



**YOU DON'T PLAY THIS MODULE!
THIS MODULE PLAYS YOU!**

A Two-hour Adventure for Tier 1 Characters. Optimized for APL 3. By: Anthony Joyce

CCC-AETHER-01-01



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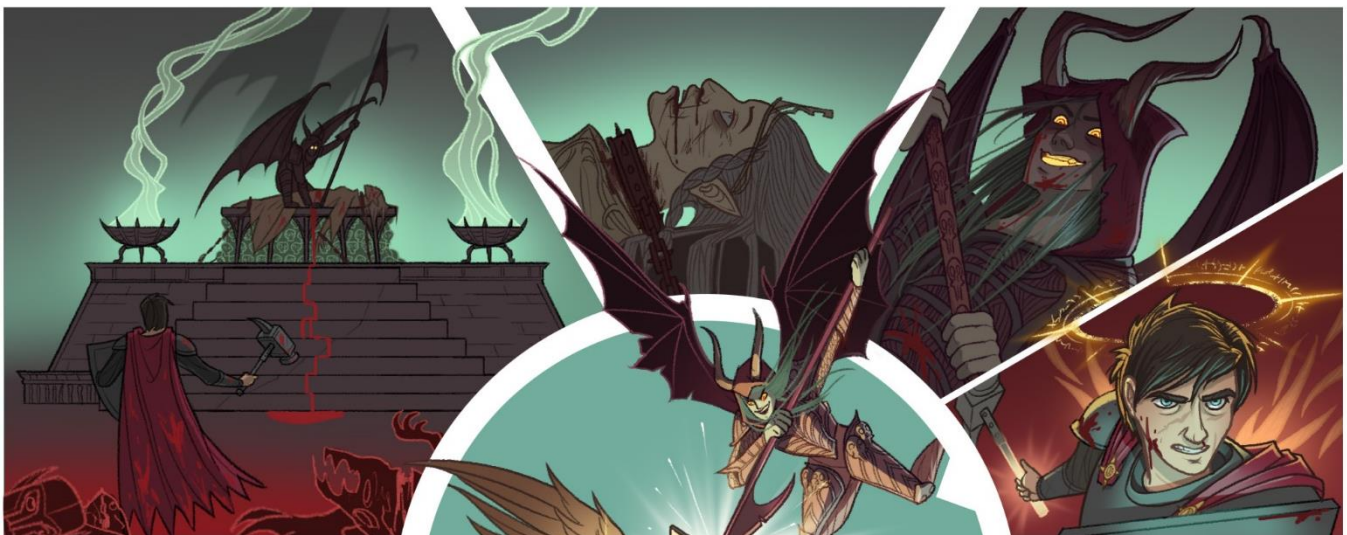
FOOLS! LED TO THEIR DOOM BY THE PROMISE OF JUSTICE.



DID THEY TRULY BELIEVE...



...THEY COULD STOP THE PROPHECY?



MAY THE GODS PITY US,



FOR TODAY THE HEIR OF ORCUS IS BORN!

Adventure Primer

This adventure is structured around players “choosing a side”. Each pillar of play offers ways to achieve the main objectives.

Background

“This is a tale most evil and foul, a horrible tale indeed. There was an angel of Tyr sent without fear, to destroy the Temple of Orcus! **SER VINDICTUS**, Ser Vindictus we can still hear her prayer, as she led her poor knights to their ultimate doom...poor Ser Vindictus...poor Ser Vindictus, no one hears her prayers in that unholy tomb!” –Verse I

The characters begin the adventure in a carriage heading towards **MAFISTO MANOR**. An Incubus and a Succubus disguised as tieflings known as the **MAFISTO TWINS** have called upon the bravest adventurers to help them rescue a lost mythical figure, an angel of Tyr known as Ser Vindictus. The Mafisto Twins are hosting a grand dinner to discuss the details with the adventurers.

Unbeknownst to anyone, three nights ago, the Mafisto Twins ambushed a group of **KNIGHTS OF HOLY JUDGMENT** and stole their map that leads to the entrance of the Temple of Orcus that Ser Vindictus attacked long ago. The Mafisto Twins seek to find Ser Vindictus and turn her into a fallen angel that worships the Archdevil **ZARIEL**.

Now, the Knights of Holy Judgment are hot on the trail of the Mafisto Twins and seek to get their map back. They will stop at nothing to retrieve the map and find Ser Vindictus themselves so they can uncover the fate that befell her and her knights.

Episodes

The adventure is spread over three episodes that altogether take approximately two hours to play. These episodes are initially introduced by a **Call to Action** Episode.

If you’re planning to play the entire adventure at once, you only need to introduce the Call to Action once. However, if you plan to play them over several sessions, you’ll want to revisit the Call to Action each time you play.

- **Episode 1: The Choice (Call to Action).** The Knights of Holy Judgment confront the characters on their way to Mafisto Manor located on the outskirts of MELVAUNT. The characters must

make a choice: join the Knights or face their righteous wrath.

- **Episode 2: Mafisto Manor.** The characters arrive at Mafisto Manor. Characters get the map to the Temple of Orcus at Mafisto Manor. Characters complete Main Objective A upon completing this Episode.
- **Episode 3: Finding the Temple of Orcus.** The characters find and enter the Temple of Orcus beneath the Bloodmuck Swamp. Characters complete Main Objective B upon completing this Episode.

Bonus Objectives

This adventure includes two bonus objectives that the characters may pursue if they have additional time to do so—earning up to an additional 2 **advancement checkpoints** and 1 **treasure checkpoint** in the process. These bonus objectives are found in this adventure’s appendices, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: The Fate of the Lost Knights.** Save or kill the lost Knights of Holy Judgment. This bonus objective is found in Appendix 4.
- **Bonus Objective B: Nezzarum’s Lair.** Defeat Nezzarum. This bonus objective is found in Appendix 5.

Adventure Hooks

Players can come up with the best story hooks that intimately build upon their characters’ backstories. Ask the players why their characters are going to rescue Ser Vindictus, a lost angel of Tyr. Is it for nefarious or noble purposes?

Choosing a Side

The characters’ choices and actions will cause them to “choose a side” during this adventure. Below is a description of the three sides:

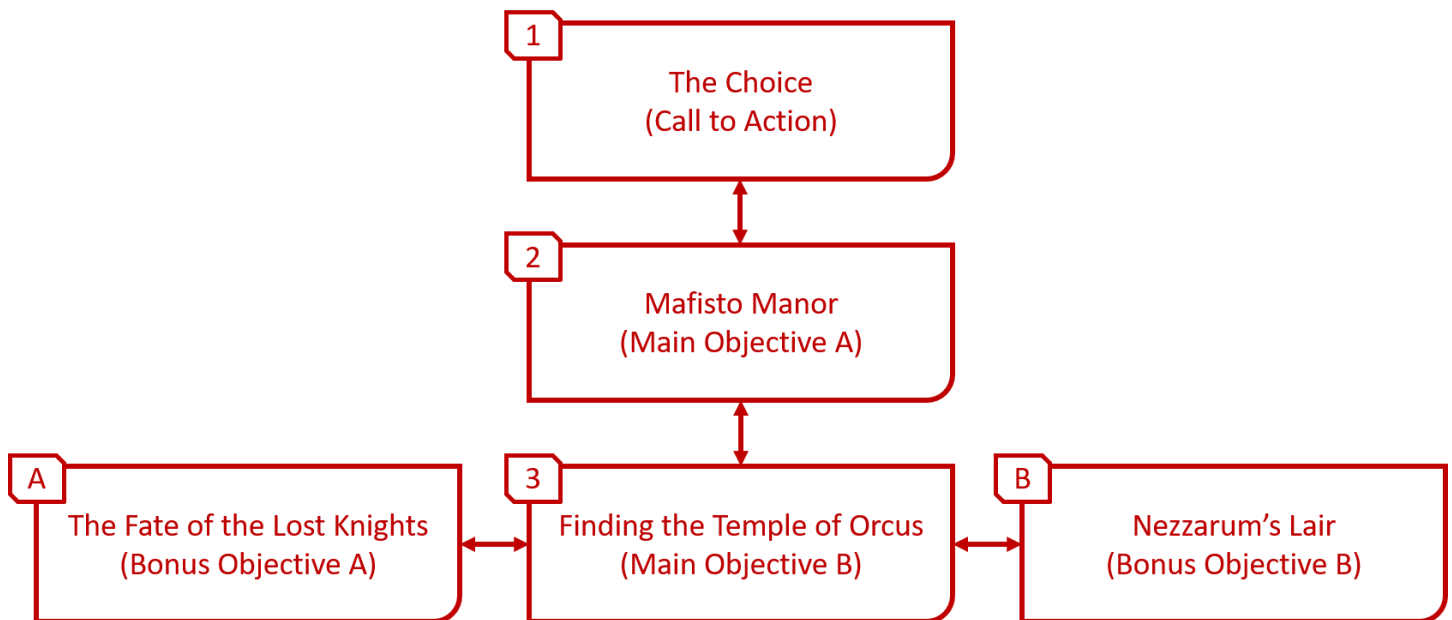
Knights of Holy Judgment. The Knights of Holy Judgment want to recover their stolen map, rescue Ser Gertz, and enter the Temple of Orcus.

Cult of Zariel. The Mafisto Twins want the characters to escort them to the Temple of Orcus, in case trouble arises. They want to enter the Temple of Orcus and see if there is anything inside they can use to their advantage in the Blood War.

Chaos. Players might reject both sides in this adventure and support Chaos!

Episode Flowchart

This adventure plays takes place over 3 Episodes and offers 2 bonus Episodes. Episodes 1, 2, and 3 play out in linear order. Characters can pursue either **Bonus Objectives** once they enter the caves in Episode 3. Characters may complete **Main Objective B** or pursue the **Bonus Objectives** in any order they see fit.



Episode 1. The Choice (Call to Action)

Estimated Duration. 30 minutes

In this Episode, the characters decide if they will side with or against the Knights of Holy Judgment.

Scene A. The Carriage Ride

The characters begin this adventure sitting in a luxurious, horse-drawn carriage trimmed with red paint. The carriage is driven by a small, deformed gnome named **NURFENPURF**. Large warts, blisters, moles, and growths cover his hideous face. He mutters to himself as the carriage travels down the road.

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Improved roads, green rolling hills, and pastures on the outskirts of **MELVAUNT**.

Weather. Mild temperatures, with the evening sky looking as if a storm is approaching from the north.

Lighting. Dim light as the sun begins to set across the hillside.

Smells and Sounds. The sound of the horse-drawn carriage echoes in the distance. A low rumble trembles across the sky as thunder roars in the distance, heading ever closer.

Creatures/NPCs

This scene introduces Nurfenpurf, a gnome **cultist** who worships the Archdevil Zariel and serves as a steward for the Mafisto Twins. Nurfenpurf carries a **Master Key** to Mafisto Manor that unlocks any door. He always wears the key on a chain around his neck. A character succeeding in a DC 16 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check can remove the key without Nurfenpurf noticing.

Objectives/Goals. Nurfenpurf wants to make sure the characters arrive at Mafisto Manor and meet with the Mafisto Twins.

What Does Nurfenpurf Know?

- Nurfenpurf knows that the Mafisto Twins run the Cult of Zariel in this region, they are powerful and shouldn't be double crossed.

What do the Characters Know?

- The Mafisto Twins are well known locally for their charitable donations to local orphanages. The

Twins often help arrange placing children with families for adoption.

- While well known, the source of the Mafisto Twins' wealth remains a relative mystery.

Call to Action

The objective of this adventure is for characters to get the stolen map and enter the Temple of Orcus.

Treasure & Rewards

The characters can find the following treasure.

- Nurfenpurf carries a **Master Key** to Mafisto Manor, which unlocks all doors in the manor. The **Master Key** is fashioned from the finger bone of a demon.

Lore the DM should know

Orcus. Orcus is the Demon Prince of Undeath, also known as the Blood Lord. Orcus rules over Thanatos, the 113th layer of the Abyss. For more detailed lore, reference *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes* or *Out of the Abyss*.

Zariel. Zariel rules Avernus, the first layer of the Nine Hells and the main battlefield in the eternal Blood War. Many eons ago, she was a powerful angel tasked with observing the Blood War on Avernus. The influence of Avernus ultimately corrupted her and she became an Archdevil. For more detailed lore, reference *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*.

The Blood War. An eternal conflict between demons and devils that takes place in the lower planes, the war is mostly fought along the River Styx, in between the Abyss and Avernus. For more detailed lore, reference *Mordenkainen's Tome of Foes*.

Tyr. Tyr is the Faerûnian god of justice. His symbol is balanced scales resting on a warhammer. Followers of Tyr see things in terms of black and white, as good or evil. The Knights of Holy Judgment is an order of knighthood devoted to Tyr and seeking out vengeance against all that is evil. These knights wear thin strips of diaphanous cloth over their eyes to remind others of the blindness of justice. For more detailed lore, reference the *Sword Coast Adventurer's Guide*.

Ser. The title "Ser" is a gender-neutral, knightly title used by the Knights of Holy Judgment. This title exemplifies that Tyr's adherence to justice is blind, and anyone, regardless of gender is equally capable of executing justice in Tyr's name.

Scene B. The Knights of Holy Judgment

A group of Knights of Holy Judgment intercept the carriage before the characters arrive at Mafisto Manor. The group is led by **SER TITUS**, a young male human **knight** riding a **warhorse**. He is accompanied by three human **guards** on **riding horses**.

Nurfenpurf brings the carriage to a sudden halt when the Knights approach. Ser Titus, clad in gleaming plate armor and wielding a large maul, gallops toward the carriage riding his majestic white warhorse. He begins shouting to the characters that they are in danger and have been tricked by the evil Mafisto Twins.

Creatures/NPCs

This scene introduces Ser Titus, a handsome, muscular Knight of Holy Judgment who seeks to uncover the mystery behind Ser Vindictus' disappearance over a century ago. Ser Titus is ruthless with enacting justice and will not hesitate to bring the full force of Tyr down upon evildoers! Ser Titus embodies confidence, leadership, and bravery, so it is only natural that when he talks, he shouts.

Objectives/Goals. Ser Titus knows the Mafisto Twins killed several of his Knights to obtain a map that leads to a lost Temple of Orcus. He seeks justice for their crime! He also knows the Mafisto Twins have captured **SER GERTZ**, a young, female half-orc priest in the Knights of Holy Judgment; and he seeks to rescue her!

What Does Ser Titus Know?

Ser Titus shares the following information with the characters in an attempt to gain their assistance:

- Several days ago, a group of Knights of Holy Judgment were attacked while mapping caves in

the Bloodmuck Swamp. The Knights were ambushed after they discovered the location of a lost Temple of Orcus.

- Two Knights who witnessed the attack say the Mafisto Twins enchanted them and forced them to kill their brothers- and sisters-in-arms. The enchantment broke one day later, but they could not recall where the entrance to the lost Temple of Orcus was.
- Ser Gertz is captive at Mafisto Manor.
- The Mafisto Twins ran off with the map that showed the location of the lost Temple of Orcus.

Development: "Choosing a Side"

This first decision should align the characters with one of the three "sides". Make sure the players know their choices matter!

Knights of Holy Judgment. If the adventurers agree to assist Ser Titus, he asks them to follow him to Mafisto Manor.

Cult of Zariel. If the adventurers refuse to assist Ser Titus, he concludes that the adventurers are evil. Tyr does not tolerate evil in Faerûn and his followers seek to vanquish evil wherever it is.

Chaos. The characters may have plans of their own and decide to work against the Knights of Holy Judgment and the Cult of Zariel. Chaos!

Encounter Adjustments:

- **Very Weak:** Remove all **guards** from the encounter
- **Weak:** Remove one **guard** from this encounter
- **Strong:** Add one more **guard** to this encounter
- **Very Strong:** Add two more **guards** to this encounter

Modifications for Ser Titus

Ser Titus wields a maul instead of a greatsword.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

The Knights believe that those who do not stand with them are against them. In their righteous zeal, they try to kill or subdue the characters before they go to Mafisto Manor.

EXPLORATION

Characters can attempt to escape using the carriage, or other mounts available to them (if any). A chase should be theatrical and fun! The DM is empowered to run a chase as they see fit.

SOCIAL

Characters who appeal to Ser Titus's sense of Judgment and righteousness have advantage on Charisma (Persuasion) checks with Ser Titus. Characters should have an opportunity to avoid combat using social skills

Episode 2. Mafisto Manor

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

In this Episode, the characters decide if they will side with or against the Mafisto Twins and get the map to the Temple of Orcus.

Scene A. The Manor

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Atop this opulent manor are several stone statues with devilish features. Their pointed snarling faces scowl down at the quaint courtyard filled with intricate, manicured landscaping.

Manor Entrance. The front doorway leading into the foyer is locked. There is a back entrance into the manor via the kitchen. Both doors are locked and require succeeding an DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick the doors' locks, a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break the door down, or the doors can be opened with Nurfenpurf's

Master Key to the manor.

Weather. Cool temperatures and a clear night sky.

Lighting. Darkness. The moon shines overhead and the lights from the manor illuminate the windows.

Smells and Sounds. A crow caws overhead as it lands on the roof of the manor and stares at the characters.

Creatures/NPCs

The Mafisto Twins. The Mafisto Twins are inside the manor. **MORDAKAI MAFISTO** is an **incubus** and **ORIANNA MAFISTO** is a **succubus**, both in tiefling form while they occupy the Material Plane. The DM decides which room the Mafisto Twins occupy.

Orianna Mafisto. Orianna is spunky, playful, and seductive. She enjoys corrupting mortals with pleasures of the flesh and their darkest desires, all in the name of fun! Her black hair is worn up in pigtailed, and she adorns her face and horns with elaborate silver jewelry encrusted with blood red sapphires. Her true name is Sharlyss (SHAR-liss).

Mordakai Mafisto. Mordakai is a veteran of the Blood War and suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder. The only thing that cheers him up is Dragonchess, a game he grew to love during his time on the front lines of the Blood War.

During a demonic invasion of Avernus, a demon ripped Mordakai's lower jaw and tongue out of his face. Since that day, **he only communicates with sign language and/or written notes**, he will use telepathy once he knows the characters are friendly.

He wears a crimson scarf to cover up his hideous war wounds and a **Helm of Comprehend Languages** he won at the Avernus Dragonchess Championship, 352 years ago. His true name is Jarixar (JAR-icks-ar).

Objectives/Goals. The Mafisto Twins want the characters to escort them into the lost Temple of Orcus.

What do the Mafisto Twins know?

- The twins want to believe Ser Vindictus is trapped in the Temple of Orcus. They want to find her and covert her into a fallen angel join the ranks of Zariel's Infernal Army.
- Several Knights of Holy Judgment survived the ambush and are lost in the caves under Bloodmuck Swamp. The Mafisto Twins suggest hunting them down so there are no living witnesses.
- **NEZZARUM, a young black dragon**, has a lair underneath the Bloodmuck Swamp near the entrance to the Temple of Orcus. They believe they can bypass the dragon's lair if they are careful.

Encounter Adjustments:

- **Very Weak:** Mafisto Twins each start with 40 hit points
- **Weak:** Mafisto Twins each start with 50 hit points
- **Strong:** Add one more **cultist** to this encounter and Mafisto Twins each start with 75 hit points
- **Very Strong:** Add two more **cultists** to this encounter and Mafisto Twins each start with 90 hit points

Modifications for the Mafisto Twins

Attack. The Mafisto Twins use scimitars while in Tiefling form. These scimitars have +3 to hit and deal 1d6+3 damage.

Ferocious Surge (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). When this creature hits with an attack that isn't a critical hit, it can turn the hit into a critical hit.

Helm of Comprehend Languages. Mordakai always keeps comprehend languages active when visitors are present.

Treasure. Orianna Mafisto carries a **Sapphire Key** that unlocks the chest in the Master Bedroom and the manacles that restrain Ser Gertz. Mordakai Mafisto carries a **Jade Key** that unlocks the display cases in the library.

Objectives

- **Main Objective A:** Characters get the map to the Temple of Orcus.

Area 1. Main Foyer

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. The floor is made of the purest marble with a white hue and hints of black which sprawl out like wild rivers. There are several large leather chairs in the middle of the room and large hanging paintings depicting a fiery battle scene adorn the walls.

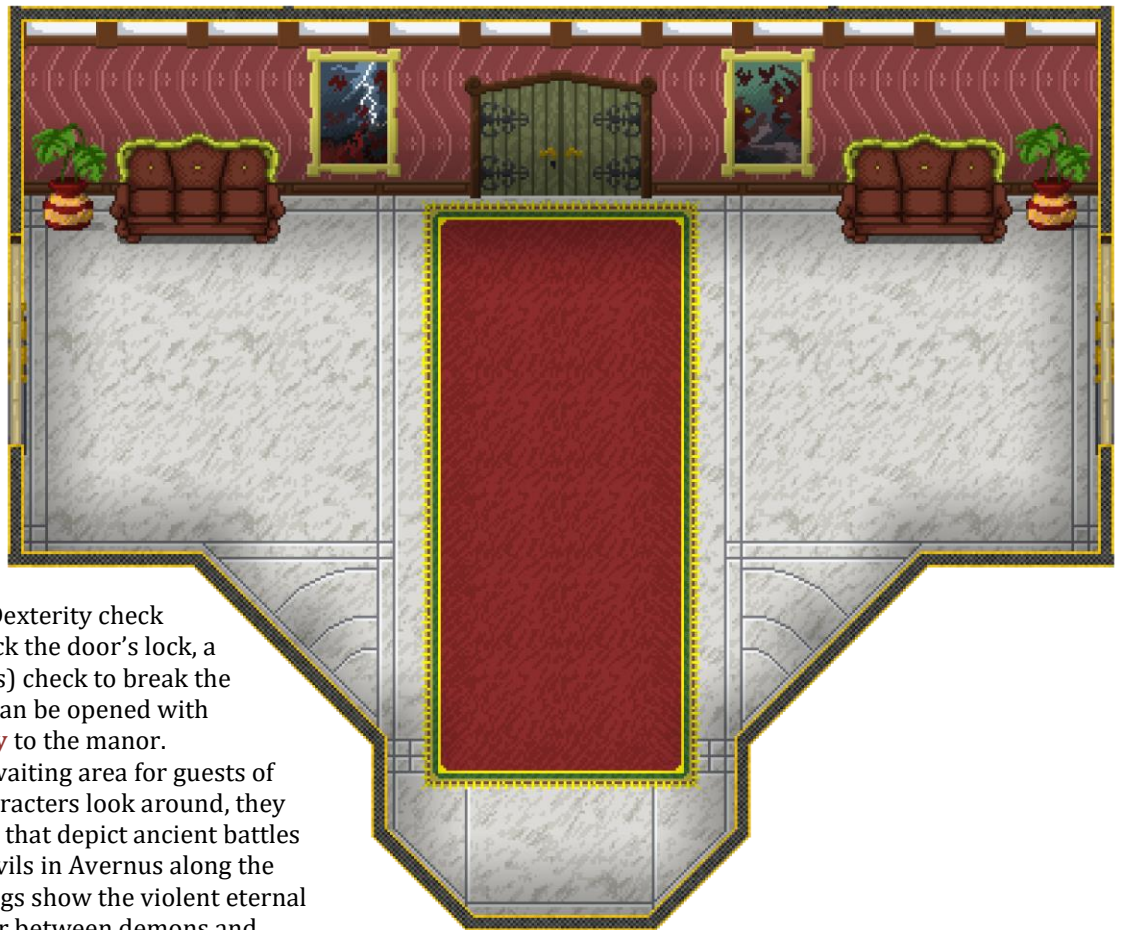
Lighting. Bright light from candles illuminate this room.

Smells and Sounds. The foyer smells of sweet lavender and oils.

Other Features

Characters can enter the manor via the front door that leads directly into the Main Foyer. If Nurfenpurf is present, he unlocks the front door and lets the adventurers enter. If Nurfenpurf isn't present, the door is locked and requires succeeding in an DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick the door's lock, a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break the door down, or the door can be opened with Nurfenpurf's **Master Key** to the manor.

The foyer serves as a waiting area for guests of Mafisto Manor. If the characters look around, they see paintings on the wall that depict ancient battles between demons and devils in Avernus along the River Styx. These paintings show the violent eternal struggle of the Blood War between demons and devils. The paintings suggest the devils defending against an infinite onslaught of demonic hordes. A successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check on the paintings reveals a young and vibrant Nurfenpurf painted in the backdrop of one of the artworks as a valiant hero, slaying a demon on the front lines of battle in Avernus.



Area 2. Dining Hall & The Feast!

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. A large dark oak table occupies the center of this large dining hall. Polished silverware and delicious food are set out on the table in preparation for the feast.

Lighting. Bright light; the fireplace illuminates the room in a bright orange hue.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of exotic roasts lingers about the room. The fireplace crackles soothingly.

Other Features

Above the fireplace hangs a painting of a female fallen angel. She is heavily armored, wields a flaming longsword in one hand, and a flaming javelin in the other. Her face is defiant as she looks towards the heavens while leading an Army of devils into battle. Characters that succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence (History) or (Religion) check recognize that this painting depicts the Archdevil Zariel.

Development: “Choosing a Side”

Cult of Zariel. If the characters side with the Cult of Zariel, then “The Feast is Served!” event occurs (see below). During the feast, each guest is served a dish from their respective cultures, which should hint at the fact that the Mafisto Twins have done their homework on their guests.

Event: The Feast is Served!

The Mafisto Twins begin the dinner with small chat. Assume, however, that the twins have gathered information on each of the characters beforehand. One way to convey that the Twins know information about the characters is for the DM to record the “flaws” of each character, using them during the social encounter as a way for the Twins to interact with each character.

Suggested Feast Events

Below are some events that can play out during the feast:

Mordakai Mafisto Feast Events. Mordakai challenges the characters to a game of Dragonchess. If they beat him, he offers them his **Helm of Comprehend Languages** and his **Jade Key** as gifts. He allows the characters to keep anything they want from his display cases in the Library.

Playing Dragonchess

The game of Dragonchess takes place on a three-tiered chess board over five rounds of contests between a character and Mordakai. Each round, a character makes any Ability check within the DM’s discretion versus Mordakai’s Intelligence check, adding +2 to Mordakai’s roll for his proficiency in Dragonchess. The highest total roll in the contest wins the round. The first to win three rounds wins the game. Characters may apply their proficiency bonus to any Ability check if they are proficient with Dragonchess. If Mordakai loses two rounds, he attempts to charm his opponent and telepathically command them to forfeit the game. The DM should encourage fun, creative Ability checks in this scene.

Orianna Mafisto Feast Events. Orianna tries to seduce good-aligned characters. At the DMs discretion, a character who spends the night with Orianna can give a cambion its true name.

Nurfenpurf Feast Events. Nurfenpurf spills food and distracts characters that ask too many questions.

Treasure & Rewards

The characters can find the following treasure.

- Mordakai’s **Helm of Comprehend Languages**.
- Mordakai’s **Jade Key** to the display cases in the library.
- Orianna’s **Sapphire Key**, which unlocks the chest in the Master Bedroom and the manacles that restrain Ser Gertz.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

In combat the Mafisto Twins first use their *Charm* action on Ser Titus (if present) and the characters. They try to turn the tides of battle by gaining more charmed allies.

EXPLORATION

A character can leave the feast unnoticed if they succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) check. Characters may pickpocket the Mafisto Twins’ keys with a successful DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

SOCIAL

Characters must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom (Insight) check to determine the true intentions of the Mafisto Twins. Characters that play Dragonchess with Mordakai have advantage on this check.

Area 3. Kitchen

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Platters of exotic cuisine fill every inch of this small kitchen. Bottles of wine line the tops of the cupboards. In the corner of the kitchen, a small iron pot is boiling on a stove. It appears to be some sort of potato stew, a cuisine of gnomes.

Lighting. Bright light, candles and fire from the stove light up the kitchen.

Smells and Sounds. Aromas of garlic, onions, and spiced meat. A boiling pot bubbles on the stove.

Other Features

This kitchen is used to prepare food for the feast. There is a locked door that opens up to the back of Mafisto Manor. This door can be unlocked with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools to pick the door's lock, a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break the door down, or the door can be opened with Nurfenpurf's

Master Key to the manor.

The other door in the kitchen leads into the Dining Hall.

If Nurfenpurf is around, he tries to kick the characters out of his kitchen; he doesn't like guests disturbing his work area or eyeing his potato stew. Nurfenpurf frequently uses whatever he can find to spice up his stew, including spices from Chult. He keeps spices stored in a cabinet near his stove that characters can find if they search around.



Area 4. Library

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. A blood-red carpet lines the floor as towering bookshelves line the walls of this room. Ancient tomes and scrolls found only in the most exclusive libraries in Faerun appear in this library.

Lighting. Bright light, glass encased flames flicker above the bookshelves.

Smells and Sounds. There is a pungent smell of leather, old books, and tomes in the Library. The library is silent, except for the occasional screams of Ser Gertz (see “Development” below).

Other Features

The Library is initially locked when the characters arrive. Nurfenpurf opens the Library for the characters after their feast with the Mafisto Twins. If the characters want to enter the Library before Nurfenpurf opens it for them, they must succeed in an DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools to pick the doors’ lock, a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to break the door down, or the door can be opened with Nurfenpurf’s **Master Key** to the manor.

The Mafisto Manor library is an elaborate collection of ancient tomes and scrolls. Characters can find several books of use here in the library that allow their characters to learn useful lore on the Blood War and the Nine Hells.

There are three glass display cases in this library. One arcane scroll with a wax seal bearing the symbol of Asmodeus sits atop a black cushion in each case. Two of the display cases hold the following scrolls: Scroll of Absorb Elements, Scroll of Comprehend Languages. The scroll in the third display case is a recipe for “Nurfenpurfs Famous Potato Stew”. Nurfenpurf hides his recipe here to safeguard it against thieves. The display cases can be opened with Mordakai’s **Jade Key**, a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves’ tools, or characters can simply break the glass of the display cases and take the scrolls.

Noticeable Tomes in the Library

Maglaments Musings: the Blood War, a deep red, leather-bound tome, is filled with lore on the Blood War. This describes the eternal battle on the River Styx between Demons and Devils in Avernus. If the Devils ever lose this

eternal struggle, Demons will consume the Multiverse. This tome is written in Infernal.

To the Abyss and Back, a golden book with silver trimming and a symbol of balanced scales resting on a warhammer. This tome is written by Ser Thandor and details the story of Ser Vindictus, an angel of Tyr: 104 years ago the “Knights of Holy Judgment,” holy warriors in the service of Tyr, sent a group of their greatest knights deep into the Bloodmuck Swamp. Ser Vindictus led her Knights on a holy quest to destroy a temple dedicated to the Demon Lord Orcus. The Knights stormed heroically into the depths of the Temple of Orcus to put an end to his presence in Thar once and for all. After the Knights entered the temple they were ever heard from again, and the location of the temple was lost. Ser Thandor believes Ser Vindictus is still alive and trapped within the Temple of Orcus. This tome is written in celestial.

Ashmadai Codex, a fiery red tome with a pentagram emblazoned on the cover details the Ashmadai, a Cult of Asmodeus, and their linkages with the Red Wizards of Thay. The tome explains the political workings of the Nine Hells. This tome is written in Infernal.

Ecology of Bloodmuck, a leaf green book bound by bamboo that details the wildlife surrounding Bloodmuck. Specifically, this book details the Bloodmuck Swamp and mentions that a young black dragon has made a lair deep beneath the swamp. This tome is written in Elvish.

Development

If the characters have not seen or heard Ser Gertz, the following event triggers if the characters are in the Library.

Characters with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 12 or higher hears faint screaming coming from behind one of the bookshelves. Characters searching for the origins of the screams and succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notice a black book slightly protruding from the bookshelf. Pulling the book causes the bookshelf to open outward, revealing a small set of stairs leading into a dimly lit cellar (Area 5).

Treasure & Rewards

The characters can find the following treasure.

- Scroll of Absorb Elements
- Scroll of Comprehend Languages
- “Nurfenpurfs Famous Potato Stew” recipe
- Maglaments Musings: The Blood War
- To the Abyss and Back,
- Ashmadai Codex
- Ecology of Bloodmuck

Area 5. Cellar

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. The cellar is small and has a pentagram etched in the center of the room. Blood-stained floors and occult ritual devices are on a desk in the corner of the room.

Lighting. Bright Light, as hundreds of candles cause shadows to dance about the cellar with glee. The shadows momentarily pause when a character enters the room.

Smells and Sounds. The room smells of iron and blood. If you listen closely, you can hear the whispers of the occult.

Other Features

The cellar is used as a small ritual room where the Mafisto Twins engage in occult activities. The twins plan on sacrificing Ser Gertz in honor of Zariel and pressure the characters to carry out this task.

Creatures/NPCs

Ser Gertz. Ser Gertz, a young female half-orc **priest** in the Knights of Holy Judgment. She has long, dreadlocked hair, and is known to speak bluntly and act assertively around others. She is calm and thoughtful in everything she does.

Ser Gertz is tied up in the center of the room, sitting on a ceremonial pentagram etched into the floor. She is also restrained by manacles. The manacles can be unlocked with a successful DC 10 Dexterity check using thieves' tools, a DC 20 Strength (Athletics) check, or with Orianna's **Sapphire Key**.

Objectives/Goals. Ser Gertz wants to seek out the remaining lost knights in the caves beneath the Bloodmuck Swamp.

What does Ser Gertz know?

- The Mafisto Twins ambushed the knights, stole their map, and captured her.
- During the ambush, she saw that several Knights were left alive. She fears that without the map they might have gotten lost in the caves beneath the Bloodmuck Swamp.
- Ser Gertz overheard the Mafisto Twins talking about a living sacrifice, and she fears they might be talking about her.

Development - "Choosing a Side"

Cult of Zariel. If the Mafisto Twins believe that the adventures are evil, they try to convince them to sacrifice Ser Gertz in honor of Zariel. Evil characters should receive inspiration for this act. The Mafisto Twins invite the characters to join the Cult of Zariel if they sacrifice Ser Gertz (see **Appendix 7**).

Knights of Holy Judgment. The characters can free the Ser Gertz and enact righteous justice on the Mafisto Twins, or they can try to convince the knights to leave peacefully. If the characters free Ser Gertz and side with the Knights of Holy Judgment against the Mafisto Twins, Ser Titus or Ser Getz recounts the story of Ser Vindictus and asks the characters to join the Knights of Holy Judgment (see **Appendix 6**).

Chaos. The characters can side against both the Cult of Zariel and the Knights of Holy Judgment.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

In combat the Mafisto Twins will first use their Charm action on Ser Titus (if present) and then the characters. They will try to turn the tides of battle by gaining more charmed allies. In combat Ser Titus will always use his Leadership action and then attempt to kill the Mafisto Twins.

EXPLORATION

If a character succeeds on a DC 10 Intelligence (Religion) check, they recognize the pentagram as a symbol of the Nine Hells. This symbol is used during sacrificial rituals.

SOCIAL

The Mafisto Twins can be talked out of sacrificing Ser Gertz if the characters succeed on a DC 19 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Intimidation) check, or a DC 19 Strength (Intimidation) check.

Area 6. Guest Quarters

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. Elegant silk linens adorn the large beds in this room. Paintings of Neverwinter at nighttime hang about the room, the skyline of the large city lighting up the night sky. In one of the paintings, a hooded figure wearing a pentagram around their neck is seen approaching Neverwinter. If characters succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check after gazing at the painting, they can feel the figure's eyes under its hood staring back at them... into their soul.

Lighting. Bright Light, candles adorn the walls of these quarters.

Smells and Sounds. The sheets smell of fresh flowers. This room is eerily silent.

Other Features

The Mafisto Twins host many guests at their residence. This room is used exclusively to provide guests a comfortable place to sleep for the night if they choose to stay.

The characters can take a long rest in this room. The beds are extremely comfortable and would only be found in the most luxurious homes throughout Faerûn. This manor is deeply connected to the Nine Hells, its evil permeating throughout the manor.

Long Rests in Mafisto Manor

DMs are encouraged to grant evil-aligned characters Inspiration when they take a long rest here. Non-evil-aligned characters experience nightmares during their rest in the manor and must succeed in a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or suffer long-term madness. Long-term madness lasts 1d10x10 hours.

Detecting Evil. The manor's evil influence is detectable by using *detect good and evil*. The grounds of the manor are desecrated.

Long-term Madness

d20	Madness (Flaw)
1-5	"Without devils and their enduring sacrifices, the material plane would be overrun with demonic hordes."
6-10	"I have an insatiable appetite for power, I'll do anything to gain more power, no matter the costs."
11-15	"The only way to ascend to greatness is to enter into a contract with a powerful devil. I must seek one out."
16-20	"Evil is the only power that can defeat evil. Goodness is weak and will only lead to the demise of the material plane, should it be allowed to flourish."

Development

If the characters have not explored the cellar of Mafisto Manor and the take a long rest, here the following occurs. During their long rest, any character with a passive Wisdom (Perception) of 12 or higher wakes up after hearing the desperate screams of Ser Gertz coming from beneath the floor. If the characters follow the screams, they are led into the library (Area 4). At the DM's discretion, the Mafisto Twins may sacrifice Ser Gertz to Zariel.



Area 7. Master Bedroom

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. A large, redwood canopy bed with deep purple, satin bedding dominates this room. Deep claw marks scar the otherwise beautiful bedposts. Behind the bed is a large mirror with onyx fixtures in the shapes of flames. In the corner of the room is a desk littered with papers and occult texts. At the foot of the desk is a **black chest** with red trimming and a fiendish eye painted on top that appears to watch the characters as they move.

Lighting. Bright Light, candles on the desks provide illumination.

Smells and Sounds. The sheets smell of fresh flowers. This room is eerily silent.

Other Features

The papers on top of the desk are notes written by Mordakai. The notes include stories of his nightmares from his battles in the Blood War. They appear to be his way of coping with the mental stress of war. Even fiends are affected by the mental and emotional scarring of war.

The Mafisto Twins keep correspondence letters to Victoro and Ammalia Cassalanter and the **stolen map** in a trapped **black chest** within their bedroom. If the characters escort the Mafisto Twins to the temple entrance, the Mafisto Twins collect the map to take on their journey before they leave the Manor.

Traps and Puzzles

The **black chest** is trapped with a **poison needle**. Characters that examine the chest and succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notice that the eye is painted as an optical illusion. The chest can only be unlocked by using Orianna's **Sapphire Key** or by disabling the trap.

This simple **poison needle** trap is meant to keep looters away. The small spring-loaded poison needle is hidden in exterior of the chest. After the trap is triggered, it needs to be manually reset and will not trigger again until it is reset.

Detection and Disabling. A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals the needle, but only if the character inspects the exterior of the

chest. A successful DC 20 Dexterity check using thieves' tools disables the needle, and a check with a



total of 10 or lower triggers the trap.

Trigger. Any attempt to open the chest without the use of thieves' tools or without Orianna's **Sapphire Key** triggers the trap. A Dexterity check using thieves' tools with a total of 10 or lower triggers the trap. If a character covers the painted eye on the trap, they trigger the trap.

Effect. The triggering character must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature takes 14 (4d6) damage and is poisoned for 10 minutes. While poisoned in this way, the creature is paralyzed. On a successful save, the character takes half as much damage and isn't poisoned.

Treasure & Rewards

The characters can find the following treasure.

- Map to the Temple of Orcus

Area 8. Nurfenpurf's Bedroom

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. This small bedroom is immaculate, thoroughly cleaned, and maintained. There is a small bed, appropriately sized for a gnome or small child. Hanging above Nurfenpurf's bed is a poster depicting a "Passage of Arms" tournament in Waterdeep. The year on the poster for the tournament is 300 years ago.

Lighting. Dim Light, a lonely candle is the desk.

Smells and Sounds. The smell of dirty feet, potatoes, and body odor fill this room.

Other Features

Nurfenpurf lives in this small room. It is the only sanctuary he has. Beside the bed is a small table with a hand drawn sketch of a homely looking female gnome with a phrase written in gnomish, "Until we meet again my champion. -Love Migly."

If characters investigate the room and succeed on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check, they notice that one of the legs on the bed appears to have a secret compartment built into the bed leg. If they open the secret compartment, they find the contract Nurfenpurf signed with the Warlock **XANDAGAST** 300 years ago. The details of the contract layout Nurfenpurf's desire to win the "Passage of Arms" tournament and become a famous celebrity. As a consequence of signing the contract, Nurfenpurf's soul belongs to Zariel for all eternity.

The Sad Tale of Nurfenpurf

300 years ago, in his youth, Nurfenpurf sought to become a mighty warrior of legend. Determined to prove his worth, he signed up for a "Passage of Arms" tournament in the city of Waterdeep. In these tournaments, participants send out a proclamation declaring themselves an open challenge for 24 hours. Anyone may face the participant in combat, with all styles of combat allowed. The last one standing after the 24-hour period expires is declared the winner.

The eve before his tournament, he prayed for strength, martial prowess, and victory! His plea was heard in the dead of night by a powerful Warlock named Xandagast who offered Nurfenpurf all he desired, so long as the gnome gave himself to Zariel. Nurfenpurf took the deal, binding himself in service to Zariel for eternity. He went on to become the first

gnome to ever win a "Passage of Arms" tournament and became a celebrity within the social circles of Waterdeep.

One hundred years later his payment came due. Nurfenpurf was summoned to the front lines of the Blood War in the River Styx. The fighting in the depths of the Nine Hells was so grotesque, so evil, that it left his body and mind deformed beyond recognition. Nurfenpurf is a disfigured monstrosity of his former self, driven mad by what he has seen, what he has become... and by what he has lost forever.

Treasure & Rewards

The characters can find the following treasure.

- Sketch of Migley
- Contract between Nurfenpurf and Xandagast the Warlock
- "Passage of Arms" Tournament poster



Scene B. Leaving Mafisto Manor

The characters should have explored Mafisto Manor and chosen a “side” prior to leaving Mafisto Manor.

Development: “Choosing a Side”

Knights of Holy Judgment. If the characters side with the knights, Ser Titus recommends they rest for the night to recover (see the *Long Rests in Mafisto Manor* sidebar *Area 6. Guest Quarters*, above). The Knights leave Mafisto Manor whenever the characters are ready to leave. If the characters do not obtain the map from the Mafisto Twins’ chest (in *Area 7. Master Bedroom*), reference the *You Forgot the Map?!* sidebar in Episode 3, Scene A.

Cult of Zariel. If the characters side with the Cult of Zariel, they are asked to stay the night and take a long rest (see the *Long Rests in Mafisto Manor* sidebar *Area 6. Guest Quarters*, above). The party escorts the Mafisto Twins to the Temple of Orcus in the morning. The Twins bring the map from the chest in their master bedroom on the journey.

Chaos. If an onslaught of madness occurs and both the Knights of Holy Judgment and Cult of Zariel are no longer in play, the characters can still continue to the Temple of Orcus on their own. If the characters do not obtain the map from the Mafisto Twins’ chest (in *Area 7. Master Bedroom*), reference the *You Forgot the Map?!* sidebar in Episode 3, Scene A.



What happens if Nurfenpurf dies?

If characters side with the Knights of Holy Judgment or Chaos, Nurfenpurf’s soul returns to Avernus where he takes the physical form of a lemure. Zariel favors Nurfenpurf for his faithful service and promotes him to a lesser devil, an **imp**. The DM may have Nurfenpurf reappear at will during the remainder of this adventure to hunt down the characters for their treachery.

If characters side with the Cult of Zariel, Nurfenpurf’s soul returns to Avernus, where he takes the physical form of a lemure. Zariel favors Nurfenpurf for his faithful service and promotes him to a lesser devil, an **imp**. The DM may have Nurfenpurf reappear at will during the remainder of this adventure to accompany the adventurers into the Temple of Orcus.

What happens if Ser Titus or Ser Gertz die?

If characters side with the Knights of Holy Judgment, at the DM’s discretion, Ser Titus or Ser Gertz can reappear at will during the remainder of this adventure as a **sword wraith warrior**. Ser Titus and Ser Gertz seek to find out what happened to Ser Vindictus before they can fade into the afterlife with honor.

If characters side with the Cult of Zariel or Chaos, they utter a curse at the character who deals the killing blow before perishing, marking that character as their adversary. This curse should be foreboding and serve as a warning of what is to come. At the DM’s discretion, they can appear at will during the remainder of this adventure as a **revenant**, seeking to kill their adversary. If they knock their adversary unconscious, they continue attacking that character until they fail three death saving throws. Once they kill their adversary, they crumble into dust and their soul fades into the afterlife.

What happens if the Mafisto Twins die?

If characters side with the Knights of Holy Judgment or Chaos, the Mafisto Twins disappear in a cloud of sulfurous smoke or dissolve into a pool of ichor, instantly returning to Avernus where they reform at full strength. At DM discretion, the Mafisto Twins may reappear at will during the remainder of this adventure to hunt down the characters for their treachery.

If characters side with the Cult of Zariel, the Mafisto Twins disappear in a cloud of sulfurous smoke or dissolve into a pool of ichor, instantly returning to Avernus where they reform at full strength. At DM discretion, the Mafisto Twins may reappear at will during the remainder of this adventure to accompany the adventurers to the Temple of Orcus.

Episode 3. Finding the Temple of Orcus

Estimated Duration: 30 minutes

In this Episode the characters travel to the Temple of Orcus and enter it.

Scene A. Travel to the Temple of Orcus

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. The shallow water in the swamp is putrid and black as dead fish float about, staring lifelessly into nothingness.

Light. Dim light as the sun begins to set across the hillside.

Weather. The swamp is humid and hot. This makes wearing armor uncomfortable.

Smells and Sounds. The swamp smells of sulfur. Wolf cries, the snarls of creatures, and constant splashes in the swamp are all around you.

Other Features

The characters travel **35 miles** from the Bloodmuck Swamp from Mafisto Manor. If the characters acquired the map to the cave entrance from the Mafisto Twins, they arrive without issue at the cave entrance that leads to *Scene B. Temple Entrance*.

When the characters arrive at the entrance of the foreboding cave, they see pestilent water from the swamp emptying into the mouth of the cave as a thick fog billows along the floor.

On a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Arcana), (Nature), or (Survival) check, the adventurers recognize these as signs that a black dragon has made its lair nearby. Rangers with dragons as favored enemies and characters that read *Ecology of Bloodmuck* they make this check with Advantage.

You Lost the Map?!

If the adventurers lose the map, they must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check to find the cave entrance that leads to the Scene B. Temple Entrance. If the adventurers fail this check, they are unlucky and find a cave entrance that leads to Nezzarum's Lair (Appendix 5).



Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

At the DM's discretion, NPCs may appear for revenge. See Episode 2, Scene B. Leaving Mafisto Manor for details about bringing back dead NPCs for their revenge. It is recommended DMs do this only once per adventure.

EXPLORATION

Travel through the Bloodmuck Swamp is arduous. Characters must succeed on a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or suffer one level of exhaustion. If a Ranger with swamp as their favored terrain is with the characters, everyone makes the check with advantage.

SOCIAL

During travel, at the DM's discretion, the characters may meet a swamp dweller who sells equipment listed in Chapter 5 of the *Player's Handbook*. All the equipment the swamp dweller sells is from failed expeditions in the swamp.

Scene B. Temple Entrance

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. The caves are smooth as shallow water flows throughout them. The caves are attached to an underground lake, and the many cave tunnel branches lead deep into the Underdark.

Light. Darkness, there is not light this deep into the cave system.

Weather. The air inside the caves is humid and cool.

Smells and Sounds. The caverns echo with the trickling of water as it flows along the cave floor. Death and decay fill the air, a pungent smell that sours the nostrils.

Other Features

This cave entrance avoids Nezzarum's lair and leads directly to the entrance of the Temple of Orcus. When the characters enter the cave, they travel several miles in the cave until they come upon the entrance to the Temple.

The Temple entrance is two massive marble doors that loom over the cavernous tunnels. Adjacent to the door is an onyx lever and a decapitated, skeletal corpse with a satchel around its torso.

Skeletal Corpse. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Medicine) check reveals this female high elf corpse has been here for at least 50 years. If the characters examine the satchel, they find a **set of thieves' tool** (not usable outside this adventure) and a blood-soaked journal with a repeated phrase written in Abyssal that translates as, "Behold the Heir of Orcus is born, undeath incarnate is here!" Several feet from the corpse is a skull with its mouth ajar in utter surprise.

The Temple Doors. The Temple doors open when the trap is disabled and the lever is pulled. An aura

of evil bathes over the characters, what is inside the temple is truly frightening.

Traps & Puzzles

The lever adjacent to the door is trapped. If a character pulls the lever without disabling the trap, a razor sharp **hidden blade trap** springs forth from the wall and attempts to decapitate anyone standing within five feet of the lever.

Detection and Disabling. If a character mentions some connection between the decapitated skull and the lever, they can discover the trap with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, rolled with Advantage. Disarming the trap for 24 hours requires a successful DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools. After 24 hours, the trap resets.

Trigger. If the lever is pulled, a retractable blade attempts to decapitate anyone standing within 5 feet of the lever. The blade resets unless the trap has been disabled. If a character fails the DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools twice in a row or fails by 10 or more the trap triggers and then resets.

Effect. Characters within 5 feet of the lever must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or take 22 (4d10) slashing damage from the blades. On a success the character is able to dodge the blades. If a character is reduced to zero hit points from this attack, they are decapitated. The blade resets after the lever is pulled.

Tunnel to Nezzarum's Lair

Near the Temple entrance, the cave tunnel continues south. This takes them to Appendix 5. Nezzarum's Lair.

Objectives

- **Main Objective B:** The Characters enter the Temple of Orcus.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

At DM discretion, NPCs may appear for revenge. See Episode 2, Scene B. Leaving Mafisto Manor for details about bringing back dead NPCs for their revenge. It is recommended DMs do this only once per adventure.

EXPLORATION

A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals information on the skeletal corpse and trapped lever. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Survival) reveals information on the tunnel to Nezzarum's Lair.

SOCIAL

NPCs may be convinced to pull the lever near the temple doors if the characters succeed on a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion), (Intimidation), or (Deception) check or a DC 15 Strength (Intimidation) check.

Wrap-Up: Concluding the Adventure

Once the characters enter the Temple of Orcus, the doors close behind them. They must explore deeper into the Temple to find what happened to Ser Vindictus and her Knights.

Characters begin with any NPC allies who entered the Temple with them if they play CCC-AETHER-01-02, *The Heir of Orcus: Verse II*.

Adventure Rewards

Upon completing the adventure, the characters each receive rewards based upon their accomplishments. These rewards include advancement and treasure, and may include special rewards, such as story awards or new downtime activities, as follows:

Advancement Checkpoints

The characters receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 1 treasure checkpoint for each **story objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Main Objective A:** The characters explore Mafisto Manor and leave to the Temple of Orcus.
- **Main Objective B:** The Characters enter the Temple of Orcus.

The characters receive 1 advancement checkpoint and 1 treasure checkpoint for each **bonus objective** that they complete, as follows:

- **Bonus Objective A: The Fate of the Lost Knights.** The characters save or kill the lost Knights of Holy Judgment.
- **Bonus Objective B:** Defeat Nezzarum.

Treasure Checkpoints

The characters receive a treasure checkpoint for completing **both main objectives** and/or **both bonus objectives**. There is a maximum of four treasure checkpoints for this adventure.

Magic Item Unlock

Characters unlock this magic item if they complete **both main objectives**.

Helm of Comprehend Languages. This elaborate helm is made of Avernium, a black metal found only

in Avernus. The helm has the appearance of a crown with spikes. The inner circle of the helm has an inscription in Infernal which reads, “Avernus Dragonchess Champion”. This item can be found in **Appendix 8**.

Story Awards

During this adventure, the characters may earn the following story award:

Knight of Holy Judgment. You are now a member of the Knights of Holy Judgment! As a Knight of Holy

Judgment, you swore a solemn oath to uphold justice, hunt down the wicked, and to serve as a stalwart guardian against devils and demons. May Tyr guide you as you devote yourself to the cause of justice, to the righting of wrongs, and the deliverance of vengeance! More information can be found in **Appendix 6**.

Cultist of Zariel. Sacrificing Ser Gertz has earned you the favor of the Archdevil Zariel. Go forth and recruit more souls in the name of Zariel! More information can be found in **Appendix 7**.



DM Rewards

In exchange for running this adventure, you earn advancement and treasure checkpoints and downtime as though you played the adventure, but none of the other rewards listed above.

However, this adventure may qualify for rewards earned by completing DM Quests. See the ALDMG (Adventurers League Dungeon Master’s Guide) for more information about DM Quests.

Appendix 1: Locations & NPCs

The following NPCs and locations feature prominently in this adventure. The NPCs are listed and shown below in order of appearance.

NPCs

- **Nurfenpurf (NURF-en-PURF)**. The steward for the Mafisto Twins and their manor. Gnome male.
Objective: Earn the favor of Zariel and the Mafisto Twins.
Personality: "I'm bitter and angry."
Ideal: "One day I'll earn Zariel's favor."
Bond: "I'll do anything for my Masters."
Flaw: "I spy on everyone."
- **Ser Titus (Ser TIE-tuss)**. Commander of the Knights of Holy Judgment. Always shouts when he talks. Human male.
Objective: Discover what happened to Ser Vindictus in the Temple of Orcus.
Personality: "JUSTICE, VENGEANCE, TYR!!"
Ideal: "RETRIBUTION FOR EVIL DOERS!!"
Bond: "SER GERTZ MUST BE SAVED!!"
Flaw: "JUSTICE IS NEVER WRONG!!"
- **Orianna Mafisto (ORR-ee-ANN-a ma-FIST-oh)**. A succubus disguised as a tiefling who contracts the adventurers to escort her and Mordakai to the Temple of Orcus. A servant of the Archdevil Zariel.
Objective: Recruit others into the Cult of Zariel and use them to enter the Temple of Orcus.
Personality: "I love to play and get my way."
Ideal: "I want others to love me."
Bond: "Mordakai has always been here for me."
Flaw: "I'll do whatever it takes to corrupt others."
- **Mordakai Mafisto (MORE-da-kigh ma-FIST-oh)**. An incubus disguised as a tiefling who contracts the adventurers to escort him and Orianna to the Temple of Orcus. A servant of the Archdevil Zariel.
Objective: Recruit others into the Cult of Zariel and use them to enter the Temple of Orcus.
Personality: "My soul is weary of war."
Ideal: "I want this eternal conflict to end."
Bond: "Dragonchess is my only solace."
Flaw: "I am willing to wager anything on a game of Dragonchess."

Ser Gertz (Ser GERTS). A member of the Knights of Holy Judgment. Half-orc Female.
Objective: Discover what happened to Ser Vindictus in the Temple of Orcus.
Personality: "It's best to be blunt and to the point."
Ideal: "I will prove myself as a great Knight."
Bond: "I am true to the ways of Tyr."
Flaw: "There is good in everyone, I don't care what others say."

- **Nezzarum (ne-ZAR-rum)**. A young black dragon with a lair near the entrance to the Temple of Orcus.
Objective: Defend his hoard of treasure and eat fairies to gain their power.
Personality: "Everyone is out to get my treasure!"
Ideal: "Power is all I need to gain more treasure!"
Bond: "I have named every single coin in my treasure hoard, they are my children."
Flaw: "I am easy to laugh, and when I laugh I can do little else."

Locations

- **Mafisto Manor (ma-FIST-oh MAN-or)**. The home of the Mafisto Twins located on the outskirts of Melvaunt. The entire grounds of the manor are desecrated, and evil radiates throughout the manor.
- **Bloodmuck Swamp (BLOOD-MUCK Swamp)**. A pestilent, decaying swamp located in the heart of Thar, 35 miles from Mafisto Manor. Below the swamp is the lair of Nezzarum, a black dragon who lives near the entrance to the Temple of Orcus.



Appendix 2: Creature Statistics

Cultist

Medium humanoid (any race), any non-good alignment



Armor Class 12 (leather armor)

Hit Points 9 (2d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Deception +2, Religion +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Dark Devotion. The cultist has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

Actions

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) slashing damage.

Guard

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment



Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 11 (2d8 + 2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	12 (+1)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages any one languages (usually Common)

Challenge 1/8 (25 XP)

Actions

Spear. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) piercing damage.

Riding Horse

Large beast, unaligned



Armor Class 10

Hit Points 13 (2d10 + 2)

Speed 60ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	2 (-4)	11 (+0)	7 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages -

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Actions

Hooves. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (2d4 + 3) bludgeoning damage.

Imp

Tiny fiend (devil, shapeshifter), lawful evil



Armor Class 13

Hit Points 10 (3d4 + 3)

Speed 20 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Skills Deception +4, Insight +3, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5

Damage Resistances cold; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons that aren't silvered

Damage Immunities fire, poison

Condition Immunities poisoned

Senses darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 11

Languages Infernal, Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Shapechanger. The imp can use its action to polymorph into a beast form that resembles a rat (speed 20 ft.), a raven (20 ft., fly 60 ft.), or a spider (20 ft., climb 20 ft.), or back into its true form. Its statistics are the same in each form, except for the speed changes noted. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Devil's Sight. Magical darkness doesn't impede the imp's darkvision.

Magic Resistance. The imp has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

Actions

Sting (Bite in Beast Form). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage, and the target must make on a DC 11 Constitution saving throw, taking 10 (3d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Invisibility. The imp magically turns invisible until it attacks or until its concentration ends (as if concentrating on a spell). Any equipment the imp wears or carries is invisible with it.

Knight

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment



Armor Class 18 (plate)

Hit Points 52 (8d8 + 16)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Con +4, Wis +2

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages any one language (usually Common)

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Brave. The knight has advantage on saving throws against being frightened.

Actions

Multiattack. The knight makes two melee attacks.

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Heavy Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, range 100/400 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d10) piercing damage.

Leadership (Recharges after a Short or Long Rest). For 1 minute, the knight can utter a special command or warning whenever a nonhostile creature that it can see within 30 feet of it makes an attack roll or a saving throw. The creature can add a d4 to its roll provided it can hear and understand the knight. A creature can benefit from only one Leadership die at a time. This effect ends if the knight is incapacitated.

Reactions

Parry. The knight adds 2 to its AC against one melee attack that would hit it. To do so, the knight must see the attacker and be wielding a melee weapon.

Priest

Medium humanoid (any race), any alignment



Armor Class 13 (chain shirt)

Hit Points 27 (5d8 + 5)

Speed 25 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)

Skills Medicine +7, Persuasion +3, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages any two languages

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Divine Eminence. As a bonus action, the priest can expend a spell slot to cause its melee weapon attacks to magically deal an extra 10 (3d6) radiant damage to a target on a hit. This benefit lasts until the end of the turn. If the priest expends a spell slot of 2nd level or higher, the extra damage increases by 1d6 for each level above 1st.

Spellcasting. The priest is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks). The priest has the following cleric spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *light*, *sacred flame*, *thaumaturgy*
1st level (4 slots): *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, *sanctuary*
2nd level (3 slots): *lesser restoration*, *spiritual weapon*
3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *spirit guardians*

Actions

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.

Revenant

Medium undead, neutral



Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 136 (16d8 + 64)

Speed 30ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

Saving Throws Str +7, Con +7, Wis +6, Cha +7

Damage Resistances necrotic, psychic

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned, stunned

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 13

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 5 (1,800 XP)

Regeneration. The revenant regains 10 hit points at the start of its turn. If the revenant takes fire or radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the revenant's next turn. The revenant's body is destroyed only if it starts its turn with 0 hit points and doesn't regenerate.

Rejuvenation. When the revenant's body is destroyed, its soul lingers. After 24 hours, the soul inhabits and animates another corpse on the same plane of existence and regains all its hit points. While the soul is bodiless, a wish spell can be used to force the soul to go to the afterlife and not return.

Turn Immunity. The revenant is immune to effects that turn undead.

Vengeful Tracker. The revenant knows the distance to and direction of any creature against which it seeks revenge, even if the creature and the revenant are on different planes of existence. If the creature being tracked by the revenant dies, the revenant knows.

Actions

Multiattack. The revenant makes two fist attacks.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is a creature against which the revenant has sworn vengeance, the target takes an extra 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage. Instead of dealing damage, the revenant can grapple the target (escape DC 14) provided the target is Large or smaller.

Vengeful Glare. The revenant targets one creature it can see within 30 feet of it and against which it has sworn vengeance. The target must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the target is paralyzed until the revenant deals damage to it, or until the end of the revenant's next turn. When the paralysis ends, the target is frightened of the revenant for 1 minute. The frightened target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, with disadvantage if it can see the revenant, ending the frightened condition on itself on a success.

Succubus/Incubus

Medium fiend (shapechanger), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (natural armor)

Hit Points 66 (12d8 + 12)

Speed 30ft., fly 60ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	20 (+5)

Skills Deception +9, Insight +5, Perception +5, Persuasion +9, Stealth +7

Damage Resistances cold, fire, lightning, poison, bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

Senses darkvision 60ft., passive Perception 15

Languages Abyssal, Common, Infernal, telepathy 60ft.

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

Telepathic Bond. The fiend ignores the range restriction on its telepathy when communicating with a creature it has charmed. The two don't even need to be on the same plane of existence.

Shapechanger. The fiend can use its action to polymorph into a Small or Medium humanoid, or back into its true form. Without wings, the fiend loses its flying speed. Other than its size and speed, its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

Actions

Claw (Fiend Form Only). *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Charm. One humanoid the fiend can see within 30 feet of it must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or be magically charmed for 1 day. The charmed target obeys the fiend's verbal or telepathic commands. If the target suffers any harm or receives a suicidal command, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on a success. If the target successfully saves against the effect, or if the effect on it ends, the target is immune to this fiend's Charm for the next 24 hours.

The fiend can have only one target charmed at a time. If it charms another, the effect on the previous target ends.

Draining Kiss. The fiend kisses a creature charmed by it or a willing creature. The target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw against this magic, taking 32 (5d10 + 5) psychic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.

Etherealness. The fiend magically enters the Ethereal Plane from the Material Plane, or vice versa.

Sword Wraith Warrior

Medium undead, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (chain shirt, shield)

Hit Points 45 (6d8 + 18)

Speed 30 ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	6 (-2)	9 (-1)	10 (+0)

Damage Resistances necrotic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

Damage Immunities poison

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, poisoned, unconscious

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 9

Languages the languages it knew in life

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Martial Fury. As a bonus action, the sword wraith can make one weapon attack. If it does so, attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn.

Actions

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) slashing damage, or 9 (1d10 + 4) slashing damage if used with two hands.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

Warhorse

Large beast, unaligned

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 19 (3d10 + 3)

Speed 60ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	2 (-4)	12 (+1)	7 (-2)

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages -

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Trampling Charge. If the horse moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a hooves attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the horse can make another attack with its hooves against it as a bonus action.

Actions

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

Young Black Dragon

Large dragon, chaotic evil

Armor Class 18 (natural armor)

Hit Points 127 (15d10 + 45)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.



STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Con +6, Wis +3, Cha +5

Skills Perception +6, Stealth +5

Damage Immunities acid

Senses blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

Languages Common, Draconic

Challenge 7 (2,900 XP)

Amphibious. The dragon can breathe air and water.

Actions

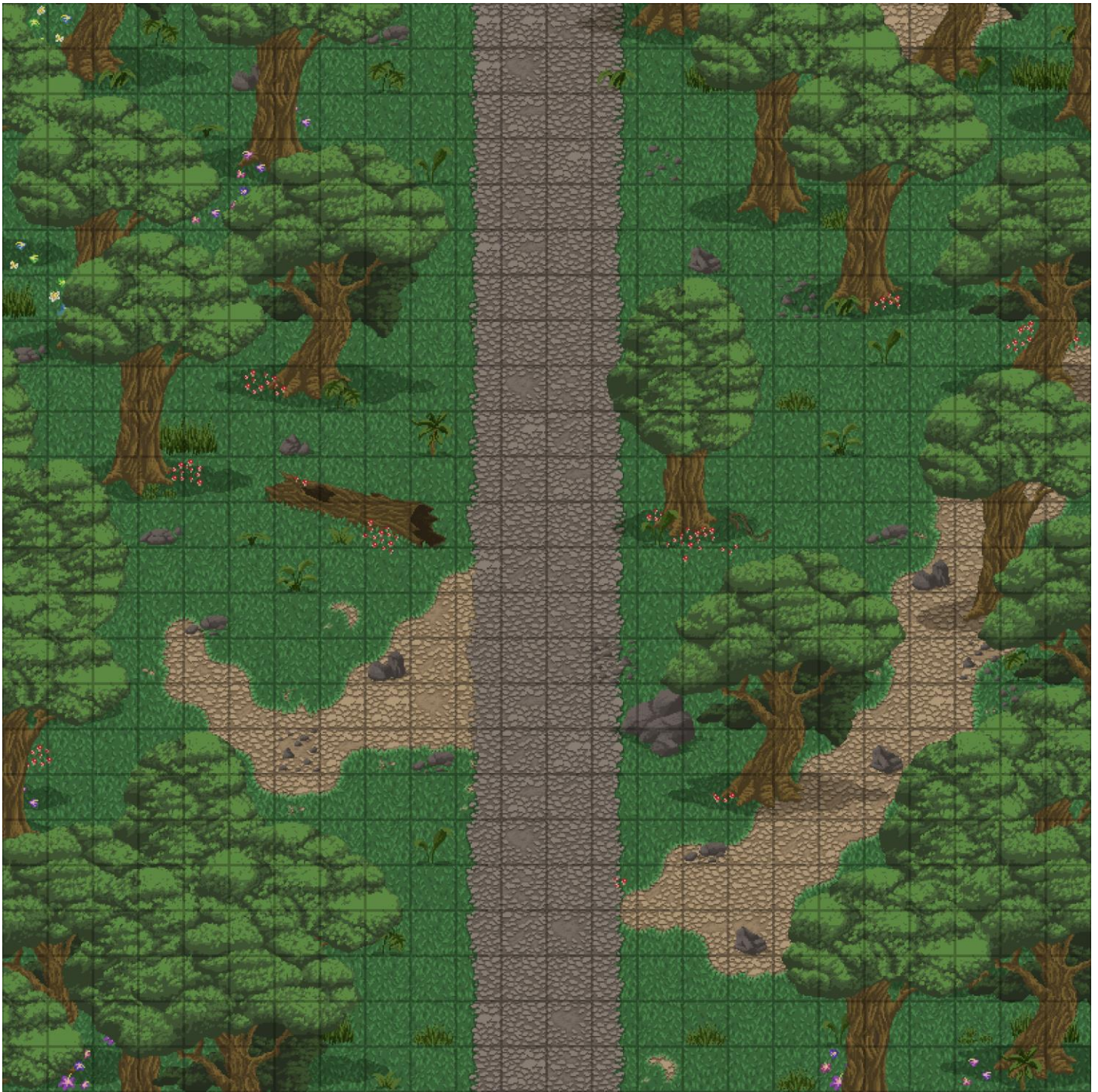
Multiattack. The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage plus 4 (1d8) acid damage.

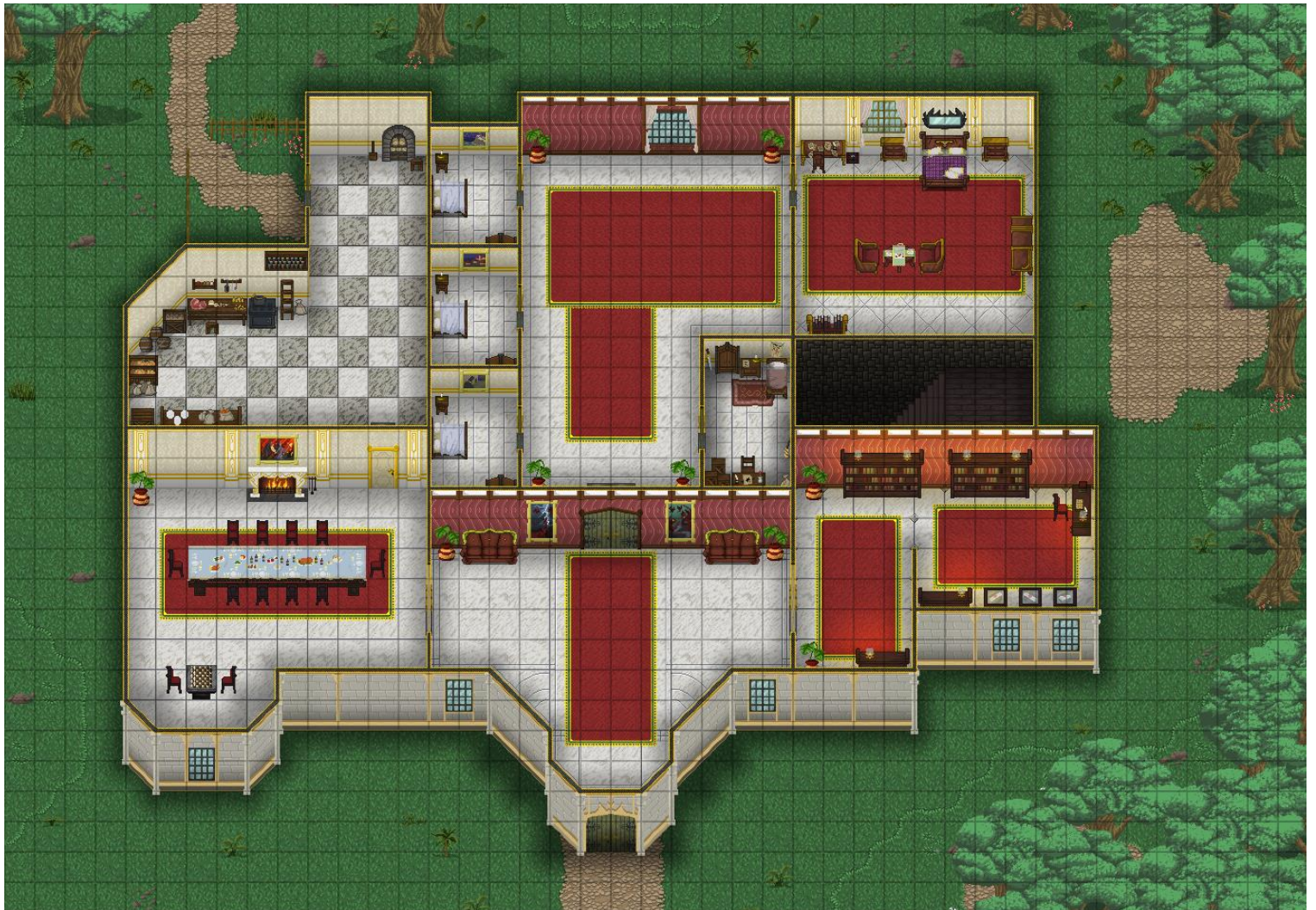
Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) slashing damage.

Acid Breath (Recharge 5–6). The dragon exhales acid in a 30-foot line that is 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw, taking 49 (11d8) acid damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

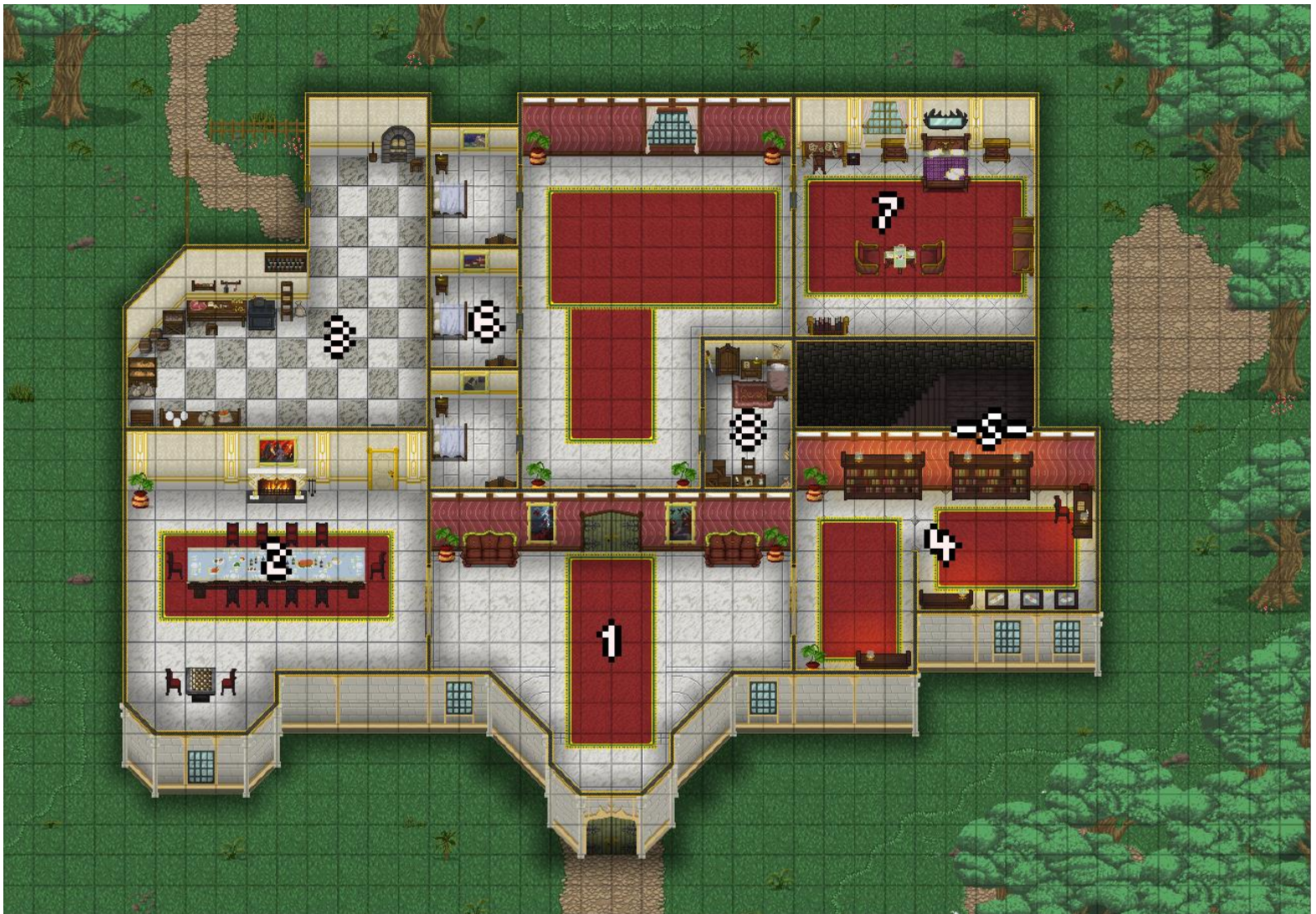
Appendix 3A: Map - Episode 1 Battle Map



Appendix 3B: Map - Mafisto Manor and Cellar



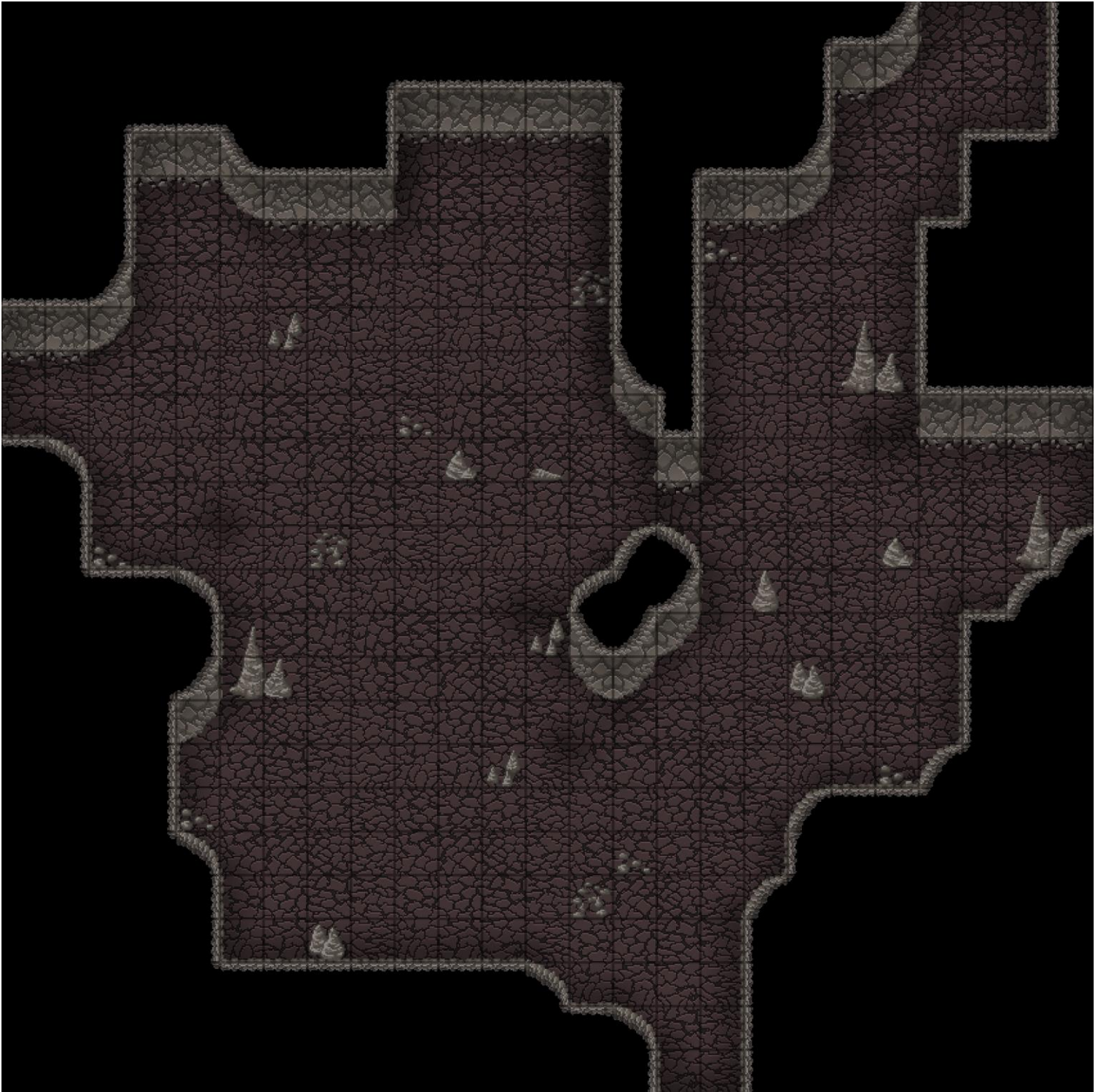
Appendix 3C: Map - Tagged Map of Mafisto Manor and Cellar



Appendix 3D: Map - Temple Entrance and Nezzarum's Lair



Appendix 3E: Map - Bonus Objective A Battle Map



Appendix 4: The Fate of the Lost Knights (Bonus Objective A.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

This is an optional bonus Episode. In this Episode, the characters kill or save the lost Knights.

Scene A. Finding the Lost Knights

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. The caves are smooth as shallow water flows throughout the caves.

Light. Darkness, there is not light this deep into the cave system.

Weather. The air in the caves is humid and cool.

Smells and Sounds. The caverns echo with the trickling of water as it flows along the cave floor.

Finding the Lost Knights

The characters must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check to track the lost knights. A successful check leads them to one of obstacles listed below. A failed check results in the characters wandering the caves aimlessly for one day (rations check!), after which they can repeat the check. The characters discover the Knights after they successfully pass all the obstacles.

Obstacles

The characters can choose to avoid these obstacles on their way out of the caves once they successfully pass them.

The Crevasse. This crevasse drops three miles into the **UNDERDARK**. The ledges near the crevasse are extremely narrow. Players can cross with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check as they hold onto the cave walls and cautiously move across. A character failing this check must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or plummet 20 feet onto a ledge below, taking 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage from the fall.

The Steaming Air Tunnel. This tunnel rhythmically releases steaming air from a nearby

lava pool every few seconds. The characters must move through this tunnel to continue their journey. Characters must succeed on a DC 12 Intelligence or Wisdom (Nature) check to accurately time the rhythmic releases of steaming air and pass through the tunnel unscathed, taking no damage. Characters that fail the check take 3 (1d6) fire damage or 7 (2d6) fire damage if they fail the check by 5 or more.

The Fungi Cavern. This cavern is full of luminescent fungi. Specifically, there are mature barrelstalks that line the walls of the cavern. These barrelstalks spew out poisonous spores. Characters moving through this cavern must succeed on three separate DC 10 Constitution saving throws, taking 2 (1d4) poison damage for each failure. Additionally, if any character failing all three saving throws is **poisoned** for 24 hours.

Creatures/NPCs

The group of lost knights is composed of one **knight** and five **guards**. They are severely dehydrated and weak from their aimless trek in the caverns.

Lost Knights Exhaustion

The lost knights suffer from 4 levels of exhaustion after wandering for days in these austere caves. Therefore, they each: (1) have disadvantage on ability checks, (2) move at half their speed, (3) make attack rolls and saving throws at Disadvantage, (4) have their hit point maximums halved, and (5) are delirious from exhaustion and believe the characters are devilish fiends!

Objectives

- **Bonus Objective A: The Fate of the Lost Knights.** Save or kill the lost Knights of Holy Judgment.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

If combat ensues, the knights fight to the death and chase the characters through obstacles during combat.

EXPLORATION

Characters that come up with creative solutions to the obstacles should be given Advantage on their checks.

SOCIAL

Characters can convince the lost Knights that they are not devilish fiends with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) or (Deception) check.

Appendix 5: Nezzarum's Lair (Bonus Objective B.)

Estimated Duration: 60 minutes

This is an optional bonus Episode. In this Episode the characters defeat Nezzarum.

Scene A. Enter Nezzarum's Lair

Area Information

The area has the following features:

Terrain & Dimensions. The lair is filled with water that is 2 feet deep. Nezzarum enters and exits his lair via a deep, underwater tunnel that goes several miles underground and exits in the Bloodmuck Swamp. The entire lair counts as difficult terrain, due to the water. The ceiling in this section of the cave is 100 feet high.

Weather. Thick fog **lightly obscures** everything in the lair. It is moist and humid in the lair. Characters make Wisdom (Perception) checks at Disadvantage while in the fog.

Light. Complete and utter darkness.

Smells and Sounds. The air is stale and smells of pus, rot, and rancid flesh.

Other Features

If the characters attempt to enter Nezzarum's Lair, they must succeed in a DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check to move about unnoticed by the black dragon.

Creatures/NPCs

Nezzarum is a **young black dragon** that has made his lair near the entrance of the Temple of Orcus. Unbeknownst to Nezzarum, the demonic influence of the temple has warped his mind, causing him to go utterly insane. If Nezzarum hears or sees the characters, he assumes that they are magical fairies from the Feywild. In his madness, he may laugh uncontrollably or become enraged at actions made in his presence.

Defeating Nezzarum. The DM should play Nezzarum as a completely insane dragon. Once he spots the characters, he calls out to them, as he believes they are fairies and wants their "power". If a character replies, they must make a DC 13 Ability (Performance) check. On a success, Nezzarum enters into a **fit of laughter**, complaining how much the laughter hurts. On a failure, Nezzarum becomes enraged and attacks the characters.

The character defeat Nezzarum if they kill him, block him from entering his lair, or make him leave his lair.

Encounter Adjustments:

- **Very Weak:** Nezzarum begins combat with 60 hit points
- **Weak:** Nezzarum begins combat with 92 hit points
- **Strong:** Nezzarum begins combat with 165 hit points
- **Very Strong:** Nezzarum begins combat with 195 hit points

Nezzarum's Fit of Laughter

Nezzarum may only take the following actions if he is in a fit of laughter:

Dodge. Nezzarum laughs so hard he becomes more difficult to hit due to his erratic movements.

Fall Prone. Nezzarum falls to the floor in a fit of laughter and rolls around.

Ready an Action. Nezzarum readies an action to attack the first "fairy" that does not make him laugh during the next **fit of laughter** check.

Objectives

- **Bonus Objective B: Nezzarum's Lair.** Defeat Nezzarum.

Playing the Pillars

COMBAT

The fight with Nezzarum should be deadly for the characters. At the beginning of each round in combat, the characters may make a DC 13 **group** Ability (Performance) check to see if Nezzarum enters a fit of laughter.

EXPLORATION

Nezzarum hunts for food in the swamp at DM discretion and returns after 2d4+1 rounds. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals stalactites that, if broken, can block the underwater tunnel. The stalactites have AC 17 and 50 hit points.

SOCIAL

Characters have advantage on Ability (Performance) checks if they spend their action in combat to play instruments, tell jokes, or any other gesture at DM discretion. Nezzarum leaves his lair if the characters pass five DC 13 **group** Ability (Performance) checks.

Appendix 6: Story Award - Knight of Holy Judgment (Player Handout 1)

Knight of Holy Judgment

You are now a member of the Knights of Holy Judgment! As a Knight of Holy Judgment you swore a solemn oath to uphold justice, hunt down the wicked, and serve as a stalwart guardian against devils and demons. May Tyr guide you as you devote yourself to the cause of justice, to the righting of wrongs, and to the deliverance of vengeance!

Joining the Knights of Holy Judgment

When a character joins the Knights of Holy Judgment, they are given a thin strip of diaphanous cloth to wear over their eyes. Characters can see normally while the cloth covers their eyes. This shows their blind devotion to justice and Tyr.

Any armor or equipment the characters own can be emblazoned with the symbol of Tyr: a set of scales resting atop a warhammer. Characters may also take the Oath of the Knights of Holy Judgment to show their devotion to this knightly order.

The oath is recited out loud in the language of your choice with a weapon raised towards the heavens.

Oath. "Without justice there is darkness. Without order there is lawlessness. I am a keeper of the law, no mortal is above it. My vengeance upon the wicked shall be swift and my judgments upon them shall show no mercy. Tyr be praised!"

Appendix 7: Story Award - Cult of Zariel (Player Handout 2)

Cultist of Zariel

Sacrificing Ser Gertz has earned you the favor of the Archdevil Zariel. Go forth and recruit more souls in the name of Zariel!

Joining the Cult of Zariel

When a character joins the Cult of Zariel they are branded in the arm with a pentagram during an occult ritual. Their armor and equipment is emblazoned with the symbols of Zariel: a flaming sword and spear. Initiation into the cult is complete when everyone present repeats the “Chant to Zariel” aloud.

Chant to Zariel. “You are the protector of the Nine Hells. All that stands between the demonic incursion and planar devastation is your will and might. Praise be to Zariel, our most fierce and brave leader, rightful ruler of Avernus. Eternal death to all who oppose her noble goal.”

Appendix 8: NPC Background Handouts (Player Handout 3)

NPC Handouts for Players

These handouts serve as a tool for the DM to enhance gameplay immersion at their table. DM's don't have to keep telling players who the NPC's are or what they look like. Enjoy!




TIEFLING
LAWFUL EVIL

Mordakai Mafisto

MORDAKAI IS A VETERAN OF THE BLOOD WAR AND SUFFERS FROM POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER.

THE ONLY THING THAT CHEERS HIM UP IS DRAGONCHESS, A GAME HE GREW TO LOVE DURING HIS TIME ON THE FRONT LINES OF THE BLOOD WAR.




DRAGON
CHAOTIC EVIL

Nezzarum

NEZZARUM IS A YOUNG BLACK DRAGON THAT HAS MADE HIS LAIR NEAR THE ENTRANCE OF THE TEMPLE OF ORCUS.

UNBEKNOWNST TO NEZZARUM, THE DEMONIC INFLUENCE OF THE TEMPLE HAS WARPED HIS MIND, CAUSING HIM TO GO UTTERLY INSANE.




GNOME
LAWFUL EVIL

Nurfenpurt

LARGE WARTS, BLISTERS, MOLES, AND GROWTHS COVER HIS HIDEOUS FACE.

HE MUTTERS TO HIMSELF CONSTANTLY.

NURFENPURT IS A GNOME CULTIST WHO WORSHIPS THE ARCHEVIL ZARIEL AND SERVES AS A STEWARD FOR THE MAFISTO TWINS.




TIEFLING
LAWFUL EVIL

Orianna Mafisto

ORIANNA IS SPUNKY, PLAYFUL, AND SEDUCTIVE.

SHE ENJOYS CORRUPTING MORTALS WITH PLEASURES OF THE FLESH AND THEIR DARKEST DESIRES, ALL IN THE NAME OF FUN!

HER BLACK HAIR IS WORN UP IN PISTAILS, AND SHE ADORNs HER FACE AND HORNS WITH ELABORATE SILVER JEWELRY ENCRUSTED WITH BLOOD RED SAPPHIRES.




HALF-ORC
LAWFUL GOOD

Ser Gertz

SER GERTZ IS A YOUNG FEMALE HALF-ORC PRIEST IN THE KNIGHTS OF HOLY JUDGMENT.

SHE HAS LONG, DREADLOCKED HAIR, AND IS KNOWN TO SPEAK BLUNTLY AND ACT ASSERTIVELY AROUND OTHERS.

SHE IS CALM AND THOUGHTFUL IN EVERYTHING SHE DOES.




HUMAN
LAWFUL GOOD

Ser Titus

SER TITUS IS A HANDSOME, MUSCULAR KNIGHT OF HOLY JUDGMENT WHO SEEKS TO UNCOVER THE MYSTERY BEHIND SER VINDICTUS' DISAPPEARANCE OVER A CENTURY AGO.

SER TITUS IS RUTHLESS WITH ENACTING JUSTICE AND WILL NOT HESITATE TO BRING THE FULL FORCE OF TYR DOWN UPON EVILDOERS!

HE EMBODIES CONFIDENCE, LEADERSHIP, AND BRAVERY, SO IT IS ONLY NATURAL THAT WHEN HE TALKS, HE SHOUTS!

Appendix 9: Magic Item

Characters completing this adventure's objective unlock this magic item.

Helm of Comprehend Languages

Tier 1, 8 treasure checkpoints

While wearing this helm, you can use an action to cast the comprehend languages spell from it at will. This item is found on **Magic Item Table B** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

This elaborate helm is made of Avernium, a black metal found only in Avernus. The helm has the appearance of a crown with spikes. The inner circle of the helm has an inscription in Infernal which reads, "Avernus Dragonchess Champion."



Appendix 10: Dungeon Master Tips

This adventure is designed for **three to seven 1st-4th level characters** and is optimized for **five characters with an average party level (APL) of 3**. Characters outside this level range cannot participate in this adventure.

New to D&D Adventurers League?

<http://dnd.wizards.com/playevents/organized-play>

New to Being the Dungeon Master?

<http://dndadventurersleague.org/start-here/dungeon-masters/>

To DM an adventure, you **must** have 3 to 7 players—each with their own character whose level is within the adventure’s level range. Characters playing in a **hardcover** adventure may continue to play to but if they play a different hardcover adventure, they **can’t return** to the first one if they’re outside its level range.

Preparing the Adventure

Before you start play, consider the following:

- Read through the adventure, taking notes of anything you’d like to highlight or remind yourself of while running the adventure, such as a way you’d like to portray an NPC or a tactic you’d like to use in a combat. Familiar yourself with the adventure’s appendices and handouts.
- Gather any resources you’d like to use to aid you in running this adventure—such as notecards, a DM screen, miniatures, and battlemaps.
- Ask the players to provide you with relevant character information, such as name, race, class, and level; passive Wisdom (Perception), and anything specified as notable by the adventure (such as backgrounds, traits, flaws, etc.)

Players can play an adventure they previously played as a Player or Dungeon Master, but may only play it once with a given character. Ensure each player has their character’s adventure logsheet (if not, get one from the organizer). The players fill out the adventure name, session number, date, and your name and DCI number. In addition, the player also fills in the starting values for advancement and treasure checkpoints, downtime days, and renown. These values are updated at the conclusion of the session.

Each player is responsible for maintaining an accurate logsheet. If you have time, you can do a quick scan of a player’s character sheet to ensure that nothing looks out of order. If you see magic items of very high rarities or strange arrays of ability scores, you can ask players to provide documentation for the irregularities. If they cannot, feel free to restrict item use or ask them to use a standard ability score array.

Point players to the D&D Adventurers League Players Guide for reference. If players wish to spend downtime days and it’s the beginning of an adventure or episode, they can declare their activity and spend the days now, or they can do so at the end of the adventure or episode. Players should select their characters’ spells and other daily options prior to the start of the adventure, unless the adventure specifies otherwise. Feel free to reread the adventure description to help give players hints about what they might face.

Adjusting This Adventure

When combat is a possibility, this adventure provides sidebars for each possible encounter that helps you to determine how to create an appropriate challenge. While you’re not bound to these adjustments; they’re here for your convenience and consideration.

To determine whether you should consider adjusting the adventure, add up the total levels of all the characters and divide the result by the number of characters (rounding .5 or greater up; .4 or less down). This is the group’s average party level (APL). To approximate the **party strength** for the adventure, consult the table below.

Determining Party Strength

Party Composition	Party Strength
3-4 characters, APL less than	Very weak
3-4 characters, APL equivalent	Weak
3-4 characters, APL greater than	Average
5 characters, APL less than	Weak
5 characters, APL equivalent	Average
5 characters, APL greater than	Strong
6-7 characters, APL less than	Average
6-7 characters, APL equivalent	Strong
6-7 characters, APL greater than	Very strong

Author's DM tips for this Module

Fellow DM's below are some tips I think will help you get the most out of running this adventure your way.

- ***This is YOUR Adventure.*** I wrote this adventure to have many open choices, specifically so each DM can tailor this adventure to their players play style. Do you have evil characters? Great! Push hard on the Cult of Zariel hooks. Good characters? Excellent, showcase the Knights of Holy Judgment! You know your players best; use the adventure to build around their playstyles.
- ***Prepare your players ahead of time.*** Due to the intentional tension I built into this adventure, I recommend you remind your players ahead of time that this is be a fun roleplaying experience. Ask if any of the players are against Player versus Player (PvP) combat, there is a high likelihood good and evil characters might want to fight each other in this adventure. So long as everyone has fun, use this adventure as a chance to highlight PvP. I strongly recommend the DM does not allow PvP to result in death, only unconsciousness.
- ***Sandbox feel might overwhelm DMs.*** Due to the many choices this adventure can take, I recommend DMs go with the flow and do not concern themselves with all the gritty details if they feel overwhelmed. Ultimately, the DM just needs to get the characters to search for the Temple of Orcus and enter it at the conclusion of the Adventure. It is that easy!
- ***Have fun.*** I wanted to give DMs full reign over this story so that you and your players can walk away with crazy stories of Dragonchess, sacrifices, slaying Dragons, helping out heroic Knights of Tyr, and whatever else might manifest itself from the imaginations of DMs and players playing this adventure. If you find yourself asking "What would happen if...?" That means you as the DM have complete control over what happens next. I hope you all enjoy running this adventure as I had creating it!

The Heir of Orcus Verse I

Do you have what it takes to save an Angel of Tyr?!



Your hands are not physically capable of rolling the dice needed to stay alive in this module!

The Mafisto Twins are seeking brave adventurers to “rescue” a lost Angel of Tyr from the Temple of Orcus, are you brave enough to answer the call? Think quick and act fast or you might just find yourself dead in a ditch down by the river as the rest of your party feasts in Mafisto Manor.

Explore a devilish mansion, travel deep underground to find the Temple of Orcus, face off with an insane dragon, avoid bottomless pits of death and despair, and watch out for your head...because you just might lose it! So stop what you are doing, throw your bag of dice at anyone foolish enough to get in your way, and play “The Heir of Orcus: Verse I” today!

Players: 3-7

**A Two-hour Adventure for Tier 1 Characters
Optimized for APL 3. By: Anthony Joyce**



**“I played this module and ended up in the 113 th layer of the Abyss, it’s that good!”
– Mane #114**

