



Blackwheel



Company

BWC-7 Test of Mettle

An Adventure for 7th-10th Level Characters

**BLACKWHEEL COMPANY[™] Faction Adventure 6 for the XEN'DRIK
EXPEDITIONS[™] Campaign**

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Hold the outpost. That one bridge... that one corridor. Hold it at all costs. What little remains of the Blackwheel special operatives forces are airdropped in on a dragonshard export depot. It will be up to a small group of elite Blackwheel operatives to rally the remaining guard of Annex and repel the attackers until House Deneith forces can arrive. Optimized for 7th-level characters.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Rich Baker, and Peter Adkison.

Sources: Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss [Ed Stark, James Jacob and Erik Mona], Fiendish Codex II: Tyrants of the Nine Hells [Robin Laws and Robert Schwab], Monster Manual IV [Gwendolyn Kestrel], Magic Item Compendium [Andy Collins, Mike Mearls, Stephen Schubert, Eytan Bernstein, Frank Brunner, John Sneed and Owen K.C. Stephens], Spell Compendium [Matthew Sernett, Jeff Grubb and Mike McArtor], Races of Stone [Jesse Decker, Michelle Lyons and David Noonan], Monster Manual III, Complete Arcane [Richard Baker], Player's Handbook II [David Noonan], Complete Adventurer [Jesse Decker]

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Adventure Background

The Company has faced major setbacks. Down a couple of airships, the *Glory Road* is pressed into action with all hands on deck. Since the location of the Dragonshard mining town has been discovered, the Cabal will stop at nothing to gain control of Annex.

The Company does not know that the Cabal has found a hidden Siberys Summoning Shard in a cave nearby Annex. From there, the Cabal is launching its assault on Annex. Rarely-seen creatures from the plane of Shavarath the Battleground are pouring through the shard at the command of the Cabal operation leader, Aidacra.

After the first assault on Annex, the PCs are called in to help on this operation vital to the survival of the Company.

Adventure Synopsis

While enjoying a game of three-dragon ante, the PCs are interrupted by a familiar face, Sergeant Skyne Tragar. The sergeant tells the PCs about the secret dragonshard outpost of Annex under attack by Cabal forces. Their mission is to hold the outpost until reinforcements arrive.

Before they leave, the PCs are sent to the Arclight division to receive special items to help them accomplish their mission.

Due to the loss of two airships, the Company is forced to charter a merchant vessel, the ***Ka-Ching*** to transport the PCs to the combat zone around Annex. General Ogdin orders the PCs to destroy the merchant vessel after the drop to preserve the secret location of Annex. The PCs face a moral dilemma in following this order to take innocent lives.

The PCs drop into the battle at the pivotal moment when the Cabal battering-ram unit smashes into the outpost's main gate under cover of demonic artillery. The defenders are pinned down and unable to defend against the battering ram brigade unless the PCs can take out Captain Kazoo and his crack Cabal artillery unit.

Once the PCs defeat Captain Kazoo, they are welcomed into the outpost for a well-deserved rest. Unfortunately, the Cabal sends their tactical strike force against the PCs while they sleep to strike at the heart of the outpost's best forces. The PCs are abducted by the bar'glura and taken to the prisoner area of the Cabal encampment. While here, the PCs learn of the secret of the Cabal siege force - a man-sized Khyber dragonshard has risen from the depths of Xen'drik. These dragonshards are the focus of the summoning.

Armed with this new information and after completing their rest to regain their spells, the PCs assault the secret Cabal summoning chambers.

After they deal with the caves' guardians and disrupt one of the summoning rituals, it looks like it will be the PCs last stand just outside Annex. But help suddenly arrives.

If the PCs did not destroy the Ka-Ching, Captain Loo and his crew rescue the PCs. Otherwise, Sergeant Kren blazes a path back to the outpost for the PCs to retreat. Sergeant Kren falls covering the PCs retreat.

Though the PCs are back inside the outpost, the relentless Cabal forces continue to hammer away at the gates and walls. The gate collapses and the stream of Cabal forces pour into the outpost. Just when all seems lost, Lt. General Pilgrim and his forces arrive to beat back the Cabal forces and Annex is saved thanks largely to the efforts of the PCs holding the line until help arrives.

Troubleshooting

Very long read-aloud text: Several sections of the adventure have lengthy read-aloud text. Use changes in your inflection or tone to vary the information. Encourage the PC's to participate in the conversation or instruction, and don't be afraid to improvise when necessary.

Artwork: There is a section at the end with all the creature artwork (DM's Aid 1). Cut out the pictures individually to prepare to show them to the PCs. Once the PCs spot the creatures, show them the picture.

Matching PC to Arclight Gear: Make sure you get a chance to look at each character sheet, so you can match the gear with the PC. More than one PC can get each item, but it needs to make sense what they get. There are two items that can only be given once, the I Scry and Little Man. See DM's Aid 2.

Bar'Igura Abduction: When the party gets split up by the bar'gluras and don't know where their party members have been taken, remind them of the I Scry device that have been given. Once the PCs decide to leave the inn in search of their missing teammates, it takes them two rounds to get there.

Adventure Secret: In this particular adventure you can choose to award one of two adventure secrets at your discretion:

1. The immediate knowledge of where the bar'glura-abducted PC(s) are located.
2. The knowledge of where the Cabal summoning cave is located.

Adventure Start

The adventure begins in the Scorpion's Sting Tavern, a frequent hangout of hires during down time.

Part One: Fallen Comrades

Stormreach has been strangely quiet without the Glory Road around. Since the loss of the Cloud Ray, the Glory Road has undertaken a number of missions to secure the Company's broader interests. Fortunately, you only have your immediate interests to worry about - namely how you're going to win this card game. The hire to your left just anted a dracolich and the player to your right has been hoarding red dragons. With a druid in your hand and a trio of twos, things are looking pretty good when the door to the tiny tavern suddenly shudders and slams open, more in self preservation than admittance of entry.

The silhouette cast across the floor is unmistakable, and the shadow itself seems to seethe. Sgt. Skyne Tragar hasn't graced your platoon with her presence in over two days. Glancing murderously around the bar, her thick canine shoulders heave with each breath. The place goes dead silent. You swear the world itself stopped turning for a moment in hopes of abating her fury. As her gaze settles on your table, she stalks forward.

Reaching your platoon's small cramped table, she leans over, glaring at each of you one by one. She snaps up the nearest pint of ale, drains it in a single pull then smashes the wooden cup into splinters across the table.

Sense Motive DC 18: You've seen this look on Sgt. Tragar before-this isn't the motivational anger of her Sgt. Persona-this is personal. She looks more frightened than angry, though only someone who had worked closely with her would be able to pick it up.

"Seventeen. SEVENTEEN," her harsh growling words echo in the silent tavern. She spins on her heels, eyes darting about the bar.

"Out!" she demands.

With that, every single soul in the bar, including the barkeep and the serving maid, makes a dragon's track toward the exit. She quickly spins back to your table as you rise.

"Not you! Sit down!" she barks, "Now!"

She hunkers over the table and produces a red cloth from beneath her thick leather tunic. With surprising tenderness, she unwraps the cloth and sets it on the table. Nearly two-dozen tiny pins sit in what you now realize is blood-soaked fabric. Each has a tiny, stylized black wheel with small spokes on them.

"Seventeen hires died today. All Six Paths... Not a one of them had accumulated enough time to earn resurrection insurance from the Company. All Mark's Men or younger with one newly promoted Field Sergeant."

She looks shocked, as if still unable to believe it herself. In a rare display of emotion, she staggers back for a moment, her knees nearly buckling as she braces her back against the bar top. Steadying herself with her hands, she continues.

"We lost another airship," she whispers hoarsely.

"The ship had just unloaded a cargo of dragonshards and was preparing to take five platoons into a combat zone. Some sort of force device ripped apart the Seregon II just as the troops were getting their gear stowed away. There was no fire, but the force of the blast alone killed many of the hires, the splintering shrapnel took care of the rest."

"We already know who is responsible. Captain Orodreth and his drop officer managed to fight off an assassination attempt by Cabal operatives."

"That was the good news," she says humorlessly as she drains another tankard of ale.

"The attack was just the beginning. Their eyes were on a much bigger prize. The Six Paths platoons were being sent into the hidden port of Annex along the coast near Tempest's Spine volcano."

"You've probably never heard of Annex. It's one of the most profitable dragonshard mining operations in all of Xen'drik. Sixty percent of the dragonshards that go to the Dragonmarked Houses come through Annex. It's one of our best kept secrets... until now."

"We received word by sending stone that Annex had come under attack by strange creatures welling up from the ground. We initially thought it was random. Annex is not without considerable defenses so the first attacks were repelled with minimal cost. But more attacks followed. It has persisted for a week now, and this morning we lost all contact with the outpost. Their sending stone is not responding. "

"Based on interrogation of Cabal operatives, we believe that the airship sabotage was meant to cripple our ability to respond to the situation at Annex. They know the Glory Road is on a job and that we're stretched as thin as parchment at this point. They mean to seize and plunder the largest and most valuable dragonshard stockpile in the world. A loss of this magnitude would bankrupt the Company, particularly as we're now out two airships."

"We alerted the Houses to the situation, but Deneith can't get any guards together because of the 'dragon' incident that hit Stormreach a few weeks ago. We are it. Or I should say, you are. They asked us

to send our best. We're sending you instead. You're all we have."

"What Blackwheel and Deneith reserves we have left on Kaeperian Island will be departing immediately by wind galleon for Annex. They'll be lead by our best field commander, Lt. General Pilgrim. But it's going to take them 48 hours to get there. You have one job: Hold the outpost until that ship arrives. She'll be carrying enough Cannith firepower to level Cyre a second time, but we've got to buy them the time to get there. I don't care if the Traveler himself shows up to claim those dragonshards—you tell him the Company will cut him a 5% reduction in cost, but if he lays a divine finger on those shards, you will send him straight back to Dolurrth. Hold that outpost!"

"If any of you planned on living forever...well, better change your plans. If you have next of kin, notify them now. You have been offered posthumous promotions if you fall on duty during this mission. Your families will be taken care of. Due to the loss of the two airships and the immediate nature of this mission, we had to charter a private airship, the Ka-Ching. The captain has no experience with combat jumps, and there is no drop officer or air-to-ground navigation officer aboard. They're a merchant ship—fast, but green. You will be in command of the ship from the moment you lift off. If the captain gives you any trouble, kill someone until he changes his mind."

"One more thing..." She looks grimly at the floor, shaking her mane. The fur on her neck and shoulders bristle, rising along with the tone in her voice.

"General Ogdin feels that we cannot afford to let anyone else know about this. We cannot risk revealing the location of Annex to outsiders. You'll be given a device from the boys in Arclight. Activate it 5 minutes before the drop."

"Touch your rank insignia to activate it." She glances down at the pile of insignias on the table, her fist tightening into a clawed ball.

Before you board the Ka-Ching, go see Hershey in Arclight division.

"We have seventeen lives to avenge. Seventeen of your brothers, just today, that had their lives snuffed out by the Cabal. Send them a message that they will never forget."

Part Two: Gearing up at the Arclight

Arclight HQ, security is intense. Never being allowed here before, this mission you know must be of great importance. The guards move to block the entrance, but the sergeant recognizes your description from his orders and allows you to enter.

A young, pimple-faced man with thick goggles comes forward to greet you. He's got a high, whiney voice.

"Welcome, hires. My name is Hershey. You guys must be going on some hot mission to get our most cutting-edge equipment. I wish I could go out, but..." He rubs his protruding belly and scratches a zit on his forehead. "Oh, well."

The Arclight division is unlike anything you have seen. Station after station containing other company men in white lab robes involved in all sort of experiments. Potions bubbling over vials. Smoke rising from weird electrical explosions. It looks like a mad artificer's laboratory gone large-scale.

As you are taking it in, Hershey snaps you back to why you are here.

“See what we have for you, <fighter PC’s name>. It is our latest experimental concoction called APEN, short for ‘armor penetration’. Some company men came back from the shadow plane with this black smoking liquid. We have captured its essence and added a few Arclight secret ingredients to it. Let me see your sword (or whatever is their primary weapon), <fighter PC’s name>.”

Hershey struggles with the weight of the sword. It is obvious his talents do not lie in the physical arena.

“Nessy, bring out the demon leg.”

Nessy, his assistant goes back to the ice locker in the back and brings some sort of frozen demon leg.

“Here is a demon leg brought back by other hires during a mission a while back. Here <fighter PC’s name>, use your sword (or primary weapon) to strike the leg as I can’t even lift the thing.”

You swing at it, but the damage is not impressive at all.

Hershey then straps the capsule on the base of the sword near the hilt and explains how you break the capsule in combat. He motions for you to try it.

When you swing and activate the capsule, a black liquid seeps out of the capsule to envelope the sword in a black mist of shadows. This time your sword slices through the demon leg like butter.

After about 30 seconds the black mist disappears.

“We haven’t been able to make it last very long. So make it count. Here.”

(Game Mechanic – It takes a swift action to activate the shadow striking liquid that makes your weapon the alignment and/or material to bypass an enemies DR. It lasts for 5 rounds. It also works for unarmed strikes of a monk. It can be given to more than one PC.)

“<Shifter or barbarian PC name>, you’re going to like this new braid we’ve developed.” He attaches a red braid with a red bead to your hair. “Red’s my favorite color. I call this bead, Big Red. All that is required to activate is to either shift or rage.”

When you activate it, you grow, but you’ve never been this big. 30 seconds later, you return to normal size.

(Game Mechanic – You and all your equipment grows to Huge for the duration for your shift and/or rage. You occupy a three by three square on the map. Your reach is 15’ or 30’ with a reach weapon. Your strength goes up by +4. Your attack bonus and armor class drops by -2 due to size.)

“<Arcane casting PC’s name> this is for you. I call it the Wand Doughnut. Before I put it on this magic missile wand, shoot Nessy with the wand.”

When you shoot him, all the missiles swirl around him and get sucked into his Blackwheel insignia brooch.

“Now put on the doughnut and try.”

“Boss, why do I have to be the one again?” asks Nessy. “Can’t you do it boss?”

Hershey leans over to the party and whispers.

“It is hard to find good help these days. No one wants to do the grunt work.”

As you activate the wand, the magic missiles go right into him instead of the brooch and knock him down.

“Nessy, get up. It doesn’t hurt,” Hershey says as Nessy slumps to the floor.

(Game Mechanic – Your magic missile wand goes through all SR and even suppresses the shield spell. The doughnut is usable five times then it is no good. They are provided with one with 5 charges at 3rd level caster – 2d4+2.)

Hershey dons a white glove on one hand and revives Nessy as white glowing energy flows through his hand and into Nessy’s wound, repairing the muscle damage and cauterizing the wound. Nessy gathers himself and dusts off his blacked lab coat.

“<Cleric PC’s name>, this glove is for you.”

(Game Mechanic – It functions similar to a ring of mystic healing from the ***Magic Item Compendium*** p.126. It is activated as a swift action. It has five charges per day. When casting a ***conjunction (healing)*** spell, you gain a +1 competence bonus to your caster level. It has 3 charges per day renewed at dawn. Expending 1 charge adds 2d6 points of healing. Expending 2 charges adds 3d6 points of healing. Expending 3 charges adds 4d6 points of healing.)

“Nessy, bring out the conch shell.”

Out comes a shell about twice the size of your fist. Hershey puts his four fingers in the big opening and raises it to his mouth to blow and you hear the sound of an angelic herald’s horn as the shell lights up through the dragonshard focus inside. Afterwards, he sings and you think that he would have sung terribly with his whiney voice that he talks with, but it is actually an okay performance.

“You try <Marshal or bard PCs name>.”

After you blow the shell, you give the best performance (or inspirational speech if the PC is a marshal) ever.

(Game Mechanic – After you blow the Dragonshard conch shell as a swift action, you inspire courage bard ability or minor aura increases by +1. It is usable once per day. It stacks with Inspirational Boost.)

“I have something for you <Rogue or any other class with sneak or skirmish ability>. Put on these bracers. It will allow you to strike vital areas of creatures that you normally couldn’t.”

(Game Mechanic – It functions similar to Deathstrike Bracers from the ***Magic Item Compendium***, p.93. When activated with a swift action, it allows you to use melee weapons to deal extra damage from sneak or skirmish attacks to constructs, elementals, oozes, plants, and undead as if they were not immune to such damage. This effect does not allow you to overcome any other immunity or resistance to extra damage from sneak or skirmish damage such as the fortification armor property. The ability functions three times per day.)

“Nessy, bring the jar. This is one of my favorites. I call it I Scry.”

You see two eyeballs attached by a sinewy tendon.

“You say ‘I scry with my little eye’ and a person’s name. One eye detaches and goes to that person. The other eye projects a map with directions how to get there from where you are. After the map is drawn, it shows a picture of what the person named is seeing.”

(Game mechanic: It takes one full round to complete and is usable once.)

“These are for any of you who have at least masterwork armor. They are dragonshards found that have a propensity to make ranged weapons miss.”

(Game mechanic: They are least crystal of armor deflection (***Magic Item Compendium, p. 24-25***). The crystal attaches to the armor or shield and gives a +2 bonus to AC on ranged attacks. You can only get one per PC.)

“And finally for my piece de resistance for this mission,” he says with a bow. He pulls out a little round metallic ball and a special Blackwheel insignia from behind the counter.

“Its code name is Little Man.”

Hershey shows you how it is activated with this special Blackwheel insignia that one of the PCs will wear.

“That little guy packs quite a bang. Just press the button here and make sure you get far away. It will go off five minutes after activation. It only works at altitudes above 100 feet. Good luck on your mission. It is our pleasure here at the Arclight division to serve our company men in the field.”

Part Three: Morale Dilemma

You see a unique airship unlike any that you have been on in your Blackwheel career. This one has bamboo sails and looks like it was built for speed. As you walk the plank to get aboard the ship, a man with almond-shaped eyes and a shaved head greets you. He bows.

“I am Wing Chin, first mate of Ka-Ching. Welcome. The captain is anxious to meet you. This way”

Spot DC 15 - you see a small sailor who seems particularly adept at moving around the riggings. The sailor stops to look at you as you board, then continues moving around the masts.

As you enter the captain’s quarters, fruits and pastries are laid out before you like you have never seen in all of Xen’drik.

“Welcome, Blackwheel Company to the Ka-Ching. I am Captain Loo,” he says with a bow. “Please have a seat.”

You see a regal looking man in his fifties. He is bald with a fu-Manchu mustache and almond-shaped eyes with the dragonmark of House Lyrander.

<Time for PC introductions>

Just after half the party introduces themselves, the doors to the captain’s chambers burst open. In comes the small sailor you spotted among the sails as you entered.

“Sorry I’m late, Captain.” Removing the hat, long tresses of black hair fall out and you notice this small pirate is a teenage girl – beautiful, but obviously still a child, roughly around fifteen years old. She peels off her sailor clothes to reveal a red and black cheongsam underneath. She pulls up a chair next to the captain and sits down.

Captain Loo turns to her with a stern look.

“Excuse my daughter’s manners. This is Libby. Her mother died giving birth to her,” he says looking at her with the eyes of a doting father. “She was born on the ship and practically is one with the ship. She knows as much as any of the other crew. Please continue with your introductions.”

The captain is very gracious and eager to hear about your tales about the Blackwheel Company. He realizes the importance of your mission because he has been paid well, so he is eager to serve.

Just as tea is finished, he motions to his daughter.

“Libby, why don’t you sing for them? She is a great singer. I always tell her that when she is of age she needs to try out for Stormreach Star. I think she could win.”

“Dad, do I have too?” she whines.

She begins to sing. Not a more appropriate way to end a tea than with a song. Her voice is pure and soothing like a bedtime lullaby.

When she is finished, the captain says, “Didn’t I tell you she was good? Well, why don’t I have her escort you to your chambers? I know you need to rest before your drop. We should be arriving in a few hours. When we get close, I will send Libby to get you. Anything you need, please don’t hesitate to ask.”

Libby will take a liking to one of the PCs and look up to them as an older brother. Play on the heartstrings of the PCs. It needs to tear them apart to plant Little Man on the ship. Any reasonable plan will work. There should be discussion by the PCs on whether to follow orders or not. Don’t let the adventure bog down because of this. If this is at a timed event, give them a maximum of 15 minutes to hash this out. Once they decide what to do, move on to part four.

DM’s Note: The best option is for the PCs to convince Captain Loo to join the Blackwheel Company. The Diplomacy check for this is a DC 25. Give them a +2 circumstance modifier if they are well mannered and polite in the tea ceremony. Another +2 if they help the crew with their duties. On the contrary, if they hit on his teenage daughter, they get a -2 circumstance penalty. And another -2 if they were rude at the tea ceremony. Every PC that speaks up and tries to convince the captain may aid.

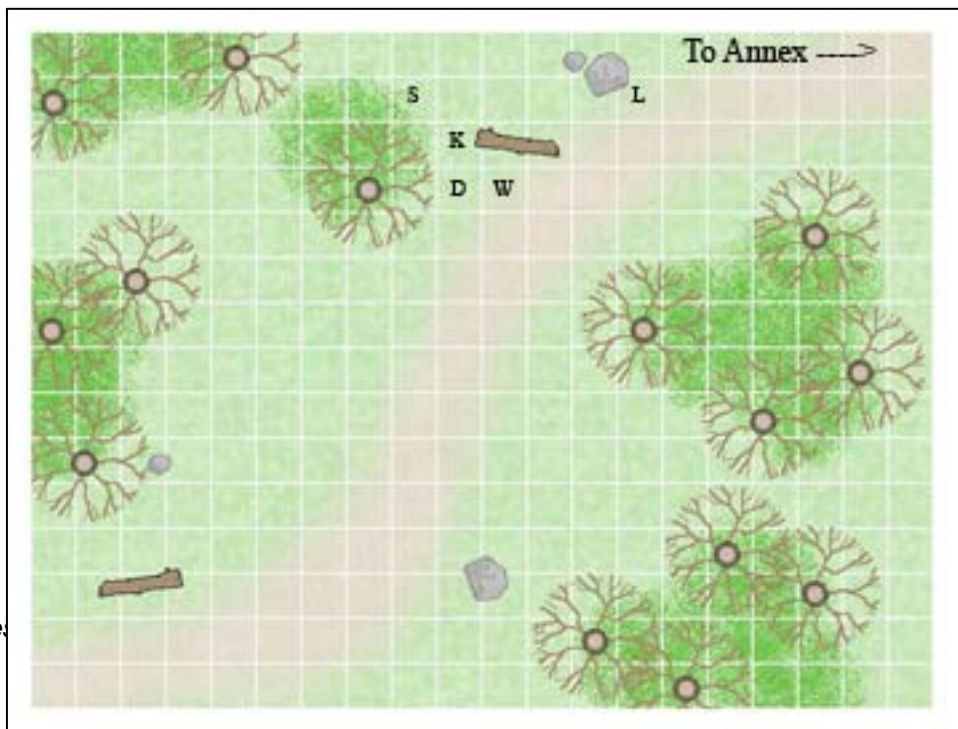
Part Four: Rain of Terror (EL 9)

Annex Under Siege

Libby retrieves you as the destination of Annex draws near.

Upon reaching the deck, Libby exclaims, “Look. Fireworks.”

“That’s no fireworks,” the captain replies.



Nearing Annex, a fierce battle is unfolding and you are going to be dropped in the middle of it. The captain leads you over the area of the artillery that is pinning down the defenses and says, “Now is the time. May the Golden Dragon smile upon your endeavors.”

Description

Captain Kazoo and his team are about 100' away from the main entrance to Annex under a copse of trees that provide cover. The captain's personal bodyguard of rutterkin are currently surrounding him chanting “Kazoo, Kazoo” while Sing-Song is leading the cadence with phrases such as “Who the best archer around?” Use your imagination to come up with more cadences that the PCs will hear when they are on the ground.

Foes

Captain Kazoo: male arrow demon: 135 hp; Combat Statistics.

Whim, Dim and Lim: male rutterkins: 37 hp each; Combat Statistics.

Sing-Song: male half-orc bard 4: 30 hp; Combat Statistics.

Scaling the Encounter

8th –Level Characters: add another rutterkin brother, Sim.

9th –Level Characters: in addition, add another arrow demon, Lieutenant Wazoo.

10th –Level Characters: in addition, add another rutterkin brother, Kim.

Because the PCs are dropping into combat, roll initiative for the monsters and have the PCs do it as well. Have them jump in initiative order. Have them roll their Will Saves once they jump, then they have the prerogative to act in the first round of the jump.

The characters may only opt to take up to two standard actions during their brief decent. However, each action they take gives them a -5 penalty to their MAAD-drop roll. Characters can choose to take these actions after seeing the result of their roll, but before they land.

When the PCs jump, read:

Though you have done these jumps many times, not many things in Eberron match the adrenaline rush. You take your leap of faith off the airship and assume the tucked position to minimize the target for enemy artillery. Though the battle rages all around you, an eerie feeling of peace envelopes you as you dive through the air. The peace however is short-lived as you are snapped back to reality with the first wave of projectiles heading your way.

Magic-Assisted Airship Drops

Successfully activating a feather fall talisman at the appropriate time during a MAAD means succeeding at a DC 11 Will save. Use the chart below to determine the result of the Will Save.

Final Will Save Total	Result
1 or less	Death—Talisman not activated before impact, or talisman activated too soon (<i>feather fall</i> spell expires before impact)
2-3	3d6 falling damage, landing missed—Talisman activated late. DC 12 Reflex save required to keep you from falling overboard. Succeeding on the Reflex save means the PC can catch some rigging and pull aboard the forecastle.
4-5	2d6 falling damage, land prone—Talisman activated late
6-7	1d6 falling damage, land prone—Talisman activated late

8-10	Land prone—Hard landing
11-19	Acceptable landing
20-24	Flawless landing—PC lands with a flourish, +2 unnamed bonus on Spot, Move Silent, Hide, and Listen checks as well as Initiative and attack rolls within 18 seconds of landing. (Make sure to add this to the their initiative roll once they roll their M.A.A.D. Will Save)
25 and above	Precise landing—PC gains all benefits from flawless landing plus can pick which square on the map to land.

Griffon Wings

Characters who participated in the events of *BWC-3 Marked Man* or *BWC-4 The Trouble with Pirates* gain a +2 bonus to the Will Save for the MAAD-drop.

Few situations are as difficult as a Magic-Assisted Airship Drop. While risk must exist, it's unrealistic to penalize 5% of players for rolling natural 1's on the Will Save. Natural 1 rolls are not instantly fatal. Treat them as you would any other roll of the d20 in this unique situation. Players may add an action point roll to this save. NPCs may (and perhaps should) encourage PCs with negative Will Save modifiers to use magic or other means to help augment or offset that weakness during the drop.

A DC 15 Tumble check successfully reduces any damage taken by 1d6 points. Casting a spell during freefall requires a DC 20 Concentration check due to the extreme conditions unless otherwise noted.

To simulate the randomness of the landing pick up PCs minis (if plastic or use some proxy if metal) and drop them from arms length above the center of the map.

RUTTERKIN LORE

Characters with rank in Knowledge (the planes) can learn more about Rutterkins. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC-12 Rutterkins are deformed soldier demons and are among the least powerful tanar'ri.

DC-17 Rutterkins often fight with strange exotic weapons, such as snap-tong (a polearm that can grapple foes) or the tri-blade (a large, sharp throwing wedge).

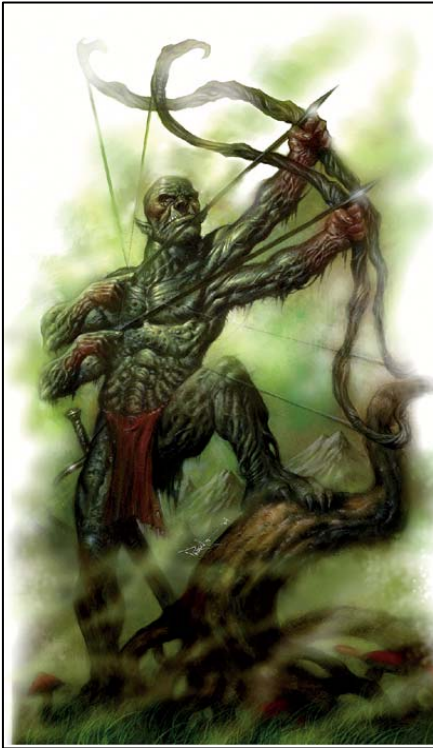
DC-22 A rutterkin has few spell-like abilities. The ability to summon other tanar'ri is its greater power.

Tactics

In the first round, Lim spots the PCs and informs Captain Kazoo about the elite force dropping in. That first round Kazoo is providing cover for the platoon of Mane demons with the battering ram charging the main gate at Annex. The mane demons are of no consequence in this battle. Once the artillery is occupied, the defenders easily dispatch the battering ram unit. Sing-Song has already started to inspire courage. In the second round and thereafter, Kazoo will focus all his attention on the PCs realizing they are the main threat. If he is reduced to less than 20 hp and there is still a significant threat left, he will dimension door back 800 feet. Then he will attempt to summon his brother, Captain Wazoo (35% chance of success). If successful, they both dimension door back to the battlefield. If not, he goes back to the caves to regroup with the rest of the Cabal team.

In the first round, Sing-Song reads a scroll of sonic weapon for the captain's bow. He does the same in the second round for his other bow. Once the PCs land, he uses glitterdust on the PCs if he can get a two PCs in the effect or if there is one particularly effective PC that effective PC is targeted. Then he goes back to singing. He heals team demon as needed.

Whim and Dim will always use their tumble skill to try and flank. In the first round the PCs are on the ground, they will engage any enemy they can both get to. Otherwise, they use their tri-blades then move to engage. Lim will stay flying until he uses all his tri-blades. They will only attempt to grapple small-size enemies with their snap-tong.



CAPTAIN KAZOO

CR 7

Male Arrow Demon (*Monster Manual III*, p. 34)

CE Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Tanar'ri)

Init +4 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +16, Spot +16

Languages Abyssal, Celestial and Draconic; telepathy 100'

AC 19 (+4 Dex, +5 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 15

hp 135 (10 HD); **DR** 5/ cold iron and good

Immunities electricity and poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10 and fire 10

SR 18

Fort +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10; +2 vs. charm and fear

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Ranged 2 Large **+1 composite longbows** (+5 Str bonus)
+14/+14/+14/+9/+9/+9 (2d6+8/x3) with **Rapid Shot** or

Ranged 2 Large **+1 composite longbows** (+5 Str bonus)
+14/+14/+14/+9/+9/+9 (2d6+8/x3+1d6 sonic) with **Rapid Shot** and **Sonic Weapon** or

Ranged 2 Large **+1 composite longbows** (+5 Str bonus)
+16/+16/+11/+11 (2d6+8/x3)

Melee 4 claws +17 (1d6+7)

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +15

Atk Options close combat shot, oversized weapons, symmetrical archery

Special Actions *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th): At will—*dimension door* (self plus 50

pounds of objects only).

Abilities Str 21, Dex 19, Con 29, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 12

Feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus (longbow)

Skills Balance +17, Bluff +14, Climb +18, Concentration +21, Hide +17, Jump +22, Listen +16, Move Silently +17, Sense Motive +16, Spot +16

Possessions 2 Large **+1 composite longbows** (+5 Str bonus), 100 arrows, 50 alchemical silver arrow, 50 adamantine arrows, 50 cold iron arrows

Close Combat Shot (Ex): An arrow demon does not incur attacks of opportunity for firing a bow while threatened. In addition, the arrow demon can shoot its bows to make attacks of opportunity as if it threatened the squares adjacent to it with its bows.

Oversized Weapons (Ex): Arrow demons can use bows of any kind that are up to one size larger than their size would allow without penalty.

Symmetrical (Ex): The arrow demon has an amazing ability to wield two bows, at -2 to all its attack rolls that round. For example, when making an attack action, an arrow demon can fire one arrow from each bow at his normal attack bonus minus 2, and when making a full-attack action, it can fire one arrow from each bow for each of its normal iterative attacks (two arrows from each bow, each shaft at a -2 penalty). The statistic block above already includes these bonuses. The arrow demon takes no additional penalties for using multiple weapons as long as it is only using bows.

Summon Tanar'ri (Sp): Once per day an arrow demon can automatically summon 1d6 dretches or attempt to summon another arrow demon with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 4th-level spell.

All stats already include Sing-Song's inspiring courage bonus of +2.



WHIM, DIM AND LIM

CR 3

Male Rutterkin (*Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss*, p.51)

hp 37 (5 HD); **DR** 5/ cold iron or good

CE Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Tanar'ri)

Init +2 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages Abyssal; telepathy 100'

AC 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 16

Immunities electricity and poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10 and fire 10

SR 14

Fort +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5; +2 vs. charm and fear

Speed 20 ft. (20 squares)

Melee mwk snap-tong +10 (1d10+5) or

Melee 2 claws +9 (1d6+4)

Ranged tri-blade +9 (2d4+4)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7

Atk Options snap-tong grapple

Special Actions *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th):

At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC 11)

1/day—*desecrate*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 10

Feats Exotic Weapon Proficiency (snap-tong), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (tri-blade)

Skills Balance +4, Climb +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +12, Listen +9, Move Silently +10, Spot +16, Tumble +12

Possessions masterwork snap-tong, 5 tri-blades, potion of fly (Lim only – already used)

Snap-tong (Piercing): This short polearm ends in a sharp spike that has one or more crescent-shaped pincers designed to close around it. A proficient wielder who hits an opponent of at least one size category smaller can attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If the wielder gets a hold, the snap-tong grabs the opponent and deals 1d10 points of damage (plus the wielder's Strength modifier) each round the hold is maintained.

Tri-blade (Slashing): This thrown weapon consists of a three-bladed wedge launched from a sling like device. It has a range increment of 20 feet.

Summon Tanar'ri (Sp): Once per day a rutterkin can attempt to summon another 1 rutterkin or 1d6 dretch with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell (CL 5th).

All stats already include Sing-Song's inspiring courage bonus of +2.



SING-SONG

CR 4

Male Half-Orc Bard 4

hp 30 (4 HD)

NE Medium humanoid

Init +2 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Common and Abyssal

AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 armor), touch 12, flat-footed 14

Fort +4, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4; +2 vs. charm and fear

Speed 30 ft. (20 squares)

Melee mwk longsword +6 (1d8+2) or

Melee mwk longspear +6 (1d8+2)

Ranged mwk crossbow +8 (1d8+2)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +3

Atk Options spells

Special Actions *inspire courage* 3/day (one already used)

Spells (CL 4th; DC 12+SL):

0□□□—*resistance*, *flare*, *message*, *mage hand*, *lullaby*, *daze*

1st□□□—*inspirational boost*, *cure light wounds*, *Tasha's hideous laughter*

2nd□—*glitterdust (DC 14), sonic weapon*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 14

Feats Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll

Skills Balance +10, Bluff +10, Concentration +10, Listen +3, Perform +10, Spot +3, Tumble +10, Use Magic Device +10

Possessions chain shirt, masterwork longsword, masterwork crossbow with 20 bolts, scroll of sonic weapon x2, wand of cure moderate wounds (8 charges)

Inspire Courage (Su): A bard with 3 or more ranks in perform can inspire courage in his allies (including himself), bolstering them against fear and improving their combat ability. To be affected, an ally must be able to hear the bard sing. The effect lasts for as long as the ally hears the bard sing and for 5 rounds thereafter. An affected ally receives a +1 morale bonus on saving throws against charm and fear effects and a +1 morale bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls. With inspirational boost (a swift spell), the bonus increases to +2.

All stats already include Sing-Song's inspiring courage bonus of +2.

Development

Once the demon artillery unit is defeat, the Annex defenders easily destroy the mane demon battering ram brigade. The gates of Annex are opened and the PCs are welcomed in.

Part Five: No Rest for the Weary (EL 9)



A Savior's Welcome

Entering through the massive gates of Annex, you see what once were haggard, downtrodden men staring at you with a renewed gleam of hope in their eyes. One of the men starts to clap as you walk by and soon everyone follows suit. You are their saviors. At least for the time being.

The familiar voice of Sergeant Kren ruins your moment.

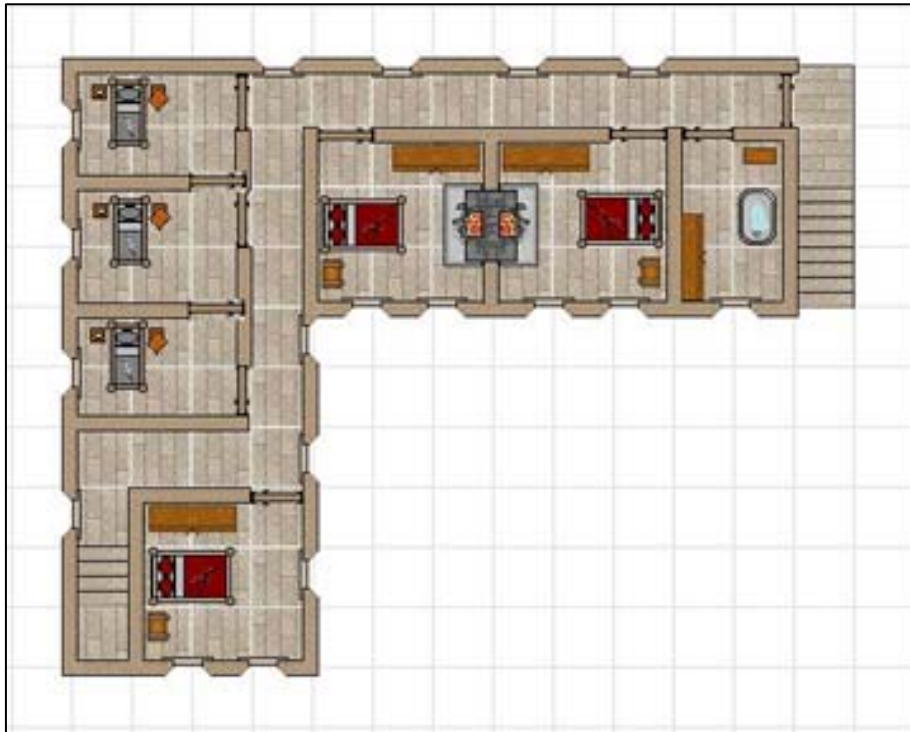
"Don't let it get to your heads, hires. There is still much to do. The Cabal will not take this lying down.

"The attacks started a little over a week ago with creatures that Annex experts say originate from Shavarath. Several scouts were sent out to locate the source of the creatures, but none of them came back."

Sgt. Kren and his "happy to see you" look.

"Get some rest tonight. Tomorrow you go out to locate the source. I fear that you are going to need all so."

your resources to do



Description

The Cabal, enraged by the defeat of Captain Kazoo and his unit, sends its mobile strike force at its new main threat, the PCs. The bar-Iguras have already teleported to the walls and got the information of the PCs' whereabouts from the poor Blackwheel guards just before they were slain.

The PCs get the three single rooms that each contain one bunk bed. Ask them if they are placing watches and if they open the adjoining room doors. Second watch is when the bar-Iguras attack. Make sure you know exactly what each PC is wearing and carrying before the encounter starts, especially the sleeping PCs.

In addition to drawing the inn on the map, draw a 30' diameter circle to represent the abandoned well in Annex that the bar-Iguras will abduct the PCs too. The well is 100' deep. To climb down the well is a DC 10 Climb check. There is also a 10% chance each round during the climb they will be entangled by spider webs. See tactics for more details about the abandoned well.

Foes

Bar-Iguras (2): 51 hp each; Combat Statistics.

Huge Monstrous Spiders (1): 52 hp each; *Monster Manual* p.288-289.

Scaling the Encounter

8th –Level Characters: add another huge monstrous spider.

9th –Level Characters: in addition, add another bar-Igura.

10th –Level Characters: in addition, add another bar-Igura.

Tactics

In the surprise round, the bar-Iguras teleport into the PCs' rooms. Before they teleported, they activated their invisibility and see invisibility spell-like abilities. The bar-Iguras take 10 on their move silently, so they get a 23. The listen DC for the PCs on watch is 23. For those sleeping, the DC is 33. The PCs can use their Feign Surprise cards if they want to act in the surprise round.

In the first round, the bar-Iguras use their abduction ability to take one PC each to the spider cave. Their melee touch attack if the PCs can't see invisible creatures is +14 (need to do this before activating abduction ability). They try to target any of the PCs who are of a race without darkvision, so when they take them to the spider cave, the PC can't see. They continue attempting to use their abduction ability until they succeed in taking a PC to the spider well. They do not care about AOOs because of their mobility feat.

Once in the spider well, the bar-Igura will attack the PC until the PC drops. Then it teleports back to the PCs' rooms to get another PC. The spider starts 90' above the bottom of the well. DC 10 Listen check will allow the PCs to hear something large with many legs scuttling down from above. The PCs will also hear moaning (from the captured Blackwheel scout). The spider knows that the bar-Iguras bring it food, so it will attack the "food" that the bar-Iguras bring it and not the bar-Iguras themselves.

This combat can be very deadly because the party is separated. Remind the PCs that they have the I Scry device to find the abducted PC. Never abduct the PC with the I Scry device in the initial abduction. It takes the PCs one round to use the I Scry device and two rounds to get to the abandoned well out back of the inn in Annex.

BAR-LGURA LORE

Characters with rank in Knowledge (the planes) can learn more about bar-Iguras. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC-15 Bar-Iguras often server as scouts for other demonic forces.

DC-20 A bar-Igura can pounce on foes with greater ferocity, clawing and biting before its victim can even react.

DC-25 Bar-Igura can see invisible foes.

DC-30 Unlike most tanar'ri, a bar-Igura can transport other creatures with its abduction ability, even if those creatures are unwilling.



BAR-LGURA

CR 5

Fiendish Codex I: Hordes of the Abyss, p. 29

CE Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Tanar'ri)

Init +4 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +11

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Common, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 23 (+4 Dex, +8 natural, +1 armor), touch 14, flat-footed 19; Dodge, Mobility

hp 51 (6 HD); **DR** 10/ cold iron or good

Immunities electricity, poison

Resist acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 16

Fort +9, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft.: Run

Melee 2 claws +12 (1d6+6) and bite +7 (1d6+3)

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +12

Atk Options pounce

Special Actions abduction, *summon tanar'ri*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th):

At will—*darkness*, *cause fear* (DC12), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (DC 18), *see invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 16)

2/day—*disguise self* (DC 12), *invisibility*, *major image* (DC 14)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 19, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12

Feats Dodge, Mobility, Run

Skills Balance +15, Climb +23, Hide +17, Intimidate +10, Jump +27, Listen +11, Move Silently +13, Spot +11, Tumble +15

Possessions *bracers of armor* +1

Pounce (Ex): If a bar-Igura charges a foe, it can make a full attack.

Abduction (Su): Unlike most tanar'ri, a bar-Igura can use *greater teleport* to transport other creatures. It can bring up to one Large or two Medium or smaller creatures with it each time it teleports. It can teleport unwilling targets as well, although an unwilling victim can attempt a DC 18 Will save to resist being transported. The save is Charisma-based.

Summon Tanar'ri (Sp): Once per day a bar-Igura can attempt to summon another bar-Igura with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell (CL 6th).

Development

After the PCs defeat the bar-Iguras and spiders, they find a missing Blackwheel scout (Armen) in the spider cave. Cocooned by the spider for a later meal, he found out where the Cabal's base of operation is, but was captured before he could return to Annex. He gives the PCs directions on getting to the summoning cave that is the base of operations for the Cabal assault.

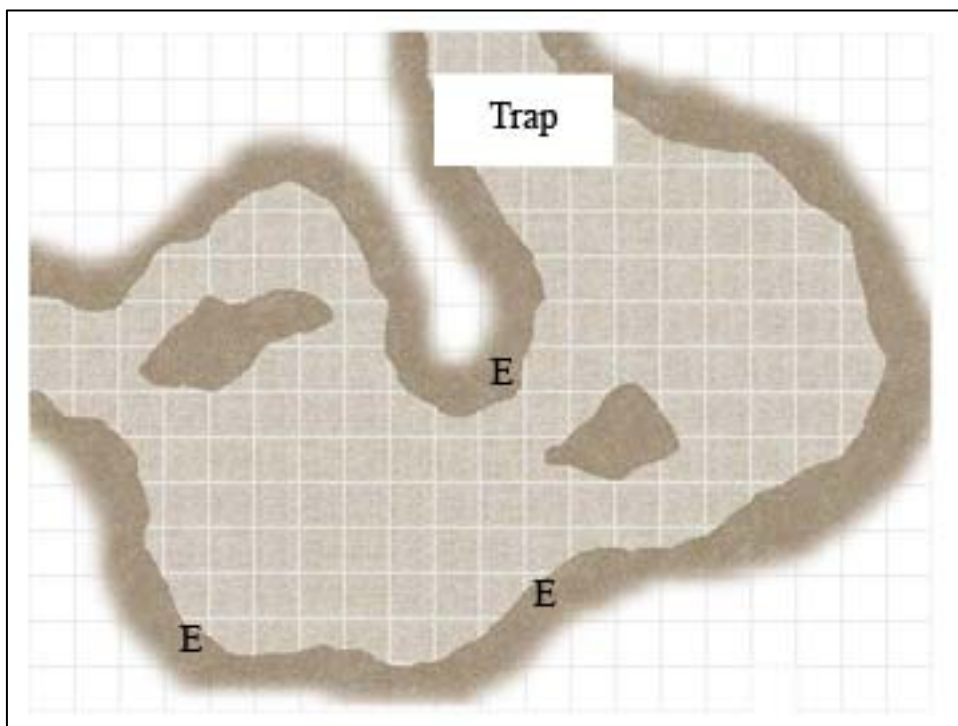
Part Six: Source of Power

Following Armen's direction, the PCs travel to the summoning cave the next day.

1. The Cave Has Eyes (EL 9)

Once the PCs enter the cave (10' high ceiling), they see coins everywhere (silver and copper) on the cavern floor. Paranoid PCs might think this is a trap, but this is only to aid the Earth Whisperer's avarice special ability. Nothing will happen if they pick up the coins. Another feature of the cave is the statues of people looking like they attempted to flee some unspeakable horror. Once the PCs enter the cave, the Earth Whisperers attack.

Foes



Earth Whisperers (3): 22 hp each; Combat Statistics.

Scaling the Encounter

8th –Level Characters: no change.

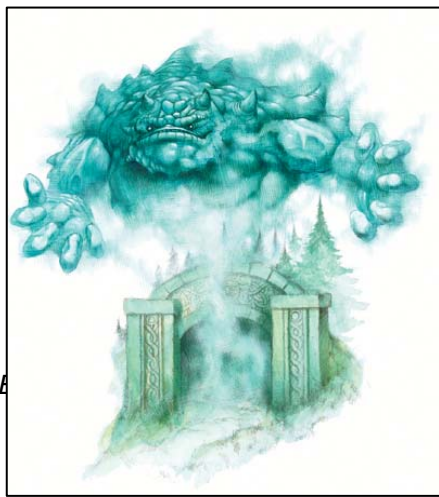
9th –Level Characters: add another earth whisperer.

10th –Level Characters: in addition, add another earth whisperer.

Tactics

Once the whole party moves past the big rock in the first part of the cave, the earth whisperers will attack. DC 10 Listen check to hear them whisper, “Intruders must die! Long live the brotherhood!”

Their goal is to divide the party with their wall of stone spell-like ability. They can create 10 five-foot squares of wall (2" thick) per use of the ability. Once this happens, they will use cavern fear on the lead party member to get him to run into the trap.



Spiked Pit Trap (80 Ft. Deep): CR 5; mechanical; location trigger, manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 80 ft. deep (8d6 fall), pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes for 1d4+5 each); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

EARTH WHISPER
Races of Stone, p.187

CR 5

NE Medium Elemental (Earth, Extraplanar, Incorporeal)

Init +6 **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages Common, Dwarven, Gnome, Gol-Kaa, and Terran

AC 20 (+6 Dex, +4 deflection), touch 20, flat-footed 14; 50% miss chance from corporeal sources (except from positive energy, negative energy, force effects like **magic missile**, or attacks made with ghost touch weapons)

hp 22 (5 HD); **DR** 5/ cold iron or good

Immunities poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, extra damage from critical hits or flanking

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Speed Fly 40 ft. (perfect) (8 squares)

Melee incorporeal touch +9 (1d4 Dex)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** —

Atk Options **Avarice**, **cavern fear**, Dexterity damage, petrification

Special Actions control earth creatures

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th):

At will—**stone shape**

3/day—**spike stones (DC 20)**, **wall of stone**

Abilities Str —, Dex 22, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 18

Feats Ability Focus (avarice), Blind-Fight

Skills Concentration +8, Listen +9, Spot +9

Avarice (Sp): As a standard action, an earth whisper can induce overwhelming greed in one creature within 30 feet. The creature targeted with the **avarice** ability must succeed on a DC 18 Will Save or attack the nearest creature that has valuable metal or mineral wealth. The affected creature attacks with lethal force, although it is not compelled to cast any spells on the creature carrying the metal or mineral wealth. This effect lasts for 1d4+1 rounds. A successful save means the creature is immune to that earth whisper's **avarice** ability for 24 hours, but not the **avarice** ability of other earth whispers. Avarice is a mind-affecting ability. The save DC is Charisma-based. In cases where the affected creature is presented with more than one source of wealth, the earth whisper chooses the affected creature's target.

Cavern Fear (Sp): As a standard action, an earth whisper can induce an irrational fear of being pushed out of the earth in one creature within 30 feet. The creature targeted by the cavern fear ability must succeed on a DC 16 Will Save or become panicked (drop everything it holds and flee with a -2 on saving throws, skill checks and ability checks). Unlike the normal effects of the panicked state, the affected creature does not flee along a random path. Instead, it attempts to head deep within the earth as possible. When presented with a pit, chasm, or other surface too steep to walk down, it attempts to climb. If the creature is presented with more than one way to go and does not know which way might lead deeper under the earth, it chooses randomly. A successful save means the creature is immune to that earth whisper's **cavern fear** ability for 24 hours, but not the **cavern fear** ability of other earth whispers. This ability functions only underground. Should the affected creature be pushed or forcibly moved into the open, it cowers. The effect lasts for 1 minute. **Cavern fear** is a mind-affecting fear effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Control Earth Creatures (Su): An earth whisper can rebuke and control earth creatures in the same way that an evil cleric rebukes or controls undead. An earth whisper rebukes earth creatures as a cleric with level equal to its Hit Dice (4th level for average earth whisper). An earth whisper can use this ability a number of times per day equal to 3 + its Cha modifier (7/day for an average earth whisper).

Dexterity Damage (Su): An earth whisper deals 1d4 points of Dexterity damage each time it hits with its incorporeal touch attack. A creature whose Dexterity is reduced to 0 by this attack must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or become petrified. If they make the save, they are just paralyzed. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Development

In the pit, there are several dead bodies of Blackwheel scouts. On the bodies, the PCs find *two potions of Cure Moderate Wounds* total.

2. My Bodyguards (EL 7)

Once the PCs enter the cave, they see three people in the far side of the cavern. The PCs are confronted with the leader of the Cabal attack force and his personal guard.

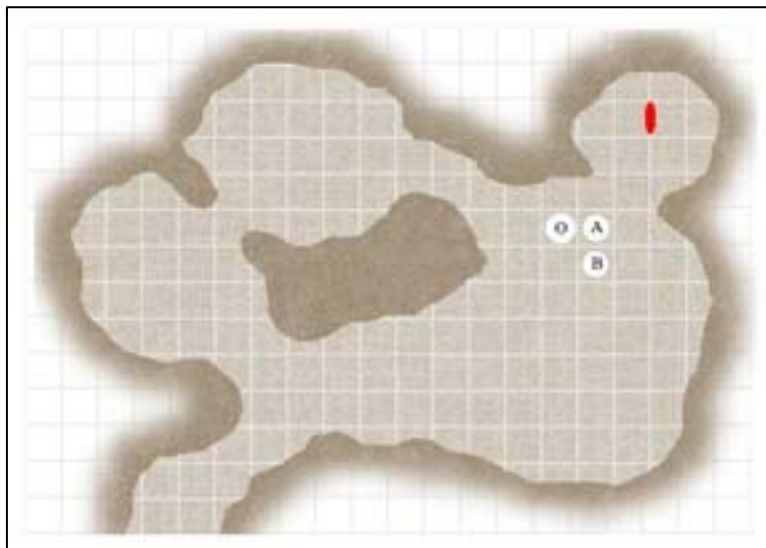
As the party is noticed by Aidacra, he looks up and says:

“Ohk, Bohk, is it too much to ask? Take care of these meddling Company men once and for all.”

He steps into the summoning cave and activates the sliding rock door behind him.

Description

The summoning cave is the side cave with the red Siberys summoning shard. The ceiling of the cavern is 10' high.



Foes

Ohk and Bohk: Corruptors of Fate (2); 57 hp each; Combat Statistics.

Scaling the Encounter

8th –Level Characters: add another corruptor of fate, Lohk.

9th –Level Characters: in addition, add another corruptor of fate, Johk.

10th –Level Characters: in addition, add another corruptor of fate, Nohk.

Tactics

Ohk and Bohk go after the PC with the obvious holy symbols hoping to take out the party's healing first. They do not care about AOOs relying on their Unluck supernatural ability. If the healer is not readily identified, the next target is any obvious spellcaster or psion.

CORRUPTOR OF FATE LORE

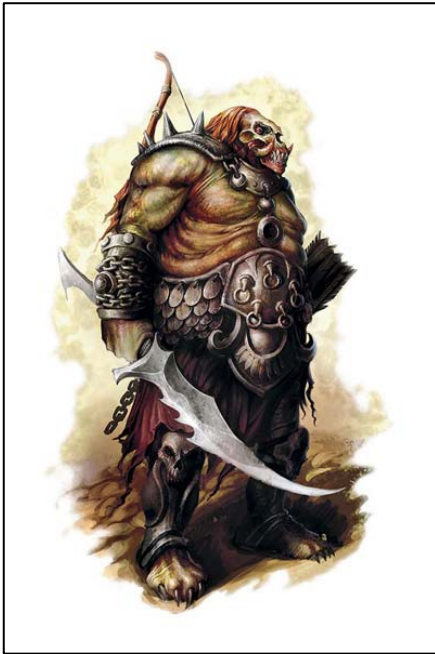
Characters with rank in Knowledge (the planes) can learn more about corruptors of fate. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC-15 Corruptors of fate are a kind of yugoloth, sharing many of their traits. This results reveals all outsider and yugoloth traits (darkvision, telepathy, immunities and resistances).

DC-20 Touching or being touched by a corruptor of fate brings ill fortune.

DC-25 A corruptor of fate has a gaze that damages those it looks at as well as bringing bad luck.

DC-30 Attacks made against a corruptor of fate miss regularly. Even successful attacks and spells deal reduced damage, though the creature doesn't seem to have damage reduction.



OHK AND BOHK

CR 5

Corruptors of Fate (*Monster Manual IV, p.190*)

CE Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar, Tanar'ri)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +10, Spot +10

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100'

AC 18 (+4 Dex, +4 armor), touch 14, flat-footed 14; Dodge

hp 52 (7 HD)

Immunities acid, energy drain, necromantic effects, negative energy effects and poison

Resist cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 14

Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk shortsword +12/+7 (1d6+2/19-20 plus bestow curse)

Ranged composite shortbow +11/+6 (1d6/x3)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +9

Atk Options align strike (evil), bestow curse

Special Actions corrupting gaze

Abilities Str 15, Dex 19, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse

Skills Balance +6, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +14, Hide +14, Jump +4, Listen +10, Move Silently +14, Sleight of Hand +14, Spot +10, Tumble +14,

Use Rope +4 (+6 involving bindings)

Possessions +1 studded leather armor, masterwork shortsword, composite shortbow with 20 arrows

Bestow Curse (Su): As the bestow curse spell; at will; Will DC 16; caster level 7th. This ability affects those touching or touched by a corruptor of fate or its weapons. A cursed subject must roll percentage dice each turn. On a roll of 01-50, it can take no action. On a roll of 51-100, it can act normally. This is a necromantic effect. Undead are unaffected by a corruptor of fate's bestow curse ability. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Corrupting Gaze (Su): A corruptor of fate can blast its enemies with a glance, at a range of up to 30 feet.

Creatures that meet the corruptor's gaze must succeed on DC 13 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of damage and a -1 penalty on attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws for 1 minute. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unluck (Su): Roll twice for attacks and damage against a corruptor of fate; the attacker must use the lower result. This is a mind-affecting necromantic effect.

Development

The sliding rock door that separates the summoning cave acts also as one-way mirror. Once the bodyguards are defeated, Aidacra will open the sliding rock door and give the PCs an offer they can't refuse.

3. A Tempting Offer (EL 9)

When the PCs arrive in the summoning chamber, read:

"Your pitiful defenses of Annex are no match for the legions of minions I have summoned. Take a look at the shard and witness the destruction of the last line of defense. A pity that some of the best Blackwheel forces must die at my hands. What a waste.

I have a proposition for you. Join a real brotherhood with real power. Come over to the Cabal and you will be able to shape the destiny of Xen'drik like you never dreamed of. What say you, brothers?" he says in low raspy voice as he reaches his right hand out to you.

(Once they refuse) **"Very well, you have chosen your fate"**. Roll initiative.

DM's Note: If the PCs decide to join the Cabal, on the event tracker, mark their character as dead. They are now free to play their Blackwheel character in the Cabal at the current level bump minus all the story objects earned as a member of the Blackwheel Company.

Description

With the time it took the PCs to finish the earth whisperers and his bodyguards, Aidacra has had ample time to fully prepare for this fight.

Foes

Aidacra: Male human sorcerer 8/monk 1; 69 hp; Combat Statistics.

Scaling the Encounter

8th –Level Characters: no change.

9th –Level Characters: use Aidacra (sorcerer 9/monk 1).

10th –Level Characters: use Aidacra (sorcerer 9/monk 1).

Tactics

Aidacra has already cast grease, mage armor (greater mage armor at the higher levels), shield, false life, dragonskin and mirror image before the PCs enter. All these spells are figured into his stat block.

When rolling initiative, Aidacra uses a swift action to cast Nerveskitter on himself (already figured into to his initiative modifier on the stat block).

He likes to start out with Evard's to contain the PCs all in one spot followed up by fireball on the Evard's area. If he did not get everyone with Evard's, he will sculpt the fireball to make sure he gets everyone with the fireball.

He has a ring of counterspells that he had someone at Stalwart Reverie (Cabal HQ in Stormreach) cast *Dispel Magic* into it before he left on this assignment.



AIDACRA

LE Male Human Sorcerer 8/Monk 1

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal

AC 32 (+3 Dex, +4 armor, +4 shield, +4 natural armor, +7 monk bonus), touch 20, flat-footed 29; Mage Armor, Shield, Dragonskin

hp 69 (9 HD); 1d4+2 images

Immunities magic missiles

Resist fire 10

Fort +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8; +1 vs. fire or poison

CR 9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee unarmed strike +4 (1d6)

Ranged ranged touch spell +7

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8; (+18 when opposed due to **Grease**)

Atk Options spells

Special Actions Metamagic Specialist (*PHB II*, p.61)

Spells (CL 8th; DC 16+SL):

1st☒☒☒☒☐☐☐—**mage armor, shield, magic missile, nerveskitter, grease**

2nd☒☒☐☐☐☐☐—**glitterdust (DC 18), mirror image (1d4+2), false life**

3rd☒☒☐☐☐☐☐—**dragonskin, fireball (DC 19), sculpted glitterdust (DC 18), empowered magic missile**

4th☐☐☐☐☐—**Evard's black tentacles (grapple +16), sculpted fireball (DC 19)**

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 22

Feats Infernal Sorcerer Heritage, Improved Initiative, Ascetic Mage, Empower Spell, Improved Grapple, Sculpt Spell

Skills Concentration +12, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge (the planes) +12, Listen +8, Spellcraft +12, Spot +8, Tumble +7

Possessions **cloak of charisma+2, amulet of health +2, ring of counterspells (dispel magic)**

Metamagic Specialist: You can apply metamagic feats that you know to sorcerer spells without increasing the casting time. This benefits even lets you quicken your sorcerer spells with the Quicken Spell feat. You do not gain a familiar when you take this class feature.

Infernal Sorcerer Heritage: You gain a bonus on saves against fire and poison equal to the amount of infernal sorcerer heritage feats you possess. When you use a conjuration (summoning) spell to summon an evil outsider, you gain +2 to your caster level.

Ascetic Mage: You practice an unusual martial art that mixes self-taught spellcasting and melee attacks to great effect. If you have levels in sorcerer and monk, those levels stack for purposes of determining your AC bonus. For example, a human 4th level sorcerer/1st level monk would have a +1 bonus to AC as if she were a 5th level monk. If you would normally be allowed to add your Wisdom bonus to AC (such as for a unarmored, unencumbered monk), you instead add your Charisma bonus (if any) to your AC.

Sculpt Spell: You can modify an area spell by changing the area's shape to a cylinder (10-foot radius, 30 feet high), a 40-foot cone, four 10-foot cubes, a ball (20-foot radius spread), or a 120-foot line. The sculpted spell works normally in all respects except for its shape. A sculpted spell uses a spell slot one level higher than normal.

Nerveskitter: You cast a spell as an immediate action when you and your party roll for initiative. You enhance the subject's reactions in combat, granting it a +5 bonus on its initiative check for the current encounter.

Dragonskin: Your skin toughens and becomes scaly like that of a chromatic dragon, of a color you select. You gain an enhancement bonus to natural armor equal to +1 per two levels, as well as energy resistance 10 against a type of energy appropriate to the color you select: acid (black or green), cold (white), electricity (blue), or fire (red). Sorcerers cast this spell at +1 caster level.



AIDACRA

CR 10

LE Male Human Sorcerer 9/Monk 1

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +8, Spot +8

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal

AC 35 (+3 Dex, +6 armor, +4 shield, +4 natural armor, +8 monk bonus), touch 21, flat-footed 32; Greater Mage Armor, Shield, Dragonskin

hp 76 (10 HD); 1d4+3 images

Immunities magic missiles

Resist fire 10

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +8; +1 vs. fire or poison

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee unarmed strike +4 (1d6)

Ranged ranged touch spell +7

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8 (+18 when opposed +10 from **Grease**)

Atk Options spells

Special Actions Metamagic Specialist (*PHB II*, p.61)

Spells (CL 9th; DC 16+SL):

1st ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒—**grease, shield, magic missile, nerveskitter, lesser orb of acid (4d8)**

2nd ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒—**glitterdust (DC 18), mirror image (1d4+3), scorching ray (4d6), summon monster II**

3rd ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒—**dragonskin, fireball (DC 19), greater mage armor, sculpted glitterdust (DC 18), empowered magic missile**

4th ☒☒☒☒☒☒☒—**Evard's black tentacles (grp +17), orb of force (9d6), sculpted fireball (DC 19)**

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 22

Feats Infernal Sorcerer Heritage, Improved Initiative, Ascetic Mage, Empower Spell, Improved Grapple, Sculpt Spell

Skills Concentration +13, Escape Artist +9, Knowledge (the planes) +13, Listen +9, Spellcraft +13, Spot +9, Tumble +7

Possessions **cloak of charisma+2, amulet of health +2, ring of counterspells (dispel magic)**

Metamagic Specialist: You can apply metamagic feats that you know to sorcerer spells without increasing the casting time. This benefits even lets you quicken your sorcerer spells with the Quicken Spell feat. You do not gain a familiar when you take this class feature.

Infernal Sorcerer Heritage: You gain a bonus on saves against fire and poison equal to the amount of infernal sorcerer heritage feats you possess. When you use a conjuration (summoning) spell to summon an evil outsider, you gain +2 to your caster level.

Ascetic Mage: You practice an unusual martial art that mixes self-taught spellcasting and melee attacks to great effect. If you have levels in sorcerer and monk, those levels stack for purposes of determining your AC bonus. For example, a human 4th level sorcerer/1st level monk would have a +1 bonus to AC as if she were a 5th level monk. If you would normally be allowed to add your Wisdom bonus to AC (such as for a unarmored, unencumbered monk), you instead add your Charisma bonus (if any) to your AC.

Sculpt Spell: You can modify an area spell by changing the area's shape to a cylinder (10-foot radius, 30 feet high), a 40-foot cone, four 10-foot cubes, a ball (20-foot radius spread), or a 120-foot line. The sculpted spell works normally in all respects except for its shape. A sculpted spell uses a spell slot one level higher than normal.

Nerveskitter: You cast a spell as an immediate action when you and your party roll for initiative. You enhance the subject's reactions in combat, granting it a +5 bonus on its initiative check for the current encounter.

Dragonskin: Your skin toughens and becomes scaly like that of a chromatic dragon, of a color you select. You gain an enhancement bonus to natural armor equal to +1 per two levels, as well as energy resistance 10 against a type of energy appropriate to the color you select: acid (black or green), cold (white), electricity (blue), or fire (red). Sorcerers cast this spell at +1 caster level.

Development

Once the PCs have dealt with Aidacra, they should have an urgency to get back to Annex to help defend it against the devilish horde that comes against it.

Part Seven: Against All Odds

1. Legionnaires

Rushing back to Annex, the PCs catch up with the legion of devils at the same place they fought Captain Kazoo. Use the same map and put the PCs on the bottom end of the map and the devils on the top.

DM's note: This fight is meant to be overwhelming for the PCs. You want to make sure that you time the rescue by Captain Loo or Sergeant Kren just as it looks as if the PCs are about to be overrun. After one or two fall, this is a good signal for the cavalry to rush in.

Foes

Legion Devils (8): 19 hp each. Combat Statistics.

Scaling the Encounter

8th –Level Characters: add two more legion devils.

9th –Level Characters: in addition, add two more legion devils.

10th –Level Characters: in addition, add two more legion devils.

Tactics

The first legion devil moves to the closest PC. The rest of the legion devils use their Legion Advance ability to teleport next to the legion devil adjacent to the PC surrounding the targeted PC if possible. After they Legion Advance, they attack. They attack until the PC is dropped then they move on to the next one. The legion devils always stay within 60 feet of each other.

The legion devils pool their hit points and each devil within 60' adds a +4 bonus on attack rolls. So with 8 legion devils, their hit point pool is 152 and their attacks with the longsword are +36 and +29 with the shield bash.

LEGION DEVIL LORE

Characters with rank in Knowledge (the planes) can learn more about legion devils. When a character makes a successful skill check, the following lore is revealed, including the information from lower DCs.

DC-13 This creature is a legion devil, an outsider native to the Nine Hells of Baator. Legion devils are expert warriors who march in the thousands to defeat Hell's enemies.

DC-18 Legion devils have a strange, magical link between them that allows them to fight better when in each other's company.

DC-23 Legion devils can teleport to each other's sides to aid one another in battle.

LEGION DEVIL

CR 3

Fiendish Codex II: Tyrants of the Nine Hells, p. 122

LE Medium Outsider (Lawful, Evil, Extraplanar, Baatezu)

Init +3; **Senses** see in darkness; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 21 (+3 Dex, +2 natural, +3 armor, +3 shield), touch 14, flat-footed 19; Dodge, Mobility

hp 19 (3 HD); **DR** 5/magic; legion's strength

Immunities fire, poison, fear

Resist acid 10, cold 10; evasion

Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk longsword +8 (1d8+3/19-20) and shield arm bash +1 (1d6+1)

Ranged longbow +6 (1d8/x3)

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +6

Atk Options legion's battle skill

Special Actions legion's advance, *summon baatezu*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 10

Feats Iron Will, Mobility, Weapon Focus (longsword)

Skills Climb +8, Craft (weaponsmithing) +4, Heal +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +8, Ride +9

Possessions studded leather armor, masterwork longsword, longbow with 20 arrows

Legion's Strength (Su): Legion devils combine their physical vitality into one single pool of strength. In many battles, legion devils seem to absorb blow after blow, fighting on despite massive injuries, until a single decisive attack against one causes all of them to fall to the ground, slain. Legion devils combine hit points into one large pool. If the pool is reduced to 0, all the legion devils in it immediately die. A legion devil gains the pool's benefit as long as he remains within 100 feet of the rest of the group. If forced to move farther away, the legion devil reclaims some of its hit points. Divide the hit points in the pool by the number of devils in the group. The devil forced out of the group gains that many hit points, and the pool loses a like number. If the share is less than 1, the devil immediately dies and the pool does not lose any points. By the same token, if any devil receives healing apply it to the devils' total pool.

Legion's Defenses (Su): If a spell, supernatural ability, or other effect that allows a saving throw targets more than one legion devil, all the devils use the highest d20 result rolled by the group. If three legion devils are caught in a cone of cold and the d20 rolls for their saves are 17, 5, and 8, all three devils use the 17 as the result of their roll before adding any modifiers.

Legion's Mind (Su): If a mind-affecting spell or ability targets a single legion devil, the devil and all other devils within 60 feet make saving throws against it. If any devil succeeds, all the devils succeed. If all the devils fail, they all suffer the effect of a failed save.

Shield Arm (Ex): The right arm of a legion devil is enlarged and heavily armored, providing it with a +3 shield bonus to its Armor Class. A legion devil can also use this arm to make a bashing attack as a secondary weapon. A legion devil does not lose its arm's shield bonus when it attacks in this manner. An arm bash deals 1d6 points of bludgeoning damage.

Legion's Battle Skill (Ex): Trained and experienced in working together, legion devils gain a +4 bonus on attack rolls for every other legion devil within 60 feet.

Legion's Advance (Su): As a move action, a legion devil can immediately teleport to a space adjacent to any other legion devil within 100' feet. The legion devil can continue its turn after using this ability as normal.

Summon Baatezu (Sp): Once per day a legion devil can attempt to summon another legion devil with a 35% chance of success. This ability is the equivalent of a 3rd-level spell (CL 5th).

Development

If the PCs defeat the legion devils, go part 2 of Against All Odds – The Calvary Arrives.

If the PCs are in trouble and they blew up the **Ka-Ching**, read the following:

Just as all hope looks lost, the gates of Annex open. Out comes a sight for sore eyes. Sergeant Kren carrying a Halfling wizard in his backpack in the "Backpack Formation" that he made famous. The sergeant cuts through a swath of devils while the wizard is clearing the rest.

"Get back to Annex, hires. Bilto and I will hold off those devils until you can close the gates. It has been an honor to serve with you. Now get into Annex and muster the remaining defense to hold. That is an order!"

Looking back just as the gates of Annex are closing, you see Sergeant Kren and Bilto eventually succumb the legions of devils heading your way.

If the PCs are in trouble and they didn't blow up the **Ka-Ching**, read the following:

Just as all hope looks lost, the gates of Annex open. You hear a familiar song coming from the sky. You could swear it is Libby Loo of the **Ka-Ching**. As you look up, you see the Ka-Ching diving toward your position.

The crew provides cover fire for you.

"Get back to Annex. We will cover for you," comes the familiar voice of Captain Loo.

Looking back just as the gates of Annex close, you see the **Ka-Ching** pulling up to get away from the throng of devils on the ground.

2. The Calvary Arrives

Rushing back into Annex, the gate closes, but not before one of the legion devils gets in. Before it can be killed, its fellow devils teleport to his side in numbers that are overwhelming. But just when it looks like Annex is about to fall, you see the skies blacken with hundreds of hires falling out of the sky. Lt. General Pilgrim and his forces have arrived.

The devils are defeated and the day is won. Annex once more is secure for the Blackwheel Company.

Ending the Adventure

If the PCs are successful in holding Annex, read the following:

The battle was hard fought, but in the end your team made the difference. Other hires look at you with respect now as your reputation has grown.

Arriving back in Stormreach, Sergeant Tragar is there to greet you with a nod of respect and a pat on the back for a job well done.

If the PCs are not successful in holding Annex, read the following:

Lt. General Pilgrim's forces arrive in time to rescue you, but too late to secure Annex. The Cabal forces are too entrenched in Annex to be removed. A valuable dragonshard depot is now in the hands of the Cabal. And the fate of the Company is in serious question as its main source of income is no longer available.

Event Treasure

If you are running *BWC-7 Test of Mettle* as part of another event, please have each PC record the following event treasure upon their adventure journals in addition to any story objects. Each PC receives their choice of +2 stat boosting item from page 247 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Adventure Questions

1. Describe how the PCs fared during the MAAD.
 - a. They all landed successfully.
 - b. Some landed poorly.
 - c. Most landed poorly.
 - d. They dropped like a rock.
2. What did the PCs do with orders to destroy the *Ka-Ching*?
 - a. They blew it up like they were told.
 - b. They refused to follow orders and did not blow it up.
 - c. They convinced the captain to join the Company.
3. Did the PC's defeat Captain Kazoo and his demonic artillery unit?
 - a. Yes, they made Sergeant Kren proud.

- b. Yes, but it was a hard fought battle.
 - c. No, they ran towards the gates of Annex screaming like little girls begging to get in.
- 4. How did the PC's fare with the bar-Igura attack?
 - a. They defeated those demons and their pet spiders with ease.
 - b. They won the battle, but it was close.
 - c. Other Annex hires had to rescue them from their impending doom.
- 5. Describe the PCs assault on the Source of Power?
 - a. The PCs fought fiercely, making mince meat out of Aidacra and his minions.
 - b. The PCs defeated Aidacra and his minions, but it was a close call.
 - c. The PCs defeated his minions, but Aidacra was too much for them.
 - d. The PCs didn't even get to Aidacra; his minions drove them away.
 - e. The PCs accepted Aidacra's offer and joined the Cabal.
- 6. Describe the adventure's conclusion.
 - a. The PCs held Annex until Lt. General Pilgrim arrived.
 - b. The PCs did not hold Annex and when Lt. General Pilgrim arrived, it was too late.
- 7. Rate the group's roleplaying.
 - a. Fantastic! Everyone had interesting and engaging characters that interacted and challenged the adventure in very fun ways.
 - b. Good. Most players had interesting and engaging characters.
 - c. Okay. There was some roleplaying.
 - d. None. There was no roleplaying. They treated the adventure as nothing more than a set of objectives to be accomplished.

Story Objects:

Object ID: EXBC22

Object Name: Mark of Onyx

Object Description: Because of your service in missions that only the best of the best can perform, you are now part of the Blackwheel Special Operation Division called Onyx. This entitles you to special equipment from the Arclight division before you go out on any mission. This translates to a 50% discount on one item in the *Magic Item Compendium*. The 100% value of the item must still be under the PCs item EV level cap.

Object ID: EXBC23

Object Name: Resurrection Insurance

Object Description: Should the PC die in the line of duty and their body be brought back to the *Glory Road*, they receive a free Raise Dead paid for by the Company.

DM's Aid 1



DM's Aid 2

Write the name of the PCs on the right side of the page. Draw a line to the appropriate magic item that they will get when they are at the Arclight division.

APEN

Big Red

Wand Doughnut

Glove of Healing

Conch Shell of Inspiration

Deathstrike Bracers

I Scry

Little Man