

PLANESCAPE CAMPAIGN SETTING

CHAPTER 9: DM'S DARK

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Well, by now a canny cutter like yourself is itching to gather your favorite victi—ahem—players, and start running a game. Of course, if you're completely green to the task you could always use a little bit of advice on where to start. And if you're old-hat, a little bit of a refresh couldn't hurt, now could it?

This chapter of the PSCS aims to help any new GMs out there who don't have anyone locally they can turn to for advice on some of the common or stereotypical problems with a planar game. We've tried to cover the major 'issues' that creep up for bashers lost in a sea of clueless, and of course if you have a question that isn't answered here, please feel free to drop by Planewalker.com and we'll be glad to give some extra advice.

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## *PREPARING THE GAME*

Starting advice for a Planescape campaign is the same as it is for any other game really: Define what sort of a campaign you're looking to run. A planar campaign can have as wide or as narrow a scope as you like, and any sort of tone that you care to adopt. It can be handy to have the following questions answered before you begin working on a grand idea that your group isn't interested in or ready for:

### **Will this be a single plane or multi-plane campaign?**

Making this decision in advance allows you to focus your research and your player's character concepts. The multiverse is huge and can be a very overwhelming place for DMs, so it is very useful to consider the scope of your campaign. Will the heroes be seasoned planewalkers, jaunting through portals at the drop of hat? Or will they be residents of Sigil's Hive Ward, caught up in faction politics and city life. The material in the *Planescape Campaign Setting* can be used in a number of ways. No one says you have to throw everything plus the kitchen sink into your game. Remember, you can always add more if you need to later.

There are two types of campaigns in general: The constantly moving and the staying put.

If you go for a planewalking style of campaign, you will have to do less detailed planning at the start. Your players won't be staying in town too long. But your time planning each week will involve research on each new location for every adventure. You'll have to have a good way to keep your players constantly on the go. Mercenary work is one good way to get your players out on the road, and it is easy to find with the Blood War or the Planar Trade Consortium. Certain places are also easy to fit into this sort of a game as such as Sigil, the Outlands, the Great Tree Yggdrasil, the Styx, the Astral and Ethereal. These are useful as headquarters or a common travel point.

In a regional campaign, you can work from a smaller base of information and as the campaign progresses new areas can be introduced. However, this style requires more initial effort such as figuring out familiar haunts and contacts from the characters' daily routines. You will need to focus on the characters given to you by your players in order to get them involved in their environment. Work as much of their character background into your plans as you can. Your players and the game will appreciate the extra effort.

### **What tone will your game have?**

If you approach your game with a grim darkness or a surreal sense of humor your players will respond in kind. The tone for your game is going to establish your players' responses to the entire campaign. So it's worthwhile to find out from your players what sort of game they are interested in.

On the planes one is most aware of the meaning of belief and existence in the multiverse. This lends towards characters that know, or think they know, exactly what's going on and have a wider perspective than the casual fates of small kingdoms on tiny prime worlds. Planewalkers realize the real conflicts of the multiverse have gone on for millennia and, despite the lofty intentions of many, they have seen firsthand the damage such struggles have wrought. By default, Planescape has a cynical and jaded tone.

But for *your* game, you have the option of approaching the planes from any point of view you like. It is your game after all.

You may instead decide to pick up on the idealism of the factions, or of the Upper or Lower (if your game leans that way) planes. You may choose to focus on the results one sees from victories, small or large. If your players prefer the non-serious, you may find it easier to approach the planes with an entirely carefree plot in mind.

### **How socially oriented will your plot be?**

While the multiverse offers its fair share of everything, there should always be a strong social element to Planescape games. Politics can be found everywhere from the Cage, to the Lower Planes, Upper Planes, and Inner Planes. And that's not even counting the wheeling and dealing in the Blood War itself. Most aspects of Planescape have some sort of political structure, even amongst the free spirited people of the Chaotic Planes, and it should show its ugly head fairly often.

Politics and diplomacy are why the planes are in their current state and are the tools needed to keep it all in check. The wheeling and dealing of the political machine gives the players a

chance to truly role-play and often illustrates the reasons why a hack-and-slash mentality is not the solution to everything. If your players aren't interested then you can play it down, but don't remove it entirely, they may gain an interest in it once they have a feel for the planes.

## What are the players' ultimate goals for the campaign?

Are they looking to play a political game? Perhaps they'd rather it be combat-oriented or mystery driven? You should always ask your players this question for any game you run, not just Planescape.

Ask your players to list three things they want to do. These goals do not have to be grand and the players should understand that they may not accomplish all of them, but it will certainly give you something to work with for your plot.

For example, these goals may include simply meeting a power or becoming a golden Lord of Sigil. Your player may wish to become immortal, or rule their own demiplane. These sorts of goals will give you inspiration when you most need it, and you'll be guaranteed to have at least one player interested in your next plot hook.

Another way to gather this information is to draw up a list of elements that can be included in a campaign and give a copy to each of the players. Ask them to put a check next to the top of elements that they are interested in.

Example elements may include:

- Combat
- Puzzles
- Intrigue
- Politics
- Diplomacy
- Exploration
- Romance
- Paid missions
- Philosophical debate
- Dungeon crawls
- Defeating a great foe
- Large-scale wars
- Defending a region
- On-the-run adventures
- Themed party creation
- Open-ended scenarios
- Inter-group conflict
- Intra-group conflict
- Pirates
- Ninjas
- Knighthood
- Criminal underworlds
- Treasure hunting
- Courtly drama

## Who are your main characters?

It's been said before, but always bears repeating: *the players are the focus of your game.*

It can be tempting to have a plot in a Planescape campaign that draws in factols and gods from across the multiverse. A plot which is so epic in scope that your players end up vanishing. But if

the story simply leaves them as bystanders to greater events, it is likely the players will become bored and frustrated long before they've come to appreciate your elaborate designs.

Take the time to work with the players as they create character histories. This will help you to have a good understanding of their backgrounds and interests,. It also provides you the opportunity to make suggestions for patrons and enemies. Then you can build your campaign around key figures and organizations that the players already have an established relationship with. Once you know your characters, you can adapt almost any adventure into your campaign with just a few tweaks, no matter if it's your own or a published adventure.

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## *THE PLANESCAPE TWIST*

Every conceivable campaign, in every conceivable world, is a subset of a Planescape campaign. Planescape can serve as an explanation for the existence of other realms of consciousness, otherworldly creatures, artifacts, gods and the afterlife. It also allows you as the DM to select from drastically different places and situations, contrasting differing ways of life focusing on particular ideas and concepts.

### **So what is a Planescape campaign?**

Is it about the movers and the shakers—the creatures from the pits of the Lower Planes as well as the celestial entities from the highest heights? Is it about strange locations with exotic names, and the hardened travelers who would brave the planar pathways to find them? Or is it perhaps about the challenging philosophies and the ideas of alien thinkers, colliding worldviews, and the fact that a single idea can reshape the multiverse like nothing else could ever hope to?

Yes, the last one rings true.

Planescape is about belief. It's about holding up a mirror to the real world and seeing a fantastic and distorted reality containing elements of truth. Whose truth, we do not ask. In essence, though, this is what differentiates Planescape from ordinary planar adventures.

In practice, you will find that a Planescape campaign should always have a strong theme. This theme (or themes, as the case may be) can make or break the campaign, and shape the direction your entire story will take.

- It can be simple:
  - *“Truth is in the eye of the beholder”.*

- Complex:
  - *“Infinity and entropy are contradictory yet cannot exist without each other”.*
- Traditional:
  - *“A single world takes shape from all the other worlds. All the worlds take shape from belief. The City of Doors is at the center of belief. And the factions seek to influence it”.*
- Or brand new:
  - *“When mind and spirit are one, the Astral will no longer be a barrier between the Prime and the Outer Planes”.*

The potential is endless, which is why it is important to give the campaign shape and form by using thematic elements.

Your theme should be dynamic and powerful. A good Planescape campaign will challenge the beliefs of both the characters and the player. The very best games are spoken of and debated about for years afterwards, because they concerned themselves with something that is important to the players. The nature of justice and honor, the value of charity and self-sufficiency, the conflict between harmony and freedom; these are meaningful issues in real life and in imaginary worlds.

But don't forget the fun! Roleplaying is all about fun, too. The players aren't just sitting around a table, philosophizing about the price of fish! They are visiting exotic locations and browsing strange ideas and characters that color in the theme of the campaign. They are philosophers with clubs and with dice and with good friends. No one should be forced to take the theme any more seriously than they'd normally take the game—but they should all have more fun than usual. That's why we paint the theme with broad, colorful strokes, filled with humor and our tongues firmly in our cheeks. Because in the end, it is a game.

Bring a level of seriousness to the ideas, but you should still be having fun with it. We'll build a Kafkaesque metaphor for something that's important, and then we laugh, dispelling the illusion. We get to visit the planes, and then come home.

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## *KEY ELEMENTS*

There are a number of key elements you can use to build up your Planescape 'twist' in your campaign. These are tools that give you the best opportunity to expand on your theme and bring it to your players character as a concrete element in their world. Use these tools to start. You'll be bound to come up with more as you keep playing. As you develop your plots, locations, and NPCs, just keep these elements in mind and your theme should develop naturally from there.

## Symbolism

Everything, every event, person, book, and word has a second or even third meaning. For example, the River Styx is not just a river that connects different Lower Planes: in your campaign it may be the embodiment of the Blood War. As the tide of war swells, so does the river. Where the river flows goes, the War will soon follow, and vice versa. Sometimes the connection is obvious, sometimes subtle, but it is always there. Belief is often derived from that symbolism. Of course, you could argue the other way just as easily - but symbolism is one of the most valuable tools for you to use in your game regardless.

## Plotting

Everyone has an agenda, from the lowest namer to the greatest deity. Their agenda dictates their actions. Adventures such as Faction War and *The Fires of Dis* are examples of events driven by the antagonists' agendas. Figuring out what everyone's agenda is can become your players' favorite pastime. You should take the time early on to determine what motivates the NPCs that surround your players.

## Scale

Everything is massive, and by that we mean bigger than life. The important features on a plane may be visible from where ever you are—the tower of Dispater on Dis for example, or the Spire on the Outlands. This has a lot to do with symbolism, of course. The trick is not to focus on the empty space that makes up most of an infinite layer, but on the landmarks. The same goes for the factions, powers, and other aspects of a game.

## The Three Laws

There are three Principles in the Planes. Call them laws, rules, themes or what have you - these are patterns that the greybeards and cutters alike are aware of. These principles can be felt throughout every layer of every plane, and throughout every era of every age. Given their significance, these themes should pop up in your own campaign frequently and your players should eventually have the committed to memory.

### *RULE OF THREE*

Things happen in threes. There are three fiendish races, three celestials, and three neutral when it comes to morals - just as there are three races of law, three of chaos and three of ethical ambivalence. There are three types of planes - Inner, Outer and Transitive, and three great planar rivers - the Sytx, the Oceanus, and the Ma'at. If you see two opposites - expect a third in the middle, acting as the median and middle ground. And if you only see two, look for the hidden third - it may contain the secrets of the multiverse.

*UNITY OF RINGS*

What goes around comes around. Time and space are circular. History repeats itself, and karma comes back to bite you in the rear. Good deeds will return to you just as bad ones do, and rings can be found everywhere. The outer planes, inner planes, the Outlands and even Sigil itself inscribe a circle.

*CENTER OF ALL*

No matter where you go, there you are. There is no true center to the multiverse - in the infinite planes the only center is where you decide to place it, be that yourself, your people - your plane or even Sigil itself as many try to declare the city to be. Truth is - it could be anywhere.

**Belief**

Belief drives a Planescape campaign, and a good campaign should challenge the beliefs of both the characters and the player. When your players walk away from a Planescape epic, they should want to think about the choices they made and the reasons for them. This is an intellectual game, and considering the beliefs and motivations of the PCs and NPCs should be a key part of it, while at the same time expecting them to be challenged and change over time.

On the planes, belief has a concrete effect on the surroundings, gifting a believer with extraordinary powers or shaping the very entities and landscapes they interact with. You may need to demonstrate this effect in order to get it in your player's minds, so look for opportunities to show the power of belief. For example, you may choose to include a set of NPCs that believe a garden into growing or the factol of another group into dying, or even make belief the focus of a pivotal plot point.

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*CHARACTER MOTIVATIONS*

Need advice for getting the players to risk life and limb on certain planes? It's all a matter of the hook. If there is any reason for doing anything, you can find an even better reason on the planes. Like any other campaign setting, getting your characters (and players) passionate about your plot can make or break a game.

**Make the goals of adversaries larger than life**

It is very possible to destroy all of reality in your plot or at the very least see a whole layer of a plane shift and an entire way of life irrevocably changed. If what they are doing is important in concrete and realistic ways, then they will feel important in your plot. When players have



played a part in stopping something that is far larger than themselves, they feel vindicated - and that makes for a memorable game.

### Explore new realms

If your players thirst for that undiscovered adventure, give it to them. Their characters may be the first to discover a lost city, or overcome an unconquered challenge. Secrets are the real source of power out in the plane and dwell on every plane. And of course, while the experience may be its own reward, there are treasures never dreamed of just waiting for the clever hand.

### Hit close to home

Find something your players personally are interested in, and use it. Obviously, don't go out of your way to drag your players along, but a little bit of a personal touch can serve to drive their characters' motivations along the paths you need them to go. Talk to your players about philosophy and find out what they think, then use that in future sessions.

### Develop player trust

If the players think the DM is trying to kill their characters or couldn't care less if their characters perished in a random lava flow, then they're unlikely to be willing to visit any dangerous location. Dangerous locations might be construed as half the planes in existence!

Build their trust in you and inspire your players to have their characters follow their beliefs wherever they lead and you'll end up with a campaign that your players will talk about for years to come. While you shouldn't move heaven and earth to protect the characters from foolish choices, if the players know that the DM is in essence on their side, then they'll be more willing to take chances. Reward your players for trusting you in the end.

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## *TR@UBLESH@@+ING +HE GAME*

This chapter cannot cover every troublesome point that you may run across in a game, but we'll try our best to get you started with some of the problems you may run into when you first start running Planescape, or when your players are new to the game themselves.

## Scale and Scope

For a lot of new DMs the planes just seem so big. The first question usually asked is “Where do I start?” Of course, the answer is “Wherever you like”.

If you're overwhelmed, start small. You may find it useful to narrow your game down to Sigil and the Outlands and expand from there. Take baby steps until you and the players get a feel for each other and the setting. You could introduce a single, easily accessible planar location to your (mostly) Prime Material campaign. Then send the characters on a single adventure to Sigil, and see how easily it is to reel them back in to the Cage... give them a villain from Pandemonium that they have to get help from Arborea to defeat. Then introduce them to a helpful fellow who just happens to be the captain of an inner-planar cruiser! Start with an adventure. Then add a little something. Next time, add a little more.

There's no need to be overwhelmed when the only one who dictates how much you use is you.

Instead of considering what planes and locations the characters might choose to hop to next, ask yourself, “What location will the characters benefit from going to next?” The planes should be a bizarre, eye opening experience wherein anything can happen and often will. Planescape is all about possibilities, and even more so about impossibilities. Here you will encounter things and ideas you would never find tied to a Prime Material realm. The planes should awe and inspire you in ways nothing else can. If the prime characters (and players at times) are not flabbergasted on a regular basis, then you are missing the point of the setting.

## Keeping it Organized

Well, some of it is really is best to commit to memory, to tell you the truth. But you don't have to remember everything. For planes such as Limbo and the Abyss, it's usually best not to remember anything, and just come up with something new on the spot, flavored with the character of the plane. However, this is clearly not always possible. Sometimes, you have to refer to the books or a previously prepared datasheet just in order to maintain coherence. So what to do?

One way to get around not knowing all the details is to rarely give your players answers to their questions out of character. Encourage them to ask someone in-character for the information. Learning as a character is generally more fun than simply being given an answer and it promotes role-playing interaction. Not all NPCs know the answer and even if they did, they might simply lie or only reveal a portion of the truth. If you ever contradict yourself, you can always blame the NPC and even develop a plot around the unintentional error. In the event that you don't know the answer when they ask, it also buys you some time to look it up between sessions later without disrupting the game flow.

Ignore all the rules that make things difficult for you. If it's not adding anything to the adventure, making things interesting or mischievously difficult, then just don't use it. Flipping through a book for an obscure answer is rarely fun for your players. The only thing you have to do is realize when this is appropriate and when it isn't. If your players question you about it, tell the truth - you're simply ignoring those details to speed up the game.

- Taking a long trek across the Gray Wastes for the first time, with low-level characters? Bring up the book and hit them with everything in it.
- Making a routine trek over Acheron's cubes? Ignore everything you don't recall at the top of your head.
- Encounter between some total clueless and a baatezu in Avernus? Take just one effect you can remember and overdo it, so it's memorable. Ignore everything else.
- Experienced planewalkers fighting a royal fiend on their home plane? Bring up a couple of the advantages that the fiend has and ignore the rest.

At the table, you'll find that you need to let the adventure flow, so if you find yourself going through a lot of books during a session - start cutting corners. One memorable rule is better than twenty tiny ones. Planes contain infinite possibility. You can take the bits you like and drop the bits you don't.

## Introducing Players

Now that you've got the hang of things and want to start running a full-on Planescape campaign with politics, planars, powers, proxies, and other p-words, go with Sigil. It's often easiest to have a party of prime characters, or at least clueless planars (they do exist).

That way the players will go through the same journey of discovery as their characters. They'll remember the details better that way too. Treasure their cluelessness! The journey is the thing!

## Min-Maxers in Planescape

Now that you've got your players settled into the game, they've realized the scope of the planes and are using everything from every supplement they can get their paws on. They're chewing through your big bad guys like they're merely scenery. This isn't just a Planescape problem of course, but given the scope of the planes it can be difficult to say no to a player's

request for some nifty feat, class, or item without saying “Are you insane? That’ll break my game!”. As a DM you may need to say that every once in awhile, but sometimes something will just slip past and you’ll have to deal with it.

As the DM, give the opponents the same sort of advantages that the players have. No module writer and no DM, can think of every scenario, so you may have to use the same tricks against them. Watch as they come up with three different ways of beating their very own tactic. It’s elementary to \*any\* kind of D&D campaign, not just Planescape.

Remember that Planescape is as much a thinking game as anything else. If you’re having this sort of trouble in your game, you’ll need to find situations that don’t play to the dice. Min-maxers can’t do a lot to wriggle out of a political situation and not every situation can be resolved by killing the bad guy behind the plot.

In the end, your players will have to realize that Planescape isn’t about bashing the big monsters, or being the biggest bad on the block. There are things out there on the planes that are so infinitely beyond the mortal power range that there is no need to roll dice should they ever come into conflict. This is why we focus on the ideas and the adventures themselves. If your group is all min-maxy, then I dare say they probably won’t enjoy Planescape as it is meant to be enjoyed.

With any luck, you can train them out of it.

## Supply and Demand

Magic items are a dime a dozen in some campaigns and money can quickly become dull and boring. Money comes and goes, and magic items wear out if they have charges. So to immortal beings - fiend and celestial alike - they just can’t be easily bought with such things. After awhile you’ll want to give your players some other reward instead. Favors, knowledge, and souls are much more lasting currencies, and much more interesting to the players.

Favors are a deciding factor in politics, along with bribery and blackmail. A wise player values the boons owed by a high-up in any city or organization. Use favors to get your players involved in the politics surrounding them, and to give them access to people and places they otherwise would have no way to reach.

A canny cutter will ask for knowledge in payment. Knowing where something is, or how to perform an otherwise difficult to learn skill will pay off later when it is needed to survive or turn a profit. You may choose to give such knowledge in the form of mechanical bonuses to skills, or in the form of contacts and maps to new locations (and adventures). Use whatever works for your game.

The most prominent currency on the Lower Planes is souls. Glittering little gems with the captured souls of the powerful or innocent and larvae petitioners by the dozen. This is something that your players should both be aware of, and wary of. They are walking currency. When dealing with fiendish sorts, they should be well aware of it. Allow your players to bargain with their souls, but so do carefully, as it could break your game - or make for a spectacular campaign.

## Suggested Levels

Planescape suffers from the stereotype that a character must be 'this many levels tall in order to play'. This is complete and utter screech. No particular levels are any easier or harder than the next in the planes. There will always be weaker beings in the multiverse than your characters, just as there will always be stronger ones. Planescape is extraordinarily malleable when it comes to personal power.

There is no correlation between specific planes and specific levels. True, some places are harder to survive than others. This may depend on the plane's natural environment, such as the Elemental Plane of Fire or Water, whilst others depend on the natives, or a combination of the two. Sigil is often a good starting location and the Outlands as a whole do not require equipment that would be out of the price range of a starting party. There are always ways around lack of equipment or spells. A creative group will find a way. If they are feeling the pinch though, as the DM you should provide alternatives: wands, scrolls, or even simply renting equipment from a local Lower Ward magic-shop.

It is worthwhile to impress upon players is that character level is not significant in Planescape. Everything in the planes is powerful, much of it more powerful than they when it comes to personal ability. But a quick wit and sharp mind will get them much further than a ton of hit points and a magical sword of slaying ever will. Planer beings respect power, but recognize that power of the body is rarely the greatest form. Where your characters might not be able to slay a greater baatezu, they very well may be able to talk it out of slaying them—or better yet, start a rapport with lasting benefits... and consequences.

## There's Always a Bigger Fish

You may run into the situation in your game where your players suddenly look up at you and say: "Wait. Don't we have gods for saving the universe? Why us?" Of course, long before you get to this point in your game you'll want to have gotten them hot under the collar at your villain, or otherwise obligated to fight the good fight so they should never have to ask - but there may come a time when your players still see fit to question why the fate of the universe falls on their shoulders when there seem to be far more able-bodied powers on hand. So what do you do?

It's not a question you can easily ignore or dismiss, and not having an answer can undermine the tone of your entire game. There are a few ways out of this: your powers, avatars, or whomever the party wishes to dump the problem on - may be concerned with other, more pressing dangers. They may even be totally unavailable (captured by your villain, for example). Another tactic is to suggest that the party itself is being used as the representative of the entities' will on the planes. The conflict may be a test of their quality.

Mortals are very valuable to the powers since they are a source of belief, so the trials and increased faith of their followers make for good motivation for a power to seemingly 'ignore' a request to take care of the problem themselves. It may even be that the power has a much longer view of events than any mortal does, and thereby knows that things have a tendency to even out in the long run or follow a preordained path, and therefore has little concern for the immediate trend of events.

Unfortunately there is no easy answer to a question of this nature, so you may have to tailor something to your game specifically. In any case, have some explanation ready, as adventuring on the planes tends to get your players thinking about why they seem to always be acting as the authorities no matter where they go.

## Travel in the Planes

Planewalking is about travel and there are many ways of getting about even at low level by means of portals, gates, vortices, conduits, spells, magical items, and special abilities. All of these can be used to travel the planes and all will have an impact on how the group gets around.

Give your players enough freedom to go exactly where you want them to go.

The means of reaching one plane to the next is a way to control the flow of the game. That's not to say that a GM should take a draconian approach, restricting their players to only travel along one preplanned route. Give the characters some choices. While the way is not always immediately obvious, a little work will soon reveal a few appealing (or sometimes less than appealing) options. And in all fairness, at higher levels a party should have very little problems traveling the planes. Between *fly*, *teleport*, *dimension door*, *plane shift*, and other spells, they can get around. Non-spell casting characters should be able to procure *flying carpets*, *wings of flying*, *boots of levitation*, *bracers of teleportation*, scrolls of... you get the idea.

There's always Sigil available, but if your party is uninterested in the City of Doors, there are other options. The Infinite Staircase could provide your players with many paths and the Planewalker's Guild at the base of the stairs makes for a great headquarters as well. Any of the planar pathways like the Styx, Oceanus, or Yggdrasil could be your ticket. You could even use a

magical artifact like a Well of Worlds or Cubic Gate, though those are hardly tools you should provide if you intend to have any sort of control over where your adventurers are going.

It is important to note that not all places are accessible by magic. Make special note of the restrictions on spells that require the Astral or Ethereal Plane. Use and abuse the notion of wards and spells to prevent divination and travel. You should take advantage of planar environments that may make it hard to see where you are going, such as veins of lead in the elemental plane of Earth, or planar powers and rulers who may have restrictions within their realms and the surrounding area, such as Asmodeus in Nessus. Some planes by their nature are unfriendly to travelers on just about every layer such as the Prison Plane of Carceri.

After an adventure or two, the players should be planning ahead. If they're not, you're either spoiling your players or they're particularly dense.

## Setting up Kip

Campaigns with a home base in one location tend to do very well. A home base provides a safe(r) location for players to return to, and having a home provides an easy way to make them care about local politics. On the other hand, staying in one place can get boring. Each group has a balance point that they find works best, and you should make an effort to find out where that point is.

Attempts to set up kip should be viewed as a great opportunity to add another layer of complexity to your plot. Creative DMs will find excellent adventure seeds and the players will have an objective to work towards.

In Sigil, a residence or business would fit in well and be very successful in the vacuum of power left in the wake of the faction banishment. Land in Sigil is limited and very expensive, so it is unlikely that the party will receive a deed to any land just for the asking, it takes political favors or serendipity to get your own kip rent-free. Attempts to build obvious strongholds in Sigil may gain the attention of the Lady of Pain, or at the very least make the party the center of a political frenzy as the new local 'warlords'.

Outside of Sigil, it is important to remember that the planes are often populated in ideal locations. The characters will have to deal with their neighbors, or displaced populace if they try to claim land already taken. Some gate-towns may have troublesome local leaders or residents, and a party must be careful not to shift the gate-town alignment or they may find their safe house in another (not nearly so friendly) plane. And of course some planes may be more trouble than their worth. The baatezu would not take kindly to some necromancer setting up kip on Avernus or Dis without permission and permits.

## Law or Order

Calling the alignment 'lawful' is a misnomer in many ways. It may be better to call it 'orderly', as for many players lawful carries linguistic baggage from its association with legality. An orderly character is the sort of person who has a daily planner and uses it daily. They keep their receipts, and balance the party's books. They have routines that they follow and appreciate the value of traditions and time-tested solutions. All of these personal traits are entirely independent of their stance on legal structures.

Orderly characters generally have few qualms with obeying the restrictions of the society in which they grow up and may be extremely judgmental of other societies that don't match the one they are used to. Still, they won't rebel against society on principle because they see nothing wrong with a controlling system. They don't mind being another brick in the wall; as far as that are concerned they only make the wall stronger.

However, if they find problems in a society for other reasons, such as moral principles or selfish desires, then they can be a royal terror in attempting to correct that flaw. They may take steps within the order of their society first, but if nothing comes of it, orderly character can, and will, commit acts of rebellion and sedition in the name of a greater or better system they may hold stronger loyalty to.

A DM with a lawful character who seems to be acting outside of the alignment stereotype should check with the player as they may find that the character's silent motivations are inherently lawful. After all, an orderly character need not hold the law in his mind like some precious icon to be burnished, polished, kissed, and obeyed blindly. The written law is an expression of order, not the cause or final conclusion of it.

## Chaos or Anarchy

Chaotic characters. It can be tempting to play a chaotic character as insane or utterly random by flipping a coin each time a decision comes up. Unfortunately, you'd be missing the point entirely. Like strongly lawful characters, this alignment is vulnerable to misinterpretations.

Chaotic characters are at their heart unpredictable and individualistic. They may have trouble organizing their life and may flit from task to task or be an absolutely incapable project manager. Chaotic characters have little semblance of organization in their lives, or if they do - change it nearly daily to reflect changes in how they interact with the world around them. In any given situation they may be the first to think of a brand new solution to a problem, shaking up the traditional answer with a better (or worse) one. They tend to chafe against restrictions on what they wish to do, and oftentimes will champion their (or others) rights to do what they want when they want regardless of social or legal restrictions.



This is not to say they won't occasionally agree with tradition or law. Chaotic characters don't necessarily break rules just for the sake of the rule being there. After all, any rule should be questioned, but questioning authority does not necessitate overthrowing authority. Sometimes the authority is being perfectly sensible! And chaotic characters if nothing else have a healthy sense of survival.

Usually a DM will not have trouble with a chaotic character acting too lawful, though when they do a quick check with the player may quickly answer any questions regarding their motivations. If the player himself is not very chaotic it may be easy to forget to champion individualism and innovation.

More often the problem with a strongly chaotic character comes from **overplaying** the alignment. A player may endanger his character, his party, switch sides mid-plot, or simply spend so much time dominating the game role-playing his chaotic alignment that hours are wasted at the table trying to deal with one player instead of the party as a whole. Some players seem to take the alignment as an excuse to kill off other members of the party or to role-play insanity as disruptively as humanly possible. Keep a close eye on players who seem to be going too far with their character - oftentimes there are out of game reasons for the disruption and in the end you may have to do what is healthiest for your game.

### **Roleplaying Extreme Alignments**

When role-playing NPCs with extreme alignments(LG, CE, CG, LE), make sure to express both qualities, not just one.

It's not enough that the lawful evil villain enjoy being evil and wicked and depraved, he must also have an honor system that he believes in and be fairly sensible in his plans and dealings. His actions might even seem reasonable from a character's perspective. A lawful evil character can make a useful ally as easily he does an enemy.

The same goes for lawful good. No matter how good your proposal is, if it involves not going through the right channels, or relies on improvisation, a paladin will not like it. Orderly planning is as important as anything else to a shining paragon of lawful good—and such people can be just as harsh as lawful evil individuals in some respects.

In fact, on the planes individuals that are opposed along one alignment axis are often allies against those they oppose on the other.

### **Unusual Bedfellows, Unlikely Enemies**

Understanding the motivations of the denizens of the planes can make for a richer campaign. With so many opposing philosophies and domains, adversaries and allies can and should come from unexpected places.

Good and evil are aspects of a character, but your players should remember it's all relative. Explore prejudices and assumptions with your NPCs. Both traditionally "good" and "evil" races can work as friend or foe. Allow ambivalent characters, such as A'kin the Friendly Fiend, to become main NPCs in your game. Just because an NPC is a baatezu does not mean the characters should go out and attack it, and there is a strong chance of them ending up in the dead-book if they try.

Paladins on the planes tend to learn quickly that the greater good can sometimes better be served over the course of their lifetime than in one quick fight. When DMing for paladins and other characters that risk losing their powers for their actions, you should keep the motivations of your players in mind. It is possible that your player is taking a long view of the situation, and that is something to reward, not punish.

## Playing Exemplar

These creatures are the physical embodiment of both their plane and their alignment. Some of them were once the souls of mortals, others were simply born as they are. Either way, they are not mortal and most have lived for millennia in cultures so absolute as to be completely impractical for mortal limitations. As such, most of their concerns and ideals are as alien to us as ours are to them.

All exemplars, particularly the good and evil kind, have something of an ulterior motive when dealing with mortals. They deal in souls. If the soul of the mortal they are dealing with is already committed one way or the other, then that will greatly influence how they interact with that mortal. Some may consciously try to lure the soul before to their path, others may ignore the fellow before him as irrelevant, useless or even attack for the offense of existing. Fiends are not all mindless monsters, and not all celestials are paladins. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The following advice on playing the alignments is meant as a guide. Circumstances in your own game may call for different behavior.

The **baatezu** are the exemplars of lawful evil. Imagine every self-serving evil lawyer stereotype rolled into one idealized lawyer. The baatezu care only for their own goals and ends and will use the letter of a bargain to make sure they come out ahead. The words in any deal are most important, not the intent. Peeling a baatezu without an escape clause is tantamount to asking for a lifetime of pain, as simply killing you in retribution would end your suffering prematurely.

The **yugoloths** are the exemplars of neutral evil. If the baatezu are the ultimate lawyers, the yugoloths are the ultimate confidence men. "Slippery as a greased basilisk and twice as deadly." Yes, they will peel you. Yes, they will usually honor the word of their bargains. No, they do not play fair. They will come to an individual again and again, slowly corrupting them

with each new task, each new promise, and every reward. By the time the victim realizes they've sold their themselves out, the chains have been welded shut. The yugoloths play all sides against each other as a feint for their true purposes.

The **tanar'ri** are the exemplars of chaotic evil. They are violence for the sake of violence. They are filled with a malevolent hatred, which in the higher caste of tanar'ri may be suppressed for a time to deal with other creatures. That violence always lingers just under the surface however, a low simmer that is just waiting to become a rolling boil. Not all tanar'ri can even be assumed to be sane or sober when they interact with a mortal. There are many theories that the entire species exists within a trancelike nightmare state, with the weaker tanar'ri only half-aware of their surroundings. These beings are untrustworthy in the extreme.

The **archons** are the exemplars of lawful good. The law is the law and good is good, and the two are nearly interchangeable concepts. What is good for one is good for all. "Littering harms the environment and destroys the sanctity of our heavens. For this crime you must do a year of penance and prayer." Do not ask what a second offense will net. Individuals are viewed within the context of society and an orderly good natured society will create and nurture good in its members, starting with the youngest. They will use mortals as a measuring stick to gauge a civilization and determine how and what needs changing to be brought to their cause.

The **guardinals** are the exemplars of neutral good. They are good for goodness' sake, believing such will benefit everyone in the end, and will take any means necessary to pursue the greater good. They will make deals and break them, if the end result is justified, though they try to avoid such situations, realizing that undermining the value of trust hinders the greater good. They do not tolerate those who would blur the line between good and evil. They are known for self-sacrifice, surrendering the majority of one of their layers of Elysium to contain many greater evils in the name of protecting the planes. They are the celestial least likely to try to drag a mortal to their way of thinking, and there are a sizable percentage of them that truly believe in the value of a mortal's freewill. The guardinal is likely to sacrifice himself for another even if the other is not worthy of it because it is the right and good thing to do. They only hope that the sacrifice will be a greater good in the end.

The **eladrin** are the exemplars of chaotic good. They are freewheeling, freedom-minded souls. They consider the rights of the individual more important than the wishes of society, and the plights of individuals are their primary concern in dealing with mortals. Changing the world, one person at a time is the best way to achieve this goal. And they believe that a society which forces everyone within it be good cannot by definition itself be good. They believe that any one person should have the choice in their actions, and be punished if they choose evil. They are more than happy to let the bad consequences of one's poor decisions serve as a life lesson, for eladrin prefer to lead by example rather than actively interfere in the lives of others. They detest the very concept of slavery and similar institutions of bondage, and will take to acts of vigilantism to correct a wrong.

The **slaadi** are “*purple. Bubbly. Good WITH children. Extra crispy.*” At least if you ask one those are the answers you may get. Slaadi are the exemplars of chaos. They are entirely unpredictable and care little for the well being of others around them. At the same time of course, they don't go out of their way to hurt them either. Really, any particular slaadi may have whatever agenda it has in mind at the moment and where a character falls in with that is entirely up to its interpretation of the situation. They may respond favorably to mortals of a chaotic alignment, but they will almost inevitably react poorly to those of lawful - unless they choose at the moment to champion the rights of the oppressed individual in a spirited debate.

The **modrons** are the exemplars of law. They don't forget, and they don't forgive. A modron is a tool, an extension of the overall mind which is the modron hierarchy. A modron only recognizes its immediate superior and immediate subordinate. A character is never likely to interact with anything less than a nonaton, octon, septon, and the greater modrons - lower castes do not have the intellect and language to communicate with the characters. They are uncaring and rational with little interest in the desires or wellbeing of any being that does not serve the ultimate order. When dealing with lawful mortals they expect the being before them to obey blindly, as if part of the hierarchy. When dealing with neutral or chaotic beings they ignore them unless they get in the way or provoke the modron with display of chaos. A modron will deny the possibility of any random element or serendipity in the multiverse, taking time to correct such misconceptions at any encounter. Never wish a modron “Good luck.” on any task.

The **rilmani** are the exemplars of the balance. They are neutral in every regard, and determinedly hold the center of neutrality in balance. A rilmani takes to his task, which others may call ‘meddling’, as a duty to prevent the redefinition of ‘good and evil’ or ‘law and chaos’ in such a way that the center slides away from its proper place in the middle. This drives the rilmani society, leaving the majority of them quietly reclusive and those not reclusive acting to preserve balance. Their small numbers lend towards the need for stealth, so few will ever see a rilmani - or know that their close comrade and advisor is a rilmani. When dealing with mortals, a rilmani treats them as they would any other being in the ‘verse - concerned only when the greater balance is at stake, and otherwise leaving well enough alone.

The **elementals** are the very essence of matter. Their forms are substance in its purest form, and in dealing with a mortal there is little to no common ground. An elemental has no comprehension of the emotional complexities of a being made of mixes of matter and energy. And likewise a mortal has little understanding of a being which has little comprehension of matters of morality and ethics, and even less of organic requirements. There are those elementals of more advanced power and intellect that do but these are not the standard. An elemental cannot be guaranteed to understand the requirements of the average being for continued life - though they may still wish to enthusiastically share themselves with their new found and unlucky friends.

## Unfunny Modrons

*“Trample them! Crush them under the marching feet!”*

Modrons have developed a reputation as ‘funny’ little dice with legs. Many modrons have been depicted as comedic relief—every single rogue modron in the official products, for one. The cuddly depictions of DiTerlizzi as well as the versions seen in *Planescape: Torment* only added to that. But modrons - regular modrons, not rogues - are the exemplars of Law, and in your game ought to be some of the most unfunny things around. This stereotype can be difficult to overcome if you have players that are used to the amusing antics of a modron outcast.

Some general advice: do not overuse quadrones. This is the type most associated with modron outcasts, and the most stereotyped one. It is also a lower caste of modron, which won't understand the big picture by design. If you want seriousness, go with the higher castes that are more intelligent and more capable of associating with mortals at their own level.

If you want serious, play serious. Don't give them a funny voice and don't overemphasize the hive tendencies of the lower castes. Think of everything that mortals think is beneficiary about law, and make them represent it. Think technology and the ability to predict. Think unyielding and strict. Think ‘borg’, not ‘wind-up toy’.

Finally, come up with a serious modron NPC and make it an important fixture of your campaign. This has the added benefit of representing the race, as opposed to any agent of chaos you might introduce. Every time you converse with a modron, the players should feel that it has the weight of its entire race behind it, much like every baatezu contract has a fiendish legal system behind it.

*Examples from play, The Great Modron March:*

The characters split up. One group flew ahead to prepare the town for the procession while the ones remaining behind tried to stall the marching army of modron bearing down on the town.

- One character stood in the path to force the modrons around him. He was trampled. “*March*”
- The characters took one monodrone and retreated away from the march. Once a delegation from the procession gave up pursuit, the characters turned the modron to march into the broadside of the procession. The monodrone was trampled by the others. “*March*”
- The characters fired volleys of arrows into the path of the modrons. When this failed to divert them, they fired on the front ranks. The second volley was answered in kind. “*Attack*”

- When the characters bargained with the procession for an alternate route, their negotiations were nothing but cold emotionless logic and reasoning. Despite the chaos going on throughout the procession and the environment, the decaton remained nothing but rational.

## Fiendish Contracts

Given the politics in Planescape, it should come as no surprise that contracts and agreements will arise in game and may be pivotal to an entire plot arc or campaign. The fiends in particular have a reputation for making deals, often with souls at stake in a written or unwritten way. They have their ulterior motives, so even the contract that mentions nothing of souls may require a task or price so gruesome to guarantee the fiend the mortal's soul in the end. It is after all, quite literally a deal with a devil (or demon, daemon, or other despicable entity).

If a character is stuck in an unsavory situation because of a fiendish contract, players should not be allowed to discard the character immediately. The essence of such deals is coming to grips with the consequences through roleplay, and as DM you need to assert your authority a little and encourage them to play the situation through. If after a few sessions, it is clear the player is not having fun with the consequences of their deal, do what is best for the health of your game and have them create a new character.

Baatezu contracts are the most stereotypical example of a fiendish contract. Verbal or written, both will involve a great deal of convoluted language. Characters with Profession(Lawyer), or Knowledge(Law) may find their skills extremely useful. Deal making is such a large part of the baatezu ethos that if broken, the baatezu will almost certainly have some way of enforcing the contract, and consider it an affront to their reputation to be outplayed or allow a broken contract to go unpunished.

The inverse of the baatezu deal is to make a deal with a tanar'ri. A contract with a being of malicious chaos is simply unwise, and it is unlikely to find one willing to put pen to paper much less willing to uphold the agreement afterwards. The best way to hold a tanar'ri to a deal is to make sure it is in its best interest to follow through. Characters may use withheld payment, physical force, or mystical bindings but in all cases they should be aware that the tanar'ri may turn on them regardless out of spite or insanity. They hold a tiger on a leash made of spider webs.

At least the tanar'ri is predictable in its response to a deal. Deals with the yugoloths are even more difficult to predict because they combine the legality of the baatezu with the fickle whimsy of the tanar'ri all wrapped up in ultimate self-interested pragmatism. A yugoloth will hold to a contract, for as long as he stays bought and the politics remain in favor. Those of the arcanaloth caste in particular, will enforce a formal agreement in mystically binding contract. A clever player will ensure that the contract's consequences apply equally to the yugoloth at the very least before they agree to anything at all.

## Conflicting Cosmologies

You may notice the characters in your game are from different primes which all have their own unique view of the afterlife and the planes. Some certainly won't agree with others, and on some worlds it almost seems like every five to ten years they arbitrarily change what they believe about where their gods make kip. In those cases it may help you, or your players to have a reason behind these differences.

The standard solution is to dismiss the Prime interpretation of the planes as nothing more than clueless bunk. After all, the smaller worlds may not even have a single wizard able to cast planeshift, much less any active form of planar travel. Some players may find this attitude dismissive though, so keep that in mind.

Another solution lies in the use of the plane of Shadow. Review the section on the Shadowlie in Chapter 8 as this psuedoplane may be useful to explain the self-delusion of many Prime worlds. The contrast of what is truth and what is lie may become a theme of your game, as even the planar view of the planes becomes a group-shared consensual reality.

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## FAC+IØN WAR

The Planescape adventure *Faction War*, quite rightly, shakes up the entire setting. This section is directed towards those that have played Planescape before this game-altering bombshell was released, and who probably have some strong opinions on the matter.

As one of the last big modules of the Planescape line, *Faction War* is often the end of many a campaign. But given its conclusion, or lack thereof, it often leaves on a sour note for players. However, not all change is bad, and if played right, *Faction War* results in a Sigil that is forever changed, and a multiverse much different from the faction-dominated setting that we have come to know. It is also the state from which Planewalker has chosen to pick up with the Planescape setting, so our future releases will assume the completion of the events in *Faction War*.

So why is it so good?

First of all, it isn't. It's completely flawed, due to the fact that it was supposed to be quite a bit longer and because the events that take place in the adventure are somewhat out of sync with what we thought they would be. Many organizations and individuals are acting quite out of character and this causes trouble for many older players of the setting. When it coems down to it, this module should be treated just like any other: isolate the things that you like about it, and remove the elements that you don't.

The basic idea in the *Faction War* isn't alien to the setting—it fits perfectly, and it is brilliant. In fact, all the faction plotlines that have been put forth up to this point have been building up to the big conflict! Even the theme is working for us; the Unity of Rings dictates that there should be a second Great Upheaval, only this time it is less of a free-for-all, and much more political.

The point is the setting was better for it afterwards. The Factions are gone from Sigil, and they have been forced out of the government of the Cage, and onto the planes. The stereotyped and pat solutions to all answers have been removed from the equation, and it was high time that they were.

See, the factions are great. They are wonderfully inventive and there are thousands of plotlines and hooks you can use about them that make the setting really take off. The sheer amount of new ideas you are introducing into your campaign when you first start using them is staggering. But if you never renew them, if you never let the plotline move to its natural conclusion, then you are stifling the setting.

*Yes, stifling it!*

The factions suffocate the creative potential of moving forward with the philosophical situation of the planes and the continuing growth of your players and player characters. If you keep using the factions after exhausting certain plotlines, and you keep moving back to the status quo, you have stopped using them as a springboard, and have started using them as a crutch.

One of the best parts about a role-playing game is that it is not a situation comedy. The events that take place do not happen in a vacuum, and everyone is not returned to the same old routine once the episode is over. The developers of Planescape were already there when they started thinking of *Faction War*, and who knows where they might have gone or what direction they might have moved into if the setting had gotten more development.

New elements can now move into Sigil and stake their claim: guilds, sects, and everyone that was being held back by the presence of the factions. Prime organizations could even start moving in! Upper and Lower planars need to replace their representatives, or try to take advantage of the situation.

Now, having said that, you probably don't want to move onto the *Faction War* until you have really exhausted the potential of having factions as government in Sigil. But if you do start your game post *Faction War*, even then, the factions aren't gone! You can, and should, still use them!



The Factions can't just go away. That wouldn't make sense, and it would be an utter waste. What's happened is that they are no longer in charge of Sigil. You can reinstate them, but that would be wasting the opportunity that the module is presenting. It is much more interesting to let them try to influence events through other means, and have them seek new venues of control, particularly throughout their planes of influence and the primes. The people in the factions don't just disappear, and Sigil doesn't just halt. You have to spend some thought on how things work from now on.

If you let things progress as seems natural to you then everything opens up. New plotlines evolve from the old ones, with the same characters, personalities, and ideas that you have come to love. Even factions that have been seemingly beheaded, like the Doomguard and the Fated, now have extended plot options that could really shake up a campaign. Remember the oath that the Doomguard swore when they became a faction? It isn't holding them back any longer. The Fated are now operating like they should have been, without Darkwood at their helm, and are being truly the standard-bearers of individualism for the first time in a long while.

Intrigue is higher than ever because of this, since you have all these individuals overtly or covertly serving the factions in Sigil (and elsewhere), but now no longer having the easy way of authority in every situation. Sigil is now a real city of opportunity for every power group around the planes, and the factions are still there, trying to stake their claim and influence in it, only they can't do it officially.

The authors clearly had more in mind, so it is up to you to fill in the blanks and write the next chapters in the great book that is the City of Doors for your own campaign.

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## III⊕DULE REVIEWS

New DMs may have an interest in seeing what came before, so we've sat down with our top DMs to give you a quick overview of all of the adventures in the Planescape line and some advice for you should you need it when you sit down to run them. We've included product numbers for you as well to make it easier for you to track some of these down for yourself.

### ***The Planescape Campaign Box***

#2600 - Two short adventure hooks, unfortunately these hooks are a little bland and should be expanded upon by the GM when run. They don't do as good a job establishing the setting or mood of Planescape as you would hope, but they were very early in the product line. These make good starting points really.

1. **For the Price of a Rose** (4 PCs, Levels 1-3)  
The PCs are recruited to solve the mystery behind the midnight vandalism of the Lady Kindernis's castle gardens.
2. **Misplaced Spirit** (4 PCs, Levels 1-4)  
A misplaced spirit from the Celestial Bureaucracy must be returned from Sigil to where she belongs, like it or not.

### ***Well Of Worlds***

#2604 - 9 adventures, one poster map. This module is divided into chapters, one adventure per chapter. This is a good starting book for your campaign, covering a wide range of low and mid level adventures that may be interspersed with your own works or adventures from other sources. The adventures are quick to read, provide easy hooks and do not heavily modify the setting making them ideal for a quick one-shot game or an interlude between larger plot arcs. They are also short and provide enough relevant material for a DM new to the setting to easily work within.

1. ***To Baator and Back*** (4-6 PCs, All levels)  
This adventure sends the PCs through a random portal and into Avernus, the first layer of Baator. There they have to deal with the harsh environment, avoid inhabitants, and broker with the Pillar of Skulls for the way out.
2. ***The Mazes*** (1-6 PCs, Levels 2-4)  
This adventure gets PCs to delve into the past history of the factions while attempting to find one of the exiled Factols of an old and defunct faction. They must find the entrance to one of the Lady's mazes, recover an item from within the maze, and find their way out.
3. ***Love Letter*** (1-6 PCs, All levels)  
When a Tanar'ri loves a Baatezu... No, really, I am serious! Guess who has to play messenger, though? The only problem with 'Love Letter' is that it really does not convey the whole enmity of these fiendish races very well. Partly due to the unique nature of the adventure, but it may leave the players with the wrong impression in the end. It is best played sometime **after** *Well of Worlds: Blood Storm* so that the players understand the uniqueness of this situation.
4. ***Blood Storm*** (3-8 PCs, Levels 9 and up)  
The PCs are press ganged into the Blood War. This may make a good introduction to *Well of Worlds: Love Letter*.
5. ***Hard Time*** (1-6 PCs, Levels 5-8)  
The PCs are recruited to swap two misplaced petitioners. One that belongs on the

Dwarven Mountain. The other is in Carceri, near the exiled Titans. A good adventure except for one bit, the Titan (Crius - Gravity) is very, very, indifferent. While this is fortunate for the PCs, it really kills the mood of being a prisoner. It is best to correct that oversight when you run this adventure.

6. *Epona's Daughter* (1-4 PCs, Levels 9-11)  
An Epona is kidnapped and the PCs must rescue her from the prime berk who just fancies the 'faerie horse'.
7. *Recruiters* (2-6 PCs, Levels 5-8)  
The PCs must prevent Plague-Mort, on the Outlands, from sliding into the Abyss while they are present (or helping it go if they like)
8. *The Hunt* (2-6 PCs, Levels 1-7)  
The PCs become prey on the Beastlands. It is highly recommended that this be played before running the module *Something Wild*.
9. *People Under the Falls* (4-6 PCs, Levels 9 and up)  
The PCs are caught in an underground/waterfall complex near a new portal Slaadi are about to use to invade the upper planes. Level 9 is listed as a minimum for this adventure, but given the circumstances and potential for clever use of the environment by the DM it may be too difficult for level 9 characters. If you have any doubts regarding the ability of your PCs, save this for level 11 or higher.

### ***Tales from the Infinite Staircase***

#2632 - This is a collection of either adventures, each of which is designed to be played individually or at a single setting in nearly any order. This release is for expert GMs since each chapter is altered by the one before, so take caution in playing through it as you may have to make adjustments.

### ***The Eternal Boundary***

(4-6 PCs, Levels 1-5)

#2601 PSM1 - Set in Sigil, the Hive, with a brief jaunt to the Elemental Plane of Fire. This adventure deals with the Dustment and the mortuary. The story is a little weak but, on the plus side it maps the mortuary.

### ***Planes of Chaos***

#2603 - This box set contains a collection of adventures focusing on strong plots, and highlighting the wide range of play levels available on the planes. In a way this particular

release is more about designing the plot hook than about the adventure itself. Therefore these adventures will require the DM to fill in necessary information on NPC stats and other level appropriate components. The adventures are loosely grouped by planar location, but are not otherwise related to each other.

1. Arsenic (1 or more PCs, Levels 1-3)  
The owner of an Abyssal inn is dealing with an infestation of cranium rats, and finds them more creative than expected, turning his own weapons against him.
2. Wicked, Wicked Ways (3-6 PCs, Levels 4-7)  
A githzerai with an amulet and a plan asks for help in destroying an evil artifact on the Abyss - but that's not the whole story, and the PCs find themselves in a pickle.
3. The Book of Lies (2 or more PCs, Levels 8+)  
The PCs find themselves in position to obtain a book containing every lie ever told, including their own.
4. Nuts (1 or more PCs, Levels 1-3)  
The PCs are caught as the willing or unwilling arbitrators between a territorial dispute of bariaur and ratatosk.
5. Party Reservation (3 or more PCs, Levels 4-7)  
Caught up in the midst of a band of bacchae, the party must slip loose or bring their path of destruction with them wherever they go.
6. Treasure for the Taking (4-6 PCs, Levels 8+)  
After accidentally freeing a titan while treasure hunting on Arborea, the party must find a way to deal with the now freed titan.
7. Street Crew (1-6 PCs, Levels 1-3)  
A town in Limbo is destabilized by a hidden force, and the PCs are blamed for the mess.
8. Deliverance (3-6 PCs, Levels 4-7)  
In search of a grey slaadi, the party must slog through Limbo's soup to deliver a message.
9. Steal Town (4-6 PCs, Levels 8+)  
Disruptions on the Astral prompt the PCs to visit the Floating City of the githzerai.

10. **A Mouse-eye View (1-6 PCs, Levels 1-3)**  
Taking refuge in Loki's drinking hall turns out to run the risk of staying there indefinitely or worse.
11. **Hoard of Trouble (3-6 PCs, Levels 4-7)**  
The discovery of multiple dragon hoards in the caverns of Pandemonium lead to a gold rush.
12. **Mad Dog (4-6 PCs, Levels 8+)**  
A series of gruesome murders in the Madhouse lead to the PCs being called in to help find and stop the killer.
13. **Snipe Hunt (4-6 PCs, Levels 1-3).**  
Sent by the Guvners to retrieve three yule logs from Ysgard, the task turns out to be trickier than thought.
14. **The Hammer and the Serpent (2-5 PCs, Levels 4-7)**  
Minions of Set in search of 'kiss and make up' presents for their god's estranged wife, make a run through Asgard casing the joint and eventually stealing from the Norse powers - leaving their PC guides holding the bag.
15. **The Fires of Ysgard (1-4 PCs, Levels 8+)**  
A mad valkyrie, on a mission to trigger the beginnings of Ragnarok, must be stopped.

### ***Into the Abyss***

*(4-6 PCs, Levels 8-10)*

#2605 PSM2 - The PCs are recruited to discover the whereabouts of a ship of chaos in the Abyss. The name says it all really. A little bland but lots of combat.

### ***The Deva Spark***

*(4-6 PCs, Levels 5-9)*

#2606 PSM3 - Even deva's make mistakes, and this one was a doozy. He placed his spark (some berks would call it a soul) in the unwitting 'care' of a distinctly not nice fellow. Now the 'spark' has travelled to the Abyss, and before long made its way to the belly of a bebilith. With that the PCs are begged to help the poor deva out to get his spark back, only to find that the good has worn off on the bebilith as well - and it won't be easy to part the two.

## ***Planes of Law***

#2607 - The Planes of Law boxset contains small adventure hooks for each plane (3 each). They are not strongly developed, and serve more as a basis for further expansion into a game.

## ***Fires of Dis***

(4-6 PCs, Levels 5-9)

#2608 PSM4 - Set in Baator and the Outlands, the PCs retrieve a holy sword from Dis only to find it came with hidden strings attached. The fate of the city of Fortitude is in the balance as the sword returns to the city.

## ***Harbringer House***

(4-6 PCs, Levels 4-7)

#2614 PSM5 - Set in Sigil, Lower Ward, Ecstasy and Curst. This is a phenomenal adventure with several alternate endings based on the PCs actions in the final showdown. It is recommended for experienced GMs and players. This is an adventure no campaign is complete without and is well suited as a campaign climax.

## ***Planes of Conflict***

#2615 - This is a collection of adventures meant to explore various aspects of the planes of conflict. They are not connected to each other and may be played in any order.

1. *Into the Land of the Dead* (3-6 PCs, Levels 1-4)  
PCs are to rescue a hero from Hades.
  
2. *Militancy Justifies the Means* (4-6 PCs, Levels 5-8)  
A fanatic threatens Bytopia. This module really deals with the sects of Planescape, specifically the Order of the Planes Militant. Thus, *Planes of Law*, wherein they are featured, would be a handy DM tool.
  
3. *Prison Break* (1-6 PCs, Levels 5-9)  
The PCs must rescue a prisoner from the Mercykiller's Hidden Vault on Carceri. It is recommended that this be used as a prelude or a follow-up to *Something Wild*. The PCs may need to get a credible witness to attest and support their claims for the Mercykillers misdeeds done in *Something Wild*, and this provides a perfect opportunity.

4. *Beyond the Forbidden Plateau* (4-6 PCs, Levels 9-12)  
Baatezu are kidnapping creatures and press ganging them into the Blood War. Any DM running this should be up on the Dinosaur lore (since that is what the fiends are capturing). Since animal abduction is part of the synopsis of *Something Wild*, DMs may want to consider running only one or the other in their campaigns, otherwise the PCs might get the idea that the Beastlands is just a really popular poaching spot and all of the animals are helpless. This adventure, with a little modification, could be run as part of the *Hellbound* series as well.

### ***Hellbound, The Blood War***

#2621 PSM6 - Three adventures in total. It is also a nice campaign ender as it changes the River Styx, robs fiends of the ability to planeshift/gate, and changes the Blood War forever. Lots of lower planar travel, GMs should be aware of the nature of the Blood War, it's respective sides and the nature of the conflict.

1. *The Field of Nettles* (4-6 PCs, Levels 4-6)  
GM's running this adventure should be experts with the Grey Waste and the PCs playing should really like combat as there is a lot of it.
2. *Strange Bedfellows* (4-6 PCs, Levels 6-9)  
This is a nice follow up to *Hellbound: Field of Nettles*. This adventure deals with the politics of the Blood War, includes a little combat and some travel to the Upper Planes.
3. *Squaring the Circle* (4-6 PCs, Levels 6-10)  
This adventure wraps up the events set in motion by the earlier two, culminating in a plummet towards the Styx from a high altitude on the back of a well-kept yugoloth secret.

### ***Doors to the Unknown***

#2626 PSM7 - Like *Well of Worlds* this module is broken into a set of four adventures, but they are best run as a coherent whole and not broken up across other adventures. Everything a DM needs to know about the locations and factions in this module is contained within. This would probably serve as useful book for novice GMs to cut a campaign from. The basic premise follows the pattern of a set of portals that appear and disappear over the course of 500 years, and the dangers they contain - locked away in centuries past.

### ***Something Wild***

#2619 PSM8 - Set in *Curst* and the *Beastlands*. The story is very disjointed and the clues may be too subtle for some plot points the PCs are encouraged to pursue. Previous exposure to *Well of Worlds: The Hunt* may help a little in regards to the nature of the *Beastlands* but it still will not help the PCs on the plot points for the *Mercykillers* or the *Malar* worshipers on *Carceri*. It's just

too vague on letting the PCs know what to do. If you run this one, keep that in mind, and consider preceding this or following it up with *Planes of Conflict: Prison Break*.

### ***The Great Modron March***

#2628 PSM9 - This is a series of short basic adventures that may be interlaced with existing campaigns. You will need to run this **before** running *Dead Gods* as it is a precursor for that module. It is suggested that if your players find modrons funny - run this module and they will learn quickly that rogue modrons are anything but the norm for the species. This book also details the modrons nicely and GMs wanting to know more about how to play them, and details on their species should definitely pick this up. There are a total of eleven chapters and it does not detail the whole march, allowing GMs to make up adventures to insert into the gaps, or to use the adventures from this module to fill gaps in their own campaign. Overall, an excellent module.

1. The March Begins (4-6 PCs, Levels 1-3)  
Starting in Sigil and quickly moving to Automata, the PCs are hired to bring a book to Automata, while there they witness the beginning of the March.
2. The Unswerving Path (4-6 PCs, Levels 2-4)  
Heart's Faith lies dead in the path of the modrons, and under that many feet - very dead indeed without the intervention of the archon hired PCs.
3. Ambushed! (4-6 PCs, Levels 3-5)  
The march comes under attack from evil knights wanting to use the modrons for torturous experiments.
4. Politics of the Beasts (4-6 PCs, Levels 4-6)  
PCs asking favors of a nymph are asked to cleanse her pool of the pollution caused by the modrons upstream.
5. Modron Madness (4-6 PCs, Levels 4-6)  
Another villain using modrons for parts is discovered, and threaten the PCs with his actions.
6. Law in Chaos (4-6 PCs, Levels 5-8)  
Limbo natives hire the PCs to 'assist' the Modron March through Limbo - mostly to get them the heck out of the plane as soon as humanely/modronly possible.
7. The Modron Judge (4-6 PCs, Levels 5-8)  
A trapped modron begs for help in rejoining his comrades.



8. **Camp Followers (4-6 PCs, Levels 6-9)**  
Summoned by a wizards, following the March - the party is forced to serve the wizards as her guardians - through the Abyss.
9. **Sidetracked (4-6 PCs, Levels 6-9)**  
As the March takes a long-forgotten portal on their path, the PCs are hired to find out where it goes.
10. **The Flower Infernal (4-6 PCs, Levels 7-9)**  
The PCs discover the nefarious plots of the Tacharim, and must put a stop to things.
11. **The Last Leg (4-6 PCs, Levels 5-9)**  
The PCs are hired to find an artifact that doesn't exist, instead discovering a rogue modron with very important information.

### ***Dead Gods***

*(4-6 PCs, Levels 6-9)*

#2631 PSM10 - Composed of two adventures that are meant to be played in order, though they don't have to be directly back to back. This adventure resolves the situations addressed in the Great Modron March. While it is not required that this module be played after the Great Modron March, it makes most sense there. The smaller of the adventures in this module is intended to be played as interludes between the larger, and both deal with themes of death and renewal on a deific level.

### ***Faction War***

*(4-6 PCs, Levels 5-9)*

#2629 PSM11 - The culmination of many of the plots highlighted in previous releases, this treats the final showdown of the Fated and the Sensates and changed the political face of Sigil forever. This module may be best saved as a campaign ender, or used to transition to 3.0 and Planewalker releases. Don't run this one until you are ready to address Sigil in a post-faction setting.

### ***Die, Vecna, Die***

*(4-6 PCs, Levels 10-13)*

A definite campaign ender, this module focuses on the attempted invasion and bid for godhood of the great wizard Vecna as he escapes from Ravenloft. This module may require a large

amount of modification for any DM inclined to remain true to the mythologies of either the Planescape or Ravenloft setting - so consider yourself warned.

### ***TSR Jam 1999 The Manxome Foe***

*(4-6 PCs, Levels 8-12)*

# TSR11445 - A Deva is trying to redeem a Tanar'ri by forcing it to end the curse of a forest on Dothion, Bytopia. Ending the curse involves having the Tanar'ri kill a Jabberwocky with a Vorpal Sword. The PCs are to make sure the Tanar'ri behaves and completes the quest. Fans of *Alice in Wonderland* should definitely run this one.

### ***The Vortex of Madness and other Planar Perils***

# TSR11326 - An anthology of five short adventures for "high level heroes". Unfortunately the adventures in this anthology are incomplete and there are no notes regarding what "high level heroes" means in terms of levels or number of players. This is best used as a resource for GMs who need some hooks and rough planar location data with the time, effort, and energy to develop them into full tilt modules. It has wonderful tables detailing planar effects on magic, travel, etc.

### ***Dungeon Magazine Adventures***

1. *Umbra* (4-6 PCs, Levels 6-9)  
Dungeon # 55, pages 18-47, page 70. Art by DiTerlizzi.
2. *Nemesis* (4-7 PCs, Levels 9-12)  
Dungeon #60, pages 32 - 58. This adventure features a cameo by Rule-of-Three and cut-out rebus puzzles for Dabus speak. It is a decent adventure, except for that trip into the Abyss the Dabus send the PCs on.
3. *Diplomacy* (4-6 PCs, Levels 13-20)  
Dungeon #144, pgs 68 - 85. While not officially listed as Planescape, it might as well be and everyone knows it.

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### ***PAR+ING WØRDS***

Planescape is about thinking outside the box; sometimes it is about recreating the box. Just as new DMs are often given the advice never to tell the players that anything is impossible, it is important for them to remember in this setting, nothing is. A Planescape DM must be prepared to work ideas and philosophies like clay; you can build entire campaigns around an intellectual

concept. Don't be afraid to experiment, don't be afraid to break the rules—the planes do it all the time.

Don't back peddle on your mistakes and don't let players walk over you. Feel free to break their confidence, but don't ever let them break yours. Do what is healthy for your game, and so long as you keep a straight face, they'll never know the difference. The rules are different out here - you're flying without a net. Be ready to think on your feet and approach every twist and turn they throw at you as if that was precisely what you wanted them to do. Most of all, be confident in yourself - you're a Planescape DM.

**Chapter Release Information**

*Please direct any questions, comments, complements or complaints to the Planewalker Forums  
Please direct any errata to report to [errata@planewalker.com](mailto:errata@planewalker.com)*

Release Version: 1.0v 10/27/2007