

SHE8-02

A Sight for Sore Eyes

A Two-Round D&D[®] LIVING GREYHAWK[™]

Sheldomar Valley Metaregional Adventure

Version 1.0.0

by Steven Hess

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Playtesters: X

A plague of blindness and a wave of violence directed at refugee Olman communities all over the Sheldomar Valley have been revealed as a plot by cultists of Tezcatlipoca, the evil Olman deity of light and darkness, to bring back the old ways of sacrifice and subservience. Even now, innocent hostages are gathered for a dark sacrifice, and evil things flock to the banner of the Smoking Mirror. Your guide is the voice of a ten-year-old child, one of many whose death on the altar may bring about the birth of a hideous evil into the world. A Sheldomar Valley metaregional adventure for APLs 10-14 and Part 3 of the *Not One of Us* series.

Note: This adventure will be of particular interest to PCs who have played SHE6-07 *Sight Unseen* and SHE7-05 *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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For questions specific to this document and your region please e-mail your triad point of contact (POC) at scon40@aol.com.

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Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First it is an official game, and you can use the AR to advance your LIVING GREYHAWK character. Second player and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth two (2) points.

This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2008.

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Sidebars contain important information for you, including special instruction on running the adventure. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Full information on NPCs and monsters are given in the *Appendices*.

Along with this adventure you'll find a RPGA Table Tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK Adventure Record (AR).

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

Because players bring their own characters to LIVING GREYHAWK games, this adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of the PCs participating in the adventure. To determine this modified Average Party Level (APL) follow the steps below:

Determine the character level for each of the PCs participating in the adventure.

If PCs bring animals that have been trained for combat (most likely dogs trained for war), other than those brought by virtue of a class ability (such as animal companions, familiars paladin's mounts) or the warhorse of a character with the Mounted Combat feat, use the sidebar chart to determine the number of levels you add to the sum of step one. Add each character's animals separately. A single PC may only bring four or fewer animals of this type, and animals with different CRs are added separately.

Sum the results of step 1 and 2, and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.

If you are running a table of six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are

given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

APL also affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. If a player character is three character levels or more either higher or lower than the APL at which this adventure is being played, that character receives only one-half of the experience points and gold for the adventure. This simulates the fact that either the PC was not challenged as much as normal or relied on help by higher-level characters to reach the objectives.

Furthermore, a PC who is four or more levels higher than the highest APL supported by the adventure may not play the adventure.

Mundane Animals Effect on APL		# of Animals			
		1	2	3	4
CR of Animal	1/4 & 1/6	0	0	0	1
	1/3 & 1/2	0	0	1	1
	1	1	1	2	3
	2	2	3	4	5
	3	3	4	5	6
	4	4	6	7	8
	5	5	7	8	9
	6	6	8	9	10
	7	7	9	10	11

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them, and fight for them.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard two-round Metaregional adventure, set in the Sheldomar Valley. Characters native to the Sheldomar Valley pay

one Time Unit per round, all others pay two Time Units per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per Time Unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per Time Unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per Time Unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep will retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly gain in-game benefits) as may be detailed in this adventure.

A character who does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may also avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in the Survival skill and succeeds at a Survival check (DC 20), the character will heal temporary ability damage as if he or she paid for Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). The player is allowed to Take 10 on this roll.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the "Lifestyle and Upkeep" section of Chapter 3 of the *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook*.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

In SHE6-07 *Sight Unseen*, the PCs worked within the refugee Olman community in southern Keoland to discover the source of a series of attacks that killed many and blinded many more. In SHE7-05 *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*, the violence that continued to target the Olman throughout the Sheldomar Valley was found to be caused by the cult of Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror, chaotic evil Olman deity of sun and moon. His followers were obsessed with a return to the "old ways" of constant warfare and human sacrifice. At the end of that adventure, the Olman boy Axian willingly departed with the cultists, telling the PCs that they would know when the time came to rescue him.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

That time is now. In this two-round adventure, the PCs are attacked in a place of relative safety by demons and their allies; at the conclusion of that combat, one of the slain succubi passes along a message from Axian, begging the PCs to find him and stop a dark ritual designed to bring an avatar of Tezcatlipoca into the living world. The PCs are

cautioned that someone Axian has befriended but who is not necessarily to be trusted, will be seeking them out.

The PCs must make their way south to the Tors to find the place where Axian and his friends are being held. Through rough weather and the occasional ambush, they seek the Arena of the Smoking Mirror and must abide by its rules to gain entry.

Once in the arena, they hunt for Axian and fight the occasional cultist, all of whom scream "Death Is Sacrifice" as they slay and are slain. The kidnapped children are found, but the drama leads to the cusp of the Astral Plane and the true site of the sacrifice, a place from where the avatar of Tezcatlipoca will be born...either alive or dead.

Depending on the PCs' success or failure, they move on either to destroy the undead remains of the avatar and succeed in the mission or face its demonic allies at the site of the first of many altars the avatar will create on Oerth.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

The DM might want to request 6 Will save results from each player on their initiative card or other tracking device, in order to efficiently run Encounter 1. Recording Knowledge (arcana), (nature), (dungeoneering), (the planes), and (religion) bonuses, along with Spellcraft, might help things along in later encounters.

Notes on Divination: Unless otherwise noted, casting any of the most common divination spells focused on the events at hand will have the following effects at any time during this adventure from the conclusion of Encounter 1 until the Advent of Sun and Moon described below.

Augury: A deafeningly-loud voice bellows from the mouth of the caster, "WOE!". All creatures within 20 ft. (including the caster) take 2d6 sonic damage (Reflex save DC 18 half).

Divination: A cacophony of insane howling, the voices of uncountable angels and demons, smashes into the caster's mind. The caster becomes confused (as the spell) for 1d4+1 rounds. If the caster succeeds at a DC 20 Will save, one clear statement is recalled:

"The least claw of the slightest finger of the Smoking Mirror reaches out towards you, drawn by blood and the promise of blood, and woe to the world into which his avatar is born."

Commune or Contact Other Plane: This powerful spell provokes an equally powerful backlash: The caster is affected by a *feeblemind* spell unless he or she succeeds a DC 22 (26 for an arcane caster) Will save. If the caster succeeds at the save, any questions can be asked normally.

ENCOUNTER 1: INNSECURITY

The Javan is the longest river in the Flanaess, rushing from its headwaters in the Barrier Peaks to its majestic outflow many miles to the south in the nigh-limitless Hool Marshes. It does not have the deep-draft capacity of the Sheldomar River; perhaps this explains why that shorter waterway gave its name to the eponymous valley...and why, unlike the Sheldomar, the Javan touches so many wild and contested areas.

Still, human civilization is a persistent phenomenon, and its reach is nowhere longer than upon steady waters that can carry goods and communications quickly and reliably. At regular intervals all along the Javan River, there are hamlets and towns and trading posts where boat-folk can resupply, do business, and pass a night or two in comfort and relative safety.

Keeler's Keep is one such hamlet. It is a small place, with just over two hundred souls in residence. Most of them, as the name implies, are employed in the care and maintenance of keelboats and their crews. Beyond Ravonnar in Keoland, on the west bank of the Javan just north of the Rushmoors, Keeler's Rest lies in lands bordering Geoff, Sterich, and Gran March, and accepts even Ketite coins (with a ten percent surcharge for the inconvenience, of course).

Aside from the movement of farm goods to the river, life in "the Keep" revolves around two businesses: The Short Pier, where keelboats are built, outfitted, and repaired, and The Alewife's Rest, a large and very comfortable inn. A visit to the former is almost always a matter of necessity, while personal choice, or perhaps an entirely different kind of necessity, drives business to the latter.

The streets of Keeler's Keep seem oddly deserted for early evening. A few animals wander the broad avenue along which every

structure in town sits, the street that leads up the shallow hill from riverside to the Alewife's Rest. A goat calmly munches at a clump of weeds; a trio of young sheep lies calmly and bleats softly at nothing in particular. As the inn grows closer, the sounds of singing and celebrating grow louder. Apparently the vast majority of townsfolk are up for an evening out.

The Alewife's Rest features some of the finest food for days in every direction and a wide variety of beverages. Its sign, two snowy-white gold-trimmed pillows, is a welcome sight to all persons seeking solace and a sympathetic ear, and doubly so to the adventuring classes. It is no surprise that all manner of persons intimately familiar with swords and spells, and how to effectively apply both, are regular visitors.

Conditions: The PCs find themselves in the common room of a fairly crowded and most definitely upscale inn. There is a bit of haze in the air, but not enough to disturb sight or smell; a low murmur of conversation and the tinkling of a nicely-played harp can be heard from over in the far corner. The PCs are as well-fed as their choice of lifestyle cost indicates, and cared for by the attentive and attractive service staff with professionalism and courtesy.

Of course, things are not what they seem at the Alewife's Rest tonight. The regular staff has been charmed into cowering down in the basement behind a huge barrel of ale while a contingent of slaads and succubi prepare to ambush the PCs in their own special way.

It is possible that tables, chairs, and even the large polished-oak bar may be used for cover during this encounter.

Table: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 25; 5 ft. diameter, blocks square as rough terrain.

Chair: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 5; Break DC 15; does not block squares.

The Bar: 6 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 60; Break DC 32; 3 ft. high, blocks movement as a low wall (*Players Handbook*, p. 148).

Trap: The charmed patrons fight to the death to defend the succubi unless they are either freed of the enchantment or neutralized without fatality. If a PC targets any of the charmed NPCs with lethal force, inform them that they are committing

an evil act and will be reported to their Triad for doing so. They may rescind their action at that time without further consequence. PCs with restricted alignment features (divine casters with good-aligned deity sponsors, paladins, etc.) who continue with an evil act must be punished as is described in that class's description.

Creatures:

APL 10 (EL 12)

Gray Slaad: hp 98; see *Monster Manual*, page 231.

Succubus (3): hp 41 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 47.

Charmed Reveler, Male Human (Oeridian) Expert1 (8): hp 7 each; see *Appendix 1*.

APL 12 (EL 14)

Gray Slaad (2): hp 98 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 231.

Succubus Queen: hp 99; see *Appendix 2*.

Succubus (2): hp 41 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 47.

Charmed Reveler, Male Human (Oeridian) Expert1 (16): hp 7 each; see *Appendix 2*.

APL 14 (EL 16)

Death Slaad: hp 147; see *Monster Manual*, page 231.

Succubus Queen (4): hp 99; see *Appendix 3*.

Charmed Reveler, Male Human (Oeridian) Expert3 (16): hp 18 each; see *Appendix 3*.

Tactics: The slaadi and the succubi use their *polymorph* abilities to impersonate the bartender, a sentimental and sympathetic half-orc named Snurk (and, at APL 12, his female human counterpart Astrid) and barmaids Bella, Ella, and Nella (and, at APL 14, Stella). The real staff of the Alewife's Rest has been charmed by the succubi into remaining hidden in the cellars.

The "girls" flirt and cavort with the PCs to the limits of good taste at first. If a PC makes reference to stealing a kiss, then have the barmaid react with growing enthusiasm...and ask for that PC's character sheet so you can roll the save vs. the *suggestion* that leads to another kiss, and another, and another. Allow anyone who asks to roll a Knowledge (the planes) check at DC 22; success reveals the life-draining and *suggestion* powers of the succubus kiss.

One of the succubi has a rolled-up scrap of paper clutched tightly in her left hand; a DC 20 (at APLs 10 and 12) or 27 (at APL 14) Spot check reveals this as they are serving the PCs their meals. If she is questioned about it, the “barmaid” shrugs and says, “It’s nothing.” If she is pressed about it, she immediately changes the subject by dropping into the lap of the nearest male PC and attempting to “kiss” him. See below for the reactions of other patrons if the PCs appear to be harassing the barmaids.

The low-level human experts shown above have been charmed by the succubi and fight to defend them if it appears that the PCs are threatening “their girls.” The men stay as close to their favorite barmaids as possible to block attempts at melee and foil large-area magical attacks. Note that the patrons appear in insufficient numbers to affect the final EL of the encounter.

The slaad (or slaads) remain in humanoid form and tend bar while the succubi use their charm spell-like abilities and their kiss on the PCs. If the situation looks as if it will degenerate into combat, they open up with their most powerful spell-like abilities but remain in humanoid form unless slain, shouting a three-word phrase in an unpleasant-sounding language all the while: (“Death is sacrifice!” in Abyssal if understood).

In the unlikely event that any antagonists are captured alive and conscious, the only say repeatedly, “Death is sacrifice,” sometimes mockingly, sometimes fearfully, in all of the languages spoken by the PCs. These creatures are fanatical in their devotion to the cult of Tezcatlipoca; no amount of diplomacy can vary their attitudes.

Should the succubi be reduced to one in number, the remaining demoness has a 50% chance per round of either trying to escape via *teleport* to report back to her dark masters or simply continuing the fight.

Treasure: The primary opposition in this encounter carries no weapons, wears no armor, and has no use for coinage. Should the PCs decide to loot the paltry coins and belongings of the innocent patrons of the inn, it is the DM’s responsibility to remind them that this is an overtly evil act as well as a crime. There is no monetary reward to be had here.

Development: If all of the succubi are killed or otherwise prevented from reporting to their

masters, Encounter 4 will be easier for the PCs. See that section for details.

It is assumed that at least one of the creatures attacking the PCs will be killed during this brouhaha. As the smoke settles and the sawdust on the floor performs its grim task, ask for a Spot check at DC 15: On a success, one of the PCs notices that a slain succubus still clutches that roll of paper in her hand. (If none of the succubi were killed or if none of their bodies are present, the note is found on the floor. The note will survive even a *disintegrate* spell aimed at its holder to be found atop a heap of dust on the floor.)

“If you have just pried this note from the hand of a really pretty demon, I salute your combat skills as well as your will-power. The cultists of the Smoking Mirror...”

Knowledge (religion), DC 15: “The Smoking Mirror” is an alternate name for Tezcatlipoca, the chaotic evil Olman deity of sun and moon, light and darkness. His followers seek wealth and power at any cost and perform regular human sacrifices to avert his gaze and direct those burning rays at the fields and cities of their enemies. Give this information without a roll to any PC at the table who played SHE7-05.

“...have gathered several dozen Olman children and are ready to begin their ceremony: I fear death less than I fear the horror they plan to bring into this world. I do not know exactly where we are, but all the hills around us are flat-topped and the winds and the rain only get stronger. You will know the cultists by their cry: “Death Is Sacrifice.”

Axian

P.S. The only way I could get this message to you was to tell them all about you. I hope nobody was hurt too badly. Keep an eye out for my friend Sheki; he wants to help but watch out for him.”

Ask if any of the PCs present at the table played SHE7-05 *Out of Sight, Out of Mind*. If yes, remind them that Axian was the young Olman boy who volunteered to go with the cultists of Tezcatlipoca to inform the heroes who rescued his people when the time was right to end the cultists’ plans. Apparently, that time is now.

Knowledge (local – Sheldomar Valley) DC 15 or (geography) or (nature) DC 18: The only place in the Flanaess known for its flat-topped hills is the Tors, the cluster of mesas that borders southern

Keoland, the Yeomanry, and the wild lands of the fallen Hold of the Sea Princes and the Hool Marshes.

ENCOUNTER 2: KARMIC RELIEF

It might be that your heroes set out for the Tors immediately. It might also be that they will seek advice both physical and metaphysical before they commit to the venture. Herein we offer them both options.

This encounter begins immediately after the note from Axian is read at the end of Encounter 1.

Describe the staff of the inn coming up from the basement: Naturally, they look *exactly* like the slaads and the succubi, so the PCs might well overreact to their appearance. Use the stats given in Encounter 1 for the NPC experts should the PCs decide to confront the staff with a show of force.

We cannot blame the PCs if they are a bit paranoid at this point, having just been attacked while at their leisure...but the recently-charmed staff of the Alewife's Rest is quite grateful to the PCs for freeing them and quite possibly saving their lives. Snurk the half-orc bartender even has a bit of personal knowledge of the Tors and can easily identify them from the description given in Axian's note.

You might want some townsfolk to be present during the cleanup...they might be curious about all the noise up at the Alewife, but then, they might be put off by all the breakage and the bleeding and the demon corpses. Use the more advanced stats shown below; less experienced types are unlikely to have the courage to approach.

Male Human (Oeridian) Expert3: hp 18 each; see *Appendix 3*.

However the PCs find out about the Tors, they must now decide to either act on Axian's request for help or go off in another direction. While it is highly unlikely that any PCs will outright refuse to help a group of children about to be sacrificed by a chaotic evil cult, role-playing certain alignments might lead to some PCs expressing selfish reluctance to do so without some promise of reward. That's where the talking dog comes in. As the PCs take stock of their situation, they might notice that they're not alone in the inn.

If the place wasn't too badly damaged:

The Alewife's Rest is only slightly damaged from the recent quarrel. The patrons are long gone; only the staff, who work hard to straighten tables and clean up broken glass, and yourselves are still inside...unless you count the mangy, flea-bitten mutt of a dog over by the door.

If damage to the building was extensive:

The Alewife's Rest was badly damaged in the recent quarrel. The patrons are long gone; only the staff, who work hard to reassemble chairs, straighten tables and clean up broken glass, and yourselves are still inside...unless you count the mangy, flea-bitten mutt of a dog over by the door.

If the place was rendered uninhabitable by magical or mundane damage:

Much of the Alewife's Rest was reduced to a smoking hole in the ground during the recent quarrel. The patrons are long gone; only the staff, who work hard to stamp out the last fires and salvage what few serving-pieces survive are still in the area...unless you count the mangy, flea-bitten mutt of a dog that just won't leave you alone.

Should any of the PCs react towards the dog either verbally or physically, the dog retreats a short distance and then says, "Sheesh... Nice way to treat a friend of a friend." Should the dog be ignored, he starts sniffing around the PCs in the most obnoxious way a dog can until he *does* provoke a reaction...at which time he expresses himself as above.

Sheki is a quasit. By definition, he is a tanar'ri, a demon...but by some odd twist of fate, he is not evil at heart. Oh, he's an obnoxious, foul-mouthed, mockingly sardonic, terminally filthy liar, but he's not really evil. He remains in the form of a dog (see *Monster Manual* p. 247) for the duration of the adventure; only *true seeing* or his death reveals his true form. At any time when the PCs might be in danger, he remains invisible and far enough away from them that he will not be harmed by stray magic.

Knowledge (the planes) DC 17: Not a lot of creatures would willingly choose to adopt the form of a mangy mutt when interacting with humanoids...and, of all the outsiders capable of adopting an alternate form, only the quasit is normally found in a Tiny form. Quasits are weak tanar'ri demons famous for associating with spellcasters as familiars; they are also known for

their cowardice. Aside from a poison sting, which they lose in any alternate form, they can become invisible at will, use a weak *cause fear* spell once per day, and use *commune* once per week to ask six questions.

Note that if no PC has the Knowledge (the planes) skill, Sheki tries to ingratiate himself with the PCs by boasting about his usefulness.

All APLs (EL 2)

Sheki the Quasit: hp 18; (Knowledge (religion) +6, AL CN); see *Monster Manual*, page 46.

Tactics: Sheki behaves like a typical dog in all circumstances: He licks himself, scoots his butt across the floor, crams his icy-cold nose into every conceivable crack and crevice in range, chases each squirrel or cat he notices, and rolls in all the available roadkill. Gauge the PCs and the players at your table, and have Sheki do his best to offend the PCs without overly offending the players. His most common line, right after doing something disgusting, should be “What? What?!?”

At the judge’s discretion, he can also fill in the PCs on a variety of crucial facts should the find themselves without the necessary Knowledge skills to do so. He can use *commune* once during the adventure to have six questions answered without suffering the backlash mentioned earlier in this adventure.

The PCs will no doubt question Sheki as to his relationship with Axian.

“I never met nobody like that kid and his friends. They ain’t scared of anything. I got to talking with them when I was on guard duty...excuse me...(He chases his tail for a few moments)...and I ain’t sure now that what those crazies in feathers want to do is such a good idea. Tell you this: They sure as hell want to ruin everyone’s fun!”

If Sheki is asked about the ritual or the location of Axian and the cultists:

“I don’t know much...you get summoned along with a couple dozen others to do a job, help out with the dark sacrifice, keep tabs on the prisoners while invisible, that kind of thing...but I did see some things; things, and stuff, too. They’s all underground, inside one o’ them flat-topped hills right at the edge of this really lovely, really stinky swamp. I think th’ cultists have used this place for a lotta years, sacrificing escaped slaves and such.

It’s all a maze, with spells goin’ off all over the place, and everything in there is fighting and hacking everything else to pieces screaming “Death is sacrifice” or some crap like that. The cultists are looking for some kind of champion, I think.”

Treasure: none

Development: The PCs do not have to accept Sheki’s services. His primary mission here is to give a party without the best mix of spells a shot at getting better information and thus, a better chance at success.

ENCOUNTER 4: WALKING AGAINST THE WIND

Regardless of the method of travel employed by the PCs, they are still many miles away from the Olman cultists and their secret sacrificial site when they run into the next roadblock along the way. Even if the PCs use teleportation or some other method, they arrive at the outer edge of a huge storm, knowing that their goal lies miles to the south in the teeth of this maelstrom. A stationary storm surrounds the hill in the Tors in which the cultists are “hosting”, and creatures quite able to fight in such an environment are guarding the approaches.

Conditions: Rain and severe winds that radiate outward from the site of the Arena of Tezcatlipoca characterize the final 10 miles of the PCs’ journey. Aside from the DM’s colorful description of soaked rations, stained cloaks, and absolutely *ravaged* hairstyles, the following in-game effects plague the PCs throughout this encounter:

Tiny or smaller creatures are blown away; Small creatures are knocked down; Medium creatures are checked (DC 15 Fort save negates). See *Dungeon Masters Guide* p. 95 for details.

–8 penalty to ranged attacks;

–4 penalty to Search and Spot checks;

–8 penalty to Listen checks.

The weather to the south, in the direction you know the site of Axian and his friends to be, is rapidly deteriorating. As you approach the vicinity of the hills in question, the winds blow hard into your face, and the rain slaps into you with palpable force. Something seems to be manipulating the weather itself into impeding your progress.

Any attempt to magically alter the weather is resisted by the incredible power of this summoned storm. A caster level check versus DC 30 is required to cast any spell that changes the weather, and such an effect has a duration of only 1 round per level regardless of the spell's description.

The jaglings attempt to sneak up on the PCs using the weather as cover. Their Hide and Move Silently modifiers are both +7. Due to the Weather domain that they all possess, they are not affected by the wind. Remember to modify the PCs' Spot and Listen checks for the weather.

Creatures:

APL 10 (EL 12)

Male Jagling Divine Crusader5 (3): hp 99 each; see *Appendix 4*.

APL 12 (EL 14)

Male Jagling Divine Crusader5 (6): hp 99 each; see *Appendix 4*.

APL 14 (EL 16)

Male Jagling Divine Crusader5 (6): hp 99 each; see *Appendix 4*.

Truly Horrid UMBER Hulk: hp 255; see *Monster Manual*, page 249.

Tactics: The jaglings use the Spring Attack feat along with their superior movement rate to move in, strike, and then retreat into the wind, forcing the PCs to move against it in order to counterattack. The trees on the battlefield provide hard cover for these creatures as well.

These creatures do not shriek, "Death Is Sacrifice," as do the opponents in previous and subsequent encounters. They fight in silence and demonstrate nothing short of fanaticism. If a jagling is captured and questioned using the Intimidate skill (modified level check d20+12), it provides the following information:

"We are the children of Apocatequil, he of the ever-changing moons, he of the capricious lightning, he of sudden calamity, opportunity and chaos. Those you seek to join are heretics who adhere to ancient but impure ways; we cannot stand idly by and let you bring about their triumph. They would soak the world in the blood that they gather, and unleash the offspring of their foulness to slay us all."

Knowledge (religion) DC 15: Apocatequil is an alternate name for Tezcatlipoca; he is worshipped

by natives of the Amedio Jungle by this different name. Apparently, these beings see their deity as more an agent of pure chaos than chaotic evil.

If the Diplomacy skill is used to modify a captive's attitude from its current Hostile to at least Indifferent, the captive says little more than the statement above...but he does so with considerably less anger in his voice, and without accusing the PCs of being part of the cultists' plans.

APL 14: The umber hulk focuses on using its confusion gaze at first, relying on the jaglings for follow-up physical attacks. It only engages in melee if half or more of the jaglings are out of commission or it is directly threatened.

Treasure:

APL 10: M: +1 keen longsword (3) (693 gp each), belt of giant strength (3) (1333 gp each), boots of striding and springing (3 sets) (458 gp each), mithral chain shirt +2 (3) (429 gp each).

APL 12: M: +1 keen longsword (6) (693 gp each), belt of giant strength (6) (1333 gp each), boots of striding and springing (6 sets) (458 gp each), mithral chain shirt +2 (6) (429 gp each).

APL 14: M: M: +1 keen longsword (6) (693 gp each), belt of giant strength (6) (1333 gp each), boots of striding and springing (6 sets) (458 gp each), mithral chain shirt +2 (6) (429 gp each).

Development: Regardless of the outcome of this battle, the PCs must "walk into the wind" in order to continue on their way. A DC 15 Knowledge (nature) or Survival check, or 1d4 hours of wandering about, reveals that the winds seem to be radiating from a central point somewhere to the south. By trekking into the teeth of the storm, the PCs eventually arrive at their destination.

ENCOUNTER 5: IN THE RED OCHRE CORRIDOR

The long, narrow crevice leads deep into the side of the hill; there is an unpleasant smell of rotten flesh in the air, and the shadows grow like a malignant thing intent on choking off all light, all air, all life. The trail widens at its end in front of an arched doorway into the side of the hill. Three creatures hover in the air around the entrance, tiny humanoid-like

greenish things with spiky horns and bat wings.

Knowledge (the planes) DC 12: Yup, they're quasits.

Our little friends here have been welcoming contestants to the Arena of the Smoking Mirror for several weeks now. They're tired, they believe that they're missing all the fun inside, and they're not very nice to begin with...so they make their introductions in a very bored, very disinterested way. If Sheki is present in any form, even invisibly, read the section in parentheses; otherwise, skip that part.

The little creatures come face-to-face with you. One of them yawns hugely and idly picks his nose to the third knuckle, while another rather stupidly spins in a circle and giggles.

(The giggling creature waves in your direction; he speaks in a guttural language that makes every word sound like the foulest curse, and the dog answers in kind.)

If anyone in the company understands Abyssal, they hear the following:

"You back, Sheki? Y'know, the job's almost done."

"Yeah, but these guys couldn't have made it here without me."

The third addresses the group with a voice heavy with boredom. "Welcome, champions of fiery sun and secret shadow. The Smoking Mirror commands you to enter and slay in his glorious name, slay that you might emerge the champion of his cause and the smiting hand of his glory." The creature yawns enormously and smacks his lips in a distracted manner. "Enter here, and you enter the Arena of the Jaguar King, where all truth is a lie and all lies are true, where the only rule is this: Do not molest the feather-cloaked ones, for they communicate the will of the Smoking Mirror to the world and will anoint their champion. Go in and slay in the name of sharpest light and darkest night, with the prayer "Death is sacrifice" always on your lips."

The beastly things move aside. The entry into the hillside yawns before you, its darkness absolute after the first few inches.

Of course, the PCs are under no compulsion to enter; if they choose not to, the adventure ends here. If they choose to enter, they find that the

darkness is a physical barrier as well as a barrier to sight. As they touch it, the PCs know that they must, in a sense, surrender to it in order to get in. In game terms, they must purposefully fail a Will save to enter; this failure also subjects them to the unusual conditions of the Arena.

(Background for the judge: Tezcatlipoca is a capricious and cruel deity, chaotic evil in every sense of the term. His Arena produces many bizarre magical effects and alternately suppresses and enhances various strengths and vulnerabilities, all with the sinister goal of collecting a huge volume of the blood of violent death for a sacrifice beyond all sacrifices.)

Conditions: The conditions shown below are currently in force for the entire Arena, and remain in force until the beginning of Encounter 11.

1- Impeded conjuration (healing) magic: In order to cast a spell with the conjuration (healing) descriptor, the caster must make a Spellcraft check at DC (20 plus spell level). See DMG p. 150 for more information.

2- No natural healing takes place in the Arena.

3- Almost every square inch of the floor and the walls up to 5 ft. in height are covered with a soft fibrous mat similar to cropped lamb's wool. The material is warm to the touch and reddish-gold in color. It is not alive; a Knowledge (arcana) check at DC 20 reveals that it is most likely of alchemical origin. It radiates faint magic of the conjuration school. If the PCs perform tests, they might notice that any liquid that is poured onto the material is soaked up almost instantly. Further inspection might show that every corpse in the Arena...and there a *lots* of them...has been exsanguinated.

DM's Note: This "carpet" is a device used by the cultists to collect the blood of the many creatures slain in the Arena. Their upcoming ritual requires thousands of gallons of blood, and they have crafted the entire Arena experience as a ruse designed to create lots and lots of bleeding.

4- Dim reddish light prevails throughout the Arena, including all attached rooms. The light has no obvious source and seems to come from everywhere and nowhere. Normal vision is at half its normal range; low-light vision and darkvision function normally. Spells that add to or detract from illumination function normally.

5- The entirety of the Arena is strewn with dead bodies. Around half are humanoids stripped of their equipment save for mundane or broken

items of no use; the rest are various creatures also bereft of useful items. See Encounter 6 for a list of monsters for descriptive purposes.

As the PCs pass through the fog barrier, they must all make Will saves at DC 20. PCs who fail see a horrific image of endless chaotic combat without detail or clue. PCs who succeed see the same, but they can make enough sense of things to recall one or more specific scenes: They gain one of the following visions plus another for every 5 points by which they make the save. Roll d6 or assign:

1- A large, green-skinned, wart-covered creature (Knowledge (nature) DC 16: a troll) slumps against the reddish rock wall, dumbly trying to reattach its severed left arm while it bleeds out from a dozen deep wounds. The monster slumps over, its eyes going glassy and fixed, with a very confused expression on its face.

2- A feral-looking, pale-skinned humanoid figure (Knowledge (religion) DC 15: a vampire) screams as she melts under a sudden downpour of a sweet-smelling liquid (Knowledge (religion) or Craft (alchemy) DC 15: holy water).

3- A large creature glowing with inner heat with a vaguely humanoid upper body and the lower body of a huge snake (Knowledge (the planes) DC 19: a salamander) seems very surprised when it scurries through a curtain of flames (Spellcraft DC 24, a *wall of fire*) and it burns him horribly.

4- A band of orcs is blinded by a sudden spray of golden light (Spellcraft DC 22, *glitterdust*); they hack each other to pieces in their blind ignorance.

5- A huge purplish spider-creature (Knowledge (the planes) DC 22: a bebilith demon) wrestles with a creature that looks like nothing more than an artificial, metallic version of itself (Knowledge (arcana) DC 20: a retriever); chunks of flesh and bits of metal fly in all directions.

6- A misty, translucent figure (Knowledge (religion) DC 16: some kind of incorporeal undead) screams in terror, unable to extricate the lower half of its body from the floor as a group of slack-jawed, hide-draped giants (Knowledge (nature) DC 14: ogres) howl with laughter and smash it to shreds with their clubs.

Feel free to skip the various Knowledge skill checks for PCs who can prove that they've encountered the creatures seen in these visions.

Allow the players to speculate as to the causes of these phenomena, all of which were set in the red-ochre stone corridors in which they now find themselves. Success at a Knowledge (arcana) check at DC 20 suggests a theory: Along with random spell attacks, this so-called Arena apparently suppresses supernatural and even extraordinary qualities at random.

As the PCs pass into the Arena, they face a shallow ascending stairway some 10 ft. wide with a step every 5 ft. This rough-hewn passage continues, winding gently, for some 300 ft. before the corridors of the Arena are reached. At the halfway point in their ascent, read the following:

A dull, red light that comes from nowhere permeates the halls as you climb deeper into the hill. There is a sudden bellow from just beyond the next twist in the stairway. An ungainly giant creature (Knowledge (nature) DC 14: An ogre) turns the corner sprinting towards you, a look of absolute terror on its face. There is a flurry of motion in the air around the creature: A thousand tiny cuts appear on its hide and its already-ragged clothing is shredded further. (Spellcraft DC 26 or capable of casting: *blade barrier* did this damage) The creature staggers, then continues towards you...and again, the air around it coalesces into a thousand tiny razors that shatter its skin and spray its blood on the floor and walls. It stays on its feet and stumbles forward...and the blades come again, this time flaying flesh from bone, tearing limb from limb and finally, mercifully killing the thing.

The PCs may speculate that any creature who tries to flee the Arena is attacked in this manner until dead; the many dismembered bodies, each with tens of thousands of tiny cuts, that litter the stairway serve as silent proof. Of course, Sheki can confirm this for the PCs if he is present.

Treasure: none

Development: If the PCs don't have Sheki to help them with the occasional hint, the judge can feel free to have a dying creature inform the PCs of their plight. They cannot flee the Arena on pain of death; they can only go on into the heart of the carnage in search of Axian. They have to get in to get out.

ENCOUNTER 6: "...AND CREATING A NUISANCE"

DMG p. 39: "An encounter so easy that it uses up none or almost none of the PCs' resources shouldn't result in any XP award at all..." As the PCs negotiate the Arena, they encounter a variety of survivors in various states, mostly desperate and fearful. These are the dregs of the contest, creatures who survived the carnage by hiding or by ganging up on stronger adversaries. Few are left now, and the cultists of the Smoking Mirror await their last few precious drops of spilled blood in order to move on with their dark sacrifice.

This encounter may be repeated any number of times as long as time permits. The author recommends a minimum of two nuisance encounters. Use these as the PCs break down doors in the Arena in search of Axian. As befits a two-round adventure, the players and judge should have set aside at least six hours for play, so gauge your time remaining accordingly. You still have three serious combats to get through.

Conditions: All encounter rooms have the impeded healing characteristics shared by the entire Arena. Otherwise, rooms can be of two types: Sunside or Moonside. A simple odd-or-even die roll determines which.

Sunside rooms are very hot (around 95 degrees F.). Any creature not immune to fire must make a Fort save after every hour in such a room; the DC is 15, +1 for each previous check. Creatures who fail this save take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage and are fatigued by heatstroke. See *DMG* p. 303 for more info.

Moonside rooms are cold (around 35 degrees F.). Any creature not immune to cold must make a Fort save after every hour in such a room; the DC is 15, +1 for each previous check. Creatures who fail this save take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage and are fatigued by hypothermia. See *DMG* p. 302 for more info.

Refer to the general description of the Arena for all other conditions. Note that no nuisance-encounter creatures, regardless of type, have been in their rooms long enough to have become fatigued or worse.

Doors: The Arena has been the scene of mass free-for-all combat for weeks, and the place has taken a real beating as a result. Use the following chart to randomly determine the condition of any door in the area:

d10	Condition
1	Missing
2	Broken open and useless
3	Broken open, can be propped
4	Propped
5 - 7	Closed, unlocked
8	Closed, locked
9	Closed, stuck
10	Closed, stuck and locked

All are strong wooden doors (2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC stuck 23, locked 25; Open Lock DC 21). A propped door fills the doorway but is not affixed to the wall except by a bit of friction: a DC 5 Strength check knocks it loose, but anyone who does so must make a DC 15 Reflex save or fall prone in the square just inside the doorway. Doors that are broken but can be propped can be placed as previously described without a skill check; doors can be placed in a more secure fashion with a few moments work and a DC 15 Craft (woodworking), Craft (trapmaking), Disable Device, or Open Lock skill check.

At least half of the walls of all corridors and around a quarter of the wall space of every room are covered with graffiti. Every language that has a written component is represented here, although by far the most common are Abyssal, Olman, and Common. Perhaps half of the missives are ungrammatical, barely-coherent boasts and prayers and curses in the name of Tezcatlipoca, while the rest are the same sentence repeated over and over, in three-foot high letters and tiny scratches: "Death Is Sacrifice." A DC 10 Heal check reveals that the "ink" of choice is almost universally blood.

At this time, ask if any of the PCs speak Olman. Have those PCs make a Spot check at DC 20. Anyone who succeeds must then make a DC 15 Int check. Anyone who succeeds notices that a few of the Olman renditions of "Death Is Sacrifice" are written differently and are more properly translated into Common thus: "Every Death Is a Sacrifice." Allow PCs to try various Knowledge skill checks (arcana, planes, religion); anyone who succeeds at DC 20 can guess that the concentration of so much death in such a magically-altered space might be of great use in powerful rituals.

Trap: All of the rooms of the Arena have random minor spell effects that occur every round. These spells target a location near any living creature: Just roll an appropriate die to determine a random creature or PC, then roll a d8 for a

direction, then roll a d10 for the number of 5-ft. squares in distance away that the effect manifests. Treat the zero on the d10 as zero feet. The judge should apply the effect at the start of the initiative sequence.

d6	Spell effect
1	<i>glitterdust</i> (DC 22)
2	<i>darkness</i>
3	<i>silence</i>
4	<i>grease</i> (DC 22)
5	<i>obscuring mist</i>
6	<i>sound burst</i> (DC 22)

All spells, regardless of *PHB* description, have a 10 ft. radius area of effect and 1-round durations (except for *sound burst*, which is instantaneous). Saving throws are based on all spells being heightened to 8th level.

Creatures: Most of the rooms of the Arena are empty save for the looted and stripped bodies of failed contestants; feel free to describe these corpses using the creatures listed below as examples. As with the main hall of the Arena, a DC 15 Heal check shows that any corpse lying in contact with the fibrous floor has been exsanguinated.

The PCs will come across occupied rooms on occasion. Here and there a single creature has hidden itself away, passed over by the great slaughter of the Arena, hoping to somehow think or simply kill its way out of this hellish place. Given below are lists of possible encounters, each of them geared towards either a sunside or moonside room, and each of them of an EL equal to the APL minus 8. The judge is free to use as many or as few of these encounters as time permits. They should burn few, if any, of the PCs' resources, and are designed to add the flavor of desperation to the adventure.

APL 10 (EL 2): Sunside

Azer: hp 14 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 21.

Jaguar: hp 23 each; see *Monster Manual (Leopard)*, page 274.

Rat Swarm: hp 24 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 239.

Thoqqua: hp 21 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 242.

APL 10 (EL 2): Moonside

Bat Swarm: hp 18 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 237.

Dire Bat: hp 33 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 62.

Quasit: hp 18 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 46.

Wererat: hp 14 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 173.

APL 12 (EL 4): Sunside

Displacer Beast: hp 59 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 66.

Harpy: hp 42 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 151.

Otyugh: hp 43 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 204.

Owlbear: hp 57 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 206.

APL 12 (EL 4): Moonside

Gargoyle: hp 39 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 113.

Minotaur: hp 45 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 188.

Sea Hag: hp 23 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 144.

Vampire Spawn: hp 39 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 253.

APL 14 (EL 6): Sunside

Ettin: hp 75 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 106.

5-Headed Pyrohydra: hp 59 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 156.

Lamia: hp 75 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 175.

Salamander (average): hp 68 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 219.

APL 14 (EL 6): Moonside

Annis: hp 53 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 143.

Babau: hp 69 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 40.

5-Headed Cryohydra: hp 59 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 156.

Will-o'-wisp: hp 54 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 255.

Tactics: Many of the combatants listed (quasit, wererat, lamia, annis) have the means to disguise themselves. If they succeed in the Listen check needed to notice the approach of the PCs, these creatures try to disguise themselves in helpless or harmless forms to gain an advantage on the PCs. Others (thoqqua, displacer beast, gargoyle, vampire spawn, babau, will-o'-wisp) can conceal themselves in some way; again, if they hear the PCs coming, they do so before they attack.

Treasure: No nuisance encounter gives any form of treasure.

Development: Remember that the cultists are using the unnatural fibrous covering on the floor to gather the blood of the dying for their sacrifice. PCs who slay these opponents are actually aiding the cultists.

Also...at the judge's option, it may be suggested to the players at this point that a rest for their characters might be in order. Should the PCs be low on spells or healing, either Sheki or the conventional wisdom could suggest holing up in an isolated room for eight or so hours. If the players decide to take a rest, use the following table to generate random encounters.

Roll 1d6 for every two hours of rest:

1-3 Nothing happens.

4-5 Sounds are heard beyond the door to the room in which the PCs are resting, but no one attempts to enter. Sleepers are not roused unless those PCs standing guard wake them.

6 Encounter! A creature wants in, and it's doing its best to gain entry. The judge should choose a nuisance encounter from the list above and roll for initiative as it starts pounding on the door.

ENCOUNTER 7: "DEATH IS SACRIFICE!"

This encounter takes place in the Arena and uses the same conditions previously described. Our purpose with this encounter is to throw an APL+2 challenge at the PCs who have faced a few less-than-challenging opponents and might be getting a bit overconfident.

It is difficult to judge the passage of time in this hellish arena. Room after room turns up

empty or occupied by some pathetic creature hardly worthy of your efforts, and over time all the rooms begin to look alike. The pervasive smell of death and decay and the vague half-light only add to the confusion. Time and again you kick open a door only to find a room that you know you've searched before...or have you?

Set up Arena Map 2 (p.37) and use the largest available room or rooms for this encounter. And yes, as soon as combat begins and the creatures listed below no longer care to conceal themselves, they'll shout out, "Death Is Sacrifice!" in all the languages they know and at every opportunity.

Trap: See Encounter 6 for details on the random magical effect trap found in every room of the Arena, including this one.

Creatures: Note that the hellwasp swarms shown below are a CR 4 below the EL of the encounter, and as such, do not substantially increase the difficulty of the encounter.

APL 10 (EL 12)

Roper: hp 98; see *Monster Manual*, page 215.

Hellwasp Swarm: hp 111; see *Monster Manual*, page 238.

APL 12 (EL 14)

Nalfeshnee: hp 168; see *Monster Manual*, page 45.

Hellwasp Swarm (2): hp 111 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 238.

APL 14 (EL 16)

Nightwalker: hp 206; see *Monster Manual*, page 196.

Hellwasp Swarm (4): hp 111 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 238.

Tactics, APL 10: The roper has a +18 Hide bonus in rocky areas, so it attempts to blend in until the hellwasp swarm attacks. The swarm is grounded (with a +19 Hide bonus) and rises to the attack, surrounding as many PCs as possible.

APL 12: The nalfeshnee can't hide very well (+10 bonus), but with a +31 to both Listen and Spot and continuous *true seeing*, he's likely to notice the PCs before they notice him. He orders the hellwasps to stay between himself and the PCs and invokes his *smite* power to start things off. *Call lightning*, *feeblemind*, and *slow* at will are potent weapons against tanks and arcane casters,

but he's not above wading in to power attack with teeth and claw.

APL 14: With Listen and Spot bonuses of +29 each, the nightwalker probably notices the PCs as they enter the room. He uses *invisibility* first, then *haste*, then he summons undead to aid him if he has the time. Then follow the sequence on *MM* p. 197.

Treasure: None of the creatures listed here are normally found using equipment or carrying large amounts of coin outside their lairs. Unless one's idea of treasure is fresh hellwasp venom sacs, there is nothing of value to be taken away from this combat.

Development: At the end of this encounter, the cultists of Tezcatlipoca will have gathered the blood volume, the necromantic reservoir they require to move their sacrifice "to the next level" quite literally. Go directly to Encounter 8.

ENCOUNTER 8: THE BOTTOM OF A STAIRCASE...

Note to the Judge: This encounter is precisely 1 minute (10 rounds) in length. We are testing the PCs' ability to work as a team in order to arrive at the place they need to be in very short order.

Leave Arena Map 2 from Encounter 7 out on the table. The PCs must discover what has changed about it before they can move on.

Just as the PCs fight from Encounter 7 comes to a close, the entire Arena shudders and goes completely dark. All of the special characteristics of the Arena listed at the start of Encounters 5 and 6, including the red light, the impeded healing magic, the lack of natural healing, along with all sunside and moonside room features, ends instantly. The carpet-like floor covering withers away into dust. Wherever the PCs are as their last opponent from Encounter 7 is defeated, they currently find themselves in a rather unremarkable dungeon.

Conditions: PCs without darkvision or some source of light are at quite a handicap here in the dark. If a party finds itself so ill-equipped that it is effectively blinded, then so be it.

If Sheki is with the PCs, he can guide them. He also has more than a clue about what's happening.

Your supremely annoying companion "dog" Sheki yelps fearfully, "They're done! The cultists are done gathering blood and they're ready to move on! Axian told me that once this happened, that once the lights went out, there would be exactly one minute before the ritual moves them to th' place of sacrifice."

In Sheki's absence, a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) roll confirms that one aspect of the cultists' plan is at an end, and another part has begun.

Call for initiative. The PCs have 10 rounds to act on what they know and join the cultists as they attempt the unthinkable. Keep track of the elapsed rounds; at the start of Round 5, all PCs sense a telepathic message from Axian:

"The ritual is nearly complete. If you are to have any chance of stopping the birth of the Son of the Sun, you must find me now. Seek the wooden doors that were not there!"

At the conclusion of Round 10, the cultists and their sacrifices are moved by the power of the ritual to a very special point on the Astral Plane, a place at which the power of their god can be coaxed into producing a physical avatar of itself, a godling to be born into the Oerth to reestablish the old ways and bring about the destruction of all who have threatened the followers of the Smoking Mirror.

If the PCs do not get into the proper room by the end of Round 10, they do not face Encounters 9 or 10, and move to Encounter 11A after wandering in the dark for the better part of an hour.

At the start of this encounter, it is assumed that the PCs are within one of the larger rooms of Arena Map 2. Aside for Sheki's rant, the results of Knowledge checks, and the Round 5 warning from Axian, the PCs have no other clues as to where to proceed next. Only one change has occurred in the arrangement of the Arena: a narrow stairway leading to a thick wooden door 20 ft. off of floor level has been added. Their location is up to the judge, but they should be somewhere out of sight of the PCs and on the far side of the map from their current location.

The stairway is only 2 ft. wide, requiring Small or Medium PCs to squeeze as they move up the steps. Only one PC can fit on the landing in front of the door, which opens pushing in from the landing. This arrangement prevents anyone from charging the door or using their full strength to

break it open, resulting in the high break DC shown below.

Door: 2 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 20; Break DC 28 (locked); Open Lock DC 24.

On the other side of the door is a round space 75 ft. across. 200 ft. overhead, the night sky is visible, with a full Luna directly overhead and smaller purplish Celene eclipsing it; the effect is unnervingly similar to a great eye staring down at you. Long tables with the remains of a magnificent feast, still-lit candles, and dozens of empty chairs fill the center of the space. At least twenty other doors lead off to other parts of the Arena all around the circumference. A broad spiral staircase leads upward from the floor along the outer wall and disappears into the misty darkness far above.

On the far side of the room from the door through which the PCs enter stands a group of around 25 persons of small stature, all wearing feathered cloaks. They are being watched by a pair of guards whose power is inconsequential compared to that of the PCs. Closer inspection reveals the cloaked persons to be children of Olman blood. Axian separates himself from the group and runs towards the PCs.

APL 10 (EL 2)

Orc (2): hp 7 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 203.

APL 12 (EL 4)

Wererat (2): hp 14 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 173.

APL 14 (EL 6)

Minotaur (2): hp 45 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 188.

Under no circumstances do the guards harm or threaten the children. They are here because everyone else has already been taken to the place of sacrifice by the ongoing ritual, and they are under orders not to hurt the kids. The PCs should have no trouble dealing with them.

Axian knows exactly how much time is left before the rest of the occupants of this room are transported to the place of sacrifice. Read the following once the PCs have secured the room:

"There are those of us who doubted your ability, and even your desire, to save us, but I knew better." Axian's smile is warm, even serene, as he greets you. "There is much you

need to know and little time; the ritual already binds us, and will transport us all regardless of what you do to the place of sacrifice in but a few moments. First, know that the Son of the Sun, the avatar of Tezcatlipoca, will be born into this world today...but if you can prevent his priests from sacrificing us, then he will be born dead and crippled." An audible hum fills the room; hair stands on end and skin tingles. "I have seen those who have gone before; they are the champions of the Arena and the demonbred priests of the Smoking Mirror. Be ready to strike them down." He motions to the other children, and they surround you, grasping your arms. The power that you felt all around moments ago seems to flood through you, and you know that, held like this, you will go wherever the ritual's magic will take these children. The youngsters seem quite calm considering their situation; a few even giggle innocently as they crowd around you.

Here is where a party that worked together and found their way into this room quickly is rewarded: Let the players know how many rounds they have until the end of the ritual (and the encounter), and let them use the time to prepare for the next combat.

Once ten rounds have elapsed and the PCs are surrounded by the cloaked Olman children, they see the room around them grow misty and insubstantial, and they feel themselves suddenly accelerating upward into the night sky.

Treasure: Nothing here of any real value.

Development: Should the PCs for some reason decline to accompany the children, they face the same ramifications as do those parties who fail to find this room in time. They do not face Encounters 9 or 10, and move to Encounter 11A after a delay of almost an hour.

ENCOUNTER 9: PARDON THE INTERRUPTION

DM's Note: The Olman children and the PCs have been transported to a place on the planar boundary between the Material and the Astral, a place shaped by unknown forces that offers a unique perspective on both the Oerth and the Outer Planes.

Conditions: Although the PCs are now on the cusp of the Astral Plane, normal Material Plane conditions prevail on the stone surfaces described

below. The temperature is average, there is no wind, and there is enough light for normal vision.

Knowledge (the planes) DC 15: You are on the Astral Plane.

DC 25: Those who roll a 25 or better on that check know that they are *almost* on that plane, and that they stand within a planar gate between the Material and the Astral.

You are as you were, standing in the midst of a group of Olman children wearing feathered cloaks, but the place where you find yourself is uniquely breathtaking. Under your feet lies broad, smooth paving stones, each at least 10 feet by 10 feet, making a 50-foot-wide roadway; perhaps half a mile off in the distance, following a gentle curve to the right, a stepped pyramid of that same stone rises.

Spot, DC 20: Movement can be noted all over the pyramid.

The road between yourselves and the pyramid is littered with irregular monoliths and boulders, some as large as 15 ft. in diameter. Above, and amazingly, below the road, brilliant stars fill the misty sky. To the left, a huge sphere hangs in space, a blue and green and brown shape that you cannot see in its entirety without straining your neck.

Knowledge (geography) or (local, any) or (arcana), DC 20: You are looking at the Flanaess from what must be around a hundred miles above.

To your right, not as large but still quite impressive, Celene hangs almost directly in front of the larger Luna. Beyond them, you can dimly see a corona, the suggestion of a circular shape of unthinkable size in the unimaginable distance. The huge circle is offset so that the eclipsing moons are concealing its lower-right portion.

Knowledge (religion) or (the planes), DC 15: You are actually *looking* at the Great Wheel of the Outer Planes.

DC 20 (or Profession (astrology) DC 20): The position of the moons seems to indicate a magical sympathy, a confluence with the portion of the Great Wheel corresponding to the Outer Realms most focused on chaos and evil.

Anyone who succeeded on the DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check earlier knows that any movement off of the Oerth-facing side of the

road will return one to the Material Plane, albeit at a very great altitude over the Flanaess. Likewise, any movement off of the moons-side of the road will propel one fully into the Astral Plane. See DMG p. 154 for Astral Plane traits.

All of these environmental changes are noted in perhaps 2 rounds. Then the cultists show up to bring the children to the pyramid for their turn as human sacrifices, and the fun begins again.

A group of humanoid figures walks into sight from between two monoliths. All wear feathered cloaks. One of their number, a hideously ugly six-foot-tall being with skin resembling shattered, bleeding porcelain and bat-like wings gestures to you. "You there! Bring the meat forward. It is time for the—" The speaker stops short; apparently, you were not the escorts he expected.

The road is 50 ft. wide; its curve is so subtle that it need not be represented at this scale. Mark off 4 irregular shapes that each occupy 4 to 6 squares; these are monoliths with a height of 15 ft. Place the opposition near the center with the guards in front towards the PCs. The PCs must set up according to these rules: No PC may be more than 10 ft. away from another, and they must be at least 60 ft. from their opponents. After the PCs set up, you should place dice or markers representing the 25 Olman children all around them.

APL 10 (EL 12)

Half-fiend 7th level human cleric (2): hp 53 each; replace morningstar with +1 longsword; see *Monster Manual*, page 147.

Vrock: hp 113; see *Monster Manual*, page 48.

Orc (8): hp 7 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 203.

APL 12 (EL 14)

Half-fiend 7th level human cleric (2): hp 53 each; replace morningstar with +1 longsword; see *Monster Manual*, page 147.

Death Slaad: hp 147; see *Monster Manual*, page 231.

Bugbear (8): hp 21 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 29.

APL 14 (EL 16)

Half-fiend 7th level human cleric (4): hp 53 each; replace morningstar with +1 longsword; see *Monster Manual*, page 147.

Death Slaad (2): hp 147 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 231.

Minotaur (8): hp 45 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 188.

Tactics: Each APL has three types of combatants: priests, outsiders, and guards. The priests hang back in order to heal the outsiders, who act as the primary attackers using spells and spell-like abilities as long as possible. The guards charge in and try to hold the PCs at range while the outsiders use their magic. As before, the PCs' opponents do not risk harming the children, but the PCs may suffer alignment consequences should they use the children as shields.

The half-fiend clerics in this encounter are more aware of their priorities than are their outsider companions or guards. If they sense that the battle is going against them, they (at the DM's option) flee to the pyramid in the distance by the safest method possible. In this case, they use one of their most powerful remaining healing spells on themselves, if possible, and participate in the next encounter.

Treasure: The half-fiends have an array of magical resources; their companions bear only mundane items of little value.

APL 10: M: 2 *breastsplates* +2 (362 gp each), 2 *heavy steel shields* +1 (97 gp each), 2 +1 *morningstars* (192 gp each), 2 *periapts of wisdom* +2 (333 gp each), 2 potions of *haste* (62 gp each).

APL 12: M: 2 *breastsplates* +2 (362 gp each), 2 *heavy steel shields* +1 (97 gp each), 2 +1 *morningstars* (192 gp each), 2 *periapts of wisdom* +2 (333 gp each), 2 potions of *haste* (62 gp each).

APL 14: M: 4 *breastsplates* +2 (362 gp each), 4 *heavy steel shields* +1 (97 gp each), 4 +1 *morningstars* (192 gp each), 4 *periapts of wisdom* +2 (333 gp each), 4 potions of *haste* (62 gp each).

The PCs must cover a half-mile of unfamiliar territory with a 25 children in tow. Unless they are blessed with a large number of arcane casters with precisely the correct spell selection, they're probably not going to be able to *teleport* the distance. They will not encounter any resistance until they approach the pyramid, but there is one very interesting phenomena with which they must deal. This unique planar location offers not a bird's-eye view, but rather a *deity's-eye* view, towards either the Material Plane or the Outer

Planes, and it can be both educational and distracting to mortal eyes.

As the PCs make their way towards the pyramid, read the following text:

The view to both the left and the right is extremely distracting. The slightest glance seems to reveal details, images, secrets that should not be visible from such cosmic distances.

PCs may decide at this time to take a look or to try and concentrate on the mission at hand. If they choose not to look, and instead concentrate on the pyramid, they must succeed on a Will save at DC (APL+8) in order to do so, with the following modifiers:

- PCs with an Int score of 11 or lower automatically succeed on this save. Persons of limited imagination are naturally less drawn to the promise of new knowledge.
- PCs with an Int score of 12 or higher suffer a penalty on this save equal to their Int bonus.

PCs who either fail this save or choose to take a moment to stare deeply at the wonders presented to them, must now make a choice: Will they look to the left, towards the Material Plane and the Flanaess, or towards the Outer Planes? The judge may re-read the check result shown above that indicates the chaotic evil orientation of the view if any PC succeeded at the original check.

If one or more PC chooses to look towards the Material Plane, read the following:

Even as you stare towards the vaguely-familiar far-off continental shape, the view zooms in closer and closer. Within seconds, you see details of geography and the natural world of which you never dreamed; moments later, the structures and delvings of all manner of creatures become transparent to your gaze. Whole libraries of knowledge open their pages to you, and the whispers of a million court intrigues, secret confessions, and hidden conspiracies resound in your ears.

PCs who look towards the Material Plane earn the AR reward "A Sight for Sore Eyes." This AR reward takes a few hours to reach its full effect and thus is not immediately available to the PCs.

If one or more PC chooses to look towards the Outer Planes, read the following:

The moons vanish as you focus on the farther distance; you can feel Luna and Celene acting as lenses, driving your senses like a scything, shining blade deep into the unimaginable terror of the Abyss. It seems that all of its infinite madness and foul evil wash over you in revelation after sickening revelation; you see the birthplace of demons, hear the insane laughter of mad gods, and know far too well what drives them all. You have gazed into the Abyss, and you are sure that the Abyss has gazed into you.

PCs who look towards the Outer Planes earn the AR reward “Gaze of the Abyss.” This AR reward takes a few hours to reach its full effect and thus is not immediately available to the PCs.

Development: Keep track of the time it takes the PCs to cover the distance to the pyramid. The 3000 ft. can be covered in 5 minutes at a hustle for a party with a 30 ft. movement rate; it is possible that some spells might expire during this trip. Note that the Olman children are mature enough to have the standard human movement rate of 30 ft.

ENCOUNTER 10: WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS

The penultimate goal of the PCs is before them: The ragged pyramid upon which the ritual to summon the avatar of Tezcatlipoca is in sight, and it is up to them to bring about the stillbirth of the Son of the Sun.

See DM Aid: Map #4 for details on the layout of this encounter. The steps going up each side of the pyramid are very steep, covering a 10 ft. rise for every 5 ft. of horizontal movement.

The last 300 ft. around the base of the pyramid are devoid of cover; anyone coming that close will surely be spotted unless they have a magical means of concealment. Figures can clearly be seen standing all around the top levels of the stepped structure, figures carrying large urns over their shoulders, figures pouring blood over the stones of the pyramid. The apex of the pyramid, some 60 ft. up, is ablaze with a smokeless yellow-white fire. High above the pyramid, maybe another hundred or so feet in the sky, a barely discernable shape writhes in either agony, or ecstasy, or both.

Spot, DC 20, followed by Knowledge (religion) DC 12 (APL 10), DC 16 (APL 12), or DC 22 (APL 14): Even from this distance, the creatures are definitely zombies of some kind, judging by their movements. (As the PCs come closer, the Spot check becomes unnecessary.)

A second Spot check at DC 30, followed by success at a DC 26 Knowledge (the planes) check, reveals that the creature suspended high above the pyramid is a marilith demon. It appears to be encased in some kind of sphere of force, in which it writhes continually.

Conditions: Because of the intense aura of negative energy, chaos, and evil that surrounds the pyramid, no healing spell functions within 100 ft. of the structure, and “Inflict” spells are maximized without altering casting times or spell level. In addition, undead cannot be turned within that same radius.

Creatures:

APL 10 (EL 11)

Greater Shadow: hp 81; see *Monster Manual*, page 221.

Noble Salamander: hp 124; see *Monster Manual*, page 219.

Fire Elemental, Huge: hp 144; see *Monster Manual*, page 99.

Human Commoner Zombie (12): hp 21 each; see *Monster Manual* page 266.

APL 12 (EL 13)

Abyssal Greater Basilisk: hp 203; see *Monster Manual*, page 24.

Noble Salamander: hp 124; see *Monster Manual*, page 219.

Fire Elemental, Huge: hp 144; see *Monster Manual*, page 99.

Bugbear Zombie (12): hp 57 each; see *Monster Manual* p. 267.

APL 14 (EL 15)

Abyssal Greater Basilisk (2): hp 203 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 24.

Noble Salamander (2): hp 124 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 219.

Fire Elemental, Huge (2): hp 144; see *Monster Manual*, page 99.

Minotaur Zombie (12): hp 75 each; see *Monster Manual* p. 267.

Tactics: The zombies listed are too far below the EL of the encounter to increase its difficulty. Noble salamanders can use *summon monster VII* to summon a Huge fire elemental; they do so as soon as they become aware of the PCs. Summoned creatures are included in the summoner's CR and do not add to the EL of the encounter.

The non-zombie, non-salamander creatures listed above lurk on the high levels of the pyramid; the noble salamanders listed at each APL are concealed within the flames at the apex of the pyramid, and they are keeping watch. If the PCs come out into view, they are spotted, and the creatures organize themselves for an ambush. If the PCs attempt to conceal themselves with magic, roll Spot checks with the salamanders' +13 bonus, -1 for every 5 feet between the pyramid and the PCs: A result over 20 indicates that the salamanders sense that something is amiss.

All creatures listed attack the children with all of the resources at their disposal. The zombies are finishing their blood-delivery task as the PCs arrive and move to attack them in a mindless wave. For their part, the children begin to chant a simple refrain in Olman as soon as combat begins: "Fathers of us all, come to us now!" They otherwise dodge their enemies to the best of their ability, but they do not flee the pyramid.

Axian (and friends): Male or female human (Olman) FavoredSoul 2, AC 20 on full defense); hp 15; saves Fort +4, Ref +7, Will +5.

There are two possible outcomes to this encounter: Either the cultists will kill 17 or more of the children and their godling will be born alive into the world, or they will fail and the Son of the Sun will be born dead...and the PCs will have a chance to kill it forever.

ALTERNATE ENDING 1: THE SACRIFICE SUCCEEDS

As soon as 17 or more children are killed, read the following:

A bubble of force suddenly forms around the pyramid, spreading outward from above the apex, forcing all to move inexorably down and away from the structure. With a wild shriek of pain and triumph, the creature suspended in the air far above the pyramid

swells around its middle to twice, then three times its normal size in a grotesque parody of pregnancy.

All around you is a sudden cacophony of blinding light and equally-blinding darkness, wave after wave of bone-chilling cold and searing heat that amplify rather than cancel each other. Every mind present feels a supernatural intelligence, a cosmic presence, approach from the far Outer Planes, and every soul present quakes in the presence of the slightest claw of the least finger of Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror, as his will is made manifest upon the Oerth.

The swollen creature far above explodes in a nova of black fire and glittering cold, and a gigantic ball of roiling flames leaps out towards the Flanaess, trailing inky-black smoke as it slowly descends towards the lands of your home. Even as it grows smaller with distance, you can just make out a huge humanoid shape in the midst of the fireball; even as the echo of its violent birth fades from your ears, you hear the thing's howl of triumph and hunger.

The portal in which the PCs find themselves disintegrates. The broad road and the pyramid simply fade away into nothing. In 1 round, the PCs and whatever children remain alive find themselves 100 miles directly above the site of the Arena in the Tors, and they begin to fall unless they can somehow do otherwise. The magic that brought them to the portal continues to create air and a comfortable temperature at that altitude and continues to do so for an hour.

If any children remain alive, they reveal a certain very helpful fact at this stage:

Axian smiles sadly at you. "We could not stop them, and the world will endure great suffering as long as the Son of the Sun lives. We must return to salvage what good we can from the ruins. That we survived at all is a sign that there is hope...and myself and my friends have one way to help."

The surviving Olman children smile at you and shrug off their feathered cloaks... except that they were not wearing cloaks in the first place. Each child has rainbow-feathered wings, which they now unwrap from around themselves and shake out and display. "Our fathers, the couatls, gave us many gifts, and

the least we can do is convey as many of you as we can help safely down to Oerth."

Proceed to Encounter 11A "Accursed Event."

ALTERNATE ENDING 2: THE SACRIFICE FAILS

As soon as it becomes impossible for the remaining cultists to kill at least 17 of the children, read the following. Axian is one of the surviving children.

A bubble of force suddenly forms around the pyramid, spreading outward from above the apex, forcing all to move inexorably down and away from the structure. With a wild shriek of pain and triumph, the creature suspended in the air far above the pyramid swells around its middle to twice, then three times its normal size in a grotesque parody of pregnancy.

A sudden quiet comes over this strange place. The only sounds are those you make yourselves and the chanting of the children, and in a moment, that chant fades away. You can see that the children are looking off into the Outer Planes, and following their gaze, you can see something moving towards your vantage point. First one, then ten, then a hundred giant serpents appear against the starry backdrop, each with bright turquoise scales and rainbow-feathered wings, each of noble countenance and stern demeanor, all rushing towards you.

Knowledge (the planes) DC 19: These are couatls, lawful good outsiders native to the Material Plane.

DC 24: As above, but most of these creatures are much larger than normal, and those in the far distance are truly colossal.

All of you sense an unmistakable feeling of peace and calm wash over you, a feeling quite different from all you've experienced recently. The logic of things becomes clear: dangerous intrusions of certain realities into other realities, regardless of the desires of those involved, are simply not to be. The feathered serpents form a sinuous pattern, impossibly complex and multi-dimensional; you feel a momentary chill and a fevered rush, the rage of a great power denied, and then the door slams shut.

The swollen creature far above explodes in a burst of black fire and glittering cold, and a sickly, wet blob of tattered flesh is launched towards the Flanaess, trailing shreds of condensation as it slowly tumbles towards the lands of your home. Even as it grows smaller with distance, you can just make out a vague humanoid shape; even as the echo of its violent birth fades from your ears, you hear the thing's high, thin scream of frustration and agony.

If anyone asks, the thing is headed directly towards the site of the Arena in the Tors.

The PCs probably have questions at this point, but the couatls, as instruments of divine justice, are done here. They came to set things right, and they vanish from sight after greeting Axian and the other surviving children. All that the PCs get out of them is a fleeting feeling based on each PCs' alignment: Any N or CN PCs feel vague unease, as if the couatls disapprove of your outlook but tolerate your aid, while all other PCs sense the gratitude of these creatures...and the power that sent them.

The portal in which the PCs find themselves disintegrates. The broad road and the pyramid simply fade away into nothing. In 1 round, the PCs and whatever children remain alive find themselves 100 miles directly above the site of the Arena in the Tors, and they begin to fall unless they can somehow do otherwise. The magic that brought them to the portal continues to create air and a comfortable temperature at that altitude and continues to do so for an hour.

The remaining children reveal a certain very helpful fact at this stage:

Axian smiles warmly at you. "We have stopped them, you by force of arms and we by bringing our fathers to knit shut what should never have been forced open. Now one last task falls to you, my friends: to rid the world of that polluted clot of profanity that has been stillborn upon it. I and my friends have one way to help."

The surviving Olman children smile at you and shrug off their feathered cloaks, except that they were not wearing cloaks in the first place. Each child has rainbow-feathered wings, which they now unwrap from around themselves and shake out and display. "Our fathers, the couatls, gave us many gifts, and

the least we can do is use one to convey you safely down to Oerth."

Proceed to Encounter 11B "Born Astride a Grave"

Treasure:

APL 10: M: +3 *longspear* (1525 gp).

APL 12: M: +3 *longspear* (1525 gp).

APL 14: M: 2 +3 *longspears* (3050 gp).

Development: With the campaign's imminent demise, the players are free to speculate on the nature of the Son of the Sun and the damage it might do to their reality should it be allowed to roam free. The question is academic at this point. All that remains is to deal with the direct consequences of the PCs' actions; either to interrupt the celebration in progress that honors the first birthday of the Son of the Sun or to put down forever the necrotic clot of semi-divine flesh that is the only evidence of the cultists' failure.

ENCOUNTER 11A: ACCURSED EVENT

The PCs return to Oerth, to the site of the Arena, to find the followers of the Son of the Sun prepared for their arrival.

From high above, the hill that concealed the Arena of Tezcatlipoca has been much changed by recent events. Instead of a flat-topped mesa, all that remains is a bowl. The interior of the hill has collapsed on itself, and the greatest depths of the ruin are concealed by a thick, roiling mist.

Any PC with the ability to detect evil, either through a class feature or a spell, automatically detects overwhelming evil when coming within 120 ft. of the hill from any direction. The evil is concentrated at the center of the hill and well below ground level. This detection is automatic and requires no action on the part of the PCs.

Conditions: The remains of the Arena are tainted by hideous, deific evil. This is the birthplace of the Son of the Sun and Moons, the avatar of Tezcatlipoca, into Material Plane reality, and no magic known to mortal minds can ever erase that pollution. The entire area beneath the mist and within the shattered hill is affected by a permanent *desecrate* spell in the presence of an evil altar, heightened to 9th level and caster level 17 (see *PHB* p. 218). It can only be dispelled at the Altar of Shining Dark (see below) and comes back into being 1 round after being dispelled,

disjoined, or wished away. In addition, this entire encounter area is mildly evil-aligned and mildly chaos-aligned as defined on *DMG* p. 149.

The central room described in Encounter 8 is open to the sky and is the only path by which the hill can be penetrated without magical aid. The mist described in the opening read-aloud text dissipates 20 ft. above ground level. Use the Arena maps to describe the areas the PCs move through. There are no intact doors left in the collapsing passages. Sprinkle a dozen dice around the map to represent impassable rubble-filled squares. None of the magical effects of the Arena are present except for the constant barrage of minor spell effects mentioned previously.

If any PC present has stonecunning, a DC 15 Craft (stonemasonry or similar) or Knowledge (architecture and engineering or dungeoneering) check reveals that this underground space, while poorly constructed and liable to suffer small collapses unless substantially reworked, will survive and be passable for decades.

Trap: All areas of the shattered Arena except for room housing the Altar of the Shining Dark have random minor spell effects that occur every 1d4 rounds. These spells randomly target a location near any living creature: Just roll an appropriate die to determine a random creature or PC, then roll a d8 for a direction, then roll a d10 for the number of 5-ft. squares in distance away that the effect manifests. Treat the zero on the d10 as zero feet. The judge should apply the effect at the start of the initiative sequence.

<u>d6</u>	<u>Spell effect</u>
1	<i>glitterdust</i> (DC 22)
2	<i>darkness</i>
3	<i>silence</i>
4	<i>grease</i> (DC 22)
5	<i>obscuring mist</i>
6	<i>sound burst</i> (DC 22)

All spells, regardless of *PHB* description, have a 10 ft. radius area of effect and 1-round durations (except for *sound burst*, which is instantaneous). Saving throws are based on all spells being heightened to 8th level.

Allow the PCs to poke around and then give them some motivation.

Axian looks around at the devastation as he cradles a certain very familiar mangy dog in his arms. "Wherever the Son of the Sun and Moon goes, there will come many evil creatures from both this world and the next.

Already his altar here has opened the gates of the Abyss; it must be destroyed or this place, this region will succumb. Those of my brothers and sisters who survive must take word to those Olman who resist the old ways of the disaster that has befallen us."

Axian scratches Sheki's ear, and the reformed quasit looks up sadly as the boy continues. "At least this one has been saved. Seek the lowest point of this forsaken place and good luck to you...I hope to meet you all again in happier times." Wings unfurl, and in a flash of rainbow feathers, the Olman "children" fly out into the central room, through the mist, and off into the darkening sky.

Depending on time, the DM can either throw a nuisance encounter or two at the PCs or move directly to the climactic fight. After searching 1d6 rooms, the PCs find a broad ramp descends at a shallow angle deep into the center of the hill.

Creatures: The room containing the Son of the Sun and Moon's Altar of Shining Dark is depicted on the appropriately-titled DM Aid page. The ramp travels some 500 ft. and descends around 100 ft and then levels off at the flanking rooms. The door to the altar room is closed but not locked; its ceiling is a uniform 50 ft. overhead.

The salamanders and fire elementals shown below are concealed within the "F"-labeled squares on the map, which are full of floor-to-ceiling fire and give all creatures of the fire subtype total concealment within them. This fire cannot be dispelled or extinguished while the Altar is intact. Any creature subject to fire damage takes 20d6 points of fire damage per round of immersion in these squares and 3d6 points of fire damage per square moving through them.

The remaining creatures shown below are concealed in the "D"-labeled squares on the map, which are full of floor-to-ceiling inky darkness that provides total concealment to any creature in them. Creatures in a "D" square with an edge that touches a clear square can see out into those clear squares without penalty.

APL 10 (EL 13)

Noble Salamander (2): hp 124 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 219.

Bebilith: hp 144; see *Monster Manual*, page 42.

Huge Fire Elemental (2): hp 144 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 99.

APL 12 (EL 15)

Noble Salamander (2): hp 124 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 219.

Nightwing: hp 179; see *Monster Manual*, page 197.

Huge Fire Elemental (2): hp 144 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 99.

APL 14 (EL 17)

Noble Salamander (2): hp 124 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 219.

Marilith: hp 204; see *Monster Manual*, page 44.

Huge Fire Elemental (2): hp 144 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 99.

Include the following section for tactics by combatants:

Tactics: These creatures are here to worship at the altar of the Tezcatlipoca's avatar, and they're emboldened by his victorious birth. They fight to the death using their most powerful abilities and absolutely no pity.

Treasure: All APLs: M: 2 +3 *longspears* (1525 gp each)

The Altar of Shining Dark

This great black monolith 15 ft. wide by 10 ft. deep by 5 ft. high is covered in detailed reliefs depicting hideous scenes of human sacrifice in the old Olman style. A complete list of its functions can only be guessed at, but according to Axian, it regularly opens gates to the Abyss to admit demons and perhaps fouler things into the world.

Until the spells binding it to its purpose are dispelled or disjoined, it cannot be affected by any magical or physical force known to this world. It is empowered by three 9th level clerical spells: *gate*, *miracle*, and *summon monster IX*, and can only be destroyed physically or magically after those spells have been dispelled or disjoined.

Development: Move on to Epilogue A for the conclusion of the adventure. It's *not* a happy ending.

ENCOUNTER 11B: BORN ASTRIDE A GRAVE

The PCs return to Oerth, to the site of the Arena, to bring final destruction to the stillborn thing that was belched out of the depths of the Abyss just recently.

From high above, the hill that concealed the Arena of Tezcatlipoca has been much changed by recent events. Instead of a flat-topped mesa, all that remains is a bowl. The interior of the hill has collapsed on itself...but the greatest depths of the ruin, remains of the passages you knew as the Arena of the Smoking Mirror are visible.

Any PC with the ability to detect evil, either through a class feature or a spell, automatically detects overwhelming evil when coming within 120 ft. of the hill from any direction. The evil is concentrated at the center of the hill and well below ground level. This detection is automatic and requires no action on the part of the PCs.

Conditions: The remains of the Arena are now perfectly ordinary dungeons in every way except for the Ruined Room where the atropal scion of Tezcatlipoca and its allies lurk. The PCs must provide light sources if needed.

The central room described in Encounter 8 is open to the sky and is the only path by which the hill can be penetrated without magical aid. Use the Arena maps to describe the areas the PCs move through. There are no intact doors left in the collapsing passages. Sprinkle a dozen dice around the map to represent impassable rubble-filled squares. None of the magical effects of the Arena are present

If any PC present has stonemasonry, a DC 15 Craft (stonemasonry or similar) or Knowledge (architecture and engineering or dungeoneering) check reveals that this underground space is poorly constructed and has been subject to incredible stresses; it is likely to collapse within months, if not weeks, if left unattended.

As the PCs begin to poke their way out of the central room, Axian speaks:

Axian looks around at the devastation as he cradles a certain very familiar mangy dog in his arms. "The Son of the Sun and Moon was born dead, and it falls to you to destroy him once and for all. My brothers and sisters and I will carry news to the Olman people wherever they can be found of your victory, and of the death of the old ways. Your names will forever be honored by my people, whatever the outcome of this battle."

Axian scratches Sheki's ear, and the reformed quasit looks up happily as the boy continues. "Even this one has found a higher purpose. I can feel the scion's cold presence if you cannot; he hides deep beneath us in the lowest hole in this shattered place. Good luck to you, in this and in all things...I know we will all meet again." Wings unfurl, and in a flash of rainbow feathers, the Olman "children" fly out into the central room and off into the darkening sky.

After searching 1d6 rooms, the PCs find a crooked ramp descending at a steep angle deep into the center of the hill. This leads some 200 ft. down to the Ruined Room.

APL 10 (EL 13)

Wight (8): hp 36 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 255.

Atropal Scion: hp 166; see *Appendix 1*.

APL 12 (EL 15)

Wraith (8): hp 45 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 258.

Purple Worm: hp 204; see *Monster Manual*, page 211.

Atropal Scion: hp 166; see *Appendix 2*.

APL 14 (EL 17)

Spectre (8): hp 63 each; see *Monster Manual*, page 232.

Nightwing: hp 179; see *Monster Manual*, page 197.

Atropal Scion: hp 197; see *Appendix 3*.

Tactics: At all APLs, the attendant undead (wights, wraiths, or specters) do not count against the EL of the encounter. They are found in two groups of four at positions A and D; they move to attack the PCs in an unorganized fashion.

The ally creatures at APLs 12 and 14 (the purple worm and nightwing, respectively) are at position B and attack as soon as the PCs come into view. The atropal scion at position C moves to attack only if it appears that his allies and attendants are actually doing damage to the PCs; he cowers and only attacks when the PCs confront him otherwise.

Treasure: The gems and coins prepared for the sacrifice that would have created a great evil altar at this site are instead scattered uselessly all about the room. (Encounter 11A and 11B both

have equivalent treasure values; there is no monetary penalty for failure in this adventure.)

All APLs: C: 3050 gp in gold and platinum coins and gems of 10 to 100 gp value.

Development: Move on to Epilogue B for the conclusion of the adventure: This one's the happy ending.

EPILOGUE A

This epilogue should only be read to a party of PCs who have failed to prevent the live birth of the Son of the Sun and Moon into the world. In this case, the cultists of Tezcatlipoca managed to kill 17 or more of the Olman children, and the PCs located the very first Altar of Shining Dark and fought the creatures it had gated in.

Every night it's the same dream. The floor beneath your feet is penetrated by tiny pinholes through which a searing red light gleams, and something obscene lurks just beyond the translucent curtains that surround you. Every night since your encounter with the cultists of Tezcatlipoca and the Altar of Shining Dark, it's been that same dream.

The waking world has its own disturbing tidings. A new movement has appeared among the primitive tribes of the outlands, as orcs, bugbears, and giants alike unite under ragged banners bearing an angry red sun on a field of black. Olman refugees are leaving the Sheldomar Valley for the south in ever-increasing numbers, their leaders suddenly hostile to the states that had sheltered them; it is said that the fractured Hold of the Sea Princes or even the Amedio Jungle is their ultimate destination.

You long for cloudy days and overcast nights, for the cool middle-ground of spring and fall, for the extremes have become far more dangerous of late. Perhaps it's just you...but the sun seems less beneficial, more a merciless killer than a life-giver these days, and the darkest night and the coldest winter offer no relief. Tezcatlipoca, the Smoking Mirror, rules the sun and the moons, light and darkness, and his scion lives among you. You know that his very presence weakens the walls between Oerth and the Abyss, and his Altars of Shining Dark continue to wedge open doors that are best left shut.

How many has he made? How many have already been destroyed by heroic effort, and how many remain? Will you speak of your failure, and of the lessons you learned, in order that some concerted effort to locate and demolish them all can be made...or will the world remain blind until all is brought to darkness?

EPILOGUE B

This epilogue should only be read to a party of PCs who have prevented the live birth of the Son of the Sun and Moon into the world. In this case, the cultists of Tezcatlipoca were prevented from killing enough of the Olman children, and the PCs located the undead remains of the scion of the Smoking Mirror and fought it and its allies.

There is always work to be done at the conclusion of even the most successful adventure: wounds must be healed, treasure must be divided, and consumables must be purchased. For those of you who believe in disseminating the knowledge you've gained, there are a number of interested parties who would hang on your every word with the story you have to tell.

Within a few days, though, life gets back to its normal self, and a few days into that normalcy, a being you thought to be an Olman child but who turned out to be so much more pays you a visit. Axian keeps his wings discreetly folded in the manner of a feathered cloak; such garments are becoming quite popular with the young and rich all over the Sheldomar Valley these days. Of course, he brings Sheki with him, and Sheki, true to his canine nature, licks himself enthusiastically throughout the conversation, offering the occasional "Oh, don't mind me...got me a hobby now!" by way of an excuse.

"I did not know what I was", says Axian, "until I met the others as a captive of the cultists. I just knew that my father spoke to me in my mind, and that I knew things that the other kids didn't. My mother only ever told me that she loved my father and that I should listen to him, and I guess that worked out well enough." Axian makes strong eye contact while speaking to you, but you can't help but notice that he glances up quite often.

Every PC must make a DC 20 Will save to avoid unconsciously rubbing his or her forehead. Those who do rub their foreheads feel nothing unusual, nor is anything visible, unless one of three conditions is met: 1- a PC uses *true seeing*; 2- a PC is by definition an outsider; or 3- a PC has a familiar or animal companion that is an outsider capable of communicating complex information.

Axian continues, a relaxed smile on his face. "The couatls knew that the cult of the Smoking Mirror would use the eclipse to try and bring their deity's power closer to the Oerth, so they created agents among the children who would power the sacrifice. We are the Sunblinders, those who stand against the uncaring sun and shadow. My friends and I are thinking of calling ourselves 'quetzals.'

His smile takes on a self-conscious note as Axian finally notices how he's been staring. "I'm sorry. Has no one pointed out the marks to you?" Indeed, no one has. "You all bear a warning of a kind, a token of what you have dared and done. Great powers of law and good have given you these marks, which are only visible to the eyes of creatures not of this plane of existence unless the magic of true seeing is invoked. It is a single Celestial letter, the letter 'G' in the center of your forehead, struck through by an 'X'.

"This mark has been earned by few mortals. It warns outsiders of your potency against them; it cautions you to be humble in spite of your triumph even as it celebrates your defeat of an evil power about to ascend to the ranks of the divine.

"You have been marked a god-slayer. So, what are we doing for dinner?"

THE END

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

Encounter 1

Defeat the succubi and their allies at the inn.

APL 10: 360 xp.

APL 12: 420 xp.

APL 14: 480 xp.

Encounter 4

Fight through the storm and the storm's inhabitants and reach the site of the sacrifice in the Tors.

APL 10: 360 xp.

APL 12: 420 xp.

APL 14: 480 xp.

Encounter 7

Survive the hostile intentions of the Arena combatants.

APL 10: 360 xp.

APL 12: 420 xp.

APL 14: 480 xp.

Encounter 9

Accompany the Sunblinder children to the extraplanar sacrifice site and protect them from the cultists.

APL 10: 360 xp.

APL 12: 420 xp.

APL 14: 480 xp.

Encounter 10

Prevent the last cultists from sacrificing the Sunblinder children.

APL 10: 330 xp.

APL 12: 390 xp.

APL 14: 450 xp.

Encounter 11A

Destroy the Altar of Shining Dark and its attendant creatures.

APL 10: 390 xp.

APL 12: 450 xp.

APL 14: 510 xp.

Encounter 11B

Destroy the atropal scion of Tezcatlipoca and its allies.

APL 10: 390 xp.

APL 12: 450 xp.

APL 14: 510 xp.

Story Award 1

Protect innocent lives in Encounter 1.

APL 10: 180 xp.

APL 12: 210 xp.

APL 14: 240 xp.

Story Award 2

Succeed in preventing the sacrifice of the Sunblinder children. This award is earned by any party that succeeds in Encounter 10 and plays through Encounter 11B.

APL 10: 360 xp.

APL 12: 420 xp.

APL 14: 480 xp.

Total possible experience

APL 10: 2700 xp.

APL 12: 3150 xp.

APL 14: 3600 xp.

TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a “treasure” section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter’s treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate. Because this is a Regional adventure, characters may spend additional Time Units to practice professions or create items immediately after the adventure so this total may be modified by other circumstances.

Encounter 4:

APL 10: M: +1 *keen longsword* (3) (693 gp each), *belt of giant strength* (3) (1333 gp each), *boots of striding and springing* (3 sets) (458 gp each), *mithral chain shirt +2* (3) (429 gp each). (8739 gp total)

APL 12: M: +1 *keen longsword* (6) (693 gp each), *belt of giant strength* (6) (1333 gp each), *boots of striding and springing* (6 sets) (458 gp each), *mithral chain shirt +2* (6) (429 gp each). (17,478 gp total)

APL 14: M: M: +1 *keen longsword* (6) (693 gp each), *belt of giant strength* (6) (1333 gp each), *boots of striding and springing* (6 sets) (458 gp each), *mithral chain shirt +2* (6) (429 gp each). (17,478 gp total)

Encounter 9:

APL 10: M: 2 *breastsplates +2* (362 gp each), 2 *heavy steel shields +1* (97 gp each), 2 +1 *morningstars* (192 gp each), 2 *periapts of wisdom +2* (333 gp each), 2 potions of *haste* (62 gp each). (2092 gp total)

APL 12: M: 2 *breastsplates +2* (362 gp each), 2 *heavy steel shields +1* (97 gp each), 2 +1 *morningstars* (192 gp each), 2 *periapts of wisdom +2* (333 gp each), 2 potions of *haste* (62 gp each). (2092 gp total)

L = Lo

APL 14: M: 4 *breastplates* +2 (362 gp each), 4 *heavy steel shields* +1 (97 gp each), 4 *morningstars* (192 gp each), 4 *periapts of wisdom* +2 (333 gp each), 4 potions of *haste* (62 gp each). (4184 gp total)

Encounter 10:

APL 10: M: +3 *longspear* (1525 gp).

APL 12: M: +3 *longspear* (1525 gp).

APL 14: M: 2 +3 *longspears* (3050 gp).

Encounter 11A:

APL 10: M: 2 +3 *longspears* (3050 gp).

APL 12: M: 2 +3 *longspears* (3050 gp).

APL 14: M: 2 +3 *longspears* (3050 gp).

OR Encounter 11B:

APL 10: C: 3050 gp.

APL 12: C: 3050 gp.

APL 14: C: 3050 gp.

Total Possible Treasure (Maximum Reward Allowed): Using Encounter 11A

APL 10: M: 15,406 gp – Total: 15,406 gp (4,600 gp).

APL 12: M: 24,145 gp – Total: 24,145 gp (6,600 gp).

APL 14: M: 27,762 gp – Total: 27,762 gp (13,200 gp).

Total Possible Treasure (Maximum Reward Allowed): Using Encounter 11B

APL 10: C: 3050 gp, M: 12,356 gp – Total: 15,406 gp (4,600 gp).

APL 12: C: 3050 gp, M: 21,095 gp – Total: 24,145 gp (6,600 gp).

APL 14: C: 3050 gp, M: 24,712 gp – Total: 27,762 gp (13,200 gp).

ITEMS FOR THE ADVENTURE RECORD

Special

On Closer Inspection: You have experienced a connection with the Outer Planes of which few mortals can boast. You may spend 4 TU in seclusion and introspection, and thereafter will have satisfied the Special requirement for the Contemplative prestige class from *Complete*

Divine. Additionally, you earn 1 influence point with one of your home region's meta-organizations that would be interested in information regarding the cult of the Smoking Mirror. Contact your region's Triad for a list of such organizations if need be; qualifying meta-organizations should be religious or academic in nature.

Meta-org: _____

A Sight for Sore Eyes: You have had a view of the world ordinarily reserved for deific eyes and minds. The knowledge you can retain depends on the depth of your connection to Axian and the other Olman children. You gain a +1 sacred bonus to all Knowledge skill rolls. If the PC named on this AR has completed all three adventures in the *Not One of Us* series, the bonus applies to all Int-based skill rolls. If the PC that qualifies for the Int-based bonus was Sunblinded in SHE6-07, the PC gains this bonus to Cha-based skill rolls as well.

In addition, once and once only you can use *true seeing* as a spell-like ability at caster level 9. Cross off this benefit when used.

Gaze of the Abyss: The origins, motives, and plans of the infinite demonic hordes are not to be lightly contemplated. Still, you cannot un-see what you saw, no matter how much you might want to. You gain a +3 sacred bonus to Knowledge (the planes) skill checks; further, you can now make Knowledge (the planes) checks untrained.

Chaotic evil outsiders may know of your unwanted intrusion and might well go out of their way to attack you. There is a percentage chance equal to two times the creature's hit dice that any chaotic evil outsider you encounter will attack you exclusively. Inform your judge of this fact prior to the start of LG play.

In addition, once and once only you can use *true seeing* as a spell-like ability at caster level 9. Cross off this benefit when used.

The God-slayer Rune: As stated by Axian, this small mark on your forehead is invisible to all except outsiders or persons using *true seeing*, and then only by those beings within 30 ft. You gain a +5 sacred bonus to all Cha-based skill checks when dealing with outsiders.

In addition, outsiders of all alignments suffer a –1 morale penalty to attack rolls and damage rolls when aware of your mark and targeting you.

Item Access

APL 10:

+1 keen longsword (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

+3 longspear (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

Mithral chain shirt +2 (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

Breastplate +2 (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

Boots of striding and springing (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

Helm of comprehending languages and reading magic (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

Item Access

APL 12 (all of APL 10 plus):

Boots of speed (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

Dimensional shackles (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

Item Access

APL 14 (all of APLs 10 and 12 plus):

Carpet of flying, 5 ft. by 10 ft. (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

Crystal ball (any) (*Frequency: Adventure; DMG*)

APPENDIX 1 – APL 10

ENCOUNTER 1

CHARMED REVELER CR 1/2

Male human Expert1
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12
(+2 Dex, +2 armor)
hp 7 (1 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3
Speed 30 ft
Melee club +2 (1d6+2)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2
Combat Gear club, leather armor
Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Skill Focus (Craft (shipbuilding)), Skill Focus (Profession (sailor))
Skills Climb +6, Craft (shipbuilding) +7, Jump +6, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +3, Profession (sailor) +8, Ride +4, Spot +3, Use Rope +4

ENCOUNTER 14B

SON OF THE SUN AND MOON CR 13

Advanced atropal scion
CE Medium undead
Init +7; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +19, Spot +19
Aura Strong evil
Languages Common, Abyssal, Infernal, Olman
AC 25, touch 16, flat-footed 23
(+2 Dex, +5 deflection, +8 natural)
hp 166 (17 HD); fast healing 8; DR 10/adamantine
Immune undead immunities
Fort +12, **Ref** +15, **Will** +22
Speed fly 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee slam +9 (1d8+1)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9
Atk Options death gaze, negative energy aura, spell-like abilities
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th):
3/day—*animate dead*, *create undead*, *cone of cold* (15d6, DC 20), *desecrate*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility*, *plane shift*, *speak with dead*, *teleport*.
Abilities Str 13, Dex 15, Con -, Int 16, Wis 22, Cha 20
SQ Turn resistance +8, unholy grace
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Improved Turn Resistance, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Knowledge (arcana) +16, Knowledge (religion) +16, Listen +19, Move Silently +18, Spot +19.
Death Gaze (Su): Death, range 60 ft.; Fort save DC 23 negates. Humanoids who die from this attack are transformed into wights 24 hours later.

Negative Energy Aura (Su): A 60-ft. radius negative energy aura surrounds an atropal scion. All undead in the aura (including the scion) are treated as if they have +4 turn resistance and fast healing 5. Living creatures in the aura are treated as having two negative levels unless they have some sort of negative energy protection or protection from evil. Creatures with 2 or less HD fall dead in the negative energy aura (and, at the atropal scion's option, rise as wights under the atropal scion's command 1 minute later).

Rebuke Undead (Su): 8/day, 1d20+5, 2d6+22, 17th

Unholy Grace (Su): An atropal scion adds its Charisma modifier as a bonus on all saves and as a deflection bonus to its Armor Class.

Description *This creature's hairless, overlarge head surmounts its wet, wrinkled, and bloated humanoid body. Its eyes are glassy and vacant. Its arms are too slender, and its tiny hands end in cruelly sharpened nails. Its legs are atrophied, dead things that hang useless below it as it hovers just off of the ground.*

Sources Atropal scion (LM)

APPENDIX 2 – APL 12

ENCOUNTER 1

CHARMED REVELER

CR 1/2

Male human Expert1
N Medium humanoid (human)
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12
(+2 Dex, +2 armor)
hp 7 (1 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +2, **Will** +3
Speed 30 ft
Melee club +2 (1d6+2)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +2
Combat Gear club, leather armor
Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Skill Focus (Craft (shipbuilding)), Skill Focus (Profession (sailor))
Skills Climb +6, Craft (shipbuilding) +7, Jump +6, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +3, Profession (sailor) +8, Ride +4, Spot +3, Use Rope +4

SUCCUBUS QUEEN

CR 11

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)
Init +2; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +27, Spot +27
Aura Overwhelming evil (but see Possessions below)
Languages Telepathy 100 ft., *tongues*
AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19
(+2 Dex, +9 natural)
hp 99 (12 HD); DR 10/cold iron or good
Immune electricity, poison
Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 18
Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 50 ft. (average)
Melee 2 claws +12 (1d6)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +16
Atk Options energy drain, spell-like abilities
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th):
At will—*charm monster* (DC 28), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 26), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *polymorph* (humanoid form only, no limit on duration), *suggestion* (DC 27), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only).
Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 32
Feats Ability Focus (kiss), Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Improved Grapple, Persuasive
Skills Bluff +28, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +28, Disguise +26*, Escape Artist +17, Hide +17, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +27, Move Silently +17, Search +6, Spot +27, Survival +6, Use Rope +5 (+7 with bindings)
Possessions *amulet of proof against detection and location*

Energy Drain (Su): A succubus drains energy from a mortal it lures into some act of passion, or by simply planting a kiss on the victim. If the target is not willing to be kissed, the succubus must start a grapple. The succubus's kiss or embrace bestows one negative level. The kiss also has the effect of a *suggestion* spell, asking the victim to accept another kiss from the succubus. The victim must succeed on a DC 29 Will save to negate the effect of the *suggestion*. The DC is 27 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level.

Tongues (Su): A succubus has a permanent tongues ability (as the spell, caster level 12th). Succubi usually use verbal communication with mortals.

Skills Succubi have a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. *While using her *polymorph* ability, a succubus gains a +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks.

Description *Perhaps it's the long weeks on the road and the horrors of combat talking, but you would swear that you've never seen a woman so beautiful as the barmaid taking your order. She is charming and graceful in a way that recalls all that's best of country life, and her open, friendly manner is as refreshing as a cool breeze on a sweltering day.*

ENCOUNTER 14B

SON OF THE SUN AND MOON

CR 14

Advanced atropal scion
CE Medium undead
Init +7; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +28, Spot +28
Aura Strong evil
Languages Common, Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, Olman
AC 29, touch 21, flat-footed 26
(+3 Dex, +8 deflection, +8 natural)
hp 166 (17 HD); fast healing 8; DR 10/adamantine
Immune undead immunities
Fort +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +28
Speed fly 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee slam +9 (1d8+1)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +9
Atk Options death gaze, negative energy aura, spell-like abilities
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th):
3/day—*animate dead*, *create undead*, *cone of cold* (15d6, DC 23), *desecrate*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility*, *plane shift*, *speak with dead*, *teleport*.
Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con -, Int 20, Wis 26, Cha 26
SQ Turn resistance +8, unholy grace
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Improved Turn Resistance, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes
Skills Diplomacy +20, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (religion) +25, Knowledge

(the planes) +15, Listen +28, Move Silently +23, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +17, Spot +28.

Death Gaze (Su): Death, range 60 ft.; Fort save DC 26 negates. Humanoids who die from this attack are transformed into wights 24 hours later.

Negative Energy Aura (Su): A 60-ft. radius negative energy aura surrounds an atropal scion. All undead in the aura (including the scion) are treated as if they have +4 turn resistance and fast healing 5. Living creatures in the aura are treated as having two negative levels unless they have some sort of negative energy protection or protection from evil. Creatures with 2 or less HD fall dead in the negative energy aura (and, at the atropal scion's option, rise as wights under the atropal scion's command 1 minute later).

Rebuke Undead (Su): 11/day, 1d20+8, 2d6+25, 17th

Unholy Grace (Su): An atropal scion adds its Charisma modifier as a bonus on all saves and as a deflection bonus to its Armor Class.

Description *This creature's hairless, overlarge head surmounts its wet, wrinkled, and bloated humanoid body. Its eyes are glassy and vacant. Its arms are too slender, and its tiny hands end in cruelly sharpened nails. Its legs are atrophied, dead things that hang useless below it as it hovers just off of the ground.*

Sources Atropal scion (*Libris Mortis*)

APPENDIX 3 – APL 14

ENCOUNTER 1

CHARMED REVELER

CR 2

Male human Expert3

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7

Languages Common

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12

(+2 Dex, +2 armor)

hp 17 (3 HD)

Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft

Melee club +4 (1d6+2)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +2; **Grp** +4

Combat Gear club, leather armor

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

Feats Alertness, Skill Focus (Craft (shipbuilding)), Skill Focus (Profession (sailor))

Skills Climb +8, Craft (shipbuilding) +9, Jump +8, Knowledge (local) +2, Listen +7, Profession (sailor) +10, Ride +4, Spot +7, Use Rope +6

SUCCUBUS QUEEN

CR 11

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, extraplanar, tanar'ri)

Init +2; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +27, Spot +27

Aura Overwhelming evil (but see Possessions below)

Languages Telepathy 100 ft., *tongues*

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 19

(+2 Dex, +9 natural)

hp 99 (12 HD); DR 10/cold iron or good

Immune electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 18

Fort +11, **Ref** +10, **Will** +12

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d6)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +16

Atk Options energy drain, spell-like abilities

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th):

At will—*charm monster* (DC 28), *detect good*, *detect thoughts* (DC 26), *ethereal jaunt* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *polymorph* (humanoid form only, no limit on duration), *suggestion* (DC 27), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only).

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 32

Feats Ability Focus (kiss), Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Improved Grapple, Persuasive

Skills Bluff +28, Concentration +18, Diplomacy +28, Disguise +26*, Escape Artist +17, Hide +17, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +27, Move Silently +17, Search +6, Spot +27, Survival +6, Use Rope +5 (+7 with bindings)

Possessions *amulet of proof against detection and location*

Energy Drain (Su): A succubus drains energy from a mortal it lures into some act of passion, or by simply planting a kiss on the victim. If the target is not willing to be kissed, the succubus must start a grapple. The succubus's kiss or embrace bestows one negative level. The kiss also has the effect of a *suggestion* spell, asking the victim to accept another kiss from the succubus. The victim must succeed on a DC 29 Will save to negate the effect of the *suggestion*. The DC is 27 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level.

Tongues (Su): A succubus has a permanent tongues ability (as the spell, caster level 12th). Succubi usually use verbal communication with mortals.

Skills Succubi have a +8 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. *While using her *polymorph* ability, a succubus gains a +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks.

Description *Perhaps it's the long weeks on the road and the horrors of combat talking, but you would swear that you've never seen a woman so beautiful as the barmaid taking your order. She is charming and graceful in a way that recalls all that's best of country life, and her open, friendly manner is as refreshing as a cool breeze on a sweltering day.*

ENCOUNTER 14B

SON OF THE SUN AND MOON

CR 16

Advanced atropal scion Tomb Warden 3

NE Medium undead

Init +9; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +30, Spot +30

Aura Strong evil

Languages Common, Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal, Olman

AC 32, touch 24, flat-footed 27

(+5 Dex, +9 deflection, +8 natural)

hp 197 (20 HD); fast healing 8; DR 10/adamantine

Immune turning, undead immunities

Fort +19, **Ref** +22, **Will** +27

Speed fly 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee slam +11 (1d8)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +11; **Grp** +11

Atk Options death gaze, negative energy aura, spell-like abilities

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th):

3/day—*animate dead*, *create undead*, quickened *cone of cold* (15d6, DC 29), *desecrate*, quickened *dispel magic*, *invisibility*, *plane shift*, *speak with dead*, *teleport*.

Abilities Str 10, Dex 20, Con -, Int 18, Wis 24, Cha 29

SQ Turn immunity, unholy grace

Feats Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken

Spell-like Ability (*cone of cold*), Quicken Spell-like Ability (*dispel magic*)

Skills Hide +23, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (religion) +27, Listen +30, Move Silently +28, Search +22, Sense Motive +25, Spot +30.

Death Gaze (Su): Death, range 60 ft.; Fort save DC 29 negates. Humanoids slain by this attack are transformed into wights 24 hours later.

Negative Energy Aura (Su): A 60-ft. radius negative energy aura surrounds an atropal scion. All undead in the aura (including the scion) are treated as if they have +4 turn resistance and fast healing 5. Living creatures in the aura are treated as having two negative levels unless they have some sort of negative energy protection or protection from evil. Creatures with 2 or less HD fall dead in the negative energy aura (and, at the atropal scion's option, rise as wights under its command 1 minute later).

Power of the Dead (Su): 1/day, 10 minute duration, free action to activate; +9 to attack rolls, damage rolls, and all saves.

Rebuke Undead (Su): 12/day, 1d20+9, 2d6+29, 20th

Tomb Sense (Su): While it is within the remains of the Arena, the Sun's Son automatically knows the precise location of all intruders in that area. This ability is similar to blindsense except that it works without line of effect and it extends into every portion of the Arena.

Unholy Grace (Su): An atropal scion adds its Charisma modifier as a bonus on all saves and as a deflection bonus to its Armor Class.

Description *This creature's hairless, overlarge head surmounts its wet, wrinkled, and bloated humanoid body. Its eyes are glassy and vacant. Its arms are too slender, and its tiny hands end in cruelly sharpened nails. Its legs are atrophied, dead things that hang useless below it as it hovers just off of the ground.*

Sources Atropal scion, Tomb Warden prestige class (*Libris Mortis*)

APPENDIX 4 – ALL APLS

ENCOUNTER 4

JAGLING DIVINE CRUSADER CR 9

Male tauric halfling/jaguar Divine Crusader 5

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +7; **Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., Listen +3, Spot +3

Aura Strong evil

Languages Common, Olman

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 17

(+6 Dex, +6 armor, +1 natural)

hp 99 (12 HD)

Resist electricity 5

Fort +11, **Ref** +15, **Will** +11

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee +1 keen longsword +20/+15 (1d8+15, 17-20/x2)
and 2 claws +13 (1d3+4)

Ranged masterwork javelin +18 (1d6+8)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +18

Atk Options Power Attack, spells

Special Actions pounce, rake

Combat Gear +1 keen longsword, mithral chain shirt
+2

Divine Crusader Spells Prepared (CL 5th):

4th— *ice storm*

3rd— *call lightning* (x2)

2nd— *gust of wind* (x3)

1st— *obscuring mist* (x4)

Deity: Tezcatlipoca. Domain: Weather

Granted Power: Inclement weather has less of an effect on you. Rain and snow don't penalize your Spot and Search checks. You can move through snow-covered and icy terrain at your normal movement. Wind effects, whether normal or magical, affect you as if you were one size category larger.

Ab Str 26, Dex 25, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 14

SQ Halfling heritage

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Balance +15, Climb +16, Hide +7, Jump +22, Knowledge (religion) +1, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +5

Possessions combat gear plus *belt of giant strength* +4, *boots of striding and springing*

Pounce (Ex) A jagling can make a full attack, including two rake attacks, when charging.

Rake (Ex) Attack bonus +13 melee, damage 1d3+4.

Halfling Heritage (Ex) Jaglings receive a +1 racial bonus on all saves, a +2 racial bonus on saves vs. fear that stacks with the previous bonus, and a +1 racial bonus on attack rolls with thrown weapons or slings.

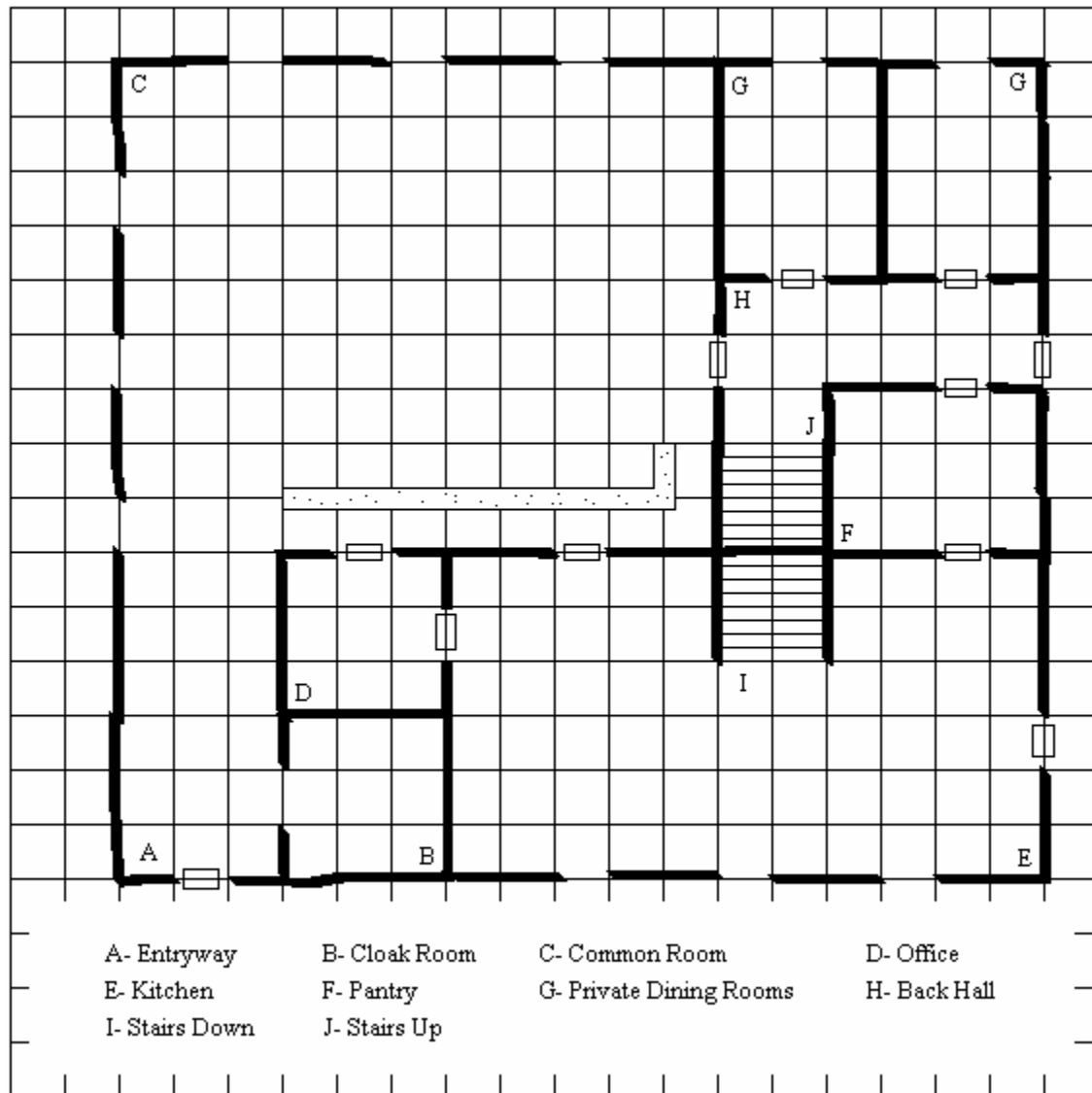
Skills +8 racial bonus on Balance, Climb and Jump checks, a +4 racial bonus on Hide and Move Silently checks, and a +2 racial bonus on Listen

checks. A jagling can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if it is rushed or threatened.

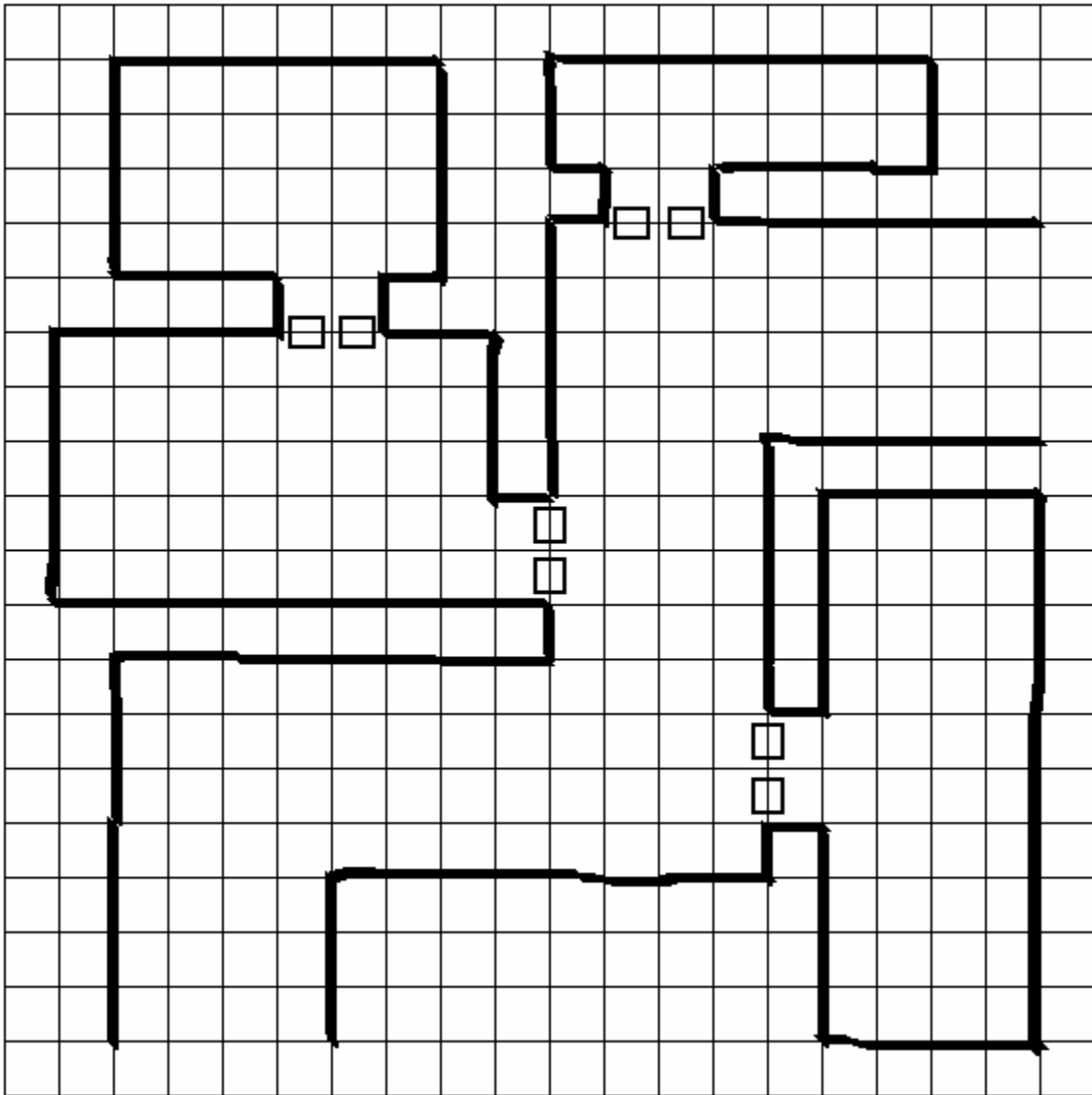
Description *Moving with amazing speed, a vaguely feline shape charges towards you from out of the jungle. A humanoid body tops the animal torso, with wiry, muscular arms wielding a longsword two-handed. The creature's skin, where not obscured by shining chainmail, is covered with short yellow-brown fur bearing the dark circular markings of a jaguar.*

Sources Tauric template (*Monster Manual II*)

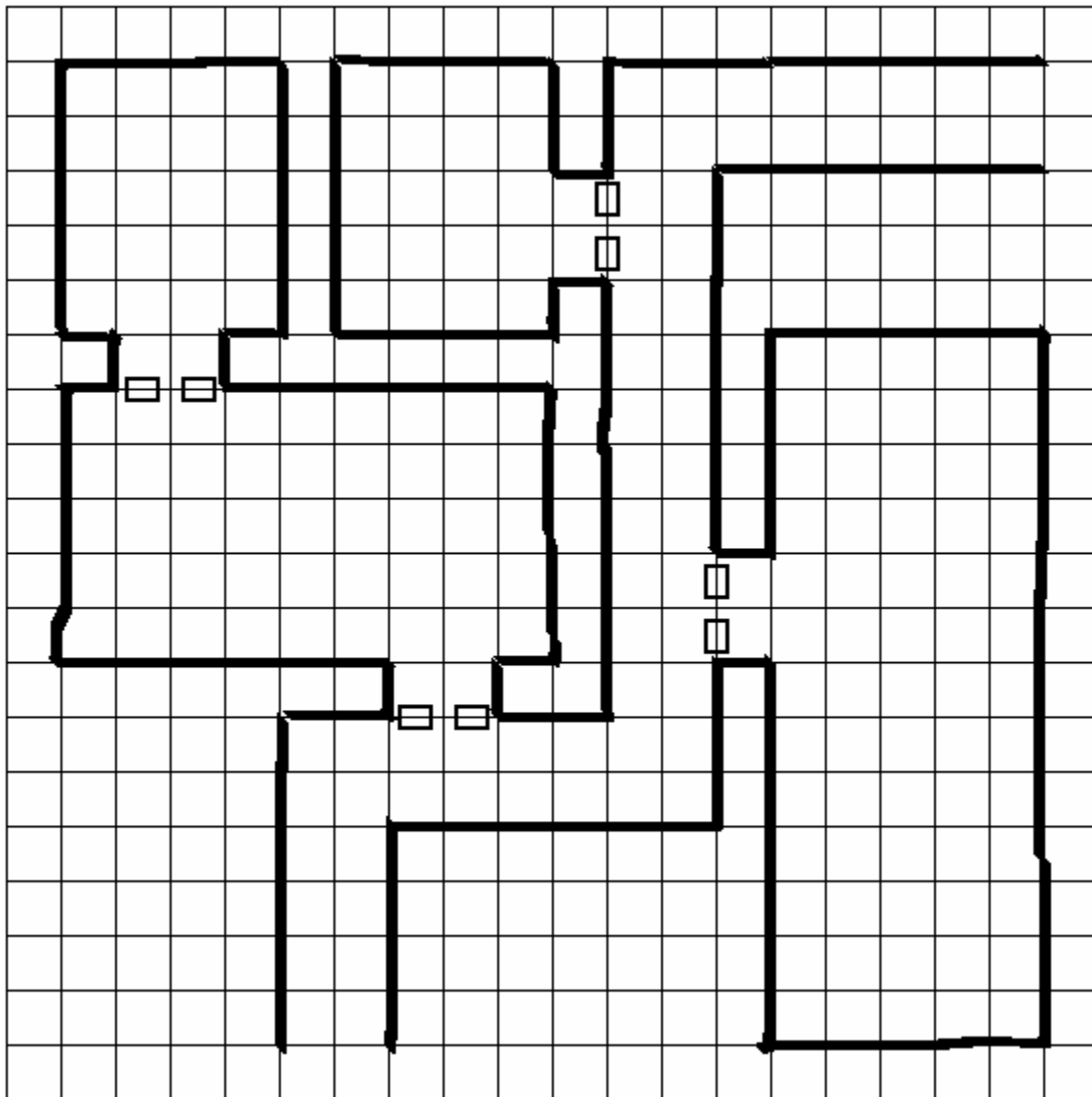
DM AID: MAP #1 – THE ALEWIFE’S REST



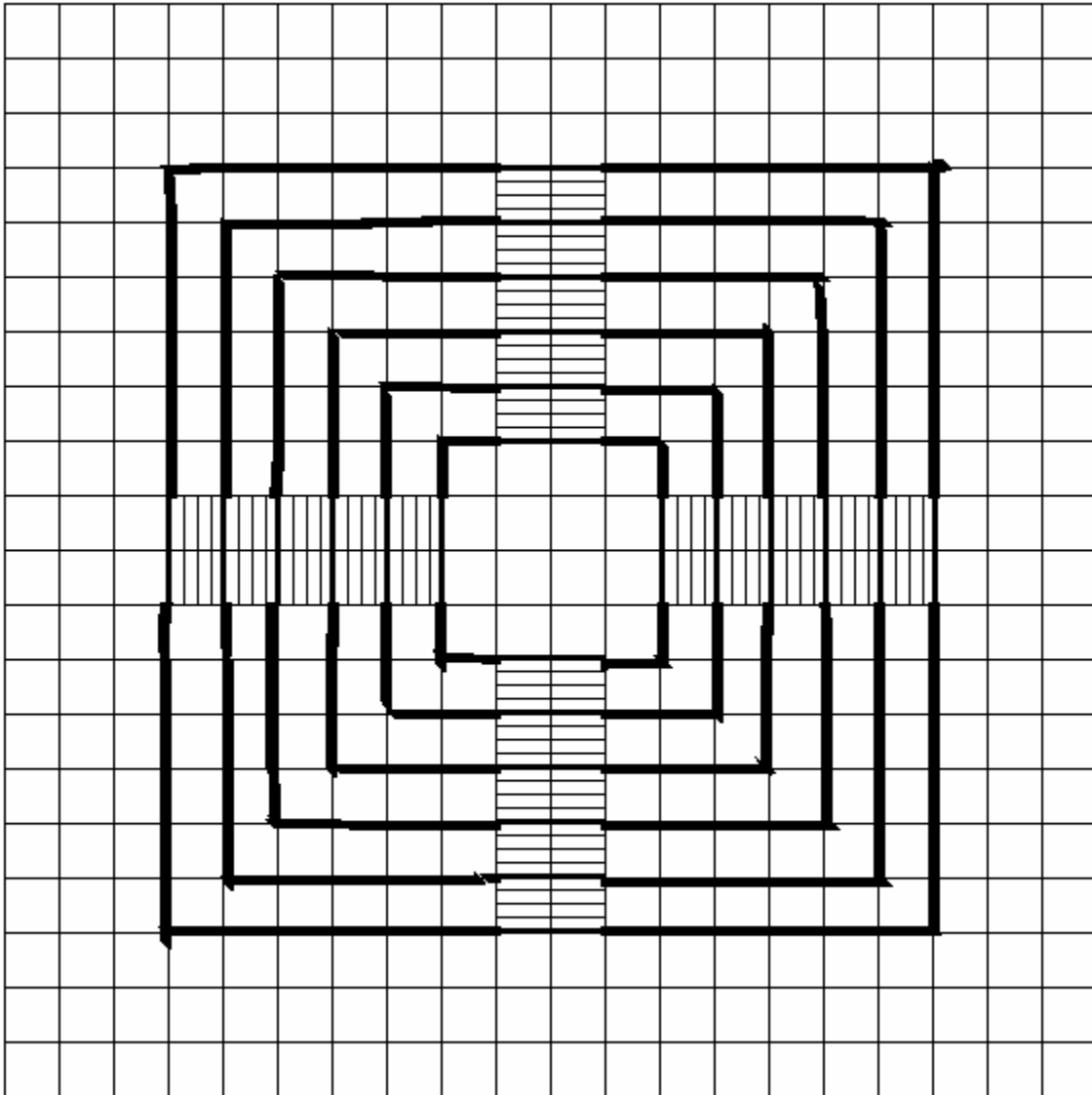
DM AID: MAP #2 – ARENA MAP 1



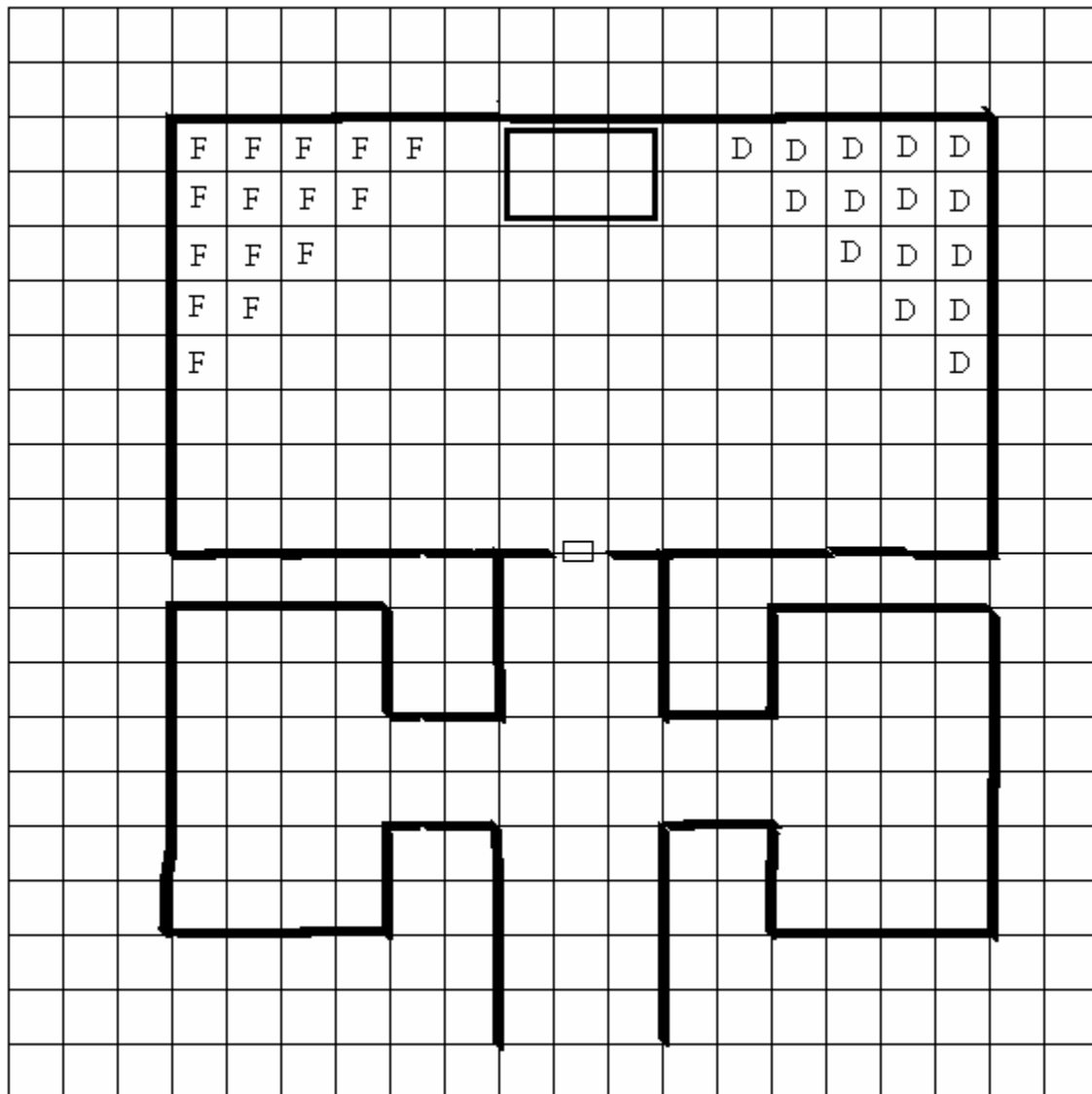
DM AID: MAP #3 – ARENA MAP 2



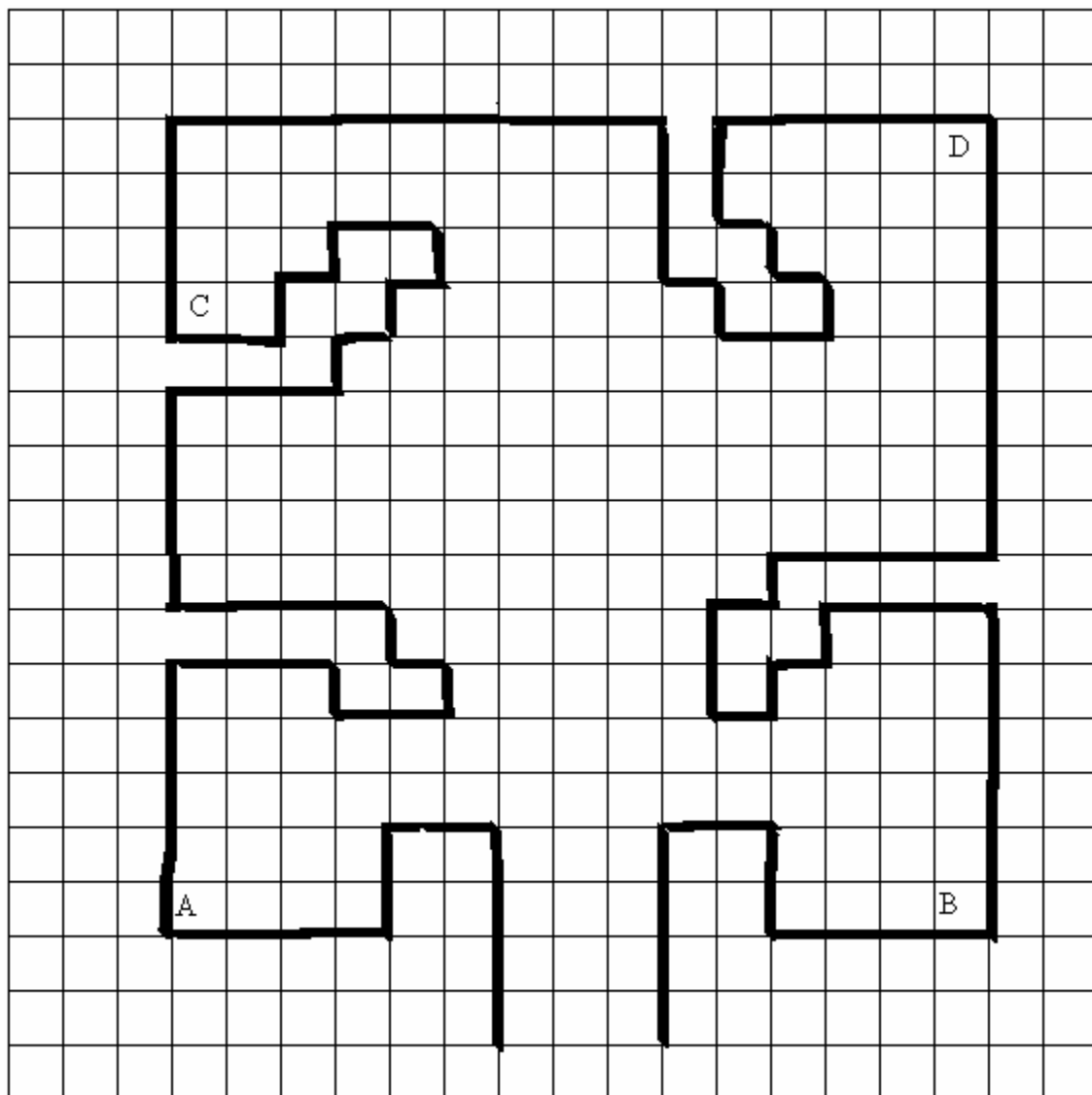
DM AID: MAP #4 – THE PYRAMID



DM AID: MAP #5 – ALTAR ROOM



DM AID: MAP #6 – RUINED ROOM



PLAYER HANDOUT #1 – AXIAN’S NOTE

If you have just pried this note from the hand of a really pretty demon, I salute your combat skills as well as your will-power. The cultists of the Smoking Mirror have gathered several dozen Olman children and are ready to begin their ceremony: I fear death less than I fear the horror they plan to bring into this world. I do not know exactly where we are, but all the hills around us are flat-topped and the winds and the rain only get stronger. You will know the cultists by their cry: “Death Is Sacrifice.”

Axian

P.S. The only way I could get this message to you was to tell them all about you. I hope nobody was hurt too badly.

P.P.S. Keep an eye out for my friend Sheki; he wants to help but watch out for him.