

The Crematorium

Carelessness hurts, the player(s) fall and take 5d8 damage at the bottom. They land on a stone floor covered in soot. A lava stream runs down the center of the room with large bits of rock stuck in the flow. There's a thirty-foot drop at the end of the stream into a fill-on river of lava. It's extremely hot in here and there's noxious fumes, the PC's don't have much time. They either suffocate or take a trip down into the lava on a rock. Players hitching a ride will be subject to three DC 23 Con checks. Each failed check means a cumulative -1 to all skill checks until they have an extended rest. Which they did neither of. Instead they decided to climb down the stone face parts of the drop instead of riding a rock. They still had to make the checks and a couple of them got hurt, and I still managed to make the task interesting. I may have been floundering to make this adventure genuinely difficult with the lasting effects. I was trying to create a good lead up to the final encounter, but you'll see later how that went.

At the end of the flume, they can jump off the moving rocks onto a floor like the one they first landed on. The ash is not as thick, as the air is rising to where they came from. It becomes visible that the floor is made of obsidian down here. There's a door shaped like a skull on this platform.

Since they didn't take the rock, I told them they climbed on the opposite side of the landing with the door. They had to find a way across the lava river, and jumping wasn't going to cut it. The result was a pretty cool ritual cast by Zan and Lisbeth, using a potion of fire resistance to make an oil to apply to the bottom of their boots. Creative and convenient!

On the other side is a torture chamber with ovens in the walls. There's a small number of devils hanging out in here, biding their time by torturing souls for the last five hundred years, hoping to eventually resume work on the surface. Their subjects are half orcs and elves, the room stinks of their charred flesh, the air filled with their screams. Originally, I anticipated that Crysx (our asimaar paladin/barbarian. Weird how I never mentioned that before) would be one that fell and the souls were going to be asimaar. I altered the section in between sessions to keep it all straight. The others were less than horrified by the situation and handled it very calmly.

Encounter:

This could be tricky because we won't know how many players there will be. Use your brain.

Whole party: 3x Bone Devil

3+ players: 1x Bone Devil
3x Bearded Devil

Less: 2x Bearded Devil

After all is said and done, there's a roughhewn stair that leads up to the **Nightmare Chamber**.

Interestingly enough, the fight never happened. The three bearded devils (since we had four players down here) stood around awkwardly as Lisbeth cut a deal with the bone devil. She promised him Ossen's soul, should they capture him alive, and Crysx's soul if they couldn't. Should they fail both tasks, Lisbeth's is forfeit. Either way, the bone devil wins, while Lisbeth doesn't have to risk the death of her and her comrades. Smart move, good move, very fun story move! You can't see it, but my fingers are steeped in an evil manner.

Maze Entrance

The room is made of a dark, forest green stone and is small; 15 feet wide, 25 feet deep. It's humid and warm in here, the ceiling makes it almost claustrophobic as it's only 7 feet. /On that ceiling is an intricate carving of a scene. Two men, entangled in battle, one clearly losing. The prevailing person appears to be using some sort of magic on their subject, it looks like either fire or frost, the lack of paint makes it guesswork. The loser, is in leather armor and has a sword and shield. His face is twisted in pain, the sword barely in his hands. The figure is engulfed in the wizard's spell, with only parts of his body showing through the chaos.

This little mural thing is totally to mess with my players in a meta sort of way. I was talking to Ben and he told me he was scared of Corbin maybe eventually stealing the legendary magic item of Ald Sotha for himself. The picture was supposed to spur that conversation between the two characters, but they didn't pick up on it.

On the other side of the room is a doorway to a bottleneck, it leads to **The Maze**. The corridor is 30 feet deep, but is so narrow that they can only walk single file.

Nightmare Chamber

It's a long stone corridor, a hall that would seemingly be in a lavish castle. Lisbeth and Zan will recognize that it's like a corridor that would be in the Council House of Ald Sotha. There's a red carpet that runs the length of the hallway. On their left, a row of windows that peer out into a black and purple void that shimmers and writhes. Lit by candlelight, the room feels eerie and is seemingly longer than it should be. As the players progress, the door on the opposite end doesn't get any closer. A voice slips into their minds and whispers to them collectively, "Relive the horror of your pitiful existence" The hallway seems to corkscrew, if they start to run to the door. Instantly, the characters are forced to relive a tragedy from their past. Have them describe it. There will be a round of CON checks (DC22) to shake Ossen out of their brains. Each time a check is failed, the character loses a recovery. When they all succeed is when they can walk through the door. This dumps them into **The Void**.

Ossen, as a villain, has a very special relationship with Lisbeth and Crysx. He was the very first bad guy they fought, and he continues to be a huge part of their lives. Those two characters are the only ones left from the original crew left at the table. Bits like this are in here to remind them

how much of a journey it's been, while also fleshing out their characters' back stories. The fear and shame element of this little scene was designed to give the newer players, like Tiberius and Mia, a reason to hate him beyond "he's a lich" reasoning. It also plays up the super powerful nature of the villain, though our heroes thwart him time and time again. Really classic stuff, if you ask me. Maybe the drum is a little worn, but it still feels fun to me and I've received no complaints!

The Maze

This is a subterranean labyrinth where you can walk side by side comfortably, but if things get dangerous, one man could easily block the way. Many of the corridors are very long, and something's echoing in the darkness; the patter of footsteps, a whisper, or sometimes a distant gurgle or animalistic grunt. Have the characters make skill checks towards figuring out the maze. Set the checks at DC25, and every failed check makes a various trap go off. Between the two of them, there needs to be four successful checks total. *Almost any DC I set is hopeless against Corbin. He has a +12 when using INT for skill checks. -__-*

Maze Trap +13 vs. AC – 3d10+4 damage *Again, I like to make it hurt!*

The maze abruptly ends, revealing that past the threshold is a void. After they look at it confused for a moment, the maze starts to fall apart. They can't escape, but play up the panic. No dice rolls, only narrative. They end up being dumped into **The Void**.

This was intended to dial up the creepy factor but be a relative period of downtime. Again, I anticipated the topic of the carving to be more prevalent, but it wasn't. However, the scene that was born of this bit, though definitely eerie, was without the characterization I had hoped for. You win some, you lose some.

The Void

They players converge, falling through this void. It's basically the dead space where the pocket universe part of the dungeon is being taken over by Ossen; he's shutting it down. They can hear voices, distant cries, and various mumblings whilst falling. Ossen addresses Crysx and Lisbeth telepathically, trying to squeeze information about their plan from them. Eventually, the pocket universe is shut down and the characters plop into the **Outer Sanctum** without taking damage.

I all but neglected this scene, completely omitting all the trash talk from the lich. They just fell through the emptiness and plopped back into the real world. Truth be told, I forgot to play it up. At the end of the night, things usually tend to fall apart.

Outer Sanctum

The room is plain, though with titanic double doors on the other side of it. There are skeletons of dwarves strewn about, still armored with their weapons by their sides. It's apparent that the room

is heavily trapped on the way to the door. Two rounds of skill checks (DC 25) are needed from each player to get across the room. The doors themselves are made of heavily corroded iron. Just barely visible, it depicts a battle of epic proportion, the dwarven army's bearskin clad leader leading the charge. If the players look closely, the Iron Bear has two sockets in its eyes. There are gems hiding in the room and it takes two individual DC 20 search checks to find. Sadly, they have to navigate the room again and risk setting off more traps. When the gems are inserted into the eye sockets, the doors just barely crack open and the smell of death greets their noses. The Iron hinges scream in protest as they open the door...

Traps:

Saw blades and poison darts +12vs AC – 10 damage

This one heavily backfired. Crysx got creative with the Bountiful Jar he received from the Prince of Shadows. He conjured some oil, and then spread it about to find all the cracks in the floors/walls so they could navigate the room safely. It was too clever to not let happen, though I did make him roll a standard (DC20) skill check for it. We ended the session with that door being cracked open.