

SF 10

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— Adventure 10: Remorse of Life —

By Gary Schotter & Jeff Harkness

**SWORDS &
WIZARDRY**



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This book is dedicated to the memory of Dustin “Lanky” Ray Cook, 1985-2009.

Special Thanks

Jeff would like to dedicate this book to Tammy, Kaitlyn and Alyssa. Gary would like to dedicate this work to Christina, Brooklyn, Kaden and Amberlyn. We also want to thank Greg Wilson for his wisdom and advice in solving many dilemmas and game mechanics issues.

And a special dedication to the 32 PCs who lost their lives during playtesting.



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**TOUGH
ADVENTURES
FOR TOUGH
PLAYERS**

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Splinters of Faith

— Adventure 10: Remorse of Life —

By Gary Schotter & Jeff Harkness

PCs must venture into the heart of darkness to stop a vampire death-priest before he fully regains his powers and sets out with his undead army to conquer the land. If the PCs can make it through the deadly jungle, undead and demons await them in the Nether Sepulcher. This adventure is designed for characters of 10th level or greater.

The steamy jungle gives way to a massive clearing of churned dirt. A black cloud roils over the entire area, a swirling thundercloud flashing with streaks of jagged lightning. Beneath this dark scar on the sky, a terrible blight on the land sits.

The pyramid rises from the midst of a maze of crumbling walls and broken stones. Stairs climb the sides of the pyramid, pausing at step-like landings along the steep rise. Ringing the walls are massive skull sculptures, their eyes burning with flickering red flames. Figures creep up and down the stairs, hunched and broken bodies moving among the grimacing skull carvings.

Standing atop the structure, lit by burning flames, a lone figure surveys the nightmarish landscape. The screams of tortured souls mix with the smells of burning flesh, and anguished bodies slide down long poles impaled through their midsections. The death-priest's

satisfaction at his horrible handiwork is evident in the number of poles containing bodies.

Nether Sepulcher

Location: Deep jungle/forest, center of an overgrown ruined city

Nickname: The Myriad Skulls, the Palace of Rotting Bone

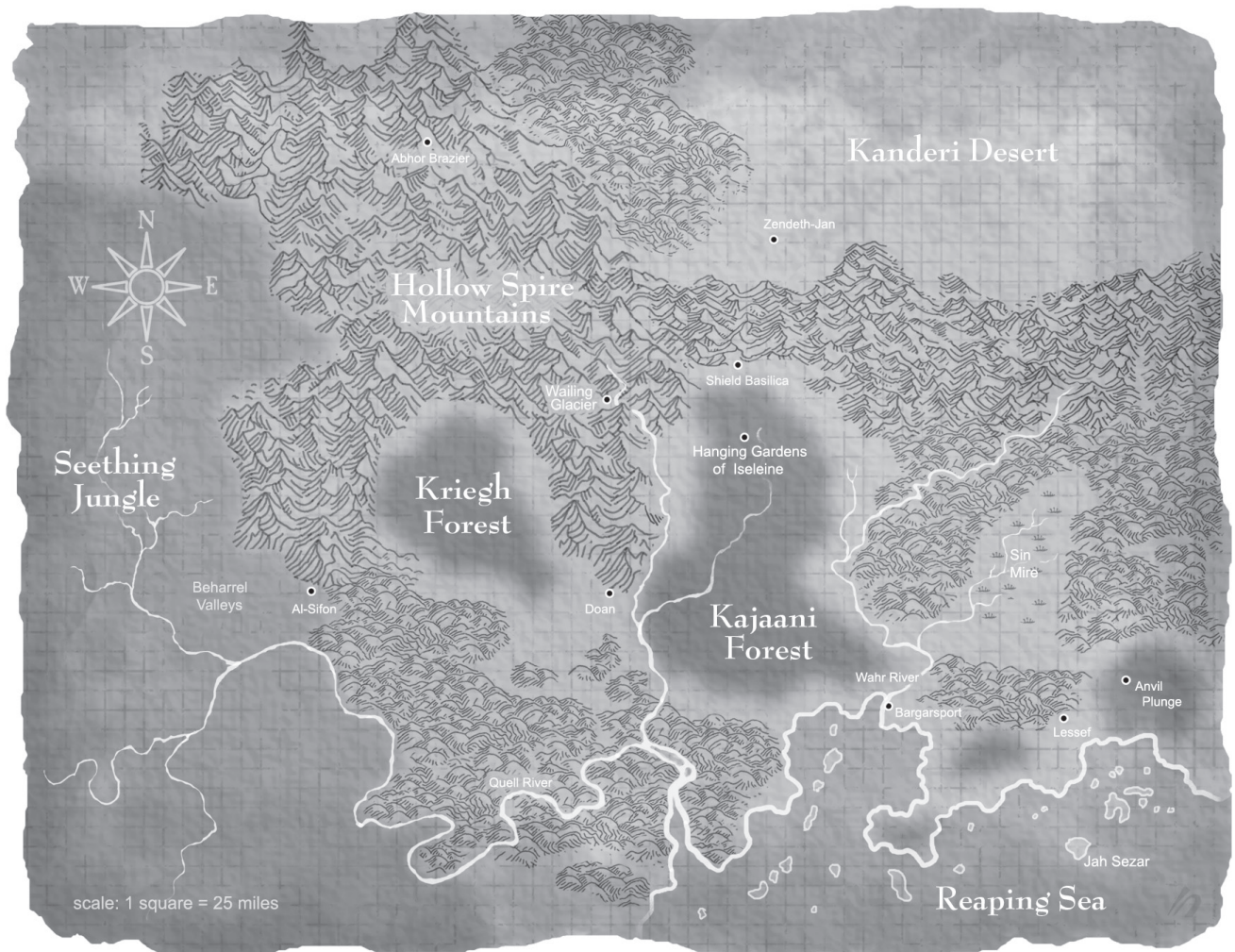
Deity: Aurikus (Orcus), Demon-Lord of the Undead

Leader: Akruel Rathamon, The Priest-King, (Vampire Lord Cleric 18)

Servants: 20+ cultist guards (Fighters, levels vary), 10 sub-priests (Cleric 3-6); 5 under-priests (Cleric 5-8); Rayne D'Anzeray (lich)

Dress: Clergy wear a simple red kilt trimmed in black and sandals. Men go bare-chested. Priests rely on the undead and protective spells in combat.

Uniqueness: A towering step pyramid with a single set of steep stairs climbing the side.



How to Use This Adventure

This adventure is the final part of the *Splinters of Faith* campaign, which has led PCs to restore a broken scepter to destroy a reawakened death-priest. The first nine adventures required PCs to reforge a relic. This final adventure pits the PCs and this reformed scepter against the death-priest Akruel Rathamon on his home turf. Be warned before you drop players into this adventure: It is deadly and dangerous, and PCs who go in blazing away are likely to find the inhabitants of Al-Sifon more than ready to match them toe to toe.

At this point in the campaign, the relic – called the *Scepter of Faiths* – is equivalent to a +4 adamantine heavy mace, +5 vs. *undead* with the ability to cast *bless* and *cure serious wounds* (3/day) and *protection from evil* 10 ft. radius (at will). The scepter can also cast *resurrection* once per month, *detect undead* (30-ft. radius) and is able to locate the death-priest Akruel with no range limits as long as the wielder and Akruel are on the same plane. The *Scepter of Faiths* is intelligent and has free will to use its powers.

PCs playing the full campaign should already have a clear idea that they must head to the Nether Sepulcher in Al-Sifon to face Akruel, but the Scepter tells them straight out if they don't.

If you plan to run the adventure without the others that precede it, however, you'll need to devise a way to get the PCs started. Unlike the previous adventures in the *Splinters of Faith* series, this adventure does not begin in a "good" temple. Instead, PCs are expected to already be heading toward the jungle where the Nether Sepulcher and Akruel Rathamon can be found. Word of missing villagers is already filtering out of the jungle, and priests across the land are starting to have nightmarish visions of Akruel stalking them and their deities. All of these could be used to get players headed in the right direction, which unfortunately for them, is right into Akruel's clutches.

Adventure Background

Once only important to historians as the birthplace of the War of Divine Discord, the Nether Sepulcher is again an active and brutal temple. With Akruel's awakening, blood flows anew over the temple's steps. Endless screams of anguish echo through its dark corridors. Orcus' minions are arriving every day from great distances to join the ancient and enigmatic high priest. Soon, an army of followers will surround the temple, an army ready to march on the nearest cities.

And the culling has already begun.

Around the temple, the nearest villages already lie desolate, the empty huts marking Akruel's second rise to power. Tracks reveal that thousands of people simply marched into the jungle, heading straight for the awakening temple. Following the trail is easy, with the tracks stopping abruptly at Al-Sifon's "gates" — a wall of colossal stone skulls.

Getting to Al-Sifon

The city of Al-Sifon sits in the midst of the Seething Jungle. Two centuries have gone by since Akruel and his minions walked the city — at least while alive. The jungle now claims the majority of the city, leaving just a few main structures and areas of interest. The rest of the city is overgrown with vines and towering trees, lost to the expanse of jungle.

Trees reaching heights of 130 feet dominate the jungle. Common trees are rubber, mahogany and palm. The canopy is continuous, or nearly so, allowing little sunlight to reach the ground. Humidity is

high from all the trapped moisture. Monkeys, sloth and squirrels make up the majority of the creatures that live in the verdant canopy.

Cane, bamboo, giant ferns, vines and moss cover the jungle floor. Wild boar, deer, snakes, jaguars and small vermin are plentiful, although they are now on the move, headed in widening circles away from the center of Al-Sifon and Akruel's growing army.

The Seething Jungle makes travel to Al-Sifon dangerous. Overland travel is reduced to one-fourth speed as travelers are forced to hack through the clinging foliage. Travel by air presents little difficulty. The encounters below are all noticeable from the air, but PCs who remain aloft are usually safe from the dangers on the ground. Travel on the Quell River also offers an easy and fast route to Al-Sifon, although the waterway winds near several small, primitive villages (all now mostly deserted since Akruel's return).

The indigenous people of the Seething Jungle are primitive and peaceful. Metal is a rarity and highly prized. Natives typically wear leather loincloths and adorn themselves with brightly colored feathers and bone or bead jewelry. The villagers have their own language, with dialects ranging widely even between villages.

Two villages found along the river are detailed below. Several others exist and the Game Referee should design them as appropriate. The villages are all abandoned now, with evidence of recent battles marring the settlements. The villagers' tracks lead into the jungle toward Al-Sifon. Even casual searchers should glean that something is completely wrong in the villages. No corpses can be found anywhere, as the dead were either eaten or raised to join Akruel's growing army. Those villagers who survived the initial assault of undead attackers then for some unknown reason marched docilely toward Al-Sifon.

Area A: The Village of Ceza' Atan

This village is little more than a few dozen huts. The village is deserted, although the people appear to have fought desperately before abandoning their homes. The blood-soaked earth points to a gruesome battle that took place here.

A cursory check reveals that the women and children fled into the jungle, while the warriors made a desperate stand against a larger invading force. The battle happened mere weeks ago.

No bodies can be found, despite blood splashed throughout the village. All signs reveal that the living marched south into jungle, dragging the dead.

Other than mundane items, little of interest remains.

Area B: The Village of Cata Luawn

A much larger village called Cata Luawn also lies abandoned. Dozens of dilapidated huts arranged in a circle around a large fire pit are empty. Debris and mundane utensils lie strewn throughout the village. Several wood dragon totems lie splintered and defaced. Decay overpowers the humid jungle air. The partially devoured carcasses of deer, boar and other animals lie scattered between the huts. Many of the carcasses have been bitten and gnawed.

Cata Luawn serves as a base for a troop of undead "recruiters" terrorizing the area. The undead serve Akruel Rathamon and Al-Sifon. The undead function during daylight but prefer to attack at night. The huts contain **40 ghouls**, **15 ghosts** and their leader, **Crimthann, a ghost lord**.

GHOUL (40): HD 2; hp 8; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d4); Move 9; Save 16; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Immunities, paralyzing touch.

GHOST (15): HD 4; hp 25; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1



bite (1d6); Move 14; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Stench, paralyzing touch.

CRIMTHANN, GHAST LORD: HD 12; hp 38; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite (1d6); Move 14; Save 3; CL/XP 13/2,300; Special: Stench, paralyzing touch, spells as a 12th-level cleric (1—*cause light wounds* (x2), *detect magic*, *light*; 2—*hold person* (x2), *silence 15-ft. radius* (x2); 3—*cause disease*, *locate object*, *remove curse*, *speak with dead*; 4—*cause serious wounds* (x2), *neutralize poison*, *sticks to snakes*; 5—*finger of death* (x2), *insect plague*, *raise dead*; 6—*blade barrier*)

Combat gear: +3 chain mail, boots of flying,

Description Crimthann ruled the Nether Sepulcher until Akruel Rathamon returned. Crimthann's new task is "recruiting" for the army, an assignment he relishes after centuries enslaved and bound to the temple. He and his minions raid villages, create undead and send them to Al-Sifon before moving to the next village. Crimthann appears as a bloated corpse covered in boils and lesions. His distended skin bubbles through the unyielding chain shirt he wears. Seeping puss and putrid bodily fluids flow over his flesh as the mail pinches and squeezes with his every move. His smell remains on his equipment and proves resistant to any attempt at nonmagical cleaning.

Area C: Sudarsharn the Jaded

A sharp bend in the Quell River creates a deep pool of churning water. The river often floods at this bend, forming a swamp that reaches a mile into the jungle. The swamp is fairly safe other than natural hazards, and incredibly clean thanks to a high chlorine mixture in the water that renders the water undrinkable. Even fish

and animals avoid this area.

Below the river's bend is the water-filled cavern lair of **Sudarsharn**, an **adult green dragon**. Even the dragon feels the pressure of the horde of undead growing each passing night. Thus far, Akruel and his minions have left her alone, but she fears even her terrible power cannot stand up to the warlord's unnatural evil.

For decades, Sudarsharn has ruled the surrounding villagers with her awesome presence and *suggestion* spell ability. Her power over the villagers made for an easy life. The natives worshipped her as a deity and provided sacrifices, food and treasure. She is angry her supplicants are missing, but realizes Akruel and his army are a force she cannot hope to prevail against alone.

Sudarsharn's lair consists of a limited underwater cave system that eventually opens into a chamber filled halfway with water. The dragon sleeps on a large island in this underground chamber. Another cave leads through miles of underwater passages.

Her hoard consists of 9,875 cp, 12,645 sp, 9,850 gp, 1,271 pp, 600 fresh-water pearls (5 gp each), 6 miscellaneous gold idols (275 gp each), 40 emeralds (100 gp each), silver dragonscale armor, 3 suits of full plate armor, bronze breastplate, 6 helms, 12 halberds, 3 heavy steel shields, +2 *dragon turtle scale shield* (usable by druids), *wand of detection* (magic), *figurine of the onyx dog*, +2 *two-handed sword*, and *Alijahs, Inferno Crown of the Pashas*.

SUDARSHARN, ADULT GREEN DRAGON: HD 9; 54 hp; AC 2[17]; Atk 2 claws (1d6), 1 bite (2d10); Move 9 (Fly 24); Save 6; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: **Breathes poison gas**, spells (1—*detect magic*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *sleep*; 2—*invisibility*, *mirror image*) **Possessions:** *wand of polymorph self* (8 charges).

Description: Sudarsharn dyes her scales with black stripes to blend in better with the jungle surroundings. With Akruel rising in power, the dragon is now attacking pilgrims journeying to Al-

ADVENTURE 10: REMORSE OF LIFE

Sifon in an attempt to weaken the warlord's growing power. She often *polymorphs* into human form to make short trips into nearby villages to hear the latest news on the temple. Those trips stopped when the villagers all marched into the jungle. She is somewhat fearful that whatever possessed the villagers' minds might also gain a hold in her thoughts. Sudarsharn approaches PCs first in human form to discover their reasons for entering her jungle. While not friendly, she does not interfere if PCs oppose Akruel. She may, however, demand her fair "tribute" of treasure if PCs return alive.

Alijahs, Inferno Crown of the Pashas

This gold crown is covered in rubies, but its beautiful exterior is marred by its often haughty personality. The crown is very vain and fickle about her owner.

A prized crown once worn by Vandallia (See Area 6-6B in *Splinters of Faith 5: Eclipse of the Hearth*), *Alijahs* was lost during the War of Divine Discord. After Vandallia, *Alijahs* went from owner to owner before ending up in Sudarsharn's possession. *Alijahs* is haughty and loyal only to her bearer. The crown is also conceited and desires to be worn by a person of high importance. When she feels the wearer is directly threatened, she unleashes a *fireball* upon the enemy. *Alijahs* cares little for the safety of anyone around her. Her primary purpose is to defend her owner.

Powers: *faerie fire* 3/day; wearer receives a +5 to saving throws vs. magical fire, and is immune to normal fire; *wall of fire* (3/day); *fireball* (1/day). Cast at 12th level.

Area D: The Coward

A half-buried structure breaks through the jungle floor. A hole in the wall opens into a building dating back to the War of Divine Discord and the fall of Al-Sifon. The broken building now shelters **Farragut**, a frightened **fire giant**.

A month ago, Farragut and his war band scouted the Seething Jungle in search of slaves and treasure. They chanced upon a deserted city containing hundreds of puny humanoids. The fire giants mounted a full frontal attack, relying on their might to overwhelm the villagers. To Farragut's surprise, the assault failed. The little ones' power far exceeded the giants. Of the giants' war band, only Farragut escaped. He hides now in the jungle and avoids the city. He carries his items and a small coffer he swiped before he ran from Al-Sifon. Farragut has developed an unnatural fear of humans, and shrieks and runs if confronted.

The coffer belonged to a priest of Orcus and contains *potions of control undead*, *frozen concoction* and *heroism*, plus a crude map detailing the pyramids of the Transcendent Cenotaph and Nether Sepulcher, and a passage linking the two temples.

FARRAGUT, FIRE GIANT: HD 11+3; hp 52; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 weapon (5d6); Move 12; Save 4; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Hurl boulders, immune to fire.

Area E: The Fey of the Insipid Glade

This old forest is eerily quiet. Even novice woodsmen notice the lack of wildlife. Trees and grasses are sickly pale and scrawny the deeper PCs venture into the glade. Dead trees jut from the ground and erosion eats at the land.

An ancient, warped tree stands at the center of the glade, looking ready to collapse into ruin. The tree's spirit is as twisted as its

hardened branches. Draped around the tree like morbid wind chimes are long strands of rope from which hang hundreds of hollowed bones. Skulls hang from the ends of the ropes, the bones knocking together in the breeze.

The tree is the extradimensional home of a debased dryad named **Brielle** and her feline lover, **Gundemar, a rakshasa**. The tree is a gateway into a small pocket dimension hunting preserve where Brielle and Gundemar fulfill their twisted desires. The domain has openings in many different forests that allow different creatures to unwittingly blunder into the pair's trap. If touched, the tree opens a shimmering gate set into the side of the trunk that transports people into the extradimensional forest within the tree.

Akruel has not yet noticed these tainted spirits, as they tend to stay within their pocket dimension. The pair hunts creatures for sport, but the walking dead infesting the Seething Jungle provide little excitement. Gundemar wishes to leave the area, but knows Brielle cannot leave her tree. The two welcome living opponents to stalk. It has been so long since they've faced a challenge.

Brielle has been rejected by the purity of nature. Normal plants within 20 feet wither and die if she remains in their proximity for more than 5 minutes. Pure environments such as untouched forests and clear streams and ponds may become spoiled and polluted if she remains in that environment for more than one day.

BRIELLE, DEBASED DRYAD: HD 10+4; hp 50; AC 4[15]; Atk +1 *hand axe* (1d6+1), +2 *flaming hand axe returning* (1d6+2 + 1d6); Move 12; Save 16; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Charm person (-2 save); magic-user spells (1—*magic missile*, *sleep*; 2—*invisibility*); cleric spells (1—*cure light wounds*, *light*; 2—*silence 15 ft. radius*). **Combat gear:** +1 *hand axe*, +2 *flaming hand axe returning*, +3 *leather armor*; **Non-combat gear:** *ring of human control* **Personality:** The nearness to Al-Sifon caused this once-peaceful dryad to become a malignancy to nature. Brielle relishes hunting humanoids of any kind and takes great pride in her bone trophies. Brielle respects and loves Gundemar.

JABROW, BRIELLE'S LEOPARD COMPANION: HD 3; hp 12; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 *claws* (1d3), 1 *bite* (1d6); Move 16; Save 14; CL/XP 4/120; Special: None.

GUNDEMAR, RAKSHASA: HD 7; hp 32; AC -4[23]; Atk 2 *claws* (1d3+8), 1 *bite* (1d6+8); Move 15; Save 9; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Illusory appearance, special magic resistance, magic-user spells (1—*magic missile* (x3); 2—*mirror image*, *web*; 3—*fly*); cleric spell (1—*cure light wounds*) **Non-combat gear:** *girdle of giant strength*, *boots of leaping*.

Personality: Gundemar typically takes the shape of a large tiger. In his natural form, he is a powerfully built tiger humanoid. He hunts an area until it is devoid of life and then moves on to a new territory. Gundemar met his perfect match in Brielle, but is beginning to feel that she is a weakness holding him back from dominating other territories.

BRAVURA, GUNDEMAR'S TIGER COMPANION: HD 6; hp 30; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 *claws* (1d4+1), 1 *bite* (1d8); Move 15 (Swim 6); Save 11; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Rear claws

Area F: The Beharrel Valleys

North of Al-Sifon, the land is draped in thick vegetation and a blanketing canopy high overhead. The jungle beyond this area is mountainous, littered with deep crevasses and plagued by volcanic activity. The heat and humidity push the temperature into dangerous levels. This primordial section of the Seething Jungle teems with animal and plants from ages past.

Roaming the edge of Al-Sifon's skull walls are a string of **6 will-o'-wisps**. These malevolent creatures lured **3 tyrannosaurus** from the Beharrel Valleys and use the dinosaurs to confront travelers. The wisps lead PCs to the tyrannosauruses or vice versa. The wisps use



brilliant strobes of light to enrage the tyrannosaurus into a berserk fury before combat. Once the dinosaurs attack, the wisps engage spellcasters. The wisps travel in pairs with each tyrannosaurus. When one group is encountered, the others arrive 2d4 rounds later.

WILL-O-THE-WISP: HD 9; hp 40; AC -8[27]; Atk 1 shock (2d6); Move 18; Save 6; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: None.

TYRANNOSAURUS REX: HD 18; hp 80; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 bite (4d8); Move 18; Save 3; CL/XP 19/2400; Special: Chews and tears.

Area G: Three Shrines

Dark clouds boiling overhead darken the jungle floor. Crumbling stone walls and cracked foundations lie tangled under trees and vines. A single platform breaks free of the vegetation, although vines grasp it as if to pull the worked stone back into the ground. Broad steps rise through the foliage to the top of the stone temple, where three small mausoleum-like shrines sit. One sits opposite the steps while the others face one another adjacent to the stairs. Between the shrines sits a weathered altar.

Living in the shrines are **3 spirit nagas**. The nagas keep a close watch over Al-Sifon's outlying areas. Each naga controls 14 zombies, for a total of **42 zombies**. The zombies bring villagers from Al-Sifon's captive pits to the nagas. The zombies hide in the dense foliage around the shrines.

ZOMBIES (42): HD 2; hp 10; AC 8[11]; Atk 1 strike (1d8); Move 6; Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Immune to sleep and charm.

SPIRIT NAGAS (3): HD 9; hp 40; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (1d3 + poison); Move 6; Save 6; CL/XP 13/2,300; Special: Poison, charm gaze, spells.

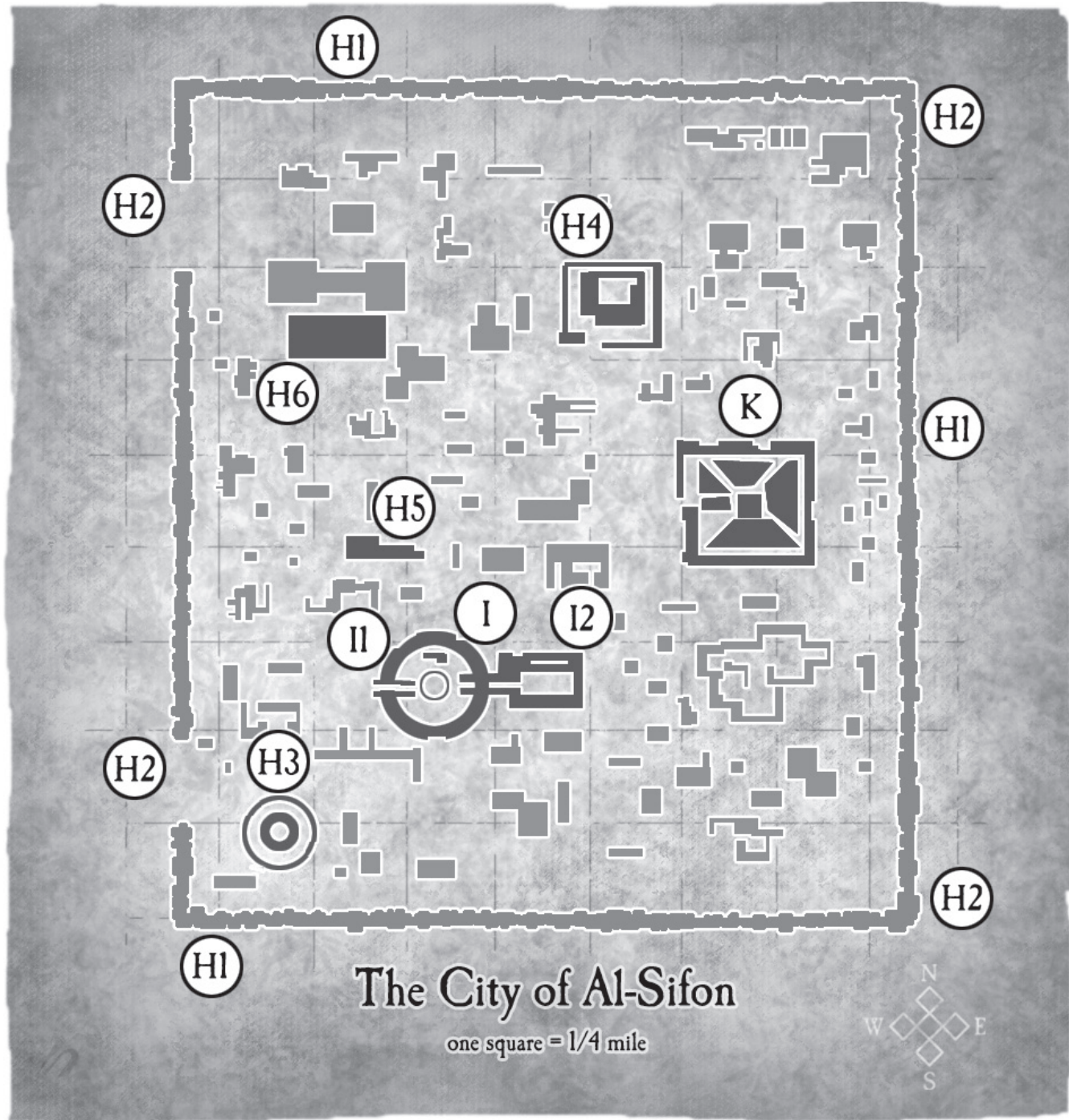
Area H: Al-Sifon, The City of Beyond

Al-Sifon's fall was not graceful, but despite the War of Divine Discord and centuries of harsh weather, the city is in remarkable shape. Many buildings are little more than half buried walls and crumbling ruins, but some key structures remain. Remnants of dwellings, tilting obelisks and stone road markers can easily be found throughout the Seething Jungle, with the bigger structures standing closer to the outer walls of the city.

A few ruins lie outside the city proper, but most of those are simply broken walls or stone floors that the jungle hasn't yet reclaimed. Most are eroded or buried, but a few structures have served as dens for common animals. The animals abandoned Al-Sifon after the undead returned. Anyone paying attention notices that the forest is noticeably silent within 5 miles of Al-Sifon's walls from the lack of animal life. Any animal encountered near Al-Sifon is always hostile and fearful.

At one time, great canals of fresh water connected sections of Al-Sifon, supplying fresh water and a way of transporting goods. The canals are now dry, blocked by dams and sections of collapsed earth. The dams date to a siege Shah Rasalt laid around Al-Sifon. While the canals are useless as waterways, they can serve as direct routes to Al-Sifon through the dense jungle.

A roiling black storm permanently fills the sky above Al-Sifon. Akruel's prayers to Aurikus initially formed the cloud, but it now feeds off the negative energy emanating from the city. Walking in the open beneath the black storm is dangerous. Every 3d6 turns, a bolt of pure negative energy erupts, targeting a random living creature (plant or animal) beneath it (1 in 6 chance of a bolt striking a PC). The cloud has been in existence for weeks now, meaning that all living vegetation and animals in the area have already been destroyed. PCs are likely the only living beings for miles around. If a PC is struck



by one of the black lightning bolts, he loses 1d4 levels for 12 hours.

If dispersed by spells, the storm weakens then reforms in 10d10 rounds. During this time, Al-Sifon's inhabitants flee underground or into shelters to avoid the sun. Very few of Al-Sifon's inhabitants fear direct sunlight, but nevertheless all hide as if they do. When the clouds return, the undead come boiling out of their hiding spots to search for the cause of the disturbance.

A 15-foot-tall wall of carved limestone boulders surrounds Al-Sifon. The boulders appear as skulls missing their lower jaw. The top of the wall is flat, creating a walkway around the city's perimeter. Breaks in the wall occur where trees grew between a few of the boulders, pushing stones outward at angles from the wall. The perimeter of the wall travels just under 9 miles as it encompasses the inner city. Many slaves died creating this horrific barrier. Two main

gates enter the city from the west but smaller roads and canal gates are scattered around the walls. The bone gates are gone, leaving only gaps in the formidable wall.

The city consists of a maze of stone walls, forgotten monuments and crumbling foundations. Twisting prisons of roots and vines cover many structures. Fissures and crevasses rend the earth where underground rooms and passages collapsed. Many stairs in the city end abruptly due to collapsed buildings and cave-ins. Piles of gnawed bones lie strewn between ruins where ghouls and other undead devour their meals. The city reeks of rotting flesh.

The dangers in Al-Sifon also extend into other planes. A pair of **bodaks** trapped on the ethereal plane watch over the city for anyone entering their reach. See Area K17 for more on these guardians.

Walking in the City of the Dead

Evil and negative energy permeate Al-Sifon. Turning undead while on the unholy ground is more difficult, with each attempt made with a –6 penalty. Undead that would automatically be destroyed get a saving throw to instead flee the cleric. Further, every undead creature within the city gains a +2 bonus to attacks, damage and saving throws. Any undead created or summoned within the city gains +2 hit points per hit dice. This effect cannot be dispelled or negated. (Bonuses to damage and saving throws have been accounted for in the stats for the undead within the city.)

Wandering Monsters

Use the following table to check for wandering monsters while PCs move through Al-Sifon. Roll 1d20 for every half hour spent inside the city of the dead.

- 1 **NOBLOCH, CHAOTIC MALE HALF-ORC:** HD 11; hp 52; AC 0[19]; Atk +2 two-handed sword, wounding (1d8 + 1d6+1); Move 9; Save 4; CL/XP 11/1,700; Special: None.
Combat gear: +2 rhino hide armor AC 2[17], +2 two handed sword (wounding) (1d10 plus 1d6+1 wounding, as reverse cure light wounds); potions of fire resistance, heroism and healing. See Area K13.
- 2 **CHÁ OOKNA, OGRE MAGE/VAMPIRE:** HD 5+4; hp 30; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 weapon (1d12+2), bite (1d10+2 plus level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 12; CL/XP 9/1,100; Special: Magic use, regenerate (3 hp/rnd), gaseous form, bite drains 2 levels. See Area K19.
- 3 **BONE MOUND:** HD 10; hp 45; AC 3[16]; Atk 1d6 claw/kick bite (1d4+2 each); Move 6; Save 5; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Animate Dead, Multiple Attacks.
- 4 **SUB-PRIESTS OF ORCUS, HUMAN CLERIC 5 (1d6):** HD 5; hp 20; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 heavy mace (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 11; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Spells (1—cure light wounds, detect magic; 2—hold person, silence 15 ft. radius; 3—cure disease). Combat gear: Chain mail, shield, heavy mace. See Area K5.
- 5-7 **WRAITHS (1d8):** HD 4; hp 28; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 touch (1d6+2 plus level drain); Move 9 (Fly 24); Save 11; CL/XP 6/400; Special: drain 1 level with hit.
- 8-9 **VAMPIRE (1d4):** HD 7; hp 52; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 bite (1d10+2 plus level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 7; CL/XP 10/1,400; Special: gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, summon bats or wolves, charm person, bite drains 2 levels
- 10 **BANSHEE (1d6):** HD 7; hp 50; AC 0[19]; Atk 1 claw (1d8+2); Move (fly 12); Save 9; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: Magic or silver to hit; magic resistance 49%; shriek of death; Immune to enchantments
- 11-12 **ZOMBIE (2d10):** HD 2; hp 10; AC 8[11]; Atk 1 strike (1d8+2); Move 6; Save 14; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Immune to sleep and charm.
- 13-14 **GHOST SPIKE:** See Special Encounter below.
- 15-20 No encounter.

Special Encounter: Ghost Spike

These sharpened 20-foot-tall steel spikes stand randomly about Al-Sifon. Akrue sacrificed victims to Aurikus on these enchanted spikes, placing their living bodies atop the sharpened points and

letting gravity drag the screaming victim toward the ground. Skeletal bodies lie on the ground, spitted by the spike. Each spike anchors the spirit of the dead sacrificed upon it, creating a legion of ghosts that defend the ground within a 300-foot-radius around the spike, but will not leave this area. Each spike has **1d6+3 ghosts** anchored to it.

GHOST (1D6+3): HD 5; hp 23; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 corruption touch (2d6+2); Move Fly 18; Save 10; CL/XP 7/600; Special: None.

Area H1: The Wall of Skulls

A rock wall of boulders surrounds Al-Sifon's crumbling ruins. The 15-foot-tall boulders are carved to resemble skulls missing their lower jaws. Two gaps in the wall once held elaborate gates crafted from bone and vine. The gates have long since collapsed, leaving gaping openings into the city.

Area H2: Guards

Guard patrols consisting of a *charmed fire giant* and **2 fire giant skeletons** are stationed throughout the city to protect the inhabitants and to attack any living creature not displaying Orcus' unholy symbol. Disguises easily fool the giants, however, and they do not question those openly displaying any symbol of Orcus, even if the PC is just carrying a skull resting atop a bone femur.

FIRE GIANT: HD 11+3; hp 46; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 weapon (5d6); Move 12; Save 4; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: Hurl boulders, immune to fire.

FIRE GIANT SKELETON (2): HD 8; hp 40; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 weapon (3d6+2); Move 12; Save 8; CL/XP 8/800; Special: None.

Area H3: Tower of the Obedient

A sturdy tower stands amid rubble, heaps of bones and corpses scattered around its base. Dozens of Orcus' faithful dangle from the 160-foot tower like gruesome lacework. The corpses hang by their necks from entwined ropes and chains. Some twitch and flail in undeath, while others simply hang until decay loses its battle with gravity. Some of Orcus' followers are called to this tower to begin their undead service to the demon prince. They willingly hang themselves in hopes of Orcus' dark blessing, although not all who answer the call are rewarded with undeath.

The hollow tower is the home of two of Akrue's most feared assassins. **Leonidas** and **Creighton** once were ogre mages who assassinated local rulers and squelched uprisings of villagers who rejected Akrue. As Al-Sifon fell, Shah Rasalt's forces cornered the murderers at their tower home. But the paladins didn't quite finish the job: Several weeks after Leonidas and Creighton were slain, they reappeared as **2 mohrgs** to haunt and terrorize looters.

The interior of the building burned long ago, leaving an empty shell that the mohrgs still call home. A crude ladder ascends the tower's interior to the top. The mohrgs permit any individual arriving to commit suicide to pass, but they gleefully torment these hopeless beings.

Remarkably, **Kentotis**, a priest of Orcus, remains alive from where he dangles from the harrowing peak. Overcome with grief and remorse for vile acts committed in service to Orcus, he came to end it all. He jumped from the tower, but became entangled in the web of ropes and bodies and did not perish. He is barely alive after 16 days hanging from the tower. He feebly calls out, but the mohrgs ignore him. If freed, Kentotis begs for forgiveness for his sins and offers PCs any information about the Nether Sepulcher. He knows of the *Frore Heart*, its powers and its location. He also knows of a tunnel between the Transcendent Cenotaph and Nether Sepulcher, but warns that the way is filled with unfathomable dangers. He knows little of

ADVENTURE 10: REMORSE OF LIFE

the inhabitants or wards in the catacombs and temples.

LEONIDAS AND CREIGHTON, MOHRGS (2): HD 12; hp 55; AC 3[16]; Atk 2 *slams* (2d6+2), *tongue touch* (paralysis); Move 12; Save 3; CL/XP 14/2,600; **Special:** Create zombie, paralysis

KENTOTIS (NEUTRAL HUMAN MALE CLERIC 5): HD 5; hp 25 (currently 3); AC 3[16]; Atk heavy mace (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 11; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** Spells (1—*cure light wounds, light*; 2—*bless, find traps*)

Combat gear: +2 heavy mace, plate mail

New Monster: Mohrg

Hit Dice: 12

Armor Class: 3 [16]

Attacks: 2 *slams* (2d6), *tongue touch* (paralysis)

Saving Throw: 3

Special: Create zombie, paralysis

Move: 12

Alignment: Chaos

Challenge Level/XP: 14/2,600

A tangle of discolored entrails hang from this skeleton's torso, the innards winding upward to loll from the creature's jaw like a clawed tongue. The touch of the creature's tongue causes paralysis in any creature who fails a save. Any being slain by a mohrg rises immediately as a zombie under the creature's control.

Area H4: The Graveyard of the Profane

This graveyard escaped the jungle's growth after Al-Sifon fell. Not a single living plant or blade of grass grows within the corpse-strewn landscape. Pockets of mist blanket the spongy ground, although there's no apparent source for the ground fog. The putrid smell of decay overwhelms the senses.

The graveyard measures roughly a quarter mile in diameter with grave markers and stones as far as the eye can see. Unlike most cemeteries, the bodies here are not buried, but laid in concentric circles around a central monument.

While Shah Rasalt was stopping Akruel, the forces of Arden were marching against the first city of Al-Sifon. The bodies of Akruel's forces were placed in this graveyard and the freestanding totem was placed among them as a reminder of their evil. An engraved plaque at the base of the monument reads "The grave of Al-Sifon where infidels of the dead god lie. Pity and admonish their evil. May their souls find eternal damnation for transgressions against good."

Around the monument is a freshly dug cone-shaped depression that contains the bodies of villagers and other unfortunates in a grisly mass grave. The bodies are being readied for future animation as undead. Many of the corpses show signs of ritual deaths and even cannibalism. Akruel thought it fitting that the newly dead should lie among his past followers.

The **Totem of the Unburied Horde**, once a monument designating this as unhallowed ground, now channels negative energy. The pillar also creates undead four times each night on any corpses brought into the cemetery. Anyone slain within the cemetery face a worse fate. They immediately rise as a ghoul (if under 4 HD) or as a ghastr (4 HD and over). Undead creatures reform after 1d8 rounds if destroyed inside the graveyard.

Prithoma, a **spirit naga**, curls around the freestanding pillar. Prithoma is always served by 4 **bodaks**. The bodaks wear black, tattered robes and

keep their faces hidden beneath low-hanging cowls. Each carries a large scythe. Prithoma directs the undead when they awaken.

Demolishing the totem immediately destroys all undead ever created by the pillar. The ghouls and ghastrs in the graveyard drop lifelessly to the ground as their connection to Orcus is severed. Ghoul and ghastr soldiers serving Akruel throughout the land immediately are snuffed out of existence, severely crippling his army. Crimthann (if not previously slain) and other ghoul lords scattered throughout the jungle also die. However, destroying the totem immediately draws Akruel's attention, and he ruthlessly deals with the perpetrators.

PCs entering the graveyard should face a steady stream of undead that includes ghouls, ghastrs, wraiths and anything else the Game Referee wants to include. As soon as one undead is slain, another rushes to fill its spot. The number of undead is infinite and the totem guarantees a never-ending supply.

GHOULS: HD 2; hp 8; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 *claws* (1d3+2), 1 *bite* (1d4+2); Move 9; Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; **Special:** Immunities, paralyzing touch.

GHASTR: HD 4; hp 20; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 *claws* (1d3), 1 *bite* (1d6+2); Move 14; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** Stench, paralyzing touch.

WRAITH: HD 4; hp 28; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 *touch* (1d6+2 plus level drain); Move 9 (Fly 24); Save 13; CL/XP 6/400; **Special:** drain 1 level with hit.

ZOMBIE: HD 2; hp 10; AC 8[11] or with shield 7[12]; Atk 1 *weapon or strike* (1d8+2); Move 6; Save 16; CL/XP 2/30; **Special:** Immune to sleep and charm.

PRITHOMA, SPIRIT NAGA: HD 9; hp 55; AC 4[15]; Atk bite (1d3 + poison); Move 6; Save 6; CL/XP 13/2,300; **Special:** Poison, charm gaze, spells.

BODAKS (4): HD 8; hp 60; AC 3[6]; Atk *Slam or weapon* (1d8+3); Move 6; Save 6; CL/XP 11/1,700; **Special:** Death gaze, +1 or greater magic weapons to hit, vulnerable to sunlight, immune to electricity, resists acid and fire

New Monster: Bodak

Hit Dice: 8

Armor Class: 3 [16]

Attacks: Slam or weapon (1d8+1)

Saving Throw: 8

Special: Death gaze, +1 or greater magic weapons to hit, vulnerable to sunlight, immune to electricity, resists acid and fire

Move: 6

Alignment: Chaos

Challenge Level/XP: 11/1,700

A bodak is a large humanoid with smooth, grayish-black skin and a featureless face. Living beings that meet a bodak's gaze lose 1 level, save avoids, and if slain in such a manner rise as a bodak 24 hours later. Bodaks are immune to electricity, and take half damage from fire and acid. The creature is vulnerable to sunlight, taking 2d6 points of damage from exposure.

Area H5: Wall of Testament

A partial wall is all that remains of this structure. The wall displays bas relief sculpture panels stained with fading colors. The first displays the dread priest-king Akruel standing upon a pyramid of

skulls. Demonic figures flank him as he presents an iconic black heart to his throngs of worshippers. Stylized beams of menacing power burst from the heart. The next section shows hordes of undead and demons ravaging cowering armies. Akruel walks before them, unscathed by assaults. The black heart floats in the background above the massive pyramid, beams enveloping Akruel with immortal power. The majority of the last panel lies in rubble. What remains is an image of Akruel upon an elaborate throne with a skull-tipped wand in one hand and a human heart in the other. The partial image of a bloated demon surrounded by a pool of flame overshadows the priest-king.

Area H6: The Murky Death

A fetid haze of methane gas rolls across this reflecting pool. The 100-foot-by-600-foot manmade lake holds black, sludge-like unholy water. Corpses and other indescribable chunks of flesh float on the gelatinous surface. The lake is 20 foot deep in the center but around one foot nearer the edges. Bubbles of escaping air burst with the echoing moans of tormented souls. Fallen bodies of the undead are deposited in the lake for “recycling.”

The lake is home to one of Al-Sifon’s most imposing inhabitants, a **nightshade**. The creature rests underwater but immediately rises to attack living creatures that disturb the water or approach within five feet. The nightshade is a collective being of pure evil and negative energy formed from the undying will of the undead. It starts as a wave of sludge as it moves toward living creatures on the lakeshore. The wave of unholy water can rise high enough to drench all beings standing within 20 feet of the lake’s edge.

NIGHTSHADE (NIGHTWALKER): HD 14; hp 80; AC 0[19]; Atk 2 claws (2d8+2 plus 2d6 cold); Move 6; Save 3; CL/XP 16/3,200; Special: Gaze attack, magical powers, cold

New Monster: Nightshade

Hit Dice: 14
Armor Class: 0 [19]
Attacks: 2 claws (2d8 + 2d6 cold)
Saving Throw: 3
Special: Cold, gaze attack, magical powers
Move: 6
Alignment: Chaos
Challenge Level/XP: 16/3,200

A nightshade is a being of pure negative energy formed by the will of the undead. It can assume many shapes by sheer force of will although in its relaxed state it appears as a sludge or ooze-shaped creature composed of withering darkness. At will, a nightshade can cast *darkness* (15-ft. radius) and *detect magic*. Three times per day, it can use *haste*, *hold monster* and *invisibility*. Once per day, it can cast *cone of cold*, *finger of death* and *monster summoning IV*. Anyone staring into the swirling negativity of a nightshade’s being must save or flee in *fear* (as per the spell of the same name). The touch of a nightshade draws the heat from beings, dealing an additional 2d6 points of damage.

Area I: Transcendent Cenotaph

The Transcendent Cenotaph is an 80-foot-tall cone-shaped shrine. Wide steps lead up one end of the steep wall. A five-foot-wide ledge halfway up the temple wall runs around the edge to the opposite side. Two curving steps descend into the temple’s depths. The side opposite the stairs ends in a blood-streaked 100-foot-long marble slide that ends in a pit. The temple’s summit is a flat 30-foot-diameter plateau.

Area Ii: Cenotaph’s Plateau

A dozen villagers, their hands bound behind them and a rope tied about their waists, scream and plead as 2 **ogre zombies** pull them up the steps. **Daznashal the Vicious**, a high priest of Orcus, wears black robes and holds a staff high as he recites ritualistic chants. At the top of the slide, 2 **ogre zombies** wielding tridents push hapless individuals one by one down the marble slope. Shouts of terror turn to screams of agony as they slide into a massive pit (Area I2).

While the ogre zombies pose little challenge to seasoned PCs, **Galosc** a glabrezu (Area I3) arrives in 2 rounds once combat begins. Galosc, who favors grandiose and frightening entrances, uses a special ability he possesses to teleport into the interior of an ogre zombie, which violently explodes. Two vrock at Area I3 arrive moments later, following their master into battle. Galosc grapples PCs and tosses them down the slide into Area I2 as the vrock engage spellcasters.

GALOSC (GLABREZU, THIRD-CATEGORY DEMON): HD 10; hp 65; AC -3[22]; Atk 2 pincers (2d6), 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite 1d4+1; Move 9; Save 5; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: Magic resistance (60%), teleport, demonic magical powers.

VROCK DEMON (2): HD 8; hp 45; AC 1[18]; Atk 1 beak (1d6), 2 foreclaws (1d4), 2 rear claws (1d6); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 8; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Magic resistance (50%), darkness, immune to fire.

OGRE ZOMBIE (4): HD 4+1; hp 28; AC 8[11]; Atk 1 slam (1d10+3); Move 6; Save 11; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Immune to sleep or charm.

DAZNASHAL THE VICIOUS (CHAOTIC HUMAN MALE HIGH PRIEST OF ORCUS, CLERIC 12): HD 9+3; AC -1[20]; Atk +2 *heavy mace* (1d6+3); Move 9; Save 4; CL/XP 14/2,600; Special: Spells (1—*cure light wounds* x2, *protection from good*, *silence* 15’ radius, *darkness*; 2—*hold person*, *silence*, *bless* and *find traps*; 3—*prayer*, *cause diseases*, *continual light*, *remove curse*; 4—*cure serious wounds* x2, *poison*, *protection from good* 10’ radius; 5—*finger of death*, *insect plague*, *dispell good*, *quest*; 6—*blade barrier*)

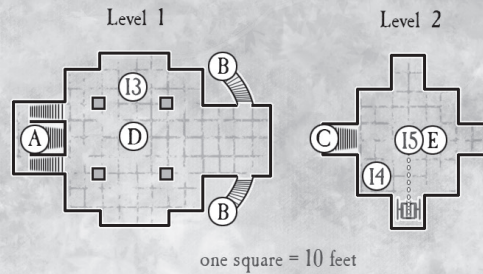
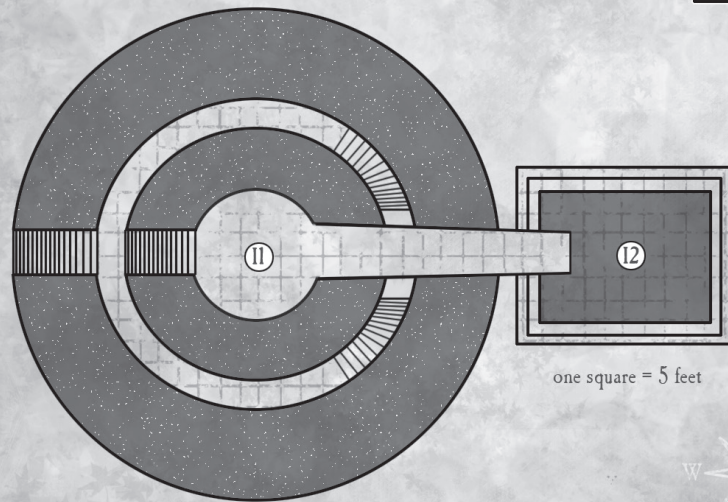
Combat Gear: +2 full platemail, +2 heavy steel shield, +2 heavy mace; **Non-combat gear:** 4 vials of oil, an unholy symbol of Orcus, prayer book, fine black robe emblazoned with the Orcus’ symbol.

Description: Daznashal was sent into the Sin Mire to locate a skum city beneath the swamp and win their loyalty with a collection of treasures. While traveling through the swamp on a raft pulled by zombie rowers in canoes, his small party succumbed to the hostile swamp. All his undead companions were lost, and Daznashal barely escaped after three giant crocodiles overturned the treasure raft. He has since redeemed himself in Akruel’s eyes by aiding the death-priest in restoring Al-Sifon.

Area I2: The Wretch Pit

The 100-foot-long marble slide (from Area I1) dumps into a 20-foot-deep pit down a steep slope that falls 80 feet to ground level.

Area 1 Transcendant Cenotaph



- (A) Down to Level 2
- (B) To Outside of Temple
- (C) Up to Level 1
- (D) Statue of Orcus
- (E) Pit to Area J

Crowding the 30-foot-by-40-foot pit floor are **40 ghouls** and **10 ghastrs**. They grasp and climb in vain to reach anyone outside the pit. Their breathless voices murmur their hunger for living flesh. The undead attack anyone who falls into the pit. An iron ladder stored outside the pit is used to occasionally release the ghouls and ghastrs when their numbers get too great. Villagers sacrificed down the slide continuously replenish the ranks of the undead. The ghouls and ghastrs cannot escape without aid.

GHOULS (40): HD 2; hp 8; AC 6[13]; Atk 2 claws (1d3+2), 1 bite (1d4+2); Move 9; Save 14; CL/XP 3/60; Special: Immunities, paralyzing touch.

GHASTS (10): HD 4; hp 25; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d3+2), 1 bite (1d6+2); Move 14; Save 13; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Stench, paralyzing touch.

Area 13: Shrine to the Undead Lord

Two staircases descend into a jet-black room. A 15-foot-tall stone statue of Orcus dominates the chamber. An amulet of carved stone hangs from the statue's neck. The amulet's centerpiece is a full-length mirror with a dull reflective surface. A 20-foot-radius cloud of oily mist surrounds the effigy. The cloud affects Lawful beings, making them save with a -2 penalty for 1d4 hours (save avoids) after exposure to the mist.

This is the abode of the **glabrezu Galosc** (See Area 11). If not previously encountered, he remains here guarding the lower catacombs.

GALOSC (GLABREZU, THIRD-CATEGORY DEMON): HD 10; hp 65; AC -3[22]; Atk 2 pincers (2d6), 2 claws (1d3), 1 bite 1d4+1; Move 9; Save 5; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: Magic resistance (60%), teleport, demonic magical powers.

Area 14: Sacrificial Pits

The room reeks of rotting corpses. Clouds of flies swarm in the room, seeking the source of the rancid smell. In the floor is a round, 30-foot-deep pit from which cold, fetid air wafts up from the black depths. Ancient stucco murals of bones and skulls cover the walls and barrel-vaulted ceilings. Large iron pulleys holding thick chains hang suspended over each pit. Dangling from the ends of the large chains are four pairs of smaller chains with locking manacles attached to the ends. The largest chains are attached to a metal winch sitting in an alcove.

The chains and winch are **animated objects** that attack living creatures who approach within five feet of the pits without speaking Orcus' name aloud. Once the four chains animate to attack, the winch also attacks. The chains have a 30-foot-reach and can attack PCs who remain on the stairs. The chains are more than 100 feet long and thicker than normal.

The chains strike at opponents to grab them in their shackles. Once shackled, the chains lower victims into the pit (Area 15). The winch uses its iron legs to trample PCs not grappled or lowered into the pit. The chains can only be broken once the animated object is defeated. The chains release dead or unmoving creatures so they may grab other victims.

ANIMATED WINCH, 4 CHAINS: HD 11; hp 47; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 chain (grab), winch trample (2d8); Move 6; Save 4; CL/XP 12/2,000; Special: Grab, trample.

Area 15: The Draining Pit

Lurking halfway down the 30-foot-deep pit are **10 shadows**. All 10 shadows savagely attack any living creature that enters the pit (either held by chains or otherwise) in order to drain their strength. The pit opens into the ceiling of a room filled with **8 wights**. The wights

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

made from precisely cut bone fragments and ivory.

Three 20-foot-deep pits are filled to floor level with heaps of bleached bones. Nothing else of interest lies within the pits.

Area J4: Font of Blood

Burial niches holding desiccated and disintegrating remains line this 15-foot-tall chamber's walls. A five-foot-diameter gray stone bowl upon a low pedestal sits in the center. The bowl contains black liquid coated with a congealed skin that seems to pulse with a pulse of its own. The stone basin contains blood drained from victims to create vampires. The foul baptismal's evil nature is enough to turn the strongest of stomachs.

Area J5: Ossuary of the Tooth

Skeletal remains fill three rows of niches lining the walls. A ring of charred and yellowed teeth sits on a three-foot pedestal in the center of the room. A cracked human skull sits in the center of teeth. Tear-drop gems sit beneath the skull's eye sockets. These are the few remains of Creltor Bahn Ilan, a necromancer of ancient repute who sought immortality. The remains are inanimate and harmless. The jewelry consists of 12 flawless gems of various types (1,000 gp each).

The pedestal's top holds a concealed and intricately locked panel. Once opened, the center core of the pedestal rises to reveal a hollow niche. The niche contains a mithral decanter, a leather-bound tome and an ivory key carved from a large tooth. The decanter (1,500 gp) contains evaporated dragon bile poison. Once opened, the poison gas spreads in an invisible 20-foot cloud centered on the decanter. The necromancer Bahn Ilan wrote the journal, which is bound in cured elf skin. The tome describes ritualistic sacrifices and experiments and acts as a *manual of golems* (flesh). It also contains a map to the necromancer's abode overlooking the Goltray River. No mention of the tooth key is made in the tome, but the key's detail and workmanship indicate its importance. The key is worth 5,000 gp to an antiquities dealer.

Area J6: Ossuary of the Dogs

Those not reborn into undeath in Orcus' service are brought here to rot. A chaotic mess of butcher corpses, tangled bones and other unimaginable gore lie in rotting heaps. Niches along the wall are crowded, with bodies stuffed and pushed into every available space. Bodies even dangle loose over the edges of the carved niches.

The room is plagued with 1,000 **rot grubs** and 12 **ghasts**. Anyone delving into the gore is immediately infected by 10d10 grubs (no save to avoid). The ghasts are already infected and automatically deposit 1d4 rot grubs upon any opponent they hit.

GHASTS (12): HD 4; hp 25; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d3+2), 1 bite (1d6+2); Move 14; Save 11; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Stench, paralyzing touch.

ROT GRUBS (1,000): HD 1; hp 3; AC 9[10]; Atk 1 burrow; Move 1; Save 18; CL/XP 1/15; Special: Burrows to heart.

Area J7: Bedlam's Gate

Brilliant, flickering lights from this corner shrine cast harsh shadows throughout the room. Slowly swaying around a huge teardrop-shaped nimbus of yellow-and-red lights are 6 **ghasts**. Horrific runes of glowing silver are etched around the light source.

The rapidly flashing light is a gate to a Chaotic plane filled with demons. Faint screams intertwined with rasping whispers of sadistic brutality issue from the portal. The runes are actually a circle of *protection from evil* keeping the gate and its inhabitants at bay.

Disrupting or altering the runes nullifies the protection and releases eager demons. Damaging area effect spells cast within the room instantly disrupt the protective circle.

If the gate is broken, 4 **vrock** immediately leap from the gate to drag the living and the undead into the horrible plane. Every four rounds thereafter, 4 more **vrock** arrive until a total of 12 escape through the gate. The gate closes forever if the vocks drag all nearby victims into the gate, 10 minutes pass or if the 12 escaped vocks are slain. Nothing short of divine intervention can save PCs carried into the gate after it closes.

GHASTS (12): HD 4; AC 4[15]; Atk 2 claws (1d3+2), 1 bite (1d6+2); Move 14; Save 11; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Stench, paralyzing touch.

VROCK DEMONS (12): HD 8; hp 33; AC 1[18]; Atk 1 beak (1d6), 2 foreclaws (1d4), 2 rear claws (1d6); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 8; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Magic resistance (50%), darkness, immune to fire.

Area J8: Well of the Devourer

A true horror among the twisted denizens of the Nether Sepulcher's crypts is a fiend-spawned **gibbering moulder** known only as **Englut** that terrorizes the lower levels. Englut is a mystery even to Orcus' faithful, who do their best to stay out of his way when he's on the move, as he is known to destroy the living and the dead alike. Thankfully, Englut rarely stirs from a dormant state that appears to be a puddle of flesh.

Disturbing images of fused and warped humans decorate the chamber's walls. It is difficult to discern where one figure starts and another begins as bodies and faces meld into each other. Their mouths are open in silent screams of horror and pain.

In the center of the chamber is a 10-foot-diameter pit surrounded by relief carvings of skulls. The 10-foot-deep well is filled with liquefied flesh churning with rapidly coalescing features such as eyes, mouths, bony protrusions, hair and other grotesque appendages. The liquid flesh pool that is Englut constantly shifts within the well until he becomes aware of intruders. Englut enjoys turning creatures into hideous mutations using its *polymorph other* ability, then turning the victim into a stone statue using *stone to flesh* to decorate its lair.

Englut can fly, albeit slowly as his wings shift and change in a fluid fashion. Englut does not pursue intruders beyond the Odium Catacombs. In the well beneath Englut's mass lie mundane items left over from his past victims. Lying among the crushed objects is a *cloak of protection* +3.

ENGLUT, GIBBERING MOUTHER: HD 15; hp 68; AC 1[18]; Atk 6 mouths (1d6 hp + blood drain); Move 12, Fly 6; Save 3; CL/XP 18/3,800; Special: Gibbering, spit, pull prey underneath, magic-resistance 25%, immune to fire, spell-like abilities (at will—*confusion*, *darkness*, *fear*; 3/day—*feeblemind*, *polymorph other*, *stone to flesh*; 1/day—*reverse gravity*).

Area J9: Ossuary of the Apparition

A silent whirlwind of translucent ghost-like humanoids spins around a central figure who kneels upon a sarcophagus with her arms raised high. The exact number and race of the spirits swirling around the woman cannot be determined. Occasionally, one slows enough for PCs to view its hollowed, decaying features. These benign spirits are merely manifestations of evil souls who did not have the power to fully return as more sinister undead. They are frightening, but harmless. A swipe causes them to dissipate, but they reform in 1d4 hours. Any turning attempt instantly slays these spirits.

The kneeling figure is **Bellisia**, a priestess of Orcus who killed

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herself rather than fall to the invading force of Shah Rasalt's army during the War of Divine Discord. Her burnt corpse is little more than bone and ash held together by the dry atmosphere. The body crumbles into dust if disturbed, and her ashes combine with the swirling negative energy inside the chamber to act as a 30-foot-diameter cloud of *dust of sneezing and choking*.

Nothing else of interest is in the chamber. The sarcophagus is empty.

Area J10: Ossuary of the Forgotten

The passage into this room collapsed long ago and Akruel's minions have yet to clear the hall. Making a passage for even the smallest creature requires several hours of hard labor.

The ossuary beyond the rubble remains relatively intact, with niches holding preserved bones and remains. A stone sarcophagus in the center of the room is open, its lid leaning against the side. A skeletal corpse in the coffin clutches a silvered wooden spike that has been driven through its chest. The top of the spike is adorned with Arden's holy symbol.

The skeleton is **Thyca Bane**, a **vampire priestess** slain during the War of Divine Discord. She is harmless unless someone removes the stake pinning her to the sarcophagus. If anyone foolishly does so, she returns to her full undead status and power immediately. She is unaware that any time has passed and attacks PCs mercilessly, thinking them minions of Shah Rasalt. If the stake is left where it is, Thyca can easily be destroyed (although PCs gain no experience for the deed). The Game Referee might use the priestess for further adventures or as an adversary who returns to seek revenge on PCs if they defeat Akruel.

Arden's forces looted Thyca's treasure long ago, but her body was forgotten after the tunnel collapsed.

THYCA BANE, VAMPIRE PRIESTESS: HD 9; hp 66; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 bite (1d10+2 plus level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 3; CL/XP 12/2,000; Special: gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, summon bats or wolves, charm person, bite drains 2 levels, spells (1—*cause light wounds* (x2), *detect magic* (x2); 2—*hold person* (x2), *silence 15 ft. radius* (x2); 3—*locate object* (x2), *prayer*, *speak with dead*; 4—*cause serious wounds* (x3), *sticks to snakes*; 5—*finger of death* (x2), *insect plague*, *raise dead*; 6—*blade barrier*)

Area J11: Font of Bone

This 15-foot-tall chamber's walls are carved with burial niches holding desiccated and disintegrating remains. A five-foot-diameter gray stone bowl sits on a short pedestal. The bowl contains powdered bone used in various ceremonies.

Area J12: The Low Altar of Bone

A stone altar carved into the shape of a large skull with a flat top rests in front of two staircases. Four candelabras stand about the room, the fat black candles they hold dimly lighting the area. Tapestries showing Orcus surrounded by hordes of undead hang from the wall between the ascending staircases. Tending to this shrine are **3 priests of Orcus** named Moshorw, Jerhorw and Loufein, and their **3 skeletal sabre-tooth tigers**. The tigers wear special saddles that allow the priests to ride them into combat. The priests aid Gunnvor (Area J13) with spells while the skeletal tigers protect them.

MOSHORW, JERHORW AND LOUFEIN (CHAOTIC HUMAN MALE PRIESTS OF ORCUS 9): HD 9; hp 37; AC

-1[20]; Atk +2 *heavy mace* (1d6+2); Move 9; Save 7; CL/XP 10/1,400; Spells: (1—*cure light wounds* (x2), *detect magic*; 2—*find traps*, *hold person*, *silence 15 ft. radius*; 3—*cure disease*, *prayer*, *remove curse*; 4—*cure serious wounds*, *sticks to snakes*; 5—*finger of death*, *raise dead*)
Combat gear: +2 *full plate*, +2 *heavy steel shield*, +2 *unholy heavy mace*; **Non-combat gear:** 4 vials of oil, an unholy symbol of Orcus, a prayer book, black robe emblazoned with the symbol of Orcus.

SABRE-TOOTH TIGER SKELETONS (3): HD 7; hp 30; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 *claws* (1d4+3), 1 *bite* (2d6+2); Move 12; Save 8; CL/XP 8/800; Special: *Rear claws*

Area J13: Bones of Contention

Three pits filled to the brim with bleached bones take up much of the room. A thin mist emanates from the pits and rolls along the floor until it dissipates upon entering the halls leading out of the room. Four stone pillars decorated with real skulls support the chamber's roof. The animated skulls chatter their teeth loudly if any living creature approaches. The skulls chatter in unison until the entire chamber is filled with their rattling noise. The skulls are harmless and immobile, but they do bite anyone foolish enough to climb or touch them (1 point of damage).

Frescos incorporating bone fragments and teeth cover the walls and barrel-vaulted ceiling. The scenes depict skeletal armies climbing from their graves and marching on nearby towns. The scene is quite bloody, showing the undead army ravaging the land and slaying all in its path.

The two 10-foot-deep square pits are filled with bones and dust fragments. Within each pit are **4 ettin skeletons** that attempt to grab passing creatures and drag them into the bone pile. The ettin skeletons are completely concealed if they stand motionless. They grab creatures thrown into the pit and batter them with bone clubs.

Under the bones in the center circular pit is **Gunnvor**, a **fire giant skeleton warrior**. Gunnvor once commanded Akruel's undying army and now guards the Nether Sepulcher's lower entrance. The fire giant erupts out of the pit in an explosion of bones when he detects intruders in the room. He attempts to push victims into the other pits for the ettin skeletons to deal with.

ETTIN SKELETONS (4): HD 10; hp 40; AC 7[12]; Atk 2 *clubs* (3d6+2); Move 12; Save 3; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: *None*.

GUNNVOR, FIRE GIANT SKELETON WARRIOR: HD 13+3; hp 85; AC 1[18]; Atk 1 *bastard sword* (5d6+4); Move 12; Save 3; CL/XP 15/2,900; Special: *Hurl boulders*, *immune to fire*, *fear*, *immune to turning*

Combat gear: +2 *plate mail armor*, +2 *bastard sword*

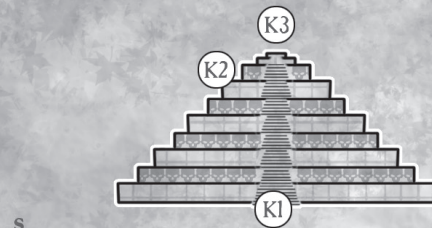
Area K: Nether Sepulcher

Alternating rows of deep gray stone blocks and massive boulders carved to resemble skulls make up this enormous pyramid. Peeling white paint makes the skulls appear to be rotting. The grinning skulls face outward, ever-burning flames glowing brightly in each 10-foot-diameter eye socket. Broad steps ascend the 45-degree sides to an upper entrance. The steps narrow as they ascend.

Two entrances sit halfway up the harrowing vertical steps, which continue on to a dais where a worn and cracked basalt altar sits. Grooves in the altar collect blood and feed it into holes that lead into the pyramid's interior.

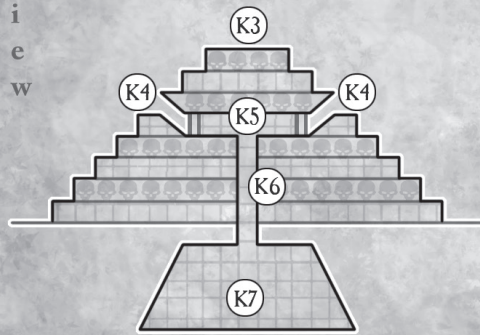
The temple sits in the middle of Al-Sifon, surrounded by undead that wander freely within the city.

Nether Sepulcher

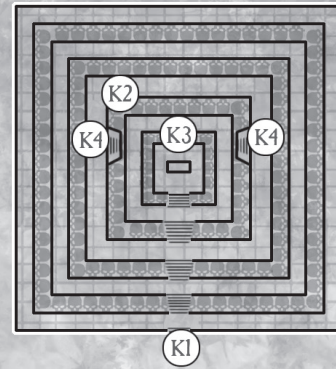


one square = 10 feet

side view



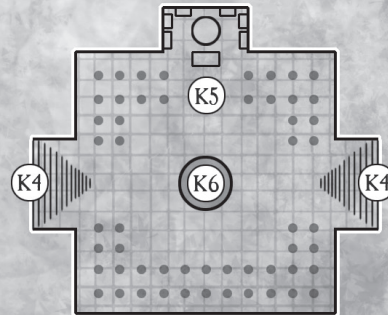
one square = 10 feet



one square = 10 feet

overhead view

The Narthex



one square = 5 feet

Wandering Monsters

Use the following table to check for wandering monsters while PCs are exploring the Nether Sepulcher. Roll 1d20 for every two hours spent inside the temple.

- 1 **AKRUEL RATHAMON, VAMPIRE LORD HIGH PRIEST OF ORCUS:** HD 17; hp 105; AC 2[17]; Atk +3 freezing heavy mace (1d6+3 + 1d6 cold), 1 bite (1d10 + level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 4; CL XP 19/3,500; Special: gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp round, change form, charm person, bite drains 2 levels, command undead, spells (1—cause light wounds (x5), detect magic (x2); 2—hold person (x4), silence 15 ft. radius, snake charm, speak with animals; 3—locate object (x2), prayer, remove curse, speak with dead (x3); 4—cause serious wounds (x5), sticks to snakes; 5—commune (x2), finger of death (x2), insect plague, raise dead; 6—animate object, blade barrier, word of recall; 7—symbol). Combat gear: +4 ring mail, +3 freezing heavy mace; Non-combat gear: ring of fire resistance, boots of speed. See Area K23 and special encounter below.
- 2 **RAYNE D' ANZERAY, LICH:** HD 16; hp 103; AC 0[19]; Atk 1 hand (1d10+2 plus automatic paralysis); Move 6 Save 3; CL/XP 19/4100; Special: Appearance causes paralytic fear, touch causes automatic paralysis, spells (1—charm person, detect magic, magic missile, shield, sleep; 2—darkness 15 ft. radius, invisibility, levitate, mirror image, web; 3—dispel magic, fireball, fly, haste, lightning bolt; 4—confusion, dimension door, fear, wall of fire, wizard eye; 5—animate dead, cloudkill,

feeblemind, transmute rock to mud, wall of iron; 6—anti magic shell, death spell, disintegrate, monster summoning IV, stone to flesh; 7—conjunction of demons, power word stun; 8—power word blind. Non-combat gear: ring of degeneration, black robes. See Area K7.

- 3 **ELIZARA, HIGH PRIESTESS OF ORCUS, CHAOTIC FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC 12:** HD 9+6; hp 56; AC 0[19]; Atk +2 heavy mace (1d6+3); Move 6; Save 5; CL/XP 13/2,300; Special: spells (1—cure light wounds (x2), detect magic, light; 2—hold person (x2), silence 15 ft. radius, snake charm; 3—cure disease, locate object, prayer, speak with dead; 4—cure serious wounds (x2), neutralize poison, sticks to snakes; 5—commune, finger of death (x2), raise dead; 6—speak with monsters). Combat gear: +2 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +2 heavy mace. See Area K7.
- 4 **OBLIVION WRAITH (2):** HD 12; hp 85; AC 1[18]; Atk 1 touch (3d6+2 plus level drain); Move 15 (Fly 30); Save 3; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: Drain attributes, immune to non-magical weapons, disintegrates objects.
- 5-7 **KNOBLOCH, CHAOTIC MALE HALF-ORC:** HD 11; hp 52; AC 0[19]; Atk +2 two-handed sword, wounding (1d8 + 1d6+1); Move 9; Save 4; CL/XP 11/1,700; Special: None. Combat gear: +2 rhino hide armor AC 2[17], +2 two-handed sword (wounding) (1d10 plus 1d6+1 wounding, as reverse cure light wounds); potions of fire resistance, heroism and healing. See Area K13.
- 8-9 **HIGH PRIEST OF ORCUS CLERIC 9:** HD 9; hp 46; AC -1[20]; Atk +2 heavy mace (1d6+2); Move 9; Save 7; CL/XP 10/1,400; Spells: (1—cure light wounds (x2), detect magic; 2—find traps, hold person, silence 15 ft. radius; 3—cure disease, prayer, remove curse; 4—cure

serious wounds, sticks to snakes; 5—finger of death, raise dead). Combat gear: +2 *full plate*, +2 *heavy steel shield*, +2 *unholy heavy mace*; Non-combat gear: 4 vials of oil, an unholy symbol of Orcus, a prayer book, black robe emblazoned with the symbol of Orcus. See Area J12.

- 10 **SUB-PRIESTS OF ORCUS, HUMAN CLERIC 5 (1d6):** HD 5; hp 29; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 heavy mace (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 11; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Spells (1—*cure light wounds, detect magic*; 2—*hold person, silence 15 ft. radius*; 3—*cure disease*). Combat gear: Chain mail, shield, heavy mace. See Area K5.
- 11-12 **CHÁ OOKNA, OGRE MAGE VAMPIRE:** HD 5+4; hp 30; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 weapon (1d12+5); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 12; CL/XP 7/600; Special: Magic use, gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, summon bats or wolves, charm person, bite drains 2 levels. Combat gear: +2 *chain mail*, +3 *bastard sword*, potions of *heroism* and *invulnerability*. See Area K19.
- 13 **VAMPIRE (1D8):** HD 9; hp 52; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 bite (1d10+2 plus level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 4; CL/XP 12/2000; Special: gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, summon bats or wolves, charm person, bite drains 2 levels
- 14-20 No encounter

Special Encounter: The Wandering Warlord

Despite the many horrors roaming the Nether Sepulcher, the true evil within the temple is the warlord Akruel Rathamon himself. The vampire lord (Area K23) wanders the temple directing his undead in his pursuit to conquer the world.

The vampire can be encountered in any room of the Nether Sepulcher, and likely comes quickly if he detects living intruders or discovers that they bear a restored *Scepter of Faiths*. Once he discovers this fact, he likely throws his minions against the PCs in an all-out assault. If needed, he'll take matters into his own hands to destroy the PCs. Anyone attempting a frontal assault against the Nether Sepulcher likely faces a death-priest determined to stop them by all means necessary.

The Game Referee should use Akruel as he sees fit. If PCs barge into the temple, the suicidal charge should draw the vampire warlord's attention. If they enter quietly (such as through the Odium Catacombs), then it may take awhile before Akruel notices them.

Either way, once alerted, Akruel prepares himself to the best of his abilities and confronts PCs. He normally travels with 2 **mummy lords** (Area K17) and a **kamarupa** (Area K18). If needed, **Rayne D'Anzeray** may also accompany his master, although the Referee should weigh this decision carefully. Rayne is a deadly combatant in his own right and the pair could easily overpower unprepared PCs.

Area K1: Solemn Guards

Two heavily armored flesh golems made from fire giant corpses stand at the base of the stairs. Both wear heavy spiked gauntlets that deal an extra 1d8 points of damage. The golems attack anyone not openly bearing an unholy symbol of Orcus

FLESH GOLEM (2): HD 12; hp 50; AC 9[10]; Atk 2 fists (2d8 + 1d8 spikes); Move 8; Save 3; CL/XP 13/2,300; Special: Healed by lightning, hit only by magic weapons, slowed by fire and cold, immune to most spells..

Area K2: Sentinels of Undeath

Horrific demon statues line the four corners of each ledge of the Nether Sepulcher. The top three rows of statues are actually 12 **gargoyles**. These guards watch the skies and the surrounding area, and leap to attack anyone flying toward the temple. If battle begins below them on the stairs, they wait a few rounds for the flesh golems (Area K1) to soften up intruders before entering the fight.

GARGOYLES (12): HD 4; hp 20; AC 5[14]; Atk 2 claws (1d3+2), 1 bite (1d4+2), 1 horn (1d6+2); Move 9 (Fly 15); Save 13; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Fly, magic weapons to hit.

Area K3: Apex of Oblivion

Vile sacrifices are made atop the temple. Dried and congealing blood cakes the stairs and upper levels of the pyramid. Smoldering braziers atop the temple surround a worn basalt altar. The jade braziers (250 gp each) burn repugnant incense made from bone and cartilage. Orcus' followers perform nightly sacrifices here to honor the demon prince.

Living creatures standing on the apex risk being struck by the black storm looming overhead (1 in 6 chance each minute of a bolt striking a victim).

Akruel Rathamon (Area K23) is often found here, directing his armies and overseeing bloody sacrifices. He deals with intruders who come to his attention, but otherwise stays focused on his horrid tasks. If PCs try to face him directly, he brings his full power to bear on them, especially if they openly wield the *Scepter of Faiths*.

Area K4: The Entrance

A landing descends steeply into the temple's interior via 20-foot-wide steps. The stairs go down 50 feet into the narthex (Area K5). Warm, slightly smoky air bellows up the stairs.

Area K5: The Narthex

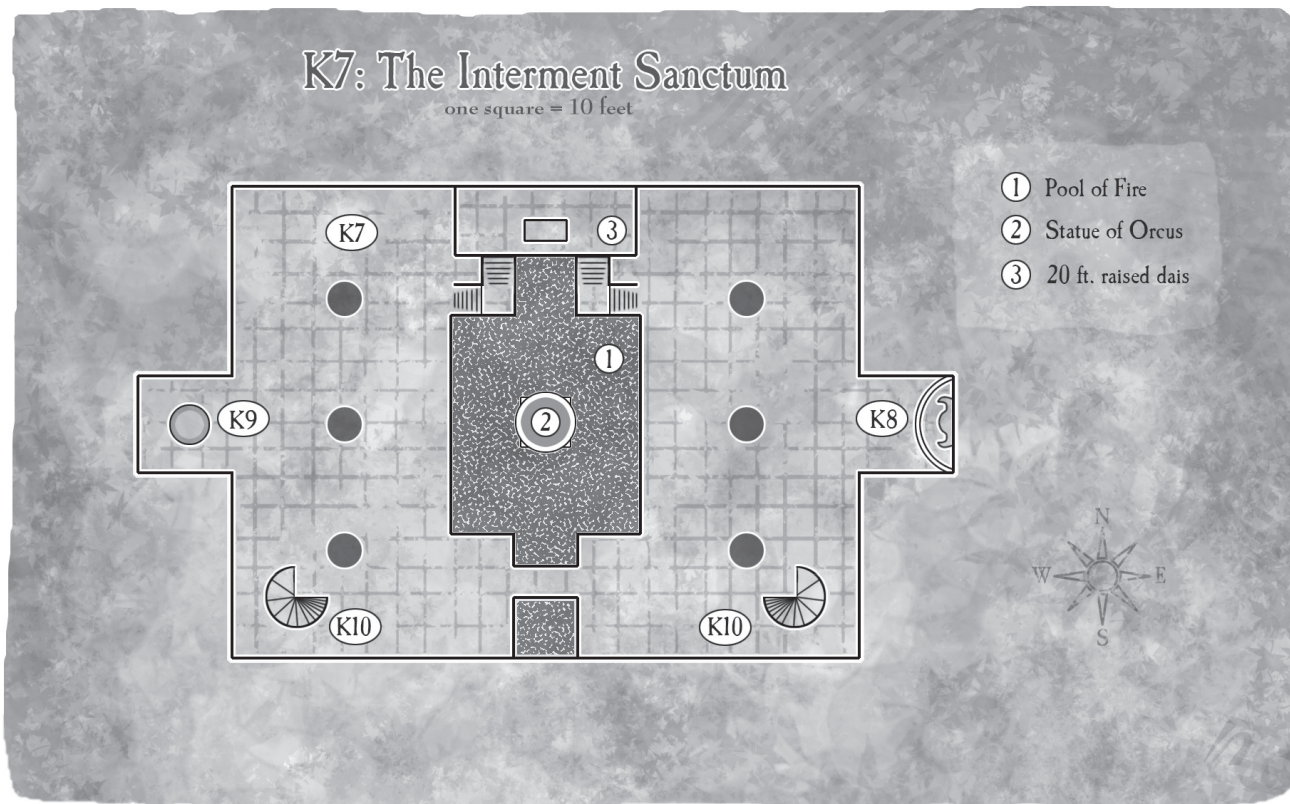
A double colonnade rings this room. The carved columns resemble gaunt humans bearing expressions of anguish as they support the ceiling. The smell of freshly disturbed earth lingers in the chamber and smoke wafts through the air. A thin layer of fresh dirt mixed with ash covers the floor.

A round pit dominates the center of the room. Concentric rings of stone inside the pit serve as adequate handholds leading into the temple's depths. An altar of black jade (5,000 gp, but weighing 900 pounds) sits in a large recess. A permanent *darkness 15 ft. radius* is cast over the altar. A large statue of Orcus can barely be made out through the darkness. The statue's hands hold a skull-topped wand horizontally over the altar. Above the altar, a lit candle hangs from a chain in a glass-faceted iron lantern. Small bowls, flasks and vessels line alcoves beside the statue. Six flasks contain applications of balms used to preserve bodies.

Several smaller chests surround the statue's base. These contain miscellaneous embalming tools such as metal hooks, jars of preserving agents, scalpels, casks of natron and rolls of linen. Tending the upper chamber are 8 **priests of Orcus** who "greet" intruders. These priests are so fanatical that if combat goes against them, they leap to their deaths down the pit to warn those in Area K7. They begin combat with a barrage of *hold* and *silence* spells against fighters and spellcasters.

PRIESTS OF ORCUS, HUMAN CLERIC 5 (8): HD 5; hp 27; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 heavy mace (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 11; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Spells (1—*cure light wounds, detect magic*; 2—*hold person, silence 15 ft. radius*; 3—*cure disease*)





Combat gear: Chain mail, shield, heavy mace; **Non-combat gear:** unholy symbol of Orcus, a prayer book, and a fine black robe emblazoned with Orcus' symbol.

Area K6: The Fall into Abaddon

This 20-foot-diameter pit descends into the Nether Sepulcher's heart. The pit is easily climbable because of bands of stone handholds lining its interior. Harmless creosote and tar cover the walls and ledges. The pit drops 90 feet to the floor of Area K7, where a statue of Orcus stands, encircled by a pool of flame. Guarding the pit's midpoint are **4 shadows**. The shadows take great pleasure in draining strength from PCs climbing down the shaft.

SHADOWS (4): HD 3+3; hp 15; AC 7[12]; Atk 1 touch (1d4 + strength drain); Move 12; Save 14; CL/XP 4/120; Special: Drain 1 point Strength with hit, hit only by magic weapons.

Area K7: The Interment Sanctum

This trapezoidal room is the Nether Sepulcher's central worship chamber. The Interment Sanctum is hot and dry, with an average temperature hovering near 100 degrees. A giant black statue of Orcus stands in a massive pool of liquid fire in the center of the room. Dozens of lanterns suspended from the ceiling by long chains hold candles that cast menacing shadows. Six massive columns support the ceiling, the pillars carved to resemble stacks of human-sized skulls. Chains and manacles dangle from each column.

The black polished floor reflects everything in the room, but warps the images. The mirror-like surface reflects living creatures as decayed walking corpses, while undead appear as they did in life. The floor has no other effects besides reminding the living of their mortality. Deep pulsating music reverberates through the room, although no source is apparent.

An altar composed of ancient tombstones sits on a balcony 20 feet

above the fire pit. Stairs on either side ascend to the balcony. Nightly sacrifices take place on the altar, usually coinciding with rituals performed atop the pyramid. The sacrifices are then cast into the pool of fire. Standing beside each staircase is a **fire giant skeleton** wearing full plate armor and holding a bastard sword.

The fire in the pit burns a 10-foot-deep pool of clear oil that is never consumed. Slowly dissolving skulls and bones line the bottom of the pool. If extinguished, a single fire source can again ignite the conflagration. Creatures falling into the pool suffer fire 6d6 damage per round. Creatures climbing out of the pool remain on fire until extinguished. The oil can be bottled and removed, but its only remarkable property is that it is not consumed if used as a fuel source.

The 25-foot-tall statue of Orcus points its skull wand at the altar. A harmless cold aura radiates from the statue and is noticeable despite the heat. The statue is carved from a solid piece of black granite and is nearly indestructible.

In the room are **Rayne D'Anzeray**, high priestess **Elizara**, **6 sub-priests of Orcus**, and an **oblivion wraith**.

Rayne warily watches the Nether Sepulcher's front entrance and its upper levels. After preparing defensive spells, he and the oblivion wraith join any combat taking place on the upper level (Area K5) or atop of the pyramid (Area K3).

If not alerted to combat above, the oblivion wraith normally lurks around the edges of the room, waiting to pick off lone intruders. If warned, it hides within a fire giant skeleton's armor and tries to surprise the skeleton's opponent.

The sub-priests perform various unholy ceremonies and occasionally sacrifice stubborn villagers to their undead lord.

The sanctum and its inhabitants are a deadly force. The Game Referee should read through their tactics carefully and consider the party's level and power before combat occurs. The encounter can be adjusted by removing the oblivion wraith, the high priestess or some of the sub-priests.

FIRE GIANT SKELETONS (2): HD 8; hp 40; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 bastard sword (3d6+2); Move 12; Save 6; CL/XP 8/800; Special: None.

OBLIVION WRAITH: HD 12; hp 85; AC 1[18]; Atk 1 touch (3d6+2 plus level drain); Move 15 (Fly 30); Save 3; CL/XP

14/2600; Special: Drain attributes, immune to non-magical weapons, disintegrates objects.

PRIESTS OF ORCUS, CHAOTIC HUMAN CLERIC 6 (8): HD 6; hp 30; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 heavy mace (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 10; CL/XP 6/400; Special: Spells (1—*cure light wounds, protection from evil*; 2—*hold person, silence 15 ft. radius*; 3—*cure disease*; 4—*cure serious wounds*)

Combat gear: Chain mail, shield, heavy mace; **Non-combat gear:** unholy symbol of Orcus, prayer book, black robe emblazoned with Orcus' symbol.

RAYNE D' ANZERAY, LICH: HD 16; hp 103; AC 0[19]; Atk 1 hand (1d10+2 + automatic paralysis); Move 6; Save 3; CL/XP 19/4100; Special: Appearance causes paralytic fear, touch causes automatic paralysis, spells (1—*charm person, detect magic, magic missile, shield, sleep*; 2—*darkness 15 ft. radius, invisibility, levitate, mirror image, web*; 3—*dispel magic, fireball, fly, haste, lightning bolt*; 4—*confusion, dimension door, fear, wall of fire, wizard eye*; 5—*animate dead, cloudkill, feeblemind, transmute rock to mud, wall of iron*; 6—*an ti-magic shell, death spell, disintegrate, monster summoning IV, stone to flesh*; 7—*conjunction of demons, power word stun*; 8—*power word blind*). **Non-combat gear:** ring of degeneration, black robes.

Description: The necromancer Rayne discovered Akruel's tomb and unleashed the evil upon the world (see *Splinters of Faith 1: It Started with a Chicken ...*). Akruel granted the spellcaster greater power, and Rayne quickly transformed himself into a lich to better serve his new master. Rayne still looks very much alive due to his recent transformation and the embalming skills of Orcus' priests. His true nature is difficult to detect. Rayne appears to be in his late 30s, and his youthful appearance belies the danger the seasoned wizard presents.

ELIZARA, DOWAGER OF DEATH, CHAOTIC FEMALE HUMAN CLERIC 12: HD 9+6; hp 56; AC 0[19]; Atk +2 heavy mace (1d6+3); Move 6; Save 5; CL/XP 13/2,300; Special: spells (1—*cure light wounds (x2), detect magic, light*; 2—*hold person (x2), silence 15 ft. radius, snake charm*; 3—*cure disease, locate object, prayer, speak with dead*; 4—*cure serious wounds (x2), neutralize poison, sticks to snakes*; 5—*commune, finger of death (x2), raise dead*; 6—*speak with monsters*)

Combat gear: +2 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +2 heavy mace **Personality:** Elizara is the ranking high priestess of Orcus and oversees many of the ceremonies performed in the Nether Sepulcher. The aging woman is a dangerous foe, but often limps and feigns infirmity to draw foes in closer to her. She wears her graying hair short, and a scar mars the left side of her neck. She sharpens her teeth to points and wears dark lipstick.

New Magic: Ring of Degeneration

This white and gold ring appears to be a ring of regeneration, except that it allows undead only to "heal" one hit point per combat round, and thus not die unless the ring is removed. The ring is a cursed item for living beings, drawing off one hit point per round and cannot be removed except by a *remove curse* or by severing the wearer's entire limb. Removing just the finger on which the ring is placed causes a permanent loss of 4 Dexterity but it removes the ring. A body completely drained by the ring withers to a pile of dust that cannot be raised. The wearer cannot regrow lost limbs, organs or any other body part.

Area K8: The East Transept: Ichors of Orcus

This room's back wall bears a carved stone humanoid skull with long ram horns curving from its forehead. A long stone tongue extends out of the skull's toothy maw and points toward the floor. Thick olive ooze drips down the tongue and into a five-foot stone basin carved into the floor. The unidentifiable substance bubbles unctuously, and greenish fumes rise from the bowl. The disgusting slime swirls as if disturbed from below.

The sludge is aptly named the Ichors of Orcus. The mucus appears from the statue's mouth although no discernible font can be found. Destroying the effigy is the only way to stop the sludge from oozing out.

The slime has several properties while within the transept. Any contact with living flesh immediately inflicts a hideous plague (save avoids) that turns the creature permanently into either a ghoul (under 4 HD) or a ghast (4 HD or above). Consuming the substance immediately inflicts the deadly curse (no save). The transformation starts at the point of contact and spreads across the victim's body. Only a *wish* or divine intervention can counter the process. The high priests say the viscous fluid originates from Orcus' blood and bile.

Submerged and hidden in the Ichors of Orcus is a +4 heavy mace that is slowly dissolving in the putrid bile. The sludge itself detects as magic and overpoweringly evil, overshadowing the mace's presence.

Area K9: The West Transept: Chamber of the Heart

An engorged three-foot-wide black stone heart hovers above a basin of inky charcoal-colored liquid. Ebon fleshy veins pulse over the heart with an unseen heartbeat. The *Frore Heart* is roughly three feet in diameter. Oily black juices seep from jagged wounds and drip into the font below. Each droplet reverberates like a pulse in the silent room when it strikes the pool. A numbing coldness grips the heart of living creatures that approach the massive black heart. Guarding the heart at all times are 2 **oblivion wraiths**.

The coldness saps PCs' will, causing them 1d6 damage per round they are within 50 feet of the heart. Undead heal 4 points of damage each round they spend near the *Frore Heart*.

The oil seeping from the heart is evil in its purest liquid form and causes any living being that touches it to lose one level per touch (no save). Immersion in the oil completely depletes a creature's life force, permanently snuffing out its existence. The lost levels from being near the heart return 1 hour after PCs leave its presence (or the heart is destroyed). The oil evaporates 1d3 hours after dripping from the heart.

The *Scepter of Faiths* is the only mortal magic that can destroy the *Frore Heart*. To do so, the scepter must be impaled in the heart, but the act destroys both artifacts. The heart has an armor class of -3[22] in regard to the *Scepter of Faiths* only.

If the *Scepter of Faiths* pierces the *Frore Heart*, both detonate in a white flash of energy. The energy tempest deals 15d10 points of damage, but at the same time it also heals 15d10 points of damage in a 100-foot-radius burst. There is no save, and the energy penetrates all barriers, including natural barriers, force effects and anti-magic fields.

Since the *Frore Heart* contains his soul, **Akruel Rathamon** (Area K23) arrives immediately if the organ is disturbed. He fights to destroy the intruders or drive them from the chamber to preserve the phylactery. If the *Frore Heart* is destroyed, Akruel Rathamon is instantly and irrevocably slain.

OBLIVION WRAITHS (2): HD 12; hp 90; AC 1[18]; Atk 1 touch (3d6+2 plus level drain); Move 15 (Fly 30); Save 3; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: Drain attributes, immune to non-magical weapons, disintegrates objects.

Stopping Akruel

PCs should by this point have a good idea that stopping Akruel isn't as simple as attacking him with the *Scepter of Faiths*. If they try, the scepter itself can tell them that Shah Rasalt tried – and failed – to stop the death-priest in that manner already. The scepter knows something else must be powering the death-priest.

If PCs fail to connect this external power source with the *Frore Heart*, numerous places exist within the temple complex that could guide them, including the many murals on the walls, and some of the “holdovers” from the past such as Essan Aziza (Area K11) who can share whispered rumors Shah Rasalt dismissed in the original war against Akruel.

Area K10: Descent into Unrest

These dual spiraling staircases descend into the dungeon levels beneath the Narthex. The steps are wide and pass through 60 feet of stone. The west stair descends to Area K11, while the east stair opens onto a secret door at Area K24.

Area K11: The Canon of Muir

The acolytes avoid this rarely used chamber. A statue of a man in heavy plate armor stands motionless in a battle stance. His heavy mace is drawn back to strike and his shield is raised high to guard against a nonexistent foe. **Essan Aziza, the Canon of Muir** (Lawful human male Paladin 12) has been held in magical stasis here since Al-Sifon's fall during the War of Divine Discord. His comrades lost track of him during the chaos and he was presumed dead. Thick dust and grime coat his form, making it difficult to discern his features. His body is soft to the touch, as if made of sooty clay. He can be cleaned with minimal effort. A *remove curse* or *dispel magic* releases him.

If freed, he continues fighting, not knowing that centuries have passed. Essan has just a few spells prepared, but he uses them to fight the “evil ones.” He fights to the death unless convinced that centuries have passed and the fight is long over. Essan speaks an ancient form of Common, making it somewhat more difficult to communicate with the paladin.

If PCs get through to him, Essan is saddened to learn the fate of his family but wishes to continue his quest to end Akruel Rathamon's reign. He believes it is fate that allowed him to be on hand for just this moment.

ESSAN AZIZA, THE CANON OF MUIR (LAWFUL HUMAN MALE PALADIN 12): HD 9+6; hp 50; AC -1[20]; Atk +3 *long sword* (1d8+3); Move 9; Save 2; CL/XP 13/2,300; Special: lay on hands, immune to disease, *dispel evil*, *detect evil*

Combat gear: +3 *long sword*, +2 *plate mail*, +2 *shield*; **Non-combat gear:** a missive from the Shield Basilica of Muir asking him to become the Shield's commanding officer upon his return from the war's frontlines. (PCs could still help make this happen if they introduce Jemichar to Shield Minion Vars Strine in *Splinters of Faith 7: The Heir of Sin*.)

Area K12: Vault of Penance

A locked iron door seals this room. The room beyond contains an obelisk of coal. Grotesque black runes are scrawled over the walls and floor, written by Orcus followers driven insane by the Dead Lord's dictums. A pulsing drone is barely audible from within the obelisk.

The pillar of coal is enchanted with a powerful *fear* spell that affects all living creatures (save resists). The pillar radiates evil and causes

any Lawful creature in the room to lose 1 point of Constitution per hour of continuous exposure (no save).

The obelisk is a divine focus for communing with Orcus. The demon prince immediately responds to anyone soliciting his aid through the coal pillar. If the solicitation is unwelcome or undesired, Orcus toys with inquiring individuals in a whispering voice. When his amusement and intrigue end, the obelisk displays a *symbol of death* and gates a **nalfeshnee** into the room. The demon does not pursue PCs beyond the room and returns to its home plane after 10 rounds. Only the most powerful priests of Orcus and sentient undead can use the obelisk without fear.

NALFESHNEE, FOURTH-CATEGORY DEMON: HD 11; hp 66; AC -1[20]; Atk 2 claws (1d4), 1 bite (1d6+2); Move 9 (Fly 14); Save 4; CL/XP 13/2300; Special: +1 or better magic weapon needed to hit, magic resistance (65%), +2 on to-hit rolls, immune to fire, magical abilities.

Area K13: The Grievous Bastille

Weak moans of pain and sobs of misery rise up these stairs. The chamber below depicts evil at its worst. Scalpels, serrated knives, hooked clasps and dissection equipment hang on the walls. Cages and cells containing pleading human villagers stand haphazardly about the room. A pit of glowing embers heats dozens of pokers and blades. Tending the unfortunate subjects on the dissection tables are **4 sub-priests of Orcus** and **4 vampires**.

Knobloch, the Cruciate, oversees the proceedings and takes great delight in his gruesome tasks. He extracts information from his captives, gleaned details of troop strengths, nearby villages and other facts to aid Akruel in his conquests.

The cells hold commoners and soldiers from neighboring nations. They are frail and terrified at what they have seen. They provide no information unless healed and set free. Currently, 13 captives remain alive.

SUB-PRIESTS OF ORCUS, HUMAN CLERIC 5 (4): HD 5; hp 20; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 *heavy mace* (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 11; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Spells (1—*cure light wounds*, *detect magic*; 2—*hold person*, *silence 15 ft. radius*; 3—*cure disease*)

Combat gear: Chain mail, shield, heavy mace; **Non-combat gear:** unholy symbol of Orcus, a prayer book, and a fine black robe emblazoned with Orcus' symbol.

VAMPIRE (4): HD 7; hp 52; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 bite (1d10+2 plus level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 7; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, summon bats or wolves, charm person, bite drains 2 levels

KNOBLOCH THE CRUCIATE, CHAOTIC MALE HALF-ORC: HD 11; hp 52; AC 0[19]; Atk +2 two-handed sword, wounding (1d8 + 1d6+1); Move 9; Save 4; CL/XP 11/1,700; Special: None.

Combat gear: +2 *rhino hide armor* AC 2[17], +2 two-handed sword (wounding) (1d10 plus 1d6+1 wounding, as reverse *cure light wounds*); potions of *fire resistance*, *heroism* and *healing*.

Area K13-A: Cell

This cell holds **6 male villagers**. They are local natives and know the jungle outside of Al-Sifon, but otherwise can offer little information to rescuers.

Area K13-B: Cell

Cheralyn, Priestess of Thasizier (Lawful human female Cleric 9) was captured while traveling near the temple. She has been

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

tortured nearly to death, and rewards rescuers with three 5,000 gp diamonds once she is returned safely to the Theurgist Seminary of Thasizier.

CHERALYN, PRIESTESS OF THASIZIER (LAWFUL HUMAN FEMALE CLERIC 9): HD 9; hp 48 (currently 3); AC 9[10]; Atk 2 fists (1d4); Move 6; Save 7; CL/XP 9/1,100; Special: spells (none currently prepared)

Area K13-C: Cell

Omvig the Robust (Neutral halfling male Fighter 8) mingled with a procession of villagers to enter Al-Sifon, hoping to get into the Nether Sepulcher to single-handedly defeat the evil growing within. Instead, he encountered the lich Rayne D'Anzeray who easily defeated him and handed him over to the torturers to extract information.

OMVIG (NEUTRAL HALFLING MALE FIGHTER 8): HD 8; hp 44 (currently 3); AC 9[10]; Atk 2 fists (1d4); Move 12; Save 7; CL/XP 8/800; Special: none

Area K13-D: Cell

Housed in this cell are 4 female humans. They are attractive, healthy and well fed. They fear the PCs have arrived to take another of them. Every day for the past sixteen days, one of their dwindling numbers has been escorted away, never to return. They draw lots each day to see who leaves when the cell door opens. Rayne has been sacrificing the woman to his dark lord (Area K6), although three still

survive in his personal chamber (Area K15).

Area K13-E: Cell

The cell is empty, but still-wet blood is spattered on the walls and ceiling.

Area K13-F: Cell

Goatbeard (Lawful human male Fighter 8) claims undead jumped him in the jungle and carried him into Al-Sifon. In reality, the lure of Al-Sifon overcame him and he marched freely into the temple. He awoke in the cell and knows nothing about the upper levels.

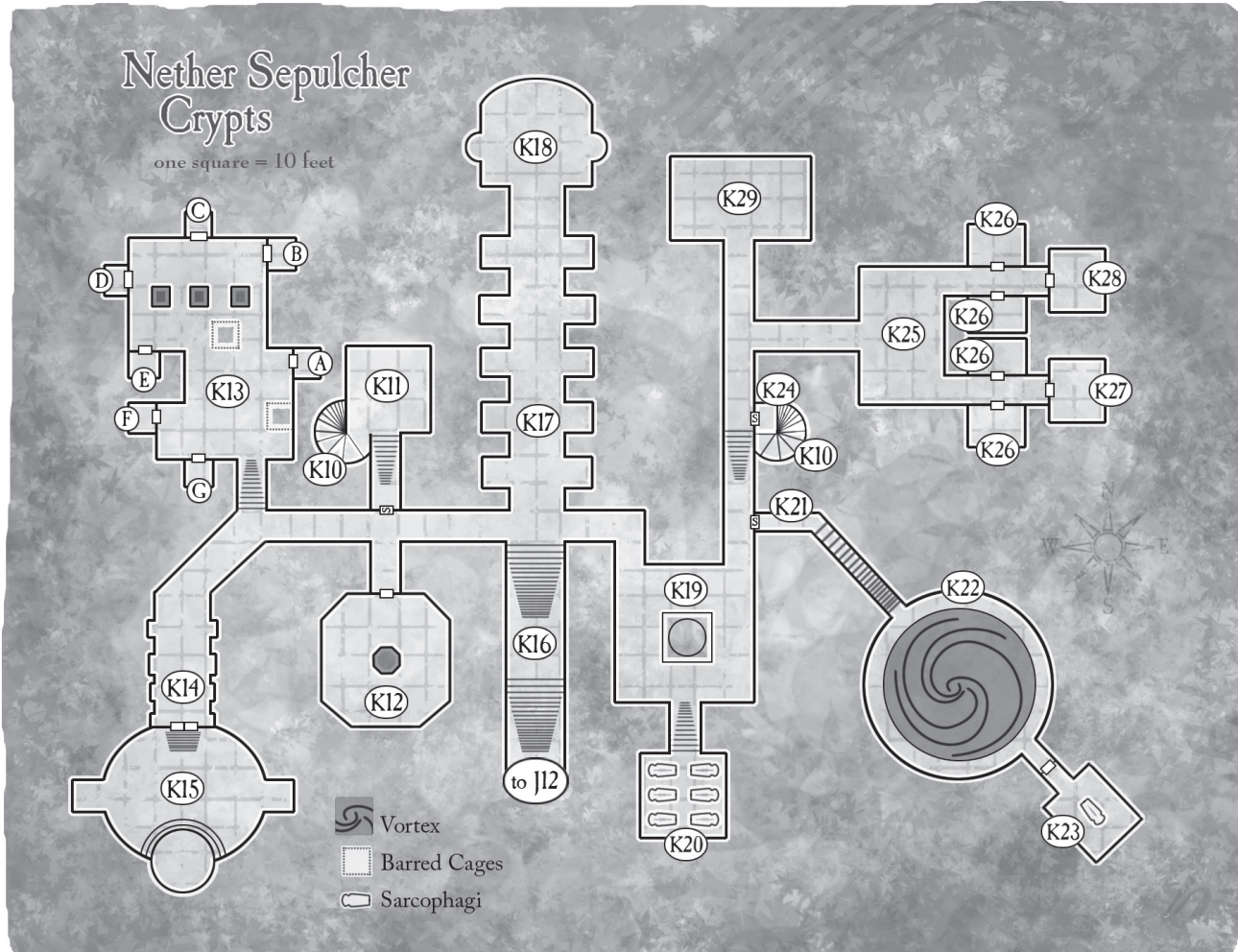
GOATBEARD (LAWFUL HUMAN MALE FIGHTER 8): HD 8; hp 56 (currently 18); AC 9[10]; Atk 2 fists (1d4); Move 9; Save 8; CL/XP 8/800; Special: none.

Area K13-G: Cell

This cell holds a normal **rabbit**. It is unclear why the torturers are holding the rabbit within the cell. The rabbit is frightened and runs if freed.

Area K14: Skeleton Hall

Two rows of funeral niches line this passage. Skeletal corpses adorned in chainmail lie upon the ledges, their bony hands grasping bastard swords that rest on their hollow chests. The skeletons are



ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

inanimate and their belongings are corroded and deteriorating.

Great iron double doors remain closed at all times. Pitted iron pull rings hang from the portals. The doors have an obvious trap (1d4 to spot) that causes thin, needle-like spikes to extend from its surface and lock into place. The real trap (1d8 to notice) springs only after the spikes are extended and the doors are unlocked. At that point, the massive hinges unclasp, allowing both iron doors to pivot forward on their base to crush anyone trying to open the portals (8d6 crushing damage plus 1d6 spike damage).

Area K15: Narthex of the Flesh, Chamber of Rayne D' Anzeray

Steep, narrow steps descend to a floor covered in black powder. The dust is the ground-up remains of bones burnt during sacrifices. Although harmless, the dust is unsettling and shifts menacingly with a will of its own. Two alcoves frame identical jade statues of Orcus. Red and black veins streak the eight-foot-tall statues, and their red ruby eyes glitter in the dim light cast by four hanging lanterns. Flickering candles in each lantern fleetingly illuminate the room. A massive mural of a horned skull leers down from the 30-foot-high domed ceiling.

An arching set of stairs rise out of the black dust to a round landing 10 feet above the floor. A heavy wooden desk scattered with papers and books sits in the center of the platform. A throne-like chair sits on the opposite side of the table. An intensely bright candle on a gaudy oversized floor sconce lights the room.

Two robes float beside the table, although no bodies can be discerned beneath the clothing. The robes are merely cloaks held up by a minor enchantment. Three gaunt **human women** sit around the chair's base. The starving women are *charmed* concubines to Rayne D' Anzeray. Since his transition into a lich, however, he cares little for them. They appear undead from neglect and from the ash of bone coating Rayne's chamber. Rayne rarely visits his chambers these days.

Tomes and notes on the desk cover topics on becoming a lich. The research books are worth 50,000 gp, although the subject matter is decidedly evil.

The women provide little information as they are still under the effects of the *charm*. They know of Rayne's death and rebirth as a lich, however, and cringe if his name is mentioned.

Area K16: Descent into the Catacombs

A set of 20-foot-wide steps descend 100 feet to connect the Odium Catacombs to the Nether Sepulcher. The passage runs 500 yards to Area J12.

Area K17: Rathamon's Choir

Four lanterns containing black candles cast a soft radiance down this long hall. Five alcoves line each side of this great hallway. Black granite sarcophagi stand upright in each recessed area. Gold and jade patterns adorn each sarcophagus and a black mist seeps from each lid to obscure the floor. The lids of the sarcophagi resemble emaciated humans with gaunt hollow eyes. The mist whips and curls harmlessly around creatures entering the hall.

Disturbing the mist reveals brightly colored hieroglyphics depicting sacrifices and ritual cruelty embellishing the floor. Residing in the first two sarcophagi are **2 ethereal bodaks**. They await intruders who can see them (using *see invisibility* or similar magics that allow vision onto the ethereal plane). The bodaks are trapped on the ethereal plane and are helpless to attack. They frequently wander the Nether Sepulcher searching for living beings crossing onto the

ethereal plane. Living beings that enter the ethereal plane from Al-Sifon immediately draw their attention, and the bodaks rush to investigate. **They cannot harm beings unless they cross planes.**

The sarcophagi hold mummified remains of high-ranking clergy and minions in Orcus' service. The second and fourth rows of sarcophagi approaching Area K18 contain **4 mummy lords**, Akruel's honor guards during his first reign. The mummies leap to attack once their sarcophagi are opened or bypassed. The mummy lords attack anyone in the hall and pursue fleeing PCs throughout this level. They return to their rest once enemies are dead or driven off.

Each sarcophagus lid is trapped (1 in 6 to spot) to cast a *haste* spell that only affects the mummies and any other followers of Orcus in the area when opened.

ETHEREAL BODAKS (2): HD 8; hp 60; AC 3[6]; Atk Slam (1d8+3); Move 6; Save 6; CL/XP 11/1,700; Special: Death gaze, +1 or greater magic weapons to hit, vulnerable to sunlight, immune to electricity, resists acid and fire

MUMMY LORDS (4): HD 10+4; hp 68; AC 1[18]; Atk 1 fist (1d12+2); Move 6; Save 5; CL/XP 11/1,700; Special: Rot, hit only by magic weapons
Combat gear: one wears +2 plate mail, ring of fire resistance

Area K18: Akruel Rathamon's Catafalque

Black mists swirl into this room. Once used as Akruel's bedchamber, it now serves as his primary coffin room. A dozen veil-clad women hold over their heads an elaborate darkwood coffin (8,000 gp) inlaid with ivory. A frightening glass mosaic of Orcus leering down at the coffin decorates the domed ceiling. The dome's edges show scenes of the dead rising from their graves to grasp at the living before dragging them back into the earth. Intricate glass montages depicting corpses with mirror eyes decorate the wall alcoves.

The "women" are **12 zombies**, embalmed so precisely that they almost seem alive. Their chests even move as if breathing. Only their lifeless eyes hint at their undead state. The zombies tirelessly hold the coffin unless otherwise commanded. The coffin is carved with ancient glyphs and runes that make it impossible to move. If the zombies are destroyed, the coffin remains floating in midair.

Two **kamarupas** guard the coffin. These spirits hide within the walls and wait until the coffin is disturbed before floating into the room to attack.

The coffin contains a *chime of opening* and a *ring of spell storing* (Magic-User).

ZOMBIES (12): HD 2; hp 10; AC 8[11]; Atk 1 strike (1d8+2); Move 6; Save 14; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Immune to sleep and charm.

KAMARUPAS (2): HD 10; hp 70; AC 3[16]; Atk incorporeal touch (2d6+2 plus death touch); Move Fly 15; Save 3; CL/XP 12/2,000; Special: Death touch, frightful gaze, nightmare.

Area K19: Chamber of Depravity

A bloated, 16-foot-tall statue Orcus assembled from various pieces of flesh and animal parts stands on a central dais consisting of three wide steps. Writhing humans engaged in obscene rituals and chants lie on the floor surrounding the figure. A single human female kneels before the statue, leading the throng. Several cultists are devouring and drinking blood from still-living victims. The group consists of **6 sub-priests**, **4 vampires** and **Chá Ookna, an ogre mage vampire**. Chá Ookna maintains the appearance of an attractive human woman

New Monster: Kamarupa

Armor Class: 3 [16]

Hit Dice: 10

Attacks: incorporeal touch (2d6 plus death touch)

Saving Throw: 5

Special: Death touch, frightful gaze, nightmare

Move: Fly 15

Challenge Level/XP: 12/2,000

A kamarupa appears as a mockery of its former flesh-bound life. Its hollow eyes and mouth are black voids, and its facial features twist and stretch into a nightmarish appearance. Kamarupa are the distorted souls of evil priests betrayed and sacrificed to their deity. Kamarupas are highly intelligent and communicate in voices similar to the screaming wind. They hate life and light. A kamarupa is roughly human-sized and weightless. They are made powerless in sunlight, and can be destroyed if caught in natural daylight.

A creature touched by a kamarupa feels the unnatural aura of the creature as it penetrates to his very soul. The chill can kill the PC unless a successful saving throw is made. The kamarupa's gaze can also instill fear in living beings up to 30 ft. Beings meeting the creature's gaze must make a save or become panicked for 3d4 rounds and try to flee blindly from the creature.

Once per night, a kamarupa can place a nightmare on any creature it has encountered. The target can resist the nightmare with a successful saving throw (at a -4 penalty). Any creature that succumbs to the incredibly vivid dreams suffers 1d10 points of damage.



to draw in male fighters. She is a new recruit in the Nether Sepulcher, but untested. She flees if the battle goes against her. Surviving amid the mass of bodies are 4 villagers. Six other villagers rise as vampires in 1d4 days if precautions are not taken.

The statue is inanimate and harmless, despite its horrific appearance. Evil enchantments keep it from decaying. It radiates evil magic.

SUB-PRIESTS OF ORCUS, HUMAN CLERIC 5 (6): HD 5; hp 20; AC 4[15]; Atk 1 heavy mace (1d6+1); Move 9; Save 11; CL/XP 5/240; **Special:** Spells (1—*cure light wounds*, *detect magic*; 2—*hold person*, *silence 15 ft. radius*; 3—*cure disease*). **Combat**

gear: Chain mail, shield, heavy mace. See Area K5.

VAMPIRE: HD 7; hp 52; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 bite (1d10+2 plus level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 7; CL/XP 10/1400; **Special:** gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, summon bats or wolves, charm person, bite drains 2 levels

CHÁ OOKNA, OGRE MAGE VAMPIRE: HD 5+4; hp 30; AC 3[16]; Atk 1 weapon (1d12+2); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 10; CL/XP 7/600; **Special:** Magic use, gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, summon bats or wolves, charm person, bite drains 2 levels.

Combat gear: +2 chain mail, +3 bastard sword, potions of *heroism* and *invulnerability*.

Area K20: Respite Chamber

Six sarcophagi lining the floor are used as refuge by some of the higher status vampires roaming the Nether Sepulcher. The tombs are large enough to each hold several undead. At any given time, **2d4 vampires** can be found here. They join combat in Area K19 after three rounds.

VAMPIRES (2D4): HD 9; hp 65; AC 2[17]; Atk 1 bite (1d10+2 plus level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 4; CL/XP 12/2000; **Special:** gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, summon bats or wolves, charm person, bite drains 2 levels

Area K21: The Secret Tunnel

This well-hidden secret passage is difficult to find, although a faint whistling of air being drawn under the hidden door and dust being sucked beneath the door give it away. If smoke or any other gases are released into the area, they are immediately sucked under the door, making it much easier to find.

The door is locked and difficult to open because of the force of the wind from Area K22 pulling it closed. The door is protected against extra-dimensional travel such as *dimension door* and *passwall*.

Area K22: The Tempest

A five-foot-wide passage leads down a set of stairs into a 70-foot-diameter circular room. Mortar and some stone blocks are eroded by a howling tempest's constant assault. Despite appearances, however, the passage is quite safe from collapse.

Once the door is opened, torrents of 160 mph winds rip through the halls, sucking debris, loose items and bodies into the passage and the tempest beyond. The winds are strong enough to lift beings into the air and drag them down the hallway. Anyone failing a save when the door is opened gets pulled down the hall, taking 2d6 points of damage as they roll toward the central vortex.

Inside the circular chamber, the torrential winds spin around the central vortex room, pulling at objects and creatures daring to enter the chamber. The incredibly strong winds sweep along every inch of the room and the adjoining hallways. Movement is halved while in the grip of the furious winds.

The stairs end at a five-foot-wide ledge that circles the fathomless pit. The pit's walls fall 50 feet into the top of a swirling whirlpool of black clouds. Red light glows from an indeterminable source beneath the spinning clouds. Crackling bolts of purple energy illuminate the room with strobe-like flashes. The swirling tempest is a huge portal into a negative energy plane.

Anyone standing on the narrow rim around the vortex is buffeted by the hurricane winds as they are focused upward by the walls of the pit. The strong winds require creatures to make a save each round or be yanked into the eye of the tempest. A successful save means creatures may act at half movement.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Incorporeal creatures are immune to the effects of the negative energy winds, although the ethereal bodaks (Area K17) that protect the temple take notice of such beings and rush to attack.

Creatures pulled into the tempest are hurled onto the negative energy plane. The pit is actually 100 feet deep, with the tempest filling the lower 50 feet. The portal lies at the bottom. Creatures drawn through the rift are not immediately slain, however. Instead, each round they must make a save or lose a level. A creature drained of all class levels becomes a wraith.

The Negative Energy Plane

The tempest is a one-way portal, with no discernible entry back to the Nether Sepulcher. Creatures entering the tempest find themselves on a black featureless plane. The ground is soft and spongy, but stable. About 200 feet away is a throne composed of horns crafted from grotesque creatures. A silver stand before the throne holds a reflective metallic skull. Akruel Rathamon sometimes travels here to regain health and to replenish his minions from among the plane's inhabitants.

The mirror-like skull is a *crystal ball* that allows Akruel to scry upon those within Al-Sifon from the safety of the negative energy plane.

Each round a PC is on the plane, he must make a save or lose a level. A creature drained of all class levels dies and becomes a wraith.

Staying on the plane for any length of time invites trouble from the inhabitants (not to mention becoming a wraith). Creatures calling the plane home are the undead and various demons that wander through occasionally. The Game Referee is free to throw whatever he feels appropriate at the PCs if they linger here.

It's left to the Referee to decide how the PCs can escape the negative energy plane.

Area K23: Calvariae Locus, Place of the Skull

The wind in the alcove containing the door is still ravaged by the torrential winds from Area K22. The door is complicated to open and locked (1 in 10). The door requires PCs with a combined Strength of 23 to open due to the wind pressure pushing against it from the vortex chamber. Closing the door seals out the tempest, but requires another combined Strength check to pull it closed.

Akruel Rathamon's burial chamber's inner walls are plated with an obsidian, dense coal and basalt mosaic mural. The mural portrays dark skulls piled floor to ceiling. Red obsidian in the eye sockets is sculpted so that the skulls' gazes follow visitors. Cracks mar the ceiling, allowing gaseous creatures to enter the chambers of the Nether Sepulcher and Al-Sifon above. A massive frieze of a jade-inlaid, skull-topped wand decorates the fan-vaulted ceiling.

Deep red flint and chert form a gruesome motif of entrails stretched across the floor. A crimson granite sarcophagus sits in the center of the room. The stone encasement measures 10 feet wide by 15 feet long. An effigy of a handsome man with diabolical features dressed in ancient ceremonial garb decorates the lid. Gold and platinum inlay further accentuate the man's importance.

The tomb's lid is locked and extremely heavy. A trap on the lid (1 in 10 to notice) causes the room's floor to retract into the walls, dropping creatures into a funnel-shaped pit that dumps creatures into the Tempest (Area K22) via a slanting pit. A save indicates that the PC grasps the walls or sarcophagus as the floor retracts.

Once the floor opens, the wind again buffets the room until the pit door resets in 5 rounds. A switch on the sarcophagus immediately resets the floor. The sarcophagus sits on a pedestal attached to the

side of funnel. Generous Game Referees may allow PCs a second save to grab the pedestal as they slide down the pit.

Eight larger-than-life skeletal hands and forearms made of pitted iron rise from the floor near the sarcophagus and hold the lid tightly to the coffin. These arms are **8 animated objects** that must be destroyed or commanded to move in order to open the lid. They do not attack, but hold the lid closed to give Akruel ample time to escape or prepare. The entire sarcophagus is enchanted with *spell turning* (as per a ring of the same name). A hole in the bottom of the sarcophagus allows access to the pit and tomb for gaseous creatures.

Once opened, the sarcophagus contains an elaborate darkwood coffin (8,000 gp in value) adorned with ivory inlays of demonic figures upon a palanquin. The skeletal remains of Akruel's harem lay scatter around the coffin. They were sealed alive in the stone tomb during Akruel's transition into undeath.

If defeated elsewhere, **Akruel Rathamon** rests in the coffin. Akruel can command one of the skeletal hands to trigger or close the pit trap if the animated objects remain. The coffin also contains a *ring of 2 wishes*, a *staff of wizardry*, +3 *full plate*, a +3 *shield*, a +3 *heavy mace* (skull topped), a *helm of fiery brilliance* and a *wand of cold* (22 charges).

ANIMATED ARMS (8): HD 4; hp 18; AC 5[14]; Atk 1 slam (1d8); Move 0; Save 13; CL/XP 4/120; Special: none.

AKRUEL RATHAMON, VAMPIRE LORD HIGH PRIEST OF ORCUS: HD 17; hp 105; AC 2[17]; Atk +3 freezing heavy mace (1d6+3 plus 1d6 cold), 1 bite (1d10+2 plus level drain); Move 12 (Fly 18); Save 4; CL/XP 19/3,500; Special: gaseous form, regenerate 3 hp/round, change form, charm person, bite drains 2 levels, command undead, spells (1—*cause light wounds* (x5), *detect magic* (x2); 2—*hold person* (x4), *silence* 15 ft. radius, *snake charm*, *speak with animals*; 3—*locate object* (x2), *prayer*, *remove curse*, *speak with dead* (x3); 4—*cause serious wounds* (x5), *sticks to snakes*; 5—*commune* (x2), *finger of death* (x2), *insect plague*, *raise dead*; 6—*animate object*, *blade barrier*, *word of recall*; 7—*symbol*)

Combat gear: +4 ring mail, +3 freezing heavy mace; **Non-combat gear:** ring of fire resistance, boots of speed.

Area K24: Secret Door

A secret door opens onto stairs that lead up to Area K7.

Area K25: Common Room

This torch-lit room contains several benches and tables. Comfortable chairs surround smaller meeting tables. A roasted hog impaled on a spit sits above a fire pit. A shelf near the pit holds utensils and food. Large barrels of mead and water sit next to the entrance. The room contains **13 zombie** servants that shuffle about the room. Living cultists of Nether Sepulcher use this room for dinners, meetings and entertaining. The zombies serve as entertainers, combatants, servants and any other loathsome tasks that the priests can imagine.

ZOMBIES (13): HD 2; hp 10; AC 8[11]; Atk 1 strike (1d8+2); Move 6; Save 14; CL/XP 2/30; Special: Immune to sleep and charm.

Area K26: Sub-priest chambers.

Each of these bedchambers holds six bunks and footlockers. The footlockers are locked and contain personal possessions as well as 10d10gp.

Area K27: Knobloch's Chamber

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Knobloch (Area K13) sleeps in this room. The room is crudely furnished with a simple bed, a table, two chairs and a footlocker. The locker contains souvenirs from creatures the half-orc is particularly proud to have tortured. These include feathers of a couatl, various human and elf hands, a bag of 300 gold teeth (150 gp), a silver holy symbol of Arden, and a broken sword. Wrapped in a hide blanket are 3 *potions of extra healing* and a *wand of magic missile* (7 charges).

Area K28: Elizara's Chamber

This is the room of the Elizara, the high-priestess of Orcus (Area K7). She is found here only during her infrequent resting periods. The room is furnished with a simple bed, a table, two chairs, and a footlocker. The locker contains memorabilia from her life before she arrived at Al-Sifon. It also contains 4 *potions of extra healing* and a *scroll* (*astral spell, commune, resurrection, symbol*).

Area K29: Spoils

Pyramids of gold bars are arranged throughout this room. The gold bars are spoils taken from the neighboring lands dominated so far by Akruel and his legions. Approximately 1,000 bars (100 gp each) sit in the unguarded room.

Concluding the Adventure

Immediately after the *Scepter of Faiths* is impaled in the *Frore Heart*, the resulting explosion dissipates the black cloud roiling over Al-Sifon. The undead within the city immediately flee for dark holes to escape the radiant sunlight as it cleanses the stones of the evil that has permeated the ruins for so long. PCs may also seek out and destroy the remaining undead where they hide if the Game Referee wishes, although this should be a time-consuming and dangerous endeavor. The jungle will claim many of the undead as they seek to escape, and a legion of paladins dispatched from the Shield Basilica of Muir will help finish the job of wiping Al-Sifon off the map permanently.

In the event PCs defeat the evil of Akruel Rathamon, they should achieve legendary status for their deeds. Award each PC a 50,000 experience point award for helping bring down the vampire and his minions.

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