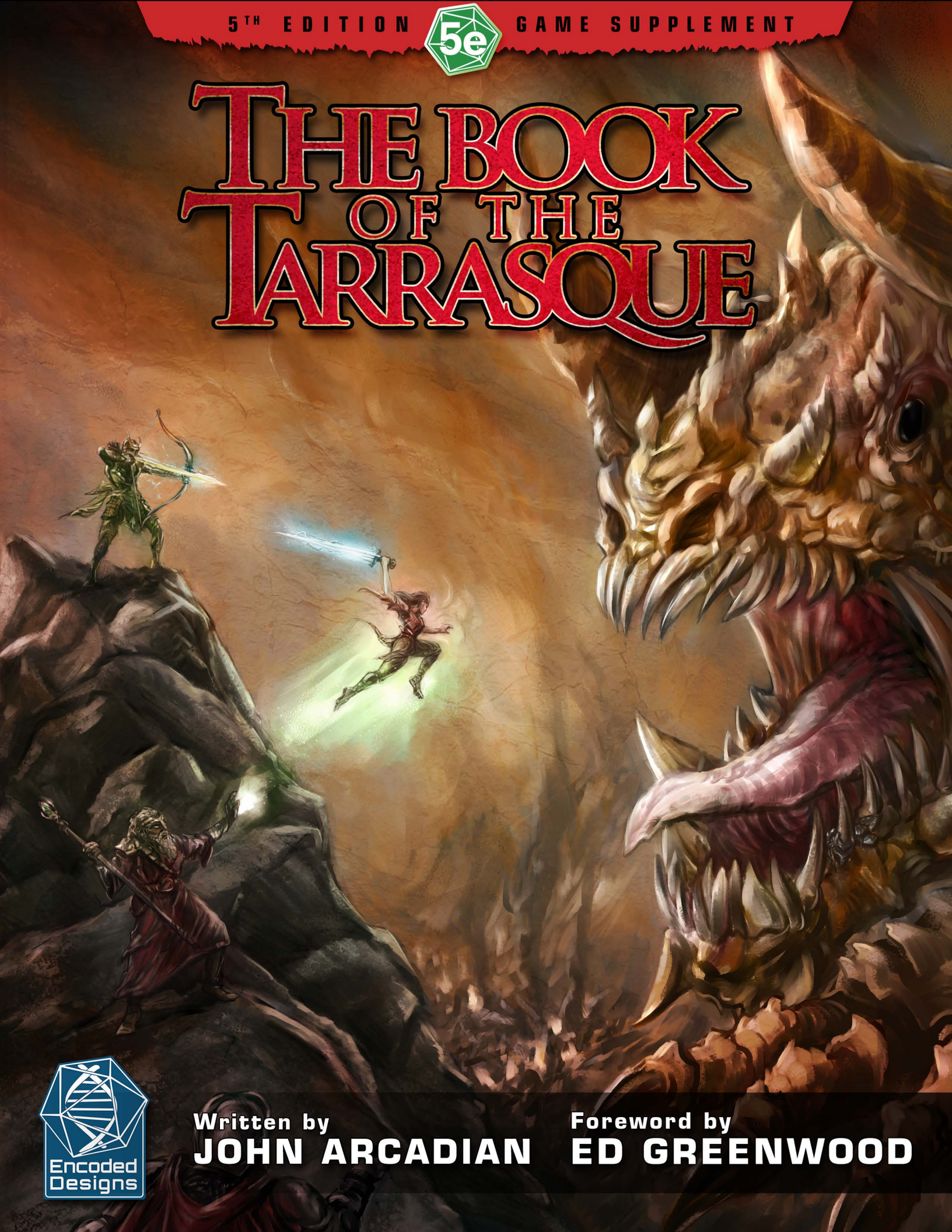


5<sup>TH</sup> EDITION



GAME SUPPLEMENT

# THE BOOK OF THE TARRASQUE



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**ED GREENWOOD**







# THE BOOK OF THE TARRASQUE

*Being a treatise on the nature of the terrifying beast known as the Tarrasque; detailing the history of, strategies used by, strategies used against, likelihoods of encountering, and containing an extended example of adventures waged against as well as research materials to aid in such endeavors.*



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The Tarrasque

**Dedication:** To the 9th Doctor, who has since regenerated, but whose strategy to take on the tarrasque was to overthrow and become leader of an entire town with his psionic powers.

**Special thanks to everyone who played in the early tarrasque games:**

The Knights Of The Northwest “Release the rabbits and dancing ogres!” kids,  
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# Table Of Contents



|  |           |
|--|-----------|
| Foreword .....   | 2         |
| Introduction .....   | 4         |
| <b>Tarrasque Rules and Advice.....</b>                     | <b>5</b>  |
| How to Use this Book.....                                  | 5         |
| The Expanded Tarrasque Statistics.....                     | 6         |
| Optional Tarrasque Rules.....                              | 7         |
| • Tiered Regeneration (Minor) .....                        | 7         |
| • Tiered Regeneration (Major).....                         | 7         |
| • Regeneration (Constant).....                             | 7         |
| • Tarrasque Rush .....                                     | 8         |
| • Trample.....   | 8         |
| • Controlled Tarrasque .....                               | 8         |
| • Ranged Rubble Throw .....                                | 8         |
| • Ranged Lightning Breath.....                             | 9         |
| • Inside the Tarrasque.....                                | 9         |
| The Care and Feeding of Adventurers to Your Tarrasque..... | 11        |
| • General Advice .....                                     | 11        |
| • Tackling the Tactics .....                               | 16        |
| • The Final Battle?.....                                   | 21        |
| Magic Items and the Tarrasque.....                         | 21        |
| Magic Items in Detail .....                                | 22        |
| Propping Yourself Up (Props and Terrain) .....             | 26        |
| Incorporating the Tarrasque into your Game.....            | 28        |
| 20 Plot Seeds to Introduce the Tarrasque.....              | 30        |
| <b>The History of the Tarrasque .....</b>                  | <b>32</b> |
| Mythological Origins .....                                 | 32        |
| Through the Editions .....                                 | 33        |
| Other Game Systems and RPG Related Appearances.....        | 36        |
| Other Non-Tabletop RPG Related.....                        | 38        |
| <b>Adventure - The Machine of Unmaking.....</b>            | <b>40</b> |
| Background and Summary.....                                | 40        |
| Part 1, The Devastation .....                              | 44        |
| Part 2, Knowledge is Power.....                            | 48        |
| Part 3, Fighting the Tarrasque.....                        | 51        |
| Part 4, The Machine of Unmaking .....                      | 54        |
| Stat Blocks.....   | 59        |
| <b>Printable Handouts.....</b>                             | <b>64</b> |
| Tarrasque: RAW Version Stats Sheet.....                    | 65        |
| Tarrasque: Expanded Version Stats Sheet.....               | 66        |
| Tarrasque Optional Rules Sheet.....                        | 67        |
| Tarrasque Interior Playmat and Rules.....                  | 68        |
| Tarrasque Game Log.....                                    | 69        |
| Giant Form Paper Miniature.....                            | 72        |
| Tarrasque Paper Miniature.....                             | 73        |



# Foreword

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## Once More The Dread Destroyer

In Dungeons & Dragons® mythology, the tarrasque is “the” monster, so mighty many cultures believe there is but one, and some misdeed, stellar alignment, or conjunction of fateful events will awaken it from stasis, entombment, or slumber beneath the earth or in remote mountain caverns to stalk the landscape, destroying everything in its path, until slain or diverted at great cost, or until some rare magic artifact or titanic spell “drives it down” again. A creature so large and ferocious it’s nigh a force of nature—and in some cultures is thought to be a punishment sent by the gods.

Where rocks are ochre, it can seem to be a mountain on the move among mountains, a great bulk of many horns with more fangs than any creature would seem to need, rending claws, and a stone-shattering tail. No lumbering behemoth, it outpaces humans when it moves. Reptilian in form, gargantuan in size, it might seem as if the largest dragon lost wings and breath weapon and smarts and a certain grace—and gained sheer drive and muscle.

Some monsters are formidable because they can outthink or out-prepare Player Characters, using their abilities to strike at advantage and then avoid the full force of adventurers’ reprisals. “Memorable foe” monsters often engage in deceptions or elaborate intrigue, or are kingpins working through intermediaries or dupes; they gather intelligence and formulate or shift strategies accordingly, coming to know threats and devising ways of best dealing with them.

Not so the tarrasque. As envisaged in the current edition of the game, the tarrasque is the epitome of “mindless destruction.” It has a painfully low Intelligence; it doesn’t plan ahead or attempt to understand the nuances or intricacies of the lands it ravages. Simply put, it’s so physically powerful that it doesn’t have to.





Adventurers may lure or goad a tarrasque, but attempts to intimidate it are doomed; it fears nothing. It's too darned stupid to fear, and although it may visually recall things that caused it pain in the past and move to eliminate them, it won't flee or act warily, even when facing perils a human adventurer would consider crudely obvious.

Causes and effects are not matters tarrasques think about. It's not clear to humans what they do think about; all that's apparent is that they enjoy destruction, lust to rend and smash structures and anything else in their chosen path—which may shift direction for inexplicable reasons, time and again, but it rarely avoids tall towers, walls, or anything that might seem to stand defiant against their might.

*... it doesn't plan ahead or attempt to understand the nuances or intricacies of the lands it ravages.*

*Simply put, it's so powerful it doesn't have to.*

A joy of running a tarrasque encounter is that this is that one beastie can last long enough, even against a powerful party that knows how to use all it's got, that there is time at the gaming table to revel in descriptions of the monster. To make players feel unease, if not fear. To voice its roars, and imbue it with an "I'll get you, I always do" rugged just-keep-coming confidence that stops short of being so dim as to pound vainly against an immobile barrier (it's low in intelligence, not wisdom); it will find a way around rather than try to claw its way through a mountain. A castle, now—that it might try to dash down to rubble.

It's no mistake that a veteran TSR designer at a long-ago Parkside-era GenCon dubbed the tarrasque he was running "Godzilla's Bad-Tempered Auntie;" his tarrasque did Godzilla-like things.

A dozen years later, at a Milwaukee GenCon, another TSR staffer referred to her tarrasque as "Ur," echoing the ancient Mesopotamian city-state and the beast's age-old nature; only later did she reveal the name was an acronym for "Urban Renewal;" in her adventure, it literally smashed flat a wide swath through a tall-towered, proud, and until-then prosperous medieval city.

Want a truly formidable foe? Come up with someone who can control a tarrasque, choosing where it goes destroying.

Want to have a lot of fun with a tarrasque? Read this book!

- Ed Greenwood



# Introduction

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I don't really remember exactly when I became enamored with the Tarrasque. I remember it from the old-school days (for me) of 2nd edition, but to the young me of the 80s it was just another monster in the *Monstrous Manual*. I knew of it in other editions of D&D, but when I played and ran 3.5 D&D, I never really considered it as a game option — maybe because it was so epic, and our campaigns always petered out or ended up with us saving the world at around 12th level.

It wasn't until I came back to playing 5th Edition that I went looking for something more epic to run as a convention game. I think I had just stumbled across some news about a 3D printed Tarrasque miniature and realized I wanted to run something incredible like that for my group of high school kids at the local library gaming program. I wanted something that instantly made the players' eyes go wide and got their minds churning with ideas and with wonder (and maybe even a little terror). I loved hearing their tactics and ideas for how to take down something incredible like the unkillable World Breaker.

That's the real beauty of facing down something like the Tarrasque — it's a trophy, an untoppable moment in a gaming career, a singular experience that steps completely outside the everyday game that occurs at the table. Whether it is being faced in a one-shot game at the home table or at a convention, or as the culmination of an epic and hard-fought campaign, the actual fight against the Tarrasque is beyond any other experience in a gaming career.

The Tarrasque is about the players, and watching them bring something different to the game. When it's run as a one-shot where everyone brings high-level versions of their favorite characters, it's a chance for the players to create a unique avatar reflecting their best hopes and desires — a perfect, distilled character that is ready to go toe to toe with the biggest threat that the world has ever known.

When the Tarrasque is done as part of an adventure arc, possibly as the crux of the entire campaign, it's a chance for the players' many hours of gaming and bonding with their characters to pay off. These avatars that they have progressed through many trials and tribulations, joys and rewards, have achieved a place in the world where they are the best hope to end the biggest threat to existence there is. It is the ultimate capstone to an extraordinary adventuring career.

Yes, running a game that features the Tarrasque is really about the players, and providing them with a unique opportunity to shine. That's why we put this product together. I've run the Tarrasque for many groups at many conventions, and it is incredible to watch each one come up with some new and unique way to challenge the World Breaker. I wanted to take what I'd learned through those experiences and make it easier for other Dungeon Masters to do the same thing. So here is a take — my take — on the incredible, wonderful, terrifying Tarrasque, tweaked slightly and ready to destroy your worlds. I hope it serves as a stepping stone for you to run something incredible for YOUR players. So go forth and make something incredible happen.

**- John Arcadian**



# How to Use this Book

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This book's goal is to provide supplemental materials and advice to make it easier to run a tarrasque combat. A slightly expanded and reorganized version of the tarrasque, as presented in the SRD, is on the next page; it is optimized to print and have at the table. After that, we have provided some optional rules that can be used to change the nature of the tarrasque for parties of different skill levels and preparedness, and to reintroduce some of the features of previous editions that made it more challenging and deadly.

I've included a section of advice on running the actual tarrasque combat, and we've noted potential differences in incorporating it into one-shot games or campaigns. This advice comes from running the tarrasque multiple times, in home campaigns, at conventions, for people met through meetups, for players with precons, for players with perfectly tweaked tarrasque-killing builds — long story short, I've run the tarrasque many times, and every bit of advice I've written comes from those experiences. I've tried to be thorough with the advice, covering everything from common tactics and ways to make sure the game remains fun, to how the most useful magic items change the game and how to incorporate props and items to make the game spectacular. Take or leave the advice as you will.

The advice section ends with a history of the tarrasque and its appearances in tabletop roleplaying games and mythology before that. A short adventure, by Chris Snieszak, that builds onto the tarrasque mythology and posits the tarrasque being linked to an even greater threat is included. Finally, a series of handouts and materials that I've composed or compiled to make running the tarrasque game easier. So, paw through the advice, grab the different handouts, run the awesome adventure — but most importantly make an awesome tarrasque experience.

## A Note on Tweaking the Tarrasque

I love the 5e tarrasque. It provides an incredible challenge and forces tactical thinking. I am enamored with everything about it, so of course the first thing I had to do when I ran it was change it. A version of the RAW tarrasque is in the handouts, but the one on the next page is the one I run in home games and at conventions.

### Reinstating Regeneration

I feel that regeneration is vital to the nature of the tarrasque, giving it a reason to be the permanently unstoppable terror that it is portrayed as. The first few times I ran the monster, I found that a prepared group at level 15 could handle it fairly easily without any regeneration, so I added a slow curve of regeneration that kicks in as the players whittle down its hit points. This creates a more interesting dynamic and makes the endgame more hard-won, especially if you narratively describe the wounds healing just when the players had victory in their hands.

### Other Changes

I've got quite a few optional rules that I've pulled out from time to time, but regeneration is really the one I will never run the tarrasque without. The other rules are partially to supplement the backstory for convention games or one-shots, or to add a little bit of challenge to groups of players who are so well prepared that the tarrasque would not be a fun challenge.

I'd suggest making use of at least regeneration to make the fight more fun for your players, and feel free to pick and choose from the optional rules included to craft the fight to your liking. Don't be afraid to tweak even further if you see areas for improvement. It's all about having fun and making their victory worthwhile, but challenging.



# The Tarrasque

*Gargantuan monstrosity (titan), unaligned*



**Armor Class** 25 (natural armor)

**Armor Class** 15 (interior)

**Hit Points** 676 (33d20 + 330)

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Senses** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Challenge** 30 (155,000 XP)

| STR      | DEX     | CON      | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|----------|---------|----------|--------|---------|---------|
| 30 (+10) | 11 (+0) | 30 (+10) | 3 (-4) | 11 (+0) | 11 (+0) |

**Saving Throws** Int +5, Wis +9, Cha +9

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Magic Resistance:** The tarrasque has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Reflective Carapace:** Any time the tarrasque is targeted by a Magic Missile spell, a line spell, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, roll a d6. On a 1 to 5, the tarrasque is unaffected. On a 6, the tarrasque is unaffected, and the effect is reflected back at the caster as though it originated from the tarrasque, turning the caster into the target.

## Legendary Resistances (3/day)

(The tarrasque can choose to save instead of fail)



**Multiattack:** The tarrasque performs these actions each turn plus an automatic Frightful Presence

1. **Bite:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 10 ft.  
36 (4d12 + 10) piercing  
If hit, the creature is grappled (escape DC 20).  
restrained. Can do swallow instead of Bite if creature already grappled. Can't bite another target while grappling with bite.
2. **Claw:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 15 ft.  
28 (4d8 + 10) slashing damage.
3. **Claw:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 15 ft.  
28 (4d8 + 10) slashing damage.
4. **Horns:** Melee +19 to hit, reach 10 ft.,  
32 (4d10 + 10) piercing damage.
5. **Tail:** Melee +19 to hit, reach 20 ft.,  
24 (4d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage.  
DC 20 strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Frightful Presence:** Each creature within 120 feet and aware of the tarrasque must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. Saving throw repeats at end of turn, with disadvantage if within line of sight of the tarrasque. If successful the creature is immune for the next 24 hours.

**Siege Monster:** The tarrasque deals double damage to objects and structures.

## Legendary Actions (x3 per turn)

(Used on end of another's turn, refresh at start of tarrasque's turn)

- ☞ **Attack:** The tarrasque makes one claw attack or tail attack.
- ☞ **Move:** The tarrasque moves up to half its speed.
- ☞ **Chomp (Costs 2 Actions):** The tarrasque makes one bite attack or uses its Swallow.

**Swallow:** One bite attack against a Large or smaller creature the tarrasque is grappling. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is **blinded** and restrained, has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the tarrasque, and it takes 56 (16d6) acid damage at the start of each of the tarrasque's turns. If the tarrasque takes 60 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the tarrasque must succeed on a DC 20 constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the tarrasque. If the tarrasque dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone.

**Regeneration** At the beginning of its turn, the Tarrasque regains hit points depending on its current hit point total.

**HP 676 to 400** – No regeneration

**HP 399 to 200** – 20 hit points a round

**HP 199 to 0** – 40 hit points a round



# Optional Tarrasque Rules



The tarrasque games I've run have stretched the gamut of challenge from too easy for the players (but still epic) to drawing buckets of sweat over whether the next 6 seconds of game time will be a TPK or not. Here are a few optional rules I use to make the tarrasque a more fearsome foe, and to bring back some elements I miss from previous editions.

## Tiered Regeneration (Minor)

As I stated earlier, I feel regeneration is a fundamental part of the tarrasque's lore and epic nature. Without some way for the tarrasque to get back up after a group of adventurers have pounded it down into pulpy mush, the tarrasque loses a lot of its wonder and mystery.

This provides an early boost to the players that, around mid-fight, they see go away. Small attacks in the end game are often erased, and thus in the end game they need to bring their best. Characters that use the age-old tactic of the "alpha strike" (using their biggest and most devastating attacks in the first round) may find they don't have enough damage output by the end to finish off the tarrasque.

### ☞ Tiered Regeneration (Minor)

At the beginning of its turn, the tarrasque regains hit points depending on its current hit point total.

**HP 676 to 400** – No Regeneration

**HP 399 to 200** – 20 hit points a round

**HP 199 to 0** – 40 hit points a round

- ☞ **Optional:** At the beginning of the tarrasque's turn the DM rolls a d6. The tarrasque only regenerates on a 5 or 6.

If I'm playing with characters at level 15, I give the tarrasque regeneration only when a 5 or 6 is rolled on a d6. This gives a little bit of leeway to characters less able to do the massive damage of a level 20 character. I also rule that the tarrasque's regeneration is unable to be suppressed by a wish or other means until it has been knocked below 0 hit points. This calls back to older editions and prevents one of the most fearsome

features from being removed early on in the fight. If the players come up with a truly clever idea to undo the regeneration, I'll heavily consider it, but simply wishing to turn off the regeneration at the beginning of the fight would drastically change the nature of it.

## Tiered Regeneration (Major)

Sometimes you have to take the tarrasque back to its old-school roots to make the higher level characters sweat. Usually this happens when players have been thinking and plotting for the week beforehand and are ready to bring their A-game to the table. In instances where I know the players are ready to take it out and where I have their buy-in, I ramp the tarrasque's regeneration up.

### ☞ Tiered Regeneration (Major)

At the beginning of its turn, the tarrasque regains hit points depending on its current hit point total.

**HP 676 to 400** – 20 hit points a round

**HP 399 to 200** – 40 hit points a round

**HP 199 to 0** – 80 hit points a round

## Regeneration (Constant)

There are those times you just want the tarrasque to create looks of despair on the players' faces. For one set of players I used constant regeneration rules. They were ready to bring heavy, hard-hitting damage every single round and had a plan for EVERY instance. That's when you need the tarrasque to be worthy of their efforts.

### ☞ Regeneration (Constant)

At the beginning of its turn, the tarrasque regains 60 hit points.



## The Tarrasque Rush

A major balance factor of the tarrasque is that it is not a speedy or mobile monster. Monsters with flight and opponents with ranged weapons can target the characters and deal their damage more readily than the tarrasque can when it is not in range. The tarrasque is more of a “hits less often, but hurts a lot when it hits” type of monster. For when I need a fight where the tarrasque can reach and attack more often, I increase its speed by bringing back the Rush action. This is all about keeping the players engaged in the combat and making sure the big T can get to do some damage to the squirreliest and sneakiest characters. It also lets me run the tarrasque into traps the players have set up. A paladin’s compelled duel or similar taunting to lure the tarrasque into a trap is a great time to trigger this action.

### ☞ Rush (Requires 2 legendary actions)

The tarrasque charges forward in an incredible rush, moving up to 150 feet in a straight line that it cannot deviate from.

## Trample

Previous versions of the tarrasque in earlier editions dealt damage as they moved through opponents’ squares. It seems a shame to lose that, especially if you use the Rush optional rule. I use no damage, rather than half damage, on a successful save, due to the narrative effect. Players who make the save feel a little invincible and are likely to stay underneath the beast to attack its belly or tail.

### ☞ Trample

The tarrasque is so large that it can move through any square occupied by a Large or smaller creature. Any creature whose square the tarrasque moves through must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage. A successful save means the creature jumps out of the way and takes no damage, as well as allows it to take an opportunity attack against the tarrasque as it moves by. A failed save allows for no opportunity attack.

## The Controlled Tarrasque

The only saving grace for most parties taking on the tarrasque is that it is a big, dumb creature. If it were intelligent, it would know to focus on taking out characters and would be “geeking the mage” and eating the cleric as its first possible moves. For some stories, an entity such as a spirit, demon, or hapless person who pulled from the Deck of Many Things (I’m looking at you, Neal) gets temporary control of the tarrasque, but must fight against the blood lust and rage in its very soul.

### ☞ “Controlled” Tarrasque

The tarrasque has a controlling entity directing its actions, allowing smarter combat tactics. This entity is filled with blood rage and still attempts to destroy everything around it. While this entity is in control, the tarrasque has an additional +6 to its Intelligence and Wisdom saving throws and can make smarter, more tactical decisions. At the beginning of each of the tarrasque’s turns, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, the tarrasque’s original mind gains control and acts on bestial instinct. On a 1-4, the entity regains control or remains in control.

☞ **Optional:** If a PC or other entity is trying to control the tarrasque toward non-destructive ends, the tarrasque is harder to control. At the beginning of each of the tarrasque’s turns, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, the entity regains or retains control. On a 1-4, the tarrasque’s original mind gains control and acts on bestial instinct.

These rules are also good for someone attempting to control the tarrasque’s mind. In these instances, I rule that the tarrasque’s blood rage makes it harder to control if it is not engaging in wanton destruction. I flip the numbers. On a 5 or 6, the PC has the stick; on a 1-4, munch on your friends some more.

## Ranged Rubble Throw

I use this in every tarrasque game I run, mostly because of the Siege Monster trait in the original write up. Buildings and stones are of no consequence to the mighty T, so I expect that there is a bit of a rubble storm that occurs whenever the tarrasque scrapes the ground.



### ☞ **Rubble Throw**

**(Replaces two claw attacks and bite attack in multiattack or requires 2 legendary actions)**

The tarrasque rakes its front or rear claws into the ground and throws rubble and rock into the air in a 60 foot cone that starts at the tarrasque's height (can reach to 120 feet high and 60 feet from the tarrasque). Those in the area make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (4d8+10) bludgeoning damage. A successful save means the creature dodges and takes half damage.

### **Ranged Lightning Breath**

Sometimes you want a broader range of attacks. For those times, I give the tarrasque a ranged lightning blast attack, harkening right back to the Kaiju inspiration that gaming lore points to. In my setup, the lightning isn't something native to the tarrasque, but the result of good intentions gone bad. A miscasting of the imprisonment spell (and a repair of my 3D printed miniature) gave the tarrasque rune-scribed manacles around its legs, binding it to an arena seeded with the bodies of many warriors. All well and good, but the tarrasque's unique nature allowed it to channel the spiritual bonds that kept it trapped into a lightning attack powered by the manacles.

### ☞ **Lightning Breath**

**(Replaces two actions in multiattack or requires 2 legendary actions)**

120-foot line, 20 feet wide

Anyone in the affected area makes a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or takes 66 (12d10) lightning damage. A successful save means the creature dodges partially out of the way for half damage. The manacles glow blue when the lightning breath activates. Any creatures inside the tarrasque take half damage automatically, unless they are in the mouth or throat, where they take full damage. The breath weapon recharges on a 4-6 rolled at the beginning of the tarrasque's turn.

### ☞ **Optional: Lightning Breath (Dispelling)**

On a failed saving throw against the lightning breath, a dispel magic effect is added. Roll a d20 (no modifiers) vs DC 10 + spell level. If successful, the magic affecting the target is dispelled per the rules of dispel magic.

When I really want to make things a little more challenging to players with very solid magical tactics, I have the lightning breath act as a dispel magic spell. I justify this with the backstory behind the manacles. In my mind, the magical resistance of the tarrasque is constantly trying to overcome the magic holding it, but is unable to. The magical resistance chips away at the magic, channeling it into the devastating lightning breath with just a hint of dispelling magic.

### **Inside the Tarrasque**

The tarrasque's swallow attack is great for changing a character's options. The panic of being inside and taking damage every turn is great to use on barbarians or other high hit point characters, but for some characters, it is hard to get out without help, so I use a few balancing options for PCs inside the tarrasque.

### ☞ **Interior AC**

Any character stuck inside the tarrasque attacks AC 15, as the tarrasque's insides are not as tough as its outsides.

### ☞ **Interior Movement**

Most areas inside the tarrasque have enough room that only small creatures can move around. A small creature inside the tarrasque can overcome the restrained condition by making DC 17 Strength and Dexterity checks. If both are successful, small creatures can move  $\frac{1}{4}$  of their movement rating. Medium or larger creatures that have managed to find themselves inside the tarrasque cannot move at all unless they are inside of the stomach or throat. In these situations, they can move slowly per the same rules governing small creature movement.

### ☞ **Dangerous Interior**

Every area inside the tarrasque causes damage, just as the acid in the stomach does.

☞ **A - Heart** - 56 (16d6) bludgeoning damage, creatures are restrained and blinded, and all concentration checks fail. The constant, vigorous beating of the rage-filled heart smashes you ceaselessly against the walls. A creature cannot hold their breath in this environment and can only survive a number of rounds equal to their Constitution modifier before suffocation drops them to 0 hit points.



- ☞ **B - Lungs** - 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage, and creatures are restrained and blinded. The tarrasque's large lungs can hold one creature, but the air pressure pulls their breath away and slams them into the walls. The tarrasque makes a DC 17 Constitution saving throw every round. On a success, the tarrasque expels the creature in a vicious sneeze.

If successful, they are thrown 30 feet outside of the tarrasque, and both the tarrasque and the creature take 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage. While inside the tarrasque's lungs, the creature deals double damage on attacks. Merely being inside the lungs causes 2d10 damage to the tarrasque. Damage inside the lungs ignores the tarrasque's immunity to non-magical damage.

- ☞ **C - Stomach** - 56 (16d6) acid damage, and creatures are restrained and blinded. After 60 points of damage is dealt to the tarrasque from inside the stomach, the tarrasque spits out a swallowed character. (Optionally, I have lowered this to 45 or 30 damage in some games.)

**D - Organ-Rich Area** - 42 (12d6) poison damage, and creatures are restrained and blinded. A creature trapped here must attempt a DC 17 Constitution saving throw every round to take half damage. Being trapped inside an organ-rich area such as between the kidneys and intestines means you are exposed to blood, bile, and other noxious things.

- ☞ **E - Muscle Rich Area** - 56 (16d6) bludgeoning damage, creatures are restrained and blinded, and all concentration checks fail. Being trapped inside an area of strong muscle and bone, the tarrasque's steely sinews crush your bones and body as it moves.





# The Care and Feeding of Adventurers to Your Tarrasque

## General Advice

A lot of my thoughts on running the tarrasque are my thoughts on running any game — primarily, aim for fun above all else. For a showpiece combat like the tarrasque, that may mean something completely different than what you would be doing in a regular campaign fight against a less epic Big Bad Evil Guy or Gal. The tarrasque is meant to be a machine of destruction, and the players are likely deriving fun from some areas of play they don't normally get to experience in a campaign.

They are looking up stats, considering strategies, figuring out how to stay alive if they got hit by all five of the tarrasque's attacks on the first round. Even if you've outlawed discrete mechanical knowledge of the tarrasque, the players are still building intense strategies to take on the beast. So, the key thing I suggest for running a tarrasque is to be permissive, but challenging. Most players probably don't want to one-shot the creature, even if they are thinking of ways to do just that. To end it in that way wouldn't be very epic. In reality, the players probably want to see their best laid plans go off well but still feel the cold hand of defeat closing around their necks. In a traditional Joseph Campbell-esque hero's journey story, this is the epic battle that tests the final question of whether the characters are worthy or not.

Say yes to them coming in on flying carpets, but look for the way to make that not a game ender. Buy into the player's ideas, but ask them first to buy in on the fact that they don't know quite everything about the tarrasque.

Up front you are going to have to gauge how combat-ready your players are. If they've got the tactics and characters to take it out in 5 rounds, you still have to make it epic and awesome for them. If the players are looking forward to the fight, but haven't spent hours online researching and speculating, consider running it closer to RAW and being more permissive if they forget that the tarrasque is immune to fire.

Spend time talking with the players going into the combat. I've had players want to keep every plan secret from me because they are used to adversarial Dungeon Masters who only want to make sure they died quickly. That's no fun. Your job as a Dungeon Master is to walk that fine line between making them sweat but letting them have an epic victory (or a skin-of-the-teeth defeat). So, talk to the players and get an idea of what they are planning. Offer advice and make sure they understand the tarrasque may still have a few surprises as well. If it's done right, the players will be talking for months about it and comparing other games to that one combat: you just have to find the right balance of fun and challenge.

*So, the key thing I suggest for running a tarrasque is to be permissive, but challenging.*

## Player Preparation

There is a lot of information about the tarrasque out there, so what should the players be privy to before attempting the challenge? For my games, I let players know that everything in the rules as written in the 5e Monster Manual is fair game through their research, divination, or other means of information gathering. This is the base information that I make sure they can access.

If I'm using optional rules, such as any of the regeneration rules, then I make sure they know that the tarrasque has regeneration, but most of the time I don't tell them how the mechanics work. If they aren't ready to bring 200 hit points in the first few rounds, I make sure to use the lighter regeneration rules, but if they have a few nuclear options, I make sure to use heftier regeneration so that their combat isn't over in a few rounds. Most often, the players who have prepared a lot have 2 or 3 nuclear options, and I want to make sure they can utilize enough of them.



If I'm using other optional rules that fundamentally change the nature of the tarrasque, such as it having a controlling spirit, having magical manacles, and the possibility to use lightning breath, etc., then I often hint at it as something that has been witnessed by survivors, but don't really reveal it in its totality. There are always two types of tarrasque knowledge you have to consider: what the players know and what their characters would know. In a long campaign there is plenty of opportunity to learn the particulars through divinations, eyewitness accounts, and other tidbits of knowledge. I encourage dripping that data out to the players, and in one tarrasque campaign I ran, the characters picked up information from almost every random NPC survivor they came across. That got them the relevant information and experiences along the way that revealed just how terrifying the tarrasque was to the world.

In one-shots, especially convention games, you have to presume that the research was done and that the characters are showing up prepared to tackle the monster -- unless, of course, the backstory of your one-shot is that everyone is hanging out in town and the tarrasque attacks. The surprise tarrasque is an awesome one-shot to run if you want to watch players panic at the table.

### **What Level Should Characters Be When Fighting the Tarrasque?**

Well, imaginary reader who is super interested in my wise and learned opinion, I have no clue. This is one of the toughest questions I've struggled with when running the tarrasque. According to the RAW stats, it is listed as a Challenge Rating 30. With that in mind, your players should be level 20+ with multiple boons.

Actual play has shown me that is not the case. I've had high school students with level 16 characters tackle it with smart tactics and only a few PC knockdowns. I've seen 20th level characters get their backsides handed to them multiple times. I've knocked down a particularly punchy level 15 paladin named Charisma seven times in one combat, and she kept getting back up and proving to be a real thorn in the tarrasque's side.

A tarrasque combat is meant to be with high-level characters, and I'd say that level 15 is the lowest you would want to go. Hit points are much less of

a resource for characters at level 15, but they have a nice array of powers to take on a "rules as written" tarrasque with a decent plan. Running at level 20 provides a good play experience as well, and the extra hit points and access to 9th level game-changer spells and abilities can create a very different experience. At conventions, these are the two sets of pregens I carry: levels 15 and 20. In campaigns, the tarrasque has been faced at level 15 with a fair spread of magic items. If the characters are above level 20 and you are looking for Epic Boons that would be useful for their battle, extra hit points or stat bumps would seem to be the most viable way to keep the combat interesting without changing the nature of it.

### **A Slow Start**

The average attacks of the tarrasque deal about 148 damage in a round. That doesn't count the legendary actions it can do on the players' turns — I love those! Players are VERY hesitant to get near that kind of damaging power within the first few rounds. That's smart, and tactical. As a strategy, it should be well respected, but if nothing breaks the caution seal, then the game drags on a lot at the start.

There are a few ways to handle this. In my convention game setup, I always let the players be the hunters. They know where the tarrasque is and can control the initial engagement. When I lay out the arena map, the players get to approach it and set up wherever they want in preparation for the fight. When round one begins, they control the action. Sometimes, that means a sneak attack to try to get in as much damage as possible before the tarrasque spins up into a full rage. Other times, they set traps that will deal recurring damage (glyph of warding) or take advantageous positions and wait.

In these instances, I like to respect their strategy, but I find some early reason for the tarrasque to become aware of their presence. I credit the blindsight in the monster writeup to a great sense of smell, especially when it comes to magic. If no direct attack is made early on, then I have the tarrasque scent the air and begin to awaken as it smells new blood entering its stomping grounds. Sniffing out one or two new sources of meat, it begins the attack in a more curious way, not fully ramped up...yet. This is partially a kindness and partially a trap. If the players aren't viscerally familiar



with the multiattack, they are more likely to engage with the combat than play it super safe.

Once the players have fully committed to their attacks, there isn't usually a lag until their characters are all bleeding and running for potions and healing, but by then the adrenaline is up and they are ready to get back into the fight.

A slow start to the combat is also why I add an optional rock throwing attack into my version. It provides an impetus to stop hiding and engage, while also giving me a reason to not level a full attack on a single character unless I want to. The small threat at its side might not be equal to the thing casting spells from afar. If I use the rubble toss, then I don't have to kill the only PC brave enough to get close just because it is the only one in range.

### **One, Two, Three, Four, I Declare Multiattack Vicious and Deadly**

One of the most devastating things about the tarrasque is that it can deal a LOT of damage in a single turn. Its regular attack, oops, I mean 5 attacks, leveled against a single character can pretty much destroy most non-hit point heavy builds. This is one of the reasons tarrasque combats are often slow to start. No one wants to stand before that massive amount of damage. I often try to keep the tarrasque from having a reason to level everything against one character.

Generally, this is played out in the tarrasque's attitude. Sure, it's a vicious killing machine with an insatiable hunger, but it's not super-focused or intelligent. While focusing everything on one target would be the tactical move, wherever possible I try to have the tarrasque split its attacks or pull punches unless logic would dictate that it would target just one combatant.

The tarrasque may bite an opponent and then claw it once, only to throw them 20 feet away at the end of that attack without making the next three attacks as part of its action. The tarrasque isn't used to heavy opposition, or many things that it sees as actual threats. Most medium-sized creatures are just one more snack on the buffet line to the tarrasque.

Most often, I've used the multiattack against summoned creatures or PCs with heavy hit points, as well as those who can deal a lot of damage -- the justification being that the larger creatures pose more of a visual threat to the tarrasque, while the heavy hitting PC is raising its threat level with each heavy attack.

*Prepared for fighting the Tarrasque sometimes looks different than prepared for other types of fights.*





## Legendary Actions

I love 5e's legendary actions. In the claws of the tarrasque they are a great way to deal out the damage equally and provide a bit of threat to players rushing to take their best attacks. The fact that they are at the end of players' turns makes it feel like any epic beast is a constant threat. Being a "fun above all else" kind of DM, I want the players to win, but I want it to be epic for them. That means keeping the threat level high, and legendary actions are great for that. I use the tarrasque's legendary actions with two purposes in mind:

1. Since they are less damaging than a full attack, wherever possible I target the less "hit point-dense" characters with the legendary actions that deal less damage. I'll then spread the multiattack among the fighters, tanks, and summoned creatures. This keeps everybody targeted while making sure I'm not taking a character out of the fight too early, unless I know they'll be healed and brought back in.
2. The move legendary action is great to change the nature of the battle and bring in a less up-front combatant. If I can justify the tarrasque being bored with the thing currently attacking it, I can move the tarrasque miniature at the end of a character's turn as it hones in on a new target farther away on the field. That will generate attacks of opportunity from whomever is next to the tarrasque and lets those characters get in an extra shot, whittling the tarrasque down just a bit more. Of course, the Rush optional rule makes that movement even more dangerous, but it can also move the tarrasque away from the main combat and give a round or two of healing to the characters, while the ranged character is put into danger.

All in all, legendary actions are great to spread the love and move the tarrasque so that it can bring other combatants into the fray while allowing a few free shots.

## Frightful Presence

The tarrasque's frightful presence trait is an excellent thematically appropriate effect that adds a lot, if it goes off well. It is balanced well to be a hindrance, but not a fatal one. With a recheck at the end of each turn, most PCs shake it off in a round or two, unless their luck is terrible. Powers like the paladin's auras often overcome the effect immediately, and good prep like having a heroes' feast the night before nullify it completely.

So, if you want the frightful presence to have some more oomph, you have to consider other ways it can be used. Primarily, I like frightful presence for that first round deal-breaker. Usually I'll mimic the roar of the beast as it awakens, or play a monster roar sound file from my phone to the bluetooth speaker duct-taped under the table. It's great when I talk about the players hearing the roar, then it actually comes out at full volume from the center of the arena. It is unexpected, and any player who fails the save has a little more appreciation for their character's position. Even if most players make their save or use their inspiration to not be out of the first round of their carefully crafted plan, doing something to "trigger" the frightful presence like that is a great way to change the tone of the game. It's not just the characters you can target with frightful presence.

*It's great when I talk about the players hearing the roar, then it actually comes out at full volume from the center of the arena.*

I've let a few groups bring in their army of low-level fighters to try to mass attack the tarrasque, but when many of them failed the DC 17 saving throw, Plan-A gets shot to Tartarus. It is good for spooking summoned creatures and animal companions, if they are not immune to fear, and it staggers the combat start a round or two. Mostly, frightful presence is about mechanically showing the tarrasque is so terrifying that it is capable of laying waste to most carefully laid plans and non-player characters. It won't destroy the combat, but it can provide a nice, rocky start, and it justifies why the tarrasque runs rampant through towns and armies.



### What Goes in, Should Come Out

The tarrasque's swallow attack is an effective way to change the tone of the game, as well as put a little space between a heavy damage dealer and the tarrasque going down too quickly, but it can have some issues. The when and how of the swallow attack being used should be considered carefully.

In the rules as written, any character swallowed by the tarrasque is trapped inside the stomach with the blinded and restrained conditions. That limits movement and provides disadvantage on attacks. To get out, the character must deal 60 points of damage from inside the tarrasque. With disadvantage from both conditions, hitting the AC of 25 and doing 60 damage in one round is hard for some characters before the 56 points of damage per round from stomach acid kills them.

While it is likely that the up close and personal front-line fighters are the ones getting swallowed, hitting the 60 damage limit to get puked out can be challenging, especially if the character is swallowed after using a lot of their big powers.

Some powers and spells like dimension door or teleport let a character get out instantly, but if all the character has is something like misty step (which requires seeing the location), then dealing damage is one of the only options. To that end, I make one or two small alterations — lower the AC inside the tarrasque to something like 15 (tougher than hide, but still easy to hit for high-level characters) or lower the threshold for causing indigestion and evacuating the character. Both options result in the same tangible effect. The character trapped inside has some difficulty in making the escape through sheer damage, but when they do it is well earned.

If the character should fail to escape and succumb to the stomach acid, I've had the tarrasque spit the body up so that it could be revived by another party member, hopefully.

**Side Note:** My tarrasque makes a noise like a cat puking on a carpet when it spits up a body.

### What to do when a PC is out of the Combat?

Characters are going to die. That's a given. The damage from one multiattack can be more than most 15th level characters have, and more than some classes get at 20th level. If you've knocked a character unconscious, or they've somehow been removed from the combat, it's up to the other characters to bring them back in.

When a character has been removed from combat, the other players usually jump into emergency mode and work to figure out how to keep the player in the game. I usually find excuses to ease off the damage throttle at that point, or take up the player bids to be the distraction. If the barbarian with 180hp left is trying to distract the tarrasque so everyone else can get to the downed cleric and cast revivify or cure wounds, then the tarrasque gladly pursues the shouting and clanging, using its legendary actions to move and provide just enough space in the combat before going back to eating everything in sight. This usually has the added benefit of taking the heavy hit point distraction into a critical health range as well.

If a character is taken out of the combat in some other way, such as foolishly pulling from the Deck of Many Things or getting swallowed and being unable to get out, then I work with the other players to find a solution to that issue so the character isn't gone for good. I try to encourage the players in these situations not to give up but to try creative solutions. Maybe they can't deal the 60 damage that the rules require to get out, but cutting through the stomach wall and grabbing a handful of intestine might give the tarrasque a hernia and cause it to do everything it can to expel the annoyance inside it. If another character uses gaseous form to get inside and then cast dimension door to pull the character out, I find reasons to let it work despite the slow movement of the spell.

Basically, if a character is out of combat and it is too early in the game, work toward a more fun outcome. A character bleeding out a few rounds before the tarrasque is likely to die is not something I'd work hard to reverse. The others will likely end the combat, and that character can be resurrected to share in the victory celebration. Likewise, if the players are craving the brutal kill or be killed action, then I'll go skipping right toward that TPK because the players would be sad if I weren't.





An army with enough magical weapons may be able to overpower the tarrasque, but how to keep it down afterwards?

## Tackling the Tactics

One of the most fun things about running the tarrasque, or any similarly epic combat, is the tactical maneuvers the players spend massive amounts of time figuring out. There are a few tactics I've seen time and again, and a few that I feel are smart, but less fun, for an epic battle. Here are some of the most common tactics I've encountered and what I've done to counter or encourage them without killing the fun of the game.

### Armed with an Army

I've had players bring up the idea of using an army of archers ready to bombard the tarrasque. While that would be the smart, real-world play, it's not very epic in a game. There is also that fact that the tarrasque is immune to non-magical damage, so unless the army is armed with magical weapons, their damage is moot and merely an annoyance. Where an army

has been involved in the actual tarrasque combat, I've usually used them as background window dressing, but if pressed and there is some accommodation for overcoming the tarrasque's immunity, I do one mass attack and treat it as a higher damage level. Something like going with one roll and if successful then  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the arrows or attacks hit and deal around 6d10 (36) piercing damage. If the roll fails, then not enough arrows hit to overcome regeneration or the incredible armor. High level combats already take forever to run, adding in a ton of extra combatants would drag it on for days. For overcoming the magical damage immunity, you can rule that this kind of attack is on a different scale and that there is enough damage that it ignores the immunity. Alternatively, you can just laugh at the players as they realize they forgot the immunity rule and plan A for army is just not effective.



### The Chest Burster

- ☞ Raise zombie/summoned creature/etc.
- ☞ Stick Potion of Growth inside mouth
- ☞ Teleport zombie inside tarrasque and command zombie to bite down
- ☞ Explode out of chest for massive damage

I've let the Chest Burster tactic come into play a handful of times, but it's usually only good for one massive damage on par with a high-level spell, and even then I've ruled that the damage isn't that massive. I've usually ruled that the tarrasque's super tough bones and regeneration are enough to keep the creature-bomb from exploding out of the chest or removing an arm — the effect the players hoped for.

Usually I counter the massive damage this could do by having the tarrasque make a DC 18 (or thereabout) Constitution saving throw for half damage. For an attack like this, I rate full damage at around 12d10 for an average of 72, with only 36 on a successful saving throw. That is usually good enough to justify the expenditure of time and effort that went into the plan, but enough to make it not a game ender.

I also have the creature that is used as a chest burster make the Constitution saving throw at DC 24 and take the same damage. The justification here is that the creature is growing inside a confined area, and once it hits the super tough bones and muscles, its growth is stunted and constrained. Its bones may break before it gets to full size, but that doesn't mean it stops growing and dealing damage. There is also the added factor that a creature intelligent enough to pull off this tactic is also intelligent enough to refuse to do so.

### Distractions and Sacrificial Pawns

A common tactic to fight something epic and large is to use sacrificial pawns that distract it. Those are great, especially because they are so crunchy and quick to die. I'm more than happy to have the tarrasque hone in on the non-character combatants in order to extend their chances a bit. Eating an elemental in one round makes the players sweat, but it also keeps the players from being on the chomping block or being able to get in an attack and move combination with one of their nova options.

### Enlarge/Polymorph (Go Big or go Home)

Characters often use enlarge or polymorph spells to set themselves on par with the tarrasque in terms of size. I love this and provide 3 potions of growth in most of my convention games. That takes the PC who drinks them from Medium to Gargantuan. It doesn't change the balance too much, and polymorphing into some creatures may add a few abilities, but that provides a few more combat options when stacked against the tarrasque. I usually let the beast restriction of the 4th-level polymorph slide a bit, but even when using the spells exactly as written, a tyrannosaurus rex vs tarrasque is a great character option. Since the damage carries over, you've essentially just given yourself 136 extra hit points before dipping into your normal hit points, plus you get to whip out a tyrannosaurus toy on your map!

*There is the added factor  
that a creature intelligent enough  
to pull off this tactic  
is also intelligent enough  
to refuse to do so.*

### Flight Options

Anything that gives flying options, like a broom of flying, potions or scrolls of flying spells, or wings of flying are great for keeping the players out of harm's way for a bit. These are part of the reason I have options for the tarrasque to use ranged attacks with a possible dispel effect thrown in. It's smart to stay far away, but not very fun. If the characters are 500 feet in the air and bomb the tarrasque, well cool, good game, guess we'll meet again next week. If the characters are zipping in and out and you can do a bit of damage to keep it interesting, then it feels like a worthwhile and enjoyable combat.



## The Mental Game

There are many options to keep the tarrasque from being easily susceptible to mental control. A straight-up roll to resist some mental effects will likely fail with its measly (at this level) +5 Intelligence save. The tarrasque is immune to the charmed condition, but that doesn't mean a clever player can't make an argument for shutting down its mind. Legendary resistances are good to prevent the tactic that would end the combat early, but if you let a psionic character in or a mage with multiple spells that might affect it, the tarrasque eventually fails.

That's okay! The very bestial nature of the tarrasque can justify an immunity all its own. Simple commands like "Go left," "Stop fighting," or "Eat my enemy" might be too advanced for the tarrasque to handle as far as commands, and if you attack it, then it defends itself or its instinct might override the control. I've only really allowed attempts to use mental (non-charm) options if they actually replace the tarrasque's mind. I've got an optional rule written up for when you want to use this for your own combats, but if a character tries to take over the tarrasque's mind in some way, I'm going to need a lot of justification to let that happen. If they can provide it, I for one welcome our new tarrasque-controlling overlord and look forward to using that option in the next game.

## *The very bestial nature of the tarrasque can justify an immunity all its own.*

### Overcoming Magical Resistance

One thing every group must deal with is the tarrasque's incredible magical resistance. All ranged attack spells pretty much fail thanks to the reflective carapace trait. Fire and poison fail. Charm, fear, and spells that cause the paralyzed condition fail. So, what does a group do? They focus on attacks that the tarrasque has to roll saves against. The tarrasque can use its legendary saves if it fails, but a smart DM likely saves those up for things like polymorph. You can also use spells that force roleplaying options, like toppling buildings on top of it with earthquake or tsunami. Make sure your players know your play style and whether or not you'll let creative uses like this occur.

There is also the question of whether lightning (such as from lightning bolt) is reflected back. One justification is that the tarrasque reflects back line spells, and while lightning bolt requires a Dexterity saving throw, it is marked as a line attack. However, chain lightning and call lightning are thematically the same, but aren't considered line spells. So, if your tarrasque takes damage from chain lightning and call lightning, why not from lightning bolt? Should the logic override the line mechanic in that instance?

I've ruled it both ways, with different justifications, because my brain was in different places for different games. Most of the time, I'm going to let it happen, or be a little more lenient. When in doubt over something like this regarding magic, I might hack the d6 reflection rule of reflective carapace. On a 1-2, the tarrasque takes the damage because you found a hole in the carapace (or aimed for an already open wound that hasn't yet closed), on a 3-5 it is reflected randomly, and on a 6 it targets the caster or another character.

### Polymorph and the Tarrasque

I've seen various versions of the "polymorph the tarrasque into a rabbit" trick online. It's an interesting idea, and in some cases it can be very clever. 5e's polymorph ends when the polymorphed form goes to 0 hit points with the excess damage carrying over. Polymorphing the tarrasque into something easy to kill just gives a few rounds of peace. Polymorphing it into something to keep it from being the tarrasque is a more interesting option.

Polymorphing the tarrasque into something small enough to be easily contained or killed, like a rabbit, could work well with the "void bomb" combination. If you place the rabbit-tarrasque inside the bag and then destroy it, that might be enough to end the creature. But, cheesy options like these are reasons I don't usually pursue these paths with players. Generally, they are ways around the challenge rather than interesting options within it.

Polymorphing party members can be a good combat option, allowing a non-magic user or a hit point lite character to get in a few good hits before their polymorph hit points run out and they retreat to a safer distance.



Polymorph could be used in your game in more interesting ways than merely as a combat option. Meet Mary. Mary is the tarrasque, but she doesn't know it. She has a fear of the tarrasque and it is her goal to destroy it. She is an NPC working with your players and helping them find the artifacts capable of killing it, because secretly, Mary fears herself and subconsciously wants to make sure the party gets strong enough to finally end her nightmares. Let's hope Mary doesn't get killed by that goblin archer when you guys are 7th level and revert to her true form. Let's hope one of the PCs doesn't fall in love with her and is unable to act when the time comes.



### **The Portable Hole/Bag Of Holding “Void Bomb” Combination**

One of the cheesiest, but most fun, combinations of magical items is the “void bomb” combination. If you're not familiar with it, the concept takes advantage of the fact that combining a portable hole and a bag of holding/Heward's handy haversack annihilates a 10-foot radius of space as a gate to the Astral Plane opens. An interesting graphic of an arrow with a mechanical contraption to cause this effect on impact exists, and I include bags of holding and portable holes within my random draw convention decks in case players want to try this.

So, how do you adjudicate it? It all comes down to how you interpret what a gate means and how it operates.

“Placing a bag of holding inside an extra dimensional space created by a Heward's handy haversack, portable hole, or similar item instantly destroys both items and opens a gate to the Astral Plane. The gate originates where the one item was placed inside the other. Any creature within 10 feet of the gate is sucked through it to a random location on the Astral Plane. The gate then closes. The gate is one-way only and can't be reopened.”

If our fictional physics are that a 10-foot radius implodes and is instantly sucked into the Astral Plane, then a giant section of the tarrasque (or anyone foolish enough to detonate the combination by hand) is sucked into the Astral plane. Depending on where this hit on the monster, it might take a big chunk of the body, a limb, or even the head. I would rule that a tarrasque without regeneration that loses its head is dead. One with regeneration, especially higher level regeneration, would immediately start regrowing the lost parts and be able to function, albeit with disadvantage.

If our fictional fantasy physics are that a 10-foot radius area is subject to being pulled through the gate into the astral plane, I'd rule it pretty much the same except for how it occurs. With an imploding area, it's instant, with a door being opened there is more chance to resist the vacuum pull into the other dimension. The effect on internal organs, heads, or limbs would be the same, just with the gate closing on and severing portions of the monster. In this scenario, I see more viability



that the gate closes around the skull and scrapes the fleshy bits off, but that the tarrasque is able to pull its head back before the gate severs it completely. This is all generally thematic, and is completely up to your interpretation. In any instance of a “void bomb,” this is my rule:

- ✧ Any creature, such as the Tarrasque, that is partially caught within the 10-foot radius of a “void bomb” must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 82 (15d10) force damage. A successful saving throw means the creature takes half damage. Any creature surviving this is at disadvantage on all attacks until the damage is healed, or a creature with regeneration is at disadvantage for a maximum of 4 rounds, whichever happens first.

Personally, I prefer the implosion effect, and my use of the Dexterity saving throw on the tarrasque as it bats away a “void bomb” arrow with its soon to be nonexistent arm. The “void bomb” exploding inside the tarrasque or where it is unable to avoid the blast would have me turn the Dexterity saving throw into a Constitution saving throw, and logically playing out the effects of it losing many of its vital organs. I’ve also been asked why force damage for a “void bomb”. It isn’t quite bludgeoning, and it could be considered slashing, but this is pure force as something is ripped away. I haven’t been able to come up with a better option, and force damage counts as magical, so it feels right.

### Reverse Gravity

The spell reverse gravity is included in almost all the magic-using pregens that are capable of casting it. It creates a 50-foot radius column of reversed gravity. I’ve often treated this as a lighter anti-gravity because that makes more sense in my mind, but even a fast upward fall is a great terrain changer. There is no damage when the gravity well throws you upward (unless you hit something on the way), but the damage comes from falling if the spell is dropped or a creature moves out of the radius. The real benefit to this spell is keeping the tarrasque out of combat for a round or two. A Dexterity saving throw keeps it anchored to the ground, but I rule that movement is limited and it is harder to attack when gravity is pulling you off the ground. It also makes for some epic mapping challenges when using miniatures.

### Seeding the Field

If your players have time to seed the field where the battle will be occurring, there may be some nasty surprises awaiting the tarrasque. In general, I’d let these go off in at least some way. They may not be nearly as effective as the players hope, but taking the effort to prepare pit traps, piles of explosives, magical wards, and other options and not seeing them go off would be devastating to the effort they put in. Some effective spell options are things like glyph of warding or my personal tarrasque nightmare spell – prismatic wall. A lot of that damage the tarrasque is immune to, but if you can find a way to keep slamming it back into the wall — say with an attack that pushes it 10 feet, then you’ve got a heavy hitting blockade.

### Wish

I love giving my players a wish or two to use. They start off so confident in their ability to make it work well, then we talk about it and they back off every idea they had. Wishes aren’t that game changing when you apply “Djinn Logic” to them. Just look for the loophole, any loophole, and grant the wish that way. “I wish for a pit large enough to drop the tarrasque at terminal velocity onto spikes strong enough to kill it.” Awesome. Say goodbye to about a mile’s worth of land for about 50 miles straight down and enjoy the TPK at the bottom. I never use wishes to actually screw with players, but I make sure they know that I can screw with them so that they will be careful in using the incredible powers.

With wishes, it is important to make sure the players know that they NEED to be careful. Of course you can just grant them with the intent they had in mind, but where is the fun in that. Generally, players use wishes in one of two ways. First, they’ll try to circumvent the challenge completely. In those instances I’ll try to walk them back from the edge, or if they are insistent, I’ll let them jump. The second way is to use them to overcome problems they wouldn’t be able to otherwise, like instantly resurrecting a party member back to full HP or rescuing the player who accidentally wiped themselves out of existence with a Deck of Many Things.

*Of course, you need one  
wish to kill the tarrasque  
for good... or do you?*



## The Final Battle?

With my version of the tarrasque, replete with its regeneration, there has to be a way to keep it down for good. The most traditional way is with a wish, but that's not the only option I've allowed. A group of PCs armed with wounding weapons could conceivably hack away all regeneration capability. The "Artifact of Destiny" McGuffin in a campaign would be perfect to kill the tarrasque and would be a good tie-in to the magic that keeps the tarrasque alive. If you are going off of the 4th edition logic of the tarrasque, it was created as revenge against the gods.

With the right McGuffin, you could end it once and for all. Another magical weapon option is something like the nine lives stealer or a magic item like the iron flask or mirror of life stealing that traps the tarrasque. These options don't necessarily remove it from the world, but they temporarily stop it from being a threat to the world. Plus, you can use the iron flask to release the tarrasque wherever you want — like that merchant who refused to sell something to my character.

If you are playing the tarrasque in a campaign where the goal is to end its terror for good, make sure to offer an option to do so. It's usually the "Hollywood last ditch" option, used at the very last second, but that's what makes a good, if unrealistic, story. Of course, the battle doesn't have to be final. The story might be that you are putting the tarrasque back to sleep for another few hundred years, and good luck to your grandkids.

You should definitely plan the post-game denouement and decide if killing the tarrasque once and for all is possible or not. If it is, definitely give that to your players as a trophy moment.

## Magic Items and the Tarrasque

D&D 5e isn't a game of magical item acquisition in the same way that previous editions were, but it is still a game where magic items change the balance and provide new options to characters. When it comes to fighting the tarrasque, the players are looking to items to provide their nuclear options, as well as to become enablers for their clever plans.

Even when I know a combination of items is going to greatly change the game balance, I often say yes.

The VERY ANNOYING ARCHER/FIGHTER with an oathbow and 5 arrows of tarrasque slaying completely changed the nature of a one-shot, but man was everyone on the edge of their seats as he was rolling die after die. The dancing sword in the hands of the paladin allowing an extra attack was less of a game changer, but it kept him out of the fray long enough to deal some damage, provide a distraction, and set up a combination from the other characters.

### Giving Items in a One-Shot

As a convention game, I like giving items by random draw. I've taken many of the items from the 5e SRD and set them up on 4 by 6 index cards that I've printed and laminated. Once they've randomly drawn 3 items from this deck, I let them trade between each other to get the best use of items. Then I let each player trade one item back in and randomly draw a new item. This usually avoids super-killer combos like the "void bomb," while also providing different options that players may not have considered.

In one-shots, I also make sure to give a card that provides basic benefits that players would need to survive the tarrasque. Every weapon the player has is at least a +1 magic weapon. If they don't have a different magic armor, then I give them +2 or +3 magic armor. This is partially my inside joke, because with a +19 the tarrasque is usually hitting them anyway. The few exceptions to this are super high AC characters who aren't going to be easy to hit.

In one-shots I hand out an array of potions to each player. Usually it is 2 potions of supreme healing, 4 potions of superior healing, and 3 potions of greater healing. Why so many? The tarrasque can deal an average of 148 damage in a single turn if it focuses every attack on a single character. Bye bye wizard, rogue, ranger, sorcerer, etc., if I target one of those characters. If you can deal a decent chunk of damage to one character and then focus on someone different to keep that first character alive, you get to see the sweat on their brows as they retreat for a round or two and chug down every potion they have. For melee combat characters who are likely to take massive damage and still be standing, the "drink a potion/use a bonus action" tactic lets them stay in the fight longer, and thus provides a more epic and enjoyable combat.



## Magic Items in Detail

There are endless combinations of magic items that can be utilized effectively against the tarrasque. Let's look at a smattering of the ones I've included in my random draw deck and how they can be effective.

- ☞ **Amulet of Health** – Extra hit points are NEVER, EVER a bad thing. I provide more than a few of these, and they can even out the characters with low HP.
- ☞ **Animated Shield** – Decent for giving a dual-weapon fighter or an archer a small AC bump while retaining their full attack options.
- ☞ **Arrow of Slaying** – Quite deadly if it is an arrow of Tarrasque Slaying, especially when combined with an oathbow. Having these gives characters hope; missing with them makes them cringe.
- ☞ **Armor of Invulnerability** – Wow. This one is a game changer. The Tarrasque's attacks aren't magical, so resistance and a one-minute immunity to damage is like a get out of jail free card for a character. The Tarrasque should swallow this character first and you have the acid count as damaging since it gets in between the cracks. That's the only way you are making a character with this sweat.
- ☞ **Bag of Holding/Portable Hole** – The bag of holding doesn't have a lot of combat utility, but as a way to carry other objects (like things drawn with the marvelous pigments or massive amounts of giant caltrops) it is great. You can always do the bag of holding/portable hole "void bomb," which will suck parts of the Tarrasque into the Astral Plane.
- ☞ **Bag of Tricks** – The bag of tricks provides great fodder to distract the Tarrasque. The creatures generated from it won't last long, but they might be distracting enough to keep a character alive.
- ☞ **Belt of Giant Strength** – Useful for extra damage on attacks, especially for non-combat cheesed characters like rogues who might get a sneak attack.

- ☞ **Bowl of Commanding Water Elementals / Brazier of Commanding Fire Elementals / Censer of Controlling Air Elementals / Stone of Controlling Earth Elementals** – Any summoning/commanding magic item allows for a good, hard core pawn to draw the Tarrasque's attention, especially if it is used at the start of the combat. I often have the Tarrasque do full damage to one of these, unless it is part of some other clever plan the players have cooked up.





- ☞ **Cape of the Mountebank** – This is a great “get the heck out of Dodge” card. If this were at-will without a limit, I’d be offering the Dungeon Master my first born for this item, but with the once-per-day limit, it’s a good escape option when you need to get out of the stomach or out of the way of a trample.
- ☞ **Cloak of the Bat** – It might not seem like much, but flight and polymorph into a bat are very good escape options in a game like this. The particular requirements to grip the cloak while flying are a good counterbalance to cheesier flight options.
- ☞ **Dancing Sword** – One more attacker on the field and one more thing for the Tarrasque to target. In reality, this doesn’t do enough damage to really draw the Tarrasque’s ire, but it is a good way to stay out of combat while still doing some damage. Great for spellcasters or ranged characters to get an extra attack with their bonus action.
- ☞ **Deck of Many Things** – I have one of these as a random draw option, and I always shake my head when a player chooses it. Nothing in the deck is enough of a benefit to really warrant the draw, but it is funny when they do. So far, I’ve had a character removed from combat into an astral dungeon through the Donjon card and had the Tarrasque resurrected as guardian to the object one character’s soul was transported into through Void. Use at your own risk, but it’s hilarious as the Dungeon Master, so give ‘em one, sit back, and enjoy.
- ☞ **“Dragon” Slayer** – A Tarrasque slaying version of any weapon is perfect for that little bit of extra damage. It’s also a fun option to acquire in a campaign. An adventure arc could be around acquiring all the materials to craft one in the epic magic fires of some remote location.
- ☞ **Dust of Sneezing and Choking** – The DC 15 Constitution save is easy for the +10 the Tarrasque rolls. If you can get inside the Tarrasque — say into its lungs through dimension door or gaseous form — and release it in there, the rules are completely different.
- ☞ **Efreeti Bottle** – A good option for a wish, but also a decent extra fighter in most circumstances.
- ☞ **Figurine of Wondrous Power** – Like so many things, a great option for something to act as a distraction. Few of the options have enough hit points or damage dealing to be a real threat. Some can provide flight to a character, which is good in and of itself.
- ☞ **Flight Options** – See flight options in the tactics section. Any magic item that allows flight is good for tactics, and maybe not so much for fun. That all depends on the players themselves, but I encourage flight options. I find ways around them often, but I encourage them as an early stage tactic.
- ☞ **Gauntlets of Ogre Power** – See Belt of Giant Strength
- ☞ **Handy Haversack** – See Bag of Holding.
- ☞ **Headband of Intellect** – Have the Tarrasque cult leader the characters have been hounding the entire campaign place this on the Tarrasque’s head just before he gets eaten by the now-cunning but rage-filled titan. It will be hilarious. As a measure against the Tarrasque, it will certainly help your Wizard in terms of extra spells and bonuses.
- ☞ **Helm of Teleportation** – Three teleports can be an incredible option. They are ways to get a swallowed party member out of danger, or an excellent way to use a massive melee attack option and get back to safety. Most players have used these to do a teleport in, teleport out, and then save the last one for their escape option. I’ve also seen the wearer get swallowed, deliver payload, and teleport out. Wash, rinse, repeat.
- ☞ **Horn of Valhalla** – Nothing would please the warrior spirits of valhalla more than getting summoned to fight the Tarrasque again. Four of them died by its hand already, and the other three are waiting for their chance to taste its blood for the first time. Extra fighters are always welcome and the berserkers are fairly hefty in terms of dealing damage before getting taken out.



- ☞ **Immovable Rod** – There are so many good ways to use an immovable rod. A ninja goblin character used it to trip the Tarrasque, then used gaseous form to leave it inside the sinus cavity. It scrambled the Tarrasque's brain a bit as the creature moved back and forth. It can also be used to keep the Tarrasque fairly well anchored in place by shoving it through the tail.
- ☞ **Iron Flask** – A great way to keep the Tarrasque contained, and also a great way to capture the Tarrasque and take it to topple an enemy empire. Sure, you have to deal with the cleanup and getting the Tarrasque to stop its rampage after the attack, but nothing says "You messed with the wrong person" like ringing a doorbell and leaving a recently released Tarrasque on your enemy's doorstep.
- ☞ **Javelin of Lightning** – A good way to do a small chunk of lightning damage or as the second part of a "douse with water, electrocute" attack combo. In those instances, I double or triple the damage. The lightning from this forms a "line" and the Tarrasque is technically immune to line magic attacks, but I've often ruled that the lightning works because other lightning spells that don't have the line descriptor work and this also has a Dexterity saving throw.
- ☞ **Luck Blade** – A decent "stay-alive" option due to the re-rolling of one saving throw or attack, and by far the most popular way (in games I've run) to get the wishes needed to end the terror for good.
- ☞ **Marvelous Pigments** – I often ignore the GP limit when giving these to players for this sort of game. Drawing a cartoon ballista is a great first move. Drawing the cartoon tunnel to hide in is also hilarious. These things get destroyed in one hit, but anything that draws the first attack is a lifesaver, for at least one round.
- ☞ **Mirror of Life Trapping** – See Iron Flask, another good way to trap the Tarrasque for campaign play.
- ☞ **Nine Lives Stealer** – No wish? Attacking a dying Tarrasque with a nine lives stealer is a way I've justified final death in a few games. It does create an incredibly powerful artifact that constantly hungers for life and may one day release the Tarrasque back into the world, but hey, it's not the World Ender.
- ☞ **Oathbow** – This is a wonderful extra damage dealing option, especially combined with arrows of Tarrasque slaying.
- ☞ **Orb of Dragonkind** – Death ward, cure wounds, and the potential to get dragon allies are all incredible things I would want as a player. If a player has this, consider limiting other magic items, because this is phenomenal.
- ☞ **Periapt of Wound Closure** – An excellent way to prevent instant death until another party member can heal you. The hit die option is less useful in a single combat.
- ☞ **Potion of Gaseous Form** – Gaseous form is a great spell for travel into or out of the Tarrasque. I always give out 3 in my random draw so that characters have the option to split them among the party, use them to get inside, do something, and then get out.
- ☞ **Potion of Growth** – Having advantage on Strength checks and +1d4 damage per potion drunk is beneficial, but knowing that you are the same size as the mighty Tarrasque is just comforting. This and polymorphing into something like a Storm Giant are mentally reassuring options.
- ☞ **Portable Hole** – See Bag of Holding.
- ☞ **Ring of Jumping** – Bouncing around the battlefield and moving onto the Tarrasque's back is a good combat tactic. The arms and tail may still reach you, but I've often given disadvantage on attacks to hit the annoying jumping creature.
- ☞ **Ring of the Ram** – Pushing the Tarrasque 5 feet isn't that great, unless you have combat options like prismatic walls, glyphs of warding, or pre-set explosives/spikes that the Tarrasque would never move toward on its own.



- ☞ **Rope of Entanglement** – Characters are less likely to get this option to go off successfully because of the high Strength bonus the Tarrasque has, but if it succeeds, it completely changes the tactics available to the group.
- ☞ **Sovereign Glue** – I’ve ruled that the Tarrasque does get attached to the ground with sovereign glue, but that it just rips up the ground and walks around with stone boots. If the PCs got enough of this together, it might be enough to hold it in place, but with just one or two feet of coverage, it won’t be enough to outdo the massive strength.
- ☞ **Staff of Healing** – An excellent option for restoring a character to combat readiness. Extra castings of cure wounds spells are always welcome.
- ☞ **Staff of Power** – The versatility of this option is incredible. While elements like the fireball spell and hold monster just won’t work, the many other options and the retributive strike is a good nuclear strike option.

- ☞ **Sword of Wounding** – A party armed with weapons with this property would be able to finally kill the Tarrasque without a wish, in my rendering. A campaign to acquire weapons of this nature may be a thing I run in the future.
- ☞ **Talisman of Pure Good** – Radiant damage is nothing to sneeze at, even if the non-aligned nature of the Tarrasque prevents it from being hugely affected by this.
- ☞ **Vicious Weapon** – Extra damage is nice, but there is not a ton of extra damage here to justify the weapon’s use in favor of something else.
- ☞ **Wand of Polymorph** – I will use legendary saves to prevent the cheesy “polymorph the Tarrasque into a rabbit” option. Wand of polymorph would probably require me to use them all and let the PCs proceed with every other cheesy plan they have in mind.



*Magic armor is good,  
but with a +19 to hit, the  
tarrasque is likely going  
to connect.*

*Still, it makes the players  
feel good to have as much  
protection as  
they can acquire.*



# Propping Yourself Up



Let's talk about one of my favorite elements of running the tarrasque, or most games in general: props and miniatures. I love having a tactile element to my games, even if I'm not running miniatures combat. The tarrasque is a D&D combat that pretty much requires miniatures, or at the least it benefits from them greatly. Even if you are running the game with epic options and thematic flavor, the combat still comes down to the grid and how it is utilized in many cases.

Wherever possible, utilizing miniatures and epic set pieces increases the engagement in your game. I've run the tarrasque at my local gaming store on wargaming tables with borrowed scenery, and it is beyond incredible.

## A Tarrasque Miniature

By far the most important tactile element is a tarrasque miniature. You can run the tarrasque without one, but it's far less fun. Good news though! You don't need to break the bank to get a good miniature, as there are a range of options.

- ✧ **Paper Cutout** – Ever notice how the art for the Tarrasque is on a separate page in the Monster Manual? I expect that is so you can copy that page and have a paper miniature for running the Tarrasque. It won't be quite to scale, but it will still be epic on the table.

If that doesn't work for you, that's fine, as we've included a printable paper miniature with this supplement. Print both pages of that and tape it together. Use cardstock or laminate it to give it a bit of stiffness and attach it to a base that is big enough for a Gargantuan creature. Use foam board to really give it some depth. When printed, the paper miniature we've included is about the size of my 3D printed Tarrasque.

- ✧ **Unofficial Official Miniature** – There are no official Tarrasque miniatures that I know of, but there are options for having something like

it. The Reaper Bones line of miniatures has a Khanjira The World Breaker model that makes a great Tarrasque. I have it and use it for games where want players really intimidated.

- ✧ **3D Printed** – There are a few 3D printable models available for free online. I had a friend with a 3D printer generate mine, and it was under \$40 dollars in materials and his time. If you don't have a 3D printer yourself, you can often find ones available at the library, to rent time on through a makerspace, or through a friend with a 3D printer like I did. When I see someone with 3D printed wares at a convention, I ask if they will print on commission. There is always the option of uploading a file to a service online that will print and ship to you, but this requires some expertise and can be a little more expensive. Any 3D printed model will usually require scaling and assembling in multiple parts to get it to a good size.

- ✧ **Proxies** – Gaming legend says the Tarrasque was based off Godzilla, so finding a toy in a monstrous Kaiju line or something such as a Rancor would be approximately large enough to use. Thrift stores are full of cheap, large toys, and even some slight modification to a tyrannosaurus toy would make an adequate proxy. Finding a toy that is approximate is a good option if you can't find anything else, and really, there is so much of the battle that will be happening in the players' minds anyway that you don't need to be exact.

- ✧ **Crafting** – If you are the crafting sort, one of my favorite options for building something like this is foam crafting. Using the polystyrene insulation blocks that wargamers use to craft terrain can create what you need. Cut them into 10 inch by 10 inch squares and glue them together. You can then use a homemade or purchased hot wire foam cutter to carve out the Tarrasque's body or shape. Cover with a primer, sealant, and paint, and you've got a serviceable Tarrasque model.



## Cool Terrain Options

For convention games, I carry a set amount of interesting terrain in my “tarrasque wagon” (a box specifically built to carry the tarrasque miniature and all the resources I need), but for home games and other times when I can bring out the big guns, I try to provide as many interesting props as I can. Nothing says “wanton destruction” like having broken papercraft houses strewn around the area, or the ruins of a coliseum with hasty graves scattered around it.

Having height options is good as well. Polystyrene rocks and rubble in multiple tiers, as wargaming often utilizes, are excellent for providing different combat tactics. A group of players may not think to climb up to the tarrasque’s eye level and get on its back unless they can visualize it.

You can also create a simple flight stand to mimic the players using flight options by taking old or cheap clear pens and hot glueing their ends into something called an elevator bolt. You can find these flat-headed bolts with heavy bottoms at most hardware stores for cheap, and the assembly is simple. Add a small piece of clear plastic or a miniature base to the top with hot glue, or just use a bit of sticky tack to stick the miniature directly to the clear stand. A flight stand made out of these cheap options can change the player’s perspective on the battle, and it looks awesome when they are floating eye to eye with the tarrasque.

Even just covering your gaming table with paper from edge to edge and drawing terrain options can change the dynamic of the game. There are many large sized maps available or made for war gaming that can be useful in creating a bit more ambiance at the table. Printing a large map in many pieces and assembling on the surface will provide one more dimension of engagement.

Crafting epic terrain doesn’t have to be costly. The last thing you should worry about is how good the terrain or miniatures look on the table — worry instead about how good it looks inside your players’ imaginations and work toward that.

## Other Miniatures

If you are running for your long-term gaming group, you are likely to know what options your players are bringing to the table. You’ll know the animal companions the players have or the various things they are likely to summon into battle. If you are running for players as a one-shot or for players you don’t normally game with, then you will want to consider the wide array of options that people may bring to the table. First, players may be summoning things to get killed instead of being killed themselves. Have a few options for summoned elementals, guardians of faith, or the army of undead that the necromancer is going to raise before the game. Options for familiars and mounts can make the game more fun as well.

Once they are on the field of battle, the only miniatures that will really matter greatly are the tarrasque and the player characters. The rest are player options, but ones that might not last long. You can easily use paper miniatures to represent these if you need something cheap that is not in your miniatures collection. A collection of paper miniature peasants is a fun option to have on the battlemat. It drives home the wanton destruction and devastation that the tarrasque does to those unlucky enough to cross its path of rampage.

*The last thing you should worry about is how good the terrain or miniatures look on the table — worry instead about how good it looks inside your players’ imaginations and work toward that.*



# Incorporating the Tarrasque into your Game



Fights against the tarrasque are vastly different depending on how and where your players face it. The next section looks at how different types of games with the tarrasque generally occur, and has a section of plot seeds to incorporate the tarrasque into your games.

## One-shot, Prepared for the Tarrasque

When the characters know that they are facing the tarrasque and have time to prepare in a one-shot, they're usually coming loaded for bear, or loaded for tarrasque, to extend the phrase. This is the convention game I usually run, and part of the reason I've created so many optional rules to use if the characters wouldn't have much of a challenge with the RAW tarrasque.

In one-shots, you are often looking at more epic combat options from your players. Generally they are going to try crazier ideas than they would in a campaign. Like all games run as a one-shot, there isn't the expectation to survive or play that exact character ever again, so no worries if tactics include getting swallowed.

Run with these ideas, since this is exactly what the players signed up for. In one-shots where players don't know each other, I give a random draw of items from a deck and let players switch items. If they've got an interesting idea that they want a particular item for (like potions of gaseous form and an immovable rod), I'll usually let them have those items so they can pull off their ideas. This is probably the only chance this group is going to have to face the tarrasque, so I might as well let them start from the best position possible.

I also give out healing potions — 2 potions of supreme healing, 4 potions of superior healing, and 3 potions of greater healing. This is enough to keep the players alive or recovering from a massive attack, but drinking a potion takes an action so it also has the potential to keep a player out of combat for a few rounds while they recover.

In one-shots, I also try to emphasize my play style in the mini-session beforehand. I talk with the players to make sure we are all on the same page. I want the players to know I'm going to run the tarrasque as challenging, but that I'm not there to TPK them out of spite. I want to know their tactics and thoughts in general terms so that I can make sure they get to try them. Some of them may just not work, but I want to give them every benefit I can. I'm going to chomp them up and spit them out, but I want to make sure they have fun while I'm doing it.

## Campaign, Prepared for the Tarrasque

The tarrasque in a campaign where it is the focus or a key element is a wholly different beast than in a one-shot. The preparation is obviously different. When I've run campaigns for the tarrasque, the focus has been on building up enough power or gathering the right mix of artifacts, items, or knowledge to be able to take it down and save the world. These games are usually more tense than one-shots, because players are invested in their characters, and they don't want to see them perish.

The primary campaign I run like this is in a homebrew setting where the world is dimensionally locked and teleports gone wrong, spelljammers, or banishment-type spells trap people on "Lockworld." The players release the tarrasque by escaping from their bonds and must put it back in its cage or kill it for good.

In a campaign like this, you are often dripping out information about the tarrasque to the players over time. You aren't just working to get to the final battle, but you are aiming to give that final battle as much meaning as possible. There should be plenty of opportunities for the characters to encounter the aftermath of the tarrasque, to meet with powerful rulers and nobles willing to give aid, or to encounter even crazier options than would come up in one-shots. Things like the Gnomecha! — the gnome-built mechanical bot Romani Peril — that is meant to be



a match for the beast one-on-one. Or the airship bombing where the tarrasque's lightning breath is revealed to devastating effect against the elven airship fleet.

In campaigns like this, I've used some of the optional rules to narrative effect to make sure it really felt like the world-ending monster it is portrayed as. Tweaking the range on the lightning breath from 120 to 2000 feet had little difference to the final combat attempt, but it meant that the airship barrage was a tactic that couldn't be completed successfully.

Campaigns are a great way to include other complications around the tarrasque. A cult of people devoted to awakening the tarrasque is an interesting counterbalance in a campaign. Now you can have a constant and consistent enemy hindering your efforts. Perhaps only Dragonbone weapons crafted from beasts you have killed will harm the tarrasque, so the adventuring goal is to claim your trophies before you can begin avenging your village.

A campaign is a great way to make the tarrasque uniquely yours. You can add in elements that make it more meaningful and devastating, and play out elements of its mythos that would otherwise never come into play. Unless you have a few years to throw at a zero to hero campaign, I would start characters in a tarrasque based campaign already at high levels. Mine started at 11 and leveled the players up to 15 when they faced it. You could also play the game with level 1 characters escaping the city as the tarrasque destroys it, fast forward to level 11 after they've devoted years to adventuring, and then play through their journey from heroic to epic, giving them a full view of the characters over time.

## Surprise, It's the Tarrasque!

Someday I'm going to run a one-shot where the players have no idea they are facing the tarrasque, and it will be epic. They'll just wake up to loud noises outside their camp or rented rooms and have to deal with it. Until I can figure out how to make that happen in a one-shot, the surprise tarrasque is going to have to be reserved for high-level campaigns. (Keep this in mind if I ever invite you to a campaign that starts at level 15.)

This take on the tarrasque is one of the most terrifying of all, because all those epic options you have as a player may or may not be worthwhile to this battle. Your carefully prepared fireballs are useless unless you use them to topple buildings. The magic items which work so well in the other parts of your game may just not be worthwhile against this living tsunami of destruction.

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In "Surprise, It's the Tarrasque!" games, you also have one other fun element to deal with – the setting where the Tarrasque finds you, and whether you care to save that setting or not. The primary focus of the game may be for the characters to get out of town before they are destroyed, but if they are any kind of heroes who care about saving people or their home town, it's likely their duty to delay the titan until others escape, if not lay down their lives trying to defend queen and country. Now you have the element of being forced to face the tarrasque without being able to level an entire city block through creative spell use. Maybe that city block is getting leveled anyway, but there will be more hesitation from some players to take on those sorts of consequences.

The surprise tarrasque can be great for a way to shake up a current game. It might be the "run away" adventure and the tarrasque is never seen again, but it might also be the adventure that turns your end-level campaign (from 13 to 18 or so) into a tarrasque based campaign. All in all, not a bad way to cap a long-running game.



## 20 Plot Seeds to Introduce the Tarrasque



1. The Tarrasque destroys the players' hometown, prompting them to dedicate their lives to ending its destructive rampage.
2. Some element of the Tarrasque's body is necessary for a ritual to delay or destroy an even greater evil. Without this, the world will end.
3. The Gods themselves have decided it is time to end the Tarrasque's fury, but they are forbidden from directly acting against it. The reward of Godhood is offered across the world to the one, single person whose hand slays the Tarrasque once and for all. The race begins, and whether they join or not the characters are swept up in the schemes of others.
4. The characters wake up one day, trapped on a strange new world that cannot be escaped. Slaves in a mine, their escape from their captors inadvertently releases one of the 5 locks on the Tarrasque and it now rampages across Lockworld, a planet enchanted by ancient mages to hold the titan. If they can release the other 4 locks and kill the titan, they can return home.
5. Surprise, Tarrasque! Wherever you are, the Tarrasque has suddenly shown up there. Flee or Fight, you have few options but trying to survive.
6. The Tarrasque is the result of magical experiments gone wrong. The mage who performed them was trapped as a ghost while her body became the unstoppable killing machine. The time of the conjunction when the Tarrasque may finally be killed is nigh, says the spirit who approached the characters, but can this spirit be trusted?
7. A friendly NPC named Mary has constant dreams of the Tarrasque. She wishes to help the PCs acquire what they need to destroy the beast, for she feels these dreams are a prophecy of the end. Secretly, Mary is the Tarrasque, polymorphed by a previous set of adventurers and seeking a final end to her torment.
8. A demon worse than the Tarrasque has terrorized the empire. The only way to cease that creature's enslavement of the world is to lure the Tarrasque to the teleport circle that leads to the demon's lair.
9. A god of death has raised an undead army of incredible size, and half the world has become dead lands controlled by the god. If the characters can reach the gateway the god is using, behind continents full of undead, they can destroy it and stop the spread. A spell has caused the Tarrasque to seek out the gateway, and the characters must follow its path of destruction through the destroyed lands. It is the best chance of surviving the journey.
10. A researcher has discovered an amazing thing - the trolls of legend were created when an ancient society captured and fed upon the constantly regenerating Tarrasque. He feels he can create great elixirs if samples of certain parts can be acquired from Trolls and the Tarrasque. Do you help or hinder him in his mad quest that may spread the corruption farther or be the key to immortality?
11. A powerful mage has restrained the Tarrasque for decades. His goals are experimentation and by the time he is done, you will be facing a Tarrasque with unimaginable options (flight, fire, 30 heads). The characters must stop Wiese the mage before he can complete his mad schemes!



## 20 Plot Seeds to Introduce the Tarrasque



12. It is lore that the only way the Tarrasque can die is to remove it from the Earth. Teleportation spells to other planes don't work on it, so a great magical catapult has been built, now a brave group only needs to lure it to the location. It would also be wise to make sure the trap doesn't get triggered early, unless you want to battle the Tarrasque on the moon with limited gravity...
13. Queen Martha has charmed and controlled the creature using means unknown to anyone. Though this keeps the destruction from being unleashed on the world, other empires are amassing armies against her. Is she a benign jailor, or does her new pet warrant the response of the other nations?
14. It has always been the duty of your village to renew the ritual that keeps the Tarrasque trapped in stone underneath the nearby mountain. The path to the ritual site is through a long tunnel, but a cave -in prevents the devotees from reaching it. The characters must escort the devotees through treacherous passages to reach the site by other means, but what dangers will they find in the unknown world below?
15. Ages ago, the Tarrasque was defeated by a wish, but this wish was misinterpreted by the Genie who cast it. This spawned a race of Tarrasque like beasts that stand about 7 ft. tall. The world uses these generally peaceful and trainable "Tarscaron" for beasts of burden, war mounts, and transportation. They can be found the world over as trusted companions. It's a pity that something is now turning them bestial again. What is worse, one titan or a worldwide epidemic of small ones, and how long before the ones the characters have bonded with revert?
16. The great lich seeks the Tarrasque as a new vessel for its soul. It has found a way to transfer its essence into or control the Tarrasque, so it is up to the characters to stop the lich from locating and unleashing an even more dangerous version of the titan.
17. An amazing flying ship has just visited your town, and it has brought with it small creatures from a land called "Falk." These have been all the rage these last few years, but now they are growing and seem to have an incredible appetite. (See Practical Planetology on page 34.)
18. Denizens of the world below have been rushing out of the caves and mountains in droves, claiming that the world below is lost to the Tarrasque. The characters must travel through the twisting caves and passages to locate the creature and attempt to put it back to sleep.
19. A "void bomb" worked to trap the Tarrasque where it could harm no living thing, but it survived within the astral plane and regenerated. Now, a savage beast of unkillable nature roams the astral spaces in-between, plaguing the dreams of mages and destroying their souls. This has caused the academy to panic, as the power of the mages destroyed in this way is unleashed in catastrophic miles-wide explosions. A group must hunt the Tarrasque through the astral plane, subject to rules and physics completely unlike those they are used to.
20. Tarrasque? What is that? What is that portal that just opened from another world and why do those mages have looks of concern on their faces as they are fighting that giant beast that just got pushed through to our side. Oh that world is the worst, but it's this world's problem now.



# The History of the Tarrasque



The tarrasque has been a staple in D&D gaming since the heyday of Advanced Dungeons and Dragons. Gaming legend says that it was created by Gary Gygax in order to have a Kaiju-like monster in the game. This fact is hard to verify from any sort of primary source or interview, but this is the general consensus when old grognards get together on message boards to tell stories of D&D in bygone eras. Taking elements (and the name) of a mythological French beast, the tarrasque was born in AD&D's Monster Manual II, and thus began its legendary reign of terror.

Let's take a brief look at where the tarrasque came from and how it has evolved through the years.

## Mythological Origins

The tarasque (one r, not two) was originally a mythological beast from the Nerluc region of France. It is most prominently talked about in the Golden Legend in the story of Saint Martha.

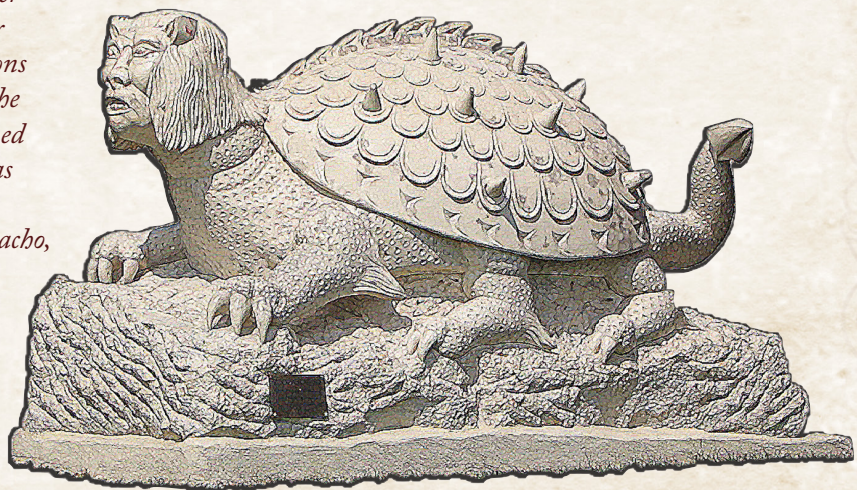
*"There was that time upon the river of Rhone, in a certain wood between Arles and Avignon, a great dragon, half beast and half fish, greater than an ox, longer than an horse, having teeth sharp as a sword, and horned on either side, head like a lion, tail like a serpent, and defended him with two wings on either side, and could not be beaten with cast of stones nor with other armour, and was as strong as twelve lions or bears; which dragon lay hiding and lurking in the river, and perished them that passed by and drowned ships. He came thither by sea from Galicia, and was engendered of Leviathan, which is a serpent of the water and is much wood, and of a beast called Bonacho, that is engendered in Galicia.*

*And when he is pursued he casts out of his belly behind, his ordure, the space of an acre of land on them that follow him, and it is bright as glass, and what it toucheth it burneth as fire. To whom Martha, at the prayer of the people, came into the wood, and found him eating a man.*

*And she cast on him holy water, and showed to him the cross, which anon was overcome, and standing still as a sheep, she bound him with her own girdle, and then was slain with spears and glaives of the people. The dragon was called of them that dwelled in the country Tarasconus, whereof, in remembrance of him that place is called Tarasconus, which tofore was called Nerluc, and the Black Lake, because there be woods shadowous and black."*

**- Text from the story of Saint Martha in The Golden Legend**

Many of the elements of the D&D tarrasque are found in this story: sharp teeth, horns, could not be harmed with stones or armor, massive destruction. Many elements were not included from the myth, such as being aquatic, having wings, or destroying ships. There are two interesting things to point out in this story. In writings like these, anything that lived in the water was often called a fish, and "wings" was a word often used for symmetrical elements on a building or beast. There is some idle speculation that the tarrasque of real world mythology was a rather large snapping turtle that was ejected from its home when the river flooded. In fact, looking at images of the tarrasque festival held in Tarascon yearly, the large model they have made is very reminiscent of a turtle.



**A Statue of the tarasque found in Tarascon.**



# Through the Editions of Dungeons and Dragons

## **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons 1st Edition Monster Manual II (1983)**

Looking at the Advanced Dungeons and Dragons tarrasque from the Monster Manual II, the Turtle resemblance is carried through, but in a bipedal look. This first version of the tarrasque has multiple attacks (claw, claw, tail, bite, horn, horn) and its bite has a good chance to sever limbs. It has the incredibly tough and reflective carapace that turns back many magical attacks, as well as immunity to fire damage. Regeneration is standard here and is attributed to its high metabolic rate. A wish is required to kill it AFTER you drop it to -30 hit points, and then you can start turning its body into gems, weapons, and armor. In the standard monster ecology style of AD&D, the tarrasque's sleep habits and hibernation are detailed. It is also mentioned that it leaves a path of destruction and ruin EVERYWHERE it goes. The size (50 feet long) and its immunity to psionics are detailed as well.

## **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons 1st Edition Mines of Bloodstone (1986), Throne of Bloodstone (1988), World of Krynn (1988)**

The tarrasque appears in two dungeons: the Mines of Bloodstone and the Throne of Bloodstone. In both of these, the tarrasque is just a monster in a room. It doesn't do much until it is disturbed by the adventurers. The Throne of Bloodstone calls its area The Lair Of The tarrasque, and had I been old enough to play at this time, I would have been quite excited to "find" the lair of the tarrasque in the middle of a dungeon crawl. It would be the best thing that character did before it died, which would probably have been immediate. In the World of Krynn adventure, the tarrasque makes an appearance in much the same way. In this one, Lord Soth releases the tarrasque on the characters to cover his escape.

## **Advanced Dungeons and Dragons 1st Edition Dark Druids (2002)**

On page 15 of the Dark Druids supplement, written by Robert J. Kuntz in 2002, there is a poem which makes

reference to the Tarrasque as the "spiked pet" of the Dark God, inspiration for Tharizdun. A 2003 piece by Kuntz deconstructs the Dark God and explains the association. It notes that a spike from the tail is a powerful relic related to the Dark God, with the Tarrasque being integral to freeing the entity.

## **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition Monstrous Compendium Volume Two (1989)**

The tarrasque next appears in the 2e AD&D series with a slightly different, more bipedal look. The general abilities of the tarrasque are nearly identical to the 1e version, with all of the same perks, resistances, and abilities. The immunity to psionics is absent in the writeup, but a note about being trampled if the tarrasque moves through your space is included. One of the most interesting deviations from the 1e version is the fact that some backstory on the tarrasque is speculated but not made definite.

*"It is hoped that the tarrasque is a solitary creation, some hideous abomination unleashed by the dark arts or by elder, forgotten gods to punish all of nature. The elemental nature of the tarrasque leads the few living tarrasque experts to speculate that the elemental princes of evil have something to do with its existence."*

**- Monstrous Compendium, Volume Two (1989)**

The write up goes on to call it a "great reptilian punisher sent by the gods to end the world." This is the first start of it being called the World Ender and having a mythology of purpose behind its rampage.

## **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition Forgotten Realms #7 (February 1990) & Forgotten Realms #8 (March 1990)**

The Forgotten Realms comic books brought in the tarrasque as a summoned creature. An evil magic-user with an incredible staff used the severed heads of 5 dragons to summon the creature. A group of heroes, mounted on their own dragons and using all their powers finally managed to defeat the skull-masked figure who wields the staff in an "Obi-wan Kenobi-like" death scene after they golem-bombed the tarrasque to break the villain's concentration and control. The tarrasque is banished back to wherever it was summoned from, with the mention that one cannot slay a tarrasque, only send it back to its native land.



The comic book version follows 1e and 2e tropes, with a wizard called Omen getting his own magic missiles reflected back at him and the tarrasque suffering very little damage. The real fight is against the one controlling it. Also, Elminster is around, but he is busy playing midwife to one of the characters giving birth.

### **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition Practical Planetology (1991)**

The Spelljammer series talked about a planet named Falx in its Practical Planetology book. The first page or two of information about this planet are fairly mundane, talking about the appearance, crust, continents, and oh yeah, several hundred creatures that are pretty much the tarrasque. Falx is also home to illithids and a goblin-like race, and the mention of the tarrasque-like entities is minimal. Practical Planetology says that some sages think the tarrasque of the sages home planet may just be a creature from this planet transported through space in some way.

### **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition 1992 Series Trading Cards (1992)**

The AD&D series of trading cards was the brainchild of James Ward. Each card contained art and rules text or narrative text about a creature, item, notable NPC, or other interesting piece of Dungeons and Dragons lore. The Tarrasque was included in the second set of cards, released in 1992. It came in at 365 in the card set of 750. The art for this version of the Tarrasque has a very bipedal, and quite humanoid look. More like someone put horns and a tail on the creature from the black lagoon, quite unlike the AD&D 1e or AD&D 2e art.

### **Advanced Dungeons & Dragons 2nd Edition How The Mighty Are Fallen (1996)**

Another appearance of the tarrasque in the days of Advanced D&D comes from a supplement called How The Mighty Are Fallen. Released in 1996, this was an adventure to gather spell components for a wizard. One such spell component is the tarrasque's pituitary gland, which can be obtained after killing the creature. In this adventure, everyone in the neighboring area knows the location of the tarrasque's lair as it sleeps beneath a burial mound. Barbarians lead the characters to the location where they must fight the tarrasque and bring its pituitary gland back. I've read through the adventure a few times, and it's hard to follow exactly

what the motivations here are. The tarrasque of 2e is featured in the art for the cover, but it's barely 12 feet tall in this picture.

### **Dungeons and Dragons 3.0/3.5 3.0 Monster Manual (2000) / 3.5 Monster Manual (2003)**

In the 3.0/3.5 editions, the tarrasque gets a bit of a size boost. Here it is noted to be 70 feet long and 50 feet tall, with enough space to hold 2 Huge, 8 Large, 32 Medium, 128 Small, OR 512 Tiny or smaller creatures. (I am working very hard not to make a "mega bite" joke right now.) Tracking the crunchier nature of 3.5, the tarrasque here is replete with multiple +20 or greater saves and many +39 bonuses to rolls. This is also the first time the tarrasque has a swallow attack defined. There was definitely a design decision to make the tarrasque feel much larger and destructive here. Even the art has pictures of people in it for scale. Interestingly, it is noted that the only way to kill the tarrasque is to do its full hit points in non-lethal damage and then use a wish. The regeneration ability as written states that all damage and all spell damage turns to non-lethal, so no attack is wasted, there is just no chance to kill the tarrasque without a wish. The tarrasque also gets spell resistance of 32 in this edition, marking it as one of the first times that the beast is immune to multiple other types of spells, as well as direct attack spells.

### **Dungeons and Dragons 3.0 Worshippers Of The Forbidden, Dragon Magazine #296 (June 2002)**

Coming just a bit before the release of 3.5, Dragon Magazine ran an article written by Eric Cagle about cultists of various stripes. One of these groups, the Wakers of the Beast, worshipped the tarrasque and sought to waken it from its slumber to destroy the world. A rather cool take: the prestige class included letting the character become a tarrasque-like monstrous humanoid with claw and bite attacks as well as dreams of where the tarrasque may be found. The art by Jonathan Wayshak was phenomenally vivid and made me want to play one of these character classes.

### **Dungeons and Dragons 3.5 Elite Opponents (Online Article, 2005)**

In an article online from Wizards of the Coast, Robert Wiese details a few different variant tarrasques. The



first one takes the tarrasque and turns it into Godzilla, with a fire breath weapon and haste as a constant ability (EEK!). The Five-Headed Pyrotarrasque has a breath weapon and five heads. This turns its multiattack into 5 bites and 10 horns. The Spellwarped Woodling Tarrasque is the tarrasque plant version, which is just a little tougher and stronger and has plant traits. This one is more flavor than mechanics, but the idea of treants worshipping a dormant tree tarrasque is kind of cool.

### **Dungeons and Dragons 3.5**

#### **The Petit Tarrasque And Other Monsters, Dragon Magazine #329 (March 2005)**

Kyla Ward wrote an article in Dragon Magazine about more real-world versions and histories of various D&D monsters, primary of which was the tarrasque. The article was a great look at the history and religious roots of the monster, as well as a way to model the tarrasque of mythology, rather than the nigh-unbeatable tarrasque of D&D legend, by modifying a young bronze dragon. Most notable here is the tarrasque's unique ability to control water, a nod to the legend that there was flooding whenever the tarrasque left its lair.

### **Dungeons and Dragons 3.5**

#### **Ecology Of The Tarrasque, Dragon Magazine #359 (September 2007)**

In an issue of Dragon Magazine, Ed Greenwood writes some more historical information about the tarrasque and its origins. An eight-page piece details the tarrasque through the meeting of a monster-hunting club. The group starts its meeting by asking a sage for information on the tarrasque. They bring out rumors and stories, switching into mechanical talk as the article moves along. It is mentioned in this piece that the earliest known record of the tarrasque within the world, likely the Forgotten Realms, is of the tarrasque devastating all of the kingdoms of an area and then proceeding to disappear before it reaches a settlement protected by a magical, dissolving shield that previously stopped vindictive dragons.

There are a few mechanical bits to balance out the story elements, and an advanced version of the tarrasque is detailed. It is CR30, has higher hit points and armor class, and it has a MULTITUDE of new feats to toughen its attacks, armor, and other combat options. The tarrasque's stomach is mentioned in detail, with it being said that the gullet expands and siphons things

it eats into 3 stomachs of muscles, internal spines, acid, and heat so that anything swallowed gets destroyed. A new thing mentioned here is the tarrasque's ability to earth glide, like a xorn, once it is sated. This isn't found in the 3.5 rules, but it is mentioned as the reason no one knows where its lair is. It is said the tarrasque seeks out underground caves to sleep in, but might just go into torpor while merged with the surrounding stone in a state that dwarves call "arnstone." This notion plays off dwarven fears that miners may accidentally "love tap" the tarrasque with their pick axes while mining and awaken it.

### **Dungeons and Dragons 3.5**

#### **Elite Opponents (Online Article, 2007)**

Another entry in Elite Opponents, Robert Wiese tackles the subject of Creatures with Many Heads, adding in as a final note - the Thirty-Headed tarrasque. The author notes "The multiheaded template allows it to exist, but it's still just plain wrong." This monstrosity has 30 bite attacks a round and 60 horn attacks. Robert also notes that 30 of these (the bites) would have a DC 80 Fortitude save, and that means insta-kill. If I ever get my hands on a 30-Headed tarrasque miniature, I will absolutely run this game.

### **Dungeons And Dragons 4th Edition**

#### **Monster Manual (2008)**

I ran only one game during 4e, so my knowledge comes from research and no personal connection. The stats and abilities here are very much like previous versions, just with a 4e flavor. The issue of flying attacks is dealt with by an Earthbinding Aura that pulls creatures closer to the ground. There is also the Burrow speed of 40 that means the tarrasque can avoid attacks by digging into the ground. Bite attacks and a frenzy when it is bloodied are its primary attacks, and missing from the tarrasque is any form of regeneration. However, the rules state that it can't be killed and it merely sinks into the ground when taken to 0 hit points. As far as lore goes, the 4e tarrasque was created by the primordials to destroy the works of the gods. It can never be destroyed so long as it is on the world. Sages speculate that getting it off world may mean you can permanently destroy it. This ties back into



the tarrasque slumbering within the earth after it is defeated, a kind of re-genesis and healing because of its connection to the world.

### **Dungeons And Dragons 4th Edition Dragon Magazine #418**

A good chunk of Dragon Magazine #418 is dedicated to the tarrasque, giving it more of a backstory as an engine of destruction created by primordial elemental princes to destroy the works of the gods during the Dawn War. In this story, named elemental princes gift the tarrasque with all of its abilities, intending it to be “intelligently malicious,” but ultimately it was flawed and destroyed by two unnamed elemental princes due to its mindless rage. The Dragon #418 article references the Dragon #296 story, as well as pulling in information from other editions and noting that the tarrasque has changed over the years. A separate article introduces a cult of tarrasque worshippers called the Reckoners. These cultists savor destruction and have found ways to tap into the tarrasque’s destructive abilities to give themselves, and others, tarrasque-like powers. Nothing quite so unassailable as the real tarrasque, but enough to make them dangerous. There are a few plot hooks, like druidic revenge or the return of elemental princes, using the Tarrasque to destroy artifacts (if you’re willing to go in with them), and the jailbreak of Tharizdun/end of the world. There is a slightly tweaked version of the tarrasque that has a few different attacks and tweaks to abilities.

### **Dungeons And Dragons 5th Edition Monster Manual (2014)**

And finally we reach the current edition of the tarrasque. The 5e version of the tarrasque is still absent regeneration, but it matches the multiattack, frightening presence, and swallow options of the previous editions. The magical resistance in 5e is boiled down to the simple advantage on all saving throws vs magic, and its reflective carapace is still quite annoying for unprepared spellcasters. The damage and condition immunities make the 5e tarrasque quite hard to tackle if the party isn’t prepared. The legendary resistance of 5e monsters are quite at home with the tarrasque, making it capable of continuing the assault on enemies constantly. As of the writing of this (2016), no additional tarrasque materials or modifications have been officially made.

## **Other Game Systems and RPG Related Materials**

The tarrasque appears in other d20 based games and supplements, but also appears as easter eggs or options in RPG-related products that aren’t quite tabletop RPGs. With the boom of self-publishing and releases through outlets like Drive Thru RPG, there are many reprints or “corrected” versions. I’ve tried to cover many of them here.

### **D20 World’s Largest Dungeon (2004)**

The tarrasque makes an appearance in Section D of the 800+ page World’s Largest Dungeon, which boasts having every monster in the monster manual, including the tarrasque. In Section D, written by Robert J. Schwalb, a xill named Chtrax is attempting to unleash an exiled god in order to destroy and get revenge on his people who cast him out. In order to do this, Chtrax is seeking a wish spell, which he thinks he can get by breaking into a vault of demons in order to release one who would grant him the wish. To do this, he has an excavation crew with a barely enslaved tarrasque to do the digging and busting through the adamantite bands of the Vault of Devils. The crux of this part of the World’s Largest Dungeon is a race against time to prevent it from releasing the hordes of devils trapped in the vault.

When the PCs encounter the tarrasque, it is controlled by a handler who casts spells at them but keeps the tarrasque digging. The tarrasque likely breaks free, attacking everything around. Many of the previous combatants that would have attacked the characters are now fodder for the tarrasque, and if it breaks into the vault, it goes to town eating devils. If it breaks free before that, it rampages through the sections and destroys most of the dungeon area and its inhabitants.

### **D20 Dangerous Denizens: The Monsters of Tellene (2008)**

Kenzer and Company’s book of monsters mentions the tarrasque on a page and a half, providing an in-world description for it as “The Beast of the Lake” and referencing the D&D Monster Manual stat block for 3.5. The Beast of the Lake is a mix of the tarrasque and the Loch Ness monster. It has little care for



being disturbed. If creatures move across the lake, it may attack but often simply returns to its underwater slumber.

### **Pathfinder**

#### **Pathfinder Bestiary (2009)**

Pathfinder had its own version of the tarrasque, with just a few differences. It appeared in the Pathfinder Bestiary and had a higher AC but lower hit points than the 3.5 tarrasque. The Pathfinder tarrasque had a different flavor to it, with the regeneration not mentioning or taking into account non-lethal damage and the tarrasque having a Powerful Leaper ability as well as a spine attack. The flavor text here mentions that it is far from intelligent, but it is able to speak a few words of the Aklo subterranean language. It also mentions that the tarrasque is smart enough to think about its biggest threat and ignore obvious distractions.

**Additional Pathfinder Tarrasque Notes:** Many later Pathfinder books provide the tarrasque with an origin as a Spawn of Rovagug, a titanic entity made to bring about the end times. A few places even mention past acts of destruction by the tarrasque. **Inner Sea Bestiary (2012), The Inner Sea World Guide (2011), Gods and Magic (2008), Dragon Empires Gazetteer (2011)**

### **Online Discussion / D20 PDF**

#### **RPG Net The City Built Around the Tarrasque (2006) & City Of The Tarrasque PDF (2009)**

This thread, started by Thomas T in 2006, speculated over the course of 10 years (it was still going as of last check) how people would deal with living in the shadow of the not-quite-dead beast. Elements of this thread were compiled into a PDF called City Of The tarrasque — Carpe Deum: Tales of Taltasqa which was compiled by Dan Akers and released in 2009. In this version, vivid imagery of the corruption caused by living so near the constantly regenerating tarrasque and eating food watered with its blood (red corn) provide some chilling details. A very interesting part of this supplement is that Trolls are spawned from a time when the tarrasque was captured in such a way aeons ago. The city was built up and the people there corrupted by the regenerating blood of the tarrasque. That's my personal headcanon for trolls now.

### **D20/Pathfinder**

#### **101 Variant Monsters (2013)**

Rite Publishing created a series of 101 variant monsters that had different traits in the d20 template. The King of Kaiju took the tarrasque right back to Godzilla-like status and removed many of the options like swallowing whole, spine attacks from Pathfinder versions, and rush attacks. It added lightning breath and an aquatic subtype, as well as a brief description about the look of the tarrasque.

### **Mutants And Masterminds 3rd Edition**

#### **The Manual of Mutants & Monsters: Tarrasque (2015)**

Misfit Studios created a tarrasque for Mutants and Masterminds, bringing the destruction of the World Breaker to the world of superheroes. This 7-page supplement has tarrasque stats for Mutants and Masterminds, as well as all the traditional powers and abilities, and even a special immortality that requires a ritual to be cast upon death, just like the wish requirement, to end it once and for all.

### **D20/Pathfinder**

#### **Racial Guide 4: Nontraditional Races (2015)**

Little Red Goblin Games released a book of racial templates and descriptions, devoting 4 pages to a very humanoid tarrasqueling race. Looking like a lizard-like minotaur, the Tarrasqueling is created from bits of regenerating flesh cut off the tarrasque. The exact conditions to create this are up for debate (according to lore), but the result is a humanoid, intelligent, tarrasque-like beast. Tarrasquelings are portrayed as fairly savage, but nurturing and raising one in a civilized environment overcomes this. Some worship the tarrasque as a god, while others resent it and seek to destroy it. They have a small regeneration, enough to keep them from most mundane deaths.

### **D20**

#### **Castles & Crusades Classic Monsters & Treasure 2nd Printing (2016)**

Not present in the first printing that I could find, but present in the second printing by Troll Lord Games, this supplement for the old-school feel d20 game has the tarrasque as a monster in the old-school style.



### Dice Game

#### D&D Dice Masters (2015)

The D&D Dice Masters card/dice game Battle for Faerun by WizKids has the tarrasque in it as a usable combat monster. There are 3 versions: the Lesser, Greater, and Epic Aberrations. Each one has regeneration as a key ability.

### 5E/Pathfinder

#### Salt In The Wounds (Pending Release)

Still in development at the time of this writing, a kickstarted world setting by J.M. Perkins, is slated to talk about what happens after you kill the tarrasque but can't keep it dead. The constantly regenerating corpse is restrained and hacked apart to keep it from raining terror upon the world, and a city spawned from the armies that beat the beast now uses the tarrasque as its means of sustenance and succor. This is an interesting setting that has its genesis (or at least partial inspiration) from an RPG net thread called The city built around the tarrasque.

*Online talk about the tarrasque is frequent, and that is one of the great things about this monster. It gets people speculating and imagining on all the various possibilities. Even if suggestions like the 3.5 Peasant Railgun just aren't viable in most games a sane Dungeon Master would run, it is still fun to speculate on it.*

### A Multitude of Unofficial Online Discussions

If we turn our attentions to online discussions, the tarrasque has generated a lot of talk and content in forums, message boards, and blogs. There are too many to track down and name them all, but there are some very notable ones that have become staples of the tarrasque.

- ☞ THE IMPOSSIBLE ... THE INVINCIBLE ... THE TARRASQUELICH! outlines the way that a lich with a phylactery could take over the Tarrasque's body and become near unstoppable.
- ☞ Seven Ways to Kill the Tarrasque on thirteen experience levels or less outlines ways in D&D 3.5 to kill the Tarrasque with crazy, incredible combinations.
- ☞ A site called 1d4Chan has quite a few wiki entries on how to handle the Tarrasque.

Online talk about the tarrasque is frequent, and that is one of the great things about this monster. It gets people speculating and imagining, even if suggestions like the 3.5 Peasant Railgun just aren't viable in a real game scenario.

### Other Non-Tabletop RPG Related

#### The Tarrasque in Neverwinter Nights (Mod)

Modders as a community always want to tackle the biggest challenges, and the tarrasque Hak Pak for Neverwinter Nights does just that. I've discovered 3 different models of the tarrasque, all of which tower above my characters (and the dragons they brought to the fight).

#### Heart of the Tarrasque/ Helm of Tarrasque

In the Defense of the Ancients Warcraft III map/mod that was eventually supported by Blizzard, an item called Heart of the Tarrasque was included. It was the "Preserved heart of an extinct monster, it bolsters the bearer's fortitude." that granted extra hit points as well as regeneration and strength. There is also a Helm of Tarrasque in Defense of the Ancients Korean language season 4 as a part of Armor of the Basilisk set.



### **The Torrasque/Tarrasque in Starcraft 2**

Another Blizzard reference, the Starcraft 2 Torrasque is a version of the Ultralisk known with the ability to resurrect itself. There are many things that correlate with a D&D reference to the tarrasque, and the name and powers are too similar to not note the easter egg. The Torrasque appeared in Starcraft and Starcraft 2. The Alternity Starcraft supplement set in the Starcraft setting and released by Wizards Of The Coast has a tarrasque that rides the line between Starcraft version and original.

### **Blade/Barb of Tarasque in World of Warcraft**

A level-80 item found in the MMO World of Warcraft, the Blade (alliance) or Barb (horde) of tarasque (one -r) was in the Wrath of the Lich King expansion. The previous Blizzard connection through Warcraft III and the Starcraft series may make this another reference, but it could also be parallel development and referencing the mythical tarasque.

### **The Deathclaw (Fallout Series)**

The Fallout Bible series of extra game background material for the Fallout games were written by Black Isle game developer Chris Avellone in 2002. In Volume 8, it is mentioned in a question and answer

section that the Deathclaws of Fallout are mini-tarrasques. This information in no way, shape, or form surprises me, considering how many times my Fallout characters have died by Deathclaw.

### **Fate/Grand Order**

In my research, I came across a Japanese phone game created by the company Type-Moon that has a creature called the tarasque in it. It has 6 legs, horns, and a turtle shell. For all intents and purposes, this is likely a reference to the mythical tarasque of french legend, rather than the D&D tarrasque. There are no hints of regeneration or other notes to say it is the D&D version at all, and it is a "Noble Spirit", a summoned creature/spell effect. Of particular note, it is wielded by a female character called Saint Martha, in all her bikini clad glory. So, you can't really say it is sticking too close to the legend, unless Saint Martha of myth enjoyed bikinis or a cross shaped chest tan.

### **20mm Tarasque Anti-Aircraft Gun**

Utilizing a 20mm shell and named for the historical tarasque, the French army's anti-aircraft gun is a gas or hydraulic powered terror. Boasting a deployment speed of 20 seconds, an effective horizontal range of 8,200 feet and a vertical reach of 6,600 feet, the tarasque might be wheeled out against a D&D tarrasque if one showed up. Since it isn't a magic weapon, it would have no effect.





# The Machine Of Unmaking

A short adventure for 15th-to-20th level characters, by Chris Sniezak

This adventure is built to have the characters discover the devastation being caused by the tarrasque and learn that it is guided by the **Cult of the End**. Investigating and learning about the tarrasque and the cult, they discover that the world will be unmade if the plan is not stopped. This leads to a fight with the tarrasque and then locating its lair in order to stop the cult from using the eldritch machine to end the world.

As the DM, first decide what optional rules you are using for the tarrasque in this adventure. You know your players best, and the previous sections of the Book of the tarrasque contain a number of optional rules to adjust the difficulty. This will also help you describe the devastation the beast leaves behind in its worldwide rampage. If the characters research the World Ender, making these decisions first helps you distribute that information during play.

Next, read the adventure and fit the generic elements into your campaign world. Details of places and names have been left vague so you can plug this adventure into your own settings with minimal work. I have bolded these generic names to allow you to easily recognize and differentiate them if you are using a different name that is relevant to your setting or world. All stat blocks for the adventure appear at the end of the adventure so that you may print them as necessary.

## Adventure Background

The **Cult of the End** has discovered an eldritch device called the Machine of Unmaking. It is powered by destruction and chaos. While the machine usually builds power slowly over time, its link to the tarrasque functions as a supercharger, bringing it closer to the culmination of its purpose. The **Cult of the End** has assembled the machine and awoken the tarrasque in order to wreak enough havoc to power it. When the machine is charged and ready, its magic simply unmakes the world.

## Adventure Summary

The adventure begins with the characters learning that the mythic tarrasque is awake and rampaging across the world. The characters seek out the tarrasque and, in doing so, discover the devastation it has caused. Here they learn relevant details about the tarrasque and encounter the **Cult of the End**. Next, they choose between doing research on the tarrasque and the **Cult of the End** at the **library**, or going immediately after the World Ender to prevent more destruction.

Research provides information to the characters on the **Cult of the End**, the Machine of Unmaking, and the tarrasque—along with some of the abilities that may not be present in the legends—giving them more knowledge to use in planning their attack. If the tarrasque is active while the PCs research, it continues its path of destruction that powers the Machine of Unmaking.

As the tarrasque destroys, the Machine of Unmaking charges, acting as a timer on the adventure. The more the machine charges, the more it affects the world, adding difficulty to the final encounter with the **Cult of the End**.

At some point, even if the characters learn about the Machine of Unmaking, they discover the only way to destroy it and stop the World Ender is to put the currently regenerating pituitary gland of the tarrasque into the machine, which destroys the machine and ends the tarrasque forever.

## The Machine of Unmaking - The Timer

The Machine of Unmaking is on a timer throughout the adventure. It adjusts the difficulty of the final encounter and represents the effects occurring in the world, depending on how long the characters take. The timer is tied to the amount of destruction the tarrasque has caused in the world since it was linked to the machine. This is represented by the number of days the tarrasque has been rampaging across the world.





What could be worse than the Tarrasque? The end of all reality.



| POWER LEVEL | DAYS | TARRASQUE   | REGIONAL EFFECTS  |
|-------------|------|---|---|
| 1           | 0    | Guided by the Cult of the End, the Tarrasque has just destroyed the city and is making its way across the countryside to another city.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No effect yet.</li> </ul>  |
| 2           | 4    | The Tarrasque destroys a dam, which floods and wrecks another large city and many fields of crops.  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small items are being unmade. A toy is reduced to its component parts. A glass window is reduced to sand. Metal utensils melt back to ore. These effects are minor but common omens.</li> <li>Whenever a character rolls a 1 on a d20, something mundane they own disassembles into component parts.</li> </ul>  |
| 3           | 6    | The Tarrasque attacks and destroys a quarry and mining operation. Then the beast follows the merchant road, wrecking multiple caravans, crossroad towns, and the road itself on its way to the capitol. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More important things that keep the world ordered start to vanish. Nails and mortar dissolve, causing wagons and buildings to collapse. Tools of construction dissolve. Things that define order cease to exist.</li> <li>Once during an encounter, right after any creature's turn, you can cause something structural - such as a building or a wagon - to fall apart and collapse in order to complicate the situation.</li> </ul>  |
| 4           | 7+   | The Tarrasque rampages through the capitol, where the library is, bringing the fight to the characters.   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The world itself starts to unravel. Rents in the earth open. Forests shred and unmake. The oceans evaporate without boiling. The basic building blocks of the world begin to dissolve. This happens throughout the land except in the Lair of the Tarrasque.</li> <li>Three times during an encounter, you can change the environment by destroying it. This can cause any number of complications. Be imaginative. The world is ending. Just remember to give the characters a saving throw if any effect would kill them instantly.</li> </ul> |



In the narrative of the game, the machine would always be powering up as the world is always moving towards entropy, but with the tarrasque on the loose, the machine is being supercharged much faster than normal. Tracking days is important here, since that determines where the tarrasque is and what power level the Machine of Unmaking reaches.

When the Machine of Unmaking reaches certain levels of power, its void magic begins to affect the world. Here is a chart for some of the effects you can provide, and some ideas for where the tarrasque might be during its rampage as these levels are hit. Think of it as a timeline to show how the world has been affected by the tarrasque. Don't hesitate to modify the tarrasque section and the Days sections to suit your game group.

Start the timer when the PCs begin Part 1 - The Devastation.

### The Cult of the End

The **Cult of the End** is a cult devoted to the end of the world. They discovered the location of the Machine of Unmaking and subdued the tarrasque with the *guiding wands* that they collected from all over the world. They are guiding the tarrasque to destroy places of order so that the destruction and chaos charges the Machine of Unmaking. Using the destruction to power the machine while weakening the essence of order in the world is making the machine more effective.

### The Guiding wands

These amethyst-tipped wands are magic items that can guide the tarrasque's path of destruction. Wielders can't control the World Ender directly, but they can use the wands to herd it. To herd the beast requires no less than thirteen wands, each with their own wielder, working in conjunction. Without at least thirteen wands guiding the tarrasque, it will follow its instincts to destroy whatever is in its path. The **Cult of the End** has acquired twenty such wands, and they use them at key times to control the creature's general path.

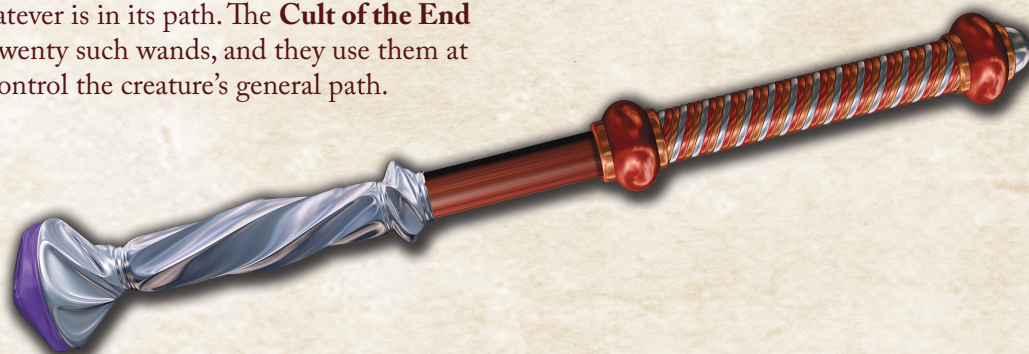
### Guiding wand

*Wand, rare (requires attunement by a spellcaster)*

A *guiding wand* is a specially crafted wand whose purpose is to control the tarrasque and influence the Machine of Unmaking. While holding this wand, you can join a circle of wands and use your willpower in concert with twelve others to guide the tarrasque. The tarrasque won't heed commands given, but will move in the general direction the group desires it to go.

Using the wand on the tarrasque means that your only action is to chant and press your will against the tarrasque's. Doing so feels like trying to keep the power of a raging river from flooding into your mind. If there are ever less than 13 people trying to control the tarrasque, the river of rage spills into every person attempting to use a wand, and they are enraged with mindless ferocity for 1d4 rounds, destroying whatever, or whomever, is closest to them. Starting the chant or ending it must be done in concert with all other wand wielders in the circle at the same time, which is usually done under the command of a separate leader to keep the circle of wands in unison.

These effects are not readily known: A *guiding wand* can also control the Machine of Unmaking, turning its powers to a particular part of the world, though the exact effects cannot be controlled. To do this, there must be at least 7 wands working in unison. A single *guiding wand* can control the gyroscopic bands in the machine, causing them to slow down or speed up. A *guiding wand* can remove the bubble of force that holds the tarrasque's pituitary gland for 10 minutes in the lair of the tarrasque. (See Lair of the Tarrasque.)





# The Machine Of Unmaking - Adventure Path

## Introduction

### - Reports of the Tarrasque -

This section provides hooks that you can use to pull the characters into the adventure. The people, places, and things for these hooks are left generic so you can incorporate names and cities that already exist in your setting.

#### The Summons from the Patron

The characters are summoned by a **patron** who reports that a **friend** from a **neighboring region** has asked for help in dealing with the mythic beast known as the tarrasque. The **patron** wants the characters to see if the **friend** is telling the truth. If it is the tarrasque, the **patron** wants the characters to stop it by any means necessary. The World Ender's appearance is said to herald the end of days, and the **patron** can think of no one better suited to deal with the situation than the characters. The **patron** promises to reward the characters with lands and titles if they prevail and bring back one of its teeth as proof that it is indeed the tarrasque.

#### A Family Member

A family member of a character who lives in a **neighboring region** has sent a letter that a gigantic beast has destroyed a city and is tearing up the entire country as it heads towards the character's hometown.

#### The Messenger

The characters are between adventures when a courier on horseback from a **neighboring region** rides up. The messenger is dead, but the horse has continued riding along in terror. The dead messenger has a missive in a satchel. The missive is for the leader(s) of the **region the PCs are in** and talks about a giant beast of myth and legend called the tarrasque rampaging across the **neighboring region**. Investigation of the body reveals that the courier was killed by a deadly magical poison. It was delivered by touch, and the area where it was delivered has visual marks of the poison.

## The Campaign Hook

The characters have been fighting against the **Cult of the End** on and off for a while. Clues in previous adventures now culminate in a **patron, friend**, or associate of the characters either sending word for help as a terrible beast of destruction is rampaging across their lands, or telling the characters rumors of this beast and it being associated with the **Cult of the End**.

## Part 1

### - The Devastation -

Once the characters have decided to make their way to the **neighboring region**, they come across the ruins of a city destroyed by the tarrasque. You can reveal the destruction first by having the characters find oversized footprints of the tarrasque. These footprints are more like large pits impeding travel along the road. Once the characters reach the city ruins, start the timer for the Machine of Unmaking. You can use some of these descriptions to help color the scene of devastation:

- Huge buildings collapsed into piles of rubble
- Walls flattened into the ground as if something stepped on them
- Neighborhoods of buildings toppled over with a path in the middle, as if something moved through and parted the rubble as easily as if it were walking through water
- Wrecked cobblestone streets
- A whole block of buildings dropped into the sewer system below street level
- A single house, protected by divine writing above the door, standing amidst the rubble of an entire neighborhood
- Water flooding the streets as several buildings have fallen into and dammed up the waterway that flows through the middle of the city
- A crushed church with the limbs of the dead sticking out of the wreckage



Alongside the rubble, which demonstrates the impressive size and destructive ability of the tarrasque, you can lay clues to the abilities it has that aren't in the rules as written. Do this only if you are using the optional rules for your tarrasque.

### The Intelligent Tarrasque

- ☞ Simple investigation reveals a pattern to the devastation. It looks like the garrisons and walls were destroyed first, followed by the city's leadership centers, government buildings, and churches.

### Ranged Rubble Throw

- ☞ There are some buildings partially standing but largely devastated by the rubble of other buildings that are far away. The bricks and stones of a destroyed building down the street have ended up hundreds of feet away.
- ☞ A whole neighborhood has been destroyed by rocks raining down on it from the sky, and large chunks of the earth a few hundred feet away have been torn up.

### Ranged Lightning Bolt

- ☞ One of the garrisons, where siege weapons such as ballista and trebuchet were set up, is burnt and still smoldering. Closer inspection reveals that lightning was used to destroy this garrison.
- ☞ A wall with a hundred dead archers on it is discovered. They were all electrocuted to death, and a scorch mark on the wall in a lightning strike pattern stretches down the entire length.

### The Elements at Your Disposal

While running this part of the adventure, there are a few elements at your disposal.

- ☞ The **Cult of the End**
- ☞ Terek Belzant - The Broken Wizard
- ☞ Gloria Strenn - The Hopeful Midwife
- ☞ The trail left by the Tarrasque
- ☞ The survivors wandering the city
- ☞ The refugee camp on the outside of town

### Tips On Conveying Destruction

Convey the complete and total devastation of the city to your players. Make it feel like a Kaiju has just rampaged through, and no one could stop it. Pull out every giant movie monster reference and intersperse that with relevant actionable information to prompt the characters to act.

### The Cult of the End

Vincent Gul leads this small force of the **Cult of the End**. They have two jobs in this part of the adventure:

1. Kill anyone who attempted to stand up to the Tarrasque. In this section, that means the wizard Terek Belzant, who is still alive.
2. Retrieve a *guiding wand*. One of the cult members was carrying it, got too close to the Tarrasque, and was crushed underfoot.

Vincent has five other **Cult of the End** cultists and two shield guardian servants with him.

### What the Cultists Know

- ☞ Their wands help guide the Tarrasque.
- ☞ They woke it up to power an eldritch device which will unmake the world.
- ☞ Once the machine has been started, there's no way to stop it.
- ☞ The Machine of Unmaking is in the **World's End Mountains** where they woke the Tarrasque. A captured cultist can mark it on a map if coerced or intimidated.
- ☞ Their leader is The Omega, Maz Kurtz, and she will bring about the end of existence so that fertile ground for a new world will be created, where the followers of the **Cult of the End** will be the gods of the new beginning.



## What Vincent Gul Knows

Everything the Cultists know plus the following:

- ✧ They learned about the Machine of Unmaking from the Living Void.
- ✧ The only place of knowledge that might hold the answers to stopping the Machine or the Tarrasque for good is the **library** at the **capital**.

## Tactics for a Fight

- ✧ The **Cult of the End** cultists use *hold person* on the party and cast *spiritual weapon* (manifests as a spear of inky black void) during the fight. Any character paralyzed is the focus of the spiritual weapon attacks.
- ✧ Vincent Gul stays by his shield guardians to get the reaction for the +2 to AC for each of them. He targets paralyzed characters with *flame strike*.
- ✧ If a character closes to melee range with him, one shield guardian (which contains the *cure wounds* spell) helps Vincent in order to give him advantage on his first attack. The other shield guardian tries to hit an enemy and discharge its *inflict wounds* spell.
- ✧ After that, use the spells as the situation dictates. Casting *blindness/deafness* on a melee combatant is a good choice. Having a shield guardian grapple a melee combatant and drag it away from Vincent is another option. The **Cult of the End** cultists try to remain spread out so they can't all be taken out by a single area of effect spell. Level 15 to 20 characters are highly capable, so it is okay if this fight is a cakewalk, as there's a Tarrasque to fight later.

## Treasure

There are 4 *guiding wands* among the cultists. Vincent has 70 platinum pieces on his person, and the other cultists each have 10 pp and 35 gp. They have raided the treasury of the city in order to procure any resources they may need. Some of the coins appear very old, unlikely to have come from the capital treasury. These came from the treasury of the cult and are a clue to the age of Maz Kurtz.

## Survivors

The few survivors of the tarrasque's devastation can be found wandering the ruins of the city. They run the range of reactions from listless to shock to frantic heroism, looking to save trapped victims and establish order.

If you like to improvise, you can craft a situation where the survivors could use the characters' help. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

- ✧ Some survivors need help rescuing a child who is alive but trapped under precarious rubble.
- ✧ A group of survivors is helping a gravely wounded survivor who is close to death. The healthy survivors beg the characters for help and healing.
- ✧ A group of survivors has several wounded people with them. It is causing them to have a hard time getting to safety. One member of their group is reeling with insanity and needs calmed down, while the others need help moving or need to be carried.

## The Broken Wizard

Terek Belzant is a wizard whose job was to protect this city and its people from threats like the tarrasque. He is understandably distraught at his failure. His apprentice Abernathy Moog was killed by the tarrasque, and his magic didn't seem to have any effect on the creature. His inability to save his home has broken his spirit.

You can use this encounter to introduce the idea of the **library** and the **Cult of the End**, and to give the characters some information about the tarrasque.

*Near what was once a wizard's tower sits an old man in tattered yellow robes, with a bloody bandage on his head and his arm in a sling. He sits alone, a smoking pipe hanging limply from his lips. Empty eyes stare into space and tear-trails stain his cheeks.*



## What Terek Knows

- ☞ It was a giant beast that was filled with a need to destroy everything. It was the spirit of destruction made real.
- ☞ It was immune to most of my magic.
- ☞ Abernathy was trying to tell me something about a group of people in town with amethyst wands having something to do with the beast before it crushed him.
- ☞ *If your Tarrasque has other optional abilities, then Terek knows about one of them and relates it from his point of view.*
- ☞ Terek believes that if he had forewarning of the attack, the **library** at the **capital** would have the information he needed to know how to fight and destroy the creature. *\*Note\** This clue gives the characters an option other than to just track the Tarrasque and fight it.

## Roleplaying Terek Belzant

Terek is distant when he speaks, never looking at the characters, even when answering their questions. His voice quavers and catches. Any mention of going after the tarrasque or stopping it provokes Terek to be snide, saying if he couldn't stop the beast, what hope do they have. After that burst of emotion, he realizes what he's said, remembers the horror he's seen, apologizes, and settles back into his melancholy.

## If you use the Cult of the End Here

Either in the middle of the conversation, or after it's over, the members of the **Cult of the End** arrive to kill Terek.

## Environmental Effects

- ☞ **Ambient Magical Energy.** The area is a destroyed wizard's tower. Ambient magic hangs in the air, and Vincent and his cultists are spellcasters. Every time a d20 comes up as 10 or lower when rolled in association with a spell or spell-like effect, roll on the Wild Magic Surge table on pg 104 of the PHB.
- ☞ **Rubble.** The collapsed tower and a lot of the surrounding area are comprised of uneven rubble that is difficult terrain. Laying down in it or hiding behind large piles of it grants half cover.

## The Hopeful Midwife

Gloria Strenn is a local midwife who has helped birth over two thousand of the city's inhabitants. In the wake of this disaster, she has gathered people she can trust, and all the supplies she can muster, to help feed survivors. She is organizing the survivors for when the remaining city leaders start to implement their rebuilding plans.

*Near the edge of the city a number of tents have been set up. People move here and there among them, but the largest concentration of refugees is near a soup tent. There, a middle aged woman is scuttling about, organizing things and keeping the peace.*

## What Gloria Knows

- ☞ A beast as big as a most of the buildings in town tore through the city and wrecked everything.
- ☞ The beast casually ate fleeing people, and it even stopped to drink a bunch of water from a fountain - its giant, blood-covered tongue lapping like a dog's.
- ☞ There were people with amethyst-tipped wands in the city, and she'd never seen the people who carried them before.
- ☞ *If your Tarrasque has other optional abilities, then Gloria tells a story about one of them from her point of view.*
- ☞ The leadership of the city sent some adventurous folks to the **library** at the **capital** to find a way to stop the beast. *\*Note\** This clue gives the characters an option other than to just track the Tarrasque and fight it.
- ☞ The leadership of the city has left to personally ask for aid from their allies abroad.
- ☞ Not even the wizard Belzant could stop the creature, and poor Abernathy (Belzant's apprentice) was stomped by it.

## Roleplaying Gloria Strenn

Gloria has dark circles under her eyes, and she looks ragged. Even with that, her eyes shine with a defiant and hopeful light, and her smile is infectious. When other survivors come to her in need of help, she presents an upbeat and hopeful attitude.



## If you use the Cult of the End Here

A pair of cultists grab a bowl of soup and some bread. Even cultists have to eat, and the pair that approach seek free food. They are part of Vincent Gul's cell, and once they grab the food they plan to meet him in the ruins of the city. They appear as everyone else, except for their clearly visible *guiding wands*. If you want the characters to notice the wands, convey that these two people have amethyst-tipped wands hanging from their belts. These cultists wear them as a mark of pride, secure in their feeling of superiority.

If confronted by the characters, the cultists first say they were here to meet and hopefully learn from the wizard Terek. This is a lie, and a DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check uncovers the ruse.

- ☞ If the characters take any hostile action towards the pair, they run, trying to get back to the other cultists. You can use the chase rules on pg 252 of the DMG.
- ☞ If the characters want to let them go and track them to their leader, the characters can make a DC 17 Dexterity (Stealth) check to trail them without being noticed. If they fail, then both sides are aware of each other's presence. If they fail by more than 5, the cultists lead them into a trap and get the drop on the characters in a closed-off alley. The cultists might just lead them to a dead end and escape through a hidden door if they do not want to engage the powerful-looking adventurers.

## Environmental Effects

There's no set map or encounter area, but you may want to use a couple of environmental effects. Feel free to come up with others depending on how you set the scene.

- ☞ **Rubble.** There is no small amount of rubble in the city. It is all difficult terrain, and laying down in it grants half cover.
- ☞ **Refugee Camp.** The cultists are running away from the characters and don't attack while still in the refugee camp area. Any ranged weapon or spell attack against the cultists that misses triggers a d20 roll. On less than a 10, the attack harms a refugee, as there are a lot around.

## Part 2

### - Knowledge is Power -

The **library** at the **capital** is the only place nearby that has reliable information about the tarrasque and the Machine of Unmaking. All of the **library**, except for a few restricted sections comprising the lowest three floors, is open to visitors. These restricted floors hold the books and information the characters are looking for. The characters need to devise some way to get access to the restricted floors and then find the information they're looking for.

### Traveling to and from the Library

It takes 3 days to travel to the **capital** from the ruins of the city by horse. From the **library**, it takes one day to get to **the dam** or **the quarry**. (See The Tarrasque Fight.)

### Gaining Access

You can follow the characters' lead on how they get into the restricted parts of the **library**, but here are a few ways they may be able to gain access. The characters should understand that it will probably take days, if not a full week, to discover the information they're looking for. The **library**, especially the restricted sections, are not organized in any logical way that could help them with their research. The information about the tarrasque is spread across many books and little of it is labelled under the word tarrasque, instead being compiled from reports of destruction and the tales of survivors. The people who work and take care of these sections would be able to provide invaluable assistance in discovering the information.

- ☞ The characters can bribe Sandra Voom, the head of the **library**, with rare books worth 10,000 gp. This gives them access to the restricted floors and to Casper Jenkins, caretaker of the restricted section. He can help them and provide quicker access to the information.
- ☞ Get on the good side of Casper Jenkins by tracking him down and speaking to him at the bar he likes to frequent. He can sneak the PCs into the **library** or "hire" them as assistants.
- ☞ The characters can sneak into the **library** every day they want to do research. This should provide its own complications each day, with Casper or



one of his assistants happening upon their work and research. If they go in during the hours the **library** is closed, they may encounter the night watchmen that patrol the **library**.

- ✧ They can apply for a permit to do the research. This takes 2 days to move through the bureaucracy of the **capital**, but a 4,000 gp bribe (spread among the many appropriate parties) speeds the process along.

### The Research

To discover the information across the various books is an Intelligence (Investigation) check every day they are doing research.

- ✧ DC 15. The characters find one piece of relevant information. For every 5 the characters beat the DC by, they gain an additional piece of information.

Only one roll is made by the characters per day and it is modified as follows:

- ✧ Every character who assists can either grant advantage or grant a +1 cumulative bonus to the Intelligence (Investigation) roll.
- ✧ If the characters choose to sneak into the **library**, the DCs of all checks are increased by 5 as they must hide their research.
- ✧ If the characters gain the assistance of Casper, they have advantage and gain a +2 on the Intelligence (Investigation) roll.

When the characters are successful, roll 2d6 and compare against the information chart. The characters gain that piece of information. If they already have that piece of information, ask them if they want to go up or down the list and give them the next closest piece of information that they don't have based on that choice.

The characters can stay and research as many days as they want, but the tarrasque's reign of destruction continues as they do. Reports of the destruction occurring in other areas, as well as the reported effects of the Machine of Unmaking, should be presented to the characters. Use the Timer Chart when a threshold has been passed, and have the characters hear some news within town or observe one of the omens of the unmaking, perhaps having a book with relevant information unravel in their hands as the words peel themselves off the page.



**Gaining access to the prestigious library is a challenge in and of itself.**



## Information Chart

Here's what the PCs can discover from the **library**:

1. The Tarrasque has been killed before, seven times. A *wish* has even been used to keep it dead, but the wording of the wish was not accurate enough to destroy it for good.
2. It can regenerate from a single piece of itself.
3. It is rumored that a large chunk of its pituitary gland is kept chained up in the room of the World Ender within the Temple of the Void in the **World's End Mountains**. When the Tarrasque is killed away from the temple, it regenerates from that piece.
4. Every time the Tarrasque is defeated, it gains new abilities and becomes stronger.
5. The Tarrasque is resistant to almost all magical effects.
6. "The Tarrasque can't be targeted by spells which a spellslinger's skill in striking is required. Nor can common spells like *magic missile* or spells like *lightning bolt* harm the creature, and may be reflected back at the caster."
7. The Tarrasque is the physical embodiment of destruction in the world, and its sole purpose is to destroy.
8. Insert a power the Tarrasque has been given from the supplement or ignore if running the Tarrasque without any optional rules. For example, if the Intelligent Tarrasque is being used, there is an amethyst crystal crown which, if worn, can control the Tarrasque. To don the crown is a death sentence for the bearer, but for a full week the Tarrasque is guided by the intelligence of the crown bearer.
9. The beast is so imposing that those who are considered brave often hesitate or flinch in the World Ender's presence. (Frightful Presence)
10. The Machine of Unmaking was gifted by the Living Void as a reset button. Those who control the machine could remake the world using their own plans.
11. The machine can only be used in the Tarrasque's lair, which is in the base of one of the **World's End Mountains**. The location is marked on a map scribbled into the margins of a book.
12. The Tarrasque and the machine are connected magically. If the last living chunk of the Tarrasque is thrown into the machine, both the Tarrasque and the Machine are destroyed for good.
13. The amethyst-tipped wands are called *guiding wands* and are used to herd the Tarrasque in general directions. The first ones were created to keep the Tarrasque away from cities.
14. The **Cult of the End** is an old organization. Their leader is called Maz Kurtz, The Omega. This is not a title but the name of their leader, who has been alive for over a thousand years and has even written some of the books the characters are learning from.

## The Adventurers Who Were Sent

If the characters inquire about the adventurers who were sent to the **library** by the leadership of the destroyed city, they learn those adventurers never arrived. They were killed by the **Cult of the End** on the way. There were reports of bodies found in a camp near the city, but the city guard has not had a chance to investigate. If the characters head to the camp, they find many things missing, as if they were robbed, but a DC 18 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals that this is a ruse. Magical poison marks can be found on the bodies.

## Expanding this Section

My suggestion is to not play out every night or day of researching. Instead, have the characters research for two or three days and then have something happen to break the monotony. Here are a few ideas you can drop in:

- ☞ The **Cult of the End** is keeping an eye on the characters and attempt to eliminate them for interfering with their plans.
- ☞ A building important to the characters collapses because of the Machine of Unmaking. The inn they're staying at, or the home of a **friend** the characters are fond of, are good options.



## Part 3

### - Fighting the Tarrasque -

Where this fight takes place is dependent on the timer. This helps you determine where the tarrasque is at the time of the fight. Refer to the first part of this book to build your tarrasque fight.

If you want to complicate the fight, have members of the **Cult of the End** around with their *guiding wands*. One alpha and twenty cultists keep their distance from the tarrasque but travel within its shadow. You can use them to attack any characters who keep their distance but damage the tarrasque.

Here are some possible locations where the fight could happen:

#### Countryside

This space is wide open with few trees to provide cover. While it doesn't provide much in the way of environmental tactics, it does make it much more difficult for the **Cult of the End** to sneak up on any of the characters who are keeping their distance from the tarrasque.

#### The Dam

The tarrasque is trying to destroy **the dam**, which is 50-ft. tall and 20-ft. thick.

**The Dam.** **The dam** has AC 17 and a damage threshold of 20. If **the dam** takes 200 points of damage, it starts to crack and leak. At any time **the dam** is over 201 points of damage, it takes an ongoing 10 damage each round until it breaks apart completely. If it is shored up in some way, return it back to 200 HP worth of damage.

At 400 points of damage, the whole dam disintegrates under the water pressure in a gush of stone and water. All creatures on the other side of **the dam** when it breaks must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw or take 15d6 (52) points of bludgeoning damage, are washed downstream 300 ft., and are incapacitated for a round. Those who make the saving take half damage and manage to get to the side before being washed downstream.

This also has the side effect of creating a flowing body of water in the middle of the encounter. The characters now have to deal with this and the tarrasque is now within the river, which is considered difficult terrain.

**The Cult.** The cultists are all on the hills and the cliff above the area that floods. They are watching the devastation and are ready to move when they need to.

#### The Mine and Quarry

The dwarves and humans of this region have been working together for many years. **The quarry** that the humans work revealed an old dwarven mining outpost rich with silver. The joint force of humans and dwarves decided to mine it together, rather than quibble over the resources. Unfortunately, the tarrasque's arrival has destroyed all structures that exist outside of the mines in **the quarry**. The beast is now clawing into the mines, ripping off chunks of **the quarry's** walls, pulling out dwarf and human workers alike, and eating them with abandon.

**The Quarry.** The outside of **the quarry** is mostly intact, which means there are plenty of places to stand on the different levels of **the quarry**.

**The Mines.** There are three mines within **the quarry** the tarrasque is destroying. Each has AC 17 and a damage threshold of 20. If a mine takes 150 points of damage it collapses, trapping 40 miners inside. Adjust the number of miners and damage if you want some variance for each mine.

The workers in one of the mines will die in a few hours if they are not dug out. They may try to dig themselves out, but from the inside this has as much chance of collapsing the rest of the mine as it does of getting them to freedom and safety. The other two groups of miners last a week before they die if they are trapped.

**The Cult.** The cultists keep their distance and only approach **the quarry** from the topmost edges once the characters have engaged the tarrasque. They seek to kill anyone who is also on the topmost edges of **the quarry**.











### The Road and the Forest

The tarrasque is making its way down the Merchant's Road towards the **capital** and is destroying the stone road with every step. It is also annihilating the forest to the left and right of the road as it goes by. This fight has a lot of cover because of the forest.

**The Forest.** The trees and the leaves are thick enough here to provide concealment from the tarrasque while within the forest. If the tarrasque attacks someone in the forest, regardless of whether they hit the character or not, that cover goes away as the tarrasque rips up all the trees and foliage in a 15' by 15' area. If you're playing theater of the mind, tell the characters they're exposed if they stay where they are.

**The Cult.** Cultists hide within the woods and look for every opportunity to murder the characters as they fight the tarrasque. They especially like to wait for a character to engage the tarrasque and then cast *hold person* on them so the World Ender has a nice easy snack to consume.

### The Capital

The **capital** is a large city with buildings tall and short, people everywhere, alleys and streets, and a peacekeeping force. The tarrasque has been guided here to destroy and wreak havoc on the city. When it reaches here, the Machine of Unmaking enters its final stage.

**The Capital.** The city walls and buildings have AC 15 and a damage threshold of 20. If the **capital** takes 500 damage, the Machine of Unmaking has powered up to level 4, and the effects start to occur immediately. The world starts to end with chunks of the land itself rising and dissolving. Rents in the earth begin to open. Trees disintegrate instantly. If this happens, the characters have 5 more rounds to kill the tarrasque or the majority of the world ends.

**The End of the World.** Killing the tarrasque vents some of the energy linked to the machine and imposes order for a short while. This stops the world from ending immediately, but the reprieve is only good for 7 days. At this point, the tarrasque is fully regenerated and the world ends immediately.

**Peacekeeping Force.** The peacekeeping force of the **capital** deals 30 damage to the tarrasque every round on initiative count 15 from arrow fire and the few troops brave enough to attack in melee. Only a few have magical weapons, meaning that despite the large numbers they can field, the damage they can do is minimal. This lasts until the **capital** takes 300 points of damage. At this point, they have been rendered ineffective through loss of people.

### Traveling to the World's End Mountains

It takes 4 days to travel from the **capital** to the **World's End Mountains** by horse. Teleportation or other means of travel can speed this up dramatically. Use your best judgement and help facilitate any ideas or resources the characters bring to the table to make travel more expedient.

It is very cold in the **World's End Mountains**. The characters should be prepared to deal with extreme temperatures.

## Part 4

### - The Machine Of Unmaking -

Maz Kurtz, The Omega of the **Cult of the End**, has been alive for a long time. She wishes to see everything end and to become a god of the new world created by the Living Void. She and her cult have reassembled the Machine of Unmaking as instructed by the Living Void, they've awoken the tarrasque, set it loose upon the world, and now they watch as the machine absorbs the power of chaos and destruction and dissolves the world back into the ether. The Living Void's plan is to escape its imprisonment and recreate the world as the overgod, with the cultists reigning as lesser gods.

### The Tarrasque's Lair

The tarrasque's Lair is a gigantic cave in the base of one of the **World's End Mountains**, a natural cavernous opening with some rough-hewn stone. Large rifts and crevices, old and new, scar the floor and the sides of the massive hallway where the tarrasque has made its exit several times throughout history. These are made by its claws and spikes, as it has squeezed out of the opening.





There are only three areas within the tarrasque's lair, but all are overwhelmingly cavernous. The first is the giant hallway leading from the entrance to the tarrasque's lair. The second is a shrine to the Living Void, erected by the cultists. If the proper rituals are performed here, the shrine can be used to speak with the Living Void. Maz has also built a way to create new tarrasque-like creatures from the pituitary gland. These mini-tarrasques are created by incredible magics that are worked upon pieces of the tarrasque, and luckily they lack many of the more fearsome powers. The third is the tarrasque's lair, where it sleeps or goes to regenerate. Maz Kurtz is here with the Machine of Unmaking and the pituitary gland, which is currently regenerating if the characters have destroyed the beast.

### General Features

**Light.** There's no light within this cave except where the cultists have torches of *continual flame* and other fires lit.

**Cold.** The **World's End Mountains** are far to the north, and it is frigid here. If characters don't prepare for the temperatures or shield themselves from the extreme cold, they are considered to have three levels of exhaustion due to the trip.

### The Hallway

Several of the remaining members of the **Cult of the End** are camped out here. An alpha and four cultists rest here and aren't expecting anyone other than their compatriots. They are not prepared or ready for attack in any way.

### Treasure

In addition to a *guiding wand*, this area contains an amethyst statue of a tarrasque worth 1,200 gp in one of the cultists bedrolls. A bottle of elvish wine (200 gp) is in another bedroll. There are also cups and silverware laying around. Dried food can be found in nearby crates, and water jugs that can last a dozen people a month are stored near the walls.



## The Shrine of the Living Void

The Shrine of the Living Void is nothing more than a simple black menhir in the middle of a cavern. The stone of this menhir is so black it seems to be a hole in existence, and gazing upon it too long leaves dark afterimages in one's vision. This causes disadvantage for the next 3 rounds to any activity that requires vision. If anyone touches it for more than 6 seconds, they cease to exist — no saving throw, no resurrection, they are merely erased from existence. The menhir radiates strong magic, but determining exactly what type is nearly impossible. To everyone around, even the cultists and Maz Kurtz, the menhir creates a sense of unease, especially as they near the object.

There are three other creatures in this room. One is an alpha of the cult and the other two are mini-tarrasques, who are shaped like the tarrasque in all ways but are only slightly larger than a horse, coming to around 7 feet at the shoulder. The mini-tarrasques are normally kept in two cages of adamantite, each on opposite sides of the room. The alpha can control them with her *guiding wand*, for they do not have the same blood lust as their progenitor. The mini-tarrasques were created from samples of the pituitary gland in the main lair of the tarrasque by a ritual taught to Maz by the Living Void using the power of the menhir.

Sounds of fighting in the hallway trigger the alpha to let the mini-tarrasques out, so they are ready for trouble. If the characters don't explore the hallway, then the alpha and the mini-tarrasques show up when the characters are dealing with Maz Kurtz, at the most inopportune time you deem possible.

## Treasure

In addition to the *guiding wand* and the adamantite cages, the alpha wears a pair of gloves made of elvish cloth sewn with mithril thread, worth 5,000 gp.

## The Lair of the Tarrasque

Maz Kurtz is here with the Machine of Unmaking, as is the piece of the tarrasque that is currently regenerating.

It takes seven days for the World Ender to fully reconstitute itself. Depending on the timing of the characters' arrival, the tarrasque could be a small glob of material in the rays of force it is attached to, or it

could be a mostly formed mass of skeletal material, muscle, and scales in the shape of a tarrasque but not quite whole yet. Rays of force extend from crystals laid into the walls and hold the gland suspended in a force bubble over a magic circle in the floor. This speeds the regeneration process.

The Machine of Unmaking is eight feet tall and consists of an obsidian stand with interlocking white crystal gyroscopic rings rotating around a black pulsing void that grows larger and smaller. It leaves a black afterimage in the vision of anyone who looks at it for more than a few seconds, but does not cause the disadvantage that gazing upon the menhir does. Maz Kurtz is tapping into the power the Machine of Unmaking has gathered and, depending on when the PCs confront her, she may be possessed of additional abilities.

## Maz Kurtz, The Omega

Maz is unamused at the intrusion, but if audible fighting occurred earlier in the hallway or shrine, she is prepared. Maz has many spells and powers at her disposal, and she is not afraid to use them. Her millennia-long lifespan has made her a survivor and clever in ways to preserve herself. Play her as such.

## The Simulacrum Ploy

Maz has a simulacrum, a common ploy she has used through the ages. She maintains a mind link with the simulacrum and projects thoughts into its head, telling the thing what she wants it to say and do. Maz is always invisible but nearby. She is not hidden from magical observation, but her puppet is almost always acting on her behalf. Even if the characters sneak up on Maz, they are likely targeting her simulacrum, which is standing by the Machine of Unmaking while Maz reads a book through its eyes.

If the characters made noise earlier, Maz is especially ready, having cast *fly*, *mage armor*, *mind blank*, and *stoneskin* on herself. She has flown to the top of the room, where there is a rock outcropping, or she is on top of the mostly reconstituted tarrasque. Her simulacrum casts *conjure elemental* (concentration spell) to conjure an earth elemental, and that creature waits with her.



The simulacrum monologues at the characters when they enter the room and will try to kill them with its meager abilities. Once it is dead, Maz hides until one of the characters, preferably a healing spell caster (but any spell caster will do), presents an opportunity or reason for attack, or it is noticed or revealed that they are a spellcaster. She attacks any known spellcaster with a shot from her *wand of disintegration*. If she can line up a group of PCs, she will use *lightning bolt* as a 7th-level slot (12d6 damage, 5' wide 100' long line).

### Tactics

As stated earlier, Maz is clever and keeps her distance from the party, either by flying around and firing spells from distance or getting off an *invisibility* spell with a legendary action if she's on the ground. She will almost always keep a counterspell ready, and will regain her reaction with a legendary action if she can. Here are a few things she likes to do:

- ✧ Cast *haste* right before her turn with a legendary action, and then use her extra action to activate her *wand of disintegration*.
- ✧ If there are many melee combatants, she flies up to the ledge and uses it as cover while she casts *haste* and sends *magic missiles*, *lightning bolts*, and *disintegration* rays from above.
- ✧ If there are many single target attacks coming her way, she always uses an *invisibility* spell with her first legendary action to make it harder to target her.
- ✧ Maz uses *time stop* to get into position, maybe dropping an earth elemental right by a caster, and then sets up a *fire shield* and *mirror image*.
- ✧ If Maz is up on the ledge and can't use a fly spell to get down, she uses a legendary action to *misty step* down to the floor or *dimension door* to move to the shrine of the Living Void if she wants to get out of there for a second to regroup.

**Note:** Remember Maz can only have one concentration spell active at a time and could be switching from *haste* to *invisibility* fairly often in this encounter. Also remember *wall of force*, *globe of invulnerability*, *conjure elemental*, and *reverse gravity* are concentration spells. They'll be marked in the stat block for ease of reference.



### When Maz Dies

When Maz is killed, she smiles at the character who killed her, winks, and her body disintegrates and flows into the Machine of Unmaking. If the machine still exists after 10 minutes has passed, Maz steps out of the menhir into the Shrine of the Living Void, fully healed and with all her spell slots restored. The only thing she doesn't have is her *wand of disintegration*.

This effect only works for Maz while she is in the lair of the tarrasque and near the Machine of Unmaking. If the battle ends anywhere outside the cave, she merely perishes. Destroying the machine will also kill Maz, as her life force is inexorably linked to it.



## Treasure

Maz has the *wand of disintegration* and a *guiding wand* on her person. She's also wearing a platinum bracelet fashioned as a series of interconnected tarrasque claws (7,500 gp) and a necklace which has a black diamond locket (20,000 gp). This opens to reveal a picture of a little boy. The chamber has the magic circle, which would be valuable to a mage. A sketch of it would fetch 7,000 gp to wizards and others interested in arcane information. A lockbox is by the wall and has 1,200 platinum pieces in it and a collection of books and scrolls on the tarrasque and the Living Void worth a total of 6,000 gp.

## The Tarrasque's Pituitary Gland

The gland is suspended in a force bubble which is 30 feet above the ground. If the tarrasque has started to reform by the time the PCs arrive, it is a DC 15 (+2 per day it has been dead) Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Strength (Athletics) check to cut through the reformed body. Each time someone fails to successfully cut through, the DC is reduced by 2 and the attempt takes a minute of time.

Touching the force bubble with one of the *guiding wands* disables the bubble for 10 minutes. *Dispel magic*, and other ways to get rid of a *wall of force*, also gets rid of the force bubble for 10 minutes (DC 15 with *dispel magic*). The pituitary gland, which is as large as a medium sized humanoid, is then free.

## The Machine of Unmaking

The machine stands eight feet tall and has white gyroscopic rings rotating around the black energy in the middle. They spin quickly, and to attempt to reach inside without touching the rings is a DC 25 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. The artifact is attuned to Maz, and the Machine has been granting her a number of special abilities (found in her stat block).

The rings spin so fast that it's difficult to get the mass that is the pituitary gland inside of it. It takes a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check to determine that the white and obsidian have parts of the amethyst crystal in them, and the amethyst wands can be used to manipulate the machine. Success means only a minute is spent figuring it out, while failure means it takes 3 minutes.

The PCs can use one of the *guiding wands* with a DC 20 (+2 per power level of the machine) Intelligence (Arcana) check to control the white rings of the machine. One character can give aid if they also have a *guiding wand*. If the check fails, the DC is lowered by 2 and it takes another minute to make another check. Once the characters slow the rings down, it takes a single action to throw the gland into the machine.

This all matters because Maz reconstitutes herself after 10 minutes and will come right back to the chamber to prevent the characters from finishing their job if they are not quick enough.

## - Epilogue -

The tarrasque has been killed. The **Cult of the End** has been defeated. The world is safe, but the devastation the tarrasque has left in its wake has certainly created other problems. What those problems are and how the characters deal with them we leave to you, but to get you started here are a few ideas.

### Bandit Kingdoms

With the devastation the tarrasque has wrought, the leaders of the **neighboring region** and the other lands destroyed by the tarrasque have abandoned those areas, and various factions have risen to rule sections of the region - creating a small warring set of states. Laws here are either nonexistent or enforced brutally.

### Mutations and Magic

The tarrasque is a highly magical creature, and its body is considered a resource by many. There is a mad struggle to secure parts and pieces of the tarrasque for experimentation and research, or merely as trophies. The local flora and fauna where the tarrasque was killed have mutated into terrible and aggressive monsters that need to be dealt with.

### Rebuilding

The lands the tarrasque wrecked need to be rebuilt, and while building may not be the right task for adventurers, keeping monsters and other outside influences from getting in the way of the rebuilding is an important task. The leadership of the region may want to keep the characters around as part of their rebuilding efforts to troubleshoot large and violent problems, or as figureheads to give the people hope.



# Stat Blocks

## Vincent Gul, Alpha of The Cult of the End

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (scale mail)

**Hit Points** 71 (13d8 + 13)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 13 (+1) | 17 (+3) | 18 (+4) |

**Saving Throws** Con +4, Wis +6, Cha +7

**Skills** Insight +6, Perception +6, Religion +4, Stealth +5

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision, passive Perception 16

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Nihilistic Beliefs.** The Alpha is immune to being charmed and frightened due to his fervent beliefs in the end of the world.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The Alpha's dedication to the void has granted him the following innate abilities. His spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The Alpha can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- **At will:** sacred flame (2d8 damage)
- **1/day each:** bane, darkness, dispel magic

**Life Link.** When brought to 0 hp, the Alpha absorbs the life energy of one of the other Cult of the End cultists within 60 feet, regaining hp equal to the hp remaining from the cultist, who then dies.

**Spellcasting.** The Alpha is a 10th level spellcaster. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). The Alpha has the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *guidance, poison spray, resistance, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bane, command, shield of faith*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness, hold person, silence*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *dispel magic, protection from energy*
- 4th level (3 slots): *freedom of movement, stone shape*
- 5th level (2 slots): *flame strike, mass cure wounds*

**Shield Guardian Dual Amulet.** Vincent has a dual amulet, which gives him two shield guardians at his beck and call. Each of them has a spell stored in them. One has a 4th level cure wounds stored in it to be cast on Vincent when he has less than 50 hp, healing 4d8+3 hp. The other shield guardian has a 4th level inflict wounds, which is cast when the shield guardian strikes an enemy with a fist attack to deal an extra 33 (6d10) necrotic damage.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The Alpha makes two mace attacks.

**Mace.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage plus 17 (5d6) necrotic damage.





## Cult Of The End Cultists

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 13 (leather armor)

**Hit Points** 33 (6d8 + 6)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 11 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 10 (+0) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) |

**Skills** Deception +4, Persuasion +4, Religion +2

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Nihilistic Beliefs.** The Cult of the End cultists have advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened due to their fervent beliefs in the end of the world.

**Spellcasting.** The Cult of the End cultists are 4th-level spellcasters. Their spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 11, +3 to hit with spell attacks). The Cult of the End Cultists have the following cleric spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *resistance, sacred flame, thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *command, inflict wounds, shield of faith*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *hold person, spiritual weapon*

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The End of the World cultists makes two melee attacks.

**Dagger.** Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one creature. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## Shield Guardian

*Large construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 142 (15d10 + 60)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 18 (+4) | 8 (-1) | 18 (+4) | 7 (-2) | 10 (+0) | 3 (-4) |

**Senses** blindsight 10 ft., darkvision 60 ft., passive perception 10

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** Charmed, Exhaustion, Frightened, Paralyzed, Poisoned

**Languages** understands commands given in any language but can't speak

**Challenge** 7 (2,900 XP)

**Bound.** The shield guardian is magically bound to an amulet. As long as the guardian and its amulet are on the same plane of existence, the amulet's wearer can telepathically call the guardian to travel to it, and the guardian knows the distance and direction to the amulet. If the guardian is within 60 feet of the amulet's wearer, half of any damage the wearer takes (rounded up) is transferred to the guardian.

**Regeneration.** The shield guardian regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The guardian makes two fist attacks.

**Fist.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage.

### Reactions

**Shield.** When a creature makes an attack against the wearer of the guardian's amulet, the guardian grants a +2 bonus to the wearer's AC if the guardian is within 5 feet of the wearer.



## Generic Cult of the End Alpha

*Medium humanoid (any race), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with Mage Armor)

**Hit Points** 40 (9d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 9 (-1) | 14 (+2) | 11 (+0) | 17 (+3) | 12 (+1) | 11 (+0) |

**Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +4

**Skills** Arcana +6, History +6

**Senses** passive Perception 11

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish, Abyssal

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Nihilistic Beliefs.** The Alpha has advantage on saving throws against being charmed and frightened due to their fervent beliefs in the end of the world.

**Innate Spellcasting.** The Alpha's dedication to the void has granted them the following innate abilities. Their spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15). The Alpha can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

- At will : sacred flame (2d8 damage)
- 1/day each: bane, darkness, dispel magic

**Spellcasting:** The Alpha is a 9th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). The Alpha has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt, light, mage hand, prestidigitation*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic, mage armor, magic missile, shield*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *misty step, suggestion*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell, fireball, fly*
- 4th level (3 slots): *greater invisibility, ice storm*
- 5th level (1 slot): *conjure elemental*

### Actions

**Dagger:** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

## Mini-Tarrasque

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 161 (14d10 + 84)

**Speed** 30 ft., burrow 30 ft.

| STR    | DEX    | CON    | INT   | WIS     | CHA     |
|--------|--------|--------|-------|---------|---------|
| 22(+6) | 13(+1) | 22(+6) | 3(-4) | 13 (+1) | 14 (+2) |

**Saving Throws** Int +0, Wis +4, Cha +4

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non magical weapons

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** blindsight 90 ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** -

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** The mini-Tarrasque has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Regeneration.** At the start of its turn, the mini-Tarrasque regenerates 20 hp.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The mini-Tarrasque makes five attacks: one with its bite, two with its claws, one with its horns, and one with its tail.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (2d12 + 6) piercing damage. If the target is a creature, it is grappled (escape DC 16). Until this grapple ends, the target is restrained, and the mini-tarrasque can't bite another target.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d8 + 6) slashing damage.

**Horns.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 17 (2d10 + 6) piercing damage.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 13 (2d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.



## Maz Kurtz, The Omega

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 12 (15 with mage armor)

**Hit Points** 352 (64d8 + 64)

**Speed** 30 ft.

| STR     | DEX     | CON     | INT     | WIS     | CHA     |
|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
| 10 (+0) | 14 (+2) | 12 (+1) | 20 (+5) | 15 (+2) | 16 (+3) |

**Saving Throws** Int +9, Wis +6

**Skills** Arcana +13, History +13

**Damage Resistance** damage from spells; nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing (from *stoneskin*)

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Draconic, Elvish, Abyssal, Infernal, Ignan

**Challenge** 20 (8,400 XP)

**Magic Resistance.** Maz Kurtz has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Spellcasting.** Maz Kurtz is an 18th-level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). Maz Kurtz can cast disguise self and invisibility at will and has the following wizard spells prepared:

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt*, *light*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *shocking grasp*
- 1st level (4 slots): *detect magic (c)*, *identify*, *mage armor\**, *magic missile*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *detect thoughts (c)*, *mirror image*, *misty step*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *fly*, *lightning bolt*
- 4th level (3 slots): *banishment*, *fire shield*, *stoneskin\**
- 5th level (3 slots): *conjure elemental (c)*, *screaming (c)*, *wall of force (c)*
- 6th level (1 slot): *disintegration*, *globe of invulnerability (c)*
- 7th level (1 slot): *teleport*
- 8th level (1 slot): *mind blank\**
- 9th level (1 slot): *time stop*

**The Machine of Unmaking.** Maz Kurtz gets the following abilities from being attuned to the Machine of Unmaking.

- A legendary action per power level of the Machine of Unmaking. She can use her legendary actions as follows:
  - 1 legendary action to cast one of the following spells at its minimum spell level at-will:
    - *invisibility (c)*, *haste (c)*, *misty step*
  - 2 legendary actions to cast one of the following spells at its minimum spell level at-will:
    - *dimension door*, *disintegration*
  - 3 legendary actions to cast one of the following spells at its minimum spell level at-will:
    - *reverse gravity (c)*, *teleport*
  - 1 legendary action to restore her reaction for the round
- Maz Kurtz gains an additional 50 hp per power level of the Machine of Unmaking.
- While in the lair of the Tarrasque, Maz can't die and is resurrected by the machine and the Living Void after 10 minutes. She has all her hp and spell slots restored when she is remade.
- Destroying the machine kills Maz.

**Simulacrum.** Maz has a simulacrum, which she uses to be her mouthpiece and to avoid assassination. The simulacrum has all of Maz's stats with the following exceptions: it doesn't have the *wand of disintegration*, it only has Maz's cantrips and the 5th level *conjure elemental* spell, and it's not attuned to the Machine of Unmaking so it has none of those benefits or abilities.

### Actions

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

**Wand of Disintegration (10 charges).** Casts *disintegration* on one target and is modified to activate by pressing a rune on the wand so it can be used with the Use an Object action. The wand needs some time to cool down after firing so it can only be used once per round.

*\*Maz Kurtz casts these spells on herself before combat.  
(c) – These are concentration spells.*



## Earth Elemental

*Large elemental, neutral*

**Armor Class** 17 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 126 (12d10 + 60)

**Speed** 30ft., burrow 30ft.

| STR     | DEX    | CON     | INT    | WIS     | CHA    |
|---------|--------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| 20 (+5) | 8 (-1) | 20 (+5) | 5 (-3) | 10 (+0) | 5 (-3) |

**Damage Vulnerabilities** thunder

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from non-magical weapons

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** exhaustion, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, unconscious

**Senses** darkvision 60ft., tremorsense 60ft., passive Perception 10

**Languages** Terran

**Challenge** 5 (1,800 XP)

**Earth Glide.** The elemental can burrow through non magical, unworked earth and stone. While doing so, the elemental doesn't disturb the material it moves through.

**Siege Monster.** The elemental deals double damage to objects and structures.

### Actions

**Multiattack.** The elemental makes two slam attacks.

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10ft., one target. Hit: 14 (2d8 + 5) bludgeoning damage.





# Handouts



## Instructions On Using Handouts

This section includes handouts that were created over the course of multiple events running the tarrasque. They are made to print for use during your game, but there are interactive versions of these handouts available with extra options, such as form fillable fields or ready to print maps.

You can print from the digital handouts, a PDF copy of this book, or if you have a printed version you might carefully remove the pages meant to be used as handouts. If you only own a physical copy of this book and do not want to destroy it to get the handouts, Encoded Designs is a supporter of brick and mortar initiatives. You can contact us through our website at <http://encodeddesigns.com> or you can email us at [tarrasque@encodeddesigns.com](mailto:tarrasque@encodeddesigns.com) with proof of ownership, and we will help you acquire a PDF copy through DriveThruRPG or other venues.

## Tarrasque Stat and Rules Sheets

The Tarrasque statistics sheets are a reworking of the 5e SRD stat block. They group similar elements of defense, attack, and special powers together for ease of use. There is a Rules As Written (RAW) version and a modified version that incorporates the most commonly utilized optional rules. There is also an optional rules sheet with checkboxes that lets you print and mark off which of the optional rules from this book you are using when you run your game.

## Tarrasque Game Log Sheet

The Tarrasque Game Log Sheet contains everything you need to record the memorable encounter. Mark the date and location (if running at a convention) and — after rolling initiatives — mark up to 6 PCs and the tarrasque in the Combatants Overview section in the order of initiative. When the action starts, you can now log the notable actions of each round in order of initiative. Mark the tarrasque's hit points at the start of the round, the total damage dealt to it, and the regeneration (if you are using optional rules). This will help you keep track of the multiple attacks and

strategies used. Print off multiple copies of the third sheet in the log as most fights against the tarrasque last between 10 and 20 rounds.

## Inside the Tarrasque Playmat

The optional rules for characters finding their way inside the tarrasque are presented as a printable playmat that you can use to place miniatures onto. This lets you visually track where inside the tarrasque a character is and works as a quick references to the optional rules for damage and movement inside the creature.

## Paper Miniatures

We have provided a few paper miniatures for your use. These are optimized for printing from the PDF. We suggest affixing them to cardboard, foamcore, or a material that has a bit of depth and stability to it.

For best effect, cut out the miniature and the facing miniature with a clean and solid line, leaving a bit of empty space around the actual art. If you are brave and have a steady hand, you can attempt to cut the art out exactly. Generously and evenly apply glue to the back of the paper miniature. Apply this to one piece of the foamcore or cardboard. Use a box cutter or utility knife to cut through the cardboard or foamcore along the edges of the paper miniature glued onto it. Have a ruler with a metal edge handy to use as a guide. If you have access to the equipment, laminating the miniature can provide greater durability and the ability to mark on it with wet or dry erase markers.

Once you have a miniature ready to your liking, you can affix it to a base. If you do not have a plastic base large enough, use leftover foamcore or cardboard and cut out a square or round base of the appropriate size. It is important for the base to have some weight to it. For the tarrasque miniature, we suggest using a full 8 in by 11 inch rectangle of foamcore as a Gargantuan creature's base is 20ft by 20ft **or larger**. Affix the miniature to the base with the gluestick or a stronger glue/clear tape combination if needed. You can also repurpose large binder clips and glue to secure it.



# The Tarrasque

*Gargantuan monstrosity (titan), unaligned*

**Armor Class** 25 (natural armor)

**Armor Class** 15 (interior)

**Hit Points** 676 (33d20 + 330)

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Senses** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Challenge** 30 (155,000 XP)



| STR      | DEX     | CON      | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|----------|---------|----------|--------|---------|---------|
| 30 (+10) | 11 (+0) | 30 (+10) | 3 (-4) | 11 (+0) | 11 (+0) |

**Saving Throws** Int +5, Wis +9, Cha +9

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Magic Resistance:** The tarrasque has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Reflective Carapace:** Any time the tarrasque is targeted by a Magic Missile spell, a line spell, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, roll a d6. On a 1 to 5, the tarrasque is unaffected. On a 6, the tarrasque is unaffected, and the effect is reflected back at the caster as though it originated from the tarrasque, turning the caster into the target.

## Legendary Resistances (3/day)

(The tarrasque can choose to save instead of fail)



**Multiattack:** The tarrasque performs these actions each turn plus an automatic Frightful Presence

1. **Bite:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 10 ft.  
36 (4d12 + 10) piercing  
If hit, the creature is grappled (escape DC 20).  
restrained. Can do swallow instead of Bite if creature  
already grappled. Can't bite another target while  
grappling with bite.
2. **Claw:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 15 ft.  
28 (4d8 + 10) slashing damage.
3. **Claw:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 15 ft.  
28 (4d8 + 10) slashing damage.
4. **Horns:** Melee +19 to hit, reach 10 ft.,  
32 (4d10 + 10) piercing damage.
5. **Tail:** Melee +19 to hit, reach 20 ft.,  
24 (4d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage.  
DC 20 strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Frightful Presence:** Each creature within 120 feet and aware of the tarrasque must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. Saving throw repeats at end of turn, with disadvantage if within line of sight of the tarrasque. If successful the creature is immune for the next 24 hours.

**Siege Monster:** The tarrasque deals double damage to objects and structures.

## Legendary Actions (x3 per turn)

(Used on end of another's turn, refresh at start of tarrasque's turn)

- ☞ **Attack:** The tarrasque makes one claw attack or tail attack.
- ☞ **Move:** The tarrasque moves up to half its speed.
- ☞ **Chomp (Costs 2 Actions):** The tarrasque makes one bite attack or uses its Swallow.

**Swallow:** One bite attack against a Large or smaller creature the tarrasque is grappling. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is **blinded** and restrained, has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the tarrasque, and it takes 56 (16d6) acid damage at the start of each of the tarrasque's turns. If the tarrasque takes 60 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the tarrasque must succeed on a DC 20 constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the tarrasque. If the tarrasque dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone.

# RAW TARRASQUE



# The Tarrasque

*Gargantuan monstrosity (titan), unaligned*

**Armor Class** 25 (natural armor)

**Armor Class** 15 (interior)

**Hit Points** 676 (33d20 + 330)

**Speed** 40 ft.

**Senses** blindsight 120 ft., passive Perception 10

**Challenge** 30 (155,000 XP)



| STR      | DEX     | CON      | INT    | WIS     | CHA     |
|----------|---------|----------|--------|---------|---------|
| 30 (+10) | 11 (+0) | 30 (+10) | 3 (-4) | 11 (+0) | 11 (+0) |

**Saving Throws** Int +5, Wis +9, Cha +9

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned

**Magic Resistance:** The tarrasque has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Reflective Carapace:** Any time the tarrasque is targeted by a Magic Missile spell, a line spell, or a spell that requires a ranged attack roll, roll a d6. On a 1 to 5, the tarrasque is unaffected. On a 6, the tarrasque is unaffected, and the effect is reflected back at the caster as though it originated from the tarrasque, turning the caster into the target.

## Legendary Resistances (3/day)

(The tarrasque can choose to save instead of fail)



**Multiattack:** The tarrasque performs these actions each turn plus an automatic Frightful Presence

1. **Bite:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 10 ft.  
36 (4d12 + 10) piercing  
If hit, the creature is grappled (escape DC 20).  
restrained. Can do swallow instead of Bite if creature  
already grappled. Can't bite another target while  
grappling with bite.
2. **Claw:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 15 ft.  
28 (4d8 + 10) slashing damage.
3. **Claw:** Melee, +19 to hit, reach 15 ft.  
28 (4d8 + 10) slashing damage.
4. **Horns:** Melee +19 to hit, reach 10 ft.,  
32 (4d10 + 10) piercing damage.
5. **Tail:** Melee +19 to hit, reach 20 ft.,  
24 (4d6 + 10) bludgeoning damage.  
DC 20 strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

**Frightful Presence:** Each creature within 120 feet and aware of the tarrasque must succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. Saving throw repeats at end of turn, with disadvantage if within line of sight of the tarrasque. If successful the creature is immune for the next 24 hours.

**Siege Monster:** The tarrasque deals double damage to objects and structures.

## Legendary Actions (x3 per turn)

(Used on end of another's turn, refresh at start of tarrasque's turn)

- ☞ **Attack:** The tarrasque makes one claw attack or tail attack.
- ☞ **Move:** The tarrasque moves up to half its speed.
- ☞ **Chomp (Costs 2 Actions):** The tarrasque makes one bite attack or uses its Swallow.

**Swallow:** One bite attack against a Large or smaller creature the tarrasque is grappling. If the attack hits, the target takes the bite's damage, the target is swallowed, and the grapple ends. While swallowed, the creature is **blinded** and restrained, has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the tarrasque, and it takes 56 (16d6) acid damage at the start of each of the tarrasque's turns. If the tarrasque takes 60 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the tarrasque must succeed on a DC 20 constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the tarrasque. If the tarrasque dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse by using 30 feet of movement, exiting prone.

☞ **Regeneration** At the beginning of its turn, the Tarrasque regains hit points depending on its current hit point total.  
**HP 676 to 400** – No regeneration  
**HP 399 to 200** – 20 hit points a round  
**HP 199 to 0** – 40 hit points a round



# Optional Rules Sheet

## ☐ Tiered Regeneration (Minor)

At the beginning of its turn, the tarrasque regains hit points depending on its current hit point total.

**HP 676 to 400** – No regeneration

**HP 399 to 200** – 20 hit points a round

**HP 199 to 0** – 40 hit points a round

## ☐ Optional: At the beginning of the tarrasque's turn the DM rolls a d6. The tarrasque only regenerates on a 5 or 6.

## ☐ Tiered Regeneration (Major)

At the beginning of its turn, the tarrasque regains hit points depending on its current hit point total.

**HP 676 to 400** – 20 hit points a round

**HP 399 to 200** – 40 hit points a round

**HP 199 to 0** – 80 hit points a round

## ☐ Regeneration (Constant)

At the beginning of its turn, the tarrasque regains 60 hit points.

## ☐ Rush (Requires 2 legendary actions)

The tarrasque charges forward in an incredible rush, moving up to 150 feet in a straight line that it cannot deviate from.

## ☐ Trample

The tarrasque is so large that it can move through any square occupied by a Large or smaller creature. Any creature whose square the tarrasque moves through must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 44 (8d10) bludgeoning damage. A successful save means the creature jumps out of the way and takes no damage, as well as allows it to take an opportunity attack against the tarrasque as it moves by. A failed save allows for no opportunity attack.

## ☐ "Controlled" Tarrasque

The tarrasque has a controlling entity directing its actions, allowing smarter combat tactics. This entity is filled with blood rage and still attempts to destroy everything around it. While this entity is in control, the tarrasque has an additional +6 to its Intelligence

and Wisdom saving throws and can make smarter, more tactical decisions. At the beginning of each of the tarrasque's turns, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, the tarrasque's original mind gains control and acts on bestial instinct. On a 1-4, the entity regains control or remains in control.

## ☐ Optional: If a PC or other entity is trying to control the tarrasque toward non-destructive ends, the tarrasque is harder to control. At the beginning of each of the tarrasque's turns, roll a d6. On a 5 or 6, the entity regains or retains control. On a 1-4, the tarrasque's original mind gains control and acts on bestial instinct.

## ☐ Rubble Throw (Replaces two claw attacks and bite attack in multiattack or requires 2 legendary actions)

The tarrasque rakes its front or rear claws into the ground and throws rubble and rock into the air in a 60 foot cone that starts at the tarrasque's height (can reach to 120 feet high and 60 feet from the tarrasque). Those in the area make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or take 28 (4d8+10) bludgeoning damage. A successful save means the creature dodges and takes half damage.

## ☐ Lightning Breath (Replaces two actions in multiattack or requires 2 legendary actions)

120-foot line, 20 feet wide

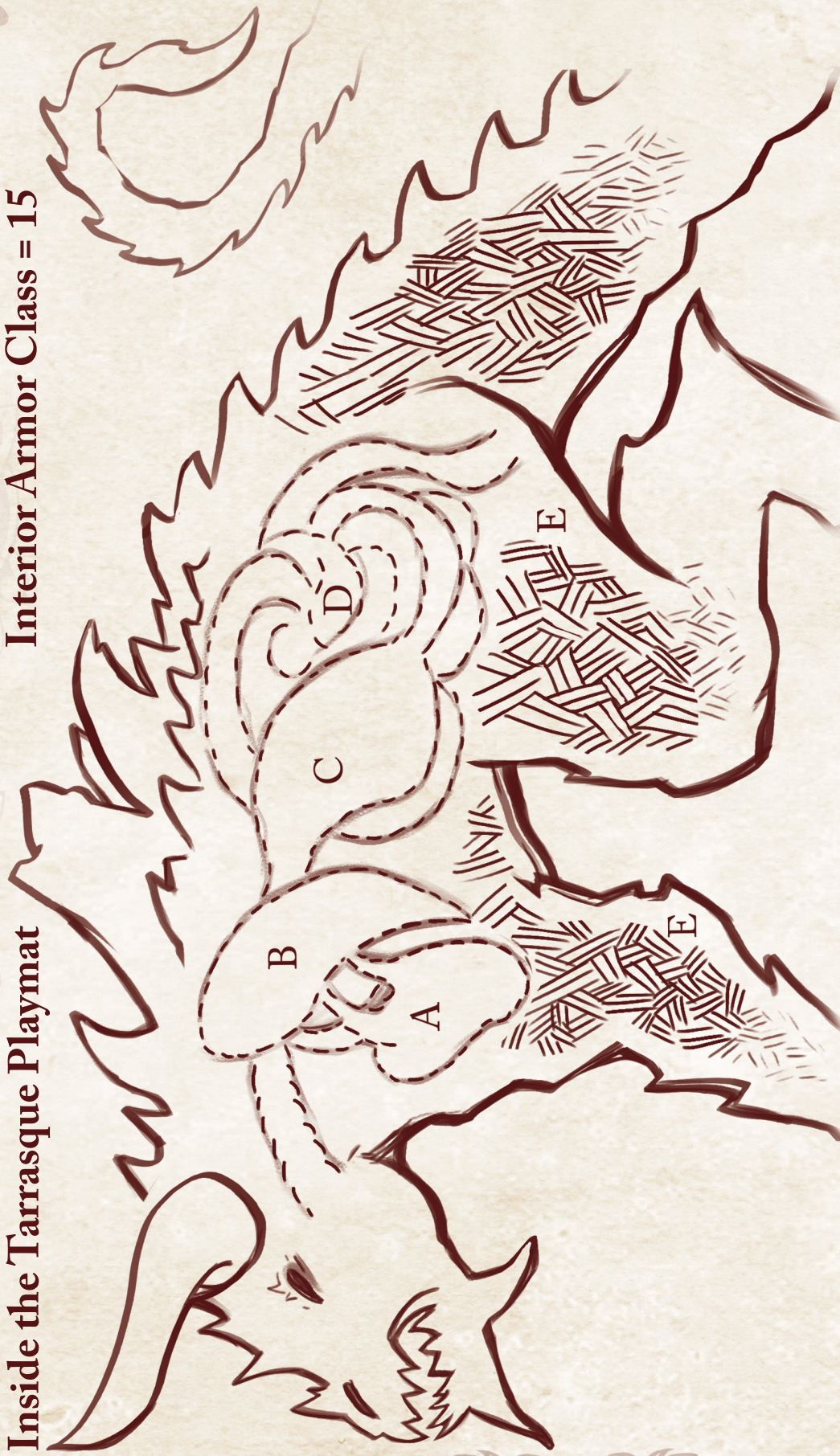
Anyone in the affected area makes a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw or takes 66 (12d10) lightning damage. A successful save means the creature dodges partially out of the way for half damage. The manacles glow blue when the lightning breath activates. Any creatures inside the tarrasque take half damage automatically, unless they are in the mouth or throat, where they take full damage. The breath weapon recharges on a 4-6 rolled at the beginning of the tarrasque's turn.

## ☐ Optional: Lightning Breath (Dispelling) On a failed saving throw against the lightning breath, a dispel magic effect is added. Roll a d20 (no modifiers) vs DC 10 + spell level. If successful, the magic affecting the target is dispelled per the rules of dispel magic.



## Inside the Tarrasque Playmat

Interior Armor Class = 15



- ⌘ **Interior Movement** - A small creature inside the tarrasque can overcome the restrained condition by making DC 17 Strength and Dexterity checks each round for 1/4 movement. Medium creatures can move this way in stomach and throat.
- ⌘ **A - Heart** - 56 (16d6) bludgeoning damage, restrained and blinded, and all concentration checks fail. Can only survive a number of rounds equal to Constitution modifier before suffocation drops to 0 hit points.
- ⌘ **B - Lungs** - 28 (8d6) bludgeoning damage, restrained and blinded, creature deals double damage. Merely being in lungs causes 2d10 damage to the tarrasque each turn, ignoring resistance. Each turn, the tarrasque makes a DC 17 Constitution save. If successful the character is sneezed out 30 ft. away where they land prone, dealing 35 (10d6) bludgeoning damage to creature and tarrasque.
- ⌘ **C - Stomach** - 56 (16d6) acid damage, restrained and blinded. 60 points of damage to tarrasque from inside causes swallowed character to be spit out 30ft away where they land prone.
- ⌘ **D - Organ-Rich Area** - 42 (12d6) poison damage, restrained and blinded. DC 17 Constitution save for 1/2 damage.
- ⌘ **E - Muscle Rich Area** - 56 (16d6) bludgeoning damage, restrained and blinded, all concentration checks fail.



# Tarrasque Game Log Sheet

Date

Combatants Overview (in order of initiative)

# | Initiative | Character Name | Player Name

|                |   |       |       |       |
|----------------|---|-------|-------|-------|
| Location/Notes | 1 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
|                | 2 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
|                | 3 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
|                | 4 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
|                | 5 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
|                | 6 | _____ | _____ | _____ |
|                | 7 | _____ | _____ | _____ |

| Round | Combatant Actions and Logging | Tarrasque HP, Damage, & Regen  |
|-------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1     | 1 _____                       | Tarrasque HP At Start Of Round |
|       | 2 _____                       |                                |
|       | 3 _____                       | Total Damage Dealt To          |
|       | 4 _____                       |                                |
|       | 5 _____                       | Total Regeneration             |
|       | 6 _____                       |                                |
|       | 7 _____                       |                                |
| 2     | 1 _____                       | Tarrasque HP At Start Of Round |
|       | 2 _____                       |                                |
|       | 3 _____                       | Total Damage Dealt To          |
|       | 4 _____                       |                                |
|       | 5 _____                       | Total Regeneration             |
|       | 6 _____                       |                                |
|       | 7 _____                       |                                |



# Tarrasque Game Log Sheet

| Round | Combatant Actions and Logging | Tarrasque HP, Damage, & Regen  |
|-------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3     | 1 _____                       | Tarrasque HP At Start Of Round |
|       | 2 _____                       |                                |
|       | 3 _____                       | Total Damage Dealt To          |
|       | 4 _____                       |                                |
|       | 5 _____                       | Total Regeneration             |
|       | 6 _____                       |                                |
|       | 7 _____                       |                                |
| 4     | 1 _____                       | Tarrasque HP At Start Of Round |
|       | 2 _____                       |                                |
|       | 3 _____                       | Total Damage Dealt To          |
|       | 4 _____                       |                                |
|       | 5 _____                       | Total Regeneration             |
|       | 6 _____                       |                                |
|       | 7 _____                       |                                |
| 5     | 1 _____                       | Tarrasque HP At Start Of Round |
|       | 2 _____                       |                                |
|       | 3 _____                       | Total Damage Dealt To          |
|       | 4 _____                       |                                |
|       | 5 _____                       | Total Regeneration             |
|       | 6 _____                       |                                |
|       | 7 _____                       |                                |



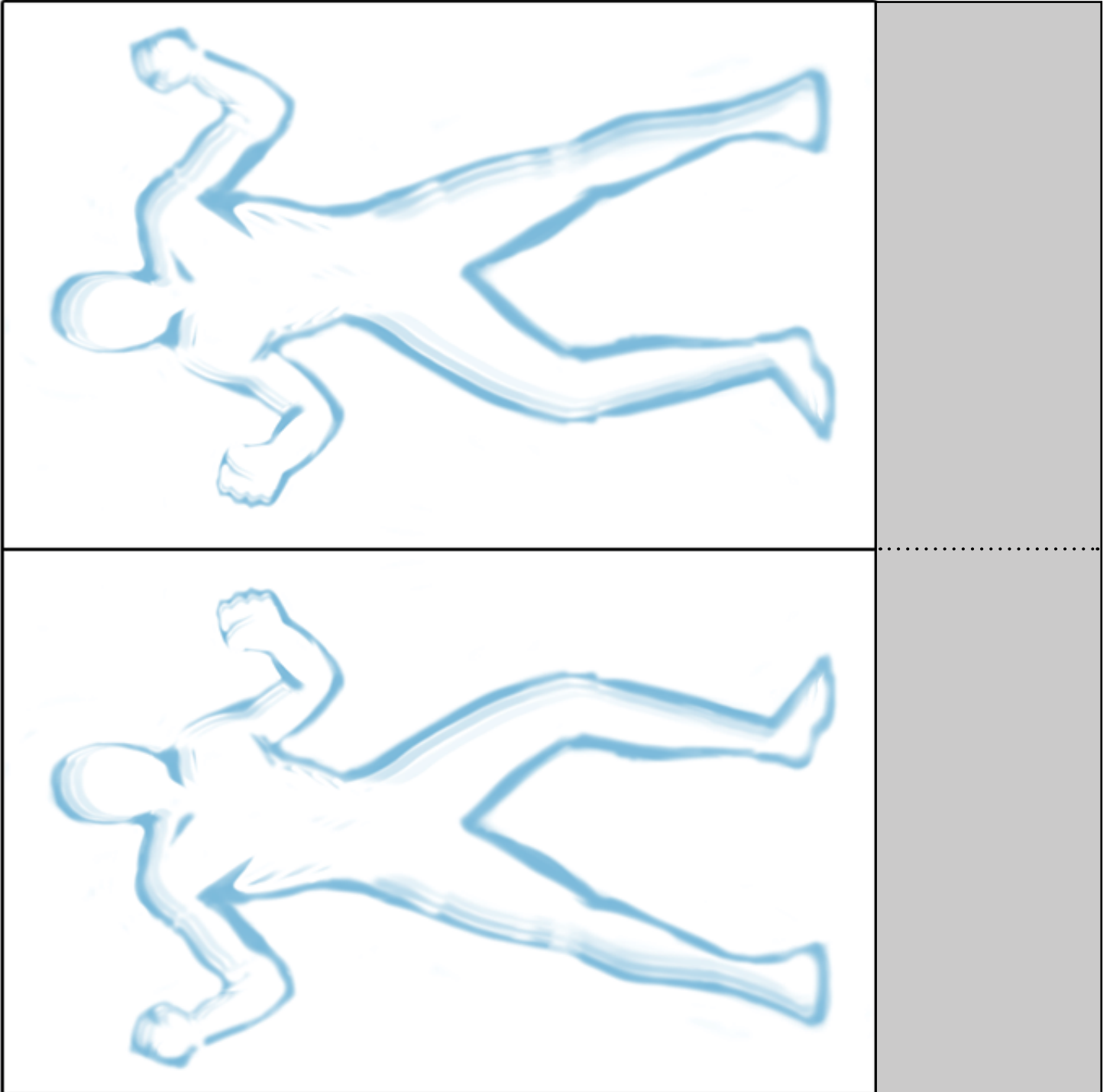
# Tarrasque Game Log Sheet

| Round | Combatant Actions and Logging | Tarrasque HP, Damage, & Regen           |
|-------|-------------------------------|---|
| —     | 1 _____                       | Tarrasque HP At Start Of Round<br>_____ |
|       | 2 _____                       |   |
|       | 3 _____                       | Total Damage Dealt To<br>_____          |
|       | 4 _____                       |   |
|       | 5 _____                       | Total Regeneration<br>_____             |
|       | 6 _____                       |   |
|       | 7 _____                       |   |
| —     | 1 _____                       | Tarrasque HP At Start Of Round<br>_____ |
|       | 2 _____                       |   |
|       | 3 _____                       | Total Damage Dealt To<br>_____          |
|       | 4 _____                       |   |
|       | 5 _____                       | Total Regeneration<br>_____             |
|       | 6 _____                       |   |
|       | 7 _____                       |   |
| —     | 1 _____                       | Tarrasque HP At Start Of Round<br>_____ |
|       | 2 _____                       |   |
|       | 3 _____                       | Total Damage Dealt To<br>_____          |
|       | 4 _____                       |   |
|       | 5 _____                       | Total Regeneration<br>_____             |
|       | 6 _____                       |   |
|       | 7 _____                       |   |



# Giant Form Paper Miniature

Cut along the outer edges and cut the dotted line in the grey base area. Do not cut the line between the figures. Fold the miniature in on itself and tape together. Fold the grey sections out to form a base and secure to a piece of foamcore or cardboard with tape.













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