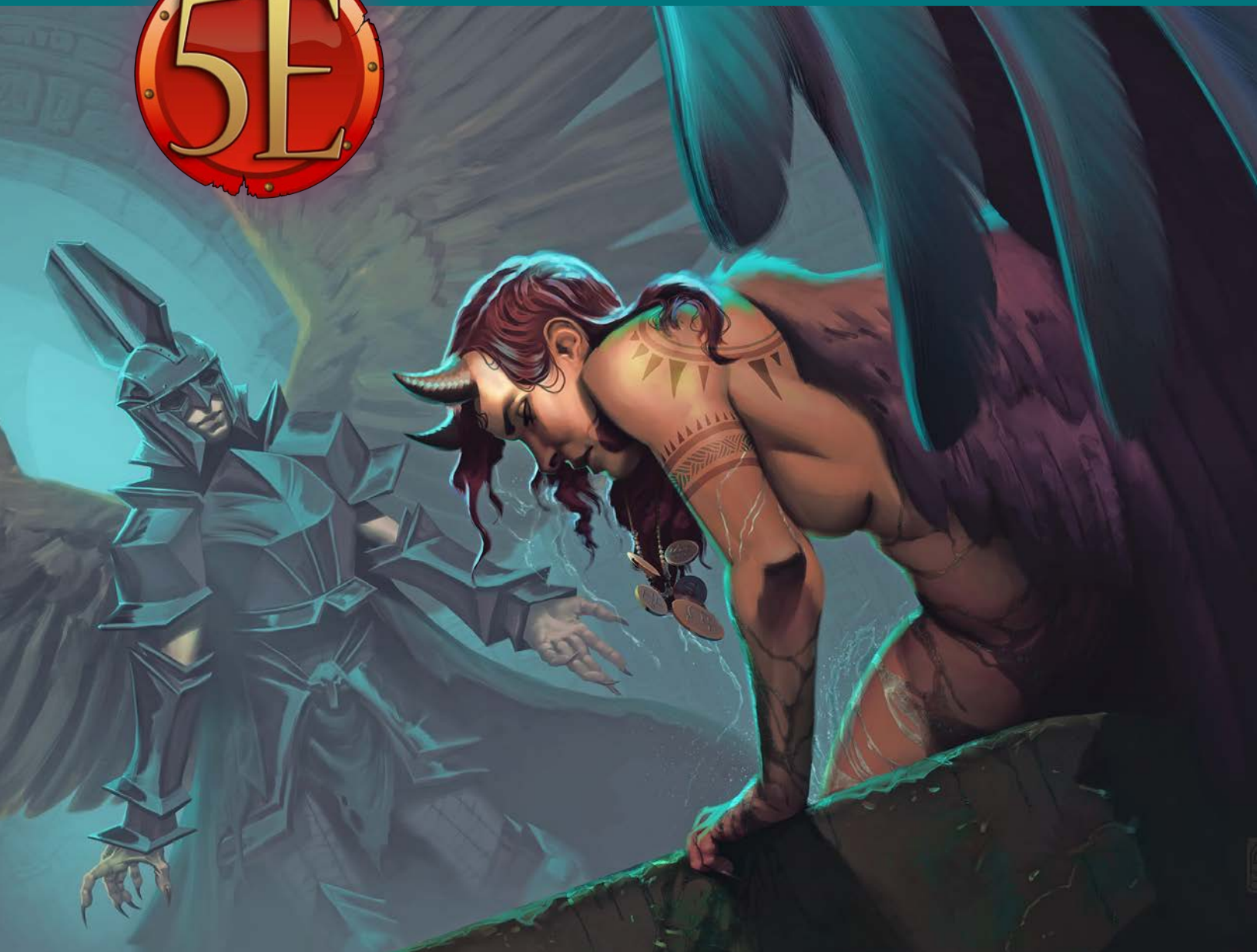


NECROPOLIS^{OF} THE MAILED FIST

Sersa Victory



A 5th Edition Adventure for 8th-level Characters

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A 5TH EDITION ADVENTURE
FOR 8TH-LEVEL CHARACTERS

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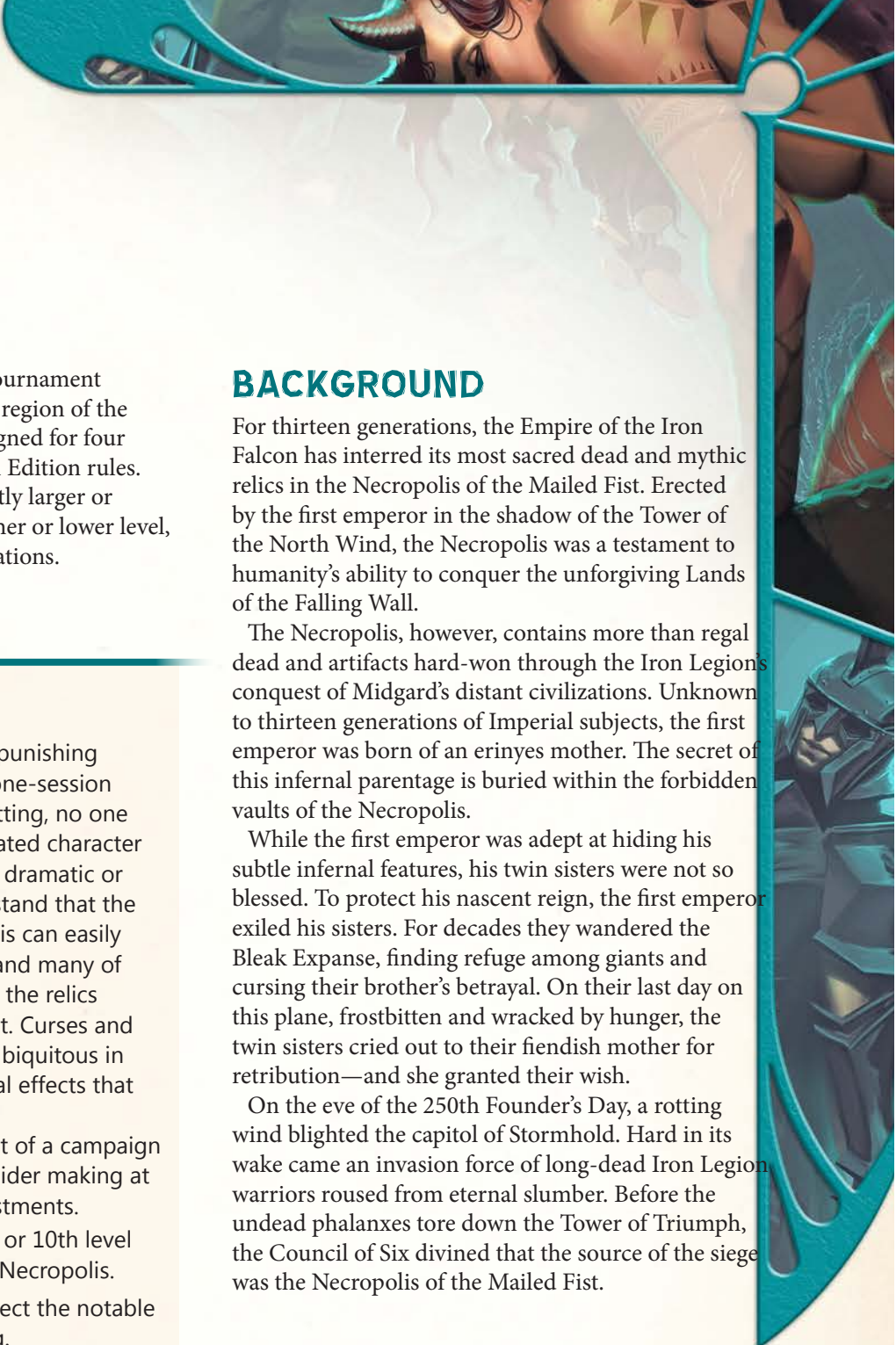
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Necropolis of the Mailed Fist is a tournament adventure set in the Northlands region of the Midgard Campaign Setting. It's designed for four 8th-level characters and uses the 5th Edition rules. The adventure can be run for a slightly larger or smaller group, or one of slightly higher or lower level, with only minor, on-the-fly modifications.

DEATHTRAP DUNGEON

Necropolis of the Mailed Fist is a punishing dungeon designed for use as a one-session convention adventure. In that setting, no one cares too much if their pregenerated character is killed, especially if the death is dramatic or heroic. With that in mind, understand that the monsters guarding the Necropolis can easily overwhelm 8th-level characters and many of the traps and hazards protecting the relics can slay a character in a single hit. Curses and other permanent afflictions are ubiquitous in the Necropolis, along with several effects that destroy magic items.

If you run this adventure as part of a campaign with established characters, consider making at least a few of the following adjustments.

- Wait until characters reach 9th or 10th level before subjecting them to the Necropolis.
- Adjust the lineage cards to reflect the notable rulers in your campaign setting.
- Ignore the time limit and the withering death when time expires.
- Allow "permanent" afflictions such as curses to wear off when characters leave the Necropolis.
- Instead of being destroyed, magic items are only disabled for 24 or 48 hours.
- Impose a setback of some kind on the party, either during the adventure or afterward, if characters respawn too often.

BACKGROUND

For thirteen generations, the Empire of the Iron Falcon has interred its most sacred dead and mythic relics in the Necropolis of the Mailed Fist. Erected by the first emperor in the shadow of the Tower of the North Wind, the Necropolis was a testament to humanity's ability to conquer the unforgiving Lands of the Falling Wall.

The Necropolis, however, contains more than regal dead and artifacts hard-won through the Iron Legion's conquest of Midgard's distant civilizations. Unknown to thirteen generations of Imperial subjects, the first emperor was born of an erinyes mother. The secret of this infernal parentage is buried within the forbidden vaults of the Necropolis.

While the first emperor was adept at hiding his subtle infernal features, his twin sisters were not so blessed. To protect his nascent reign, the first emperor exiled his sisters. For decades they wandered the Bleak Expanse, finding refuge among giants and cursing their brother's betrayal. On their last day on this plane, frostbitten and wracked by hunger, the twin sisters cried out to their fiendish mother for retribution—and she granted their wish.

On the eve of the 250th Founder's Day, a rotting wind blighted the capitol of Stormhold. Hard in its wake came an invasion force of long-dead Iron Legion warriors roused from eternal slumber. Before the undead phalanxes tore down the Tower of Triumph, the Council of Six divined that the source of the siege was the Necropolis of the Mailed Fist.

TOURNAMENT PLAY

Necropolis of the Mailed Fist was designed to be played as a competitive tournament at a convention. The rules below describe how to run this adventure in tournament mode.

TIME LIMIT

Players have three hours of real time to complete the adventure. Start the timer when the first encounter begins in Area 1 or 2. Players should always know how much time has elapsed and how much time they have left.

When time expires, the bell golem in Area 4 tolls and characters rapidly wither into shriveled husks (an inescapable effect of the occult magic pervading the Necropolis). Each character is entitled to one final turn, then the adventure ends and the players' score is tallied (see "Tournament Scoring"). Points are scored as a team, not individually.

DEATH AND RESPAWNING

A character who dies in the Necropolis respawns at the start of his or her next turn adjacent to an ally of the player's choosing. A character who dies outside of a turn-by-turn encounter respawns immediately.

Characters respawn with all their hit points, hit dice, class abilities, and spell slots. Some effects persist from before the character died:

- Lineage cards
- Curses
- Reductions in maximum hit points
- Magic item charges
- *Traitor's marks*

Clever players will quickly realize that they can get a significant power boost by dying and respawning. Be sure they understand that the team loses 200 points each time a character dies and respawns. It is possible to end up with a negative score.

RESTING

Characters are permitted to take short rests in the Necropolis, but long rests are not possible.

SPELLCASTING

Spells with a casting time longer than 10 minutes don't work inside the Necropolis.

REDUCED-THREAT MONSTERS

A reduced-threat monster uses a normal monster's statistics but has half the monster's normal starting hit points. It also takes a -2 penalty on attack rolls and saving throws, and the DCs of saving throws it causes are reduced by 2. In an ongoing campaign, a reduced-threat creature is worth only half the creature's usual XP.

GLORY TRIALS

At various points during the adventure, the characters will be presented with glory trials: optional challenges that, when completed, earn bonus points for the characters. In a tournament setting, always be clear and specific to players about the challenge, the

GLORY TRIAL

The optional challenge presented by a glory trial and its reward appear in callouts like this.

rules, and the potential reward of a glory trial. In a home campaign setting, glory trials can be melded seamlessly into the narrative without calling special attention to them, or they can be ignored.

Some glory trials reward characters for completing additional objectives that aren't necessary to progress through the Necropolis. Others, however, are simple dares that reward characters for doing something dramatic or reckless that they aren't likely to consider otherwise.

LINEAGE CARDS

If your group is playing with the pregenerated characters, each character in the adventure is the child of a lord or lady who rules over one of the city-states of the Empire of the Iron Falcon.

A printable set of lineage cards is included with this adventure. At the start of the game, each player draws two cards at random: one lord card (father) and one lady card (mother). When placed side by side, these cards describe an ability the character can use once during the adventure.

If your characters aren't part of the Empire, you can still use these cards. Just assume each character represents a particular lineage and carries a token embodying it, and thus gains the proper benefits within the Necropolis. Tokens are transferable, but the benefits are not.

HELL MODE

At the start of a tournament session, give players one minute to choose whether to play the adventure at normal difficulty (as written) or to tackle it in Hell mode. In Hell mode, monsters and traps are more dangerous and puzzles have a slimmer margin of error, but challenges characters overcome are worth 50 percent more points.

HELL MODE

Instructions for changing an encounter into Hell mode appear in callouts like this.

THE NECROPOLIS

The Necropolis of the Mailed Fist has two entrances: the Unbroken Procession of the Falcon and Sword (Area 1) and the Flooded Catacombs of the First Testament (Area 2). Each entrance presents its own dangers and rewards.

Describe both entrances to players, then give them one minute to decide which entrance to use. Once characters enter the Necropolis, the other entrance seals itself so it can't be opened from inside the Necropolis.

The Unbroken Procession of the Falcon and Sword is the main entrance to the Necropolis. It is used by funeral processions and marching formations. This entrance is more strongly defended than the alternative, but if characters defeat its guardians, they'll gain some treasure that might help them later against monsters guarding the vaults of the Necropolis.

The Flooded Catacombs of the First Testament was opened inadvertently when an earthquake wracked the mountainside. The catacombs are unstable and flooded with icy water from the Necropolis's moat, but if characters get past these hazards, they'll gain treasure that might protect them against the traps and curses warding the Necropolis.

1. THE UNBROKEN PROCESSION OF THE FALCON AND SWORD

Four tiers rise like colossal steps in this imposing hypostyle, each littered with broken spears, shields, and skeletons. Regal statues the size of stone giants kneel at the edge of each tier, their arms outstretched to place a stone crown dripping with icicles atop the head of the statue on the tier below.

The heads of the statues have been sawed off and cast into the corners of the great hall—but their eyes remain as boulder-sized, smoldering orbs levitating above each statue's shoulders, exactly where they would be if the heads remained in place.

Characters have one turn to maneuver and prepare before the action begins.

The hypostyle shudders, sending clouds of frost rippling downward from the high vaulted ceiling. One eye hovering above the highest tier splits like a hatching egg, and from it emerges a trio of obsidian skulls, conjoined at their occipital bones and bathed in azure flame. "Step forward, traitors, and receive the punishment for your trespass."

The icon of a three-headed falcon clutching a sword is emblazoned on the skulls' three foreheads.

A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recognizes the skulls as watchers of the gate, constructs tasked with destroying heretics and intruders who try to breach the Necropolis.

The skull construct is immune to all damage, but it can't directly cause damage, either. Instead, it summons other guardians to battle the characters on its behalf, in the sequence listed below. Before summoning, the watcher speaks, demanding "which of you will face the conjured wrath of the Emperor?" It then summons the first construct (flying sword), which becomes visible as a misty, indistinct image that slowly gains definition. If players are unsure what's expected of them, explain that the watcher seems to expect them to choose a champion to fight the flying sword, and that they don't have much time (no more than 60 seconds of real time) to choose. As soon as someone is chosen, blazing sigils appear on the forming image and on the forehead of the elected character, locking them into a duel. The construct then repeats the phrase and summons the second construct, and so on until all four constructs have been summoned. When all four constructs have been summoned and matched with a champion, they emerge from their misty portals and combat begins.

These summoned constructs can be attacked by anyone, but they have resistance to all damage and advantage on all saving throws and ability contests that aren't caused by their foe with the matching sigil. The constructs' attacks cause normal damage to any target, but they always attack their marked foe if possible. When a construct is defeated, the sigil disappears from its matched character. Other constructs no longer have resistance to that character's damage or advantage against its saving throws and ability contests.

- **1st Construct:** flying sword
- **2nd Construct:** animated armor
- **3rd Construct:** monolith footman (CR 5, *Tome of Beasts*)
- **4th Construct:** fellforged (CR 3, *Tome of Beasts*)

HELL MODE

Constructs summoned by the watcher are under the effect of a *haste* spell that can't be dispelled.

SENTINEL EYE TRAPS

Three of the floating, flaming eyes are also guardians. At the end of each round (on initiative count 0), each of the three unleashes an enervating gaze attack at one character it can see. Primary targets are characters not currently engaged in a duel (either characters who didn't have a matched foe because the party contains more than four characters, or someone who's already defeated his or her matched opponent). The targeted character must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. If the saving throw fails, the character takes 7 (2d6) necrotic damage and is frightened until the end of their next turn. If the saving throw succeeds, that sentinel eye sprouts another skull-shaped pupil, increasing by one the number of enervating gaze attacks it can make each turn.

Sentinel eyes have AC 15, a +5 bonus on all saving throws, and darkvision to 120 feet. They are immune to all damage except magical piercing damage. They don't have hit points, but an eye that takes 15 or more points of magical piercing damage in a single turn is destroyed. Casting *darkness* on a sentinel eye or blinding it by any other means effectively removes it from the fight.

GLORY TRIAL

Destroying all three sentinel eyes isn't necessary for characters to get past this chamber, but a team that does destroy all three earns 100 bonus points.

MITHRAL DOOR

The large mithral door atop the highest tier is emblazoned with the image of a three-headed falcon clutching a sword. The door is magically sealed, so it can be forced open only with a successful DC 30 Strength (Athletics) check. Bringing one of the broken-off statue heads within 10 feet of the door causes the head to speak a word of power in its sepulchral voice, which breaks the seal on the door, allowing it to open normally.

CURSE OF ENDLESS RETRIBUTION

The first time in an encounter when a character affected by this curse takes damage, a hovering sentinel eye is summoned into the area. The sentinel eye has an initiative result 1 lower than the cursed character's initiative result.

If characters try to open the sealed door any other way, whether by force or thievery or magic, the removed heads of the regal statues open their mouths and bellow a guttural *hymn of endless retribution*. Each character must make a Wisdom saving throw and check the result below.

A *knock* spell or comparable effect does open the sealed mithral door but also triggers the *hymn of endless retribution*.

DEVELOPMENT

When all four summoned guardians are destroyed, the watcher of the gate explodes in a ball of azure flame. The graven eyes of one of the removed statue heads roll back to reveal a pair of hollow spaces, each containing a magic item. The left eye socket holds *mithral dragon scale mail* that bestows resistance to slashing damage. The right eye socket holds a *ring of the ram*.

2. FLOODED CATACOMBS OF THE FIRST TESTAMENT

Icy water sloshing around broken stone rises waist-high on skeletons propped in alcoves that stretch into darkness. Rumbling shakes the moss-colored walls of these crumbling catacombs, followed by the sound of bones thumping against the sides of their sarcophagi as they're tossed about in the water. Tarnished jewelry is strewn about, and pages from holy texts float atop the water like dead fish.

The water flooding the catacombs is icy cold but not harmful. Because of its depth, creatures without a swimming speed must treat the water as difficult terrain.

Saving Throw	Effect
15+	The character resists the thundering <i>hymn of endless retribution</i> .
10-14	The character's mind and body are wracked by the hymn. The character takes 27 (5d10) thunder damage plus 27 (5d10) psychic damage.
<10	As above, and the character is branded with the traitor's mark and suffers the <i>curse of endless retribution</i> .

Give each character one turn to prepare before the encounter begins. When it begins, the entire area rumbles and shakes. It's clear the catacombs will collapse in a matter of moments, starting with the corner the characters are standing in.

COLLAPSING WALLS AND CEILING

Each round on initiative count 0, a numbered section of the catacombs collapses. If this is the first round of the encounter, the unlabeled section nearest the entrance collapses. Characters still in an area when it collapses must make a saving throw (see below). On subsequent rounds, determine randomly (1d12) which section collapses.

Characters standing in a section when it collapses must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw. Those that fail take 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage from falling stone and debris and are restrained. A restrained character is freed when it or an adjacent ally uses an action to make a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check.

HELL MODE

A character whose saving throw result is 9 or less is crushed to death by falling stones.

Once a section collapses, a character who moves through any portion of that section must make a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check or take another 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage from debris that continues falling.

At the start of the third round (after two sections have collapsed), a **sarcophagus slime** (CR 5, *Tome of Beasts*) emerges from the rubble near the entrance. It isn't hindered by difficult terrain. Characters near the sarcophagus slime can see a gemstone eyeball suspended inside it. The gemstone can be removed once the sarcophagus slime is destroyed, and it radiates divination magic.

VALVE AND SEPULCHERS

When a character moves within sight of the valve (labeled "V" on the map), read or paraphrase the following:

An iron valve glints at the edge of the darkness.
A skeletal hand clutches it with frozen fingers.

A character standing near the valve can see two sealed sepulchers farther into the catacombs: one bears the symbol of a three-headed falcon clutching a sword, and the other bears the symbol of a three-headed falcon clutching an ankh.

Tell players that they can turn the valve only once, as a bonus action, to divert the water into one or the other sepulcher. Make it clear there is no incorrect choice but the sepulcher they choose will become inaccessible as all the water flooding this catacomb fills it, and the other sepulcher will open.

Whichever sepulcher opens, a **drowned maiden** (CR 5, *Tome of Beasts*) emerges from it. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History or Religion) check recognizes the drowned maiden as the Keeper of the Catacombs: a young sage who was sealed alive in the Necropolis by the First Emperor of the Iron Falcon. She doesn't stray from the entrance of her sepulcher and tries to block anyone from entering.

GLORY TRIAL

The Keeper of the Catacombs doesn't need to be destroyed, but the characters earn 100 extra points for doing so.



INSIDE THE SEPULCHER

Both supulchers contain a standing sarcophagus with three icons—a wyvern, a comet, and an obelisk—engraved in a horizontal row. A character who makes a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check recognizes the icons as an illusion; their true nature can be revealed only by viewing them through the gemstone eye from the sarcophagus slime in Area 2. Viewing them through the gemstone eye reveals them in their correct order—comet, obelisk, wyvern.

Either sarcophagus can be opened easily. The sarcophagus in the sepulcher marked with the falcon and sword contains a *sentinel shield* and a *wand of secrets*. The sarcophagus in the sepulcher marked with the falcon and ankh contains a *stone of good luck* and a *scarab of protection* with 3d4 charges.

MITHRAL CUBE PUZZLE

The exit from section 12 of the catacombs is keyed to a puzzle.

A large, iron box is riveted to the south wall, and the side of the box facing the room is open. Inside the box are three mithral cubes set on spindles so they can rotate to display one side to the room. The faces of each cube are marked with symbols representing a comet, a wyvern, and an obelisk; the fourth face of each is blank. Currently, all three blank faces are visible.

If the cubes are rotated into the order comet, obelisk, wyvern, the entire wall rotates open, revealing a tunnel to the south. The tunnel ends at a ladder that climbs to a trapdoor in the floor of the pit in Area 3. The trapdoor is situated just in front of the doors to Area 7. This is the only exit from the catacombs.

If the cubes are rotated to any other pattern, the wall still pivots open. The cubes, however, then polymorph into angry mithral falcons that claw at the characters briefly before disappearing. Each character must make a Constitution saving throw and check the result on the table below.

Saving Throw	Effect
15+	The character fends off the attack with no ill effect.
10-14	The character takes 27 (5d10) slashing damage, and the falcons steal one potion or scroll carried by the character.
<10	As above, plus the character is branded with the <i>traitor's mark</i> and the mithral falcons tear out the character's eyes and carry them away. The character is permanently blinded and afflicted with the <i>curse of the wanderer in darkness</i> .

CURSE OF THE WANDERER IN DARKNESS

Each time a Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check fails to reveal anything new about the Necropolis, the cursed character gains 1 level of exhaustion.

A *knock* spell also opens the passageway into the Necropolis and triggers the mithral falcons to attack.

3. PATH OF THE IRON LEGION

Splintered shields and trampled drifts of snow cover the floor of this vaulted ambulatory. Armored skeletons are partially mortared into the walls and ceiling so they arch over the passageway with ghostly lanterns clutched in their fingers. Skulls in helmets sit atop pedestals in alcoves. Their eyes and teeth have been replaced with gems that shimmer in azure and violet hues.

Slow, heavy footfalls and the tolling of a bell can be heard in the distance.

The armored skeletons twist their bodies and raise their arms as characters explore the ambulatory, as if trying to provide the characters with the most light from their lanterns.

PIT OF RODS

An open pit blocks the floor in front of the door to the tomb of the Council of Six (Area 7). The pit is 10 feet deep, and the bottom is lined with what appear to be magical rods that have been sharpened like spikes. This is a ruse; they're simple spikes, not magical in any way. Characters can jump across the pit or climb down with ease. Characters who entered the Necropolis via the flooded catacombs (Area 2) emerge from a secret door at the bottom of the pit.

ENTOMBED IRON LEGIONNAIRES

The skulls of eight Iron Legionnaires rest in this ambulatory. Each has been prepared with gems to look like a helmeted demilich. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) or Wisdom (Insight) check recognizes that they're just skulls, not undead.

A mithral plaque is set into the floor in front of each legionnaire skull. All the plaques except that of Aphas are buried beneath snow; a corner of Aphas's plaque can be seen. Each plaque describes the legacy of that legionnaire that earned him or her a place of honor in the Necropolis. The plaques are listed below, beginning with the alcove to the east of Area 9 and proceeding clockwise.

1. **Dhakatos:** He who cut the head from the Copper Sphinx.
2. **Glisya:** She who brought the First Age of Famine to the Isle of Berserkers.
3. **Aphas:** He who torched the heretical libraries of Valeria.
4. **Gosya:** She who did without mercy what Skudra-Skeranul could not do.
5. **Liatha:** She who immolated the Tree of Renewal at the heart of the Margreve.
6. **Amael:** He who brought the Second Age of Famine to the Isle of Berserkers.
7. **Illyrie:** She who made mail and cloak from the scales of the ancient wardens.
8. **Adyas:** He who brought Our Emperor the head of the Three Rivers Paladin.

If characters burn an oil-soaked wooden skeleton from Area 19 at the base of the pedestal displaying a legionnaire's skull in the correct combination, the gemstones set into the skull's eyes flare with emerald radiance and the skull rises up to float above its pedestal. When four skulls are floating, the grinding of stone can be heard distantly from Area 5, announcing to characters that "a wall has opened in the vaults of peace."

Skull	Skeleton
1. Dhakatos	4. Neb-em-Akhu
3. Aphas	3. Nur-Ishtar
5. Liatha	1. Camassia
7. Illyrie	2. Khoxele

If characters burn any oil-soaked wooden skeleton in front of the incorrect legionnaire, the smoke forms into a **cinder wraith** that lets out an otherworldly death wail. The wail causes 36 (8d8) thunder damage to every character in the Ambulatory, or half damage with a successful DC 15 Constitution or Wisdom saving throw (character's choice which to attempt).

After wailing, the cinder wraith demands that characters bring it a *traitor's skull* within 30 minutes (real time, not game time; set a timer!). If characters fail to do so, give them one minute to choose three attuned magic items that are reduced to ash; if they don't choose, select three randomly. If a *traitor's skull* is brought to the wraith, both wraith and skull disappear in a burst of ashes.

The cinder wraith is nothing but swirling ash; it can't be harmed by any means. Turning the wraith extends the time limit by 10 minutes, but this can be done only once. Its Wisdom is 16.

HELL MODE

Instead of losing three magic items for failing to comply with the cinder wraith's demand, characters lose all but one magic item. Give them one minute to choose which item to save.

4. BELL GOLEM

A bell golem (modified **stone golem**) plods endlessly through the Ambulatory. It can be encountered anywhere in the area, but near the spot marked 4 is as good as any for a start. Read this text as characters approach the golem's location.

The tolling of the bell grows louder. Ahead, a stone golem steps heavily from the gloom, shaking snow from the vaulted ceiling with each footfall. Hundreds of mournful faces, occult sigils, and holy runes are engraved on its body, and instead of a head and face, a bronze bell is perched atop its shoulders. The bell swings and rings out with each step the golem takes.

The bell golem is not hostile. In fact, it doesn't acknowledge the characters but just endlessly lumbers around the ambulatory.

A character who closely investigates the faces carved into the bell golem hears the following phrase whispered again and again: "The fallen Legionnaires must witness their conquest once more."

When characters encounter the bell golem, tell them that once during this adventure, they can ring the golem's bell (that's a total of once, not once apiece). Doing so bestows on them a powerful boon—the nature of which they'll learn when they ring the bell. It will also, however, awaken the “guardians of pure darkness” that lurk in the walls of the Necropolis.

RINGING THE BELL GOLEM

When characters ring the bell golem, each character recovers instantly as if they had taken two long rests. In addition, up to three diseases, curses, or ongoing afflictions except for *traitor's marks* are cured or removed.

Additionally, an unidentifiable crackling sound is heard briefly, coming from the east. If characters enter the Hall of Heritage (Area 8) after this, they find the heart of the skein witch has materialized in the hands of the deva fountain.

After ringing the bell, the golem's many mournful faces begin moaning a dirge as shadows creep along the frost-covered walls. Announce to players that “the constellation of living spheres of annihilation has been awakened!” Add this guardian monster to the final encounter with the Exiled Sisters of the First Emperor (Area 21).

GLORY TRIAL

Ring the bell golem earns the characters 100 extra points for each Trial they've attempted.

Remember that the bell golem keeps moving all the time. Characters will return to the Ambulatory many times, and they can encounter the golem in different places each time. Whenever they re-enter, check the time. The golem's position in the Ambulatory matches the position of a clock's minute hand at the current time, if the Ambulatory were a clock face with Area 9 corresponding to 12 o'clock. Alternatively, you can roll a d12 and position the golem at the hour indicated.

5. TOWER OF THE CATHEDRAL COLOSSUS

Ramps from Area 3 lead down to a platform over a chasm, where this encounter occurs. The ceiling of this room rises far above, and the bottom of the chasm is cloaked in shadow until the colossus activates.

Silvery daylight shines down in beams through stained-glass windows that surround the walls of this

gargantuan tower. Each frost-choked window depicts a woman in a nun's habit, with a glowing nimbus around her head and hands covering her face as if she were weeping. Stone ramps descend from east and west down into the howling chasm, leading to a landing where stands an idol depicting a three-headed falcon.

THREE-HEADED FALCON IDOL

The three falcon heads of the idol are made of different materials: mithral, marble, and wood. Each falcon head clutches a chain in its beak, and from each chain hangs a sand glass filled with salt. The glasses have different amounts of salt, so it takes them different lengths of time to run out, as listed below. The salt has all run into the bottom halves of all three glasses when characters enter.

- The mithral falcon's glass lasts 7 rounds
- The marble falcon's glass lasts 5 rounds
- The wooden falcon's glass lasts 3 rounds

These glasses can be removed easily from the chains. They fit into the obelisks in Areas 9, 12, and 16, where they activate the rune circles that allow access to the three trials. If a glass is broken, the pieces and salt reform into a whole glass again in one round.

CATHEDRAL COLOSSUS

When the first character steps onto the balcony that extends to the north over the chasm, the **cathedral colossus** looms up from the darkness below.

The tower shudders, rattling the stained-glass windows and the chains clutched by the idol. Crows circle up from the chasm, followed by the hunched figure of a colossus. It's the size of a watchtower built from a dozen shattered cathedrals. Impaled on the steeples and ramparts of the cathedrals are hundreds of bodies writhing in religious ecstasy and zealous joy. As the colossus straightens up to its full height, it gazes down upon the balcony where you stand—and the impaled congregation begins to sing.

The impaled congregation sings the first line of a call-and-response hymn: “Our goddess cleanses the land with iron and light.” Tell players they have one minute (real time) to come up with and sing back a response. There is no single, correct response; they can sing anything they invent, as long it's thematically suited to the adventure, someone actually sings it, and the line ends on a word that rhymes with light.

If a suitable response is sung within 60 seconds, the colossus bows its head and folds its gargantuan hands in reverence. Divine energy flows from the mouths of the impaled congregation: one character chosen by the players receives a boon that increases one of the character's ability scores to 20 (+5). Which ability score gets raised depends on the rhyming word in their response, as listed below. It's up to you whether you show this list to the players and tell them the effect they're about to trigger.

Rhyme	Effect
Blight	Constitution
Bright	Intelligence
Fight	Strength
Flight	Dexterity
Knight	Strength
Might	Strength
Night	Dexterity
Plight	Dexterity
Rite	Intelligence
Sight	Wisdom
Smite	Wisdom
Spite	Constitution
White	Wisdom
Wight	Constitution
Write	Intelligence
Anything else	Charisma

ENTERING THE CHAPEL INSIDE THE COLOSSUS

After the characters sing their response, the cathedral colossus bends down to eye level with the balcony. Its stained glass eyes flicker with brazier light, and its double-door mouth opens to reveal a gloomy chapel inside its head: this is Area 6.

DESCENDING INTO THE CHASM

The bottom of the chasm can't be seen from the balcony. Throwing down a light source reveals the chasm to be 60 feet deep, and the bottom is carpeted with splintered bones, smashed altars, and shattered pews.

The cathedral colossus can't speak but it understands Common. It will lower the characters to the bottom of the pit on its hand if someone asks it to and makes a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check. Alternatively, climbing down the colossus requires a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check; climbing back up succeeds automatically but does take some time.

There's little of value among the bones and ruined pews. A character who carefully inspects the walls of the tower or makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check, however, discovers a section of wall marked with the icon of a three-headed falcon clutching a sunwheel. A character who touches this icon while wearing the *talisman of the sunwheel* causes that section of wall to become ethereal, revealing a short stairway down to the false vault of the *sunscurge* (Area 19).

6. CHAPEL INSIDE THE COLOSSUS

This area is inside the head of the colossus that stands in the chasm in Area 5. It is not indicated on the map of the Necropolis.

This cramped chapel reeks of sulfur and is littered with stone tablets bearing hymns of excommunication. Two statues stand at the head of the chapel, both depicting a furious young woman clutching a broken crown. Horns and leathery wings are visible underneath their habits.

BEST TWO OUT OF THREE

The characters need to collect only two of the three *iron signet rings* to proceed to the final encounter. This means the characters can fail or skip one of the three trials and still successfully complete the adventure.

If characters fail two of the trials, they can't complete the mission. Players can, however, continue playing and earning more points (at the

risk of also losing points, of course) toward the competition. Alternatively, players might choose to end the game immediately and lock in the score they've already earned.

If this situation arises, give players one minute to decide. If they don't reach a consensus, the adventure ends.

A character who makes a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History or Religion) check recognizes the two women as the exiled twin sisters of the First Emperor. The few depictions that exist feature them without fiendish wings and horns.

A character inspecting the statues sees that the left-hand ring finger of both statues has a groove where a ring would fit, but there are no rings. Sliding one of the *iron signet rings* from Area 11, 15, or 18 onto the hand of either statue causes an unseen bell to toll and the eyes of that statue to glow like cinders. If *iron signet rings* are slid onto the hands of both statues at the same time, the cathedral colossus closes its double door mouth and the characters are teleported to the Acropolis of the Sun Shone Black (Area 21).

If any other ring is slid onto the hand of one of the statues, that ring is reduced to ash. The next Medium-sized humanoid monster the characters encounter with a CR of 3 or higher wears the destroyed ring and benefits from its powers.

7. TOMB OF THE COUNCIL OF SIX

This area is accessible from the northwest corner of Area 3. An open pit that fills the hallway makes it difficult to reach the doors to this room.

The double iron doors leading into this tomb are emblazoned with the image of six hooded figures circled around a set of scales. A skull and a heart are being weighed on the scales, with the skull clearly the heavier of the pair.

An epitaph engraved across the center of the doors reads: Tomb of the Council of Six, Supreme Arbiter of Imperial Law.

The doors are not locked or sealed and can easily be pushed open. Once the party enters the room, read:

Rot grubs retreat from the light toward a hexagonal pool of black slime thick from the cold. Piles of sacred salt obscure upright obsidian tablets that bear the names of a hundred arch-traitors. Urns overflowing with charred birth certificates are stacked between the standing tablets.

When characters approach the pool of slime, a six-headed **hydra** emerges from the slime. Its scales are mottled and pale, and rune-covered wrappings around its eyes can't conceal that the sockets are hollow and teeming with rot grubs.

The hydra introduces itself as the Council of Six, advisor to the first Emperors and Empresses, Supreme Arbiter of Imperial Law. The Council is terse but not hostile.

The Council explains that each time characters bring it one of the *traitors' skulls* found elsewhere in the Necropolis, they shall be rewarded with a truthful answer to a single yes-or-no question about the Necropolis. Answers to likely questions include:

- *Is there a secret door in the tower of the cathedral colossus?* Yes.
- *Is there a secret door in the path of the Iron Legion?* No.
- *Is there a secret door in the hall of heritage?* No.
- *Is there a secret door in the vault of the vorpal sword?* Yes.
 - *Is the vorpal sword cursed?* Yes.
 - *Is the gauntlet cursed?* (pause) No. (The real gauntlet isn't.)
 - *Must we collect all three iron signet rings to defeat the forsaken sisters?* No.
- *Must we collect all three iron signet rings to claim the gauntlet?* Yes.

GLORY TRIAL

Bringing a *traitor's skull* to the Council of Six is not required to complete the adventure. If characters bring at least one *traitor's skull* to the Council, they earn 100 bonus points.

SACRED SALT AND TABLETS

The sacred salt in this chamber can be used to melt the colossal chains of frozen marilith tears preventing the characters from taking the forbidden *Necropolis Diagrams* in Area 8.

A character looking for the name of the Scribe of the Iron Testament can find that name among the arch-traitors engraved on the tablets. A character who has seen the skeleton in Area 8 but is not looking for the scribe's name specifically happens across the name listed among the arch-traitors on a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Investigation) check.

TALISMAN OF THE SUNWHEEL

If characters bring the skull of the Scribe of the Iron Testament to the Council of Six, the Council bestows on them the *talisman of the sunwheel* in addition to answering a yes-or-no question about the Necropolis.

8. HALL OF HERITAGE

This room is accessible from the northeast corner of Area 3. There is no door but just an open hallway.

Braziers spring to life, illuminating an ice-slicked colonnade draped with Imperial tapestries. Decapitated frost giants hang from spiked manacles in alcoves lining the walls. The giants' backs are turned toward you, and you can see their azure-colored bones in the gaping wounds. Diagrams, family trees, and historical notes have been burned onto the giants' backs; the odor of seared flesh still hangs in the freezing air.

A sarcophagus-shaped block of charcoal-colored ice stands at the far end of the hall. A mummy draped in finery is suspended in its dark center.

HANGING FROST GIANT CORPSES

The decapitated frost giant corpses have ancestral records and Imperial family trees burnt onto the leathery flesh of their backs. Many of these scars were seared in within the last few months. A character making a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check notes that the bloodlines between the northern and southern provinces of the Empire never cross.

The ancestral records also reveal that two of the characters have been misled about their parentage. On the basis of this information, two characters (total) can choose to swap their paternal lineage cards with one another.

ENTOMBED MUMMY AND BRIMSTONE TABLET

A plaque nailed into the sarcophagus-shaped block of ice identifies the mummy within as the Scribe of the Iron Testament. A character making a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Survival) check discerns that no such black ice occurs in nature. Armed with that knowledge, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies the substance as frozen erinyes tears.

Hellish runes are visible on the brimstone tablet tucked under the Scribe's arm. These runes smolder when the character who drew the Unknown Mother lineage card approaches within 15 feet of the tablet.

HELL MODE

A demonic symbol appears on the forehead of the child of the Unknown Mother. That character has advantage on their next saving throw.

To that character's surprise, they can read and understand the runes! Replace that character's Unknown Mother lineage card with the Erinyes Queen of the Ashen Tower lineage card.

MITHRAL SCROLL TUBE

The Scribe of the Iron Testament also clutches a mithral scroll tube. This is difficult to see through the translucent black ice; a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check, or passive Perception of 15 or higher, is required to spot this detail.

The only means to get through the frozen erinyes tears and claim the scroll tube is using the sacred salt from Area 7, which melts the ice in a few minutes. The ice is immune to all other types of damage and forms of attack except magical fire damage from a spell cast with a 4th-level or higher spell slot. Such a spell won't harm the scribe, tablet, tube, or stopper; it only melts the frozen tears.

The tube is sealed with a wax stopper molded in the shape of a three-headed falcon clutching an ank. Opening the tube unleashes an ominous but harmless cloud of dust. Inside the tube are the forbidden *Necropolis Diagrams* (see "New Magic Items").

GLORY TRIAL

Characters don't need to free the entombed mummy to complete the adventure. If they do, however, they earn 100 extra points.

9. SHRINE OF THE CONQUEROR

There is no door to this room, just an open hallway.

A statue as tall as a frost giant looms over a shrine littered with chunks of broken stone and rusting siege weapons. The statue depicts a warrior in spiked armor pointing toward the horizon. Upright pikes encircle the shrine, and impaled on each pike is a decayed but still writhing body encased in frost-coated armor.

A black obelisk rises at the center of the shrine. A circle of runes surrounds its base, faintly glowing.

The statue stands on a base the height of a human. A mithral plaque is riveted to its surface and, in ancient lettering, reads:

"Hail, those who would make burial mounds of the cities of their enemies. Shout with violence the hymns

of war, for the Goddess smiles on those who would raze a castle to spite a single traitor.”

The chunks of stone are fragments of defensive walls and watchtowers shattered during battle. Many still bear the markings of rival city-states from Midgard’s Northlands and beyond.

The impaled bodies are **eight gray thirsters** (CR 2, *Tome of Beasts*). They can’t free themselves from the pikes they’re impaled on, but they’re still dangerous because of their Thirst, Withering Turban, and Drought abilities.

OBELISK AND SENDING CIRCLE

A black marble obelisk juts from the icy floor. A deep, square recess is hewn from the center of the obelisk; inside it is the engraved symbol of a three-headed falcon clutching an hourglass. Lines, angles, and sigils stretch from the base of the obelisk, forming a rune circle that thrums with occult power.

If one of the three *sacred salt hourglasses* from Area 5 is pushed into the recess, all the salt it contains rapidly flows into the upper globe but doesn’t start trickling back down to the lower globe, and the runes of the circle glow more brightly. If all the characters are inside the glowing rune circle at the same time, the salt begins trickling down and all the characters teleport to the Trial of the Conqueror (Area 10). While anyone remains outside the circle, no salt flows and no one teleports.

Once characters have attempted the Trial of the Conqueror, the rune circle fades and can’t be reactivated.

10. TRIAL OF THE CONQUEROR

This room is accessible only from Area 9.

Statues of whip-scarred warriors the size of fire giants stand waist-deep in a lake of boiling mithral that fills this pyramid with waves of heat. The statues support on their backs a stone ziggurat, atop which is coiled a dragon of shimmering mithral. The light reflected off the dragons’ scales casts long shadows between the polished bones of a glacier tarrasque, which are scattered around the edge of the lake.



The dragon atop the ziggurat is a young **mithral dragon** (*Tome of Beasts*). The symbol of a three-headed falcon clutching a sword is etched onto its forehead. It won’t leave the ziggurat. A **helmed horror** and its retinue of **six animated armors** emerge from the glacier tarrasque bones to engage the characters as soon as they teleport into the chamber.

Tell the players they must slay every monster in this area within the number of rounds granted by the hourglass they used to activate the obelisk in Area 9. If characters are unable to do so, they are violently teleported back to the shrine of the conqueror (Area 9). Each character takes 33 (6d10) force damage, and they have one minute to choose either supremacy for their enemies or subjugation for themselves (the opposite of the choice presented in Area 11). If they don’t reach consensus within the time limit, make the choice randomly.

MITHRAL DRAGON

The creature atop the ziggurat is a young mithral dragon (CR 6, *Tome of Beasts*) but with three sets of extra mithral plating, all etched with occult runes. This extra plating gives the dragon the following three additional abilities.

- **Extra Armor:** The mithral dragon's AC increases to 21. The mithral dragon's resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage extends to damage from magical weapons.
- **Extra Rows of Teeth:** The damage dealt by the mithral dragon's bite attack increases to 20 (4d6 + 6).
- **Extra Tail Cudgel:** Each time the mithral dragon deals damage to a creature with its bite attack, that creature must make a successful DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be knocked into the lake of boiling mithral.

Each set of extra plating is secured to the mithral dragon with an enormous padlock traced with runes. These padlocks can be opened with the mithral keys exhaled by the dragon (see below). If a padlock is unlocked (requires an action), that set of plating falls to the ground and the dragon loses its benefit for the rest of the battle.

MITHRAL KEY BREATH WEAPON

The shards of mithral breathed by the dragon are in the shape of skeleton keys. Each time the dragon uses its breath weapon, a character in the affected area can pick up one of the keys as a reaction.

A character moving into melee with the mithral dragon can try to leap onto its back as part of the character's movement. Doing so requires a successful DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If successful, the character can use the mithral key to unlock one of the three padlocks (as an action), thereby eliminating one of the dragon's unique abilities. If the Dexterity check to leap onto the dragon's back fails, however, the character is bucked away from the dragon and tumbles down the ziggurat into the lake of boiling mithral.

If a character leaps onto the dragon's back without a mithral key, that character can still try to open the lock. This requires thief's tools and a successful DC 16 Dexterity check, or a dagger and a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, or a *dispel magic* spell and a successful DC 20 spellcasting check. A successful check eliminates one of the dragon's unique abilities. Failure sends the character tumbling down the ziggurat into the lake of boiling mithral and also recharges the dragon's breath weapon.



DRACONIC RAGE

When the mithral dragon is reduced to 50 or fewer hit points, it sprouts a second head that allows it to make an additional bite attack with its Multiattack or breathe a second line of mithral keys when it uses its breath weapon.

HELL MODE

The mithral dragon sprouts two additional heads and gains two additional attacks instead of one.

HELMED HORROR AND ANIMATED ARMORS

The helmed horror and its retinue of six animated armors attack any characters that remain on the shore or hide among the tarrasque bones.

The cage-like tarrasque bones strewn about the shore provide half cover (+2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws) against the mithral dragon's breath weapon.

LAKE OF BOILING MITHRAL

The lake of boiling mithral is 25 feet deep. Any creature that enters the lake or ends its turn in it takes 22 (4d10) fire damage.

An obsidian sarcophagus floats atop the boiling mithral. Spiked mithral chains are wrapped around the sarcophagus, secured with a padlock identical to those on the mithral dragon. A character can leap onto the sarcophagus, or scramble onto it if they're in the lake, with a successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Inside the sarcophagus is a *traitor's skull*.

GLORY TRIAL

If any character at least tries to leap or scramble onto the floating sarcophagus, the group earns 150 extra points regardless of the character's success or failure.

DEVELOPMENT

Destroying the mithral dragon, the helmed horror, and the animated armors completes the trial. The lake of boiling mithral drains away, revealing an obsidian mausoleum at the bottom of the lake beneath the ziggurat (Area 11).

Additionally, the sending circle reactivates, allowing the characters to make the one-way return trip to the Shrine of the Conqueror (Area 9). A mental command is all that's required.

11. CENOTAPH OF THE CONQUEROR

This location is only accessible when the lake of boiling mithral is drained from Area 10. It is not shown on the map. The chamber is circular, 50 feet in diameter, and the top of the vaulted ceiling is 50 feet above the floor.

Beads of boiling mithral drip from the vaulted ceiling of this mausoleum onto a massive obsidian sarcophagus. The boulder-sized heads of warriors, carved from stone and apparently broken off larger statues, rest in the corners of the mausoleum atop piles of bone dust and shattered spears. A tapestry, burnt around the edges, bears the intricately-woven image of a three-headed falcon clutching an ankh.

The sarcophagus's stone cover is heavy but can be removed with a strong shove. Inside the sarcophagus

is a canopic jar that contains an *iron signet ring of the conqueror* (see "New Magic Items").

When characters take the *iron signet ring of the conqueror*, thirteen ghostly warriors are conjured into the mausoleum. They form a ring around the sarcophagus and kneel, crossing their right arms over their chests in a salute. Tell characters that they have one minute to choose between supremacy for themselves or subjugation for their enemies:

- **Supremacy:** Each character gains 20 hit points, and their hit point maximum increases by 20 for 24 hours.
- **Subjugation:** All monsters in the Necropolis lose 20 hit points, and their hit point maximums are reduced by 20 for 24 hours.

With the decision made, the warriors disappear, leaving clean, bare outlines where they knelt on the floor. The characters' only option then is to return to Area 10, where the teleportation circle glows gently. A mental command is all that's required.

12. SHRINE OF THE HIEROPHANT

There is no door to this vault, just an open archway and a short hallway.

A black obelisk looms in the center of this smoky shrine. Faintly-glowing runes encircle its base.

At the back of the chamber, a statue as tall as a frost giant looms over the room. The statue depicts a chaplain, its left hand stretched out as if performing a baptism, its right hand motioning to the north. Eight posts surround the skeleton, each with a smoking brazier at its top and a corpselike, withered creature chained at its base.

The chamber is lined with alcoves. Each alcove contains a skeleton with its ribcage crushed beneath the weight of stones heaped atop planks.

The statue stands on a six-foot-tall base. A mithral plaque riveted to its surface contains the following inscription in ancient lettering: "Hail, those who would illuminate the night sky with the glow of cleansing pyres. Revel in the wailing of those who have strayed from our faith, for it is the howl of the heretic that brings joy to our Goddess."

The creatures chained to the posts are **eight gray thirsters** (CR 2, *Tome of Beasts*). They can't move more than a few feet from their stakes and can't escape from the chains, but they're still dangerous because of their Thirst, Withering Turban, and Drought abilities.

TRAPPED OBELISK AND SENDING CIRCLE

When characters approach within 10 feet of the obelisk, read or paraphrase the following:

A black marble obelisk juts from the icy floor. A cubic indentation in the center of the obelisk is marked with the symbol of a three-headed falcon clutching a skull. Lines, angles, and sigils stretch from the base of the obelisk, forming a rune circle that thrums with magic.

Unlike the obelisks in Areas 9 and 16, this one is marked with the icon of a three-headed falcon clutching a skull rather than an hourglass. A character who has visited both Areas 9 and 16, and who makes a successful DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check here, recognizes that the runes comprising the circle are subtly different from those in the other two shrines.

If one of the hourglasses from Area 5 is fitted into the obelisk, the obelisk explodes in a time-distorting hail of obsidian shards and salt. Each character in the shrine must make a Dexterity check. The outcome for each character depends on their result, as shown on the table below.

The hourglass reforms in Area 5 one round later.

HELL MODE

If characters fit an hourglass into the obelisk in this shrine, they also lose 15 minutes from their time remaining.

SECRET DOOR

The secret door is hidden the north wall is hidden behind one of the crushed skeletons, at the point where the statue is pointing. A character searching the backs of the alcoves or making a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers the secret door. Opening it reveals a corridor to Area 13.

13. OBELISK AND SENDING CIRCLE

This moldering chamber beyond the secret door in Area 12 contains the only obelisk and sending circle that allow characters to access the Trial of the Hierophant (Area 14).

This chamber is empty of anything except a black marble obelisk surrounded by faintly glowing runes scribed into the floor. A recess cut into the obelisk is engraved with a representation of a three-headed falcon clutching an hourglass.

When one of the three *sacred salt hourglasses* from Area 5 is forced into the obelisk, the rune circle glows more brightly. When all the characters are inside the glowing rune circle at the same time, they teleport to the Trial of the Hierophant (Area 14).

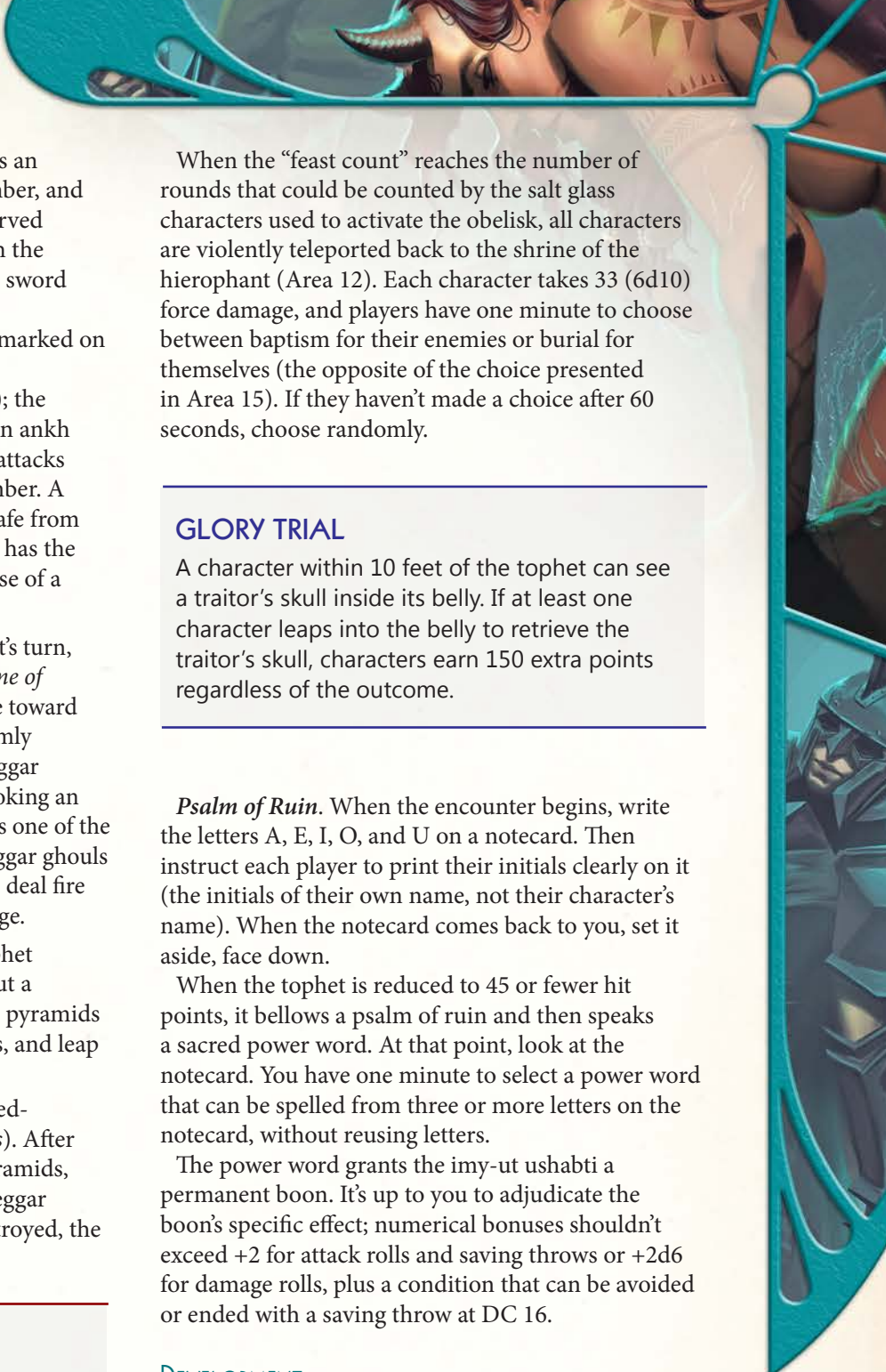
Once characters have attempted the Trial of the Hierophant, the rune circle fades and can't be reactivated.

14. TRIAL OF THE HIEROPHANT

This room is accessible only via the teleportation circle in Area 13.

Mounds of ash cover the floor of this temple like drifts of dirty snow. Shards of shattered canopic jars are scattered around, and skulls that have been decorated with gems to resemble demiliches are positioned haphazardly atop the heaps of ash. Three obsidian pyramids rise above the ashes on tiers lined with burial masks; impaled on a spike atop each pyramid is a mummy glistening with icicles. A towering mithral idol depicting the Goddess stands near the center of the temple. Her belly contains an open, blazing furnace.

Saving Throw	Effect
15+	The character evades the arcane explosion.
10-14	The character takes 10 (3d6) magical piercing damage per round that the hourglass measured. The character is also branded with the <i>traitor's mark</i> .
<10	<p>Time immediately around the character flows rapidly in reverse to an epoch long before the character was born. The character regresses through the stages of their race's evolution before dissolving into a pool of primordial slime.</p> <p>A spectral undead warrior then appears, gathers up the sludge into a canopic jar, and fades away. The spectral undead warrior re-materializes in Area 19 and uses the slime to paste shut the ring-shaped holes allowing egress into Area 20.</p> <p>Tell the players that "the vault of the mailed fist has been sealed shut by primordial slime!"</p>



Each of the three 20-foot-tall pyramids has an open doorway facing the center of the chamber, and characters can see heaps of bones and preserved organs inside. A mithral skull engraved with the symbol of a three-headed falcon clutching a sword hangs above the mouth of each pyramid.

The piles of ash, bones, and shattered jars marked on the map are difficult terrain.

The idol is a **tophet** (CR 8, *Tome of Beasts*); the symbol of a three-headed falcon clutching an ankh is etched onto its forehead. It animates and attacks moments after characters arrive in the chamber. A character hiding in one of the pyramids is safe from the tophet's gout of flame attack. The tophet has the following unique abilities in addition to those of a standard tophet.

Pauper's Furnace. Each round on the tophet's turn, 1d4 + 1 burning **beggar ghouls** (CR 1/2, *Tome of Beasts*) leap from the tophet's belly and move toward one of the three pyramids (determine randomly when they emerge). If there's no path to a beggar ghouls target pyramid that doesn't risk provoking an opportunity attack, that ghouls instead attacks one of the characters blocking its path. The burning beggar ghouls are immune to fire damage, and their attacks deal fire damage instead of piercing or slashing damage.

Calling the Sacred Wardens. When the tophet is reduced to 90 or fewer hit points, it lets out a mournful call. The mummies atop the three pyramids howl, wrench themselves free of their spikes, and leap down to the floor.

These three mummies are a triad of reduced-threat **imy-ut ushabti** (CR 3, *Tome of Beasts*). After activating, these guardians lurk near the pyramids, trying to block characters from getting at beggar ghouls inside. If two imy-ut ushabti are destroyed, the third disintegrates into ash.

HELL MODE

A creature taking poison damage from an imy-ut ushabti is affected as if a *hold person* spell had been cast on them (spell saving throw DC 13).

When a beggar ghouls reaches its pyramid, it moves through the door to the inside, where it begins feasting on piles of sacred bones and preserved organs. Thereafter, keep count of every occasion when any pyramid is occupied by at least one feasting ghouls on initiative count 0. Let players know you're doing this.

When the "feast count" reaches the number of rounds that could be counted by the salt glass characters used to activate the obelisk, all characters are violently teleported back to the shrine of the hierophant (Area 12). Each character takes 33 (6d10) force damage, and players have one minute to choose between baptism for their enemies or burial for themselves (the opposite of the choice presented in Area 15). If they haven't made a choice after 60 seconds, choose randomly.

GLORY TRIAL

A character within 10 feet of the tophet can see a traitor's skull inside its belly. If at least one character leaps into the belly to retrieve the traitor's skull, characters earn 150 extra points regardless of the outcome.

Psalm of Ruin. When the encounter begins, write the letters A, E, I, O, and U on a notecard. Then instruct each player to print their initials clearly on it (the initials of their own name, not their character's name). When the notecard comes back to you, set it aside, face down.

When the tophet is reduced to 45 or fewer hit points, it bellows a psalm of ruin and then speaks a sacred power word. At that point, look at the notecard. You have one minute to select a power word that can be spelled from three or more letters on the notecard, without reusing letters.

The power word grants the imy-ut ushabti a permanent boon. It's up to you to adjudicate the boon's specific effect; numerical bonuses shouldn't exceed +2 for attack rolls and saving throws or +2d6 for damage rolls, plus a condition that can be avoided or ended with a saving throw at DC 16.

DEVELOPMENT

The trial is complete when the tophet is destroyed. The ushabtis and ghouls fall to the ground motionless and the floors of the pyramids open, revealing three obsidian stairwells that descend and converge in a smoke-filled tomb (Area 15).

15. CENOTAPH OF THE HIEROPHANT

This room is not on the map of the Necropolis. It can be reached only by descending one of the staircases from Area 14.

Censers hang on spiked chains from the vaulted ceiling of this mausoleum, casting ashes down onto a massive obsidian sarcophagus. A fountain hewn in the likeness of a mourning angel weeps melted-down holy symbols into a basin etched with hymns of purity. A tapestry stiff with frost bears the intricately-woven image of a three-headed falcon clutching an ankh.

The sarcophagus's cover stone is heavy but can be removed with a hearty shove. Inside the sarcophagus is a canopic jar that contains an *iron signet ring of the hierophant* (see "New Magic Items").

When characters take the *iron signet ring of the hierophant*, thirteen ghostly parishioners are conjured into the mausoleum. They form a ring around the sarcophagus and kneel, their hands folded in prayer. Tell players they have one minute to choose between baptism for themselves or burial for their enemies, with these effects:

- **Baptism:** Each character gains a +2 bonus to saving throws while inside the Necropolis.
- **Burial:** All monsters in the Necropolis take a –2 penalty on saving throws.

After the choice is made, the ghostly parishioners disappear, leaving their outlines in the ash-dusted floor. The sending circle reactivates, allowing characters to make the one-way return trip to the sending circle (Area 13).

The characters' only option is to climb the stairs back up to Area 14, where the teleportation circle glows gently. A mental command is all that's required to send them back to Area 13.

16. SHRINE OF THE DOOMSAYER

There is no door to this room, just an open archway and a short hallway.

A statue the height of a frost giant looms over a shrine littered with spell-scorched, disfigured skeletons. The statue depicts a woman in a death mask raising a grimoire with both hands as if beckoning others to heed its portents. Hundreds of weapons, scroll tubes, and sobbing undead are trapped half-phased through

the frost-covered walls, as if some great teleportation ritual was hideously miscast or halted in the middle.

A black obelisk looms in the center of the shrine, surrounded by a faintly-glowing rune circle. A cubic indentation in the obelisk is marked with the symbol of a three-headed falcon clutching an hourglass.

The statue stands on a base the height of a human. A mithral plaque is riveted to its surface bearing ancient lettering, "Hail, those who have carried the discoveries of our forebears to the cities of the unenlightened. Make pariahs of those who wallow in ignorance, for the Goddess has blessed our people alone with the knowledge and the will to subjugate Nature."

Many weapons, scroll tubes, and other valuable items are trapped in the walls; none can be removed without destroying them. Also trapped are **four gray thirsters** (CR 2, *Tome of Beasts*). They can't move from their positions, but they're still dangerous because of their Thirst, Drought, and Withering Turban abilities.

The obelisk functions identically to those found in Areas 9 and 13, but the rune circle teleports characters to the Trial of the Doomsayer (Area 17). Once characters have attempted the Trial of the Doomsayer, the rune circle fades and cannot be reactivated.

17. TRIAL OF THE DOOMSAYER

This room is accessible only via the teleportation circle in Area 16.

This chamber is shaped like the interior of a pyramid. Five crooked statues of hooded oracles surround a central well. The statues are hewn from glittering meteoric rock. A well the diameter of a city square fountain rises from the floor amid the statues, its waist-high rim ringed with impaled skeletons.

The colossal face of a hooded woman the size of a castle's gate is carved into the far wall, a pair of petrified couatls snaking from her eyes and gazing down upon the statues.

When characters examine the statues closely, read:

In places, chunks of the rock have broken away, revealing hollow interiors containing soot-covered mummies. The mummies are wrapped in prophetic scrolls instead of bandages. It appears almost as if the statues were broken from the inside, not by damage from the outside or by natural deterioration.

When any character moves inside the ring of statues, a **guillotine golem** (see below) rises from the well.

The mummies trapped inside the statues howl, chant, pound and scrape against the meteoric rock enclosing them. Those that can, grope toward you, clutching at your clothes and equipment while chanting “not us, not us.” The well rumbles, and the frost-covered skulls that fill it bulge upward, then tumble onto the floor as an iron golem rises up through them. The construct’s head is an elongated caricature of an eyeless, screaming face. In its long mouth hangs a small, razor-sharp guillotine engraved with occult runes.

The mummies can’t harm the characters, impede them, or remove anything from them; they’re clutching is meant only to unsettle the players.

GUILLOTINE GOLEM

The guillotine golem resembles an iron golem with a mithral talisman in the shape of a three-headed falcon clutching a sword emblazoned on its chest. It isn’t nearly as powerful as an iron golem, however; it uses the stats block of a shield guardian with the following changes.

Large. The guillotine golem is Large, not Medium.

Regeneration. The guillotine golem regains 25 hit points at the start of its turn if it has at least 1 hit point. If the dark prophecy puzzle (see below) is solved, the falcon talisman on the golem’s chest shatters and the golem loses Regeneration.

Shield (reaction, 1/day). When the guillotine golem is hit by an attack that would reduce it to 70 or fewer hit points, it casts *shield* and then sprouts two additional arms. The extra arms increase the number of Fist attacks the guillotine golem can make as part of its Multiattack from two to four.

Fist. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d6 + 4) bludgeoning damage, and the target is grappled (escape DC 14). The guillotine golem can have two creatures grappled at the same time, but

each grappled creature prevents it from making one Fist attack.

Decapitation. If a creature remains grappled by the guillotine golem at the end of the creature’s turn, and that creature has half or fewer of its maximum hit points, the guillotine golem can use a reaction to lift the grappled creature to the guillotine in the golem’s mouth. The creature can attempt a DC 14 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (its choice). If the saving throw succeeds, the creature escapes from the grapple; if the saving throw fails, the guillotine blade slices down and decapitates the creature, killing it instantly. The decapitated creature’s head falls inside the golem’s chest and the golem absorbs that creature’s knowledge, and its body is cast aside. The golem can also use its action to attempt decapitation on a creature within reach that has been incapacitated by the paper drakes (see below), provided it’s capable of making at least one fist attack.

When it decapitates a creature, the golem immediately makes an Intelligence check with a bonus equal to (the decapitated creature’s Intelligence modifier) + 3 (see table below).

HELL MODE

When the guillotine golem casts *shield*, it also casts *greater invisibility*. Characters see the golem sprout its extra arms seconds before it turns invisible.

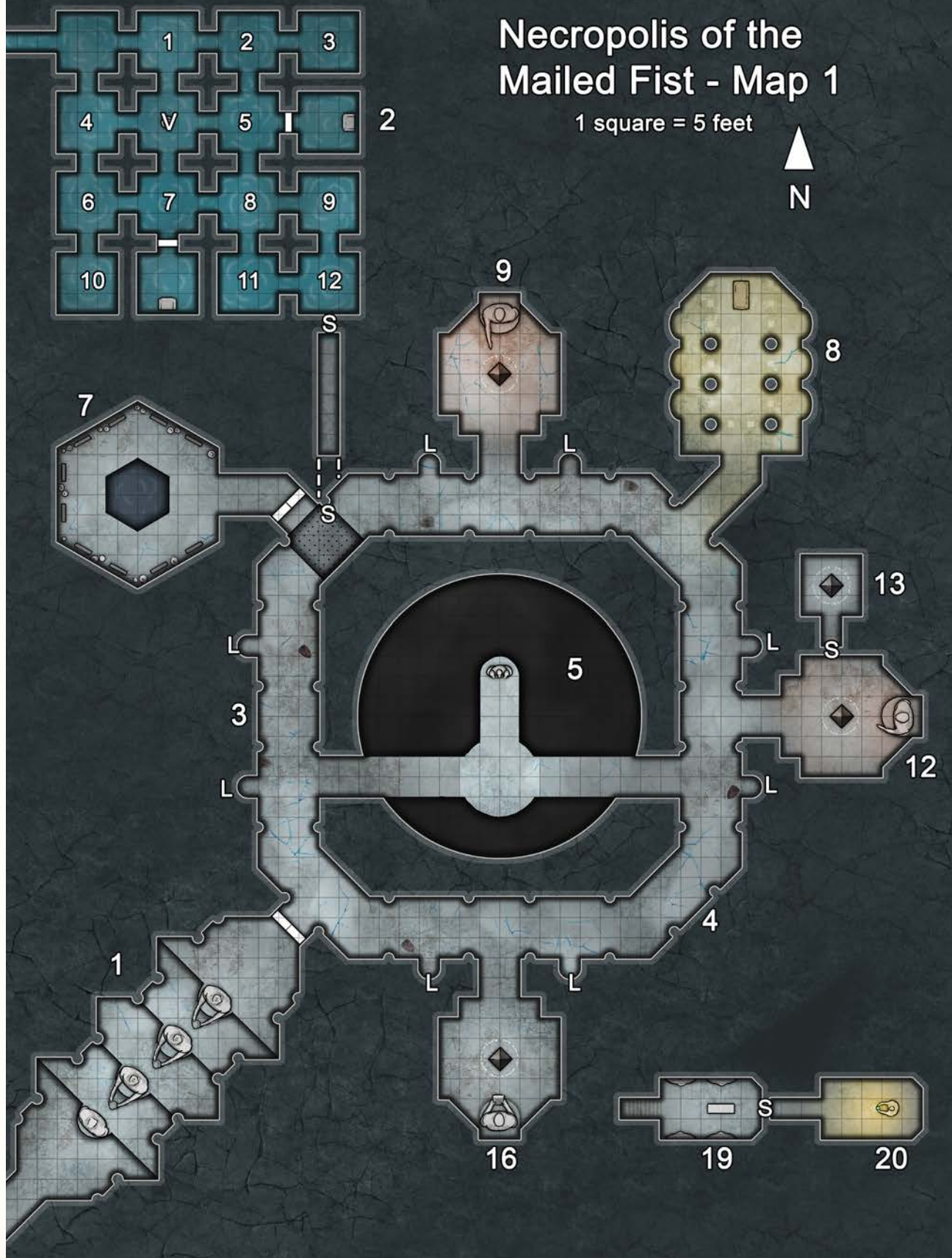
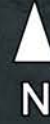
GLORY TRIAL

A character within 10 feet of the guillotine golem can see a *traitor’s skull* inside its reservoir of decapitated heads. If at least one character reaches or climbs into the reservoir to retrieve the *traitor’s skull*—provoking an opportunity attack from the golem—the characters earn 150 extra points regardless of the outcome.

Check Result	Effect
20+	The guillotine golem learns and immediately casts (no action required) a spell of 4th level or lower that the decapitated creature knew and had prepared. The golem chooses the spell from among the possibilities. All numeric effects of the spell, such as duration, area, number of creatures affected, and damage, are doubled. If the decapitated creature couldn’t cast spells, the guillotine golem can use one of the creature’s class abilities once before the end of the golem’s next turn.
15-19	As above, but the spell must be 3rd level or lower.
10-14	As above, but the spell must be 2nd level or lower.
<10	As above, but the spell must be 1st level.

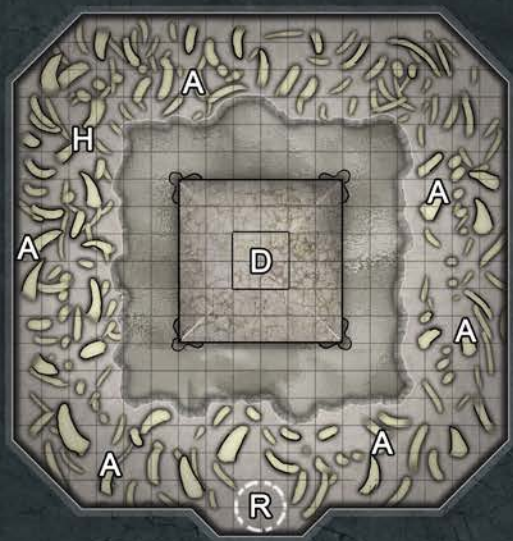
Necropolis of the Mailed Fist - Map 1

1 square = 5 feet



Necropolis of the Mailed Fist - Map 2

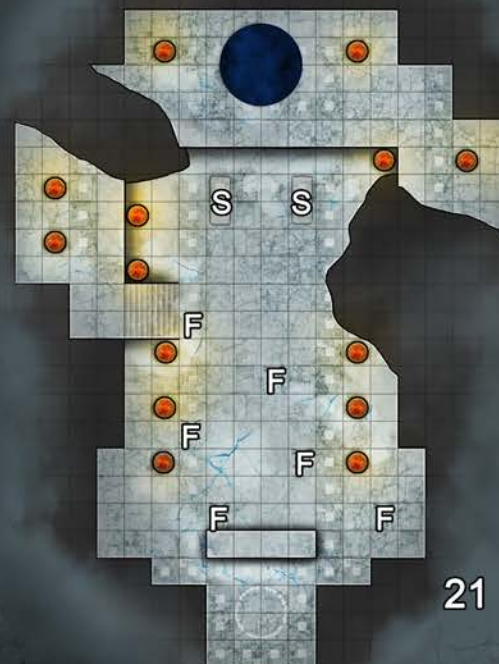
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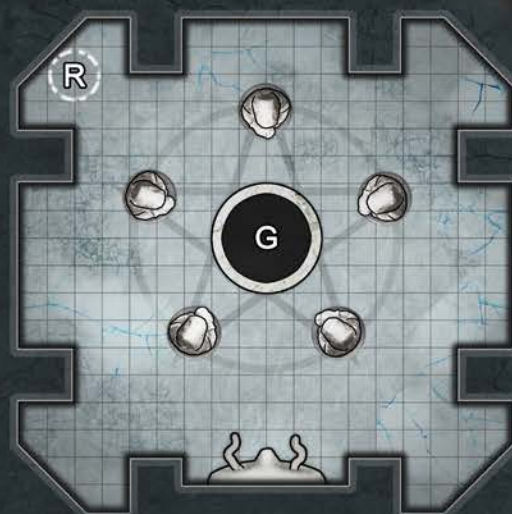
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14



21



17

PAPER DRAKES AND DARK PROPHECY PUZZLE

At the start of combat, three reduced-threat paper drakes (CR 2, *Tome of Beasts*) unfurl from the wrappings of mummies and join in the attack against the characters.

When a paper drake is reduced to 0 hit points, it collapses into a prophetic scroll that can be picked up by a character (no action required). Each of the three scrolls is different.

1. “The comet shall fall from the void and shatter the iron towers of the unwilling. The prophecy must be brought to pass.”
2. “The ancient behemoth shall rise from the ice to devour the unwilling. The prophecy must be brought to pass.”
3. “The fires of our goddess scorned shall incinerate the unwilling. The prophecy must be brought to pass.”

To complete the prophecies, characters must do something to the mummies that’s symbolic of what’s described in the scrolls. For example, shattering the bones of a mummy could fulfill the requirement to “shatter the iron towers.” Eating the desiccated flesh of a mummy could fulfill the requirement to “devour the unwilling.”

Once characters perform an action appropriate to all three prophecies, the puzzle is solved, the guillotine golem’s shielding talisman is destroyed, and it loses Regeneration.

If players can’t figure out how to solve this puzzle, a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Insight) check can earn them a hint; draw a connection between the mummies lamenting “not us, not us” and the Unwilling mentioned in the prophetic scrolls.

TIME LIMIT

When the first prophetic scroll is picked up, tell players that they must solve the dark prophecy puzzle within a number of rounds equalling the number of rounds granted by the hourglass with which they activated the sending circle to this area. Any rounds that have already passed in this area count toward the limit!

If characters are unable to solve the puzzle within the time limit, they are violently teleported back to the shrine of the doomsayer (Area 16). Each character takes 33 (6d10) force damage and has one minute to choose between prophecy for their enemies or portent for themselves (the opposite of the choice presented in Area 18).

DEVELOPMENT

The trial is complete when the guillotine golem is destroyed. The mouth of the colossal stone face opens, revealing an archway containing a misty portal; the portal leads to Area 18, from where characters can make the one-way return trip to the Shrine of the Doomsayer (Area 16).

18. CENOTAPH OF THE DOOMSAYER

This room is not on the map of the Necropolis. It can be accessed only via the archway portal in Area 17.

Polished skeletons hang by silk nooses from the vaulted ceiling of this mausoleum, with burnt scraps of forbidden literature stuffed between their broken jaws. An obsidian sarcophagus with astrological symbols chalked onto the cover stone dominates the center of the mausoleum. A tapestry stiff with frost bears the intricately-woven image of a three-headed falcon clutching an ankh.

The sarcophagus’ cover stone is heavy but can be removed with effort. Inside the sarcophagus is an iron canopic jar that contains an *iron signet ring of the doomsayer* (see “New Magic Items”).

When characters take the *iron signet ring of the doomsayer*, thirteen ghostly sages are conjured into the mausoleum. They form a ring around the sarcophagus, kneel, raise prophetic tomes above their heads, and groan in anguish. Tell players they have one minute to choose between prophecy for themselves or portent for their enemies:

- **Prophecy:** Each character gains a +2 bonus to skill checks while inside the Necropolis.
- **Portent:** All monsters in the Necropolis have their saving throw DCs reduced by 2.

Once the choice is made, the ghostly sages disappear and the entire floor glows softly with teleportation runes. A mental command is all that’s needed to send characters back to Area 16.

19. FALSE VAULT OF THE SUNSCOURGE

This room is located at the bottom of a short flight of stairs reached through a portion of the wall engraved with the three-headed falcon clutching a sunwheel at the bottom of the chasm in Area 5. The wall is normally solid and impenetrable, but it turns ethereal when it’s touched by someone who wears the *talisman*

of the sunwheel (see Area 7). Once the wall turns ethereal, characters can step through it unhindered.

Colossal stone skulls hewn from green marble stare wordlessly from the walls of this misty vault. Splintered regal skeletons carved from wood and soaked in lamp oil lay piled inside the cavernous mouths of the skulls. Wooden bones and bits of jewelry overflow from the mouths toward a baroque marble table in the center of the vault.

Floating above the table is a rune-scribed longsword glowing a bright emerald green.

There are four colossal stone skulls: two in the southern wall and two in the northern wall. About twenty wooden skeletons soaked in lamp oil have been jammed into the mouths of the great stone skulls. All the skeletons wear macabre clothing and jewelry typical of ancient Imperial nobles.

The skeletons in the northern wall wear clothing and jewelry bearing the iconography and style of the northern provinces. Skeletons in the southern wall wear clothing and jewelry bearing the iconography and style of the southern provinces. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (History) check recalls that the northern and the southern provinces have been fierce rivals since the founding of the Empire. So bitter is their enmity that no peace accord or marriage edict has ever been signed between the two provinces.

If enough of the tightly-packed skeletons are removed from a skull's mouth, a large, iron ossuary is revealed at the back. Each ossuary is engraved with the name of a distant ruler brought down in war by the conquering Iron Legion:

1. Camassia, Mother of the Circle of Druids
2. Khoxele, Exarch of the Vassal City of Dragons
3. Nur-Ishtar, Gatherer of the Lost Scrolls of Asar-Segt
4. Neb-em-Akhu, Guardian of the Pyramid of Tiberesh

Inside each ossuary is a folded skeleton soaked in lamp oil. Burning the skeletons at the base of the pedestal displaying the correct Iron Legion that defeated them (see Area 3) opens the secret door in the east wall of this vault.

MARBLE TABLE

The table in the center of the vault is covered in parchment yellowed with age. The parchments are the tattered pieces of an ancient, signed peace accord between the northern and southern provinces.

RUNE-SCRIBED SWORD

The hilt of the rune-scribed longsword floating above the table is wrought in the image of a three-headed falcon clutching a sunwheel.

A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (History) check recognizes this weapon as the *sunscurge*, a *vorpallongsword* said to have been wielded by the First Emperor of the Iron Falcon.

This weapon is a fake, however. It functions as a normal *vorpalsword* until the wielder either rolls a critical hit or strikes a blow that reduces a monster to half or fewer of its maximum hit points. When that happens, the weapon leaps free and slashes at its former wielder's neck; that character must make a successful DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or be decapitated and instantly killed. If the saving throw succeeds, the character takes 27 (6d8) slashing damage instead. Ask that player what final words their character's severed head shouts. The *vorpalsword* disintegrates immediately after turning on its user.

HELL MODE

A character triggering the curse of the false sunscourge gets no saving throw, and the sword severs the heads of both its former wielder and that character's nearest ally.

TAPESTRY

A frayed tapestry hanging against the east wall depicts a three-headed falcon clutching a sunwheel. Behind the tapestry, the wall is branded with the same icon. The secret door to the True Vault of the *Sunscurge* (Area 20) can be detected with a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check or a successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check, but the door can't be opened from here by any means magical or mundane.

The only way to open the door is to burn the oil-soaked skeletons at the feet of the correct Iron Legionnaires in Area 3. When that's done, the secret door wrenches open with great calamity, revealing a wall with three slots in it, sized to accept something the size of a ring. If all three *iron signet rings* are slipped into separate slots, the wall becomes ethereal and reveals a passage to Area 20.

If any characters were reduced to primordial slime by the exploding obelisk trap in Area 12, the ethereal warrior who appeared afterward used that thick slime to gum up the ring slots. They must be painstakingly cleaned before anything can be inserted in them. A

spell that deals acid, fire, or cold damage cast with a level 3 or higher spell slot instantly clears away the slime, but characters can come up with alternative methods. If something other than an iron signet ring is dropped in a slot, characters must figure out a way to remove it before the correct item will fit in.

20. TRUE VAULT OF THE SUNSCOURGE, MAILED FIST OF THE FIRST EMPEROR

Colossal, mailed stone fists hang from the fractured ceiling as though they'd punched through it. Each fist clutches dozens of burning wooden skeletons. The flickering light from the flames casts convulsing shadows across mosaics on the walls. The mosaics are a series that depicts an armored warrior rising from his sarcophagus, descending into Hell, and fitting a fiendish gauntlet onto his hand.

A black marble statue of a horned Iron Legionnaire in fluted plate mail kneels at the center of the vault. The kneeling figure's gaze is cast to the floor and its hands hold out a mithral gauntlet that glows with emerald radiance.

The gauntlet held by the statue is the true *Sunscurge*, the legendary weapon wielded by the First Emperor of the Iron Falcon (see "New Magic Items").

If a character takes the gauntlet, the legionnaire statue rises to its feet and hands two of the *iron signet rings* back to the character. Players have one minute to decide which two rings the legionnaire offers them.

HELL MODE

The Iron Legionnaire statue returns all three iron signet rings to the characters.

After returning the rings, the statue points back toward the pit (Area 5) and intones the word "Chapel." It doesn't speak or move again. There is no other exit from this chamber than returning to the base of Area 5, where the Colossus (Area 6) crouches with its mouth-doors open.

21. ACROPOLIS OF THE SUN SHONE BLACK

This area can be accessed only via teleportation from Area 6 (the Chapel Inside the Colossus). Note that when characters arrive, much of their view of the acropolis is blocked by the wall in front of them, and

they're within a few feet of the precipitous edge of the lurching platform.

The mists of teleportation disperse, revealing an open-walled acropolis surrounded by churning black clouds. Embers mix with snow blown by a fell wind to swirl around the dozens of grotesque columns sculpted in the likeness of an erinyes eating the heart of a weeping pauper. The acropolis tilts and shudders at regular intervals. Beneath the structure, visible through the black clouds beyond the edge, is a colossus the height of a mountain carrying the acropolis across the underworld on its shoulders. Its limbs appear to be assembled from the ruins of an entire city-state shattered by the Iron Legion.

When characters move around the wall and into the acropolis proper, read or paraphrase the following:

Braziers atop the fiendish columns spring to life, casting searing shadows across the uneven stone floor. A sphere of darkness the size of a boulder looms at the head of the acropolis; skulls with gems in place of eyes and teeth orbit like grim planets.

A pair of shrieks pierces the air. Infernal runes glow to life on the columns. The floor shakes from two tremendous impacts as the lids of the sarcophagi fall and shatter. The bodies of two undead women—one encased in black armor, the other draped in necromantic talismans—emerge from the sarcophagi. Fiendish horns can be seen on their foreheads, and batlike wings unfold from beneath their cloaks.

EXILED SISTERS OF THE FIRST EMPEROR

This acropolis is the demesne of the **Exiled Sisters of the First Emperor** (see "New Monsters"). Shunned by the family that reared them and feared for their half-fiend heritage, the sisters wandered the Bleak Expanse in misery until being given monstrous unlives by the erinyes queen that birthed them.

The exiled sisters represent the *iron signet rings* used by the characters to travel to this acropolis. The exiled sisters attack immediately and fight until destroyed.

HELL MODE

The exiled sisters automatically get an initiative result one higher than the highest result rolled by the characters.



BLACK SUN AND ORBITING DEMILICHES

The black sun at the head of the acropolis is 15 feet in diameter and radiates supernatural cold. Thirteen good-aligned lesser demiliches orbit the black sun. The demiliches were imprisoned here by the exiled sisters, who are siphoning off the necromantic power of the demiliches' soul gems to power their assault on Midgard.

The lesser demiliches orbiting the black sun call out to the characters from across the acropolis, begging to be freed. They are too weak to free themselves or do much of anything else. A character who allows a demilich to drain at least 3d8 hit points from the character grants that demilich enough energy to break free.

In exchange for this favor, the demilich grants that character a bonus of 1d8 + 1 radiant damage to their next damage roll against the exiled sisters for each d8 of hit points the character allowed the demilich to absorb.

Each character can make this sacrifice only once during the battle.

GLORY TRIAL

If a character sacrifices at least 6d8 hit points to the demiliches, the characters earn 150 extra points. This bonus can be earned just once.

If characters rang the bell golem in Area 4, the **constellation of living spheres of annihilation** (see

“New Monsters”) emerges from the black sun and attacks the characters when the first exiled sister is slain. The constellation floats in a trident formation—the exiled sisters’ birth sign.

DEATH OF THE FIRST SISTER

The death of the first exiled sister triggers several changes.

The erinyes’s body crumples into a heap of infernal slime that burns through the stone floor of the acropolis and hurts the colossus carrying the structure through the Underworld. The acropolis shudders as the colossus comes to an abrupt halt, and characters with Dexterity 14 or less are automatically knocked prone.

Second, the mouths of the colossal, devilish faces on the floor open to expose 10-foot-deep pits of smoking brimstone lined with sharpened rods. A creature that falls or is pushed into one of the mouths and onto the sharpened rods takes 11 (2d10) magical piercing damage and must make a successful DC 16 Charisma saving throw or be dominated by the exiled sisters. On its next turn, the dominated creature climbs out of the pit and takes an action on the exiled sisters’ behalf, such as attacking an ally or casting a protective spell on the sisters. At the end of the turn, the character automatically recovers its free will.

Finally, the halted colossus sets the acropolis into a caldera of boiling lava; in five rounds, it will sink into the lava, incinerating all creatures on the acropolis and ending the adventure. Be sure players know the clock is ticking.

METEORIC ERINYES COLUMNS

The columns depicting erinyeses consuming the hearts of paupers are wrought from the same meteoric rock found in Area 17. They are painfully hot to the touch.

DEVELOPMENT

When the last exiled sister is reduced to 0 hit points, the black sun explodes with a thunderous boom, sending waves of ash across the floor and shattering the acropolis’ fiendish columns. The imprisoned lesser demiliches fly free and turn their wrath against the exiled sisters’ corpses, reducing them to piles of bone dust with their necrotic rays.

An altar stands where before the black sun loomed. Atop the altar is an obsidian canopic jar traced in mithral. Its lid bears the icon of a three-headed falcon clutching a crown. Inside this jar are the preserved bones of the First Emperor, an *iron horn of Valhalla*, a *rod of rulership*, and the Sun card from the *Deck of Many Things*.

With the exiled sisters’ assault on Midgard ended and the remains of the First Emperor recovered, the demiliches form a ring around the characters, chant the hymn of passage, and teleport the characters back to the mouth-temple of the Colossus for the Aftermath.

AFTERMATH

Despite the desecration wrought to the Necropolis of the Mailed Fist, the Empire of the Iron Falcon, and Midgard itself by the forsaken sisters, the sacred bones of the first emperor remain uncorrupted. Returning these hallowed bones to the high priestess of the Church cements the characters as imperial heroes.

Not even heroes of such tremendous stature, however, are privy to the site of the new Necropolis; traitors, heretics, and vengeful exiles forever lurk in the shadows cast by the towers warding the Empire of the Iron Falcon.

If playing for score, calculate the characters’ final score now and inform the players of the results.

HELL MODE

When the last exiled sister is reduced to 66 or fewer hit points and undergoes her Hellish Transformation, the erinyes faces in all the columns begin firing volleys of cards from a superheated *Deck of Many Things* made from iron. On initiative count 0 each round, every character must make a Dexterity or Wisdom ability check. The character with the lowest result takes 27 (6d6 + 6) magical fire damage and is struck by a *Deck of Many Things* card chosen randomly from the table below (allow the player to roll or draw). In case of a tie, no one is struck.

1d6	Card
1	Idiot plus one other card; roll or draw again
2	Void
3	Donjon
4	Skull
5	Talons
6	Euryale

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

These new monsters are uniquely themed to the Necropolis of the Mailed Fist. If you find another use for them, feel free to challenge characters with them again, or with modified versions of them.

EXILED SISTERS OF THE FIRST EMPEROR

The Exiled Sisters of the First Emperor are standard erinyeses that were slain and resurrected by their fiendish mother as wights. They use the erinyes stat block with the following changes.

TYPE. They gain the undead type in addition to their fiendish (devil) type.

LEGENDARY RESISTANCE (2/DAY). An exiled sister that fails a saving throw can choose to succeed at that saving throw instead.

TWIN SISTERS. The exiled sisters have advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, stunned, and knocked unconscious.

HELLISH TRANSFORMATION. When one exiled sister is dead and the other is reduced to 66 or fewer hit points (regardless of which order those things happen in), the surviving sister grows to 12 feet tall (size Large) and sprouts four additional arms. The exiled sister's statistics become that of a reduced-threat **marilith** but with the exiled sister's current hit points.

HELL MODE

After transforming, the exiled sister immediately takes a full, extra turn. This doesn't alter her position in initiative order or affect her normal turn this round.

LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The exiled sisters can take 4 legendary actions between them, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The exiled sisters regain spent legendary actions at initiative count 0.

When the first exiled sister is slain, the remaining sister is limited to 3 legendary actions.

Teleport. The exiled sister moves her speed without provoking opportunity attacks. Alternatively, the exiled sisters swap positions with one another.

Infernal Wrath (Conqueror Ring, Costs 2 Actions). The exiled sister makes three melee weapon attacks.

Horn of the Exiled Legion (Conqueror Ring, Costs 3 Actions). The exiled sister blows the polished horn of a pit fiend. Living creatures in a 30-foot cone must make a successful DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take 22 (4d8 + 4) thunder damage and be knocked prone and pushed into an open demon's mouth pit within 10 feet, if possible.

Enervating Gaze (Hierophant Ring, Costs 2 Actions). A living creature of the exiled sister's choice that she can see must make a successful DC 14 Charisma saving throw or lose two hit dice. A creature with no hit dice remaining gains one level of exhaustion instead.

Cursed Ankh of Unlife (Hierophant Ring, Costs 3 Actions). The exiled sister or her twin gains temporary hit points equal to (5 × the number of hit dice spent or lost by all living creatures during this encounter). No more than 50 temporary hit points can be gained at one time.

Endtime Psalms (Doomsayer Ring, Costs 2 Actions). Living creatures within 30 feet of the exiled sister have disadvantage on saving throws until the ends of their next turns.

Signs of Portent (Doomsayer Ring, Costs 3 Actions). A living creature with 0 hit points that can be seen by the exiled sister must make a successful DC 14 Charisma saving throw or add one failed death saving throw to its tally.

CONSTELLATION OF LIVING SPHERES OF ANNIHILATION

Large construct, neutral

ARMOR CLASS 14 (natural armor)

HIT POINTS 60 (10d10)

SPEED 0 ft., fly 30 ft. (hover)

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
2 (−4)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	14 (+2)	2 (−4)

DAMAGE VULNERABILITIES force

DAMAGE RESISTANCES bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

DAMAGE IMMUNITIES necrotic, poison, psychic

CONDITION IMMUNITIES charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, stunned, unconscious

SENSES blindsight 30 ft., passive Perception 12

LANGUAGES understands Common

CHALLENGE 5 (1,800 XP)

Annihilator. The constellation favors creatures branded by the *traitor's mark*. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by the constellation becomes a vaguely-humanoid cloud of dust.

Disintegrating Movement. The constellation can move through objects as if they were difficult terrain. Objects it moves through are disintegrated.

ACTIONS

Void Tentacle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (4d8) force damage, and a creature must make a successful DC 12 Dexterity saving throw or have one piece of armor disintegrated. This can be a shield or other element of armor; in either case, it equates

to a –2 penalty to armor class for each piece of armor disintegrated. If the target creature has no armor, the attack does an additional 10 damage.

REACTIONS

Annihilate Weapon. When a creature misses the constellation with a melee weapon attack by 5 or more, its weapon is destroyed and rendered unusable.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

The Sunscourge is unique to the Necropolis of the Mailed Fist, although it may inspire similar items elsewhere in your campaign.

SUNSCOURGE, MAILED FIST OF THE FIRST EMPEROR

Weapon (gauntlet), unique (requires attunement)
When this gauntlet is worn, a circular saw blade shaped like the sun and as large as a carriage wheel unfurls from the back of the gauntlet. When the wearer forms a fist, the saw blade spins and glows with searing light.

The *sunscourge* has the following abilities:

- The wearer gains the benefits of *gauntlets of ogre power*.
- When used to make a weapon attack, the *sunscourge* functions as a +2 *sword of sharpness*.
- The first time an Exiled Sister of the First Emperor is wounded by this weapon, the *sunscourge* saws off her head, killing her instantly. This can happen once per adventure.

If a character bearing the *traitor's mark* tries to wear the *sunscourge*, the character must make a Charisma saving throw and find the result below.



Save Result	Effect
25+	The character's force of will overcomes that of the <i>sunscourge</i> . He or she can wield the <i>sunscourge</i> with no ill effects.
20-24	The <i>sunscourge</i> shreds the character's mind, causing 27 (6d6 + 6) psychic damage. The character drops the <i>sunscourge</i> and takes the same damage again if he or she ever picks it up or carries it again.
<20	The character is affected as if by a maximized <i>disintegrate</i> spell with no saving throw.

FORBIDDEN NECROPOLIS DIAGRAMS

Scroll, very rare

When characters first examine the forbidden *Necropolis Diagrams*, they discern the following three-word hints scrawled about the three Trials:

- **Conqueror:** mithral key dragon
- **Hierophant:** protect pyramids idol
- **Doomsayer:** guillotine golem prophecies

In addition, once per adventure while in the Necropolis, a character can learn the location of all secret doors in the chamber they're in, even if the secret doors are not visible to the character. The character also gets a two-word hint regarding what lies beyond the secret door, such as "sending circle," "vorpal sword," or "sun gauntlet."

Other than these benefits, the forbidden Diagrams are unreadable.

TOURNAMENT SCORING

When playing this adventure as part of a tournament, use the chart below to tally a team's score.

Complete the glory trial in one of the entrances (Area 1 or 2)	+100
Reach the Path of the Iron Legion (Area 3)	+150
Solve the iron legion puzzle (Area 3)	+100
Ring the bell golem (Area 3)	+100-300
Claim the talisman of the sunwheel (Area 7)	+100
Complete the glory trials in Areas 7 or 8	+100 each
Claim the heart of the skein witch (Area 8)	+100
Use the talisman of the sunwheel to enter the false vault of the <i>sunscurge</i> (Area 19)	+100
Claim the <i>sunscurge</i> (Area 20)	+500
Claim an iron signet ring (Areas 11, 15, 18)	+750 each
Complete a glory trial in Areas 10, 14, 17, or 21)	+150 each
Defeat the Exiled Sisters of the First Emperor	+1,000
A character dies	-200
A character is branded with the <i>traitor's mark</i>	-50
Played in Hell Mode	Multiply final score × 1.5

Score	Rank	Grade
7,000+	Godlike	A++
6,750+	Emperors	A+
6,000+	Hierophants	A
5,250+	Conquerors	B
4,500+	Legionnaires	C
3,750+	Paupers	D
Less than 3,750	Lepers	F
0 or less	Exiles	-

PREGEN CHARACTERS

These characters are intended for use when the adventure is played as a tournament.

SISTER OF ASHES

Warlock, Level 8

MOTIVATION To atone

TALISMAN A polished demon's horn

ARMOR CLASS 14

HIT POINTS 60 (HD 8d8)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (−1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	10 (0)	20 (+5)

PROFICIENCY +3

SAVING THROWS Wis +3, Cha +8

SKILLS Arcana +4, Medicine +3, Religion +4

DAMAGE RESISTANCES Fire

SENSES passive Perception 10

OTHERWORLDLY PATRON the Demon

Demon's Own Luck. You can call on your patron to alter fate in your favor. When you make an ability check or a saving throw, you can use this feature to add a d10 to your roll. You can do so after seeing the initial roll but before any of the roll's effects occur. Once you use this feature, you can't use it again until you finish a short or long rest.

Infernal Blessing. When you reduce a hostile creature to 0 hit points, you gain 13 temporary hit points that last until you finish a long rest.

ATTACKS (1/ROUND)

Fire Bolt. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2d10 fire damage.

Occult Blast. *Ranged Spell Attack:* +8 to hit, range 120 ft., one or two targets (make separate attack rolls). *Hit:* 1d10 + 5 force damage.

Obsidian Sacrificial Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d4 + 2 piercing damage.

INVOCATIONS

Agonizing Blast. When you cast *occult blast*, add 5 to the damage on a hit (this has already been applied in the action).

Ashen Form. When you are in an area of dim light or darkness, you can use an action to become invisible until you move or take an action or reaction.

Eyes of the Rune Keeper. You can read all writing.

Infernal Heritage. You can cast *fire bolt* at will.

Voice of the Succubus. You can use an action to expend a warlock spell slot to speak with the voice of the succubus. This has the same effect as casting the spell *hypnotic pattern*. You can do this once. Expended uses are regained when you complete a long rest.

SPELLCASTING

Spell Slots 4th level (2)

Spell Attack Modifier +8

Spell Save DC 16

Cantrips: *occult blast* (as *eldritch blast*), *fire bolt*, *poison spray*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *true strike*

1st-level spells: *hellish rebuke*, *hex*

2nd-level spells: *ashen step* (as *misty step*), *scorching ray*

3rd-level spells: *fireball*, *vampiric touch*

4th-level spells: *blight*, *fire shield*, *wall of fire*

EQUIPMENT

Demon-bone wand, obsidian sacrificial dagger, demon-skin leather armor, herbalism kit, explorer's pack, *potion of superior healing* (8d4 + 8)

SISTER OF FURY

Barbarian, Level 8

MOTIVATION To exact revenge

TALISMAN A fragment of fortress wall

ARMOR CLASS 15

HIT POINTS 85 (HD 8d12)

SPEED 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	9 (−1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

PROFICIENCY +3

SAVING THROWS Str +7, Con +6 (see *Furious Haste* and *Idol of the War God*)

SKILLS Athletics +7, Intimidation +3, Perception +5, Survival +5 (see *Idol of the War God*)

SENSES passive Perception 15

Unrestrained. You have advantage on initiative rolls.

Rage. You can enter a rage as a bonus action. Your rage lasts for 1 minute. It ends early if you are knocked unconscious or if your turn ends and you haven't attacked a hostile creature since your last turn or taken damage since then. You can also end your rage as a bonus action. You can rage 4 times; expended uses are regained when you complete a long rest. When raging, the following parameters apply.

- You have advantage on Strength checks and on Strength saving throws.
- When you make a melee weapon attack using Strength, you gain a +2 bonus to the damage roll.

- You have resistance to bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.
- You can't be frightened or charmed. If you are already frightened or charmed, you ignore those conditions while you rage.
- You can make a single melee weapon attack as a bonus action. If you do so, when your rage ends, you gain one level of exhaustion.

Unleash Fury. When you make your first attack on your turn, you can choose to unleash your fury. Doing so gives you advantage on melee weapon attack rolls using Strength during this turn, but attack rolls against you have advantage until the start of your next turn.

Furious Haste. You have advantage on Dexterity saving throws against effects you can see. To gain this benefit, you can't be blinded, deafened, or incapacitated.

ATTACKS (2/ROUND)

Serrated Voulge. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2d6 + 4 slashing damage (2d6 + 6 while raging).

Bladed Sun Disk. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 4 slashing damage (1d6 + 6 if raging and used in melee).

MAGIC ITEMS

Idol of the War God. While carrying this bloodstone idol, you gain a +1 bonus to ability checks and to saving throws. This bonus is not included in modifiers listed above; don't forget it!

EQUIPMENT

Serrated voulge, bladed sun disks (3), bone-trim cloak, dungeoneer's pack, idol of the war god, *potion of superior healing* (8d4 + 8)

SISTER OF JUDGMENT

Paladin, Level 8

MOTIVATION To enforce

TALISMAN The edicts of her goddess, etched into a ring

ARMOR CLASS 19

HIT POINTS 70 (HD 8d10)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	9 (−1)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

PROFICIENCY +3

SAVING THROWS Wis +5, Cha +7

SKILLS History +3, Medicine +5, Persuasion +7, Religion +3

IMMUNITIES Disease

SENSES passive Perception 12

Aura of Devotion. You and friendly creatures within 10 feet of you can't be charmed while you are conscious.

Force of Judgment. When you hit a creature with a melee weapon attack, you can expend one spell slot to deal an extra 2d8 radiant damage to the target (3d8 radiant damage if it is undead or a fiend).

Lay on Hands. You have a pool of healing power with which you can restore up to 40 hit points per day. As an action, you can touch a creature and draw power from the pool to restore a number of hit points to that creature, up to the maximum amount remaining in your pool.

Sacred Weapon (Recharges after a short rest). As an action, you can imbue one weapon that you are holding with positive energy. For 1 minute, you add a +4 bonus to attack rolls made with that weapon. The weapon also emits bright light in a 20-foot radius and dim light 10 feet beyond that. If the weapon is not already magical, it becomes magical for the duration. You can end this effect on your turn as part of any other action. If you are no longer holding or carrying this weapon, or if you fall unconscious, this effect ends.

Spare the Righteous. Whenever you or a friendly creature within 10 feet of you must make a saving throw, a +4 bonus is added to the saving throw. You must be conscious to grant this bonus.

Ward the Faithful. When a creature you can see attacks a target other than you that is within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll.

ATTACKS (2/ROUND)

Executioner's Cold Iron Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 3 slashing damage.

SPELLCASTING

Spell Slots 1st level (4), 2nd level (3)

Spell Attack Modifier +7

Spell Save DC 15

1st-level spells: *bless, heroism, protection from evil, searing smite, sanctuary, wrathful smite*

2nd-level spells: *branding smite, lesser restoration, magic weapon, protection from poison*

EQUIPMENT

Executioner's cold iron longsword, rune-scribed splint mail, scales shield, explorer's pack, holy signet ring, *potion of superior healing* (8d4 + 8)

SISTER OF MALICE

Fighter, Level 8

MOTIVATION To reclaim

TALISMAN Polished skull of a rival

ARMOR CLASS 19

HIT POINTS 75 (HD 8d10)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	9 (-1)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

PROFICIENCY +3

SAVING THROWS Str +8, Con +6

SKILLS Athletics +8, History +4, Intimidation +5, Perception +4

SENSES passive Perception 14

Unbreakable. On your turn, you can use a bonus action to regain 1d10 + 8 hit points. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Merciless. On your turn, you can take one extra action in addition to your regular action and a possible bonus action. Once you use this feature, you must finish a short or long rest before you can use it again.

Cruelty. Your weapon attacks score a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20.

Ward the Weak. When a creature you can see attacks a target other than you that is within 5 feet of you, you can use your reaction to impose disadvantage on the attack roll.

Might of Malice. You can add +2 to any Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution check you make that doesn't already use your proficiency bonus. In addition, when you make a running long jump, the distance you can cover increases by 5 feet.

ATTACKS (2/ROUND)

Serrated Sickle. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d10 + 5 slashing damage.

Cold Iron Stake. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 5 piercing damage.

Wailing Javelin. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 5 piercing damage.

EQUIPMENT

Serrated sickle, cold iron stake, wailing javelin, bloodstained splint mail, skull-disk shield, dungeoneer's pack, *potion of superior healing* (8d4 + 8)

SISTER OF MERCY

Bard, Level 8

MOTIVATION To soothe

TALISMAN A salve tin wrought in the likeness of an angel

ARMOR CLASS 16

HIT POINTS 60 (HD 8d8)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (0)	18 (+4)

PROFICIENCY +3

SAVING THROWS Dex +7, Cha +7

SKILLS Arcana +4, Athletics +2, Acrobatics +7, Deception +10, History +4, Insight +6, Perception +3, Performance +7, Persuasion +7, Sleight of Hand +7

SENSES passive Perception 13

Celestial Ancestry. You have advantage on saving throws against being charmed, and magic can't put you to sleep.

Hymn of Refuge. When a creature that you can see within 60 feet of you makes an attack roll, an ability check, or a damage roll, you can use your reaction to expend one of your uses of Words of Faith, rolling a Faith die (d8) and subtracting the number rolled from the creature's roll. You can choose to use this feature after the creature makes its roll but before the GM determines whether the attack roll or ability check succeeds or fails or before the creature causes damage. The creature is immune if it can't hear you or if it's immune to being charmed.

Hymn of Rest. You can use soothing music or oration to help revitalize your wounded allies. If you or any friendly creatures who can hear your song regain hit points at the end of a short rest, each of those creatures regains an extra 1d6 hit points.

Wanderer of the Plague Lands. You can add +1 to any ability check you make that doesn't already include your proficiency bonus.

Words of Faith. You can use a bonus action on your turn to choose one creature other than yourself within 60 feet of you who can hear you. That creature gains one Faith die, a d8. Once within the next 10 minutes, the creature can roll the die and add the number rolled to one ability check, attack roll, or saving throw it makes. The creature can wait until after it rolls the d20 before deciding to use the Faith die, but must decide before the GM announces whether the roll succeeds or fails. Once the Faith die is rolled, it is lost. A creature can have only one Faith die at a time. You can use this feature 4 times; expended uses are regained when you finish a short or long rest.

ATTACKS (1/ROUND)

Ivory Khopesh. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d8 + 4 piercing damage.

Silvered Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 1d6 + 4 piercing damage.

SPELLCASTING

Spell Slots 1st level (4), 2nd level (3), 3rd level (3), 4th level (2)

Spell Attack Modifier +7

Spell Save DC 15

Cantrips: *true strike, minor illusion, mending*

1st-level spells: *cure wounds, faerie fire, feather fall, healing word*

2nd-level spells: *hold person, might through faith (as enhance ability), lesser restoration*

3rd-level spells: *major image, mass healing word, speak with dead, speak with plants*

4th-level spells: *dimension door, greater invisibility*

EQUIPMENT

Ivory khopesh, silvered crossbow, silver-reinforced cloak, songbook, healer's kit, *potion of superior healing* (8d4 + 8)

SISTER OF WRATH

Cleric, Level 8

MOTIVATION To cleanse

TALISMAN A candle rendered from the fat of a heretic

ARMOR CLASS 17 (19 with shield)

HIT POINTS 50 (HD 8d8)

SPEED 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	8 (-1)	13 (+1)	10 (0)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)

PROFICIENCY +3

SAVING THROWS Wis +8, Cha +4

SKILLS Athletics +6, Insight +8, Medicine +8, Perception +8

SENSES passive Perception 18

Destroy Undead. When an undead fails its saving throw against your Turn Undead feature, the creature is instantly destroyed if its challenge rating is 1 or lower.

Destructive Wrath. When you deal lightning or thunder damage, you can expend a use of your Turn Undead feature to deal maximum damage instead of rolling.

Thunderbolt Strike. When you deal lightning damage to a Large or smaller creature, you can also push it up to 10 feet away from you.

Turn Undead. As an action, you present your holy symbol. Each undead that can see or hear you within 30 feet of you must make a Wisdom saving throw. If the creature fails its saving throw, it is turned for 1 minute or until it takes any damage. A turned creature must spend its turns trying to

move as far away from you as it can, and it can't willingly move to a space within 30 feet of you. It also can't take reactions. For its action, it can use only the Dash action or try to escape from an effect that prevents it from moving. If there's nowhere to move, the creature can use the Dodge action. This ability can be used twice. Expended uses are regained after completing a short or long rest.

Voice of the Goddess. Once on each of your turns when you hit a creature with a weapon attack, you can cause the attack to deal an extra 1d8 thunder damage to the target.

Wrath of the Chosen. When a creature within 5 feet of you that you can see hits you with an attack, you can use your reaction to inflict 2d8 lightning or thunder damage (your choice) on the creature. The damage is halved if the creature makes a successful Dexterity saving throw. You can use this feature 5 times; expended uses are regained when you complete a long rest.

ATTACKS (1/ROUND)

Blessed Skull Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 2d6 + 3 bludgeoning damage.

SPELLCASTING

Spell Slots 1st level (4), 2nd level (3), 3rd level (3), 4th level (2)

Spell Attack Modifier +8

Spell Save DC 16

Cantrips: *guidance, resistance, sacred flame, spare the dying*

1st-level spells: *bane, healing word, inflict wounds, protection from evil, shield of faith, shout of the goddess (as thunderwave)*

2nd-level spells: *holy might (as enhance ability), lesser restoration, spiritual weapon, shatter*

3rd-level spells: *bestow curse, smiting bolts (as call lightning), mass healing word, protection from energy, remove curse, revivify*

4th-level spells: *control water, death ward, divination, ice storm*

EQUIPMENT

Blessed skull mace, rune-scribed splint mail, shield, holy amulet, explorer's pack, flask of holy water, *potion of superior healing* (8d4 + 8)



Lord of the Shattered Towers

When you cast the iron jaws of the mithral dragon down the steps of the Ziggurat of the Conqueror . . .



Lord of the Scoured Wastes

When you dash the body of the helmed horror against the rune-scribed bones of the glacier tarrasque . . .



Lord of Urns and Ossuaries

When you stand in defiance of the corrupted idol of the Iron Goddess and her psalms of ruin . . .



Lord of the Cleansing Pyre

When you slay a burning pauper ghoul while standing atop the mounds of skulls . . .



Lord of the Breaking Wheel

When you witness a mortal escape from the iron grasp of the guillotine golem . . .



Lord of the Falling Comet

When you render a dark prophecy unto the scroll mummies sealed within the meteoric oracles . . .



Lady of the Coil of Wyverns

... you sprout wyvern's wings and are affected as if by the *fly* spell until you are reduced to 0 hit points.



Lady of Seven Sacred Shadows

... you become draped in shadows and are affected as if by the *blur* spell until you are reduced to 0 hit points.



Lady of the Iron Temple

... you are bathed in a nimbus of light and are affected as if by the *death ward* spell until you are reduced to 0 hit points.



Unknown Mother

The effect of this lineage is revealed when you reach the Hall of Heritage.



Erinyes Queen of the Ashen Tower

... you gain resistance to fire damage and damage from demons and devils until you leave the Necropolis.

Remove this card from the deck once it's drawn; don't shuffle it back into the deck.

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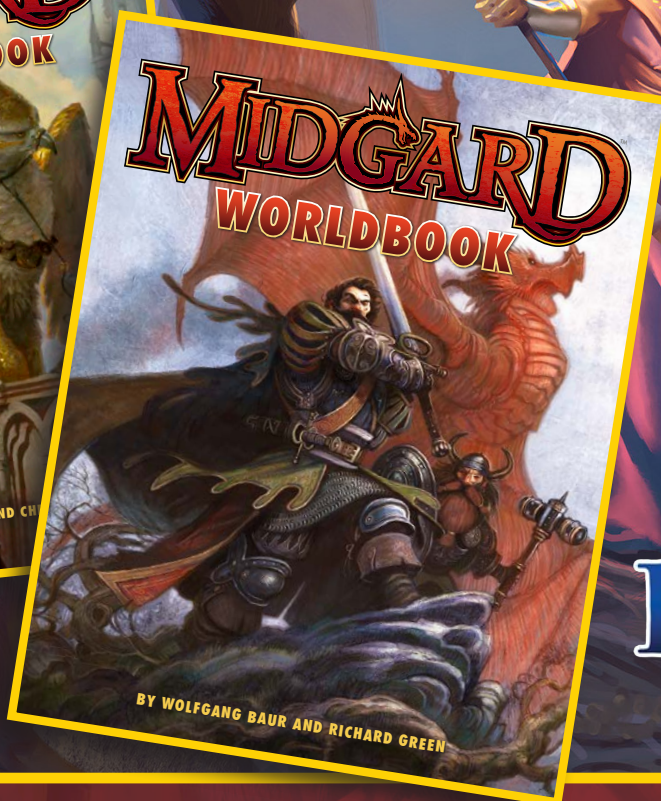
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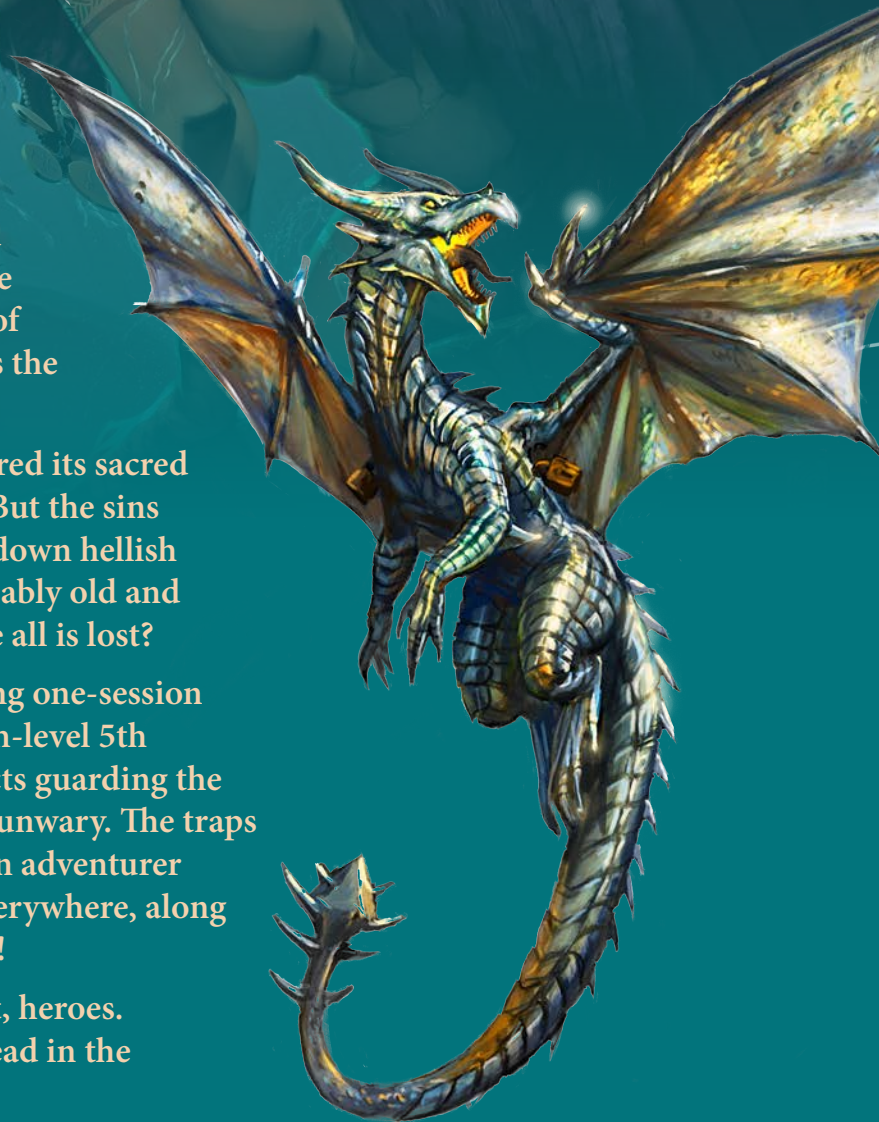
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