

1/day—*summon* (level 7, 2 bone devils 65%)

STATISTICS

Str 28, **Dex** 25, **Con** 27, **Int** 22, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +26 (+30 grapple, +28 trip); **CMD** 43 (45 vs. trip)

Feats Acrobatic Steps, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Multiattack, Nimble Moves, Power Attack, Strike Back

Skills Acrobatics +27 (+31 when jumping), Appraise +23, Bluff +25, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +19, Fly +16, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +23, Stealth +27

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ agile grappler

Gear *jailer's dungeon ring*^{UE}, *prisoner's dungeon rings*^{UE} (3)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Agile Grapppler (Ex) Isitalba does not gain the grappled condition if she grapples a foe.

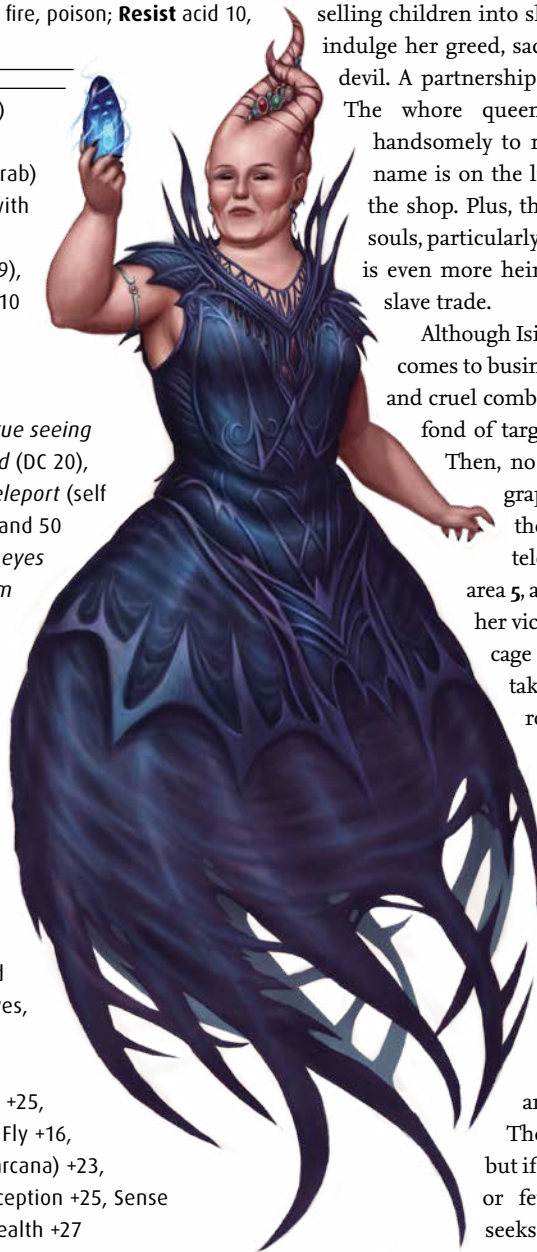
Tentacle Cage (Su) If Isitalba successfully grapples a creature, she transfers that creature into her lower body's nest of cage-like tentacles. This works like the swallow whole universal monster ability. Isitalba's tentacles have AC 18 and 18 hp for the purpose of an entrapped creature cutting itself out. Isitalba's tendrils heal quickly, allowing her to use this ability 1 round after a creature cuts itself free.

After spending her mortal lifetime growing rich from selling children into slavery, Isitalba looked for a way to indulge her greed, sadism, and ego once she became a devil. A partnership with Mahathallah fit seamlessly. The whore queen pays the handmaiden devil handsomely to run the emporium, and Isitalba's name is on the lips of any creature that seeks out the shop. Plus, the devil has found that dealing in souls, particularly those stolen from good creatures, is even more heinously enjoyable than the mortal slave trade.

Although Isitalba is particularly skilled when it comes to business affairs, she is also a formidable and cruel combatant. When faced with foes, she is fond of targeting the most potent spellcaster.

Then, no matter where she's fighting, she grapples that enemy and transfers the creature into her tentacle cage, teleports into the flaming cage in area 5, and then teleports back out, leaving her victim to burn alive. A creature in the cage (hardness 15, hp 40, break DC 28) takes 6d6 points of fire damage per round (Reflex DC 20 half, CL 15th). The cage has no hinges, door, or other entrance. If she can, before exiting the cage, Isitalba slips a *prisoner's dungeon ring* on the victim so she can monitor its status while it suffers. Because she is immune to fire, she can repeat this process indefinitely.

If a party begins overpowering her, Isitalba teleports to area 3, where she regroups with Parsenka and the mithral golem, if possible. The barbed devil fights to the death, but if Isitalba is brought to 50 hit points or fewer, she attempts to flee. She seeks further reinforcements among Mahathallah's other myriad infernal servants before returning to her lavish emporium.



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Emporium Isitalba

The Emporium Isitalba is a nondescript shop buried in the throng of Dis's Market of Breaths.

1. Storefront

Visitors to the Emporium Isitalba first find a tattered silk tent with a drooping flap attached to a run-down two-story building. A portly mercane named Bertrus sits lazily behind a stall outside the tent. While Bertrus plays the part of the apathetic shopkeeper, he's actually paid an obscene amount to screen potential buyers. He treats passing rubes with disdain, but once someone expresses interest in seeing the "real" merchandise, the mercane's manner becomes sharp, shrewd, and respectful. Bertrus escorts the PCs to area **2** if they show him a magic item worth at least 30,000 gp.

BERTRUS CR 5

XP 1,600

Mercane (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2* 188)

hp 51

2. First Floor

Once inside, the wares' quality increases, though the prices are still badly inflated. Glass-top display cases feature a variety of magical baubles and other sundries. An immobile mithral golem, smaller than most of its kind, stands against the wall bearing a price tag that reads, "For Sale: 200,000 gp."

Perhaps the most striking feature of this room, though, is the two imps that fly about it, pestering customers to buy the extravagantly priced merchandise. Named Nieksiskas and Siktas, the imps further weed out casual customers with their irritating antics.

Adjacent to the seating area is a locked door with a sign labeled "Office." The door is secured with an *arcane lock* as well as an *alarm*. Like the storefront, these abjurations are just for show. The real alarm system is the golem, which activates if a customer tries to steal something or bypass the office door's security systems. The imps also are spies as much as they are pests, and if the mithral golem is stealthily disabled, they fly to areas **1** and **3** to fetch help as appropriate.

At the far end of the room is an upward ramp blocked with a red velvet rope and a sign that reads, "By Invitation Only" in Infernal. Anyone who attempts to bypass the rope without an invitation triggers a *wall of force* (CL 15th), which immediately blocks off the entirety of the ramp. Activating this spell alerts Bertrus in area **1**, who attempts to eject the offenders from the store.

Those wishing to enter the shop's upper floor (area **3**) must first convince the mercane to forward their request to his barbed devil boss. The PCs may attempt to compel the outsider with magic, force, or bribes, but the only surefire way to gain his approval is by displaying an item worth trading. Showing up to three magic items worth a total of at least 100,000 gp gains an invitation to the second floor.

MITHRAL GOLEM GUARDIAN

CR 15

XP 51,200

Young variant mithral golem (*Bestiary 2* 293, 139)

hp 124

Special Abilities The young mithral golem does not have the quickness extraordinary ability; its natural attacks count as good-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage resistance

3. Upper Floor

The ramp at the rear of area **2** leads to the Emporium Isitalba's upper floor. This level, overseen by a barbed devil named Parsenka, is where most of the real merchandise is kept. Parsenka is the shop's bookkeeper and protects these valuable wares.

Few visitors ever see more of the emporium's collection than what is displayed here. Those who wish to see the best items must convince Parsenka to grant them admission to the shop's basement. Like the mercane, Parsenka may be compelled, forced, or bribed. However, the only guaranteed way to earn an invitation to the basement is by promising to trade a *soul jar*, soul gem, one-of-a-kind artifact, or equivalent treasure, and showing proof of possessing that item.

PARSENKA

CR 14

XP 38,400

Monk barbed devil (*Pathfinder RPG Monster Codex* 247, *Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 72)

hp 138

4. Office

Behind the abjured door in area **2** is a messy office with a few bookshelves and a sideboard. Behind the desk is a permanent *illusory wall* (DC 22 Will save to disbelieve if interacted with) that hides a ramp that descends into area **5**.

5. Isitalba's Study

The hidden spiral ramp in the office (area **4**) leads to this subterranean area, which holds the best of the whore queen's collection, including several *soul jars* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Lost Treasures* 55). An iron cage filled with a perpetually burning flame occupies the center of the room.

Isitalba greets anyone escorted here. She is patient and respectful, even to mortals. However, if she begins to suspect that the visitors aren't legitimate customers, she quickly turns nasty, as described on page 35.

ISITALBA

CR 16

XP 76,800

hp 229 (see page 35)

6. Hidden Cache

This hidden room houses the rarest items in the collection. The room has no doors or windows, and the only way to enter is by teleportation.

Hell Unleashed



The Whore Queen's Wares

The following entries include the base value of the magic items available on each floor, the number of medium and major magic items above each floor's base value, and special items available when the PCs first arrive. For more information about the base value of available magic items, see pages 460–461 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*.

All minor magic items are available at the emporium, and all magic items for sale (including the special items) are marked up by various amounts, as listed below.

STOREFRONT (40% MARKUP)

Base Value 10,000 gp; **Medium Items** 3d4; **Major Items** 2d4

SPECIAL ITEMS

Mortiz This crawling hand (*Bestiary* 2 59) is confined to a glass jar sealed with wax. *Cost:* a demon's eye.

Shaitan's Fist This *boulderhead mace* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 152) is made from the hand of a slain shaitan genie. *Cost:* 9,500 gp.

FIRST FLOOR (30% MARKUP)

Base Value 50,000 gp; **Medium Items** 4d4; **Major Items** 3d4

SPECIAL ITEMS

Debased Chain This corrupted suit of *celestial armor* was taken off the body of a slain angel and modified. It allows the wearer to use *burrow* (instead of *fly*) once per day. *Cost:* any armor with the *righteous* ability (*Ultimate Equipment* 121).

Gage of Parrying This long-dead marid noble's glove acts as a *sash of flowing water* (*Ultimate Equipment* 213) when worn on a free hand. *Cost:* 32,500 gp.

UPPER FLOOR (20% MARKUP)

Base Value 160,000 gp; **Medium Items** 4d6; **Major Items** 4d4

SPECIAL ITEMS

Bradvanka This warhammer, once wielded by a powerful demon, functions as a *sword of the planes*. *Cost:* a detailed map of the Abyssal Midnight Isles.

The Wretched Traveler This hibernating elder thing is suspended in a large aquarium filled with murky seawater. *Cost:* a live aboleth.

ISITALBA'S STUDY (PRICELESS)

Legions of High Heaven This tome details the hierarchy of the archons and their direct servants. *Cost:* any angel's soul.

The Soul of Illiniul This movanic deva's soul was captured on the Negative Plane after he was swarmed by sceaduinar. *Cost:* a live qlipthoth or protean.

The Soul of King Oligaphius This bombastic monarch was one of Taldor's early rulers. *Cost:* the soul of any past or current Chelish or Osirian ruler.

HIDDEN CACHE (PRICELESS)

Leaving Paradise This copy of a chapter of the *Chronicle of the Righteous* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Chronicle of the Righteous*) is tattooed on an angel's flayed skin. *Cost:* a *book of infinite spells* that contains *soul bind*.

Zaebarizel's Coils The pit fiend contained in this *bilious talisman* (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Princes of Darkness, Book of the Damned, Vol. 1* 41) promises the adoration of paramours from across the multiverse. *Cost:* 100 souls of good outsiders.

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Furcas

Called the Knight of the Laurels and the Sentinel of Dis, Furcas is the infernal duke of duty, flames, and herbalism. His disparate concerns model him as a true knight of Hell, a sentry armed with fire and girded by thorns. His patience and wisdom make him one of the multiverse's greatest military commanders, but also a sage of all things green and growing. It might take eons, but Furcas knows that a relentless will can forge even the most delicate petal into a weapon deadlier than any spear.

While laurels do crown Furcas's brow, his title stems from the tangle of parasitic, cassytha-like growths that riddle the remains of his stern, once-angelic form. These vines constitute a mighty, tauric body—one that serves as armor for the infernal duke and as a bed for innumerable toxic plants. Furcas is rarely seen without the *Avernus Claw*, a trident gifted to him by Typhon, the deceased former archdevil of Avernus. The burning trident holds

the power to block any escape from the first layer of Hell, and serves as Furcas's divine symbol.

As Furcas's demesne—the Hanging Marches—lies on Avernus, the infernal duke is the subject of the layer's ruler, Barbatos. However, Furcas also maintains strong ties with Dis, the second layer of Hell, and its imperious ruler, the archdevil Dispater. These dual loyalties stem from the ancient hellmouth Voulgaz, which yawns at the center of Furcas's realm. The infernal duke's fortress, the Forked Pyre, guards the hellmouth and serves as the stronghold from which Furcas oversees his legions as they conduct travelers and damned souls into the plane-city beyond. Furcas has overseen this post for countless eons, and despite numerous sieges by celestials and proteans alike, the gate to Dis has never fallen.

Whether seeking to reclaim a damned soul (rightfully or otherwise), to gain some wisdom of the natural world, or to secure passage to Dis, characters with business in Hell are likely to travel through the Hanging Marches. This is made all the easier from Golarion by a permanent portal that connects a forested valley within Brevoy's Icerime Peaks with Olikscourt, a toppled outpost on the shore of the Crawling Sea. Few who trespass in the Hanging Marches escape the notice of the Knight of the Laurels.

Infernal Duke, Furcas

This giant, centaurlike creature's body is made of hardened, thorny vines. A crown of laurels graces its brow.

FURCAS **CR 27**

XP 3,276,800

LE Huge outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect chaos*, *detect good*, see in darkness, *true seeing*; Perception +45

Aura frightful presence (120 ft., DC 35), *unholy aura* (30 ft., DC 28, 10 rounds)

DEFENSE

AC 46, touch 33, flat-footed 39 (+4 deflection, +7 Dex, +13 natural, +14 profane, -2 size)

hp 635 (31d10+465); regeneration (epic and good, good and mythic, or deific)

Fort +36, **Ref** +28, **Will** +27

Defensive Abilities armor of thorns, *freedom of movement*, hellish resurrection, immovable; **DR** 20/good, epic, and silver; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, charm effects, compulsion effects, death effects, energy drain, fire, petrification, poison; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30; **SR** 38

OFFENSE

Speed 50 ft.; *air walk*

Melee *Avernus Claw* +48/+43/+38/+33 (2d6+19/19-20 plus 1d6 fire), 2 hooves +44 (1d8+15 plus disease), slam +44 (1d8+15 plus *swat*)



Hell Unleashed



Ranged poison barb +36 (1d4+15/19–20 plus poison)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (25 ft. with trident)

Special Attacks crown of laurels, disease, poison, poison barb, powerful hooves, swat, trample (4d8+22, DC 40)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 27th; concentration +37)

Constant—*air walk*, *detect chaos*, *detect good*, *freedom of movement*, *true seeing*, *unholy aura* (DC 28)

At will—*blasphemy* (DC 27), *desecrate*, *diminish plants*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport*, *plant growth*, *shapechange*, *telekinesis* (DC 25), *thorny entanglement*^{ACG} (DC 23), *unhallow*, *unholy blight*, *wall of stone*

3/day—*overwhelming presence*^{UM} (DC 29), *quicken fire seeds* (DC 26), *reverse gravity*, *summon devils*

1/day—*imprisonment* (DC 29), *meteor swarm* (DC 29), *time stop*

STATISTICS

Str 40, **Dex** 24, **Con** 40, **Int** 29, **Wis** 33, **Cha** 31

Base Atk +31; **CMB** +48 (+52 bull rush, +52 disarm); **CMD** 83 (immovable; 85 vs. bull rush, 85 vs. disarm, 87 vs. trip)

Feats Awesome Blow, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Critical Focus, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Disarm, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (trident), Improved Disarm, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*fire seeds*), Staggering Critical

Skills Bluff +44, Diplomacy +44, Handle Animal +44, Heal +42, Intimidate +44, Knowledge (arcana) +40, Knowledge (engineering) +40, Knowledge (nature) +43, Knowledge (planes) +43, Perception +45, Profession (herbalist) +42, Sense Motive +45, Spellcraft +40, Stealth +33, Use Magic Device +41

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Sylvan; telepathy 300 ft.

SQ infernal duke traits (see page 43), irresistible force

ECOLOGY

Environment any (Hell)

Organization solitary (unique)

Treasure triple standard (*Avernus Claw*, other treasure)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Armor of Thorns (Ex) A network of thorny vines armors and invades Furcas's body. Any creature that strikes Furcas with a non-reach melee weapon, unarmed strike, or natural weapon takes 1d8+7 points of piercing damage from the barbs studding the infernal duke's body and must succeed at a DC 40 Fortitude saving throw or be poisoned (potentially in addition to the effects of *unholy aura*). This living, toxic armor also feeds off of all manner of corruption. Any attempt to poison Furcas or magically control his vine armor heals him for 4d6 points of damage. Furcas can also use his poison barbs to heal himself in this way.

Crown of Laurels (Su) Once per day as a move action, Furcas can bestow his laurel crown upon an adjacent creature. For the next 24 hours, the creature is affected as per the spells *greater heroism* and *unholy aura*. At the end of this period, these benefits cease and the creature is infected with a particularly resilient form of devil chills (see below). This

version requires six consecutive successful saving throws to cure, and can be magically cured only by a lawful evil spellcaster. Creatures immune to disease suffer no negative effects. The crown always returns to Furcas after 24 hours.

Disease (Su) *Devil chills*: hooves—injury; *save* Fort DC 40; *onset* immediate; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d3 Str damage; *cure* 3 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Immovable (Ex) While conscious, Furcas cannot be moved, tripped, or knocked prone by any attack, combat maneuver, spell, or similar effect generated by any creature lesser than a deity or object of less than artifact-level power.

Irresistible Force (Su) Anytime Furcas's attack moves a foe—whether through the use of a combat maneuver, Awesome Blow, *telekinesis*, or a similar effect—that creature is moved double the normal distance.

Poison (Ex) Poison barb—injury; *save* Fort DC 20; *frequency* 1/round for 10 rounds; *effect* fatigued; *cure* 3 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison Barb (Su) As a standard action, Furcas can grow and fire a toxic barb from his body. This is a ranged attack with a range increment of 60 feet. Any creature struck by the barb must succeed at a DC 40 Fortitude saving throw or be poisoned. Furcas can decide what type of poison the barb bears, whether his own fatiguing toxin or any poison conveyed through injury that appears on the chart on page 559 of the *Pathfinder RPG Core Rulebook*. After using this ability, Furcas cannot grow another barb for 1d4 rounds.

Powerful Hooves (Ex) Furcas's hoof attacks are considered primary attacks. He always adds his full Strength bonus to the amount of damage dealt by his hooves.

Swat (Ex) As a free action, Furcas can use the Awesome Blow feat with his slam attack. Because of his irresistible force ability, any creature affected by this attack is hurled 20 feet.

AVERNUS CLAW		MAJOR ARTIFACT
SLOT none	CL 28th	WEIGHT 24 lbs.
AURA overwhelming varied		

Furcas's weapon is a +4 *axiomatic flaming burst unholy trident*. The weapon's *flaming burst* special ability wreathes the trident in hellfire—half the damage its flames deal is fire damage, while the other half results directly from infernal power and is therefore not reduced by fire resistance. As a standard action, Furcas can slam the trident's haft against the ground, causing all creatures within 30 feet to be affected by *dimensional anchor*. Any affected creature that attempts to teleport or travel to another plane (even by a permanent gate) instead appears in a square adjacent to Furcas. As a standard action, Furcas can call the trident to his hand from any distance, even across planar boundaries.

DESTRUCTION

The *Avernus Claw* must be sunk to the bottom of the deepest sea of Elysium for 1 year, then dealt a blow by the weapon of a chaotic good deity.

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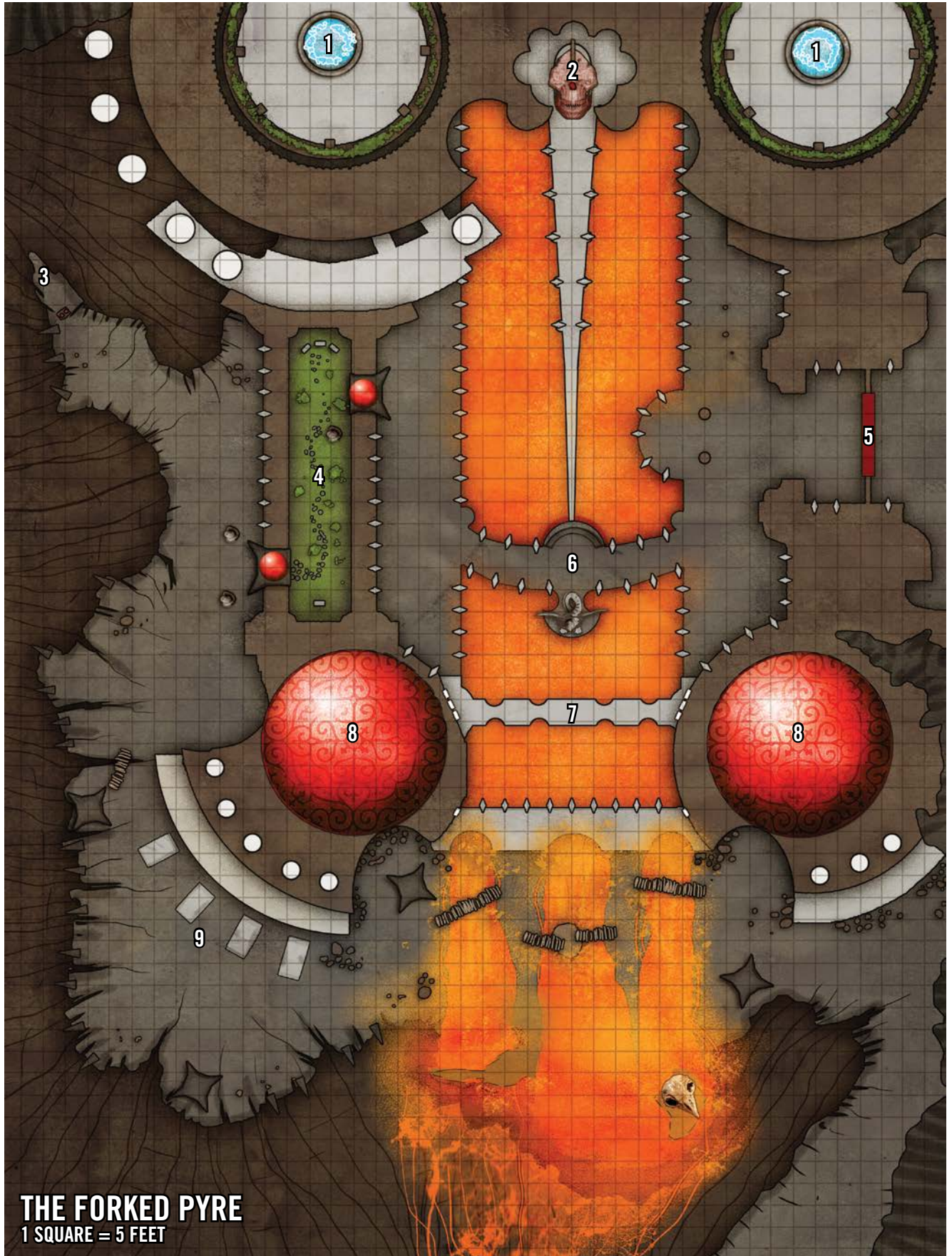
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THE FORKED PYRE
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET



The Forked Pyre

Furcas's fortress stands at the heart of his realm, rising from a scorched cliff high upon the swamp volcano Barrowsiege. Devilish slavers drag captive souls across sharp rocks to the valley called Pilgrim's Basin, where the Torn Oath—a river of molten iron—plummets into a scalding morass. Above loom the towers of the Forked Pyre, a citadel that digs deep into the black rock and serves as both a planar gatehouse and Furcas's burning greenhouse sanctuary. Within strains the chain-bound hellmouth Voulgaz, whose bowels spill into the city-plane of Dis below. Dark armored devils—mostly barbazu, cornugons, and levalochs—patrol the fort, well prepared for desperate celestial incursions. Every 10 hours, the Forked Pyre's gates open, admitting travelers and the damned alike. The worthy damned are allowed to climb into the hellmouth's jaws. Trespassers and travelers, though—especially mortals—have only moments to explain their business to the portal's devil sentinels lest they face torturous interrogations or even Furcas himself.

In addition to its grim defenses, the Forked Pyre holds several of Furcas's experiments and most hope-shattering trophies.

1. The Tines: Facing out over the Torn Oath, the Forked Pyre's towers are studded with guard platforms and clever weapons meant to deter attack from any direction. Internally, though, the towers are hollow, and are filled with balconies, elegant fountains, and intricate trellises from which hangs a vertical garden of the multiverse's rarest plants. One tower holds herbs with miraculous healing properties, while in the other flourish a billion subtle poisons. Only master herbalists—and the gardens' ancient green dragon guardians—might hope to know the difference.

2. Voulgaz: One head of the wormlike hellmouth Voulgaz permanently gapes within this alcove. In what passes for a day in Furcas's eternally dawn-skied inferno, thousands of grim pilgrims and hopeless souls feed themselves into Voulgaz's needle-toothed maw. Those who do almost instantly emerge from the hellmouth's one-eyed twin in Dis, in a plaza of avant-garde topiaries not far from the Market of Breaths.

Above the alcove, a massive clawed adamantine hand juts through the Torn Oath's endless falls of liquid iron. At Furcas's command, the hand can open or close its grip. When the hand opens, the ascent to Voulgaz's alcove clears and cools. When it closes, molten metal veils the recess and floods the path below. Unbeknownst to all but Furcas, the archdevils, and Asmodeus himself, the claw belongs to an ancient, lawful evil formian titan called Legionnaire. As a last ditch effort, Furcas can release this ancient guardian to bury the hellmouth and destroy invaders, though doing so would undoubtedly result in the Forked Pyre's ruin.

3. Altar of Barbatos: Many who reach the threshold of Dis beg to treat with Archdevil Barbatos, Lord of the First, for mercy, asylum, or a swift doom. Furcas grants all

slaves the chance to be heard at his liege's precarious altar, knowing the Bearded Lord has never answered.

4. The Last Grove: The killing floor between the Forked Pyre's gates is overgrown with ancient trees and squirming foliage. Hidden beyond the deadly garden's only narrow trail lie the stolen monuments of fallen or forgotten druidic faiths. Beneath grasping vines lie the last copies of several ancient druidic secrets, as well as the petrified remains of a near-godly, lynxlike agathion once called Urhasdea, Sister of the Moon.

5. The Red Warden: This gate passes into the inner reaches of the Forked Pyre, the vast fortress home of Furcas's armies, prisons, and trophies, as well as of the infernal duke himself. More than Hell-forged steel, the gate is sentient and embodies the eternal torment of the devil Zhurook—a mighty pit fiend who once failed Furcas in some vital duty. Furcas himself reshaped the pit fiend into a gate of scales and ever-molten iron incapable of leaving its post. The living gate has accepted its fate and now serves as a commander of Furcas's guard.

6. Typhon's Oppression: Captured in obsidian and steel, the baleful countenance of dragon-winged, serpent-tailed Typhon—the deceased former archdevil of Avernus—menaces all who approach Dis's gate. Furcas maintains this monument to his fallen former liege, in part out of grim honor, but more because one of Typhon's claws is locked within. The poisoned claw grants this stoic construct a measure of the dead god's terrifying power.

7. Walk of Laurels: Molten iron flows through the dam-like walls of the Forked Pyre before spilling into Pilgrim's Basin far below. From this high parapet, Duke Furcas personally oversees the mournful progression of souls and the clockwork movements of his troops. Here too the dam's gates can be commanded to open, flooding the paths beyond the walls and the crowded valley below with molten metal.

8. The Watchers: Two crimson domes watch the dead garden moon, Onysies, which sways in the skies above the Hanging Marches. Furcas cultivates his most delicate and aberrant experiments within these domes—new parasitic growths, soul-fed orchards, half-sentient blossoms, and the fruit of life and death. The crystalline domes shield this garden of strange beauty, as the inferno beyond is too harsh for much of its flora. The domes also serve as a prison for experiments beyond the limits of nature and fecund species too dangerous to release even upon Hell's cruel landscape.

9. The Titans' Beds: Four slabs of cracked marble wrapped in chains lay outside the Forked Pyre. Here Furcas binds those who offend him most—typically his own failed or dishonored servants. The magic of the slabs makes those bound upon them grow, causing the rusty chains to tear their skin. Into these wounds slip fiendish serpents, who gnaw burning cavities into the prisoners and slowly consume them from within.

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The Hanging Marches

From above, the Hanging Marches appear drowned in a vast gray-green sea, where slimy waves languidly lap the shores of rocky spurs and a central, smoldering island volcano. Those who draw closer swiftly realize their misperception, typically as vines as thick as a giant's biceps lash from the impossibly dense foliage, dragging trespassers into dark, crushing depths deadlier than any ocean abyss. Foul plants choke the Hanging Marches, so much so that their growth obscures all but the highest ground. Beneath the canopy of assassin vines writhing in windless tides, forests, marshes, hidden savannas, and grim villages sprawl in an emerald-tinged near-darkness. Even in the eternal dimness, plant life drawn from countless worlds flourishes and produces saps, pollens, and natural medicines of potencies rare in all the multiverse. Here, even the most innocuous growth can take on a life of its own; the marches' countless floral guardians patrol the inferno, as do diabolical hunters and the members of the Leeching Vein, an order of neutral evil planar druids sworn to Furcas himself.

From the Hanging Marches' seemingly endless morass erupt volcanic mountains, yet even these are shrouded in greedy plant life. The rivers of molten rock and metal that endlessly seep from the peaks struggle to burn back the wild growth, creating swamps of ash and unleashing wildfires that prowl through the demesne like serpents.

Recently—at least, as deities measure time—the Hanging Marches expanded to encompass the larger neighboring realm of Arima. That land of darkness, serpents, and rutting things was the personal garden demesne of Typhon, the former archdevil ruler of Avernus. After Typhon's death and the appearance of the stranger Barbatos, Arima was divided. Much of it was drawn into the skies over Avernus, where it became Barbatos's new realm, the Promised Land. The ruins that remained behind were left to loyal Furcas. The vegetation of the Hanging Marches hungrily expanded to fill this new territory, casting the land's twisted temples and the dens of its ancient serpents into twilight, and creating a vast reach now called Viperpool.

Furcas's Cult

Furcas is typically worshiped by merciless knights, corrupt druids, evil centaurs, and hobgoblins. Green dragons and graveknights sometimes ally with him, as do nature worshipers seeking ancient secrets. His favored devils are levalochs, but he is also served by numerous strains of fiendish plants and fire creatures infused with hellfire. Furcas's sanctuaries are castles and temples reclaimed by nature, preferably snarled with forest growth or partially buried in volcanic ash. His followers' most sacred sacrificial rite is known as the Green Spear, in which a swiftly growing plant (like bamboo or kudzu) is allowed to push through the victim

over several days, either using preexisting wounds or creating its own. His most common manifestation is the knight of the verge (see below). Rules for manifestations appear on page 6.

Furcas is worshiped as a demigod of duty, flames, and herbalism. His favored weapon is the trident and his symbol is a flaming pitchfork—his infamous weapon, the *Avernus Claw*. He grants access to the domains of Evil, Fire, Law, and Plant and to the subdomains of Ash, Devil, Growth, and Slavery (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Inner Sea Gods* for more information).

KNIGHT OF THE VERGE

CR 7

XP 3,200

LE manifestation of Furcas (100-ft.-radius circle)

Caster Level 7th

Notice Perception DC 19 (to notice movement inside the obviously unnatural overgrowth)

hp 14; Trigger proximity (entering area of plant growth);

Reset 1 day

Invocation A good-aligned sentient creature must be sacrificed using the Green Spear (see above) and its body seeded with kudzu, ivy, or similar vines. *Plant growth* must be cast on the seeds after they sprout (in 2d6 days).

Effect For as long as the manifestation remains undestroyed, a 100-foot circle around the focal corpse is affected as the overgrowth effect of the spell *plant growth*. These plants are immune to fire. While the unusual plants are obvious, the guardian hidden within is not. If a creature that is not lawful evil enters the affected area, a knight-like figure made of knotted ivy rises to attack. The knight has the same statistics as a shambling mound and recovers 5 hit points every round it remains within the overgrown area. It will not willingly leave the overgrown area, even to pursue enemies. If *diminish plants* is cast upon the area, the plants lose their immunity to fire and no longer heal the knight. If the knight is destroyed, a new knight appears after 24 hours.

Destruction *Diminish plants* must be cast upon the area, then the corpse at the center of the manifestation (Perception DC 20 to find) must be burned and its ashes doused with holy water.

Infernal Dukes

In the hierarchy of Hell, Asmodeus, the Prince of Darkness, reigns over all. Beneath him are the archdevils, his most trusted and powerful servants, who each rule one of Hell's layers. Beneath them, infernal dukes number among the Pit's most powerful inhabitants, generals of mighty devil armies and rulers of vast hellish realms called infernal demesnes. Every infernal duke is a demigod, and the oldest rival even the archdevils in power. Like demon lords, they number among the most potent and corrupt beings in existence and actively seek to tempt mortals to further their foul ambitions. Infernal dukes possess the following traits.



Infernal Duke Traits

Rulers of devilkind and generals of vast legions, infernal dukes seek to spread the might of Hell across the planes. All infernal dukes are lawful evil outsiders that are, at a minimum, CR 26 in power. Unless otherwise noted in an infernal duke's entry, infernal dukes possess the following traits (in addition to the traits possessed by all devils).

- **Regeneration (Ex):** Only epic and good damage, good and mythic damage, or damage from a creature of equal or greater power (such as an archdevil, a deity, a demon lord, or an empyreal lord) interrupts an infernal duke's regeneration.
- Immunity to ability damage, ability drain, charm effects, compulsion effects, death effects, energy drain, and petrification.
- Resistance to acid 30 and cold 30.
- **Hellish Resurrection (Ex):** An infernal duke rules an infernal demesne, a vast territory in or fundamentally linked to Hell. If an infernal duke is slain, its body rapidly melts into corruption (leaving behind any gear it held or carried), its soul returns to a hidden location within its realm, and it is immediately restored to life (as *true resurrection*) at that location. Once this occurs, an infernal duke can't use this ability again until a full year has passed. An infernal duke realizes it is vulnerable during this time and usually doesn't risk further battles for the remainder of that year, relying on the defenses of its realm and its legions of minions to protect it. An infernal duke who is slain again during this year or is killed by unusual methods (such as by a true deity or an artifact created for this purpose) is slain forever—its remains appear in Nessus among the corpses and trophies of other fallen infernal dukes. An infernal duke gains this ability only if it controls a demesne.
- **Frightful Presence (Su):** An infernal duke can activate its frightful presence as a free action as part of any attack, spell-like ability, or special attack, or by speaking aloud.
- **Summon Devils (Sp):** Three times per day as a swift action, an infernal duke can summon any devil or combination of devils whose total combined CR is

20 or lower. This otherwise works like the summon universal monster rule with a 100% chance of success, and counts as a 9th-level spell effect.

- Telepathy 300 feet.
- An infernal duke's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as lawful, epic, and evil for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.
- Being a demigod, an infernal duke can grant spells to its worshipers. An infernal duke's domains are Evil, Law, and two other domains relevant to its interests.

Infernal Demesnes

Every infernal duke rules a territory in or tied to one of Hell's nine layers. Infernal demesnes—also sometimes called *infernos*—range from nation-encompassing territories to planet-sized expanses utterly subjugated by Hell's diabolical legions.

Not all infernal demesnes are burning expanses; the environments, themes, and traits of each are as unique as the infernal dukes themselves.

These strange realms present unusual challenges and dangers to creatures trying to explore them. An infernal duke gains the following additional powers while in its inferno—the statistics presented for infernal dukes do not include these abilities, as a duke may be encountered beyond the borders of its demesne.

- Use of the following spell-like abilities at will: *demand*, *discern location*, *fabricate*, *major creation*, and *polymorph any object* (when used on objects or creatures that are native to the demesne, the *polymorph* duration factor increases by 6).
- Use of the following spell-like abilities once per day: *binding* and *miracle* (limited to physical effects that manipulate the realm or to effects that are relevant to the demon lord's areas of concern).
- **Heightened Awareness (Ex):** An infernal duke gains a +10 insight bonus on Perception checks and initiative checks.
- **Mythic:** All of the infernal duke's spell-like abilities function as the mythic versions of those spells as applicable. The infernal duke gains the mythic power and surge universal mythic monster abilities (*Pathfinder RPG Mythic Adventures* 227 and 228). An infernal duke gains a d12 surge die.



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Hellknights

Regardless of perceptions throughout the Inner Sea, those merciless enforcers of law and lethal justice known as Hellknights are not slaves of Hell or operatives of the dark god Asmodeus. Indeed, despite their close association with Cheliah, they're not even agents of that forbidding nation. From the martial order's earliest days, the Hellknights have been devoted to upholding the strictest interpretation of the law. Though they hold Hell's legions as models of ruthless efficiency, their name comes from a centuries-old insult their founder deflected by making it the knights' own.

The Hellknights care little for good or evil—only the rigid dispensation of justice. Some color this as righteousness, and others as domination, but neither matters to the

Hellknights so long as their actions adhere to the Measure, their codex of nationless laws, crimes, and punishments. Hellknights believe these codes apply to them even more than to common people. As such, Hellknights bear the weight of the Chain, a collection of philosophies and mantras founded in the Measure that are meant to expunge destructive urges. These doctrines focus on the virtues of order, discipline, and mercilessness, and any Hellknights who transgress against them face flagellation-like penances called Reckonings. In these ways, the Hellknights seek to guard themselves against corruption from within, from the world beyond, and from the temptations of Hell.

The Hellknights are in league with the armies of Hell, employing them as servants, shock troops, and symbols of dominance, and Hellknights called signifers hold the chains of these fiends, drawing them into the mortal world and loosing them upon their foes. While signifers are certainly not the only Hellknights vulnerable to corruption—diabolical or otherwise—the temptation for them proves greatest. Most believe their training and their rigid goals give them the discipline to tamp down spiritual corruption. Cloaked by such naive beliefs, the summoned devils take hold of their chains, and subtly—at first obsequiously—reverse the roles of slave and master. Often this begins innocuously, as even summoning a devil to the Material Plane is an amoral act.

Many signifers seek power to aid their allies and to better achieve their order's goals, and so seek knowledge, techniques, and magic from Hell's rulers. Others risk corruption by pursuing truths or the answers to mysteries such as the centuries-old, unsolved disappearance of the Hellknights' founder, Daidian Ruel. Still others are aided by those within the knighthood, as the Church of Asmodeus actively courts the Hellknights, and many of the Prince of Darkness's servants would make the oppressive knights their cat's-paws. Yet all these corruptive elements pale in comparison to the temptations faced by members of orders with heartless objectives, such as the Order of the Nail, which would wipe out races they deem primitive; the book-burning Order of the Rack; and the aloof Order of the Gate, which denies the existence of the sinister planar portal locked within its dungeons.

Despite these evils, the vast majority of Hellknights walk the neutral path intended by the Measure and the Chain. Some even cling to beliefs of righteousness and morality, but such lawful good Hellknights number in the minority in most orders, with fringe groups like the Order of the Scar and Order of the Torrent being exceptions. Yet, most insidiously, most of the evils found within the Hellknights are not faceless, institutionalized vices or the snarling grimaces of Hell, but rather the result of plain, mortal corruption.





Sharroa DiViri

This human woman is clad in menacing black armor, and an eyeless mask covers much of her face.

SHARROA DIVIRI CR 9

XP 6,400

Female human Hellknight signifer 4/wizard 5 (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Paths of Prestige 28*)

LE Medium humanoid (human)

Init -1; **Senses** see in darkness; Perception +9

Aura aura of law

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, -1 Dex, +3 profane)

hp 52 (9 HD; 5d6+4d8+14)

Fort +4, **Ref** +2, **Will** +7; +2 competence bonus vs. spells that rely on visual effects

Immune blindness, dazzled

OFFENSE

Speed 20 ft.

Melee mwk longsword +8 (1d8+2/19-20)

Ranged +1 light crossbow +3 (1d8+1/19-20)

Special Attacks hand of the apprentice (7/day)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 9th; concentration +13)

5th—*dominate person* (DC 19)

4th—*dimension door*, *stoneskin*, *wall of fire*

3rd—*dispel magic*, *fireball* (2, DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 17)

2nd—*detect thoughts* (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 16), *resist energy*, *scare* (DC 16), *scorching ray*

1st—*feather fall*, *magic missile* (2), *protection from chaos*, *shield*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 8, **Con** 12, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 20

Feats Arcane Armor Mastery, Arcane Armor Training, Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Light Armor Proficiency, Medium Armor Proficiency, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration

Skills Acrobatics -3 (-7 when jumping), Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (planes) +16, Perception +9, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +16

Languages Common, Dwarven, Halfling, Infernal, Varisian; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ arcane bond (signifer mask), assiduous gaze (vigilance), exceptional equipment, Hellknight order (Order of the Rack)

Combat Gear *potions of cure moderate wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +2 breastplate, +1 light crossbow with 20 bolts, mwk longsword, *cloak of resistance* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *sanguine talisman of Sheel Leroung*, signifer mask, granite and diamond dust (worth 250 gp), spell component pouch, spellbook (contains all prepared spells and all cantrips, plus three 1st-level spells, four 4th-level spells, and two 5th-level spells of the GM's choice)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Assiduous Gaze (Vigilance) (Su) While wearing her signifer mask, as a swift action, DiViri can see through up to 5 feet of stone, wood, or similar barriers within 30 feet as if they didn't exist. This effect cannot penetrate metal of any kind. She can use her assiduous gaze for up to 2 rounds per day; these rounds need not be consecutive.

Exceptional Equipment DiViri possesses the *sanguine talisman of Sheel Leroung*, a magic item more powerful than a character of her level should possess. In addition to this, she has access to many of the magical treasures of the Order of the Rack Hellknights—particularly *wands of summon monster*. This advantage increases her CR by 1.

Signifer Armor Training (Ex) DiViri's arcane spell failure chance in her breastplate is 20%. She can reduce this to 0% by making use of her Arcane Armor Mastery feat.

Sharroa DiViri believes most people don't deserve the lives they've been granted. One of three granddaughters of Severs DiViri, Lictor of the Order of the Nail Hellknights, Sharroa spent years studying magic with the signifers of the Order of the Rack. Befitting her cynical view of humanity, she oversees the testing of all Order of the Rack armigers, taking restrained delight in sifting the weak from the worthy.

Several years ago, Sharroa discovered a devil talisman mortared into a wall within the subbasement of Citadel Rivad. She's since identified it as belonging to Sheel Leroung, a wizard affiliated with the founder of the Hellknights. Using the authority of her rank, she's spent years investigating the relic and interrogating the devil bound within.

Sharroa regularly exchanges letters with her sisters, Embravi and Chaid, and she's fiercely protective of Demia and Ralli, her twin daughters.

SANGUINE TALISMAN OF SHEEL LEROUNG		PRICE 67,500 GP
SLOT neck	CL 8th	WEIGHT —
AURA moderate conjuration		

This crimson devil talisman once belonged to the diabolist Sheel Leroung, a conjurer who aided Daidian Ruel in investigating the ways of Hell. The wearer of this talisman gains a +3 profane bonus to Armor Class and a *telepathic bond* with the bearded devil bound within. Once per day, the wearer can attempt an opposed Charisma check against the barbazu's +0 modifier to summon him forth for 8 rounds, as per the spell *summon monster*. The barbazu bound within this talisman is known as Lodveyn the Wizeden. Rather than Weapon Focus (glaive), Lodveyn has Throw Anything—preferring to fling his polearm, then following it into the fray with his vicious claws. He claims to have been a servant of both Leroung and the ice devil Voulgarghas, and remembers much of the early days of the Hellknights' founding.

CONSTRUCTION REQUIREMENTS	COST 33,750 GP
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Craft Wondrous Item, *planar binding*, ability to conjure and bind a barbazu

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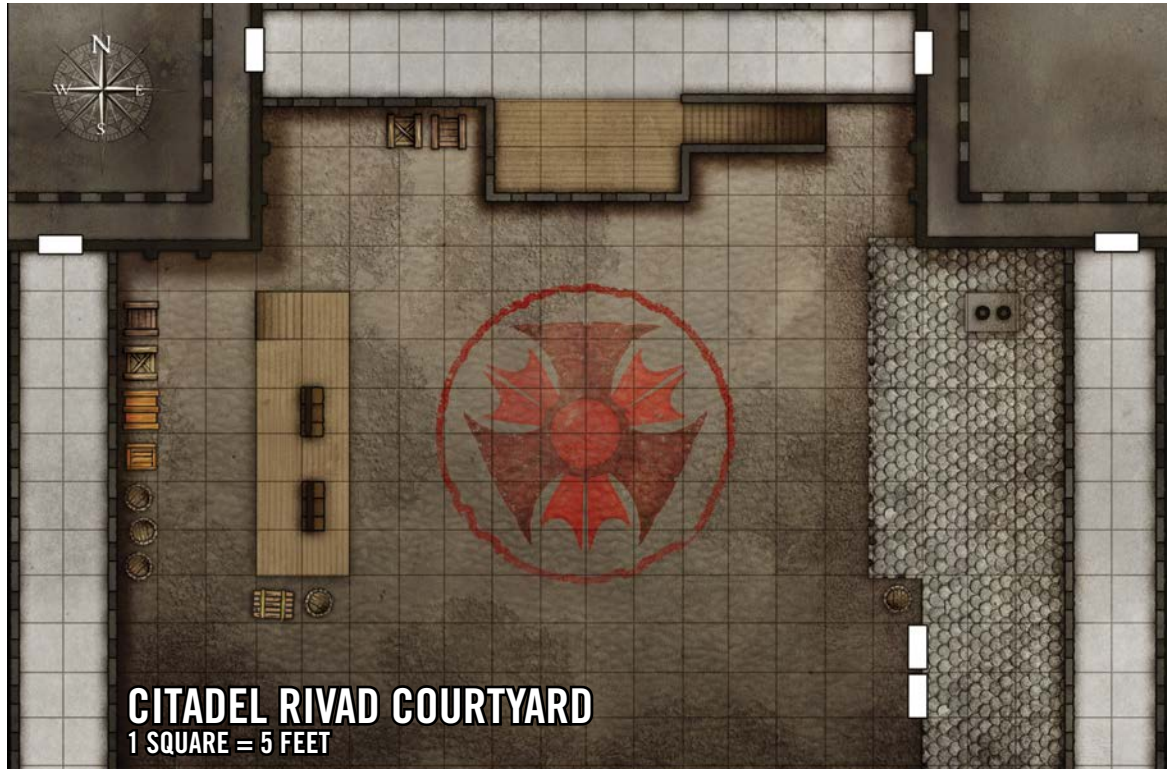
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Hellknight Trials

All true Hellknights have slain a devil. To enter the ranks of any Hellknight order, an armiger (a Hellknight squire) must face a test of bravery and prowess. Among the orders, this trial by fire is known variously as forging, damnation, the Binding, or simply the Test. Regardless of what the test is called, the uninitiated must literally face Hell and emerge victorious to pass it. Only after surviving this trial can a soldier call himself a Hellknight.

Every Hellknight order has its own traditions concerning its armigers' final test. In most citadels, it's a joyless, trial-like ritual conducted twice a year and witnessed by every available member of the order. A high-ranking officer—typically the order's lictor—oversees this test, administered by the citadel's signifers. After a lengthy introduction, the signifers call forth the first armiger. The soldier to be tested enters a 30-foot diameter circle—typically a weathered mark within the citadel courtyard. (The map of Citadel Rivad's northern courtyard above provides an example.) Once the initiate enters and signals readiness, the signifers summon a devil into the testing area. The trainee and the fiend then fight to the death. If the armiger falls, he dies—stories among the Hellknights claim that such failed souls are consigned to Hell, where they're murdered over and over by the devil who bested them. If the armiger triumphs, he's allowed to recite a series of memorized vows, swearing to uphold the Measure and live by the Chain. If his performance is judged suitable, he receives the right to wear the armor of his order as a true Hellknight.

Not all tests are ceremonial spectacles, though. By the word of the Measure, any Hellknight can serve as witness for any worthy soldier who bests a devil mightier than himself in single combat. If the Hellknight vouches for that individual and swears that the challenge conformed to the test's standards, the victor can join any Hellknight order that accepts him as a true Hellknight.

Those who achieve this deed fulfill the deadliest requirement of the Hellknight and Hellknight signifer prestige classes (see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: The Inner Sea World Guide* and *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Paths of Prestige*, respectively.)

Preparing for the Trial

Only the most foolhardy—and, thus, unworthy—Hellknight aspirants face their test without research and preparation. As such, in the days before the test, many Hellknight armigers learn a great deal about barbazus, the bearded devils they are most likely to face in combat.

Equip for Battle: Although armigers have not yet earned the right to wear true Hellknight armor, plate armor is still available to them. As barbazus wield Hell-forged glaives, sturdy defenses are a must. Preparing for the 10-foot reach of the devil's glaive is also advisable, making all manner of polearms common during the test. These also help armigers keep away from the devils' vicious beards. Ranged weapons are permitted during the test, but considering the trial's relatively small boundaries, their use is generally considered a poor strategy.

Hell Unleashed



Infernal Defenses: Like most devils, barbazu prove exceptionally resistant to mortal weaponry, except those forged of silver or blessed by good-aligned deities. To prepare for this, many armigers invest in silver weapons, *oils of bless weapon*, or, at the very least, silver weapon blanch (applied over multiple weapons; see page 105 of *Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment*). Many high-ranking Hellknight officers also have access to weapons with the *holy* special ability—either their own or relics of the order—that they might lend to favored armigers. While this isn't technically against the test's strictures, those who blatantly make use of weapons other than their own risk losing the respect of future peers and overseers.

Magical Fortification: None of the test's rules restrict armigers from making use of spells, potions, wands, or other magical supplements during the test, either to defeat their foe or to enhance their abilities. What is forbidden, though, is anything entering the testing grounds after the trial has begun—including another's magic. So long as an armiger gains the effects of another's spell before the testing ceremony begins, it's permitted. However, the test is preceded by a lengthy explanation of its history, purpose, merits, and rules, which alone might last over an hour. As such, spells with durations of only a few minutes usually expire before an armiger's battle begins. This makes longer-lasting spells, such as *magic vestment* and even *rage*, preferred. Some particularly canny armigers with particularly devoted allies (or deep pockets) also make clever use of *shield other*. Other enhancements, such as a bard's inspire courage ability, are permitted, but only if they don't disrupt the high seriousness of the occasion—thus preventing all forms of music, dance, and oratory entertainment. As such, only a few armigers have been clever enough to benefit from such effects.

Prepare to Bleed: Even more dreaded than death by a barbazu's glaive or ripping claws is the slow, weakening wearing down an armiger faces should he suffer from infernal wounds. Knowing that drawing out the fight isn't in their best interest, most armigers attempt to end the battle as swiftly as possible. Additionally, they usually bring multiple curative potions, knowing that even drinking several doesn't promise an end to an infernal wound.

Administering the Trial

Hellknight tests are typically administered by an order's signifers, who confirm to their own traditions and practices.

Conjuring Devils: Most Hellknight tests involve the summoning of bearded devils. Many signifers capable of casting 5th-level spells employ *summon monster V* to summon such devils, potentially even using feats such as Extend Spell to increase how long the fiend stays on the Material Plane. Hellknight citadels often have tightly

guarded stores of wands bearing this spell, created by their most powerful signifers. Other infernal magic items such as devil talismans and rarer tokens might be employed to bring a barbazu into the testing ground (or onto the field of battle if need be). These devils are typically summoned rather than called, so that they return to Hell upon being defeated. This is a preference held by most signifers (and the Hellknights' allies), though not a requirement of the test.

Mercilessness: Although summoned creatures must obey those who conjure them, signifers typically unleash the devils they summon to fight as they please. Rather than following the flawed mortal tactics of their conjurers, these devils fight as the cruelty of the Pit compels them. While a signifer can retake control in an instant, most avoid doing so, as not to risk being accused of tampering with a test's results.

Aftermath: The battle doesn't always end at the test's conclusion. The disease known as devil chills is well documented among Hellknights, and allied clerics are often made available at Hellknight citadels should survivors need to avail themselves of healing. For most armigers, death in the test is a damning judgment—proof that the initiate was not fit for service. In rare cases, slain armigers who have impressed a high-ranking Hellknight or who are owed a debt of gratitude by such leaders might be resurrected at their superior's expense. This isn't against the test's rules or the greater laws of the Measure and the Chain, but it usually looks like mercy—potentially casting doubt on the resolve of both the armiger and his benefactor. Only in exceptional cases, when matters of justice and honor are plainly at stake, are such second chances entertained.

Advanced Trials

Only those who attempt to become a true Hellknight at the earliest possible opportunity are likely to face a bearded devil as part of their test. Those who wait, or who diffuse their talents along multiple paths, face more difficult tests. As a character's level increases, so does the deadliness of her test—and the unlikelihood of completing it alone. This increase in lethality serves the Hellknights well, as they're more interested in lifelong commitments, not secondary dalliances.

The most common types of devils that might face a character in a Hellknight test (and the CR and HD of each) include: bearded devils (CR 5, 6 HD), host devils (CR 6, 7 HD), warmonger devils (CR 7, 8 HD), erinyes (CR 8, 9 HD), bone devils (CR 9, 10 HD), barbed devils (CR 11, 12 HD), heresy devils (CR 12, 13 HD), ice devils (CR 13, 14 HD), handmaiden devils (CR 14, 15 HD), belier devils (CR 16, 17 HD), apostate devils (CR 17, 18 HD), and pit fiends (CR 20, 19 HD). In cases where there is no breed of devil with Hit Dice that closely match the PC's, advanced versions of near matches suffice.

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The archfiend Moloch has waged war across the many planes of the multiverse since time immemorial. As the general of Hell's armies, the Ashen Bull commands one of the largest, most ferocious fighting forces in existence. Moloch is conquest incarnate, and there are few forces that could possibly stand in his way. With the patience only immortal beings from distant planes can muster, Moloch has been amassing a vast army, which he readies for an inevitable strike upon the Material Plane. To facilitate the eventual invasion, Moloch and his most powerful minions maintain a multiverse-wide network of stable planar portals that act as way stations and easy access points to strategic targets and are almost invariably occluded from unsuspecting mortal eyes by various layers of deception. Among scores of such beachheads on Golarion is the Magrevore, a volcanic portal deep in the Darklands beneath Qadira that is guarded by one of the Ashen Bull's most merciless servants: the ancient pit fiend Mardehzuk.

The pit fiend has maintained and watched over the portal for centuries, during which time he has established a syndicate of cultists, allies, and unwitting servants, which works throughout the Darklands and the surface above to spread Mardehzuk's infernal influence and ready the populace for their impending subjugation before Moloch's horde. Mardehzuk benefits from a constant stream of sacrificial victims, funneled into the lightless depths by a large network of greedy slavers, evil duergar, and diabolical faithful. These slaves are broken of their will, twisted in their faiths, and left helpless to their own damnation. In fell rituals to the Ashen Bull, the souls of these wretched sacrifices are reaped like so much grain, and stored as pathetic lemures within grotesque pools surrounding the portal—the raw materials Mardehzuk uses to craft minions and soldiers to further his ends.

All of Mardehzuk's eventual sacrifices begin as property of Qadiran caravans, many of which roam the shifting sands of the Keleshite satrap. Most traders buy slaves based on their physical attributes; the meek become house servants, the comely are placed in harems, and the strong become field hands or mine workers. However, several years ago, word spread that a certain duergar slaver named **Radegril** (LE female duergar ranger 14) was seeking an unusual type of slave, paying top coin for slaves that were particularly devout worshippers of good-aligned gods. Over time, Qadiran caravaneers began reserving their most pious slaves for the duergar trader, whose true name and race only her most trusted agents knew. The slavers bring their chattel to Khoka for sale to Radegril's captains, who lead their

purchases into Nar-Voth through a series of caverns accessible from the banks of the Pashman River.

Though the amoral Qadiran traders may not know it, every slave they sell to Radegril is subjected to the most grueling physical punishment one could possibly imagine. Radegril is paid handsomely not only to procure the most sanctimonious slaves she can find, but to physically break them. She forces her charges to work in such dangerous conditions that crippling injury is not merely a possibility, but an inevitability. Slaves work until their backs give out, their limbs are mangled, and their lungs are permanently befouled. Once they are so disabled that they cannot possibly survive unaided, Radegril turns them over to her employer: a high priest in Moloch's cult named **Achmejaana** (LE male human cleric of Moloch 18).

Achmejaana is the final intermediary between the slaves and eternal damnation. He is one of only a few living mortals to ever have seen Mardehzuk, and it's his job to prepare the pit fiend's sacrifices. Achmejaana leads a small cadre of menial devils, and their common purpose is to break the captives' spirits. Because Mardehzuk prefers to sacrifice apostates, the prisoners must be willing and ready to renounce their faiths when the proper time comes. This is far more subtle work than Radegril's raw brutality, and it requires constant magical and psychological torture to achieve. The slaves are brought by degrees to believe that, if their respective gods were as merciful and just as they claim, they would never let such torment befall their true believers. Once the slaves have been stripped of their faith, they are dragged to Mardehzuk's sacrificial altar, overlooking the portal to Hell.

Mardehzuk's lair is a series of cooled lava and metal pillars, which rise above the shores of a magma lake deep beneath the surface of Golarion. On the surface of the lake is a slow-moving whirlpool—the Material Plane's best approximation of the infernal forces that await on the other side of the portal. Quagmires of particularly runny lemures—puddles of diabolical proto-flesh—writhe and wail for relief along the lake's shore. Once the slaves have been stripped of their humanity, they are dragged to the topmost platform, where Mardehzuk promises them relief from their suffering if they only renounce their gods, and accept infernal dominion. No mortal yet has shown the will to refuse the devil's offer, and every slave thus far sacrificed has relented. Once the captives renounce their faith, they are impaled on the horns of an enormous iron bull's head, and their souls join the lemure pools at the edge of the lake, to be shaped into servants of Moloch by Mardehzuk.



Mardehzuk

Dark horns and spines jut from the face and joints of this red, winged creature, and hate roils in its eyes.

MARDEHZUK **CR 21**

XP 409,600

Male advanced pit fiend (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 294, 80)

LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +36

DEFENSE

AC 38, touch 18, flat-footed 29 (+9 Dex, +20 natural, -1 size)

hp 402 (23d10+276); regeneration 5 (good weapons, good spells)

Fort +25, **Ref** +22, **Will** +19

DR 15/good and silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 32

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +35 (2d8+13), 2 wings +33 (2d6+6), bite +35 (4d6+13 plus poison and disease), tail slap +33 (2d8+6 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (2d8+19), disease, hellfire breath (60-ft. cone, 20d10, Reflex DC 33 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), poison

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +27)

At will—*blasphemy* (DC 25), *contagious flame*^{APG}, *desecrate*, *fireball* (DC 21), *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *greater scrying* (DC 25), *invisibility*, *magic circle against good*, *mass hold monster* (DC 27), *persistent image* (DC 23), *power word stun*, *scorching ray*, *trap the soul* (DC 26), *unholy aura* (DC 26), *wall of fire* 3/day—quicken *fireball* (DC 21) 1/day—*meteor swarm*, *summon* (level 9, any one devil of CR 19 or lower, 100%)

STATISTICS

Str 37, **Dex** 29, **Con** 35, **Int** 26, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +23; **CMB** +37; **CMD** 56

Feats Ability Focus (poison), Cleave, Great Cleave, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*fireball*), Vital Strike

Skills Appraise +31, Bluff +34, Climb +39, Diplomacy +34, Fly +33, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (arcana) +34, Knowledge (planes) +34, Knowledge (religion) +31, Perception +36, Sense Motive +36, Spellcraft +31, Stealth +31, Use Magic Device +31

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ devil shaping

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Disease (Su) *Devil chills*: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 33; *onset* 1d3 days; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Str; *cure* 3 consecutive saves.

Hellfire Breath (Su) Mardehzuk can unleash a cone of hellfire as a standard action. This attack deals 20d10 points of damage; half of this damage is fire damage, while the other is unholy damage (as per *flame strike*).

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 35; *frequency* 1/round for 10 rounds; *effect* 1d6 Con; *cure* 3 consecutive saves.

Mardehzuk is singularly focused on his task as guardian of an infernal portal and uses lieutenants and intermediaries in nearly all dealings with mortals save sacrificing them, which he revels in doing himself. His favored servants are cornugons, levalochs, and puragaus.



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Magrevore

Deep in the Darklands, beneath Qadira's burning sands, lies the Magrevore. There, held within an enormous volcanic cavern, Mardehruk guards and tends to the portal through which Moloch's armies will one day pour forth onto the Material Plane.

Two pairs of horned devils patrol the cavern's access tunnels, as well as the shores of the magma flows (area 2). The cornugons can be found in any area of the cavern as needed and follow Mardehruk's orders unflinchingly.

HORNED DEVILS (4)

CR 16

XP 76,800 each

hp 217 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 76)

1. Lemure Pools

The scorched shores of Mardehruk's cavernous sanctuary are made of porous rock that climbs above the magma below at heights ranging from 20 to 50 feet. Amid this network of platforms are two pools of seething protoflesh. Faces, limbs, and digits briefly form on the pools' surfaces, only to immediately dissolve back into the roiling mire. These are the tormented souls of all of Mardehruk's sacrifices, reincarnated as hundreds of lemures, too pitiful even to hold individual forms. The lemures cannot leave the pools, but their limbs continually grasp for something to pull in. Any creature that comes within 10 feet of a lemure pool risks getting dragged in. Reaching, contorted pseudopods constantly attempt to grapple all non-devil targets within a 10-foot radius of the pool's edge (CMB +24, CMD 38). Grappled targets take 10d6 points of damage each round and are pulled 5 feet toward the pool's center on each round during which the lemure pool maintains its hold. A creature submerged within the pool instead takes 20d6 points of damage each round as the protodevils simultaneously smother and rip them apart. As they are composed of the makings of evil outsiders, a pool can be completely destroyed if targeted by a *dismissal* or *banishment* spell (no save), leaving grappled targets in a 20-foot hole.

2. Magma Flow

Several viscous veins of molten rock feed into a large magma lake, while others disappear down winding tunnels into adjacent caves. Molten magma deals 2d6 points of fire damage per round to any creature that touches it, and 20d6 points of damage to any creature submerged in it. It continues to deal half the initial amount of damage for 1d3 rounds after contact.

Additionally, the spaces adjacent to these flows are filled with choking, sulfurous fumes. These fumes affect creatures identically to thick smoke, and any creature within 5 feet of a magma flow must succeed at a DC 15 Fortitude saving throw or spend that round choking and coughing. The DC of the check increases by 1 for each subsequent round that the creature spends bathed in the fumes.

3. Basalt Columns

A pair of basalt columns rise from the magma lake below, connected by sets of floating iron stairs. The eastern column rises 60 feet above the cavern's floor, while the western column stands 80 feet above the lava. When he is carrying out sacrifices, Mardehruk's slaves stand precariously upon these stairwells and columns in a long and orderly line. While a few obstinate sacrifices leap to their deaths in the lake below rather than die upon the altar above, most wait willingly, standing patiently for their turn to die by the pit fiend's brutal hands.

4. Altar to Moloch

Towering over the basalt pillars is a floating cube of spiked iron, levitating steadily at a height of 100 feet above the portal below. In place of one of the corner spikes, a carving of an enormous bull's skull—an altar to the Ashen Bull himself—overlooks the portal. The carving is rusted and charred, covered in maggots and the blood of the pit fiend's sacrifices; a single large ruby set into the skull's forehead glows with an otherworldly light. Cowering at the edge of the platform are several slaves, whose eyes seem absent of any willpower. Mardehruk stands majestically before the altar, intoning a diabolical litany as he impales slave after slave upon the bull's horns. These sacrifices are left to slowly cook upon their skewers, their dissolving flesh falling into the magma or portal below. While most of the souls of Mardehruk's sacrifices are quickly added to the pools of protodevil flesh in area 1, some are held within the altar's mysterious gem, the power of which can be unleashed as a devastating manifestation.

MOLOCH'S SOULS

CR 18

XP 153,600

LE persistent manifestation of Moloch (30-ft. radius from the altar of Moloch)

Caster Level 18th

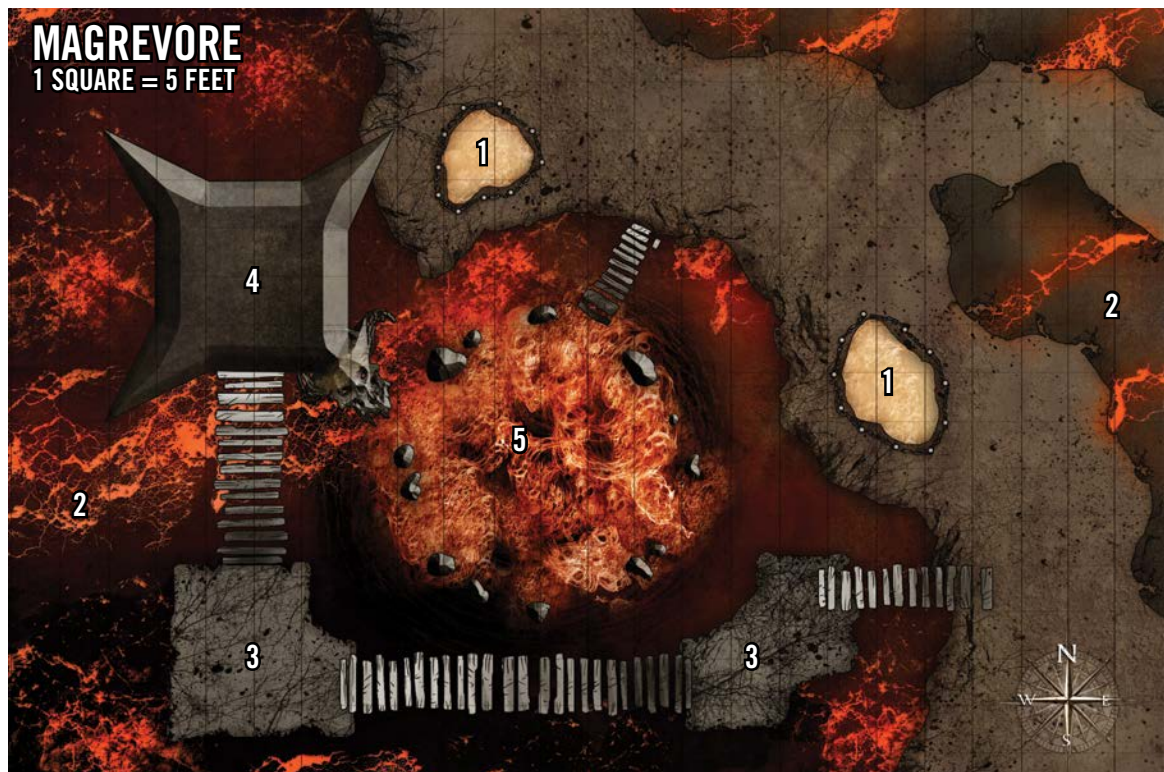
Notice Perception DC 34 (to see the image of a wailing face flash across the surface of the altar's ruby)

hp 81; **Trigger** proximity (a nonevil target comes within 20 feet of the altar); **Reset** 1 minute

Invocation A ruby worth at least 10,000 gp must be bathed in the blood of a good outsider with at least 15 Hit Dice, then submerged in lava for 1 year. It must then be placed upon an altar to Moloch and an ex-cleric of a good deity must be sacrificed upon the altar.

Effect The souls of the sacrifices upon the altar issue forth as shadowy specters of flaming and broken bodies, visible only to nonevil creatures within the manifestation's area. This functions as the spell *weird* (DC 25), though targets need not be within 30 feet of one another as long as they are within the range of the manifestation.

Destruction The ruby upon the altar must be submerged in freezing holy water created as part of a *miracle*.



5. Infernal Portal

In the center of the Magrevore's burning lake is a whirlpool of slowly spiraling magma, beneath the surface of which lies Mardehzuk's portal to Hell. This acts as a permanent *gate*, but a creature traveling through it must be able to survive at least 1 full round of submersion in magma (see area 2) in order to survive the journey. Mardehzuk takes his job as sentry of the portal seriously, and only those who have Moloch's permission may traverse the planes through his gateway. Only a direct order from Moloch himself changes the pit fiend's resolve, and Mardehzuk and his minions attack any creature (devils included) that attempt to enter the portal or that emerge from the other side.

MARDEHZUK **CR 21**

XP 409,600

hp 402 (see page 49)

Moloch's Wrath

If a party manages to defeat Mardehzuk, destroy his blasphemous altar, or close the portal to Hell, they will have dealt a crippling blow to the archfiend Moloch—a feat few mortals can boast. While this sounds like an unqualified victory, meddling in the affairs of demigods may lead to centuries' worth of unforeseen consequences. In the short term, Mardehzuk's vanquishers may claim his weaponry and magical items, which are of a quality and rarity seldom seen on the Material Plane. In the long term, they will have earned the unwelcome attention of Moloch himself, whose fiery vengeance will follow them wherever necessary.

Treasure: On the infernal side of the portal, Moloch was already preparing for a full invasion. His armies were mustered, and he had already begun to stockpile magical items in Mardehzuk's lair. However, if the portal remains closed, his magical treasures are the mortals' to claim.

The stockpile includes a +3 *seeking longbow*, a *bastard's sting* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment* 150), a *mail of malevolence* (*Ultimate Equipment* 127), a *staff of power*, and a *volcanic shield* (*Ultimate Equipment* 133), all of which were taken from fallen adventurers who attempted to defeat the pit fiend; these are kept less for their usefulness than as trophies. The trove also includes tomes that detail the true names and sigils of several of Moloch's top lieutenants. Deciphering these tomes requires an advanced knowledge of the Infernal language, as well as sustained effort. For more information on true names and sigils, refer to *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Princes of Darkness, Book of the Damned, Vol. I*.

A New Enemy: In defeating Mardehzuk, an adventuring party will have earned themselves one of the most dangerous enemies in the multiverse. In the days after the party destroys the pit fiend's altar, they will be plagued by vivid nightmares of a bull with flames pouring from its eyes, nose, and mouth. In the visions, the bull charges inexorably toward them, and they can neither stop it nor outpace it. The visions subside after a few days, but the message should be clear: Moloch has taken personal notice of them, and there is no place in the multiverse, save the bosom of Heaven itself, that will preserve their souls from his wrath.

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Though deities are powerful beyond the ken of mere mortals, they are not infallible. Unfortunately, because of the power that gods wield, the unintended consequences of their lapses reverberate in surprising ways. The fiendish creatures known as asuras arise as incarnations of divine misdeeds. Because asuras spawn spontaneously, they lack a home plane or a consistent heritage. Though they are not devils, many asuras lair in Hell. While asuras lack a unified culture, they are bound by a common philosophy, which can be loosely described as anti-theological. Consequently, many asuras spend their time in nihilistic meditation, or in active attempts to defile holy places throughout the multiverse.

Eons ago, a group of worshipers of the Vudrani deity Diomazul, the Serpent of Eighty Blades, was involved in a civil dispute with a neighboring cult. When Diomazul's followers requested his divine assistance, their god slaughtered every member of the rival faction. The massacre was so far out of proportion to the perceived sleight that it prompted the incarnation of an adhukait asura named Miranksha.

Adhukait asuras are warriors that specialize in violence and desecration. They always appear as two creatures intertwined as one, but an adhukait is actually a single entity with two minds. Because the misdeeds of a god of war gave rise to Miranksha, she is a particularly bloodthirsty asura. For the past several millennia, the aggressive asura has wandered through Vudra and Casmaron, assaulting Iroan temples and Keleshite caravans and slaughtering everyone in sight. Miranksha disappeared for the past several centuries, presumably lost in dark meditation, and her reign of blasphemous terror slowly faded into legend. However, she recently resurfaced on the secluded isle of Jalmeray.

Jalmeray is the westernmost of Vudra's Impossible Kingdoms. The island nation's renowned monasteries draw monks and others who wish to hone their physical and mental discipline from all over the Inner Sea. The most famous of these monasteries are the Houses of Perfection, which require applicants to best genies in battles of speed, strength, and wits to earn admission. Jalmeray is also home to monastic temples dedicated to simplicity and quiet contemplation.

One such temple, the Flowering Jasmine Monastery, is located deep in the island's northern forests. The Flowering Jasmine Monastery is dedicated to several Vudrani gods, including Irori, Likha, and Gruhastha, as well as the empyreal lords Korada and Falayna. The temple's pristine natural surroundings and the dedicated patience of the Flowering Jasmine monks made it an ideal retreat for worshipers of many goodly faiths. Over the centuries, pilgrims of a variety of faiths

have taken up the responsibility of tending the sacred site. The most recent group of caretakers was a small group of clerics and monks of Korada, the empyreal lord of forgiveness and peace.

About a year ago, Miranksha fell upon the temple, attracted by its sterling reputation and remote location. The peaceful monks were no match for her wrath, and she massacred them in a bloody rampage. However, unlike her progenitor Diomazul, the asura left a single survivor—the temple's battered head monk, Shanaduri. Miranksha is keeping the monk imprisoned amidst the rotting corpses of her former students, and routinely torments her with well-reasoned persuasion aimed at eroding the holy woman's faith. The asura has yet to break the monk's spirit, but it is only a matter of time before Shanaduri turns apostate.

Meanwhile, the asura has been entertaining herself by preying upon the pilgrims that come to worship. Like a spider in the center of a web, Miranksha uses the temple as a lure for the faithful. Once visitors arrive, the asura captures them, torments them, and then tosses their ruined corpses in with the head monk. Miranksha has also thoroughly desecrated the temple, exhuming all the bodies from the graveyard, despoiling the holy mantras, and turning her kills into grisly trophies. As a further insult to the gods, she has carefully inscribed an ode in honor of an asura rana, the most powerful type of asura, and infused the words with unholy power.

Miranksha's unholy reign has gone unnoticed for the better part of a year, due largely to the remoteness of the monastery. It's not unusual for a pilgrim to spend several months under the tutelage of the wise Vudrani monks, so few of the visitors are yet considered missing. However, there is one pilgrim whose absence has recently caused alarm. A travelling Sarenite priest named Xeriban journeyed to the Flowering Jasmine Monastery from Osirion. A famed theologian and expert in Iroan philosophy, Xeriban was on sabbatical touring holy sites throughout Golarion. Once he set foot in the desecrated monastery, however, his plans changed horrifically. He is currently imprisoned alongside the head monk, fighting to keep his sanity and faith.

Fortunately for Xeriban, before he trekked to the temple, he sent a missive from nearby Padiskar to the Tephu Academy of Scribes in Osirion. The message indicated his intention to stay at the temple for no longer than a week, after which time he would relay his findings. Three weeks have now passed, and Xeriban's Osiriani contacts grow increasingly concerned. Now, the Academy of Scribes is offering a reward to anyone who can ensure the safety of the lost scholar and discover the mystery behind the Flowering Jasmine Monastery.



Miranksha

This creature's twin bodies are conjoined at the thighs. Its twisted, rust-colored bodies feature many horns and strange holes.

MIRANKSHA CR 8

XP 4,800

Variant adhukait asura (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3* 22)

LE Medium outsider (asura, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +4; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.;

Perception +20

Aura elusive (30 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +7 natural)

hp 85 (9d10+36); regeneration 5 (good weapons, good spells)

Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11; dual mind, +2 vs. enchantments

DR 5/good; **Immune** curse effects, disease, flanking, poison;

Resist acid 10, electricity 10; **SR** 19

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 mwk kukris +16/+11 (1d4+6/18–20), 2 claws +10 (1d4+3)

Special Attacks dance of disaster

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 7th; concentration +11)

Constant—*feather step*^{APG}

At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *spider climb*

3/day—*blink*, *blur*, *freedom of movement*, *mirror image*, *spike stones* (DC 18)

1/day—*summon* (level 4, 1 adhukait 50%)

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 19, **Con** 19, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Step Up, Wind Stance

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+20 when jumping), Bluff +16, Escape

Artist +18, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (planes) +5,

Knowledge (religion) +13, Perception +20, Perform

(dance) +10, Stealth +16; **Racial Modifiers** +6 Escape

Artist, +4 Perception

Languages Common, Infernal,

Vudrani; telepathy 100 ft.

Gear mwk kukris (2), *cloak of resistance* +1

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Dance of Disaster (Su) Whenever Miranksha hits with a melee attack during a full-attack action, she can move 10 feet before making her next attack. Miranksha's normal speed doesn't limit this movement.

Dual Mind (Su) Miranksha can attempt two saving throws against mind-affecting effects. If either saving throw succeeds, the mind-affecting effect fails to affect Miranksha.

Like most adhukait asuras, Miranksha is a brutally efficient assassin who delights

in stealing and defacing holy relics. However, Mirisanka is both more patient and more cunning than others of her kind. Although she still slaughters most of her victims, she draws a perverse joy from corrupting individuals of strong faith, particularly those who worship good-aligned beings.

Three centuries ago, Mirisanka entered a deep meditation, contemplating how to hone her blasphemous acts in pursuit of her ultimate goal—to reincarnate as an asura rana. The conclusion that she drew from her meditation was that in order to gain such power, she must strengthen her connection to the asuras who have already ascended. She greatly admires the asura rana and demigod Vritra, who appears as a three-headed serpent, and she is now attempting to draw his attention. She does not worship Vritra, and nothing raises her ire faster than those who dare to accuse her of bowing down to him as a god. The asura's plot to gain power from Vritra is showing promising results, as Vritra's influence has already made Miranksha a more potent killer than most of her kind.

Mirisanka's recent actions at the Flowering Jasmine Monastery are the next step in her plan. Her current goal is to corrupt the head monk Shanaduri so thoroughly that the holy woman willingly aids in the corruption and murder of innocents. Shanaduri's mental fortitude is wearing Mirisanka's patience thin, and until Xeriban showed up, it was unclear which the monk's will or the asura's patience would give way first. Now the asura is considering using Xeriban as her accomplice if he proves easier to break.



Flowering Jasmine Monastery

This secluded monastery lies on a mountainside deep in the woods of Jalmeray. A lone footpath leads from nearby Padiskar to the temple.

1. Front Dais

Several stone statues, a large brass bell, and a smattering of windblown leaves rest on this raised dais.

2. Lotus Pond

A small waterfall trickling down the adjacent mountainside feeds this lotus pond. Several pairs of weather-beaten straw sandals are discarded at the pool's edge. Miranksha convinced a shambling mound to camouflage itself with the pond's lotuses, which were once a symbol of Korada's blessing.

SHAMBLING MOUND CR 6

XP 2,400

hp 67 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 246*)

3. Meditation Room

The temple's meditation room is a large, sparsely furnished space. Several thin cushions are strewn haphazardly around the room. A squat altar at the eastern edge of the room features several incense burners, three bottles of jasmine oil, and a pair of small stone statues whose faces have been scratched off and replaced with Infernal words. The statues once depicted the deities Likha and Gruhastha, which the PCs can discern with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check. The Infernal words covering their faces are "failure" and "fraud," respectively. Miranksha recently burrowed a small passage in the back of this room to access into a natural cave system that riddles the mountainside behind the monastery.

4. Training Room

To the south of the meditation room is a small training room where the monks honed their physical fitness. The cabinet and weapon racks are empty.

5. Desecrated Bodies

The southernmost chamber in the cave system is filled with bodies shrouded in linen, as well as dozens of burial urns. One of the urns contains a *headband of ki focus* (*Pathfinder RPG Ultimate Equipment 250*) and a *clear spindle ioun stone*. Miranksha brought three recent visitors to the temple into this room and tortured them into madness. Sorakia and Zalajar were clerics of Korada who had turned to the empyreal lord for redemption from their own dark pasts, and Pradapi was a monk seeking a peaceful place to meditate upon Irori's teachings. Sorakia and Zalajar renounced their faith before they died and rose as huecuvas, and Pradapi lost his sanity before he died and rose as an allip.

PRADAPI CR 3

XP 800

Allip (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 12*)

hp 30

SORAKIA AND ZALAJAR CR 3

XP 800 each

Advanced huecuvas (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 290, 150*)

hp 22 each

6. Blasphemous Altars

Small niches have been carved into the walls of this dank stone tunnel. Each niche is roughly hewn and features a single basalt tablet inscribed with dense blocks of Infernal text. Because the writing style is archaic, deciphering the text requires a successful DC 30 Linguistics check (DC 20 if the PC speaks Infernal). Each tablet contains a litany written in an ancient poetic style—an ode to Vritra, a Vudrani demigod. Anyone who reads or touches a tablet triggers a venomous manifestation (see page 6).

SERPENT'S BITE CR 7

XP 3,200

LE persistent manifestation of Vritra (20-foot radius centered on the litany)

Caster Level 7th

Notice Perception DC 18 (to notice the sound of hissing)

hp 31; Trigger touching or reading the litany; **Reset** 1 day

Weakness slow

Invocation Spend at least 600 gp inscribing and adorning a litany in praise of Vritra, then slay a priest of a good-aligned deity or other divine being in front of the litany.

Effect A swarm of venomous snakes (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 3 249*) appears on the ground in front of the litany, as if summoned by *summon monster IV*, and attacks anyone who isn't an asura. Any creature that touches or reads a portion of the litany must succeed at a DC 16 Fortitude saving throw or fall under the effects of a *poison* spell.

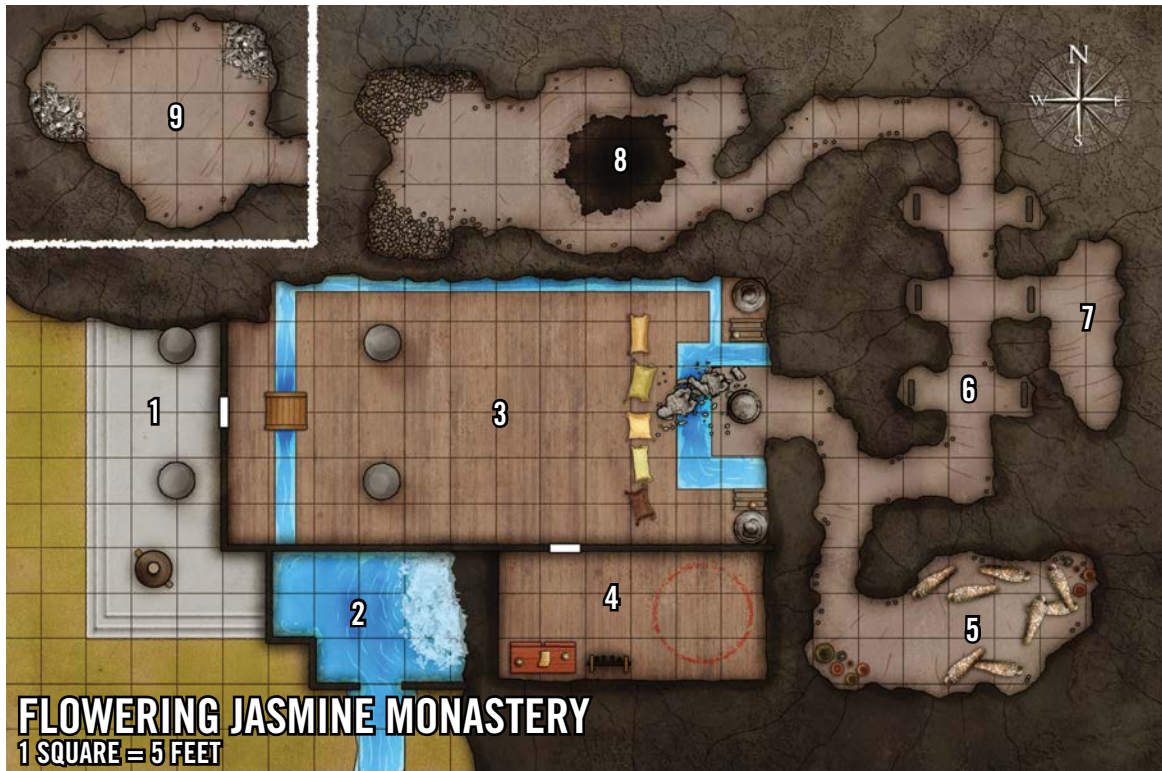
Destruction The manifestation is destroyed if a creature mars the litany until it is no longer legible, then covers the writing surface with holy water.

7. Trophy Cave

Miranksha clawed several alcoves into the wall in this small chamber. Each alcove features a different decaying body part decorated with tattoos of religious and personal significance. Silk tapestries hang here, each one riddled with holes and covered in blood.

8. Reeking Pit

The edges of this large cavern are filled with rubble, and a large pit occupies the center of the room, descending into blackness. The foul stench of decay emanates from the pit.



9. Charnel Prison

At the bottom of the reeking pit is a narrow, 40-foot-long tunnel that terminates in a 15-foot-high cavern. The ground in both the tunnel and the cavern is filled with rubble, making it difficult terrain. Rotting, dismembered corpses are strewn about the edges of the chamber. Shanaduri and Xeriban are chained to the wall with masterwork manacles secured with good locks (Disable Device DC 30). Their gear is stacked in a pile in the corner of the room, along with a variety of personal items that Miranksha collected from her other victims. Xeriban's holy symbol is jammed into a corpse's skull.

Unless the sound of combat drew Miranksha's attention, she is here tormenting her captives. If she hears intruders coming, she attempts to use her summon ability.

MIRANKSHA CR 8

XP 4,800

hp 85 (see page 53)

SHANADURI CR 4

XP 1,200

LG guru (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 246)

hp 27 (currently 2)

XERIBAN CR 7

XP 3,200

NG male cleric of Sarenrae 7 (use the statistics for Kyra,

Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex 280)

hp 56 (currently 3)

Restoring the Monastery

The grateful Shanaduri asks the rescuing party to help cleanse the temple of the asura's desecration.

Bury the Dead: Miranksha's victims may not rest peacefully until they have received proper burial rites. Their dismembered bodies must be gathered and then burned on ceremonial pyres. In return for this service, Korada rewards each PC with a *blessing of courage and life* (*Pathfinder RPG Advanced Player's Guide* 205), which lasts for one month or until expended.

Escort Xeriban: The Osiriani scholar and priest Xeriban asks the PCs to escort him to the nearby town of Padiskar so that he can report back to the Academy of Scribes. Xeriban offers to assist the PCs with researching a topic of their choice within the vast Great Library of Tephu. Because Xeriban has extensive knowledge of the Great Library, his assistance proves the PCs with a +5 circumstance bonus on Knowledge checks within the library. Additionally, the grateful scholar gives the party his *gem of brightness*, which has 25 charges remaining.

Purify the Temple: If the PCs wish to purify the temple, they must remove desecrated items from the temple grounds and either repair or destroy them. The basalt tablets in the fiend's blasphemous altars must be destroyed. Once the PCs have cleared the temple of the symbols of the asura's profane invasion, the guardian deity Gruhastha bestows the effects of the *bless weapon* spell to one of each of the PC's weapons for one month. This blessing is tied to the affected weapon, and may not be in any way altered or transferred.

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In the northern reaches of Ustalav, along the shores of Lake Prophyria, sits the city of Karcau. Though Karcau's isolation makes it an easy target for the jokes of Ustalav's southern aristocrats, in reality, Karcau boasts the cultural assets of a city twice its size. The Karcau Opera is widely renowned, and its greatest singers and musicians double as some of the finest music instructors in the country. The city's many socialites generously patronize the arts. Foremost among these cultural leaders is prominent entrepreneur and owner of the conspicuous Eylusia Building, **Zeffiro Lesiege** (NE male human cleric of Alichino 5). However, like Karcau itself, Lesiege holds many dark secrets beneath his public exterior.

Lesiege got his start as a simple undertaker, but his flair for extravagance and presentation quickly transformed the local mourning business. Through his influence, funerals became major social events on par with cotillions and weddings. Aristocrats began to throw lavish wakes, endlessly attempting to one-up each other's costumes, decor, and comestibles. As his business exploded, Lesiege went from funeral proprietor to trendsetter and social heavyweight. His status and riches eventually allowed him to build the hyper-stylized Eylusia Building, which resembles a giant mausoleum.

Lesiege's appetite for decadence and debauchery grew with his prestige and fortune, however, and he soon began spending much of his time pursuing seedier interests. Unfailingly, these involved illicit drugs, gluttony, and reckless sexual encounters. His unsavory appetites, plus his status as a rising star in Karcau's social scene, made Zeffiro an easy target for Alichino, Jester Prince of the Cage. The malebranche promised Lesiege even more power and ample opportunity to enjoy his vices; in return, Alichino wanted him to collect souls to serve as soldiers in the malebranche's growing army. Giddy over a seemingly one-sided deal, the entrepreneur readily agreed.

To that end, in addition to coordinating gluttonous events for Karcau's Harlequin Society, Lesiege established his own clandestine diabolical outfit. By night, its wildly excessive parties cavorted beneath the Eylusia Building in a fog of booze, mind-altering substances, decadent foodstuffs, drunken orgies, and dark rituals. Word of these indulgent parties spread, and the Eylusia Building became a secret nighttime hotspot. However, the organization's ties to Alichino were loose at best, as Lesiege proved a better partier than diabolic cult leader.

Early in the cult's existence, thinking himself a first-rate servant of Alichino, the foolish Lesiege conducted a ritual in which he requested a reward from the malebranche. He had hoped to receive the profuse thanks of a high-ranking infernal lieutenant and perhaps a boon that would suit his degenerate tastes. To his surprise, though, the Jester

Prince of the Cage sent Terindelle—an erinyes who served Alichino without question, and who wasn't there to fawn over Lesiege or give him any gifts. Instead, she was tasked with voicing Alichino's displeasure. The cult hadn't been impressing the fiend, and Terindelle was there to ensure that Lesiege won as many souls for the malebranche as possible. Terindelle made it clear that she would work for Lesiege, but if his incompetence ruined Alichino's plans, she would annihilate the cult leader.

Terindelle arrived at a particularly opportune time, for Lesiege's excesses had grown so extreme that even his funeral empire was in danger of crumbling. Without delay, the erinyes, disguised as a studious, aloof, and beautiful human woman, became the enterprise's director. She steered it back toward profitability and took the reins of the diabolical organization. Now, deep beneath the Eylusia Building, Lesiege still hosts his erotic, excessive parties for bored nobles while Terindelle quietly records souls promised to Alichino in an intoxicated haze.

Unfortunately, none of the obtuse aristocrats know the true purpose of the cult. In public, Terindelle and Lesiege have never once mentioned Alichino by name, nor have they ever hinted at their infernal ties. Instead, under Terindelle's expert guidance, the organization has gradually transformed from a bourgeois club of vice with a smattering of vile leanings into a diabolical cult worthy of the name.

As the organization grew, Terindelle changed the nature of its rituals. She added structure, order, and complex liturgy to the proceedings. The use of wine and drugs became formalized, driving some participants into uncontrolled states of sexual mania, while others watched dispassionately from behind diaphanous curtains. Recently, the cult began experimenting with ritual human sacrifices. So subtle has Terindelle's influence been that the members of the organization don't even realize how extreme their actions have become. This pleases Alichino immensely, for he finds much humor in tricking these oblivious mortals into committing atrocities in his name—and unknowingly pledging their souls to his cause.

After years of Terindelle's tutelage, Lesiege is now primed to become one of the most powerful figures in Karcau. His fortune rivals that of any noble in the city, and many of the civic leaders are also members of his diabolic outfit. Lesiege is widely respected, and none suspect his true infernal allegiance. However, Lesiege and his elite erotic parties are not without their detractors. Several fringe members have become nervous at the extremity of the group's activities, even if they don't quite remember them all. One such member, a local landlord named **Orphaneus Aldermun** (N male human expert 2), has become increasingly skittish. He recently sent a letter to a distant cousin, an Iomedean cleric, detailing the activities of the cult. Orphaneus has



since disappeared, but word about Lesiege's parties is now out, and it's clear that something must be done.

Terindelle

This short-haired woman's stern gaze and prim outfit convey a purely businesslike attitude.

TERINDELLE **CR 10**
XP 9,600

Variant erinyes (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 75)
 LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, *true seeing*; Perception +22

DEFENSE
AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 16 (+1 deflection, +7 Dex, +6 natural)
hp 126 (11d10+66)
Fort +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9
DR 5/good; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 21

OFFENSE
Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)
Melee +1 *longsword* +17/+12/+7 (1d8+6/19-20)
Ranged +1 *cruel composite longbow* +19/+14/+9 (1d8+6/×3) or rope +18 touch (entangle)
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +17)
 Constant—*true seeing*
 At will—*alter self*, *fear* (single target, DC 19), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *unholy blight* (DC 19)
 3/day—*major image* (DC 18)
 1/day—*summon* (level 4, 3 hell hounds, 50%)

STATISTICS
Str 20, **Dex** 25, **Con** 23, **Int** 14, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 21
Base Atk +11; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 33
Feats Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge[®], Mobility[®], Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run
Skills Bluff +19, Diplomacy +19, Escape Artist +13, Fly +20, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (local) +5, Knowledge (planes) +14, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +22, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +16
Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.
Gear +1 *longsword*, +1 *cruel composite longbow* (+5 Str bonus) with 60 arrows, *ring of protection* +1, inkpens (3), parchment, sealing wax, signet ring

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Entangle (Su) Terindelle carries a 50-foot-long rope that entangles opponents of any size as an *animate rope* spell (CL 16th, DC 21). She can hurl the rope up to 30 feet with no range penalty. Her rope functions only for her and no other. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Terindelle is an unquestioning servant of Alichino, but even she hesitated when the Jester Prince of the Cage assigned her to handle Zeffiro Lesiege. After all, the bumbling entrepreneur was far more likely to pass out in a pile of naked, stupefied nobles than to collect any significant number of souls for the malebranche. To appease Lesiege's ego, Alichino made it clear that the erinyes must work for the cult leader, not the other way around. There is wisdom in the malebranche's decision, though, for Zeffiro is in a position to collect nearly all the souls of Karcau's nobility, and Terindelle is just focused, efficient, and ruthless enough to maximize that potential. No doubt, Alichino finds it amusing to pair such diametrically opposite servants together.

For her part, Terindelle accepted the assignment stoically. She knows that she will serve as Alichino's highest-ranking general when he finally alights on dark wings to conquer the Material Plane. She also knows that the cretin nobles she recruits for her patron will eventually end up serving as her foot soldiers and minions, and she desperately waits for the day when she can unleash her bottled fury upon their wretched souls.

In particular, she gleefully anticipates bending Lesiege's repellent form and weak mind to her cruel will. She has special plans for the lecher, including ripping apart his mortal body and eternally feeding him pieces of it. Needless to say, Terindelle has no loyalty to Lesiege; therefore, if a higher-level party confronts her, or if all her cultist allies are killed and she cannot immediately dispatch the attackers, she may try to escape back to Alichino's side. For now, though, while the cult remains unchallenged, the erinyes bides her time, busily collecting souls for the infernal patron who will one day give her what she desires most.



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The Eylusia Building

Zeffiro Lesiege's headquarters is a five-story tower called the Eylusia Building. The ground floor is an ostentatious showroom featuring mourning displays. The second floor is a workshop, where artisans build deluxe coffins. The third floor features laboratories where alchemists perform advanced embalming and mummification techniques, and the fourth floor is administrative. The fifth floor is home to Lesiege's penthouse office, detailed below. The multiple floors can be accessed either by an internal stairwell or an external cargo lift system.

1. Waiting Room

This room and the adjacent hall are carpeted with somber Keleshite rugs. A plush chair is situated against the wall.

2. Terindelle's Office

If Terindelle is expecting the PCs, they find her here, meticulously reviewing paperwork. If the PCs arrive during one of Lesiege's parties, she is in the basement's ceremonial chamber (area 8).

Most of the shelved books in this sparse office are mundane ledgers; however, a successful DC 15 Perception check reveals that a few show more wear. Hidden inside them are several pages written in Infernal, detailing specific vile rituals and bearing a fiendish sigil. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that it is Alichino's sigil.

3. Lesiege's Penthouse

Lesiege's personal office is enormous, well lit, and opulent. Several stylized paintings hang on the wall. Behind the largest piece, Lesiege has a wall safe secured with an electricity arc trap. The safe contains dossiers with embarrassing or incriminating details about many of Karcau's aristocrats. Lesiege is almost never here or anywhere in the building, even during his parties. He's content to let Terindelle run things while he pursues his vices elsewhere.

ELECTRICITY ARC TRAP CR 8

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 29

EFFECTS

Trigger touch; **Reset** none

Effect electricity arc (7d6 points of electricity damage, DC 22 Reflex half); multiple targets (all targets in a 30-ft. line)

4. Boardroom

A successful DC 15 Perception check reveals that a subtle, tamped-down path in the carpet leads to the space in between the conference tables. Further examination (Perception DC 20) reveals a secret lift built into the floor. Inserting a special key into a keyhole next to the lift triggers it. The key is hidden under a chair's seat (Perception DC 20). Without a key, activating the mechanism requires a successful DC 20 Disable Device check. The lift goes down to area 5.

5. Basement Entrance

Each alcove here features a statue of an unsmiling jester wearing a painted domino mask. A successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that these are thinly veiled depictions of Alichino. The lift here ascends to area 4.

6. Lounge

In the eastern half of this comfortably furnished lounge, three ice sculptures stand between tables brimming with liquor bottles and tumblers. If the room is unoccupied, as it is during the daytime, half-full tumblers, riding crops, and random scraps of silk clothing lie strewn around the room.

If the room is occupied, the PCs find a mass of mostly nude nobles engaging in erotic play. All occupants wear masks, and unmasked individuals are questioned. Anyone armed, wearing armor, or fully clothed is also scrutinized.

The ice statues here are actually ice golems. Since they're disguised as jester statues, a successful DC 20 Perception check is required to notice that their ice doesn't look fit for consumption. If anyone enters the room during the daytime, or if the revelers yell for help, the constructs attack.

ICE GOLEMS (3) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 53 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 161)

7. Privacy Rooms

These curtained rooms are filled with props, including at least one large cage. If these rooms are occupied, the people here consume drugs and engage in sexual acts.

At the hallway's end, two hired guards stand outside while the curtained room is occupied, turning away those without a written invitation from Lesiege or Terindelle.

EXPERT BODYGUARDS (2) CR 5

XP 1,600 each

hp 59 each (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 269)

8. Ceremonial Chamber

Hidden in one alcove is a statue of Alichino in all his wicked glory, with black wings and a hideous grin. The eastern doors lead to the sewers, which require a skiff to navigate.

If the PCs enter during a ritual, they find a naked, unmasked person chained to the floor, surrounded by several masked figures. In her true form, Terindelle intones a diabolical incantation while a cultist holds a dagger aloft. If interrupted, Terindelle and the cultists attack.

TERINDELLE CR 10

XP 9,600

hp 126 (see page 57)

INITIATES (8) CR 1

XP 400 each

hp 16 each (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 245)



THE EYLUSIA BUILDING



EXPLORING THE EYLUSIA BUILDING

Both the city of Karcau and Zeffiro Lesiege's headquarters offer a variety of potential missions and encounters. Several additional details are listed below, each of which may be a prelude, side quest, or continuation of an investigation into the cult that operates underneath the Eylusia Building. For more information on Karcau, see *Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Rule of Fear*.

Nobles Scorned (CR 7): It's customary to bury Karcau's deceased nobles with the jewelry and other ornaments they held most precious in life, but rumors persist that some such baubles have gone missing on bodies entrusted to Lesiege's care. One angry family, who insists that valuables were stolen off their loved one during the body's viewing, hires the PCs to infiltrate a wake and subsequent funeral service and catch the culprit in the act. During their covert operation, the PCs discover a ring of criminals lurking among Lesiege's funerary ushers and attendants, including two freelance thieves (*Pathfinder RPG NPC Codex* 147). Once the PCs corner them, in the interest of self-preservation, the thieves tell them about an odd conversation they overheard between Lesiege and his director, Terindelle. The conversation seemed to imply that they were responsible for the disappearance of Orpheus Aldermun and his unspecified dark fate. The thieves are also eager to share that Lesiege and Terindelle often seem far more occupied than their daily duties would require.

Beneath the Streets (CR 8): Beneath Karcau lurks a large network of submerged caverns that has been modified and repurposed as sewer tunnels. These subterranean

networks are also home to a variety of repugnant creatures, including black puddings (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 35), trapper lurking rays (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 4 187), and a festering spirit (*Bestiary* 4 98). The sewers also house a whole community of former swamp-dwellers who have recently immigrated into the tunnels beneath the city. The insular swamp people are master survivalists, and they have extensively booby-trapped their territory. If the PCs infiltrate the Eylusia Building's cult from the sewers, or if Terindelle flees into the tunnels, they will face several of these obstacles. The swamp-dwellers are no friends of devils, though, and if they hear that an erinyes might be among them, they could turn into allies should the PCs gain their trust.

Heinous Experiments (CR 9): On the Eylusia Building's heavily secured third floor, alchemists and necromancers conduct distasteful research into various mummification and corpse-preservation techniques. In the central laboratory, these experiments have turned particularly heinous, and they have recently led to the creation of two mohrgs (*Bestiary* 208). Until Lesiege can decide what to do with these foul creatures—he briefly considered using them in his cult's dark rituals—they remain locked away, or so the researchers claim. Recent rumors of strange noises from below the Eylusia Building's administrative offices seem to indicate that perhaps the researchers' situation is much more perilous than they've admitted. Worse, a group of embalming apprentices to Lesiege have gone missing, and rumors persist that these creatures might be somehow involved.

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Vipostix

Despite Hell's reputation as a place of eternal punishment for the damned, not all who burn in its flames deserve such a fate. Such is the tragedy of **Benner Lightbourne** (LG male human paladin of Iomedae 7), a virtuous man who happened upon the location of the famed *Thorncrown of Iomedae*. Lightbourne languishes in Caina, the eighth layer of Hell, as the victim of Vipostix, a vicious apostate devil who believes the abducted paladin is the key to striking a blow against righteousness.

Lightbourne's dark path began innocuously enough. An Iomedae agent based in Lastwall's northern Fangwood, the paladin had been infiltrating a group of smugglers from Nirmathas. As it turned out, the criminals were rather foolish and readily told him about their highest-priced contraband, including several choice items from Vellumis. When the ringleader also mentioned they had fenced "some worthless-looking blasting crown," Lightbourne's interest was piqued.

The smugglers described a wooden crown with jagged metal shards protruding from it that they had stolen from an Aspis Consortium agent. They had overheard the agent bragging about the crown's abilities, but when they tried to wear it, it only made the smugglers feel tired and weak. One fool who used it even accidentally immolated a packhorse. Shrugging, the smugglers sold it for a handful of gold to a hooded woman, who said she was headed to Tamran to meet her handler.

Upon hearing this, Lightbourne was stunned. Deep in his pious heart, he knew the smugglers described not some minor magic item but the *Thorncrown of Iomedae* itself. Missing for 75 years, the legendary artifact is the remnant of the helmet the goddess wore when she emerged, newly ascended, from the Starstone Cathedral.

Lightbourne immediately revealed his true identity to the criminals, placing them under arrest. He bound their hands, escorted them to Vigil, and turned them over to the authorities. Then, he met with his Sword Knight and told him the shocking news that the *Thorncrown* was nearby, and well within the Iomedaeans' grasp.

The information was merely hearsay, though, and Lightbourne's superior balked at rousing the Knights of Ozem to retrieve the artifact just yet. Instead, Lightbourne promised to travel to Nirmathas himself, retrieve the artifact, and send word back to Vigil. Then, Lightbourne's Sword Knight asserted, the knights would gladly provide the paladin and the crown with an escort home.

Vipostix, however, had other plans. Before Lightbourne could ever make it to Nirmathas, the devil snatched the lone paladin and brought him to Caina. He tortures him still, hoping to learn the *Thorncrown's* location. He knows the paladin will break soon, allowing the devil to set in motion his plans to destroy the crown.

Vipostix

The gem-encrusted skull of this gaunt humanoid form floats above its regally clad shoulders, surrounded by jagged crystal spikes.

VIPOSTIX CR 17

XP 102,400

Variant apostate devil (*Pathfinder Campaign Setting: Princes of Darkness, Book of the Damned, Vol. 1* 54)

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +26

DEFENSE

AC 32, touch 20, flat-footed 22 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +12 natural)

hp 279 (18d10+180); regeneration 5

Fort +16, **Ref** +20, **Will** +18

DR 10/good and silver; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 28

OFFENSE

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

Melee 2 claws +29 (1d8+10/19–20 plus 1d6 Wisdom drain)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks boundless reach, ohrwurm, summon devil

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +27)

At will—*alter self* (DC 21), *dream* (DC 24), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *major image* (DC 22), *mirage arcana* (DC 24)

3/day—*blasphemy* (DC 26), *dominate person* (DC 24), *greater scrying* (DC 26), *hold monster* (DC 24), *veil* (DC 25)

1/day—*mind fog* (DC 24), *screen* (DC 27)

STATISTICS

Str 31, **Dex** 28, **Con** 30, **Int** 21, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 28

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +27 (+29 disarm); **CMD** 48 (50 vs. disarm)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Acrobatics +27, Bluff +30, Diplomacy +34, Disguise +17, Fly +30, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +23, Perception +26, Sense Motive +26, Stealth +30

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ indomitable oration, malleable form

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Boundless Reach (Su) Vipostix's claws can slice through reality, allowing him to make melee attacks against any creature he is aware of (typically creatures within 100 feet). Vipostix threatens only the 10-foot area around him and cannot make attacks of opportunity against creatures farther away. This ability can span miles or even planes if Vipostix uses *greater scrying*



to pinpoint a certain creature. Spells that prevent planar travel, such as *forbiddance*, also protect against Vipostix's boundless reach. *Dimensional anchor* prevents Vipostix from using this ability for the duration of that spell. An attacked creature can retaliate that round, striking at Vipostix's claws with weapons or spells as if his entire body were present, but cannot grapple or otherwise prevent the claws from vanishing out of reach at the end of the round.

Once per day as a move action, when Vipostix deals damage with this ability, he can appear within 10 feet of the creature attacked, even if it's on a different plane. Vipostix must return to his original location within 10 minutes. If he does not, he is immediately shunted back there as if via *greater teleport* or a one-way *gate*. When Vipostix returns this way, he can take up to one Medium or smaller creature with him as long as he is in contact with it (Will DC 28 negates). The hole in reality is invisible to all other creatures and functions for no one other than Vipostix.

Indomitable Oration (Su)

Vipostix's speech is always perfectly clear and cannot be silenced or warped through mundane or magical means. In areas of incredible noise, through water or airless voids, and even in areas of magical silence, Vipostix's voice can still be heard and understood normally. All beings understand Vipostix, as if he constantly speaks in all tongues at once.

Malleable Form (Su) Vipostix has complete control over his physical form, and if transformed into another shape against his will, he can revert back to his own form as a free action.

Ohrworm (Ex) Three times per day as a standard action, Vipostix can whisper a fundamental and terrifying truth to one creature within 5 feet. The target must succeed at a DC 28 Will saving throw or have Vipostix's words take root in its psyche. Outsiders and elementals receive a +2 bonus on their saving throws to resist this ability. Initially, this seems to have no effect. Anytime the victim tries to rest, however, it must succeed at an additional DC 28 Will saving throw or be affected as per the spell *nightmare*. Afterward, the victim

must succeed at another DC 28 Will saving throw or have its alignment shift one step toward lawful evil. Only by unlearning what Vipostix told it can a victim be free of this effect; this requires a spell such as *miracle*, *modify memory*, or *wish*. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Summon Devil (Sp) Once per day, Vipostix can attempt to summon 1d6 bone devils or 2d4 bearded devils with a 50% chance of success, or one ice devil with a 20% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of an 8th-level spell.

Wisdom Drain (Su) Vipostix drains 1d6 points of Wisdom each time he hits with his claw attack. He does not heal any damage through his regeneration ability during any round that he uses his Wisdom drain.



Much like Benner Lightbourne's chance discovery of information about the *Thorncrown of Iomedae*, Vipostix stumbled upon knowledge of the paladin by accident. He overheard Lightbourne's name in connection with several Asmodean converts to Iomedae's faith; curious, Vipostix turned his scrying eyes toward the man—at just the moment the paladin told his Sword Knight that he had located the crown.

The apostate devil then developed a deliciously heinous plan. He'd accost Lightbourne while the paladin traveled to Nirmathas and drag him to Caina. In short order, he'd pull the *Thorncrown's* location from the tortured man; then, he'd place the artifact on Lightbourne's head and kill him. Once the *Thorncrown* resurrected the paladin, the devil would use more torture and cold logic to convince Lightbourne to renounce Iomedae and embrace Mephistopheles, Caina's archdevil lord, obliterating the *Thorncrown* and paladin alike. Vipostix believes that this would prove, despite the claims of good gods and their followers, that holiness only ever leads to painful, utter annihilation.

Even if Lightbourne's information turns out to be wrong and Vipostix doesn't locate the artifact, the apostate devil knows that the paladin's disappearance may prompt righteous Iomedaeans or the paladin's other allies to track him to Caina. In that case, the ever-confident devil salivates at the possibility of turning more pious individuals into blasphemers. There is no chance, Vipostix believes, that any virtuous heroes could keep him from profiting from this situation.

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Spike of Suffering

Among Caina's endless spires stands Vipostix's Spike of Suffering. Anchored to neighboring pillars with enormous chains, the spike is over 700 feet tall, and Benner Lightbourne is imprisoned atop it.

The chain links near the spike's base are over 6 feet wide, while those near the pinnacle (area 2) are less than a foot wide. The narrower chains sway, so scampering across them requires a successful DC 20 Acrobatics check. Vipostix is less likely to notice intruders on the lower chains.

Like the rest of Hell, Caina is strongly evil-aligned and strongly law-aligned, and creatures with nonevil or nonlawful alignments take penalties here. Some spells also function differently in Hell. For more information, see Chapter 7 of the *Pathfinder RPG GameMastery Guide*.

1. Pillar

Remnants of a ramp that once spiraled up the pillar provide footholds and handholds to anyone attempting to climb it. Scaling the spike requires a series of successful DC 20 Climb checks.

Creatures that fall from the spike plunge into Caina's malignant darkness. Any nonevil creature that begins its turn in the darkness gains a permanent negative level (Fortitude DC 23 negates). The only way to escape the darkness is through teleportation effects.

Patrols of a single horned devil and three of ice devils keep watch over the spaces between the spires and the chains that link them.

HORNED DEVIL **CR 16**

XP 76,800

hp 217 (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 76)

ICE DEVILS (3) **CR 13**

XP 25,600 each

hp 161 each (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary* 77)

2. Pinnacle

Lightbourne is here, chained to a column made of superheated iron. He paces in an endless circle, tormented by the apostate devil's mocking litanies against his faith.

Vipostix has cast a permanent *dimensional anchor* on the chain and the leg shackle that bind Lightbourne, affecting the paladin as if it were cast on him as long as his shackle is attached (Disable Device DC 45, hardness 20, hp 50, break DC 28). He has cast a permanent *status* spell on Lightbourne.

The superheated column uses *true seeing* to detect any additional creatures that move onto or within 5 feet of the pillar's pinnacle. Each round, starting on the round it detects one or more intruders, the iron column casts *disintegrate* (CL 15th) targeting the creature nearest to it. The column immediately alerts Vipostix when it detects intruders. If the column is disabled from below the pinnacle (with *dispel magic*, for example), Vipostix is not

alerted. The column ignores the prisoner and the creature that last sat upon the *throne of blasphemy* (see area 3).

A rescued Lightbourne is deeply shaken but eternally grateful, and still determined to locate the *Thorncrown*. He asks for the PCs' help traveling to Nirmathas to find it.

3. Apostate Throne

Vipostix's throne was created for the devil's blasphemous activities by Mephistopheles himself. Vipostix currently sits upon the minor artifact, trying to break Lightbourne.

VIPOSTIX **CR 17**

XP 102,400

hp 279 (see page 60)

THRONE OF BLASPHEMY		MINOR ARTIFACT
SLOT none	CL 16th	WEIGHT 500 lbs.
AURA strong enchantment		

By sitting on the *throne of blasphemy* and intoning profane blasphemies (a full-round action) with hands soaked in the blood of a good-aligned sentient being, a creature gains the ability to poison the minds of those nearby for 24 hours. Every round the seated creature speaks (a standard action), all creatures with Intelligence scores of 3 or higher within 100 feet must succeed at a Will save or be compelled to listen, becoming vulnerable to its blasphemies. The save DC is equal to 10 + the seated creature's Charisma modifier + 1/2 its Hit Dice. Deafened creatures, or those immune to sonic mind-affecting effects, are not considered to be listening.

The seated creature can then use its speech to affect listeners as if by the following spells: *confusion* (as a 4th-level spell), *crushing despair* (as a 4th-level spell), *enthrall*, *modify memory*, or *suggestion* (as a 3rd-level spell). The seated creature can affect multiple victims with different spell effects in the same round. The DC to resist these spells is equal to the original DC from above + the mimicked spell's level. Victims still receive saving throws against these effects, but if they fail their saves, they are not aware that the throne is working its power on them.

Any victim that succeeds at its saving throw against a particular spell effect is immune to that effect for the next 24 hours. However, it can still be affected by the throne's other spell effects. These are sonic mind-affecting effects.

A creature that gains the power to poison other creatures' minds from the throne maintains this ability for 24 hours even if it moves off the throne. If another creature sits on the throne and gains this power, any other creature that gained the ability this way immediately loses it.

The throne imposes 2 permanent negative levels on nonevil creatures that sit upon it and use its blasphemous power.

DESTRUCTION

The *throne of blasphemy* is destroyed if a lawful evil creature is killed upon it and then *magic circle against evil* is cast upon the throne.



SPIKE OF SUFFERING
1 SQUARE = 5 FEET

Gallery Of The Damned

Caina, the eighth level of Hell, is filled with villains from throughout Golarion's history. Damned to an eternity of torture and imprisonment, these figures are the last keepers of long-lost secrets that still confound contemporary mortals. There are dozens of such damned souls in Caina; below are a few examples. These individuals can be found in various hellish prisons located throughout the locale's wicked terrain.

The Disgraced Noble: The legendary coward **Raamnaba** (NE male human aristocrat 5) was once a member of the ruling class of Ninshabur—a vast empire in Casmaron that spread into the Inner Sea during the Age of Destiny. Toward the end of his life, Raamnaba was charged with escorting the ruling class's children and elderly to the kingdom's treasure-temple while military phalanxes battled the Spawn of Rovagug. However, as the Tarrasque raged forth from the Pit of Gormuz, the noble began to panic, and he tried to sacrifice his charges in exchange for his own worthless life. Needless to say, despite Raamnaba's desperate bargaining with infernal powers, his plan failed. Now, he is imprisoned in Caina, guarded by an immolation devil (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 2 87*). The noble reveals the location of his empire's long-lost treasure-temple—now buried somewhere near the Pit of Gormuz—to anyone who vanquishes his tormentor.

The Corrupt Astrologer: The wizard **Hyron Matnari** (NE male human diviner 6) was once a member of the Saoc Brethren, the astrologers who governed the nation

of Lirgen during the Age of Enthronement. During his lifetime, Matnari falsified many of his divinations, resulting in government policies that stuffed his own pockets. Unfortunately, his decades of perfidy corrupted many of his fellow astrologers' findings, thus disrupting the government's entire divination system. His corruption indirectly contributed to his people's inability to foresee the formation of the Eye of Abendego, which wiped out Lirgen. Matnari's corruption earned him a spot in a tiny cage hanging from one of Caina's many chains. If released, he can give his rescuers the location of an abandoned observatory in the Sodden Lands. Many ancient records and divinatory texts from fallen Lirgen remain there.

The Warlord Betrayer: The amoral warlord **Ninktaini** (CE male human cavalier^{APG} 7) was ruler of a city-state in the ancient Tekritanin League, which occupied modern-day Thuvia during the Age of Destiny. The Tekritanin League was in constant tension with the Jistka Imperium and Ancient Osirion, and border wars in which many died were common. However, sometime in the late -1400s AR, Ninktaini struck a deal with his Osiriani rivals, opening up his city's gates in exchange for endless luxury. The Osirians razed the city, and Ninktaini enjoyed the sumptuous rewards of his betrayal—but only during his mortal life. Now, he is imprisoned atop a spire near Lightbourne's prison, guarded by a pair of horned devils (*Pathfinder RPG Bestiary 76*). If freed, Ninktaini reveals the location of an undiscovered glade deep in the Barrier Wall where sun orchids grow in abundance.

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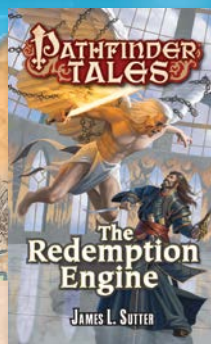
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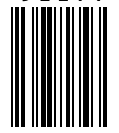
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