

The Forgotten Terror

by

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Sample file



This adventure is designed for play in conjunction with *Castle Spulzeer*, an adventure for the FORGOTTEN REALMS® campaign setting. It can, however, also be played as a stand-alone adventure, so that Dungeon Masters (DMs) may run it without playing the Realms scenario.

Playing This Adventure



The Forgotten Terror is a unique crossover adventure for the RAVENLOFT® and FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign settings, designed for a party of four to six player characters of 10th through 12th level. The party should contain at least one character capable of employing wizardry and one character skilled in the use of priestly magic. These characters may be anchorites and arcanists or spellcasters from other worlds.

Adventure Summary

At the start of this adventure, the characters are all imprisoned within a gemstone set into the hilt of a magical dagger. Exactly how they came to be in this place depends upon whether the Dungeon Master has chosen to run this adventure as the sequel to the FORGOTTEN REALMS adventure *Castle Spulzeer*.

The events that took place in *Castle Spulzeer* are summarized in Appendix Two of this book under Chardath Spulzeer's character description. (Those events brought both him and the player characters to Ravenloft simultaneously.) For those Dungeon Masters using *The Forgotten Terror* as a stand-alone adventure, a suggested alternate beginning appears below.

Aggarath, the magical dagger in which the player characters are trapped, functions very much like a *mirror of life trapping*. Those who die by this blade find their spirits trapped within its ruby hiltstone—a floating domain in Ravenloft. The domain of *Aggarath* is a hostile one, however. As its occupants move around within the domain, the crystalline prison drains away their life energy. If the player characters do not escape quickly, they will lose the ability to do so.

As if that situation were not bad enough, the Mists have embraced the mad Chardath Spulzeer and made him into the lord of this domain. All the facets of that madman's shattered psyche are reflected in the faces of the gem.



The gemstone universe over which Chardath rules has no physical reality. In game terms, it can be considered a nondimensional space similar to that found within a *bag of holding*. As far as the heroes are concerned, however, they experience the place as a series of "facets," or levels. Each of these regions is a distinct universe which mirrors various aspects of Chardath's mind. As this is an insane mind, some of the facets are most torturous.

The heroes begin the adventure in the First Facet. As they travel through the facets of Chardath's madness, they gather the knowledge and power that they need to escape from the stone (see "The Enchanted Rubies," below). The adventurers must be quick, however, so as to escape before being reduced to level 0 and consumed by the gemstone universe.

Along the way, the party is aided by a mystical presence who offers advice in exchange for a promise of aid: The heroes must take him out of Aggarath when they exit. In truth, this adviser is the telepathic voice of *Maleffluent*, the evil intelligent weapon that Chardath Spulzeer carries with him. In the Forgotten Realms, he all but dominated Chardath. Here, however, he is unable to bend the demilord's will. To a powerful spirit like *Maleffluent*, this state of affairs is unacceptable. He will do everything he can to see his master destroyed and himself released from Aggarath.

Of course, *Maleffluent* has every intention of dominating the heroes if they are foolish enough to bring him into the outside world. Still, they may have no choice but to strike a devil's bargain with this potential ally.

The Enchanted Rubies

The majority of this adventure details the efforts of the characters to explore the gemstone domain of Aggarath. As they do this, they gather the tools and clues that should enable them to escape before the parasitic land completely absorbs their life essences.

Scattered throughout the domain of Aggarath are a number of rubies. These look more or less like normal gems, each an inch or so in size. They glow softly with magical power; a *detect magic* spell will confirm their nature. No two rubies are the same shape, however, making it possible to tell them apart easily.

Only by gathering at least three of these rubies will the heroes be able to escape from the

gemstone universe at the end of the adventure. The means of recovering particular stones is presented in each facet description. "The Twelfth Facet" section details how to use the rubies to escape Aggarath. In addition to the rubies, the heroes also need a key that Chardath holds.

Once the heroes escape Aggarath, their bodies are magically reconstituted. Any levels they may have lost during the adventure are restored.

Getting Started

Before beginning play, Dungeon Masters are advised to read the appendices of this product, which relate important background information about the domain of Aggarath, movement between facets, the demilord Chardath Spulzeer, the evil axe *Maleffluent*, and other key characters and concepts.

Alternative Beginnings

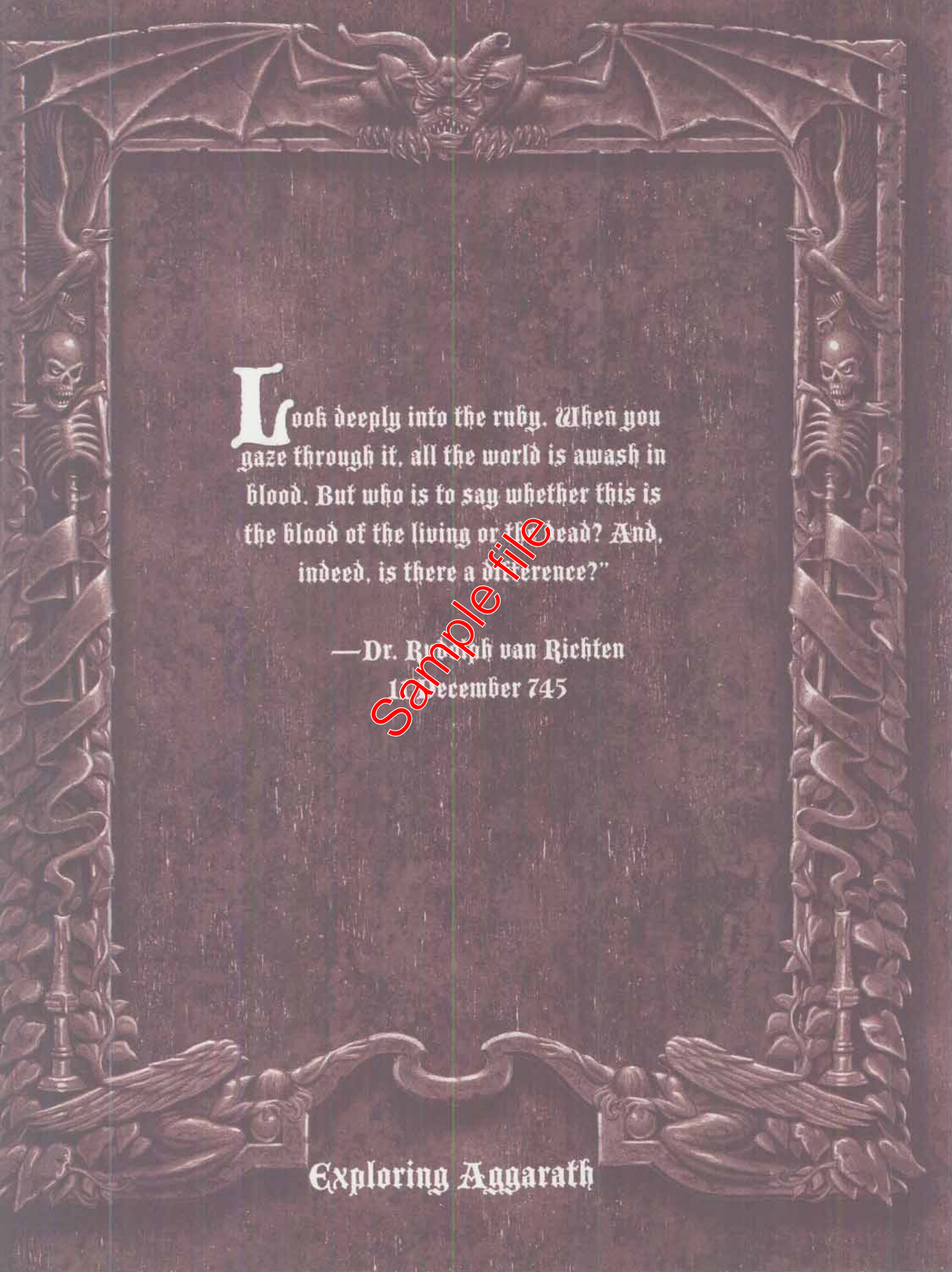
If this adventure is not being played in follow-up to *Spulzeer*, the Dungeon Master needs to make a few minor adjustments. The most important of these is finding a means of trapping the characters in the gemstone universe of Aggarath.

The easiest way of accomplishing this is for the heroes to be murdered by someone wielding the weapon *Aggarath* (described in Appendix One of this book). The Dungeon Master can begin the adventure by having the characters hired to investigate a series of brutal killings. In every case, the body of the victim is nothing more than a withered husk. This is a side-effect of the life-draining ability of the dagger.

As the characters investigate events, the trail leads them to what appears at first to be the hidden lair of a dangerous madman. In truth, however, the heroes have stumbled upon a deadly cult of dangerous fanatics. The cultists have been carrying out these murders as part of a terrible ritual which will, they believe, free the powerful spirit trapped in the knife. Clearly, they understand only a fraction of the truth about the weapon that they hold.

The heroes are then taken unawares and become the next victims of the deadly *Aggarath*. These events lead directly to the arrival of the party in the First Facet.

Note: This lead-in requires tinkering with a few rules and assumptions elsewhere in the adventure. These are minimal, however, and can be easily dealt with or even ignored during play.



Look deeply into the ruby. When you gaze through it, all the world is awash in blood. But who is to say whether this is the blood of the living or the dead? And, indeed, is there a difference?"

—Dr. Ragnor van Richten
1 December 745

Exploring Aggarath

The First Facet

*Pleasure is oft a visitant; but pain
Clings cruelly to us.*
—John Keats, “Endymion” (1817)

The First Facet is a land of shimmering ruby crystal. It is by far the most passive of the twelve regions that make up the domain of Aggarath. The boxed text, however, does not necessarily reveal this relatively benign state. The heroes may well believe themselves to be in great danger the moment that they appear in Aggarath.

In game terms, this facet serves to introduce the characters to their new surroundings and allows them to learn a thing or two about the domain before they truly begin the adventure. They could see the ghost Marble, whom they may recognize from Castle Spulzeer. Further, the heroes very likely will hear the voice of *Maleffluent*, Chardath’s magical battle axe.

Entering the Facet

Exploration of the First Facet can begin with the Dungeon Master reading the following text to the players:

One by one, you come to your senses in a place unlike any you have ever seen before. The surface beneath you is a sheet of red glass or crystal which glows with a diffuse, rippling light. It stretches out of sight in all directions with no visible edge or border.

Above you, a black sky devoid of stars, clouds, or other features spreads from horizon to horizon. Vast arcs of crimson lightning periodically lance across this void, followed swiftly by tremendous claps of thunder. These mighty reports cause the ground beneath your feet to tremble, yet no echo is ever heard in their wake.

The air here feels neither cold nor warm and is without scent or motion. This condition creates a stifling effect that makes this vast, openness seem somehow close and confining.

Mood and Atmosphere

In this scene, the Dungeon Master should play up

the sheer strangeness of the region. The heroes are in a realm which is, at the very least, exceedingly unusual. Ruby plains, crimson lightning in a black sky, and a complete lack of geographical features ought to be disorienting and frightening. This is especially true for characters who have agoraphobia (the fear of open spaces) or a similar handicap.

Exploring the Facet

Although this place appears very static, a number of events can trigger activity here. For the most part, the results depend upon the actions of the heroes.

Standing Around

A tried and true method of investigation among player characters is to stand around and do nothing. In general, the theory behind this approach is that whatever comes next in the adventure will happen soon enough. If the players opt to do this, the adventure winds to a standstill. So long as they remain patiently standing around waiting for something to happen, nothing does.

Still, this fact does not mean that such inactivity fails to reveal the nature of this place. After the heroes have wasted a turn or two, the Dungeon Master may read them the following text:

The passing of minutes seems to have no change on this place. It grows neither hotter nor colder, and no sign of life or other visitors becomes apparent. There is no respite from the endless cascade of lightning and no reprieve from the cacophony of thunder.

Still, not everything remains the same. As you linger in this place, you become aware of a distinct feeling of lethargy and weakness. Is this the result of some outside force or only the lingering effects of your arrival in this strange land? At the moment, it is impossible to tell.

This lethargy is, of course, the first traces of Aggarath’s energy-draining essence taking its toll on the characters. In game terms, it has no effect. It should, however, alert the characters that something is amiss in this place.