



EPIC

21-30

# ZIGGURAT BEYOND TIME

by David Noonan

**I**n *Ziggurat Beyond Time*, the PCs venture into a mythic ziggurat for their own reasons. Opposing the PCs are insectile creatures known as sebaceans, which came from the Far Realm to prepare for a foretold invasion of the cosmos. Ritually bound creatures, including a dracolich, also call the ziggurat home. Further, undead remnants of the ziggurat's original builders restlessly guard the structure's lower burial chambers.

This adventure is a stepping-stone into epic play. It's confined to a single site and the encounters are self-contained. Since every campaign is unique, this adventure is also designed for you to customize (see the sidebar).

Ultimately, exploration of the ziggurat can lead in different directions. When this adventure is over, the PCs can follow the destiny of the Deluvian Hourglass, uncover and perhaps thwart an invasion from the Far Realm, or learn more about the mysterious lost civilization that built the ziggurat in the first place.

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## BACKGROUND

Thousands of years ago, the jungle surrounding the ziggurat was the center of a vast and advanced civilization, with a language and culture alien to the jungle-dwellers of today. This civilization built a number of great marble ziggurats used for religious worship, magical research, and burial. As is the way of empires, the civilization collapsed.

The civilization's ruins remain in the world. At least one of its ziggurats survived largely intact. It did so because it drifts in time and space, holding one of the fallen civilization's greatest treasures: the *Deluvian Hourglass*. This artifact, created at the dawn of time, has an important role to play in the end of the world. The builders of the ziggurat locked the hourglass up to forestall anyone meddling with it and bringing about a premature apocalypse.

Long after the ziggurat builders' empire fell, warped creatures known as the sebaceans found the ancient pyramid. They had a very different idea: seize the *Deluvian Hourglass* and hold it for the Mad Architects, their masters from the Far Realm. Sebaceans care little for the affairs of those in this cosmos, mortal or immortal. They await only the arrival of the Mad Architects. When the Mad Architects appear, the sebaceans plan to present them with the *Deluvian Hourglass*. Then the sebaceans hope to help the Mad Architects twist and mold reality.

The Mad Architects might arrive tomorrow, or they could arrive in a century. The sebaceans don't know how long they must wait. But they're not subject to normal perceptions of time. Eternally patient and hopelessly malevolent, and aided by the ziggurat's space outside normal time, they endure. They while away the time reshaping apes from the jungle into their servitors.

## GETTING THE PCs INVOLVED

PCs might explore the ziggurat for one or more of the following reasons, or for another purpose unique to your campaign.

### DELUVIAN HOURGLASS

Because the *Deluvian Hourglass* has magical ties to the end of the world, it might figure prominently in any number of earth-shattering plots that the PCs are trying to thwart or advance. Deluvius constructed the hourglass because he believed the primordials would destroy the world after eliminating their rivals, the gods. But the end of the world needn't necessarily be at the hands of the primordials. The hourglass fundamentally just wants to be there when it happens.

Ritual divinations or particularly thorough research can reveal that the *Deluvian Hourglass* is within the ziggurat. That brings the PCs to the adventure site and gives them a simple goal: take the hourglass.

**Possible Quest:** Deliver the *Deluvian Hourglass* to an important NPC patron. This could be a council of powerful mages, the high priests of a particular god, or another mighty ally that uses the PCs for its most important missions.

## MAD ARCHITECTS

The PCs might have squared off against the sebaceans or other servitors of the otherworldly menace known as the Mad Architects before. Divinations might have revealed that the Mad Architects plan to launch an invasion of the world soon. And if you're starting a new campaign with this adventure, the sebaceans' weird masters might pique the PCs' curiosity, fueling an entire "Stop the Mad Architects" storyline.

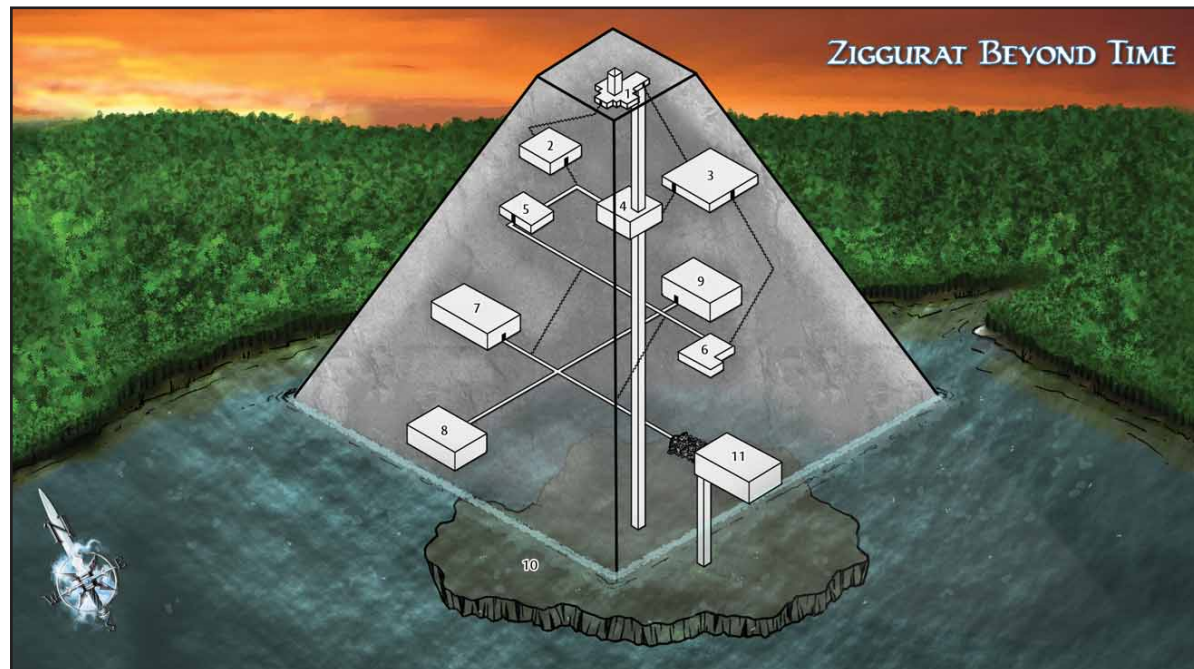
**Possible Quest:** Find out why the sebaceans are guarding an ancient ziggurat with no known significance beyond its strange magical properties.

*"Return to your doomed world, fools!"*

## ANCIENT CIVILIZATION

This adventure hook requires more work, but you have more "plot room" to work with. As written, not much is revealed about the empire that built the ziggurat in the first place. But that's just an excuse for you to fill in the details. Who were these people, what did they know, and why do the PCs care about them now? The mere existence of the ziggurat suggests that they were accomplished in feats of magic and architecture. The PCs could be literal or philosophical descendants of that ancient empire, trying to learn more about it. Maybe they want to restore it to its former glory.

**Possible Quest:** Fully explore the ziggurat and eliminate the monsters that have infested it since the empire fell. Perhaps even claim it as a base of operations.



## THE ZIGGURAT

A crystal lake surrounds the ziggurat in the world, and no matter where else it is. The lake is shallow, because centuries ago it was an artificial pool dug by the ziggurat builders. Over the intervening time, the ziggurat has settled somewhat, and the lake floor has several new layers of sediment. In the world, small creeks from the surrounding jungle feed the lake, which slowly empties out into a nearby river.

The lake is 10 feet deep at its shore, and it's 20 to 30 feet deep at the center, near the ziggurat. It has no life in it, but the water is fine.

## ZIGGURAT EXTERIOR

The ziggurat is constructed of massive light gray stone blocks connected to each other with a tongue-and-groove system. Vegetation doesn't grow on the pyramid's exterior due to the energy from its days as a place of great magical power. Each layer of stone on the ziggurat is 10 feet high. A stairway runs up the south face of the 400-foot-structure, and that's the only architectural feature of note.

## ZIGGURAT INTERIOR

At first glance, it might seem difficult to navigate the ziggurat—so many chambers on different levels, with long staircases connecting them. But your job is made much easier by the magic of the ziggurat builders. The ziggurat warps space and is much larger on the inside than on the outside.

Time also flows differently within the structure—but exactly how is up to you. The default assumption is that time passes more slowly than in the outside world. Further, some aspects of change, such as plants growing on the ziggurat surface, simply never happen.

## CEILINGS

Most ceilings are 15 feet above the floor.

## PASSAGES

Each chamber is a quarter-mile or more from its nearest neighbors, so it's a couple minutes of uninterrupted walking from one encounter to the next. PCs should figure out that's something is amiss almost immediately. When they make their descent from room 1 to either room 2 or room 3, they realize they've descended almost a thousand feet, which would put them far underground.

The quarter-mile applies to all hallways from chamber to chamber except for the long corridors that connect rooms 7, 8, and 9—and lead to room 11, although a cave-in blocks that way. Each of those is a quarter-mile from the intersection of the north-south and east-west corridors, so it's about a half-mile walk from any one of those rooms to the others.

The ziggurat does have one path that obeys the normal rules of space. A shaft connects rooms 1, 4, and 10. It's 400 feet deep, the height of the ziggurat itself.

## STAIRS

All stairs are difficult terrain, and they have gray paving stones for their treads.

## CUSTOMIZE THIS ADVENTURE!

Tailor *Ziggurat Beyond Time* according to your world and campaign. The ziggurat's history and significance are up to you, and it can be as detailed as you desire. Names and features presented herein are placeholders for you to make your own. Add information within the adventure—perhaps a clue in the mosaic inside room 8—that suggests another ziggurat the PCs can visit when they're done with this one. Create more meaningful social interactions with the undead creatures in rooms 7 and 8, because they hail from the heyday of the ziggurat. Change specific features—such as the statues in rooms 5 and 6, and the mosaics in rooms 8, 9, and 11—to match your story. Add features to other rooms that work with what you intend. Feel free to even change the history and purpose of the *Deluvian Hourglass*. This setting is yours to make what you will.

### Location

You can locate the ziggurat as you like. It could be in more than one place at once, connected to several locales or even planes. (Hints of this possibility exist in the adventure.) Perhaps it only appears in its worldly location at specific times. Foreknowledge of one of these times could be why the PCs come to the ziggurat now.

### Treasure

*Ziggurat Beyond Time* employs the “parcel” technique of treasure distribution described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Use these eleven treasure parcels.

**Parcel 1:** Magic item, level 25

**Parcel 2:** Magic item, level 24

**Parcel 3:** Magic item, level 23

**Parcel 4:** Magic item, level 22

**Parcel 5:** Magic item, level 22

**Parcel 6:** 1,800 pp

**Parcel 7:** 1,000 gp, four jewel-encrusted statuettes of religious or magical significance to the ancient civilization that created the ziggurat (worth 15,000 gp each), and a two-foot-tall carved titan-bone obelisk with ever-changing magic runes (50,000 gp)

**Parcel 8:** 700 pp and a perfect, fist-sized star sapphire (5,000 gp)

**Parcel 9:** 500 pp and a *potion of recovery*

**Parcel 10:** Two *potions of vitality* and another perfect, fist-sized star sapphire (5,000 gp)

**Parcel 11:** 2,500 gp plus three flawless platinum urns with gold inlays (worth 7,500 gp each)

### Distributing the Loot

Consult your players' magic item wish lists, then apportion the following parcels into these rooms. It's possible that the monsters make use of the magic items in their rooms. Decide that ahead of time.

**Room 4:** Two parcels.

**Room 5:** One parcel.

**Room 6:** One parcel.

**Room 7:** One parcel.

**Room 8:** One parcel.

**Room 9:** Two parcels.

**Room 10:** One parcel.

**Room 11:** Two parcels.

## 1. STAR OBSERVATORY

Encounter Level 21 (16,000 XP)

### SETUP

- 2 sebacean guardians (Gu)
- 2 sebacean gliders (Gl)
- 8 sebacean mutant apes (A)

Sebaceans use this room as a guard post. Because the ceilings are low in the ledge areas, the PCs can't see the sebaceans and the apes from the top of the ziggurat—don't show the monsters until they join the battle. The creatures attack when someone steps on the dome or descends to the floor of the main chamber.

When the PCs look down into room 1, read:

*A crystalline dome (open end down) hangs near the ceiling of the chamber below. You can't see what's holding it there.*

*The dome itself is about 30 feet across at its outer rim, and it's almost perfectly transparent. Etched into the surface are arcs connecting small glowing motes—like candles trapped in glass. The crystal also has some small cracks in it.*

*Below the dome is an empty, square chamber. In the center of the north, south, east, and west walls are 20-foot wide openings, each about five feet high. Darkness and the angle from the pyramid's top prevent you from seeing what's down there.*

When a PC steps onto the dome surface, read:

*The dome reverberates with a low, deep ring—like that of a great temple bell, but softer. Scurrying comes from below you.*

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Sunlight from the opening in the roof provides bright light in the main chamber and dim light in all the initial ledges (-10 ft.). The lower ledges (-20 ft.) and similarly low areas are dark.

**Star Dome:** This crystalline dome floats near the ceiling, suspended by magic. It's only a 5-foot drop from the top of the ziggurat exterior onto any of the four squares in the center of the dome.

Only those four squares are easy to stand on. The dome surface is slippery. It takes a DC 20 Acrobatics check to move into a dome square surrounding the central four.

The dome is also fragile, indicated by the cracks. PCs who remain in the same square for two turns in a row break through that dome square. A falling PC can attempt a saving throw to catch the edge. If a PC falls, he or she falls 30 feet.

Climbing other parts of the dome requires a successful DC 32 Athletics check.

From below, the dome magnifies the sky. The builders of the ziggurat used the top chamber as an observatory (Arcana DC 18 to discern this).

**Ledges:** Beyond room are ledges to the north, south, east, and west. It's a 10-foot drop down them and a DC 25 Athletics check to climb them. Secondary ledges are another 10 feet down. The ceiling stays 15 feet above the ledges, so only a 5-foot gap exists between the edge of the ledge and the ceiling in the lower area.

**Shaft:** It's a 60-foot drop to room 4. The shaft (Athletics DC 25 to climb) drops another 300 feet into room 10.



## PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

The apes are bestial and practically rabid, screeching as they attack and howling in pain when struck. But the sebaceans have a more alien mien. They stare at the PCs with their compound eyes, tilt their heads and ripple their mouth-mandibles. The guardians give basic commands to the gliders in Deep Speech. PCs who speak Deep Speech understand terse commands like “get the ones on the dome” and “focus on the spellcasters in the back.” Others hear only snatches of sinister gibberish. If the PCs use Deep Speech to speak to the monsters, the guardians noticeably flinch but they don’t converse.

### 2 Sebacean Guardians (Gu) Level 21 Soldier

Large aberrant magical beast XP 3,200 each

**Initiative** +14 **Senses** Perception +16; darkvision

**HP** 199; **Bloodied** 99

**AC** 37; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 33

**Resist** 20 adaptive (see below)

**Speed** 6, climb 4

⬇ **Limb Blades** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage and until the sebacean guardian’s next turn, when the target shifts, the sebacean guardian can make a melee basic attack against it.

⬇ **Heuristic Strike** (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ)

Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 1d10 + 10 damage. One condition that a save can end on the sebacean guardian ends, and the target gains that condition (save ends).

#### Threatening Reach

A sebacean guardian can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).

#### Adaptive Resistance

A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Deep Speech

**Str** 26 (+18) **Dex** 14 (+12) **Wis** 23 (+16)

**Con** 23 (+16) **Int** 12 (+11) **Cha** 16 (+13)

### 2 Sebacean Gliders (Gl) Level 20 Skirmisher

Large aberrant magical beast XP 2,800 each

**Initiative** +20 **Senses** Perception +15; darkvision

**HP** 191; **Bloodied** 95

**AC** 34; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 31

**Resist** 20 adaptive (see below)

**Speed** 6, fly 10; see also *reactive teleport*

⬇ **Limb Blades** (standard; at-will)

+25 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.

⬇ **Flyby Attack** (standard; at-will)

The sebacean glider flies up to 10 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The glider doesn’t provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.

⬇ **Reactive Teleport** (immediate reaction, when the glider takes damage; at-will) ♦ **Teleportation**

The glider teleports 2 squares and attacks an adjacent creature; +25 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage.

#### Adaptive Resistance

A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Deep Speech

**Skills** Stealth +23

**Str** 19 (+14)

**Dex** 26 (+18)

**Wis** 21 (+15)

**Con** 23 (+16)

**Int** 12 (+11)

**Cha** 14 (+12)

### 8 Sebacean Mutant Apes (A) Level 18 Minion

Medium aberrant beast XP 500 each

**Initiative** +14 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

**AC** 32; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 30

**Speed** 8, climb 8

⬇ **Limb Blades** (standard; at-will)

+23 vs. AC; 9 damage.

⬇ **Dying Howl** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Each other sebacean mutant ape within 10 squares gains +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn. This bonus stacks with that from other sebacean mutant apes’ *dying howls*.

**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Deep Speech

**Str** 25 (+16) **Dex** 20 (+14) **Wis** 21 (+14)

**Con** 23 (+15) **Int** 5 (+6) **Cha** 15 (+12)

## TACTICS

The mutant apes delay if necessary to go after the guardians, who need the room to get into advantageous positions. Apes climb easily to the upper level or even onto the dome, using their climb speed. When they do attack, the apes spread out, worming into spaces among their larger masters to get at the PCs.

The sebaceans can climb or fly, so the ledges pose no difficulty for them. The guardians get into melee with as many PCs as they possibly can, while the gliders harry PCs atop the dome or still outside the ziggurat.

Note which effect a guardian saves against so it can impose that effect on a foe in subsequent rounds with its *heuristic strike*. The gliders teleport the first time they take damage every turn.

The sebaceans and mutant apes fight until slain. Sebacean guardians don’t leave the center chamber, but the gliders chase fleeing PCs for a round or two before retreating back into the ziggurat. Mutant apes also try to chase PCs, but each one gives up after a round.

## 2. BLOOD ALTAR

Encounter Level 21 (15,900 XP)

### SETUP

- 2 sebacean gorgers (Go)
- 1 sebacean gleaner (Gl)
- 6 sebacean mutant apes (A)

While fighting, the PCs and the sebaceans have to deal with the increasingly deadly floor hazard.

When the PCs reach either doorway, read:

*Three of the strange insect creatures—two green-and-black ones and a pale white one that glows slightly—stand atop a low platform in the center of the room. Around them, in a ring, caper six apes with grotesque insectile limbs.*

*A channel engraved in the floor glows pale blue. It twists and turns from each corner of the room, eventually leading up the platform stairs. Three low stone biers rest atop the platform.*

*Two staircases lead into this room—one of which you used—downward to the south and upward to the north.*

### BLOOD CHANNEL

The line marked on the floor is a two-inch deep channel cut in the stone floor. When a creature on the center platform takes damage, its blood fills the channel and starts to spread outward. The first instance of damage fills all the channel spaces on the center platform with blood. Each time afterward that a creature on the center platform takes damage, 6 more squares fill with blood in each direction.

If a creature starts its turn in a square with a filled blood channel or moves into such a square during its turn, it takes 10 damage. Creatures atop the central low stone bier don't take this damage. Once the blood reaches the small pipes in the floor at the end of the path, the channels remain active for one hour before returning to their blue state. The blood pours out into the lake that surrounds the ziggurat, turning it a bloody red for 12 hours.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

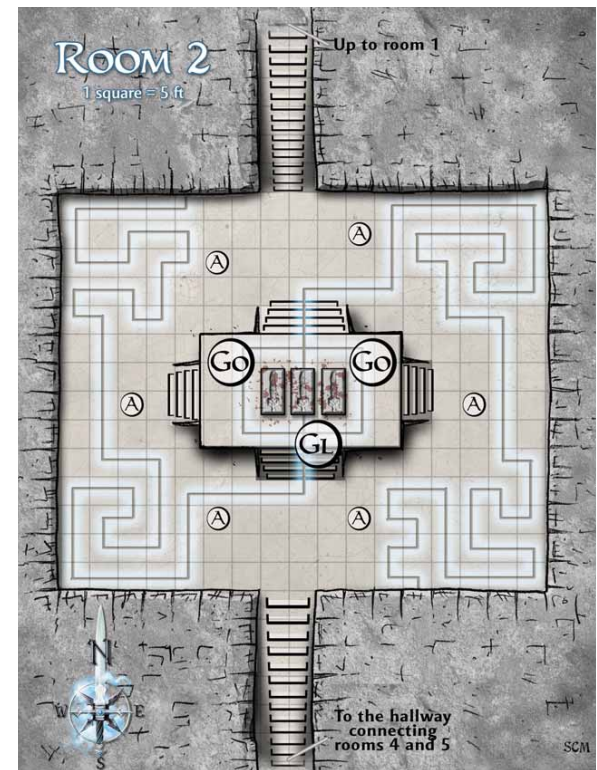
**Illumination:** The path in the floor glows a faint blue and provides dim light before the fight starts. Once the floor channels become active, they glow a bright red along the edges, noticeably brightening the room. The gleaner is luminescent, providing dim light in adjacent squares.

**Platform:** The top of this flat area is 5 feet from the floor. Those on it can attack those on the floor, and vice versa.

**Platform Stairs:** These stairs are gradual.

**Southern Stairway:** A creature forced onto and knocked prone on these stairs must save or fall down them 2d4 squares. The creature takes 1d6 damage per 2 squares so fallen.

**Stone Biers:** The three biers on the center platform are made of white marble and have a humanoid-shaped depression and faint reddish-brown stains on their top surface. Sacrificial victims were placed here, and the victims' blood powered the magic of the floor channel and eventually turned the lake red. The sebaceans don't perform sacrifice for its own sake, but they've experimented using apes to figure out how the floor channels work.



### PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

The gorgers do little other than make low, disjointed roars when they're particularly pleased. They speak and understand Deep Speech, but they don't talk during the battle. For a gorger, language is only a means by which gleaners give them orders.

The gleaner, on the other hand, is an opportunity for you to reveal a little about the sebaceans. It can speak Common in its dual-toned voice. The gleaner delivers vile oaths every round, first in Deep Speech, and then in Common on the following round if it doesn't seem like the PCs understood it. When it's bloodied, the gleaner's dialogue gets more fatalistic.

Here are some examples:

- ◆ “Turn back before the sublime potency of the sebaceans!”
- ◆ “Fools! You’ll be entombed here and forgotten forever!”
- ◆ “You cannot hope to defeat all of us!”
- ◆ “When one sebacean falls, the Mad Architects send two more to take its place!”
- ◆ “You cannot postpone . . . the inevitable . . .” is fine for a final statement.

The apes do their screeching and howling. They seem as rabid as ever.

2 Sebacean Gorgers (Go)		Level 22 Brute
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 4,150 each
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +15; darkvision	
HP 258; Bloodied 129;	see also <i>bloodied fury</i>	
AC 34; Fortitude 36, Reflex 31, Will 30		
Resist 20 adaptive (see below)		
Speed 6, climb 4		
⬇ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +25 (+27 while bloodied) vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 (2d10 + 10 while bloodied) damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
⬅ <b>Blade Shred</b> (standard; recharges when an adjacent enemy becomes bloodied)		
Close burst 1; +24 (+26 while bloodied) vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 (2d10 + 10 while bloodied) damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
<b>Bloodied Fury</b>		
The sebacean gorgor gains +2 to attack rolls and damage rolls while bloodied (included above).		
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>		
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Deep Speech	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 18 (+15)	Wis 19 (+15)
Con 28 (+20)	Int 14 (+13)	Cha 15 (+13)

Sebacean Gleaner (GI)		Level 23 Controller
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 5,100
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +18; darkvision	
HP 215; Bloodied 107		
AC 37; Fortitude 34, Reflex 35, Will 36		
Resist 20 adaptive (see below)		
Speed 6, climb 4		
⬇ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)		
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.		
⚔ <b>Toxic Spittle</b> (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex, 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
⚔ <b>Cocoon Prison</b> (standard; recharges when no enemy is restrained by this power)		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 acid damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).		
⬇ <b>Hypnotic Toxin</b> (standard; recharge ☹)		
Reach 2; +27 vs. Will; 2d10 + 3 damage, and the target is dominated (save ends).		
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>		
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Deep Speech	
Skills Arcana +23, History +23		
Str 19 (+15)	Dex 19 (+15)	Wis 24 (+18)
Con 23 (+17)	Int 25 (+18)	Cha 27 (+19)

6 Sebacean Mutant Apes (A)		Level 18 Minion
Medium aberrant beast		XP 500 each
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +14; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		
AC 32; Fortitude 32, Reflex 30, Will 30		
Speed 8, climb 8		
⬇ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)		
+23 vs. AC; 9 damage.		
<b>Dying Howl</b> (when reduced to 0 hit points)		
Each other sebacean mutant ape within 10 squares gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn. This bonus stacks with that from other sebacean mutant apes’ <i>dying howls</i> .		
Alignment Evil	Languages Deep Speech	
Str 25 (+16)	Dex 20 (+14)	Wis 21 (+14)
Con 23 (+15)	Int 5 (+6)	Cha 15 (+12)

## TACTICS

From atop the central platform, the sebacean gleaner orders the gorgers and apes forward. Then it uses *cocoon prison* in the first round, and *toxic spittle* as soon as it can in subsequent turn. The only thing that can make it leave the center platform is the prospect of delivering *hypnotic toxin*. After doing so, it scurries back behind the gorgers as soon as it can.

The gorgers stay between the PCs and the gleaner. Mutant apes engage in the gaps the gorgers leave open, surrounding the PCs or guarding the gleaners’ flanks. They also work to provide the gorgers with combat advantage by flanking the PCs. The apes don’t allow the PCs to run around the gorgers.

None of the monsters are immune to the effects of the blood channels. However, they do know how the channels work. They also know that standing on the central bier renders them immune.

All monsters fight until slain. They don’t pursue the PCs beyond either stairway. If the PCs retreat, the gleaner says, in Common, “Return to your doomed world, fools!”

“You cannot postpone . . . the inevitable . . .”



### 3. BOUND ELEMENTAL

Encounter Level 21 (18,800 XP)

#### SETUP

- 3 sebacean guardians (Gu)
- 1 sebacean gleaner (Gl)
- 1 earthwind ravager (E)

The challenge in this room is to try to slow down or stop the sebaceans before they destroy all the obelisks, then (assuming the sebaceans succeed) deal with an angry earthwind ravager—potentially in a very dark room. Determine what the PCs' light sources are at the start of the encounter, because the room might plunge into darkness when the last obelisk shatters.

**When the PCs reach any of the doorways, read:**

*An animate tornado of dust and rock is contained within a circle of brightly glowing runes in the center of this room. Lightning arcs between the tornado creature and the tips of four crystalline obelisks—one in each corner of the room. This creates the only bright light in the chamber. Four sebaceans stand just outside the circle: a pale white one that glows slightly and three red-brown ones.*

*Four staircases lead into this room. They go downward to the east, south, and west, and upward to the north.*

#### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The lightning provides bright light. Once the earthwind ravager is freed, those lights are gone and the only illumination in the room is what the PCs are using, plus the natural luminescence of the sebacean gleaner (dim light in squares adjacent to it).

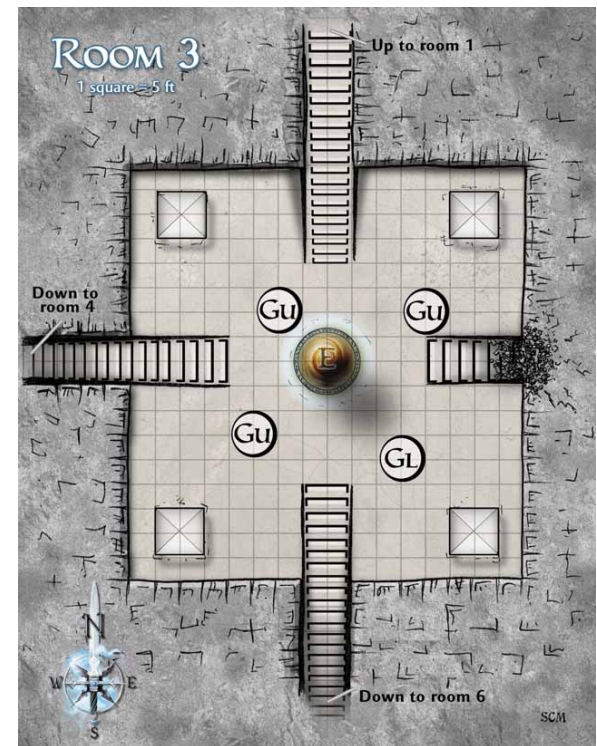
**Binding Circle:** This silver-inlaid binding circle has two unbroken parallel lines along the circumference and a long line of glowing runes. It binds the earthwind ravager inside but doesn't prevent it from attacking. As the crystal obelisks shatter, the runes disappear. When they're all gone, the earthwind ravager is free.

**Crystal Obelisks:** These obelisks are crystal monoliths created by gleaners using their crystal thread. But the obelisks are hollow, and it takes only 10 damage to shatter them. When that happens, the lightning bolt arcing between the obelisk tip and the earthwind ravager disappears, and one quarter of the runes in the binding circle go dark.

When an obelisk shatters, broken crystal covers its original space and all squares adjacent to that space. This is difficult terrain. Any creature knocked prone in such a square takes 1d10 damage.

**Downward Staircases:** A creature forced onto and knocked prone on these stairs must save or fall down them 2d4 squares (maximum 4 on the eastern staircase). The creature takes 1d6 damage per 2 squares so fallen.

**Eastern Staircase:** This stairway leads down for only 4 squares, then ends in a dense cluster of broken stone blocks. The collapse extends for hundreds of feet.



#### PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

The sebacean guardians go about their grim business, grunting as they go. The sebacean gleaner uses Deep Speech to give tactical orders to the guardians, and it switches to Common to deliver dire warnings like “You cannot hope to invade our home and live!” and “We will not know true joy until the end of the world, but we take grim satisfaction in consuming those who would destroy us!” Feel free to expand on or truncate these battle cries, depending on your sense of pacing and drama.

When released, the earthwind ravager shouts (in Primordial), “Free! I am free! Free . . . to slay!” After that point, it might be saying something, but it's hard to hear over the roar of its own winds and the crash of stones smashing against one another.

3 Sebacean Guardians (Gu)		Level 21 Soldier
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 3,200 each
<b>Initiative</b> +14	<b>Senses</b> Perception +16; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 199; <b>Bloodied</b> 99		
<b>AC</b> 37; <b>Fortitude</b> 35, <b>Reflex</b> 29, <b>Will</b> 33		
<b>Resist</b> 20 adaptive (see below)		
<b>Speed</b> 6, climb 4		
⊕ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage and until the sebacean guardian's next turn, when the target shifts, the sebacean guardian can make a melee basic attack against it.		
⊕ <b>Heuristic Strike</b> (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ)		
Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 1d10 + 10 damage. One condition that a save can end on the sebacean guardian ends, and the target gains that condition (save ends).		
<b>Threatening Reach</b>		
A sebacean guardian can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).		
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>		
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Deep Speech	
<b>Str</b> 26 (+18)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+12)	<b>Wis</b> 23 (+16)
<b>Con</b> 23 (+16)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+11)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+13)

## TACTICS

The sebacean gleaner says in Deep Speech “Shatter the obelisks! Free the servant!” as soon as it detects danger. Then it launches *toxic spittle* if the PCs are more than 5 squares away, or *cocoon prison* if a PCs is close enough. During its second turn, it moves as close to the center of the room as it can manage, without putting itself at too much risk, and uses whichever ranged attack power is available. If possible, it saves its *hypnotic toxin* for after the room goes dark, when it's the only readily visible target.

The sebacean guardians ignore PCs for the first round or two, each moving to a crystal obelisk and shattering it with a single blow. Once they've

Earthwind Ravager (E)		Level 23 Controller
Large elemental magical beast (air, earth)		XP 5,100
<b>Initiative</b> +21	<b>Senses</b> Perception +14	
<b>HP</b> 219; <b>Bloodied</b> 109		
<b>AC</b> 37; <b>Fortitude</b> 34, <b>Reflex</b> 36, <b>Will</b> 29		
<b>Immune</b> disease, petrification, poison		
<b>Speed</b> fly 8 (hover)		
⊕ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +26 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 10 damage.		
↘ <b>Wind Devil</b> (standard; sustain minor; at-will)		
The earthwind ravager causes swirling wind to rise up around the target. Ranged 5; +26 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the ravager's next turn. The creature can sustain the effect as a minor action, dealing 2d8 damage to the target (no attack roll required) and keeping it immobilized until the end of the ravager's next turn.		
↶ <b>Whirlwind</b> (standard; at-will)		
Close burst 1; +24 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 10 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.		
↶ <b>Buffeting Blast</b> (standard; recharge ⓂⓂ)		
Close blast 3; +24 vs. Fortitude; 4d8 + 8 damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the earthwind ravager's next turn.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Primordial	
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +26		
<b>Str</b> 24 (+18)	<b>Dex</b> 30 (+21)	<b>Wis</b> 17 (+14)
<b>Con</b> 27 (+19)	<b>Int</b> 6 (+9)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+14)

destroyed all the obelisks, the guardians try to move between the PCs and the gleaner.

The earthwind ravager attacks as many PCs as possible with its *buffeting blast*—even if a sebacean or two gets caught in the blast area. Then it uses *whirlwind* if a PC is next to it at the start of a turn. If no PC is adjacent, it employs *wind devil* against a PC with a light source.

If the room is plunged into darkness, the earthwind ravager moves around randomly. Roll 1d8 for direction and move it until it's adjacent to a creature or a wall, then use *whirlwind* every turn.

Sebacean Gleaner (G)		Level 23 Controller
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 5,100
<b>Initiative</b> +15	<b>Senses</b> Perception +18; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 215; <b>Bloodied</b> 107		
<b>AC</b> 37; <b>Fortitude</b> 34, <b>Reflex</b> 35, <b>Will</b> 36		
<b>Resist</b> 20 adaptive (see below)		
<b>Speed</b> 6, climb 4		
⊕ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)		
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.		
↘ <b>Toxic Spittle</b> (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
↘ <b>Cocoon Prison</b> (standard; recharges when no enemy is restrained by this power)		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 acid damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).		
⊕ <b>Hypnotic Toxin</b> (standard; recharge ⓂⓂ)		
Reach 2; +27 vs. Will; 2d10 + 3 damage, and the target is dominated (save ends).		
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>		
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech	
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +23, History +23		
<b>Str</b> 19 (+15)	<b>Dex</b> 19 (+15)	<b>Wis</b> 24 (+18)
<b>Con</b> 23 (+17)	<b>Int</b> 25 (+18)	<b>Cha</b> 27 (+19)

All monsters fight until slain. The sebaceans don't leave this room, but the earthwind ravager pursues PCs if they flee toward room 1. If they flee in another direction, the ravager departs the ziggurat for good once the PCs are out of its sight, smashing the observatory dome on its way out of the structure.

## 4. DRACOLICH LAIR

Encounter Level 23 (25,500 XP)

### SETUP

1 blackfire dracolich (D)

A dracolich bound by ritual to assist the sebaceans spends its time here.

When the PCs reach any doorway, read:

A pyramid looms here, and atop it is a skeletal dragon surrounded by blue and ebony flames. On each side of the pyramid, a stairway leads up to the creature. The bones of humanoids cover the pyramid's slopes.

Along the south wall is a cluster of gray eggs, each about two feet tall. The northwest corner of the room has a series of basins embedded in it, each dripping a glowing green liquid into a lower one.

Two passages lead into this room from the north and east. A hole in the high ceiling in the southern part of the room corresponds to a 10-foot wide shaft in the floor.

### TACTICS

Because the dracolich is a solo controller, brace yourself for a long battle. Realize that with more than a thousand hit points at your disposal, you can afford to play patiently and brashly. With that much between it and destruction, the dracolich isn't afraid to provoke opportunity attacks to attack just as it likes.

**Turn One:** The dracolich rises, crouches, and snarls, its hollow insides flaring with blue-black fire as

it uses *frightful presence*. It aims to penalize PC attack rolls for the rest of the encounter this way. Then it uses an action point to employ its *breath weapon*. If it needs to do so, it flies to a better position, but it's probably just fine atop the pyramid.

At this point, the flow of the battle might make specific tactics pointless. Consider these points when using the dracolich's powers.



**Rukaleth, Blackfire Dracolich (D) Level 23 Solo Controller**

Gargantuan natural magical beast (dragon, undead) XP 25,500

**Initiative** +18      **Senses** Perception +21; darkvision**HP** 1,095; **Bloodied** 547; see also *bloodied breath***AC** 39; **Fortitude** 40, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 36**Immune** disease, fear, poison; **Resist** 35 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant**Saving Throws** +5**Speed** 8, fly 10 (clumsy)**Action Points** 2⬇ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Reach 4; +28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage. Against a stunned target, this attack deals an extra 3d8 necrotic damage.

⚡ **Mesmerizing Glare** (immediate interrupt, when an enemy makes a melee attack against the dracolich; at-will) ♦ **Fear**Close blast 3; +26 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the blackfire dracolich's next turn. *Miss*: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against the blackfire dracolich until the end of the blackfire dracolich's next turn.⚡ **Blackfire** (standard; recharge ☹☹☹) ♦ **Fire, Necrotic**

Close blast 5; automatic hit; 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).

⚡ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge ☹☹) ♦ **Necrotic**The blackfire dracolich breathes a coruscating blast of necrotic energy. Close blast 9; +26 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 8 necrotic damage, and the target is stunned until the end of the blackfire dracolich's next turn. *Miss*: Half damage, and the target is not stunned. *Hit or Miss*: The target loses any necrotic resistance it has (save ends).⚡ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter)

The blackfire dracolich's breath weapon recharges, and the blackfire dracolich uses it immediately.

⚡ **Frightful Presence** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Fear**Close burst 20; targets enemies; +26 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the blackfire dracolich's next turn. *Aftereffect*: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the encounter.**Alignment** Evil      **Languages** Common, Draconic**Skills** Arcana +20, Endurance +24, History +20, Insight +21, Intimidate +19, Religion +20**Str** 29 (+20)      **Dex** 25 (+18)      **Wis** 20 (+16)**Con** 27 (+19)      **Int** 18 (+15)      **Cha** 17 (+14)

**Action Point:** The dracolich saves the other action point for the turn just after it uses its *bloodied breath*. On that turn, it takes two actions, preferably *breath weapon* and *blackfire*, one of these and a bite, or two bites. It might instead save the action point until after it's bloodied, for when it can make a *breath weapon* and *blackfire* combination. Just be careful to use the action point before the creature is destroyed.

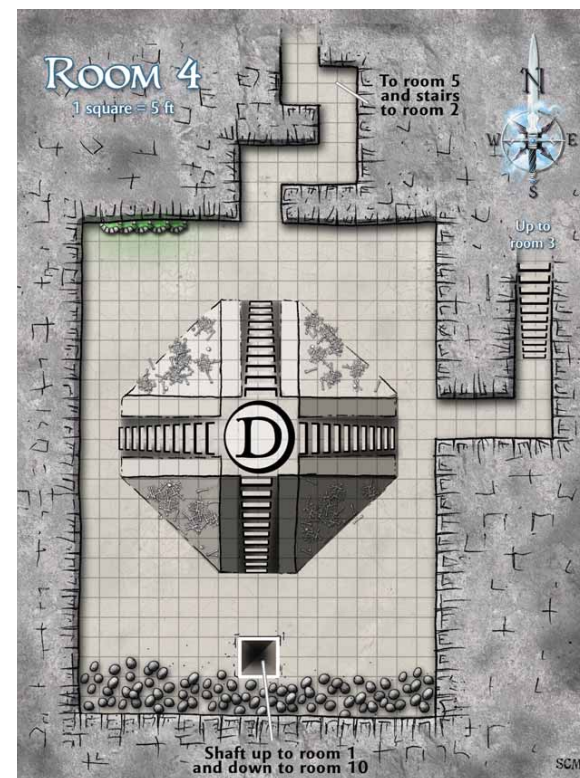
**Bite:** This is the dracolich's last option on any given turn. It bites only when it must.

**Blackfire:** This is the dracolich's most likely action on its second turn. It uses this power whenever it recharges and the *breath weapon* isn't available.

**Breath Weapon:** The most potent part of the breath weapon is the stunned condition, not the damage. Try to catch as many PCs in the blast as possible, maneuvering and even provoking opportunity attacks to do so. The dracolich pays attention to who among the PCs has necrotic resistance, and it tries to blast that PC with its breath weapon whenever the resistance shows up again.

**Mesmerizing Glare:** The dracolich uses this every round, usually against the first PC to make a melee attack against it. It might change this tactic if another likely melee attacker has other PCs nearby who could end up in the blast. In fact, the dracolich doesn't have to put the PC currently attacking it in the blast. If it can stun two or more other PCs, especially if they'll lose a turn by being stunned, then the dracolich could ignore the PC attacking it and glare at the better targets.

It's tempting to use *mesmerizing glare* against the same particularly dangerous PC every round. This removes a PC's output from the fight entirely—at very little cost to the dracolich. But doing this also removes an actual player from the action at your table, so your sense of drama might demand that you mix up the glares a bit.



**Movement:** The dracolich moves to negate the PCs' positional advantage and to set up nice killing zones for its *blackfire* or *breath weapon*. Early in the battle, it isn't as careful about avoiding opportunity attacks as it might otherwise be. It does fly from one position to another, so it only provokes for leaving the initial square.

**Retreat/Pursuit:** The dracolich can't leave this chamber, so neither retreat nor pursuit are possible. It's too haughty to bargain for its existence. If reduced below 100 hit points, it starts to focus its efforts on taking at least one PC to with it.

## PORTRAYING THE DRACOLICH

The dracolich refers to itself as "Rukaleth, the Bound Guardian," and it makes clear that it is forced to serve the sebaceans. It doesn't apologize for attacking the PCs but instead suggests that the attack is nothing personal. It says, "Bound here as I am, I take no joy in your inevitable destruction, mortals . . ." or something similar. If the PCs slay the dracolich, it thanks them for granting the "final release" that it has craved for centuries.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** Embedded in the western part of the north wall is a series of stone basins arranged in a diagonal line down the wall, each with a spout that hangs over the next lower basin. This is a basic water clock. The basins are filled with phosphorescent water that drips from basin to basin, providing bright light for 10 squares and dim light for another 10 squares beyond that.

**Ceiling:** The ceiling here is 40 feet high.

**Eggs:** These are mummified dragon eggs. They're difficult terrain.

Breaking an egg open, which any reasonable force can accomplish, reveals a dragon hatchling skeleton covered in wispy tissue. A successful DC 22 Nature check allows a PC to discern that the egg and hatchling were never really alive. A subsequent successful DC 22 Religion check suggests that the eggs and hatchlings were undead, perhaps the result of an effort to create creatures that were born as dracoliches.

**Pyramid:** The stairs on this 20-foot pyramid are difficult terrain. On the angled sides, the slope and bones conspire to make it a difficult climb (Athletics DC 25).

**Shaft:** It's a 300-foot drop to room 10 and a 60-foot climb from this room's ceiling (Athletics DC 25) up to room 1.

**Water Clock:** This is not only a water clock, but also the sebaceans' protection against the dracolich if it breaks its bonds. The water cycles through a magical reservoir behind the wall. It looks like normal water other than the glowing algae it contains. A successful DC 27 Arcana check is sufficient to tell the water flows magically and is itself magical.

*"Bound here as I am, I take no joy in your inevitable destruction, mortals . . ."*

A creature that drinks the water (minor action) is unaffected by the next stunned condition it suffers. This effect lasts until the affected creature would be stunned, at which time the effect negates that one stunned condition, or for 5 minutes—whichever is less.

**Treasure:** The dracolich's treasure, two parcels you assigned, is scattered among the eggs.

## 5. PAIN PYRAMID

Encounter Level 21 (20,000 XP)

### SETUP

- 3 painwrought helmed horrors (H)
- 1 pain pyramid trap (pyramid on map)

Because of the *pain pyramid*, exact positioning matters in this room more than usual (see Tactics below).

Modify the description of the room's statue as needed to fit your campaign.

#### When the PCs can see into the room, read:

*You can't see the full extent of the room yet, but you can see a massive stone pyramid covered in glowing runes. The runes pain your eyes, warning against approach.*

#### When the PCs reach a doorway, read:

*Two suits of dark plate armor stand along the western edge of the room. Next to them is an obsidian statue of a heavily muscled human male, his arms reaching upward to the ceiling. Near a section of collapsed wall in the eastern part of the room is another similar suit. Red light illuminates each suit of plate armor from within, and dances along the edges of the greatsword each one wields.*

*Passages exit the room to the north and south.*

## PAIN PYRAMID

This stone pyramid in the room's center is 18 feet high. At its apex is a crystal that triggers whenever someone steps within 2 squares of the pyramid's base. The runes flash brightly and the room is plunged into darkness for an instant, then the runes start glowing again.

### Pain Pyramid Trap

Level 21 Warder  
XP 3,200

*This magical pyramid bears runes that warn against approach.*

**Trap:** The pyramid in the center of the room attacks creatures that draw near with powerful psychic attacks that can damage and slow intruders.

#### Perception

- ◆ DC 22: The character notices the power flows into the runes from the pyramid's top.

#### Additional Skill: Arcana or Religion

- ◆ DC 27: The character recognizes the nature of the pain pyramid, including its attack and trigger.

#### Trigger

When a creature approaches within 2 squares of the pyramid's base, the trap attacks. Once a creature has entered the area, it can remain in the area without suffering further attacks. The trap attacks again when another creature enters the area, or if a creature leaves and reenters the area.

#### Attack

**Opportunity Action**      Close burst 2

**Attack:** +24 vs. Will

**Hit:** 2d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the target is slowed until the start of its next turn.

**Aftereffect:** Ongoing 10 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends both).

#### Countermeasures

- ◆ A character can climb the pyramid's side with a DC 27 Athletics check.
- ◆ A character adjacent to the apex can disable the trap with a DC 29 Thievery check or Arcana check.

## TACTICS

This fight is all about the helmed horrors using the pain pyramid to their advantage. They aren't immune to the trap, but with lots of hit points and regeneration, they're willing to trigger the pyramid whenever they can punish the PCs with it. The pyramid's attack is an opportunity action, so it can be triggered once per combatant.

Helmed horrors engage in melee combat when they can, flying to avoid opportunity attacks. Each



one uses its *blade sweep* whenever two targets are available. It saves its *painful elemental burst* for moments when it's immobilized and unable to hurt the PCs any other way. A helmed horror pushes the PCs out of the pain pyramid's area if it thinks they might be forced to reenter the area. The helmed horrors aren't immune to each other's *painful elemental burst*, but they are willing to engage in some friendly fire to nail the PCs.

The helmed horrors fight until slain. They don't pursue fleeing PCs beyond this room. Instead, they retreat to their starting positions without triggering the trap, and they regenerate and recharge until they're good as new.

## PORTRAYING THE HELMED HORRORS

The helmed horrors utter a single phrase in Primordial when they engage the PCs: "Make the intruders suffer." They also hiss when the pain pyramid immobilizes them. Other than that, they're hauntingly silent.

### FUN BEFORE FRUSTRATION

The helmed horrors can use the pyramid to make the PCs' lives miserable. But if the PCs have particularly bad luck, your players might become miserable, and that's no good. After you've doled out an appropriate dollop of frustration, you can have the helmed horrors all stay within the pyramid's area and stop triggering it on purpose. The battle is supposed to confound the players to a degree, but it shouldn't kill their enthusiasm for the game.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The glowing runes provide bright light throughout the chamber.

**Ceiling:** The ceiling to this chamber is 30 feet high.

**Statue:** This 22-foot figure (Athletics DC 20 to climb) is part of the ziggurat's original design, and the low platform it's on is no hindrance to movement. Its squares are difficult terrain, and it is blocking terrain for determining cover.

**East Cave-In:** There used to be a passageway heading upward from here, but it's blocked by tons of broken stone. The cave-in extends for at least 1,000 feet.

**Treasure:** One parcel is at the statue's feet.

### Force Pods Hazard Level 20 Blaster XP 2,800

*The nearby pods suddenly expand and pulse with power, sending a forceful wave of green energy rolling over the area.*

**Hazard:** When an enemy comes within 2 squares of a pod, all pods start to exude smoke and expand (see Trigger below). Pods can distinguish among enemies and allies. A single force pod hazard includes four Large pods placed near each other.

#### Perception

The pods are obvious, but the danger is not.

#### Arcana

◆ DC 25: The character recognizes the nature of the force pod, but not how to disable it.

#### Insight

◆ DC 28: The character feels and alien fear from the pods and understands the force pulses are a defensive reaction. This opens the possibility of the second countermeasure.

#### Trigger

When an enemy comes within 2 squares of a pod, the hazard reacts and rolls initiative. The pods continue to detonate each round until disabled or until no enemy is within 2 squares.

#### Attack

**Initiative** +8

**Standard Action** Close burst 2

**Target** Enemies in the burst

**Attack** +23 vs. Reflex

**Hit** 2d6 + 7 force damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.

#### Countermeasures

- ◆ A character can attack a pod (AC 34, other defenses 32; 45 hp). Destroying a pod disables that part of the hazard.
- ◆ This is available only if a PC succeeds on the Insight check above. An adjacent character can disable a single force pod with a DC 30 Diplomacy or Insight check, made as a standard action to project calm feelings at the pod. The pod reactivates if it or any other pod is attacked.

### 3 Painwrought Helmed Horrors (H) Level 20 Elite Soldier XP 5,600

Medium elemental animate (construct) Senses Perception +22; darkvision, true sight 10

HP 380; Bloodied 190

Regeneration 10

AC 38; Fortitude 35, Reflex 33, Will 34

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Saving Throws +2

Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy)

Action Points 1

⊕ Elemental Greatsword (standard; at-will) ◆ Weapon; Cold, Fire, Lightning, or Thunder

+26 vs. AC; 1d10 + 8 damage plus 1d10 cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (painwrought helmed horror's choice).

⊕ Blade Sweep (standard; encounter) ◆ Weapon; Cold, Fire, Lightning, or Thunder

The painwrought helmed horror makes an *elemental greatsword* attack against two different targets within reach.

⊕ Painful Elemental Blast (standard; recharge [⊕]) ◆ Psychic; Cold, Fire, Lightning, or Thunder

Close blast 3; +22 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 psychic and cold, fire, lightning, or thunder damage (painwrought helmed horror's choice), and the target is pushed 2 squares.

**Tactical Step** (free, when the greater helmed horror hits with an opportunity attack; at-will)

The painwrought helmed horror shifts 3 squares.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages Common, Primordial

Skills Insight +22

Str 26 (+18)

Dex 23 (+16)

Wis 24 (+17)

Con 22 (+16)

Int 12 (+11)

Cha 18 (+14)

Equipment greatsword

## 6. PODS ARCANE

Encounter Level 21 (17,500 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 larva mage (L)
- 1 astral stalker (see below)
- 1 force pods hazard (green pods on map)

A larva mage, seeking the same world-ending Far Realm invasion as the sebaceans, has placed its arcane knowledge at the sebaceans' disposal. Its astral stalker bodyguard starts invisible in whichever entry passage the PCs aren't using, so it isn't shown on the map.

Modify the description of the room's statue as you need to fit the story you're telling. The force pods might also become part of your current and future plots for the ziggurat and the sebaceans. Further, you can add details to the papers on the larva mage's desk.

#### When the PCs reach a doorway, read:

*This room has four pods—like giant cocoons or eggs—made of a swirling, glowing green substance. They have an almost liquid sheen to them, and you see small wisps of smoke or mist emerge from their tops. A red marble statue on the south wall depicts a fat human woman with a hair braid that encircles her body, preserving her modesty. An alcove opens in the southeast.*

See the skills required for identifying the hazard. If PCs come from the east, they have line of sight to the larva mage immediately. Otherwise, they see it only later.

Once the PCs can see the larva mage, read:

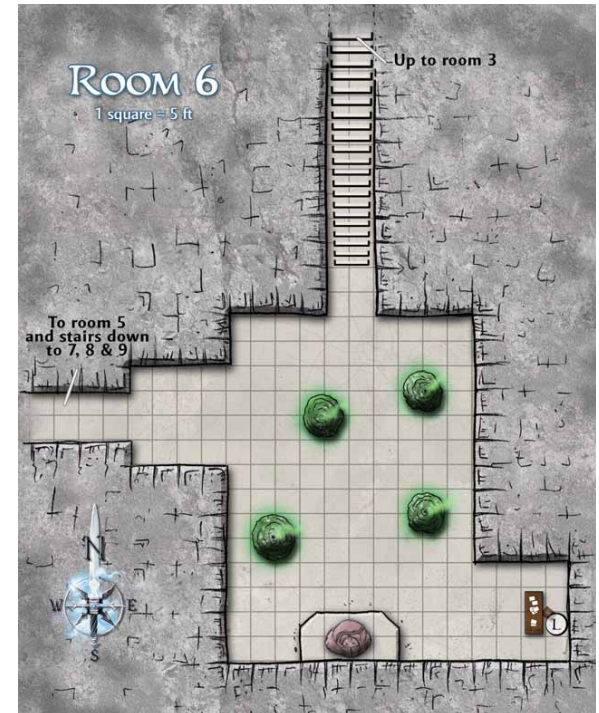
*Standing behind a desk in the alcove is a darkly robed humanoid wearing an ivory facemask.*

### FORCE PODS

These pods are curiosities that the sebaceans brought from the Far Realm. Whether they have some greater purpose is up to you. If you're expanding the adventure, then the pods could be cocoons or eggs of some kind. The force they exude is just a defense technique to keep threats away while whatever's inside the pods grows. The pods see the larva mage, astral stalker, and all sebaceans as allies.

As soon as a PC steps within 2 squares of a pod, all four pods start blowing green smoke from their tops. Roll initiative for the pods. The pods continue to smoke until it's their turn, at which point all four detonate a kinetic wave that hits everyone within 2 squares of a pod. Resolve pod 1 first, then pods 2, 3, and 4. The order matters because one pod might push a PC toward or away from another pod that hasn't detonated. As long as someone's within 2 squares of one of the pods, detonate all four of them during the pods' turn.

The pods are blocking terrain for determining cover.



### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The pods provide bright light throughout the chamber.

**Ceiling:** The top limit in this chamber is 20 feet high.

**Desk:** This furnishing is 3 feet high, forming a low obstacle that can grant cover. The larva mage is doing arcane research on it. The research also includes some valuables—see Treasure, below.

**Statue:** This 15-foot figure (Athletics DC 20 to climb) is part of the ziggurat's original design, and the low platform it's on is no hindrance to movement. Its squares are difficult terrain, and it is blocking terrain for determining cover.

**Treasure:** One parcel is on the desk.



## PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

The astral stalker doesn't speak. While attacking, the larva mage tries to convince the PCs to surrender.

Larva Mage (L)		Level 21 Elite Artillery	
Medium natural magical beast (undead)		XP 6,400	
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +12		
HP 304; Bloodied 152			
AC 35; Fortitude 30, Reflex 33, Will 27			
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; takes half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 radiant, 10 against close and area attacks.			
Saving Throws +2			
Speed 6			
Action Points 1			
⚔ <b>Corrupting Touch</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic +24 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage.			
☞ <b>Horrific Visage</b> (minor; recharge [☞]) ♦ Fear Ranged 10; +24 vs. Will; the target is immobilized (save ends) and cannot attack the larva mage until the end of its next turn.			
☞ <b>Ray of Cold Death</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Necrotic Ranged 20; +26 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 cold and necrotic damage, or 4d8 + 8 cold and necrotic damage if the target is bloodied.			
☞ <b>Worm's Feast</b> (standard; recharge [☞]) ♦ Illusion Ranged 5; the target is tricked into believing that worms are devouring its flesh; +26 vs. Will; 4d10 + 8 damage. If this damage doesn't reduce the target to 0 or fewer hit points, the target takes no damage but is stunned until the end of its next turn.			
☞ <b>Withering Flame</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic Area burst 1 within 20; +24 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 8 fire and necrotic damage.			
<b>Squeezing Swarm</b> By altering its shape, a larva mage can squeeze through small openings as if it were a Tiny creature (see "Squeeze," <i>Player's Handbook</i> 292).			
Alignment Evil	Languages Common		
Skills Arcana +23, History +23, Religion +23			
Str 14 (+12)	Dex 16 (+13)	Wis 14 (+12)	
Con 20 (+15)	Int 26 (+18)	Cha 15 (+12)	

Astral Stalker		Level 22 Elite Lurker	
Medium immortal humanoid		XP 8,300	
Initiative +23	Senses Perception +18; blindsight 10		
HP 314; Bloodied 157			
AC 38; Fortitude 32, Reflex 38, Will 32			
Saving Throws +2			
Speed 10, climb 6			
Action Points 1			
⚔ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will) +27 vs. AC; 2d6 + 8 damage, and the astral stalker can choose to designate the target as its quarry (see <i>stalker's quarry</i> ).			
☞ <b>Throat Dart</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison Ranged 5/10; +29 vs. AC; 1d10 + 8 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both). <i>First Failed Saving Throw</i> : The target is immobilized instead of slowed (save ends). <i>Second Failed Saving Throw</i> : The target is stunned instead of immobilized (save ends).			
⚔ <b>Quick Claws</b> (standard; at-will) Against a slowed or an immobilized target, the astral stalker makes two claw attacks.			
<b>Combat Advantage</b> The astral stalker's melee attacks deal an extra 2d6 damage against any target it has combat advantage against.			
Invisibility (standard; at-will) ♦ Illusion The astral stalker turns invisible until it attacks.			
<b>Stalker's Quarry</b> (minor; at-will) The astral stalker knows the exact location of a creature it has designated as its quarry. The astral stalker can have only one quarry at a time, but the power works across any distance and even crosses planar boundaries.			
Alignment Evil	Languages Supernal		
Skills Stealth +24			
Str 22 (+17)	Dex 26 (+19)	Wis 15 (+13)	
Con 19 (+15)	Int 8 (+10)	Cha 10 (+11)	

## TACTICS

The larva mage stays behind its desk (see Features of the Area) for cover, and it flings spells at the PCs. It uses *horrific visage* every turn against the most dangerous looking PC. Whenever the PCs cluster in such a way that the larva mage can attack two or more of them with *withering flame*, it does so. It saves *ray of cold death* for long-range attacks, as well as for bloodied targets. Paying attention to the state of its foes, it employs *worm's feast* as a finishing move. If it thinks doing so might down an enemy, it uses its action point to shoot *ray of cold death* and *worm's feast* at the same target during the same turn. It uses *squeezing swarm* to retreat from melee—perhaps to the statue or among the pods for cover.

The astral stalker waits until the PCs move into the room, then it fires a *throat dart* after the PCs are among the pods. It then uses an action point to turn invisible again. Thereafter, the stalker uses its claws, unless it needs to use a *throat dart* to hit a PC. It designates a PC it hits as its quarry, so it can track the party later.

The monsters fight until slain. The larva mage is unwilling to leave this chamber. If the PCs retreat, it sends the astral stalker to hunt them down after a short rest. The astral stalker joins a subsequent battle, but it retreats if bloodied. It doesn't leave the ziggurat.

## 7. WATERFALL CRYPT

Encounter Level 21 (16,550 XP)

### SETUP

- 3 holy ziggurat guardians (H)
- 2 undead gibbering abominations (A)
- 1 holy ziggurat slinger (S)

As the PCs approach, they hear the roar of falling water several hundred feet before they arrive. The sebaceans keep these undead around in case they ever need a clue into the ziggurat's past.

As the PCs reach the water-filled fissure, read:

*The floor of the hallway is cracked in the center, luminous water churning in it.*

When the PCs reach the doorway, read:

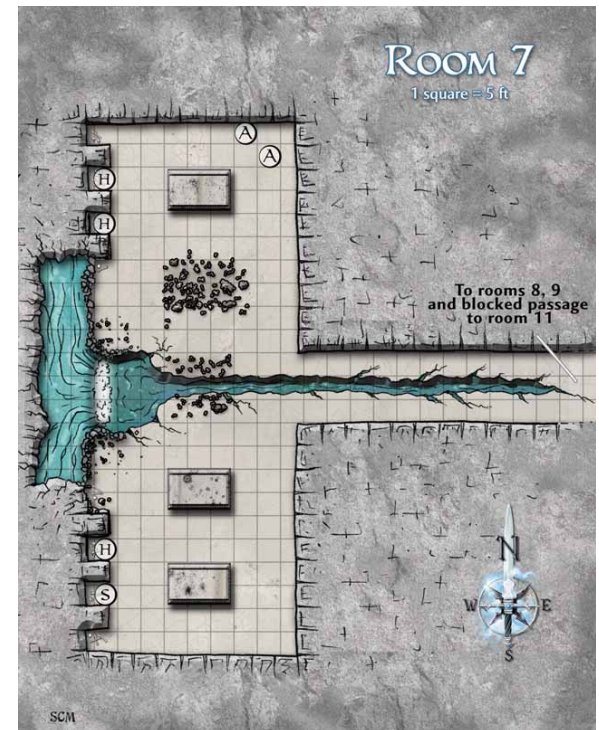
*The west wall has a luminous waterfall running down it. Water pools at the base of the waterfall. The broken stones where the water flows suggest that the builders didn't plan for a waterfall here. It has cut a channel in the floor and into the hall. The channel divides the room into northern and southern portions.*

*An intact crypt squats north of the channel, and two similar structures are to the south. You can see the broken remnants of two other crypts near the middle of the room. One was directly in the water's path.*

<b>Holy Ziggurat Slinger (S)</b>		<b>Level 22 Artillery</b>
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 4,150
Initiative +18		Senses Perception +16; darkvision
HP 165; Bloodied 82		
AC 34; Fortitude 35, Reflex 34, Will 33		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic, 5 radiant		
Speed 6, climb 6		
⚔ Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Radiant		
+26 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 radiant damage (save ends).		
⚔ Holy Sling (standard; at-will) ♦ Radiant, Weapon		
Ranged 10/20; +28 vs. AC; 2d6 + 9 radiant damage, and the target is weakened and takes a -2 penalty to saving throws (save ends both).		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Primordial
Skills Athletics +21		
Str 20 (+16)	Dex 24 (+18)	Wis 20 (+16)
Con 27 (+19)	Int 17 (+14)	Cha 19 (+15)
Equipment sling		

<b>3 Holy Ziggurat Guardians (H)</b>		<b>Level 20 Soldier</b>
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 2,800 each
Initiative +18		Senses Perception +15; darkvision
HP 193; Bloodied 96		
AC 36; Fortitude 33, Reflex 32, Will 31		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic, 5 radiant		
Speed 6, climb 6		
⚔ Holy Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Radiant, Weapon		
+27 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 radiant damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 radiant damage (save ends) and is marked until the end of the ziggurat guardian's next turn.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Primordial
Skills Athletics +21		
Str 22 (+16)	Dex 22 (+16)	Wis 20 (+15)
Con 25 (+17)	Int 17 (+13)	Cha 17 (+13)
Equipment spear		

*Movement within several of the alcoves along the west wall attracts your attention. Humanoid corpses in loincloths stir there, eyes and weapons lighting with white radiance. Floating masses of gray flesh covered with eyes and toothy maws float in the northeast corner of the room. You can barely hear their murmuring above the sound of the flowing water.*



### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The luminous water creates bright light in the room.

**Burial Alcoves:** Each of these alcoves is wide enough to provide a square of fighting space. The southernmost and northernmost alcoves also contain bones (difficult terrain). Alcove walls act as blocking terrain for determining cover. The southernmost alcove also contains a steel spearhead.

**Channel:** The water channel drops 3 feet to the water, which is 2 feet deep (except at the waterfall, see below). It takes a move action to cross the channel by stepping down and up the other side. Or a creature can just jump (Athletics DC 10, 5 with a running start). The water is harmless, despite its glow.

**Crypts:** These small buildings are 10 feet high. Each is decorated with carvings, meaningful only if you want them to be. The stone door on each crypt is heavy and mortared shut. It takes 50 damage or a DC 22 Athletics check to break the stone door open. The northern crypt holds a human skeleton and some treasure (see below). The other two crypts hold only multiple skeletons.

**Waterfall:** Too gentle to pose a real danger, this 15-foot cascade churns up the pool at its base. That pool is 10 feet deep. Worn smooth by the water, the wall behind the waterfall can be climbed (Athletics DC 30) to the terrace where the water flows.

The waterfall pours in from a small breach to a dominion in the Astral Sea. Water flows down the middle of the hallway and seeps through fissures in the stone blocks. It eventually percolates down into room 10.

**Treasure:** The northern crypt contains one parcel.

## PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

If you desire, the humanoid undead here can be reasoned with as part of your designs on the ziggurat's purpose. The PCs can't do so until they destroy the mad gibbering abominations. Until they do, they have to fight.

The abominations utter nonsense every turn when using their *gibbering*. Some of the gibbering refers to aspects of the ziggurat, and you can add to it in any way you'd like, making it meaningful or otherwise. The gibbering might include any of the following:

- ◆ *"Fire! And flame! Fear the black, black, black where-am-I of history-mystery. Yes!"*
- ◆ *"You will-have-been being here before now! The muscles, they strain against the stars . . . the broken! Broken! Stars!"*

- ◆ *"Water underneath, under the thunder. Hear it? Yes! Outstanding! The black, black, black argument unfolds."*
- ◆ *"The hallways echo like veins, like wormy, burning, squirming veins. The man below the ceiling, stealing, searing, biting!"*
- ◆ *"Do you never deny that you didn't? You didn't! You never could have! Except before! Before they came."*
- ◆ *"Seek sand, seek sand . . . and sand sanctimonious sanity, and stand—stand-stand. We are all sand!"*
- ◆ *"The eggs don't hatch. They're patient, ancient patience. Hasten their ancient, raise their hazy memory."*
- ◆ *"Go down, brown sound, down, down underground. Howling sounds underground never found last hound."*

## TACTICS

The guardians move out of the alcoves right away and engage the PCs in melee. Delaying if necessary, the slinger and abominations let the guardians move into position first. The guardians mark as many different PCs as they can. They jump and use their climbing ability to maneuver around the PCs as they need to.

On its turn, the slinger moves near the waterfall. The next turn, it climbs the waterfall to stand on the terrace above. It makes a ranged attack each round.

Each undead gibbering abomination launches an *eye of despair*, then it swoops toward the PCs, relying on the guardians' marks and its *gibbering* to keep the PCs at bay. A gibbering abomination maneuvers to keep combat advantage and uses its tentacles (with bonus damage) against dazed enemies until its *eye of despair* recharges. At that point it floats backward far enough to use that power, returning to the fray the following turn.

The creatures all fight until slain (unless you plan to have the undead talk to the PCs—see Portraying the Monsters). They don't pursue the PCs beyond this room.

<b>2 Undead Gibbering Abominations (A) Level 18 Controller</b>		
Medium aberrant magical beast (undead)		XP 2,000 each
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +13; all-around vision, darkvision	
HP 168; Bloodied 84		
AC 32; Fortitude 31, Reflex 30, Will 30		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic, 5 radiant		
Speed 6, fly 4 (hover; maximum altitude 1)		
⚔ <b>Tentacles</b> (standard; at-will) ◆ <b>Necrotic, Psychic</b>		
Reach 2; +22 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic and psychic damage (save ends).		
↩ <b>Gibbering</b> (free, once on the undead gibbering abomination's turn before it takes other actions; at-will) ◆ <b>Psychic</b>		
Close burst 5; deafened creatures are immune; +20 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of the undead gibbering abomination's next turn.		
👁 <b>Eye of Despair</b> (standard; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞) ◆ <b>Psychic</b>		
Ranged 10; +20 vs. Will; 3d8 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
<b>Combat Advantage</b>		
The undead gibbering abomination deals an extra 2d6 psychic damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned		<b>Languages</b> —
<b>Str</b> 20 (+14)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+13)	<b>Wis</b> 19 (+13)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+12)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+9)	<b>Cha</b> 12 (+10)

## 8. VOID CRYPT

Encounter Level 21 (16,000 XP)

### SETUP

- 3 ancient ziggurat mummies (see below)
- 1 ziggurat ghost (G)
- 1 view beyond hazard (see below)

This unlit chamber holds more of the undead remnants of the society that built the ziggurat. Sebaceans don't come down here.

Don't indicate the monsters until the PCs can actually see them. The ghost is out of line of sight when the PCs enter, and the mummies rest within the numbered crypts. On the map, a dotted red line indicates the hazard.

Unless the PCs advance with Stealth and without light, the undead know intruders approach. PCs that have light notice it dims here (see Features of the Area).

This room also contains a mosaic you might customize.

### When the PCs reach the doorway, read:

*This chamber swirls with dark dust that seems to move on an unfelt breeze. It has a number of burial alcoves on the south wall and five large crypts in the middle. A mosaic covers the west, north, and east walls. It depicts a heavily muscled black-skinned man and a two-headed tiger walking along a mountain path—of sorts. About half of the “mountains” look more like pyramids than natural formations.*

**Perception DC 22:** *You notice the dust just ahead isn't reflecting light. In fact, it seems to be absorbing it.*

**Perception DC 27:** *Something moves in or near the burial alcoves.*

If the PCs see the light-eating dust, a successful Arcana check can warn them what the dust really means. See the hazards statistics.

As soon as it hears the PCs, the ziggurat ghost moves to attack. It might surprise those who don't hear it (Perception DC 34 above). The ancient ziggurat mummies roll initiative at the same time.

**View Beyond Hazard** **Level 21 Warden**  
XP 3,200

*The area swirls with dark dust.*

**Hazard** Supernatural powers cause a temporary unweaving of the strands of time, revealing a space beyond known existence, perhaps where the dead go. The dust typically covers 10 contiguous squares in a room.

#### Perception

◆ DC 22: The character notices that the swirling dust appears to absorb light, darkening the area.

**Additional Skill:** Arcana

◆ DC 27: The character identifies the glow that often presages this hazard.

#### Trigger

When a creature casts a spell or supernatural power in the hazard's area, or the hazard's area is within the area of a spell or other supernatural power, the hazard attacks. What qualifies as a supernatural power is left to DM discretion.

#### Attack

**Opportunity Action** Close burst 3

**Targets:** All creatures in burst

**Attack:** +25 vs. Will

**Hit:** 3d6 + 8 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

**Miss:** Half damage, and the target is not dazed.

**Special:** Immortals, animates, and undead are immune.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** This room is dark. This room has a connection to the Shadowfell, so light areas are halved within it. (Arcana or Religion DC 28 to sense the connection and to discern the meaning of the light-dimming effect.) The center of the Shadowfell connection is the view beyond hazard.

**Burial Alcoves:** Each of these alcoves is wide enough to provide a square of fighting space. Those shown to contain bones are difficult terrain. Alcove walls act as blocking terrain for determining cover.

**Crypts:** These small buildings are 10 feet high. Each is decorated with carvings, meaningful only if you want them to be. Those marked 1, 2, and 3 have mummies in them. The other two crypts hold only multiple skeletons, although the eastern one has a mummy (not undead).

The stone door on each unnumbered crypt is heavy and mortared shut. It takes 50 damage or a DC 22 Athletics check to break the stone door open.

**Mosaic:** This wall decoration is made of colorful stones. It has mythological significance to the ziggurat's builders, and perhaps to your campaign.

**Treasure:** The eastern crypt contains one parcel.

## MUMMY ROT DCS

Rather than those on MM 192, the DCs for the ancient ziggurat mummies' mummy rot are: Endurance improve DC 29, maintain DC 24, worsen DC 23 or lower. You don't really need to worry about the mummy rot until the PCs take an extended rest.

<b>Ziggurat Ghost (G)</b> Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	<b>Level 21 Controller</b> XP 3,200
<b>Initiative</b> +19 <b>Senses</b> Perception +17; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 152; <b>Bloodied</b> 76	
<b>AC</b> 32; <b>Fortitude</b> 30, <b>Reflex</b> 34, <b>Will</b> 32	
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> insubstantial	
<b>Speed</b> fly 6 (hover); phasing	
⊕ <b>Blinding Touch</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b> +24 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).	
⊕ <b>Ghostly Possession</b> (standard; recharge ☒ ☒) ♦ <b>Charm</b> Target must be a living humanoid; +24 vs. Will; the ghost enters the target's space and is removed from play, and the target is dominated (save ends). The ghost can use this power against only one creature at a time. When the target is no longer dominated, or when the ghost chooses to end its <i>ghostly possession</i> (a free action), the ghost reappears in a square adjacent to the target.	
↩ <b>Terrifying Shriek</b> (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ <b>Fear, Psychic</b> Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 3d8 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.	
✱ <b>Ghostly Terrain</b> (standard; sustain minor; at-will) ♦ <b>Zone</b> Area burst 2 within 10; the area is filled with ghostly lights, wisps of mist, and the faint whispers of the dead. The zone is difficult terrain and lightly obscured. Any creature that enters or ends its turn in the zone is subject to an attack: + 25 vs. Will; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
↩ <b>Death Shriek</b> (when reduced to 0 hp) ♦ <b>Fear, Psychic</b> The ziggurat ghost recharges and uses its <i>terrifying shriek</i> immediately.	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +24	
<b>Str</b> 11 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 28 (+19) <b>Wis</b> 14 (+12)
<b>Con</b> 20 (+15)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+11) <b>Cha</b> 25 (+17)

## PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

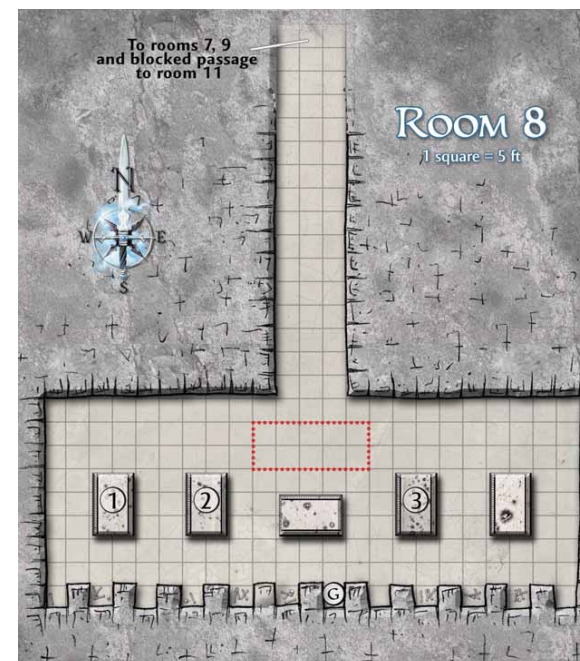
As with room 7, the humanoid undead here could be part of your plans for further adventures. The PCs might talk to these creatures.

<b>3 Ancient Ziggurat Mummies</b> Medium natural humanoid (undead)	<b>Level 21 Brute</b> XP 3,200 each
<b>Initiative</b> +12 <b>Senses</b> Perception +16; darkvision	
<b>Tomb Rot (Necrotic)</b> aura 1; enemies that start their turn in the aura take 10 necrotic damage.	
<b>HP</b> 246; <b>Bloodied</b> 123; see also <i>dust of death</i>	
<b>Regeneration</b> 10 (if the mummy takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)	
<b>AC</b> 32; <b>Fortitude</b> 35, <b>Reflex</b> 30, <b>Will</b> 32; see also <i>despair</i> above	
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 10 necrotic; <b>Vulnerable</b> 10 fire	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
⊕ <b>Rotting Slam</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Disease, Necrotic</b> +24 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target contracts level 21 mummy rot (see MM 192 and below).	
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common
<b>Str</b> 22 (+16)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+13) <b>Wis</b> 10 (+10)
<b>Con</b> 26 (+18)	<b>Int</b> 4 (+7) <b>Cha</b> 20 (+15)

The mummies are silent, implacable foes. In its spirit form, the ghost doesn't actually speak. It screeches when wounded and cackles whenever one of its attacks hits. But when the ghost possesses a PC, it uses the PC's voice to taunt and insult the other characters.

## TACTICS

The ghost moves forward and uses *ghostly terrain* right on top of the view beyond hazard. This sets the hazard off. It also means the PCs can't see the exact extent of the hazard. Don't correct the players if they think the effect is part of the ghost's attack. The ghost then uses its *terrifying shriek* to push PCs into the hazard/zone area—and it does this again when the power recharges. Afterward, it tries to possess someone, using its minor action to maintain the zone. It uses its phasing ability to maneuver away from the PCs as it needs to, walking right through the crypt or alcove walls.



Each ancient ziggurat mummy uses a move action and a minor action to open its crypt. The mummy then charges into battle if possible. All the mummies simply slam away at the PCs, moving only to block direct attacks on the ghost.

The monsters fight until slain. If the PCs retreat, then the mummies shamle back into their crypts after a few minutes, and the tormenting ghost likewise returns to a burial alcove.

## 9. BETRAYER CRYPT

Encounter Level 21 (17,900 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 betrayer spirit reaver (R)
- 3 betrayer wights (W)
- 1 voidsoul specter (see below)

This burial chamber also has undead from the zigurat's past. However, these undead aren't like the others. They're evil guardians bound here against their will for crimes they committed in life. All of the monsters are out of line of sight when the PCs enter, so don't show them until they're seen. The voidsoul specter is inside the center crypt, so it can't be seen at all.

Like room 9, the PCs must approach quietly and without light to avoid alerting the undead.

This room also contains mosaics you might customize.

**When the PCs reach the doorway, read:**

*This cool burial chamber is heavy with gloom. It has alcoves in the northern wall and five stone crypts in the center. Mosaics stretch across the west, south, and east walls. The western mosaic depicts white apes pulling at a muscular black-skinned human male, separating him from a fat crimson-skinned human woman who is also beset by apes. The southern mosaic shows the male riding a two-headed tiger, shooting a bow at a throng of apes. And the eastern mosaic shows the fat woman kneeling before an immense black dragon.*

**Perception DC 26:** You hear movement from several of the burial alcoves in the north.

If the PCs don't hear the monsters, the undead receive a surprise round. They attack immediately.

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** This room is dark.

**Burial Alcoves:** Each of these alcoves is wide enough to provide a square of fighting space. Those shown to contain bones are difficult terrain. Alcove walls act as blocking terrain for determining cover.

**Crypts:** These small buildings are 10 feet high. Each is decorated with carvings, meaningful only if you want them to be. All the crypts hold multiple skeletons, but the eastern and western one also hold a few mummies (not undead) and some treasure (see below). All the doors on the crypts are heavy and mortared shut. It takes 50 damage or a DC 22 Athletics check to break the stone door open.

**Mosaic:** This colorful wall art has no meaning other than what you give it.

**Treasure:** The easternmost crypt has one parcel, and the westernmost crypt has another.

### PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

The reaver and wights are extremely pale, humanlike creatures with bestial features, reminiscent of the apes in the mosaic. They threaten and mock the PCs. They also hint at their fate as eternal guardians (soulless in the case of the wights). When slain, they're thankful for the release from their condition.

The voidsoul specter speaks in a chilling whisper right before attacking. It taunts individual PCs. However, it's careful not to speak when doing so could help the PCs locate it. It fears destruction.

Betrayer Spirit Reaver (R)		Level 21 Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 3,200
Initiative +19	Senses Perception +13; darkvision	
HP 202; Bloodied 101		
AC 37; Fortitude 34, Reflex 33, Will 33		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic;		
Vulnerable 10 radiant		
Speed 5		
⚔ Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon		
+26 vs. AC; 2d12 + 7 damage (crit 3d12 + 31), and the target is dazed (save ends). <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target is dazed and weakened (save ends both).		
✂ Murderous Gaze (standard; encounter) ♦ Gaze, Necrotic		
Ranged 10; must target a living creature; +20 vs. Fortitude; if the target is weakened, it is reduced to 0 hit points. Otherwise, the target takes 3d6 + 7 necrotic damage and loses a healing surge.		
<b>Death Drinker</b>		
If a living creature is reduced to 0 hit points within 5 squares of the betrayer spirit reaver, the reaver gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn, as well as 15 temporary hit points.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common	
Str 24 (+17)	Dex 24 (+17)	Wis 6 (+8)
Con 26 (+18)	Int 10 (+10)	Cha 24 (+17)
Equipment greataxe		

### TACTICS

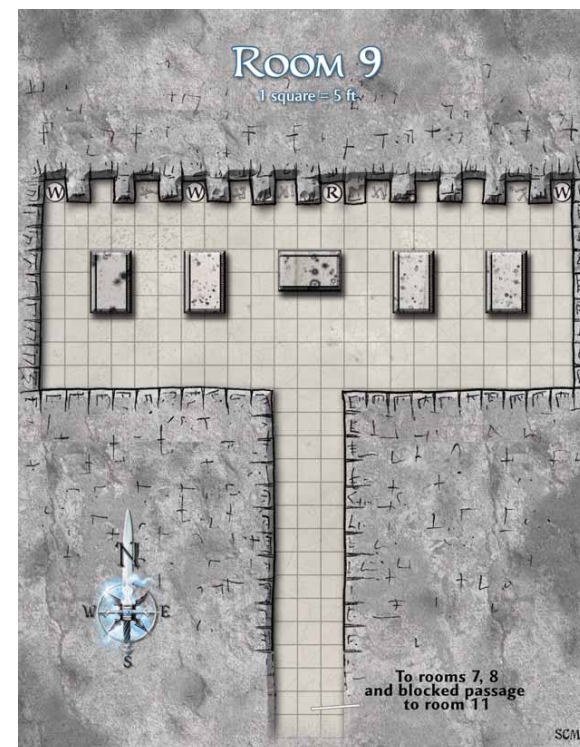
The betrayer spirit reaver rushes in to combat, charging if it must. Hoping to benefit greatly from *death drinker* as its foes fall, it moves among the PCs and stays there, hacking with its greataxe. It uses its *murderous gaze* as soon as it knows a PC is weakened, even if doing so draws an opportunity attack or other damage. Of course, it moves or shifts to avoid such damage if it can.

<b>3 Betrayer Wights (W)</b>		<b>Level 21 Brute</b>
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 3,200 each
<b>Initiative</b> +16	<b>Senses</b> Perception +13; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 244; <b>Bloodied</b> 122; see also <i>death wail</i>		
<b>AC</b> 33; <b>Fortitude</b> 36, <b>Reflex</b> 33, <b>Will</b> 32		
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 20 necrotic;		
<b>Vulnerable</b> 10 radiant		
<b>Speed</b> 7		
⚔ <b>Claw</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Healing, Necrotic</b>		
+24 vs. AC; 2d8 + 9 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened. To end the weakened condition, the target must spend a healing surge (a free action). If the target does so, the wight regains 15 hit points.		
⚡ <b>Death Wail</b> (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b>		
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +21 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 7 necrotic damage. Undead allies in the burst can make a basic attack as a free action.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Str</b> 28 (+19)	<b>Dex</b> 22 (+16)	<b>Wis</b> 6 (+8)
<b>Con</b> 24 (+17)	<b>Int</b> 8 (+9)	<b>Cha</b> 20 (+15)

Like the reaver, the wights rush the PCs, cunningly maneuvering for flanking. They too simply stay among the PCs, cutting with their claws. Until they're bloodied, they willingly draw opportunity attacks and other damage to get at softer targets in the party's ranks. Remember that the option to remove the weakened condition the wights impose is a free action, so a PC can do it at any time.

<b>Voidsoul Specter</b>		<b>Level 23 Lurker</b>
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 5,100
<b>Initiative</b> +23	<b>Senses</b> Perception +16; darkvision	
<b>Spectral Cold</b> (Cold) aura 1; an enemy that starts its turn in the aura takes 10 cold damage and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the start of its next turn.		
<b>HP</b> 115; <b>Bloodied</b> 57		
<b>AC</b> 35; <b>Fortitude</b> 32, <b>Reflex</b> 35, <b>Will</b> 34		
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 30 necrotic, insubstantial;		
<b>Vulnerable</b> 10 radiant		
<b>Speed</b> fly 8 (hover); phasing		
⚔ <b>Spectral Touch</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Necrotic</b>		
+25 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 6 necrotic damage.		
⚡ <b>Life Siphon</b> (standard; encounter) ♦ <b>Healing, Necrotic</b>		
Close blast 5; +25 vs. Fortitude; 2d12 + 6 necrotic damage, and the voidsoul specter regains 5 hit points for every creature damaged by the attack.		
<b>Invisibility</b> (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ <b>Illusion</b>		
The voidsoul specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack. It remains invisible while using <i>life siphon</i> .		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic evil	<b>Languages</b> Common	
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +24		
<b>Str</b> 12 (+12)	<b>Dex</b> 26 (+19)	<b>Wis</b> 10 (+11)
<b>Con</b> 19 (+15)	<b>Int</b> 11 (+11)	<b>Cha</b> 23 (+17)

When its initiative count comes up, the voidsoul specter turns invisible and emerges from the center crypt. It moves among the PCs as well, trying to get as many as possible in its aura. PCs instantly know something is amiss, because the temperature drops—those in the aura feel its icy grip. The specter is content to remain invisible for a turn before attacking, and it only attacks from a good position away from the dangerous melee combatants. It turns invisible each turn before attacking to ensure combat advantage and to choose its angle of attack without risking opportunity attacks. Once it's bloodied, it moves to a good spot for its life siphon, which doesn't render it visible. It doesn't care if it hits its allies with life siphon, knowing that if it manages to damage them, it regains even more hit points.



The reaver and wights fight until slain, but the specter retreats into the center crypt once it's at 29 or fewer hit points. It fights to the death if the PCs breach the crypt. Otherwise, it uses its 3 healing surges (each restoring 28 hp) and recharges *life siphon* after a short rest. If the PCs are still around, it attacks them, retreating again when bloodied. All of the monsters are bound to this chamber and the nearby hall, so they don't give chase.

## 10. UNDERCAVERN

Encounter Level 21 (18,100 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 sebacean mutant chuul (C)
- 1 sebacean mutant treant (T)
- 1 sebacean glider (GI)
- 5 sebacean mutant apes (A)

This cavern is a hollow gap in the bedrock on which the ziggurat rests, and water from the Elemental Chaos has seeped here over the centuries from room 8. It's also home to a treant and a chuul that the sebaceans have bred as guardians.

PCs can initially arrive here only through the shaft to rooms 4 and 1. That shaft ends 20 feet above the water.

The chuul starts submerged in the deep water in the southwest corner. Don't reveal it until its turn.

**When the PCs descend into the cavern, read:**

*Below is an immense cavern, the floor of which is covered with luminous water—you're not sure how deep. Three islands rise above it. The northern island has twisted, dark, vinelike masses along its northern and western reaches. Upon that island, several of the strange ape creatures caper and howl before a black altar, on which stands a black, winged insectile creature. Vine masses cover the southern island, which has a humanoid like a massive banyan tree covered in dark chitin and with glowing multifaceted eyes. A smaller eastern island is bare stone.*

Sebacean Glider (GI)	Level 20 Skirmisher
Large aberrant magical beast	XP 2,800
<b>Initiative</b> +20	<b>Senses</b> Perception +15; darkvision
<b>HP</b> 191; <b>Bloodied</b> 95	
<b>AC</b> 34; <b>Fortitude</b> 32, <b>Reflex</b> 34, <b>Will</b> 31	
<b>Resist</b> 20 adaptive (see below)	
<b>Speed</b> 6, fly 10; see also <i>reactive teleport</i>	
⚔ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)	
+25 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.	
⚔ <b>Flyby Attack</b> (standard; at-will)	
The sebacean glider flies up to 10 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The glider doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.	
⚔ <b>Reactive Teleport</b> (immediate reaction, when the glider takes damage; at-will) ♦ <b>Teleportation</b>	
The glider teleports 2 squares and attacks an adjacent creature; +25 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage.	
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>	
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Deep Speech
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +23	
<b>Str</b> 19 (+14)	<b>Dex</b> 26 (+18) <b>Wis</b> 21 (+15)
<b>Con</b> 23 (+16)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+11) <b>Cha</b> 14 (+12)

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The water provides bright light in the whole cavern.

**Ceiling:** The moist, rough ceiling (Athletics DC 35 to climb) is 20 feet high.

**Altar:** This low obstacle is 3 feet high.

**Deep Water:** The water here varies between 5 and 15 feet deep (Athletics DC 10 to swim), darkening color indicating more depth. PCs fighting while underwater take penalties for aquatic combat: -2 to attack rolls for powers that have the fire keyword, and -2 to attack rolls with weapons other than spears or crossbows.

Sebacean Mutant Treant (T)	Level 21 Elite Soldier
Huge aberrant magical beast (plant, undead)	XP 6,400
<b>Initiative</b> +16	<b>Senses</b> Perception +14; low-light vision
<b>Screaming Tree (Psychic)</b> aura 2; an enemy in the aura at the start of its turn takes 10 psychic damage.	
<b>HP</b> 400; <b>Bloodied</b> 200	
<b>AC</b> 38; <b>Fortitude</b> 36, <b>Reflex</b> 33, <b>Will</b> 34	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6 (forestwalk)	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	
⚔ <b>Slam</b> (standard; at-will) ♦ <b>Psychic</b>	
Reach 3; +25 vs. AC; 2d6 + 9 damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends).	
⚔ <b>Psychic Roots</b> (minor; at-will) ♦ <b>Illusion</b>	
Reach 4; +23 vs. Will; the target is knocked prone and immobilized (save ends).	
<b>Psychic Shock</b>	
A creature hit by the treant's opportunity attack is immobilized until the end of the treant's next turn.	
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Deep Speech
<b>Str</b> 28 (+19)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+14) <b>Wis</b> 9 (+9)
<b>Con</b> 24 (+17)	<b>Int</b> 10 (+10) <b>Cha</b> 23 (+16)

**Shallow Water:** Where marked, the water is only about two feet deep. It is difficult terrain but poses no other difficulties.

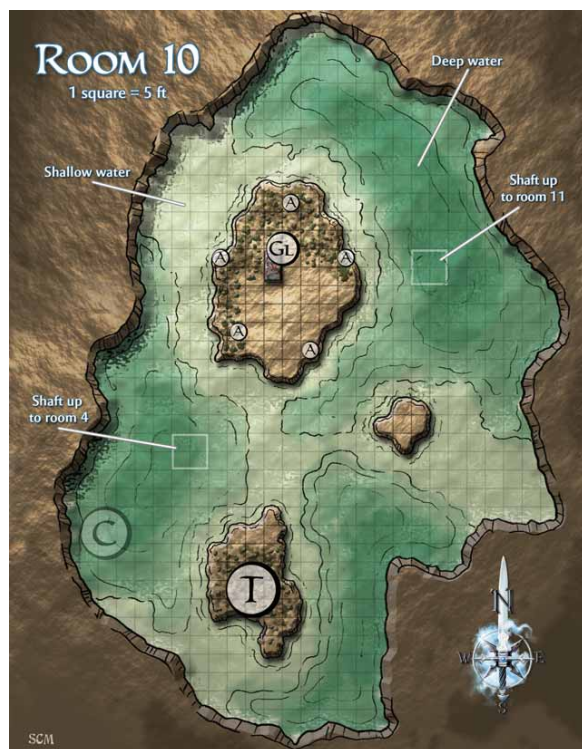
**Shaft to Room 11:** It's a 40-foot climb to room 11 through this shaft, with DCs as the shaft above.

**Shaft to Room 4:** It's a 300-foot climb (Athletics DC 25) to room 4 and another 100-foot climb to room 1. PCs can climb up the slippery walls of the cave (DC 25), then a along the ceiling (see above).

**Vine Masses:** These sinewy black plants loop and snake along the ground where the islands show dark spots. They are difficult terrain. If attacked, they twist away from the danger, leaving the square clear.

**Treasure:** One parcel is on or around the altar.





## PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

The apes gibber and howl as always, but they also whine and whimper whenever the chuul or treant comes near. These monsters frighten the apes. The chuul makes no sound, but the snap of its claws echoes throughout the cavern whenever it makes an attack. The treant speaks Deep Speech, but it says little other than “Death!” whenever it attacks, and “Drown!” or “Stay!” when it immobilizes someone with its roots.

### Sebacean Mutant Chuul (C) Level 21 Elite Soldier

Huge aberrant magical beast (aquatic) XP 6,400

**Initiative** +16    **Senses** Perception +17; darkvision  
**Psychic Moan (Psychic)** aura 2; the chuul exudes a constant hum of psychic energy. Enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to Will defense and gain vulnerable 5 psychic.

**HP** 402; **Bloodied** 201

**AC** 39; **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 33, **Will** 34

**Saving Throws** +2

**Speed** 7, swim 7

**Action Points** 1

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage, or 4d8 + 8 damage against an immobilized creature.

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

The chuul makes two claw attacks. If both claw attacks hit a single target, the chuul makes a secondary attack against the same target with its tentacles. **Secondary Attack:** +26 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized (save ends).

⤵ **Psychic Lure** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Psychic**

Ranged 10; +27 vs. Will; 2d10 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is pulled 5 squares.

⊕ **Tentacle Net** ♦ **Poison**

A creature hit by the chuul's opportunity attack is immobilized until the end of the chuul's next turn.

**Alignment** Evil

**Languages** Deep Speech

**Str** 27 (+18)

**Dex** 19 (+14)

**Wis** 15 (+12)

**Con** 25 (+17)

**Int** 6 (+8)

**Cha** 22 (+16)

### 5 Sebacean Mutant Apes (A) Level 18 Minion

Medium aberrant beast XP 500 each

**Initiative** +14    **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

**AC** 32; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 30

**Speed** 8, climb 8

⊕ **Limb Blades** (standard; at-will)

+23 vs. AC; 9 damage.

**Dying Howl** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Each other sebacean mutant ape within 10 squares gains +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn. This bonus stacks with that from other sebacean mutant apes' dying howls.

**Alignment** Evil

**Languages** Deep Speech

**Str** 25 (+16)

**Dex** 20 (+14)

**Wis** 21 (+14)

**Con** 23 (+15)

**Int** 5 (+6)

**Cha** 15 (+12)

## TACTICS

On its turn after the PCs enter, the sebacean glider takes flight. It favors using *flyby attack* against those embattled by the chuul and treant.

As soon as it's aware of the PCs, the treant lurches toward them. Its *forestwalk* ability allows it to ignore the vine masses on the islands. It plants itself among the PCs, catching as many as possible in its aura and *psychic roots*. It then slams away at those within its reach, moving only to catch more enemies with its powers.

The chuul surfaces on its turn, when it moves up to a PC and makes its *double attack*. It prefers immobilized targets. Because the chuul gains +2 to attack rolls against non-aquatic PCs in deep water, it also likes to catch its targets there. When it can, it makes a *double attack*, only using *psychic lure* to pull a foe within reach when it needs to do so to avoid missing out on an attack during its turn. It might use an action point on its first turn to swim, *psychic lure* a PCs to it, then *double attack*.

Like good soldiers, the chuul and treant work well in close proximity to each other. Both can immobilize, which really benefits the chuul. The chuul's *psychic moan* makes the treant's *screaming tree* aura more potent, and makes *psychic roots* more likely to hit and immobilize.

As for the apes, they rush the PCs as soon as they can, splitting up and approaching from different directions.

If the PCs flee up either shaft, the treant lifts two mutant apes per round up to the shaft. With a climb speed of 8, the apes can make a credible pursuit. The sebacean glider flies up the shaft to room 11 if reduced to 30 or fewer hit points. If it can, it uses its three surges in that room during a short rest and warns the monsters there. All the other creatures fight until slain.

## II. HOURGLASS CHAMBER

Encounter Level 22 (20,900 XP)

### SETUP

- 1 sebacean gleaner (GL)
- 2 sebacean mutant nightwalkers (N)
- 6 sebacean mutant apes (A)

Tons of rock block the passage to this chamber on the same level as rooms 7, 8, and 9. The PCs might figure a way through that cave-in, but they're most likely to come through the shaft from room 10.

The map shows four sebacean mutant apes, but that's because at the start of the encounter, the apes are piled atop one another. They all start in the indicated space, within a crystal cylinder (see Features of the Area).

This room has mosaics you can customize.

### When the PCs see the room, read:

*This nearly octagonal room has two large alcoves. Upon a dais on the east wall, a luminous white sebacean stands—right below a floating, bejeweled hourglass. Three glowing crystal columns filled with green mist also stand in the room. Two have giant obsidian-skinned, chitin-covered humanoids with horned heads, featureless except for glowing green eyes. The third has a throng of those weird ape-creatures, all leaping and climbing atop each other, scrabbling at the inside of the crystal tube.*

*The northern alcove has a mosaic of the fat woman depicted on mosaics elsewhere in the ziggurat. She's embracing a slim woman with serpentine arms ending in snakeheads. Bowing apes surround them on all sides. A small shelf is built into the northern wall.*

*In the southern alcove is a mosaic of the slim woman from the north alcove. Her arms are stretched out, and each*

*is biting a stricken human in peasant garb. A small shelf is also built into the southern wall.*

*A short stair leads up to a western passage out of the room.*

### FEATURES OF THE AREA

**Illumination:** The crystal columns glow, providing bright light throughout the room. Their shards also glow for about 5 minutes, so the light remains for a while when the columns are gone.

**Crystal Cylinders:** A cylinder's wall doesn't block line of sight, but it does block line of effect. Creatures inside a cylinder have total cover from attacks that come from outside the cylinder. It takes 15 damage to break each cylinder. When it breaks, it leaves shattered glass in the marked squares that start adjacent to it. Those squares are difficult terrain, which a creature can ignore by taking 3 damage per square. A creature knocked prone on the shattered glass takes 1d10 damage.

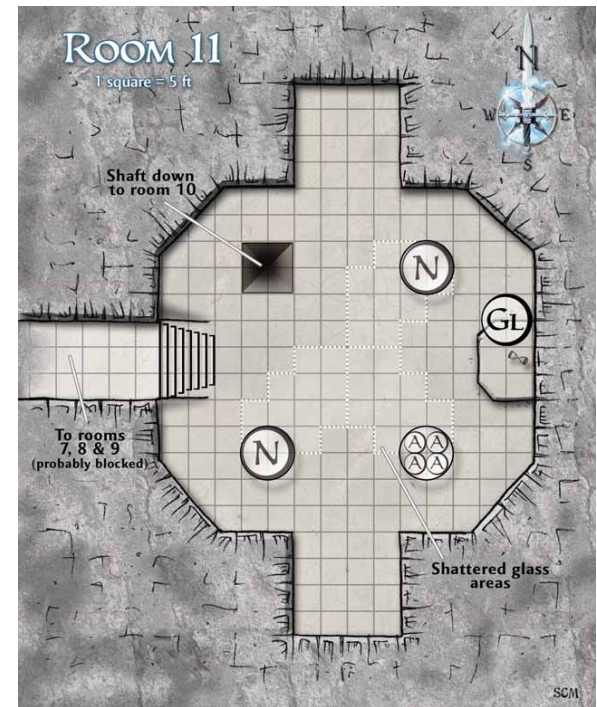
**Deluvian Hourglass:** This artifact floats about 10 feet off the ground, but anyone can grab it. It's fully described at the end of the adventure. If grabbed during the fight, a PC gets an instinctive sense that it functions like a +5 implement of whatever type that PC usually uses. The hourglass communicates with its new owner after the fight, when it describes its powers and preferences more fully.

**Shaft:** It's a 40-foot climb (Athletics DC 25) down to the ceiling of room 10 and another 20 feet down to the water in the Undercavern.

**Treasure:** One parcel is on the northern shelf, and another on the southern shelf.

### PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

The apes and the sebacean gleaner should seem more desperate than elsewhere—this is the last line of defense for the hourglass. Once it's bloodied, the gleaner starts trying to convince the PCs to leave the ziggurat.



It makes statements like:

- ◆ “You must depart! The hourglass must hasten the end of the world! Surely you see this.”
- ◆ “You cannot trifle with the power . . . of time itself! Flee while you still can!”
- ◆ “We’ve waited too long, keeping the hourglass safe! It must remain here until the end of the world!”
- ◆ “Your puny minds cannot fathom the untold wonders when the Mad Architects remake this world! Go now, and live out your ignorant mortal lives!”
- ◆ “Why do you wish to be trapped within the ziggurat until the end of the world?”
- ◆ “Your petty victories shall be short lived when the Mad Architects bring the glory of the Far Realm to your world!”

<b>Sebacean Gleaner (GI)</b>		<b>Level 23 Controller</b>
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 5,100
<b>Initiative</b> +15	<b>Senses</b> Perception +18; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 215; <b>Bloodied</b> 107		
<b>AC</b> 37; <b>Fortitude</b> 34, <b>Reflex</b> 35, <b>Will</b> 36		
<b>Resist</b> 20 adaptive (see below)		
<b>Speed</b> 6, climb 4		
⬇ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)		
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.		
↘ <b>Toxic Spittle</b> (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex, 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
↘ <b>Cocoon Prison</b> (standard; recharges when no enemy is restrained by this power)		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 acid damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).		
⬇ <b>Hypnotic Toxin</b> (standard; recharge [3])		
Reach 2; +27 vs. Will; 2d10 + 3 damage, and the target is dominated (save ends).		
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>		
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech	
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +23, History +23		
<b>Str</b> 19 (+15)	<b>Dex</b> 19 (+15)	<b>Wis</b> 24 (+18)
<b>Con</b> 23 (+17)	<b>Int</b> 25 (+18)	<b>Cha</b> 27 (+19)

<b>6 Sebacean Mutant Apes (A)</b>		<b>Level 18 Minion</b>
Medium aberrant beast		XP 500 each
<b>Initiative</b> +14	<b>Senses</b> Perception +14; darkvision	
<b>HP</b> 1; a missed attack never damages a minion		
<b>AC</b> 32; <b>Fortitude</b> 32, <b>Reflex</b> 30, <b>Will</b> 30		
<b>Speed</b> 8, climb 8		
⬇ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)		
+23 vs. AC; 9 damage.		
<b>Dying Howl</b> (when reduced to 0 hit points)		
Each other sebacean mutant ape within 10 squares gains +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn. This bonus stacks with that from other sebacean mutant apes' <i>dying howls</i> .		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Deep Speech	
<b>Str</b> 25 (+16)	<b>Dex</b> 20 (+14)	<b>Wis</b> 21 (+14)
<b>Con</b> 23 (+15)	<b>Int</b> 5 (+6)	<b>Cha</b> 15 (+12)

## TACTICS

The sebacean gleaner can take a standard action on its first turn to shatter the crystal cylinders by force of will alone. If it's unable to do so, the creatures in the cylinders must batter their way free by attacking the cylinders from the inside.

Once it can attack the PCs, the gleaner uses normal gleaner tactics of hanging on the edge of the battle, alternating between *cocoon prison* and *toxic spittle* as recharge dictates. It uses *hypnotic toxin* on a melee attacker or to further hinder a foe that just escaped from a cocoon.

The nightwalkers move to opposite sides of the room, and they use *void lure* to pull the PCs back and forth between them. Each wants a PC close enough each turn to use its claws. It moves or charges to bring its claws to bear if it needs to. Until they're bloodied, the nightwalkers worry little about opportunity attacks. They do respect marks, however, because their accuracy is affected. If a nightwalker senses a bloodied enemy, it uses *mind annihilation* even if doing so provokes opportunity attacks. The nightwalkers focus on those they perceive to be the greatest threat, often defenders who control the battle's flow with marks.

Mutant apes simply block access to the gleaner, and slice the PCs with their *limb blades*.

If the PCs retreat, the apes follow them. The sebacean and the nightwalkers remain here. All the monsters know the stakes. They fight until slain.

<b>2 Sebacean Mutant Nightwalkers (N)</b>		<b>Level 21 Elite Brute</b>
Large aberrant humanoid (undead)		XP 6,400 each
<b>Initiative</b> +16	<b>Senses</b> Perception +14; darkvision	
<b>Void Static (Psychic, Necrotic)</b> aura 5; enemies that start their turns in the aura take 5 psychic and necrotic damage.		
<b>HP</b> 490; <b>Bloodied</b> 245		
<b>AC</b> 35; <b>Fortitude</b> 36, <b>Reflex</b> 34, <b>Will</b> 35		
<b>Immune</b> disease, poison; <b>Resist</b> 20 psychic, 20 necrotic;		
<b>Vulnerable</b> 20 radiant		
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2		
<b>Speed</b> 8		
<b>Action Points</b> 1		
⬇ <b>Claws</b> (standard; at-will) ⬥ <b>Psychic, Necrotic</b>		
Reach 2; +24 vs. AC; 1d8 + 9 damage plus 2d8 psychic and necrotic damage.		
↘ <b>Mind Annihilation</b> (standard; encounter) ⬥ <b>Gaze, Necrotic, Psychic</b>		
Ranged 5; affects a bloodied target only; +22 vs. Will; the target drops to 0 hit points. <i>Miss</i> : The target is dazed until the end of the sebacean mutant nightwalker's next turn. Resistance does not apply to this power.		
↙ <b>Void Lure</b> (minor 1/round; at-will) ⬥ <b>Gaze, Necrotic, Psychic</b>		
Close blast 5; targets enemies; +21 vs. Will; 1d8 + 7 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target is pulled 3 squares.		
<b>Alignment</b> Evil	<b>Languages</b> Common, Deep Speech, telepathy 20	
<b>Str</b> 28 (+19)	<b>Dex</b> 23 (+16)	<b>Wis</b> 9 (+9)
<b>Con</b> 25 (+17)	<b>Int</b> 17 (+13)	<b>Cha</b> 24 (+17)

## UNFINISHED BUSINESS

With the sebaceans defeated and the *Deluvian Hourglass* in the PCs' hands, the adventure in *The Ziggurat Beyond Time* are over. The PCs' involvement in the end of the world might be just getting started.

As soon as it's handled for more than a few moments, the *Deluvian Hourglass* speaks in a whispery voice to its possessor, telling what it can do and what it expects in return. Tell the player what actions and events affect the concordance score positively or negatively, but don't say how many concordance points each is worth. Reveal some or all of the hourglass's motivations, depending on the likely arc of your campaign.

While the sebaceans held the hourglass for centuries, they aren't the only ones who know of or desire its power. An artifact such as the *Deluvian Hourglass* attracts attention from all sorts of forces—good, sinister, and merely mercenary. Now that the PCs have the hourglass, you can send all sorts of mayhem their way.

By the end of the adventure, it should be clear to the PCs that the sebaceans have designs that extend far beyond one mysterious ziggurat. Furthermore, the PCs should have a healthy curiosity about the Mad Architects. Are the sebaceans the only entities that the Mad Architects have influenced in known reality? Unlikely. More monsters are certainly out there laying the groundwork for the Mad Architects' arrival. The PCs might be the only ones capable of uncovering and defeating the Far Realm horrors the Mad Architects have insinuated into the universe.

One or more of the mythological figures referred to in the ziggurat mosaics might have survived the fall of the empire that venerated them. These beings might yet live today. If this is the case, you don't need to do anything right away. Let the PCs go on further adventures, then reintroduce something that evokes their memories of mythology depicted in the ziggurat.



## NEW MONSTER: SEBACEAN

Sebaceans are insectile creatures touched by the Far Realm. They claim to have come to the world to guard locations of mystical importance, awaiting the day when their masters breach reality and reclaim them.

Sebacean Gleaner		Level 23 Controller
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 5,100
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +18; darkvision	
HP 215; Bloodied 107		
AC 37; Fortitude 34, Reflex 35, Will 36		
Resist 20 adaptive (see below)		
Speed 6, climb 4		
⚔ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)		
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.		
☞ <b>Toxic Spittle</b> (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex, 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).		
☞ <b>Cocoon Prison</b> (standard; recharges when no enemy is restrained by this power)		
Ranged 10; +27 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 acid damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).		
⚡ <b>Hypnotic Toxin</b> (standard; recharge ☹☹)		
Reach 2; +27 vs. Will; 2d10 + 3 damage, and the target is dominated (save ends).		
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>		
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Deep Speech	
Skills Arcana +23, History +23		
Str 19 (+15)	Dex 19 (+15)	Wis 24 (+18)
Con 23 (+17)	Int 25 (+18)	Cha 27 (+19)

### SEBACEAN GLEANER TACTICS

A sebacean gleaner initially avoids melee, opening with a *cocoon prison*. It then uses *toxic spittle* until the cocooned enemy saves, when *cocoon prison* becomes available again. If attacked in melee, it likes to use *hypnotic toxin* on its attacker. It sometimes employs *hypnotic toxin* on a cocooned enemy that just saved.

Sebacean Glider		Level 20 Skirmisher	
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 2,800	
Initiative +20		Senses Perception +15; darkvision	
HP 191; Bloodied 95			
AC 34; Fortitude 32, Reflex 34, Will 31			
Resist 20 adaptive (see below)			
Speed 6, fly 10; see also <i>reactive teleport</i>			
⚔ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)			
+25 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage.			
✚ <b>Flyby Attack</b> (standard; at-will)			
The sebacean glider flies up to 10 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The glider doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.			
✚ <b>Reactive Teleport</b> (immediate reaction, when the glider takes damage; at-will) ✦ <b>Teleportation</b>			
The glider teleports 2 squares and attacks an adjacent creature; +25 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage.			
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>			
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil		<b>Languages</b> Deep Speech	
<b>Skills</b> Stealth +23			
<b>Str</b> 19 (+14)	<b>Dex</b> 26 (+18)	<b>Wis</b> 21 (+15)	
<b>Con</b> 23 (+16)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+11)	<b>Cha</b> 14 (+12)	

### SEBACEAN GLIDER TACTICS

A sebacean glider hangs on the edge of a battle, swooping in and out to deliver risk-free attacks. It tries to stay within two squares of multiple enemies to threaten as many as possible with *reactive teleport*.

Sebacean Gorger		Level 22 Brute	
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 4,150 each	
Initiative +15		Senses Perception +15; darkvision	
HP 258; Bloodied 129; see also <i>bloodied fury</i>			
AC 34; Fortitude 36, Reflex 31, Will 30			
Resist 20 adaptive (see below)			
Speed 6, climb 4			
⚔ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)			
Reach 2; +25 (+27 while bloodied) vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 (2d10 + 10 while bloodied) damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).			
⚔ <b>Blade Shred</b> (standard; recharges when an adjacent enemy becomes bloodied)			
Close burst 1; +24 (+26 while bloodied) vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 (2d10 + 10 while bloodied) damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).			
<b>Bloodied Fury</b>			
The sebacean gorger gains +2 to attack rolls and damage rolls while bloodied (included above).			
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>			
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil		<b>Languages</b> Deep Speech	
<b>Str</b> 26 (+19)	<b>Dex</b> 18 (+15)	<b>Wis</b> 19 (+15)	
<b>Con</b> 28 (+20)	<b>Int</b> 14 (+13)	<b>Cha</b> 15 (+13)	

### SEBACEAN GORGER TACTICS

A sebacean gorger establishes melee contact with as many enemies as possible, so it can use *blade shred* early and often. The gorger and its allies concentrate attacks on enemies adjacent to the gorger, to ensure a faster recharge on *blade shred*.

Sebacean Guardian		Level 21 Soldier	
Large aberrant magical beast		XP 3,200	
Initiative +14		Senses Perception +16; darkvision	
HP 199; Bloodied 99			
AC 37; Fortitude 35, Reflex 29, Will 33			
Resist 20 adaptive (see below)			
Speed 6, climb 4			
⚔ <b>Limb Blades</b> (standard; at-will)			
Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage and until the sebacean guardian's next turn, when the target shifts, the sebacean guardian can make a melee basic attack against it.			
✚ <b>Heuristic Strike</b> (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞☞☞)			
Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 1d10 + 10 damage. One condition that a save can end on the sebacean guardian ends, and the target gains that condition (save ends).			
<b>Threatening Reach</b>			
A sebacean guardian can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (2 squares).			
<b>Adaptive Resistance</b>			
A sebacean gains resist 20 against the first damage type that damages it during an encounter. The resist lasts until the end of the encounter.			
<b>Alignment</b> Evil		<b>Languages</b> Deep Speech	
<b>Str</b> 26 (+18)	<b>Dex</b> 14 (+12)	<b>Wis</b> 23 (+16)	
<b>Con</b> 23 (+16)	<b>Int</b> 12 (+11)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+13)	

### SEBACEAN GUARDIAN TACTICS

A sebacean guardian has the simple job of standing on the front lines and defending its allies. It uses *limb blades* and *threatening reach* to pin enemies down, positioning itself so allies can maneuver for defensive and offensive spots. So it can use its *heuristic strike*, a guardian deliberately draws the attention of controllers and other enemies that might inflict conditions that end on a save.



nest of them amid ancient obelisks in a remote desert, she reported that they fiercely guarded the obelisks, but did not pursue her and her retinue. Karlerrea identified four types of sebaceans, seemingly organized like hive insects.

Sebaceans are known to lurk in the desolate wildernesses of the cosmos. They bide their time, keeping ancient sites and treasures safe for some inscrutable purpose.

**DC 30:** A possibly apocryphal *Annotations to the Bestiary* penned by Karlerrea indicated that an individual sebacean's caste is easy to identify from the coloration on its carapace. Guardians are red-brown, and gorgers have a mottled green-and-black pattern. Gleaners are pale white and faintly luminescent; their necks are also longer than the other sebaceans. The gliders are black, but their insectile wings are a more obvious point of distinction.

Sebaceans have a caste society, and the gleaners lead them. These sebaceans are potent ritualists, capable of constructing magical traps and altering local creatures into servitors. They can also spin filaments of crystal, which they use to build traps,

*“Your puny minds cannot fathom the untold wonders when the Mad Architects remake this world! Go now, and live out your ignorant mortal lives!”*

### Sebaean Mutant Ape Level 18 Minion Medium aberrant beast XP 500

**Initiative** +14      **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision

**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion

**AC** 32; **Fortitude** 32, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 30

**Speed** 8, climb 8

⬇ **Limb Blades** (standard; at-will)

+23 vs. AC; 9 damage.

**Dying Howl** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Each other sebacean mutant ape within 10 squares gains +1 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn. This bonus stacks with that from other sebacean mutant apes' dying howls.

**Alignment** Evil      **Languages** Deep Speech

**Str** 25 (+16)      **Dex** 20 (+14)      **Wis** 21 (+14)

**Con** 23 (+15)      **Int** 5 (+6)      **Cha** 15 (+12)

### SEBACEAN MUTANT APE TACTICS

These apes, twisted by the ritual magic of the sebacean gleaners, seize advantageous ground and surround their enemies. They are bred to attack in packs, staying within 10 squares of most other mutant apes so each *dying howl* allows them to become briefly more effective.

### SEBACEAN LORE

A character knows the following information with a successful Dungeoneering check.

**DC 25:** Sebaceans were first identified and named by the warlock Karlerrea in her *Bestiary of the Hideous*, a sought-after reference work. After encountering a

contain their ritual subjects, or temporarily restrain their foes.

All sebaceans converse in Deep Speech, their cadence ponderous. Most sebaceans have a basic understanding of Common, but gleaners have mastered the language from scrying on the “lesser races” in the vicinity of their lairs. In most cases, however, sebaceans only speak to give orders or disseminate necessary information.

**DC 35:** Divinations performed by the archmage Oriel the Thrice-Blessed suggest that the sebaceans are guarding specific locations around the world in anticipation to an invasion from a master race known

as the Mad Architects. Further research and ritual divination to learn more about the Mad Architects has not been fruitful. The sebaceans believe that the Mad Architects are even now preparing their campaign from their unimaginable home in the Far Realm.

Sebaceans speak of the Mad Architects, other than to name them, only in veiled threats and ravings about the end of the world. Every sebacean is utterly certain that, when the time is right, the Mad Architects shall manifest themselves in this world—presumably in the places that the sebaceans are guarding. Then these mysterious and malevolent beings will begin their campaign of universal conquest—or consumption.

If the Mad Architects exist and created the sebaceans, they never gifted their creations with the concept of leisure or complex emotions. Sebaceans can’t “feel” anything beyond a sense of frustration or satisfaction. So no sebacean art or culture exists. Other than the gleaners and their experiments, sebaceans only wait for the time when their Far Realm masters come to the cosmos.

## ENCOUNTER GROUPS

Sebaceans don’t roam. They guard locations and objects for eventual use by the Mad Architects. So when they’re encountered, it’s almost always in the context of a site-based adventure. And because sebaceans don’t harbor ambitions beyond “keep this place safe until the Mad Architects invade,” they often arrange alliances of convenience with the other denizens of a site.

### Level 21 Encounter (XP 18,450)

- ◆ 2 sebacean guardians (level 21 soldier)
- ◆ 1 sebacean gorger (level 22 brute)
- ◆ 1 sebacean glider (level 20 skirmisher)
- ◆ 1 sebacean gleaner (level 23 controller)



## THE DELUVIAN HOURGLASS

The hourglass is appropriate for epic-level characters. It functions best in the hands of a character that uses an implement to make attacks. Unlike most artifacts, the *Deluvian Hourglass* requires a particular sort of fuel to power its most potent magic: primordial sand. The owner earns primordial sand by defeating epic foes (see the sidebar), but over time the hourglass demands ever more powerful primordial sand.

Because the hourglass hops around from one point in history to another in disregard for time's ordinary sequence, telling the history of such an artifact is problematic. The *Deluvian Hourglass* was present at the dawn of time, but only because it sent itself there, not because it was actually created there. It can't predict the future, so it can't know when the world's end is nigh.

A mighty primordial known as Deluvius fashioned the hourglass amid the tumult of the war between the primordials and the gods. As was common among the elemental forces in the early days of that war, Deluvius assumed that the primordials would eventually be victorious and expunge the gods' "improvements" from the cosmos, if not destroy creation outright. Deluvius created the hourglass as a way of marking time until the primordials' inevitable victory.

But the gods defeated the primordials in that Dawn War, and thus the hourglass has outlived its creator. It still waits for the end of the world and has a spark of Deluvius's desire to see the universe destroyed. But in the countless ages since the fall of the primordials, the hourglass has seen enough to know that the end of all things won't necessarily come at the hands of the its erstwhile masters.

### The Deluvian Hourglass Epic Level

*This roughly shaped hourglass is festooned with jewels that glow with inner elemental light. Its metal parts are dull silver, but they shift as if they were mercury. Inside the hourglass is a small mound of black sand.*

The *Deluvian Hourglass* is a +5 implement with the following properties and powers.

**Enhancement:** Attack rolls and damage rolls

**Critical:** +5d6 damage, + 5d8 damage to immortal creatures

**Property:** The bearer of the hourglass is considered to be four levels higher when performing divination and scrying rituals.

**Power (Encounter):** Immediate Reaction. Use this power when you fail a saving throw. Reroll the saving throw.

**Power (Daily):** Free Action. You can speed up time for yourself alone. You gain an extra standard action during your next turn. This power consumes 1 ounce of primordial sand.

**Power (Daily):** Minor Action. You can perform a *time stop* (wizard 22). This power consumes 1 ounce of primordial sand.

### GOALS OF THE DELUVIAN HOURGLASS

- ◆ Be present at moments of great historic significance, especially ones where future events hinge on the efforts of a few extraordinary individuals.
- ◆ Travel time and space to learn more about essential cosmic forces.
- ◆ Hasten the end of the world.

### ROLEPLAYING THE DELUVIAN HOURGLASS

Insofar as the hourglass has a personality clear to mortals, it's an erratic and fickle presence. The shifting of the sands within the hourglass sounds like a whisper to

### PRIMORDIAL SAND

The *Deluvian Hourglass* starts with 2 ounces of primordial sand. It consumes primordial sand each time you use its mightiest powers. Fortunately, the hourglass can make more sand for itself. Whenever the party kills an epic-level, nonminion aberrant or immortal enemy in a battle where you used the hourglass, the hourglass destroys the body and leaves a one-ounce pile of primordial sand. It does so to only one enemy per battle, only the highest-level enemy in that battle, and only 1d3 times per day. Further, the enemy turned into sand must be of your level or higher.

its owner. At first, the hourglass has little to say, other than to briefly explain how its powers work and how to acquire more primordial sand. But as the hourglass sees the adventures that its possessor is undertaking, it starts to offer advice. It often suggests that its possessor use it to perform divination rituals that inquire about cosmos-shaking threats. As if it has observed this truth, it speaks in mysterious riddles about how things happen over and over again, without changing.

But the hourglass doesn't necessarily reveal its true purpose, which is to see creation's ending. It encourages its possessor to do battle with forces that wish to end the world . . . up until the moment when significant success or failure hangs in the balance. It then urges its owner to hasten the end. But the hourglass does so with no malice, and it doesn't display any sign of bearing a grudge if the owner doesn't agree. It continues to serve its possessor according to the concordance score.



## CONCORDANCE

Starting score	5
Owner gains a level	+1d10
Owner places an ounce of primordial sand in the hourglass	+1
Owner makes significant progress on a quest involving the potential end of the world (maximum 1/week)	+1
Owner remains on the same plane for 1 week	-1
Hourglass has no primordial sand (maximum 1/week)	-2
Owner prevents the world's end (maximum 1/week)	-2

## PLEASED (16–20)

*The force I wield is beyond time itself. How can you hope to hold out against its onslaught?*

At this point, the hourglass is where it wants to be: on the cusp of world-shaking events. It continues to use its power to push its owner to be decisive and reach the point where the fate of the world hangs in the balance.

The *Deluvian Hourglass* enhancement bonus increases to +6.

**Critical:** +6d6 damage, + 6d8 damage to immortal creatures

**Power (Encounter):** Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when you are hit by an attack. You can force an enemy to reroll any successful attack from the beginning of its resolution. If the rerolled attack fails to hit, then the enemy repeats that attack a third time—but this time you make all the decisions about the attack's targeting.

## SATISFIED (12–15)

*Fear not, friends. If something goes wrong, I can turn back time and correct it.*

The hourglass senses the potential within its wielder, but it doesn't believe that the true potential has been awakened yet. So it continues to urge its owner toward acts that involve greater conflicts and titanic struggles.

**Power (Encounter):** Immediate Interrupt. Use this power when ally misses with an attack. That ally can reroll the failed attack, and if the attack hits, it deals an extra 10 damage.

## NORMAL (5–11)

*When the sand moves, I can hear it talking to me. And it says that the world is relying on us.*

The hourglass is content to observe the world, searching for two pieces of information: evidence that the skeins of time are drawing tightly around some momentous event in the future, and confirmation that its current owner is destined to play an important role in that struggle. The hourglass hasn't seen proof of either, but it is patient.

## UNSATISFIED (1–4)

*I get the feeling that the hourglass is responsible for the strange events we've been experiencing.*

Frustrated with its owner, the hourglass tries to twist the strands of time to force a change in ownership. Or it tries to give a sense that the will of the *Deluvian Hourglass* is not to be trifled with. It uses the following property for maximum mischief, trying to shift the tide of battle and put the outcome in doubt.

**Property:** Once per day, as an immediate interrupt when an ally hits with an attack, the hourglass can force that ally to reroll the attack. The attack deals only half damage even if it hits.

## ANGERED (0 OR LOWER)

*Help! The hourglass is trapping me within an endless loop of time! Stop it!*

The hourglass is patient, but it knows firsthand that time is precious. It functions normally until a critical juncture in the battle, then it unleashes the following property at the worst possible time for the PCs. When

possible, the hourglass traps an ally, not the owner. It wants to isolate the owner from friends and convince the owner to voluntarily relinquish it.

**Property:** Once per encounter, as an immediate reaction to any action, the hourglass can trap any creature within a loop of time, forcing that creature to perform the exact same action it performed the previous round (save ends). At the beginning of its turn, the creature in the time loop teleports back to the square where it started the previous turn. Then it repeats the same sequence of actions, with no variation and without regard to the frequency of the power used or the presence of enemies.

## MOVING ON

The hourglass disappears with little fanfare if it reaches a concordance of angered and its owner voluntarily relinquishes it. It sticks around long enough to allow an improvement in concordance and to toy with its owner.

Conversely, the hourglass thanks its owner and departs if it reaches a concordance of pleased but believes that the battle for the end of the world is more likely to occur elsewhere—perhaps with a less-capable and more-pliable owner. In this case, the hourglass leaves behind a non-artifact copy of itself that functions as a +5 (or +6 if appropriate) *implement* that has the property and first two powers described in the statistics.

The final likely way the hourglass moves on—and its preferred means—is for the known cosmos to come to an end. When that happens, the last act of the hourglass is to cast itself back to the dawn of time so it can experience the breadth of history all over again. ✕

*About the Author*

David Noonan is a game designer for Wizards of the Coast, Inc. He contributed to the 4th edition core rules and co-wrote the *Scepter Tower of Spellgard* adventure. He lives in Washington state with his wife and two children.