

THE RED HAND OF DOOM

Part 5B: Avernus Rising

BATTLE OF BRINDOL CHANGES

While High Wyrmlord Azarr Kul does want to conquer the Vale, he has another goal — to free Tiamat from her Infernal prison! He has been working a ritual as his army advanced, but there is one last component: death. The Battle of Brindol also serves as a mass sacrifice to Tiamat.

The Price of Blood

At least 3 times throughout the battle (and possibly earlier, if things have been especially bloody), Divine Magic goes wrong. A PCs damage spell does fire damage instead of its normal type, healing does half as much, NPC spells fizzle.

Once enough blood has been spilled, the final stages of the ritual will begin, and all divine power not from Avernus will cease to function and the sky turns red. This will automatically happen just before the last wave of *Streets of Blood* (carrying through *Sniper Attack*), but will happen early if the PCs (or allies) fail to stop 3 crisis points/encounters.

“Divine” Intervention

Just before the final battle, something (literally) miraculous occurs. A blinding light fills the sky, revealing what appears to be a small, second sun hovering less than a mile above the city. In this flash, the PCs regain all health and focus points (or if they prefer, spell slots equal to their highest rank), and their Divine Connections are restored! ([more](#))

None in the city can explain what happened (other than Lady Kaal, who made a deal with the Archdevil Zariel — see this article for background), but it gives them a chance.

The Final Push

When Kharn is slain, he says “You’re too late — the ritual has begun, and Avernus is rising. You’ll never stop it in time!” as a cloud of smoke rises above the mountains.

The leaders gather. Immerstal offers teleportation, Lady Kaal gathers consumables, but before the PCs can be healed by any other source, the second sun flares, restoring their HP, focus points, and spell slots. It allows them to instantly level up, re-prepare spells, and even transfer runes as their weapons/armor glow with radiant light!

REVISED FANE OF TIAMAT

In a flash of light, you find yourselves teleported onto a rough mountain path. Over the next ridge you see rising smoke and pumes of fire as hellfire bursts through the mountain — Avernus is rising!

Lava. Creatures who fall into lava (and don’t [grab an edge](#)) take 6d6 fire damage each round with no save.

Race Against Time!

Once the PCs arrive at the Fane, time is of the essence. If the PCs take more than 3 10-minute breaks to refocus, heal, etc., the ritual completes! Though you might allow more rests after efficient prep. Make sure stakes are clear! Each rest should include evocative descriptions of decay.

A. Entrance — The Maw of Hell

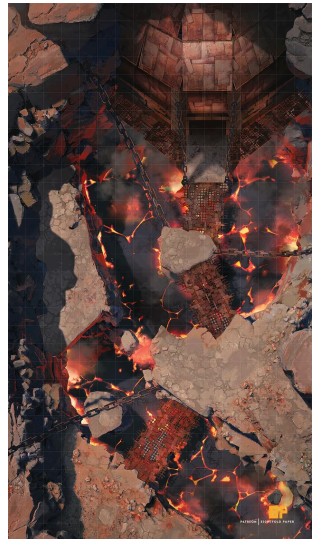
The earth is rumbling and cracking, jets of fire fire bursting out onto the cracking stone. Within the iron entrance to the enemy stronghold, you hear screams and sounds of battle! ([Map](#), [Patreon](#))

Creatures. [Tyrgarun](#), Elite Young Blue Dragon (lv. 10), plus [Ozyrrandion](#) and [Regiarix](#) if they survived. **40 XP**, +20 XP per extra dragon.

Adjustments. (-1) Remove the Elite template. (+1) 2 [Blue Abishai](#) (+1 per dragon).

Hazard. Every round, 1d4 squares of lava (GM chooses) start to bubble. The following round, all creatures in a 10-ft. burst make a DC 25 basic Reflex or take 6d6 fire damage.

Treasure. The dragon lairs are nearby in the mountains (and will not be destroyed with the rest of the fortress)! The combined hordes contain a [Greater Staff of Evocation](#), a [+1 striking shock greatsword](#), a [lifting belt](#), a pair of [boots of bounding](#), 182 gp, 4089 sp, 9744 cp, a fine statuette of an elf maiden worth 50 gp, 3 matched emeralds in a wooden case, each worth 100 gp, and 8 smaller gemstones, each worth 10 gp.



B. Inside the Fane — Waves of Fire

Inside, you see a cacophony of horror. Devils of all sizes crawl from the hellfire below, the Fane's defenders fleeing before them, clashes break out throughout the collapsing structure. ([Map](#), [Patreon](#))

Gauntlet. This section assumes the PCs are booking it across the bridge as quickly as possible! Leave them in initiative, and add foes if they delay.



Hazard (Volcanic Geisers). Every round, 1d6 squares of lava start to bubble (GM chooses). The following round, all creatures in a 10-ft. burst make a DC 25 basic Reflex or take 6d6 fire damage.

Hazard (Noxious Gas). Every round of combat, roll 1d6. On a 1, all non-fiends must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or become sickened 1 for 1 minute.

Wave 1 — Retreating Soldiers — Trivial 10

Creatures. 1 [Hobgoblin General](#) (lv. 6), 2 [Bladebearers](#) (lv. 4), 2 [Hobgoblin Squads](#) (lv. 6). 40 XP.

Tactics. Fleeing, but very much in trauma response fight mode. If the General falls, the rest likely flee.

Adjustments. (-1) 1 Squadron. (+1) General → [Warpriest](#).

Wave 2 — Caught in the Middle — Low 10

Creatures. 3 [Blackspawn Raiders](#) (lv. 6) fighting 4 [Infantry Devils](#) (lv. 5). 60 XP.

Tactics. The two groups charge from opposite sides of the PCs, trying to fight through them towards each other but also hoping the PCs will wear the other group out.

Adjustments. (+/-) 1 Raider and 2 Bearded Devils.

Interlude — Tortured Spirits

A swirling mass of damned souls rends through you, momentarily sharing the pain of a hundred years of torment and misery.

Hazard. All PCs must make a DC 30 basic Will save or take 5d6 spirit damage.

Wave 3 — Fiendish Foes — Low 10

Creatures. [Terilanyx](#) (lv. 10), 2 [Blue Abishai](#) (lv. 6). 60 XP.

Tactics. They thirst for blood and fight until slain.

Adjustments. (+/-) 2 Abishai.

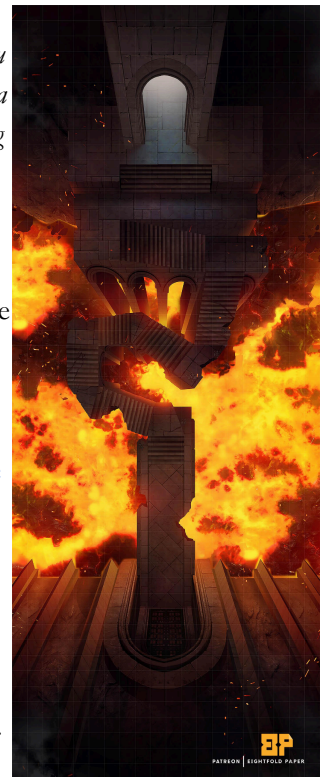
C. Approaching the Ritual Site — Moderate 10

You rush through twisting, empty corridors. ([Stop to rest?](#)) Finally, you come to a rickety stone bridge above a river of fire, 20 feet down. Defending it are a furious priest and several flying foes! ([Map](#), [Patreon](#))

Falling. Unlike the previous areas where the lava surface was only just below the ground level, here the lava is 20 feet below. Falling without [Grabbing an Edge](#) might be deadly. [Climbing](#) back up is DC 20.

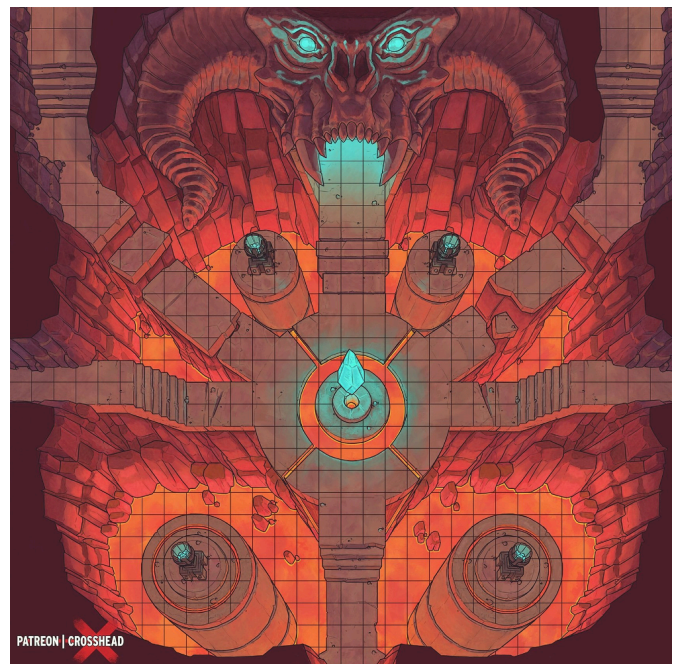
Creatures. [Doom Hand](#) [Warpriest](#) (lv. 8), 2 [Erinyes](#) (lv. 8), 2 [Wyverns](#) (lv. 6).

Adjustments. (+/-) 2 [Wyverns](#). Or turn Priest into more.



D. The Inner Sanctum

You come to a massive chamber that, unlike the others in this structure, is not crumbling. It was clearly designed to handle this calamity, with a pool of lava bubbling up in the middle and several drains flowing into the magma 20 feet below. 5 glowing crystals — one for each type of chromatic dragon — crackle and pulse with magic. On the other side is a massive, gaping maw that radiates infernal energy, waiting to drag you to hell. ([Map](#), [Patreon](#))



The High Wyrmlord — Severe 10

Creatures. [High Wyrmlord Azarr Kul](#) (lv. 12), 4 [Blue Abishai](#) (lv. 6). **120 XP.**

The Devil's Mam. Any PCs who starts their turn within 15 feet of the Devil's Maw must make a DC 30 basic Fortitude save or take 8d6 spirit damage. On a critical failure, or 2nd failed save, they are pulled into Avernus.

Falling. The lava (8d6 Fire) is 20 feet below. [Climbing](#) up is DC 20 (as, therefore, is [Grabbing an Edge](#)).

Destroy the Crystals. If all 5 crystals are destroyed (Hardness 10; the outer 4 have 30 HP, the center has 60 hp, [object immunities](#)), the ritual/fight ends early!

Adjustments. (-1) 3 Abishai. (+1) 1 [Warpriest](#), 1 Abishai.

Treasure. [+2 striking shock](#) greatpick, [greater reinforcing Red Dragonhide Shield](#).

Accomplishments. The party earns **60 XP** for stopping the Red Hand's advance! (*Surviving Wyrmlords will retreat.*)

Tiamat's Wrath — Severe 10

Something begins to emerge from the Devil's Mam. The battle stops. [Azarr Kul / Crystals, whichever is still around] begin(s) to glow, and focus(es) energy towards the Mouth to Avernus. [The PCs have 3 rounds to prepare. They can't stop what's coming.] You see a dragon's head tear through [Azarr Kul/Crystals], then another, until a massive 5-headed beast stands before you. It roars, and the world tears apart into floating platforms. ([Map](#))

Creatures. [Aspect of Tiamat](#) (lv. 13). **120 XP.**

Adjustments. (-1) Weak Adjustment. (+1) 4 [Blue Abishai](#).

Accomplishments. The party earns **120 XP** for closing the portal to Avernus and saving Elsir Vale for good!



E. Escape! — Low 10 (Chase)

With the ritual ended and both High Wyrmlord Azarr Kul and the Aspect of Tiamat defeated, bursts of lava erupt from below, shattering the ceiling above. This whole place is about to blow, and Avernus is taking back what belongs to it!

This uses the [chase](#) rules with minor changes:

- ❖ Every round, each PC makes 1 check in any order to try to progress, based on their approach.
- ❖ The GM should reward clever ideas/approaches! But each entry has suggested skills for guidance.
- ❖ A particularly good tactic might entirely bypass an obstacle for all! Others can do the next obstacle.
- ❖ Instead of tracking CP, track which PCs have bypassed which obstacle. Individuals can fall behind, though others can stay to help, and critical successes might let them bring another with them.
- ❖ Obstacles are destroyed behind the PCs. Anyone stuck behind after 6 rounds is trapped and killed.

Obstacle 1 — Collapsing Bridge

The stone platforms shake, crack, and slowly slide apart!

Skills. [DC 22 Athletics](#) to jump gaps, [DC 25 Acrobatics](#) to balance on the shifting platforms.

Spells. [Wall of stone](#) solves for all! Teleports bypass.

Obstacle 2 — Winding Hallways

You travel the same labyrinthian complex... what do you remember?

Skills. [DC 22 Survival](#) or [DC 27 Perception](#) to navigate. [DC 27 Society](#) to recall layout.

Obstacle 3 — Horde of Devils

Countless devils of all sizes run in every direction, confused.

Skills. [DC 27 Athletics](#) to shove, [DC 22 Acrobatics](#) to tumble through, [DC 25 Intimidation](#) to scatter, [DC 25 Religion](#) or [DC 30 Perception](#) to predict their paths.

Spells. Teleports bypass obstacles 3 & 4.

Obstacle 4 — Pit of Fire

The bursting lava has expanded the gap in the bridge!

Save! Cross fire: [DC 25 basic Reflex](#) or 8d6 damage!

Skills. [DC 25 Athletics](#) to jump, [DC 27 Perception](#) or [Survival](#) to find another path, [DC 30 Acrobatics](#) to swing across on dangling chains

Obstacle 5 — Sinkhole

The area outside the entrance is collapsing back into hell!

Skills. [DC 25 Nature](#) or [DC 30 Perception](#) to avoid hotspots, [DC 27 Acrobatics](#) to avoid triggering them.

On a failure, can bypass by taking 12d6 fire damage.

Spells. Anything that raises PCs high bypasses this.