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DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS



CODEx OF THE DAMNED

BY PHILLIP LARWOOD
AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTER LEVEL 5



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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you fear, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

The Codex of the Damned is a 4E adventure for five 5th-level characters. The adventure caters to a wide variety of character types and playing styles. Some of these characters could include paladins and clerics seeking to crush the darkness lurking within the Vault before the blasphemous texts held within can be unleashed upon the world, fighters and rogues slaking their lust for glory and bloodshed, and warlocks and wizards seeking ancient knowledge and power.

While the adventure is placed in the small town of Yaleford, it can be situated in any relatively small town or village on the outskirts of a major kingdom or empire.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

At the start of the adventure, the PCs find themselves on the doorstep of a musty dungeon located beneath the ruins of Yaleford's old church. Sent there to stop the vicious murders plaguing Yaleford and to see to it that nothing else emerges from the dungeon to wreak havoc upon the world, the PCs soon find out that the place was used as a vault to store blasphemous, heretical and evil books, and is flooded with foul undead created from the vault's former custodians.

As they journey through the cursed and twisted chambers, the PCs gradually learn the fate of the vault and the artifact responsible, an enormous tome of fell power called the *Codex of the Damned*. From their own knowledge, the murders in Yaleford, and clues left throughout the vault, they soon realize that the *Codex* is trying to rebuild itself, and that if it reaches completion Yaleford will not be the

Loc	Pg	Type	Encounter	EL
Start	6	S	Myths and legends	3
B	6	C	3 slashwings	4
1-1	8	C/T	1 collapsing bookcase	6
			2 runecursed	
			4 spectral custodians	
1-4	10	C	6 clay angels	5
1-6	10	S or C	The Mad Scribe	6
1-7	12	C	1 arcanashade	4
			3 spectral custodians	
1-9	13	C	2 bloodspill raptors	5
			2 oniares demons	
2-1	16	C	1 arcanashade	5
			2 runecursed	
			2 spectral custodians	
2-4	16	C	5 animated chains	5
2-7	18	C	1 bone swarm	6
			5 lesser flameskulls	
2-8	19	C	8 magekiller wasps	5
2-9	19	C	6 magekiller wasps	5
			1 magekiller wasp queen	
3-1	21	C/T	1 fire rune trap	7
			5 runecursed	
3-3	22	C	1 gloomstalker	6
			1 foulblade	
3-5	24	C/H	stasis flare	6
			2 spectral custodians	
3-7	25	C	3 flayed horrors	6
			1 animated iron maiden	
3-8	26	C	2 arcanashades	7
			Anurnadan (apocrypha demon)	
3-9	27	C	1 staff guardian	9
			1 orb guardian	
			1 wand guardian	
4-1	29	C	5 flayed horrors	7
4-3	29	C	Shar-Thom	10

only town to fall to its unholy might. They should also learn the secret to unmaking the *Codex*, a secret that is lost within the vault waiting to be unearthed.

After finding the materials necessary to destroy the *Codex*, the PCs must journey deeper into the vault, battling their way through chambers ravaged by malefic forces and facing an assortment of gut-wrenching horrors to reach the demiplane where the *Codex* awaits. Once there, they must face the *Codex*'s scribe Shar-Thom, a withered scholar and the most powerful of all the custodians, whose egomania and blind lust for knowledge led him to destroy those around him and plunge the vault into its current state of chaos and evil. Only by eradicating Shar-Thom can PCs take the necessary steps to destroy the *Codex* once and for all.



GAMEMASTER SECTION

ENCOUNTER TABLE

To help the GM prepare, we have included a quick reference table showing all encounters at a glance. Loc — the location number keyed to the map for the encounter. Pg — the module page number that the encounter can be found on. Type — this indicates if the encounter is a trap (T), skill challenge (S), or combat (C). Encounter — the key monsters, traps, or NPCs that can be found in the encounter. Names in italics are classed NPCs. EL — the encounter level.

SCALING INFORMATION

While this adventure is constructed for 5 characters of 5th-level, it can be modified for both larger or smaller parties and higher or lower level PCs with ease.

Weaker Parties (3 or fewer characters or lower than 4th-level): Remove 1 slashwing bat from area B; remove 2 spectral custodians from area 1-1; remove 2 clay angels from area 1-4; lower the Mad Scribe's levels by 1 or more in area 1-6; remove 1 or 2 bloodspill raptors or oniares demons from area 1-9; remove the spectral custodians from area 2-1; remove 2 animated chains or the fearful whispers and unnatural chills effects from area 2-4; remove 2 or more lesser flameskulls or the bone swarm from area 2-7; remove 2 or more magekiller wasps from areas 2-8 and 2-9; remove 2 runecursed or the trap from area 3-1; lower the level of the dragonborn atavists by 2 or remove one of them from area 3-3; remove the spectral custodians from area 3-5; remove a flayed horror or the animated iron maiden from area 3-7; remove 1 or both arcanashades from area 3-8; remove 1 or 2 guardians from area 3-9; remove 2 flayed horrors from area 4-1, and lower Shar-Thom's level by 2 and/or remove one of his abilities (such as his *armor of runes* ability) in area 4-2.

Stronger Parties (6 or more characters or higher than 6th-level): Add a single slashwing bat to area B; replace 2 or more spectral custodians with runecursed in area 1-1; replace 2 clay angels with 2 or more runecursed or arcanashades in area 1-4; increase the Mad Scribe's level by 1 or more in area 1-6; add 1 or 2 bloodspill raptors or oniares demons to area 1-9; replace the spectral custodians with runecursed or arcanashades in area 2-1; increase the number of animated chains by 2 in area 2-4; replace 2 or 4 lesser flameskulls with 1 or 2 standard flameskulls in area 2-7; increase the number of magekiller wasps in areas 2-8 and 2-9 by 2 or more; replace the 5 runecursed in area 3-1 with 5 flayed horrors; increase the DCs and attack bonus for the stasis pulse by +2 or +4 in area 3-5; add an extra gloomblade to area 3-3; add an extra flayed horror to area 3-7, and add an extra arcanashade to area 3-8. Areas 3-9, 4-1 and 4-2 don't need to be changed unless the PCs are having an easy time of things elsewhere in the vault. Increasing the difficulty in these areas can be achieved by increasing the level of each of the guardians by 1 in area 3-9, increasing the number of flayed horrors in 4-1 by 1

or more, and adding 1 or more levels to Shar-Thom in area 4–2.

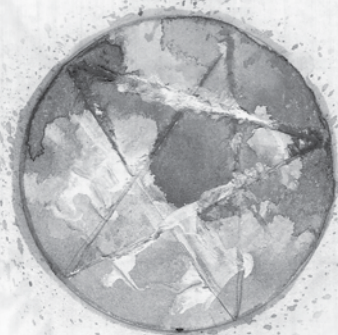
GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

The adventure background assumes that the PCs are already in Yaleford and are hired by the town's troubled lord, Holgnar Halfhammer, to end the murders battering his community. Holgnar offers the PCs 1,000 gp to put a stop to the murders and see to it that the dungeon is no longer a threat. Since Holgnar is rather desperate to see that this problem is fixed, he can be forced to pay up to 1,500 gp with a DC 20 Diplomacy check.

Other possible ways of getting the PCs involved include:

- The PCs are approached by the wives of the missing guards (see *Adventure Background*) to locate their husbands. The wives are not hopeful of finding their husbands alive and are thankful even if the PCs bring back their remains. The wives have nothing substantial to offer the PCs other than some meager jewelry and coins worth a total of 90 gp.
- The PCs are sent to Yaleford by Mandrus Yorn, a noted historian, to explore a dungeon unearthed by recent excavations. Mandrus believes that the dungeon is the lost vault of the custodians, a dungeon complex rumored to hold the most evil texts in all creation. Mandrus pays the PCs 550 gp and a level 1 magic item (of the PCs choice) to explore the dungeon to determine if it is the vault, and to collect as many intact books they can find to bring back to him.
- The PCs arrive at Yaleford in the company of Greta Fallwind, Yaleford's new cleric (the old one was slain by orc raiders). When Greta arrives, she finds that not only has work stopped on the church because of the murders in town, but that five golden icons sacred to the clergy have been taken. She asks the PCs to explore the dungeon and recover the golden icons.

GMs can also use the scenarios presented above as minor quests for PCs to accomplish while exploring the vault. If this option is chosen, locating the remains of the missing guards for their wives and retrieving the stolen icons for Greta earns the group 400 XP each. In this way, PCs can engage in multiple tasks at once and are rewarded for their efforts as they progress through the adventure.



BACKGROUND STORY

Centuries ago, a group of scholars witnessed the destruction of the twin cities of Kalinjar and Randor by a massive earthquake which released an enormous cloud of burning poisonous gas. Reeling from the disaster, the group discovered that the seer Prashama had predicted the catastrophe several years before and had been ignored by the cities' rulers.

Realizing that the disaster could have been averted, the group began collecting prophecies and other texts from across the world and placing them within a secure vault. They expanded their collection to include apocryphal, blasphemous and outright evil texts. The group came to be known as the custodians, though knowledge of their efforts was kept secret.

The custodians collected all these works both to protect the world from harm and head off any disaster that might occur. Oft times they were successful (such as in the case of the prophecies of the oni mage Tao Shin) and their work continued for over 200 years.

At the height of their power, the custodians came into possession of a paragon-level artifact known as the *Codex of the Damned*. Aware of its danger, they locked it away in their most secure chambers, where no one could peruse its awful pages. They kept materials at hand to destroy it should the need arise. The *Codex* would have remained locked away forever had not Shar-Thom, the senior custodian of the vault, ignored the warnings and studied the book to gain access to its many secrets.

Despite his many precautions, Shar-Thom was gradually corrupted by the power of the *Codex*. He began plotting to remove the *Codex* from the vault. Knowing that the other custodians would oppose him, he raided the vault for forbidden texts and unleashed their power upon his fellows, summoning terrible monsters and weaving powerful curses. The destruction was terrible, yet a few of the custodians persevered and faced Shar-Thom in his private chambers, blasting him with magic and damaging the *Codex*.

With the vault overcome by demons and undead, the surviving custodians fled the vault and buried the entrance beneath a massive landslide. In time, the town of Yaleford was founded on the site, and a church was built over the entrance by the custodians' descendants in the hopes that the *Codex's* evil would be sealed away forever.

Although Yaleford prospered, it also suffered at the hands of invaders. In the most recent assault, the old church was destroyed by fire, the result of an incursion of orc raiders who slaughtered all before them. In response to the church's destruction, the local lord began to build a new and better one to replace it. The lord, Holgnar Halfhammer, prayed to the gods that nothing else would befall his town and ignored the old tales about the town's origins.

As the excavation proceeded, the workers unearthed an ancient door within the old church's foundations. Too curious for their own good, the workers tried to open the

door and were blasted by a powerful rune, their bodies consumed by fire. When Holgnar examined the door, he remembered the old tales about Yaleford being built upon a doorway to evil itself, and he ordered his men to cover the door back up.

The following morning the body of the church foreman was found spread-eagled before the door like a grotesque trophy, his skin literally ripped from his body, leaving nothing behind but a pulpy mess. As word of the horrific murder spread, Holgnar ordered the entire passage leading to the door filled up with rock and the entrance posted with guards, hoping that these measures would stop whatever had come through the door until a more permanent solution could be found.

On the third morning since the opening of the door, workers discovered their previous day's work ruined and the four guards posted at the worksite missing. At the door's entrance, they also found a second flayed victim, his body little more than a glistening sack of meat, but still recognizable by his missing digits as the popular blacksmith Kasgard Three-Fingers.

Now, with the townsfolk almost hysterical with fear and Holgnar looking for answers, it is up to the PCs to brave what lies beyond the door and see to it that the threat to Yaleford is brought to an end.

THE VAULT

MUNDANE FEATURES

Constructed centuries ago to house various dangerous texts, the vault is split into three wings. PCs should explore the first two wings before tackling the third, as this gives them the experience and knowledge they need to survive Shar-Thom's private sanctum, and the materials needed to destroy the *Codex of the Damned*.

While much of the original vault is still intact, books and furniture have been affected by the passage of time and crumble to dust if moved or otherwise handled. The magical lighting once used in the vault no longer functions, and unless otherwise noted the vault is in complete darkness. In addition, many areas have been affected by the influence of the *Codex* or Shar-Thom's treachery and are warped beyond recognition. These areas follow specific rules and have terrain features and conditions unseen in the rest of the complex.

In general, all corridors and chambers in the vault are constructed of solid slabs of granite and usually depict murals of scholars, sages and historians rendered in exquisite detail. Ceilings are 2 squares high in most corridors and 5 squares high in most chambers. Floors are covered in dust, the occasional pile of bones, or a crumbling bookcase, but these features don't affect movement unless otherwise noted.

All doors in the vault are thick stone and most are open; the few stuck or locked doors are noted in their room's description. The doors have been weakened by the

corrupting influence of the *Codex* and are not as strong as they used to be.

Weakened Stone Door: AC/Reflex 5; Fortitude 10; HP 30; Break DC 15.

SUPERNATURAL FEATURES

The custodians of the vault slain by Shar-Thom so many years ago have returned as undead, their spirits unable to escape the pull of the *Codex*, and are bound within the vault until the book is destroyed. While most of these undead are creatures like arcanashades and runecursed, some exist merely as presences that manifest as fearful whispers or unnatural chills. These manifestations are listed in each area entry where they occur.

FEARFUL WHISPERS

Some areas of the vault are filled with the dreadful whisperings of the damned custodians; their voices filled with soul-numbing horror. The voices whisper terrible things from beyond the grave, secrets that no mortal should ever hear. These whispers are so terrible that they fill most living creatures with dread, including the PCs. The whispering sounds take on the form of disturbing giggles and agonized cries of pain mixed in with various blasphemies and lies.

Any PC entering an area suffused with fearful whispers hears the sounds on a DC 13 passive Perception check. If the whispering is pointed out to a PC, he must immediately make an active Perception check to hear it.

The whispering effect does not affect the PCs' ability to communicate with one another or listen to other sounds, but fills their minds with doubt and worry, and makes it difficult for them to concentrate on anything. PCs affected by the whispering are dazed until they succeed on a saving throw to end the effect or leave the area. A PC who makes his saving throw does not need to make another save until 5 minutes have passed. A PC who simply leaves the area and reenters it is affected anew, and he must make a save to end the condition.

Deafened creatures are immune to fearful whispers.

UNNATURAL CHILLS

Some areas within the vault are affected by a preternatural chill caused by the deathly presence of so many damned souls. While these areas are substantially colder than normal, they are not cold enough to affect normal objects or cause damage, and the effects of the chill are mostly spiritual in nature. Because of this, resistance or immunity to cold has no effect on unnatural chills.

Unless there are mitigating circumstances, PCs notice the increased cold in the area very quickly. They feel their bodies and minds becoming numb. A PC is slowed until he succeeds on a saving throw to end the effect or leaves the area. A PC who makes his saving throw does not need to make a new save until 5 minutes have passed. A PC who simply leaves the area and reenters it is affected anew, and he must make a save to end the condition.

If a PC is affected by both fearful whispers and unnatural chills at the same time, a single save removes both conditions, but the PC suffers a -2 penalty to his saving throw.

Skill Challenge:

Myths and Legends (EL 3, 800 XP)

What secrets does the darkened dungeon before you contain? Perhaps your knowledge can help light the way.

The PCs can use their own knowledge of local myths and legends to learn more about the dungeon. The PCs gain a +2 bonus on their History checks if they consult with Holgnar (or Mandrus) and a +2 bonus on their Religion check if they consult with Greta. In each case, PCs must state that they are seeking the NPC's knowledge to benefit from this bonus. PCs can also aid each other in these skill checks (helping to track down leads, read old records, etc.).

Setup: If the PCs are successful, they learn some vital clues about the nature of the vault.

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: History, Religion, Streetwise.

History (DC 17): The PCs delve into old wives' tales and the songs about Yaleford's past for some hint of knowledge about the dungeon. If the PCs succeed, they find some tale or bit of knowledge about the vault. If they fail, the tale leads to a dead end.

Religion (DC 17): The PCs study old church records that survived the building's destruction (Greta gives the PCs these records if they ask for them). If the PCs succeed, they find mention of the vault beneath the church. If they fail, they turn up nothing useful. If the PCs fail three times on this check, all records pertaining to the vault beneath the church have been destroyed.

Streetwise (DC 12): The PCs talk to the locals to find any witnesses to the horrible crimes. On a success, the PC finds someone who saw a horrible figure cloaked in floating symbols fly through Yaleford's streets on the night Kasgard was murdered. Subsequent successes turn up further sightings of figures emerging from the direction of the old church in the dead of night.

Success: The PCs learn that the vault was a repository for some great evil and run by a long-dead sect of mysterious scholar-wizards. The PCs might also get enough of a description of the undead emerging from the vault to identify them with Religion checks (if the PCs succeed on these knowledge checks they learn that the undead include spectral custodians and runecursed).

Failure: The PCs find out nothing helpful. In addition, Shar-Thom becomes aware that someone is seeking knowledge of the vault. He visits a terrifying dream upon the PCs wherein they are being brutally tortured to death by hideous undead that look like flayed and animated corpses. This causes the PCs to lose 1 healing surge, but grants them a free look at the flayed horror's torture chamber (**Area 3–7** of the vault).

PLAYER BEGINNING

Start the adventure by reading the following:

Construction on the new church has ceased, leaving work tools, building supplies and materials scattered haphazardly throughout the complex. A ramp of soggy earth leads down into the foundations of the old church, and here a passage winds its way through the stonework to the site of the horrible murders plaguing the quiet town of Yaleford.

Area A

"Gateway to Hell"

Read or paraphrase the following:

The passage ends in a sinister portal of pitted dark rock shrouded in gloom. The workmen call the door the "gateway to hell." Looking upon its warped and cracked face, and the hideous pool of drying blood that lies before it, you find it hard to disagree with them.

The pool of blood belongs to Kasgard Three-Fingers. His body was removed by the town guard shortly after its discovery, but everyone involved was too traumatized to do anything requiring more time and effort. The pool covers an area of 2 squares and, without the presence of direct sunlight, is taking some time to dry out. While the pool is ghastly to look at, it is not special in any way.

PCs examining the door can see the remains of the rune activated when the workers first tried to open it. The rune is no longer magical, and the door is unlocked. Beyond the door is a stone corridor that continues to slope downwards into the earth. The passage is lightless and smells vaguely of moldy books and mummified corpses.

Area B

Grand Rotunda (EL 4; XP 900)

Read or paraphrase the following:

The corridor slopes downwards for its entire length before emerging into a large circular chamber with a high and partially cracked domed ceiling. Figures decorate the walls: robed humanoids studying books, lecturing to enthralled listeners, and copying scrolls. Standing in the center is the beautifully carved statue of an elderly man holding a lantern in his left hand and an open book in his right. The statue seems to be glancing down at the book and looking forward at the same time, his face solemn and his brow wrinkled in thought. There are no other exits.

This grand chamber links the various sections of the vault together. It saw a lot of traffic during the days when it was an active, vibrant place filled with eager scholars. The murals on the walls depict just some of the activities enjoyed by the custodians. Murals like them can be found throughout the complex (though many have been defaced or altered).

The PCs are not alone in this chamber; a number of slashwing bats now roost in the area after flying down through a wide crack in the ceiling that eventually leads to the ruins of the church yet to be demolished by Holgnar's workers. The slashwings are a nuisance to the farmers of

the region and they are grateful to the PCs if the bats are driven off or slain.

As soon as the PCs bring lights into the chamber or make any sounds, the bats stir into life and fly down to attack, angry that their rest has been disturbed. They use a combination of hovering attacks and flyby attacks. If two of the bats are slain, the remaining bat flies up and out of the chamber, never to return.

If, for some reason, the PCs decide to explore the vault at night, the three slashwings are out hunting, possibly giving the PCs a surprise or two if they come out depleted from combat during the morning.

Hidden in the walls are three secret doors. Various claw scratches and blood splatters make finding these secret doors easier than normal; they can each be located with a DC 18 Perception check. The secret doors are locked and have the following statistics:

Secret Stone Door: AC/Reflex 5; Fortitude 15; HP 120; Break DC 25; Thievery DC 30.

PCs searching for tracks in this chamber can find two pairs of muddy footprints leading to the eastern wall with a DC 22 Perception check. These belong to the runecursed in area 2–1.

The statue is of marvelous workmanship and shows a typical custodian in pursuit of his duties to light mankind's way through the darkness with the power of knowledge. The statue has been magically strengthened to resist damage (with double the hit points of similar sized statues) but is not animated.

A DC 20 Perception check reveals that the lantern can be lit, and the dais can be rotated so the statue faces a new direction. Those looking at the pages of the book discover that they contain various words of opening in draconic, elven and supernal carved into the stone.

The easiest way to open the secret doors (other than using something like the knock ritual) is to manipulate the statue as follows.

West Door: The PCs must fill the statue's lantern with oil and light it while the statue is facing the secret door.

East Door: The PCs must read out the opening words from the book while the statue faces the secret door.

South Door: The statue must be turned to face the secret door while the other two doors are open.

The custodians could bypass this onerous procedure by using a magical key which, when pressed against a door, would cause it to slide open. Unfortunately, none of these keys have survived the passage of years save for the one possessed by Shar-Thom himself.

Slashwing (3)

Level 7 Skirmisher

Large natural magical beast

XP 300

Initiative +8

Senses Perception +9; blindsight 10, darkvision

HP 81; **Bloodied** 40

AC 21; **Fort** 21, **Ref** 18, **Will** 15

Speed 3 (clumsy), fly 8 (hover)

⬇ **Wing Slash** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs.AC; 1d10+5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

⬇ **Hovering Flurry** (standard; at-will)
If the slashwing does not take a move action when flying, it can make two wing slash attacks.

⬇ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)
The slashwing flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during the movement. It does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

Seeker in Darkness (while mounted by a friendly rider of 7th level or higher; at-will) ♦ Mount

A slashwing grants its rider blindsight 10 and darkvision while mounted.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Skills Stealth +11

Str 20 (+8)

Dex 16 (+6)

Wis 12 (+4)

Con 17 (+6)

Int 2 (–1)

Cha 8 (+2)



LEVEL 1: WEST WING OF THE VAULT

This area of the vault is where the bulk of the omens, prophecies and heretical texts gathered by the custodians were kept. Many of these books are not as dangerous or troubling as many custodians made them out to be, and most have been destroyed by the passage of years. The area is still dangerous, however, for this is where many custodians were slaughtered by Shar-Thom and where he opened a portal to one of the many awful layers of the Abyss.

Area 1-I Library (EL 6, XP 1,350)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the half-open double doors is an enormous rectangular chamber that looks like it might be a library of some kind. Towering bookcases caked in dust and cobwebs take up much of the chamber, their shelves covered in crumbling books and ruined folios. Landings rise up above the floor to the north and south, protected by balustrades in the shape of furled scrolls and accessed by flights of stairs. The chamber reeks of death and decay, and the bookcases create a maze of darkened recesses throughout the chamber.

This library is where the custodians kept the bulk of the books they collected, including heretical works and minor prophecies. Most of the writings here were not considered dangerous, but still contained elements that made them scandalous or troublesome.

The books have not suffered the passage of years well. They disintegrate as soon as they are touched, keeping their time-lost secrets to themselves. The bookcases fare little better, and only their sturdy construction has stopped them from collapsing.

PCs entering the library with a light source draw the attention of the damned custodians who still patrol this region. The custodians include two runecursed and four spectral custodians. The runecursed come shambling between the bookcases, and the spectral custodians are floating above the landings.

As soon as these undead detect the PCs presence, the two runecursed move to the western end of the chamber and push against the last row of bookcases, causing it to fall over and create a domino effect as it careens into the next bookcase. This creates an avalanche of bookcases that has the potential to bury and damage PCs in the eastern end of the chamber. Once the bookcases have been pushed over, the squares adjacent to each bookshelf become filled with broken wood and dust.

As soon as the trap has been sprung, the runecursed and two of the spectral custodians engage the PCs in melee while the other two spectral custodians use their whispering tirade from the landing. The runecursed and spectral custodians rely on their superior movement and the difficult terrain to hamper the PCs.

Collapsing Bookcase

Level 6 Blaster

Trap

XP 250

A terrible rumbling sound fills the library as the bookcases in the room begin to fall, creating a deadly avalanche of collapsing wood.

Trap: Bookcases tumble forward to crush the PCs, making a melee attack on each square adjacent to a bookcase symbol.

Perception

PCs can't use Perception to detect this trap beforehand.

Initiative +8

Trigger

The runecursed push the first bookcase over. This triggers the other bookcases to fall in order.

Attack

Standard Reaction

Melee

Targets: All creatures in a square adjacent to a bookcase symbol.

Attack: +11 vs. Reflex.

Hit: 2d8+4 damage and knocked prone.

Miss: half damage and not knocked prone.

Effect: The bookshelves and adjacent areas become difficult terrain.

COUNTERMEASURES

- A character can make a DC 16 Acrobatics check to roll clear of the falling bookcases. If the PC succeeds he takes half damage from the attack (no damage if it misses).
- A character can make a DC 19 Athletics check to jump clear of the falling bookcases. If he succeeds he takes half damage from the attack (no damage if it misses).

Runecursed (2)

Level 5 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (undead)

XP 200

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27

AC 19; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed 8

⚡ **Runic Strike** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic** +11 vs.AC; 1d10+4 necrotic damage, and the runecursed shifts 4 squares.

⚡ **Runic Barrage** (standard; recharge ⏏, ⏏) ♦ **Necrotic**

Close Blast 1; targets enemies; +8 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Combat Advantage

The runecursed gains combat advantage against creatures immobilized by its *runic barrage*.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common

Skills Stealth +10

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 7 (+0) **Cha** 15 (+4)

Spectral Custodian (4)

Level 4 lurker

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

XP 175

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision

HP 38; **Bloodied** 19

AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing; see also *absence of malice*

④ **Maddening Caress** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

+9 vs. AC; 1d6+4 psychic damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to its Will defense until the end of the Spectral custodian's next turn.

⤵ **Whispering Tirade** (standard; at will) ♦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; 2d8+4 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Absence of Malice (move; after a successful attack; recharge ☐, ☐, ☐, ☐)

The spectral custodian teleports 6 squares.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common

Skills Stealth +10

Str 10 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+4)

Area 1–2

Reading Rooms

Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber is empty except for a bit of ruined furniture and some sort of horrible graffiti on the back wall.

These chambers vary slightly in size and furnishings but are otherwise identical. The graffiti in each chamber detail acts of depravity and evil, and looks as if written in extremely old dried blood. The rooms are empty.

Treasure: A PC carefully searching these rooms can make a DC 16 Perception check to unearth some minor treasure buried amongst the debris: 160 ancient gold pieces in a rough leather sack, and a silver and turquoise ring worth 120 gp.

Area 1–3

Marble Bust

Read or paraphrase the following:

At the end of the corridor is an intersection. Facing you is an alcove containing the marble bust of a scholar or seer with a smiling face and inquisitive eyes.

The marble bust radiates magic. It was used by the custodians to help with their readings of unknown or dead languages. Anyone touching the marble bust gains the use of the comprehend languages ritual to speak and read a single language for the next 24 hours. Unfortunately, due to the weakening enchantments upon the bust, only a single person can benefit from the ritual at any one time. If the bust is removed from the vault, it loses its power.



Area 1–4 Room of Prophecies (EL 5, 1,050 XP)

Read or paraphrase the following:

This large chamber contains six stout stone pillars carved with images of scholars. Atop each pillar is the carved figure of a winged angel whose head is bowed in silent prayer. At the back of the chamber is a bank of six rusty iron levers. The room contains two other exits.

The custodians kept most of the dangerous prophecies they collected here and in area 3–6, locking them away in thick stone pillars. The bank of iron levers in the southeast corner activates the pillars, causing them to open with a dull grinding sound to reveal a small cavity in their centers. The pillars still contain works from before the vault was abandoned; the custodians were unable to remove them in the chaos caused by Shar-Thom's treachery.

The winged angels are actually special homunculi known as clay angels. These clay angels have been placed to guard the prophecies within the pillars. They attack anyone not bearing the symbol of the custodians who tries to open the pillars, using their mind wrack power on anyone trying to take the prophecies. As soon as a clay angel is bloodied, it uses its prayer stance until it regenerates to full hit points.

Treasure: The four works contained within the pillars include:

- Visions of Prashama: a set of rice paper sheets bound together in a darkwood folio containing several ancient prophecies by the dead seer, including the destruction of the city-states of Kalinjar and Randor
- Book of Ruin: a battered leather book detailing the ravings of various madmen about the end of the world
- The prophecies of the dwarven oracle Nulinar, now thankfully crumbled to little more than a pile of dust
- The prophecies of the insane black dragon Velkityerash, etched on a gold-leafed, silver dragonhide scroll, wherein the dragon prophesied the destruction of the eladrin city of Tarmendaril by an army of undead led by a mighty atropal.

The prophecies within these books are outdated yet still quite valuable to the right buyer. The Book of Ruin and Visions of Prashama are worth 250 gp each, while the prophecies of Velkityerash is worth 900 gp.



Clay Angel (6) Level 4 Lurker Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 175

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
HP 43; **Bloodied** 21

AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15

Immune disease, poison

Speed 7, fly 5 (clumsy)

④ **Wing Buffet** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage and the clay angel makes a secondary attack against the same target. **Secondary Attack:** +4 vs. Fortitude; the target is blinded until the end of the clay angel's next turn. See also *guard object*.

✂ **Mind Wrack** (standard; at will) ♦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10+4 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). See also *guard object*.

Guard Object

The clay angel gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls and a +4 bonus on damage rolls against targets within 2 squares of its guarded object (any one of the pillars counts as a guarded object for a clay angel).

Prayer Stance (standard; at will)

The clay angel clasps its hands together in silent prayer and gains resist 15 to all damage and regeneration 2. It can sustain its prayer stance as a standard action each round.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Stealth +11

Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 16 (+5)

Area 1–5 Safe Haven

Read or paraphrase the following:

This desolate chamber is littered with bones, rubble and decaying furniture. The statue of a robed scholar stands in one corner, his face quiet and contemplative.

The statue represents Belistar, the ancient god of seers and scholars. The statue's presence radiates a strange calming effect on the restless spirits of the custodians and they do not attack anyone in this chamber. Because of this, the chamber serves as a safe resting place for PCs.

Area 1–6 The Scriptorium (EL 6, XP 1,250)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Most of this chamber is empty save for a few piles of rubble and the occasional moldy-looking tome. At the far end of the room is a large stone lectern with the face of a leering fiend carved upon it. Behind this lectern is a skeletal humanoid clad in purple robes. The skeleton bends down over a book and seems to be scribing furiously, using his bony fingers as writing implements. Within a few short seconds he finishes writing and tears the page loose before letting it fall to the ground, whereupon it vanishes in a flash of crimson light. With the page gone, the skeletal figure begins scribing anew.



This chamber once served as a scriptorium and an examination of the crumbling furnishings reveals as much. Aside from the skeletal figure and rubble on the floor, the chamber is otherwise empty. Floor squares with rubble count as difficult terrain.

The skeleton is an undead being known as the Mad Scribe. The Mad Scribe was once a senior custodian named Kalanuu who was charged with copying some of the more dangerous texts kept in the vault. He was also one of the first custodians to be killed by Shar-Thom, then cursed and transformed into a horrid form of undead.

Kalanuu's existence is now taken up with scribing the same page over and over again, and he ignores the PCs unless they disrupt his work or manage to break through his veil of madness. The lectern is effectively part of the Mad Scribe and moves about when he moves.

The Mad Scribe can be reasoned with by those who succeed on a skill challenge to talk with him. The skill challenge has the best chance of succeeding if the PCs present Kalanuu with the *quill of scribing* from area 2–7. Those who fail the skill challenge are attacked.

When PCs release Kalanuu from his curse (whether through the skill challenge or by destroying him in combat), he imparts on them the dreadful secrets of the vault. When this happens read or paraphrase the following:

The Mad Scribe's skeletal visage is replaced by that of a tiefling in his middle years with pale red skin and short black horns. The tiefling smiles wearily and addresses you in archaic Common, his voice filled with lost wisdom.

"Adventurers, deep within this vault lies Shar-Thom. He is the instigator of this madness and the one you must defeat to end it. He carries with him the Codex of the Damned, an artifact of evil that is trying to rebuild itself through him. I do not know how to destroy the Codex, but perhaps the other custodians left some answers. You must find out before you face Shar-Thom; otherwise, your victory will be short-lived. Thank you for releasing me from my torment, and may the gods smile upon you."

With that, the tiefling vanishes in a twinkling of crimson lights, almost as if he had never existed.

Treasure: When Kalanuu is released from his curse, he leaves behind his *safewing amulet* +2 and the *quill of scribing* (if the PCs gave it to him).

If the Mad Scribe attacks, his lectern flies off the ground and he uses *howl of madness* against the largest group of PCs. He then returns to the ground to make claw attacks, relying on his aura to slow down his foes. As soon as he is bloodied, he takes to the air and uses *howl of madness* for a second time.

Skill Challenge:

Talking to the Mad Scribe (EL 6, 1,250 XP)

You try to talk with the robed skeleton.

The PCs try to interact with the Mad Scribe, glean as much information as they can from the process. They must make careful use of Arcana, Diplomacy and Insight checks to gain his attention and break him out of his madness. If the PCs offer Kalanuu the *quill of scribing* from area 2–7 they gain a +5 bonus on all checks related to the skill challenge.

Setup: If the PCs are successful, they learn several valuable pieces of information about the vault, including the Codex. If they are unsuccessful, the Mad Scribe flies into a rage and attacks.

Complexity: 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures)

Primary Skills: Arcana, Diplomacy, History and Insight.

Arcana (DC 19): The PCs offer the Mad Scribe something of a magical nature, such as a ritual scroll, or engage him in a discussion about magical writing. If successful, the PCs pique the Mad Scribe's interest and gain a +2 bonus to their next check. If unsuccessful, the Mad Scribe views the PCs as simpletons and they take a –2 penalty to their next check instead.

Diplomacy (DC 19): The PCs try to reason with the Mad Scribe, using whatever methods they can think of to wrench him out of his madness. If the PCs fail this check three times, the Mad Scribe ignores all future attempts at Diplomacy until the PCs succeed on an Arcana or Insight check.

History (DC 19): The PCs use their knowledge of the past and/or the history of the custodians (picked up from town or elsewhere) to make the Mad Scribe remember his former life.

Insight (DC 14): The PCs can tell when something has annoyed the Mad Scribe or gained his interest. If a PC succeeds on this check, he gains a +2 bonus to his next check.

Success: Kalanuu regains his sanity and thanks the PCs for their efforts in breaking through his madness before gradually fading away. Before he leaves, he tells the PCs the true name of the apocrypha demon in area 3–8 and the password for moving through area 3–9 without activating the guardians (see both areas for details).

Failure: The Mad Scribe flies into a rage and attacks. If slain, he does not reveal any information but that found below.

The Mad Scribe Level 6 Solo Controller

Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 1,250

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +12; darkvision

Vortex of Madness aura 3; all creatures in the area are afflicted by horrific phantasmal images. Any creature that begins its turn within the aura takes 5 psychic damage and is slowed until the end of its next turn.

HP 272; **Bloodied** 136

AC 23; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 22; see also *demonic lectern*.

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic, 10 psychic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Saving Throws +5

Speed fly 6 (hover)

Action Points 2

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+11 vs.AC; 1d8+4 necrotic damage

‡ **Flurry of Claws** (standard; at will) ♦ **Necrotic**

The Mad Scribe makes two claw attacks. If both attacks hit, the Mad Scribe rends his victim for an additional 5 points of necrotic damage.

⚡ **Howl of Madness** (standard; recharge when bloodied) ♦ **Psychic**

Close blast 3; +9 vs.Will; 3d8+6 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Demonic Lectern

The Mad Scribe's demonic lectern grants him cover against area and ranged attacks.

Alignment Evil (until cured of his madness)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven

Skills Arcana +14, History +14, Religion +14

Str 13 (+4) **Dex** 17 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+7)

Con 12 (+4) **Int** 23 (+9) **Cha** 20 (+8)

Possessions *Safewing amulet* +2

Area 1-7 Room of Blasphemies

(EL 4, XP 825)

Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber appears to have been simultaneously struck by an earthquake and engulfed in a conflagration. Scorched piles of rubble lie heaped about the chamber and numerous holes and cracks perforate the fire-blackened walls and ceiling. In the center of the chamber, an enormous crack splits the floor in half, creating a chasm of sorts across the room. Someone or something has also placed a fallen pillar over the chasm, its surface covered with engravings of robed scholars.

This chamber was where a number of dangerous blasphemous texts, heretical works and unholy scriptures were kept. The texts were placed in pillars like the ones in area 1-4. But the pillars exploded and the writings were immolated when the Abyssal gate in area 1-9 was opened and the custodians died fighting the waves of demons that poured through the breach.

The chasm presents an obstacle that PCs need to cross to get to area 1-9. The chasm is 2 squares wide and 30 ft. (6 squares) deep. Anyone falling into the chasm takes 3d10 points of damage and must make DC 15 Athletics checks to climb back out (the number of checks dependant on the PC's speed and how fast he tries to climb). While solid, the pillar crossing the chasm has a tendency to roll if anyone tries to walk across it. A PC must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check to cross it without falling. PCs can also pull themselves across it, which takes two Acrobatics checks but reduces the DC to 10.

Aside from these terrain features, the chamber is also



affected by fearful whispers, as described on page 5 (to which the undead are immune).

Three spectral custodians and an arcanashade dwell in this chamber, floating at the bottom of the chasm. They rise up and attack any PCs entering the area, the spectral custodians using a combination of melee and ranged attacks while the arcanashade uses its *arcane lance* to blast the PCs into oblivion.

Spectral custodian (3) (see page 9 for statistics).

Arcanashade **Level 7 Artillery**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 300

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 55; **Bloodied** 27

AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 20, Will 19

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 5 variable (2/encounter), insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Speed fly 8 (Hover); phasing

⚡ **Arcane Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning** or **Thunder**
+12 vs. AC; 1d6 acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage; see *mastery of magic*.

↘ **Arcane Lance** (standard; at will) ♦ **Acid, Cold, Fire, lightning** or **Thunder**
Ranged 10; +14 vs. AC; 1d10+4 acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage; see *mastery of magic*.

⚡ **Arcane Deluge** (standard; when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning** and **Thunder**
Close burst 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 4 points of acid damage, 4 points of cold damage, 4 points of fire damage, 4 points of lightning damage, and 4 points of thunder damage. Miss: half damage.

Mastery of Magic (minor; at-will)

An arcanashade can alter the damage type it deals with its attacks to acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. Once changed the damage type remains the same until the arcanashade uses another minor action to change it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common plus one other

Skills Arcana +13, Stealth +11

Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)

Con 13 (+4) **Int** 20 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Area 1–8

Collapsed Shrine

Read or paraphrase the following:

This corridor is completely choked with rubble from an ancient cave-in.

The corridor once led to a shrine to Belistar. The demons from area 1–9 desecrated the shrine before it collapsed during the battle with the custodians. There is nothing left here for PCs to salvage even if they could dig through all the rubble.

Area 1–9

Demonic Infestation (EL 5, XP 1,000)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Once this chamber might have served a different purpose, but now some horrific force has transformed it into a nightmarish cave. Dark red blood flows down the cavern's walls in smoking streams before forming pools of acrid clotted gore on the uneven floor. Writhing alien intestines and other organs are also spread throughout the cave, forming a sticky obstacle course. The chamber smells of rotting flesh and sulfur, and is lit by a baleful red glow. Whatever evil was unleashed here has left its mark.

This chamber (once used as a storeroom) is where Shar-Thom opened a planar rift to a particularly terrible region of the Abyss using a forgotten ritual, working his foulness elsewhere in the vault while the custodians were forced to turn back the tide of horror that surged through the rift. The custodians managed to seal the rift but not before many of them were slain.

Despite the fact that the planar rift was sealed, the Abyssal layer still exerts its influence over the area, transforming the chamber into its current state.

The following terrain features affect combat in this chamber:

Blood Pools: The pools of blood and gore do not hinder movement, but any creature moving into a square containing one of the pools takes 1d6 points of acid damage from the caustic fluid and acrid fumes.

Intestines: The writhing intestines and other organs are considered difficult terrain for movement purposes. Any creature that falls prone in the organs is grabbed and must make a DC 17 Strength check to stand back up.

As soon as any of the PCs enter this chamber, the barrier between planes thins for an instant and a blood red tear opens up at the spot marked “X” on the map with a sickening tearing sound. At the start of the following round, two oniars demons and two bloodspill raptors emerge and attack. The bloodspill raptors use their attacks to shift around the battlefield while the oniars demons use their *gore* and *impaling antlers* powers to force the PCs into the pools of blood and intestines. The oniars demons and bloodspill raptors fight to the death.

Treasure: This chamber contains two of the golden icons stolen from the old church and an *orb of sanguinary repercussions* +1. If the PCs don't return the icons to the church, they can sell them for 150 gp each. Also in this chamber is an ivory-bound book of holy liturgies blessed by a high priest that was given to the custodians to be used in the ritual to destroy the *Codex*. The book has somehow resisted being defiled by the unholy energy within this cave, and the PCs should recognize its importance as a sacred object immediately.

Bloodspill Raptor (2) Level 6 Skirmishers

Large Elemental Beast

XP 250

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 64; **Bloodied** 32

AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 19, Will 17

Resist 5 acid, 5 fire

Speed 10

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+11 vs.AC; 1d8+5 damage and the bloodspill raptor shifts 1 square.

⊕ **Bloody Rake** (standard; recharge Ⓢ,Ⓢ,Ⓢ)
+11 vs.AC; 2d8+5 damage and the bloodspill raptor shifts 3 squares.

⊕ **Raptor Frenzy** (standard; when first bloodied)
The bloodspill raptor can make a claw attack and a *bloody rake* attack in the same round, even if its *bloody rake* has not recharged.

Bloodthirst

A bloodspill raptor deals an extra 1d6 points of damage to bloodied opponents.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –

Skills Endurance +10, Stealth +10

Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 6 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+5)

Oniares Demon (2)

Level 6 Soldiers

Medium immortal humanoid (demon)

XP 250

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision

HP 68; **Bloodied** 34

AC 22; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 18

Resist 10 variable (1/encounter)

Speed 5, swim 7

⊕ **Gore** (standard; at-will)
+13 vs.AC; 1d6+4 damage and the target is pushed 1 square.

⊕ **Impaling Antlers** (standard; recharge Ⓢ,Ⓢ)
+13 vs.AC; 3d6+4 damage and the target is pushed 3 squares and falls prone.

Coiling Snakes

The mass of snake tails that serve as the oniares' legs grant it a +4 defense bonus against any attack that forces it to be pulled, pushed or slid.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal

Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +11

Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 20 (+8) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)





LEVEL 2 EAST WING OF THE VAULT

This section of the vault is where the bulk of the ordinary custodians lived, ate and slept. Aside from dormitories and a dining hall, some of the chambers include a holding cell for insane custodians, and a summoning and scrying chamber. The east wing is crawling with the spirits of slaughtered custodians, as well as a swarm of angry magekiller wasps released from magical stasis by Shar-Thom when he arose from his deathless slumber.

Area 2-1 Chamber of Relaxation (EL 5, XP 1,050)

Read or paraphrase the following:

The door opens into a large octagonal chamber. The middle of the chamber is lower than the rest of the room, forming a smaller octagonal area that is joined to the rest of the chamber by four short flights of steps. Pillars in the shape of piles of books flank the stairs to the north and south, while in the center of the lower area is a pool of hideous sludge and the defaced statue of a scholar who seems to be relaxing. The chamber radiates an unwholesome chill and the stench of decay lingers in the air.

This chamber is where the custodians came to relax. At one stage in time, this chamber was well-lit and magically warmed, the pool filled with fresh water and numerous golden carp. These days have passed, and the chamber is now a shadow of its former self.

Hidden in the pool of slime are two spectral custodians and two runecursed. An arcanashade emerges from the statue when PCs explore this area. The spectral custodians rely on a mix of melee and ranged attacks while the runecursed try to immobilize PCs to make them easier to strike. The arcanashade relies purely on ranged attacks unless somehow cornered.

PCs entering this chamber who succeed on a DC 20 Perception check hear a faintly audible buzzing sound. This buzzing comes from the magekiller wasps in area 2-8 and area 2-9. With a DC 22 Perception check, a PC who examines the floor in this chamber can see dried slimy footprints leading from the pool to both the western and southern doors and back again. These tracks were made by the runecursed lying in the pool (see below) and ultimately go to area 2-6.

The following terrain features affect combat in this chamber:

Pillars: The pillars can be used as cover.

Pool: The pool is filled with a thick layer of extremely slippery slime. The pool of slime counts as difficult terrain and creatures moving through a square containing slime must make a DC 16 Acrobatics check or fall over.

Stairs: The stairs count as difficult terrain.

Edges: The height difference between the two sections of the chamber is 10 feet (2 squares). Creatures can jump down from the upper level to the lower level without using the stairs, but suffer 1d10 points of falling damage unless they make a trained Acrobatics check to reduce the damage. Climbing up from the lower level without using the stairs requires a DC 15 Athletics check and takes 4 squares of movement.

The entire area is suffused with the unnatural chills effect. This chill has no effect on the undead.

Arcanashade (1) (see page 8 for statistics).

Runecursed (2) (see page 9 for statistics).

Spectral custodian (2) (see page 13 for statistics).

Area 2-2 Abandoned Dorms

Read or paraphrase the following:

Ruined furniture and an assortment of crumbling mundane possessions are all that remain in this chamber.

These chambers were dorm rooms for the regular custodians and are furnished with the remains of beds and wooden trunks. Anything of value has long since been destroyed by the passage of time.

Area 2-3 Privy

Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber contains a large ceramic tub for bathing and a covered privy. The tub is filled with foul-smelling brackish slime. Dust and cobwebs cover everything.

This privy is one of the safest regions in the East Wing since the undead never come here. The enchantments placed upon this area have long since faded to dust.

Area 2-4 Holding Cell (EL 5, XP 1,000)

The door to this chamber is locked (see page 5 for statistics). Once the PCs open it, read or paraphrase the following:

A number of skeletons are piled in this chamber, lying amidst several thick iron chains that hang from the southern wall. Metallic objects glitter amongst the bones, illuminated by a glowing white crystal hanging from the ceiling encased in iron. The chamber is noticeably colder than the corridor you are standing in.

Sometimes custodians would read the wrong book and go mad. Those who suffered this fate would be placed here until they could be cured or sent away from the vault. Unfortunately, Shar-Thom's madness was not detected and he escaped being admitted to this room.

This chamber is affected by both the dreadful whispers and unnatural chills effects, making combat in this chamber far more dangerous than normal.

Treasure: Amongst the skeletons is a bit of treasure, including a pair of jade bracers worth 320 gp and three gold rings worth 70 gp each. The glowing white stone is

enchanted, but any attempts at taking it out of the room cause the light to fade out over the course of 2 hours.

The skeletons here belong to custodians who succumbed to madness as a result of Shar-Thom's meddling. The skeletons themselves aren't dangerous, but the spirits of the damned custodians have possessed the chains that bind them, transforming them into horrible whirling instruments of death. The chains detach themselves from the walls and slide across the floor like snakes to attack, but do not follow PCs beyond the door. The animated chains have greater reach than normal for creatures of their size.

Suddenly, the limp iron chains twitch and spring into unholy life, ripping free from the walls and sliding towards you like angry serpents.

Animated Chain (5)

Level 5 Soldier

Medium natural animate (construct)

XP 200

Initiative +8

Senses Perception +2; blindsight 10

HP 60; **Bloodied** 30

AC 19; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison, sleep.

Speed 6

⊕ **Chain Lash** (standard; at-will).

Reach 2; +13 vs.AC; 1d10+4 damage and the animated chain can make a *binding chain* attack.

⊖ **Binding Chain** (standard; against a target struck by *chain lash*).

+11 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed and can be constricted the following round. An animated chain cannot grab more than one target at a time.

⊖ **Constricting Chain** (standard; against a grabbed target).

+11 vs.AC; 1d10+4 damage and the target is restrained. An animated chain cannot restrain more than one target at a time.

Alignment Evil **Languages** —

Str 16 (+5)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 10 (+2)

Con 20 (+7)

Int 1 (−3)

Cha 5 (−1)

Area 2–5

Cursed Bust

Read or paraphrase the following:

At the end of the corridor is an intersection. An alcove faces you, and sitting in the alcove is the marble bust of a smiling scholar.

This marble bust is identical to the marble bust in area 1–3, but the enchantment on this bust has been replaced with a curse by Shar-Thom.

If anyone touches or examines the bust, read or paraphrase the following:

The face of the kindly scholar melts away, the stone running like molten wax. As the face melts it is replaced with a mummified countenance with rotting cheeks, blackened teeth and burning hollow pits for eyes.



In the next instant, the PC who touched or examined the bust is attacked by Shar-Thom. The undead scholar uses his flensing gaze to strip the PCs' flesh away and add it to the Codex. This is resolved like a normal attack. After Shar-Thom attacks, the bust explodes in a close burst 1 attack; +17 vs. Reflex; 3d6+3 damage.

If the PC survives the attack, he experiences a sudden dizzying vision of both the Codex and Shar-Thom. If this occurs, read the description of area 4–2 (minus Shar-Thom's speech).

Area 2–6

Kitchen of Blood

PCs following the runecursed tracks from 2–1, find that they lead here before heading back again:

Sheets of wet sticky blood cover the walls, floor and ceiling of this chamber, staining everything in an awful dark shade. The blood originates from the ravaged corpse of one of the town guards, his chest cavity hacked open to reveal his innards, several of which have been removed and hung from hooks above his body. A blood-splattered meat cleaver and other bloodstained tools lie near the body, which has been placed on a bench. It seems that this chamber might have once been a kitchen, but the guard's blood covers everything.

One of the missing guards from Yaleford was dragged here by the runecursed from area 2–1 and murdered for the sheer joy of it. They then left his body to rot.

Despite the horrible appearance of this chamber, it is not dangerous and looks like it might have been a well-stocked kitchen at one stage.

Treasure: Most of the utensils in this chamber have succumbed to rust and corrosion, but the meat cleaver is magical and functions as a *handaxe* +1 in combat, despite its unusual and bloody appearance.

Area 2-7 Hellish Dining Room (EL 6, XP 1,225)

The door to this chamber is locked (see page 5 for stats). Once the PCs open it, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the door is a dining hall dominated by a huge ebony table. An enormous stone fireplace lit with strange magenta flames takes up the southern half of the chamber, and a wooden cabinet filled with metal tankards and plates sits against the eastern wall. Heaped on top of the table like some sort of overflowing banquet is a mass of blackened bones. A strange hissing and spitting sound issues forth from the fireplace, almost as if the lurid purple flames are trying to speak.

Once used as a dining room by the custodians, this chamber has now become the lair for several undead, placed here by Shar-Thom.

Living within the fireplace are five lesser flameskulls surrounded by purple flames (instead of the normal green). The lesser flameskulls rise up out of the fireplace to attack as soon as anyone investigates it or the heap of bones on the table, reciting foul verses in Abyssal as they blast the PCs with their flame rays.

The heap of bones on the table is actually a dreadful form of undead known as a bone swarm. The bone swarm rises up from the table and crawls towards the PCs while they are engaged with the lesser flameskulls, using grasping swarm on nearby PCs to knock them prone.

The bone swarm is made up of the charred bones of five custodians whom Shar-Thom roasted with fire magic. The custodians' heads transformed into free-willed lesser flameskulls (hence their evil alignment).

The flames in the fireplace are magical and cannot be extinguished without the use of high-level ritual magic. Sitting in the fireplace is a locked iron strongbox that has survived the flames relatively unscathed. Spotting the strongbox in the flames requires a DC 13 Perception check.

The following terrain features affect combat in this chamber:

Table: Moving from the floor onto the table requires 2 squares of movement. Luckily, the table can take the weight of several people.

Flames: PCs take 2d8 points of fire damage upon entering the square adjacent to the fireplace. PCs must reach through the flames (and take fire damage) to reach the locked iron strongbox stashed amongst the glowing coals.

Treasure: The iron strongbox is burning hot to the touch and locked. PCs take 1d4 points of fire damage per round they handle the strongbox and must wait at least 10 minutes before it's cool enough to handle without taking damage. Both the strongbox and the lock are of superb construction.

Iron Strongbox: AC/Reflex 8; Fortitude 8; HP 45; Break DC 30; Thievery DC 25.

Inside the iron strongbox is a *belt of sacrifice* (heroic-tier) and a minor magic item known as a *quill of scribing*. *Quills of scribing* are magic items that allow scribes to quickly and easily copy various types of writing in half the usual time. While *quills of scribing* normally have no real game benefit except as curios (they are worth 90 gp each) this particular *quill of scribing* once belonged to Kalanuu, the Mad Scribe, and showing it to him grants the PCs a generous bonus to the skill challenge encounter in area 1-6.

Lesser Flameskull (5) Level 4 Artillery

Tiny natural animate (undead)

XP 175

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +9

HP 40; **Bloodied** 20

AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 fire, 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed fly 8 (hover)

⊕ **Fiery Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Fire**

Reach 0; +6 vs. AC; 1 damage plus 1d6 fire damage

⌘ **Flame Ray** (standard; at will) ♦ **Fire**

Ranged 8; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d8+3 fire damage

Alignment Evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common

Skills Stealth +9

Str 5 (−1)

Dex 15 (+4)

Wis 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+4)

Int 18 (+6)

Cha 16 (+5)

Bone Swarm

Level 8 Brute

Medium natural animate (swarm, undead)

XP 350

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision

Swarm Attack aura 1; the bone swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.

HP 106; **Bloodied** 53

AC 20; **Fort** 21, **Ref** 18, **Will** 14

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, half damage from melee and ranged attacks;

Vulnerable 10 radiant, 10 against close and area attacks

Speed 4, climb 4

⊕ **Grasping Swarm** (standard; at-will)

+11 vs. Reflex; 2d8+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone and slowed (save ends both).

Alignment Evil **Languages** –

Str 20 (+9)

Dex 16 (+7)

Wis 8 (+3)

Con 16 (+7)

Int 3 (+0)

Cha 3 (+0)



Area 2–8 **Scrying and Summoning Chamber** (EL 5; XP 1,000)

PCs approaching this chamber can hear the buzzing of the magekiller wasps that lie ahead with a DC 10 Perception check. Once PCs reach the chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

A shimmering blue light illuminates this chamber, radiating outwards from an empty magic circle drawn in glowing azure pigments. Situated around the circle are three mirrors mounted securely in sturdy metal frames that seem to reflect and amplify the light. The chamber is roughly triangular in shape and is devoid of other furnishings.

This chamber was once a summoning and scrying chamber for the custodians. They could call on spirits from other planes. They used these spirits to keep tabs on the outside world, track down potentially dangerous books, and protect the world from unfolding prophecies.

Buzzing about this chamber when the PCs arrive are eight magekiller wasps, magical insects that incubate their eggs in the brains of magic-using creatures and can fire blasts of greenish energy from their stingers. The magekiller wasps were released from magical stasis by Shar-Thom, and are drawn here by the magical energy trapped within the mirrors.

The magekiller wasps attack as soon as they detect the PCs, half of them using their eldritch stings to kill martial and divine PCs while the other half close in and try and incapacitate arcane spellcasters with their sting attacks. The magekiller wasps instinctively know that bouncing their eldritch stings off the mirrors causes extra damage.

The magic circle is currently empty but can be used as the focus for various rituals. It does not count as a teleportation circle. The mirrors are constructed from highly polished steel and mounted in strong iron frames. They have the following statistics:

Enchanted Mirrors: AC/Reflex 3; Fortitude/Will 15; HP 40; Break DC 16; Immune powers and abilities with the Arcane keyword.

The enchanted mirrors have been exposed to the magical energies seething in this chamber for so long that they have been altered over the centuries, and enhance the use of arcane magic used in this chamber (see below).

The following terrain features affect combat in this chamber:

Mirrors: Anyone using any ability or power with the arcane keyword while in this chamber gains a +1 power bonus to attack and damage rolls. A creature can also try to bounce a close or ranged arcane attack off a mirror onto a target for extra damage. To do so, the creature must make an attack roll against one of the mirrors (against the appropriate defense), then make a secondary attack with a –2 penalty against a target whose image is reflected in the mirror. While the mirror must have both line of sight

and line of effect to the target, the attacker only needs line of sight. If both attacks are successful, the attack deals an additional 1d8 points of damage to the target. This bonus damage is untyped damage regardless of the keyword used in the attack and the mirror is unharmed by the attack.

PCs using the mirrors for the focus of scrying rituals also gain a +10 bonus on their Arcana checks.

A PC can determine the effects of the mirrors with a DC 25 Arcana check. This takes a standard action and a PC gains a +5 bonus to the check if he sees the wasps using the mirror to bounce their eldritch sting attacks.

Magekiller Wasp (8) **Level 2 Artillery** Small natural magical beast XP 125

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision; see also *sense magic*.

HP 24; **Bloodied** 12

AC 15; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14

Speed 2, fly 8 (hover)

④ **Sting** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 damage and the magekiller wasp makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +6 vs. Fortitude and the target is slowed (save ends). *First Failed Save:* The target falls unconscious.

✧ **Eldritch Sting** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Arcane**
Ranged 6; +10 vs. AC; 2d6+3 damage.

Sense Magic

A magekiller wasp can sense the presence of arcane magic in any object or creature that it has line of sight to.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 12 (+2) **Int** 7 (–1) **Cha** 13 (+2)

Area 2–9 **Magekiller Nest** (EL 5, XP 1,000)

PCs approaching this chamber can hear the buzzing of the magekiller wasps that lie ahead with a DC 10 Perception check. Once PCs reach the chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

At the end of the corridor is a large rectangular library stuffed with moldy and dusty bookcases. Taking up a large portion of the chamber is an enormous hive fashioned from a combination of mulched paper and other bric-a-brac taken from the complex. The hive is attached to the walls of the chamber by sticky strands of some sort of adhesive slime and iridescent purple and green wasps the size of cats crawl over its surface, buzzing angrily.

This chamber once housed a variety of texts on arcana, dungeoneering, history, nature, religion and other topics. Most of the books kept here have long since rotted away and those that survived have been used as building supplies and food by the new occupants.



When Shar-Thom awoke from his long sleep he released the magekiller wasps from stasis and transported them to this library, hoping to use them to defend the vault from invaders. The wasps quickly took over, building a nest for themselves and scrounging every resource that they could from the surrounding areas.

As soon as PCs enter this chamber, the magekiller wasps fly out from their nest and attack, following the tactics of their sisters in area 2–8. One round after the attack begins, the magekiller wasp queen emerges and attacks, using her eldritch sting to blast the PCs and attempting to implant any helpless target with her eggs.

Despite the size of the nest (it is over 4 squares or 20-feet across), it is rather fragile and vulnerable to fire attacks.

Magekiller Wasp Nest: AC/Reflex 3; Fortitude 15; HP 10; Vulnerable fire 5

PCs who destroy the nest cause the corpse of one of the town guards to fall out, covered in sticky slime. The guard is miraculously still alive (even if the PCs destroy the nest with fire), but is on the verge of death and implanted with a magekiller wasp egg. Unless cured, the guard dies within a few days and a normal magekiller wasp emerges from his brain.

Treasure: Aside from the dying guard, the nest contains one of the golden icons stolen from the church. If PCs decide not to return it, they can sell it for 150 gp.

Tucked away in a corner of the chamber (located with a DC 20 Perception check) is a vial of golden liquid that shines with a soft light. This is a vial of tears taken from a celestial qui-rin. Wrapped around the vial is a piece of leather upon which is scrawled a message in archaic common – give the players Handout A. The vial of qui-rin tears is one of the components that the PCs can use to destroy the Codex of the Damned.

Magekiller wasp (6) (see page 19 for statistics).

Magekiller Wasp Queen Level 6 Artillery

Medium natural magical beast

XP 250

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision; see also *sense magic*.

HP 52; **Bloodied** 26

AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 18

Speed 2, fly 8 (hover)

⊕ **Sting** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+13 vs.AC; 1d8 damage and the magekiller wasp queen makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +11 vs. Fortitude and the target is slowed (save ends). *First Failed Save:* The target falls unconscious. Targets take a –2 penalty to saving throws against a magekiller wasp queen's poison.

⤵ **Eldritch Sting** (standard; at will) ♦ **Arcane**
Ranged 8; +15 vs.AC; 2d8+4 damage.

⬇ **Egg Implantation** (standard; against a helpless or unconscious target).

The magekiller wasp queen implants the target with a magekiller wasp egg (see Appendix B: New Monsters).

Sense Magic

A magekiller wasp queen can sense the presence of arcane magic in any object or creature that it has line of sight to.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Str 12 (+4)

Dex 20 (+8)

Wis 15 (+5)

Con 16 (+6)

Int 10 (+3)

Cha 16 (+6)

LEVEL 3 SOUTH WING OF THE VAULT

This wing of the vault is where the senior custodians worked and studied. It is also where the most dangerous books were kept. Being so close to the Codex and Shar-Thom, the South Wing is also the most warped and dangerous area in the vault. It is home to several horrid creatures, including a dreaded apocrypha demon and a pair of dragonborn atavists that have escaped from their ancient confinement cell. PCs should be 6th-level by the time they reach this wing of the vault, and the encounters in this wing are much more difficult as a result.

Area 3-I Chamber of the Seer (EL 7, XP 1,500)

Read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this chamber are covered in murals depicting scholars and seers chronicling great disasters, including a flight of red dragons reducing a magnificent city to cinders, a tsunami devouring a coastal city, and a monstrous horned demon the size of a castle emerging from a mountaintop as exultant worshippers look on. In the center of the chamber is the statue of an elderly eladrin male holding a bowl of water in his hands. Diagonally across from you is another exit.

This chamber once served as a place of meditation and reflection. Custodians came here to gaze up at the statue of Zoranthel (one of the founding custodians) and ask the

enchanted monument a question. Now, the chamber is cursed and reacts to Shar-Thom's commands should he perceive the presence of any creature passing through it.

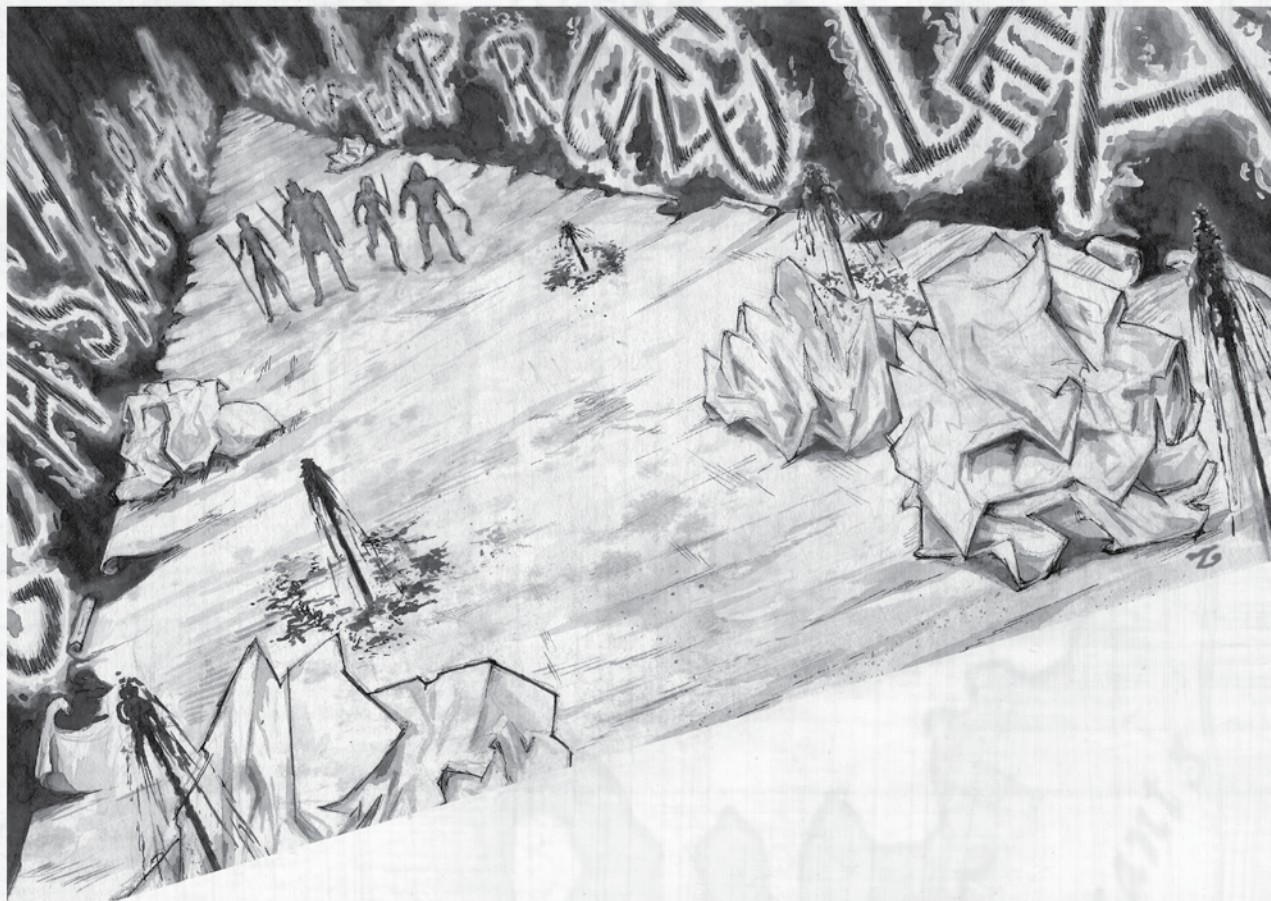
The bowl held by the statue of Zoranthel is filled with crystal clear water. PCs can identify the function of the statue by the runes engraved on the bowl with a DC 22 Arcana check. If successful, they also know the procedure for activating the statue's power.

Placing an offering worth at least 400 gp in the bowl causes it to vanish in a blaze of white light and the statue's eyes to begin glowing with a pearly radiance. At the same time, the figure animates and speaks to the PC who made the offering, his words in archaic Common:

"What question would you ask Zoranthel today, scholar?"

Any PC who made an offering can ask the statue a question as if using the Consult Mystic Sages ritual. The statue only answers a single question, but its knowledge of the vault and the Codex is faultless and any question posed about either (including the location of specific creatures or objects) is answered perfectly without any need for skill checks. For all other questions, the ritual functions as described in the *4E Player's Handbook*. PCs can ask the statue a new question by placing another offering in the bowl and are only limited by how much treasure they are willing to sacrifice.

Asking the statue any question about the vault or the Codex alerts Shar-Thom, causing the chamber to change quite drastically as the fallen custodian exerts his dark power once more.



One round after the statue finishes answering the question, Shar-Thom's sepulchral voice echoes throughout the chamber:

"So, the outside world has sent a force to oppose me, has it? Come to me, if you dare, adventurers; your flayed skins will be added to the Codex, like all who came before you."

As Shar-Thom finishes speaking, five horribly mutilated runecursed (missing various body parts care of the flayed horrors in area 3–7) move out from the other corridor to attack. At the same time, runes inscribed on the floor activate and flare to life when stepped on, releasing blasts of magical flame into the air. The runecursed are just as likely to step on a rune as a PC. After the runecursed have been dealt with, the room reverts back to normal, as the remaining fire runes deactivate.

Fire Rune Floor Level 10 Obstacle Trap XP 500

The chamber's floor is covered in mystical runes that randomly flicker with fire.

Trap: This trap consists of 10 runes positioned throughout the chamber (see map). When a rune is triggered it erupts into a stream of fire and attacks.

Perception

- ♦ **DC 24:** A PC can discern if any adjacent squares contain fire runes.

Additional Skills: Arcana

- ♦ **DC 21:** The character's knowledge provides a +2 bonus to disable a rune.

Trigger

When a creature enters or begins its turn in a fire rune square, the trap attacks the creature.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Melee 1**

Target: Creature in a trapped square.

Attack: +13 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d8+6 fire damage. On a critical hit the target takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

COUNTERMEASURES

- A PC who makes a successful Athletics check (DC 6 or DC 11 with a running start) can jump over a single trapped square.
- An adjacent PC can disable a rune with a DC 22 Thievery check.

Runecursed (5) (see page 8 for statistics).

Area 3–2

Shattered Bust

Read or paraphrase the following:

At the end of the corridor are an intersection and the shattered remains of a marble bust in an alcove. It looks as if the bust was destroyed some time ago.

Shar-Thom destroyed the marble bust in the alcove here centuries ago. PCs who survived the cursed bust in area 2–5 probably recognize the custodian's handiwork.

Area 3–3

Damaged Teleportation Chamber (EL 6, XP 1,200)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the stone door is a large chamber lit by pale blue light coming from a partially damaged teleportation circle inscribed on the floor. Cracks and holes line the walls, and it appears that the chamber was the center of some sort of battle. A large, scorched wooden trunk is the only furnishing in this room. The trunk has been turned upside down, scattering anachronistic-looking clothing across the floor.

Standing in the center of this chamber are two powerfully-built humanoids resembling dragonborn. The reptilian monsters are covered with dull black scales dripping with caustic green fluid, and hold wicked-looking swords in their meaty talons.

This chamber was used by high-ranking custodians to come and go from the vault when they needed to travel long distances quickly and efficiently. When Shar-Thom attacked the vault, a few custodians tried to escape via the teleportation circle and were attacked by several apocrypha demons. At the end of the battle, all but one of the apocrypha demons were slain, the custodians killed and the teleportation circle damaged.

Recently, two black dragonborn atavists escaped from their magical stasis in area 3–4. The atavists were attacked by runecursed and spectral custodians as they tried to make their way out but were forced back into this chamber. Despite the fact that they are desperate, the dragonborn atavists attack the PCs rather than parley, hoping to steal their equipment and make it back to the surface, in the hope that the PCs have already taken care of the undead.

If the PCs have any dragonborn amongst them, the dragonborn atavists fight to the death. Otherwise they try to flee once one of them is killed. The dragonborn atavists use their breath weapons as soon as they are able and make use of hit and run tactics.

Treasure: Amongst the clothing on the floor is an emerald, sapphire and gold hairpin in the shape of a winged staff worth 550 gp. The hairpin is well-hidden and requires a DC 25 Perception check to locate.

Development: The teleportation circle can be repaired by spending 1,500 gp in rare materials and making a DC 30 Arcana check. If repaired, the teleportation circle could possibly link to other adventure locations, depending on the dictates of the campaign.



Gloomstalker

Level 6 Elite Lurker

Medium natural humanoid (reptile)

XP 500

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 114; **Bloodied** 57

AC 22; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 17

Resist 15 acid

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

⬆ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+11 vs.AC; 1d6+2 damage, and the gloomstalker shifts 1 square.

⬆ **Twin Blades** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
The gloomstalker makes two short sword attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target grants combat advantage to the gloomstalker until the end of the gloomstalker's next turn.

⬆ **Breath Weapon** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Acid**
Close blast 3; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d10+2 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

⬆ **Gloom Burst** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ **Zone**
Close burst 2; the gloomstalker creates a zone of darkness that remains until the end of its next turn. The cloud blocks line of sight, and all creatures within the area (except the gloomstalker) are blinded.

Combat Advantage

The gloomstalker deals an extra 2d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Stealth +13, Thievery +13

Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+8) **Wis** 13 (+4)

Con 15 (+5) **Int** 13 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Equipment two short swords

Foulblade

Level 8 Elite Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (reptile)

XP 700

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
HP 176; **Bloodied** 88

AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 17

Resist 15 acid

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7, fly 7 (hover); see also *flyby attack*

Action Points 1

⬆ **Caustic Falchion** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid, Weapon**
+13 vs.AC; 2d4+5 damage (crit 2d4+13) plus 1d6 acid damage.

⬆ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)
The foulblade flies up to 7 squares and makes a melee basic attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target.

⬆ **Wing Slam** (minor; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ)
+11 vs. Reflex; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the foulblade's next turn.

⬆ **Breath Weapon** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Acid**
Close blast 3; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d8+3 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

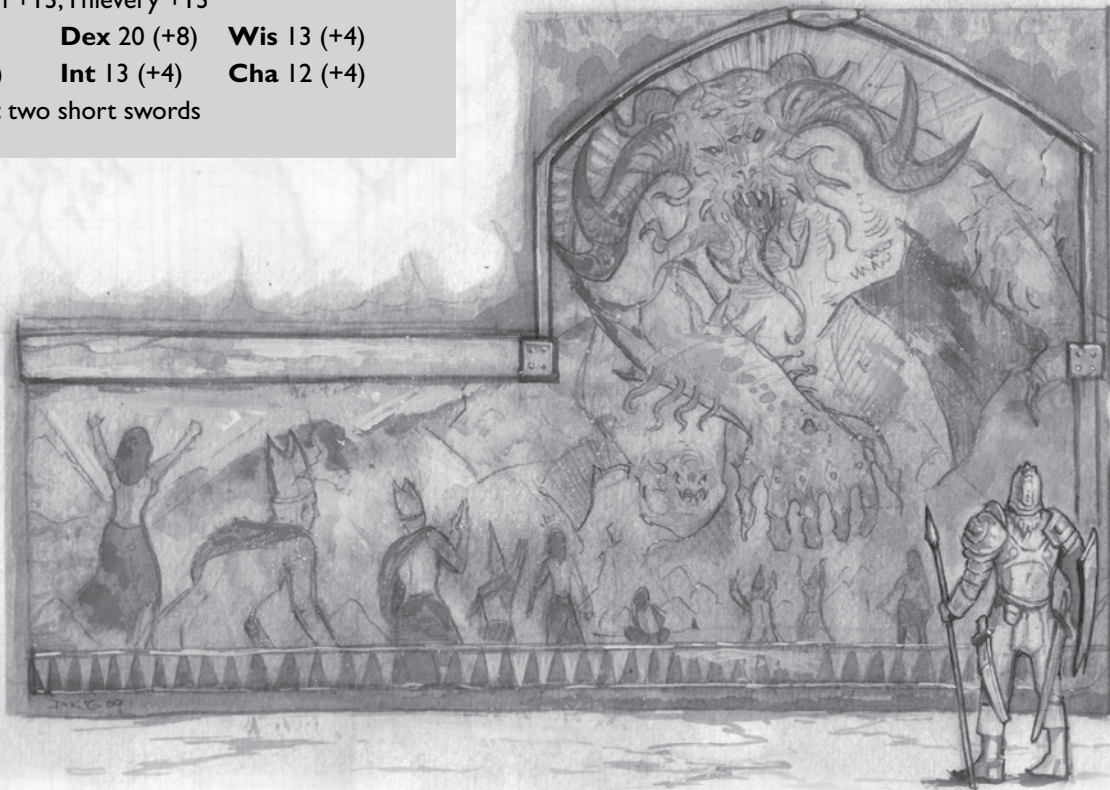
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Athletics +14, Stealth +12

Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+6)

Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 8 (+3)

Equipment falchion, leather armor



Area 3–4 Empty Stasis Chambers

Read or paraphrase the following:

This small bare chamber is empty except for a layer of dust. Symbols have been carved into the walls.

Sometimes, the custodians would hold a few creatures related to various prophecies and disasters for study, keeping them in magical stasis until needed. These identical chambers are where these creatures were kept. All are now empty. The symbols were part of the stasis magic and can be identified with a DC 22 Arcana check.

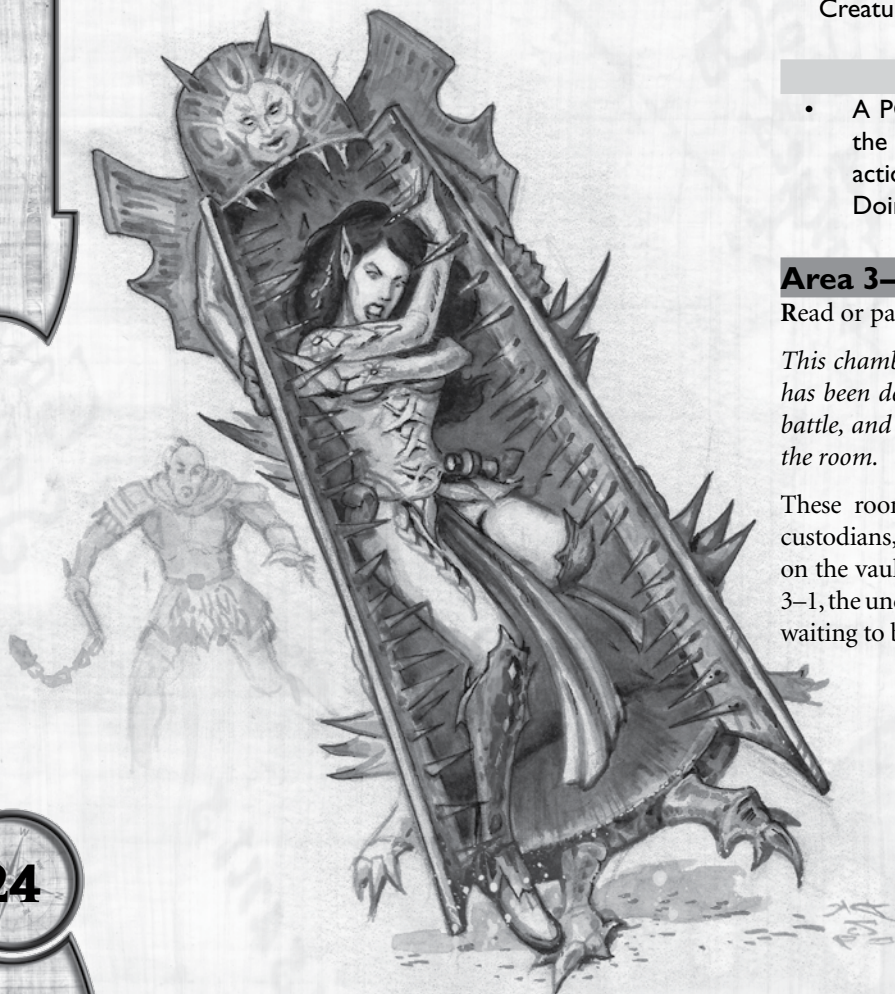
Area 3–5 Malfunctioning Stasis Chamber (EL 6; XP 1,150)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Floating within the chamber are two spectral apparitions that appear frozen in time. Suddenly a pulse of light flashes in the room and washes over you.

This chamber still contains residual stasis magic that flares up every few rounds to freeze those within a certain radius. As the PCs open the door, the spectral custodians are released from stasis and swoop forward to attack. The spectral custodians have as much chance to be affected by the stasis flare as the PCs, but gain a +4 defense bonus against it due to their insubstantial nature and close connection to the vault.

Spectral custodian (2) (see page 9 for statistics)



Stasis Flare

Hazard

Level 9 Elite Lurker

XP 800

The chamber is filled with a pulsing light that slows down and immobilizes those affected by it before quickly dissipating.

Hazard: The stasis pulse affects the entire chamber and the first 6 squares of the corridor (starting from the square nearest the door and moving east from there).

Perception

- DC 26: The PC detects a faint humming sound that precedes each stasis flare.

Additional Skills

- DC 22: The PC recognizes the symbols carved on the walls. A PC who identifies the magic being used gains a +2 bonus to their Will defense against the hazard.

Initiative +7

Trigger The stasis flare is random (recharge 3,4,5,6).

Attack

Standard Action

Close burst 4

Targets: Creatures in burst.

Attack +14 vs. Will.

Hit: The creature is frozen in stasis (save ends).

While in stasis, a creature cannot take any actions (even free actions or purely mental ones) nor can it be moved or affected by any attack. **Miss:** Creature is slowed instead (save ends). **Aftereffect:** Creature is slowed (save ends).

COUNTERMEASURES

- A PC can make a DC 26 Arcana check to deface the correct symbols on the walls as a standard action (this action draws opportunity attacks). Doing so causes the stasis flare to end.

Area 3–6

Abandoned Dorms

Read or paraphrase the following:

This chamber was once well-appointed. Now, the furniture has been destroyed by the passage of time and the chaos of battle, and lies in shattered and moldering piles throughout the room.

These rooms were used as dorm rooms for the senior custodians, and suffered poorly during Shar-Thom's attack on the vault. If the PCs do not face the runecursed in area 3–1, the undead can be found lounging in these three rooms, waiting to be called upon by their infernal master.

Area 3–7

Torture Chamber (EL 6, XP 1,300)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Torture devices of every description compete for space in this horrifying chamber. Their blood-stained frames are crowded around sinister looking lead-lined pillars covered in blasphemous symbols and runes, and topped by the maimed statues of clay angels. The cloying stench of flayed flesh and congealed blood hangs in this chamber like a shroud, and every surface is splattered in a rich tapestry of viscera and gore.

This chamber once housed a number of extremely vile works in lead-covered pillars. Numerous wards protected the pillars from harm and clay sentinels were set to guard them. Shar-Thom looted the pillars of their texts and, in the process, dispelled the wards and destroyed the clay sentinels.

When PCs enter this chamber, they interrupt a trio of flayed horrors in the process of torturing a runecursed on a table covered in wicked spikes. The runecursed has been tortured for countless years and can only gibber in madness and thrash about on the table, most of its body parts lying twitching about the chamber.

When the flayed horrors see the PCs read or paraphrase the following:

The flayed horrors turn from their pitiful project and smile insanely, their eyes burning with gleeful hunger. As they move to attack, a nearby iron maiden springs into unholy life and begins sliding across the chamber towards you, its spiked lid opening and closing like a giant steel maw.

The flayed horrors use flensing strike whenever they can while the animated iron maiden attempts to trap a creature inside it. All of the creatures in this chamber fight to the death.

Shortly after Shar-Thom was imprisoned within the vault and it was buried beneath a landslide, the flayed horrors transformed this room into a torture chamber, using the powers of the void to create horrible machines for extracting information from the custodians still left alive. When everything had been learnt from those poor souls, the flayed horrors moved on to the runecursed, and evidence of their work can be found on the bodies of all the runecursed in this region.

A bank of six iron levers hidden behind a torture device opens the pillars. PCs using the levers find that the pillars' cavities are empty.

In addition to the terrain, the room possesses the fearful whispers effect.

Flayed Horror (3)

Level 7 Soldier

Medium natural humanoid (undead)

XP 300

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision

HP 78; **Bloodied** 39

AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

Ⓢ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

‡ **Flensing Strike** (standard; at will) ♦ **Healing**

The flayed horror makes two claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the flayed horror makes a secondary attack against the target. *Secondary Attack*: +12 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends), and the flayed horror gains 10 temporary hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Stealth +11

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 14 (+5) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 6 (+1)

Animated Iron Maiden

Level 9 Brute

Medium natural animate

XP 500

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55

AC 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19

Immune disease, poison

Speed 4

Ⓢ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs. AC; 2d8+5 damage and the target is subject to the iron maiden's *jaw trap* ability.

‡ **Jaw Trap** (standard; after making a successful slam attack)

+10 vs. Reflex; the target is retrained and takes ongoing 10 damage from the iron maiden's spikes (save ends). The iron maiden can only restrain one target at a time, but can make *slam* attacks against other targets as normal. Saving throws against this ability take a –2 penalty.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 10 (+4) **Wis** 10 (+4)

Con 21 (+9) **Int** 1 (–1) **Cha** 4 (+1)

Area 3–8

Demon Lair
(EL 7, XP 1,400)

Read or paraphrase the following:

Thousands of sheets of paper have been strewn over every corner of this room. Streamers of vellum and papyrus scrolls hang from lead-lined pillars like the webs of some great spider. Most of the paper is covered in a hideous scrawling language that causes your eyes to ache, and the air is filled with the stench of blood and ink.

This chamber used to house a number of heretical and apocryphal texts so blasphemous that only the senior custodians had access to them. The texts once contained within the pillars were removed by Shar-Thom when the vault was first corrupted. Their power was used to create the abyssal portal in area 1–9, enact vile curses such as the one that turned Kalanuu into the Mad Scribe, and summon various demons and monsters to attack the custodians.

The papers strewn about every inch of this chamber are covered in unholy verses, foul litanies, obscene prayers and awful truths (and outright lies) about the gods and the nature of the universe. The papers are one of the physical manifestations associated with apocrypha demons, and this chamber has become the lair of an apocrypha demon named Anurnadan.

The paper on the floor and hanging from the pillars is highly flammable. If the paper is set alight, the room quickly erupts into flame, filling 1 square the first round, 2 adjacent squares the second round, 4 adjacent squares the 3rd round, and so on until the entire chamber is engulfed. The fire burns for 2 rounds in each square and inflicts 1d6 fire damage to any creature that begins or ends its turn caught in a square.

Treasure: Lying amidst the papers are the final two gold icons stolen from the old church.

If PCs don't return the icons to Greta, they can sell them for 150 gp apiece. The PCs also find a withered skeleton whose mouth is stuffed with paper wearing a suit of *chainmail* +2 and a *potion of vitality* in a steel flask.

Note: While the *potion of vitality* is a high-level magic item for 5th or 6th-level PCs, it can help them survive the grueling battles to come. If you believe the potion is too powerful, feel free to replace it with 2 or 3 regular *potions of healing*.

When Shar-Thom attacked the vault, one of the first measures he took to secure victory was to summon several apocrypha demons from a horrible text known as the Book of Vile Tongues. These apocrypha demons aided Shar-Thom in his plans, but only Anurnadan survived the struggle.

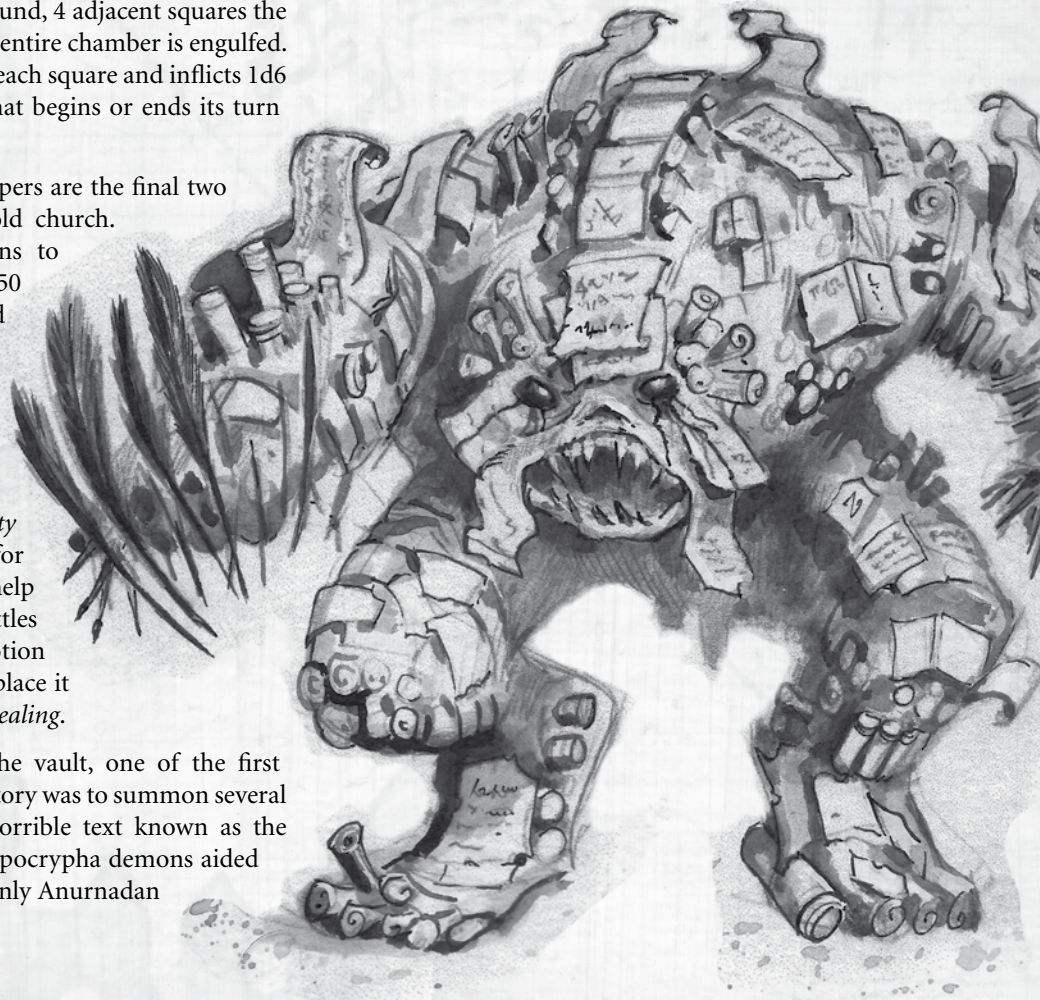
When the PCs enter the chamber, Anurnadan is concealed amid the papers on the floor. As soon as they begin searching through the chamber, he addresses them with his telepathy, his voice horrible, yet, at the same time, strangely alluring. Read or paraphrase the following:

"Pitiful mortals, do you search for the meaning of truth? Truth is but an illusion and your lives nothing more than lies. Turn back now and I may let you keep your little deceptions."

Anurnadan does not want the PCs to leave, but enjoys his falsehoods. If the PCs turn and leave, he laughs and directs two arcanashades to fly out of the nearby walls and attack, firing their arcane lances at the PCs. One round later, he rises up out of the papers on the floor, his eyes weeping black ink.

Anurnadan begins combat by hammering the PCs with word of blasphemy. He spends an action point to target an individual PC with ray of delusion. Anurnadan uses his claw attacks while his ray recharges and tries to keep out of combat as much as possible. If brought below 30 hit points, Anurnadan uses body of lies and makes a Bluff check to fake his death in the hopes that the PCs leave. If they do so, he follows them at a safe distance until they get into combat with Shar-Thom.

Arcanashade (2) (see page 13 for statistics).



Anurnadan (Apocrypha Demon)

Level 9 Elite Lurker

Medium immortal humanoid (demon) XP 800

Initiative +10

+13; darkvision

Senses Perception

HP 144; **Bloodied** 72

AC 24; Fortitude 21, Reflex 19, Will 21

Resist 10 cold, 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 fire

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7

Action Points 1

Ⓢ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+14 vs.AC; 2d6+5 damage.

⚡ **Ray of Delusion** (standard; recharge Ⓜ, Ⓜ, Ⓜ)

♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 5; +12 vs.Will; a target struck by the ray is dominated (save ends). *Aftereffect:* the target is dazed (save ends). A target takes a -2 penalty to its saving throw to end either condition.

⚡ **Word of Blasphemy** (standard; encounter) ♦

Psychic

Close blast 3; +10 vs.Will; 4d10+5 psychic damage and the target is dazed (save ends). A target takes a -2 penalty to its saving throw to end this condition.

Apocryphal Touch (standard; at-will)

An apocrypha demon can alter any page of writing it touches, changing the content and context of the words and pictures to whatever it wishes. Ritual scrolls and books touched in this way are destroyed. An apocrypha demon can alter one page of writing each round it maintains contact with a book.

Body of Lies (minor; at will)

An apocrypha demon can disguise itself as a volume of paper in the form of scrolls, books, folios, palimpsests or any other written material. In paper form, the apocrypha demon gains a +10 bonus to Stealth checks and cannot be targeted by ranged or melee attacks. It gains vulnerable 10 against area attacks used against it, and retains its other resistances and vulnerabilities. An apocrypha demon can resume its true form as a minor action.

Name of the Beast

Anyone who knows an apocrypha demon's true name gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls against the demon. They also do not suffer the penalty to saving throws against the apocrypha demon's powers.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** All; telepathy

Skills Arcana +14, Bluff +14, Religion +14, Stealth +11

Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+8)

Con 18 (+8) **Int** 20 (+9) **Cha** 21 (+9)

Area 3-9

Guardian Wizards

(EL 9, XP 2,100)

The door to this chamber is locked. Once PCs open it, read or paraphrase the following:

This vast circular chamber is over a hundred feet in diameter and lit by several floating balls of smokeless orange flame. Murals of scholars predicting various catastrophic and awful tragedies cover the walls and ceiling, their heads bowed in doom and grief as the world around them collapses. In the center of the room is a magnificent mural of three masked wizards hurling spells at one another. Opposite from you is a strange wall of dizzying polychromatic light that roils spasmodically in time to some unknown force.

This extremely dangerous chamber is an antechamber of sorts and leads directly to the demiplane created by Shar-Thom and the Codex. The murals are indicative of the murals spread throughout the complex, but their subject matter is far more terrible. PCs who examine the murals and make a DC 16 Perception check can tell that the images have been altered in small ways to maximize the feelings of hopelessness and despair.

The balls of flame are free standing orbs of continual flame and radiate no heat. They cannot be moved or damaged, but can be extinguished by any power or effect that destroys magical zones and conjurations (each orb has a Will defense of 20). There are a total of seven orbs of continual flame surrounding the central floor mural.

The wall of light is a permanent two-way gate to the demiplane of the Codex. PCs passing through the gate feel giddy for a second before arriving in area 4-1 of the demiplane.

The mural in the center of the chamber's floor is truly a work of art, but is also a deadly guardian constructed by the ancient custodians.

As the PCs start moving across the room, the three wizards animate. When this happens, read or paraphrase the following:

The murals of the robed wizards suddenly spring to life, pulling themselves free from the floor's embrace to turn and face you. Their weapons are held at the ready and glow with eldritch power.

The wizard guardians are magical constructs of pure energy and exist solely to protect the room. Despite the fact that they are constructs, the guardians are intelligent creatures and attack in unison. While they are deadly opponents and fight until slain, the guardians do not follow the PCs through the gate into the demiplane, and desperate or clever PCs can use this ploy to escape. If the Codex is destroyed, the guardians dissolve into brightly colored pigments and slowly drain away.

Development: If the PCs learned the password from Kalanuu, they can travel through this room without releasing the guardians. The password is Yeltanin (the name of one of the greatest of the custodians).

Staff Guardian Level 7 Elite Soldier

Medium natural animate (construct) XP 700

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 150; **Bloodied** 75

AC 25; Fortitude 22, Reflex 21, Will 20

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** fire 10

Speed 6

⊕ **Staff** (standard; at-will)
+14 v.AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the staff guardian's next turn.

⬇ **Flaming Staff** (standard; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ) ♦ **Fire**
+14 vs.AC; 2d8+5 fire damage, and the target slides 2 squares and takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

↩ **Immolating Staff** (standard; when the staff guardian reaches 0 hit points) ♦ **Fire**
Close burst 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 3d8+5 fire damage, and the target is knocked prone and takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 14 (+5) **Cha** 10 (+3)

Orb Guardian Level 7 Elite Controller

Medium natural animate (construct) XP 700

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
HP 140; **Bloodied** 70

AC 23; Fortitude 21, Reflex 21, Will 21

Immune disease, poison

Speed 6

⊕ **Orb** (standard; at-will)
+12 v.AC; 1d8+5 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the orb guardian's next turn.

↩ **Orb of Denial** (standard; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ) ♦ **Psychic**
Close burst 3; +9 vs. Will; 3d10+5 psychic damage, and the target cannot use encounter or daily powers until the end of the orb guardian's next turn.

↩ **Orb of Dissolution** (standard; when the orb guardian reaches 0 hit points) ♦ **Acid**
Close burst 3; +9 vs. Fortitude; 4d8+5 acid damage and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 14 (+5) **Int** 19 (+7) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Wand Guardian Level 7 Elite Artillery

Medium natural animate (construct) XP 700

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision
HP 120; **Bloodied** 60

AC 21; Fortitude 20, Reflex 22, Will 20

Immune disease, poison

Speed 8

⊕ **Wand** (standard; at-will)
+12 vs.AC; 1d6+3 damage.

↘ **Lightning wand** (standard; at will) ♦ **Lightning**
Ranged 10; +14 vs.AC; 2d6+5 lightning damage.

↘ **Fork Lightning** (standard; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ) ♦ **Lightning**
Ranged 10; +14 vs.AC; 2d6+5 lightning damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the wand guardian's next turn. The wand guardian can then make a second ranged attack against a target within 5 squares; *Secondary Attack*: +12 vs.AC; 1d8+5 lightning damage.

↘ **Wand Tempest** (standard; when the wand guardian reaches 0 hit points) ♦ **Lightning**
The wand guardian makes 4 *lightning wand* attacks.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 10 (+3)

Con 14 (+5) **Int** 16 (+6) **Cha** 10 (+3)



LEVEL 4 THE DEMIPLANE OF THE CODEX

The power of the Codex of the Damned has transformed Shar-Thom's private sanctum into a tiny demiplane. It resembles a massive unfurled scroll, gently waving in a sphere of darkness. It is dotted with strange environmental features including geysers of caustic ink, boulders created out of crumpled sharp-edged paper, and massive abyssal letters that pulsate with evil power. The demiplane has no weather or day or night, but the temperature is fairly mild and the air is breathable, even though it slightly tastes of ink.

The PCs must enter this demiplane to defeat Shar-Thom and destroy the Codex. If they do so, the demiplane collapses in on itself and transforms back into a normal chamber, as it rejoins the rest of the complex. This also lays the souls of the doomed custodians to rest.

For ease of reference, the terrain features for the Codex have been placed here, instead of throughout the various areas of the demiplane:

Abyssal Letters: These giant glowing letters are treated as difficult terrain and illuminate anyone standing in them.

Caustic Ink Geysers: A creature that enters a square containing a caustic ink geyser must make a DC 18 Acrobatics check or take 3d6 points of acid damage and be knocked prone. Those who make the check are not knocked prone and only take half damage. Ink geysers do not provide cover, but they do provide concealment. The ink geysers are constantly active, so don't count them as hazards for encounter or XP purposes (players can normally avoid them when not in combat).

Paper Boulders: These boulders of crumpled paper have extremely sharp edges that can easily slice through cloth or flesh, causing nasty wounds. A PC can jump over a boulder with a DC 16 Athletics check. Those who fail have their movement stopped and take 1d6 points of damage from the boulder's slashing edges. PCs pushed or slid into boulders also take 1d6 damage. Aside from causing damage, the boulders can also be used as cover by those standing or kneeling behind them. Despite being made out of paper, the boulders are almost as hard as normal stone boulders, and have the following statistics: **AC/Reflex** 5; **Fortitude** 10; **HP** 40; **Break** 30; **Vulnerable** fire 20.

Falling off the Edge: PCs who fall off the edge of the scroll plummet 20 feet through the darkness of the demiplane before vanishing, and emerging 10 feet above area 4-1. The PC only takes 1d10 points of damage upon landing, but may be far from where he or she initially fell.

Area 4-1 Arrival! (EL 7, XP 1,500)

When PCs pass through the gate in area 3-9 read or paraphrase the following:

Passing through the portal, you find yourself standing on the edge of what appears to be a massive unfurled scroll that stretches hundreds of feet ahead of you. Below you, the ground appears to be stained yellow paper, but of a thickness that supports your bulk even as it leaves creases beneath your feet. Boulders of crumpled paper and geysers of black ink decorate the scroll's surface, but its most disturbing features are giant flaming letters that blaze up into the empty darkness that surrounds its every side. The letters illuminate the scroll's inconceivable length, and the spectacle is at once dizzying and terrifying.

As soon as PCs arrive on the demiplane, Shar-Thom is aware of their presence and sends five flayed horrors to meet them. Two of the flayed horrors are new recruits created from the corpses of two of the missing town guards (recognizable by patches of uniform still clinging to their bodies).

Flayed Horror (5) (see page 25 for statistics).

Area 4-2 Shar-Thom (EL 10, XP 2,500)

Read or paraphrase the following:

As you reach the end of the scroll, your attention is drawn to a massive tome floating several feet above the ground. The pages of the book seem to have a life of their own, twitching as you watch. Then you realize that they are made out of human flesh and skin and are still somehow horribly alive. Reading the book is a mummified figure in tattered green robes. Yellow runes float about his body like some kind of strange armor, and his eyes glow like beacons of unholy light. He stops reading and looks at you as if appraising a slab of meat.

"You have come far to fail, adventurers. However, your deaths will not be wasted, for with your flayed flesh I shall complete the Codex and be free of this vault forever!"

The tome is the Codex of the Damned, the book responsible for transforming the vault into its current horrible state. While still incomplete, the Codex is a powerful tool of evil and is treated as an artifact (the Codex's full statistics can be found in appendix A). To destroy it, the PCs need the holy book of scriptures from area 1-9 and the vial of quirin tears from area 2-9. Without these items, destroying Shar-Thom does not end the nightmare, and they must backtrack through the vault to get the ingredients. PCs who manage to destroy the Codex cause the demiplane to collapse and free the damned custodians. The Wrapping Up section has more information on what happens if the players fail or succeed in destroying the Codex.

Before the PCs can attempt to destroy the Codex, they must face Shar-Thom, the most powerful of all the custodians, who was responsible for unleashing the power of the Codex on the vault. Shar-Thom was slain before the surviving custodians sealed the vault, and returned as an

undead horror shortly thereafter. While not as powerful as he once was, he is still a formidable opponent and more than capable of killing off a party of unprepared PCs. He normally begins by unleashing a necrotic pulse, and then spending an action point to target the most damaged PC with flensing gaze. While he waits for his flensing gaze to recharge, he makes slam attacks, using his armor of runes to fend off the most powerful attack each round.

Note: Shar-Thom is an exceedingly powerful opponent, and could very well kill even a well-prepared party. If you feel Shar-Thom is too powerful for your characters to handle, feel free to reduce his level by 1 or more to compensate.

Shar-Thom **Level 10 Solo Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 2,500

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +15; darkvision

HP 424; **Bloodied** 212

AC 26; Fortitude 24, Reflex 22, Will 24

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 15 necrotic;
Vulnerable 10 radiant

Saving Throws +5

Speed 6

Action Points 2

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+17 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

↓ **Double Slam** (standard; at-will)
Shar-Thom makes two slam attacks. If both attacks hit, the target loses a healing surge and is weakened (save ends).

↗ **Flensing Gaze** (standard; recharge ⓧ, ⓧ) ♦ **Healing**
Ranged 10; +13 vs. Fortitude; 3d8+5 damage and Shar-Thom makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack:* +13 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends) and Shar-Thom gains 10 temporary hit points.

↖ **Necrotic Pulse** (standard; recharge when first bloodied) ♦ **Necrotic**
Close burst 3; +11 vs. Reflex; 4d10+5 necrotic damage and the target is pushed 3 squares. *Miss:* Half damage and the target is not pushed.

Armor of Runes (immediate reaction; at-will)
Shar-Thom gains a +6 power bonus to any one defense against an incoming attack. He can only block one attack this way each round.

Create Flayed Horror (minor; at-will)
Shar-Thom can animate any target slain by his *flensing gaze* as a flayed horror one round after the target dies, as long as the target is on the same plane.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Supernal.

Skills Arcana +16, History +16, Religion +16

Str 14 (+7) **Dex** 17 (+8) **Wis** 21 (+10)

Con 18 (+9) **Int** 23 (+11) **Cha** 20 (+10)

Possessions token in the form of a scroll (magical key for the secret doors in **Area B**).

WRAPPING UP

The best possible scenario for the PCs is to slay Shar-Thom and perform the ritual to destroy the Codex. Once Shar-Thom is slain, he collapses, moldering away in a single round as his essence dissipates into the demiplane. With Shar-Thom dead, the Codex is powerless until it can find another sentient creature to corrupt. Until such time, the PCs have a chance to destroy it.

If the PCs complete the ritual to destroy the Codex (see Appendix A for details), the demiplane begins to collapse in on itself, the scroll transforming into a bare stone 20-foot square chamber in a flash of cold white light around the PCs. At the same time, the damned souls of the custodians are released and all surviving arcanashades, flayed horrors, runecursed and spectral custodians collapse into inert corpses or vanish. All fearful whispers and unnatural chill effects also disappear and all animated constructs become inert. Destroying the Codex does not banish Anurnadan or get rid of creatures such as the dragonborn atavists or magekiller wasps, however, and the PCs might need to deal with these threats before they leave.

If the PCs fail to destroy Shar-Thom and the Codex, but are not all killed, Shar-Thom continues murdering a single person from town every night and targets the PCs with his attacks, sending runecursed or flayed horrors out into Yaleford's streets to kill them. Any PCs stripped of their skin and killed are animated as flayed horrors and their skins added to the Codex. Once six more skins are added to the Codex, it becomes complete and increases in power as detailed in Appendix A. If this happens, Shar-Thom regains more of his power and becomes a 20th-level solo threat.

Even if the PCs deal with the Codex and Shar-Thom, there are several other possibilities for adventure both in the vault and elsewhere. If the magekiller wasp queen survives and escapes the vault, the PCs might have to deal with a much larger magekiller wasp infestation in the future. The abyssal rift opened up by Shar-Thom could also reopen, threatening all the surrounding regions with a demonic horde. Finally, the books in the vault or the teleportation circle in area 3-3 could lead to new adventure areas, including other custodian strongholds or world-threatening menaces that might lie just around the corner.



APPENDIX A THE CODEx OF THE DAMNED

This module introduces a new artifact for use in your 4E campaign, the Codex of the Damned. The Codex of the Damned is appropriate for heroic-level characters. When completed, it becomes appropriate for paragon-level characters.

In its current state, the Codex is unfinished and requires the skin and flesh of several sentient creatures to be made whole. When found, the book's first task is to convince its new owner to complete it. The closer a creature is to completing the book, the happier it becomes.

CODEx OF THE DAMNED (INCOMPLETE) HEROIC LEVEL

This massive tome is bound in the black and wrinkled hide of some sort of hideous demonic creature. The pages of the book are made out of humanoid skin and covered in arcane writing that has been painted in blood across its surface. The pages of the book twitch as if alive and a low moaning sound escapes from its horrid pages. Strangely, the book seems to be missing several pages.

The Codex of the Damned functions as a ritual book and contains all the rituals from levels 1 to 10 in the *4E Player's Handbook*.

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Arcana and History checks.

Property: When using a power with the arcane, healing or necrotic keywords you gain a +2 power bonus to attack rolls and a +2 power bonus to damage rolls.

Power (Daily ♦ Healing, Implement): Standard action. You can use *flensing gaze* (see Shar-Thom's statistics on how this power works). The skin of anyone slain by this power mystically appears in the Codex at the end of the round, if the Codex is still incomplete.

Power (Daily ♦ Arcane, Implement, Necrotic, Zone): Standard action. You can use the 5th-level warlock power *Hunger of Hadar* (see the *4E Player's Handbook* for details).

Goals of the Codex of the Damned

- Complete itself (it does not focus on any other goals until completed).
- Spread chaos and death (the more randomly, the better).
- Gather all of the arcane knowledge in the world and destroy anyone else who seeks to possess it.

Roleplaying the Codex of the Damned

The Codex is a foul and blasphemous thing that speaks with a hollow yet persuasive voice into the mind of its

wielder. It lies, cajoles and bullies to get what it wants, weaving truths and untruths together and promising its owner incredible power.

When incomplete, the Codex's every thought is to become whole again, and it expects its owner to set aside all other tasks until this is done. When touched by a prospective owner (usually an arcane spellcaster of some description) its cover flies open to the awful secrets hidden within.

CONCORDANCE

Starting Score	5
Owner gains a level	+1d6
Owner completes a page of the book (max 1/day)	+3
Owner gains newfound arcane knowledge +1	
Owner slays a good-aligned arcane spellcaster	+1
Owner fails to acquire arcane knowledge when given the chance	-1
Owner fails to slay a good-aligned spellcaster when given the chance	-1
Owner fails to complete a page of the book (minimum 1/day)	-2

Pleased (16–20)

"The Codex is finally happy. I can almost feel its pages purring in satisfaction."

The Codex is only satisfied when fully completed (regardless of how many levels its owner gains). It focuses on gathering power and knowledge for itself and its owner.

Property: The owner's power bonus to attack and damage rolls increases to +5 when using a power with the arcane, healing or necrotic keywords.

Satisfied (12–15)

"The Codex shows me things... great things."

The Codex is generally only satisfied when it is near completion. It knows it is close to reaching its full potential and concentrates on becoming whole.

Property: The owner's item bonus to Arcana and History checks increases to +5.

Normal (5–12)

"I can feel the Codex's power."

If incomplete, the Codex focuses all its attention on repairing itself and tells its new owner as much, explaining that it will only grow more powerful when complete. If complete, the Codex is less insistent and more persuasive.

Unsatisfied (1–4)

"I have displeased the Codex..."

The Codex quickly becomes dissatisfied with an owner who does not expend all his time and effort to complete it. If completed, it is more likely to toy with its owner in the hopes of driving him to madness or despair.

Property: Bloody runes cover the owner's body, giving him a –2 penalty to all Charisma-based skill checks (but not powers). The owner loses a healing surge that can only be regained when he achieves a concordance score of 5 or more.

ANGERED

"The Codex wants my skin!"

The Codex is quick to anger when incomplete, and lashes out in blind fury against its owner, hoping to use its owner's skin to help complete itself. When complete, it lashes out at its owner as a form of chastisement and punishment (not in an effort to take his skin).

Power (Daily ♦ Healing, Implement): The Codex targets its owner with a *flensing gaze* attack for every day that it is angered. If the owner is slain by this attack and the Codex is incomplete, the owner's skin is added to the tome.

The Completed Codex

When completed, the Codex appears filled with pages and contains all known rituals of levels 1–20 found in the *4E Player's Handbook*. It also grants its owner the following additional daily powers:

Power (Daily ♦ Arcane, Teleportation): Minor action. You can use the 10th-level wizard utility power *arcane gate* (see the *4E Player's Handbook* for details)

Power (Daily ♦ Arcane, Implement, Necrotic, Teleportation): Standard action. You can use the 19th-level warlock power *wrath of Acamar* (see the *4E Player's Handbook* for details).

MOVING ON

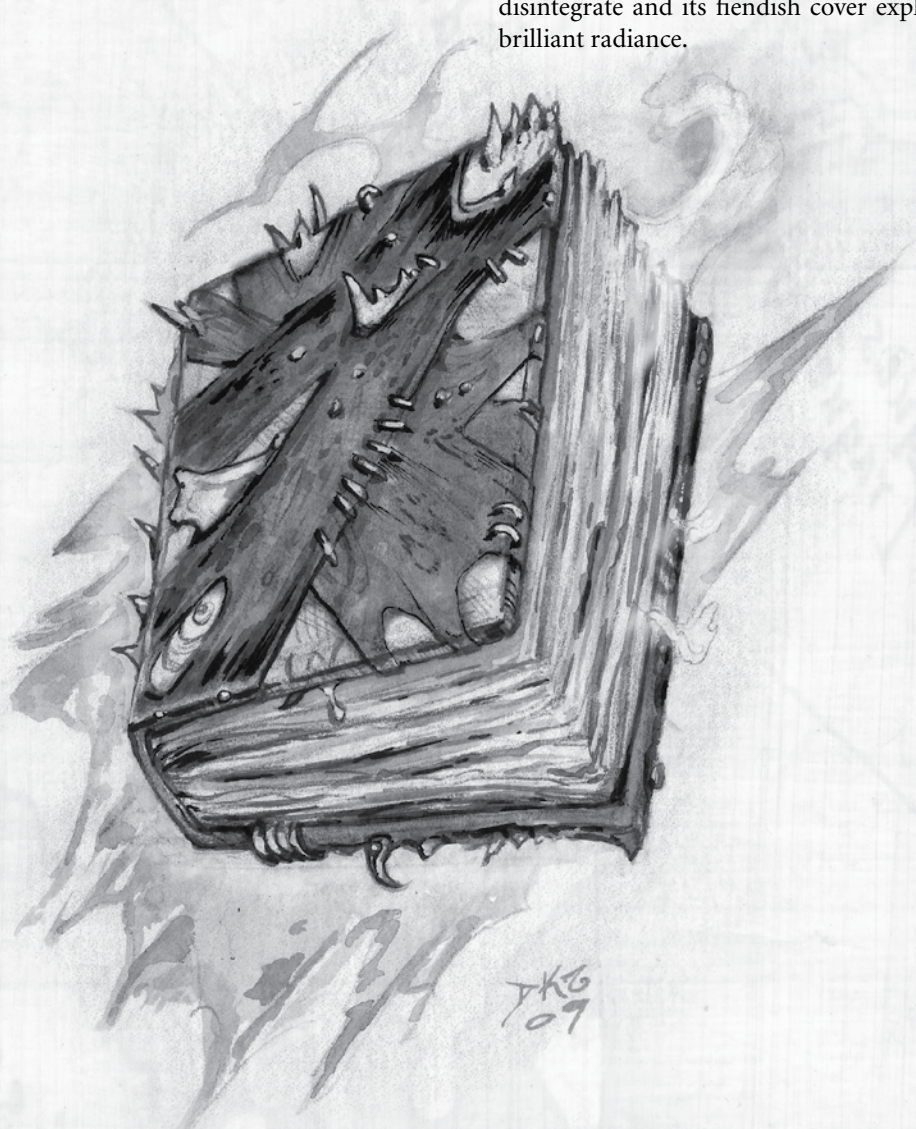
"The knowledge of the world is mine."

The Codex cannot move on while incomplete. When complete, it moves on suddenly and inexplicably, often when its owner needs it most. The Codex generally moves on when it has gathered all the knowledge it can in the possession of its current owner. After a time the Codex reappears, often on another world or continent, but always incomplete.

DESTROYING THE CODEX

"This ends now!"

The only way to permanently destroy the Codex is to write a holy prayer from a book blessed by a lawful good high-priest upon its pages using the blood of a qui-rin or similar good-aligned immortal as ink. When this is done, the book begins to unravel, screaming in terror as its pages disintegrate and its fiendish cover explodes in a flash of brilliant radiance.



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APPENDIX B NEW MONSTERS

This module introduces a number of new monsters to add to your campaign.

Apocrypha Demon **Level 9 Elite Lurker**
Medium immortal humanoid (demon) XP 800

Initiative +10

Senses Perception +13; darkvision

HP 144; **Bloodied** 72

AC 24; Fortitude 21, Reflex 19, Will 21

Resist 10 cold, 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 fire

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7

Action Points 1

④ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+14 vs.AC; 2d6+5 damage.

↗ **Ray of Delusion** (standard; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ, Ⓢ)

♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 5; +12 vs.Will; a target struck by the ray is dominated (save ends). *Aftereffect*: the target is dazed (save ends). A target takes a –2 penalty to its saving throw to end either condition.

↔ **Word of Blasphemy** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Psychic**

Close blast 3; +10 vs.Will; 4d10+5 psychic damage and the target is dazed (save ends). A target takes a –2 penalty to its saving throw to end this condition.

Apocryphal Touch (standard; at-will)

An apocrypha demon can alter any page of writing it touches, changing the content and context of the words and pictures to whatever it wishes. Ritual scrolls touched in this way are destroyed.

An apocrypha demon can alter one page of writing each round it maintains contact with a book.

Body of Lies (minor; at-will)

An apocrypha demon can disguise itself as a volume of paper in the form of scrolls, books, folios, palimpsests or any other written material. In paper form, the apocrypha demon gains a +10 bonus to Stealth checks and cannot be targeted by ranged or melee attacks. It gains vulnerable 10 against area attacks used against it, and retains its other resistances and vulnerabilities. An apocrypha demon can resume its true form as a minor action.

Name of the Beast

Anyone who knows an apocrypha demon's true name gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and a +2 bonus to damage rolls against the demon. They do not suffer the penalty to saving throws against the apocrypha demon's powers.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** All; telepathy

Skills

Arcana +14, Bluff +14, Religion +14, Stealth +11

Str 17 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 19 (+8)

Con 18 (+8) **Int** 20 (+9) **Cha** 21 (+9)

Description This creature is made up of hundreds of different scrolls gathered into a vaguely humanoid shape and covered in writing. Razor-sharp scribing pens serve as the creature's claws and its maw is filled with needle-like teeth. Foul black ink leaks from the creature's eyes like tears and it mutters blasphemy as it walks.

APOCRYPHA DEMON TACTICS

The apocrypha demon generally attacks with surprise, hoping to quickly overwhelm its foes and leave one or two under its control. When it can, an apocrypha demon prefers to taunt and deceive its foes, but takes the direct approach if the rewards are greater.

APOCRYPHA DEMON LORE

A character knows the following information about apocrypha demons with a successful Religion check. Finding out anything useful about an apocrypha demon is difficult because their existence is shrouded in lies and falsehoods. This makes the DC for any checks involving them higher than normal for creature's of their level.

DC 25: Apocrypha demons are demons that revel in the corruption of holy texts and any books that preach tolerance, love, happiness or similar altruistic and optimistic ideologies. Defacing the pages of a book of love poetry with disturbing and violent erotica and filling the prayers in a holy book with apocryphal messages are things that bring joy to an apocrypha demon.

DC 30: Apocrypha demons destroy any work of literature they touch, and can disguise themselves as normal books. They are cunning deceivers and pathological liars. Because of their paper-like bodies apocrypha demons are extremely susceptible to fire.

DC 35: Discovering an apocrypha demon's name gives one power over the beast.

Arcanashade **Level 7 Artillery**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 300

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision

HP 55; **Bloodied** 27

AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 20, Will 19

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, 5 variable (2/encounter), insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant

Speed fly 8 (Hover); phasing

④ **Arcane Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning or Thunder**
+12 vs.AC; 1d6 acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage; see *mastery of magic*.

↗ **Arcane Lance** (standard; at will) ♦ **Acid, Cold, Fire, lightning or Thunder**
Ranged 10; +14 vs.AC; 1d10+4 acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage; see *mastery of magic*.

↔ **Arcane Deluge** (standard; when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ **Acid, Cold, Fire, Lightning and Thunder**

Close burst 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 4 points of acid damage, 4 points of cold damage, 4 points of fire

damage, 4 points of lightning damage, and 4 points of thunder damage. *Miss*: half damage.

Mastery of Magic (minor; at-will)

An arcanashade can alter the damage type it deals with its attacks to acid, cold, fire, lightning, or thunder. Once changed the damage type remains the same until the arcanashade uses another minor action to change it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common plus one other

Skills Arcana +13, Stealth +11

Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 13 (+4)

Con 13 (+4) **Int** 20 (+8) **Cha** 16 (+6)

ARCANASHADE TACTICS

An arcanashade tries to keep its distance from enemies, flying about and using *arcane lance* against opponents. If a target proves resistant to certain types of damage the arcanashade uses *mastery of magic* to pick a more appropriate energy type.

ARCANASHADE LORE

A character knows the following information about arcanashades with a successful Arcana or Religion check.

DC 15: Arcanashades are spirits formed from arcane spellcasters whose bodies are consumed by magic. In continual pain because of the searing energy coruscating



Description Floating in the air is a robed figure from which jets of acid, cold, fire, lightning and thunder stream in a mishmash of colors and sounds. The figure has no discernible features, and its face is a ball of crackling magical energy.

through their bodies, arcanashades are malicious creatures who alleviate their own suffering by slaying other creatures. Arcanashades dwell in or near places where arcane magic has been used to slay numerous people, including ancient battle sites and ruined wizard academies.

DC 20: Arcanashades can change the type of energy damage their attacks inflict and when slain explode in a wave of damaging magical energy.

Bloodspill Raptor **Level 6 Skirmishers**
Large Elemental Beast XP 250

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 64; **Bloodied** 32

AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 19, Will 17

Resist 5 acid, 5 fire

Speed 10

Ⓢ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+11 vs.AC; 1d8+5 damage and the bloodspill raptor shifts 1 square.

⚔ **Bloody Rake** (standard; recharge Ⓜ, Ⓜ, Ⓜ)
+11 vs.AC; 2d8+5 damage and the bloodspill raptor shifts 3 squares.

⚔ **Raptor Frenzy** (standard; when first bloodied)
The bloodspill raptor can make a claw attack and a bloody rake attack in the same round, even if its bloody rake has not recharged.

Bloodthirst

A bloodspill raptor deals an extra 1d6 points of damage to bloodied opponents.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –

Skills Endurance +10, Stealth +10

Str 19 (+7) **Dex** 14 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 16 (+6) **Int** 6 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+5)

Description

Stalking towards you is a sinuous bipedal lizard with great slashing talons on the end of powerful hind legs. Its scaly flesh is a brilliant crimson in color and its eyes are pools of darkness filled with insatiable hunger.

BLOODSPILL RAPTOR TACTICS

A bloodspill raptor makes frequent use of *claw* and *bloody rake* attacks to decimate opponents and move around the battlefield. They work best in groups, flanking and focusing their attacks on one enemy at a time.

BLOODSPILL RAPTOR LORE

A character knows the following information about bloodspill raptors with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Bloodspill raptors are evil bipedal dinosaurs native to the lower planes. They hunt in small tightly-knit packs and dwell in blood-soaked savannahs and sweltering abyssal jungles. Smaller demons and devils sometimes use bloodspill raptors as steeds, though they make unruly mounts.

DC 20: Bloodspill raptors become enraged by the smell of blood, and are more dangerous when they and their



enemies are wounded.

Bone Swarm

Level 8 Brute

Medium natural animate (swarm, undead)

XP 350

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision

Swarm Attack aura 1; the bone swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.

HP 106; **Bloodied** 53

AC 20; **Fort** 21, **Ref** 18, **Will** 14

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, half damage from melee and ranged attacks;

Vulnerable 10 radiant, 10 against close and area attacks

Speed 4, climb 4

⊕ **Grasping Swarm** (standard; at-will)
+11 vs. Reflex; 2d8+5 damage, and the target is knocked prone and slowed (save ends both).

Alignment Evil

Languages —

Str 20 (+9)

Dex 16 (+7)

Wis 8 (+3)

Con 16 (+7)

Int 3 (+0)

Cha 3 (+0)

Description An undulating carpet of bony fragments writhes along the ground toward you. It is composed of animated teeth, finger bones, and other tiny, osseous remains, all swarming together like a wave of bony centipedes.

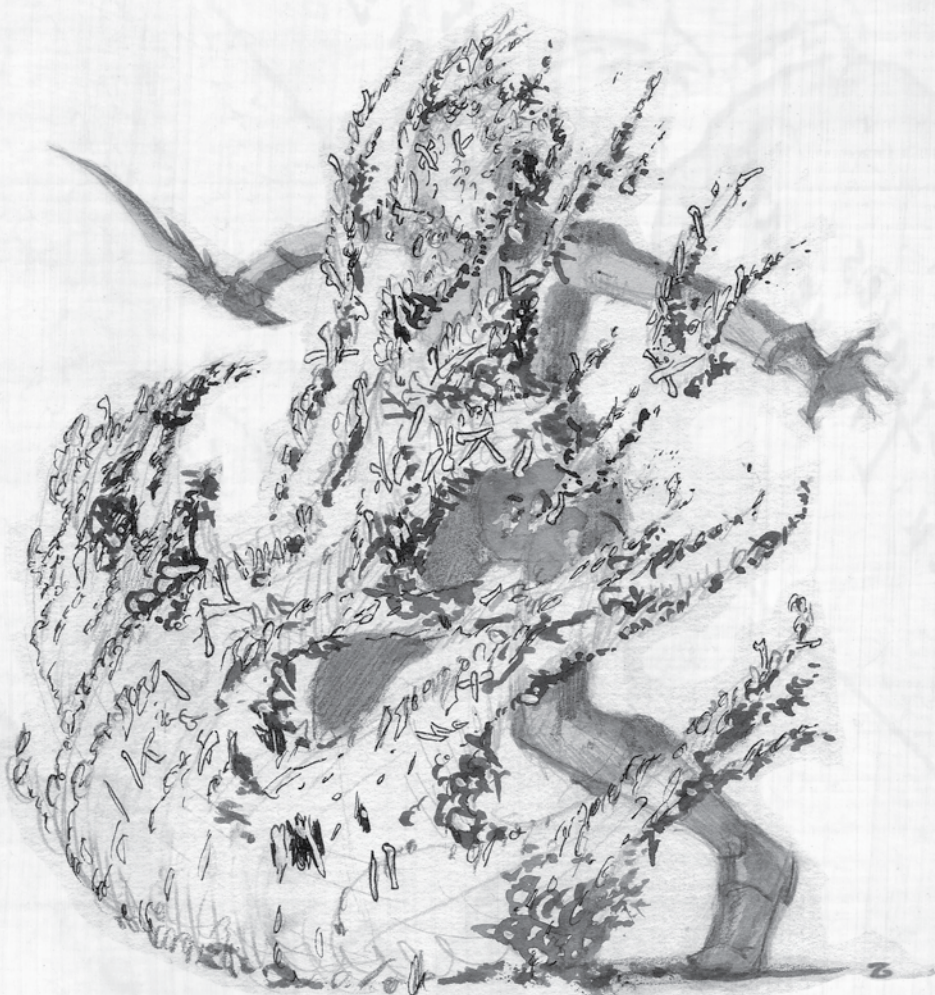
BONE SWARM TACTICS

A bone swarm attacks any living creature it can reach. It attacks by enveloping a target, dragging it to the ground, and then tearing it apart. Although essentially mindless, bone swarms are filled with intense hatred for the living, and will pursue living foes tirelessly until destroyed.

BONE SWARM LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Religion check.

DC 15: Bone swarms often arise spontaneously from bone yards, especially if strong necromantic energy is present. Like all undead, they are vulnerable to radiant damage, and such attacks are the only thing that will cause the relentless swarm to retreat.



**Clay Angel****Level 4 Lurker**

Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 175

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision**HP** 43; **Bloodied** 21**AC** 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15**Immune** disease, poison**Speed** 7, fly 5 (clumsy)④ **Wing Buffet** (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 1d8+3 damage and the clay angel makes a secondary attack against the same target. **Secondary Attack:** +4 vs. Fortitude; the target is blinded until the end of the clay angel's next turn. See also *guard object*.

✧ **Mind Wrack** (standard; at will) ♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10+4 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). See also *guard object*.

Guard Object

The clay angel gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls and a +4 bonus on damage rolls against targets within 2 squares of its guarded object (any one of the pillars counts as a guarded object for a clay angel).

Prayer Stance (standard; at will)

The clay angel clasps its hands together in silent prayer and gains resist 15 to all damage and regeneration 2. It can sustain its prayer stance as a standard action each round.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** —**Skills** Stealth +11**Str** 14 (+4)**Dex** 18 (+6)**Wis** 12 (+3)**Con** 15 (+4)**Int** 10 (+2)**Cha** 16 (+5)

Description *This man-sized figure has been crafted to resemble a heavenly angel with vast feathered wings and a smooth oval face. The workmanship of the angel is breathtaking, and you cannot help but appreciate its beauty even as flies towards you.*

CLAY ANGEL TACTICS

Clay angels use a combination of *wing buffet* and *mind wrack* to drive off or kill their opponents. They use *prayer stance* when wounded, but not if it gives someone the chance to steal their guarded object.

CLAY ANGEL LORE

A character knows the following information about clay angels with a successful Arcana check.

DC 15: Clay angels are larger, more powerful cousins of clay scouts (see the D&D 4E *Monster Manual*) and take the form of beatific angels. Like clay scouts, they are normally set to guard specific objects.

DC 20: Clay angels can blind opponents with their wings and can clasp their hands together in prayer to increase their resistance to damage and heal their injuries.

DRAGONBORN ATAVIST

Dragonborn atavists are genetic throwbacks that occur in roughly one out of every 5,000 births in large dragonborn communities. Unlike the typical dragonborn, whose draconic heritage has become mixed and muted over the millennia, dragonborn atavists closely resemble a specific breed of chromatic dragon.

Atavists are universally evil, possessing the wicked nature of the dragon type they resemble, and are shunned by the great clans of dragonborn. However, atavists are incredibly powerful creatures, and are quite capable of surviving on their own. Each displays a number of potent abilities related to the dragon breed to which they are related, and most are more than a match for numerous standard dragonborn.

Although incredibly rare, a number of small enclaves of dragonborn atavists exist in isolated places throughout the known world. Typically, an enclave consists of three to five atavists, usually of the same type, but occasionally larger, mixed enclaves led by the most powerful atavist have been formed. In addition, dragonborn atavists often serve true dragons, acting as favored minions, or, in rare cases, consorts and allies of equal status.

Most atavists harbor a deep and abiding hatred of their more common kin and often go out of their way to attack or otherwise harm any dragonborn they encounter. Fear of complete annihilation and a general inability to work together towards a common goal keeps the atavists in

check, and prevents a mass uprising that would threaten the great clans. However, dragonborn rightly fear the atavists, and some even admire their power and closer relationship to true dragons.

DRAGONBORN ATAVIST LORE

Dragonborn have many myths and legends concerning the atavists, and they often serve as a draconic form of boogeyman in tales told to little ones. A character knows the following information with a successful Nature check.

DC 15: Dragonborn atavists are genetic anomalies that occur in large dragonborn communities. They closely resemble a specific type of chromatic dragon in both form and temperament, and possess abilities similar to true dragons.

DC 20: Dragonborn atavists are shunned by normal dragonborn, and an intense animosity exists between the two races. This forces the atavists to seek out isolated and forlorn places to make their homes. Depending on the type of atavist, typical lairs include remote glaciers, areas of intense volcanic activity, desolate deserts, impenetrable swamps, and primeval forests.

DC 25: Dragonborn atavists are often found in small groups called enclaves. These enclaves are often composed of atavists of a similar draconic heritage (white, red, black, etc.), but mixed groups are not unknown. In addition, atavists often serve true dragons and may occasionally be found in the company of other reptilian or draconic creatures.





DRAGONBORN ATAVIST (BLACK)

Black dragonborn atavists are furtive killers that stalk prey through the gloomy swamps they inhabit. They are selfish and malicious like the dragons whose blood they share, and are far more likely to hoard wealth than other atavists.

Foulblade **Level 8 Elite Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 700

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision
HP 176; **Bloodied** 88

AC 24; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 17

Resist 15 acid

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7, fly 7 (hover); see also *flyby attack*

Action Points 1

Ⓢ **Caustic Falchion** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Acid, Weapon**
+13 vs. AC; 2d4+5 damage (crit 2d4+13) plus 1d6 acid damage.

↓ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)
The foulblade flies up to 7 squares and makes a melee basic attack at any point during the move without provoking an opportunity attack from the target.

↓ **Wing Slam** (minor; recharge Ⓜ, Ⓜ)
+11 vs. Reflex; 1d8+4 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the foulblade's next turn.

↖ **Breath Weapon** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Acid**
Close blast 3; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d8+3 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Athletics +14, Stealth +12

Str 20 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+6)

Con 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 8 (+3)

Equipment falchion, leather armor

Description This tall, black-scaled humanoid grips an enormous falchion in both taloned hands. An acrid, cloying stench surrounds the dragon-like monstrosity.

FOULBLADE TACTICS

Quick and agile, a foulblade prefers to attack from the air, diving at its foes to deliver powerful and accurate blows with its corrosive falchion. It uses *flyby attack* to maintain its distance from powerful melee types, and *wing slam* to neutralize spellcasters and those using ranged attacks.

Gloomstalker **Level 6 Elite Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 500

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 114; **Bloodied** 57

AC 22; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 17

Resist 15 acid

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8

Action Points 1

Ⓢ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 1d6+2 damage, and the gloomstalker shifts 1 square.

↓ **Twin Blades** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
The gloomstalker makes two short sword attacks. If both attacks hit the same target, the target grants combat advantage to the gloomstalker until the end of the gloomstalker's next turn.

↖ **Breath Weapon** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Acid**
Close blast 3; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d10+2 acid damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends).

↖ **Gloom Burst** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ **Zone**
Close burst 2; the gloomstalker creates a zone of darkness that remains until the end of its next turn. The cloud blocks line of sight, and all creatures within the area (except the gloomstalker) are blinded.

Combat Advantage

The gloomstalker deals an extra 2d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Draconic

Skills Stealth +13, Thievery +13

Str 14 (+5) **Dex** 20 (+8) **Wis** 13 (+4)

Con 15 (+5) **Int** 13 (+4) **Cha** 12 (+4)

Equipment two short swords

Description This lithe, draconic humanoid grips a short sword in each hand, twirling the blades in a circular arc with lackadaisical agility. Its body is surrounded by a shifting haze of smoky gloom, and a steady patter of caustic green fluid drips from its fanged jaws, sizzling quietly on the flagstones under its feet.

GLOOMSTALKER TACTICS

A gloomstalker is a stealthy killer that prefers to strike from ambush. In melee, it constantly maneuvers around the battlefield, adjusting its position to gain combat advantage against its target. A gloomstalker typically begins combat against numerous foes with *gloom burst*. Then it targets the area of darkness with its breath weapon to further injure and disorient its foes. Finally, it wades into the gloom with its short swords, attacking its wounded and blinded foes with terrible, lethal precision.

Flayed Horror **Level 7 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 300

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 78; **Bloodied** 39

AC 23; **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 15

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;
Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

Ⓢ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
+14 vs. AC; 1d8+5 damage.

↓ **Flensing Strike** (standard; at will) ♦ **Healing**
The flayed horror makes two claw attacks. If both



claws hit the same target, the flayed horror makes a secondary attack against the target. *Secondary Attack*: +12 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends), and the flayed horror gains 10 temporary hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +11

Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+3)
Con 14 (+5) **Int** 9 (+2) **Cha** 6 (+1)

Description *This undead creature appears as a humanoid whose skin has been flayed off, revealing the sinew, organs, and muscles beneath.*

FLAYED HORROR TACTICS

Whenever possible, a flayed horror attempts to hide and attack with surprise. It focuses its attacks on a single opponent, attempting to rip away as much skin as possible to assuage its horrific pain.

FLAYED HORROR LORE

A character knows the following information about flayed horrors with a successful Religion check.

DC 15: Flayed horrors are created through a horrific necromantic ritual called *the flensing*. The unfortunate individuals forced to endure this ritual are slowly flayed alive, and, just before death, their bodies are infused with necromantic energy. This process creates a skinless, undead abomination, wracked with constant pain, and eager to replace its lost skin with that of humanoid victims.



DC 20: Flayed horrors can rip away the skin of a victim with their long bony claws. This creates a massive wound that causes intense pain and weakness.

Magekiller Wasp

Level 2 Artillery

Small natural magical beast

XP 125

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision; see also *sense magic*.

HP 24; **Bloodied** 12

AC 15; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 14

Speed 2, fly 8 (hover)

⊕ **Sting** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 damage and the magekiller wasp makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack*: +6 vs. Fortitude and the target is slowed (save ends). *First Failed Save*: The target falls unconscious.

⌘ **Eldritch Sting** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Arcane**
Ranged 6; +10 vs. AC; 2d6+3 damage.

Sense Magic

A magekiller wasp can sense the presence of arcane magic in any object or creature that it has line of sight to.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 12 (+2) **Int** 7 (−1) **Cha** 13 (+2)

Description *The size of a large cat, this wasp is covered in iridescent amethyst and emerald chitin, and its crystalline wings are festooned in glowing blue runes. It buzzes angrily as it approaches, its black stinger pulsating with green energy.*

Magekiller Wasp Queen

Level 6 Artillery

Medium natural magical beast

XP 250

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision; see also *sense magic*.

HP 52; **Bloodied** 26

AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 18

Speed 2, fly 8 (hover)

⊕ **Sting** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
+13 vs. AC; 1d8 damage and the magekiller wasp queen makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack*: +11 vs. Fortitude and the target is slowed (save ends). *First Failed Save*: The target falls unconscious. Targets take a −2 penalty to saving throws against a magekiller wasp queen's poison.

⌘ **Eldritch Sting** (standard; at will) ♦ **Arcane**
Ranged 8; +15 vs. AC; 2d8+4 damage.

⬇ **Egg Implantation** (standard; against a helpless or unconscious target).
The magekiller wasp queen implants the target with a magekiller wasp egg (see Appendix B: New Monsters).

Sense Magic

A magekiller wasp queen can sense the presence of arcane magic in any object or creature that it has line of sight to.



Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —
Str 12 (+4) **Dex** 20 (+8) **Wis** 15 (+5)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Description *A large wasp the size of a small pony flies towards you, its vast wings outstretched and its green and purple carapace gleaming in the light. It aims a large black stinger in your direction, its tip charged with sparkling eldritch energy.*

MAGEKILLER WASP TACTICS

Magekiller wasps and magekiller wasp queens use their *eldritch sting* to soften up opponents before using their normal sting attack to poison them into submission. Magekiller wasps protect their queen at all costs, sacrificing their lives to save her if need be.

MAGEKILLER WASP LORE

A character knows the following information about magekiller wasps with a successful Arcana or Nature check.

DC 15: Magekiller wasps are large intelligent magical insects the size of cats. Like normal paper wasps, they feed on and build their nests out of paper, destroying books, scrolls and other forms of writing to form their colonies. Magekiller wasps breed by incubating their eggs in the brains of arcane spellcasters and magic-using creatures such as gnomes, hags and oni. Because of their unusual life-cycles, magekiller wasps are drawn to places where magic and books can be found in large quantities, including wizards' guilds, great libraries and similar places. They are universally feared by arcane spellcasters everywhere.

MAGEKILLER WASP EGG IMPLANTATION

LEVEL 6 DISEASE

Though not a true disease, the implantation of a magekiller wasp egg is just as deadly and often much more gruesome.

Attack +10 vs. Fortitude

Endurance Improve DC 18, maintain DC 14, worsen DC 13 or lower. Arcane spellcasters (such as warlocks and wizards) and magic-using creatures take a -2 penalty to their Endurance checks.



The target is cured.	The target loses one healing surge that cannot be regained until cured.	The target is plagued with terrible headaches and suffers a -2 penalty to attacks and checks.	The target's headaches worsen and his brain begins to swell. The target suffers a -2 penalty to attacks and checks and is constantly dazed.	Final State The target falls unconscious as the brain swelling becomes unbearable. 1d4 hours later an adult magekiller wasp explodes from the target's head and the target dies horribly. While non-spellcasting creatures can create normal magekiller wasps, magekiller wasp queens and drones (that are physically identical to standard magekiller wasps) can only be created by implanting an egg into a spellcaster or spell-using monster.
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DC 20: Magekiller wasps can sense magic as long as it is within sight of them and use this innate sense to guide them to magical locations. The wings of an adult magekiller wasp can be ground up and used in the creation of ink for ritual scrolls.

Oniaries Demon

Level 6 Soldiers

Medium immortal humanoid (demon)

XP 250

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision

HP 68; **Bloodied** 34

AC 22; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 18

Resist 10 variable (1/encounter)

Speed 5, swim 7

Ⓢ **Gore** (standard; at-will)

+13 vs.AC; 1d6+4 damage and the target is pushed 1 square.

Ⓢ **Impaling Antlers** (standard; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ)

+13 vs.AC; 3d6+4 damage and the target is pushed 3 squares and falls prone.

Coiling Snakes

The mass of snake tails that serve as the oniaries' legs grant it a +4 defense bonus against any attack that forces it to be pulled, pushed or slid.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Abyssal

Skills Bluff +11, Intimidate +11

Str 18 (+7) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 20 (+8) **Int** 10 (+3) **Cha** 16 (+6)

Description This man-sized figure has the upper body of a powerful humanoid with rough leathery skin and a bestial looking tusked face. An enormous pair of wicked-looking antlers rises from the top of its head, and below its waist is a nest of squirming brown snake legs instead of legs.

ONIAIRES DEMON TACTICS

An oniaries demon uses its horn to gore opponents, pushing them into deep water or environmental hazards where the oniaries demon has the advantage. Their coiling serpentine legs prevent them from being forced into compromising positions themselves.

ONIAIRES DEMON LORE

A character knows the following information about oniaries demons with a successful Religion check.

DC 15: Oniaries demons are water-dwelling demons found on certain layers of the lower planes. While they principally live in the water, they are equally adept on dry land and can breathe both air and water. Oniaries demons slay and devour anyone who invades their watery realms, but are just as likely to emerge from waterways to wreak havoc on coastal communities.

DC 20: Oniaries demons serve the demon lord Innagaz as soldiers in his abyssal army. Oniaries demons often sharpen their antlers on rocks and the bones of their enemies and wear garishly colored tribal fetishes.

Runecursed

Level 5 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid (undead)

XP 200

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +8; darkvision

HP 54; **Bloodied** 27

AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 17, Will 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 8

Ⓢ **Runic Strike** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+11 vs.AC; 1d10+4 necrotic damage, and the runecursed shifts 4 squares.

Ⓢ **Runic Barrage** (standard; recharge Ⓢ, Ⓢ) ♦

Necrotic

Close Blast 1; targets enemies; +8 vs. Reflex; 3d6+4 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

Combat Advantage

The runecursed gains combat advantage against creatures immobilized by its *runic barrage*.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common

Skills Stealth +10

Str 18 (+6)

Dex 15 (+4)

Wis 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+4)

Int 7 (+0)

Cha 15 (+4)





Description An emaciated humanoid with mummified black skin stands before you, its hair a ragged mop on its head, and its eyes burning with feral orange light. Sinister red runes crisscross the monster's flesh and seem to move of their own volition, crawling across the horror's skin like glowing red worms.

RUNECURSED TACTICS

Runecursed use their *runic strike* ability to prevent themselves from being flanked or ganged up on by opponents, and use *runic barrage* when they can catch more than one opponent with its effect.

RUNECURSED LORE

A character knows the following information about runecursed with a successful Religion check.

DC 15: Runecursed are corpses animated by necrotic magic. The necrotic runes scarring their flesh transform them into evil and sadistic killers with no memories of their former lives.

DC 20: While most runecursed are created deliberately by death lords and necromancers, a few arise spontaneously when a person dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge is slain by being exposed to evil or forbidden lore.

Slashwing

Level 7 Skirmisher

Large natural magical beast

XP 300

Initiative +8

Senses Perception +9; blindsight 10, darkvision

HP 81; **Bloodied** 40

AC 21; **Fort** 21, **Ref** 18, **Will** 15

Speed 3 (clumsy), fly 8 (hover)

⊕ **Wing Slash** (standard; at-will)

+12 vs.AC; 1d10+5 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).

‡ **Hovering Flurry** (standard; at-will)

If the slashwing does not take a move action when flying, it can make two wing slash attacks.

‡ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)

The slashwing flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during the movement. It does not provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

Seeker in Darkness (while mounted by a friendly rider of 7th level or higher; at-will) ♦ Mount
A slashwing grants its rider blindsight 10 and darkvision while mounted.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Skills Stealth +11



Str 20 (+8) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 17 (+6) **Int** 2 (–1) **Cha** 8 (+2)

Description *This creature resembles a huge bat with bristling brown fur, and sharp bony blades lining the outside of each wing.*

SLASHWING TACTICS

Slashwings are large, bat-like subterranean predators. They are used as mounts by a number of subterranean races primarily due to the fact that slashwings can “share” their senses with a rider. This includes the ability to see in the dark and even locate objects via echolocation.

A slashwing uses the bony blades on its wings to attack prey and enemies. In combat it uses one of two tactics. It either makes hit-and-run attacks, slashing at an opponent in conjunction with an aerial dive; or it simply hovers, slashing wildly with both wings.

MONSTROUS BAT LORE

A character can learn the following with a successful Dungeoneering or Nature check.

DC 15: Slashwings are bat-like predators that live deep beneath the earth. They are named for the deadly bony blades that line each wing. They can be trained as mounts, and are often used by subterranean races in this capacity. Rumor has it that a slashwing’s rider can access the beasts senses, gaining the ability to see in complete darkness.

Spectral Custodian **Level 4 lurker**
Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 175

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +8; darkvision

HP 38; **Bloodied** 19

AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing; see also *absence of malice*

④ **Maddening Caress** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

+9 vs.AC; 1d6+4 psychic damage, and the target takes a –2 penalty to its Will defense until the end of the Spectral custodian’s next turn.

↗ **Whispering Tirade** (standard; at will) ♦ **Psychic**
Ranged 10; +7 vs.Will; 2d8+4 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Absence of Malice (move; after a successful attack; recharge ☐, ☐, ☐)

The spectral custodian teleports 6 squares.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Stealth +10

Str 10 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+1) **Cha** 14 (+4)

Description *A ghostly white apparition glides towards you, its haggard rotting face filled with madness and despair.*

SPECTRAL CUSTODIAN TACTICS

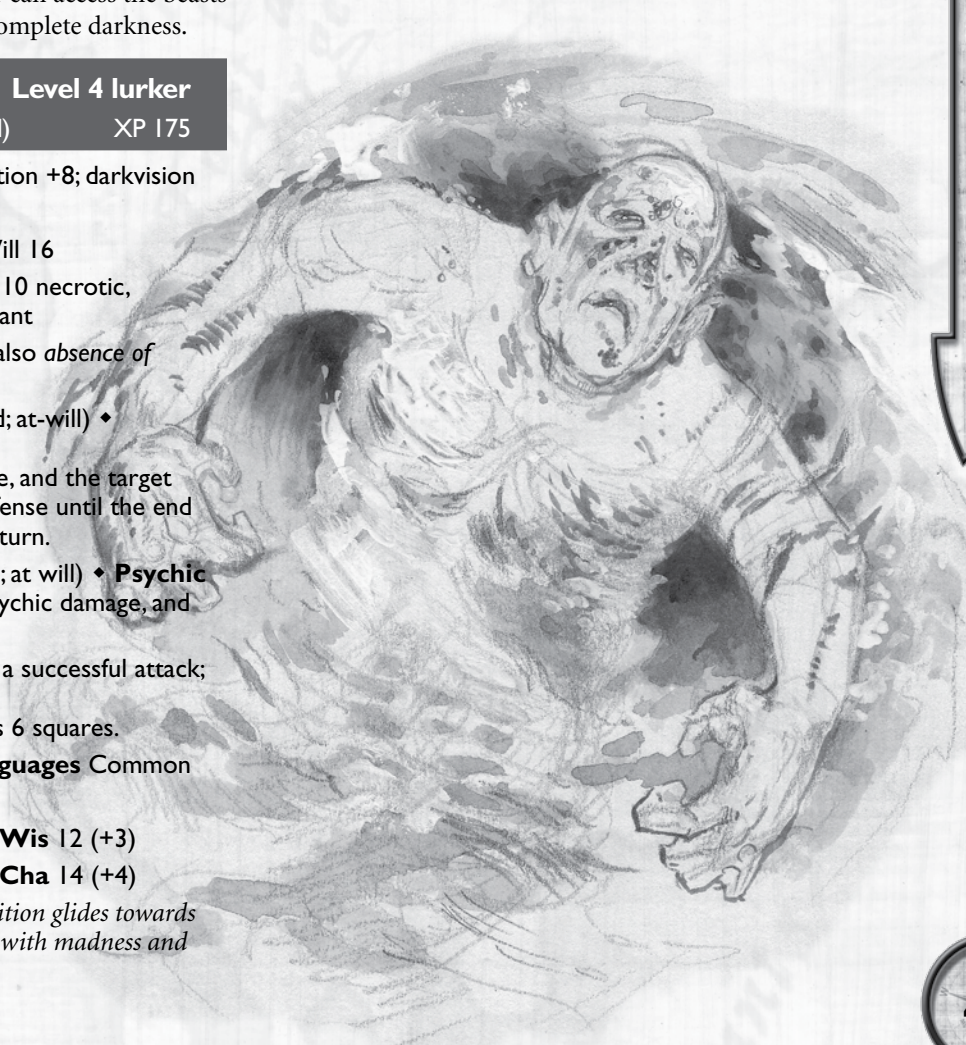
A spectral custodian tries to use its insubstantial and phasing abilities to attack with the element of surprise. It typically uses *maddening caress* against a target before using *absence of malice* to teleport away. It then uses *whispering tirade* against the same target the following round.

SPECTRAL CUSTODIAN LORE

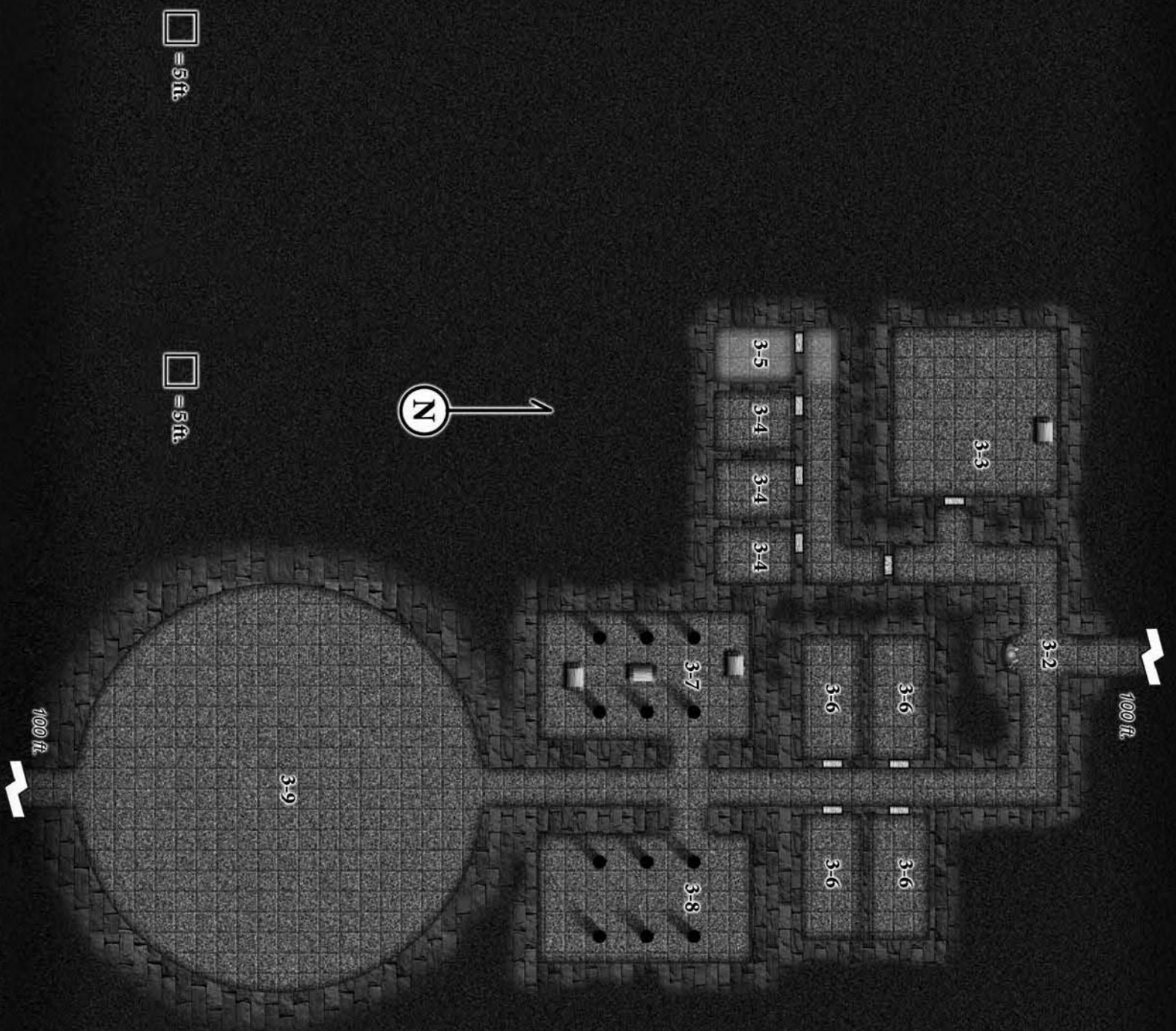
A character knows the following information about spectral custodians with a successful Religion check.

DC 15: Spectral custodians are homicidal undead created from scholars, teachers and other people whose souls are trapped within the vault. Completely insane, spectral custodians cannot find solace in death so long as their souls are imprisoned.

DC 20: A spectral custodian can also be created when a scholar commits some horrible crime in the pursuit of knowledge, but cannot live with the guilt and shame of his actions and commits suicide. Unfortunately, this is not the end for the scholar, who returns to cursed existence as an undead shade.



SOUTH WING



THE VAULT

WEST WING

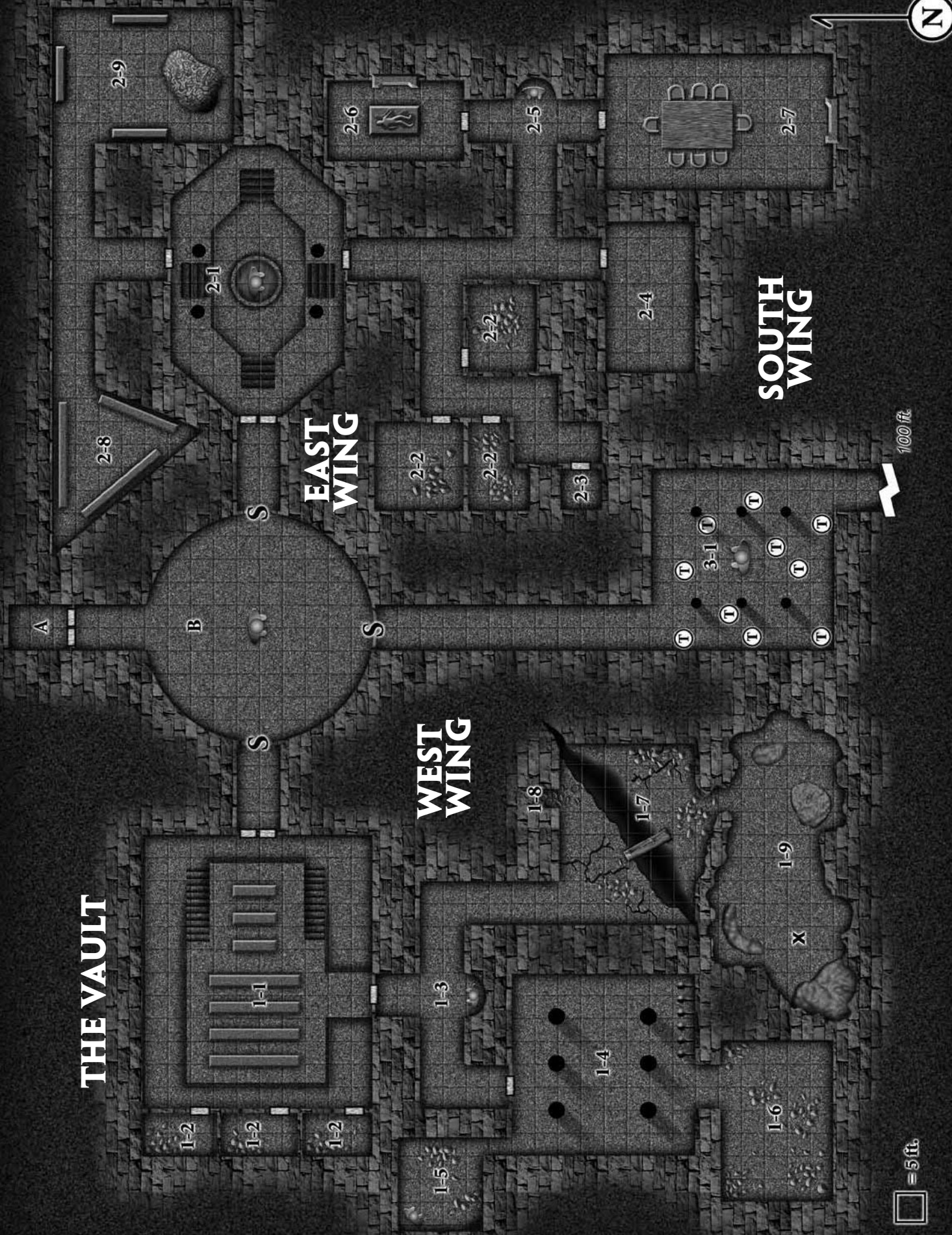
EAST WING

SOUTH WING

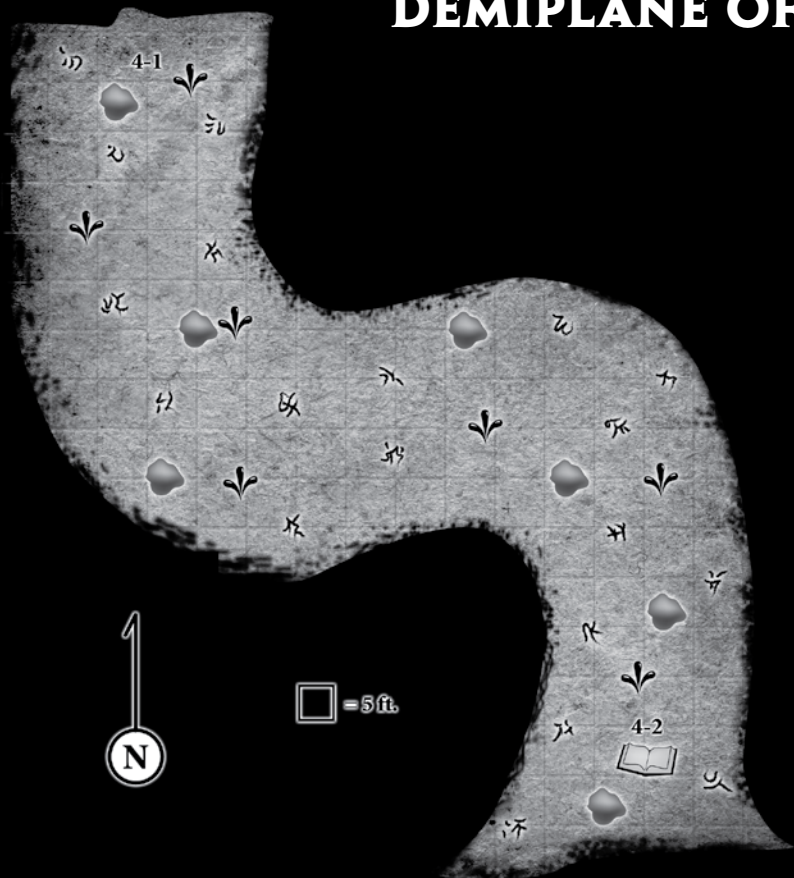


□ = 5 ft.

100 ft.



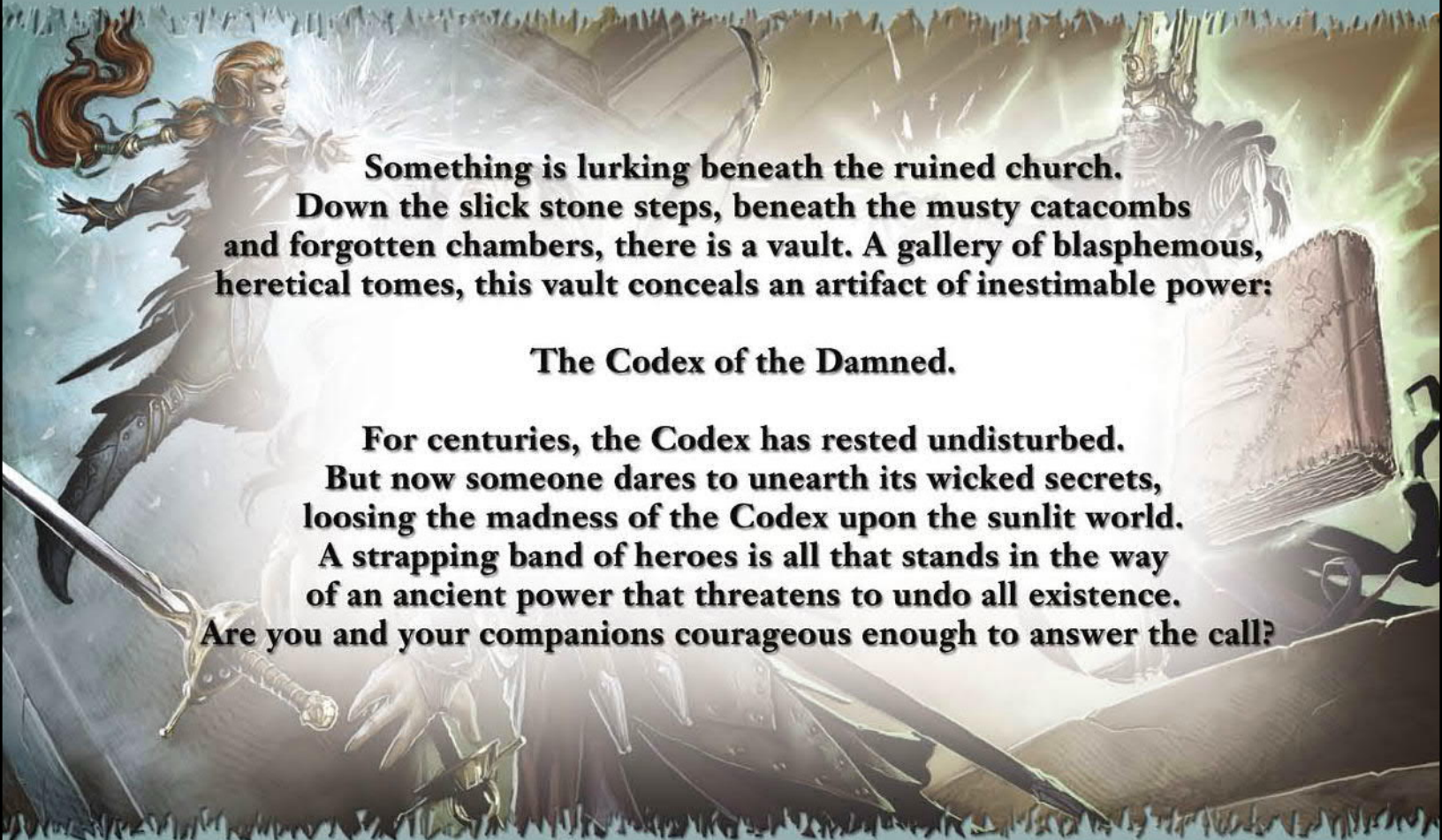
DEMIPLANE OF THE CODEX



WHO EVER FINDS THIS VIAL MUST TAKE
IT AND USE ITS POWER TO DESTROY
THE CODEX. IT CONTAINS THE BLOOD OF
A QVI-KIN, AN IMMORTAL CREATURE
OF LEGEND. WITH ITS BLOOD YOU
MUST WRITE A HOLY PRAYER UPON THE
CODEX'S FOUL PAGES. ANY PRAYER WILL
DO, BUT IT MUST BE ONE IN THE
POSSESSION OF TARETHAL, BUT HE
FELL WHEN THE DEMONS ATTACKED.
PERHAPS THE BOOK STILL LIES
WHERE THE ABYSSAL PORTAL
WAS OPENED? SEARCH THERE
AND RECOVER IT, FOR I CANNOT.
ALREADY, I HEAR THEM CLOSING IN ON
ME.
— RATHKAR

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