

ENCOUNTER S1: PERILOUS ARCHWAYS

Encounter Level 14 (5,400 XP)

SETUP

2 sword wraiths (W)

The portal in Encounter M4 transports the characters to an extradimensional space tied to the deepest part of the Shadowfell—and the entrance to Acererak's Shadow Tomb.

When the characters land in this chamber, place their miniatures randomly outside the area of the blind Devourer, and read:

You strike the floor hard, landing within a vast domed chamber. A circle of runes in the ceiling marks the portal through which you've just passed. Your eye is drawn to a great green face carved into the stone of the floor beside you. The graven image of a horned devil stares up blindly—eyes blank, mouth opened to reveal a space of dead black within it. A single word has been scrawled into stone beneath the face: "Devourer."

This darkness swallows the light of the glowing runes that cover the walls here—the same sort of sigils you saw in the Garden of Graves. Glowing stone archways are set around the chamber, each with white mist swirling inside it. Between the arches, some twenty well-rotted humanoid corpses hang from the ceiling, entwined by chains that drip black ichor to the floor.

Show the players Perilous Archways (page 80).

Arcana, History, or Religion Check

DC 18: *You've heard of the horned devil face before. This is the personal symbol of the demilich Acererak.*

The characters have 3 rounds before the sword wraiths attack.

When the sword wraiths attack, read:

The flickering glow of the arches casts shifting shadows along the ceiling—two of which detach with a shriek.

TACTICS

The sword wraiths target a single heavily armored character with *shadow sword*. They flank to gain combat advantage, using *shadow glide* to keep from being surrounded.

NO EXIT

The ceiling above and around the blind Devourer is the exit portal connected to the Shadow Gate in Moil. It operates in only one direction. In addition, a

2 Sword Wraiths (W)	Level 17 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 1,600 each
HP 90; Bloodied 45	Initiative +19
AC 30, Fortitude 29, Reflex 30, Will 31	Perception +14
Speed 0, fly 8 (hover), phasing	Darkvision
Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 necrotic, insubstantial; Vulnerable 10 radiant	
TRAITS	
Combat Advantage (necrotic) The sword wraith deals 2d6 extra necrotic damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.	
Regeneration (healing) The sword wraith regains 10 hit points whenever it starts its turn and has at least 1 hit point. If the sword wraith takes radiant damage, its regeneration doesn't function until the end of its next turn.	
Spawn Wraith Any humanoid killed by the sword wraith rises as a free-willed sword wraith at the start of its creator's next turn, appearing in the space where it died, or in the nearest unoccupied space if that space is occupied. Raising the slain creature (using a Raise Dead ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Shadow Sword (necrotic) ♦ At-Will Attack: Melee 5 (one creature); +20 vs. Reflex Hit: 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
☞ Shadow Glide ♦ Encounter Effect: The wraith shifts 6 squares.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
⚔ Death Strike (necrotic) Trigger: The wraith drops to 0 hit points. Effect (No Action): The wraith shifts 4 squares and makes a melee basic attack, dealing 2d8 extra necrotic damage on a hit.	
Skills Stealth +20	
Str 14 (+10)	Dex 24 (+15)
Con 18 (+12)	Int 11 (+8)
Wis 12 (+9)	Cha 24 (+15)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Common	

character who makes a DC 23 Arcana check realizes that the powerful magic holding the Shadow Tomb within its extradimensional space inhibits the use of the Planar Portal ritual and similar effects.

Although the archways might seem like exits to the players, the blind Devourer is the only exit. See the statistics blocks for these traps. The only way out of the area is through the mouth of the blind Devourer (see page 65).

THE FALLEN

The bodies strung up within the web of black chains are adventurers who came to the Shadow Tomb and failed. These corpses have hung here for weeks or more, putting them past the reach of a Raise Dead or Speak with Dead ritual.

Any character who ascends the chains to search the bodies can make a DC 18 Perception check to find a scribbled journal within the cloak of one of the

dead. This journal describes how the corpse's group encountered a different eldritch engine in the Feywild similar to that found by the characters in the Garden of Graves. This group traced the engine's flow of energy to the Shadowfell, but the journal contains no record of how they arrived here or what this place is.

Any search of the bodies notes an absence of magic items, including one wearing plated gauntlets and boots but no armor, and another with an empty scabbard. See location 11 for more information.

THE ARCHWAYS

It's easy for the characters to get the idea that each of the ten archways around the perimeter of this area leads out of the chamber—and that's just what Acererak wants them to think, at least at first.

The characters gain the XP for this trap when all members of the party have exited location 1.

Perilous Archways
Trap

Level 14 Obstacle
XP 1,000

A featureless white mist roils within each of the stone archways set around the chamber.

Trap: Acererak has laid this trap for adventurers who have studied the lore of the Tomb of Horrors and who hope to unravel the workings of what they assume are teleportation circles.

Perception

- ◆ DC 18: A character notes recent footprints leading into and out of arches 1, 2, 6, 8, and 9. These arches are the ones through which the Raven Queen's servants passed before they deduced that the blind Devourer marks the real exit from this area.

Additional Skill: Arcana

- ◆ DC 18: Teleportation magic suffuses each of the arches.

Special

If any character steps within 5 feet of an arch, three of its stones glow with a pulsing blue-white light—one at the lower left, one at the lower right, and one at the apex. This effect is of no consequence. (Touching the glowing stones also has no effect, but feel free to roll dice each time as if it does.)

Do not place the numbers of the arches on the map or indicate them to the players. The fact that every second arch teleports a character is the only clue hinting at the blind Devourer's true nature.

Trigger

The trap is triggered each time a character steps through an archway. None of the arches offers an exit from this chamber. Instead, each archway is a magic trap whose effects are noted below. Except as indicated, an archway affects a character the same way each time he or she steps through it. A character who cannot be affected by a particular archway (for example, a character with no magic items who steps through archway 5) instead takes 2d10 damage. An even-numbered archway teleports the character directly into the blind Devourer's open mouth, triggering its attack. See the blind Devourer trap statistics block.

Portal Effects

See the Portal Effects table below.

Portal Effects	
1	The character ages, causing him or her to become weakened and slowed. A Remove Affliction ritual reverses this effect, and the effect slowly wears off after the character reaches his or her third milestone after aging. A character who steps through the archway multiple times in the hope of reversing the effect might well drop dead of old age at your whim. The aging effect could equal one-third of a character's normal life span.
2	The character takes damage equal to his or her healing surge value and is teleported to the blind Devourer.
3	The character's number of healing surges is reduced by one as long as he or she remains within the Shadow Tomb. If the character enters this archway multiple times, the effect is cumulative.
4	The character's size is reduced one category (minimum Tiny), and he or she is teleported to the blind Devourer. The character's normal-sized gear and clothing is scattered around the Devourer. This effect can be undone with a Remove Affliction ritual, or if the character steps through this archway again while not carrying any gear. A smaller creature's ability to use its normal equipment and weapons is left to your discretion, but Tiny creatures have limitations in combat (<i>Player's Handbook</i> , page 282).
5	The character has a magic item (your choice) teleported to location 11.
6	The character's mundane clothing and armor are destroyed. The characters' magic armor, shield, and clothing are teleported to location 11. The character is teleported nude (but with weapons and other gear) to the blind Devourer.
7	The character becomes dominated (save ends), and he or she attacks allies until the condition ends.
8	The character falls unconscious until the start of his or her next turn and is teleported to the blind Devourer. At the start of the next encounter, the character falls unconscious (save ends).
9	The character's head turns into that of a donkey. His or her armor and clothing is modified as necessary, and the character can speak, but the speech is interspersed with brays. Only a Remove Affliction ritual can undo this effect. If the character steps through the arch multiple times in the hope of reversing the effect, the ritual must be performed that same number of times.
10	The character is teleported to the blind Devourer and is afterward overcome by the pervasive feeling that something about his or her person or gear has changed. Aside from this feeling, the archway has no effect.



Blind Devourer

Trap

Level 15 Lurker

XP 1,200

The fiendish visage carved into the floor stares up with blank eyes, the blackness of its mouth seeming to draw in all light.

Trap: The featureless black mouth of the blind Devourer is a trap that conceals the only exit from this chamber.

Perception

- ◆ DC 18: The character can see multiple signs of metal scrape marks at the edge of the blind Devourer's mouth, as if armored characters had carefully lowered themselves into it.

Additional Skill: Arcana

- ◆ DC 18: The character recognizes that the mouth of the blind Devourer is a fixed sphere of darkness, much like a sphere of annihilation (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 93).

Additional Skill: Arcana, History, or Religion

- ◆ DC 23: The character recognizes that this imagery is wrong—although the green diabolic face is Acererak's most infamous symbol, it has never before been pictured with its eyes closed.

Special

Until the sphere of darkness is disabled (see Countermeasures), the blind Devourer radiates no teleportation magic.

Trigger

When a creature enters the blind Devourer's mouth, the trap attacks.

Attack

Opportunity Action **Melee 0**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +18 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 4d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 10 damage (save ends). A creature reduced to 0 hit points by the sphere's damage is destroyed and reduced to a pile of fine gray dust.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A character can make a DC 23 Athletics check to climb out of the blind Devourer's mouth. Up to two characters adjacent to the mouth can aid this check.
- ◆ The sphere of darkness cannot be controlled or destroyed, but it can be disabled temporarily in the course of activating the exit from this location. A character can make a DC 25 Athletics check or make a melee weapon attack vs. AC 31 that deals 10 or more damage to break the carved stone of one of the Devourer's blind eyes. The character who breaks the stone takes 1d10 damage from arcane feedback, but the sphere is disabled while the Devourer's open eye is revealed. The stone that covers the area magically re-forms, restoring the blind eye in 1 round.
- ◆ If two characters break both eyes simultaneously, neither character takes damage, the sphere of annihilation is disabled for 1 minute, and a portal opens beneath it. Characters who lower themselves into the Devourer's mouth drop 20 feet into location 2, taking falling damage as normal. Characters can lower a rope down to avoid this damage, but the rope is severed when the sphere of annihilation reactivates.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light from the glowing runes and the mist in the archways.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 20 feet high.

Chains: Raw necrotic essence seeps like blood from chains bolted into the stone of the ceiling, hanging to

form a dripping web around the chamber. The lowest chains descend to 20 feet above the floor.

The chains can be reached by flying, by climbing the wall between the arches (DC 25 Athletics), or by throwing a rope and grappling hook (DC 15 Athletics or Acrobatics).

Whenever a creature ends its turn within the chains, it takes 1d10 necrotic damage and is slowed until the start of its next turn. Moving through the chains requires a DC 12 Acrobatics check or Athletics check.

Freeing a body from the chains requires three DC 18 Strength checks or Thievery checks in any combination.

False Portal Archways: These stone archways are filled with a roiling white mist that blocks any sight of what lies beyond. Players or characters familiar with the original adventure might try to determine the function of these arches, but they do so in vain. See the trap statistics block for information.

Necrotic Essence: Pure necrotic essence pools to a depth of 1 inch where it drips from the chains above. These areas are haunted terrain (page 48). Whenever a creature enters or starts its turn in the necrotic essence, it takes 1d10 necrotic damage and is slowed until the start of its next turn.

Portal Archways: Each archway fronts a 5-foot deep alcove filled with white mist, and its walls, floor, and ceiling are made of smooth stone. Characters not teleported as part of an archway's effect can feel their way around the alcove, but the mist provides total concealment. A character who lingers within one of these archways takes 1d10 damage at the start of each of his or her turns.

The Blind Devourer: This graven image of a great green devil's face is recognizable to any players or characters familiar with the original adventure. The face's mouth is a well of utter darkness, and its blind eyes stare upward. See the trap statistics block for more information.

