

AGE 12+

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®]

LAIR ASSAULT



INTO THE PIT OF MADNESS™

A CHALLENGE FOR CHARACTERS OF 10TH LEVEL

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Going into this challenge, players should understand that the encounters are intentionally difficult, and characters and parties optimized for success are the most likely to succeed. Some players might know details about the scenario from previous sessions, which they are free to share with other players.

BACKGROUND

For as long as mortals have walked the world, a dark shadow has loomed over the Yatil Mountains. Here the Witch Queen Iggwilv penned the *Demonomicon* and reigned over an empire so terrible and so wicked that the lands around were forever changed. Yet hers is not the worst legacy of those who have claimed these peaks as their home. A temple to the dark god—the Chained God, He of Eternal Darkness—has stood somewhere in these mountains since before humans founded their first kingdom. Its influence has long lured the insane, the cruel, and the vile to its shadowy corridors.

Many times in its history the temple has risen in power, and many times it has fallen. The last time, courageous heroes sacked it, bringing down its blasphemous altars and putting the twisted monsters lurking there to the sword and spell. As thorough as their work was, however, it was not enough, for a new cult has uncovered the ruins and is freeing the Chained God from his prison.

The cultists located the dread Wailer of Tharizdun, the instrument designed to open the Way to Darkness. They have sounded this horn, made sacrifices, and stand ready to greet their master . . . unless the heroes can stop them first.

PREPARATION

This booklet comes with additional components needed to run the challenge.

Battle Map: The first part of the challenge uses the map that shows the upper level of the ruined temple of Tharizdun. The reverse side shows the Black Cyst and various nodes reached by passing through the dark portal. You should also receive a small laminated map on which to mark creature locations.

Token Sheet: The token sheet includes tokens for all the monsters described in the adventure.

STARTING THE CHALLENGE

Allow the players to introduce their characters before starting. The characters have spent the last week crossing the mountains to reach the ruined temple.

When the players are ready to start, read:

Not long ago, the Laird of Granite Hall, a rock gnome elder, begged you for help. He explained a terrible darkness stirs in the Yatil Mountains and beseeched you to destroy it before it spread across the lands. Sensing the peril, you agreed and have spent the time since then traveling the narrow, winding paths through the mountains' windswept peaks.

The gnome gave you directions to a most sinister place, an area blasted and dead, poisoned by some ineffable evil. There you found signs of recent work—tools, campsites, and more. The result of these labors appears to be a stinking tunnel into the mountainside.

As you inspect the area, a deep, sonorous noise rises from within the tunnel, as if a great horn has been sounded somewhere beyond the darkness. The ground trembles, eerie purple light glows from the cave mouth, and the sun itself turns black. Are you too late? Is the world's end at hand? The only way to know for sure is to venture forth into the darkness and confront the villains waiting there.

Tell the players the following circumstances of the challenge:

- ◆ The characters hear sinister whispers in their minds, a jumble of words in a language familiar yet incomprehensible. Tell the players that a character can listen to the words by spending a minor action and rolling on the Madness table. **After the roll, the character can spend up to two healing surges, regaining hit points as normal, and the character regains the use of two encounter powers.** The table's effects apply for the duration of the challenge. A character can receive each effect only once; reroll on an identical result.
- ◆ No short rests can be taken during the challenge, and the adventurers have no time to perform rituals before the challenge.
- ◆ They have 20 rounds from when they roll initiative to complete the challenge.

Madness Table

d8	Effect
1	Blind Bloodlust: You deal 2d6 extra damage on opportunity attacks. You treat all creatures as enemies for triggering your opportunity attacks, and you must make every opportunity attack you can.
2	Misdirected Wrath: Whenever your melee or ranged attack misses, you deal 2d6 damage of the type your attack deals to one randomly determined creature adjacent to the original target, including yourself.
3	Amplified Pain: When you make an attack, one creature you hit takes 2d6 extra damage. You have vulnerable 5 to all damage.
4	Crippling Fear: Whenever you take 17 or more damage, the first action of your next turn must be to crawl or walk away from the source of the damage, or you become stunned until the start of your next turn.
5	Dangerous Delusions: While you are not bloodied, you take a -2 penalty to saving throws. While you are bloodied, you gain a +2 bonus to saving throws.
6	Hallucinations: Whenever you take psychic damage, you take a -2 penalty to attack rolls and grant combat advantage until the start of your next turn.
7	Cracked Psyche: You have vulnerable 5 psychic. The vulnerability increases by 5 for each Madness table effect you have.
8	Paranoid: Creatures cannot gain combat advantage against you, nor can you gain combat advantage against other creatures. You can give this result to any other character as a free action by taking 10 psychic damage.

- ◆ Describe the party and individual awards but not the secret awards (see “Awards”). Reveal fulfilled secret awards after the challenge is complete.

Show the map of the Buried Temple. Have the players place their miniatures or tokens in the Start Area.

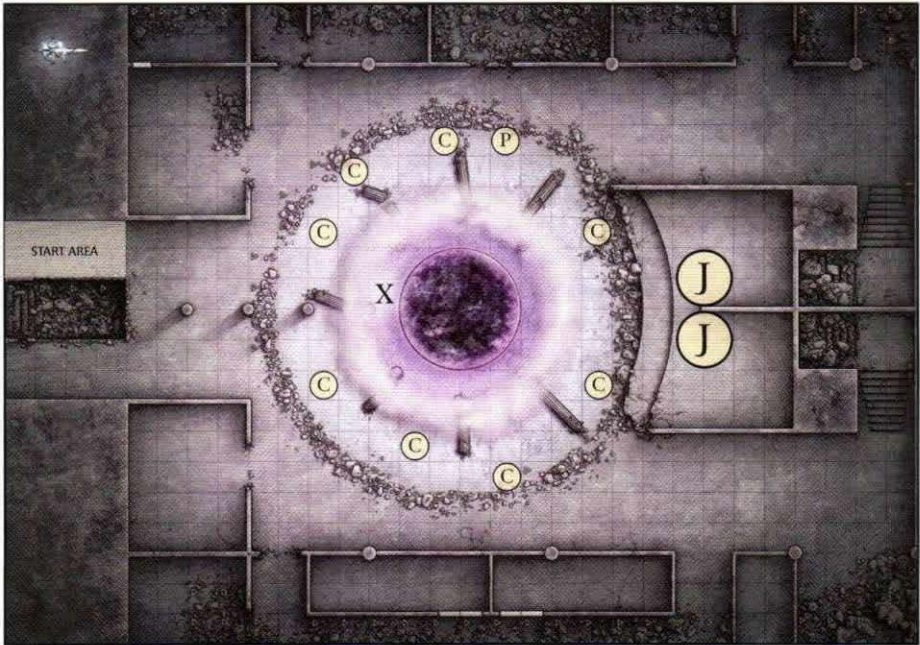
Nightmare Mode

If all players agree, you can run the challenge on “nightmare mode” by adding a +5 bonus to all monster damage rolls. In addition, environmental damage such as “Extreme Cold” and environmental damage sustained in the nodes always deals maximum damage.

ENDING THE CHALLENGE

The challenge ends in success when the characters defeat the Essence of Evil described in Part 3. The challenge ends in failure when the characters are all slain or have not defeated the Essence of Evil by the end of 20 rounds after entering the Buried Temple.

Failure to defeat the Essence of Evil means it slithers free from the Buried Temple and opens a portal to the Chained God’s prison. The dark god then escapes and plunges the natural world into the Elemental Chaos, destroying it.



PART 1: THE BURIED TEMPLE

The characters burst into the temple just in time to see the cultists open the Way to Darkness. This encounter uses the map depicted at the bottom of page 6.

To begin the encounter, read:

The passage opens onto a wreckage-filled chamber with toppled columns and broken statuary that depicts horrid monsters and human suffering. A great black obelisk rises from the floor's center and reaches toward the ceiling 60 feet overhead. A weird purple light radiates from the obelisk, and gray fog roils around it all the way up to the ceiling.

Cultists clad in black robes and horned masks gather in a circle around the obelisk. Their shrieks and hoots form an unholy chorus. One swings a metal thurible from a chain; its incense smoke mingles with the gray vapors, parting them. Another cultist whirls to face you, gripping a great iron horn graven with sickening whorls and runes. "You are too late!" he cries. "He of Eternal Darkness awakens!"

Roll initiative for the monsters, and have the players roll initiative. Place cultists and the priest in a ring around the gray vapors, leaving out any cultists the characters cannot yet see and placing them when they are visible. Do not place the ogre juggernauts until a character can see them.

Choose a location for the treasure chest in an area accessible to the characters but which they cannot initially see. Mark the location on the mini-map on page 6, and place the treasure chest's token on the battle map when a character can see the chest. Also mark the location of the staircase on your mini-map.

Tactics

Doomdreamer Cultists: The cultists split into four pairs to gang up on separate characters.

Ogre Juggernauts: The ogre juggernauts delay until one or more characters closes on the priest. They then sweep around the obelisk and use *juggernaut push* to drive the characters into the gray vapors.

Doomdreamer Priest: The priest leads with *blackfire tendrils* and then uses *corrupt soul* until no slowed targets are available. He then falls back on *corrupting blackfire* to slow targets, so he can use *corrupt soul* again. The priest also stays within 5 squares of an ogre juggernaut so he can use *vile command*.

Special Items

Robes: The priest and each cultist wears a robe, which can be useful to the characters. It takes a standard action to strip a dead, helpless, stunned, or unconscious cultist and another standard action to don a robe. Taking either action provokes opportunity attacks, and the character taking the action grants combat advantage until the start of his or her next turn.

Thurible: One cultist carries a thurible, a metal censer suspended from chains. Incense in the thurible gives off a sickly sweet odor, and its smoke drifts toward

the gray vapors, dissipating them. (If the players failed to pick up on the earlier description, it takes a DC 18 Passive Perception check to notice this effect.) A character trained in Arcana (any power source) or Religion (divine power source also required) might also detect the relationship between the thurible, the vapors, and the purple light with a successful DC 26 Arcana check or Religion check.

2 Ogre Juggernauts (J)

Large natural humanoid (giant)

Level 10 Brute

XP 500 each

HP 131; Bloodied 65

Initiative +7

AC 22, Fortitude 24, Reflex 20, Will 20

Perception +7

Speed 8

STANDARD ACTIONS

⊕ Greatclub (weapon) ⊕ At-Will

Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC

Hit: 4d8 + 5 damage.

↘ Rock ⊕ At-Will

Attack: Ranged 5 (one creature); +15 vs. AC

Hit: 3d6 + 7 damage.

⊕ Juggernaut Push ⊕ Recharge [☒] [!]

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. Fortitude

Hit: The ogre pushes the target 1 square and knocks it prone. The ogre then shifts 1 square to the square the target vacated. The ogre can push the target an additional number of squares equal to the ogre's speed, shifting an equal number of squares and remaining adjacent to it.

The target takes 1d8 damage for each additional square the ogre pushes it.

Str 24 (+12)

Dex 15 (+7)

Wis 15 (+7)

Con 21 (+10)

Int 4 (+2)

Cha 6 (+3)

Alignment chaotic evil

Languages Giant

Equipment greatclub, 4 rocks



8 Doomdreamer Cultists (C)

Medium natural humanoid, human

Level 11 Minion Soldier

XP 150 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

Initiative +11

AC 27, Fortitude 23, Reflex 23, Will 23

Perception +9

Speed 6

Immune psychic

STANDARD ACTIONS

⊕ Dagger (weapon) ⊕ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC

Hit: 9 damage, and the target cannot shift until the end of its next turn.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

↙ Maddening Howl (psychic) ⊕ Encounter

Trigger: The cultist drops to 0 hit points.

Attack (No Action): Close burst 1 (enemies in the burst); +14 vs. Will

Hit: 7 psychic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Skills Religion +7

Str 17 (+8)

Dex 18 (+9)

Wis 8 (+4)

Con 18 (+9)

Int 11 (+5)

Cha 18 (+9)

Alignment chaotic evil

Languages Common

Equipment robes, dagger



Doomdreamer Priest (P) Level 14 Controller (Leader)

Medium shadow humanoid, shadar-kai

XP 1,000

HP 138; Bloodied 69

Initiative +10

AC 26, Fortitude 25, Reflex 26, Will 27

Perception +11

Speed 7

Low-light vision

**TRAITS**☠ **Shroud of Doom** ♦ **Aura 2**

Enemies in the aura must roll each saving throw twice and take the lowest result.

STANDARD ACTIONS⊕ ☹ **Corrupting Blackfire** (fire, necrotic) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 or Ranged 10 (one creature); +17 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + 13 fire and necrotic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

⚡ ☹ **Corrupt Soul** (charm) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 or Ranged 10 (one slowed creature); +17 vs. Will

Hit: The target is dominated (save ends).

⚡ **Blackfire Tendrils** (fire, necrotic) ♦ **Encounter**

Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +17 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d10 + 6 fire and necrotic damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

MOVE ACTIONS☹ **Shadow Jaunt** (teleportation) ♦ **Encounter**

Effect: The priest teleports up to 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of his next turn.

MINOR ACTIONS☹ **Vile Command** ♦ **Recharge** ☹ ☹

Effect: Ranged 5 (one ally who can hear the priest). The target makes a basic attack as a free action. If the attack hits, the target gains 10 temporary hit points. If the attack misses, the target takes 10 damage.

Skills Arcana +17, Religion +17, Stealth +15**Str** 12 (+8)**Dex** 16 (+10)**Wis** 8 (+6)**Con** 18 (+11)**Int** 20 (+12)**Cha** 23 (+13)**Alignment** chaotic evil**Languages** Common**Equipment** robes, unholy symbol, Wailer of Tharizdun

The safest way to reach the staircase is to use the thurible. A character can swing the thurible while moving into the gray vapors and the purple light. Doing so creates a safe path through the vapors and the light to the staircase. Those moving along the path take no damage from the vapors or the light.

Wailer of Tharizdun: The priest carries this iron horn that is carved with unholy glyphs, whorls, and spiral patterns. A character trained in Arcana, History, or Religion might recognize the item and determine all its functions with a successful DC 26 check. The horn is a focus for the ritual to open the way to the Black Cyst, the passage for the Essence of Evil to enter the world, paving the way for Tharizdun and the end of all things. Sounding it within the Cyst, which the characters can guess should be accessible somewhere within this temple, calls forth the Essence of Evil. One might think to sound the horn to slay the essence quickly; it is an instrument of madness, however, and any character sounding it rolls on the Madness table and applies its effects without gaining any of the benefits for doing so.

Features of the Area

As a minor action, a character trained in Arcana, Religion, or Nature can study any one of the area's magical features—the columns, the light, the vapors, or the obelisk—and make a DC 18 check using that skill. Success indicates the character can determine the feature's function (read the feature's description to the player).

Illumination: The area is filled with bright light.

Columns: The columns are carved to resemble shrieking, tortured humans. They resonate with evil psychic energy and are blocking terrain. Whenever a cultist uses *maddening howl*, each creature that is not wearing a cultist robe and is adjacent to a column takes 5 extra psychic damage.

Rubble: Squares containing debris or toppled columns are difficult terrain. Toppled columns do not amplify *maddening howl* the way standing columns do.

Gray Vapors: Any creature not wearing a cultist robe and entering a square of vapor takes 5 cold damage. A creature takes this damage only once per round.

Purple Light: Any creature not wearing a cultist robe and entering a square of purple light takes 10 psychic damage. A creature can take this damage only once per round.

Black Obelisk: This obelisk is blocking terrain. Any creature that willingly touches the obelisk becomes hazy and takes ongoing 15 psychic damage (save ends). A creature can choose to fail the saving throw. On the second failed saving throw, the creature is removed from play. The creature reenters play when the party descends the hidden staircase to the antechamber, or when all other characters touch the obelisk and are removed from play. When each creature reenters play, roll a d6 once and consult the Destination table (see Part 2). That creature appears in the node indicated by the die roll.

Treasure Chest: The chest is locked (DC 18 Thievery to open, DC 26 Athletics to break open; AC/Reflex 3, Fortitude 15; immune to fire, necrotic, poison, psychic, forced movement, all conditions, ongoing damage; hp 100).

Incense: Inside the treasure chest are six balls of sticky incense that are much too large to fit in the thurible. When the characters open the chest, hand out the six incense tokens to the players to distribute between themselves as they see fit. A character who succeeds on a DC 18 Religion check can tell that the incense balls are objects of holy power. These items are important for overcoming the Essence of Evil in Part 3.

Hidden Staircase: The X on the tactical map indicates a staircase. With a successful DC 18 Perception check made as a minor action, a character inspecting the area notices the staircase descending under the black obelisk. Any character that moves adjacent to the stairs automatically notices the opening. The stairs are 30 feet long and enclosed, leading down to Part 2.

When the characters slay the last cultist, read:

A rumbling from below shakes the chamber.

This disturbance comes from the Essence of Evil thrashing in its prison.

PART 2: ANTECHAMBER AND NODES

The characters arrive here by descending the hidden staircase in Part 1.

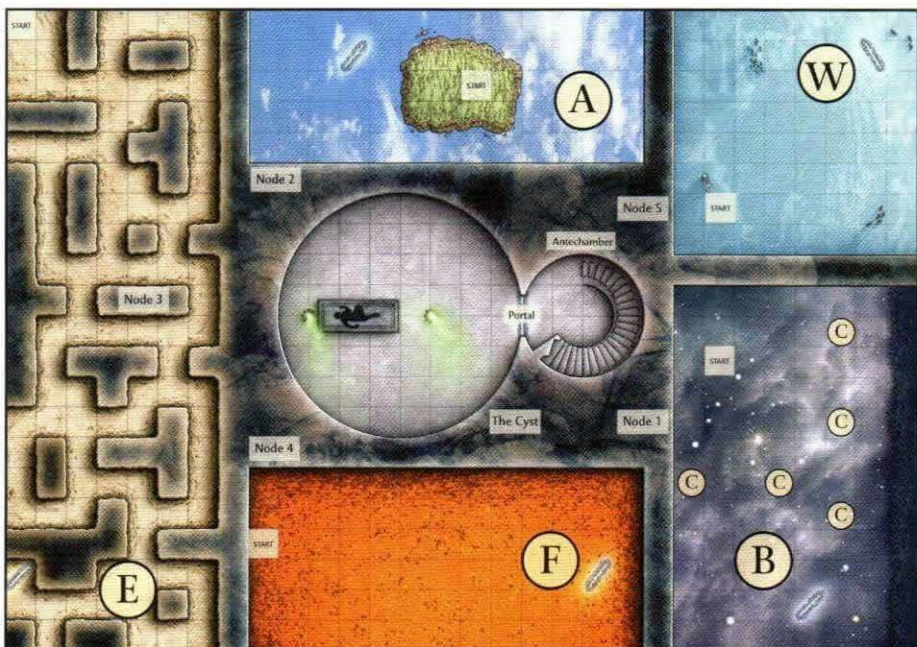
When the characters descend the stairs, read:

The stairs wind along the wall of a deep, chilly pit, descending 30 feet to end in a 20-foot-diameter circular antechamber. Here the air is intolerably cold. The black walls, the floor, even the steps bristle with needle-sharp mineral growths, glistening with frost in the purple radiance shining down from above. A dark opening, roughly 10 feet across, on the south wall ripples like the surface of a pool of water. Beyond it is a larger chamber, and in the center of that room is a dark moving shape on a stone block.

Features of the Area

Extreme Cold: When a creature not wearing a cultist robe starts a turn in the antechamber, that creature takes 5 cold damage.

Dark Portal: A portal is set in the opening on the south wall of the antechamber, near the base of the stairway. When the portal is triggered, it whisks a creature to one of five nightmare nodes created by the Chained God's tortured imagination. When a character moves through the portal opening, he or she disappears. Roll a d6 and consult the Destination table to see where the character goes. Roll an additional d6 for each Madness table effect the character has and use the lowest result.



When a creature moves through the dark portal opening, the creature may continue moving if able. The same rule applies when a creature moves through a return portal.

A creature that has not yet entered the Cyst has no line of effect to anything in the Cyst. Although an image of the Cyst appears on the portal (already described above), the creature has no line of sight to the Cyst. When entering the dark portal opening, a creature that has previously entered the Cyst can choose a destination instead of rolling to determine one. That creature also has line of effect and line of sight to the Cyst from the antechamber. Those fighting in the Cyst can use the antechamber as part of the field of battle.

A character trained in Arcana can make a DC 18 Arcana check to identify the portal's features. A character with a check result of 23 or higher knows the name of the destination corresponding to the die roll made on the Destination table. If a character with a check result of 28 or higher can see another creature moving through the portal, that character can choose the creature's destination.

If the Essence of Evil drops to 0 hit points, the portal disappears.

d6	Destination
1	Node 1: Astral Vengeance (or the Cyst if already defeated)
2	Node 2: Elemental Air (or the Cyst if already defeated)
3	Node 3: Elemental Earth (or the Cyst if already defeated)
4	Node 4: Elemental Fire (or the Cyst if already defeated)
5	Node 5: Elemental Water (or the Cyst if already defeated)
6	The Cyst (see Part 3)

NODE DESCRIPTIONS

These area descriptions are keyed to the map.

Tactical Placement: A creature transported to a node appears in the node's start square or the unoccupied square nearest to the start square. Once the player places his or her token, place the monster or monsters at least 5 squares away from the portal.

Node Edges: Some effects can force a creature beyond a node's edge. A creature pushed over a node's edge appears on the opposite side of the node in the square the creature would have entered if the opposite edge were a continuation of the map.

Node Limits: A node remains active as long as at least one creature is in the node. Monsters cannot leave the node in which they belong. After a node's monsters are slain and the characters exit, the node shuts down.

All nodes cease to exist when the Essence of Evil drops to 0 hit points. Any characters in the nodes are moved into the Cyst.

Return Portals: Each node has a return portal marked on the map. A return portal has only two dimensions, so it must be entered from the side that is level with the portal rather than from above or below it in a three-dimensional environment.

When a character exits a node, roll a d6 and consult the Destination table. If the result leads to any node that has already been shut down, the character appears in the Cyst (see Part 3).

Node 1: Astral Vengeance

The node exists in the Astral Sea, near the boundary of the demiplane where the Chained God lies bound. Several angels stand guard here to ensure no one disturbs their prisoner. Roll initiative for the angels.

When a character appears in this node, read:

You float in a starry expanse that seems to go on forever. Before you towers a vast wall of darkness, a boiling mass of inky fluid that undulates and ripples. A flickering portal floats nearby.

When you place the angels, read:

You see an enormous angel armed with a falchion and clad in silvery mail standing before you. Five human-sized angels armed with fiery swords stand to either side. The larger angel says, "This place—and knowledge of its location—are forbidden to you. Prepare for death!"

Tactics

Angel of Battle: The angel uses *mobile melee attack* each turn to make flyby attacks against the characters. When the angel becomes bloodied, it uses *storm of blades* against as many characters as it can.

Angel of Valor Cohorts: Two angels move to block the characters from entering the portal. The others move to flank the characters.

5 Angel of Valor Cohorts (C) Level 11 Minion Soldier

Medium immortal humanoid (angel)

XP 150 each

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

Initiative +11

AC 27, Fortitude 25, Reflex 22, Will 21

Perception +7

Speed 6, fly 9 (hover)

Immune fear, fire, radiant

STANDARD ACTIONS

⊕ **Greatsword** (fire, radiant, weapon) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC

Hit: 9 fire and radiant damage.

Str 23 (+11)

Dex 18 (+9)

Wis 14 (+7)

Con 16 (+8)

Int 11 (+5)

Cha 16 (+8)

Alignment unaligned

Languages Supernal

Equipment chainmail, greatsword



Angel of Battle (B)**Level 15 Skirmisher**

Large immortal humanoid (angel)

XP 1,200

HP 148; **Bloodied** 74**Initiative** +13**AC** 29, **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 28**Perception** +11**Speed** 8, fly 12 (hover)**Immune** fear; **Resist** 10 radiant**TRAITS****Angelic Presence**

While the angel is not bloodied, attack rolls against it take a -2 penalty.

STANDARD ACTIONS⊕ **Falchion (weapon) ♦ At-Will****Attack:** Melee 2 (one creature); +20 vs. AC**Hit:** 3d10 + 5 damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the start of the angel's next turn.‡ **Mobile Melee Attack ♦ At-Will****Effect:** The angel moves up to half its speed and uses *falchion* once at any point during the movement. The angel doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.↔ **Storm of Blades ♦ Encounter****Attack:** Close burst 3 (enemies in the burst); +20 vs. AC**Hit:** 6d8 + 7 damage.**Effect:** The angel's fly speed changes to 2 (hover) until the end of the encounter.**Str** 23 (+13)**Dex** 19 (+11)**Wis** 18 (+11)**Con** 20 (+12)**Int** 15 (+9)**Cha** 25 (+14)**Alignment** unaligned**Languages** Supernal**Equipment** falchion

Features of the Node

Illumination: The entire area is brightly lit.

Call of Evil: Each round on initiative count 10, a powerful urge draws non-immortal creatures toward the Wall of Eternal Darkness: +13 vs. Will; the urge pulls the target 1d3 squares toward the Wall of Eternal Darkness. This forced movement can pull the creature into the wall.

Wall of Eternal Darkness: The long map edge closest to the return portal and the top of the battle map is the Wall of Eternal Darkness. Any non-immortal creature that enters a square adjacent to the wall or starts its turn in such a place takes 10 cold and psychic damage. A creature takes this damage only once per

MOVEMENT IN THE ASTRAL SEA

A character succeeding on a DC 13 Arcana check or Religion check knows he or she is in the Astral Sea, situated just below the astral horizon. Characters who have fly speeds can move normally here. Those without fly speeds must make a DC 10 Athletics check to move at half speed. Those who have a check result of 21 or higher can move at full speed that turn. A character does not need to make an Athletics check to maintain position.

turn. A successful DC 26 Arcana, History, or Religion check identifies the wall, its nature, and its danger.

Node 2: Elemental Air

Characters traveling through the portal to this node appear on an earthmote floating in endless empty air. A strong wind threatens to send the character careening from the rock to fall forever. Roll initiative for the elemental.

When a character appears in this node, read:

You stand on a chunk of rock drifting through endless sky. Powerful winds howl all around you. A glance over the edge reveals a few solid specks moving through the air, but no ground below them. A shimmering gray portal hangs in the air 10 feet away from the rock on which you stand. The portal keeps pace with the mote.

The player places his or her miniature or token on the earthmote. Because the air elemental is invisible at the start of this challenge, do not place the air elemental's token until it attacks.

Air Elemental (A)	Level 10 Lurker
Large elemental magical beast (air)	XP 500
HP 81; Bloodied 40	Initiative +15
AC 24, Fortitude 21, Reflex 23, Will 22	Perception +5
Speed 0, fly 8 (hover)	
Vulnerable 5 fire	

TRAITS

Phantom on the Wind

The air elemental becomes invisible whenever it starts its turn without an enemy adjacent to it. The invisibility lasts until the end of its next turn or until it attacks.

STANDARD ACTIONS

⬇ Slam ⬆ At-Will

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 5 damage.

⬅ Rampant Storm ⬆ At-Will

Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +13 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d8 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the air elemental's next turn if it could not see the elemental before the attack.

Skills Stealth +16

Str 20 (+10)

Dex 22 (+11)

Wis 11 (+5)

Con 15 (+7)

Int 5 (+2)

Cha 8 (+4)

Alignment unaligned

Languages understands Primordial



Tactics

The air elemental stays out of the character's reach whenever possible, hovering and using *rampant storm*. The air elemental flies above, under, and around the earthmote to attack from whichever direction is most advantageous.

Features of the Node

Illumination: The entire area is brightly lit.

Clouds: Each round on initiative count 10, roll a d6. On a 6, the earthmote passes through a cloud and the entire area becomes lightly obscured until initiative count 10 of the next round.

Winds: Each round on initiative count 10, a powerful gust of wind attacks each non-air creature: +13 vs. Fortitude; the wind pushes the target 1d3 squares away from a random map edge. The DM determines which squares the wind moves the characters into.

Falling: A character who falls has one chance to make a DC 18 Acrobatics check or Athletics check to grab the lower edges of the mote; on a successful check, a character grabs the side. Climbing the mote's surface requires a DC 15 Athletics check. If the character falls, he or she descends until eventually striking another mote below. The speed of the fall makes such an impact instantly lethal.

Node 3: Elemental Earth

Characters traveling through the portal to this node appear in an underground air pocket consisting of several linked corridors. Roll initiative for the elemental.

When a character appears in this node and can see, read:

You stand in a cramped space. The walls, floor, and ceiling are earth and rock. A passageway leads out of this small room.

Wait to place the earth elemental until it takes its first turn.

Earth Elemental (E) Large elemental magical beast (earth)	Level 11 Soldier XP 600	
HP 119; Bloodied 59	Initiative +5	
AC 26, Fortitude 24, Reflex 21, Will 22	Perception +5	
Speed 7, burrow 7	Tremorsense 5	
TRAITS		
Earth Glide The elemental can pass through earth and rock as if it were phasing, and it can end its movement in squares occupied by blocking terrain made of such materials.		
Brittle Skin Whenever the earth elemental takes thunder damage, it takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of its next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
Ⓢ Slam ⚔ At-Will Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC Hit: 3d8 + 6 damage, and the target cannot shift until the end of the elemental's next turn.		
⚡ Quake Stomp ⚔ Recharge when first bloodied Attack: Close burst 4 (enemies in the burst); +14 vs. Fortitude Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, and the elemental slides the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.		
Str 22 (+11)	Dex 6 (+3)	Wis 11 (+5)
Con 23 (+11)	Int 5 (+2)	Cha 6 (+3)
Alignment unaligned		Languages understands Primordial



Tactics

The earth elemental starts moving toward the character as soon as he or she arrives. If it is facing one character, the earth elemental uses *slam*. If it faces two or more before it becomes bloodied, it uses *quake stomp*.

The elemental's combination of a burrow speed and *earth glide* means the elemental is unhampered by the narrow tunnels despite its size. It doesn't need to squeeze, and it can charge and shift.

Features of the Node

Illumination: The entire area is dark.

Tremors: Each round on initiative count 10, a quake causes the tunnels to pitch and heave. Each non-earth creature in the node is subject to an attack: +13 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target falls prone.

Node 4: Elemental Fire

Characters traveling through the portal to this node appear in a field of burning cinders.

When a character appears in this node, read:

You stand in the middle of a burning plain. Fiery cinders carpet the ground, and flames blast free in places, climbing 20 feet into the air. As the heat washes over you, a mass of flames glides through the hazy air toward you.

Place the elemental after the player places his or her token. Roll initiative for the fire elemental.

Tactics

The fire elemental races toward the character during the first round, using *slam* and then *flickering flame* to dance out of its enemy's reach.

Features of the Node

Illumination: The entire area is brightly lit.

Flares: Each round, on initiative count 10, roll a d10. On a 10, fire bursts up from the ground beneath a randomly determined creature, attacking that creature and each creature adjacent to it: +13 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 fire damage; half damage on a miss.

Heat: Whenever a non-fire creature starts its turn in this node, it takes 10 fire damage.

Smoke: Smoke lightly obscures the entire area.

Fire Elemental (F)**Level 11 Skirmisher**

Large elemental magical beast (fire)

XP 600

HP 107; **Bloodied** 53**Initiative** +14**AC** 24, **Fortitude** 22, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 23**Perception** +6**Speed** 10, fly 6 (clumsy)**Resist** 15 fire, 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** cold (see *frozen in place*)**TRAITS****Frozen in Place**

Whenever the elemental takes cold damage, it cannot shift until the end of its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS⊕ **Slam** (fire, necrotic) ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 + 7 fire and necrotic damage.

MINOR ACTIONS**Flickering Flame** ♦ **At-Will**

Effect: The elemental shifts up to 3 squares.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS**Seething Fire** (fire, necrotic) ♦ **At-Will**

Trigger: An attack hits the elemental.

Effect (*Free Action*): Each enemy adjacent to the elemental takes 5 fire and necrotic damage.**Str** 10 (+5)**Dex** 24 (+12)**Wis** 13 (+6)**Con** 11 (+5)**Int** 5 (+2)**Cha** 6 (+3)**Alignment** chaotic evil**Languages** understands Abyssal and Primordial

Node 5: Elemental Water

Characters traveling through the portal to this node appear in an endless expanse of water.

When a character appears in this node, read:

You float underwater. The water extends in all directions, cold and murky. Ahead you see a shimmering gray portal, a ripple in the water.

Place the water elemental after the player places his or her token. Roll initiative for the water elemental.

Tactics

The water elemental hammers at the character using *slam* and *drowning essence*. It saves *whirlpool* for when it is bloodied or if it faces two or more enemies at once.

Features of the Node

The entire node is underwater with no solid surfaces.

Illumination: The entire area is dimly lit.

Chaotic Currents: Each round, on initiative count 10, a swirling current pushes all creatures in the node 1d3 squares away from a random map edge. The DM determines which squares these currents push characters into.

Water Elemental (W)**Level 11 Controller**

Large elemental magical beast (aquatic, water)

XP 600

HP 111; **Bloodied** 55**Initiative** +8**AC** 25, **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 22**Perception** +5**Speed** 6, swim 6**Vulnerable** cold (see sensitive to cold)**TRAITS****Aquatic**

The elemental can breathe underwater. In aquatic combat, it gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls against non-aquatic creatures.

Sensitive to Cold

Whenever the water elemental takes cold damage, it gains vulnerable 5 against the next attack that hits it before the end of its next turn.

STANDARD ACTIONS⊕ **Slam** ♦ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

↶ **Whirlpool** ♦ **Encounter**

Attack: Close burst 2 (enemies in the burst); +14 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 4d6 + 7 damage, and the elemental slides the target 3 squares.

MINOR ACTIONS**Drowning Essence** ♦ **At-Will** (1/round)

Effect: The elemental slides each creature that is taking ongoing damage from its *slam* 2 squares.

Str 20 (+10)**Dex** 16 (+8)**Wis** 11 (+5)**Con** 15 (+7)**Int** 5 (+2)**Cha** 8 (+4)**Alignment** unaligned**Languages** understands Primordial

AQUATIC COMBAT

When running this combat, keep the following rules from the *Rules Compendium* in mind.

Swim Speed: A creature moves through the water using its swim speed. A creature that has no swim speed must use the Athletics skill to swim.

Fire Powers: Attackers take a -2 penalty to attack rolls of fire powers used underwater.

Weapons: Attackers take a -2 penalty to attack rolls while wielding any weapon underwater that isn't from the spear or crossbow weapon group.

Suffocation: An air-breathing creature can hold its breath for 3 minutes before it's at risk of suffocating. See *Rules Compendium*, page 180, if these rules become necessary.

PART 3: THE CYST

The characters can reach the Cyst through the black obelisk or through the dark portal. Those who arrive in the Cyst do so as if they have entered the area through the doorway that contains the dark portal, starting in a square inside the Cyst adjacent to that doorway. In this part of the challenge, the characters confront the Essence of Evil and try to destroy it before they run out of time.

When one or more characters enter this area, read:

Terrible cold envelops you when you appear in a hemispherical chamber 40 feet across. The name of this terrible room comes unbidden to your mind: the Black Cyst.

A form rests on a stone block near the chamber's center. The shape is so dark your eyes hurt to look upon it. The form twitches and writhes as if struggling to awaken from a nightmare.

On either end of the stone block are two great metal cressets, each standing atop three legs and forged from black iron. Curls of green smoke rise from the bowls.

A babau arrives on its initiative count after a character appears in the area, and an extra babau arrives on its initiative count every 2 rounds thereafter (to a maximum of three babaus at any one time). The demons emerge from the curls of green smoke rising from the cressets. The Essence of Evil breaks free from its prison and enters the room when a babau first becomes bloodied.

Sounding the Horn: If a character has the Wailer of Tharizdun and sounds it in this room, the Essence of Evil immediately appears and rolls initiative. It appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to the stone block and attacks on its turn.

Madness: Characters who have no Madness table effects gain resist 5 to all damage against attacks from monsters in this room. Characters who have two or more Madness table effects are dazed until they leave the room. If an effect would end the dazed condition, the character becomes dazed again at the start of his or her next turn.

Features of the Temple

Illumination: The entire area is dimly lit.

Ceiling: The stone ceiling is 15 feet high.

Cressets: As long as the cressets smoke, any demon that starts its turn in the room regains 5 hit points. A character who sees a demon heal knows the unholy smoke from the cressets causes the healing.

A character looking into a cresset's bowl notes two round depressions at the bottom, one of which contains a ball of green incense. Placing the incense from the treasure chest in Part 1 in the other depression causes it to burn white smoke. This smoke neutralizes the green smoke, canceling the cressets' healing effect on the demons and negating the Essence of Evil's *heart of darkness* aura.

A character who has training in Arcana and studies the cressets can attempt a DC 26 Arcana check as a minor action. On a successful check, the character knows that the cressets allow demons to enter this chamber from the Abyss. On a check failed by 5 or more, the character is stunned and takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends both).

Babau**Level 13 Skirmisher**

Medium elemental humanoid (demon)

XP 800

HP 127; Bloodied 63

Initiative +13

AC 26, Fortitude 23, Reflex 25, Will 24

Perception +10

Speed 7

Darkvision

Resist 20 cold

**TRAITS**☼ **Protective Slime (acid)** ◆ **Aura 1**

Any enemy in the aura that hits the babau with a melee attack takes 5 acid damage.

STANDARD ACTIONS⊕ **Bite (acid)** ◆ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage. The target also takes ongoing 5 acid damage, or ongoing 10 acid damage if the babau is bloodied (save ends).

⊕ **Claws** ◆ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +18 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 3 damage, and the babau can shift 1 square.

⊕ **Babau's Advantage** ◆ **At-Will**Effect: The babau uses *bite* and *claws* against a creature granting combat advantage to it.**MINOR ACTIONS**☼ **Murderous Abduction (teleportation)** ◆ **Recharge** when the babau reduces an enemy to 0 hit points or fewer

Effect: The babau teleports one creature adjacent to it up to 7 squares and then teleports to a square adjacent to that creature. The creature grants combat advantage to the babau until the end of the babau's next turn.

Skills Athletics +14

Str 17 (+9)

Dex 21 (+11)

Wis 19 (+10)

Con 15 (+8)

Int 12 (+7)

Cha 14 (+8)

Alignment chaotic evil

Languages Abyssal

A successful DC 26 Athletics check made as a standard action will topple a cresset. A character takes 10 cold damage per attempt. The cressets are immune to all damage. Once both cressets are knocked over, no more demons enter the room.

Stone Block: The stone block is blocking terrain.

Dark Portal: The portal functions normally until it disappears when the Essence of Evil drops to 0 hit points. The monsters of the Cyst cannot use the dark portal to enter any node. These creatures ignore the portal as if it didn't exist.

Horrific Cold: Whenever a creature starts its turn in this room, it takes 5 cold damage plus 5 cold damage for each Madness table effect it has. Wearing a cultist robe halves this damage.

Jagged Surfaces: Needlelike stone covers the surfaces of this chamber. Any creature pushed against the wall or ceiling or knocked prone takes 10 damage.

Tactics

Essence of Evil: The essence uses *drown the light* early to blind as many characters as it can. It then fights to neutralize the characters, grabbing melee characters to keep them pinned down and pulling ranged characters close for its *vile bite*.

Babaus: The babaus circle for combat advantage.

Essence of Evil**Level 12 Elite Controller**

Large immortal magical beast

XP 1,400

HP 252; Bloodied 126

Initiative +11

AC 26, Fortitude 24, Reflex 23, Will 24

Perception +15

Speed 6, fly 6 (hover)

Darkvision

Resist 10 cold, 10 necrotic

Saving Throws +2; Action Points 1

**TRAITS**☼ **Heart of Darkness** ◆ **Aura 2**

Within the aura, bright light is dim light, and dim light is darkness.

Tentacle Snare

When the essence moves, all creatures grabbed by it are pulled with it. The essence's movement triggers no opportunity attacks from creatures grabbed by the essence.

STANDARD ACTIONS⊕ **Tentacle Rake** (cold, psychic) ◆ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +17 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 12 cold and psychic damage.

⊕ **Tentacle Grab** (cold, psychic) ◆ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 3 (one creature not grabbed by the essence); +17 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 6 cold and psychic damage, the essence slides the target up to 2 squares, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 20). Until the grab ends, the target takes ongoing 10 cold and psychic damage, and at the start of each of the essence's turns, the essence can slide the target up to 2 squares.

⊕ **Vile Bite** ◆ **At-Will**

Attack: Melee 1 (one creature grabbed by the essence); +17 vs. AC

Hit: 2d8 + 12 damage, and the target cannot spend healing surges until the start of the essence's next turn.

Double Attack ◆ **At-Will**

Effect: The essence makes two melee attacks.

⚡ **Drown the Light** (cold, necrotic) ◆ **Recharge** ☼ ☼ ☼

Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +15 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 2d8 + 11 cold and necrotic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the essence's next turn.

MINOR ACTIONS⚡ **Drawn to Darkness** (charm) ◆ **At-Will** (1/round)

Attack: Close burst 3 (one creature in the burst); +15 vs. Will

Hit: The essence pulls the target up to 3 squares.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS**Chains of Tharizdun** ◆ **Encounter**

Trigger: The essence is bloodied.

Effect (No Action): Heart of darkness becomes aura 1 until the end of the encounter, and any creature that ends its turn in the aura takes 5 cold and necrotic damage, or 10 cold and necrotic damage if it has two or more Madness table effects.

Str 22 (+12)

Dex 20 (+11)

Wis 19 (+10)

Con 22 (+12)

Int 20 (+11)

Cha 22 (+12)

Alignment chaotic evil

Languages understands Abyssal and Common, telepathy 20

AWARDS

In this D&D LAIR ASSAULT challenge, characters can gain up to twenty awards. Each award earns a player 10 glory, and a player can earn a total of 200 glory for collecting all of the awards. Have the players record their awards and glory and report them on the player tracking form. A player can earn a specific award only once, regardless of the number of times he or she plays the challenge.

Party Awards

World Destruction Denied: Destroy the Essence of Evil.

Your Work Is Done: Slay every monster.

Blitzkrieg: Complete the entire challenge in 10 or fewer rounds.

We Need a Do-Over: Every character dies.

True Heroes: Defeat the challenge on nightmare mode.

Individual Awards

Die Alone: Die in a node occupied by no other characters.

Flying over the Cuckoo's Nest: Complete the challenge with three or more Madness table effects.

Doing the Gods' Work: Land the killing blow on the Essence of Evil.

Iron Will: Complete the challenge without gaining a Madness table effect.

Path of Lunacy: Kill the monsters in at least three nodes before entering the Cyst.

I Believe I Can Fly: Fall to your death in node 2.

Elemental Bane: Destroy any two of the elementals.

It Sticks Like Napalm: Take ongoing damage at least three times during the challenge.

Reluctant Participant: Never enter the Cyst during the challenge.

Courageous or Foolhardy: Be the first to enter the Cyst.

Crazy Train: Kill five cultists or more with a single attack.

Secret Awards

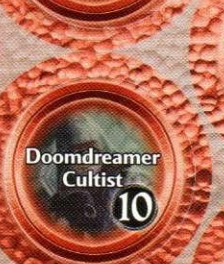
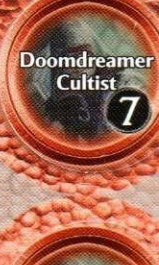
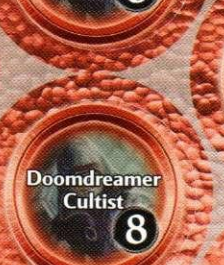
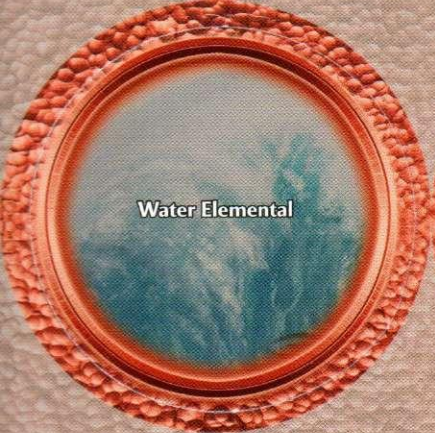
This challenge has secret awards that players can satisfy. At the end of the challenge, reveal only the awards that were fulfilled.

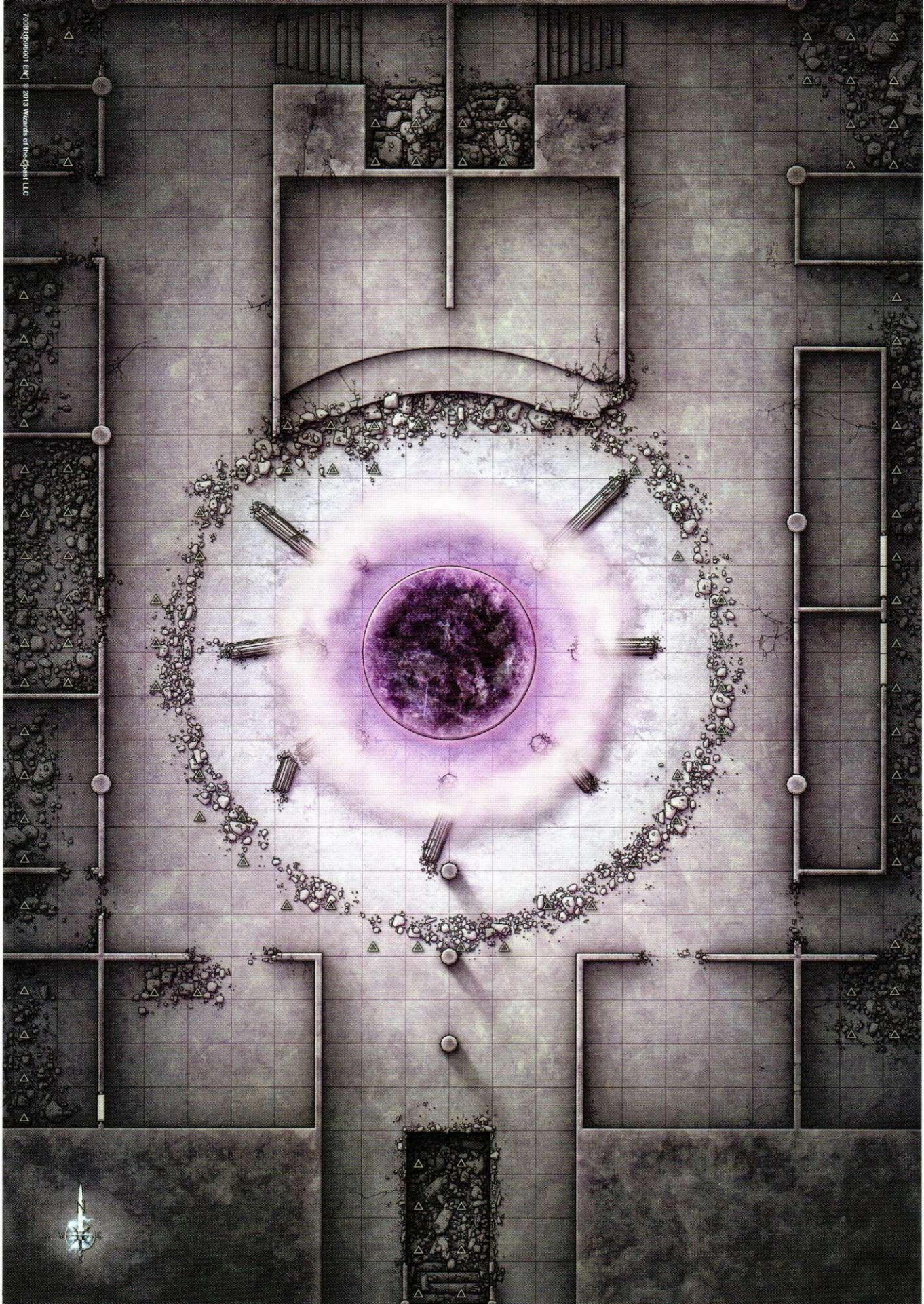
Nice Threads: Be the first to don a cultist's robes.

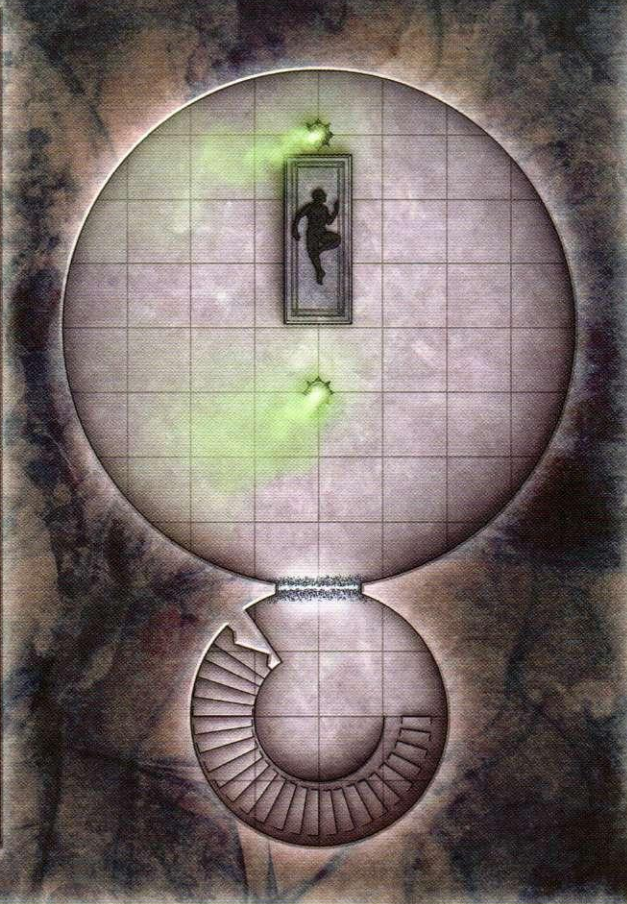
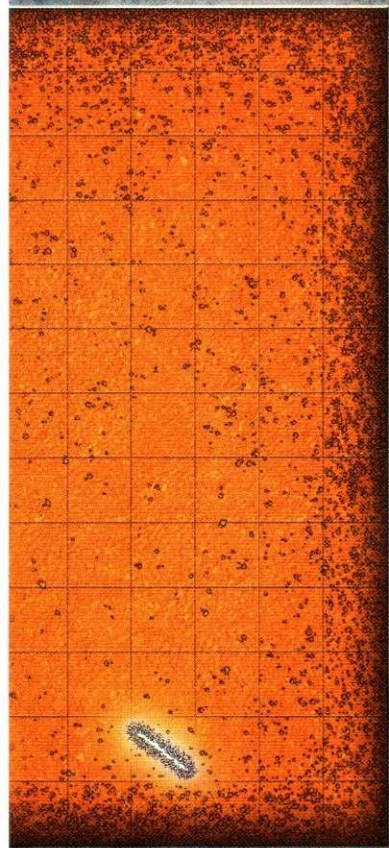
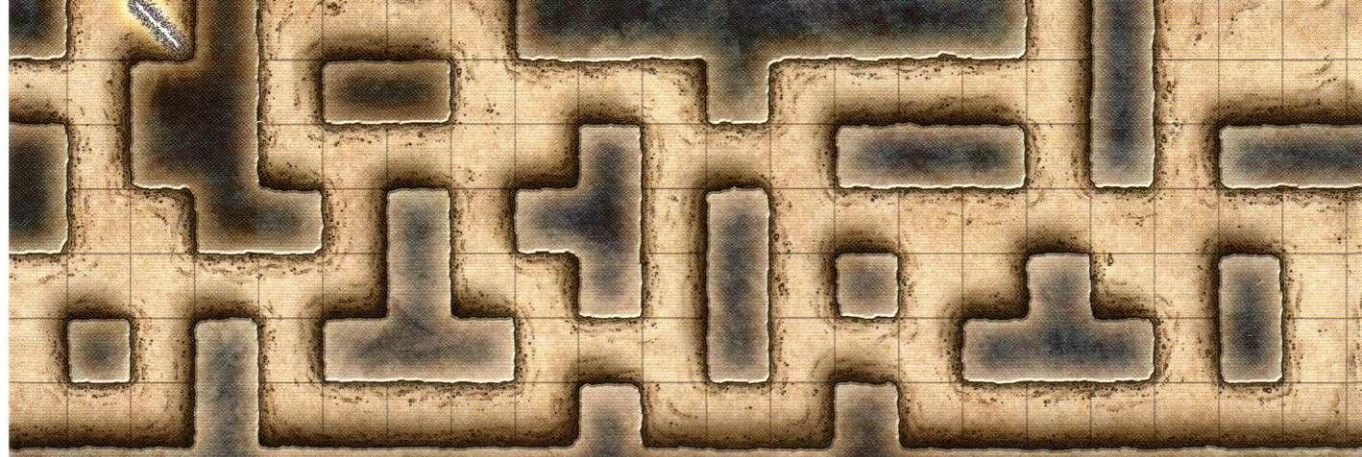
That Smell: Use the thurible to safely move through the gray vapors and the purple light.

Round Peg, Round Hole: Place an incense ball in one of the cressets found in the Cyst.

Call Me Crazy: Sound the Wailer of Tharizdun to summon the Essence of Evil before it would normally appear.







DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LAIR ASSAULT

EVIL STRUGGLES TO ESCAPE

Cultists have discovered the Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun and unearthed an ancient artifact of evil. Now, the ground trembles as a manifestation of the Chained God struggles to escape. Unless brave heroes can stop the cultists from completing a vile ritual, Tharizdun will be unleashed and plunge the world into darkness.

Into the Pit of Madness™ is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® Roleplaying Game challenge designed for the 2013 spring installment of the D&D® LAIR ASSAULT official play program. The challenge draws inspiration from several classic D&D adventures, including *The Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*, *The Lost Caverns of Tsojcanth*, and *Return to the Temple of Elemental Evil™*. It includes one full-color, double-sided battle map; a sheet of tokens customized for the challenge; and a laminated play aid.

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