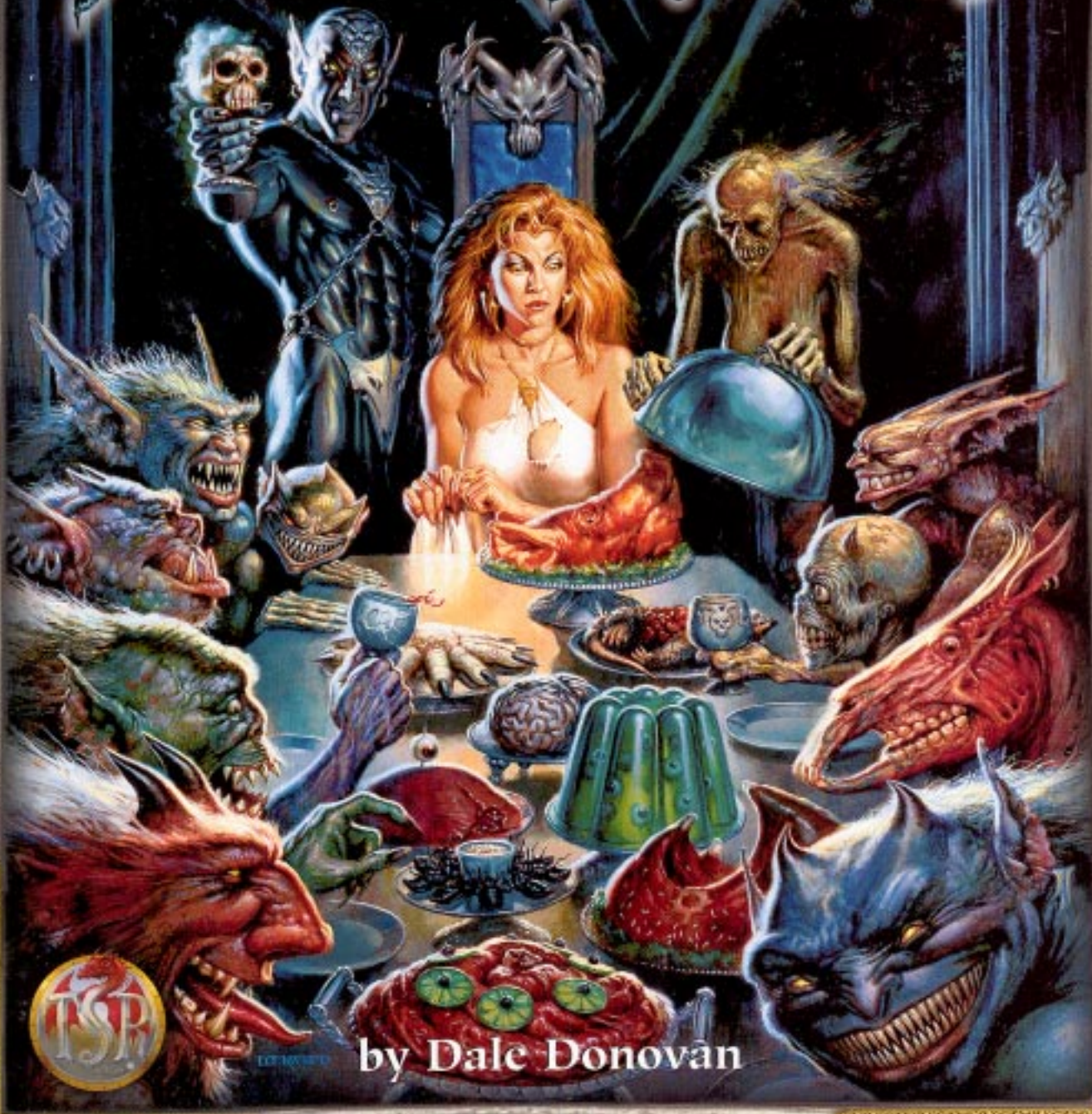


# FORGOTTEN REALMS

ADVENTURE

FOR SIX TO EIGHT CHARACTERS OF LEVELS 10-12

# FOR DUTY & DEFTY



by Dale Donovan

# Advanced Dungeons & Dragons®



## For Duty & Deity

by Dale Donovan

### CONTENTS

<b>Introduction</b> .....	2	Power Keys .....	27
Background .....	3	Magical Items .....	28
Plot Synopsis .....	5	The Demons .....	28
DM's Notes .....	5		
<i>Tales from the Infinite Staircase</i> .....	5	<b>Into the Abyss</b> .....	29
<b>Call of the Lost Goddess</b> .....	6	Welcoming Committee .....	29
Getting the PCs Involved .....	7	The Home of Evil .....	31
Option #1: Holy Summons .....	7	Graz'zt's Master Plan .....	33
Option #2: In the Neighborhood .....	7	Samora .....	34
Option #3: Planewalking .....	8	A Tour of Samora .....	35
The City of Coin .....	9	Opportunities .....	39
Silverale Hall .....	10	Zrintor, the Viper Forest .....	40
Goldspires .....	10	The Wanderer .....	42
Opportunities .....	14	Opportunities .....	43
<b>The Infinite Staircase</b> .....	15	Zelatar .....	43
The House of the Moon .....	15	A Tour of Zelatar .....	44
Rules of the Staircase .....	17	Opportunities .....	48
The Lillendi .....	17	<b>Finale</b> .....	50
Staircase Specifics .....	18	Option #1: The Caravan .....	51
Traveling the Staircase .....	18	Option #2: Samora .....	53
Encounters on the Stair .....	19	The Rescue .....	53
Landings and Doors .....	19	Victory? .....	55
On the Stair .....	20	Consequences .....	56
Along the Road .....	20	The Outlands and Home .....	56
Opportunities .....	22	Thraxxia and her Revenge .....	58
<b>Surviving the Abyss</b> .....	23	If the PCs Failed .....	58
Rules of the Abyss .....	23	<b>Monster Pages</b> .....	59
Wizard Magic in the Abyss .....	24	Graz'zt .....	59
Spell Keys .....	26	Lillend .....	61
Priest Magic .....	26	Viper Tree .....	63

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**Special Thanks to:** the Prepress group of Wizards of the Coast, Julia Martin and Eric Boyd for all their wonderful work on the gods; Wolfgang Baur, for his "inspired" work on the Abyss; Thomas Reid, a fearless leader who ascended (like unto a god) to the AD&D® Core group; and Monte Cook and Skip Williams, for sharing ideas and for letting me borrow a few.

**Dedicated to** Jim, Tim, Leon, and Lester: dear friends all, regardless of distance.

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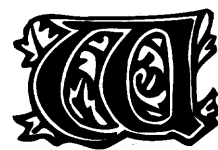
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# Introduction

*"Waukeen. . .dead? No, comrade. Though even gods may die, if the Merchant's Friend had passed onto the Astral, I would know of it. The Golden Lady is but on a Great Caravan, and her coin shall turn up again soon enow. Meanwhile, the Regent keeps watch on the Counting House and grunts us hope that the Golden Lady shall render to us profit for our faith in her and in her chosen Regent."*

*— Holycoin Voice of the Lady Tharundar Olehm, Goldspires, Athkatla*



Welcome to *For Duty & Deity*, an adventure that will take high-level FORGOTTEN REALMS® characters far beyond their familiar home of Toril to the infinite layers of the Abyss. There they must rescue the imprisoned Faerûnian goddess of trade, Waukeen, from the clutches of the demon lord Graz'zt. Then, of course, they must escape from the Abyss, likely with various demons—or tanar'ri, as they are known on the planes—in hot pursuit. If they succeed, they will have the gratitude of a goddess; if they fail, their bodies and minds will become the playthings of Graz'zt. A quick death in battle may be the least unpleasant outcome the characters can hope for in the latter circumstances.

This adventure differs in several ways from standard Realms adventures and therefore requires more explanation than such adventures. With the exception of the opening scene, the events of this scenario do not occur on the planet Abeir-Toril, or even on the Prime Material Plane. Characters will be introduced to the concept of the plane-spanning Infinite Staircase and use it to reach the Abyss. The Infinite Staircase appears not only in this adventure but also in the PLANESCAPE® adventure anthology *Tales from the Infinite Staircase* (TSR 2632), by Monte Cook.

Unlike the linked FORGOTTEN REALMS scenario *Castle Spulzeer* (TSR 9544) and the RAVENLOFT® adventure *The Forgotten Terror* (TSR 9537), the *Tales* anthology of adventures and this product are not literal crossover products. The two products do not directly affect or interact with each other. They are complimentary, however. While enough information is presented here on the Infinite Staircase to allow the Realms characters to use it to reach the Abyss (and, hopefully, to return therefrom), the full wonders of the Staircase can be found only in the *Tales* product. Those groups intrigued by the Staircase concept are encouraged to seek out and use the scenarios and plots in that book and adapt them for use. Even though the *Tales* anthology suggests characters of levels notably lower than those required for this adventure, bear in mind that the average Realms character may not possess the same degree of knowledge that an experienced planewalker character might. Thus, the extra spells, hit points, and so on of the higher-level Realms characters used here could come in handy.





Furthermore, while this adventure takes place on the Outer Planes—in the Abyss, to be exact—*For Duty & Deity* is not a PLANESCAPE adventure. Though it uses many of the rules that the PLANESCAPE accessories have established for running adventures on other planes of existence, this remains a scenario that involves prime-material characters and a prime-material point of view. (If PLANESCAPE groups wish to use this adventure, a brief alternate beginning is presented as part of the next chapter, “Call of the Lost Goddess.”) The relevant statistics for all creatures and conditions encountered are presented within the adventure itself, including MC-style entries on three especially significant creatures. Though other accessories are not necessary for play, DMs who wish for further information can find more details on the Abyss in the PLANESCAPE boxed set *Planes & Chaos*. Also, most of the creatures found in this adventure are located in one of the two PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® appendices (TSR 2602 and 2613, respectively).

This adventure is meant to be epic in scale, much more so than its relatively slim size would indicate. Your FORGOTTEN REALMS characters will attempt to rescue a goddess from her imprisonment by an Abyssal lord! Despite the fact that Waukeen’s current status is only that of an extremely powerful and knowledgeable mortal, she and Graz’zt are still likely the two most potent beings your game’s characters have yet met (such luminaries as Elminster notwithstanding). In an effort to magnify the scope of this adventure (and provide extended play possibilities), a few brief sections entitled “Opportunities” appear at intervals where the DM can take the given information and expand the adventure in her own way for her own campaign. Not only do these Opportunities serve to expand the scope of the adventure, but they also allow the DM to personalize the adventure for her unique campaign.

Finally, this adventure was designed to be highly dangerous to the characters. The Abyss is counted as one of the most hazardous places in the multiverse. However, this adventure is not intended as an excuse to kill the PCs; with a little careful planning, any group can survive the adventure and complete the quest.

## Background

**F**or *Duty & Deity* involves the plight of Waukeen, the goddess of trade, money, and wealth, and the

player characters’ attempt to rescue her. The full story of how Waukeen came to be in her current predicament goes back over a dozen years, to the time commonly referred to as the Time of Troubles. The events of this time, and those subsequent, are summarized below.

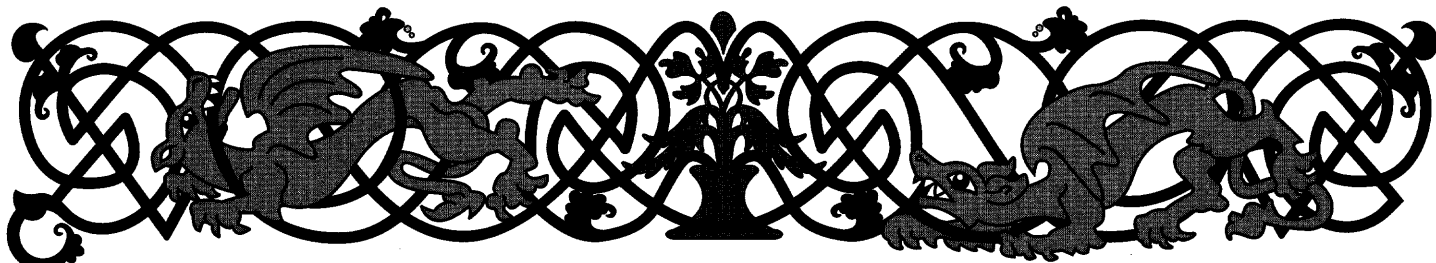
The Time of Troubles occurred in the summer and fall of the year 1358 Dalereckoning (DR). During this time, the overgod Ao discovered that one or more of the Faerûnian gods had stolen the mystical *Tablets of Fate*. As a punishment, Ao banished the gods from their home planes, exiled them to the world of Toril, and forced them to take mortal avatar forms until the *Tablets of Fate* were found and returned. These events resulted in the deaths of four gods and the ascension of two mortals to take their places in the pantheon. Repercussions of these events are still being felt over a decade later,

When the *Tablets* were returned and Ao allowed the gods to regain their true forms and homes on the planes, Waukeen did not return. Until the events of this adventure—which takes place late in the year 1370 DR—no one knew exactly what had happened to Waukeen. Many mortals believed her dead. Their suspicions were seemingly confirmed in 1365 DR, when a prophet of the goddess Lliira appeared before each of Waukeen’s temples in turn. She pronounced that Lliira, the Goddess of Joy and the Mistress of Revels, would hereafter answer the prayers of and supply spells to the worshipers of Waukeen. The priestess offered no information on Waukeen’s disposition or possible death.

Like all the Faerûnian powers, the goddess Waukeen had indeed been confined to an avatar form on Toril during the Time of Troubles. Also like the other powers, she wanted nothing more than to return to her realm on the Outlands, the Marketplace Eternal. While wandering Toril, Waukeen encountered the avatar of Lliira. The two goddesses had been on good terms previously and they saw no reason to change that arrangement; indeed, they chose to continue their travels across Faerûn together. Like many of the powers, Waukeen knew of the Celestial Staircase (the Torilian name for the Infinite Staircase) in Shadowdale and determined to climb it. Torm, the god of guardians, confronted her and barred her way. Waukeen attempted to bribe Torm with his heart’s desire in order to let her and Lliira pass, but—not surprisingly—she failed to tempt the god of duty.

So, Waukeen and Lliira returned to Toril and made their way to the forest of Cormanthor, where Waukeen devised a plan. As the goddess of trade both legal and





illegal, Waukeen struck upon the notion of smuggling herself off the Prime Material Plane. To enact this plan, she used her vast array of contacts and her extensive knowledge of smuggling routes used across the planes. She intended to then bargain her way back to Outlands and her base of power. Waukeen planned to journey through the Lower Planes, thus most effectively avoiding Ao's possible detection of her movements and allowing her to approach her realm indirectly.

Through convoluted means (and perhaps the assistance of one or more mortal spellcasters who worshiped one of the goddesses), Waukeen managed to contact and contract Celestian, a power of long-distance and interplanar travel from another crystal sphere. Celestian owed Waukeen an unknown favor and he agreed to repay this debt by removing Waukeen from the Prime Material Plane. He refused to include Lliira in the bargain, since he felt he was already taking sufficient risk in simply transporting Waukeen from the Prime. However, Celestian found this task impossible while Waukeen still possessed her divinity. Ao had bound the gods to Toril in their avatar forms and nothing could overcome that restriction.

Left with no other recourse, Waukeen dared an experiment. She believed that Ao's restrictions prevented the gods' incarnations from leaving Toril rather than the individuals who carried that power. Waukeen therefore transferred all her divine abilities and powers to Lliira, who promised to hold the power and portfolio of Waukeen in regency until the two goddesses met again. Left as nothing more now than an extremely potent and vastly knowledgeable human being, Waukeen was able to escape Ao's restrictions, and with Celestian's help, found herself on the Astral Plane.

From there, Waukeen contacted the powerful and wily Abyssal lord Graz'zt (a demon much interested in wealth and knowledge of all kinds) and struck a deal. Graz'zt guaranteed Waukeen safe passage through the Abyss to the Outlands, for which Graz'zt would be handsomely paid with knowledge of many secret treasure caches throughout the planes. Even more important to Graz'zt, Waukeen could supply him with information vital to the Abyssal lord's financial dealings in the Abyss. Waukeen promised Graz'zt information on which Abyssal lords were blackmailing or paying off other lords, who was paying whom to fight (or to avoid fighting) in the Blood War (the eternal battle of the chaotic demons and the lawful devils raging across the

Lower Planes), and other such essential knowledge.

Graz'zt's minions appeared to Waukeen on the Astral and took the depowered goddess back to Graz'zt's realm in the Abyss, Azzagrat. Comprised of the 45th, 46th, and 47th layers of that plane, Azzagrat is one of the largest of all Abyssal realms. The fact that Graz'zt manages to obtain and hold such a kingdom speaks to his power and guile.

In Graz'zt's Argent Palace in the city of Zelatar, the Abyssal lord betrayed Waukeen. He informed the former goddess that she was to remain "his guest" until such time as they had successfully "renegotiated" their deal to allow Waukeen to pass safely through the Abyss and beyond. Graz'zt holds Waukeen there to this day, shuttling her between his Argent Palace and the vice-ridden city of Samora.

Waukeen did once escape her captors' clutches while she was being escorted from Samora to the Argent Palace. She managed to bribe one of her demonic guards, saying that the rewards she could offer him if he let her escape would put him far beyond the reach of Graz'zt's revenge. Convinced, he allowed the mortal Waukeen to escape into the Viper Forest of Zrintor. Waukeen planned to hide there until the search parties had passed her by, and then make her way to the Outlands, bargaining for assistance along the way as she needed it.

However, one of the search parties found the former goddess as she hid among the viper trees of Zrintor. These demons would not accept her promises of riches beyond all belief. They brought her back to the Argent Palace, not out of loyalty but out of fear of their master, Graz'zt. Unknown to Waukeen, the horrible fate of the guard who had let her escape was still vividly and viscerally fresh on the minds of those who found the former Golden Lady in Zrintor. Fear of Graz'zt outweighed greed in the demons' minds and doomed Waukeen's escape attempt to failure.

As this adventure opens, Waukeen is still a prisoner of Graz'zt. The demon lord incessantly increases his demands of wealth and knowledge as the price of her freedom, but Waukeen knows that Graz'zt will never willingly free her now. She endures the macabre parties and festivals Graz'zt throws in honor of his "guest" and waits only for another chance to escape, while pondering exactly how best to make the demon lord pay for his arrogance when she is once again free.

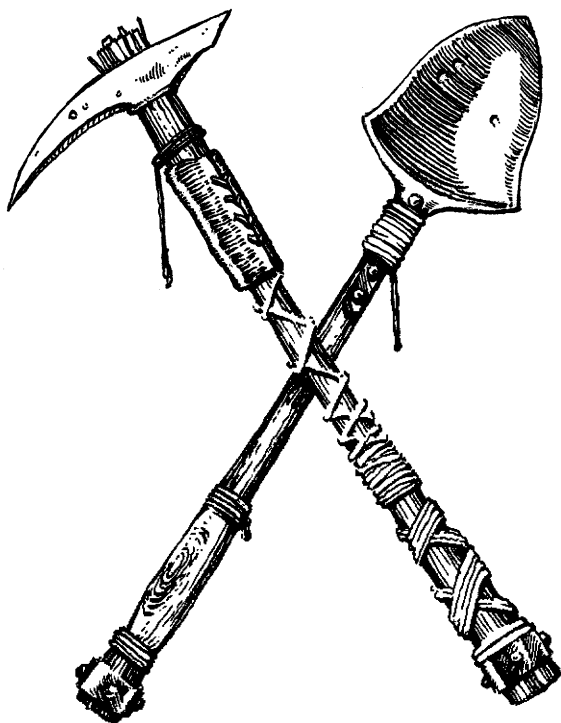


## Plot Synopsis

The adventure opens in Athkatla in Amn, the foremost center of worship for the church of Waukeen. The church has flourished under the Regent (Lliira), though aspects of Lliira's portfolio and what was Waukeen's have intermingled. In any case, an up-and-coming priestess of the church suffers visions that reveal the goddess' true location and predicament. Once the leader of the church confirms her vision, a holy crusade must be mounted to free the Golden Lady from her vile imprisonment.

Rather than launch a large-scale, public assault on the Abyss, the church decides to send a small band of powerful adventurers across the planes to rescue and return Waukeen to her rightful place in the Faerûnian pantheon. The PCs learn of the Infinite Staircase, explore it, and use it to make their way to the Abyss.

Once there, the PCs learn the hard way that in the Abyss things do not work as they do on Toril. They must adapt to these changes, learn of Waukeen's location (tramping about the dangerous Abyss in the process), make their way to her, break her out, and effect their escape. They then must return to the Staircase while being pursued and get themselves and Waukeen back to the Outlands, the goddess' home.



## DM's Notes

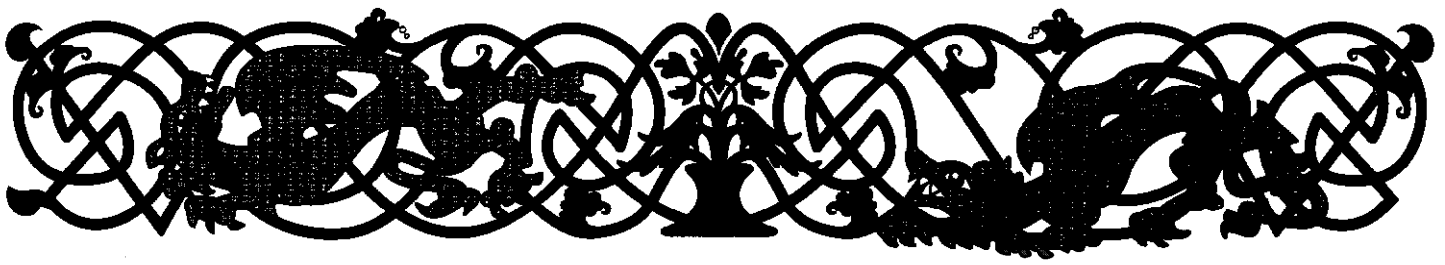
*For Duty & Deity* introduces two new sets of information: the wonders of the Infinite Staircase and rules changes for the Abyss. (See the chapters "The Infinite Staircase" and "Surviving the Abyss" respectively.) The DM should be familiar with these sections, as conditions on the planes often change the results of the most common PC actions. Additionally, this can be a terribly lethal adventure for those PCs who tend to think with their swordarms and not their heads. As always, thoroughly read the entire adventure before attempting to run it.

## Tales from The Infinite Staircase

In *For Duty & Deity*, the Infinite Staircase is solely a means to gain access to the main location of the adventure. A few suggested plot threads included in the following adventure may lead to further scenarios, and a resourceful DM can use these springboards to create more adventures unrelated to the plot provided here. This adventure can also be easily linked with the *PLANESCAPE Tales from the Infinite Staircase* adventure anthology to create a larger, grand adventure with two plots—one which can serve as a "subplot" for the other.

*Tales from the Infinite Staircase* describes a danger to the Staircase and to the multiverse as a whole: the Iron Shadow, a mysterious force that drains creative energy. This creeping malady spreads from location to location, robbing all who encounter it of their will and ability to make decisions and think creatively. Where the Iron Shadow falls, inspiration, motivation, and innovation die.

While traveling the Staircase, PCs could learn of the Iron Shadow's threat and deduce—rightly so—that Toril could easily be next. With such a threat potentially hanging over their home world, the PCs may decide to try to stop it themselves. The lillendi on the Staircase can give them more information and set them on the right path (as described in the *Tales* product). Once on the path, the PCs can travel from planar location to planar location, learning the secrets of the Shadow and of the multiverse beyond Toril as they travel.



# Call of The Lost Goddess

*"The Golden Lady's grace is gone from the world. Her luminous beauty that shone down on us – us the light of the sun off a newly minted coin – is taken from us forever. A prophet of Lliiru has appeared before the gates of this very temple and told us this. The Bringer of Joy, the Lady Lliiru, now watches over us. Let us pray she takes us into her fold us those deserving such guardianship."*

– Numerous (mistaken) Waukeenan priests, 1365 DR



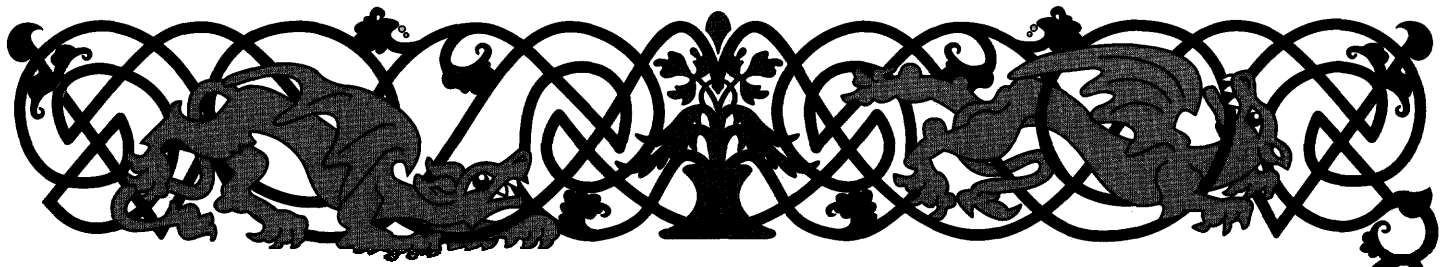
**S**even years after the Time of Troubles, many of Waukeen's flock simply assumed their goddess had died after her disappearance during that tumultuous event. When Lliira's prophet appeared before each of Waukeen's temples in turn to say that Lliira held the Golden Lady's power until such time as Waukeen returned to claim it, many heard not the prophet's words, but only what they expected to hear. Not all Waukeenan believed their Golden Lady was gone forever, though. The temple known as the Goldspires in Amn's capital of Athkatla, the center of Waukeenan worship in all of Faerûn, heard the prophet's words and understood. Waukeenan there held in their hearts the belief that Waukeen would one day return to them (and still do to this day). Though they embraced the Regent and her generosity in accepting them and preventing the total collapse of their faith, they yearned for the return of the Merchant's Friend.

None held this hope more dearly than the Holycoin, Voice of the Lady Tharundar Olehm (N hm P24: Waukeen). As the high priest of Waukeen's entire faith, the Holycoin's acceptance of the Regent went a long way toward solidifying the merging of the two churches. Holycoin Olehm has recently been disturbed at some of the rumors concerning certain excesses of some of the former Waukeenan in regions beyond Athkatla and Amn, but he and all at Goldspires remain true to the Golden Lady.

So true, in fact, that one of the Holycoin's assistants has been having disturbing dreams of late. Halanna Jashire (N hf P9: Waukeen) is the youngest of the Five Furies (the Holycoin's closest assistants) and the Holycoin protégé. Jashire has risen through the ranks of the Goldspires' hierarchy the fastest of any cleric since Goldeye Istor of Sembia. Holycoin Olehm believes Jashire is favored by Waukeen, or at least by Lliira in the absence of the Merchant's Friend. He further believes that her unnerving dreams are divinely sent. Indeed, not long ago, Holycoin Olehm's own divination spells seemed to confirm that Jashire's dreams are truly religious visions, but proxies of Lliira (direct servants of the goddess) have denied that the Lady of Joy sent any such dreams to the young priestess.

The dreams themselves offer little to clarify the situation. Visions of darkness, cold discomfort, and pain, fleeting images of horrible shapes moving and shuffling, terrible scents of decay and rot, and feelings of entrapment, imprisonment, anger, and anguish fill Halanna Jashire's sleep. The young woman from Ankhapur has learned to fear the fall of night, as night brings sleep, and sleep brings the dreams. The young priestess can-





not close her eyes without drifting off into slumber, and then the dreams accost her psyche. Soon, Jashire awakens, screaming. When she is calmed and sleep retakes her, the horrible nightmares return. No poultice, potion, or spell grants the exhausted young woman a respite from the dreams, and the Holycoin strives to find the answer to why these nightmares have invaded the mind of his protege before the dreams—and the harm they cause—take Halanna Jashire from him.

At this point, the Holycoin strongly suspects that the cause of Halanna's dreams involves Waukeen, but he cannot prove it. He has not yet mentioned this suspicion to the rest of the church hierarchy, fearing to raise false hope in Waukeen's faithful before he can be sure hope even exists. But the Voice of the Lady did not gain his high post by hesitating, and so he has begun to call for adventurers to gather in preparation for whatever Halanna's visions may eventually reveal.

## Getting The PCs Involved

The following three options allow PCs to become involved with the attempt to rescue Waukeen from her Abyssal prison. The first (and preferred) option brings any PC priest(s) of either Waukeen or Lliira into the story when, as powerful members of their faiths, they are summoned by the Holycoin to come to Goldspires and lend whatever aid they can. This option further allows a priest PC of almost any good-aligned Faerûnian power into this scenario, through favors called in by the Holycoin from the PC's priestly superiors. PC priests (and their adventuring comrades, of course) can thereby be sent any distance to Athkatla and Goldspires.

The second option offers a more generic approach, but one that requires the PCs to be relatively near Athkatla when the call goes out from the Holycoin for experienced, confident heroes. The details are nonspecific but seem—like all calls for heroes—to indicate a threat “to the good of all of Faerûn.”

The third and final option allows for good-aligned PLANESCAPE characters to become involved in the events of this adventure. Even often-cynical planars see the value of having a god who lives on the Outlands owing you her freedom, if not her life.

### Option #1: Holy Summons

The boxed text below introduces the party's priest or cleric to the troubles of young Halanna Jashire and the Holycoin's request for aid from the good-aligned religious community on Faerûn. The text below assumes either a Waukeenaar or Lliiran priest PC; otherwise, a summons goes out to the PC cleric or priest of any of the good-aligned Faerûnian gods.

A call has gone out from the Goldspires itself. The Most Reverend Holycoin and Voice of the Lady Tharundar Olehm has issued a summons to all the faithful of the Golden Lady and her Regent. One of the Five Furies—the Reverend Holycoin's primary assistants—has been stricken sorely ill. It is said that dreams, horrific dreams, keep the gifted young priestess Halanna Jashire from any rest and that neither magical nor mundane cures have any effect. Without rest and sleep, none can long remain in this world, and such an end is rapidly approaching for Jashire. Word has reached you that the Holycoin himself has mentioned your names, in the hope that you will go to Athkatla to aid him in his quest to cure his protege.

Give the players a chance to discuss this proposal. If they can determine a means to reach Athkatla quickly, let them do so. If not, they can head to the nearest temple of Waukeen or Lliira (which is also the source of the information they have just received). Once the PCs reach this nearby temple, they are greeted by a minor cleric named Randaar Alandais (N hm P5: Waukeen or Lliira). Randarr is a middle-aged, bookish man with a bald head, a rolling stomach, and a perpetual squint from going over the ledgers and log-books of the church's various investments and business ventures.

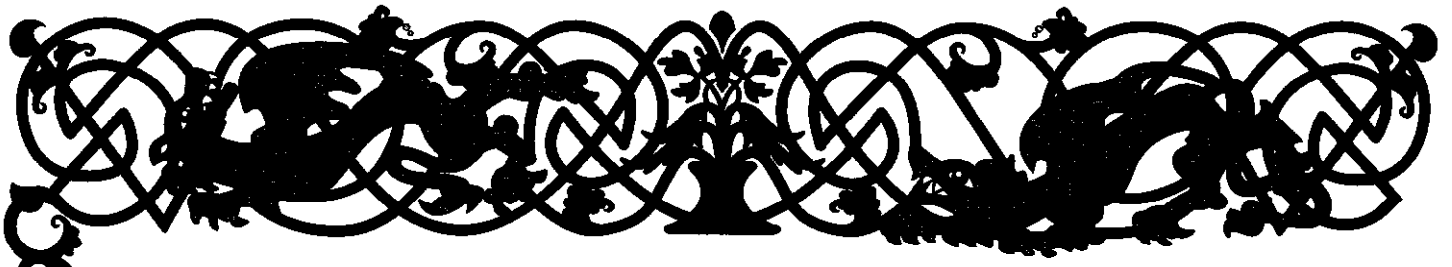
Randaar introduces the party to Marcella Harauntan (N hf M14), a tall, thin, dark-haired woman dressed in expensive silk wizard's robes. In her hands, Harauntan holds a scroll that contains a *teleport without error* spell on it. When the PCs are prepared, the mage casts the spell and sends the PCs to Athkatla and the next section, “The City of Coin.”

### Option #2: In The Neighborhood

If your campaign happens to be in the relative vicinity of Amn, use one of the following four scenarios to introduce the characters to the storyline.







First, Amn is the trade center of the central Sword Coast and has links to ports around the globe (including Mztica), and PCs could be there for business or investment reasons. Second, Amn has suffered from many monstrous incursions of late, and the PCs could be involved in or even leading the fight against the humanoid hordes. Third, the nation of Tethyr to the south has not long ago concluded a war of reunification and a just queen and her royal-blooded husband and prince now rule that land. The PCs could have been involved in the fighting to unify the country after so many years of strife and war. Fourth, the events of the adventure *Castle Spulzeer* take place in this general area. Details on Amn and Tethyr can be found in the outstanding *Lands of Intrigue* boxed set (TSR 1159), by Steven E. Schend. Of course, events of your own devising could also bring the PCs within the range of the Holycoin's local plea for assistance. Read the boxed text below aloud.

Among the tavern tales and festhall gossip, you hear a peculiar and intriguing offer. It seems that the Holycoin himself, leader of the lost goddess Waukeen's church at Goldspires in Amn's capital of Athkatla, has issued a summons to all experienced or "blooded" adventurers. One of the church's up-and-coming clerics has been stricken with visions that no one can interpret. He is therefore seeking adventurers who may have had experience with such odd things, or anyone at all who might be able to suggest another approach to understanding the visions and restoring the priestess to health. Hints that the visions may involve "the greater good of all Faerûn" and mentions of "rewards beyond those mortals can conceive" arouse your instincts. Obviously, there is more to this than anyone is saying. In any case, you've not heard of anything else this intriguing lately. And Athkatla's not all that far away. . . .

Let the PCs discuss this turn of events. A wily DM can even introduce the above information slowly over time during the course of other adventures in the region. Unless the DM rules otherwise, the PCs can learn little more of this situation without traveling to Athkatla. Divination spell results are unusually cryptic when applied to this matter, if they function at all. If the PCs seem hesitant to pursue the matter, a divination spell (or a dream) of the most powerful spellcaster in the group

(regardless of class) could serve to provide further motivation. In this case, the spell (or dream) gives the briefest of glimpses into Halanna Jashire's nightmare visions. Regardless of the spell's normal mechanics, the spellcaster is overwhelmed with vivid flashes of any of the following images:

- The scents of rotting or burning flesh and the reek of putrefying food;
- The hideous screams of tortured souls, wracked with pain and anguish;
- Visions of dark shapes or silhouettes of horrendous creatures with horns, tails, and wings;
- A lovely, golden-haired woman who is somehow trapped, weeping quietly to herself;
- A golden, bejeweled goblet held in an ebony six-fingered hand, with glowing green eyes and a sinister, malevolent chuckle heard in the background.

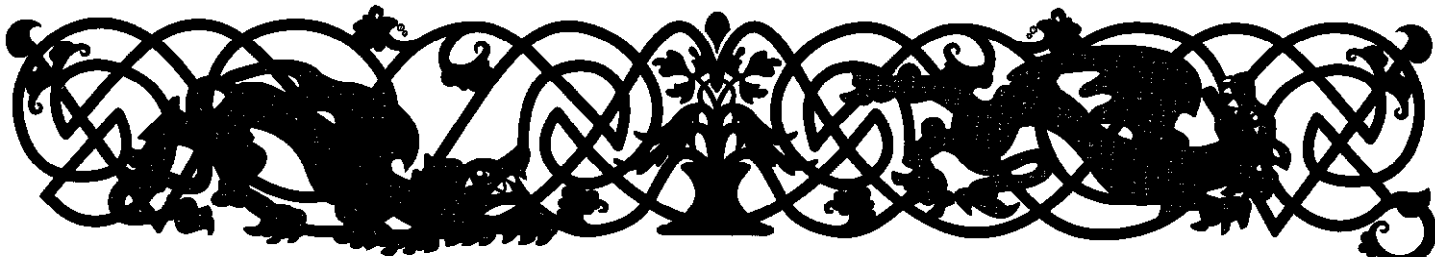
The effect of this spell (or dream) upon the PC is up to the DM. At best, a saving throw vs. paralyzation should allow the PC to shake off (but not forget) the effects. At worst, the PC may suffer effects similar to those caused by a *symbol of fear*. These images and the fact that one of their spells so grossly misfired should interest the PCs enough to journey to Athkatla (and the next section: "The City of Coin").

### Option #3: Planewalking

This option for introducing PCs to the adventure is aimed at PLANESCAPE groups that wish to use this adventure in their campaigns. Read the following text to the group.

You've been in Sigil for a while now, resting and recovering from your latest adventure. You hear that some bariaur has been rattling his bone-box in the Market Ward about a prime high-up who wants to hire a bunch of bloods to do a deed for him. From the chatter in your favorite alehouse, you also learn that this bariaur's got a portal key to take those interested to the prime's digs on a world called Toril. Seems the bariaur's working for the church of some goddess of trade or revels or somesuch. He's got gold filaments woven into his hair, beard, mane, and tail, plus golden horns to boot. They say you can't miss him. Maybe this bariaur is worth finding, since he seems awful popular, not to mention rich. . . .





The bariaur is Raavik (N bariaur m proxy P10: Waukeen) and a PLANESCAPE DM can use him as a device with which to impart as much of the information presented above as the DM sees fit. Minor alterations need to be made, such as removing all “local” Torilian references and so forth. Raavik isn’t tough to find; he appears as described, though his horns are merely gold plated, not truly golden.

Once the PCs have learned of the situation and the Holycoin’s desire to meet with any interested parties, Raavik gives the party a portal key: a large gold coin (worth 2 pp) minted long ago by the church of Waukeen. The coin is odd in that it has two heads, both profiles of Waukeen, and in that one of the two sides of the coin has been defaced. Two scratches “cross-out” the face on one side of the coin. After tossing the party this coin, Raavik tells them the portal to Athkatla is the delivery door of Imel’s Happy Tongue, then tromps off.

Imel’s Happy Tongue is a casual eatery, catering both to those with a taste for the exotic and those with plenty of mouths to feed. The place’s weekly “Delicacies of the Planes” specials attract wildly divergent crowds from week to week. The annual “Cheeses of the Planes” (the Torilian death cheese is a perennial favorite) is very popular, as are the “Beers of the Planes” (Bytopian Stout!) and the “Fruits of the Planes” (avoid the Abyssal apples—they tend to bite back).

Imel (N hm F3: Cipher) himself is a man who turned a bit of knowledge and more than his share of quick thinking into a profitable business. The Happy Tongue is a sprawling two-story inn and tavern with a common room, bar, and kitchen downstairs and private rooms upstairs. Imel knows of the portal and doesn’t mind its occasional use. If the PCs chat with Imel about their destination, he’ll kindly ask them to pick up some death cheese for him—he’s almost out.

## The City of Coin

The fortified port city of Athkatla is the mercantile and social center of the troubled nation of Amn. Business is the city’s lifeblood and the law can sometimes be blinded by the prospect of greater profits.

The Council of Six, a mysterious body that inspires fear and respect in all Amnians, rules Amn and Athkatla. The six Council members, like the Lords of Waterdeep to the north, realize that anonymity expedites many of the processes of ruling. As a result, the six all wear shrouded,

hooded robes to conceal their true identities.

The nation has been much troubled lately. The reunification of its neighbor to the south, Tethyr, has caused the towns of Riatavin and Trailstone and the surrounding territory to announce their intention to leave Amn and join Tethyr, complaining that they have been slighted and ignored in business dealings that involve the whole of Amn. As a result, the Council has halted all trade with Tethyr.

Further, an army composed of the Skullgnasher giants and the Spearbiter goblins has subjugated much of the land between Athkatla and the rebellious area.

The final trouble plaguing Amn in recent years has been the disappearance of the country’s primary deity: Waukeen. Nowhere was the goddess known as the Merchant’s Friend more fervently worshiped than in the mercantile center of the central Sword Coast. The headquarters of the entire faith is based at Goldspires, a fortified enclave north of Athkatla’s city walls, and it is to this place that the PCs will soon come.

While the PCs explore Athkatla, the DM must remember one important fact. Due to their historical troubles with evil wizards, most Amnians view mages with suspicion at best and outright contempt at worst. PC mages who take no steps to disguise their profession pay higher prices for all goods and services, are ignored in favor of other customers, and may even expect to be pushed about by the armed escorts and bodyguards of various nobles that the PCs encounter.

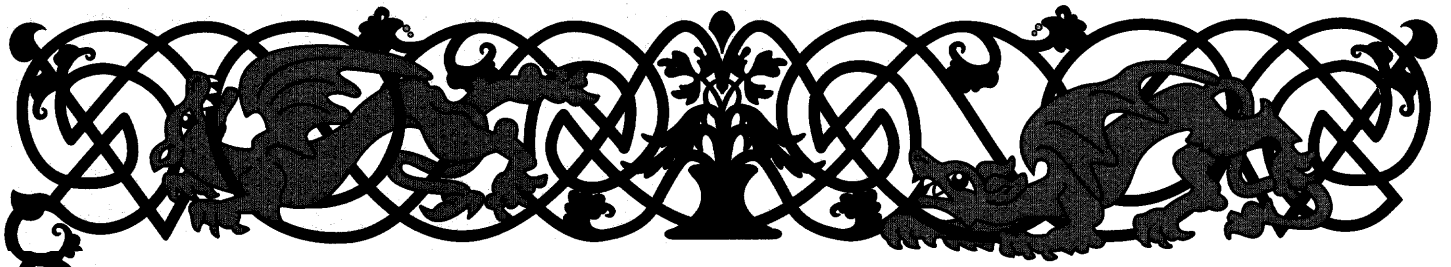
Read the following boxed text to the players when their characters reach Athkatla.

Upon arriving in Athkatla, also known as the City of Coin due to all the business and trade that goes on here, you find that the capital of Amn lives up to its reputation for hustle and bustle. Caravan wagons fill the main streets, and streetside vendors and kiosks offer cheap, greasy food and lukewarm drinks to the hungry and parched caravaneers.

Before too long, the gentle but insistent tide of the crowd brings you to a vast, multileveled open marketplace set in an oval, stadiumlike building. You quickly find yourselves in the heart of Waukeen’s Promenade.

Twice the size of Waterdeep’s Market, this open oval stadium surrounded by 50’ stucco walls provides four 75’-wide levels for consumer and mercantile traffic. The upper





levels even provide some shade from the day's sun for those below. Were this the height of summer, such shade would be in high demand.

Ramps wide enough for a horse-drawn wagon lead up from level to level. The booths, stalls, and terraces here offer any nonmagical item the players can imagine. If one of the PCs has always wanted a Kara-Turan peacock-feather fan or has yearned to taste Maztican maize (corn), Waukeen's Promenade is the place to find it. In other words, every nonmagical item (and more) from the *Player's Handbook* and the *Arms & Equipment Guide* can be purchased here. Finding exactly what you want is often a problem. With hundreds of vendors spread over four levels, finding just the exotic item a PC may be searching for could take hours.

As is common in such markets, no prices are visible. When asked the vendor always offers the item in question for 100% of its listed PHB value, plus 10-60% (1d6 × 10). If the PC wishes to pay this, so be it. Haggling is expected and the process offends no one (though merchants commonly appear so). If the PC haggles well, the final price may drop below that listed in the *PHB*. Note that haggling does not involve simply threatening the vendor or drawing steel. Bear in mind that those PCs who are openly wizards may be turned away from vendors outright; if a merchant does choose to sell goods to a wizard, the item's price starts at least at 200% of the PHB price and will not dip below 150%.

Allow this scene to play as long as the characters are interested. More chances for roleplaying and some minor adventures in the Promenade are suggested in the "Opportunities" section at the end of this chapter.

As day turns to evening, the PCs should seek either lodgings for the night (see below) or directions to Goldspires, the temple of Waukeen.

### **Silverale Hall**

Anyone the PCs ask about a place to find a good meal and good night's rest recommends Silverale Hall, an inn, tavern, and festhall just blocks from the Promenade. One of the oldest such establishments in Athkatla, the Silverale is owned by Hansol Ynnilross (LN hem C2: Milil), an able negotiator, skilled peacemaker, failed bard, and expatriate scribe from Silvermoon.

The directions you were given to Silverale Hall were correct after all. No more than 15 minutes walk from the Promenade, you see an old, well-maintained, four-story stone building. The placard hanging from its post depicts a silver mug overflowing with some heady brew. Within, you hear the sounds of talk, laughter, and someone singing a ribald tavern tune.

Entering, you're welcomed with a smile and a nod from the half-elf male behind the bar. Astonishingly handsome, with snow-white hair, a lithe build, and blue eyes that seem almost purple in this light, the barkeep waves you over to one of the few open areas of the bar and asks how he can serve you.

The Silverale is always busy but never crowded. Its clientele of locals, vendors from the Promenade, and caravaneers are reasonably well behaved, it offers good food and company, and the inn is very clean and well kept.

For further chances to roleplay in the Silverale, see the section labeled "Opportunities" at the end of this chapter.

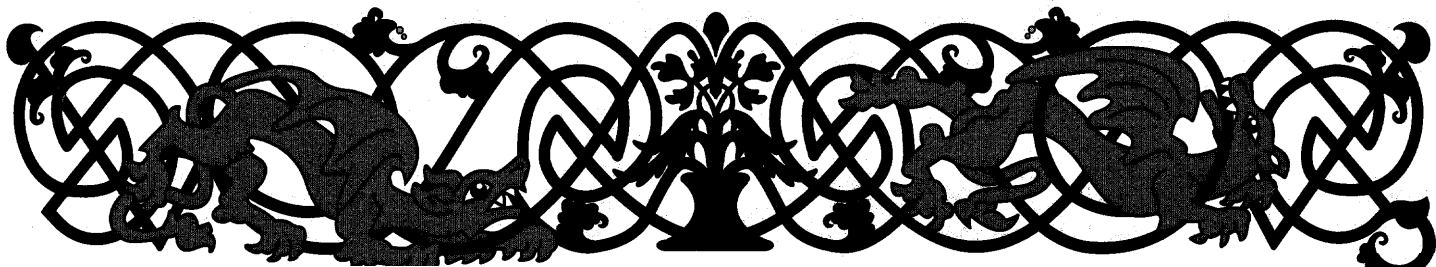
### **Goldspires**

When the PCs decide it's time to get the details of the "job" the Holycoin allegedly has for them, they can obtain directions to the Goldspires complex, which is north of the city itself. Vendors at the Promenade can direct them. (Doing so may get the PCs a bargain rate on whatever it is they're buying when they ask.) Hansol can also set them on the right path. (Again, this may earn the PCs a break on their lodging costs, or at least a free round of halfling porter in magically chilled mugs.) Read the following aloud.

Beyond the Alandor river, Athkatla's Temple District, and the city's north wall, the road forks. The right fork leads north to such cities as Baldur's Gate. The left fork bends back toward the shoreline of the Sea of Swords to a fortified enclave with gold-topped towers. Here lies the abbey of Goldspires and possibly the answers to your questions regarding the Holycoin, his protégé's visions, and the quest that may be become yours.

Overlooking Merchant's Bay, Goldspires looms over the rooftops of the nearby city from its coastal promontory. Goldspires is nearly a town unto itself. Within its





walls, almost 1,000 lay followers and servants, 150 priests, and the faith's six senior clergy serve the Golden Lady and her Regent. Construction of a new dance hall and the Hospitality House (rentable by the wealthy and noble for gala events) have been initiated since the Regency began. Despite rumors of the lessening influence of the Merchant's Friend, more than 12 major mercantile companies and powerful Amnian families help fund the church (and hope to wield influence with the Holycoin).

When the PCs state their interest in the Voice of the Lady's "mission for the good of all Faerûn," they are ushered in through the high, gold (plated) gates of the abbey. They are brought to one of the smaller buildings within, one that looks more like an office of a trading or caravan company than any sort of religious edifice. There they wait until the Holycoin's schedule allows them an audience with him.

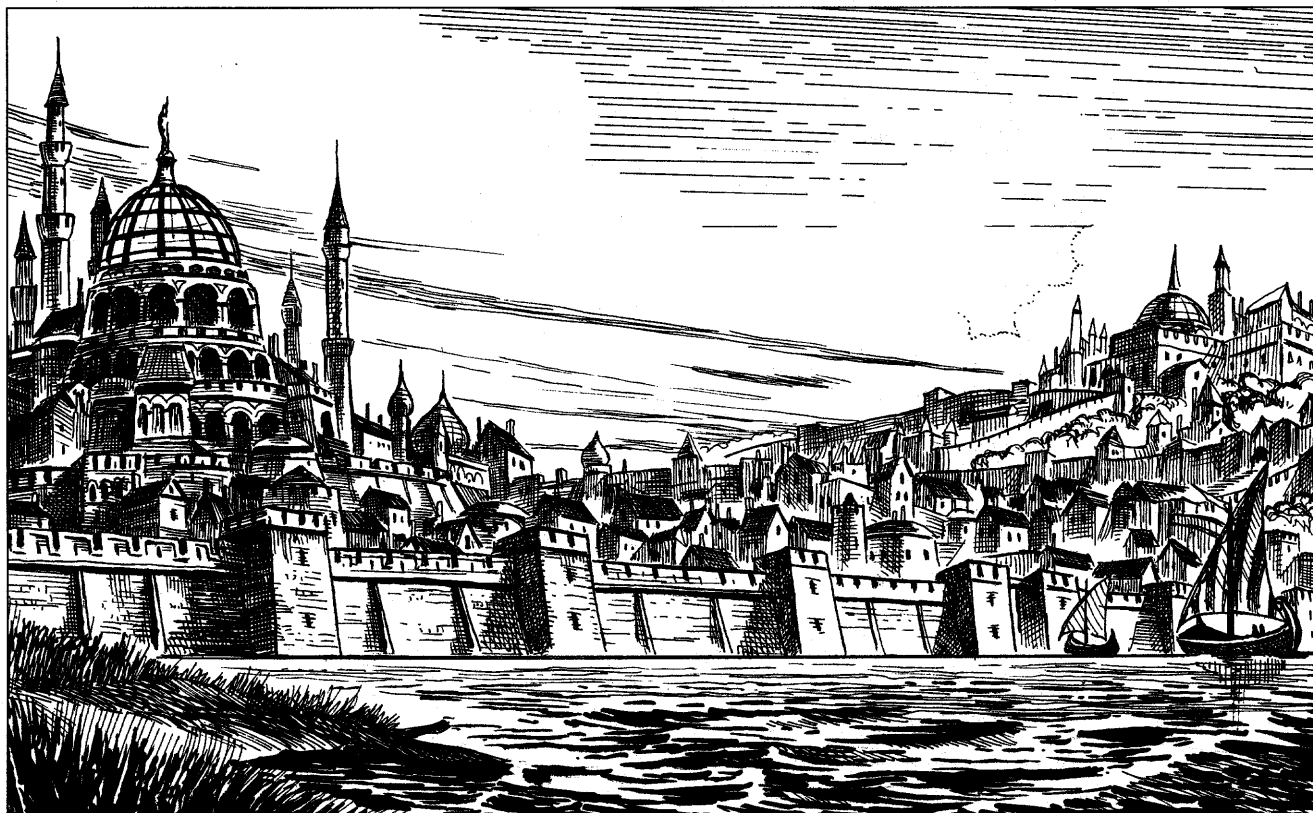
While the PCs aren't kept waiting too long (unless they were insufferably rude), the officials of Goldspires take this time to cast *know alignment* and several other divination spells to determine the PCs' true intentions. If the PCs take note of this through detection spells of their own, sincere

apologies are offered with the statement that, "We must see to the Holycoin's safety, of course. Certainly you understand that no offense was intended." If the PCs do not accept this explanation, they're asked to leave Goldspires; the church officials don't have time to deal with characters' "fragile" egos while one of their own lies dying.

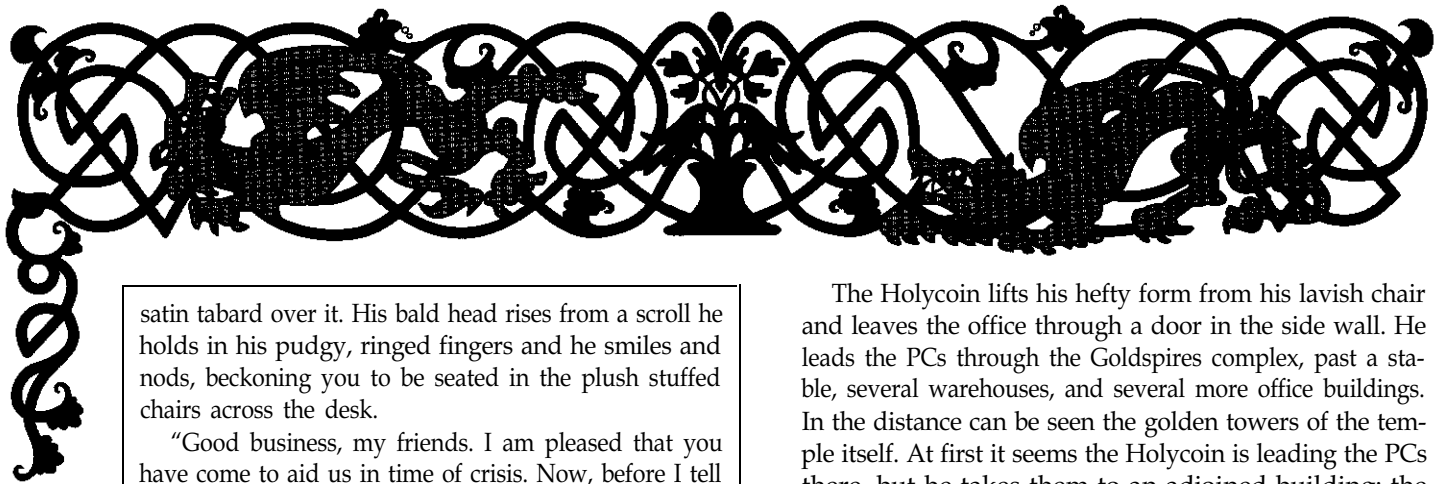
When the PCs are granted the audience with Holycoin Tharundar Olehm, read the text below to the players.

Rather than being escorted into a temple, a minor acolyte guides you into a spacious office. A large map of Faerûn covers one wall, with red and black lines tracing roads and what must be trade routes hither and yon across the map. Interestingly, several black lines leave from Amnian ports and vanish at the map's western edge, far out into the Sea of Swords.

Before you can peruse the map any more, your attention is brought to the massive man sitting behind the scroll and invoice-covered desk. Voice of the Lady Tharundar Olehm is tastefully though expensively attired in a long-sleeved, billowy silk shirt with a gold



High on a hill, the Goldspires complex overlooks Athkatla



satin tabard over it. His bald head rises from a scroll he holds in his pudgy, ringed fingers and he smiles and nods, beckoning you to be seated in the plush stuffed chairs across the desk.

“Good business, my friends. I am pleased that you have come to aid us in time of crisis. Now, before I tell you of what we would ask of you, tell me of what you know regarding our call for aid.”

At this point, the players can tell what they know; if any have experienced the terrifyingly misfired divination spell or had a dream as described earlier, the Holycoin is most interested in hearing it.

After the PCs have finished relating any details that they know of, and before they begin peppering the Holycoin with questions, he continues.

“What precipitated you sitting here before me are the dread dreams one of my foremost assistants has been experiencing recently. Halanna Jashire is a young priestess with much promise. In truth, young Halanna is my most favored protegee. These dreams have kept her from sleep and her health has deteriorated rapidly. No magical or mundane cure has provided her any relief, nor can we find a cause for the dreams.”

At this point, describe Jashire’s dreams if none of the party’s spellcasters have had a glimpse through a divination spell or dream of their own. The Holycoin continues:

“You see, I was able to determine not long after Halanna began experiencing her horrific nightmares that they were more than simple dreams. I discovered them to be divine visions, sent to young Halanna through means unknown. My acolytes and I endeavored to learn the source of these visions. I myself consulted with the proxies of the Regent, and they informed me that Mistress of Revels has not granted any visions to Halanna. Using my contacts in the religious community and the divinations of many, I learned that no god of good or evil, law or chaos, was tormenting my young friend with these visions. What then could this source be? But come, before we speak any more of Halanna as if she has already passed beyond, I will take you to her. Perhaps you, with your vast experiences, can help us—and poor Halanna.”

The Holycoin lifts his hefty form from his lavish chair and leaves the office through a door in the side wall. He leads the PCs through the Goldspires complex, past a stable, several warehouses, and several more office buildings. In the distance can be seen the golden towers of the temple itself. At first it seems the Holycoin is leading the PCs there, but he takes them to an adjoined building: the abbey’s infirmary.

As you enter the infirmary, the Holycoin raises a finger to his suddenly solemn face to assure quiet. Down a side hallway to an isolated room you see several attendants, at least one priest, and a servant hovering around a curtained-off bed. From within the white silk curtains can be heard faint rustling and the whispering murmur of a voice, as if from a small child suffering from an overactive dream or an overfull stomach.

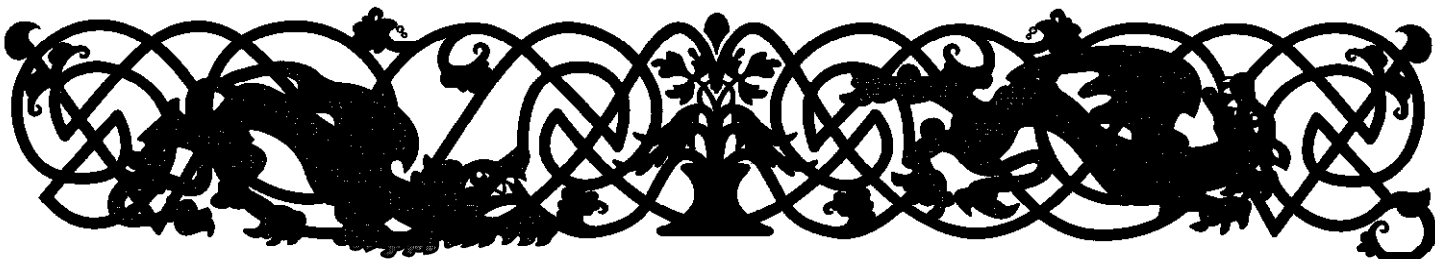
The Holycoin approaches the bed and pulls aside the curtain, holding it back so you may step to the bed’s side. The sight before you both saddens and sickens you. What was once a lovely, golden-haired woman lies reduced to a forlorn relic. Her hair is matted and sweaty, her eyes sunken, her cheeks hollow, her lips cracked and bleeding as if chewed; her pale, thin body lies drenched in its own moisture and quivering from numerous muscle tremors.

“This is Halanna. As you can see, without rest or a respite from these visions, we fear that she may not remain with us much longer. In your far travels and adventures, have you knowledge of any item, any substance, any spell that may cure her? If so, I beseech you make use of it now.”

The PCs may examine Halanna as they wish and may even cast spells on her. However, the Holycoin explains that even the most powerful healing spells he himself cast upon her had no effect. As they examine Halanna, the Holycoin sits by her bedside, taking her small, trembling hand in his and gently caressing her cheek.

As noted previously, Olehm suspects that Halanna’s visions may lead to the lost goddess Waukeen. Thus far he has been unable to prove it, and all of the vast resources at his command have been unable to provide any answer to either the cause of the priestess’ visions or a means of healing her. His call for adventurers had two purposes, known only to him: the first, in preparation for a possible





quest, and the second in hopes that their presence might spark some response in Halanna. Unknown to them, the PCs are far from the first group to visit Halanna in this manner.

After their characters have examined the suffering priestess for a few minutes, read the following to the players.

Halanna suddenly awakens from her semiconscious stupor. Sitting bolt upright in the bed, her glassy eyes stare blankly ahead. From between her cracked lips comes a hoarse whisper, the best her exhausted body can muster. She says, "Gold . . . Lady . . . Abyss . . . Graz'zt . . . betrayed . . . BETRAYED." Falling back onto the bed, muttering "She . . . lives, she lives. . . ." Her energy spent, Halanna Jashire falls back into semi-consciousness. You see an expression of utter surprise cross the Holycoin's face. This lasts but an instant as he reaches some conclusion and leaps from the bed like a man half his age and weight. Turning to you with tears welling in his eyes, he says, "You must excuse me while I commune with my clergy and our Regent patroness." He indicates a nearby acolyte, who steps forward at his beckoning. "This goodly man will lead you to a comfortable room to wait. You are welcome guests, and if this omen portends what I suspect, your arrival is no less than prophetic!" He turns to several other priests, commands them to follow him, and takes his hasty leave of you.

The acolyte politely leads the PCs to a nearby room with comfortable chairs and a modest library of mundane—but interesting—books to entertain them. The PCs are left here for at least two hours. If in that time they try to find the Holycoin and have him explain what just happened before their eyes, they are told the Holycoin is too busy to see anyone, since he, the Furies, and the other church officials are deep in prayer and cannot be disturbed. Eventually, the Holycoin summons them back to the office where they met him earlier.

Upon arriving, they find the Holycoin is not behind the desk, but they're told he'll return momentarily. A small table has been set in the room's center and covered with a small feast. Cold meats, cheeses, fresh fruit (including some types they have never seen before), fresh-baked breads, and chilled wine sit on a large silver serving platter. They PCs are told to eat their fill while

they wait. When the Holycoin returns, read the following aloud:

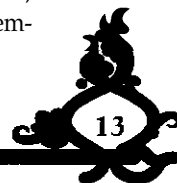
"Ahh, my friends, I'm glad to see you again, and I appreciate your patience. After Halanna's utterance earlier, I had much to do and am relieved and heartened to learn that my suspicion regarding the cause of Halanna's dreams has been confirmed. Your presence proved the catalyst that let us know for certain that the Golden Lady, our goddess Waukeen, lives!

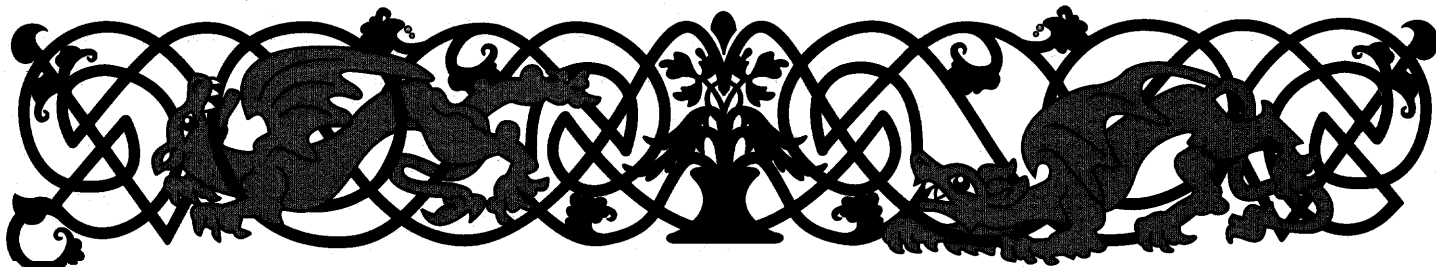
"I believe her to be the captive of an Abyssal lord called Graz'zt, a cunning and powerful demon. How he came to hold the Merchant's Friend imprisoned in some infernal cell, I know not. But I do know this: The goddess must be rescued! My friends, who the Golden Lady brought to us on this fortuitous day, will you attempt this important, dangerous task? Have you the temerity to rescue our beloved Waukeen from the grip of a demon lord?"

The Holycoin is convinced that the PCs' presence at the moment of Halanna's revelation proves they are meant to be involved in this quest—perhaps they were divinely sent, or inspired. He attempts to convince them to accept the quest on these grounds but is not offended if the PCs ask for more material incentives. (He is a priest of the goddess of *wealth*, after all.)

The Holycoin has made the fact of Waukeen's imprisonment known to the leaders of the other good faiths in Faerûn. The audacity of Graz'zt in holding a power of said pantheon against her will incites these leaders to promise the Holycoin aid in the rescue of Waukeen. Indeed, the clergy of Selûne, the goddess of the moon, has already volunteered the use of the Infinite Staircase for the PCs' rescue party. This gives any PC clerics or priests of Selûne an even more obvious reason to become involved.

The Holycoin willingly haggles until he and the PCs find a mutually acceptable price. The DM must determine what the PCs can gain according to the power level and rarity of magic in her campaign. The Holycoin could be convinced to give the party up to 100,000 gp of investments in various mercantile interests and 10,000 gp each in gems and jewelry. Cleric PCs may be able to negotiate some spell scrolls and minor potions. Promises of *resurrection* and other such spells are given. However, the Holycoin will not give the party noncharged, reusable magical items unless they have none such them-





selves, and then only with the most solemn promises that the items be returned. Should the characters fail in their quest or attempt to abscond with the items, the items will automatically return by magic to the temple treasury. (Remember that the characters will travel to the Abyss where their items and magical ability will be sorely limited, as explained in the chapter "Surviving the Abyss." If the PCs' current stock of magical items seems sufficient to handle such conditions, they gain no more. Less well-equipped parties may be granted more at the DM's discretion.)

When terms are reached, read the following aloud.

"Experts have told me that this Graz'zt monitors the standard entrances to his realm, but I believe we have a way around the demon lord's guards and wards. Please come in, Lady Kyriani."

Perhaps the loveliest half-elf woman any of you have seen enters the room. Long silver hair, plaited back but still flowing almost to the petite figure's waist, frames a high-cheekboned, pixiesque face. The woman's slender but curvy figure is hardly concealed beneath the traveling gown she wears.

"Greetings," the woman says with an alluring smile. "Before you visit the horrors of the Abyss, you shall see the wonders of the Infinite Staircase. If you've concluded your business with the Holycoin, we shall go. Now join hands," she says as she pulls a scroll from her cloak and reads it. The woman is a mage, and you are being teleported you know not where.

Kyriani (N hef M11) is the most prominent lay member of Waterdeep's House of the Moon, the largest temple to the moon goddess, Selûne. She was in Amn searching for the lost center of Selûnite worship, the mysterious elven city of Myth Lhahast (as the Selûnites believe that the lost city rests somewhere within Amn). Kyriani was not too distant from Athkatla when the Holycoin's plea for aid was sent to her from the House of the Moon. Kyriani takes the party to the House of the Moon in Waterdeep, from where they can access the Infinite Staircase.

## Opportunities

Sections like this one appear at several points in this adventure. They allow the DM to expand the adventure by providing intriguing subplots and interesting NPCs that can further develop the scenario. Each requires a bit of work on the part of the DM, though. If you want to expand the adventure by having the PCs spend more time in Athkatla before becoming embroiled in the events described above, introduce any of these subplots or NPCs.

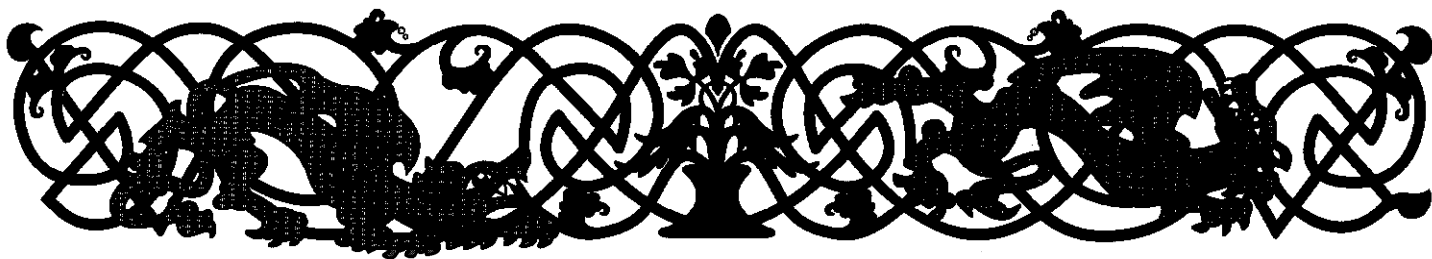
While the PCs are in Waukeen's Promenade, any or all of the following events could occur.

- One or more of the PCs have their pockets picked. The culprit might be a hungry street urchin or a member of the Shadow Thieves. In fact, the Shadow Thieves are very powerful in Amn, rivaling the Council of Six in decision-making power. If the PCs come into conflict with this group, a long-term campaign could result.
- The PCs overhear two traders quietly discussing the price and time of a delivery of some contraband materials. The contraband might be poison, narcotics, or even slaves (perhaps brought all the way from Maztica). Another long-term adventure could result from this event.
- A nondescript small, dark man approaches the party and offers them vast wealth (of the DM's choice) if they'll just turn around, leave Athkatla now, and never return.

At Silverale Hall, any or all of the following events occur at the DM's discretion.

- A bard regales the Silverale's crowd with a song or poem. This should coincidentally relate somehow to the adventure. Topics include Waukeen, the Infinite Staircase, the Abyss, or rescuing a distressed "damsel."
- The same small, dark man who may have tried to bribe the PCs at the Promenade attempts to do so again. The man, Gildaar (LE hm P9: Cyric) has instructions to stop the PCs from seeing the Holycoin, as Cyric knows something major is afoot and he wants his minions to disrupt things. Gildaar makes life as difficult as he can for the PCs short of attacking them outright.





# The Infinite Staircase

*"Oh, the River Styx is a putrid stream,  
Oceanus is too good for me.  
Olympus takes too long to climb,  
Yggdrasil is just a tree.  
But the Infinite Staircase takes you there.  
The Grand Old Stair goes ev'rywhere.  
A few short steps will bring us home . . . and fulfill our ev'ry dream."*

— Unknown planar poet

**K**yrri used a *teleport* spell from the scroll to bring the PCs from Athkatla to the steps of the House of the Moon in Waterdeep. From here she can introduce the characters to the concept of the Infinite Staircase and send them on their way to the Abyss. The *Sojourner's Portal* magical mirror (see *Powers & Pantheons*) will temporarily act as a gate to the Staircase's base in Selúne's palace of Argentil, on the plane of Ysgard. Though they shall not meet the Moonmaiden, worshipers of Selúne should be awe-struck by the visit. From there, the PCs will explore the Staircase, learn its rules, and meet a few NPCs that could turn up later in the adventure or at a future point during your campaign.

## The House of The Moon

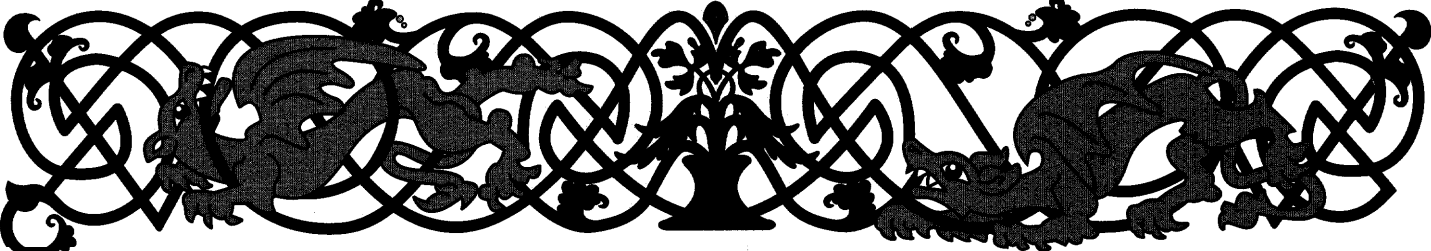
**L**ocated on the north side of Diamond Street between Seawatch Street and the Street of Whispers, this temple is among the most prominent of those in the Temple Ward of the city. This imposing four-story structure dominates the entire block, outdoing many nobles' villas in its sheer size and grandeur. A huge magical dome of gleaming silvery force tops the roof of the temple. The outer walls are covered with 4'-square white marble tiles, ensorcelled with numerous enchantments to reveal the teachings of Our Lady of Silver in the form of runes. Every window is carved into the shape of a full or crescent moon.

Summarize from the above description what the PCs see when they find themselves on the steps of the House of the Moon. Kyri tells them where they are and that the beginning of their journey to rescue the goddess Waukeen awaits within. As Kyri leads the PCs through the building, read or summarize the boxed text below. Unless one or more of the PCs actively reveres Selúne the Moonmaiden, Kyri keeps the party moving swiftly toward their goal, a very special mirror located on an upper floor of the temple.

As you enter the grand entrance hall of this magnificent temple, you see its simple yet elegant design. Balconies overhang the length of this hall and a semicylindrical vaulted ceiling soars some 30' above your heads. Three freestanding pillars each hold an ancient urn atop them.







Continuing, you pass through the narthex, where three armed and armored blue-clad guards stand arrow-straight. Passing into a chapel, you all-too-briefly see an altar atop a crescent-moon-shaped dais beneath six arched balconies lighted by numerous drifting balls of glowing silver luminescence. Entering a hallway, you turn left and ascend a curving set of stairs.

Upon reaching the landing, you turn left down another hallway, but rather than entering any of the doors you pass, Kyri brings to a dead end, with only an old mirror ahead of you.

Kyri has brought the PCs before Sojourner's Portal, a magical mirror that allows instant magical travel to a number of destinations favored by Selûne. Though the mirror usually only leads to locations on Faerûn, the moon goddess' wish to aid the attempt to rescue Waukeen has enabled it to open onto the Infinite Staircase's base in Selûne's home realm. The mirror is oval and ancient in its construction. Framed in ornate, tarnished silver, the mirror seems otherwise unremarkable at first glance. It radiates alteration magic if such is detected for. Read or summarize the following boxed text to the party.

Kyri says, "You stand before a powerful relic of the Selûnite faith. This gate will take you to the heart of the Gates of the Moon, Selûne's realm. From there the Infinite Staircase—which many also call the Celestial Staircase—leads onto the many planes of existence. And at the Staircase, your journey truly begins.

"Before I send you off, however, I have a gift for you from the Holycoin himself. You shall travel to the Abyss, and that place is dangerous beyond words. Those who live on the planes have a saying that's their key to survival: 'It's not who you are, it's what you know.' Therefore the Holycoin gave me this to pass onto you." She hands each priest in the party a scroll with a spell that's unknown to you.

Kyri continues, "The Holycoin was also able to discern the path to Graz'zt's Abyssal realm from the Infinite Staircase. In a particularly dark and cold area of the Staircase, seek out a door with a six-fingered hand marked or burned upon it. That will lead to the Abyss. And mark well where in Graz'zt's realm the door leaves you. You may need to find it again, in a hurry."

The priest spell on each scroll is copied twice, allowing two castings of the spell from each scroll before the scroll is blank. Any PC priest can cast the spell from this scroll.

**Foesight**  
(4th-level priest spell, Divination, Reversible)

Sphere: Divination

Range: 0

Duration: 24 hrs.

Area of Effect: Caster

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 turn

Saving Throw: None

*Foesight* lets the caster detect his enemies at a distance, giving him time to flee or to prepare a defense. The effect is centered on the caster and moves with him, spreading outward with a radius of 1/2 mile per caster level.

If a being who means harm to the caster (or his group) comes within the area of an active *foesight*, the caster immediately senses the enemy's presence. After two rounds, the feeling grows in strength, and the caster knows the approximate distance of the foe, the general direction from which it comes, and the speed at which it travels.

The spell does not in any way identify the enemy or provide information on its strength. It does, however, give the caster a general sense of the foe's numbers (whether a lone enemy or an army of enemies). *Foesight* does not change based on the distance of the enemy—that is, the caster's sense of danger does not increase as the enemy draws closer.

The reverse of this spell, hidden hatred, protects a body from being detected by a *foesight* until he is within 10' of the target. At that distance, hidden hatred can no longer cloak the attacker's enmity. Although *foesight* works only for the caster of the spell, any creature can be the recipient of the hidden hatred version.

The material component is the caster's holy or unholy symbol. (In this case, the scroll itself acts as the material component.)

At this point, the PCs may ask Kyri what she knows of the Staircase. Her knowledge is limited (especially compared to the lillend the PCs are soon to meet), but the DM can choose to impart as much information regarding the Staircase as she wishes through either Kyri or the lillend in the next scene. Be certain not to give away too much information or the Staircase may lose its sense of wonder and awe. Unless the PCs are experienced planar travelers, they'll never have encountered anything as



strange as the Staircase. Don't ruin that by giving away all of its secrets.

The DM should read over the "Rules of the Staircase" section carefully and determine how much to tell the PCs. At the very least, before the PCs begin their long climb, they should learn that the Staircase focuses around creativity. Kyri (or the lillend they meet on the way) can also give them the basics of traveling the Staircase: how tiring it can be, how long trips can take, the danger of leaving the Staircase or using travel magic while on it, the potential dangers of opening every door, and so on.

When the PCs are ready, read or summarize the following to the players.

"Very well," smiles Kyri, "if you're ready to go, please join hands again and step through the mirror after I say the command word. Ready?"

Seeing that you are indeed set, Kyri nods, turns to the mirror, and speaks a word of power that causes the mirror's glass to cloud with a silvery fog. Try as you might, you cannot retain the memory of the word; it slips through your mind like quicksilver through your fingers.

Unlike the lurching sensation of a *teleport* spell, there's no sensation or disorientation associated with stepping through the mirror. Once you're all through, you find yourselves in a vast chamber, bare except for a 20' wide silver staircase that leads up farther than you can see. This chamber has no roof and the stairs, which seem to be made of silver, are unsupported except by the white marble floor. Directly behind you is a set of huge, closed silver doors.

Once you've read over the Staircase information, go on to the section titled "On the Stair," below.

## Rules of The Staircase

The base of the Infinite Staircase (also called the Celestial Staircase by those who know of its existence on Faerûn) rises from a chamber in Selûne's palace Argentil, on the plane of Ysgard. This circular chamber is 200' in diameter and rises like a shaft as far as any can see, with a singular spiral staircase made of silver winding up the shaft's center, seemingly without support except where

the Staircase is attached to the chamber floor. Green tendrils of ivy hang from the Staircase at random intervals. Observers may note that the vines don't seem to put down roots anywhere; indeed, no root system can be found. The vines are not magical; they're a mystery the PCs just cannot solve. (Some theories suggest the vines are rooted in some of the planes that the Staircase leads to, though little proof exists.)

The Staircase's branching paths wind from the plane of Ysgard to locations throughout the multiverse. Landings and portals exist at various places along the Staircase. The portals lead only to planes and places that exhibit a penchant for creativity. If a new thought, philosophy, magic, or art of any kind is being created in a place, the Staircase may be found there. (The Staircase does not differentiate between good and evil; creativity of any type draws the Stair.) These portals and doors change over time as the creative energy of a place ebbs and flows. Doors and portals appear and vanish on the Staircase as the decades and centuries go by. Fortunately, the Staircase is inhabited by creatures that know its secrets.

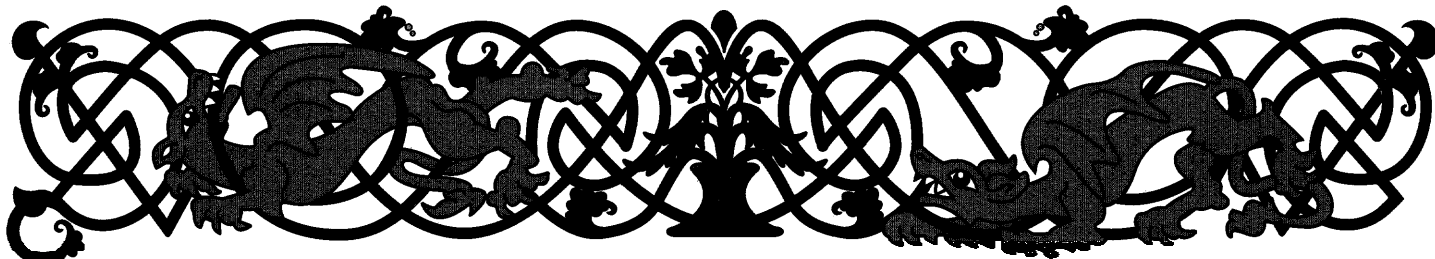
### The Lillendi

Creatures known as the lillendi (see page 61 for their full write-up) act as the custodians, guardians, and managers of the Staircase. Complex and perplexing, these enigmatic creatures appear as human or elf women from the waist up but have the lower torsos of multicolored serpents and the wings of some brightly patterned bird. Lovers of music, art, and all creative endeavors, the lillendi consider the Staircase to be their most sacred site. While the race is generally peaceful, they are quite capable of defending themselves and the Staircase. The lillendi also hold grudges for a very long time against creatures that offend them.

The lillendi's respect for creative expression means that material goods and even food mean little to them. A song, a poem, or a piece of artwork holds much more meaning. The lillendi also allow anyone to use the Staircase, though they seem to bear animosity toward the baatezu (or devils, as they're known on the Prime) and the mechanical modrons of Mechanus (perhaps due to injures suffered as a result of one of the modrons' infamous marches).

The lillendi at the base of the Staircase wear magical masks that render them invisible; only one reveals herself at a time unless the visible one is attacked.





**Lillendi (1d4-1 at base of Staircase):** AC 3; MV 9, Fl 27 (C), Sw 15; HD 7+14; hp 50 each; THACO: 11 (10 with weapon); #AT 2; Dmg 2d6 (tail)/1d8+1 (scimitar or long sword, plus Strength) or 1d6+1 (spear or powerful bow, plus Strength); SA Constriction, spells; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, immunities; MR: 25%; SZ L (human torso and 20' tail); ML champion (15-16); Int high (13-14); AL CN or CG; XP 9,000 each.

**SA: Constriction:** Foes hit by tail automatically suffer 2d6 points of damage per round. Constricted creatures can break free with a bend bars roll. Constricted victims of less than 250 pounds can be carried aloft and dropped. All such held foes suffer a -3 penalty to attack, damage, and saving throw rolls. Lillendi cannot inflict constriction damage while carrying a foe in the air. While holding a victim so, the lillend has a +1 bonus on attack and damage rolls against that foe with her weapon.

**SD:** Immune to poisons, gases, normal fire, Positive and Negative Energy Plane effects, music-based magic, and all enchantment/charm spells. They can be hit only by magical weapons.

**Spell-like powers:** Lillendi cast spells (and can charm with music, affect morale, and determine the history of legendary magical items) as 7th-level bards. They possess the following magical abilities: *darkness*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *knock and light 3/day*; *Otto's irresistible dance*, *pass plant*, *polymorph self (humanlike forms only)*, *speak with animals*, *speak with plants*, and *transport via plants 1/ day*.

## Staircase Specifics

As the Staircase rises, spirals, and twists to each of its destinations (reached through doorways found on the numerous landings), a wise traveler can guess where each section of the Staircase leads. Portions of the Staircase that lead to evil planes tend to be dark and bitterly cold. Those portions that lead to one of the Upper Planes appear clean, bright, and warmly friendly. Connections to other planes are not so easily ascertained, though experienced Staircase climbers may be able to note certain signs.

A side effect of the Staircase's power is only mentioned here, though it could come into play if the characters successfully rescue Waukeen. (She'll point it out to any surviving PCs as part of the reward she offers.) When a climber walks the Staircase alone, the power of the Infinite Staircase can sense and lead a character to his or her heart's desire. This is dangerous to a PC because if the character reaches such a place, she'll never want to leave, thus ending her adventuring career. (She's happy there; why leave and go back to a world of pain, loneliness, or endless battle?)

In such as case, the PC is presented with a pathway of the Staircase she's never noticed before. If this path is taken to its end, the character is granted a chance to reach

her heart's desire. Whether the PC accepts this depends on the player and the DM. (The DM must also confer with the player regarding what the character's heart's desire is.) If you wish to resolve this through game mechanics rather than through roleplaying, give the character a Wisdom check with a -4 penalty, modified by a +1 bonus for level of the PC's class. If the check fails, the character accepts her heart's desire, goes through the portal, and is never seen or heard from again (as far as the other PCs and the campaign is concerned). If the check is successful, the PC can walk away from the doorway. Though the character won't know this at the time, she never finds her way back to this door again. She may reach her heart's desire, but it won't be via the Infinite Staircase.

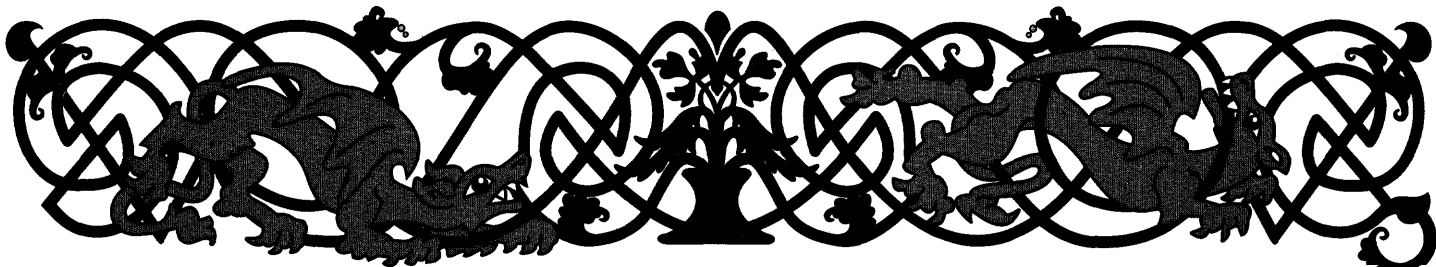
In the case of this adventure, PCs devoted to Waukeen (not just clerics or specialty priests) or to law and good (paladins, for example) just may be able to find their way by using this power of the Staircase. If, as the DM, you rule that lost characters are so singularly focused on the objective of freeing Waukeen, they may find their way to the correct portal to the Abyss (see below), allowing them to continue with the adventure.

The first landing of the PCs encounter is over 1,000' from the Staircase's base. No walls are visible. The landing is a 200' diameter disk with numerous branching stairs, all of different composition and going off in different directions, extending from the disk like tentacles. Note that up and down, left and right, will be different for many of the various stairs. A climber never notices any change in orientation, even if his friends at a distance see him turn and take a stair that seems to lead up a wall. Whether this is another power of the Staircase or an optical illusion of some sort remains unknown.

## Traveling The Staircase

As its name implies, the Staircase itself is essentially infinite; it leads to an infinite number of places on a number of infinite planes. Characters unaccustomed to such concepts may experience frustration in trying to understand the endless, plane-spanning nature of the Staircase. A lack of understanding won't keep them from being able to travel on it, however, and that's what really matters. Despite the Staircase's endless nature, its planar connections are frequent enough so that nearly any destination accessible by the Stair can be reached in two or three days. (An extremely short trip, by planar standards.) As most of that time is spent climbing stairs (while probably carrying from 50-100 lbs. of armor, weapons, and gear), this exer-





tion takes its toll. A PC can easily climb the Infinite Staircase for one day for every 6 points of his Constitution (rounded down) before he must make a Constitution check. Failure indicates that the character suffers 1d2 points of damage from the strain. If he pushes on, the Constitution check must be repeated at a cumulative penalty of -1 per day, with the attendant damage of a failed check. A full day of rest eases the strain.

With no map of the Staircase for reference, the DM must use the “travel time” given below for the journey to the Abyss or decide on their own how long that trip, and any others the PCs may make on the Staircase, take.

A journey on the Staircase takes travelers over stairs of many different materials and constructions. Straight wooden stairs, spiral staircases wrought of metals or bamboo, and winding, curving stairs of marble, granite, or other stone are just a few examples. Landings are frequent on the Infinite Staircase (though some are dead ends), so PCs traveling upon it need not camp on the stairs themselves.

Trying to use magic while on the Staircase to reduce travel times is possible but risky. Flight, magical or otherwise, is perfectly safe as long as the flyer remains within 25' of the general path of the Staircase. Flying farther than that from the Staircase or flying in attempt to “short cut” from one portion of the Staircase to another portion of stairs brings risk. Due to the interplanar nature of the Staircase, any traveler attempting this incurs a 25% chance of passing through an invisible “fold” in the space occupied by the Staircase. This results in the character being flung onto some random plane. Most travelers who disappear in this manner are never seen or heard from again. Any PC who suffers this fate during this adventure might find her way back to the Staircase and her comrades via some divine (or DM) assistance. Perhaps the PC in question is led back to a portal on the Staircase by a golden pathway or a trail of golden coins.

*Teleport*, *dimension door*, and other similar magic runs the same risk. Teleporting from the Staircase to another plane is impossible. The traveler finds herself still on the Staircase, but the spell (or charge from a magical item) is gone.

Falling from the Staircase is also dangerous, carrying the same risk as detailed above. Those who do not succumb to that 25% chance fall 10d100' before impacting another part of the Staircase. Note that with the varying perspectives on different part of the Staircase, anyone unlucky enough to be falling may think he is falling “up” past certain portions of the Staircase and its travelers.

## ENCOUNTERS ON THE STAIR

For the most part, travelers on the Infinite Staircase find it a lonely, desolate place. Encounters or even sightings of other travelers are rare. The chance of a random encounter with another creature is about 1 in 10, checked at least once per trip but at most twice daily. The DM is encouraged to generate such encounters, remembering that the interplanar nature of the Staircase means the PCs might meet beings from literally anywhere. The following table offers suggestions for encounters, but it remains the job of the DM to turn them into full-fledged scenarios.

### d10 Result

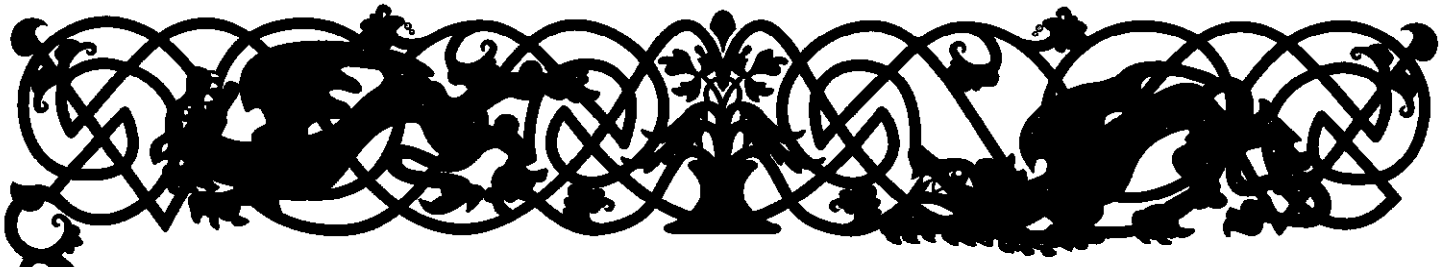
1. Domesticated Animal (hungry, lonely)
2. Wild Animal (hungry)
3. Lost Child (any species and alignment)
4. Lone Traveler (on a mission, random alignment)
5. Wandering Fiend (random type on mission, will not attack unless provoked)
6. Planewalkers (adventuring party of planars, random alignment)
7. Lone Traveler (wounded or lost, random alignment)
8. Lillend (watches party, can provide aid)
9. Evil Monster (any, aggressive intent)
10. Good Creature (any, may provide aid)

## LANDINGS AND DOORS

Like the stairs themselves, the landings and doors of the Staircase vary in form and composition. Many are very small, with only a single doorway and one or two adjoining stairs. As noted above, some landings are dead ends, with a doorway but no stairs other than the ones used by the travelers to reach the landing. Doors may be wooden and hung on traditional hinges, circular metallic hatches or iris valves, or open archways made of stone.

In order to reach their destination in the Abyss, PCs need to resist the urge to open every door they pass and explore a bit. Unless you wish to expand this portion of the adventure and allow some exploration, you'll need to keep the party focussed. After a few door openings (just to satisfy—or whet—their curiosity), have a door the PCs approach feel very warm to the touch. The metallic handle or doorknob bums a bare hand touching it for 1d12 points of damage. If the PCs insist on opening this door anyway, a wave of searing heat forcibly hits them as they view the legendary City of Brass, home of the efreeti, on the Elemental Plane of Fire. The heat wave inflicts 3d12





points of damage per round to those without some protection. Actually stepping through the doorway inflicts 5d10 points of heat damage and requires item saving throws for all the PC's items vs. magical fire. Such an encounter should dissuade too much exploration.

Each doorway leads to an unobtrusive area of the plane beyond the Staircase. Possibilities include cellar doors no one's ever opened, a door in a deserted building, or a trap door to an attic or root cellar. (No door leading to or from the Staircase should be trapped.) The vast majority of those who live near a portal to the Staircase have no idea that a link is so close, even if the being in question knows of the Staircase itself.

## On The Stair

At least one *invisible* lillend is always in this chamber of Argentil, Selûne's palace. If any of the PCs revere the Moonmaiden, be sure to mention the warmth and welcome they feel emanating from all around them. Regardless of where Selûne happens to be in the cosmos at the moment the PCs arrive, any Selûne-worshiper is unlikely to ever feel this close to the true, beneficent power of the goddess again.

When the PCs appear in the chamber, a lillend named Cattariina removes her mask, suddenly becoming visible. She immediately moves toward the PCs. Describe her to the players; she may appear not unlike a winged naga to the PCs. However, any Selûne-worshiper knows instantly upon seeing the lillend that this creature serves the Moonmaiden and is no threat to them.

If trigger-happy PCs attack the lillend before her true purpose and identity can be confirmed, Cattariina defends herself to the limit of her abilities. She'll cease attacking when the PCs do. Cattariina's weapon is a *scimitar* +3. If she was attacked, Cattariina is likely to hold a grudge and be somewhat less than forthcoming in answering any questions the PCs might have. If the characters try to assuage her with some form of art (a poem, a song to Cattariina's beauty, a sketch of the Staircase, and so on) that is well done (a successful proficiency check for the art form in question), she'll decide to let bygones be bygones.

Once the PCs accept Cattariina, she asks if they know the ways of the Staircase. She offers to instruct them on the ways and the dangers of using the Staircase. The lillend states that the Infinite Staircase is drawn to great concentrations of creative energy, thus connecting any

where that sentient beings exist in the multiverse. The Staircase isn't limited to only one area on each plane, either; she mentions that the "Celestial Staircase" touches Shadowdale and other locales such as the top of Mount Waterdeep. The PCs can ask Cattariina any further questions they have, such as how long the trip will take (two to three days, as the Staircase sometimes changes and the Abyss is a long distance from the Staircase's base in Ysgard).

Once this scene is played out, Cattariina wishes the PCs good luck. She doesn't know about their specific mission unless they tell her; if they do, she advises them to keep it to themselves once they begin traveling the Staircase itself, as any manner of creature is allowed to use it.

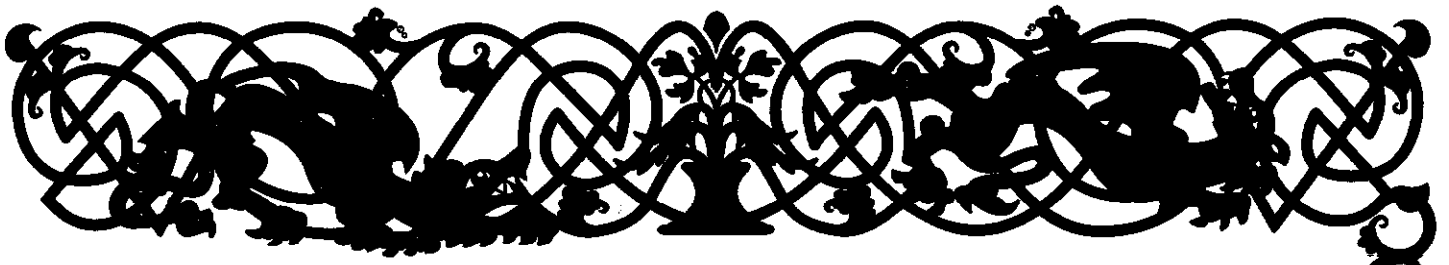
## Along The Road

The DM now has the opportunity to let the characters explore the Staircase's wonders and diversity. As they climb (and climb and climb), describe the varying scenes they see: the ways in which the Staircase changes between sections (material, construction, and lighting), the variety of doors they pass, the number and strange geometries of the Staircase's landings, and so on. Feel free to incorporate any of the entries under "Opportunities" (see below) during the course of the PCs' trip. The Staircase is seldom crowded (it is infinite, after all), but the PCs should be aware that many peoples and species make use of this interplanar pathway. Introducing the larger scope of the AD&D® game multiverse by using the Staircase is a terrific chance to expand the campaign and interest the characters in the diverse realms beyond Toril.

After the PCs have been traveling for a day or so (or when the novelty of the Staircase's flight after endless flight of stairs has begun to wear off), read or summarize the following boxed text.

As you approach a landing from below, you think you hear voices—many voices, in fact. You also can smell smoke from a fire and the aroma of cooking meat. As your view crests the upper limit of this flight of stairs, you see a small community of tents and other temporary structures has taken root here on one of the Staircase's wide landings. Several other sets of stairs either meet or diverge from this landing, depending on your point of view. All sorts of creatures seem to have camped here together, though for company or for protection you know not. You suddenly realize how





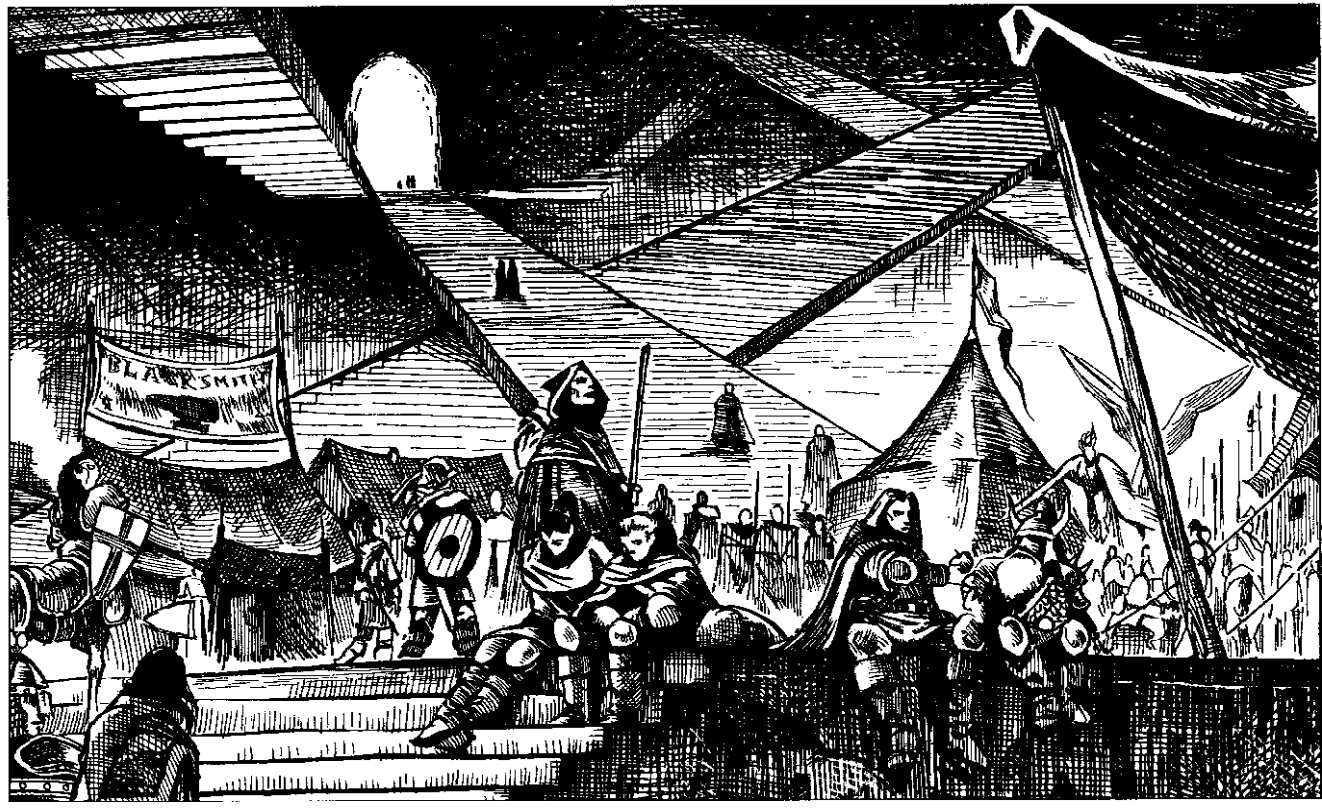
badly your feet are aching inside your boots and just how good a hot meal in your stomachs would feel right about now.

Here, at the “Nowhere Inn” (as it’s called by several of its inhabitants) the PCs can rest, recover, learn more about the Staircase, obtain directions to the door to the Abyss, or even hire a guide to take them there. The Nowhere Inn is a roving collection of merchants and misfits that sets up shop on busy Staircase landings, providing food, lodging, and companionship for those traveling the Staircase. This “inn” is also an opportunity for the DM to weave in more subplots for this adventure or for adventures in the future of your campaign. Detailed below are a few of the encounters the PCs could have while here.

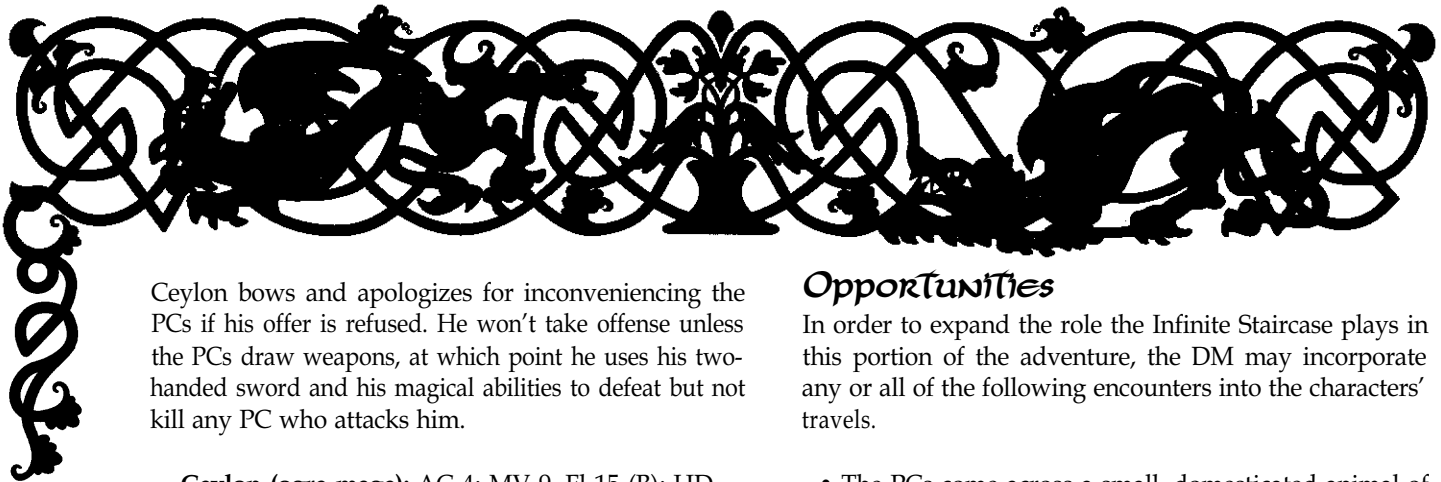
- A small pink silk tent is fronted by a small man from an oriental culture of whatever world he hails from. The man’s clothes are cut from the same fabric as his tent. This is Ching-Dau (NG hm F7), and he tends several small grill-like appliances upon which he’s cooking

what looks to be small pieces of beef, pork, and shrimp on skewers. He has more meat before him than it seems possible any man of his size could eat, and he’s willing to sell or trade some for a reasonable price. He also asks any PC who buys meat from him if she has any paints or brushes. It seems Ching-Dau is an artist, and he complains that he lost all his supplies when he fell asleep on the Staircase and was accosted by several minotaurs. They did not harm him but merely ransacked his pack and took all his paints and brushes, leaving the rest for Ching-Dau to gather and repack.

- An elf woman named Allisa Misthaven (NE ef T5) wanders through the knots of people, offering a rare elven wine for sale by the mug or the skin. She calls it Starclear, and although it is quite good, an elf PC who has had the good fortune to taste Evermead knows this to be a watered-down impersonation of that drink.
- An ogre mage calling himself Ceylon (N ogre mage m) approaches the PCs at some point and offers his services as a guide. Ceylon is a veteran of the Staircase and the Abyss, enough so that he was able to pick out the PCs as newcomers who might need a bit of assistance.



*The Infinite Staircase is much more than a set of steps.*



Ceylon bows and apologizes for inconveniencing the PCs if his offer is refused. He won't take offense unless the PCs draw weapons, at which point he uses his two-handed sword and his magical abilities to defeat but not kill any PC who attacks him.

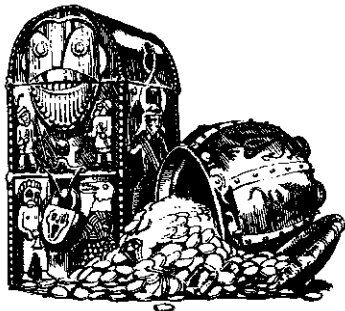
**Ceylon (ogre mage):** AC 4; MV 9, Fl 15 (B); HD 5+2; hp 42; THAC0: 15; #AT 1; Dmg: 1d10+3 (two-handed sword +3) or 1d12 (fist); SA Spell-like powers; SZ L (10½' tall); ML unsteady (7); Int exceptional (15); AL N; XP 975.

*Notes:* Ceylon is a coward despite his magical powers. He is a knowledgeable guide but definitely places the safety of his own skin above the needs of whoever hires him. His sword +3 was forged on the Outlands, which means it loses only one plus in the Abyss or any other Outer Plane.

*Spell-like powers:* Usable 1/round, at will unless otherwise noted: *fly* (12 turns/day), *invisibility*, *darkness*, *polymorph self* (into a humanoid form only). Usable 1/day: *charm person*, *sleep*, *gaseous form*, *cone of cold* (60' long with a diameter of 20', 8d8 points of damage, save vs. spell for half damage).

Once the PCs have interacted with the above NPCs (or any others that the DM wishes), allow them a restful night's sleep. If the party does not sleep in shifts with at least one PC staying awake at all times, several items are missing from the PCs' packs when they awaken. The thief is long gone and missing items are lost to the PCs. Threats against the community of the Inn do not go over well. Unless the PCs are careful, they may find themselves on the wrong end of a riot.

Once this scene has resolved itself, the PCs should resume their journey on the Staircase. If they hire Ceylon, they can cut almost a day's climb off their trip. If not, they can gain some vague directions from some of the Inn's members but nothing very concrete. When the PCs are ready, move on to the next chapter of this adventure: "Into the Abyss." The DM needs to be very familiar with the informational chapter "Surviving the Abyss" before then, however.



## Opportunities

In order to expand the role the Infinite Staircase plays in this portion of the adventure, the DM may incorporate any or all of the following encounters into the characters' travels.

- The PCs come across a small, domesticated animal of some sort. This animal could be a cat, dog, tressym, or other type of "pet" creature, or it could be a small wild animal such as a lizard, a raccoon, or even a songbird. Whatever this creature is, it wandered through a door that led it here to the Staircase and it's now lost and hungry. A pet creature may "adopt" one or more of the PCs who show it kindness, and a wild animal may flee, attack, or beg for any obvious foodstuffs. A wild animal may even follow at a distance the character who gives it food or water.
- Another lillend approaches the group. This creature, Saleera, knows nothing of the PCs or their mission but will provide aid and answer questions if treated with respect. If the PCs are arguing amongst themselves or being otherwise boisterous, Saleera is likely to remain *invisible* and let them pass.
- A number of worker grell equal to the number of PCs minus one descends and attacks the PCs from a landing above. These grell are led by a philosopher grell with AC0, max hp, and the spells of a 2nd-level mage.

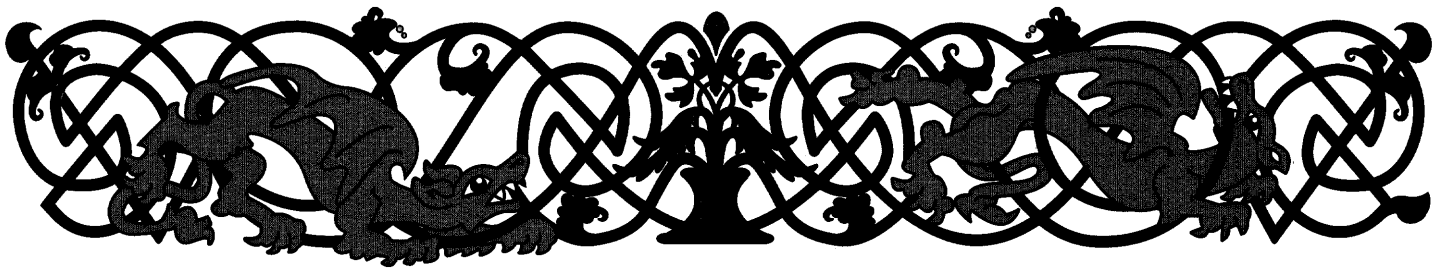
**Grell (equal to # of PCs1):** AC 5; MV Fl 12 (D); HD 5; hp 40 each; THAC0: 15; #AT 11; Dmg: 1d4×10/1d6; SA Drop; paralyzation; SD Immune to electrical attacks; SZ M (4' diameter); ML elite (13); Int average (8); AL NE; XP 2,000 each.

*SA: Drop:* Can descend from above, victim must make surprise rolls at 3. *Paralyzation:* For each hit, victim must successfully save vs. paralysis with a +4 bonus or be paralyzed for 5d4 rounds.

**Grell, philosopher:** AC 0; MV Fl 12 (D); HD 7; hp 56; THAC0: 13; #AT: 11; Dmg: 1d4×10/1d6; SA Drop; paralyzation, spells; SD Immune to electrical attacks; SZ M (4' diameter); ML champion (16); Int exceptional (16); AL NE; XP 5,000.

*SA: Drop:* Can descend from above, victim must make surprise rolls at 3. *Paralyzation:* For each hit, victim must successfully save vs. paralysis with a +4 bonus or be paralyzed for 5d4 rounds. *Spells:* Casts spells as a 2nd-level wizard.





# Surviving The Abyss

*"Ah, the infinite wonders of the Abyss. If there's anything you don't like, you'll find it here."  
— Common Abyssal saying*

**A**s with the Infinite Staircase before this, some introductory material on the Abyss and the conditions that reign there must be presented before the PCs reach this incredibly dangerous place. Bear in mind that the PCs have likely never entered a region (much less an infinite plane of existence) that is so actively hostile to their presence. Not even the nation of Thay or the innermost chambers of the Citadel of the Raven hold as many powerful, magical foes as the triple realm of Graz'zt's domain in the limitless layers of the Abyss.

## Rules of The Abyss

**T**he Abyss is crueler than death and hungrier than the grave. The only "law" is chaos and evil. And both the chaos and the evil take physical form as the demons, or tanar'ri, who rule here. There is no place of refuge in the Abyss, no one who will even think twice about betraying a friend for a handful of coin . . . or less. Only two kinds of beings are found in the Abyss: the quick and the dead. If characters are used to fighting their way out of trouble, in the Abyss they find more foes to bash than they ever thought possible. The PCs will run out of spells, hit points, and hope long before the demons even notice their numbers are slightly depleted.

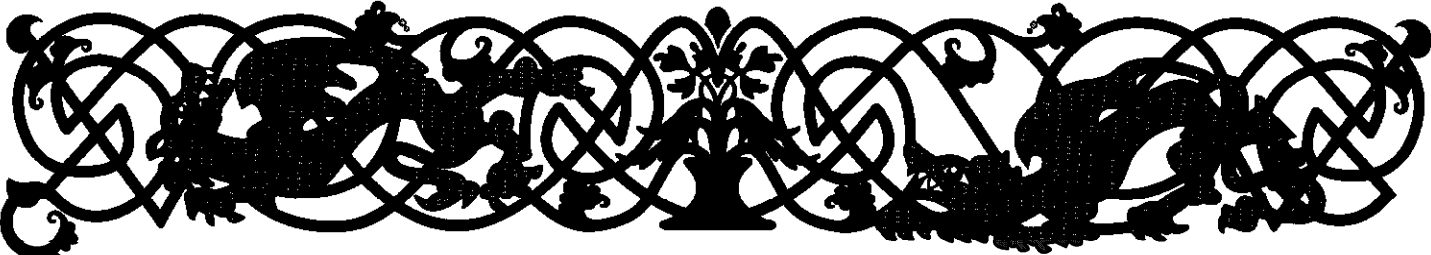
Most visitors need guides to get by, and that's where Ceylon the ogre mage comes in. If the PCs have retained his services (for a high, but not outrageous, fee), things are likely to go easier for them. Ceylon knows a lot, but he's not much use in a fight. He's a coward. If directly threatened, he uses all his abilities to the fullest, but he turns invisible or otherwise flees the scene the moment he has a chance. Don't let Ceylon win any battles for the PCs unless they seem to be in need of immediate rescue. But he should only do so once; the Abyss is not very forgiving of those who do not learn their lessons. Finding a guide in the Abyss itself is also possible (see page xx).

Any being who goes to the Abyss must obey three rules of survival. First, survive the layer's climate and terrain. Many layers are inimical to human life (filled with poison gas, fire, and so forth). Second, avoid being eaten by the local flora and fauna. Third, bring or find enough rations and water unblemished enough to survive. Mastering these rules is easy, though, in comparison to the limits the Abyss places on magic.

One potentially deadly magical effect is the fact that on their home plane, demons are not considered extradimensional creatures. Therefore, both wizards and priests will be shocked to discover that spells such as *banishment*, *binding*, *dispel evil*, *holy word*, and even *protection from evil* do not work against demons in the Abyss the way they would on the Prime. (In the case of *protection from evil*, only the "extraplanar creature" ward







fails to function. The spell's other protective qualities remain.) The following sections further describe the alterations to wizard and priest magic in the Abyss.

## Wizard Magic in The Abyss

Magic draws attention in the Abyss. The bigger the spell, the more likely it is to attract attention. And attention is something a mage doesn't want in the Abyss. The Abyssal lords pay special attention to what magic is cast in their realm. (In the case of this adventure, the only lord involved is Graz'zt, but his attention is bad enough.) A lord's reaction to a spell varies, and it's extremely unlikely that Graz'zt himself would ever show up to investigate. That's why a lord has lackeys. Below is detailed exactly how each school of spells is affected when cast in the Abyss.

### General Restrictions

Because the Abyss has no access to the Ethereal Plane or the Inner Planes, the following spells do not function at all without a spell key (as described below): *conjure elemental*, *conjure elemental-kin*, *demishadow magic*, *demishadow monsters*, *detect phase*, *dimensional blade*, *distance distortion*, *duo-dimension*, *energy drain*, *estate transference*, *find familiar*, *invisible stalker*, *Leomund's secret chest*, *Lorloveim's shadowy transformation*, *major creation*, *minor creation*, *phase door*, *shades*, *shadowcat*, *shadow form*, *shadow magic*, *shadow walk*, *summon shadow*, and *vanish*.

### Alteration

Alteration spells often go wrong or fail completely due to the corruptive nature of the Abyss. Whenever an alteration is attempted, the caster or the recipient (if there is one) must make a saving throw vs. spell. If he succeeds, the spell works normally. If he fails, the spell is changed in some way, warped by the chaotic nature of the Abyss. The changes wrought fall into three broad categories detailed below. The exact effects of alteration spells vary in the details, but the overall degree of corruption from the spell should remain in the same category in which the spell is listed.

**Lesser Transformations/Least Corruptions:** These spells produce fairly minor changes in the subject's properties but not its form. In the Abyss, these spells result in minor corruptions that are inconvenient at worst. The spell works as intended, but the effect goes slightly awry.

*Dancing lights*, for example, might produce several glowing skulls, a huge padlock might appear on a held portal, and a flying creature might sprout wings at her neck, shoulders, or ankles. The following spells fall into this category.

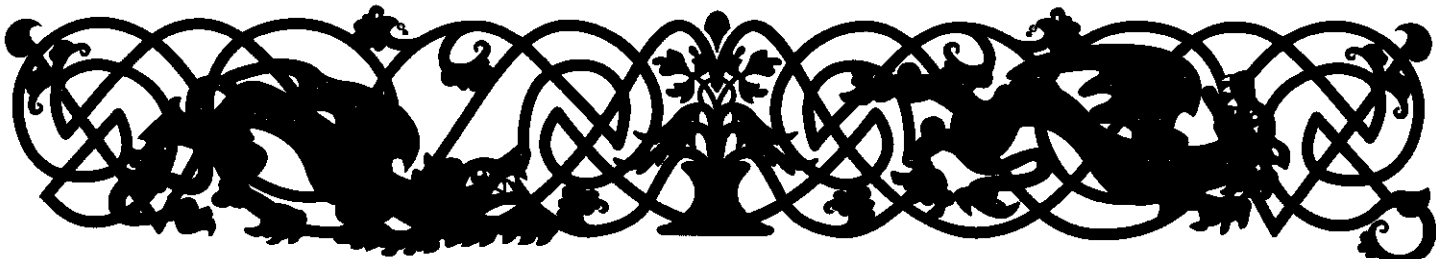
*Spells:* 1st level — *cantrip*, *comprehend languages*, *dancing lights*, *feather fall*, *gaze reflection*, *hold portal*, *jump*, *lasting breath*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *wizard mark*; 2nd — *continual light*, *darkness 15'-radius*, *deepockets*, *fog cloud*, *fool's gold*, *irritation*, *knock*, *levitate*, *ride the wind*, *rope trick*, *sense shifting*, *strength*, *whispering wind*, *wizard lock*; 3rd — *alternate reality*, *far reaching I*, *fool's speech*, *fly*, *gust of wind*, *haste*, *infravision*, *Leomund's tiny hut*, *secret page*, *slow*, *squaring the circle*, *tongues*, *water breathing*; 4th — *dilation I*, *extension I*, *far reaching II*, *Mordenkainen's celerity*, *Otiluke's resilient sphere*, *Rary's mnemonic enhancer*; 5th — *avoidance*, *extension II*, *far reaching III*, *lower resistance*; 6th — *extension III*, *dilation II*, *Mordenkainen's lucubration*, *project image*; 7th — *spell shape*; 8th — *permanency*.

**Lesser Corruptions:** These spells' effects produce dramatic changes in the subject's properties and in the Abyss cause spectacular and potentially dangerous corruptions.

The spell has unintended side effects, though most of these are not permanent. Affect normal fires might cause a spray of lava and *burning hands* could change the caster's hands into tiny dragons' mouths. A wizard eye might report what it sees to the lord of the layer, and *teleport* might force the target to make a system shock roll to survive the spell. Below are spells in this category.

*Spells:* 1st — *affect normal fires*, *burning bands*, *color spray*, *fireburst*, *shocking grasp*, *spider climb*; 2nd — *magic mouth*, *pyrotechnics*; 3rd — *alacrity*, *blink*, *delude*, *explosive runes*, *fireflow*, *Melf's minute meteors*, *wind wall*; 4th — *dimension door*, *rainbow pattern*, *solid fog*, *vacancy*, *wizard eye*; 5th — *airy water*, *distance distortion*, *Leomund's secret chest*, *passwall*, *telekinesis*, *teleport*, *waveform*; 6th — *control weather*, *death fog*, *glassees*, *guards and wards*, *lower water*, *mirage arcana*, *move earth*, *part water*, *Otiluke's freezing sphere*, *wild shield*; 7th — *Hornung's surge suppressor*, *Mordenkainen's magnificent mansion*, *phase door*, *reverse gravity*, *suffocate*, *teleport without error*, *vanish*; 8th — *Abi-dalzim's horrid wilting*, *airboat*, *glassteel*, *incendiary cloud*, *Otiluke's telekinetic sphere*, *sink*; 9th — *crystalbrittle*, *estate transference*, *Mordenkainen's disjunction*, *succor*, *temporal stasis*, *timestop*.

**Major and Inalterable Corruptions:** These spells alter the subject's physical form and in the Abyss cause extensive corruptions—and even permanent ones. Living recipients change race or species, and nonliving, targets become foul and useless.



Therefore, the caster of a *fire shield* might become immolated in flame as if he were a balor; a *stoneskin* recipient might be petrified; the caster of a *claws of the umber hulk* spell may permanently lose all spellcasting ability due to his transformed hands; a *massmorph* might create a stand of viper trees; or strength of one might literally meld the recipients into a single, gibbering creature for the spell's duration. Such spells are listed below.

*Spells: 1st – enlarge, erase, fist of stone, metamorphose liquids, Murdock's feathery flyer; 2nd – alter self, shutter, Maximillian's earthen grasp; 3rd – item, Maximillian's stony grasp, wraithform; 4th – fire shield, Leomund's secret shelter, massmorph, plant growth, stone shape, polymorph other, polymorph self, stoneskin, turn pebble to boulder; 5th – animal growth, fabricate, stone shape, transmute rock to mud; 6th – claws of the umber hulk, disintegrate, stone to flesh, Tenser's transformation, transmute water to dust; 7th – duo-dimension, hatch the stone from the egg, statue; 8th – polymorph any object; 9th – glorious transmutation, shape change.*

### Conjuration/Summoning

These spells are very risky in the Abyss, as a mage never knows exactly what will show up in response to her summoning. The chance that a demon will answer is 10% × the spell's level. The more powerful spells also call more powerful demons to the caster and are more likely to attract unwanted attention. Demons hate nothing more than being pulled away from their business by a summoning spell cast by some meddling mortal.

With a spell key, elemental summonings call forth "pseudoelementals," since the Abyss is cut off from access to the Elemental Planes where the true elementals live. Such spells instead create a pseudoelemental from the nature of the plane where the mage stands. Thus, a mage who casts *summon elemental* in the Abyss calls forth a creature similar in all ways to the one he intended save that the creature's alignment is chaotic evil.

### Divination

Divinations function in the Abyss, but all true demons (see "The Demons," below) and Abyssal lords (in this case, Graz'zt) immediately detect the spell and can use the power of the Abyss to attack the nosy spellcaster through the divination spell itself. This counterattack always follows the form of the spell. A *clairaudience* spell could engender a sonic or spoken counterattack. A *clairvoyance* or true *seeing* spell allows visual retaliation such as blinding lights, horrifying visions, and so on. A know alignment

opens the caster's mind to mental counters, and *legend lore* provides only false information, usually chosen by the lord for its seeming truth. The broader the divination spell, the broader the forms the rebound may take. *Detect magic* is the only exception to this rule. It allows any counterspell, subject to the level limits given below.

Even though the counterattacks take the same form as the divination, they disrupt and close the pathway between the observer and the target of the divination after twice the divination spell's level are channeled back through the pathway created by the divination. In other words, the target of a *clairvoyance* (3rd-level spell) could counter with a *color spray* and *advanced illusion*. The target of the *clairaudience* could respond with a shout spell (six spell levels) but not power word, stun or *prismatic spray* (seven spell levels each). Know alignment could be the channel for the target's retaliation with confusion, chaos, or emotion spells.

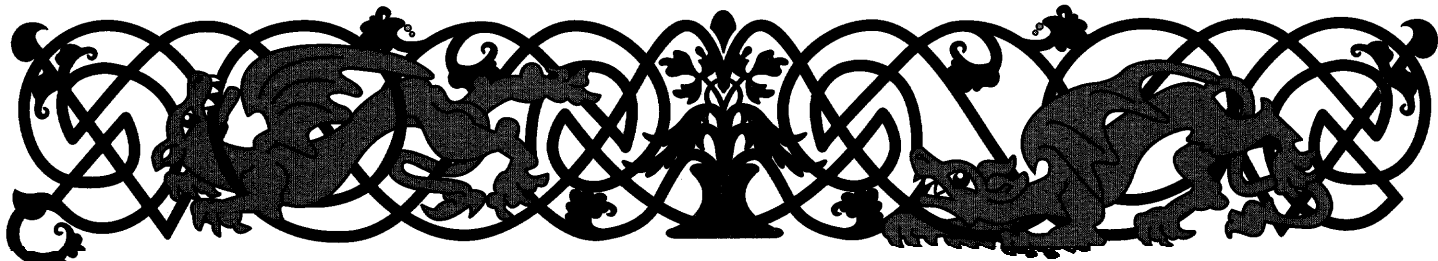
The *ESP* spell is a special case, since it allows a mental counterattack. Reading the mind of a demon is a sure way to madness. *ESP* destroys the minds of mages in the Abyss, as the workings of a demonic mind are too terrible for a mortal to fathom. Whenever the spell is used to read the mind of a demon (even one that's assumed a human form), the mage must make a saving throw vs. death magic. Success indicates that the mage is merely feebleminded for 2d6 hours and can relate fragments of useful information when she recovers.

Failure means that the mage suffers a form of madness (agreed upon by the player and the DM) until she is treated with a *heal*, *restoration*, *limited wish*, or a more powerful cure. The mage can still cast spells, but she loses spell levels based on the type of demon that counterattacked. Least demons cost the mage a single spell level (one 1st-level spell), lesser demons burn out two spell levels (one 2nd-level spell or two 1st-level spells), a greater demon costs three spell levels, a true tanar'ri burns four, and the terrible mind of an Abyssal lord costs the mage eight spell levels. Furthermore, the mage is forever scarred by such an incident; the mage loses half of those spell levels (four) permanently, rounded in favor of the character.

### Illusion/Phantasm

These spells work well in the Abyss, for the demons take great delight in deceiving their foes, playing with them before they destroy them utterly. All illusions operate as if cast by a mage one level higher than the PC's level. These illusions last longer, create stronger shadow magic, and are





more difficult to disbelieve. Note that this holds true for any illusions cast by demons as well.

### **Necromancy**

Necromancy spells work well in the Abyss. *Animate dead* works, but a specific flaw allows manes and other minor inhabitants of the Abyss to take over the animated corpses. Usually this results in the animated dead attacking the caster or his comrades. *Reincarnation* cast in the Abyss always results in a demonic form, usually a dretch or a manes. Good-aligned souls that die in the Abyss are reborn as bodaks. (Both bodaks and manes can be found in the PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM *Appendix*.)

### **Wild Magic**

Wild magic is as unpredictable as the Abyss itself and sometimes just as deadly. Like illusion/phantasm spells, all wild magic spells are cast at one level higher than the mage's normal level. In addition, when a wild surge occurs, the caster must roll twice on the Wild Surge table in the *Tome of Magic*, with the worse of the two results taking place. Demons love seeing a spellslinger toasted by his own spell.

### **Elemental Spells**

Spells that summon elemental creatures are discussed above, under "Conjuration/Summoning." Other elemental spells fall into one of two categories in the Abyss. Protective spells (such as protection from fire) often fail when they are most needed; the caster or recipient of the protective spell must make a saving throw vs. breath weapon to determine if the spell functions or fails. Destructive elemental spells (like *fireball*) are cast as if the caster were one level higher than she is, also inflicting one extra point of damage per damage die.

### **Spell Keys**

Spell keys are very valuable items to mages who travel the planes. They allow the mage's spells—or some of them, at least—to be cast normally, disregarding the particular's plane's rules for how spells work (or don't work) there. In the Abyss, the most popular spell keys allow alteration spells to be cast normally. Chances exist for the PCs to purchase spell keys once they arrive in the Abyss. After all, the Abyss is a very dangerous place, and giving the PCs a good scare when their magic starts to go awry is worth having an NPC explain a few things to them afterward, and then sell the PCs a spell key for some outrageous fee.

Most everybody in the Abyss knows how spells are affected, and so many folks sell "keys" that really don't work, or only do so for a small number of spells. In the Abyss, spell keys normally involve blood or money. Think of keys as bribes to let the Abyss open the gates of power to the caster, powering her spell. Necromantic spells usually require a death, elemental spells require fouling or destroying some pure substance, and alterations might need the mixing of the caster's and the recipient's blood. Conjuration/summoning keys are kept well hidden by the demons (who hate being summoned by mere mortals) as are those for divination spells. Abyssal lords hate spies and so make it difficult for these people to operate.

## **Priest Magic**

Cleric and priest PCs do not have it any easier than mages do when traveling the planes. In fact, in some ways they have it even worse. On the Prime Material Plane (which includes most campaign worlds, Toril included) clerics and priests have a direct planar link to the home realm of their deity (typically on an Outer Plane) and receive spells and other granted powers normally. Traveling beyond the Prime complicates matter, however.

In brief, for every plane of existence (not the individual layers of a plane; the Abyss counts as one plane of existence total) *between* the priest or cleric and her power's realm, subtract one level from the spellcasting ability of the character in question. This rule also applies to rangers and paladins who gain cleric spells.

For example, say a cleric of Selûne travels to the Abyss. Selûne's realm is located on Ysgard. Counting around the rim of Great Wheel of the Outer Planes, the shortest course from Ysgard to the Abyss passes Limbo and Pandemonium. To determine the amount of level loss, don't count the plane where the power resides (Ysgard) or the destination (the Abyss in this case). Two planes separate Ysgard and the Abyss, and therefore the priest loses two spellcasting levels. This reduces the number of spells she can cast and may reduce the efficacy of at least some of those spells she retains. The chart on the following page gives a quick reference for all the common Torilian deities and the number of spell levels their priests will lose in the Abyss.

The priest PC does not lose any hit points, weapon, or nonweapon proficiencies, nor does she suffer any reduction in saving throws or the ability to turn undead.





Most priests (except those who have traveled the planes extensively) are unaware of the spell restriction described above. Such was the case with the Holycoin; he does not know that the priest PCs who are now journeying to the Abyss for him will be reduced in power. Power keys exist to ameliorate this effect, however.

## Power Keys

As spell keys empower mages to safely cast spells in otherwise hostile environments, items known as power keys serve somewhat the same function for priest and cleric PCs. Unlike spell keys, however, power keys cannot usually be bought or traded for; they are gifts from the gods themselves to their favored worshippers.

Power keys come in two types. The first type allows any spell cast by a priest to function at full power, so a power key for the healing sphere allows all healing spells to automatically heal their maximum amount of damage. The second type of power key—actually a *greater* power key—is far more powerful. With a greater power key, the priest reduces the level loss suffered by his separation from the home plane of his power. The number of levels regained depends on the key, which can restore from one to four levels of power. Thus, if a priest of Selune who normally loses two spell levels in the Abyss gains a greater power

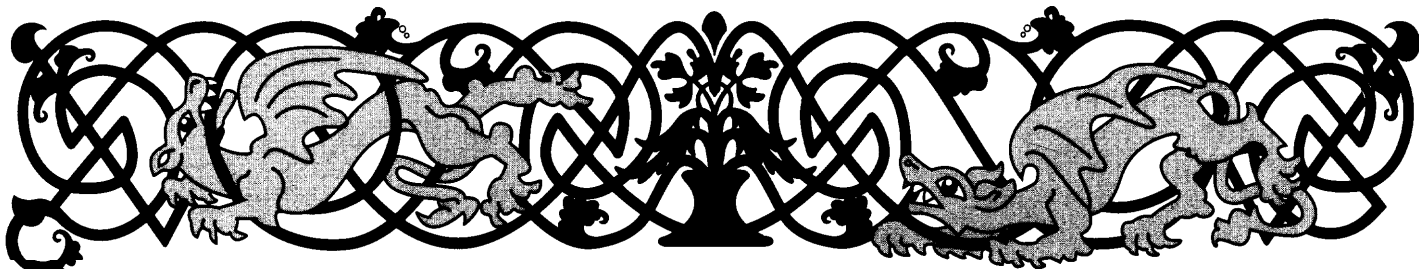
key of two levels, he no longer suffers any power loss while in the Abyss.

Ordinarily, power keys are extremely rare items earned only through years of service to a deity. Due to the nature of this adventure, however, a PC priest of Waukeen or Lliira has the chance to gain one. At the DM's option, this boon can be extended to a priest of any good-aligned power of Faerun, since the good powers of Toril are all interested in seeing Waukeen return to her place within the pantheon.

Realms PCs should retain the scrolls containing the *foesight* spells Kyri gave them. The scrolls themselves can act as either a power key of the healing sphere (for the priests of Waukeen, who lose no spellcasting levels in the Abyss) or a greater power key of two levels for priests of Lliira. PC priests of other faiths are out of luck unless the DM decides the scrolls can benefit the priest of any good power, in which case those priests also gain a power key to the healing sphere. If the spells on the scrolls are cast, the power key benefit disappears.

The coin that acted as the portal key in the alternate PLANESCAPE beginning of this scenario also acts as a power key for worshipers of either Waukeen or Lliira, the coin granting these priests a boon as described for the scrolls.

Plane	Level Loss	God
The Abyss	None	Beshaba, Lolth (drow), Umberlee
Acheron	-4	
Arborea	-3	Elf gods (Aerdrie Faenya, Corellon Larethian, Deep Sashelas, Erevan Ilesere, Hanali Celanil, Labelas Enoreth, Sehanine, Solonor Thelandira), Finder Wyvernspur, Lliira, Sune, Tymora
Arcadia	-6	Azuth, Clangeddin Silverbeard (dwarf), Savras
Baator	-3	Tiamat
Beastlands	-4	Deneir, Mielikki, Milil, Nohanion, Shiallia
Bytopia	-6	Gnomish pantheon (Baervan Wildwanderer, Baravar Cloakshadow, Flandal Steelskin, Gaerdal Ironhand, Garl Glittergold, Nebelun the Meddler, Segojan Earthcaller), Ilmater
Carceri	None	Malar, Talona, Vhaeraun (drow)
Elysium	-5	Chauntea, Eldath, Lathander, Mystra
Gehenna	-2	Iyachtu Xvim, Loviatar, Velsharoon
Gray Waste	-1	Jergal, Kelemvor, Mask, Shar
Limbo	-1	Tempus
Mechanus	-5	Helm, Hoar
Mount Celestia	-7	Berronar Truesilver and Moradin (dwarves), Halfling pantheon (Arvoreen, Cyrollalee, Yondalla), Torm
Outlands	None	Dugmaren Brightmantle and Dumathoin (dwarves), Gond, Oghma, Silvanus, Sheela Peryroyl (halfling), Waukeen
Pandemonium	None	Auril, Cyric, Garagos, Talos
Ysgard	-2	Eilistraee (drow), Selune, Sharness, Shaundakul, Tyr, Uthgar, Valkur
Prime Material	-1	Ao, Gargauth, Gwaeron Windstrom, Lurue, Red Knight, Siamorphe, Ulutiu, Zinzerena (drow)
Inner Planes	-3	Akadi (Air), Grumbar (Earth), Istishia (Water), Kossuth (Fire)



## Magical Items

As a general rule, magical items are affected by the planes in the same ways and to the same degrees as similar spells. For instance, if a character takes a *ring of invisibility* to a plane where illusions fail to work (such as Mechanus), then the *ring* doesn't work either. An item based on alteration magic suffers the same effects as a mage's alteration spells. Clerical items and scrolls do not suffer the level loss of their owners, but they are subject to the spell alterations by school as described for wizard's magic. From the notes above on spells, the DM can extrapolate the effects on most magical items before the issue arises during the game. Spell and power keys don't function for items or scrolls.

Magical armor, weapons, and other items with bonuses (pluses) associated with them are another matter. Such items are bound to the magic of the plane on which they were created, and taking them to other planes diminishes their power. The farther an item is taken from its plane of origin, the weaker its magic becomes, at least for the duration of the time away from its home plane. Items trace the shortest route back to their plane of origin.

For instance, a *battle axe* +3 forged on Toril on the Prime becomes a *battle axe* +2 if taken to the Astral Plane, as the Astral is one plane removed from the Prime. If the wielder of that weapon goes to the Abyss, it becomes a *battle axe* +1. Assuming that all the characters' magical weapons, armors, shields, *rings of protection*, and so on were created on the Prime, for this adventure all the PCs' magical items' pluses are reduced by two in the Abyss. As above, a *battle axe* +3 becomes a *battle axe* +2, a *shield* +4 becomes a *shield* +2 (thus worsening the character's AC by two as well), and a *ring of protection* +1 offers no saving throw or Armor Class bonuses. (Remember that Abyss-forged magical items, like those carried by demons, function at full power. PCs who learn this can equip themselves with more effective items—if they can separate a demon from its weapon.)

Any weapons that are reduced to +0 or less are still considered magical for the purposes of striking creatures that can be hit only by magical weapons. (Although a +2 magical sword reduced to +0 cannot hit a marilith in the Abyss, since such demons require +2 or better weapons to hit.) They register to *detect magic* spells, and generally remain extremely sturdy and finely crafted. Items with additional powers, such as a *sword of dancing*, lose all those additional powers if the item's bonus is reduced to +0 or less. For items with more than one plus, such as a *sword* +1, +4 vs. *reptiles*, apply the penalty to the highest of the item's pluses to determine the loss of additional powers. Finally, note that cursed items are in no way affected by planar travel.

## The Demons

The demons, or tanar'ri as they are more commonly referred to on the planes, are the native race of the Abyss. Like most outer-planar creatures on their home plane, they can be killed outright and forever while on the Abyss. The DM should take into account the fact that not all demons are foolishly brave, especially when facing final death at the hands of powerful PCs.

These fiends are not without defenses, however. Each type of demon has its own special abilities, but a few common powers are shared by them all. Each demon can use the following spell-like powers: *darkness* 15'-radius and *infravision*. Tanar'ri can also *gate* in others of their kind at will, as defined for each type of fiend. As a result of the events of the PLANESCAPE *Hellbound* boxed set, demons have lost the ability to *teleport without error*. Demons are susceptible to each of the attack forms as listed below.

Attack Form	Damage
Acid	Full damage
Cold	Half damage
Electricity (lightning)	None
Magical fire	Half
Normal fire	None
Gas (poisonous, etc.)	Half
Iron weapon	Full
Magic missile	Full
Poison (contact, ingested)	None
Silver weapons	Full*

\* Greater, true, and guardian tanar'ri suffer only half damage from silver weapons.

Five categories of demons exist, excluding the individual Abyssal lords. These categories allow the DM to determine the basic power level of an individual demon.

**Least:** Dretch, manes, rutterkin.

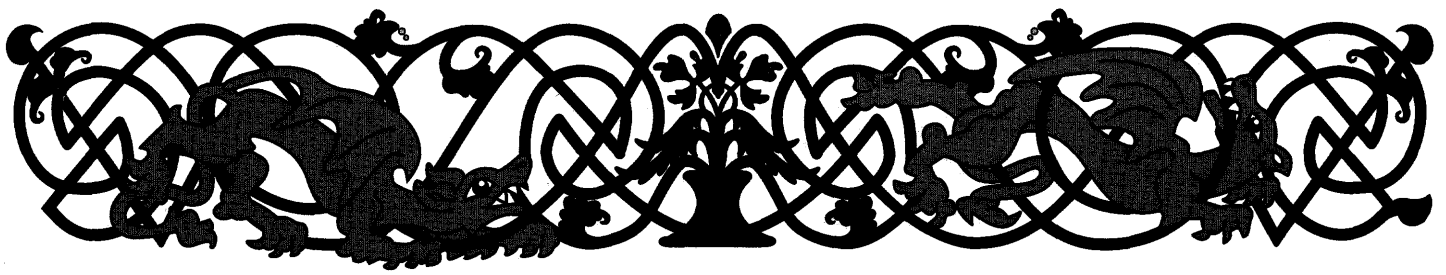
**Lesser:** Alu-fiend, bar-Igura, cambion, succubus.

**Greater:** Babau, chasme, nabassu.

**True:** Balor, glabrezu, hezrou, marilith, nalfeshnee, vroek.

**Guardian:** Molydeus.

All demons also share a form of telepathy that enables them to communicate with any intelligent life form, regardless of language barriers. All demons with Average or better Intelligence can communicate in this manner. If the PCs have not encountered this before, the DM is presented with a terrific opportunity to unnerve PCs (and players) by describing voices in their head-raspy, snarling, malevolent voices.



# Into The Abyss

*"In the Abyss, kindness is unnatural, mercy impossible, and power all that matters."*

*—Rule-of-Three, a cryptic tanar'ri*

**A**p until this point, the PCs had one path to follow from the revelation of Halanna's visions to their journey on the Infinite Staircase. Once they find the door to the Abyss, everything changes. The PCs know that Waukeen is a captive in the realm of Azzagrat, but they don't know the realm's layout, its cities, or where exactly the goddess might be. After the opening scene "Welcoming Committee" in the city of Samora, the PCs can go anywhere they wish, investigating clues that may lead to Waukeen and learning about the realm.

The following pages describe locales in Azzagrat. Since the PCs may conceivably follow several paths, the DM needs to be prepared to describe each location and prepare possible encounters beyond those detailed here. The DM is also responsible for maintaining the aura of danger and tension inherent in exploring a place as dangerous as the Abyss.

## Welcoming Committee

**A**fter the PCs have climbed on the Staircase for two to three days (or more at the DM's discretion), they locate the door bearing a six-fingered hand insignia in an exceptionally dark and cold area of the Staircase. In this area, the stairs and railing seem to be made of a black stone, perhaps onyx or obsidian. It's difficult to tell, as the PCs' light sources, whether magical or mundane, don't seem to give off much light here. The Staircase is unusually dirty as well, with strangely dark cobwebs filling the comers.

When the PCs open the door and step through it, they find themselves in a dead-end alleyway in an Abyssal town. A blue sun high above lights the scene. No figures are visible at the moment, though the characters hear the noises of a bustling city. At first the sounds echo those of a normal town in any part of the Realms: animals bray, wagons roll down streets, hammers pound anvils, and so on. If the PCs listen more closely, however, they realize that those "ordinary" noises vary from what they expect. The braying animals are not horses, the wagons make odd squishing sounds as they travel, and there seems to be a cry (perhaps a scream?) after every hammer-strike. Beneath the other noises sounds an undertone. It's muffled, almost as if it were coming from some distance or from underground, but it sounds like a chorus of wails. Whether the cause of the moans is anguish or ecstasy is impossible to tell.

The PCs should also realize that this doorway seems inconspicuous and even unimportant. They may guess that not many residents of this town know of this doorway to the Staircase and they may wish to keep it that way, since this likely will be their primary means of escaping the Abyss once they have completed their mission.

Before the PCs have much time to react, a roving pack of demons notices them in the alley and moves to attack. The characters can flee back through the door and onto the Staircase, although the fiends will certainly pursue them if they do.





The PCs are attacked by a pack of apelike bar-igura. There is one bar-igura per PC. They leap down from the rooftops at the far (open) end of the alley and advance quickly, their hulking bodies shambling along the ground using both legs and abnormally long arms. Though they may appear somewhat like orangutans, their strength and magical abilities make them far more dangerous.

**Bar-igura (lesser tanar'ri) (1 per PC):** AC 0; MV 9, Climb 15; HD 6+6; hp 40 each; THAC0: 15; #AT 3; Dmg: 1d6/1d6/2d6 (claw/claw/bite); SA Spring attack, spell-like powers; SD Camouflage; MR: 30%; SZ M (5' tall); ML elite (13); Int low to average (5-10); AL CE; XP 8,000 each.

**SA:** These fiends can leap up to 40 feet and attack in the same round.

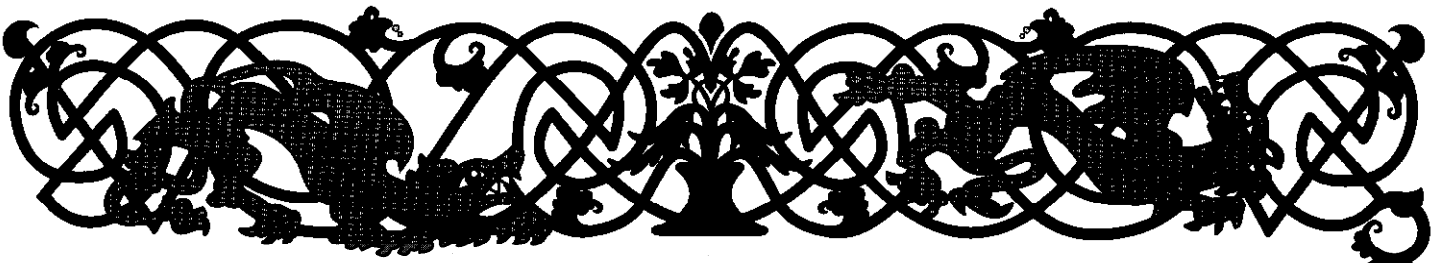
**SD:** Bar-igura can change their coloration like chameleons. This requires one round and acts as thief's hide in shadows with a 95% chance of success.

**Spell-like powers:** (at 6th level of use): *change self* (2/day), *detect invisibility*, *dispel magic*, *entangle*, *fear* (by touch), *invisibility* (2/day), *plant growth*, *spectral force* (2/day), *telekinesis*. *Gate* ability: 35% to summon 1d6 more bar-igura, 1/day.

These demons roam the streets and back-alleys of Samora, looking for any who appear lost, weak, or vulnerable. They lack weapons and any appreciable grasp of tactics beyond attempting to engage every PC in melee. They are clever enough (barely) to use their *telekinesis* ability to disrupt the spellcasting of the party's mages and priests, once the PC spellcasters reveal themselves. If the bar-igura fail a morale check (when half of the fiends have fallen and then each time half of the remaining demons perish), they attempt to escape the battle by fleeing to the rooftops.

This brawl gives the PCs a chance to flex their muscles in combat and discover the various changes that magic undergoes in the Abyss. The fight should deplete their hit points and a few spells. (If the characters seem to be winning too easily, have the bar-igura use their *gate* power to summon more of their kind.) After the fight has ended, the players may conclude that their PCs are out of luck as far as magic goes. That's true to a point, but Ceylon the ogre mage (if they hired him) or Warwick (see below) can explain more about the workings of magic in the Abyss and point out ways around the restrictions.





## The Home of Evil

As the PCs soon discover, they are in the city of Samora on the 47th layer of the Abyss, the deepest layer of Graz'zt's Triple Realm. All three (infinite) layers of Azzagrat overlap confusingly and move through one another in a pattern only the chaotic tanar'ri can understand. Azzagrat is unlike other Abyssal realms in that Graz'zt's predilection toward making deals extends to merchants and traders plying their wares across the planes. Such merchants are granted free passage in and through Azzagrat, though all must leave a large portion of their profits with Owantz, the monstrous goristro demon that guards Azzagrat's borders.

One of the common threads that connects all three layers is the River of Salt, a sparkling crystalline mass that is somehow liquid and solid at the same time. Creatures falling into this river are reduced to a reddish paste by the rasping crystals in 1d6+2 rounds. Those who fall into the river cannot drag themselves out without aid. A successful saving throw vs. death magic allows the being in the river to stay "afloat" long enough for others on the shore to attempt a rescue; otherwise, the creature is immediately dragged under the mass of grinding minerals. Note that any PC who reaches in to save her friend also suffers 2d12 points of damage instantly and must save vs. paralysis or pull her hand back out of the river from the pain.

Throughout Graz'zt's realm, open *gates* exist to transport beings from one layer of Azzagrat to another. These *gates* appear at random, seemingly meaningless locations as ovens or open pits of green flame that erupt from the ground like geysers. The fiery ovens' flames always rise out of the ground in a circular shape, usually from 4-6 feet high. Peering through the flames reveals only the other side of the oven, not the destination of the fiery *gate*. The flames are not illusory, but neither are they magical. Demons are normally immune to normal flame and thus pay the flames no heed. PCs and other beings not immune to fire suffer 2d6 points of fire damage every time they use one of the *gates*. Unfortunately, there are also ovens of green fire in Azzagrat that are just fiery pits with no *gating* powers at all. The flames still inflict 2d6 points of damage, however, and there's really no way to tell a *gate* - pit from a fire pit aside from watching other travelers. The fiends enjoy watching beings try to discern the difference and burning themselves in the process. About one in every three ovens is a *gate*; the others are simply flame geysers.

Viper trees are also common in Azzagrat. They grow in stands near many towns and palaces as protective barriers. Zrintor, the Viper Forest, exists on the 45th layer of the Abyss.

The three layers each have unique physical conditions. The "uppermost" layer, the 45th, seems somehow subdued. The light from the sun above this layer seems muted, even at noon. This muted feeling pervades the entire layer, making even the screams of the least demons and other helpless souls somehow fade into the background. On this layer, everything is less noticeable and appears equally gray. This makes stealth easier for all concerned with such matters. All attempts to move silently or to hide in shadows enjoy a +10% bonus to the chance of success, and all creatures suffer a +2 penalty to surprise. Things (and beings) just tend to go unnoticed here.

The second layer of Azzagrat, the 46th layer of the Abyss, also suffers from peculiar lighting conditions. Here, the sunlight is of normal color, but it shines upward from the ground, not downward from the sky. Shadows on this layer are stark towers of darkness climbing into the sky. The sky itself is dark during the "day" and gray at "night."

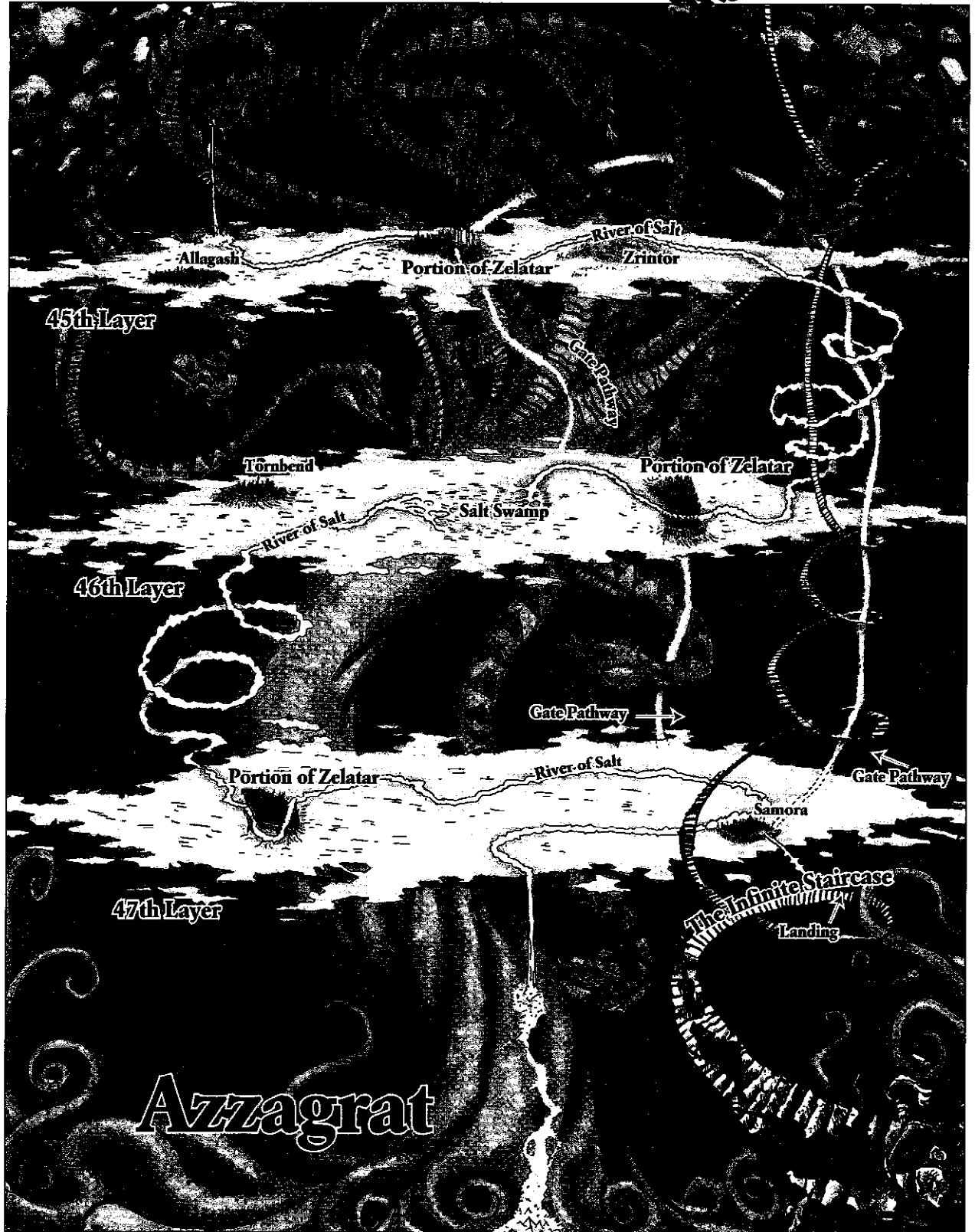
A blue sun lights the third layer of the Triple Realm, the 47th layer of the Abyss and "bottommost" layer of Azzagrat. Indeed, all flames burn blue or purple here, and all inflict cold damage rather than heat. Cold spells such as ice storm inflict fire/heat damage on this layer. Additionally, while fiends normally take half damage from cold and are immune to normal fire, on this layer all demons suffer half damage from the transformed fire spells and are immune to cold spells. The sun's blue light also makes it difficult to recognize other beings, and many creatures looking for a place to hide come here.

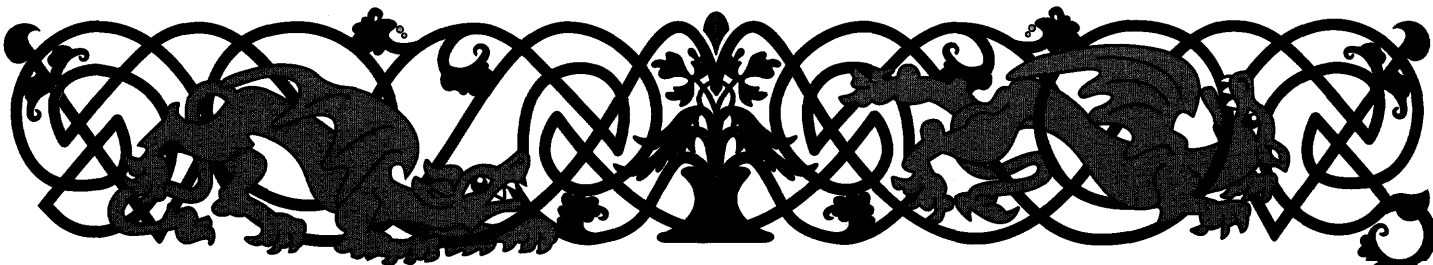
The demons of Azzagrat believe that the 47th layer, the home of Samora, can be reached only by way of *gates* on the 45th and 46th layers. They are uniformly unaware of the Infinite Staircase's access to this layer and Samora itself.

Although the PCs are not to learn of this yet, Waukeen is currently in—or rather, under—Samora. The Merchant's Friend is to be transferred back to Graz'zt's Argent Palace in his capital city of Zelatar in a few days. The PCs have a chance to intercede, but they currently lack the savvy and information to even attempt a rescue this soon.









## Graz'zt's Master Plan

From the moment Graz'zt was approached by the proxies of Waukeen who negotiated the goddess' passage through his domain, the Abyssal lord planned to betray her. He never intended to let Waukeen leave his realm if he could prevent it. Graz'zt suspected that he could, since his many ties to the Prime Material Plane alerted him to the troubles the Torilian pantheon was suffering at that time. Had Waukeen retained her godly might, she would have escaped him, but an Abyssal lord in the heart of his domain easily has the ability to restrain any mortal, no matter how powerful.

Once Waukeen was in his six-fingered clutches, Graz'zt announced his desire to "renegotiate" the deal he and Waukeen had struck. He knew that the Merchant's Friend—by her very nature—would refuse to reopen a closed and agreed-upon deal, and that fact gave Graz'zt the time he needed to implement the next phase of his scheme, a plan that involved one of his many offspring.

Graz'zt has fathered many an abominable whelp, among them a few who have achieved (with help from daddy) the status of minor gods on the Prime. Perhaps the most notorious of Graz'zt's children is Iuz, a demigod currently living on the world of Oerth. There he rules a large portion of that world's largest continent, much of which he gained after orchestrating a massive war there.

The foremost long-term goal in Graz'zt's twisted but uncannily intelligent mind is his desire to steal an entire crystal sphere from the Prime and add it to his realm. Graz'zt's son Iuz has a foothold in Oerth's crystal sphere, but Graz'zt's plan to steal that sphere away from the Prime has centuries or millennia yet before the demon lord can act openly.

Graz'zt is nothing if not a master planner. Between the successes of his children on the Prime and his own demonic desire for more power, slaves, and riches, he quickly realized the opportunity granted him by fate when a depowered goddess (of wealth, no less!) from another crystal sphere was so literally dropped in his lap.

Graz'zt plans to hold Waukeen for as long as he can, well aware that eventually some meddlers might discover her location and seek to rescue her. To forestall such an attempt, he has been shuttling Waukeen in caravans from Samora to Zelatar and back "for security reasons," thus providing would-be rescuers an obvious opportunity. In fact, most of those moves are mere ruses meant to draw out interlopers, and Graz'zt's minions wait eagerly for the chance to destroy potential rescuers as they guide the false

caravans. The Abyssal lord is so confident in this trick that he truly does, on occasion, surreptitiously move Waukeen from one city to the other. This is done without any fanfare or caravan wagons full of guards, and only in the trusted hands of one of his lieutenants (see page xx for details).

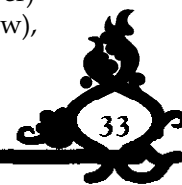
With that contingency taken care of, Graz'zt has set his wizards and soothsayers to the task of finding a way to replace Waukeen or to place the psyche of one of his children within the body of the Golden Lady. The Abyssal lord's choice for this task is Thraxxia, one of his daughters. An alu-fiend in physical form, she has gained all the magical powers, Hit Dice, and Armor Class of a nalfeshnee through her guile, wit, and treachery. (Thraxxia's statistics appear on page 58.) Thraxxia has served her father well over the centuries. She served in Maretta's Lancers (see the section on "Samora") for several decades and learned much from the devious succubus. Since that time, she has been a personal assistant and assassin for Graz'zt. She even eliminated three rival half-sisters to gain the chance Graz'zt offered to the child who was strong enough to reach out and take it.

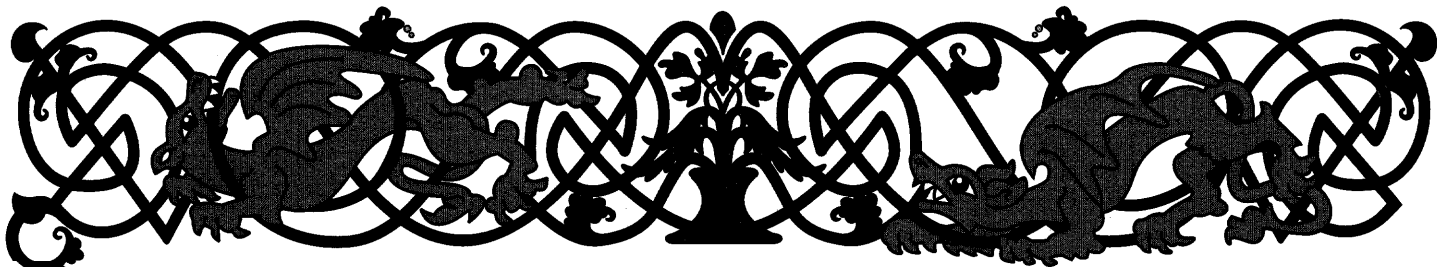
Graz'zt seeks a way to allow Thraxxia to impersonate or magically control Waukeen in such a manner so as to be undetectable to Lliira (who holds Waukeen's power) and the other Faerûnian gods. Once the divine power was transferred to the seeming Waukeen, all false guises will be dropped and whatever remains of the true Waukeen can be eliminated. Thus Thraxxia will become the goddess of wealth on Toril, much as the humans Midnight and Cyric replaced gods who died during the Time of Troubles.

Graz'zt can also simply declare that he possesses Waukeen's physical shell and try to blackmail Lliira into turning over the Golden Lady's divine power with the threat of Waukeen's permanent destruction, but the demon considers this a last resort.

Finding or determining a means to impersonate a deity takes time, Graz'zt knows, but an Abyssal lord has plenty of that. He amuses himself by taunting Waukeen with constant demands for a new, more lucrative contract, saying he will let her leave as soon as she agrees. But Waukeen knows the Lord of the Triple Realm shall never willingly let her go now, and she bides her time and hopes another chance to escape presents itself.

This is the state of affairs when the PCs arrive in the Abyss and the city of Samora. One day (or two, if the DM determines that the PCs need an extra day to recover) after the characters arrive in Zelatar (see below),





Waukeen will be returned to Graz'zt's Argent Palace for further "negotiations" about her release. If the PCs wish to rescue Waukeen, they must do so before then.

## Samora

Once the PCs defeat or drive off the bar-Igura, they can begin to explore Samora. The town itself is not large; in fact, it's dwarfed by Zelatar, which exists on all three layers of the realm. Samora is connected to all of Azzagrat's other major towns (such as Zelatar, Tombend, Allagash, and others) by the fiery *gates*. Of course, the Infinite Staircase connects here too, although the fiends are thus far unaware of that fact. What attracts the Staircase is the great deal of creativity that goes on here. One of Graz'zt's trusted servants, the succubus Maretta, keeps track of her lord's innumerable dealings with the greedy, power-hungry mortals of many worlds. The Lady of the Counting-House also presides over the deals and bargains that Graz'zt has struck with other Abyssal lords and even fouler creatures over time. Both making and maintaining these deals requires a great deal of creativity.

Further, Samora is a city of vices, a den of pleasure and discipline. In this lawless town, demons and other twisted souls can live out their most depraved dreams and fantasies—for a price. Of course, part of the price for this "freedom of expression" goes right into Graz'zt's coffers, where Maretta accounts for it and stores it away (and never gets too greedy herself). Few other places like Samora exist anywhere else in the multiverse, and none that revel in such expressions of chaos and evil. Maretta herself lives in the underground core of the city, in a haven that magnifies Samora's excesses to the ultimate extreme.

The city of Samora has no literal ruler, but the Lady of the Counting-House has Graz'zt's ear and anything—or anyone—that offends her soon disappears from Samora, usually after receiving a summons to the Abyssal lord's Argent Palace. Maretta protects her lord's interests as well, for she commands 13 alu-fiends that patrol the Counting-House, the dungeons beneath, and the city. These 13 are known as the Lady's Lancers for their preferred means of attack, which involves flying above a foe and then diving toward their target (gaining a +2 to attack and damage rolls with the light lances they carry for just such circumstances). The Lancers usually work alone, though a distress call from Maretta brings any of them in the area to her aid. (Usually, 1d4+1 Lancers answer a call

from Maretta.). Several of the Lancers are assigned to guard the currently mortal Waukeen.

**The Lady's Lancers (alu-fiends, lesser tanar'ri) (13):** AC 2 (*chain mail* +3); MV 12, FI 15 (D); HD 2; hp 16 each; THACO: 19; #AT: 1; Dmg: 1d6+2 (*lance* +2); SA Dive, spell-like powers; SD +1 or better weapon to hit, absorb hit points; MR: 30%; SZ M (5' tall); ML steady (12); Int average (10); AL CE; XP 4,000 each.

**SA: Dive:** Lancers dive toward their target from the sky, gaining +2 to attack and damage rolls.

**SD:** Alu-fiends can restore their own hit points at the expense of their opponents. They gain half the damage they inflict on victims (in melee combat only) as hit points, up to their normal maximum.

**Spell-like powers:** *Charm person*, *dimension door* (1/day), *ESP*, *shape change* (to a humanoid form of approximately their own size and weight only), *suggestion*.

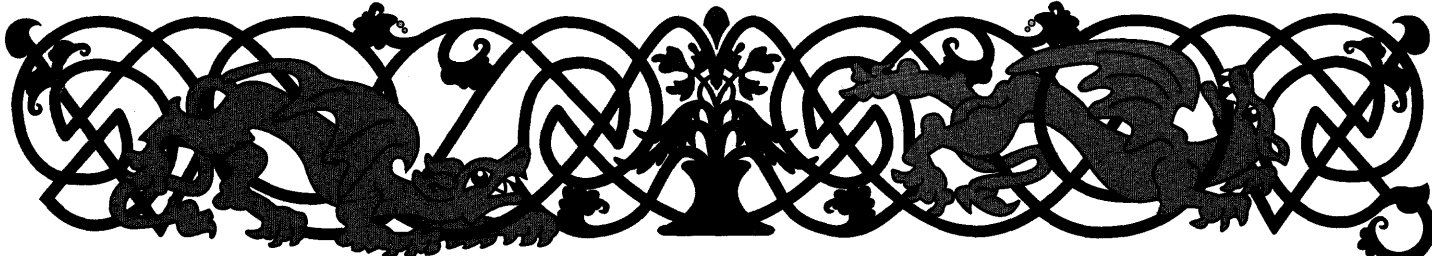
The PCs' first goal is to acquaint themselves with the people and locales of Samora and try to uncover some clues as to Waukeen's whereabouts. As they'll learn, the fact that Lord Graz'zt has a "lady guest" is far from a secret. In fact, it's publicly known in Azzagrat that a small, heavily guarded caravan regularly moves this guest of the Abyssal lord between Samora and the Argent Palace in Zelatar. The DM should be familiar with the town and all its happenings and people before beginning this section of the adventure.

Strangers who ask questions attract attention, even in a relatively open Abyssal realm such as Azzagrat, so the PCs must develop some cover story for wandering around the town. If the heroes do not create a more plausible reason themselves, their guide Ceylon or another friendly NPC (perhaps a trader they encounter leaving the realm) suggests that the PCs pose as merchants' agents who are looking to expand their business into Azzagrat. Under this cover, they can claim to be examining the market in the realm to determine the potential for profits as well as the risk factors involved in running a trade route here.

Once the PCs learn of the caravan's existence, asking detailed questions about it can lead to trouble. As noted above, the caravan is a trap devised by Graz'zt to lure any would-be rescuers of Waukeen into a battle they are unlikely to win. Though this fact is unknown to the general public, many of Samora's inhabitants become nervous whenever anyone strange or new to town starts asking about the caravan, its guards, the route it takes, and so forth.

When the PCs approach random beings about the caravan, the NPCs exhibit one of the following eight sample





reactions. (Several named NPCs have specific reactions, as detailed later in “A Tour of Samora,” and the DM should play out these reactions as written.) Though most creatures in Samora are evil (this *is* the Abyss, after all), Azzagrat is also a realm of merchants and traders, some of whom merely come here for the trade opportunities. Choose a reaction or roll 1d8 for a random result.

### d8 Reaction Result

1. The being approached by the PCs is having a very bad day. Unless the PCs are very polite, complimentary, and deferential, this being takes out all her pent-up anger and frustration on the characters. This is not intended as a combat encounter. The being simply yells at the PCs, asking why they’re bothering her; can’t they see she’s busy? And isn’t that just like a (name the race of the PC who spoke) to be so rude, when it’s completely obvious to any addle-pated fool that she’s got no time for clueless berks like them?
2. This being, for reasons all his own, chooses to lie through his teeth about whatever the PCs ask. The creature considers each question carefully before answering but is merely making up some believable lie. The DM should take this opportunity to creatively misinform the PCs.
3. This being is simply greedy. He only answers questions posed by the PCs when sufficiently bribed. The DM must determine the appropriate amount based on his campaign and the wealth of the PCs involved. If satisfied with the bribe, the being does his best to answer the PCs.
4. This being appears quite startled, and even a little afraid, when the PCs mention the caravan. Before hustling off in an effort to escape the PCs, this being waves its hands as if to ward the characters away from the topic, and says, “Shut up. Don’t ask me about that. Don’t ask about that at all. Leave me alone.”
5. This being serves Lady Maretta and appears to be quite helpful to the PCs for a relatively modest bribe. The being answers the PCs’ questions enthusiastically, as if she enjoys talking about the subject, but vaguely, claiming not to be an expert in such matters. All the while, this being tries to get the PCs names and find out why they are here in Azzagrat and Samora itself.
6. This enticing, attractive being speaks with the PCs gladly, drawing out the conversation. In truth, he or she seeks to be paid for a dalliance with one of the PCs. The being attempts to seduce the least attractive

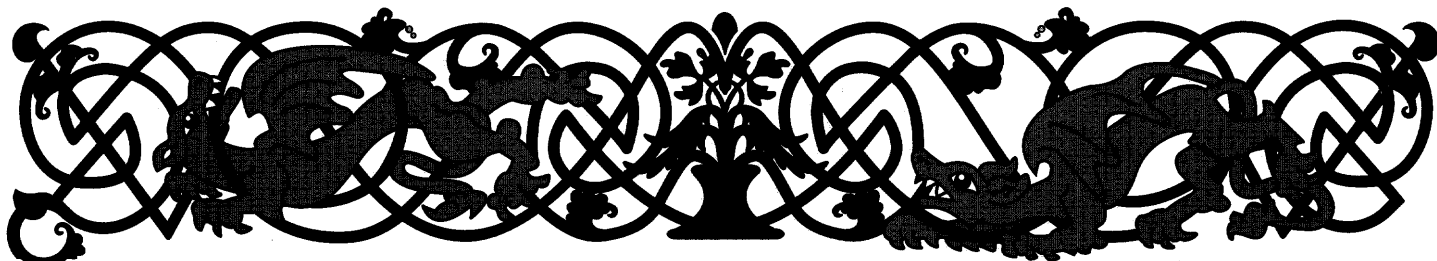
member of the opposite gender away from the party. If asked about the caravan, the being responds, “Best be peery —ah, that means careful—about who you ask such questions. Now I don’t mind—I get asked all *sorts* of things—but others here might. Now, aren’t there more *pleasant* things we might discuss?”

7. This being is roaring drunk and mistakes the PCs for some long-lost friends. While he contributes little to the PCs’ quest for information, he accompanies the PCs for the rest of the day unless they actively discourage him. Until that time, he tries to put his arm around various characters, wants to take them into any number of drinking establishments or festhalls, and constantly seeks to borrow money from his “buddies.”
8. This being becomes actively belligerent when asked about the caravan or Lord Graz’zt’s guest. This being may be a minor fiend or other planar creature, or a low-level NPC. In either case, the being starts a fist-fight with the PC who broached the topic. If the PCs draw weapons, use magic, or gang up on the being, word of their behavior could reach important ears in town.

### A Tour of Samora

Samora is a reflection of the chaos of the Abyss, a hodgepodge of buildings erected without any particular plan. As a result, the few streets twist and turn and often dead-end without warning. All the streets share one feature in common, though: an open sewer running down the middle of the road. Aside from haphazardly strewn buildings and filthy streets, the PCs can encounter a few gates (as marked on the map on page 37) with random destinations to various parts of the realm and the River of Salt nearby. Listed below are several types of sites the PCs can investigate. After each category (sites are marked by type on the map), a few sample sites of that variety are given, along with a sampling of NPCs.

**Plazas:** Two large plazas are found within Samora. The Market plaza becomes the site of one of the most bizarre open-air marketplaces on all the planes on market days, as all manner of goods and services can be bought here, most only of interest to evil creatures. In the Slave plaza, a steady stream of slavers—some demons, others not, but all fiendish—run a constant trade auction of defenseless beings. Humans, demihumans, humanoids, monsters, and all types of planar creatures are paraded across the tall stage and sold to the highest bidder.



If the PCs observe this practice for any period of time, they notice that elves and halflings seem very popular with the mixed crowd of buyers. If any of them remark on this, a large, homed creature resembling a 9'-tall red minotaur offers his opinion. "They scream the best, them elves do, and the little ones're easiest to knock around. Keeps 'em in line," he says, before turning back to the auction. This is Barkan, a 14th-level warrior from a distant prime world ("Barkan's world," he says if asked). Though he's not looking for a fight, he won't back down from one, either. Barkan has 109 hp and AC -2. He fights with his bare fists and his horns, earning him four attacks per round (2d6 damage per fist and 2d4 per horn for each successful hit).

This open display of slavery should disturb any lawful good members of the party (to say nothing of elves and halflings!), creating potential for some interesting role-playing within the group over how best to serve good and law. Disrupting the slave auction or simply charging the stage quickly brings several Lancers, and this rash act could spell doom for the PCs' mission. Buying several slaves or freeing them from the warehouse where they're kept are better options. Of course, buying a large number of slaves, starting a fight in the gathered audience (with Barkan, most likely), and other overt actions could attract more attention to the PCs than they might wish.

If the DM wishes to extend this plotline, one of the slaves that the PCs bought or otherwise freed was meant for another purchaser, who desires the slave back. The purchaser may seek revenge on the slave's rescuers or try to recapture the slave.

**Breweries:** At least three breweries, wineries, distilleries operate in and around the city. Those who know brag that Samora is one of the few places where one can obtain the rarer Abyssal beverages such as Malefic Mead, Baatezu Blood Wine, and Deva's Bile. Most of the substances brewed here will kill the PCs outright should they be foolish enough to drink of them. A generous DM may allow a saving throw vs. poison to allow a PC to avoid ingesting a lethal dosage. PCs who succeed might still be violently ill or roaring drunk for extended periods at the whim of the DM.

**Taverns:** Taverns seem to make up the majority of the buildings in Samora, with festhalls of all descriptions running a close second. Place the following enterprises in tavern sites on the map as the PCs visit them.

*The Sodden Solar:* This tavern has a relatively low percentage of fiendish patrons, if such is a concern for the PCs. This tavern serves a high proportion of the merchant

trade that moves through the city. Humans, dwarves, a few strange-looking gnomes fiddling with gadgets, a bariaur, some githzerai, and a blue giant fill the smoky common room, along with an odd. . . *man*, who watches the PCs as they enter.

The odd-looking man is Warwick Osseyes (N tiefling m B13), a planar guide, salesman, and tiefling. Tieflings are crossbreeds, humans with the blood of a lower-planar ancestor running in their veins. They seem mostly human, but darker, almost sinister, somehow "wrong." Only Warwick's black eyes (without whites) and unnaturally sharp fingernails betray his partly fiendish ancestry. Warwick notes the party as potential employers or buyers. (If Ceylon is present, the ogre mage and Warwick know one another, and Ceylon directs the party here in an attempt to meet with the tiefling.)

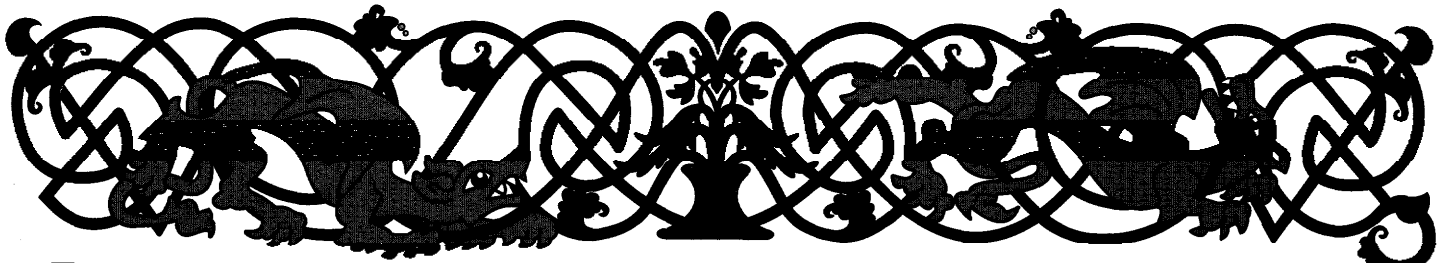
If the PCs need a guide to shepherd them around the Abyss, Warwick offers his services for 5,000 gp per day plus expenses, or a fee that is unreasonably high under any other circumstances. Warwick also can provide the party's spellcasters with a spell key that prevents changes to the Major and Inalterable Corruption category of alteration spells, as listed on page 24. With the key, these (and only these) alteration spells can be cast normally. Of course, Warwick does not detail the exact parameters of the spell key.

The key in question is a small, mummified hand or claw curled into a fist. It appears that it may have come from a monkey of some sort. Any PC who examines it closely notices this "monkey" had five fingers and a thumb on its hand. Warwick also offers the chance to obtain up to two other keys, but this is the only one he has immediately available. Additional keys will take time and require a much higher cost—paid in advance.

Warwick's price for each key is a permanent, non-charged, noncursed magical item. "Keys are power," he says, "and I want power in exchange." Warwick haggles with the PCs, as he seems to know at least as much about the heroes' magical items as they do. The PCs will not be able to dispose of three *daggers +1* for a like number of keys. Warwick might take all three daggers for one key, however.

If the PCs do not purchase any of Warwick's keys, several other parties approach them, each selling keys of their own. Each of these keys is a worthless fake, though the prices are much more reasonable than the tiefling's. A few patrons of the tavern even claim to be selling power keys. While they do radiate magic (*Nystul's aura*), these items

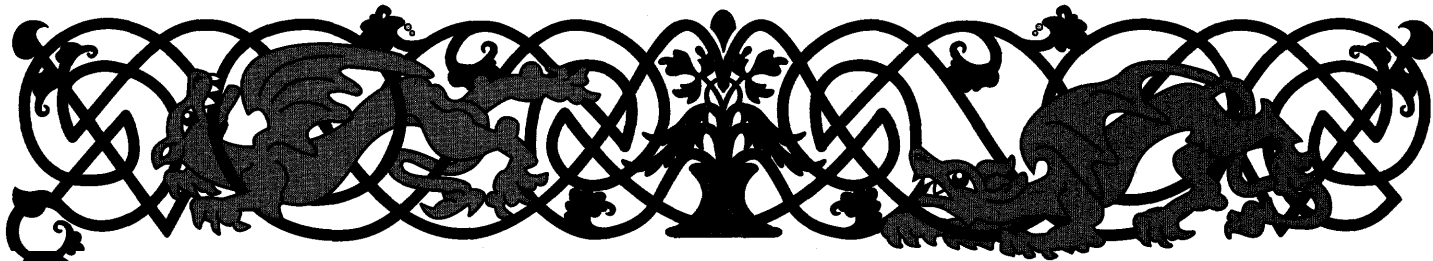




# Samora

- |                    |                      |                  |
|--------------------|----------------------|------------------|
| 1. Sodden Solar    | 3. Lord's Pawns      | 5. Marett's Beds |
| 2. Weeping Goddess | 4. The Sleeping Berk |                  |





are forgeries, regardless of how badly PC priests may wish them to be otherwise.

If the PCs decide to hire Warwick, he recommends going to Zelatar to see if any information regarding Waukeen can be found there. Warwick is convinced that the whole production of moving Waukeen is an invitation to any would-be rescuers to fall right into one of the Abyssal lord's traps. (He's right.) He also believes that moving such a valuable hostage between two different prisons is so obviously stupid that it must be one of Graz'zt's many ruses. While that's true to a point, Warwick doesn't understand the true arrogance and malice of the Abyssal lord, who *does* occasionally move his prisoner just to amuse himself.

*The Weeping Goddess:* Despite the name on the placard outside this tavern, no clue to the whereabouts of Waukeen can be found within. The place holds a large number of patrons, almost all of them fiends. If the PCs are frustrated thus far with their time in the Abyss, they can take out some of those frustrations here in an old-fashioned barroom brawl. The demons brawl for real, however, and combat could quickly become lethal. Suggested foes include a small number of bar-Igura or a number of major cambion toughs equal in number to the PCs. The DM should assemble a group of foes sufficient to give the PCs a knock-down, drag-out fight before running this encounter. (Statistics for bar-Igura and major cambions can be found on pages 30 and 53, respectively.)

*The Lord's Pawns:* This tavern's clientele appears to be the various minor demons and servants of the Lady Maretta's estates. The patrons here are used to outsiders and pay them little heed. Bits of their telepathic "conversations" can be overheard if any of the PCs approach closely, as the dretches and manes have yet to fully master this form of communication. Among the useless (and disgusting) topics of talk are the preparations for "her" arrival in a few days. The PCs can glean no more details beyond all they never wanted to know about the cleaning, cooking, and other chores that must be performed by these lowly demons. Although the PCs may guess, the demons do not reveal if the "her" they refer to is Waukeen, Maretta, or someone else entirely.

The minor fiends are actually discussing Maretta's return from a dalliance with Graz'zt in Zelatar. If the PCs try to bully or force more information from these lowly creatures, a dretch or manes reveals this fact, though grudgingly and with much talk of cleaning, dusting, repainting the stained walls, and so on. While this goes

on, several of the other minor demons flee the scene only to return with 1d4+2 of the Lady's Lancers, who challenge to PCs to battle (outside, where they can dive at the PCs). In fact, only half the Lancers that arrive enter the tavern; the rest circle in flight outside, waiting to dive. Statistics for the Lancers can be found on page 34.

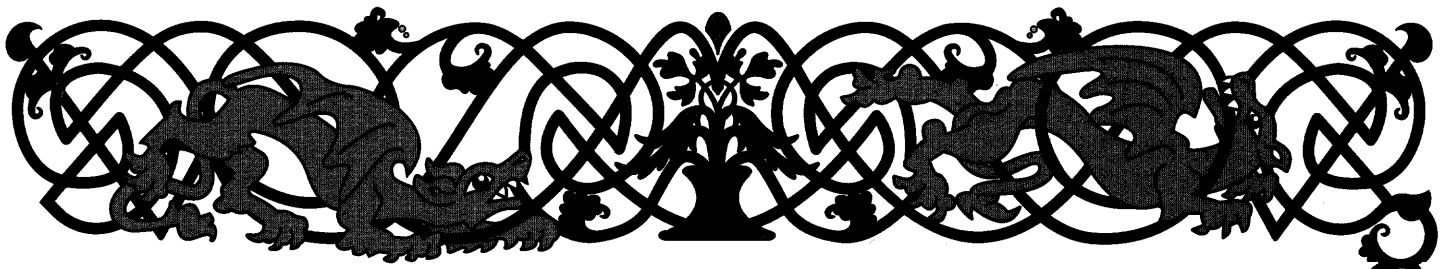
**Barracks:** Like the rest of the Abyss, part of Samora's existence and business goes to support the Blood War against the lawful evil baatezu. While Graz'zt's power and influence keeps many who wish to avoid the fighting safe in Samora, Maretta occasionally musters a troop of demons and sends them off, with great fanfare, to fight and die in the Blood War. Most of the barracks are currently unoccupied, as Maretta sent a regiment of vlocks off to battle a few months ago. If the PCs need a place to hole up, heal, and recover spells, these large, two-story stone dwellings fit the bill.

Of the barracks in Samora, only one is occupied and the DM must decide if and when the PCs enter this building. This barracks is inhabited by band of dimensional warpers, an extraplanar race intent on observing life and seeking knowledge in all its forms. These bipedal, snakelike beings have long thin limbs with a sturdy, winglike membrane stretching from the arms to the legs, though they are unable to fly. The warpers' heads are bald and earless, vaguely shaped like a bud's, but their large, round eyes have catlike pupils. Each stands about 6' tall and has a wingspan of about 5'. These beings mean no harm to the PCs and meeting them here is sheer coincidence. If the PCs attack, the warpers defend themselves until one is free to use its time stop power to escape. Full details on these esoteric beasts can be found in *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM* 11.

**Dimensional warpers (1 per PC):** AC 1; MV 12; HD 8; hp 30 each; THAC0: 13; #AT: 3; Dmg: 1d3/1d3/1d6 (claw/claw/tail); SA Spell-like powers; SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (13); Int supra- (19); AL N; XP 3,500 each.

**SA:** *Duo-dimension at will, enlarge, haste, slow each 3/day, dimension door 1/turn, time stop 1/week.*

**Stockyards:** A town full of demons eats a lot, and these pens and corrals keep the beasts destined for the fiends' gullets from escaping their fate. Various herd animals from across the planes are brought here to satisfy the demons' palettes and provide a change of pace from more common Abyssal fare (usually, anything slower than a hungry fiend). If curious PCs manage to avoid the least demons



typically assigned to guard these yards and can devise a means to see through or over the 10' + high walls, they may be shocked to see two unicorns chained within one corral. Each hoof is clamped into a manacle and chained to a stake driven deep in the ground, with a harness around the neck of each poor beast also attached to a chained stake. The heavy, metal harness prevents either unicorn from teleporting away or even lifting its head. The two are chained in the corral so they are unable to see each other. Both unicorns retain their horns. (Wealthy demons consider unicorn horns to be a sort of Abyssal status symbol, using them pick their teeth after they've finished a meal.)

If the PCs manage to free the unicorns, the creatures are still lost in an evil land. In fact, they seem ill even when freed from the chains. The Abyss itself is causing these noble creatures to slowly wither away. They must be removed from the Abyss, and soon. The easiest way to do this may be to take them back to the Staircase doorway and send them through. At least there they have a chance of survival.

The PCs will probably find themselves hunted for their good deed, however. The owner or owners of the unicorns were expecting a very lucrative sale to the Lady of the Counting-House for one of her infamous fetes. The unicorns were to be killed and eaten as the crowning moment of the evening. The owners may pursue the PCs themselves in order to regain their stolen property, or they may send fiends or other magical (or summoned) creatures after the PCs.

Additionally, stealing property is strongly frowned upon in trade-friendly Azzagrat, and those PCs who commit such an act, whether the "property" is unicorns, slaves, or other commodities, find themselves labeled as thieves and pursued by the Lancers wherever they go in Azzagrat.

If the PCs rescue the unicorns despite the risk, the goddesses Mielikki or Lurue may grant them aid or a boon at some time once they leave the Abyss, at the DM's discretion.

**Festhalls:** The numerous festhalls in Samora are unlike any seen on Toril, with the possible exception of those run by the church of Loviatar. PCs should steer clear lest they become entertainment for the jaded pleasure-seekers of the city.

**Stables/Warehouses:** Samora is a trading town like all of the settlements in Azzagrat. Warehouses store the materials and goods to be bought, sold, or transported, and the stables tend to the care and feeding of the many different species of steeds and pack animals used by the mul-

titudinous caravaneers. Investigating PCs may be able to purchase horses or other mounts, though none of the nightmares, manticores, and other magical mounts are for sale. At least one of the warehouses holds a cargo of slaves.

**Inns:** If the PCs are brave enough to take lodging among the fiends, rooms can be had at any of the following establishments.

*Maretta's Beds:* The Lady of the Counting-House herself owns this inn, whose accommodations are luxurious and reasonably priced. The rumor that the owner sometimes pays nocturnal visits to attractive male customers is vastly blown out of all proportion.

*The Sleeping Berk:* This inn's name is a small in-joke for planar travelers. A berk is a fool who got herself into a mess or dangerous situation when she should have known better. Despite the name, many merchants stay here. An oven of green flames bums directly outside this inn. When PCs decide to leave for Zelatar, they can do so here. However, this gate takes the PCs to the outskirts of that city, well within the Viper Forest.

## Opportunities

Below are encounters and NPCs that can be added to Samora in order to expand the adventure.

- Gildaar, the Cyricist priest from the earlier "Opportunities" section, followed the PCs to the Abyss. He's acting on orders from the proxies of his god to interfere with the PCs in any way that he can. If the PCs avoided the barroom brawl in the Weeping Goddess tavern, Gildaar hires some of the cambion toughs there to ambush the PCs. Use the cambion statistics on page 53 for such an encounter.
- A cambion or alu-fiend finds a member of the PC party very attractive and tries—in its chaotic way—to impress the PC in question. Attempts to do this might include attacking the most attractive (highest Charisma) member of the party of the opposite sex of the character in question, buying the object of his or her affection drinks, meals, gifts such as slaves, and so on. The demon is earnest and not thoroughly evil (alignment CN). If the character does not blithely disregard or haughtily reject the fiend, the PCs may gain a potent ally regardless of any possible romance. Naturally, a rejected tanar'ri could also become a relentless foe of his or her previous object of affection.







## Zrintor, The Viper Forest

Viper trees are quite common throughout Azzagrat. Entire groves stand near many of the towns and nobles' palaces and villas. But nowhere are the strange reptilian trees more numerous than in Zrintor, the Viper Forest on the 45th layer of the Abyss. Viper trees are far more common on another plane of existence called the Gray Waste (which the PCs may know as Hades), a fact which has led to the rumors that part of the Triple Realm once belonged on the Gray Waste. Supposedly, Graz'zt was able to steal this layer away and pull it into the Abyss, thus adding to his realm's size.

When the PCs emerge from the fiery *gate* (suffering 2d6 points of damage unless they're protected from fire), they find themselves deep in the Viper Forest. No discernible paths leave the area of the *gate*, but either Warwick or Ceylon can guide them to Zelatar along paths that take the PCs through the deepest part of the Viper Forest. Successful Wisdom checks with a -4 penalty allow PCs without a guide to spot several plumes of dark gray smoke against the gray sky in the far distance. While no city is visible due to the denseness of the trees, the smoke is from Zelatar. Allow each PC a check every half-hour until one notices the plumes.

If the PCs have been in a few fights, they might see the forest as a chance to rest and recover. After all, they see no packs of snarling demons awaiting them or any other visible dangers at all. The forest seems quite peaceful with its large groves of strange, white scaly trees swaying in the breeze. Upon closer examination the trees' branches appear to bear serpentlike heads. Alarming as this might appear, the trees are quiescent for the moment. The PCs may begin to relax in the seeming stillness of the forest, and that's exactly how the trees want them to feel. Nothing in the Abyss shows mercy or holds off an attack when it has the least chance of winning, but an attack can certainly wait until the victims are at their most vulnerable.

After a while, all the PCs notice that this forest seems devoid of all animal life. This may not necessarily be a bad thing in the PCs' eyes; after all, Abyssal animals are no more friendly than the tanar'ri. After a few hours in the forest, allow nature-oriented PC such as rangers, druids, or elves a chance to notice that when the wind (which smells of ashes and sulfur) dies down, the strange trees continue their swaying and rustling. A successful Intelli-

gence check for these PCs will tell them something's wrong. Other PCs can notice this as well with the alertness or other appropriate nonweapon proficiencies.

The trees wait to attack until the PCs seem to have relaxed their guard, such as when they prepare to make camp (and before the characters light a fire). If the characters noticed the windless swaying of the branches, they won't be surprised by the attack. PCs who failed to notice must check for surprise and then proceed with the combat.

Just before the viper trees strike, describe to the players a hissing, whispering susurrus, almost as if someone—or something—was talking. The viper trees have no strategy beyond biting at those close enough to reach or dropping a few limbs that crawl after targets attacking with missiles or spells. Any character carrying an open flame such as a torch will not be attacked other than by broken-off branches.

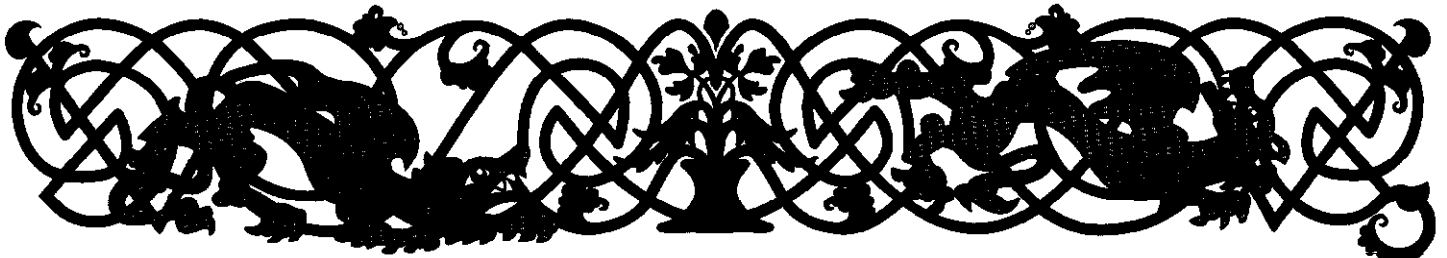
This combat gives the DM the chance to gauge the PCs' relative health. If the party has already tussled with several groups of fiends and might lose this fight and perish, assign the viper trees lower Hit Dice (2-5 HD). If the PCs have been keeping out of battle and are in good shape, throw high-HD viper trees (6-9 HD) at them. Just be aware that without countermeasures, PCs paralyzed by the trees' venom will remain so for 48 hours and likely miss an excellent opportunity to rescue Waukeen.

If the PCs have either Warwick or Ceylon with them, they can suggest rumored cures for the vipers trees venom (see the MC write-up on pages 63-64). Not all the cures the guide has heard of need to be efficacious, however. Some such "cures" include "drinking" from the River of Salt to burn the toxin out of the body, inhaling the smoke from a fire of viper tree branches, or use of the herbalism nonweapon proficiency. None of these cures alleviate either the Dexterity loss or the paralysis.

**Viper trees (1 per PC):** AC 7; MV 0; HD 2-9 (6 hp per hit die); THAC0 see below; #AT 1/HD; Dmg: 2d6 (bite); SA poison; SD spells, immunities; SW: fire; MR: 15%; SZ L (12' high); ML steady (12); Int semi- to low (2-7); AL NE; XP see below.

Notes: Viper trees' THAC0 and XP value depend on their Hit Dice as in the charts below.

THAC0	XP
2HD: 19	2 HD: 420
3-4 HD: 17	3 HD: 975
5-6 HD: 15	4 HD: 2,000
7-8 HD: 13	5 HD: 3,000
9 HD: 11	6 HD: 4,000
7 HD: 5,000	
8 HD: 6,000	
9 HD: 7,000	



**SA: Poison:** On a successful hit, victims must save with a -3 penalty. Those who fail lose 4 points of Dexterity permanently and are paralyzed for 48 hours. Successful saves vs. this poison result in the temporary loss of 4 Dexterity points (and any bonuses) due to shaking and trembling for 48 hours. Resting or regaining spells in this time is impossible. Onset time is 2d4 rounds.

**SD:** Immune to cold, venom, and acid attacks. *Charm monster, hold person, sleep,* and similar spells must affect a number of creatures equal to the viper tree's Hit Die to be effective.

**SW:** Suffers double damage from fire.

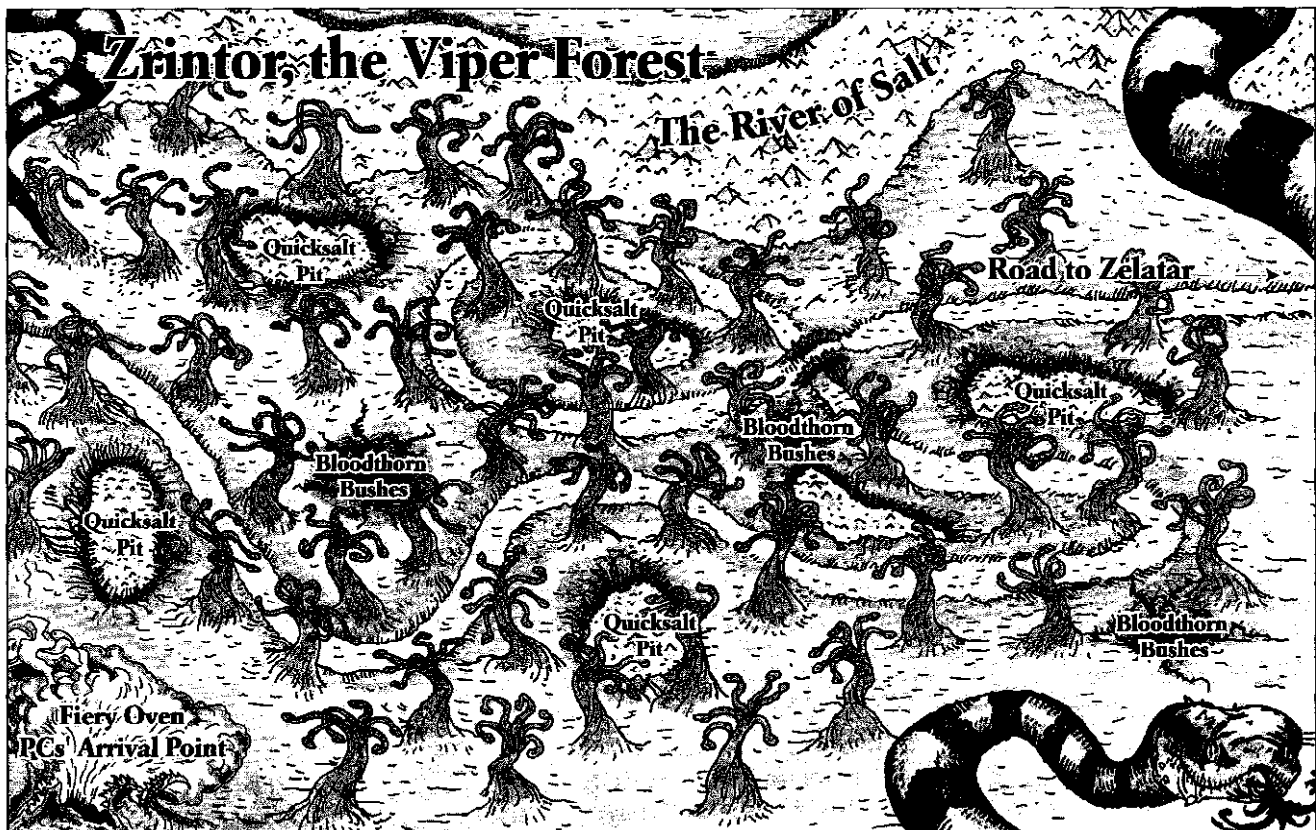
The PCs' trip through the Viper Forest takes them just over 24 hours. Depending upon when they reached the forest, they may need to spend a night or two under its dangerous boughs. Ironically, night is the safer time to travel through this area since the viper trees fear nothing so much as fire, and most beings traveling by night carry torches or light campfires. This seemingly easy defense has a downside, however. These demonic trees catch fire easily, and the flames can spread rapidly. PCs might just find themselves in the midst of a huge conflagration that endangers them as well as the viper trees.

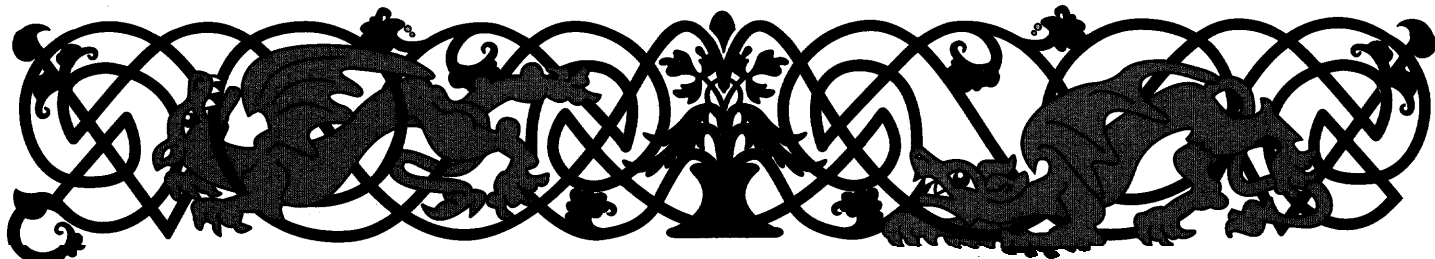
Viper trees killed by fire damage explode into flames with a hideous hissing scream. This explosion of flames

has a 40% chance to ignite any other viper trees also engaged in fighting the PCs. The viper trees that catch flame in this way suffer 1d6+1 points of damage per round. If all the viper trees fighting the characters catch flame, a 30% chance exists that the fire spreads to consume a large portion of Zrintor. This fire moves at a movement rate of 12. The PCs must outrun the flames to avoid getting caught in the conflagration. Until the characters exit the burning woods (time determined by how much of the 24-hour period has elapsed), they suffer 2d10 points of damage per hour from the flames and the noxious, oily smoke that the viper trees emit when they burn.

If the PCs are unable to outrun the flames, they can attempt to cross the River of Salt as its wide course prevents the flames from spreading to the far shore. Any number of means can be devised to cross, but any non-magical boat, raft, or other vessel is instantly ground to splinters by the sharp salt crystals that comprise the river. See the rules on page 31 for creatures falling into the river.

Once the PCs have evaded the viper trees (one way or another) or defeated them by fire, the trees cease their





attacks, although the PCs should still feel endangered. The hissing whispers that seem to murmur the words “murderers,” “killers,” and “flame-bringers,” continue to follow them for the duration of the PCs’ stay in the forest.

### The Wanderer

After the PCs have recovered somewhat from the fight against the viper trees, have them make surprise rolls. Those who fail do not hear the approach of a lone human woman. She wears the tattered remnants of what had been plate mail armor, holds a wooden shield far too large for her, and her only weapons are a dagger and a (normal) tree limb she uses as a staff or club.

The woman’s name is Annia Graystockings (LG hf Pal8; 23 hp remaining of her normal total of 67) and she identifies herself as a “fallen” paladin and Holy Warrior of Suffering of the church of Ilmater, from the PCs’ prime world of Toril. She tells of how she and others of her faith were on a pilgrimage to Damara when they were attacked and captured by a band of demon slavers. Annia was one of the knights assigned to protect the pilgrims, but she was struck unconscious and taken as just another slave.

When she awoke she found herself in a slave pen. Feeling guilty for failing those she was supposed to protect, Annia nevertheless rallied the few pilgrims she was imprisoned with and they made an escape attempt. While the others ran, Annia fought the minor demon guard with only her bare hands and the strength of her faith. Defeating the beast, Annia hurried to catch up with the pilgrims she had taken as her responsibility. It took her several minutes to find them among the buildings of a small unnamed village, but in that short time the pilgrims had been slaughtered by a passing troop of bar-Igura demons. Tears poured down her cheeks as she watched these beasts tear apart the bodies of those who had trusted her to keep them safe.

Although part of her wished to end her own pain by charging the demons and thereby dying in battle, she resisted. Annia decided that it must be Ilmater’s will that she be a party to this doomed pilgrimage, and that she must atone for whatever sin she had committed. As a result, she took to wandering the Abyss, seeking a way back to Toril. She feels that if she survives this trek, Ilmater will have forgiven her. She further feels that her meeting of the PCs at this time must be the will of Ilmater and the other powers of good and righteousness.

Annia has survived solely on the strength of her beliefs and the meager bits of food and water she has been able to

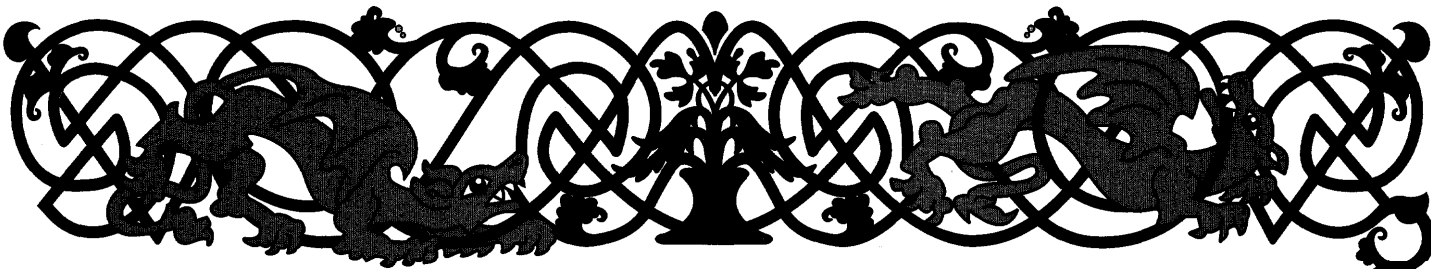
snatch or beg from travelers. Her dagger is a *dagger* +2, stolen off the body of a drunken fiend as he lay sprawled outside an Abyssal tavern.

While recent events have shaken her mental stability, Annia is calm—almost resigned—and determined to follow the course she feels Ilmater has set for her. She accepts food, drink, and even healing spells from the party if offered. But she does not accompany the PCs even if they tell her of their mission, insisting that she must fulfill her own quest for Ilmater or die trying. In return for the gifts of food and water, and to help in a small way with the quest to rescue Waukeen, she offers the party the *dagger* +2, saying that its Abyss-forged qualities oppose her paladin’s nature.

Annia also can serve as a resource for the PCs, since in her travels here she has become relatively knowledgeable about the Abyss itself. If asked about the caravan rumored to move Waukeen, Annia expresses concern that an Abyssal prince as cunning as Graz’zt would move such an important person in so obvious a manner. On the other hand, the demon lord would be wise enough to expect a rescue attempt of some sort, and a large, well-protected caravan would stand the best chance of repelling such an attempt. Annia is not thinking as clearly as she would otherwise, and she may agree with any argument that is put forth strongly enough, even going so far as to change her mind. If this debate continues, Annia becomes confused and decides to carry on with her mission, the only thing that lets her focus her overwrought mind.

As she leaves, Annia thanks the PCs sincerely and expresses her hopes that all the good powers of Toril aid them in their quest. If there’s a priest or cleric of Ilmater in the party, Annia gives the priest a gift of her own holy symbol. She explains that this symbol was her mother’s when she was a paladin, and Annia hopes that it may somehow help the PCs free Waukeen. Although she won’t reveal it to the PCs, this ancient holy symbol (a wooden carving of two bound hands) acts as a power key for all those of Ilmater’s faith. With this key, any cleric or priest of Ilmater casts spells of the protection and combat spheres at full effect.





## Opportunities

- If the DM feels the need to have the PCs combat more foes, they can wander into the territory of a nest of Abyss ants.

**Abyss ants (5d6):** AC 3; MV 18; HD 3; hp 15 each; THAC0: 17; #AT: 2; Dmg: 1d6 /1d6+2 (bite/sting); SA Spit acid; SZ S (2' long); ML fearless (19); Int low (5-7); AL NE; XP 175 each.

SA: Spit acidic goo up to 10 feet 3/day for 2d4 points of damage (successful save vs. wand negates).

- Observant PCs may notice that at times during their journey through Zrintor and the hinterlands between Samora and Zelatar, they can discern tracks of what appear to be human-sized boots walking the same path (or at least the same general direction) they are. The path is several hours old, but they can learn no more from the tracks. The tracks are Gildaar's; he's gone ahead to Zelatar to prepare for the PCs' arrival there.
- A vicious storm arises while the PCs are traveling through the open, exposed country of Azzagrat. Driving, burning hot rain that tastes of salt, carried by a fierce, foul-smelling, howling wind, lashes the PCs until they can find cover (a cave, rocky outcropping or overhang, or a gulch or ditch). While the PCs suffer no damage from the hot rain (though they become wet, itchy, and thoroughly uncomfortable), any metallic items exposed to the rain and not cleaned and dried within four hours suffer the equivalent of an attack by a rust monster. Affected metal corrodes and falls to pieces. Magical items have a chance of being unaffected equal to a 10% chance for each plus (a +2 weapon has a 20% chance of not being affected).
- As a variant on the storm theme, the PCs find themselves caught in a sandstorm that stings exposed skin (1 point of damage per turn spent in the open with any exposed skin), drives grit and sand into the PCs' eyes, noses, and mouths, and disorients them. Have all PCs make Intelligence checks; those who fail are turned around in the storm and think that the party is completely lost.

## Zelatar

The city of Zelatar is much larger than the town of Samora. The following pages present only a few of the places to see and opportunities to have encounters possible in this town; the DM is encouraged to add whatever details he sees fit.

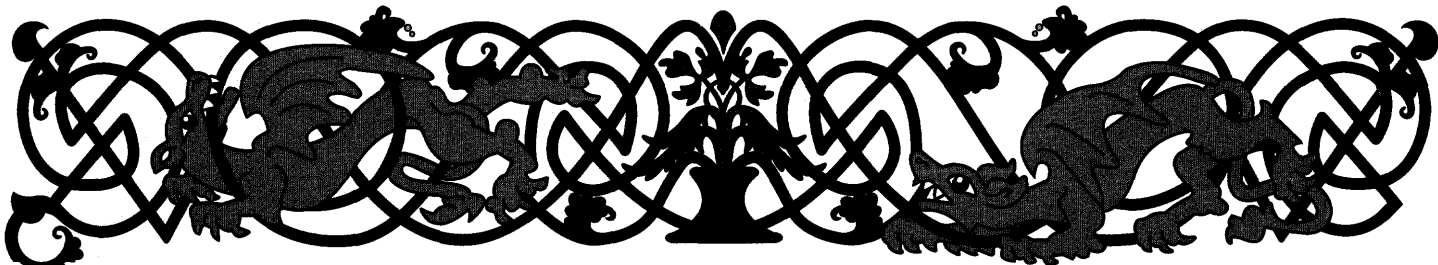
Zelatar is the largest city in Graz'zt's realm and serves as his *de facto* capital. In the strange domain of overlapping planes that Graz'zt rules, Zelatar is one of the strangest places. Portions of the city exist on all three layers of the Triple Realm, usually following the course of the River of Salt. The demons use magical boats, barges, and rafts as their main thoroughfare for trade and transit through the city. As a result of this confusing layout, doors, arches, and entryways of all varieties can be *gates* to take visitors to a portion of the city on another layer of the Abyss.

The majority of the city's inhabitants are demons, of course. Alu-fiends, cambions, nabassu, shadow fiends, succubi, incubi, tieflings, and more call Zelatar home. Graz'zt's realm is open to visitors, so many (brave) merchants of all species, sizes, and shapes also can be found in this major Abyssal commerce center. There's no such thing as a safe place in the Abyss, but Graz'zt's realm is certainly more survivable than most.

If any one building dominates the city, it's Graz'zt's Argent Palace, built of a shimmering white stone. The place's cold beauty confuses visitors who expect every thing Abyssal to be ugly or horribly twisted. Rumors claim that Graz'zt swindled the devas of Mount Celestia—the Seven Heavens of good and law—to mine the stone for him, and the wily Lord of the Triple Realm even got them to deliver! The Argent Palace's 66 towers are made of the purest ivory (supposedly taken from huge whalelike creatures that live on the Astral Plane), and the place allegedly has 100 mirrored halls to reflect the brilliance of its lord.

The style and tastes of the realm's lord can be seen not only in the Argent Palace but throughout the city as well. It's said that Graz'zt devotes entire rooms of his palace to single themes such as storms, the color red, or death. This trend is evident as whole "neighborhoods" in Zelatar share the same architectural style and building materials. The city's parks (and there are many) also display this taste. One park is completely full of statues depicting devas and other winged celestial inhabitants of the Upper Planes. From a distance the statues appear pristine, a beautiful oasis of goodness in the heart of an Abyssal realm. Upon





closer look, however, the subtle expressions on the statues' faces reflect not angelic goodness but demonic corruption. The effect is highly disturbing to those who enter the park seeking a moment's respite from the plane's relentless evil, only to find that Azzagrat's artisans have made that same evil attractive rather than repulsive.

Other areas of the city highlight Graz'zt's fascination with contrasts or clashing imagery. One of his estates is guarded by a lich bound to the Abyssal lord's service. In a stately throne atop the front wall, the undead guardian sits in rich, expensive raiment, ready to strike down any who dare enter without leave. In each hand the undead wizard holds one perfect white rose.

No image in Zelatar is more disturbing, however, than the materials used in the construction of virtually all the city's buildings. The structures, the stone-paved roads, and even the furniture in the inns and taverns all appear to be made of normal wood, stone, metals, and so on. Close inspection reveals that faces can be briefly seen in the walls, the floors, even in one's headboard or ale mug. These faces all display extreme torment and anguish before receding back into the surface of the material. Such a sight should frighten even the most jaded adventurer, though these pathetic souls pose no threat to anyone any longer.

The reason Zelatar so strongly reflects Graz'zt's tastes is not simply his ego, but the fact that Graz'zt fashioned the entire city from the souls of mortals gained from his dealings on the Prime. Destroying a few "soul objects" is easy enough, but damaging the physical form that now contains a being's spirit (in a way, its body) doesn't release the tortured soul. It merely causes the soul indescribable pain and may even fragment the spirit itself if the object is shattered or destroyed. The PCs can do little to aid these helpless souls.

Zelatar's town crier, Mefisto (CE tiefling m B9) is a well-known figure in the city. His calls with the news of the day can be heard at any time of the day or night as he wanders the streets with his lamp. It's common knowledge that Mefisto can be bribed to give false news and many of Zelatar's powerful residents use him for this purpose. No one seems to mind that much of the news Mefisto shouts is untrue; they consider it a game to find the kernels of truth in his daily pack of lies.

While the PCs are in Zelatar, Mefisto cries the following news:

- The Abyssal power Yeenoghu is scheduled to pay a visit to the Lord of the Triple Realm in the next few days.
- A shipment of prime slaves is due from Samora any time now (be sure to get to the auction block early!).
- Construction of a palace for Lord Graz'zt's latest lady "guest" is set to begin in less than a month (laborers are needed; duties grant an exclusion from Blood War service).
- The Lord's "lady guest's" caravan is to arrive at Zelatar's gate in one day (or two, if the DM so decides).

The PCs should meet Mefisto at least once during their time in Zelatar. They find him a handsome, debonair, charming rogue who lies as easily as he breathes and makes everyone love him for it.

## A Tour of Zelatar

The sample sites listed below include the layer of the city in which that site can be found. Refer back to page 31 for details of the differences between the three layers. The 45th layer of the Abyss (the uppermost layer of Azzagrat) contains Zrintor and the Argent Palace. Many buildings on the 46th layer have checkerboard (with "open" squares) or otherwise incomplete floors to let the oddly slanted light enter, and windows are few. The blue-lit 47th layer holds Samora as well as a portion of Zelatar.

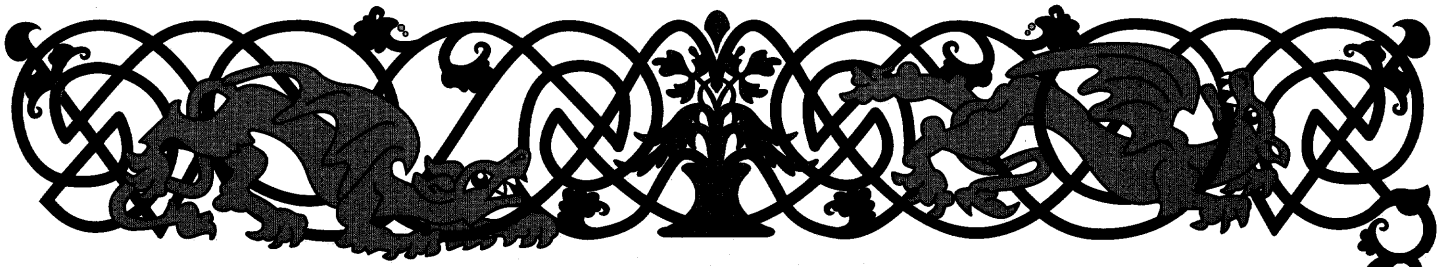
Many of the same types of buildings can be found in Samora and Zelatar, and those descriptions not duplicated here can be extrapolated from the details in the "Samora" section. As with Samora, most unmarked buildings can be considered residences.

Once the PCs learn that Waukeen is still in Samora, they may be able to reach that town more quickly by navigating their way through the streets of Zelatar.

**Private Estates:** As the largest and wealthiest city in Graz'zt's realm, Zelatar is home to many major demons and important merchants who have dealings with the Abyssal lord. Graz'zt himself has three estates, one in each layer of the city. Lady Maretta owns an estate on the 46th layer and another on the outskirts of the Argent Palace (45th). Graz'zt's favorite daughter Thraxxia has a small villa not far from the Argent Palace as well.

**Parks:** As noted above, Zelatar is full of parks (many of which can double as markets in good weather). Notable examples include the small, tree-lined walkway (no viper trees) that meanders among statuary bought and brought





from across the planes to the 46th layer of the Abyss. Each statue depicts some form of vermin from other planes of existence. Most of these are hideous and unrecognizable, but characters may be amused to find both rats and mosquitos represented among the vermin. Note that no such living creatures are to be found in this park. Another exceptional plaza on the 45th layer bears a remarkable display of petrified flowering plants. Roses, daisies, daffodils, sunflowers, and more varieties of stone flowers fill this open-air arboretum.

One other park is dangerous to the PCs, though not most of the city's fiendish residents. A park on the 47th layer features hanging plants from a wide variety of planes and also contains a large growth of bloodthorn plants. This plant resembles nothing more than a clump of briars and vines, though the luscious red berries might lure a hapless victim closer. The clump is near enough the pathway to attack any being that walks down that path. The 3" thorns that lie close to the vine's stems may not be noticed until it's too late.

**Bloodthorn (1 per PC):** AC 3; MV 1; HD 8; hp 35 each; THAC0: 15; #AT 8; Dmg: 1d6+special; SA Blood drain; MR: Nil; SZ L (10' vines); ML fearless (20); Int semi- (2-4); AL N; XP 1,400 each.

**SA:** Any vine that successfully strikes a target by a margin of 4 or more over the number required to hit wraps around the target. Each round the victim remains caught by a vine, he loses hit points equal to the initial damage caused by the attack. (Thus, if the victim suffered 4 points in the first attack, he loses 4 hit points a round from blood drain.) A bend bars/lift gates roll is required to escape. Each vine has 8 hit points and damage must be done with a Type 5 weapon. Burning the vine causes it to release its victim and recoil, attacking no more in this combat.

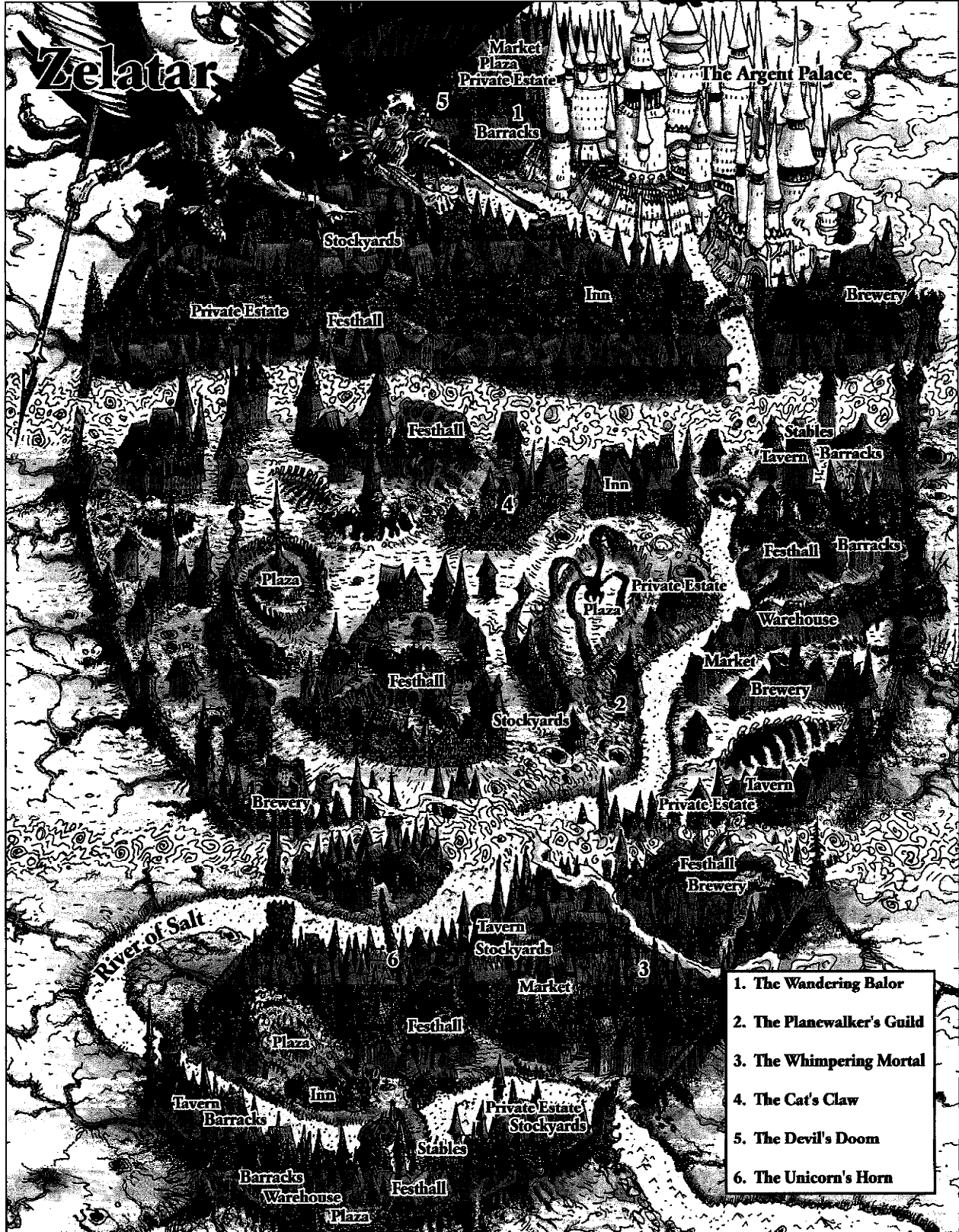
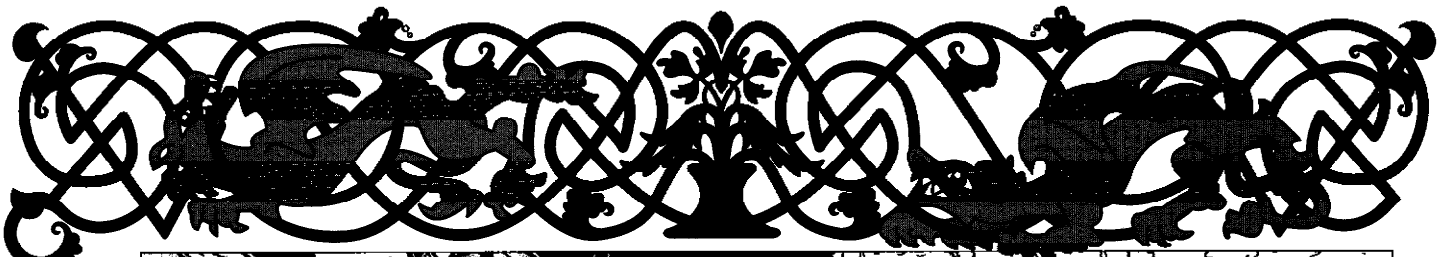
**Marketplaces:** Each ward of the city has one major marketplace that stays open for business all hours of the day and night. More than just merchandise can be purchased at these markets, and information is only one of the nonmaterial commodities for sale.

The first marketplace the PCs visit buzzes with talk about the huge orders Lord Graz't has placed for a banquet to be held tomorrow evening. The merchants (bariaur, gnomes, another of those blue giants that call themselves the Arcane, and other, odder creatures) speculate that the lord's golden-haired guest must be returning from Samora with her entourage soon. If asked, any of these merchants say that keeping such a thing secret is difficult, especially in the Abyss. Besides, they say, the lady's entourage is more of a parade: Several wagons with demon

guards in bright uniforms, some carrying banners and others blowing horns, travel between Zelatar and Samora every few weeks. It's a spectacle as much as a transport.

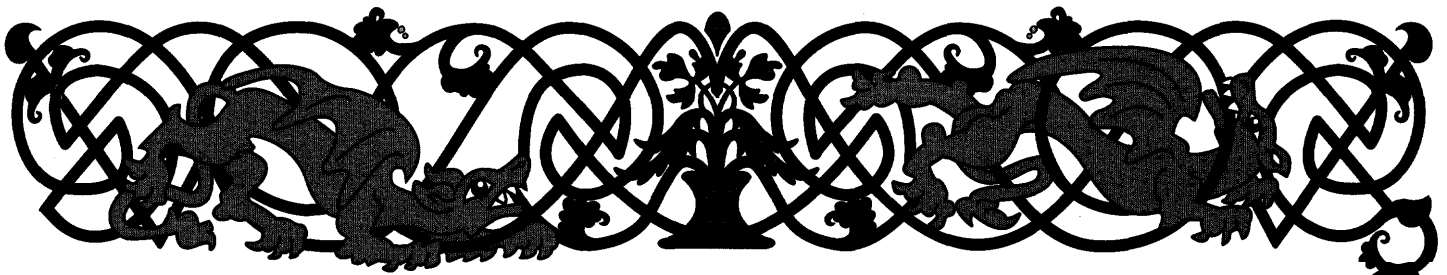
Among all the items (and some beings) that the various merchants try to sell to the PCs, one vendor stands out. A very pale and emaciated but otherwise normal-looking dwarf motions the PCs toward his curtained and covered wagon. (He is actually a duergar, but most nondwarf PCs might not notice the difference. Any dwarf PC who notices must decide how to react to this ancestral enemy.) If they approach, he comments on any recent wounds or scars that they bear, suggesting that they, as out-of-towners, should take better care of themselves. In fact, he can help. The dwarf reaches behind the wagon's curtain and removes a small wooden box. In it are a number of plain gold rings, though each has a fine-lined, almost invisible pattern on it. The dwarf claims these are *rings of protection* and he is willing to part with them, but only as a group. He points out that the fine pattern is the same on all the rings. If *identify* or other means are used, the rings are magical and appear to be *rings of protection* +3. The dwarf haggles willingly if the PCs are interested, but he won't let the lot go for less





- 1. The Wandering Balor
- 2. The Planewalker's Guild
- 3. The Whimpering Mortal
- 4. The Cat's Claw
- 5. The Devil's Doom
- 6. The Unicorn's Horn





than 1,000 gp (or a higher price the DM determines). If the PCs are not interested, the dwarf takes offense, tosses the box of rings back behind the curtain, and, in dwarvish, calls the PCs several unkind names as he tries to shoo them away from his wagon.

The rings are actually ring-worms (MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM 11). These tiny creatures drain magic to survive. Each day they're worn, they drain one spell level from the wearer's mind (if the wearer is a spellcaster). If the wearer casts no spells or has none left to drain, the ring-worm instead draws one charge from every magical item with charges the wearer carries on his person. This draining is cumulative: On the first day it's worn the ring-worm drains one spell level or charge, the second it drains two spell levels or charges, and so on. A successful *dispel magic* spell can remove the ringworm from the wearer's finger. Fire applied directly to the ring-worm has the same effect, though the ringworm and the wearer each suffer half damage from the fire.

**Ring-worms (1 per PC):** AC 2; MV 1; 1 hp; THACO: n/a; #AT Nil; Dmg: Nil; SA Magic drain; MR: Nil; SZ T (1-2" long); ML special; Int non (0); AL N; XP 35 each.

**SA:** *Magic drain:* A ring-worm drains one spell level per day (if any) or one charge from magical items per day, cumulative, until the source of the magic is gone or the ring is removed.

**Barracks:** Unlike Samora's barracks, these buildings are occupied by demonic troops. These troops are not headed to the Blood War, though. Instead, they serve Graz'zt directly. Every type of demonic fiend can be found in these barracks, though the weaker varieties make up the vast majority of the population.

**Breweries:** Demons enjoy intoxicating beverages, and the breweries here strive to meet that desire. As a larger proportion of Zelatar's population cannot withstand some of the brews demons favor, more establishments of this sort create potables for human consumption. Some of the biggest breweries (and most popular brews) are Avner's Abyssal Ale (a heavy porter), Zelatar Zappf (a reddish lager), and Abyss' Alive and Kicking (a wheat brew with live yeast).

**Taverns:** With the popularity noted above, Zelatar is crawling with places to drink.

*The Wandering Balor:* This tavern stands atop four elephantine legs that carry it slowly across the length and breadth of Zelatar. Patrons enter by climbing the numerous

snakeskin ropes that dangle from the narrow railing encircling the tavern.

*The Planewalker's Guild:* This organization exists solely for interplanar adventurers. This tavern is simply one of many such locales across the planes where planewalkers can find good company and aid if they find themselves in need. This bar serves as a contact point for the Planewalker's Guild, which is actually based on the Infinite Staircase. More information on the Guild's organization can be found in the *Tales from the Infinite Staircase* adventure anthology.

*The Whimpering Mortal:* As the name might suggest, this place caters almost exclusively to a demonic clientele. PCs seeking information can find it here—if they're willing to risk staying in the room with intoxicated fiends. If they pay for several demons' drinks, the fiends eventually start talking (insulting and threatening the PCs all the while).

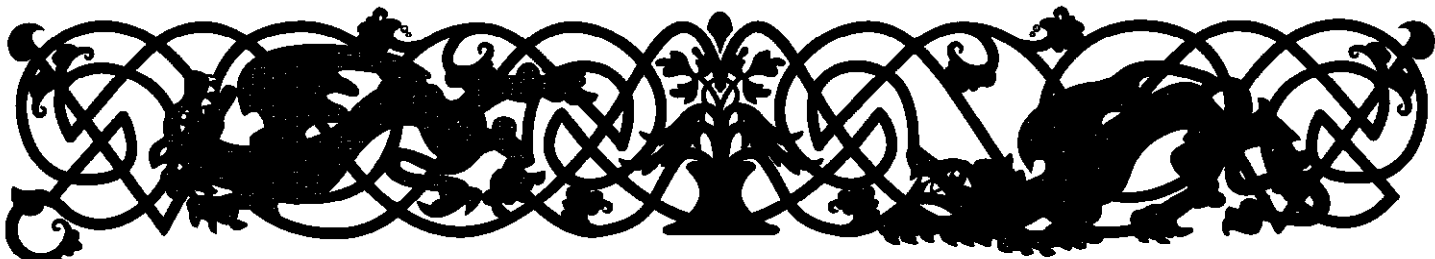
One tanar'ri, a vrock named Clyddis, says he knows anything a "prime" might want to know. If asked about the "lady's caravan" arriving tomorrow, Clyddis asks for 10,000 gp (or an equivalent in magical items) in advance. If the PCs pay up, he reveals that he once was a guard assigned to escort the caravan. But he snuck off once, and his commander tore his feathers off and tossed him out of the outfit.

Clyddis said he never got too near the "lady"; all the guards were forbidden to approach too closely. If pressed for further details, he mentions that the lady seemed to stay in the Argent Palace while in Zelatar and in or near the Maretta's Counting-House in Samora. If asked about the Counting-House's location, Clyddis says (for another 5,000 gp) that a particular fiery *gate* near the Weeping Goddess tavern in Samora takes a body there, though he's unsure where "there" is. (This information is crucial to the PCs' successful completion of the quest.)

**Stockyards:** Zelatar seems to hold more and larger stockyards than even the city's size would normally demand. If the PCs freed the unicorns back in Samora and visit the stockyards here for any reason, one they choose to visit is owned by the same merchants who own the yard where the unicorns had been kept. The proprietor Vlad, a fat, bearded man who wears a homed helmet, talks to the PCs while concerned talk among his employees centers on what Vlad will do now that his "presents" for Lady Maretta have been stolen. Vlad seems distracted about something while talking to the PCs and sweats profusely, though the temperature is not extremely warm at the moment.







**Stables/Warehouses:** With the mercantile trade such a major part of Zelatar's existence, the number of stables and warehouses almost rivals the numbers of taverns in town. If the PCs want to stay in Zelatar or if they seek work for any reason, ready employment can be had as warehouse guards and caravan escorts.

**Festhalls:** The festhalls of Zelatar pale in comparison to those of Samora and are much more similar to those the PCs are acquainted with, though the range of employees, clients, and recreational activities are much broader than any found on Toril.

**Inns:** Inns and "guesting houses" represent the PCs' last chance to get some rest before the events of the next day (or two) lead them to glory or a lingering, tortured existence as playthings of the Lord of the Triple Realm. If the PCs lack any information the DM deems to be important (Clyddis' information or things heard in the market, and doubt about the caravan that supposedly will guide Waukeen back to Zelatar), any of the following inns' workers or patrons can supply those details. Of course, if the PCs have been sloppy in their information-gathering or have relied too heavily on their guide, the DM may feel inclined to let the PCs suffer without some piece of information they don't know they need.

*The Cat's Claw:* This oddly named inn on the 46th layer is run by a tiefling named Faylah who bears a light coat of tawny fur, catlike eyes, a 3' tail, and 6"-long claws. This inn is affiliated with the Planewalker's Guild—both the bar and the society. PCs can find this a safe place to sleep and recover spells as few beings, even fiends, wish to anger the tiefling.

*Devils' Doom:* This inn on the 45th layer caters to demons from out-of-town, here to do business or meet with the proxies of the Lord of the Triple Realm. Fiends here can provide the same information that Clyddis does (for an even heftier price).

*The Unicorn's Thorn:* This inn on the 47th layer earns most of its business from merchants moving cargo or other shipments between Samora and Zelatar. Some of the merchants here have guesses as to the location of Maretta's Counting-House back in Samora. One in particular, a strange-looking, 7'-tall elflike man named Saaren, says if the "lady guest" of Graz'zt's is so important that they have to keep moving her around, why do they do it in such an ostentatious way? Why not just sneak her around? Why all the banners and painted wagons? Just so Graz'zt can show off his latest prize? Saaren doesn't think that's a likely answer.

If the PCs are somehow amazingly resistant to learning exactly what's going on in the city of Zelatar in the next 48 hours, the DM's last resort of Mefisto the town crier gives the PCs one final chance to learn anything they need to know. By this point, they must know that they have to attempt to rescue Waukeen before she arrives at the Argent Palace; if they don't, they have no chance of wresting her away from Graz'zt and his minions. There's also no telling just how long Waukeen will remain in Zelatar once she arrives. While the PCs may have done fine so far, if they hang around the Abyss for too long they will eventually attract attention they're not capable of dealing with.

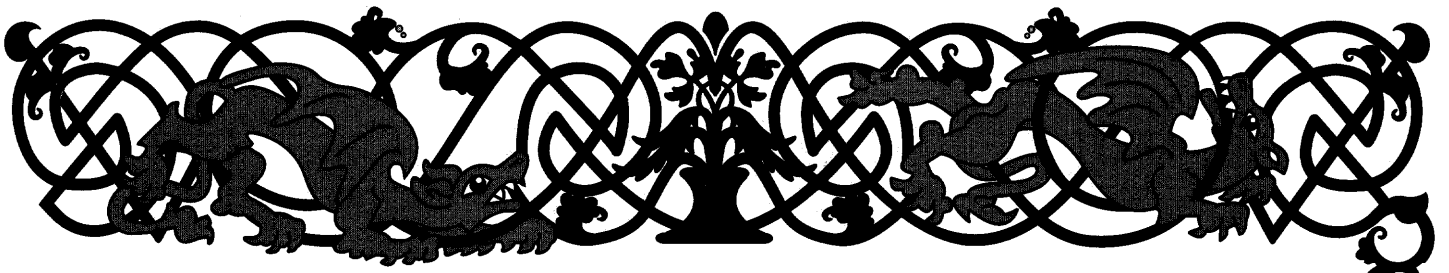
### Opportunities

This final installment deals with the issue of Gildaar and his efforts to harass and pursue the PCs. In Zelatar, the PCs finally have the chance to deal with the troublemaker directly.

Having reached Zelatar before the PCs did, Gildaar set another trap for the characters. Not long after they arrive in Graz'zt's largest city, the PCs are accosted by a human merchant named Barduke. Though the characters have never seen him before, he approaches them in some public place (ideally, a marketplace) and accuses them of stealing from him, of robbing his caravan while he journeyed from Samora to Zelatar. Of course, Gildaar bribed the man to so accuse the characters in the hopes they will flee the city. Either Ceylon or Warwick can tell them that Graz'zt is very strict with those who interfere with trade in his domain—so strict, in fact, that most offenders are never seen nor heard from again.

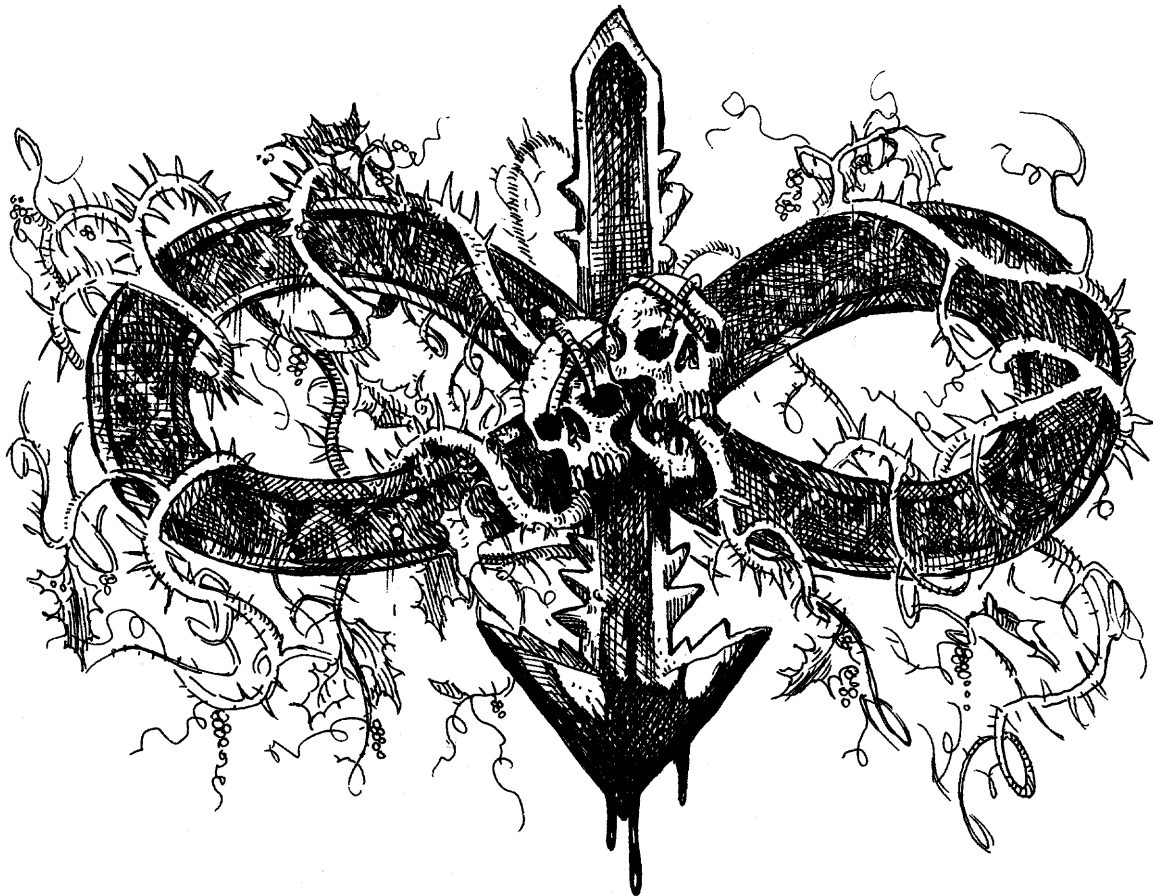
The PCs may try to refute the accusation, but the rapidly gathering crowd jeers at them and starts calling for blood. (Several tanar'ri in front begin discussing the best methods for punishing thieves by the most painful methods possible.) If the PCs confront Barduke himself and can (nonviolently) impress upon him just how unhappy they are about the whole situation, the merchant admits he was put up to it. (He is basically a coward who won't stay bought.) He scans the gathered crowd and points out Gildaar to the PCs. He indicates the same small, dark man who first tried to bribe them into leaving Athkatla and abandoning the quest. With his latest ploy ruined by the fearful Barduke, Gildaar escapes as quickly as he can. The PCs can pursue, and it's up to the DM to determine if they catch him. If the Cyricist has made life hell for the PCs, they're certainly justified in taking out their frustrations

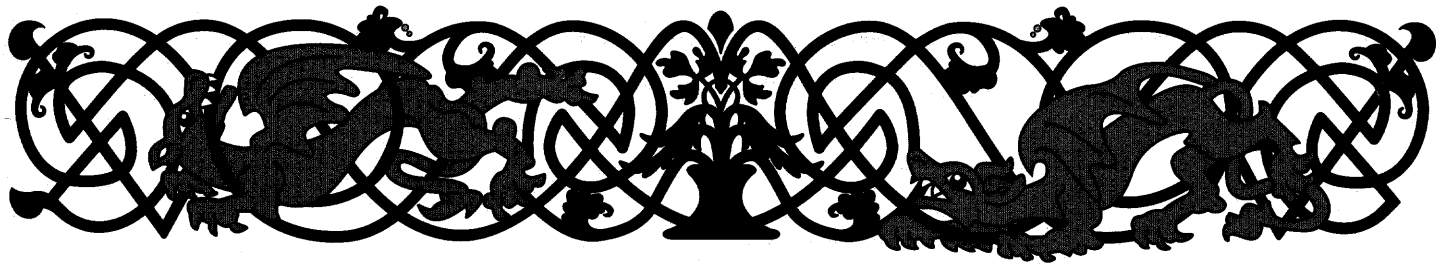




on him. All he knows is that he was given a vision by his power Cyric (see *Faiths & Avatars*, TSR 9516) to do all he could to prevent the PCs from succeeding in their mission. He suspects the truth of why the PCs are here, but cares not a whit about Waukeen (or the PCs, for that matter). He's simply doing his god's bidding and that's all that matters. Regardless of Gildaar's fate at the hands of the PCs, the church of Cyric (and Gildaar if he survives) can become a long-term foe of the PCs.

Gildaar (LE hm P9: Cyric) remains to be detailed by the DM. This lone man should have statistics and magical items that make him a foe worthy of a party of high-level PCs. Possibilities include clerical magical items usable only by evil beings, several of the spells detailed for Cyricist specialty priests in the *Faiths & Avatars* tome, or a band of thugs or henchmen (fiendish or otherwise).





# FINALE

*"Your pretensions are amusing, but futile."*

*—Graz'zt, Lord of the Triple Realm*



**T**he player characters are about to enter the most critical phase of this adventure, and the DM must consider two questions. Have the PCs learned enough to make the right decisions in the conflict to come, and are the characters in the right shape (bloodied but not beaten) for that confrontation? If the PCs make the wrong decisions due to a lack of information, they are likely to end up dead. If they are too badly wounded to continue they face a similar fate. And if the PCs have thus far triumphed over all enemies without serious injury, their overconfidence may lead them into an ill-thought decision and the same result. Only the DM can answer these questions, as each group of PCs makes different decisions and each party is equipped differently. The encounters listed here allow the DM to address these issues.

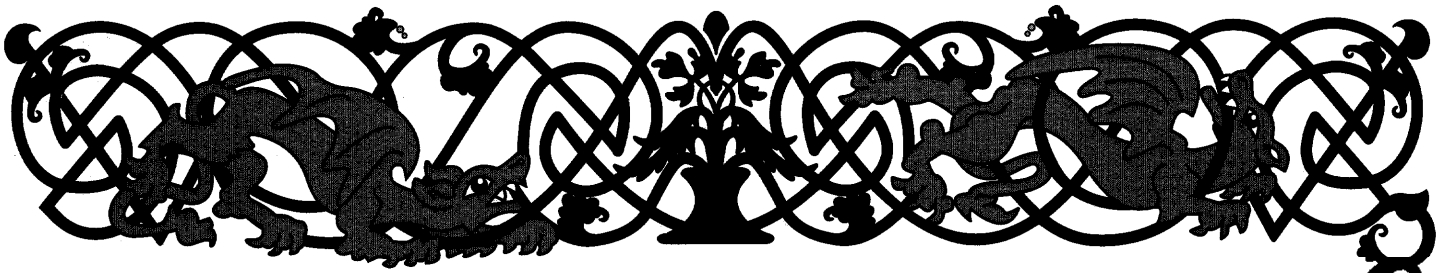
If the characters are aware of the Planewalker's Guild organization (Ceylon knows of them), they may be able to find a place to rest, heal, purchase healing potions, and so on if the DM feels the heroes are too wounded to tackle the rest of the adventure immediately.

By now the PCs should have enough information to make a plan regarding a rescue attempt of Waukeen. Enough evidence exists to confirm that Waukeen is indeed expected in Zelatar soon. The question is, how will she be arriving? The PCs must decide if they believe Waukeen is actually moved by the caravan. Much evidence (and common opinion) says yes, but the PCs should have encountered at least one dissenting opinion. The procession certainly makes a fine target, but it is certain to be well guarded—and there is always the possibility that the whole set-up is a trap. Characters who feel confident that Waukeen will be in the caravan must devise a plan to attack the convoy, avoid the guards, secure Waukeen, and evade pursuit as they escape back to the Infinite Staircase. Attacking the caravan will likely result in the death of at least some characters and the failure of their mission. If this does not interfere with the DM's plans for her campaign, so be it.

The PCs may feel that Waukeen is part of the caravan but decide they lack the firepower to wrest her away in a direct confrontation. They then have two choices: attack before the caravan leaves Samora or wait in Zelatar until the procession arrives and try to rescue the Golden Lady from the Argent Palace. This latter option is the worst decision the PCs can make. Graz'zt's full statistics are provided in this product to allow him to become a long-term threat in your campaign, not to allow the Lord of the Triple Realm to battle the PCs. The Abyssal lord is a genius and certainly smart enough to let his underlings handle the PCs. His personal bodyguard of 13 babau (and all the additional demons they and Graz'zt could potentially gate into the battle) should prove sufficient to keep Graz'zt from having to take matters into his own hands. Entering the Argent Palace is not an option for the purposes of this adventure, although the DM is free to detail the palace's interior and inhabitants if the PCs are insistent.

With all this in mind, the two foremost options for Waukeen's rescue are attacking the caravan and making a run for it, or finding where the depowered goddess is being





kept in Samora and breaking her out before the caravan assembles. Both options are detailed in the next few pages. The PCs' actions from this point on impact not only themselves but the fate of Waukeen, the schemes of Graz'zt, and perhaps even a major change to the Torilian pantheon of gods. The players should have a clear understanding of the gravity of the situation before the action begins. They should also take stock of their magical resources and weaponry, knowing by now that they are likely to fight several kinds of demons. The *dagger +2* the PCs obtained from Annia may become more important than they realized, as it was Abyss-forged and therefore is at full power here.

Neither guide fights for the group from this point on. Ceylon is a coward and Warwick thinks taking on Graz'zt for any reason is insane. Both continue to act as guides, however, if the PCs insist on it.

The DM is free to determine the exact level of power and ability that the entirely mortal Waukeen currently possesses. However, regardless of whatever spells, skills, or other powers she may have, she cannot access them in the Abyss. Graz'zt blocked those powers since Waukeen's arrival in Azzagrat, else the former goddess would have escaped long ago. She cannot aid the PCs in any way, even during the final battle in the underground lair where Waukeen is being held. Under no circumstances should the characters persevere through all the obstacles presented in this adventure only to have Waukeen step up, free herself, and save the their lives at the last moment. Don't steal the spotlight from the PCs; this is really their story, not Waukeen's. Besides, if the PCs free Waukeen and she re-ascends to her place among the gods, she resurrects any dead PCs.

## Option #1: The Caravan

The PCs can strike at the caravan anywhere along its path, but perhaps the most isolated spot for an ambush is near the Viper Forest of Zrintor on the 45th layer. The DM can use the map of the Viper Forest on page 41 as a base map, but the caravan actually travels the road that skirts one edge of the forest. Hopefully, the PCs have some sort of diversion arranged or else they will be vastly outnumbered when they make their play for who they believe is the Merchant's Friend. The impressive caravan that approaches the PCs' chosen ambush site may

even be enough to make them reconsider their plan.

Two outriders lead the procession, cambions mounted on huge, jet-black horses and carrying heavy lances with banners displaying Graz'zt's six-fingered hand symbol. Behind this a vrock drives a small open wagon pulled by two horses. In the back of this brightly painted wagon rides a group of human-looking children all chained together and to the wagon itself. All the children's faces display no emotion, but they nevertheless toss flowers of all sorts and colors out of the wagon, littering the road and the immediate vicinity with sweet-smelling blossoms. Behind this comes another wagon, as brightly colored as the first but fully enclosed and appearing quite sturdy. This wagon is also driven by a vrock and pulled by two more horses. Through the windows, a golden-haired human woman can be seen. She looks well, though tired, and she has two human female attendants inside the wagon with her. On both sides and behind this wagon walk six more vocks, all wearing white tabards with gold trim. Graz'zt's symbol is evident on the front of each tabard. Behind the second wagon ride two more mounted cambions, with long, banner-decorated trumpets playing decidedly martial music. The horses are well trained and will not spook.

It is unlikely that the PCs can handle so many powerful foes. Diversions can distract the cambions long enough for the PCs to make a grab for the seeming Waukeen. (In fact, the cambions have instructions to fall for whatever distractions the would-be rescuers come up with, to lure the heroes into Graz'zt's trap.) Regardless of any diversionary tactics, the eight vocks that guard the wagon carrying "Waukeen" and her two attendants do not leave their assigned posts. They are far more afraid of what Graz'zt will do to them if they shirk their duty than they are of anything the PCs can throw at them. These creatures resist the party's attempt to rescue the goddess with all the powers at their command.

The slave children in the first wagon (and the flowers, for that matter) are sophisticated illusions detectable only to *true seeing* and the like. The illusion is intended to distract rescuers into splitting their forces and trying to release the children as well as Waukeen.

Assuming that the cambions are out of the picture temporarily, the vocks fight individually, using powers such as *mirror image* and *dispel magic* as well as their five physical attacks to defeat the PCs quickly. A vrock won't screech unless it nears death. If the PCs are still in combat when the cambions return, they charge with their heavy lances and then enter melee.



When the PCs reach the “prisoners,” the women inside seem grateful to be rescued and eager to escape as quickly as possible. “Waukeen” and her attendants are all succubi, and they play the role of the goddess and her attendants as they run from the scene of the fight.

While the PCs are battling for their lives, Verin, one of the Abyssal lord’s most powerful lieutenants, is sneaking the real Waukeen from Samora to Zelatar. Their route involves numerous gates and takes them from Samora into the portion of Zelatar that exists on the 47th layer. Verin then moves the true Waukeen through one of the many secret doors of the Argent Palace, where Graz’zt entertains his “guest” by throwing a lavish party.

If the PCs escape with the women, any surviving vrocks and cambions pursue the party but do not attack for the time being. Unless the PCs have mounts, they are unlikely to be able to outrun the cambions’ horses and the vrocks’ flight for long. If the PCs begin to suspect Waukeen and the attendants, the succubi do their best to charm the males of the group to protect them while telepathically calling to the vrocks and cambions for aid.

If the PCs never suspect that their prisoners are not

what they seem, the succubi wait until the PCs turn their backs on them—at which point they attack. These fiends do not call the others unless they are losing the battle, wanting the glory of defeating the heroes for themselves. They do not let their pride overwhelm their sense, however; the demons do not intend to let the PCs escape the Abyss alive.

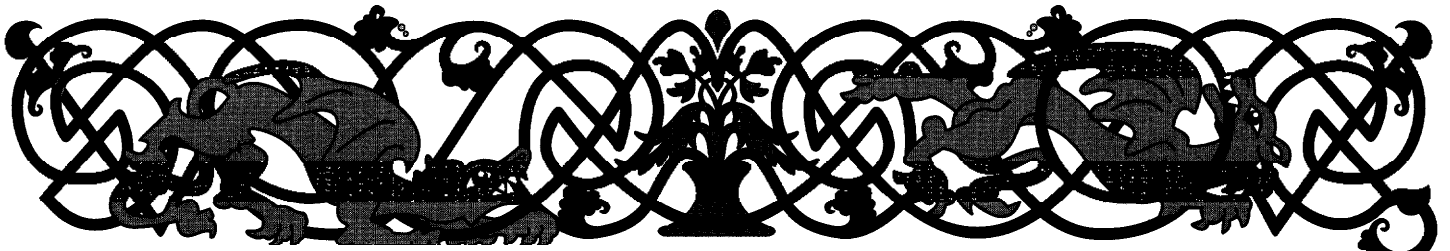
If the PCs are all killed by Graz’zt’s set trap, see “If the PCs Failed,” on page 58.

Should the characters manage to defeat all of the fiends, they should make an immediate run for the Infinite Staircase. By this point Waukeen has reached the Argent Palace, and the PCs have no chance of reaching her there.

**Vrocks (true tanar’ri) (8):** AC -5; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 8; hp 48 each; THAC0: 13; #AT 5; dmg: 1d4/1d4/1d8/1d8/1d6 (rake/rake/claw/claw/bite) or by weapon +7; SA Spores, screech, first attack, *dance of ruin*; SD +2 or better magical weapons to hit, never surprised; MR: 70%; SZ L (8’ tall); ML fanatic (18); Int high (13); AL CE; XP 19,000 each.



*The caravan is a tempting but forbidding sight.*



**SA:** Vrocks may attack up to five different targets in a round with their natural weapons. *Spores:* Once every 3 rounds, a vrock can eject a cloud of spores, automatically inflicting 1d8 points of damage on all foes within 5 feet. The spores attach and grow on the victims, inflicting additional damage of 1d2 points per round as they grow into vines which completely cover a victim in 10 rounds if not removed. *Bless*, *neutralize poison* and holy water kill spores and *slow poison* halts their growth. *Screech:* Once per battle each vrock can emit a screech that deafens all within 30 feet and stuns those who fail a Constitution check for 1 round. *Dance of ruin:* When five or more vrock are in battle, they can join hands, form a circle, and begin the dance of ruin. After 3 rounds their dance releases a wave of energy that strikes all within 100 feet for 2d20 points of damage (save vs. death magic for half damage). If any of the dancing vrocks suffers 20 or more points of damage in a single round, the *dance of ruin* is disrupted.

**Spell-like powers:** In addition to the powers shared by all demons, vrocks may cast *detect invisibility*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic*, *mass charm*, *mirror image*, and *telekinesis*, all usable 1/round, at will, as a 10th-level wizard. Vrocks can also gate in minor demons, but the vrocks in this particular battle are too proud to do so considering they were picked for this trap.

**Major Cambions (lesser tanar'ri) (4):** AC 6; MV 15; HD 4; hp 25 each; THAC0: 17; #AT: 1 or 2; Dmg 2d8+2 (heavy lance charge) or 1d8/1d6 (long sword/short sword): SA Spell-like abilities, thief abilities; SD Never surprised; MR: 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (13); AL CE; XP 4,000 each.

**SA:** Cambions have statistics just as PCs do, generated as follows: Str 17-18; Dex 13-18; Con 13-18; Int 9-16; Wis 5-8; Cha 1-6.

**Spell-like powers:** Each cambion has one of these powers: *detect magic*, *fear by touch*, *levitate* 7/day, or *polymorph self* 3/day. Cambions are also likely (75%) to wear magical armor to improve their AC and wield magical weapons, all of which were created in the Abyss.

**Thief abilities:** climb walls 95%; hide in shadows 80%; move silently (80%)

**Succubi (lesser tanar'ri) (3):** AC 0; MV 12, Fl 18 (C); HD 6; hp 36 each; THAC0: 15; #AT: 2; Dmg: 1d3/1d3 (fist/fist); SA Energy drain, spell-like powers; SD +2 or better weapons to hit, immune to fire, never surprised; MR: 30%; SZ M (6' tall); ML elite (13); Int exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 11,000 each.

**SA:** *Energy drain:* lose one life level by touch (kiss).

**Spell-like powers:** Become ethereal as *oil of ethereality*, *charm person*, *clairaudience*, *ESP*, *plane shift*, *shape change* (only to a humanoid form of approximate weight and size), *suggestion*. They too can gate in more demons but have been threatened by the vrocks if they do. The vrocks want all the glory of defeating the heroes to be theirs alone.

## Option #2: Samora

Hopefully, the PCs have chosen the wiser option of trying to reach Waukeen before she leaves Samora (whether they believe she is part of the caravan or they have determined the convoy is a trap). This is the best tactical decision they can make, and the DM should consider the party's general strength level at this point and adjust the following scenes accordingly. (Despite the scene described above, the point of this adventure is not to kill the PCs outright but give them a chance to rescue Waukeen if they are smart and don't make too many mistakes.)

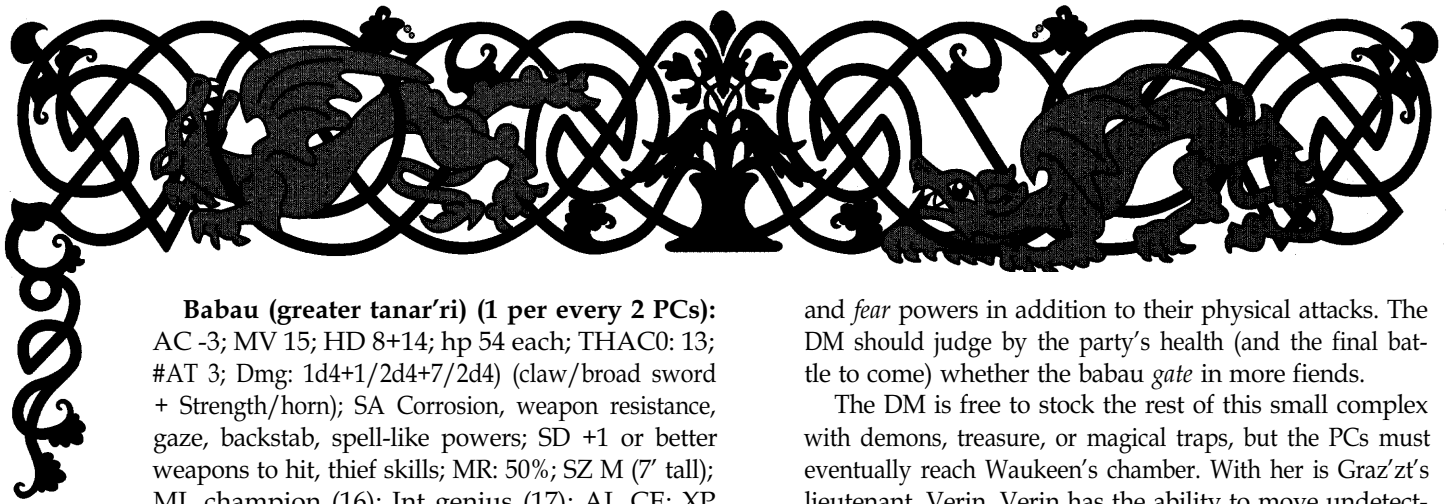
The PCs can return to Samora well before the caravan is to leave in the morning, especially if they still have a guide. Otherwise they can attempt to bribe Mefisto in Zelatar to learn which gates connect to the part of the city that exists on the same layer of the Triple Realm as Samora.

The fiery gate outside the Weeping Goddess tavern in Samora can take the PCs to the Counting-House where Waukeen is being kept. (The PCs should have gained this information from the vrock Clyddis or another source.) They can find the gate easily enough and monitor it for activity if they wish. During the night, several demons (mostly babau, though a few alu-fiend members of the Lancers appear as well) emerge from the gate and enter the tavern. If the PCs attack or try to grab a fiend as it emerges from the gate, it defends itself and shouts to others for aid. However, later on a few demons stagger out of the tavern and the PCs can talk to one of these fiends without trouble. For a suitable bribe, the demon (a more-than-tipsy alu-fiend but not one of the Lancers) tells the PCs that the gate provides elite guards a quick route to the tavern. But it's a secret, she drunkenly insists, and instructs the PCs not to tell anyone it leads to a secret wing of the Counting-House beneath the town. This alu-fiend knows nothing else of use. When the PCs decide to make the leap through the gate, roll 2d6 points of damage for the green flames and refer to the map of the underground lair on this page.

## The Rescue

No sooner do the PCs appear in Chamber A than they are attacked by a number of babau demons assigned to guard this side of the gate. The number of babau is equal to one-half the number of PCs (round up). Roll for surprise for both sides and proceed with melee.





**Babau (greater tanar'ri) (1 per every 2 PCs):** AC -3; MV 15; HD 8+14; hp 54 each; THAC0: 13; #AT 3; Dmg: 1d4+1/2d4+7/2d4) (claw/broad sword + Strength/horn); SA Corrosion, weapon resistance, gaze, backstab, spell-like powers; SD +1 or better weapons to hit, thief skills; MR: 50%; SZ M (7' tall); ML champion (16); Int genius (17); AL CE; XP 17,000 each.

**SA:** A babau's body secretes a red goo that makes all slashing and piercing type weapons inflict only half damage. The goo also burns exposed flesh for 1d6 points of damage and might corrode metallic weapons: Item saving throw vs. acid to resist. Magical items can add their "pluses" to the roll. **Gaze:** Anyone meeting the glowing red eyes of a babau must successfully save vs. spells or suffer as from a *ray of enfeeblement*. The gaze's range is 20 feet and can affect only one target per round in addition to the babau's normal attacks. **Gate:** Babau have a 40% chance to gate in 1d6 cambions or one babau 1/day.

**Spell-like powers:** *Dispel magic, fear, fly, heat metal, levitate, polymorph self*, usable on at a time, 1/round.

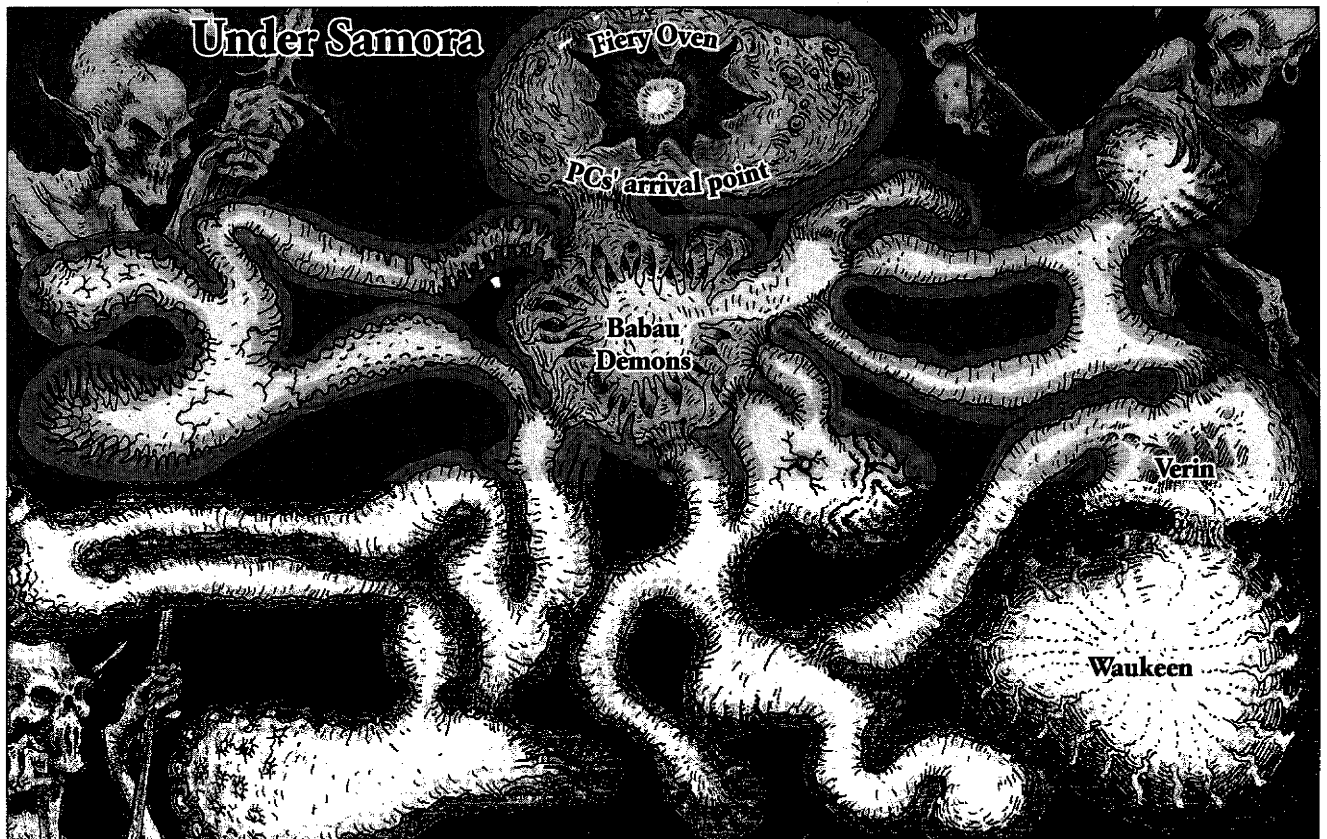
**Thief abilities:** PP 30; OL 30; F/RT 25; MS 95; HS 80; DN 35%; CW 90; RL 30; Backstab 24.

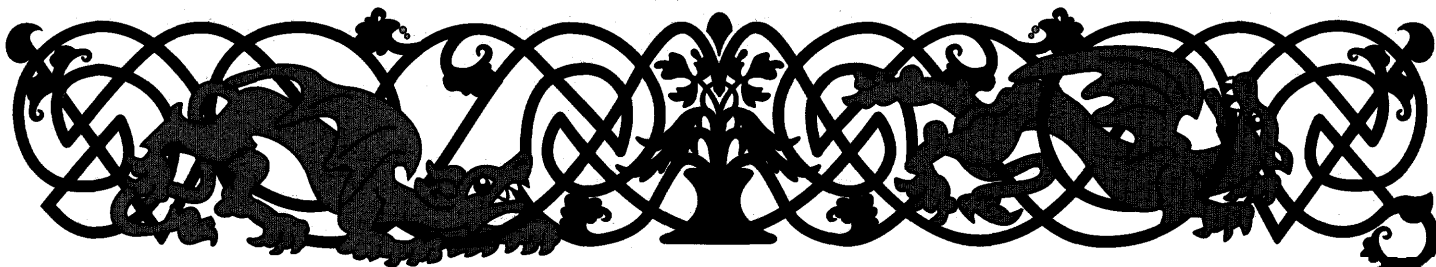
This is a straight slugfest. The arrogant demons never expected intruders here. They use their *gaze, dispel magic,*

and *fear* powers in addition to their physical attacks. The DM should judge by the party's health (and the final battle to come) whether the babau *gate* in more fiends.

The DM is free to stock the rest of this small complex with demons, treasure, or magical traps, but the PCs must eventually reach Waukeen's chamber. With her is Graz'zt's lieutenant, Verin. Verin has the ability to move undetected by other Abyssal lords, and he normally uses this ability to foment strife between these powerful demons to Graz'zt's advantage. For the moment, however, he has the task of watching over Waukeen. Verin appears as typical cambion with jet-black skin, sinister features, and ornate armor. Waukeen looks well enough, but she is dirty, unkempt, and seems very tired. At the moment, the former goddess appears as a young, pretty woman with light blonde hair and amber eyes.

When the PCs reach this chamber, Verin is enraged at the thought of losing the precious Waukeen, but he fears Graz'zt's rage too much to kill her outright to prevent her escape. Nevertheless, he threatens to do so in an attempt to gain the upper hand. If this fails, he challenges the PCs





to take her from him, takes his true form—that of a marilith—and enters battle. Verin leaps into combat, unleashing a *cloudkill*, *curses*, and animating dead PCs to fight their friends. He fights to the death.

**Verin (marilith, true tanar'ri):** AC -9; MV 15; HD 12; hp 88; THACO: 9 (but see below); #AT: 7; Dmg: 4d6/see below (tail/six magical weapons); SA Magical weapons, constriction, spell-like powers; SD Spell immunity, +2 or better weapon to hit, never surprised; MR: 70%; SZ L (7' tall); ML fanatic (18); Int genius (18); AL CE; XP 23,000.

**SA:** Constriction: tail inflicts 4d6 points of damage per round, character with Strengths over 14 have 10% per point over 14 to escape, victims must make Constitution checks each round to remain conscious.

Verin's six weapons include the following:

- *Battle axe* +2 (1d8+2 damage, THACO 7)
- *Battle axe* +3 (1d8+3 damage, THACO 6)
- *Dagger of venom* (1d4+1 damage, save vs. poison or die, THACO 8)
- *Long sword* +2 (1d8+2 damage, THACO 7)
- *Long sword* +4 (1d8+4 damage, THACO 5)
- *Sword of wounding* (1d8+1 damage, cannot be healed by magic and opponent loses one additional hit point each round for every wound inflicted, THACO 8)

**Spell-like powers:** Usable 1/round unless otherwise noted: *animate dead*, *cause serious wounds*, *cloudkill*, *comprehend languages*, *curse*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *detect invisibility*, *polymorph self* (7/day), *project image*, *pyrotechnics*, *telekinesis*.

## Victory?

Assuming the PCs are victorious, read the following boxed text.

Waukeen waits calmly for you to approach, a beatific smile upon her lips. Though she is now mortal, a power and knowledge beyond comprehension shine still in her eyes. Although you have been her rescuers, you can't help but feel you should humbly kneel before her.

"It's time to go," she says, as if this moment had been ordained. You feel renewed, somehow gaining the strength and will to finish this quest.

The PCs and Waukeen can stay to search the rest of this small lair, though the former goddess is quite anxious to leave immediately. Again, the DM can determine what, if anything, the PCs find of value here. Possibilities include some form of healing (potions, unguents, or salves) to help badly wounded PCs; a few weapons (Abyss-forged, of course); gold, gems (perhaps

magical), or some minor miscellaneous magical items that were stashed here by the demons, either for safe-keeping or for use in guarding the Merchant's Friend.

The PCs will probably take Verin's magical weapons as treasure. These Abyss-forged weapons lose two "pluses" on the Prime. Also, possession of these items allows Graz'zt and his daughter Thraxxia to automatically locate the characters at any time. (Graz'zt did not *entirely* trust his lieutenant and used this ability to keep tabs on Verin at random times.)

Once the party has escaped the lair, it should flee toward the doorway that leads to the Infinite Staircase. Reaching that doorway safely is another matter, however. Not long after the PCs take to the streets, demons and other passersby notice the PCs' companion and raise the alarm. What ensues can be a running battle through the streets and alleys while the PCs strive to protect Waukeen and reach the doorway safely.

If the player characters are badly wounded, they can reach the doorway with a large mob at their heels but without suffering any significant damage. A few lesser or least demons might charge the party in an attempt to snatch Waukeen away, but any such attempts should be disorganized and easily discouraged by a few successful return attacks or spells by the heroes. This scene depends on the actions of the PCs: Do they stand and slug it out with the fiends (giving demonic reinforcements time to arrive), or do they run and fight while looking over their shoulders?

If the DM wishes to expand the scope of the chase scene, he can add a few more potent adversaries for the PCs. Flying demons such as alu-fiends, succubi, and vrocks might lead the pursuit of the PCs. (Use or modify the statistics presented in this adventure for these creatures.) Flying pursuers do not need to negotiate crowds, buildings, and other obstructions that may lie in the PCs' path. These fiends are quite powerful and fast, however, and the PCs may not be up to battling more demons. Other, less powerful creatures can harass and harry the PCs on their way out the Abyss if the DM desires. Such creatures might include bats (any variety) or displacer beasts sent by their fiendish keeper; gargoyles or gargoyles (which certainly look demonic and could confuse harried PCs); minor undead sent by fiendish necromancers; or stirges, rats (any variety), and other vermin. The PCs should not simply walk out of the Abyss, but they can escape if they move swiftly and keep from being distracted.





## CONSEQUENCES

**T**his adventure is not quite over when the party reaches the door to the Infinite Staircase. The demons that follow the party are loath to give up their prize so easily. If the PCs are still eager (or able) to continue fighting, the running battle can continue on the Staircase itself. Both the characters and their pursuers can utilize the properties of the Staircase as they strike at each other from odd angles and attempt to knock opponents off the stairs.

If the characters are in bad shape from their battles, or if the DM chooses to bring the combat to a close now, several lillendi appear on the Staircase. The lillendi warn the PCs' pursuers that the Staircase is their home, the demons are the invaders here, and that Selûne herself has sent them to escort the valourous PCs and Waukeen to safety. With that implicit threat the demons return to Samora, but soon Graz'zt (and his daughter) will know of this doorway and the mortals that stole his captive goddess.

Waukeen herself is still mortal until she returns to the Outlands and her domain, the Marketplace Eternal. As the party travels the Staircase, however, the PCs begin to see changes in her physical appearance. The young woman becomes more beautiful with every step, and her light blonde hair and amber eyes both turn the color of spun gold. Even her shabby, unremarkable clothing changes slowly until she appears cloaked in gold-colored garments. She speaks little on the journey, seeming pensive and looking ever forward as if she can see her home beyond the next rise of stairs.

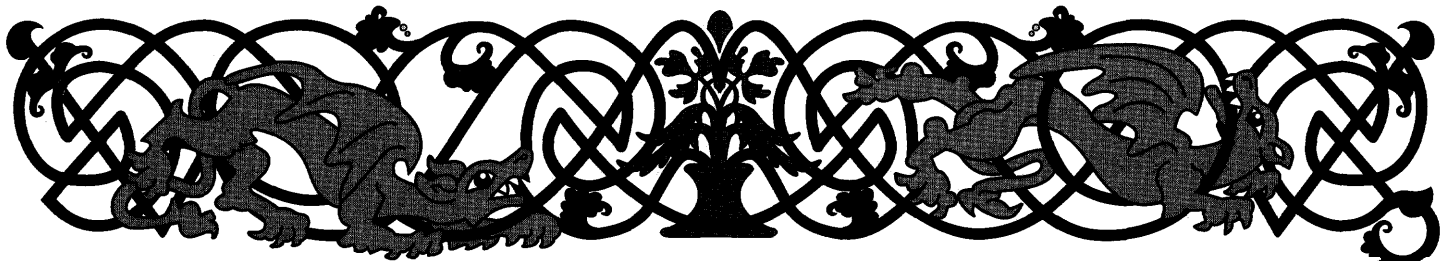
The journey from the Samora doorway to the Outlands can be as detailed as the DM wishes. Waukeen knows the route and sets the PCs on the right path, which involves at least two days of climbing the stairs. Refer to the previous material on the Staircase (pages 17-22) for possible encounters or use the following ones as desired.

- The PCs encounter a paladin of Ilmater at one point on the trip. Somnuel Longstride (LG hm Pal10) searches for Annia Graystockings. The church of Ilmater has learned that Annia and the pilgrims she was escorting were abducted to the Abyss, and Longstride seeks any information that the PCs can provide regarding her health and location. If the DM wishes to extend the PCs' adventures in the Abyss, a return visit with Longstride to find Annia (after they have finished their current quest) provides one such opportunity.

- The PCs encounter an unfortunate soul who has been driven mad by the mind-boggling physics of the Staircase. An elf female with unkempt hair and clothes (no armor or weapons) who seems even to have forgotten her name wanders toward the party until she sees Waukeen. The presence of Waukeen terrifies the young elf. She screams, backs away without taking her eyes from the woman, and then collapses into a heap. She mutters nonsense such as "this place isn't right," "this can't be," "all wrong," "she's wrong," and "she doesn't belong here" and so on. The elf's addled brain somehow allows her to sense Waukeen's power, even though the Golden Lady is still mortal at this point. The PCs can render any aid they choose, but only a heal spell has any effect on the woman's insanity. The woman is obviously hungry and wolfs down any food offered, as long as Waukeen stays out of her sight.
- On a dark, lonely area of the Staircase, the PCs meet a troop of orogs (see under "Orc" in the MONSTROUS MANUAL) equal to twice the number of characters in the PCs' party. The humanoids prepare to defend themselves but do not attack. If the PCs converse with the orogs, the creatures claim to be servants of someone or something called the Gorgon. They say that they were exploring the rugged mountains where this Gorgon lives, searching for thieves, when they discovered and entered a mysterious cave. They found themselves on a landing of the Staircase about four hours' walk from here. They seek only to return home. If the lillendi remained with the PCs, they leave now to escort the orogs back where they came from.

### The Outlands and Home

Finally, the party reaches the doorway that leads to the Marketplace Eternal on the Outlands. This is a plane of absolute neutrality, though many mistakenly consider the place to be without a predominant alignment. The Outlands hold not only Waukeen's realm but also gate-towns that lead to the first layer of each of the Outer Planes. For example, the aptly named town of Plague-Mort leads to the first of the numberless layers of the Abyss, the Plain of Infinite Portals. Other small communities exist on the Outlands, as do the realms of other neutral gods. Rising high from the "center" of the Outlands (a questionable position, on an infinite plane) is the Spire, a towering rock that climbs endlessly into the sky. Planar maps place Sigil, the magnificent City of Doors, floating above the Spire's peak, although the question of how a city exists



above an infinite spire has never been answered to any one's satisfaction.

The Marketplace appears as nothing more than a huge, sprawling bazaar. It stretches for miles in every direction, with tents and stalls making impromptu roadways through the realm. Gambling halls, drinking tents, and hucksters of all varieties mix here indiscriminately. It's a place of splendor, but it's also very, very confusing to a newcomer. The Marketplace Eternal is actually home to four gods of wealth and trade; Waukeen of Toril, Shinare of Krynn, Zilchus of Oerth, and Sera of Aebrynis have pooled their resources to make their realm larger than each of them might have managed alone. Each power maintains his or her own quarter of the realm. Waukeen's quarter is called the House of Barter, and she eagerly leads the PCs to a wide, busy landing in this portion of the realm. As the group appears, a hush falls over the assembled beings here as they realize who walks among them once more.

Then a great cry rises from the center of the crowd, and a golden creature with a winged lion's body and a woman's face steps forward. This creature, Keelira (N gynosphinx proxy: Waukeen), bows deeply and proclaims in a deafening voice, "Rejoice, you faithful of the golden goddess Waukeen; rejoice, for this day the Golden Lady has returned!" With this proclamation, the crowd explodes into wild cheering and celebration.

Waukeen steps forward gracefully and motions for the heroes to join her as she walks toward a grand golden palace. Keelira walks with them, berating the PCs the whole way for Waukeen's "bedraggled appearance" and the lack of care they must have taken with the goddess. Once inside the palace, Waukeen thanks the gynosphinx for her faithful service, and says, "I see you have cared for my kingdom well in my absence. Now, my friend, if you will perform one more task? The Lady of Joy has something that belongs to me. . . ." The PCs may find it odd that Waukeen *asks* for aid, but the proxy accepts the courtesy as no less than her due; after all, she has been essentially ruling the realm since Waukeen's disappearance. Keelira nods and walks toward a doorway. Beyond the door sprawls a vast town of lights and music. Keelira disappears into this city as Waukeen turns to the PCs, inviting them to make themselves comfortable in her home. If they ask, she explains that the door is a portal to the realm of Brightwater, Lliira's realm on the plane of Arborea.

After a few hours, Keelira returns and speaks briefly to Waukeen. The PCs can follow her out to a wide balcony, where she gazes up into the sky. High above, a cloud of

brightly whirling lights and smoke appears, coalescing into the form of a young, sensuous, dancing lady with pure blue eyes and long gold hair. This unearthly beautiful figure waves her hand, and a glowing shower of brilliance falls onto the waiting Waukeen. Waukeen's mortal body glows briefly and then "explodes" blindingly into a spray of bouncing, rolling golden coinage. When the characters can see again, the avatar form of the Golden Lady—truly a goddess once again—stands before them. She smiles and says, "For your great deed, it is only appropriate that you be granted a great reward."

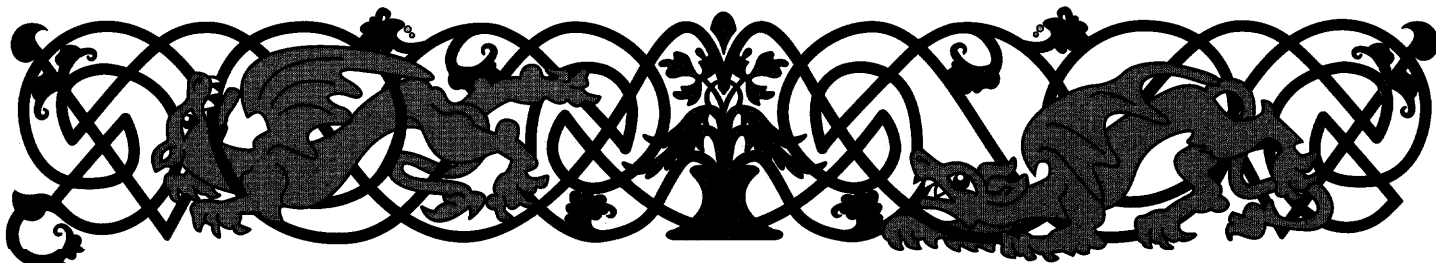
Waukeen first fulfills whatever terms the PCs set with the Holycoin and returns to them double the amount of gold pieces (if any) the PCs spent while in the Abyss. Next, she resurrects any PCs who died, if the bodies are present. If dead characters were left behind in the Abyss, Graz'zt has already transformed them into evil bodaks. "Another crime that Graz'zt will pay for," Waukeen says sternly. She promises that the PCs will always have a safe haven in any church of Waukeen, and as tokens of her favor she presents each character with a magical weapon that matches each PC's most commonly used weapon.

These weapons are variants of the *sword of the planes* as described in the *DMG*. On the Prime, these weapons function with a +2 magical bonus. On any Inner Plane (or when used against inner-planar creatures), the bonus increases to +3. When on the Outer Planes (or used against creatures from those planes), the bonus increases to +4. And in the Abyss or against demons, the bonus is +5 to attack and damage rolls. Each weapon is also marked with Waukeen's symbol on the hilt or handle. This symbol shows the wielder to be favored of Waukeen and grants sanctuary at any Waukeenan temple. Additional rewards, if any, are left to the DM.

The accessory *Faiths & Avatars* has details on restoring the hierarchy of Waukeen's church and faith. The PCs may choose to work for Waukeen as she reorganizes her church and plots her revenge against Graz'zt. If any of the PCs were sufficiently awed by witnessing Waukeen's re-assumption of her power (or being returned from death) to take up worship of the goddess, a place in her new hierarchy is almost assured. The characters could also become Waukeen's primary tools against Graz'zt and his various plans. She could send them on missions to disrupt his trade agreements, expose some of his deals to other Abyssal lords, or simply raid his Counting-House.

The official FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign assumes that Waukeen is freed from her imprisonment and that





she regains her rightful place in the Faerûnian pantheon. If the PCs failed in their attempt to rescue her (see below), another group of heroes assembled by the Holycoin successfully frees Waukeen from captivity.

The goddess reveals her return to her church (and the rest of Faerûn) on the 24th of Nightal, 1370 DR. This day becomes an official festival for the worshipers of Waukeen.

Regardless of the god or gods the PCs worship, for the time being they are known far and wide as the Heroes of the Abyss and the Rescuers of the Merchant's Friend, and they enjoy discounts wherever they go.

### Thraxxia and Her Revenge

The PCs may have successfully rescued Waukeen, but they have ruined Thraxxia's best chance to gain tremendous power and favor in her father's eyes. She does not soon forget this affront.

Graz'zt himself is disappointed that his plan didn't work out, and he may take some form of revenge against the PCs should they ever return to the Abyss. Fortunately for the PCs, the Abyssal lord has lived too long and has too many other plots brewing to be overly concerned about one missed opportunity. Thraxxia is another case entirely.

As a very powerful being with numerous connections throughout the Lower Planes and beyond, Thraxxia makes a wonderful long-term foe and foil for the PCs. Not only can she send horrific creatures after the PCs from time to time (such as the retriever, described in the PLANESCAPE MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM Appendix II), but she also can act behind the scenes to hinder, handicap, or destroy the PCs' efforts in other areas.

Thraxxia might also travel to Toril, setting traps of all varieties for the PCs. She can ally herself with other foes of the characters such as the Zhentarim, the Cult of the Dragon, or the Red Wizards of Thay. Many mortals are willing to trade their souls for power, a deal that Thraxxia and her kind are always happy to oblige.

If the PCs are nobles or have their own estates and businesses to manage, Thraxxia can act against these concerns as well. Shipments go missing, villages are looted or burned by demonic creatures, and scandalous lies are spread about the PCs, their heritage, and their religious practices. Thraxxia should not overwhelm the campaign, but she can make life miserable until the PCs track her down and eliminate her—an act which angers Graz'zt greatly.

**Thraxxia (nalfeshnee, true tanar'ri):** AC -8; MV 12; Fl 15 (D); HD 11; hp 76; THAC0: 9; #AT 3; Dmg: 1d4/1d4/2d4 (claw/claw/bite); SA Magical spray, spell-like powers; SD Never surprised, +2 or better weapon to hit; MR: 70%; SZ M (5' tall); ML fanatic (18); Int godlike (21); AL CE; XP 17,000.

**Notes:** Thraxxia has the abilities of a nalfeshnee but appears in the body of an alu-fiend. She also has access to Graz'zt's store of magical items, which means she can have virtually any item the DM wishes.

**SA: Spray:** After concentrating for one round, Thraxxia can release multiple rainbow beams that shoot in every direction. All creatures within 60 feet suffer 15 points of damage (save vs. spell for half). Victims must then again successfully save vs. spell at a -2 penalty or be stricken dumb and wander in a trance for 1d10 rounds.

**Spell-like powers:** Usable one at a time, 1/round unless noted otherwise: *alter self*, *bind*, *call lightning*, *chill touch*, *detect invisibility* (always active), *distance distortion*, *ESP* (always active), *feeble-mind*, *forget*, *giant insect*, *invisibility*, *know alignment* (always active), *mirror image*, *protection from good* (always active), *raise dead*, *slow*, and *web*. Gate ability: 50% chance to call 1d6 babau or 1 vroek, 1/day.

## If The PCs Failed

If the party failed in its mission and all the PCs died, they are likely to be recreated as bodaks under the command of Thraxxia. Their careers as player characters are over. At best, the players' next batch of heroes may one day meet a group of bodaks that seem somehow vaguely familiar to them.



# Graz'zt

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Abyss/Azzagrat
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Unique
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Planar ruler
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Any
<b>DIET:</b>	Carnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Supragenius (20)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	U, Z
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic evil
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	Unique
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	-9
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	12
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	41, 186 hp
<b>THACO:</b>	4 (hits any AC on 10+)
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	2 or 4
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	1d8+6 (Str)/1d4+4 acid (×2) or 1d6+6 (×4, fists)
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Spells, summon demons
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Immunities
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	70%
<b>SIZE:</b>	L (8' tall)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Fearless (19)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	43,000



Each Abyssal lord is a single tanar'ri unlike any other, a unique creature with its own interests, strengths, and weaknesses. Most lords rule an entire layer of the Abyss, though the least among them fight for control of a layer with other lords. Their talent for leadership, control, and planning sets these lords apart from their followers; though they still rage in battle, their urge for destruction is better hidden than that of lesser demons. When they do vent their anger, the sight is awesome to behold.

Graz'zt, an especially powerful Abyssal lord, rules the 45th, 46th, and 47th layers of that inhospitable plane. Also known as the Lord of Shadow or the Lord of the Triple Realm, Graz'zt is famous for his pride, unusual self-control, and coolness (quite uncommon among demons). Graz'zt prefers to appear as a very tall and heavily muscled ebon-skinned man with six fingers and six toes, glowing green eyes, pointed ears, and smallish fangs. His statistics in any form are S 18/00, D 17, C 19, I 20, W 19, Ch 18.

Graz'zt enjoys contrasts, clashes, and mismatches of all kinds. Others (nondemons, in most cases) may find his presentations disturbing or jarring, such as a severed head in the center of a banquet table or a painting of a sun-dappled field hung on a gore-strewn wall. The Lord of Shadow lives simply himself, preferring monstrosities as his entertainment, not his decor. Entire rooms of his palace are devoted instead to a single color or theme such as war, blood, or storms. Eight armanites (four black and four white of these twisted, centaurlike demons) pull his carriage.

Graz'zt favors garments of a radiant white and silver weapons, and he always carries several potent magical items. He speaks the languages of demons, devils, yugoloths, devas, slaadi, githyanki, githzerai, and the common human tongue. He also possesses the ability to speak telepathically with all sentient creatures.

**Combat:** Though he is a skilled and powerful swordsman, Graz'zt prefers to fight with magic when he can, using whatever magical items he has on his person first. He can also call on his own personal magic, which he casts as a 20th-level mage. The Lord of the Triple Realm can use each of the following spells once per round, at will unless otherwise noted: *chaos*, *continual darkness*, *disintegrate* (1/day), *dispel magic*, *duo-dimension*, *emotion*, *magic missile*, *mirror image*, *polymorph any object* (1/day), *polymorph other* (3/day), *polymorph self*, *read languages*, *read magic*, *telekinesis* (up to 1,500 lbs.), *teleport*, *trap the soul* (1/week), *vanish*, *veil* (1/day), and *water breathing*.

Graz'zt is rarely forced into combat, since he is constantly escorted by a bodyguard of 13 babau. When he does enter melee, Graz'zt is a truly fearsome opponent; he can transform any weapon he holds into an acid-dripping horror, striking twice per round for normal damage plus his Strength bonus and 1d4+4 points of acid damage. If unarmed, Graz'zt strikes four times per round with his lightning-fast fists, causing 1d6+6 points of damage with each hit.

# Graz'zt

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Graz'zt can *gate* 1d2 balor (60% chance) or 1d4+1 babau (40%) at will while in the Abyss. This Abyssal lord has been known to use the following items: a *sword of sharpness*, *wand of frost*, *chime of opening*, *robe of eyes*, and a *cloak of displacement*. In addition, Graz'zt has access to many magical items taken in war or forged in Abyssal furnaces; he may use any item allowable to warriors, priests, or wizards.

**Followers and Resources:** Graz'zt has many followers, all driven to loyalty by fear of their master. The Lord of Shadow's fickle nature and impatience with failure are well known, and he is quick to change sides if events conspire against him. If his pawns succeed at tasks they are well rewarded, but failure results in mutilation or death.

With three Abyssal layers at his disposal, Graz'zt is one of the richest lords, though he is not renowned for greed. Graz'zt uses his wealth as a weapon, deploying it to best effect against his foes, whoever they may be. He can be generous after a fashion, offering items, wealth, or power to those who want such things—for a price. The cost of such gifts is always a debt of service, task, or term of servitude.

**Plots and Goals:** Graz'zt is the father of Iuz, a demigod responsible for much suffering and death on the prime-material world of Oerth. His charisma and flattery have helped him beget many other such demigods on the Prime. As noted above, he himself is not above doling out a bit of magic or a few minor servants to those who seek infernal aid. His price always inflicts a toll on the soul of the being, regardless of how the deal first appears. Thus is the Lord of Shadow responsible for much mortal suffering on the Prime.

Graz'zt schemes against other Abyssal lords more than against the baatezu (or devils). He seems to care far less about the Blood War than other demon lords, seeking power on his own plane rather than the domination of another evil race. He is very wily and cunning, readier to make pacts than most demons but always twisting the wording of such pacts to his own advantage. He favors overcoming mortal opponents by guile, subtlety, and twisted words rather than simple brute force. The Lord of the Triple Realm always has three times the number of plots brewing than any other Abyssal lord, choosing to keep his options open rather than throw all his resources into any one effort.

Graz'zt's ultimate goal is to subvert and drag an entire crystal sphere from the Prime into the Abyss, thus giving him a fourth layer to rule and immeasurably more wealth, both in materials and in souls.

His current plan combines his interests in the Prime, his offspring, his desire to gain a new layer, and his "guest," the former Torilian goddess Waukeen. With Waukeen becoming less and less tractable to further negotiations regarding the terms of her

release, Graz'zt hopes to use guile, trickery, or a threat against Waukeen's life to convince Lliira to surrender the mantle of Waukeen's divinity to him or one of his semidivine offspring. So doing would gain Graz'zt a tremendous foothold of power on Toril that could bring all of Realmspace to him in time.

Graz'zt will be tremendously upset if Waukeen is freed and escapes the Abyss, but he won't be so foolish as to chase her along the Infinite Staircase, let alone follow her onto the Outlands and to her home realm. Nevertheless, he'll refuse to give up on his plans to add a new layer to his holdings, and the Realms are his most likely prospect. (He doesn't want to lose face among the Abyssal lords, so his best bet is to continue with his plans to annex the Realms and claim that Waukeen became useless to his agenda.) Therefore, Graz'zt will soon turn his attentions to the Realms, themselves, as he explores his options and opportunities.

He'll begin by sending spies across the planar boundaries to learn what they can about strengths and weaknesses across the whole of Faerûn. A likely choice of operatives for this mission are vrocks, which look like vultures from a distance, so they can travel wide distances, observe unobtrusively from above, and don illusions of humans and demihumans if need be. (Of course, other demons can polymorph themselves into other forms as well, and thus serve Graz'zt's plans.) They will seek out the power bases and most obvious threats to an invasion, and they'll look for potential allies among groups such as the Zhentarim, Banites, and Red Wizards. Their presence may not even be detected unless Waukeen remains suspicious enough of Graz'zt that she personally watches for signs of his work. (In that case, her clergy may become involved in a cold war with his Abyssal forces.) The vrocks also may kill the wrong person or people and expose themselves in the process, in which case their capture could betray Graz'zt's plans.

The Realms may or may not be in danger of becoming another layer of the Abyss, but until Graz'zt's spies are soundly defeated or someone confronts and intimidates him directly, demonic incursions into the Realms are likely to go on for years (as they have for centuries due to many unrelated reasons).

# Lillend

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Ysgard, Arborea, Limbo, the Infinite Staircase
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare (Uncommon on Staircase)
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Family
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Day
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	High (13-14)
<b>TREASURE:</b>	A
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic good or chaotic neutral
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	2d6
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	3
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	9, Fl 27 (C), Sw 15
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	7+14
<b>THACO:</b>	11
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1 weapon and 1 tail
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	2d6 and by weapon type
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Dropping in flight, spells, crush
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Spells, immunities, magical weapon to hit
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	25%
<b>SIZE:</b>	L (human torso with 20' body)
<b>MORALE:</b>	Champion (15-16)
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	9,000



Lillendi are natives of Ysgard, though they can travel astrally to the Prime and may also be found on the planes of Arborea and Limbo. They are peaceful and delight in song and conversation—and far from harmless. Those who offend lillendi may receive harsh treatment at their hands, and even blameless individuals are subject to their pranks. Lillendi are particularly hostile toward those who seek to impose civilized order on the wilderness.

A lillend has the torso, arms, and head of a comely man or woman but also has broad, powerful, feathered wings and a stout serpentine body from the waist downwards. Though the humanlike portions of a lillend are of unremarkable hue, the feathered and scaled parts of its anatomy are brightly colored and strikingly patterned. Each individual has its own unique color combination and is quite proud of it. A lillend wears no clothing but sometimes wears jewelry. It always carries weapons and musical instruments.

Lillendi do not mate or marry. They reproduce parthenogenically, giving birth to offspring that resemble their mothers in most respects. Lillendi with male human torsos are biologically female, though they follow male human patterns of dress and customs.

A lillend can understand any intelligent communication, including writing or sign language. All lillendi have infravision to 300 feet. Lillendi speak their own language, the common tongue, and the languages of giants, bariaur, and githzerai.

**Combat:** Lillendi can cast spells, charm with music, affect morale, determine the history of legendary magical items as 7th-level bards, and they can use any magical items that bards can use. In addition to their bardic abilities, they may cast *darkness*, *hallucinatory terrain*, *knock*, and *light* 3/day. Once per day they can cast *fire chant*, *Otto's irresistible dance*, *pass plant*, *polymorph self* (into humanlike form only), *speak with animals*, *speak with plants*, and *transport via plants*.

Lillendi can breathe water and can move swiftly on or under the surface, wings folded tightly against the body when they snake their way across the surface. When they dive underwater their wings beat slowly to propel them forward, like enormous diving birds. They are immune to poisons, noxious gases, normal fire, the effects of the Positive and Negative Energy Planes (including level draining and enervation), and to any musically based magical effect, such as harpy song or satyr piping. They are unaffected by all enchantment/charm spells, and only +1 or better weapons can strike them.

Lillendi have 17 Strength and 16 Dexterity for their human torsos, with attendant bonuses in combat. Their weapons, sometimes magical, are usually long swords, great spears, or powerful long bows with war arrows. If a lillend catches her opponent in her serpentine coils, she inflicts 2d6 points of damage that round and adds 2d6 points of damage automatically each round thereafter as she crushes the life out of her prey. Any creature held in a lillend's coils suffers a -3 penalty to attack, damage, and saving throw rolls. When a lillend attacks prey

# Lillend

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caught in its coils, she does so at +1 to attack and damage rolls.

Lillendi carry particularly unpleasant enemies in flight for up to 10 rounds, then drop them for 20d6 points of falling damage (2d6 for each round in the air). Falls that inflict more than 50 points of damage require a saving throw vs. death magic to avoid instant death from massive damage, regardless of the character's remaining hit point total. Lillendi cannot do constriction damage while flying, and they cannot carry more than 250 pounds aloft.

Lillendi are said to be able to choose the hour of their death, the Silent Hour, when they grow weary of life and service to the moon. This knowledge is either a gift from the gods of the moon, or a curse from the powers of Law, whom the lillendi are said to have served long ago and then abandoned. Shortly before her death, a lillend makes her farewells, and as she dies she is absorbed into her power's realm, disappearing in a misty fog that acts as a combination *moonbeam* and *chaos* spell. Those who go into battle expecting death fight more fiercely, to make the best possible impression on the power they serve. Lillendi entering the Silent Hour strike in a calm, focused fury: always winning initiative, making attack rolls at +4, and inflicting double damage, but they always perish at the end of the allotted span. Lillendi who haven't yet chosen the Silent Hour can still die through accidents or violence, but in death their faces are always wracked with despair, for the legends say that those who do not pass through the Silent Hour are never joined with the power they serve.

**Habitat/Society:** Lillendi serve the gods of the moon. They only travel to the Prime when ordered to do so by their powers.

Lillendi social status depends on a simple system of initiations into mysteries and the ownership of certain totem masks. The mysteries are akin to secret societies, and each mystery is a specific kernel of wisdom passed on from one generation to the next. The more societies a lillend is a member of, the greater her status. Each society is devoted to particular musical forms, songs, instruments, and weapons, so a group of lillendi usually uses the same instruments, weaponry, and spells. All lillendi who guard the Staircase wear the *Faceless Mask of Infinity*, though each is styled according to the wearer's tastes.

Lovers of art and music, nothing is more to the lillendi than creativity. This devotion makes the Infinite Staircase their most sacred spot. To harm, malign, or threaten the Staircase is to do the same to them. And while the lillendi are normally among the most peaceful of creatures, they can be quite dangerous. Worse, these beings hold a vicious grudge for their long lives. Gold and food mean little to them, but a poem, song, or artwork of any kind holds much value for them.

Note that the lillendi allow all who do not intend harm to them, the Staircase, or their god free use of the Staircase, even demons (though they despise the lawful devils).

**Ecology:** Lillendi devour both material food and magical essences. They can sustain themselves on moonbeams and the elemental essence of the wilderness (mountain breezes, gentle rains, raging rivers, and forest fires), though they prefer more substantial meals. If they gorge themselves on meat, they often remain in a torpid digestive state for hours or even days. This torpor doubles their spellcasting times, halves their constriction damage, and causes a -2 penalty to initiative. The lillendi enjoy this sluggishness, though they are wise enough not to go into such torpor alone and unguarded.

Lillendi are known for broad tastes: They eat meat, vegetables, hay, grains, or spell components with equal abandon. Their digestion is complete and efficient; some say that the lillendi merely transmute all they eat into magical energy.

Obviously, lillendi aren't a common sight on Faerûn, so they don't normally contribute to or take from the local ecology. However, it's possible that a few portals along the Infinite Staircase lead to various points on Toril, including the one featured in *For Duty & Deity*, in which case the ecology of the lillendi may interact with that of the Realms. Possible portals used by the lillendi aren't limited to the lands of the Realms proper—they may be under the surface of the Sea of Fallen Stars, for example, or in far-off Maztica and Kara-Tur.

If lillendi come to the Prime on some mission, their presence may be indicated by the disappearance of a wide variety of foodstuffs, as they will embark upon a sort of "taste of the Realms" party as long as they're visiting. Those who wish to treat with them can advance their objective by bringing purely Faerûnian items with them, with which to fascinate the planar creatures. Lillendi will be similarly appreciative of sages who can impart astrological, astronomical, and ecological information to them. Druids and lillendi are likely to appreciate and learn from each other, as they each have their own relationship with Nature, of which the other may be unaware.

# Viper Tree

<b>CLIMATE/TERRAIN:</b>	Abyss, Carceri, Gray Waste	
<b>FREQUENCY:</b>	Rare	
<b>ORGANIZATION:</b>	Solitary	
<b>ACTIVITY CYCLE:</b>	Constant	
<b>DIET:</b>	Omnivore	
<b>INTELLIGENCE:</b>	Semi to Low (2-7)	
<b>TREASURE:</b>	L, M, O (R, W)	
<b>ALIGNMENT:</b>	Chaotic/neutral evil	
<b>NO. APPEARING:</b>	1d20	
<b>ARMOR CLASS:</b>	7	
<b>MOVEMENT:</b>	0, 15 in larval form	
<b>HIT DICE:</b>	2-9 (1d8+1)	
<b>THACO:</b>	2 HD: 19	
	3-4 HD: 17	
	5-6 HD: 15	
	7-8 HD: 13	
	9 HD: 11	
<b>NO. OF ATTACKS:</b>	1/HD	
<b>DAMAGE/ATTACK:</b>	2d6	
<b>SPECIAL ATTACKS:</b>	Venom	
<b>SPECIAL DEFENSES:</b>	Spells, immunities	
<b>MAGIC RESISTANCE:</b>	15%	
<b>SIZE:</b>	L-H (5-50' high)	
<b>MORALE:</b>	Steady (12)	
<b>XP VALUE:</b>	2 HD: 420	6 HD: 4,000
	3 HD: 975	7 HD: 5,000
	4 HD: 2,000	8 HD: 6,000
	5 HD: 3,000	9 HD: 7,000



the brain of a viper tree is actually deep in the tree's heartwood. As a result, viper trees get their full complement of attacks until they are near death. The bite of a viper tree inflicts 2d6 points of damage.

Viper tree venom is insidious and potent; anyone bitten by a viper tree must make a saving throw against poison at -3. Victims that fail lose 4 points of Dexterity permanently and are immobilized by the venom for 48 hours, long enough for the tree to swallow even the largest prey. The venom has an onset time of 2d4 rounds. Even if the saving throw succeeds, the victim temporarily loses 4 points of Dexterity as a result of the shakes and trembling the venom induces for the next 48 hours. *Neutralize poison* removes the Dexterity loss immediately but does nothing for the paralysis. It even prevents the permanent Dexterity loss if applied within an hour. *Remove paralysis* cures the twitching and immobility but does nothing for the Dexterity loss. Viper trees are immune to their own venom.

Because of their multiple heads, viper trees are unaffected by most spells that target a single or a few creatures such as *charm monster*, *hold monster*, or *sleep*. To affect a viper tree, such a spell must affect a number of creatures equal to the viper tree's Hit Dice.

Viper trees are immune to cold, venom, and acid attacks, and they take half damage from blunt weapons and normal damage from electrical attacks. Their woody stumps bleed a brownish-amber sap when cut, and the wood bums quickly. Viper trees suffer double damage from fire.

Said to be the bastard young of Nidhogg, the serpent at the root of Yggdrasil, viper trees are white, scaly trees with living snakes' heads as their branches. From a distance they appear as white beeches or similar trees, but viewed up close they have clearly reptilian skin and features. Though they can writhe and reach as snakes do, usually viper trees simply sway in the breeze as other trees—but they also move even in the absence of any breeze.

Viper trees speak the language of demons and no other. Groves of viper trees hiss and whisper to each other unnervingly during the night, speaking of their kills, their hungers, and their treasures. They are common in Azzagrat, the 45th to 47th layers of the Abyss; elsewhere in the Abyss they are used as guards in gardens, around moats, and at gates.

**Combat:** Single viper trees rarely attack creatures larger than size S. Viper tree groves (such as the Viper Forest of Zrintor) are notably more aggressive, willing to attack small groups of size M creatures if the group is perceived as sufficiently weak. They can swallow even size L creatures, if given enough time.

A viper tree has dozens of serpentine heads and branches, but the tree can only command a few of them at a time. When a branch is slain, one of the tree's "sleeping" branches wakes, for



# Viper Tree

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If attacked with missile weapons, viper trees can break off their own branches to crawl toward their attackers. These branches ooze sap from their broken end and die within an hour, so the trees are reluctant to lose them, but the broken branches have the same hit points, THAC0, and damage as the parent tree.

**Habitat/Society:** Viper trees are a strange hybrid of tanar'ri, reptile, and plant—a sort of fiendish, egg-laying plant. They lay eggs once a month, and each egg lies protected at the base of the its parent. Once it hatches on its own, the newly hatched viper tree is abandoned by its parent. The young go through a mobile stage before rooting in the body of their first large prey.

Great groves of viper trees grow on the sites of some Blood War battlefields, where the trees defend themselves against attacks from baatezu by growing in large clusters. The viper trees allow demon armies to pass through freely and even take cover under their branches, but baatezu are always attacked, even if all the viper trees are slain as a result. Yugoloth armies are usually ignored.

A legend exists among the tanar'ri that the lords of Baator once amused themselves by forming viper trees from manes and other creatures that they captured in the Blood War. Others say that the Abyssal lords made examples of a thousand least demons who refused to march against a position that a million of their fellows had already failed to take. In either case, they were once tanar'ri, and this is why they usually side with the tanar'ri against the baatezu. The fiends still tell the tale to prevent desertions, but it may hold a kernel of truth to it: Some baatezu lords are believed to still know the secret to the transformation.

**Ecology:** While the viper tree eats whatever prey it can capture and swallow, it also does take nourishment from the ground in which it roots. Great groves of viper trees grow on the sites of great battles of the Blood War. The viper trees seem to grow especially strong from such, nutritious soil.

Reportedly, several zulkirs among the Red Wizards have imported viper trees from the Abyss and planted them in Thay. Lauzoril, the Zulkir of Enchantment/Charm magic, apparently is developing magic to control the trees so that they will ignore those who know a password or bear his sigil. (Whether he'll share his research with the other zulkirs is another story.) Getting the vipers trees to take root and survive, let alone thrive, outside the Abyss is only achievable through powerful and sustained magic, and sages such as Elminster have questioned the wisdom and feasibility of such an undertaking. Nevertheless, the Red Wizards are notorious for their ingenuity and tenacity, so it may be possible that a prime-material strain of the viper tree may be developed.

If this plan is true and the Red Wizards are successful, viper tree forests may spread across Faerûn if unchecked. Even worse, their aggressive nature indicates a possibility that their roots will leech the soil where they grow dry of all nutrients in short order, killing all flora around them in addition to any fauna they can reach. Such an infestation could conceivably spread across the Realms, destroying the native ecology and turning Toril into a Prime version of the Abyss! In fact, the introduction of the viper tree to Thay may be a part of Graz'zt's larger plan to annex the Realms.

## Larval Form

In their larval form, viper trees resemble fully mobile, three-headed snakes. Larval trees have only 2 Hit Dice, and only two of the heads of the newly hatched creature are fully active—the third is a sort of runt. The tiny, inactive head is always the central one, which is carried along by the other two until it awakens after a period of about one month. Thereafter the third head is the directing intelligence of the entire creature, and it begins searching for a suitable place to put down roots. When the larval tree kills suitably large prey, it lodges its tail through the kill and into the earth and begins the growth of its plant phase.

The larval viper tree is insatiably hungry, constantly devouring manes, cranium rats, and other small prey. It can strike a single target with two heads, while the third protects it against attacks from any other direction. Its venom immobilizes prey by inducing twitching spasms that last for 1d10 hours. (A saving throw vs. poison at +2 reduces this to a 2-point Dexterity loss, which fades within a day.)

## FORGOTTEN REALMS®

ADVENTURE

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by Dale Donovan

**F**or over a decade, mystery has surrounded the fate of the lost goddess of trade and wealth, Waukeen. The Golden Lady disappeared during the Time of Troubles and has not been heard from since. Now, in Marpenoth in the Year of the Tankard (1370 DR), a young prophet suffers from disturbing, divine visions that reveal a beautiful, golden-tressed woman imprisoned on a far plane of existence by some great evil.

The leader of Waukeen's church believes that these visions mean Waukeen is alive but trapped in the deadly and dangerous Abyss. A party of adventurers is dedicated to peeling back the mystery of the Golden Lady's fate. Their route takes them to the plane-spanning Infinite Staircase and beyond, to the Abyss, the home of the demonic tanar'ri. The heroes must brave the dangers of the Abyss and rescue the lost goddess from the clutches of one of the most brilliant and dangerous of all Abyssal lords.

This stand-alone adventure was developed in concert with the PLANESCAPE® adventure anthology *Tales from the Infinite Staircase*. They can be played separately. However, guidelines within both allow a Dungeon Master to use either product as a subplot for the other, creating new opportunities for player characters and extending the opportunity for adventure.

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ISBN 0-7869-1234-0



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U.S. \$13.95 CAN \$18.95