



COMPLEAT ENCOUNTER

SET ONE

DARK ELF SANCTUM

A 9TH-LEVEL ADVENTURE SCALABLE TO ALL LEVELS OF PLAY

WAYNE REYNOLDS • MIKE MEARLS • NEIL MCKENZIE • CHRISTOPHER WEST

In a darkened chamber deep below the sunlit world, a diabolical dark elf priestess weaves rhymes of magic over an ancient portal arch. What foul entity answers her summons, and what will happen when it emerges into the world of man?

This Compleat Encounter features three lead-free pewter miniatures suitable for use in any fantasy roleplaying game. 10 double-sided full-color cards provide a complete map of the Dark Elf Sanctum scaled for miniatures play, an adventure that uses the miniatures provided in this set, and complete statistics for the enemies and magic items encountered within. All game rules adhere to the Open Game Licensed version of the world's most popular roleplaying game.

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COMPLEAT ENCOUNTER

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DARK ELF SANCTUM

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ANY SETTING • MID-LEVEL (9TH–11TH) • SUBTERRANEAN

The dark elf cleric Sarthessa Zyltaris plans to use an evil artifact, the *dread portal of the maw*, to sow hatred and suspicion in the sunlit realms of the overworld. She hopes that her efforts lead to the eruption of a full-scale war. With the surface kingdoms at each other's throats, she and her followers plan to surge up from the depths and defeat them. Brave heroes must venture deep into the earth, find her hidden sanctum, and defeat her before her plan comes to its dreadful fruition.

This Compleat Encounter uses the information found on the maps and data cards in this set to create a mini-adventure. The cards include information and

game rules for the dark elf cleric Sarthessa Zyltaris, the brutish horned demon that acts as her bodyguard, and two new artifacts that Sarthessa controls, the *dagger of veils* and the *dread portal of the maw*. You'll need the cards for the relevant game rule information when running this encounter. See Card 4 for tips on how to scale this adventure to a variety of character levels.

Although the miniatures, maps, and plots in this Compleat Encounter can be used with any fantasy roleplaying game, the rules included herein are compatible with the Open Game Licensed version of the world's most popular RPG. You can download a copy of those rules at dzosrd.org.

USING THIS COMPLEAT ENCOUNTER

Sarthessa Zyltaris's background (Card 6) describes her basic plan against the surface world. The characters could become embroiled in this plot in a number of ways. They might find one of her agents, a doppelganger or dark elf spy, and uncover evidence of her plot in his belongings and gear. A cleric, druid, or paladin in the party might receive a divine vision of the terrible destruction that Sarthessa plans to unleash. The character's vision could lead him to the hidden sanctum where Sarthessa makes her preparations.

Alternatively, if you simply need a quick adventure for the characters, they might find a map or similar obvious clue that leads them directly to Sarthessa's lair.

The description of the sanctum is meant to include enough detail and ideas that you can use it as the setting of any other adventure involving dark elves. If the party is too low level to defeat Sarthessa, you can

still use the sanctum as the lair for any dark elf villain in your campaign, and the miniatures provided in this set can likewise serve as less-powerful foes.

DARK ELF SANCTUM ENCOUNTER KEY

The dark elf sanctum is a small temple nestled in a forgotten corner of the subterranean depths. The hidden passages that lead to it typically require Search checks (DC 20) to discover. While a skilled rogue can locate a hidden passage, finding the specific section of cavern wall to search is no easy feat. A DC 25 Survival check made by a character with the Track feat uncovers signs of the dark elves' passage through the hidden tunnels.

The passages to the sanctum are 10 feet wide and up to 20 feet tall. Large monstrous spiders watch the tunnels, ready to catch prey in their webs and pounce upon them from above.

- **Large monstrous spiders (8):** hp 22; MM p. 288.

The cavern that hosts the sanctum is roughly 90 feet wide, 60 feet long, and 30 feet tall, with smooth walls, floor, and ceiling. The sanctum has 20-foot-tall walls. Dark elf wizards created the cavern with the use of *disintegrate* spells, while the sanctum was built with materials transported here via magical means.

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GENERAL TRAITS

The sanctum has the following features. All spell effects have caster level 20th unless otherwise noted.

Alarm: All of the outer doors bear a permanent *alarm* set to deliver a mental alert to the temple's high priestess when they are opened.

Glyphs of Warding: The three entrances to the sanctum are guarded by *glyphs of warding* (caster level 10th) set to allow only dark elves to pass unharmed. The exterior door leading to area 5 is set to discharge against anyone other than the high priestess or those she accompanies.

Unhallow: The sanctum is warded by this spell, cast by a 20th-level cleric. *Dimensional anchor* has been set as the *unhallow's* spell effect.

Veil of Secrecy: The sanctum is protected by a permanent *false vision* that makes the sanctum appear as an empty, long-abandoned cave.

The doors of this place are made from a smooth, black stone. The walls are made from a similar material, though they are streaked with veins of bright, crimson red in a vaguely spider web pattern. The walls are doors are magically reinforced.

Locks: The exterior doors bear high-quality (DC 30) locks.

Walls: Hardness 10, 170 hit points.

Doors: Hardness 10, 170 hit points, break DC 35.

1. ENTRY CHAMBER (EL 8)

A luxurious, soft rug covers the floor here, stretching from the black, stone double doors to a lowered section of the floor. Flickering, ghostly lights flutter in the air ahead of you. Their radiance reflects off a rippling pool of dark liquid below them. They cast cold light that seems to not so much illuminate this chamber as generate a multitude of shifting, threatening shadows along the walls.

The entry chamber is typically used to welcome visitors. Metal racks for weapons, cloaks, and so forth line the walls. Only priestesses of the dark elves' monstrous spider goddess are allowed to bear weapons in the sanctum.

A greater shadow lurks here, charged with guarding both sets of double doors that lead to this area. It attacks anyone who enters the sanctum without a dark elf accompanying them.

- **Greater Shadow:** 58 hp; MM p. 221.

2. UNHOLY POOL (EL 6)

Three fist-sized ghostly lights float above this pool of dark, reddish liquid. The pool occasionally bubbles and ripples, as if something stirs within. Four statues stand in the corner of this chamber, each facing the pool. The statues depict female dark elf warriors arrayed in plate armor and holding large, leaden maces in two hands.

To the west of the pool stands an angular, metal arch. Dozens of tooth-like spikes cover its inner surface, while runes cover its sides. A metal skull, carved into the arch's mid-point leers at you.

The pool contains the mingled blood of elves, humans, dwarves, and other creatures sacrificed within the sanctum. It is 10 feet deep. The flow of magic deep within its structure causes the fluid to bubble and ripple. Blood from victims slain in area 3 is magically transported to this well.

The four statues animate and attack if a non-dark elf steps into the lowered area around the pool. They are size Medium animated objects with hardness 5. They fight with two-handed maces that inflict 2d6 damage. As the animated statues move to attack, they let out a great, metallic shriek that alerts the temple's occupants. The toothy arch is actually the *dread portal of the maw*, a minor artifact described on Card 10.

- **Animated Objects, Medium (4):** 31 hp, hardness 5; MM p. 13.

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3. ELDRITCH CIRCLE

A strange, glowing sigil is carved into the floor here. It casts a dim, purple light. Streaks of radiant energy run through its intricate pattern. Every few seconds, the symbol seems to throb with energy that causes its light to slightly flare before dimming once again.

This strange symbol serves as the location for the grim sacrifices offered to the spider goddess. Any humanoid slain here shrivels into a dried husk as its blood and other fluids are transported into the pool at area 2.

The circle's purple light has a strange effect on any non-dark elf that ventures within 5 feet of it. Such creatures must make Will saves (DC 20) or be dazed for 1d3 rounds by the beguiling lights.

If any non-dark elf moves past or through the symbol, any dark elf clerics in the sanctum immediately become aware of their presence as per the *alarm* spell.

4. IDOL OF THE SPIDER GODDESS (CEL II)

The great statue of a spider dominates this end of the sanctum. Carved from black rock and mounted atop a red, stone altar, it glares at you with a dozen crimson, twinkling jeweled eyes. East of the statue rises a stone platform with two low sets of steps to the north and south.

The statue of the spider goddess is the center of this unholy place. If it is destroyed, the magical effects described under General Traits come to an end. The symbol in area 3 winks out of existence, allowing any dazed characters to immediately recover their wits. The pool in area 2 drains completely, while the animated statues collapse into rubble.

Destroying the statue is no easy task. It has 100 hit points and Hardness 8. In addition, anyone who strikes it is cursed by the spider goddess, suffering a -4 penalty on all saves against spider poison. Spiders gain a +4 bonus on attacks against such creatures. The curse persists for one year and a day.

The twelve gems in the spider idol's eyes are worth 1,000 gp each.

A horned demon, summoned by Sarthessa Zyltaris via the *dread portal of the maw*, lurks on the platform to the east of the statue. It uses its spells to ready itself before charging into the battle.

- **Horned demon:** hp 138; Card 8.

5. PRIESTESS'S BED CHAMBER (CEL II)

A large, luxuriant bed dominates this chamber. It is covered with purple silk sheets, three large pillows, and several fine blankets. An armoire against the eastern wall stands open, displaying a colorful variety of fashionable dresses from both under and surface world cultures. Aside from this chamber's location deep beneath the earth, and the great holy symbol of the spider goddess hanging above the bed and the metal rack for armor and weapons to the west, this place could easily be the bedchamber of a prosperous young noblewoman or merchant princess.

Sarthessa Zyltaris uses this chamber as her private residence. While elves do not need to sleep, the priestess requires quiet and privacy to meditate on the mysteries of the spider goddess and engage in private discussion with visiting nobles, warriors, and planar beings. Visiting priestesses and acolytes of the sanctum rest on the floor of area 4. No visitors are currently present, but a surprise drop-in from a raksasha (MM p. 211) might enliven an encounter that has run out of steam.

Ownership of this bedchamber is a tangible expression of the high priestess's power and privilege. Among dark elf clerics, the phrase "taking the bed

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chamber" is a euphemism for murdering the high priestess of a temple and seizing her position.

Given the murderous rivalries amongst dark elf clerics, this chamber is heavily protected. The exterior door bears a *glyph of warding* (as described above under general traits).

The interior door is locked (DC 30) and trapped with a *glyph of warding* (caster level 10th) set to activate against anyone other than the high priestess or those in her company.

Sarthessa spends most of her time in this chamber, though she moves to help her minions deal with any attackers as soon as she receives any sort of warning. If the PCs barge into this room from outside, she retreats to area 4 and organizes her defense there.

- **Sarthessa Zyltaris:** 80 hp; Card 6.



CONCLUDING THE ENCOUNTER

With Sarthessa defeated, the PCs have made a significant dent in local dark elf politics. New enemies and allies might creep from the darkness. The matron of another dark elf noble house might offer unthinkable riches if the party can wipe out another dark elf rival, while members of the Zyltaris Clan might hound the PCs with paid assassins or summoned demons hungry for retribution. Lastly, there is the matter of the *dagger of veils* and the *dread portal of the maw*, both of which are sought after by legions of hideous creatures from the lightless depths of the subterranean realm. The assault on the Dark Elf Sanctum may have started as a simple side-quest, but ramifications from the encounter will follow the PCs for much of their careers.

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

In place of the guardians listed in the area descriptions, the sanctum can feature different mixes of monsters to accommodate different party levels.

Beginning Parties (Levels 1–4): Area 1: ghoul; area 2: 1 Medium animated object; area 4: gems worth 100 gp each, gargoyle.

Low-Level Parties (Levels 5–8): Area 1: umber hulk zombie; area 2: 3 Medium animated objects; area 4: gems worth 500 gp each, shield guardian.

High-Level Parties (Levels 13–16): Area 1: glabrezu; area 2: 4 Medium animated objects; area 4: gems worth 1,000 gp each, greater stone golem.

Heroic Parties (Levels 17–20): Area 1: marilith; area 2: 4 Medium animated objects; area 4: gems worth 2,000 gp each, balor.

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SARTHESSA ZYLтарIS

Ambitious, amoral, and cunning, Sarthessa Zyltaris navigated the treacherous sisterhood of the spider goddess with unmatched political skill. She betrayed her mistress to a rival faction, only to turn against these rivals and defeat them while they were still weakened from the struggle. When the dust settled, Sarthessa was the only cleric of any power left standing. In time, she used similar tactics to work her way up the temple hierarchy. Time and again, Sarthessa turned her enemies against each other, leaving her to swoop in and claim ultimate victory when they were left battered and exhausted from the conflict.

Currently, Sarthessa is engaged in her riskiest venture to date. She recently acquired both a *dagger of veils* and a *dread portal of the maw*, two powerful icons of the spider goddess. As a sign of the goddess's favor, she has also received the services of a horned demon as a bodyguard. With these resources, she aims to start a war on the surface world that will pave the way for the dark elves to re-conquer what was once theirs. She plans to open gates using the *dread portal* within several human cities. In the aftermath of the attacks, her agents will plant false clues that a neighboring realm created the gates. Once war erupts, Sarthessa plans to sweep in with her own followers and conquer both lands.

Sarthessa Zyltaris, female dark elf cleric 10: CR 11; Medium humanoid (elf); HD 10d8+20; hp 80; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21 (+1 Dex, +9 armor, +1 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 12; Base Atk +7; Grp +8; Atk *Dagger of veils* +9 melee (1d4+1 and blood drain, see weapon's description); Full Atk *Dagger of veils* +9/+4 melee (1d4+1 and blood drain, see weapon's description); SA Spells, spontaneous *infect*; SQ Darkvision 120 ft., SR 21, +2 Will vs. spells and spell-like abilities, light blindness, rebuke undead; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 19, Wis 20, Cha 17.

Skills: Bluff +16, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +18, Hide +14, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Spellcraft +17.

Feats: Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Feint, Weapon Focus (dagger).

Languages: Common, Abyssal, Elven, Draconic, Dwarf, Infernal, Undercommon.

Spell-Like Abilities: 1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*. Caster level 10th.

Cleric Spells Prepared (caster level 10; 6/6+1/5+1/4+1/4+1/3+1): 0—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *virtue*; 1st—*bane* (DC 16), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 16), *magic weapon* (d), *obscuring mist*, *sanctuary* (DC 16), *shield of faith*; 2nd—*aid*, *bear's endurance*, *bull's strength*, *cure moderate wounds*, *hold person* (DC 17), *invisibility* (d); 3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility purge*, *magic vestment* (d); 4th—*confusion* (DC 19, d), *cure critical wounds*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *giant vermin*; 5th—*flame strike* (DC 20, d), *greater command* (DC 20), *righteous might*, *wall of stone*.



Domains: Deception, War.

Possessions: *Dagger of veils*, +1 *shadow full plate*, holy symbol of the spider goddess, *headdress of the gate*, *cloak of resistance* +2, *pearl of power* (2nd level), *amulet of natural armor* +1.

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DEMON, HORNE

Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil)

Hit Dice: 12d10+72 (138 hp)

Initiative: +1

Speed: 30 ft. (6 squares)

Armor Class: 25 (+1 Dex, +14 natural), touch 11, flat-footed 24

Base Attack/Grapple: +12/+16

Attack: Claw +16 melee (1d8+4) or gore +16 melee (1d6+6)

Full Attack: 2 claws +16 melee (1d8+4) and bite +14

melee (1d6+2) and gore +14 melee (1d6+2)

Space/Reach: 5 feet/5 feet

Special Attacks: Belt of the coven, horns, powerful charge 2d6+6,

Special Qualities: DR 10/good, SR 22

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +9, Will +11

Abilities: Str 19, Dex 13, Con 22, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 15

Skills: Climb +19, Intimidate +17, Jump +19, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Listen +18,

Search +17, Spellcraft +17, Spot +18, Tumble +16

Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Bull Rush,

Improved Disarm, Multiattack, Power Attack

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary or patrol (2–9)

Challenge Rating: 11

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: 13–18 (Large); 19–24 (Huge)

Level Adjustment: +6

A horned demon is a hulking, muscled beast with four long, fierce horns sweeping back from its skull and similar bone structures along its forearms. It wears a belt imbued with the souls of three evil spellcasters. These villains speak to the demon and provide it with counsel in battle. When the demon faces an opponent, the spellcasters lend their arcane power to its efforts, blasting its foes with spells or enhancing its efforts with support spells.

COMBAT

In battle, the horned demon lunges toward the nearest target with a bloodthirsty abandon. The coven trapped within its belt uses its spells to the best of its ability. Typically, the coven uses *shield* and *mage armor* to leave the demon invulnerable to most attacks. It then either follows up with *bull's strength* if the demon faces a tough foe, or picks off the demon's opponents with *magic missile* and *lightning bolt*.

Belt of the Coven (Su): A horned demon wears a demonskin belt and loincloth set with three metal disks, each with a humanoid face carved up on it. In addition to the horned demon's normal actions, each of these faces is an intelligent creature. A horned demon somehow separated from its belt has Intelligence 6, Wisdom 8, and Charisma 5. The three souls bound within the belt are spellcasters charged with directing the demon and providing it magical support.

Each round, one of the three faces can cast a single spell as a free action. The spell must be cast with a standard, move, or free action for the belt to use it in this manner. The belt has the casting ability of a sorcerer with half the horned demon's HD as its caster level (typically

resulting in caster level 6th). The belt uses the demon's attributes, attack bonus, and all other relevant data when using its spells, such as touch attack bonus. The demon acts as the spell's caster for purposes of determining line of effect, targets, and so forth. Using spells in this manner does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Typical Sorcerer Spells Known (cast 6/7/6/3): 0—*acid splash* (ranged touch +13), *arcane mark*, *daze* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue* (touch +13); 1st—*jump*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *spider climb*; 3rd—*lightning bolt* (DC 15).

Horns (Ex): The long, sharp horns that run along the demon's arms allow it to disarm its opponents with greater ease. It catches a weapon in the gap between its arm and the horn and yanks the weapon away from its opponent. It gains a +2 bonus on all attack rolls made to disarm an opponent.

In addition, the tough horn covering on the demon's claws increases its claw damage from the standard 1d6 for Medium creatures to 1d8.

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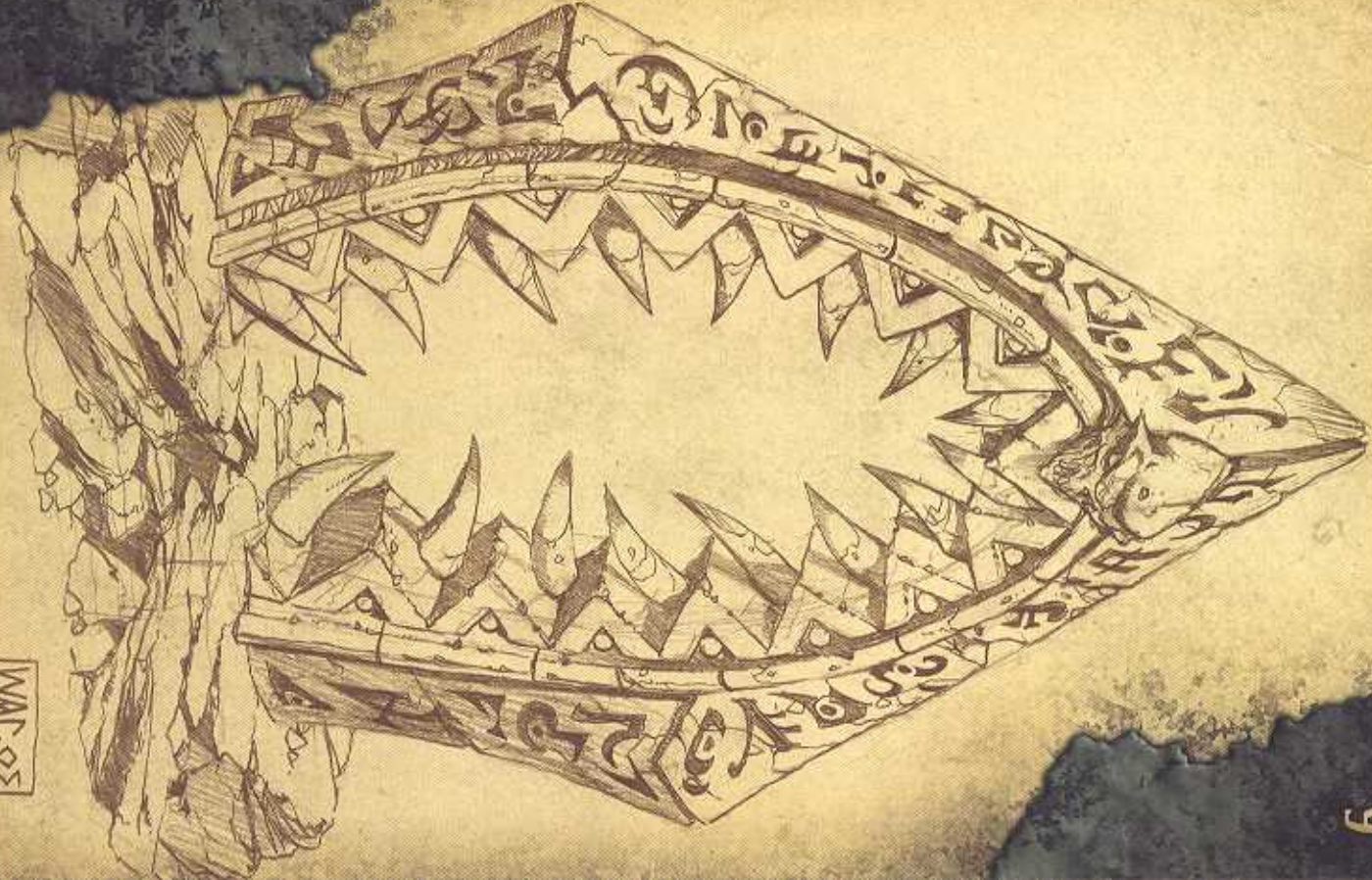
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NEW MINOR ARTIFACTS

The new magic items on this card play an important role in the Dark Elf Sanctum Compleat Encounter, and could have a lasting impact upon your campaign. Be sure to review this card before you start the adventure.

Dagger of Veils: This long, silver weapon curves slightly back toward its wielder. Its fluted blade glistens in the light. The *dagger of veils* is a +1 weapon with several additional powers. The *Annals of Arachnadia* record the existence of 12 such weapons, and it is said that the spider goddess rewards them to her most faithful clerics.

When the dagger strikes a living opponent, it drains blood from him and uses it to generate a variety of magical effects. When used within a temple of the spider goddess (including the Dark Elf Sanctum detailed in this Compleat Encounter), the dagger gains one charge per successful melee attack. As a free action once per round, the dagger's wielder can summon evil outsiders to aid him using the dagger's charges. A charge remains in the dagger for 1 hour before it dissipates. Summoned creatures remain for 10 minutes before disappearing. They appear in a space or spaces of the caster's choice within a range of 100 feet.

CHARGES	SPELL
1	1d3 Medium fiendish monstrous spiders
3	1d3 dretches
5	1d3 Large fiendish monstrous spiders
7	1 vrock
9	1 bebilith or hezrou

The *dagger of veils* is a religious icon of the spider goddess. Only those capable of casting divine spells bestowed by that deity can use the dagger's abilities. All others suffer 1d6 damage per round that they hold the dagger. Any Use Magic Device checks made to activate the dagger's powers suffer a –20 penalty. Furthermore, there is a cumulative 5% chance with each check that the spider goddess notices this heretical transgression and takes her revenge. She destroys the dagger and casts a divine spell of 7th level or lower (DM's choice) upon the transgressor. The save DC against this spell is 16 + the spell's level, and it is targeted on the dagger's user and only the dagger's user.

If a good- or neutral-aligned party of adventurers destroys the *dagger*—it can be sundered as normal by a magical weapon—they gain XP for defeating a CR 8 creature. The heavenly lords reward them for destroying this fell artifact.

Strong conjuration; CL 20th; Weight 2 lbs.

Dread Portal of the Maw: This iron artifact consists of an angular arch with dozens of teeth-like spikes along its inner surface. A leering stone skull is carved at the peak of the arch, while runes cover its outer surface. This powerful item is a favored tool of dark mages and evil clerics, as it allows them to call powerful monsters from the outer planes to do their bidding.



Each *dread portal* is linked to a single *headdress of the gate*. Any evil character that wears this item can use the *dread portal* to call evil outsiders to help her. If the *headdress*'s wearer summons a creature using a spell, magic item, supernatural, or spell-like ability, she can opt to channel the creature through the *dread portal*. If she does so, the creature gains a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution.

The *dread portal*'s true power is its ability to open gateways between areas in the material world and the hellish outer planes, allowing demons and devils to rampage across the world. The portal's user can open a portal at any point within 100 miles of the *dread portal* by sacrificing 50 HD worth of intelligent, good creatures to it. In this manner, an evil spellcaster can unleash an army of outsiders upon his enemies. Up to 500 evil outsiders of various sizes and types pour through the gate and rampage across the area. They remain for 1 hour, long enough to wreak serious damage. The *dread portal* can be used in this manner once per year.

Strong conjuration; CL 20th; Weight 200 lbs.

