

Level 7: The Gates of Hell

This extraordinarily difficult level houses a clan of encephalon gorgers and its kennel of hell hounds. The level also provides the only entrance to the Portal of Darkness (**Level 13**), which itself leads to the central power source for the entire dungeon: The Den of the Master (**Level 15**). As such, **Level 7** functions as a testing ground for PCs: no party should proceed deeper into the dungeon if it cannot first survive the Gates of Hell.

The encephalon gorgers use this level's most unique feature, the *teleportals*, to quickly traverse the area's twisting passages and tunnels. Due to the encephalon gorgers' solitary and secretive nature and because the other dungeon denizens fear these treacherous creatures, many rooms remain empty. The map of this level is shown in **Map RA-7**.

Level 7

Equivalent Dungeon Level: 10

Entrances: Water tunnel from **Level 6**

Exits: Secret staircase to **Level 13**; river tunnel to **Level 11A**; chute to **Level 12**

Wandering Monsters: Check once every 60 minutes on 1d20:

1	1 gelatinous cube
2-3	2d6 giant rats
4	1d2 encephalon gorgers and 1d4 hell hounds
5-20	No encounter

Detection: Characters detect great evil in **Area 7-14** and down the staircase in **Area 7-18**.

Shielding: The crypt in **Area 7-18** is shielded. No magic, aside from the secret door located there, functions in this area. Due to the inherent evil of this level, clerical spells above 2nd level cannot be recovered while resting.

Standard Features: Most surfaces of the level are of cut stone; all the footing, except where noted, is even. Though few creatures from the other levels ever venture to the Gates of Hell, rats are ever-present.

Secret Doors: Unless otherwise noted, all secret doors have a normal chance to be located.

The River and Swimming: The channel leading to **Level 11A** is swift and deep, and it is nearly impossible to swim against this current. Travel upstream leads to a subterranean river and drops further underground. Running beside the channel, a 3-foot-wide path cut into the rock allows PCs safe, single-file passage.

Gelatinous Cube: HD 4; AC 8 [11]; Atk 1 (2d4); Move 6; Save 13; AL N; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Paralysis, immune to lightning and cold.

Giant Rat: HD 1d4 hp; AC 7 [12]; Atk 1 bite (1d3); Move 12; Save 18; AL N; CL/XP A/5; Special: 5% are diseased.

Encephalon Gorgers: HD 8; AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 claws (1d6+1); Move 6; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Mindfeed (must hit with both claws, sinks teeth in head and drains cerebral fluid, 1d6 points of damage per round, resists cold, haste (2/day), regenerate 3 hp/round).

Hell Hound: HD 4; AC 4 [15]; Atk 1 bite (1d6); Move 12; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Breathe fire (8 hp), immune to fire.

7-1. Entrance Chamber

Swimming through the pool of water on **Level 6**, PCs emerge here. This cave's atmosphere is surprisingly warm and dry; a stiff gust of hot air blows from **Area 7-3**.

7-2. Empty Rooms

The occasional piece of junk clutters the otherwise empty areas marked 7-2. Referees should spice up each of these areas with various minor additions such as pieces of furniture, a unique feature such as pock-marked floors, or a minor item with no relative value such as a brass brazier with red-hot coals. Referees should also roll a wandering monster check each time characters enter a room labeled "7-2."

However, **Area 7-2a** differs from the areas marked 7-2 by having three crawlspaces that diverge from it—each crawlspace no more than three feet high and two feet wide. Small creatures can traverse the narrow passages by crouching or crawling; man-sized creatures must succeed on a saving throw to negotiate the twisting tunnels without getting stuck. Once stuck, the PC may attempt another saving throw to become unstuck. Whenever a PC gets stuck, 1d4 **giant rats** arrive and begin feeding on the helpless PC. Large creatures cannot pass through the crawlspaces.

7-3. The Warm Room

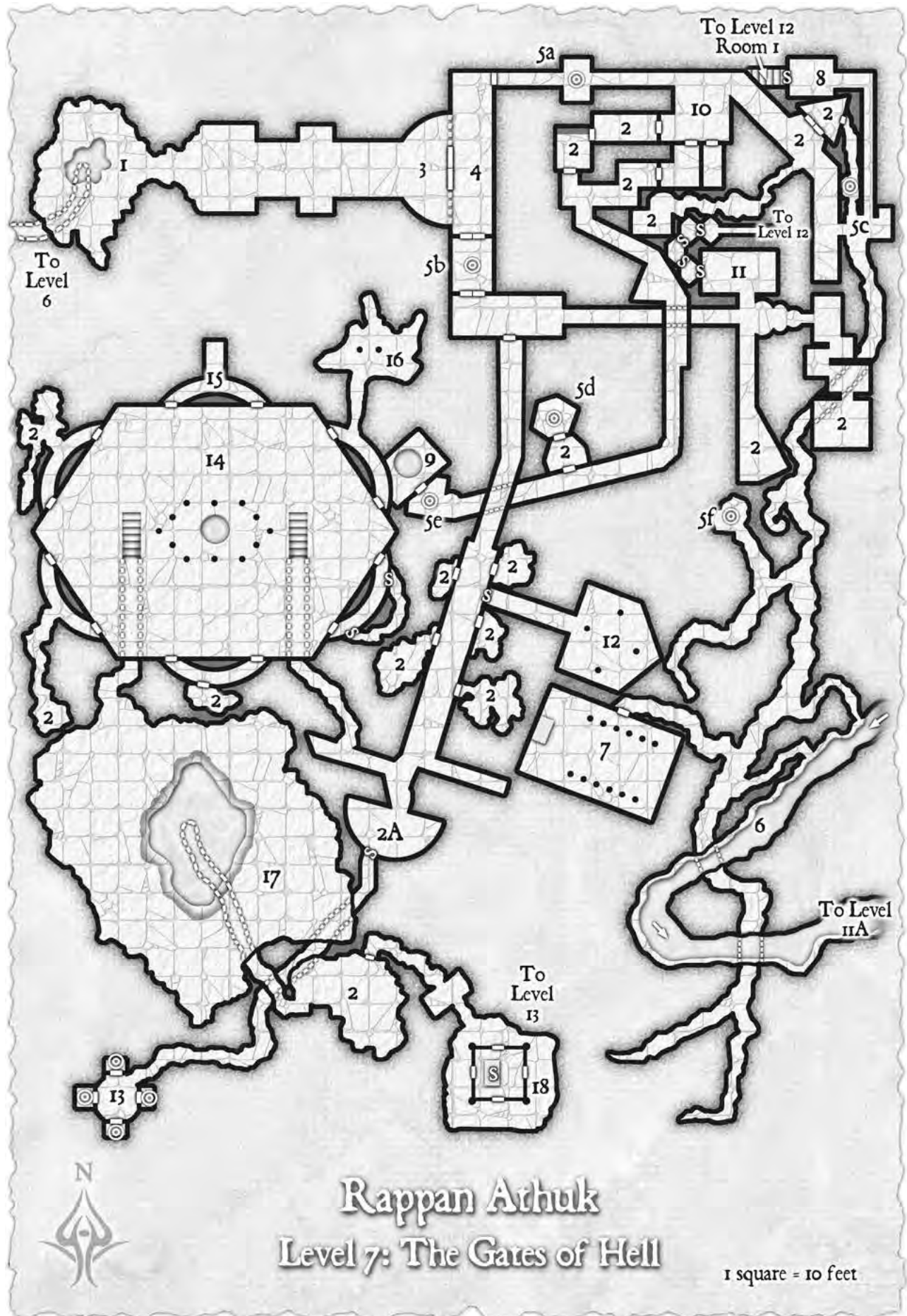
This room radiates a strange, magical heat, creating the warm breeze felt in **Area 7-1**. A red glow emanates from **Area 7-4**.

7-4. The Gates of Hell

A huge iron gate dominates the eastern end of this chamber. The gate is locked (see below); the bars, set three inches apart, are fully 4 inches thick. Carvings of demons and devils and infernal inscriptions appropriately adorn the gate.

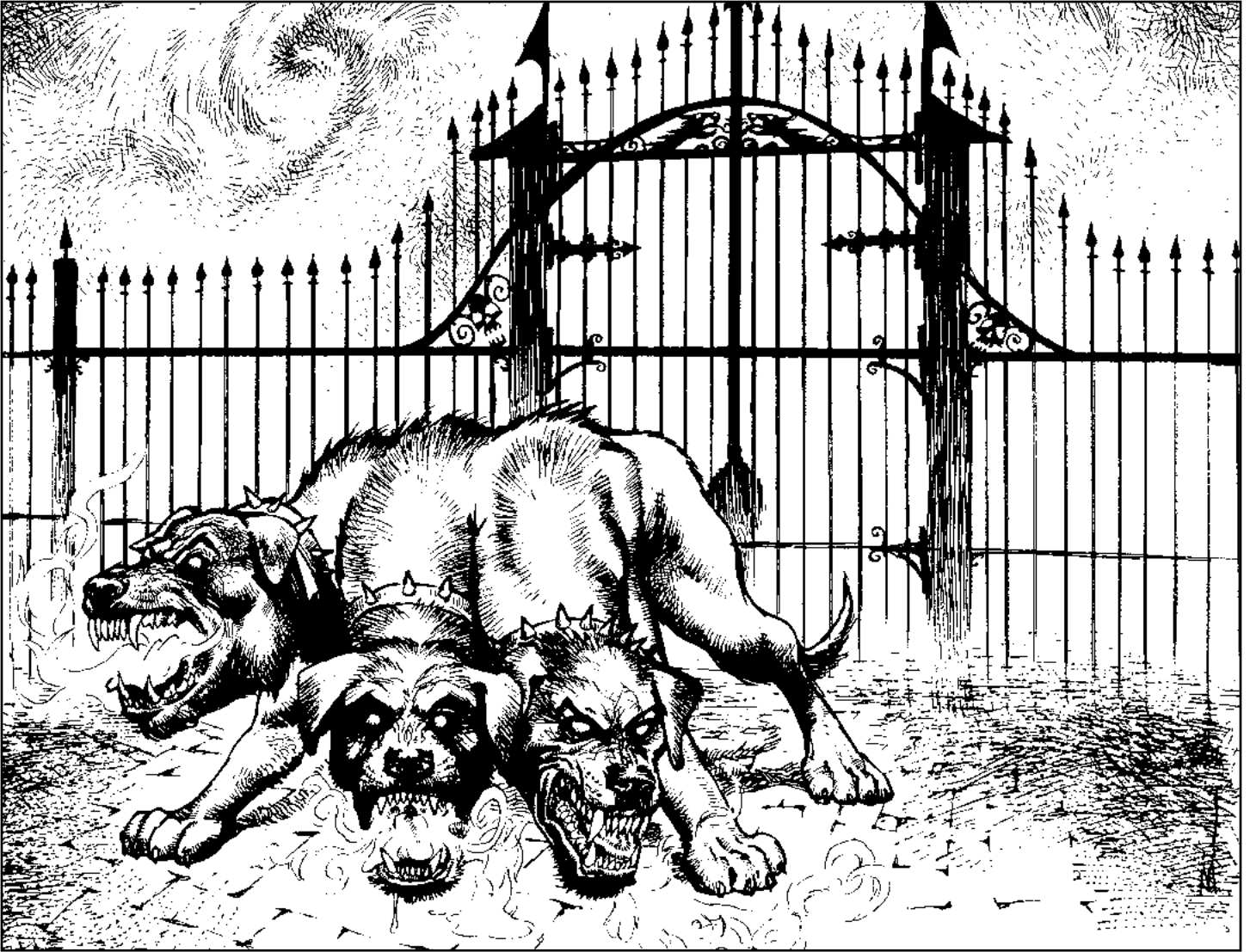
Behind the gate, **Revirax** the giant abyssal 3-headed hell hound stands poised to attack anyone other than an encephalon gorgers who approaches within range of his breath weapon. The gate provides improved cover to the hell hound, which fights to the death to prevent passage through the gate. The monstrous hound can open and close the gates by mental command. It pursues those that disturb it, though never straying far from the gates. This beast was created by Orcus' avatar in the dungeon—the Master.

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Rappan Athuk
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1 square = 10 feet



Revirax: HD 26 (110 hp); AC -5 [24]; Atk 3 bites (2d8 + 1d10 fire); Move 24; Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 30/7400; Special: +2 or better weapon to hit, immune to fire, magic resistance 10%, double damage from cold, breath weapon (30 ft. cone, 5d6 fire damage, save for half, usable every 2d4 rounds)

Heated Iron Gates of Hell: The gates are treated as if under the permanent effects of a *heat metal* spell, inflicting 2d4 points of fire damage per round to all who touch it, including those trying to pick the lock or break the bars. This effect cannot be dispelled.

7-5. Teleportals

The six areas designated 7-5A through -5F are *teleportals* and can be used to move about the dungeon level. Stepping into any of these areas activates the *teleportation*, sending the PC (or PCs, if more step through simultaneously) to another designated *teleportal* area. In some cases, the *teleportal's* destination varies depending upon the direction from which PCs enter the room.

Objects thrown into the room are *teleported* as soon as they cross the room's threshold. Stretching an arm or a leg into the room does not activate the *teleportal*, but if half a PC's body crosses the threshold (e.g., while flying) or if his foot touches the floor, he is instantly *teleported*. Only the PC actually stepping into the room is *teleported*; therefore, PCs linked together by a rope do not *teleport* simultaneously.

Once *teleported*, a PC may leave the new *teleportal* area by any available exit without reactivating the *teleport*. Re-entering the room, however, activates the *teleportal*. The following list provides each *teleportal's* destination area, based on the direction entered:

- 7-5A west leads to 7-5C
- 7-5A east leads to 7-5E
- 7-5B north leads to 7-5D
- 7-5B south leads to 7-5A
- 7-5C north leads to 7-5E
- 7-5C south leads to 7-5B
- 7-5D south leads to 7-5F
- 7-5E northwest leads to 7-5B
- 7-5E southeast leads to 7-5C
- 7-5F southeast leads to 7-5A

7-6. The River Path

This 10-foot-deep river and the 3-foot-wide riverbank path that parallels it wind down several hundred feet to **Level 11A**. There are no encounters along this footpath, and PCs may pass safely by traveling single file and moving no faster than a hustle. PCs falling into the water are quickly carried downstream to **Level 11A**. A PC who is a fantastic swimmer can reach the shore before being swept away. In any case, PCs succeeding on a saving throw avoid drowning while being carried along by the current.

7–7. The Encephalon Gorgers Shrine

Black and red veins streak the polished stone that constitutes this large temple's floors and walls. Twelve pillars of the same veined stone display grotesque and abstract carvings. Against the west wall, three wide marble steps lead to a dais that supports a stone pedestal with three gold panels (see **Magic Panel Trap** below). This shrine, sacred to the encephalon gorgers, is their unholy place of dark worship. The shrine's iron door is locked—bolted from the inside.

Currently, 6 **encephalon gorgers**, led by their priest, **Gilth**, are performing a Ritual of Melding, whereby they commune psychically to enhance their power. Any disturbance outside the door disrupts this unholy ritual, thoroughly enraging the encephalon gorgers who immediately prepare for battle.

Encephalon Gorgers (6): HD 8; AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 claws (1d6+1); Move 6; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Mindfeed (must hit with both claws, sinks teeth in head and drains cerebral fluid, 1d6 points of damage per round, resists cold, haste (2/day), regenerate 3 hp/round).

Gilth: HD 11 (50 hp); AC 6 [13]; Atk 2 claws (1d6+1); Move 6; Save 4; AL C; CL/XP 14/2600; Special: Mindfeed (must hit with both claws, sinks teeth in head and drains cerebral fluid, 1d6 points of damage per round, resists cold, haste (2/day), regenerate 3 hp/round, casts spells as 11th level cleric (1st – *cause light wounds* x3, *detect magic*; 2nd – *bless, hold person* x2, *silence 15-ft. radius*; 3rd – *cause disease, prayer* x2, *remove curse*; 4th – *cause serious wounds, protection from good 10-ft. radius, sticks to snakes*; 5th – *dispel good, finger of death, quest*). Gear: Ring of protection +2, holy symbol, gold torque (1,000 gp).

As soon as the encephalon gorgers detect intruders trying to enter the temple, they position themselves 40 ft. from the door. Then, depending on how long it takes the PCs to break through the door, the encephalon gorgers take the following actions:

Round 1: Encephalon gorgers take up position; Gilth casts *prayer*.

Round 2: The encephalon gorgers each use mindsense to determine the size of the invading party; Gilth casts *bless*.

Round 3: The encephalon gorgers concentrate using mindsense to determine the number and strength of the minds beyond the door; Gilth casts *protection from good 10-ft. radius*.

Round 4: The encephalon gorgers activate *haste*.

When the door opens, assuming that they have prepared themselves as above, the encephalon gorgers hit the PCs as follows:

- Each of the encephalon gorgers moves to attack a foe entering the room, working in pairs.
- Gilth casts *cause serious wounds*.

For the remainder of combat, the encephalon gorgers keep attacking with their claws and making grapple checks. Encephalon gorgers who performed aid another actions the first round jump into the fray in the second round, hoping to get some yummy brain juice; Gilth uses his wand and magic for as long as possible.

If the PCs penetrate the door without alerting the encephalon gorgers, the encephalon gorgers immediately act as listed above starting with round 4's tactics, but Gilth first casts *protection from good 10 ft. radius*. Encephalon gorgers target fighters and clerics before more lightly armored foes; they consider Joe Platemail III more dangerous than his magic-user friends (due to their spell resistance).

Treasure: Each encephalon gorgers carries gems worth 100 to 200 gp; Gilth wears his gold torque and carries his *ring of protection +2*. Hidden within the pedestal is a *ring of spell turning*.

Note: To access the *ring of spell turning*, PCs must press the three

gold panels in the correct order (from left [A] to right [C]): **B, A, C, B**. Deviating from this order—for instance, pressing panel A first or pressing **B** then **C**—triggers a blast of red light from the pedestal. Any PC within 30 ft. of the pedestal must succeed on a saving throw or fall unconscious for 1d4 hours and lose 1 point of intelligence permanently. This magical trap cannot be disabled. The panels' trap cannot be *dispelled*.

Should the PCs press the panels in the correct order, the top of the pedestal slides aside revealing a small depression within which the *ring* is set.

7–8. Secret Staircase

Seemingly a simple, empty room, even the **secret door** to the west appears ordinary. Once discovered, however, it becomes clear that this is no “ordinary” secret door. Upon finding the door, the PCs discover a secret keyhole, but there is absolutely no way to get this door open without the key from **Area 7–12**. No magic can destroy or bypass this door, and the lock cannot be picked. Once opened, the door reveals a staircase stretching down into the darkness, leading eventually to **Level 12, Area 12–1**.

7–9. The Basin of the Mind

Against the western wall of this otherwise empty chamber is a 10-foot-wide, 5-foot-deep pool of still, black water. The water gives off a faint, minty odor. A PC touching the water with bare skin feels a slight burn, as if exposing an open cut to a mildly acidic juice. The water radiates moderate abjuration magic.

Any PC who tastes the water finds it refreshing and delicious and must succeed on a saving throw to avoid gulping down a full quart of the stuff. Immediately casting either a successful *dispel magic* (caster level 15th) or a *remove curse* can cure the afflicted PC of his desire to drink. After consuming the water, the PC must succeed on a saving throw or be cursed with a –2 to all subsequent saves. This curse can only be broken with a *remove curse* or *wish*.

On the other hand, if a PC removes all armor and/or clothing and immerses himself fully in the stinging water, he receives full immunity to all karmic tempest attacks (see below) for the next week. Unaware of this benefit, the PC notices only a strong tingling sensation in his scalp for the next 20 minutes.

7–10. The Kennel

These small, interconnected chambers house the encephalon gorgers' litter of **hell hounds**. Twenty-one beasts roam the five rooms, attacking anyone who sets foot in the northernmost chamber. The final, southernmost chamber is the lair of the **den mother**—a large, 8 HD hell hound that only joins combat should it progress beyond the first room.

The hell hounds have no treasure.

Hell Hounds (21): HD 4; AC 4 [15]; Atk 1 bite (1d6); Move 12; Save 13; AL C; CL/XP 5/240; Special: Breathe fire (8 hp), immune to fire.

Hell Hound Den Mother: HD 8; AC 4 [15]; Atk 1 bite (1d8); Move 12; Save 9; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Breathe fire (16 hp), immune to fire.

7–11. Entrance to the Slave Pits

This room is empty. A half-hexagon shape extends from floor to ceiling along the middle of the north, east and west walls. While there is nothing interesting or special about the north or east walls, the west wall's **trapped secret door** leads to a series of small, hexagonal-shaped rooms, each with its own trapped secret door, as follows:

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- When **Area 7-11A's** door is opened, a poisoned crossbow bolt is fired from **Area 7-11A's** eastern wall, striking the first PC in its path.
- When **Area 7-11B's** door is opened, a poisoned crossbow bolt is fired from **Area 7-11B's** southern wall, striking the first PC in its path.
- While **Area 7-11C's** door is not trapped, there is a pressure plate on the floor directly beyond the threshold. When the plate registers 20 foot-pounds of pressure, a poisoned crossbow bolt is fired from the northern wall of **Area 7-11C**, striking the first PC in its path.
- When **Area 7-11D's** door is opened, a deadly, poisonous gas is released.

Area 7-11D contains an eight-foot-diameter circular chute that descends 40 ft. at a 70-degree angle to **Area 12-38**.

7-12. Pillars of Sacrifice

A PC performing a search in this area reveal the **secret door** leading to **Area 7-12**. This room contains four thick but unremarkable stone pillars. Painted in the center of the floor is a six-foot-diameter yellow circle ringed in red. PCs closely examining the western pillar might notice a small, carved relief in the shape of a key.

When PCs enter the painted circle, three *magic mouths* appear, one on each of the northern, eastern, and southern pillars. In clockwise order, the mouths say the following: “Give of your life” (north). “Give of your heart” (east). “Give of your mind” (south). Once the last *magic mouth* has spoken, a glowing-red, one-foot-diameter circle replaces each mouth on the pillars. The red circles remain on the pillars until PCs either vacate the room or remove the key from the western pillar. Any PC placing his right hand on any of the glowing red circles loses, respectively, one level of experience (as per energy drain; north), one point of permanent wisdom (east); or one point of permanent intelligence (south). These losses have no saving throw.

Once a PC has made the necessary sacrifice, a bright yellow light flashes from the western pillar, and the key to the secret door in **Area 7-8** appears, resting perfectly in the relief. PCs may remove the key without difficulty.

7-13. Doors and Exits

Each of the four, equidistant alcoves in this empty, circular chamber contains a heavy, unlocked iron door, cool to the touch. Listening at the doors, PCs hear a strange, moaning wind. Opening the doors reveals a curtain of silvery mist. PCs can see nothing beyond the mist. A PC extending his hand or other body part through the ephemeral curtain feels only cool, dry air.

These doorways, one-way *teleportals* that function like those in **Area 7-5**, lead to separate locations, as follows:

- North: To the island lair of the dragon, Aragnak, as described in the wilderness section.
- West: Forty miles into the eastern desert, near the “Pit of Despair” adventure detailed in *Demons and Devils* by **Necromancer Games**.
- South: To **Area 3A-10**.
- East: To the basement of the Fortune’s Fool casino in Bard’s Gate, detailed in the *Bard’s Gate* supplement by **Necromancer Games**.

7-14 The Hall of the Overmind

PCs can reach the Hall of the Overmind by one of two steep, stone stairwells that ascend through the floor of this enormous, arena-like chamber. The stairwells, 5 ft. wide and 20 ft. long, end at a landing that is flush with the floor of the hall itself. The ceiling arches 30 ft. above the polished, stone floor, and 2 enormous braziers, both 10 ft. in diameter, burn brightly at the north end of the great hall. In the center of the chamber, surrounded by 15-foot-high stone pillars, is the pool of the Overmind, the

bodiless, sentient “soul” of the encephalon gorgers.

Presently, **10 encephalon gorgers** and **8 morlock slaves** attend to the Overmind’s needs. Only encephalon gorgers or their slaves may enter this sacred place. The Overmind automatically recognizes the identity (that is, encephalon gorgers or otherwise) and intent of anyone setting foot on the stairs and immediately warns its minions telepathically of approaching danger. Once alerted, the encephalon gorgers spring into action.

Tactics: First, the morlocks position themselves, four to a stairwell, to block the chamber’s entrances. Meanwhile, the encephalon gorgers, divided evenly, position themselves 30 ft. behind the morlocks. While waiting for the intruders, the Overmind scans the minds of the PCs and relates their strength and numbers to the encephalon gorgers. Once the PCs reveal themselves, the morlocks attack with their battleaxes, while the encephalon gorgers use their karmic tempest ability (Morlocks are immune to the karmic tempest’s effects.) The encephalon gorgers’ tactics: keep the morlocks between themselves and the PCs for as long as possible, and wear the PCs down with wave after wave of mental blasts. If necessary, the encephalon gorgers retreat to within the circle of pillars surrounding the Overmind (see **The Overmind** below). Although an encephalon gorgers normally abandons companions and treasure alike if its own life seems threatened, no encephalon gorgers leaves the hall alive until all intruders are slain. Truly—it’s a fight to the death!

Encephalon Gorgers (10): HD 8; AC 4 [15]; Atk 2 claws (1d6+1); Move 6; Save 8; AL C; CL/XP 9/1100; Special: Mindfeed (must hit with both claws, sinks teeth in head and drains cerebral fluid, 1d6 points of damage per round, resists cold, haste (2/day), regenerate 3 hp/round.

Morlock Slaves (8): HD 8; AC 1 [18]; Atk 1 battleaxe (1d8); Move 12; Save 8 (7 vs. fear); AL C; CL/XP 8/800; Special: Blind. Gear: Battleaxe, ring armor.

The Overmind: Also known as the “elder-brain,” the wholly evil Overmind is a five-foot-wide, five-foot deep pool of briny fluid containing the brains of this community’s dead encephalon gorgers. Any non-chaotic being passing between the pillars that surround the Overmind must succeed on a saving throw or lose 2 points of wisdom. These points can be regained either by magical means or with one week’s bed rest in a law-aligned church and a successful saving throw. In addition to the Wisdom drain, the Overmind emits a powerful mind blast that affects anyone within the pillars’ perimeter. This attack requires a successful saving throw, and, unlike a normal mind blast, instead of stunning its victims the blast knocks them unconscious for 4d10 minutes.

The Overmind enjoys immunity to fire, electricity, cold, *magic missiles* and acid, and it cannot be harmed by physical attacks. Touching the Overmind conveys a lethal electric shock attack for 3d6 points of electricity damage; saving throw for half damage. This attack automatically repeats every round that a PC remains in physical contact with the Overmind, no matter how slight.

To fully destroy the Overmind, PCs must secure it, in its entirety, in a solid-gold vessel forged in a smithy blessed by a lawful cleric. The Overmind must then be transported to a lawful church, where a cleric of no less than 15th level can destroy it with a *holy word*. Should the PCs accomplish this, award them 4,000 XP. Removing the Overmind from the pool by any other means fails; it automatically *teleports* itself back to its basin after five rounds. Any cleric in the party will know the necessary steps.

However, casting a *holy word* spell on the Overmind while it rests within its chamber temporarily suppresses all its abilities for 10 rounds — long enough to locate the **treasure** hidden within it. Finding the treasure requires a successful find secret doors check.

Finally, the Overmind enhances all encephalon gorgers within 100 ft. of it as follows. First, it grants a -2 [+2] bonus to Armor Class. The Overmind allows telepathic communication between itself and all encephalon gorgers within this area. Finally, the Overmind grants a special karmic tempest special attack. This attack is a cone of psychic energy out to a range of 45 ft. All creatures (other than encephalon gorgers, morlocks, and

the Overmind) in the area must make a saving throw or be stunned for 2d4 rounds. These bonuses are included in the stat block above.

Treasure: PCs discover, at the bottom of the Overmind, a silver strongbox inlaid with diamonds (1,500 gp value) containing 2,500 pp; a *ring of spell storing* currently holding *invisibility*, *fireball* and *magic jar*; a *cloak of protection* +3 and a *wand of cure light wounds* (6 charges).

7–15. The Ziggurat of Faith

The short passage widens, becoming a narrow chamber, faced on the north by three “steps,” each five feet high, five feet wide and of diminishing lengths. On the topmost step, just visible through the gloom at the center of a yellow glow, a pedestal supports a large tome. Carved in the chamber’s floor is the legend: “Ziggurat of Faith.”

Each step is a test. Only a cleric, druid, or paladin of at least 10th level can attempt the test. PCs of different classes or of insufficient levels suffer enough temporary strength damage to reduce them to 1 in that attribute upon touching the stone steps — no save. Likewise, all magical attempts to reach the tome (e.g., *dimension door*, flying) fail. No magic, except that protecting the tome, functions on or above the steps.

Step One: When an appropriate PC pulls himself onto the step, he hears a voice in his head. (Note: Only the player controlling the tested PC should be allowed to hear the voice, for only he can answer the question. If the player attempts to ask for help from his fellow players, the PC is thrown from the steps [see **Wrong Answers**, below].) The voice asks, “Where is the seat of faith: the mind, the soul, or the sword?” The correct answer is, of course, “the soul.” Speaking the answer aloud permits the PC to scale the next step.

Step Two: Upon reaching this step, the PC again hears a voice. “From whence is the faithful protected: resistance, forgiveness, or acceptance?” The correct answer is “acceptance.” (This step operates exactly as step 1.)

Step Three: The final test! This time the PC hears no voice. Instead, one round after the PC’s arrival at the light-enshrouded pedestal and *tome*, a skeletal figure wearing chainmail and wielding a black two-handed sword rises out of the darkness and steps toward the PC. The PC has two chances for success: she can disbelieve the creature if she succeeds on a saving throw or she can do nothing. If the PC successfully saves, the image disappears. The shimmering light around the pedestal also vanishes, allowing the PC to take the *tome*. If the PC does nothing, the blade passes harmlessly through her, the skeleton vanishes and she may take the *tome*. Treat any other response—drawing a sword or casting a spell — as a wrong answer. There is one exception: clerics or paladins may attempt to turn the skeletal figure, as this action requires faith.

Note: PCs attempting to “grab the *tome* and run” discover that the shimmering yellow light is a protective field. No physical body can pass through it, and no magic (e.g., *telekinesis*) affects the *tome* inside.

The *Tome of Understanding* is a thick book that contains tips for improving instinct and perception, and entwined within the words is a powerful magical effect. If anyone reads this book, which takes a total of 48 hours over a minimum of six days, they gain a bonus of +2 to her Wisdom score. Once the book is read, the magic disappears from the pages and it becomes a normal book.

Treasure: *tome of understanding*.

Wrong Answers: The moment a PC delivers a wrong answer, a powerful telekinetic force hurls the PC from the step to the floor below. The PC takes 1d6 hp falling damage per step ascended. Once a PC has given a wrong answer, he may not attempt the Ziggurat of Faith again and is treated as though he were of the wrong class or level when touching the steps.

7–16. Testing Pillars

This cave contains nothing but two stone pillars. Carved on the floor in Common, a legend reads as follows: “Whosoever wishes to take the test of strength, pass between the pillars.” Walking around or behind the pillars or examining them closely reveals nothing beyond the fact that they are simple, unadorned stone columns. Any PC who passes between the pillars, though, immediately vanishes, and all of his belongings—weapons, armor, supplies, jewelry—Everything!—drops into a heap between the pillars’ bases.

The PC “awakens” in a dreamlike setting. He stands in the middle of a huge amphitheater’s arena. He sees no entrances or exits and thousands of empty seats. He wears only sandals and leather armor and spots a simple wooden club at his feet. Sixty feet away, carrying a greatclub in each hand and glaring with bloodlust in his eyes, stands an **ettin**. The test is straightforward: Defeat the ettin armed with your club and your wits or perish. No magic of any kind functions within the arena. Should the PC triumph, he finds himself returned to the cave of the testing pillars—naked and carrying not his club but a *manual of gainful exercise*. Any wounds incurred during the battle are quite real and must be healed. Should the PC lose, his body returns to the cave where he may or may not be healed, depending on how deadly was the ettin’s final blow. In any event, that PC may not attempt the test of strength again. Another may, but only if the first failed. The pillars “reactivate” exactly a year and a day after someone passes the test.

Ettin: HD 10 (50 hp); AC 3 [16]; Atk 2 clubs (3d6); Move 12; Save 5; CL/XP 10/1400; Special: None.

The *Manual of Gainful Exercise* is a thick tome contains exercise descriptions and diet suggestions. Entwined within the words is a powerful magical effect. If anyone reads this book, which takes a total of 48 hours over a minimum of six days, she gains an inherent bonus of +2 to her strength score. Once the book is read, the magic disappears from the pages and it becomes a normal book.

7–17. The Crater Cave

Two tunnels terminate in this enormous cavern: the northern tunnel descends from the western staircase in **Area 7–14**, and the western entrance is little more than a crawlspace from **Area 7–2a**. By whichever means they arrive, the PCs are greeted by a staggering sight. Rising 65 ft. into the darkness and stretching 40 ft. across and 60 ft. end-to-end is a massive, oval rock formation containing a vast crater. To reach the interior crater, however, PCs must first fly up or scale the sheer cliff face of the rock formation.

Dark, still water fills the crater, rising to within 20 ft. of the crater’s lip. The crater’s interior slopes down sharply to the water and those climbing must take care lest they fall into the “lake.” PCs taking the time to investigate might notice subtle ripples on the surface of the water, betraying the presence of the **zombified carcharodon** (a large shark, similar to the great white) that protects the secret entrance to **Area 7–18**, located at the base of the lake. The water is 45 ft. deep, and there is no hope of either defeating the zombie carcharodon or finding the **secret entrance** without securing a means to breathe underwater. Even then, PCs must succeed on a find secret doors check to locate the hidden entrance—beneath a large rock.

The carcharodon attacks PCs 1d3 rounds after they enter the water.

Zombie Carcharodon: HD 28 (112 hp); AC 3 [16]; Atk 1 bite (4d10) and tail slam (2d8); Move 0 (Swim 24); Save 3; AL C; CL/XP 28/6800; Special: As zombie.

7–18. Trapped Tunnel, the Stone Crypt and Stairway to Hell

Trapped Tunnel. The twisting tunnel narrows briefly to a width of five feet. The walls of this portion of the tunnel are smooth and manmade. One hundred foot-pounds of pressure, exerted on the floor between the smooth walls, activates **this deadly trap**: two dozen poisoned spears, 12 from each wall, spring out and impale anyone between the walls!

Crypt Room: Painted images of Orcus and his minions slaying the unfaithful and reigning for an eternity in a fiery abyss adorn the walls of this square chamber. In the center of the room, a square, stone crypt bears a painting of a door on each exterior face. The western painted door resembles a barred gate; the southern painted door, a solid, iron-bound wooden door; the eastern painted door, a stone door; and the northern painted door, an iron door. Inscribed above each door, in Abyssal, is a single word: Abase (west), Thee (south), And (east), Enter (north). Should anyone kneel before the northern wall of the crypt and declare his devotion to, reverence for, and awe of Orcus, a light surrounds the painted portal and a **secret door** swings open. There is no other way to open this secret door; it cannot be pried or jimmied and, as stated earlier, no magic except that of the door functions in this area.

Within the crypt, against the west wall, is a single stone sarcophagus—the likeness of a great demonic warrior carved on its lid. The sarcophagus is entirely empty. In the middle of the floor is a **secret trap door**. The handholds for this door, however, have long since worn smooth, so an open doors check is required to pry it open. The trap door opens to reveal a 5-foot-wide, 50-foot-long sloping passage that ends in a set of rough, carved stairs—stairs lead to **Level 13, Area 13–1**.