

Damned

A Threefolded Game

Damned

For a seemingly endless time you burned in the fiery pits. Scourged of your previous life by immortal fire, you have been left with little but the memories of the crimes that brought you here.

Now you are plucked from the fires by the Demon Captain Vex, servant of Lord Malphitheor, to be used in his schemes against rival Demon Lords. If you serve your Lord (and backstab the right souls) you might be able to work your way up the demonic hierarchy. One day you might even be a Demon Lord yourself!

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

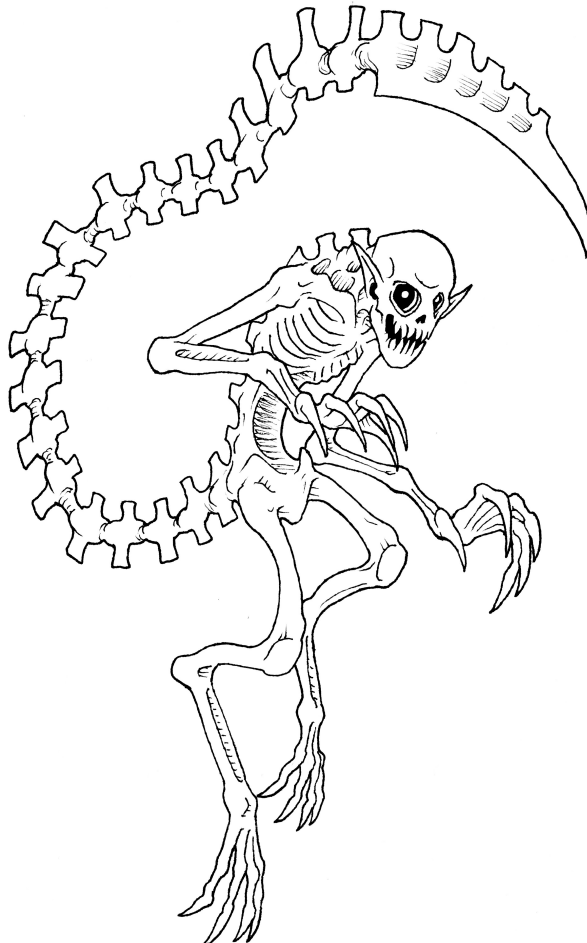
2 to 5 people, one is the Overseer the others the players

10+ d6s, d8s, d10s, and d12s

Paper and writing implements

Tokens (2 colours)

Before playing, talk as a group about the tone of the game. Do you need to set any limits on describing torture and gore?



Creating Characters

SINS

Of all your sins, which was the greatest, that condemned your soul to Hell? Choose one, and detail it.

If violent, vicious or bloody: +1 Bloody Hands

If false, treacherous, or boastful: +1 Deceitful Tongue

If scheming, poisonous, or covetous: +1 Wicked Heart

If occult, arcane, or blasphemous: +2 Dark Arts

If you are truly innocent, somehow tricked or stolen into hell, +1 Precious Memory. Detail it.

STATS

Begin with the following stats, plus the bonus from your greatest sin.

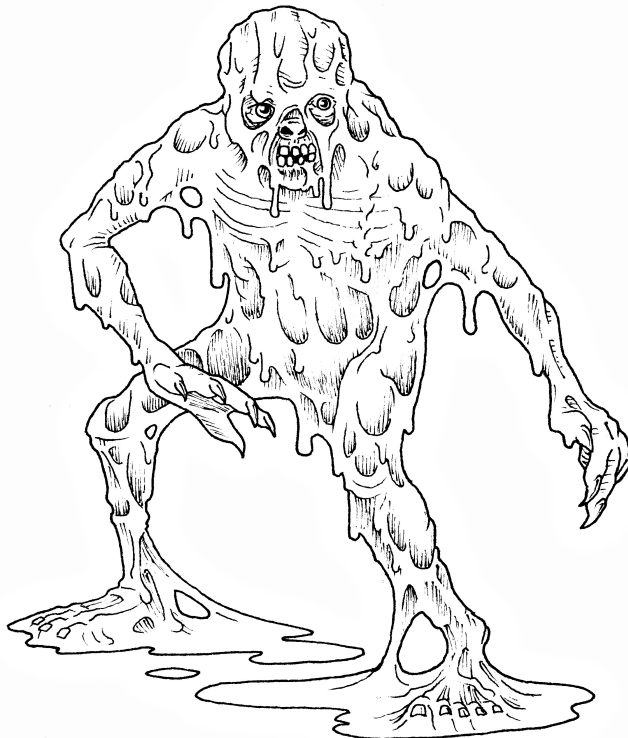
Bloody Hands 3. (Inflict harm.)

Deceitful Tongue 3. (Lie, boast, manipulate, or trick.)

Wicked Heart 3. (Understand evil, see through lies and deceptions.)

Dark Arts 0. (Work magic, shape the landscape of Hell.)

Precious Memory You have one last, precious memory of your life. What is it? *A loved one's name? The warmth of the sun? A child's laughter? The smell of good clean earth? A stranger's kindness?* Your precious memory is worth one soulstone at the Dark Market. Will you trade it for power in Hell, or fight to keep it?



System

UNOPPOSED ACTIONS

When you attempt an action, roll a number of six-sided dice equal to the governing stat. If the action is unopposed, the Overseer will tell you how many successes you need:

Simple = no roll necessary

Easy = 1 success needed

Hard = 2 successes needed

Longshot = 3 successes needed

A roll of **5+** is a success. Unopposed actions do not give tokens, except Dark Arts.

OPPOSED ACTIONS

If an action is opposed, you and the Overseer (or opposing player) both roll dice based on your respective governing stat. The player with the most successes wins and takes a **Strength** token. The loser takes a **Weakness** token

If there is a tie on successes, both characters get what they want, if possible. If not possible, neither get what they want. Neither takes tokens.

If neither player gets a success, neither get what they want, and both are exhausted. Both take a **Weakness** token.

UNGOVERNED ACTIONS

If your character takes an action that isn't violent, deceitful, or wicked, the action is ungoverned. Roll **3d6**. Ungoverned actions never earn Strength tokens, and usually do not give Weakness tokens. If an action is normally impossible (such as changing shape), then it is governed by Dark Arts instead.

BONUS DICE

The Overseer may reward creative description and clever tactics by adding a bonus die on a roll.

BLOODY HANDS

When you inflict harm on another character, roll your Bloody Hands, opposed by their Bloody Hands. If you win, the fight is over. Describe the horrible wounds you inflict. Souls and demons cannot die, they are already dead. They can, however, feel pain and suffering.

All wounds heal over time (and relatively quickly) but they are still messy, inconvenient, and single the injured character out as a target for abuse. The loser is likely stripped of whatever they were carrying. They may be imprisoned. If they are torn apart, or eaten, they may regenerate where they they are, or re-spawn back at the lake of fire.

DECEIT

When you lie to manipulate another character, roll your Deceitful Tongue, opposed by their Wicked Heart. If you win, they believe you. They may relent, but then they must believe you.

WICKEDNESS

When you seek the truth about another character, roll your Wicked Heart, opposed by their Deceitful Tongue. If you win, they must answer one question truthfully. They may relent, but then they must answer truthfully

DARK ARTS

Dark Arts are used to work magic, and perform actions that are normally impossible, even for Demons. Most Damned begin with Dark Arts at 0, and cannot even attempt Dark Arts rituals. It is up to you and your play group exactly what magic can accomplish, below is a partial list of suggestions. Powerful feats of magic may also require spellbooks, or the sacrifice of soulstones, at the Overseer's discretion.

Easy = 1 success needed: Beast speech, fly, levitate objects, minor illusions, detect magic, telepathy

Hard = 2 successes needed: Beast form, disguise, fire bolt, shape landscape, open portal, sending

Longshot = 3 successes needed: Turn to mist, teleport, craft artifacts, transform landscapes, scrying

Dark Arts are always considered opposed by Hell itself. If you succeed, take a **Strength** token. If you fail, take a **Weakness** token.

When in doubt about the effects of Dark Arts, add Dark Arts successes as bonus dice on next action.

WEAKNESSES

Before you make any roll, the Overseer may choose to invoke any Weaknesses you have showing. For each Weakness invoked, cancel one success from your roll. Discard the invoked Weakness immediately (although if you failed your roll, you may have gained another Weakness).

Shedding Weakness

When you feast on the flesh of the fallen, shed one Weakness.

When you take time to rest, and eat filth, shed all your Weaknesses, but in that time the bells toll, and your enemies are not idle.

STRENGTHS

When you have **5** Strength tokens, immediately trade them for a new demonic **trait**.

TRAITS

Traits visibly transform you from a weak Damned Soul into a powerful Demon. Traits have both a descriptive element, and a mechanical benefit. The following is a list of suggestions. Feel free to create new demonic traits.

Acid blood, barbed tail, burning eyes, crimson flesh, dark halo, deadly claws, familiar creature, fearsome gaze, forked tongue, huge body, many eyes, powerful horns, thunderous hooves, scaly hide, stone skin, tattooed runes, terrible beauty, vicious teeth, etc.

Governed Traits

Most traits add one of the following benefits:

- Resilience. +1d to a Stat (max. 5d).
- Power. Upgrade all dice of one Stat to the next die size (d6, d8, d10, d12).

Ungoverned Traits

Some traits are not governed by a stat, but add either resilience or power for some ungoverned actions.

Glorious wings, or *serpentine body* for ungoverned rolls to escape, or navigate terrain.

Creeping shadow for ungoverned rolls to move unseen.

Shadow tendrils for ungoverned rolls to manipulate objects.

The Overseer

Your job, as the Overseer, is to challenge the player characters and to portray the environment and other denizens of Hell.

CHALLENGE THE CHARACTERS

Give the player characters something to do. Especially in the beginning, the PCs are nobodies, disposable grunts plucked from the fiery pits to do a job. Malphitheor has plenty of work for them. See the sample missions at the end for ideas.

If they succeed, they are tasked with more: more dangerous assignments, more important missions, and possibly even minions of their own to use and abuse. If they fail, and return to Malphitheor empty-handed, he strips them of their Precious Memories. If they fail again, they are thrown back into the fiery pits to continue an eternity of torment.

Beyond that, what do the players want? Do they want to climb the hierarchy of Hell by tormenting and abusing others? Pit the Demon Princes against each other? Or try to recover their lost memories, and escape from Hell?

Success breeds fear and anger, and soon, the PCs start to look like a threat. Captain Vex, the lowly punk Demon that sends them out on missions, starts wondering when he gets sent out and one of the PCs does the sending. Above the cannon-fodder level, Hell's hierarchy is crowded and when someone moves up, by design, someone moves down.

The corollary to this is that no-one, and especially the PCs, gets anywhere by tormenting others at the same level. Sure, you can gain Strength, but you cannot move up in the hierarchy, and gain titles or treasures, except by challenging something with more power or authority.

If the PCs see the obvious course of action, which is to do nothing else but torment other souls around them to gain Strength tokens and level up, you may want to see how far they want to take it. Every lowly Damned belongs to a Demon Lord, though, and the PCs are poaching on someone's territory. Eventually, their actions attract the wrath of more powerful Demons. And when Malphitheor notices that they aren't accomplishing their mission, he will pitch them back into the fiery pits.

PORTRAY THE ENVIRONMENT

Most of Hell consists of interconnecting caverns of rough rock, with pits of fire and lakes of lava, but there are other types of terrain, including ice caverns, blood swamps, or acid seas. Demon Lords rule from cities bordering the River Styx, built by Damned slaves. Dotting these always painful terrains are the tormented souls of sinners, hung on hooks, wrapped in thorns, burning in lava, embedded in ice, or serving as furniture in a Demon Lord's fortress.

Before you begin play, think about what Hell looks like to you and be ready to describe it in gory detail for the players.

TERRAIN

For random Hellish terrain, roll the highest die available to any of the PCs (d6 early on, and then d8, d10 or d12 as they level up). Each terrain has a [type] tag attached.

- | | |
|----|---|
| 1 | Cavern. Rough rock with pits of flame. [Dangerous] |
| 2 | Blood Swamp (or Sea). [Difficult] |
| 3 | Twisting corridors. [Hidden] |
| 4 | Corpse Trees. [Occupied] |
| 5 | Ice. [Fragile] |
| 6 | Ruins. [Littered] |
| 7 | Acid. [Dangerous] and roll again. |
| 8 | Webs, Chains, or Thorns. [Difficult] and roll again. |
| 9 | Darkness or Smoke [Hidden] and roll again. |
| 10 | City (Dis, Pandemonium, Abaddon, Tartarus). [Occupied] and roll again. |
| 11 | Mechanical. [Fragile] and roll again. |
| 12 | Battlefield. [Littered] and roll again |

Choose a specific effect from the [types] below. Assume that any rolls required are easy (1 success needed). You may choose an option twice to increase the difficulty to hard (2 successes needed).

Dangerous (choose one):

- Add +1d to all Bloody Hands rolls.
- If you lose a combat, take an extra Weakness token.
- If you fail at an ungoverned roll to navigate the space, take a Weakness token.
- If you lose a combat, your body is destroyed or imprisoned.
- You cannot shed Weaknesses in this place.

Difficult (choose one):

- Make an ungoverned roll (3d6) when you first enter, or take a Weakness token.
- Remove one success from all Bloody Hands rolls (as tough you had a Weakness token).
- Make an ungoverned roll (3d6) before you can ... (enter close range, leave, etc.).
- All ungoverned rolls here are at least Hard (2 successes needed).

Hidden (choose one):

- This place hides it's true nature (roll again). Roll your Wicked Heart to see it.
- This place shows a false nature (roll again). Roll your Wicked Heart to see through it.
- Your objective, your foe, or the exit are hidden. Roll your Wicked Heart to discover them.
- You may sneak through, escape, or avoid this place with an ungoverned roll (3d6).

Occupied (choose one):

- Crowded with damned Souls. Roll your Deceitful Tongue for them to help you.
- The place itself is alive and intelligent. Roll your Deceitful Tongue for it to help you.
- Swarming with Vermin. Your Deceitful Tongue is useless without a beast speech spell.

Littered: Something useful abounds here (gold, weapons, filth, flesh, doors ...).

Fragile: Any Bloody Hands roll will damage this environment, revealing new features (roll 1d6):

1 +dangerous, 2 +difficult, 3 +hidden, 4 +crowded, 5 +littered, 6 destroyed (you all fall into a new environment).

TIME

There is no sun in Hell, and no seasons, but the passage of time is marked by a complex system of unseen, tolling bells (the Screaming Bell, the Doom bell, the Curse Bell, etc). When the PCs retry an action, take time to heal, travel, or attempt Dark Arts rituals, the bells toll. Choose one or more of the following:

- Your enemies recover from their wounds. With enough time, they shed their Weaknesses.
- More enemies arrive. Demonic patrols, reinforcements, opportunists or wandering Beasts.
- The environment changes, or the connecting portals, doors or tunnels shift to new destinations.
- The hierarchy changes. Your enemies gain allies, titles, or treasures. Your information is old.
- Your Lord is not pleased. Your delay is costing him, and he does not look kindly on failure.

PORTRAY THE OTHER DENIZENS OF HELL

Most Damned Souls in Hell are tortured sinners, burning in the lake of fire, chained to the rocks, or serving as Demons' furniture. They do not oppose your rolls, so you cannot gain Strength by tormenting them, and their abused bodies are filth, not flesh.

Other Damned are slaves, tending the corpse trees, digging for filth, building cities and fortresses, or running errands like the PCs.

Demons come in all shapes, sizes and level of power but all are bullies and cowards. They torment those weaker than themselves but fear those more powerful. The hierarchy of Hell ensures this as much as anything else.

Everyone in Hell lies, boasts, threatens, bargains and betrays. Everyone is suspicious.

Name everyone. Track your NPCs' Weakness on paper instead of using tokens. Invoke NPC's Weaknesses immediately, on their next roll. Don't worry about tracking their Strength. When the bells toll, shed all their Weaknesses, and some may gain new traits.

DAMNED SOULS

Murderer's Soul

Bloody Hands: 4d6
Deceitful Tongue: 3d6
Wicked Heart: 3d6

Deceiver's Soul

Bloody Hands: 3d6
Deceitful Tongue: 4d6
Wicked Heart: 3d6

Schemer's Soul

Bloody Hands: 3d6
Deceitful Tongue: 3d6
Wicked Heart: 4d6

Witch's Soul

Bloody Hands: 3d6
Deceitful Tongue: 4d6
Wicked Heart: 3d6
Dark Arts: 2d6

DEMONS

Demons have a few descriptive traits, and may have gold, weapons, or other treasures.

Demon Soldier

Bloody Hands: 5d8
Deceitful Tongue: 4d6
Wicked Heart: 4d6

Demon Captain

Bloody Hands: 5d10
Deceitful Tongue: 4d8
Wicked Heart: 4d6
Dark Arts: 1d6

Demon Lord (Baron)

Bloody Hands: 5d10
Deceitful Tongue: 5d10
Wicked Heart: 4d8
Dark Arts: 3d6

Demon Lord (Duke)

Bloody Hands: 5d12
Deceitful Tongue: 5d10
Wicked Heart: 4d10
Dark Arts: 4d8

Demon Prince

Bloody Hands: 5d12
Deceitful Tongue: 5d10
Wicked Heart: 5d10
Dark Arts: 5d10

BEASTS

Beasts have a few descriptive traits. They cannot speak, or understand speech, making it difficult to deceive or bribe them unless you use a beast speech spell with Dark Arts.

Vermin

Bloody Hands: 4d6
Deceitful Tongue: 3d6
Wicked Heart: 3d6

Vermin Swarm

Bloody Hands: 5d8
Deceitful Tongue: 4d6
Wicked Heart: 4d6

Hell Hound

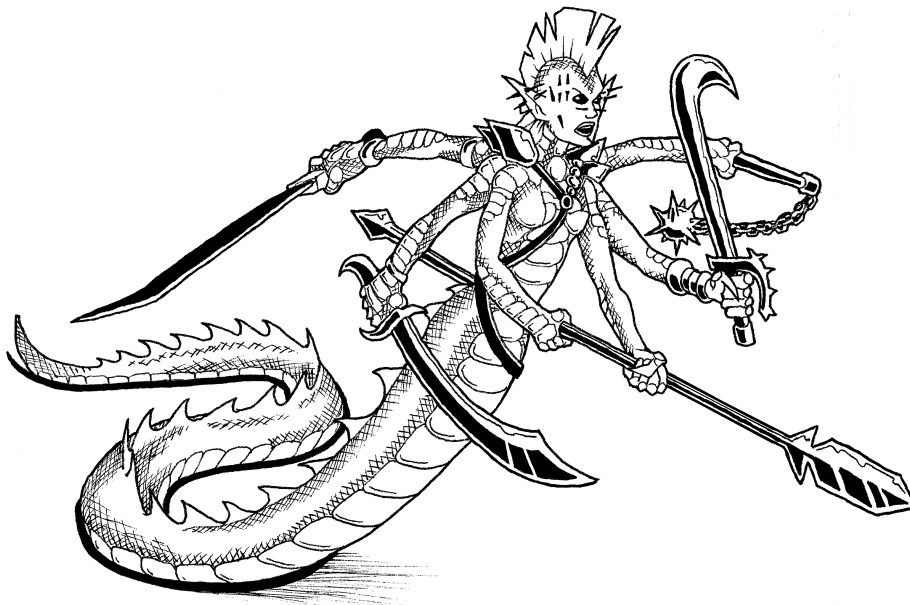
Bloody Hands: 5d10
Deceitful Tongue: 4d6
Wicked Heart: 4d8

Nightmare

Bloody Hands: 5d10
Deceitful Tongue: 5d6
Wicked Heart: 4d10

Dragon

Bloody Hands: 5d12
Deceitful Tongue: 5d8
Wicked Heart: 5d10



DARK MARKETS

In the cities that border the River Styx, there are Dark Markets, with two tiers of trade. The Damned trade in gold, while Demons trade in soulstones. Yes, you could attempt to steal from the merchants at the Dark Market, but doing so would quickly attract the wrath of Duke Mammon and his Hellhounds, who police the Markets. The following list of Treasures is only a sampling of what may be available from the Dark Market, as rewards from your Lord, or as prizes to steal from your enemies. Other things you might trade for include favors, secrets, or ship's passage. Remember everyone lies, every trade should involve rolling Deceitful Tongue or Wicked Heart.

TREASURES

Gold: Turns out you can take it with you. Some greedy souls found a way to bring their riches to Hell with them, for all the good it does. Damned Souls and minor Demons keep gold to trade for filth, rags, flesh, crude weapons, and to bribe and gamble. Nothing else worth having can be bought with gold. High ranking Demons wear gold rings, chains and medallions as signs of power and to gamble with, but they cannot be bribed with mere gold.

Filth: Filth is the staple of the Damned. Those who cannot afford flesh dine on filth.

Flesh: The flesh of the Damned is a delicacy. Feast on flesh and shed one Weakness.

Rags: The Damned dress in rags, when they are lucky enough to be dressed at all. If you don't have rags, you don't have pockets.

Soulstones: Not all Souls come to Hell as sinners. Some are tricked, bought, or stolen. These pure Souls become soulstones, and are prized by higher ranking Demons. A single soulstone will buy a flaming weapon, finery, bloodwine, or a spellbook. A nightmare, warship, or stronghold, would cost several soulstones.

Armor: Prevents taking 1 Weakness in battle. After it is used, the armor is broken and useless.

Bloodwine: Drink a bottle of bloodwine and shed all your Weakness. May also be used as a bribe.

Finery: Vain Demon Lords prefer to dress in fine clothes, robes, silks, and jewels.

Keys: Open doors between layers, into cities, vaults, or cells. Some doors may open to different places, depending on which key is used. Some keys may always lead to the same place, no matter which door you take.

Maps: Which layers are connected, what hazards or treasures do they hold, and when do they change?

Poison: Use your Deceitful Tongue to offer poison to your enemies, or Wicked Heart to dose their food. Poison victims are incapacitated as though they lost at Bloody Hands.

Spell Books: Add +1d to Dark Arts for a few specific spells (book of the damned, book of shadows...)

Weapons: Iron or stone weapons can be bought with gold, and add +1d to Bloody Hands. Magical flaming weapons may add +2d, but must be bought with soulstones

Firey Crowns: Only Dukes and Princes wear firey crowns. They cannot be bought, only taken. For a lesser Demon to possess one is asking for trouble.

SAMPLE MISSIONS

Captain Vex delivers orders from Malphitheor. But Vex lies, conceals details, and takes the credit.

- Travel to the realm of Demon Lord Baltizaar, rival of Malphitheor, and steal the emerald idol's eye. [*The emerald eye is powerful and valuable. Many Demons would pay a high price for it, but Malphitheor plans to give the PCs nothing.*]
- Go to the realm of Demon Lord Pompositor, and discover why his troops have been causing trouble for Malphitheor. [*Pompositor's new Captain, Kotus, is behind the trouble as part of his own schemes.*]
- Stop one of Demon Lord Landrignon's patrols. The patrol can't be killed (obviously) but they can be temporarily dis-incorporated to create a convenient opening for another group of grunts to invade Landrignon's territory. [*Landrignon has something Malphitheor wants.*]
- Serve under Baron Raum to spy on him and reveal his plotting against Malphitheor. [*Raum has made an allegiance with Duke Zagan to bring Malphitheor down. If the PCs discover his treachery, he will try to convince them to join him in Zagan's service.*]
- Malphitheor wants the Soul of newly Damned occultist Nicholas, currently in the possession of Baron Moloch. Moloch is holding a masquerade where Demons gamble for Damned Souls. The PCs will attend the masquerade, and win or steal Nicholas' Soul, without letting Moloch know how badly Malpitheor wants it. [*Nicholas knows about treasures which Malpitheor lost to the mortal church. It would be embarrassing for Malpitheor if this were discovered by other Demons.*]

SECRETS

The PCs may learn secrets by spying, in trade, or by torturing their enemies (roll 1d12).

- 1 Password (to pass as an enemy, meet an ally, or access a stronghold)
- 2 Code (to pass or intercept secret messages)
- 3 Location (of a Damned, Demon, treasure, or stronghold)
- 4 Time (of a shipment, or the changing of the guards, or when the target is vulnerable)
- 5 Identity (of a betrayer, either enemy or allied)
- 6 Danger (of an area, or enemy)
- 7 Magic Words (to activate or deactivate an item, portal, or monster)
- 8 Crimes (How one Demon wronged another in the past)
- 9 Weakness (of an enemy, or stronghold)
- 10 Plans (what your enemies, or your own Lord, are going to do next)
- 11 Passage (between two places, in or out of a city or stronghold, or into the mortal world)
- 12 Loyalty (which Lord a certain Demon really works for)

LIES

Demons and the Damned lie. Make missions more complicated by rolling for a random lie (1d12).

- 1 The mission is not from Malphittheor at all, but serves another Demon Lord.
- 2 The mission is not from Malphittheor at all, but serves his scheming Captain, Vex.
- 3 The mission is only a diversion, and is intended to fail.
- 4 A Demon who seems powerful is actually weak.
- 5 The PCs are offered a reward to betray Malphittheor. It is a lie to test their loyalty.
- 6 There are untold dangers on this mission.
- 7 The treasure is actually very powerful and important.
- 8 The treasure is actually worthless, or non-existent.
- 9 A rival team has been sent on the same mission.
- 10 The mission will anger one of the Demon Princes.
- 11 The mission will anger a jealous rival underling of Malphittheor.
- 12 Malphittheor plans to betray the PCs.

