Encounter Level 22 (22,800 XP)

Setup

2 pillar of zealotry traps (Z)
2 pillar of kinetic waves traps (K)

The portal in Sehanine’s temple connects to a similar portal in this chamber, which serves as the entry point for the Embassy of Ghouls. If the adventurers want to rest at any point, they can use the portal to return to Passion's Rendezvous (see “Features of the Area”).

Once, this room was the receiving area to the secret underchambers of the temple of Sehanine, and the pillars in the corners were used as defenses against unwanted intruders. They still serve that function now, albeit for a darker master.

When the adventurers arrive, show the “View of the Temple Portal” on page 27 of Adventure Book One and read:

In the center of this stone chamber’s floor is a large portal circle lined with green runes that glow brightly enough to light the whole room. A stone chair at the eastern end is delicately carved and scribed with symbols. An ornate square pillar sits in each corner of the room. Near each pillar is a pile of rubble, the shattered remains of some sort of statuary. A faint humming fills the air.

Perception

DC 29: The humming seems to be coming from the pillars and the stone chair.

The adventurers emerge from the portal in or adjacent to the portal squares in the center of the room. Two pillar traps activate immediately; the other two wait until approached. The adventurers can stop the traps from attacking by employing the countermeasures or by interacting with the stone chair.

Negotiating with the Reaper Skill Challenge

You sit in the stone chair and see a smoky form begin to coalesce before you. After a few moments, the shape takes the guise of a spectral reaper clutching a scythe. Its eyes burn with a red, unholy light, and its skeletal body is mostly concealed by a tattered, hooded robe. In a dusty voice, the reaper whispers, “Show your worth to death’s true master, and pass.”

Level: 23 (XP 5,100).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Religion.

Bluff (DC 24, standard action): The character tells a tall tale of the adventurers’ exploits that is untrue but nonetheless impresses the reaper. This skill can be used to gain 1 successes in this challenge.

Diplomacy (DC 24, standard action): The character explains that, despite their many exploits, the adventurers are humbled to be in the presence of a servant of “death’s true master.” This skill can be used to gain 2 successes in this challenge.

Religion (DC 29, standard action): The character describes how the party’s actions have been worthy of death’s true master by citing religious texts and obscure prophecies. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

Secondary Skill: Insight.

Insight (DC 29, minor action): The reference to “death’s true master” is a clue that the reaper serves Orcus. If the character realizes this connection, it is easier to prove the adventurers’ worthiness to the reaper. A success on this check provides a +2 bonus to all subsequent skill checks during this challenge.

Success: The reaper disables all four pillar traps and unlocks the curtains.

Failure: The reaper takes a toll in life force for the time it has spent in negotiation. All characters who have taken part in the skill challenge lose a healing surge. The reaper then unlocks the curtains but does not disable the pillar traps.

2 Pillars of Zealotry (Z) Level 20 Lurker Trap XP 2,800 each

The finely carved pillars to the northwest and southeast depict elves and humans dancing and frolicking. However, the pillars radiate a disturbing feeling of malice and dread.

Trap: Each pillar attempts to dominate those who enter the chamber. The pillars draw energy from living creatures that are not devoted to Doresain and Orcus, and they function only as long as such creatures are within the room.

Perception

DC 27: The character recognizes the nature of the pillars.

Additional Skill: Religion

Trigger

When characters enter the chamber, the trap activates and rolls initiative. The trap continues its attacks until no living unbelievers remain in the room.

Attack

Target: Two random creatures not in service to Doresain or Orcus

Hit: The target is dominated (save ends).

Aftereffect: The target is dazed (save ends).

Countermeasure

A character can disable a pillar with three successful DC 27 Thievery checks or DC 27 Arcana checks. A pillar attacks as a free action if a check is failed.
ENCOUNTER E2: TEMPLE PORTAL ENTRANCE

**Features of the Area**

**Illumination:** Bright light.

**Pillars:** Ornate remnants of the temple’s former occupants, the magic that kept them warding the area has been corrupted and turned to Xamshil’s ends. The pillars in the northeast and southwest corners are zealotry traps, and those in the northwest and southeast corners are kinetic waves traps.

**Stone Chair:** The chair appears to be fashioned from the same stone as the pillars. A message crudely carved in the backrest can be read by any character standing adjacent to the chair. It states, “Sit and bargain for passage with death’s agent.”

Any character who uses a minor action to sit in the chair sees a visage of a reaper, visible only to the seated character. This begins a skill challenge. A character can rise from the chair with a minor action. Only one character can occupy the chair at a time. The skill challenge does not end until the PCs meet with success or failure.

**Shattered Statues:** Four shattered statues near the pillars turn the squares into difficult terrain.

**Portal:** This is a permanent teleportation portal that is linked to the portal in the temple’s northeast alcove. Carrying a small chunk of stone from one of the shattered statues allows a character to open the portal and return to the temple. If the lead adventurer does this, the rest of the party can immediately follow.

**Curtains:** Two sets of curtains block passage to the north and west. These curtains radiate a powerful warding magic that can be detected with a DC 31 Arcana check. They have been locked with the Arcane Lock ritual; the PCs can force the curtains open by making a DC 31 Strength check or DC 29 Thievery check. If the characters succeed on the skill challenge, or if they destroy or disable the pillars, the warding magic fades from the curtains, and they can pass through the curtains without any difficulty.

**Stairs:** Past the north curtain, a set of stairs descends only to crumble into a 2 × 2 square pit.

**Pit:** The pit was recently dug for use in testing the worth of Doresain’s supplicants before they were turned into fleshgluttons. Although the pit is only 10 feet deep, it is charged with necrotic energy that saps life. Any living creature that starts its turn in the pit is weakened (save ends).