



BY JEFF LEE



# Doomspeakers

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Vilest of the Vile3The Doomspeakers in Midgard11Leaders, Organization, and Goals3New Magic Items12Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks712

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# VILEST OF THE VILE

Among the worst evils in the multiverse are demons. And those depraved souls that worship them. Darkest among them are antipaladins, the antithesis of life, hope, and good. Then there are the Doomspeakers, antipaladin champions of demon princes that are inducted into the profane secrets of *The Book of Nine Dooms*, a corrupt and unholy tome that teaches them to focus their hatred in new ways, opening them to a practice of magic that devours a portion of its caster, fueling the great misery and destruction wrought upon the antipaladins' foes. The followers of this entropic order seek nothing less than the destruction and dissolution of all order and light in the world.

**NOTATIONS:** This text refer to the following products: ARG: Advanced Races: Gnolls, DM: Deep Magic, UC: Ultimate Combat, UE: Ultimate Equipment, UM: Ultimate Magic.

# Leaders, Organization, and Goals

The Doomspeakers, being demon worshipers, are understandably lacking in organization and discipline. They are ruled by their mightiest and most cunning members, who retain power for as long as they can hold it. They use a large number of gnolls as shock troops and general minions. A typical Doomspeaker collective is led by one of their antipaladins with other cultists under their direct command-often clerics but evil wizards, oracles, barbarians, and others swell their numbers as wellwho control the gnoll troops. Advancement in the ranks is as much ability as luck and circumstance. Many rise by taking advantage of their predecessor's destruction, and often, they have a hand in his or her demise, directly or indirectly. Due to this deadly competitive nature, individual "cells" often work alone, though they band together in order to succeed in their plans against particularly strong foes.

As for the goals of the Doomspeakers, they are nothing less than the goals of their demon masters: destruction, misery, and dissolution. Each leader goes about it in a particular manner. Some favor might, laying waste to their targets with their learned dooms, troops, and their own strength of arms. Others prefer guile, subtly working at their enemies, often sowing paranoia and dissension to fracture and weaken their foes, turning them against one another before sweeping in to lay waste to what remains. The Doomspeakers are especially feared for their nihilistic tendencies. Those who have learned the dark secrets of *The Book of Nine Dooms* do not hesitate to harm themselves in order to bring about the destruction of their enemies.

The following are examples of Doomspeaker leaders

**CR 15** 

#### NARN THE CRUCIFIER

XP 51,200

# Human antipaladin 16 CE Medium humanoid (human) Init +1; Senses Perception +9

Aura cowardice (10 ft.), despair (10 ft.), vengeance

(10 ft.), sin (10 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+12 armor, +1 Dex, +2 natural) hp 140 (16d10+48)

Fort +17, Ref +11, Will +14

#### Defensive Abilities

#### OFFENSE

**Speed** 30 ft. (20 ft. in armor) **Melee** +2 anarchic unholy falchion (w/ Power Atk) +25/+15/+10/+5 (2d4+24/15-20) or 2 claws (w/ Power Atk) +22/+17 (1d10+21 plus contagion [DC 14])

Ranged +1 returning throwing axe +18 (1d6+7) or mwk heavy crossbow +18 (1d10+1/19-20) Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 21,

7d6), cruelties (DC 21; curse, nauseate [5 rounds], sicken [16 rounds], stagger [8 rounds], stun [4 rounds]), smite good 6/day (+3 attack and AC, +16 damage), touch of corruption 10/day (8d6)

Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th;

concentration +19) At will—*detect good* 

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 13th;

concentration +16)

4th—doom of serpent coils<sup>DM</sup> (DC 17)

3rd—blade of dark triumph<sup>UM</sup>, doom of dancing blades<sup>DM</sup>, vampiric touch

2nd—darkness, darkvision, doom of consuming fire<sup>DM</sup>, doom of sundering<sup>DM</sup>

1st—death knell, doom of cowards<sup>DM</sup> (DC 14), doom of the cracked shield<sup>DM</sup>, litany of sloth<sup>UC</sup>

#### TACTICS

**During Combat** Narn casts *doom of cowards*, seeking to inflict the shaken condition on as many opponents as possible, then uses his display feats to strike further fear into them, hoping for attacks of opportunity against fleeing opponents. If an especially potent foe, such as a paladin or good outsider, enters battle, he reads his scroll of *unholy sword* if given the opportunity and then wades in with his smite good ability and Power Attack. **Base Statistics** When not using his fiendish boon and Power Attack, Narn's statistics are **Melee** +2 falchion +25/+20/+15/+10 (2d4+11/15-20) or 2 claws +22/+22 (1d10+6 plus contagion [DC 14])

## STATISTICS

**Str 22, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16 Base Atk +16; CMB +21; CMD 32** 

Feats Cleave, Dazzling Display, Furious Focus, Improved Critical (falchion), Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Savage Display, Shatter Defenses, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Bluff +15, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (religion) +7, Linguistics +5, Perception +10, Ride +5\*, Sense Motive +8

\*armor check penalty factored into final score Languages Common, Abyssal, Gnoll SQ aura of evil, fiendish boon (weapon; +4 enhancement, 16 minutes/day), plague bringer Combat Gear +2 falchion, +1 returning throwing axe, masterwork heavy crossbow and 50 +1 bolts, feather token (whip), potions of cure serious wounds (3), potion of bull's strength, scrolls of disguise self, protection from good, and unholy sword; Other Gear amulet of natural armor +1, demon armor, belt of giant strength +2, blood reservoir of physical prowess<sup>UE,</sup> cloak of resistance +2, headband of alluring charisma +2, gold unholy symbol, heavy warhorse with saddle, bit and bridle, and chainmail barding.

The most powerful and certainly one of the most terrifying of the Doomspeakers is Narn, called the Crucifier for his favored way of dealing with captured enemies and disloyal minions. He operates out of Shadowhold, a dark fortress perched on the cliff side of a narrow box canyon of a mountain abutting the plains where he recruits his gnoll troops.

## GRUULOK

XP 9,600

Male gnoll antipaladin 11

CE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +2 Aura cowardice (10 ft.), despair (10 ft.), vengeance (10 ft.)

CR 10

#### DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15 (+ 4 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex)

**hp** 98 (11d10+33)

Fort +11, Ref +6, Will +6

**Defensive Abilities 20%** chance of spells and abilities treating Gruulok as neutral instead of evil

# OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 battleaxe +15/+10/+5 (1d8+5/×3) or mwk dagger +15/+10/+5 (1d4+3/19-20)

**Ranged** +2 *flaming burst composite longbow* +14/+14/+9/+4 (1d8+5+1d6 fire/×3) or mwk dagger +14 (1d4+3/19–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy (DC 16, 6d6), cruelties (DC 16; dazed [1 round], frightened [5 rounds], shaken [11 rounds]), smite good 4/day, touch of corruption 6/day (6d6)

Antipaladin Spell-Like Abilities (CL 11th; concentration +12)

At will-detect good

Antipaladin Spells Prepared (CL 8th; concentration +9)

3rd—doom of blue crystal<sup>DM</sup>

2nd—darkness

1st—disguise self, death knell, hobble mount<sup>DM</sup>

During Combat Gruulok likes to attack from ambush if possible, pelting his opponents with arrows from cover or concealment. He attempts to neutralize or at least hinder mounted opponents using hobble mount. If he is surrounded and outnumbered, Gruulok casts *doom of the blue crystal*, attempting to petrify his foes before smashing the statues to pieces with his axe.
Base Statistics When not using his fiendish boon and Rapid Shot, Gruulok's statistics are Ranged +1 composite longbow +15/+10/+5 (1d8+4/×3)

#### STATISTICS

Str 16, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 6, Cha 12 Base Atk +11; CMB +14; CMD 26 Feats Deadly Aim, Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Skills Bluff +8, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (religion) +4, Perception +2, Stealth +12

#### Languages Common, Gnoll

**SQ** aura of evil (only detects as 1 HD creature when his armor is worn, fiendish boon (weapon; +3 enhancement, 11 minutes/day), plague bringer **Combat Gear** +1 composite longbow (+3 Str) and 40 arrows, +1 battleaxe, masterwork daggers (2), belt of teeth (bite +18 [1d6+3]); potion of cure serious wounds, potions of protection from good (2), greenblood oil (5 doses); **Other Gear** +1 angelskin studded leather, ring of protection +1, iron unholy symbol, mewling horn<sup>ARG</sup>, jewelry worth 250 gp.

The gnoll Gruulok is a creature of exceptional ferocity and vileness that showed enough promise for the Doomspeakers to indoctrinate him into the mysteries of *The Book of Nine Dooms*, rising from the troops to become an antipaladin in his own right. Gruulok is a ferocious but cunning fighter, preferring to attack greatly outnumbered or outmatched foes or, at least, from ambush. He is a notorious cannibal and has a preference for the flesh of centaurs and halflings.

# KOLYA THE RUINED

**CR 11** 

#### XP 12,800

Female tiefling (pitborn) oracle 12 CE Medium humanoid (elf, human) Init +2; Senses Perception -1

#### DEFENSE

AC 25, touch 13, flat-footed 23 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 natural, +3 shield) hp 81 (12d8+24) Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +9 Immune fatigue

#### OFFENSE

## Speed 20 ft.

**Melee** *bone whip* +11/+6 (1d4+2) or mwk heavy mace +11/+6 (1d8+1)

Ranged mwk light crossbow +12 (1d8/19-20)

**Special Attacks** bleeding wounds (3 bleed), death's touch 6/day (1d6+5 negative energy, +2 channel resistance for 1 minute)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +15) 1/day—*shatter* 

**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 12th; concentration +15) 6th (3/day)—circle of death (DC 21), harm (DC 21) 5th (5/day)—doom of ancient decrepitude (DC 18), doom of the earthen maw<sup>DM</sup> (DC 18), righteous might

4th (6/day)—cure critical wounds, fear (DC 19), inflict critical wounds (DC 19), unholy blight (DC 17) 3rd (7/day)—animate dead, bestow curse (DC 18), glyph of warding, inflict serious wounds, magic vestment

2nd (7/day)—cure moderate wounds, darkness, desecrate, false life, resist energy, spiritual weapon 1st (7/day)—cause fear (DC 16), cure light wounds, deathwatch, detect good, divine favor, obscuring mist 0—bleed, create water, detect magic, detect poison, mending, read magic, resistance, spark, stabilize TACTICS

During Combat Kolya lays into her opponents using her spells, casting *righteous might* before engaging. She channels her death's touch ability through her *bone whip*, using its enervation ability on what appears to be the most powerful of her opponents, especially enemy spellcasters. She saves her *inflict critical wounds* to use with her bleeding wounds ability against soft targets like wizards.

# ten 12 Der

Str 12, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 17
Base Atk +9; CMB +10; CMD 22
Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Iron Will, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration
Skills Diplomacy +16, Heal +12, Knowledge (planes) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Profession (slaver) +12, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +15
Languages Common, Abyssal, Gnoll
SQ armor of bones (+8 armor bonus, 11 hours/day), spirit walk 1/day (12 rounds)

**Combat Gear** *bone whip*, masterwork light crossbow and 20 bolts, *potion of fly*, *potion of nondetection*; **Other Gear** +1 *heavy steel shield, amulet of natural armor* +1, *ring of protection* +1, *spellguard bracers*, masterwork backpack, masterwork manacles, healer's kit, silver unholy symbol.

Kolya was born with visible traces of demonic taint in her bloodline, which she tried to hide as best she could. In her teens, she was found out while traveling through a small frontier town. She was brutally savaged by the townsfolk—violated, disfigured, and

crippled-before being left for dead outside of town. She survived, crawling away to find an animal den, in which to recover. During her fever dreams, she believes demons spoke to her, and perhaps they did. She was opened to avenues of power that aided in her eventual recovery (though her legs remain damaged, a sacrifice for her gifts). Her new power allowed her to rise from prey to predator, visiting death upon the deserving, including the town that once brutalized her. (She and her gnolls burned it to the ground.) However, in her eyes, all are deserving of death. Eventually, she was recruited by the Doomspeakers, who admired her power, demonic connections, and mercilessness. With her divine gifts and the powers learned from The Book of Nine Dooms, she works diligently to carve a bloody path through the world.

Kolya wears a copper mask to cover her scarred face, missing nose, and mouth of broken teeth, with only her orange eyes visible. The verdigris running from the eye holes, down over the burnished cheeks, gives the appearance of green tears. Her horns are broken but still visible beneath her mop of unruly brown hair. Her left leg is twisted, and she limps badly on the right, her ankle permanently damaged. When attempting to intimidate and unnerve prisoners and sometimes foes, she will remove her mask and expose her ruined visage, promising to work on the individual until he looks just like her.

#### SKERR'ESH

#### **CR** 7

#### XP 3,200

#### Old male gnoll cleric 8

CE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +3 Aura destructive (30 ft.; 8 rounds/day, +4 damage, and auto-confirm critical hits)

#### DEFENSE

AC 13, touch 8, flat-footed 13 (+ 5 armor, -2 Dex) hp 47 (8d8+8)

Fort +8, Ref -1, Will +10; -2 vs. fear effects Defensive Abilities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft. (40 ft. when withdrawing) Melee +1 spear +8 (1d8+4/ $\times$ 3) Ranged mwk sling +5 (1d4+2)

**Special Attacks** channel negative energy 6/day (DC 16, 4d6), chaos blade 1/day (4 rounds), destructive smite 6/day (+4 damage)

**Domain Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 7th; concentration +9)

#### 6/day-touch of chaos

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +9) 4th—doom of serpent coils<sup>DM</sup> (DC 17), inflict critical wounds<sup>D</sup> (DC 17), unholy blight (DC 17) 3rd—animate dead, cure serious wounds, protection from energy, rage<sup>D</sup>, summon monster III 2nd—blood track<sup>ARG</sup>, cure moderate wounds, dread bolt<sup>UM</sup> (DC 16), shatter<sup>D</sup>, slave's stupor<sup>ARG</sup> (DC 16) 1st—comprehend languages, divine favor, murderous command<sup>UM</sup> (DC 14), protection from law<sup>D</sup>, ray of sickening<sup>UM</sup>, sanctuary (DC 14) 0—bleed, detect magic, detect poison, read magic

D Domain spell; Domains Chaos, Destruction

**During Combat** Skerr'esh lets his minions engage opponents directly, supporting them with summoned fiendish hyenas, *unholy blight* targeting enemy spellcasters, and other offensive spells. If engaged directly, he uses his spear, using his destructive smite to drop a foe quickly.

#### STATISTICS

Str 14, Dex 6, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 13
Base Atk +6; CMB +8; CMD 16
Feats Extra Channel, Improved Channel, Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment)
Skills Diplomacy +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Profession (slaver) +7, Sense Motive +10
Languages Common, Gnoll
SQ aura

**Combat Gear** +1 spear, masterwork sling and 10 bullets and 1 alchemical bullet (acid), cheetah paw fetish<sup>ARG</sup>, potion of barkskin, potion of blur, scroll of lesser planar ally; **Other Gear** +1 mithril chain shirt, masterwork manacles, silver unholy symbol, jewelry worth 150 gp.

Skerresh, servant of demons, is an old gnoll, having survived nearly 50 years. At full height, he would be over seven feet tall, but his natural slouch, combined with the hunching of old age, makes him stand no more than a few inches above six feet. The fur on his muzzle and along his shoulders and spine has gone gray. He remains a powerful combatant due to his divine power, though his physical abilities have faded with time. Skerresh serves as Kolya's right hand. He appreciates her subtlety, her well-planned and smartly executed violence, and her penchant for slavery. He advises her on her operations, offering his aged wisdom and practical experience dealing with slaves as well as the political machinations of demon cultists. Skerr'esh keeps several slaves himself, docile body servants to help and comfort him in his advanced age.

## ANDORA NAVARRE

#### XP 2,400

CR 6

**Female half-elf arcane duelist (bard)** 7 CE Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +6; Senses low-light vision; Perception +10

#### DEFENSE

AC 18 touch 13 flat-footed 15 (+ 4 armor, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 shield)

**hp** 49 (7d8+14)

Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +4; +2 vs. enchantment effects Immune sleep

#### OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

**Melee** +1 *rapier* +8 (1d6+4/18-20)

Ranged mwk composite shortbow +8 (1d6+1/×3) Special Attacks

**Bardic Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +10 [+14 to cast defensively])

3rd (2/day)—confusion (DC 16), doom of the dancing blades<sup>DM</sup>, thunderous drums (DC 16)
2nd (4/day)—doom of the slippery rogue<sup>DM</sup>, mirror image, silence, suggestion (DC 15)

1st (5/day)—charm person (DC 14), detect secret doors, disguise self, expeditious retreat, grease (DC 14)
0—dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, lullaby, message, read magic

## TACTICS

**During Combat** Andora likes to roam the battlefield, sticking and moving. She casts *expeditious retreat* and *mirror image* before combat if possible, using the extra movement to prevent too many foes from closing on her. She casts *confusion* on other melee types to keep them disorganized and *silence* near spellcasters to thwart their efforts and push them closer to her so she can hit them with Spring Attack. She uses her bladethirst ability to give her rapier the keen enhancement for as long as possible.

STATISTICS

Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 16 Base Atk +5; CMB +7; CMD 19

Feats Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Disruptive, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perform [oratory]), Spring Attack Skills Acrobatics +12, Bluff +12, Disguise +10, Intimidate +10, Perception +10, Perform (oratory) +16, Sense Motive +6, Stealth +9 Languages Common, Elven SQ bardic performance 19 rounds/day (bladethirst +1, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2, rallying cry) Combat Gear +1 rapier, masterwork composite

shortbow (+1 Str) and 20 arrows, *elixir of hiding*, *elixir of tumbling*, *potion of bull's strength*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 4 smokesticks; **Other Gear** +1 *studded leather armor*, mwk darkwood buckler, silver unholy symbol, disguise kit, jewelry worth 100 gp.

The fifth daughter of a minor nobleman, Andora fled her home as soon as talk of an arranged marriage began. She lived by her wits, traveling with an acting troupe for a time, learning fencing and narration, and living a decadent and hedonistic life. After a scandalous affair with a married noble was discovered, she was imprisoned on trumped up charges. Her life in prison was rough, and she quickly grew jaded and hateful of those born into power. As luck would have it, a Doomspeaker was imprisoned with her. When his allies came to break him out, she made herself useful and was taken along, falling quickly into their depraved cult and learning their ways. As is her wont, Andora's schemes usually involve the downfall of the nobility, either by involving them in scandals or by straightforward assassination or kidnapping.

# Cult Activities and Adventure Hooks

Here are several methods of introducing the Doomspeakers as adversaries for the PCs in your campaign. They can be opponents for single adventures or returning enemies in an extended campaign, pitting the PCs against increasingly more powerful members of the cult as they do their demonic masters' wills and spread chaos and destruction throughout the land.

# APL 1-3

• Caravans crossing the great plains are not reaching their destination. PCs investigating the situation—perhaps joining a caravan as guards find themselves attacked by the walking dead, the



remnants of those lost in prior caravans. With a bit of luck or skill, the PCs can backtrack along their trail. In an old ruin on the plain, a member of the Doomspeakers placates his gnoll troopers with goods and food from the caravans while industriously reanimating the corpses of the fallen, sending them out to wander uncontrolled over the trade route in order to further disrupt trade. Should the PCs defeat the cleric and his gnoll troopers, they find among the cleric's possessions a book about unholy demonic texts, including one called *The Book of Nine Dooms*. That section has copious handwritten notes in the margins, including mention of a hidden settlement around a forgotten oasis deeper in the desert.

• Gnolls have been reported lurking in the ruins near an oasis on a busy trade route. The PCs are hired to scout the situation and roust the gnolls from the ruins if they believe they are able. The gnolls put up a fierce fight but flee after losing a third of their number. An exploration of the ruins reveals that the gnolls seemed intent on opening a sealed vault under the ruins of some large, important buildingperhaps a temple or civic building-too far gone to discern its exact purpose. Should the PCs commit to opening the vault, they find it a long and arduous process as the walls and door are strong, two feet of solid stone. The gnolls return during the process, attacking the PCs while they attempt to open the vault. Again, they flee if they lose half their numbers. Should the PCs enter the vault, they find a room filled with strange trappingsboxes containing crumbling incense and temple accouterments, a locked shrine, and a golden idol of an obviously demonic entity. It is up to the PCs what they wish to do with this discovery, but the remaining gnolls once again throw themselves at the party in a desperate last attempt to win the contents of the vault, fighting to the death. Should the PCs win, they can head back to civilization. However, these are evil artifacts that the gnolls are determined to retrieve. Whoever sent them scares them more than a party of stalwart adventurers.

• The PCs are hired as night watch for a rather strange museum exhibit. An eccentric collector of sculpture has acquired six statues of blue crystal, all done in the likeness of men and women in the throes of combat. She is keeping them on display in her public gallery while she attempts to research their origins, having bought them from a caravan master that claimed to have found them alongside the route he traveled to get to the city, simply sitting in the sand at the side of the trail. The collector is certain they are not of any local artisan, living or dead, that she knows. After the gallery closes for the evening, the place is invaded by gnolls. They attempt to get past the PCs and smash the statues, attacking PCs that interfere and fleeing back into the night after succeeding at their task (though some might take the time to grab a few portable valuables on the way out). Should the PCs capture any of the gnolls, they may discover through interrogation that the statues were once alive, turned to crystal by a powerful spell cast by a Doomspeaker. If the PCs manage to find a way to return the statues to flesh again, they find a party of competent adventurers who reward the PCs for their assistance and possibly recruit them in the crusade to root out the Doomspeakers and bring them to justice.

## APL 4-6

• Warring clans have caused a steady stream of refugees to flee westward away from the conflict. Many settlements are turning them away, afraid of overcrowding, food shortages, and disease. However, word is spreading among the tents of the refugee camps of a place of sanctuary. In the foothills of the mountains to the north, a valley settlement is sending out an open invitation to the refugees, promising food, shelter, and opportunity. However, a feverish, exhausted refugee arrives on the outskirts of a town the PCs are currently visiting. Before collapsing into unconsciousness, she mumbled a few cryptic words "Good Hope ... betrayed ... false friendship... everyone taken...". A brief investigation yields the information that Good Hope is the name of the community that is supposedly taking in refugees. Should the PCs investigate, they find a walled but peaceful looking community where the refugees are being tended. They camp outside the walls of the town awaiting their turn to be situated and helped in starting new lives. Overly curious visitors soon discover that the town is actually a cover for slavers working for the Doomspeakers, overseen by Skerresh the gnoll cleric and his band of gnolls hidden in a tunnel network beneath the town that they use to shuttle the new slaves out to buyers elsewhere. If the PCs win here, they attract the personal attention of Kolya the Ruined, who seeks revenge for this disruption of her work.

- A notorious rogue seeks to sell a tome to a spellcaster or religious figure in the party. He says he's nicked a powerful magical tome: The Book of the Nine Dooms. At first, he's rather cagey and wrangles for a good deal but soon becomes rather desperate to be rid of the book, his price dropping well below his original asking price. When the night of the meeting finally comes, the rogue is nervous and strange sounds in the night cause him to panic, thrusting the wrapped book into the hands of a PC and fleeing into the night. If they pursue, they come upon him as he's struck down by several dark-garbed figures. Should they see the packaged book in other hands, they target that person and any who assist. Should the PCs instead decide to leave with their new prize, they hear of the rogue's demise the following day. He apparently died of near-complete exsanguination from his eyes, ears, and mouth, found lying in a great pool of his own blood. The party eventually discovers that what they hold is not The Book of the Nine Dooms, but a copy. The Doomspeakers are still ready to slay anyone in their path to recover the book. What the PCs do with it is up to them. If they keep it, they are sure to become regular targets for assassins and agents of the Doomspeakers. Should they turn it over to the authorities or a temple, then it is safe for a while, until a daring raid causes it to return to the hands of the cult. If they destroy it, the Doomspeakers stop pressing them, but they mark them as enemies to be dealt with later.
- A wronged noble seeks out one of the PCs to be his champion in a duel of honor. He invites the other PCs to attend, expecting them to come along to the victory feast after their companion wins in the noble's name. Unfortunately for the noble, his entourage, and the PCs, the man who wronged him was not actually another noble, but Doomspeaker Andora Navarre in disguise. She takes advantage of her effrontery to lure the noble and his people to a remote location where her minions hide, ready to kill or capture everyone. What first appears to be honorable single combat soon turns into a desperate battle against a horde of evil with the PCs not only having to defend themselves, but also the noble and his entourage of courtiers and attendants.

# APL 7-9

- The centaurs of the plains are being much more aggressive against traveling humans. If the PCs manage to make contact without being attacked themselves, the centaurs demand that their leaders stop their raids on the centaur tribes, and they threaten outright war if this demand is not met immediately. Investigation leads to a group of Doomspeakers, disguised as soldiers from a nearby country, who are killing the centaurs to goad them into open warfare.
- The PCs discover a secret slave market in a city where such activity is outlawed. Interrogation of prisoners after breaking up the ring reveals that the slaves are being smuggled into the city via ship at regular intervals. If the PCs await the ship's next landing, they find a fierce Doomspeaker antipaladin and his scurvy cohorts ready to defend their living cargo, drugged and hidden in barrels marked as salt pork. They are not above distracting overly moral opponents by kicking barrels of enslaved folk overboard into the bay.
- The son of a local noblewoman, while traveling with a caravan to meet his bride and stay with her and her family for a month before their official betrothal, has been kidnapped after the caravan was attacked by gnoll raiders. The noblewoman learned of this from survivors of the attack. What concerns her is that the expected ransom demand hasn't been received. Fearing the worst, she hires the PCs to track down the raiders and rescue her son. Tracking the raiders to an ancient ruin deep in the desert, the PCs soon discover that the gnolls serve the Doomspeaker Gruulok, who intends to sacrifice the noble's son in an extravagant and extraordinarily cruel and bloody ritual in order to bind a demon to his service. The PCs should work to disrupt this ritual quickly, or they may not only face a powerful antipaladin, but also his new demonic ally.

# APL 10-12

• Seeking a challenge worthy of his might, Narn the Crucifier has set off on a rampage of historic carnage. He is making his way toward the coast, slaughtering caravans, wandering tribes, and settlements in his path, and leaving a trail of crosses hung with his dead and dying victims in his wake, a road of carnage to the sea, until he finds foes worthy to face him. The PCs are asked to take what may amount to a suicide mission in the hopes that, if they slay the Doomspeaker, his gnoll troops will scatter back to the plains and stop the mass slaughter.

• The PCs attend the memorial service of a wealthy guild merchant. The service is interrupted by the local constabulary, who accuse the merchant of conspiring with slavers. Damning evidence is presented, and the estates of the deceased merchant are seized by the crown. His wife begs the PCs to investigate the matter, to turn up anything that will clear her deceased husband of the charge so that she and her children will not be turned out in the street, or worse, found to be collaborators. If the PCs can convince the constables to cooperate, they can peruse the evidence and find the trail that leads them to the slavers. A group of Doomspeaker cultists, under the command of Kolya the Ruined, is in charge of the slaver operation. Defeating or driving off the Doomspeakers allows the party to gather evidence that the merchant was being

blackmailed into cooperating. While not clearing him of wrongdoing, it may be enough to convince the law to be more lenient in his case.

• People of importance throughout the realm are being assassinated. There seems to be no rhyme or reason to the choice of targets, save that they are all influential men and women-priests, nobles, wealthy merchants-and no two murders are alike. In fact, some feel there is no connection to them at all, that it is simply a rash of murders only coincidentally linked. A paranoid noble or a priest troubled by a premonition asks the PCs to stay close. Soon, the assassin shows, and it is none other than Narn the Crucifier. The Doomspeaker has recruited a wizard that has fashioned him new weapons, primal dooms, which he finds poetic as each target dies at the hands of their worst fears. Faced with the PCs, he uses his arsenal of items in rapid succession, leaving the PCs to face not only a powerful cultist, but creatures from their darkest nightmares.

# THE DOOMSPEAKERS IN MIDGARD

In the Southlands, the Doomspeakers recruit many of the gnolls of the Sarkland Desert to their cause, the gnolls drawn by their strength and the thought of easy conquest. While the Doomspeakers are universally despised by all peace-loving citizens of the Southlands, one name in particular inspires great fear and loathing: Narn the Crucifier. The antipaladin's depredations and atrocities have caused the sultana to declare him an enemy of the empire, promising great riches to the one that presents his head before her throne, and torturous death is guaranteed for any found aiding Narn in any way.

Narn's fellow antipaladin Gruulok avoids such powerful resistance. He sticks to raiding the caravans, wandering tribes, and occasional settlements in the vicinity of the Sarkland Desert. Despite this cautious outlook, Gruulok has his own ambitions, hoping his show of strength allows him to unite most, if not all, of the gnoll tribes in the area under his banner, providing a powerful enough force to safely move on larger targets, like the cities of Nuria Natal.

The Doomspeakers have a hidden temple or complex in the south that serves as their main base of operations and the resting place of *The Book of Nine*  *Dooms*. Some say it is hidden in ruins somewhere in the desert, others that it is hidden below ground in one of the cities in Nuria Natal, perhaps Per-Bastet or the City of Scorpions. Another theory says it actually lies in a sea cave on one of the islands off the southern coast of the Mharoti Empire. Wherever they lair, the Doomspeakers have proven a threat to all civilized areas in the Southlands, even daring to challenge the might of the Dragon Empire.

The Doomspeakers also have a presence on the Rothenian Plain. Some say they lair in caves under Demon Mountain by permission of the Master of the Mountain. Others claim they lurk in the forests north of the plain. Here, like in the Southlands, they also avail themselves of the local gnolls as troops, using them to bring grief to all residents of the plain centaurs, huginn, kariv—through raids, pillaging, and enslavement. In particular, Kolya the Ruined, and her lieutenant, the aged priest Skerr'esh, are fond of enslaving the plainsfolk. Kolya fancies kariv slaves in particular; it amuses her to end family bloodlines by tying them to one place and allowing the kariv curse to take effect.

# NEW MAGIC

Doom rings out from the Abyss to mortal lands. It seeps into all that it touches.

# New MAGIC ITEMS

Fear. Destruction. Violence. These are the aspects nurtured in the favored implements of those that revel in spreading doom.

#### **BONE WHIP**

Aura strength type; CL 9th Slot none; Price 14,305 gp; Weight 3 lb.

## DESCRIPTION

This whip is constructed of humanoid vertebrae, their edges magically sharpened and pointed, joined together in a single, coiled line by strands of blackened steel wire. The handle is half a femur wrapped in soft leather of tanned human skin. This weapon functions as a +1 conductive scorpion whip. In addition, once a day on a successful attack, the wielder can affect the target with an enervation effect, bestowing 1d4 negative levels on the target. For every negative level afflicted on the target, the wielder of the *bone whip* gains 5 temporary hit points and a +1 profane bonus to damage rolls for 1 minute. **CONSTRUCTION** 

Requirements Craft Magic Arms and Armor, enervation, inflict light wounds; Cost 7,305 gp

#### **PRIMAL DOOM**

Aura strong conjuration and transmutation; CL 12th Slot none; Price 14,400 gp; Weight 3 lb.

#### DESCRIPTION

Each *primal doom* appears to be a globe of crystal or glass with a murky liquid or smoke churning within. The wielder of the *primal doom* chooses a target and hurls the globe at it. Upon breaking, the contents of the globe, the dark, primal essence of the Abyss itself, escapes, latching onto the mind of the target and forming itself into a fiendish creature based on the darkest fears of the target. For example, if a target is afraid of spiders and fire, the *primal doom* fashions itself into a fiendish giant spider with flaming mandibles.

The casting of a *primal doom* and formation of a creature from its contents is a full round action. The target creature is allowed a Will save to avoid this psychic dredging of its mind (DC 20). If the target's

saving throw is successful, the form of the doom cannot be of a higher CR than its HD–2. However, if the target fails the save, then the doom forms a creature equal to the target's HD.

The GM is encouraged to come up with creative and frightening creatures to be created from this item, taking existing monsters and giving them unique and interesting abilities.

#### CONSTRUCTION

Requirements Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph*, *summon monster VI*, creator must be a Doomspeaker; Cost 7,200 gp

# NEW SPELL

All that live must die. Magic simply speeds up the process.

### DOOM OF ANCIENT DECREPITUDE

School necromancy; Level antipaladin 4, druid/ shaman 5, oracle 5 Casting Time 1 standard action Components V, S, DF Range personal (aura) Target 20 ft. radius around caster Duration 1 round/level Saving Throw Fort, see text; Spell Resistance yes

You generate an entropic field that rapidly ages you and anyone in the area of effect. On the first round, anyone within the area of effect must make a Fortitude saving throw. The caster of the spell gains a +2 profane bonus to his saving throws against the spell. Failure indicates that the creature has advanced to middle age, suffering a decrease to its physical statistics (-1 to Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution) but none of the benefits. A successful saving throw staves off the aging effects, but each round a creature remains in the area, it must make another saving throw.

On a second failed save, the creature advances to old age, reducing its physical statistics by 2. A third failed save advances the creature to venerable age, reducing physical statistics by 3.

Any further rounds continue to age a creature, causing physical disabilities as it continues to advance in age. Roll 1d4 for effect: 1—blindness, 2 deafness, 3—reduced mobility (reduce all movement speeds by 10 ft.), 4—dementia (treat target as confused for the duration of the spell). Consider each round past the third within the field as aging the target another 10 years. A creature aged to the limit of its lifespan dies. Once the spell ends, or a target leaves the area of effect, an affected creature's age begins to revert to normal, removing one round's worth of effects for every round outside the spell's area of effect. Any creatures killed by the spell's effects remain dead, however. Since they died of old age, they cannot be returned to life with anything less than a *wish* or *miracle*.

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