

# OBSIDIAN APOCALYPSE: INFERNAL RISEN



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# HISTORY

## IN WHICH AN ARCH DEVIL ACHIEVES AN INFERNAL GOAL

### 100 YEARS Ago

Lucifer and the Dukes of Hell met in the most secret corner of Malefacta, in a chamber so heavily warded against deific observation that it was a blind spot for even the most powerful evil god. There, the Prince of Darkness laid out a literally diabolical plan. This was to be Lucifer's revenge upon Asmodeus.

Lucifer knew he faced three opponents. First, there was Asmodeus and his legions. Asmodeus was far more secure on the throne of Hell with Lucifer isolated in Infernus. He would see any activity outside Infernus as Lucifer becoming a threat, and Asmodeus would not stand for that.

Second, there were the mobs of demons that delighted in destroying devils. At the least sign of weakness, they would invade Hell. They would certainly attack Lucifer in vast hordes if he moved outside of Hell. The Fallen Prince's head on a pike would be worth any number of demon lives.

Third, there were the gods themselves. The gods of law and good banished Lucifer before time was time. They had not relented on that decision since.

Therefore, Lucifer would move in secret. With the few agents left to him, including Demoriel, Caasimolar, and Lilith, the Prince of Lies began to weave his master plot.

### 50 YEARS Ago

For decades, rumors spread through the circles of Hell that Lucifer was going to recover his throne from Asmodeus. Asmodeus scoffed at such rumors. He was a deity and possessed the contract of creation. What was Lucifer compared to that? The rumors were only true in the long term, but it served Lucifer well to have Asmodeus distracted by something other than Lucifer's true efforts.

Still, the rumors raised a question: If Asmodeus was so powerful, why did Lucifer yet live?

Meanwhile, on other planes, the Dark Cardinals of Lucifer's unholy worship quietly began to wage war on the followers of Asmodeus. Rather than attack his followers openly, they used assassins to murder them in the shadows, and thieves to steal their most powerful possessions. They passed information about temples devoted to Asmodeus to paladins and clerics of good deities.

As his mortal followers suffered, Asmodeus began to weaken. His rage shook the circles of Hell, but doubt spread among his dukes.

### 25 YEARS Ago

On the Day of Smoke and Fire, Infernus partially merged with the Material Plane. Lucifer trumpeted his coup over Asmodeus: His agents had stolen the contract of creation and found the secret concealed within it. Lucifer had used it to reshape the mortal world. Now his demiplane acted as a bridge between Hell and the Material Plane.

Lucifer did not hesitate. He gathered his worshippers and his legions into Infernus. Then he threw a gauntlet in the face of Asmodeus: Lucifer offered his hand in friendship to every devil that swore fealty to him. Past betrayals would be forgotten. Siding against Lucifer in the Great Uprising was said to be immaterial. Even Belial was welcome again in Malefacta.

Even the weakest and most foolish devils realized that joining Lucifer in Infernus meant free and easy access to the souls of the Material Planes. In every devil, the lust for souls warred with their allegiance to Asmodeus.

When Asmodeus responded by declaring war on Infernus, the internal struggles ended. All those still loyal to Asmodeus rose up and stormed the walls of Lucifer's stronghold.

### 15 YEARS Ago

For ten long years, Hell besieged Infernus, and Lucifer laughed. For every one of his servants who died in battle with Asmodeus, his devils reaped five souls from the Material Plane. The most evil wizards and tyrants found themselves called into Lucifer's service and immediately transformed into horned devils.

Meanwhile, the gods were unable to assert their will and return the Material Plane to its previous state. Asmodeus had done his work with the contract of creation too well. Now that Lucifer had his secret, the nature of reality on Abaddon had to include Infernus.

While Lucifer laughed, however, Asmodeus consolidated his hold on his remaining devils. Although Lucifer had easier access to the Material Plane, the very presence of Infernus warped Abaddon to make it more hospitable to all devils, regardless of their allegiance. Asmodeus still had his priests and worshippers on Abaddon. In fact, his entire declaration of war was simply a means to strengthen the loyalty of his troops.

Realizing that he could not overwhelm Infernus, Asmodeus ordered his devils to blockade Infernus, and he began laying other plans.

### 5 YEARS Ago

On the Night of Winged Darkness, Lucifer turned his devils from defending Infernus to rampaging across Abaddon. For years, the forces of good stood between the legions of Hell



## GODS AND CONTRACTS

At the dawn of time, Asmodeus was involved in the creation of Abaddon. He crafted the contract of creation, which delineated the responsibilities of each deity taking part in creation. When he created the contract, Asmodeus hid within it a secret that he could one day use to overthrow creation.

Lucifer's agents stole the contract for their dark master, who spent years studying it. Once he discovered the secret hidden there by Asmodeus, Lucifer used it to transform Abaddon, making room for his home plane of Infernus.

The gods cannot be sure of the power granted to Lucifer by Asmodeus' secret. It is possible that Lucifer can undo all of creation, including the Outer Planes. Then again, the contract's power may only concern Abaddon itself. Though the gods do not move directly against Lucifer, they do scheme to steal the contract from Infernus. Meanwhile, they grant what power they can to their mortal followers.

and the citizens of Abaddon. But with every passing day, good weakened, and Infernus grew stronger.

During the siege of a small city, a summoned movanic deva was badly injured. Realizing that it was minutes from death, the deva made a bargain with its summoner. It taught the summoner a ritual that channeled the deva's life energy into a protective circle. Hundreds of lives were saved by the deva's efforts. This was the first Guardian Ritual.

When the mortals regrouped and drove off the devils, the deva returned to the celestial realm from which it came. However, the secret of the ritual remained, and quickly spread from place to place across Abaddon.

Desperate settlements snatched up the Guardian Ritual and put it into practice. In some cases, the summoned celestial proved too strong and refused to aid them. In others, the sympathetic celestial volunteered to spend eternity providing what amounted to a magical keep, a circle within which people could crowd to escape devils. In darker places, summoned celestials found themselves enslaved.

## New

Vast stretches of Abaddon now fall under the sway of Infernus and its devils. Some settlements have bargained with the devils, performing evil rites and making horrific sacrifices to remain free. Others survive through the concentrated efforts of celestial armies. Still others continue only through the Guardian Ritual, with captive celestials protecting them.

Lucifer's hellish influence extends even beyond the areas controlled by his devils. The presence of Infernus has

## WHY IS ANYTHING LEFT?

Abaddon is a big place, and Lucifer's forces, although vast, are finite. Time is also limited; the devils have only had five years to turn their greedy eyes on the living souls of Abaddon.

While Lucifer's forces are immortal, each devil can only be in one place at a time. They can be sent back to Infernus by various spells and by physical death outside the boundaries of Lucifer's realm. The Guardian Ritual remains a thorn in Lucifer's side. Each sanctuary must be broken by siege or by sabotage, taking up resources that could be used to reap souls.

Finally, while devils covet souls above all else, they also enjoy punishing the wicked, tempting the good, and inflicting pain and terror. Wiping out everyone on Abaddon means the end of a great deal of fun for the devils, and the end of a way for them to advance through the infernal ranks.

Inevitably, the devils will conquer Abaddon, and Lucifer will use the power and souls gained to retake his throne in Hell. Once he becomes the master of both worlds, he will likely turn his searing gaze to the Outer Planes.

twisted the very fabric of reality, changing the very traits of Abaddon. Living things have changed as well, with many more infernal creatures roaming the world. Even the vegetation and weather have changed.

Day-to-day life has become torment. Sooner or later, everyone gives in to temptation or gets tired of struggling. Strangers cannot be trusted, as they may have betrayed their fellow mortals for the worthless promise that they will survive the conquest of Abaddon. For that matter, those strangers could be demons or devils in disguise. Victories are measured in single lives saved from invading devils, and in seeing another sun rise.

Clerics face a struggle every day. On one hand, the common folk do not understand why the gods don't come to make everything right again. They have never heard of the contract of creation, and would not much care about it if they did. On the other hand, divine magic still works and can be very effective when fighting devils.

Most people, including most adventurers, have lost all hope of overcoming Lucifer and sending Infernus back to Hell. Not all hope has been lost, however. The gods still live, and still grant their power to mortals. Unlikely alliances between good and evil gods, including Asmodeus, strive together to send Infernus back to Hell.

Meanwhile, the greatest adventurers of Abaddon plan and scheme to infiltrate Infernus, storm Malefacta, and wrest the

contract of creation from Lucifer's grasp. If only they could agree on who should control it...

## GM CAMPAIGN NOTES

As a GM, you need to make two decisions about this campaign model.

### CAN INFERNUS BE DRIVEN OUT?

If the contract of creation can be found in time, and its secrets unraveled quickly enough, it may contain information that would allow player characters to drive Infernus back down into Hell, where Asmodeus waits for it.

First, this should be an epic-level quest. The challenges facing the PCs are enormous. They will literally have to overcome Lucifer, who is a deity.

Second, this is an opportunity for moral and ethical issues. What do the characters have to sacrifice to accomplish their goal? How many communities will perish because the PCs are questing toward Malefacta rather than defending helpless people? If Asmodeus' priests learn of the quest, they will offer to aid. Will your player characters accept the aid of chaotic evil clerics?

If that sounds like your kind of game, then you should consider making it possible for Infernus to be driven out. Keep in mind that Asmodeus' church will absolutely betray the PCs and steal the contract of creation for their infernal deity once the characters succeed.

Remember also that the presence of Infernus has forever changed the geographical and political maps of Abaddon. Even if it is driven out, nothing will ever be the same as it was.

### ARE YOUR CHARACTERS THE BIGGEST?

Whether or not Infernus can actually be driven back to Hell, some people on Abaddon believe that it can. Perhaps your characters are running around defending communities, gradually falling back as Lucifer's control over Abaddon grows. Meanwhile, Abaddon's epic heroes quest for the contract of creation.

This sort of campaign is about hard choices. Who do your player characters save, and who must fend for themselves?

Another hard choice, mentioned earlier, is who controls the contract of creation. If your player characters work for the epic heroes, who do your player characters want to control the contract? Conflicts between your characters brought on by divided loyalties are also part of this style of game.

### ULTIMATELY

The decisions that you make before you start play will define what kind of adventures you run and how your campaign advances.

# HELL FEATS & TRAITS

*Here are some new character options for when Hell comes to Abaddon.*

## OPTIONAL RULE: CHARACTER TRAITS

The core rules introduced racial traits, which are special abilities you gain by being a member of a specific character race. Character traits are similar in concept but are not necessarily connected to your race or your class. By enhancing a skill or other ability you possess, a character trait helps describe your talents and aptitudes. Traits can help add to your history, explain your place within the campaign setting, and illustrate an aspect of your personality. Think of traits as hooks upon which to hang character elements that contribute to your understanding of your character as well as your role within the world itself. Put another way, character traits help to quantify who you are and what you are good at doing.

Since character traits represent an optional rule and an expansion of both character power and game complexity, the GM must decide whether to allow them or not. From a game mechanics perspective, a character trait is less powerful than a feat. Traits provide minor bonuses under specific circumstances, which means they require a bit more record-keeping to track and remember.

When you choose character traits, work with your GM to select ones that make sense for your character and for the campaign. Select the traits that best describe your character's backstory and who they are as a person, rather than simply choosing those that provide the best bonus or benefit.

## GAINING CHARACTER TRAITS

When you create your character at 1st level, you can select up to two traits. The GM may, however, only allow only one trait during character creation. Alternatively, the GM might allow you to choose three or more traits. Take into account your race, your class, and your background, and pick the traits that fit in those choices and with your overall character concept.

As you gain experience and survive adventures, you may gain additional character traits. Instead of choosing a feat, you can instead select two more character traits, with the GM's permission.

## INFERNAL TRAITS

These character traits represent some taint, corruption, or experience related to devils and the presence of Infernus. If you choose one or more of these character traits, it indicates





you've been changed, corrupted, or influenced by infernal powers, whether willingly or not.

#### **DEVIL'S FORTITUDE**

You were born or grew up near Infernus, where temperatures are higher than normal.

You gain a +1 bonus on Constitution checks to resist the effects of heat and a +1 bonus on Wisdom (Survival) checks against severe weather. Survival is always a class skill for you.

#### **FIENDISH WILL**

You grew up in or near a place like Blood Market, where devils often interact with mortals. You are used to being around them.

You gain a +1 bonus on Charisma (Intimidate) checks. Intimidate is always a class skill for you.

#### **INFERNAL AWARENESS**

A long-past devilish ancestor lives on in you, and helps you stay alive.

You gain a +1 bonus to Wisdom (Perception) checks. Perception is always a class skill for you.

#### **MASTER'S MARK**

You have a birthmark shaped like a pentagram.

You gain a +1 bonus on Charisma (Persuasion). Persuasion is always a class skill for you.

#### **OTHER TRAITS**

These traits represent some advantage of being free of devilish influence and experience, or perhaps experience in hunting down fiendish powers.

#### **BLOOD CRUSADE SOLDIER**

You trained with the Blood Crusade cadre.

You gain a +1 bonus to damage rolls made against fiendish creatures that you recognize as such.

#### **BRIMSTONE SCHOLAR**

You have had access to forbidden lore related to Infernus.

You gain a +1 bonus on Intelligence (Arcana) and Intelligence (History) checks related to Infernus. One of those two Intelligence skills of your choice is always a class skill for you.

#### **FOOL ME ONCE**

You have seen what happens to people who expect devils to keep their word, and you are determined to not let that happen to you.

You gain a +1 bonus on Wisdom (Insight) checks. Insight is always a class skill for you.

#### **LIVING MEMORY**

You are at least 30 years old and remember the time before the Day of Smoke and Fire.

You gain a +1 bonus on Intelligence (History) checks. History is always a class skill for you.

## WORDTWISTER

You have learned much from the way that devils find loopholes in every contract.

You gain a +1 bonus on Charisma (Deception) checks. Deception is always a class skill for you.

## INFERNAL ANCESTRY FEATS

This section offers several new feats that revolve around the concept of a fiendish or celestial connection. Some feats suggest bloodline ties—such as if an ancestor made a pact, or because fiendish blood flows through your veins. Other feats point instead to an alliance with or opposition to the powers of heaven or hell. Overall, these feats follow the same rules as other feats, as described in the core rules. You do, however, gain additional benefits (and some disadvantages) when you acquire more than one infernal ancestry feat, as described at the end of this section.

### BORN UNDER A BAD SIGN

Devils have a difficult time figuring you out.

Increase your Charisma score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

When a fiendish creature targets you with a spell or magical attack that allows a Wisdom saving throw, you gain advantage on that save.

You gain advantage on Charisma (Deception) checks when interacting with devils.

### CELESTIAL SLAYER

You have hunted celestials with magic enough to gain from the experience.

**Prerequisite:** Ability to cast at least one spell

Increase your Intelligence or Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Your spells ignore any magic resistance possessed by a celestial creature.

When you cast a spell that requires you to make an attack roll, the spell's range is doubled.

### DEVIL HUNTER

You have been killing devils for longer than many others.

You have advantage on melee attack rolls against any fiendish creature of size Larger or smaller.

You gain advantage on Intelligence (Arcana) checks to determine the vulnerabilities and weaknesses of a fiendish creature you can see.

When you damage a fiendish creature that is concentrating on a spell, that creature has disadvantage on the saving throw it makes to maintain its concentration.

### DEVIL SPAWN

An ancestor literally from Hell means that you can take the heat.

**Prerequisite:** Maker's Mark infernal character trait

You have resistance to fire damage.

### DEVIL'S LUCK

The Infernal Hosts look out for their own, although who knows when they may call in a favor from you.

**Prerequisite:** You must possess at least one infernal character trait

When an attack would drop you to 0 hit points, as a reaction you regain your proficiency bonus in hit points. This ability recharges after a long rest.

Once per day between long rests you can reroll a failed saving throw. You must take the results of the second roll.

### HELLSPAWN VITALITY

Your Hellish ancestry makes you unusually resilient.

**Prerequisite:** Devil Spawn infernal character trait

Increase your Constitution score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

Each hit die you expend to heal yourself regains an additional number of hit points equal to your Constitution modifier (minimum of 1).

### INFERNAL ADEPT

Minor eldritch powers of Hell are at your disposal.

**Prerequisites:** Ability to cast at least one spell, Devil Spawn and Hellspawn Vitality infernal character traits

You can cast detect good and evil twice per day between long rests.

You can cast invisibility on yourself once between long rests.

For each additional infernal ancestry feat you have beyond this one, you can cast command once between long rests.

### INFERNAL GATEKEEPER

Extraplanar prey cannot escape you.

**Prerequisites:** Devil Spawn, Hellspawn Vitality, and Infernal Adept infernal character traits

When a fiendish or celestial creature you can see within 90 feet attempts to teleport (whether as an innate magical ability or as a spell, including spells such as dimension door), as a reaction you can prevent it from leaving. Alternatively, you can redirect its teleport so that it appears in an empty space adjacent to you.

A fiendish or celestial creature adjacent to you triggers an opportunity attack from you as a free action if it attempts to teleport (whether by innate magical ability or through a spell).

You ignore half and three-quarters cover when making an attack against a celestial or fiendish creature you can see.



## INSPIRED FAITH

Your belief in the eventual triumph of good over evil seems laughable to many, but it makes you strong.

Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.

When a fiendish creature targets you with a spell or other magical attack that allows a Wisdom saving throw, you gain advantage on that save.

You gain advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks made while dealing with fiendish creatures.

## PLANAR LINGUIST

You have a gift for gabbing with fiendish and celestial creatures. You are adept at understanding how to best communicate with them.

**Prerequisite:** Possess at least one infernal character trait

You speak, read, and write Abyssal, Celestial, and Infernal languages.

You gain advantage on Charisma (Deception) and Charisma (Persuasion) checks when interacting with celestial and fiendish creatures.

The starting attitude of celestial and fiendish creatures improves by one step upon meeting you.

## SPECIAL

If you gain more than one of the infernal ancestry feats described above, you accumulate additional benefits and disadvantages as described below.

- **2 infernal ancestry feats:** You gain darkvision with a range of 60 feet. If you already have darkvision, your vision range extends an additional 20 feet.
- **3 infernal ancestry feats:** You gain advantage on saving throws against poison. You also gain resistance to poison damage. You smell of blood and brimstone.
- **4 infernal ancestry feats:** You gain telepathy. You can mentally communicate with any other creature within 100 feet that has a language, although you do not need to share a language in common with the contacted creature. You can telepathically address multiple creatures at once, although maintaining such a conversation with more than one creature at a time is as difficult as simultaneously speaking and listening to multiple people at the same time. If your alignment was good, it becomes neutral. If it was neutral, it becomes evil.
- **5 infernal ancestry feats:** You grow a pair of bat wings, gaining a fly speed of 60 feet. In addition, you also grow a barbed tail. Your alignment becomes evil, if it was not already. If your alignment was neutral, it becomes lawful. If your alignment was chaotic, it becomes neutral.

# THE ABADDON HYBRID PLANE

How the presence of Infernus alters the Material Plane

## REGIONS

It's worthwhile to think about the plane of Abaddon in terms of four distinct regions.

## INFERNUS

Infernus was a plane formed by Lucifer as a refuge after the Great Uprising drove him from the throne of Hell. It now permanently touches the Material Plane at the same time it overlaps with Hell. Put simply, anyone can walk from the Material Plane into Infernus, and vice versa.

## PLANAR TRAITS OF INFERNUS

Infernus, a place touched by fire, possesses several unusual physical traits. Most notable, the plane possesses finite, defined edges and borders.

Magic on this plane undergoes a number of changes. Spells and other magical effects that cause fire damage do an additional die of damage. Any spell with a range of 5 feet or greater that inflicts fire damage has its range doubled.

At the same time, spells that create or summon water, including water elementals or similar creatures, first require the caster to make a spellcasting ability check against a DC equal to 10 + the level of the spell being cast. If this roll fails, the spell fails and the spell slot is expended.

## ORANGE SKY

This region is closest to Infernus. The glowing orange sky of Infernus covers most of this region. The temperature within ten miles of the border with Infernus is considered very high, and effects travelers accordingly. Devils are common here. Extreme weather (see Weather, below) and strange terrain (see Special Terrain and Other Hazards, below) are far more common here than elsewhere. This region is expanding.

## BLOOD AND SCREAMS

This region is second closest to Infernus. It seldom sees any true sunlight but experiences a normal day-and-night cycle. Temperatures are warmer than they were before the Day of Smoke and Fire, but not extreme enough to require special precautions. There is some extreme weather and strange terrain, but not as much as in Orange Sky. Devils routinely assault settlements in this region, but seldom remain here. As Orange Sky grows, this region shifts further outward.

## ABADDON

This region is furthest from Infernus and occasionally sees extreme weather and strange terrain. Devils sometimes raid this far, but rarely. This region is clearly shrinking as the Blood and Screams region shifts and Orange Sky expands.

### ABADDON TRAITS

Abaddon includes several unusual planar features that make it strange and alien to creatures from other dimensions. Like Infernus, Abaddon possesses distinct borders.

Due to the pervasive emanation of evil throughout Abaddon, creatures of good alignment may suffer from psychic dissonance. At the end of a long rest on this plane, a good-aligned creature must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, the creature gains one level of exhaustion.

This emanation of evil also makes spells more harmful against good-aligned creatures. A damaging spell cast against a good-aligned creature automatically rerolls all damage dice that roll a 1. You must use the new rolls.

### WEATHER

The presence of Infernus has affected the weather patterns of Abaddon. Cloud cover increases near Lucifer's abode. The sky near Infernus is a cloudy orange glow at all times. If you roll on a random weather table and get a powerful storm as a result, roll on the following table.

If you choose the weather experienced by your PCs, use these sparingly.

#### 1d12 Result

- | 1d12 | Result   |
|------|--|
| 1-5  | Normal powerful storm.   |
| 6    | <b>Blood Snow:</b> This weather only occurs in climates where snow could normally happen. If characters are not in such an environment, treat this result as being a normal powerful storm. Blood snow falls over an area of 1d4 miles in diameter for 1d3 hours. Within this area, animate dead can create double the number of undead as usual. In addition, undead creatures within the area gain advantage on Wisdom saving throws against turn undead attempts.   |
| 7    | <b>Acid Hail:</b> This weather only occurs in climates where hail could normally happen. If characters are not in such an environment, treat this result as being a normal powerful storm. An acid hail storm covers an area 1 mile in diameter for 2d16 minutes. It functions as a normal hail storm, but the hail is large enough to do 1 point of acid damage per round of exposure to the storm (DC 12 Dexterity saving throw negates). Acid hail also damages vegetation and inanimate objects. Acid hail on the ground impedes movement as snow and does 1 point of acid damage to anything touched by it (no save allowed). Wading through acid hail for more than an |

hour destroys footwear and starts eating characters' feet.

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|----|--|
| 8  | <b>Heat Storm:</b> Treat a heat storm as an area of extreme heat 2d4 miles in diameter. A heat storm lasts 1d4 hours.  |
| 9  | <b>Flame Cone:</b> This is a tornado of fire. Unlike a normal tornado, a flame cone does not extinguish normal fires but rather starts them. A character in the area of a flame cone must make a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw after each minute of exposure or catch fire, at which point they suffer 3d6 fire damage each round they continue burning. Flame cones can start grass and forest fires, burn houses and villages, and roast livestock in the fields. Characters within 100 yards of a flame cone are exposed to extreme heat, even if they have shelter protecting them from the flames. A flame cone travels 30 miles per hour (approximately 260 feet per round) in a direction chosen by the GM and lasts 1d10 minutes.   |
| 10 | <b>Plague of Flies:</b> A plague of flies is a cloud of biting flies 1d3 x 100 feet in diameter. The effect lasts 2d20 minutes. A character within the plague of flies suffers disadvantage on all Wisdom (Perception) checks. Characters within the effect must succeed on a Constitution saving throw (DC 15) every 5 minutes. Failing one saving throw affects the character like the confusion spell. If a confused character fails another saving throw, they become poisoned. The flies are capable of crawling through spaces as small as one-eighth of an inch, so only a hermetically sealed shelter protects from their effects. Strong winds, magical or otherwise, dispel the cloud for the duration of the wind, after which the cloud reforms until the end of its duration. |
| 11 | <b>Storm of Frogs:</b> A storm of frogs is an abrupt deluge of poisonous amphibians. The storm is 1d6 x 50 feet in diameter and the effect lasts 1d4 x 10 seconds. Living creatures without some kind of overhead cover (e.g., helmet, or a shield or backpack held over the head) them must succeed on a DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or take 2d4 points bludgeoning damage from falling amphibians and become poisoned. The fall cripples the frogs it doesn't kill, so there is no need to worry about them after the storm ends.   |
| 12 | <b>Flensing Tempest:</b> A flensing tempest is a hurricane-force wind full of tiny shards of glass. It covers an area 1 mile in diameter and lasts 1d4 hours, during which time it moves at 75 miles per hour (roughly 1,115 feet/round). Creatures caught in the area take 1d8 piercing and slashing damage each minute of exposure. The tempest extinguishes all flames. Ranged attacks are impossible (except with siege weapons, which suffer disadvantage on attack rolls). Perception checks are impossible—all characters can hear is the roaring of the wind and opening one's   |



eyes is an invitation to blindness. Hurricane-force winds often knock down trees. Only full cover, such as behind a stone wall, is sufficient protection to negate the damage.

## SPECIAL TERRAIN AND OTHER HAZARDS

The pernicious effects of combining Infernus with the Material Plane of Abaddon have twisted the land itself. Use these example terrains to add challenge to your encounters.

**Blade Grass:** A patch of blade grass is five feet by five feet square, usually encountered in glades of 1d12 patches. Blade grass resembles tall, silvery-green grass. It can be identified with a successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check. Blade grass is considered difficult terrain. A character moving or fighting in a patch of blade grass risks being cut by the grass. Make a melee attack for the grass with a +4 attack bonus. If the attack succeeds, the character takes 1d4 slashing damage and has its speed reduced by half from wounded feet. This movement penalty lasts until after a long rest, until the creature receives treatment from a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check, or until it receives magical healing. Fire destroys blade grass.

**Charge Trees:** A charge tree is a thorny, spiny growth that loosely resembles a tree. Its blue color is a dead giveaway of its true nature. Touching a charge tree causes it to release a potent electrical charge. Once triggered, the charge tree attacks every living creature in a 60-foot radius circle for 2d6 rounds. Each round, creatures within the radius suffer 2d6 lightning damage, or half damage on a successful DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. Once a charge tree expends its stored energy, it cannot release any charges for 24 hours. Any effect that damages a charge tree triggers the effect, including magical effects that include the tree within their area and a charge tree taking damage from another charge tree. Charge trees are Large objects (AC 15, 80 hit points, with a damage threshold of 5).

**Hellstone:** The very material of Hell and Infernus occasionally protrudes from the surface of Abaddon. Hellstone is a dull dark-red stone with threads of scarlet running through it. Hellstone is warm enough to melt snow or ice. Lucifer knows everything that happens within one hundred feet of an outcropping of hellstone. Hellstone is also worth 100 gp per pound, as it is a useful component of the Guardian Ritual (see The Guardian Ritual section for more information).

**Soulsunder:** Soulsunder is ground forever stained with psychic pain from when a devil rips the soul from a living creature. Soulsunder can be layered on top of any other terrain. The power of the Sundered creature determines the size of the area. Soulsunder is 5 feet in radius for every Hit Die the creature had in life. If a non-evil creature stands in an area covered by Soulsunder, they suffer disadvantage on any Wisdom saving throw against becoming frightened. Evil creatures and creatures unaffected by fear ignore this effect.

Any intelligent creature that dies in an area of Soulsunder rises as a lemure 1d3 hours afterward.

# THE GUARDIAN RITUAL

## THE SECRET TO THE SURVIVAL OF SETTLEMENTS IN ABADDON

The secrets to summoning outsiders were known to clerics, sorcerers, and wizards long before the rise of Infernus and the spread of Lucifer's influence across Abaddon.

Five years ago, the mortals struggling against the inevitable conquest of their souls gained a new weapon. A powerful celestial being taught them the Guardian Ritual.

The Guardian Ritual traps an outsider in the Material Plane and forces it to use its own power to provide protection against the forces of evil. Some consider it slavery, but there are those good-aligned celestials willing to sacrifice their freedom to protect mortals.

### THE RITUAL

**Casting Time:** 1d3 hours

**Components:** V, S, M (1000 gp per HD of the desired celestial or fiendish creature)

Upon completing this ritual, you must succeed at a DC 25 Intelligence (Arcana) check or the ritual fails. Up to ten additional spellcasters may assist you; each caster that succeeds at a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) check adds +2 to your check. Failing this check consumes the material components of the ritual but causes no other ill effects.

The ritual creates a magical circle with an inward-facing trap. After you complete the ritual, you summon a celestial or fiendish creature into the circle. The summoned creature must make a Wisdom saving throw but does not receive advantage for having magic resistance. If the creature fails this save, it becomes trapped within the magic circle. If the creature succeeds at this save, the ritual fails and the material components are consumed. Of greater concern, the summoned creature may unleash its rage and punish the summoner, or it may simply flee. A trapped creature can make a new Wisdom saving throw every week. If it succeeds, it breaks free of the magic circle.

### PROTECTION

Once the summoned creature is trapped, the magic circle emits a warded area with the benefits similar to the hallow spell. This hallowed area includes a 100-foot-diameter sphere, centered on the creature, per Hit Die of the trapped celestial or fiend. Since the warded area is invisible, most settlements mark the boundary in some obvious way. The hallow effect prevents the passing of celestials, elementals,



fey, fiends, and undead, but only those with an alignment in opposition to the alignment of the bound creature. For example, if the bound creature is lawful good, chaotic or evil creatures cannot enter the protected area.

In addition, a creature of an alignment opposed to that of the bound celestial or fiend feels uneasy as soon as they enter the area. They must make a DC 10 Wisdom saving throw. Every hour they remain within the warded area, they must make another Wisdom save, with the DC increasing by 1 each hour. A creature that fails the save the first time gains a level of exhaustion. Each time the creature fails this save, it gains another level of exhaustion, to a maximum of three levels.

## BARGAINS

A wise caster will try to bargain with the summoned outsider and convince it to remain within the circle. Most creatures—especially celestials and fiends—seek that which makes them stronger. They seek to promote those qualities that offer them the greatest power, aid their own survival, and fit with those philosophies closest to their own. Angels, for example, love beauty and things that destroy evil, while demons enjoy inflicting pain and suffering; devils prize souls above all.

If the trapped creature agrees to a bargain, it willingly remains within the circle and does not receive a save to end the effect. If, however, you fail to keep your part of the bargain, the ritual ends and the creature can leave the magic circle. Likewise, if the creature no longer feels like keeping its end to the bargain (perhaps seeking a newer, better agree-

ment), it resumes making Wisdom saving throws each week to break free.

## SPECIAL MATERIALS

If you use hellstone (see above) as part of the ritual, the summoned celestial or fiendish creature suffers disadvantage on its Wisdom saving throws to break free of the magic circle. Gaining this benefit requires at least 100 gp worth of hellstone for each hit die of the summoned creature.

## DURATION

The protection gained from a successful Guardian Ritual lasts as long as the outsider remains trapped and alive within the ritual's magic circle. For better or for worse, the forces of Infernus have clearly figured out both of these loopholes.

Because hellstone gives Lucifer the ability to know what happens around it, he has tried numerous experiments on protected settlements, including having devils fly over the settlements and bombard creatures trapped within the magic circle with ordinary rocks.

When the settlements began fortifying their magic circles and the outsiders within them, the devils tried bigger rocks, siege engines, and even tunneling. Their greatest success, however, have come through bribing or tricking mortals into breaking the circles for them.

Any warded creature (i.e., celestials, elementals, fey, fiends, and undead) can tell immediately when the protection of a Guardian Ritual ends, because the barrier preventing them from entering the protected area disappears. Other creatures of an evil alignment that are within the area notice the feeling of unease vanish (see Protection, above). They no longer need to make saving throws, but they must still recover from exhaustion through either mundane or magical means.

## DISMISSAL

You may dismiss the magic circle at will. Additionally, as part of the bargaining process with an outsider, you may specify a time limit for the creature's service. That limit becomes part of the circle; when it ends, the circle ends as well.

Canny summoners negotiate time limits and summon a replacement outsider immediately prior to the end of the time limit.

## CONSEQUENCES

There are consequences for enslaving an outsider.

## SETTLEMENT ALIGNMENT

Slavery is evil. Enslaving any creature, whether for the common good or not, is an evil act that some settlements embrace in order to survive. Such an act changes the summoner's alignment, at least to neutral if not to outright evil. Such an act slowly degrades the moral fiber



of a community as well. Corruption slowly becomes more rampant, and attitudes such as compassion and mercy fade.

Over a long period of time (longer than any settlement has survived so far) enslaving a creature changes a settlement's alignment to evil.

### FAILURE TO KEEP A BARGAIN

If the summoner makes a bargain with an outsider and then fails to keep that bargain, the outsider is free to leave. Generally, good and neutral outsiders will simply do that. Evil outsiders, however, may kill the summoner in retaliation or for no reason at all.

### ESCAPE

If an outsider escapes, the consequences to both summoner and settlement are immediate. Depending on the wrath of the outsider, the outsider's CR, and the length of imprisonment, consequences might include:

- Immediate death of the summoner.
- Immediate destruction of the settlement, which may or may not include the deaths of all citizens.
- Any aligned item that matches any part of the celestial or fiend's alignment deactivates while within the boundaries of the settlement.
- Any aligned item that matches any part of the outsider's alignment and is kept overnight within the confines of the settlement disappears, confiscated by the outsider and its allies. Confiscation may be permanent or only until the owner leaves the settlement, at the outsider's discretion.
- Inability to give birth. Depending on the creature's rage, only animals may become infertile or it might extend to every living thing in the settlement.
- Blight and destruction of crops.
- Damnation in the afterlife.
- Loss of one's senses within the boundaries of the settlement. Generally, this consequence involves losing one's sense of hearing, sight, or taste. This loss only exists within the boundaries of the settlement.
- Automatic failure of all summoning spells or rituals targeting outsiders of the same alignment as the outraged outsider. Note that this failure applies to the summoning by any citizen of the settlement and is not limited to summoning within the physical boundaries of the settlement.
- Loss of access to divine spells above some level. In general, spells of third level or below remain available at all times, but an outsider might appeal to the gods to deny access to divine magic. Generally, only a few casters will have access to higher-level spells, making

this effect less of a punishment. Again, this loss of access

## THE HOUNDS OF HELL

For creatures that love to torment mortals—and that particularly delight in damning good souls—almost none of them can cast detect good and evil. To rectify this, the GM should select a few existing types of devils and give them the ability to cast detect good and evil at-will. Good candidates for this ability include imps and weaker devils. Having such a magical ability allows them to serve as bloodhounds, hunting good creatures for their higher-ranking masters.

These alignment hunters seek out those with the strongest auras of good to corrupt—or destroy. As a result, mortals must take great care to conceal any good-aligned items they have, whether by physical or magical means, especially since some devils can detect thoughts.

applies to any citizen of the settlement and is not limited to spells cast within the physical boundaries of the settlement.

Obviously, death and destruction are permanent. Other effects may last a season, a year, as long as the outsider was a prisoner, or for all time.

## HELL SETTLEMENTS

### EXAMPLE SETTLEMENTS AFTER INFERNUS MERGES WITH THE MATERIAL PLANE

The settlements presented here include:

- Basalt Citadel – a village run by devils, for devils
- Beacon Mount – a small city protected by a solar angel
- Blood Market – a large market town run by devils and open to almost everyone
- Lesser Wysthe – a village deceived by a succubus
- Ombregarde – a small town corrupting itself by enslaving a hound archon as its guardian

#### BASALT CITADEL

LE Village

**Qualities:** Insular, Notorious

#### DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government:** Magical

**Population:** 125 (100 devils; 15 hobgoblins; 10 other)

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## NOTABLE NPCs

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Negator Red Hand (LE barbed devil CR 11), current master of the Basalt Citadel

Slaver Kurrigast (LE erinyes CR 8), leader of the Basalt Citadel military

Master of Ceremonies Legast (LE chain devil)

Guardian none

The Basalt Citadel is a new settlement, built since the Night of Winged Darkness atop a massive outcropping of hellstone. It is a Hell on Abaddon, and what all Abaddon will become when Lucifer's forces achieve ultimate victory.

## GUARDIAN RITUAL

The devils of the Basalt Citadel know of the Guardian Ritual but see no reason to perform it. Instead, they study it. Occasionally they perform the ritual outside the walls, convincing—or coercing—a non-devil to be the summoner.

When the ritual is complete, they test the protected area and look for weaknesses. When they tire of their sport, they destroy the magic circle and attempt to destroy the good outsider before it can flee Abaddon.

## LIFE

This is a closed, walled village in which devils take their time wresting the souls from mortal beings. Night and day, screams drift over the walls, accompanied by the infernal laughter of devils. Here, devils feast on mortal flesh. They toy with mortals and torture them. They offer to end the games and pain in exchange for the mortal's soul.

The Basalt Citadel may hold any number of secrets. It certainly holds many abducted mortals. Many bring good magic items here to appease the devils, hoping to protect a person or community for a few days longer.

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## BEACON MOUNT

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LG Small City

**Qualities:** Holy Site, Pious, Prosperous, Tourist Attraction

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

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**Government:** Overlord

**Population:** 5,500 (3,000 humans; 700 elves; 500 dwarves; 250 half-elves; 1,050 other)

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## NOTABLE NPCs

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Duke of Beacon Mount Lord Granan Arcannegrin (LG male gnome fighter 8)

Commander of the Watch Unavyre Mazebane Good's Friend (LG female minotaur paladin 7)

Holy Radiance Bresaadi Fatalblade the Learned (LG female elf cleric 9)

Keeper of the Guardian Pruerrir Candliss the Fortold (NG female human wizard 9)

Guardian Geurilleon (NG solar angel)

Beacon Mount was a large city before the Night of Winged Darkness. Between the predations of devils and the limited area of protection, it has shrunk considerably since then.

The city of Beacon Mount contained a centuries-old temple to the lawful good deities as well as a college of paladins. Both were important targets for Lucifer's armies once they had access to the Material Plane.

Four years ago, during a particularly heavy assault on Beacon Mount, every caster that could summon divine aid did so. One, Pruerrir Candliss, was able to summon a solar angel called Geurilleon. Geurilleon, seeing the devotion of the citizens as well as their desperation, volunteered to defend as much of the city as possible.

Geurilleon flew into battle with the devils, while Pruerrir and her apprentices raced to complete the Guardian Ritual in the temple. While the civil authorities raced to gather as many cityfolk as possible within the protected area, Geurilleon called forth powerful magic, such as divine word, fire storm, and banishment. Arrows of slaying flew from its bow.

At last, Pruerrir signaled that the circle was ready. At Geurilleon's command, Pruerrir and her apprentices completed the circle. All around Beacon Mount, devils howled in rage as the protective barrier sprang into existence.

## GUARDIAN RITUAL

With Geurilleon in the magic circle, the protection extends 1100 feet in radius. The citizens of Beacon Mount have reinforced and fortified the temple and modified its interior to accommodate as many people as possible. The people of Beacon Mount have expanded the temple by expedient means, building roofs out over the surrounding streets.

## LIFE

Life in Beacon Mount closely resembles normal city life from before the Night of Winged Darkness—until the devils attack.

When the Watch signals the approach of danger, the population gathers within the protected area. Until the danger passes, the citizens share food and water with visitors and sing to Geurilleon.

Many citizens visit Geurilleon every day. The solar angel seems to enjoy talking with them and appears fascinated by the details of mortal life. For the most part, the citizens love Geurilleon and bring what gifts they can.

It is a common practice to ask Geurilleon to bless newborn children.

Beacon Mount celebrates Protector's Day, when it honors those who have fallen in combat with devils. Over the last four years it has become tradition for the Duke, the Keeper



of the Guardian, and the Holy Radiance of the temple to offer Geurilleon its freedom on Protector's Day. To date, Geurilleon has declined the offer. In response, the attending citizens express their gratitude in song and in gifts.

## BLOOD MARKET

LE Large Town

**Qualities:** Prosperous, Racially Intolerant (any celestial being, including aasimar)

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government:** Overlord

**Population:** 3,750 (1,000 devils; 700 hobgoblins; 550 humans; 400 half-orcs; 250 dwarves; 100 tieflings; 750 other)

## NOTABLE NPCs

Auton Angul Axelord (LE horned devil), overlord of Blood Market

Master of Pain Kasdexxa (LE bearded devil), commander of Blood Market's guards, called the Vigil Slavemaster Aspexa Charthagnion (NE female tiefling rogue 8), runs the slave market

Lady of the Keys Herensuye (LE erinyes), owns the Blood Market vaults

Chief of Scales Ureste the Unyielding (LN male human), runs the Blood Market bazaar

President of the Caravan of Hope Xavkul Chandler (NE male human) (see Caravan of Hope in the Organizations section)

When the Night of Winged Darkness began, Olytrius Abadrion (LN male fighter 7) was duke of a large town called Oakbridge. When the devils marched on Oakbridge, Olytrius confronted Angul Axelord, the horned devil leading the attacking army. Olytrius bargained with the devil, offering Oakbridge as a base of power. There would be no fighting. Angul's forces could move on, knowing that they had a secure area behind them. Instead of feasting once on the souls of Oakbridge, Angul and its devils could use the town to take slaves.

Olytrius pointed out that a market attracted hundreds of people every year; the devils would not need to hunt, because souls would come to them. The horned devil accepted, sealing the deal with Olytrius' blood. Angul declared itself Auton and changed the town's name to Blood Market.

## GUARDIAN RITUAL

No Guardian Ritual has ever been performed in Blood Market. However, the knowledge of the ritual exists in the town. Perhaps, one day, someone will come to Blood Market powerful enough to hold off the devils and their allies long enough to complete the ritual and banish the evil from the town.

## LIFE

Now, Blood Market is an open town. Anyone can come and trade, gamble, patronize brothels, consult sages and oracles, and otherwise conduct their business. Black markets operate openly; no merchandise is illegal or forbidden.

Laws are strictly enforced, as long as the victim is current with protection payments to the Vigil. Punishment for larceny of any kind is the loss of a hand. For a second offense, the punishment is death. Punishment for harming a devil is torture, followed by death. Punishment for other assaults or murder is forced service in the Vigil.

The citizens of Blood Market tell visitors that though the devils may be cruel, they are reasonable and predictable. Someone might vanish in the middle of the night, but they always know what happened and why. The devils are terrifying, but they also keep order in Blood Market. That kind of security is hard to find these days.

## LESSER WYSTHE

N Village

**Qualities:** Notorious, Prosperous

## DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government:** Autocracy

**Population:** 190 (95 human; 25 half-orcs; 20 halflings; 50 other)

## NOTABLE NPCs

Mayor Leoward Killcraft (CN male half-orc)

Chief of the Watch Pantiln Duskwalker (N male elf fighter 6)

Guardian Companion Graeak Heartwound (N male half-elf cleric 3)

Guardian Gruzja Ala (CE succubus)

Before the Night of Winged Darkness, Lesser Wysthe was a little village built around a livery stable and an inn. The town of Big Wysthe was a day's ride away. The villagers widely regarded Big Wysthe as the black sheep of the family, sure that their homespun ways were more proper. When Lucifer turned his devils loose on Abaddon, Big Wysthe fell quickly while Lesser Wysthe seemed to escape notice.

The villagers were wary about being passed over, but eventually decided that they simply weren't big enough or good enough for the devils to notice.

One day a beautiful woman came to Lesser Wysthe. She was badly injured, which she said was from fighting with devils. Her name was Gruzja Ala. She claimed to be a celestial and offered to protect Lesser Wysthe if the village would allow her to recover there. Graeak Heartwound knew of the Guardian Ritual by then and offered to perform it for her. She accepted his offer but suggested that the village carefully choose the spot on which to center her protection, and to

fortify that spot against devilish attempts to break the magic circle.

The village took some time to complete the preparations. During that time, rumors flew of a growing romance between Gruzja and Graeak. The villagers secretly approved of the bachelor cleric finding someone—if romance kept their guardian in the village, so much the better.

That the villagers found ways for Gruzja and Graeak to be alone together fit right in to Gruzja's plans.

## GUARDIAN RITUAL

With Gruzja Ala in the magic circle, the protection extends 400 feet in radius. Because she is actually a succubus, her protection makes lawful and good characters uneasy and ultimately sick, but it also protects against lawful creatures and thus keeps out the devils.

No one in Lesser Wysthe realizes that Gruzja is a demon. The one most equipped to recognize it, Graeak Heartwound, is completely under her influence and so ignores any telltale signs.

## LIFE

Any rash of sickness among lawful or good citizens is assumed to be some strange illness, and most affected citizens move away to other places when they can stand the effect no longer.

Gruzja truly was injured in combat with devils and really did want Lesser Wysthe to shelter her while she recovered. Being loose in the Material Plane was far more interesting to her than marking time in the Abyss.

The demon plans to toy with the villagers by manipulating them, exaggerating their flaws, and exacerbating their quarrels. She enjoys causing them pain, sorrow, and suffering. She is clever enough that no one realizes she is at fault, although less naive adventurers would probably notice it right away. However, any adventurer that tries to kill Gruzja must get through the entire population of the village, since everyone is convinced that her protection defends them from devils.

And they're right. It does.

Ultimately, Gruzja plans to escape. At the height of a devil assault, she will convince one of her playthings that her power is fading and all is lost. Out of love for her, the plaything must break the circle. The villagers will die, feeling betrayed, confused, and terrified. Once safely away, Gruzja will reveal her true nature to her plaything. Once the true horror of their act crashes in, she will kill them. Then Gruzja will return to the Abyss with an impressive coup to report.

Lesser Wysthe is known for its tolerance of minor crimes like public drunkenness, breaking the peace, and picking pockets. The Watch more often laughs with the lawbreakers, breaks

things up, and sends people on their way with a fatherly warning not to do it again.

## OMBREGARDE

NE Small Town

**Qualities:** Notorious, rumormongering citizens

**Disadvantages:** Cursed

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## DEMOGRAPHICS

**Government:** Council

**Population:** 1,500 (800 human; 300 dwarf; 100 half-orc; 300 other)

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## NOTABLE NPCs

Artisan Councilor Zanlannan Dodox (LN male gnome)

Labor Councilor Otifalcon Silvershaper (NE male halfling)

Rustic Councilor Kevgold Fieldsmond (N male elf)

Watch Councilor Thergwen Necrovore (LE female half-orc warrior 7)

Master of the Guardian Myrirlfel Yardstick (LN male dwarf wizard 4)

Guardian Banga Tenbolt (couatl)

When word of the Guardian Ritual reached Ombregarde, the town was on the brink of extinction. By purest chance, the local wizard Myrirlfel Yardstick had been studying Hellstone. Once details of the ritual were available, Myrirlfel immediately laid out the magic circle using Hellstone. As the next devilish assault began, he summoned a hound archon. The couatl, Banga Tenbolt, was unable to overcome Myrirlfel and found itself trapped in the magic circle.

Many citizens of Ombregarde were caught outside the protective circle and were unable to outrun the devils assaulting the town. Seeing their loved ones dragged off to Infernus before their very eyes darkened the souls of the helpless survivors of the attack.

## GUARDIAN RITUAL

With Banga Tenbolt in the magic circle, the protection extends 300 feet in radius. Because the archon was summoned so quickly, the town council could not choose a particular spot for it. As a result, Ombregarde had to build a hasty shelter around the hound archon and the magic circle. Repairing and reinforcing the citizens' shelter and the celestial's prison has continued, shifting buildings and cutting off town streets.

No one in Ombregarde realizes that the Hellstone in the circle allows Lucifer to know about Banga Tenbolt, its enslavement, and every discussion that happens near the circle.

## LIFE

The citizens of Ombregarde know that things have not been going well. Despite the presence of their guardian, a string of bad luck has plagued the town. They are as yet unaware



of the change wrought by enslaving a celestial, and no moral argument given has overcome the need for the protective circle. Good-aligned citizens have begun drifting away to other settlements further from Infernus, causing the overall alignment of the settlement to shift recently.

For a few weeks, citizens were allowed to visit Banga Tenbolt and express their gratitude for its protection. Eventually, Myrirfel Yardstick realized that Banga asked each and every visitor to break the magic circle. He explained to Banga's visitors the dire consequences that would ensue should its enslavement continue. The wizard then petitioned the town council to curtail further visitation. Now the only contact Banga has with the outside world is the Master of the Guardian, Myrirfel Yardstick.

As the town's population shrinks, the council debates whether to make mandatory its citizens having as many children as possible.

## ORGANIZATIONS

### ALLIES, ENEMIES, AND OPPORTUNISTS IN POST-INFERNUS ABADDON

#### ARCHIVISTS' LEAGUE

**Alignment:** LN

**Headquarters:** Beacon Mount

**Leaders:** Chief Archivist Frukas Hollysharp, Preserver Pruonna Coilbone, Preserver Shatumal Soulaxe

**Prominent Members:** Collector Yenice Falkner, Collector Seatumal Quickwright

**Structure:** The Archivists' League is organized like a university, with multiple departments focusing on different academic and magical disciplines.

**Scope:** National

**Resources:** Access to numerous sources of lore, including large numbers of spellbooks.

The Archivists' League was founded after the Night of Winged Darkness, when it became obvious that the destruction of whole communities meant the loss of culture, philosophy, art, and knowledge. It set out to preserve as much as possible for as long as possible.

#### STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Collector Yenice Falkner was chosen by the largest universities of Abaddon to lead the Archivists' League. Under her are two experts in preserving books and works of art, as well as numerous librarians scattered across Abaddon. The librarians have many collectors working for them. Collectors oversee the transportation of acquisitions to the various fortified libraries of the League.

#### GOALS

The stated goal of the League is the preservation of as much of Abaddon's various cultures as possible, for as long as possible.

Collector Falkner, however, has a secret agenda. She has put her most trusted librarians and collectors on the watch for any lore related to Infernus and Malefacta. This Shadow League looks out for adventurers who might benefit from that lore. When they find a group of candidate adventurers, the collectors approach them with requests to acquire various books, scrolls, or artwork. These requests serve as tests. When the Shadow League finds a powerful enough group of adventurers, it will share its knowledge and ask the adventurers to steal the contract of creation from Lucifer—

assuming they can find such epic adventurers before the devils destroy Abaddon once and for all...

#### PUBLIC PERCEPTION

Most see the Archivists' League as useless. Those who know of it at all think that preserving books ahead of lives is completely wrong-headed, if not outright evil. As a result, League representatives usually find themselves resented by the communities they deal with, and must share what useful knowledge they have to earn favor.

In some places, the attitudes toward the League are sharply divided along class lines. Where the poor resent the waste of resources on the League, the middle-class and rich feel differently. They hope that anything they give the League will somehow survive Hell on Abaddon and make its way back to their families "afterward," assuming there is an afterward.

Additionally, most communities severely distrust lone collectors, viewing their work for the League as little better than theft. That reputation is somewhat deserved, as collectors of the Shadow League do not hesitate to steal what is not freely given them.

#### BLOOD CRUSADE

**Alignment:** NG

**Headquarters:** Beacon Mount

**Leaders:** Lady Corthana Many-Battles, Captain Lotquar Bronzeclamp, Captain Otiward Catslove

**Prominent Members:** Sergeant Walkas Stoneheart, Sergeant Crurry Goblinsfoe, Sergeant Zantumal Carter, Sergeant Yllasaadi Mazebane

**Structure:** Military

**Scope:** National

**Resources:** Information related to the strengths and weaknesses of devils, tactical experience, and access to arcane forges that make good-aligned weapons.

The Blood Crusade is a training cadre of military veterans who work together to share information on fighting devils.

Roughly ten years ago, Lady Corthana Many-Battles recognized that, the war between Hell and Infernus being over, there was very little standing between the devils and the common folk of Abaddon. She reached out to her fellow veterans; though some scoffed, a core group agreed with her assessment.

Coordinating with religious officials, including orders of paladins, Lady Corthana established the Blood Crusade. She sent invitations to renowned adventurers across the land. Those that came to Beacon Mount in response received several weeks of training and an exhortation to go out and spread their knowledge and training.

Now, small units of Blood Crusade cadre are scattered around the communities near Beacon Mount. They train the communities and any willing travelers on how to fight the invaders.

Soldiers of the Blood Crusade are primarily clerics, fighters, and paladins, but with some rangers, sorcerers, and wizards. Even so, other classes and professions are also welcome.

## STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Lady Corthana commands the Blood Crusade, but in reality this means very little as her role is mostly administrative. Her soldiers are busy training local Watch and Guard units, so the Blood Crusade itself never gathers as a unit.

Captain Bronzeclamp is in charge of training the trainers. The sergeants working for him train Blood Crusade soldiers until those soldiers are ready to go out and train other people. Captain Catslove works with artificers, blacksmiths, and others involved in crafting good-aligned items, helping them to hide their workshops and forges from devils and to distribute their wares.

In a settlement where the Blood Crusade is present, one sergeant is in charge. That sergeant trained directly with the Blood Crusade in Beacon Mount. The corporals and soldiers, each trained by the sergeant, are volunteers from the local community.

## GOALS

The Blood Crusade leadership would love to be at the front of any campaign to drive Infernus from Abaddon, but they do not believe that will happen. Rather, they believe that victory is less important than the fight itself. Standing up to the devils is the right thing to do.

Their goal is to train every community in Abaddon to fight back. As the number of free survivors shrinks, that goal gets easier to accomplish.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The public has mixed feelings about the Blood Crusade.

On one hand, Blood Crusaders are more effective at fighting devils than many. They do not judge communities or expect

lavish rewards. Meals and a place to sleep are enough for a Blood Crusade sergeant. Some communities welcome them for that.

On the other hand, towns with guards trained by the Blood Crusade tend to be more effective at killing devils, which in turn draws more attention from devils. Some communities see Blood Crusaders as troublemakers who rock the boat and draw too much attention to the community.

## THE BROKEN BOW

**Alignment:** LE

**Headquarters:** Blood Market

**Leaders:** Magdove Shrineblade, Syryss Flangefoot, Janstina Flamesbreath

**Prominent Members:** Aluiries Harpsorcerer, Unaora Xilson, Faela Ashghost, Zankas Painkot, Crutiln Woodsheart

**Structure:** Terrorist Cells

**Scope:** Regional

**Resources:** Vast wealth and almost unlimited information

The Broken Bow is a group of devil-worshipping rogues and assassins who gave their loyalty to Lucifer in return for a promise that they would survive the infernal conquest of Abaddon.

The vast wealth of the Broken Bow comes not only from their careers as thieves and killers, but also from their ability to bargain with their new masters. When tasked with destroying a particular Guardian Ritual magic circle (see Goals, below), the prominent members (named above) can bargain with the messenger devil for temporary use of Infernus' resources.

The almost unlimited information available to the Broken Bow comes from their devil allies. Just as the members bargain for resources, they also ask for everything from street maps to floor plans, from the names of prominent citizens to the names of the best inns in the settlement.

## STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The Broken Bow is run by whoever possesses the most powerful combination of charm, cunning, power, and skill; at the moment, Magdove Shrineblade. The Broken Bow does not use titles.

The Broken Bow is a small group, but has expanded over the last year in order to reach its goals. In each cell, there is one person who has met a single member of one other cell. Other members of a cell may know the name of the person from the other cell, but they have never met that person. A chain of cells leads back to the original cell, containing the leaders and prominent members listed above. In this way, each chain of cells is independent of the others, and prisoners or traitors cannot unravel the entire organization.

Although the core members are all rogues and assassins, the Broken Bow does not discriminate by class or profession.



Anyone willing to demonstrate an allegiance to Lucifer and a delight in evil is welcome.

## GOALS

When Magdove Shrineblade bargained with a phistophilus devil named Ashcrin Nathoj, she believed that the ultimate conquest of Abaddon was inevitable. All she wanted was for her gang to survive that. She thought she was clever when she bargained for survival, rather than for dominion over some sliver of the world. She was horrified when she read the contract that she signed, finding that although she and other named members would survive, they would survive as lesser devils.

The contract specifies that Magdove, Syryss, Janstina, Aluiries, Unaora, Faela, Zankas, and Crutiln would survive if they broke nine Guardian Ritual magic circles: one for each of the nine levels of Hell. No other members of the Broken Bow are part of the contract. The core members of the group deceive new recruits, promising survival in return for their aid, even though no such thing is assured.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The public has no idea that the Broken Bow exists. If the public knew, there is no telling how horrible the mob justice would be.

## CARAVAN OF HOPE

**Alignment:** NE

**Headquarters:** Blood Market

**Leader:** Xavkul Chandler

**Prominent Members:** Ianice Silverkin, Kevhorn Nobleborn, Petice Taletreader, Victaerris Hammerhand

**Structure:** Business

**Scope:** Regional

**Resources:** Wagons, horses, fortified storage places, contact with lesser devils, and wealth to hire whatever mercenaries they need.

The Caravan of Hope is a consortium of traveling merchants that claims to trade in good-aligned weapons and armor. In reality, the company gathers them in order to sacrifice the items to their infernal masters.

## STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

Xavkul Chandler is the president of the company. He lives in Blood Market, where the Auton, Angul Axelord, can keep an eye on him.

From there, Xavkul sends out his caravans under various masters, including the four prominent members listed above. The caravans consist of appropriate wagons and beasts of burden, along with teamsters and guards.

## GOALS

The ongoing goal of the Caravan of Hope is to sacrifice enough good-aligned items to appease their devilish masters. Xavkul and his lackeys believe that their service will earn them a place in the ranks of the lesser devils.

The typical Caravan of Hope purchase starts with recognizing a good-aligned item. At that point, the master of the caravan approaches the owner. The master suggests that devils can detect good-aligned people, items, and magic; thus, owning a good-aligned item could make the possessor a target of devil attacks. The caravan master then offers to take the item off the owner's hands for a cost—not a price. The master is willing to negotiate for anything up to half of the difference between cost and price, reminding the owner of the danger of devil attacks the whole time.

If the owner succumbs to the caravan master's offer, the Caravan of Hope takes the item back to one of its fortified warehouses. From there the item makes its way back to Blood Market, where Xavkul oversees its sacrificial destruction.

If the owner refuses the master's offers, the master ends the negotiation with regret. The master's pleasant, professional facade is a lie, of course. The caravan master will send the caravan's mercenaries to steal the item, murdering the owner if need be and if they can make it look like the result of a devil attack.

## PUBLIC PERCEPTION

The Caravan of Hope is generally seen as a source of news and needed trade goods. The common folk respond to the arrival of a caravan with joy and celebration. Few people realize how the caravans manipulate the information that they deliver to increase fear, despair, and misery.

On a few occasions, good-aligned organizations have inquired after items purchased by a Caravan of Hope merchant. On these occasions, the Caravan of Hope puts on a big show of cooperating with the investigation and looking for the item in their warehouses. They do not allow outsiders into the warehouses, of course. They have always produced a replica or have been able to take inquirers to the site of a destroyed caravan. The Caravan of Hope insists that it loses just as many caravans to devils, thieves, and monsters as any other trade organization—a lie that the inquirers believe.

The Caravan of Hope says that it continues to run caravans despite the risks because it is important to keep news flowing and to keep some sense of normality alive. This only improves its public perception and solidifies its place in the post-Infernus world. Thus, it is hard to investigate and harder to stop.



## THE DEVOUT FELLOWSHIP

**Alignment:** LE

**Headquarters:** Lesser Wysthe

**Leader:** Most Humble Cruturnal Trueblood

**Prominent Members:** Deacon Unarath Bearcharger, Deacon Fhaerris Foechuckle, Deacon Hollyrath Flinteye, Deacon Quicaryin Pitfoe, Deacon Zanros Warstout

**Structure:** Monastic order

**Scope:** Regional

**Resources:** Only what they can arouse within their community

The Devout Fellowship arose a few years ago, after Gruzja Ala came to Lesser Wysthe. Ironically, it arose out of concerns over infiltration by devils and devil-worshippers.

### STRUCTURE AND LEADERSHIP

The Most Humble Cruturnal Trueblood leads the fellowship. When the group began, it was a bunch of frightened commoners looking to feel safer in their community. Cruturnal saw their need as a crusade and started organizing them as a religious order.

Insisting that he was the same as everyone else, Cruturnal began telling his brothers and sisters to refer to him as the Most Humble. Still, Cruturnal is the absolute authority within the Fellowship. He appoints the deacons who lead patrols in Lesser Wysthe and the surrounding community, looking for their chosen foes.

### GOALS

The Devout Fellowship is looking for devils and devil-worshippers, which usually means whoever annoys them the most. Anyone who disagrees with the Fellowship's judgment is also called a devil or devil worshipper.

Because the Fellowship lacks any political authority and has only the most rudimentary magic, they are easily thwarted or redirected.

### PUBLIC PERCEPTION

If the Fellowship had any power, it would be frightening. Since it doesn't, most communities see it as a nuisance.

The exception is communities with only lay priests and adepts. Those communities lack the magical power to prove a Fellowship judgment false. In those tiny, isolated places the Fellowship rules with an iron fist. Coming to the Fellowship's attention or getting in their way is likely to get you drowned or stoned to death.

The only reason that any communities allow the Fellowship to continue to exist is that, once in a great while, they uncover a demon or a devil. Of course, when that happens, they have to rely on others with more power and skill to actually fight the revealed enemy. Thus, letting the Fellowship look for enemies frees up other people to do things that better help to find and eliminate the devils.