

Level 13: The Portal of Darkness

This level provides access to the final encounter with the “Master” on **Level 15**. No other point of access is available to PCs. While not extensive, there are several key encounters found here, as well as several very nasty traps. The party needs to dig deep into their moral and religious values if they are to have any chance of defeating Orcus on this plane of existence. Travel here is not for the weak-willed or weak-hearted, and only the bravest and most powerful have any hope of survival. Once traversed, they know that the end of their descent into Rappan Athuk, one way or another, is imminent. A map of this level is depicted in **Map RA-13**.

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Equivalent Dungeon Level: 10

Entrances: Secret staircase from **Level 7**.

Exits: Magical portal to **Level 15**.

Wandering Monsters: None.

Detections: The entire area radiates magic, evil, and chaos. No pinpointing of sources is possible on this level.

Shielding: The entire level is shielded, and no means of magical transport such as *teleport* or *dimension door* functions, though these spells can be used normally as long as no walls or doors are bypassed. In addition, no divine spells involving extra-planar contact of the higher planes, such as *summoning* or *commune*, operate on this level. Contact with the lower planes of Evil is allowed, however, placing lawful-aligned PCs at a distinct disadvantage.

Continuous Effects: No divine spells may be recovered while resting on this level, due to the proximity to the portal and **Level 15**. All divination spells register as ambiguous due to the chaos aura of the place.

Standard Features: Unless otherwise noted, all doors on this level are made of stone and locked. All secret doors are made of stone.

Two rounds after the PCs enter the room, the ghost of Ingi appears. He attempts to converse with the PCs, begging them to leave this evil place. He is forbidden to describe the area behind the gates, as well as the gates themselves; he does not attack unless the party persists in trying to open the gates. If the gates are touched in any way, Ingi attacks, while sobbing and apologizing.

He can be laid to rest only if the avatar of Orcus (on **Level 15**) is slain on this plane.

Igni, Paladin 12: HP 54; AC 0/19; Atk +2 *longsword* (1d8+2) or +1 *longbow* (1d6) or *corrupting touch* (6d6); Move Fly 12; Save 2; AL L; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: Incorporeal, lay on hands (24 points of damage per day, or heal self same), cause disease, *dispel good*, *detect good*, corrupting gaze, corrupting touch, telekinesis, frightful moan. Gear: +2 *longsword*, +1 *longbow*, *plate mail* +1, *shield* +1.

13-2. The Demon Gate

These doors appear as an artistic marvel of depravity. No scene of terror is spared in the carvings and inlays on these doors. Hearts are ripped out of living victims, demons devour babies, men are impaled on spikes, women are dismembered, and other scenes too grisly to describe are carved in detail from floor to ceiling. The doors are not locked, but they are trapped. The mithral inlay is a set of magical runes. If *read magic* is used to view the runes, they say:

*“Beware the crossing,
For those who disturb the Master’s rest
Gain only eternal torment”*

Anyone passing through the doors is subjected to a *curse* that traps them in one of the pillars in **Area 13-4** until released by a *wish* spell.

Creatures: When the doors are opened, the 2 **glabrezu guardians** awake and step out of the two demonic pillars in front of the door.

Glabrezu Guardian (2): HD 10; AC -3 [22]; Atk 2 *pincers* (2d6), 2 *claws* (1d3), 1 *bite* 1d4+1; Move 9; Save 5; AI C; CL/XP 11/1700; Special: Magic resistance (60%), demonic magical powers.

13-3. War and Peace

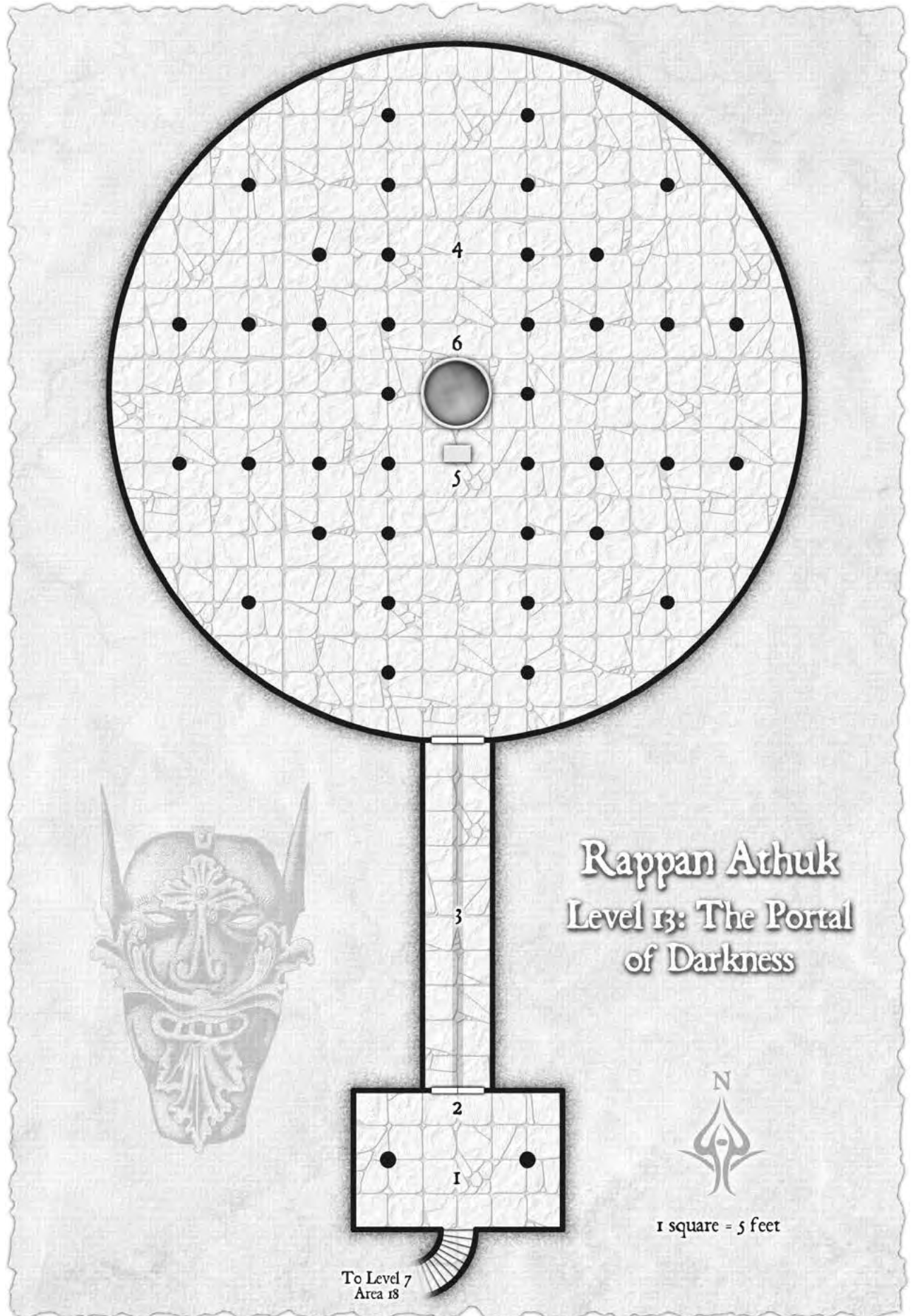
The corridor beyond the demon gate is set with bricks of pure white on the right side and of glossy red brick on the left. The dividing line running between the two is made of a 2 ft. wide strip of strange greenish metal. Painted on the right wall are pastoral scenes, happy times on the farm, and other peaceful tidings. Painted on the left wall are scenes of war and destruction, fighting and killing. Inscribed on the floor of the room, immediately beyond the demon gate, is the following magical text:

*“The struggles of life for the good are many,
for the evil are few and dictate the path chosen.
War and peace, one and the same,
To fail in war is to lose peace, and war the way
to win it. ’Tis a fine line the good men walk.”*

13-1. The Guardian at the Gates

These stairs descend from **Level 7**. They are neither trapped nor dangerous in any way. All of the walls, floor, and ceiling are made of seamless white stone. The staircase opens into a 60 ft. by 40 ft. room, of the same white stone as before. In the room are two huge pillars, carved in the shape of demons, as well as piles of moldering bones and rusted metal. A wicked looking set of double doors stands before the party, etched with horrific scenes of demons, slaughter, and blood sacrifices to the demon prince, Orcus. Mithral runes are inlaid into the doors in magical script.

Creature: **Igni** was a paladin who almost defeated the avatar of Orcus. When Igni was defeated, Orcus concocted a particularly cruel undeath for the man. The demon lord cursed Igni to his current ghost state but also perverted all of Igni’s abilities into those of an antipaladin. Under the curse Igni is compelled to slay any who try to open the doors. Because the change from paladin to antipaladin was involuntary Igni remains lawful, but cannot act on his alignment, further adding to his torture.



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Anyone crossing the room must choose to cross on the left, the right, or on the centerline. Anyone who crosses the room on the red (war) side is immediately faced in battle by themselves, equipped and with spells prepared exactly the same. This effect is similar to a *mirror of opposition*. Anyone who crosses on the white side (peace) is affected by a curse of non-violence. A saving throw avoids the *curse*. Anyone so *cursed* cannot do violence until the *curse* is removed. They are not immediately aware of this situation, however, and should not be told anything other than they feel at peace, with a sense of safety and contentment, until battle begins. Anyone who crosses along the center path (the green metal) is unaffected by the *curses*.

The double doors at the north end of the hall are typical for this level.

13-4. The Chamber of the Portal

This 200 ft. diameter room is lit with an eerie golden glow. It contains numerous huge pillars that hold tortured souls imprisoned by the gate passing described in **Area 13-2**. **Twelve individuals**, as well as any PCs so imprisoned, are present in the pillars. The horrible sight of men in pain, trapped inside the columns, is enough to bring tears to even the eldest dwarf's eyes. These individuals can be seen moving and writhing within the stone, but no means short of a *wish* spell frees them. Any NPCs freed from the pillars are assumed to be lawful characters of 12-15th level (companions of *Igni*, for instance), and may join or serve the PCs as a reward for being freed. The Referee can generate these NPCs as needed. The remaining pillars are empty of souls and are merely nicely carved stone. In the center of the room is a reflective black circular pit, and in front of it lies an altar covered in blood, with several sponges, knives, and bowls atop its black stone exterior.

13-5. The Altar of Blood

This altar consists of a solid black piece of rock about 6 ft. long and 2 ft. wide, with one shelf-like protrusion on the south side. On the shelf are three silver bowls, coated in dried blood, three sharp knives made of obsidian, and three sponges stained with the blood of men. The altar is inscribed with words in Common. They read:

*"To pass the portal of oblivion
One must cover themselves for the dark god
in only a coat of his own crimson."*

If anyone bleeds himself into one of the silver bowls and then coats his naked body with his own blood, he may pass through the portal unharmed (taking his equipment with him, if desired), and thus pass into **Level 15, Area 15-1**, where the Master awaits. If the blood of another is used, or if passage is attempted without a blood coating, the PC attempting to pass is destroyed utterly as if by a *disintegration* spell, no save. Blood loss inflicts 1d4 points of constitution damage in order to generate sufficient quantities for the coating.

13-6. The Portal of Darkness

This pure black circle shimmers and reflects back all light that touches it. As mentioned above, those who coat their naked bodies with their own blood may pass through the portal unharmed and thus pass into **Level 15, Area 15-1**, where the Master awaits.

