

# The Lure of the Archlich: A D&D Adventure



# Adventure Summary

This is a one shot adventure for four to six characters of level 10. The characters are hired by a mysterious patron who claims to know the location of a hidden treasure in the Tomb of Horrors, a legendary dungeon created by the archlich Acererak. The patron provides them with a map and some clues, but warns them that the tomb is full of deadly traps and secrets. The characters enter the tomb and face various challenges, such as false doors, pit traps, illusions, undead guardians, and puzzles.

They also encounter other adventurers who have entered the tomb before them, some alive and some dead. The characters eventually reach the final chamber, where they find a jeweled skull on a pedestal. The skull speaks to them telepathically, revealing itself to be Acererak. He congratulates them for making it this far, but tells them that they have fallen into his trap. He explains that he needs their souls to power his phylactery, which is hidden somewhere else in the multiverse. He then activates a sphere of annihilation that begins to suck everything in the chamber into oblivion. The characters must find a way to escape or destroy the sphere of annihilation, or bargain with Acererak for their lives. They could also try to use the talisman of the sphere that Acererak wears around his neck, which allows him to control the sphere. If they manage to defeat Acererak or escape his trap, they could claim his treasure or flee from the tomb. If they fail, they become his latest victims.

# Adventure Background

Acererak is an archlich who travels between worlds and is known to take sick pleasure in devouring the souls of adventurers, whom he lures into trap-ridden dungeons where they suffer horrible deaths. One such dungeon lies under the lost city of Omu, called the Tomb of the Nine Gods, for Acererak slew nine false gods and sealed them within it. He also created an infamously deadly dungeon known as the Tomb of Horrors, where he trapped his own soul in a jeweled skull.

Acererak keeps his phylactery hidden, and neither gods nor spells can divine its location. If his physical body is destroyed, Acererak reforms next to his phylactery in 1d10 days. He can also project his consciousness into his jeweled skull, which he uses to communicate with visitors and control some aspects of the tomb.

The Tomb of Horrors is a complex labyrinth of corridors and chambers filled with traps, puzzles, and monsters. Acererak designed it to test the skills and wits of adventurers who seek his

treasure or his secrets. He also enjoys watching them suffer and die, and collecting their souls for his phylactery. The tomb has claimed the lives of thousands of adventurers over the centuries.

The patron who hires the characters is actually an agent of Acererak, who has been sent to lure more victims into the tomb. The patron knows some details about the tomb, but not all of them. The patron does not enter the tomb with the characters, but stays outside and waits for their return or demise.

## Adventure Hooks

You can use one of these hooks to get the characters interested in exploring the Tomb of Horrors:

- The characters receive a letter from a mysterious patron who claims to have information about a hidden treasure in an ancient dungeon. The patron offers to share this information with them for a price.
- The characters hear rumors about a legendary dungeon that contains untold riches and secrets, but also deadly dangers. They learn that a mysterious patron is looking for adventurers who are willing to explore it.
- The characters are contacted by a friend or ally who has gone missing after entering an ancient dungeon. They find a map and some notes that lead them to the Tomb of Horrors.
- The characters are hired by a scholar or collector who wants them to retrieve an artifact or document from an ancient dungeon. They are given a map and some clues that point them to the Tomb of Horrors.

## Adventure Outline

The adventure consists of four parts:

- Part 1: The Entrance (EL 10). The characters enter the Tomb of Horrors and face their first challenges.
- Part 2: The Labyrinth (EL 10). The characters explore the maze-like corridors and chambers of the tomb.
- Part 3: The False Crypt (EL 10). The characters reach what appears to be the final chamber of the tomb, but discover that it is a trap.
- Part 4: The True Crypt (EL 11). The characters confront Acererak

# Part 1: The Entrance

The characters arrive at the location indicated by the map and clues provided by the patron. They see a low, flat-topped hill about 200 feet wide and 300 feet long. The hill is covered with grass and a few trees. A stone archway stands at the center of the hill's south side. The archway is 10 feet wide and 10 feet high, and has a keystone carved with a skull.

The archway leads to a dark tunnel that slopes downward. The tunnel is 10 feet wide and 10 feet high, and has a smooth stone floor. The tunnel ends at a stone door that has a skull carved on it. The door is locked and trapped.

## Stone Door

The stone door is made of iron and has a DC 25 Strength check to break. It has an AC of 19, hardness 10, and 60 hit points. It also has a complex lock that requires a DC 30 Disable Device check to open.

The door is trapped with a glyph of warding that activates when the door is opened without disabling the lock. The glyph casts finger of death on the creature that opens the door. The creature must make a DC 23 Fortitude save or take 3d6+13 points of damage and die. A successful save reduces the damage by half and prevents death.

The door leads to a small antechamber that has another stone door on the opposite wall. This door is identical to the first one, except that it has no lock or trap. It leads to another tunnel that slopes downward.

## Tunnel

The tunnel is 10 feet wide and 10 feet high, and has a smooth stone floor. The tunnel ends at a stone wall that has three levers on it. The levers are labeled A, B, and C.

The wall is actually a secret door that can be opened by pulling the levers in the correct sequence. The correct sequence is BAC. Pulling any other lever or pulling them in the wrong order triggers a trap.

## Lever Trap

The trap consists of three scything blades that swing down from the ceiling when a lever is pulled incorrectly. Each blade targets one of the three levers, making a melee attack against the creature that pulled it. The blades have an attack bonus of +15 and deal 2d4+5 points of slashing damage on a hit.

The secret door leads to another antechamber that has another stone door on the opposite wall. This door is identical to the first one, except that it has no lock or trap. It leads to another tunnel that slopes downward.

## **Tunnel**

The tunnel is 10 feet wide and 10 feet high, and has a smooth stone floor. The tunnel ends at a large chamber that has four stone doors on each wall. Each door has a different symbol carved on it: a sun, a moon, a star, and a comet.

The doors are actually false doors that lead to dead ends or traps. Only one door leads to the next part of the tomb: the one with the comet symbol.

## **False Doors**

The false doors are made of iron and have a DC 25 Strength check to break. They have an AC of 19, hardness 10, and 60 hit points.

The sun door leads to a short corridor that ends at another iron door. This door is locked and trapped with an explosive runes spell that activates when the door is opened or read. The spell deals 6d6 points of force damage to anyone within 10 feet of the door (DC 14 Reflex save for half damage).

The moon door leads to a short corridor that ends at another iron door. This door is locked and trapped with an acid arrow spell that activates when the door is opened or touched. The spell shoots an arrow of acid at the creature that opens or touches the door, dealing 2d4 points of acid damage initially and another 2d4 points of acid damage on each of its next two turns (no save).

The star door leads to a short corridor that ends at another iron door. This door is locked and trapped with an animate objects spell that activates when the door is opened or touched. The spell animates four suits of armor that stand in alcoves along the corridor. The suits of armor attack anyone who enters the corridor with their swords (use animated object statistics).

The comet door leads to another tunnel that slopes downward.

## **Part 2: The Labyrinth**

The characters enter a maze-like complex of corridors and chambers that make up the bulk of the tomb. The labyrinth is full of traps, puzzles, and monsters that test their skills and wits. The

labyrinth is also magically warded to prevent teleportation, scrying, and divination within its walls. The characters must find their way to the false crypt, where they will face a deadly illusion.

The following sections describe some of the encounters and features of the labyrinth. You can use them as they are, modify them, or create your own. You can also randomize the layout of the labyrinth using a grid map or a dungeon generator.

### **Pit Trap**

One of the corridors in the labyrinth has a pit trap that spans its entire width. The pit is 10 feet deep and filled with spikes. A DC 20 Perception check reveals the trap. A DC 20 Reflex save avoids falling into the pit. Falling into the pit deals 2d6 points of piercing damage and 1d6 points of poison damage (DC 15 Fortitude save halves the poison damage).

The pit trap can be bypassed by jumping over it (DC 15 Acrobatics check), climbing around it (DC 15 Climb check), or using magic or equipment.

### **Riddle Door**

One of the chambers in the labyrinth has a stone door that has a riddle carved on it. The door is locked and can only be opened by speaking the correct answer to the riddle. The riddle is:

I have a face and two hands, but no arms or legs. I can tell you the time, but I don't know your name. I can make you run, but I can't walk. What am I?

The correct answer is: a clock.

If the characters speak the correct answer, the door opens and leads to another chamber. If they speak an incorrect answer, a trap activates.

### **Riddle Trap**

The trap consists of four crossbow bolts that shoot out from hidden slits in the walls when an incorrect answer is spoken. Each bolt targets one of the four corners of the door, making a ranged attack against the creature closest to that corner. The bolts have an attack bonus of +10 and deal 1d8+2 points of piercing damage on a hit.

The trap can be disabled with a DC 25 Disable Device check or by using magic or equipment.



## Mirror Room



One of the chambers in the labyrinth has four mirrors on each wall. The mirrors are actually portals to other chambers in the labyrinth. The characters can enter and exit the portals by stepping through the mirrors.

The portals are randomly connected to each other, so the characters may end up in different chambers each time they use them. You can roll a d4 to determine which portal leads to which chamber, or use your own method.

The mirror room also has a hidden treasure chest that contains some of Acererak's loot. The chest is concealed behind one of the mirrors, which can be moved with a DC 20 Strength check or by using magic or equipment. The chest is locked and trapped.

### **Treasure Chest**

The treasure chest is made of iron and has a DC 25 Strength check to break. It has an AC of 19, hardness 10, and 60 hit points. It also has a complex lock that requires a DC 30 Disable Device check to open.

The chest is trapped with a fireball spell that activates when the chest is opened without disabling the lock. The spell deals 6d6 points of fire damage to anyone within 20 feet of the chest (DC 14 Reflex save for half damage).

The chest contains 5,000 gp, a +1 longsword, a ring of protection +1, a potion of cure serious wounds, and a scroll of fly.

### **Skeleton Room**

One of the chambers in the labyrinth has four skeletons standing in alcoves along the walls. The skeletons are actually animated by Acererak's magic and will attack anyone who enters the chamber.

The skeletons have statistics as follows:



## Skeletons (4)



These skeletal warriors are the remains of fallen soldiers or adventurers, animated by dark magic. They wield scimitars and wear leather armor, but their bones are brittle and vulnerable to bludgeoning weapons.

- **Challenge Rating:** 1/3
- **XP:** 135 each
- **Alignment:** Neutral Evil
- **Size:** Medium
- **Type:** Undead

- **Initiative:** +6
- **Senses:** Darkvision 60 ft., Perception +0
- **Armor Class:** 16 (2 armor, 2 Dex, 2 natural)
- **Hit Points:** 4 (1d8)
- **Saving Throws:** Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2
- **Damage Reduction:** 5/bludgeoning
- **Immunities:** Cold, undead traits
- **Speed:** 30 ft.
- **Melee Attack:** Scimitar +0 (1d6+2/18–20)
- **Ability Scores:** Str 15, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 10
- **Base Attack Bonus:** +0
- **Combat Maneuver Bonus:** +2
- **Combat Maneuver Defense:** 14
- **Feats:** Improved Initiative
- **Gear:** Leather armor, scimitar

The skeletons will fight until destroyed. They can be turned or rebuked by a cleric or a paladin as normal.

The skeleton room also has a hidden lever that opens a secret door to another chamber. The lever is concealed behind one of the skeletons, which can be moved with a DC 15 Strength check or by using magic or equipment. The secret door leads to the false crypt.

## **False Crypt**

The secret door leads to a large chamber that resembles a crypt. The chamber has four stone sarcophagi along the walls, each with a carved lid depicting a different creature: a dragon, a sphinx, a beholder, and a mind flayer. The chamber also has a stone altar at the center, on which rests a jeweled skull.

The skull is actually an illusion created by Acererak to lure the characters into his trap. The skull appears to be made of gold and gems, and has a faint magical aura. A DC 25 Perception check or a detect magic spell reveals that the skull is an illusion. A dispel magic spell or a true seeing spell can also dispel the illusion.

If the characters approach the skull or touch it, the illusion fades and Acererak's voice booms out from the altar:

"Fools! You have reached the end of your journey. There is no treasure here, only death. I am Acererak, the master of this tomb. I have lured you here to feed on your souls. You will never leave this place alive. Prepare to meet your doom!"

As Acererak speaks, the sarcophagi open and four creatures emerge: a young red dragon, a gynosphinx, a beholder, and an ulitharid (a mind flayer with six tentacles). These creatures are actually simulacra created by Acererak using his magic. They have statistics as follows:

### Young Red Dragon Simulacrum

*Large dragon (fire), neutral evil*

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- **Armor Class** 25 (natural armor)
  - **Hit Points** 76 (8d12 + 24)
  - **Speed** 40 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor)
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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)

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- **Saving Throws** Dex +8, Con +9, Wis +8, Cha +9
  - **Skills** Perception +16, Stealth +9
  - **Damage Immunities** fire
  - **Senses** blindsight 30 ft., darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 26
  - **Languages** Common, Draconic
  - **Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)
  - **Frightful Presence.** Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 19 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.
  - **Sound Imitation.** The dragon can mimic any voice or sound it has heard, lasting up to 3 minutes.
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- **Multiattack.** The dragon makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.
- **Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 19 (2d10 + 8) piercing damage plus 7 (2d6) fire damage.

- **Claw.** Melee Weapon Attack: +14 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d6 + 8) slashing damage.
- **Breath Weapon (Recharge 5–6).** The dragon exhales fire in a 40-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 17 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

### Gynosphinx Simulacrum

*Large magical beast, lawful neutral*

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- **Armor Class** 21 (natural armor)
  - **Hit Points** 60 (8d10 + 16)
  - **Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (poor)
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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
23 (+6)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	18 (+4)	19 (+4)

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- **Saving Throws** Dex +8, Con +8, Wis +7
  - **Skills** Perception +15, Sense Motive +15
  - **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 25
  - **Languages** Common, Draconic, Sphinx; comprehend languages
  - **Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)
  - **Inscrutable.** The sphinx is immune to any effect that would sense its emotions or read its thoughts, as well as any divination spell that it refuses. Wisdom (Insight) checks made to ascertain the sphinx's intentions or sincerity have disadvantage.
  - **Riddle.** The sphinx can ask a riddle to any creature that can understand it and is within hearing range. The creature must answer within one minute or suffer a magical effect determined by the sphinx. The sphinx can use this ability once per day.
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- **Multiattack.** The sphinx makes two claw attacks.
- **Claw.** Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 17 (2d6 + 6) slashing damage. If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.
- **Pounce.** If the sphinx moves at least 20 feet straight toward a creature and then hits it with a claw attack on the same turn, that target must succeed on a DC 18

Strength saving throw or be knocked prone. If the target is prone, the sphinx can make one bite attack against it as a bonus action.

- **Rake.** Melee Weapon Attack: +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (1d6 + 6) slashing damage. The sphinx can use its rake only against a prone creature.
- **Spell-Like Abilities.** The sphinx's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 15, +7 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:
  - At will: comprehend languages, detect magic, read magic
  - 3/day: clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic, remove curse
  - 1/day: legend lore

### Beholder Simulacrum

*Large aberration, lawful evil*

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- **Armor Class** 24 (natural armor)
  - **Hit Points** 68 (8d10 + 24)
  - **Speed** 5 ft., fly 20 ft. (good)
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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

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- **Saving Throws** Int +6, Wis +6, Cha +6
  - **Skills** Perception +16
  - **Damage Immunities** gaze attacks, visual effects
  - **Condition Immunities** prone
  - **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 26
  - **Languages** Common, Deep Speech
  - **Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)
  - **Antimagic Cone.** The beholder's central eye creates an area of antimagic, as in the antimagic field spell, in a 150-foot cone. At the start of each of its turns, the beholder decides which way the cone faces and whether the cone is active. The area works against the beholder's own eye rays.
  - **All-Around Vision.** The beholder can see in all directions at once. It has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks and on saving throws against being blinded.
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- **Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d4 + 3) piercing damage.
- **Eye Rays.** The beholder shoots three of the following magical eye rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one to three targets it can see within 120 feet of it:
  - *Charm Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be charmed by the beholder for 1 hour, or until the beholder harms the creature.
  - *Paralyzing Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
  - *Fear Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
  - *Slowing Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the target's speed is halved for 1 minute. In addition, the creature can't take reactions, and it can take either an action or a bonus action on its turn, not both. The creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
  - *Enervation Ray.* The targeted creature must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
- *Telekinetic Ray.* If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Strength saving throw or the beholder moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. It is restrained by the ray's telekinetic grip until the start of the beholder's next turn or until the beholder is incapacitated. If the target is an object weighing 300 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, it is moved up to 30 feet in any direction. The beholder can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a door or a container.
- *Sleep Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or fall asleep and remain unconscious for 1 minute. The target awakens if it takes damage or another creature takes an action to wake it. This ray has no effect on constructs and undead.
- *Petrification Ray.* The targeted creature must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect

ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.

- **Disintegration Ray.** If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw or take 45 (10d8) force damage. If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, its body becomes a pile of fine gray dust. If the target is a Large or smaller nonmagical object or creation of magical force, it is disintegrated without a saving throw. If the target is a Huge or larger object or creation of magical force, this ray disintegrates a 10-foot cube of it.

### Ulitharid Simulacrum

*Large aberration, lawful evil*

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- **Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)
  - **Hit Points** 66 (12d10 + 12)
  - **Speed** 30 ft.
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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	21 (+5)	17 (+3)	18 (+4)

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- **Saving Throws** Int +9, Wis +7, Cha +8
  - **Skills** Arcana +9, Deception +8, Insight +7, Perception +7
  - **Damage Resistances** psychic
  - **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17
  - **Languages** Deep Speech, Undercommon, telepathy 2 miles
  - **Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)
  - **Innate Spellcasting (Psionics).** The ulitharid's innate spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 17, +9 to hit with spell attacks). It can innately cast the following spells, requiring no components:
    - At will: detect thoughts
    - 3/day each: dominate monster (can target only creatures that have an Intelligence score of at least 5), levitate
    - 1/day each: plane shift (self only)
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- **Multiattack.** The ulitharid makes two attacks: one with its tentacles and one with its bite.



- **Tentacles.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) psychic damage. If the target is Medium or smaller, it is grappled (escape DC 15) and must succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence saving throw or be stunned until this grapple ends.
- **Bite.** Melee Weapon Attack: +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. *Hit:* 22 (4d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 11 (2d10) psychic damage.

## Part 3: The True Crypt

If the characters manage to defeat or escape from the simulacra in the false crypt, they can find a secret door that leads to the true crypt. The secret door is hidden behind the altar where the jeweled skull illusion was. The door can be opened by pushing a hidden button on the altar.

The secret door leads to another tunnel that slopes downward.

The tunnel ends at a large chamber that has a stone sarcophagus at the center. The sarcophagus has a carved lid depicting Acererak's face. The chamber also has four pillars that support a domed ceiling. The ceiling is painted with a starry sky.

The sarcophagus is actually Acererak's phylactery, where he stores his soul. The phylactery is protected by a powerful magic barrier that prevents anyone from opening it or damaging it. The barrier also blocks any divination or teleportation magic within the chamber.

The chamber is also guarded by four specters that emerge from the pillars when the characters enter. The specters are the restless spirits of adventurers who died in the tomb and had their souls trapped by Acererak. They have statistics as follows:

## Specter (4)



*Medium undead (incorporeal), lawful evil*

- **Armor Class** 15 (deflection)
- **Hit Points** 22 (3d8 + 9)
- **Speed** fly 80 ft. (perfect)

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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
—	16 (+3)	—	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

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- **Saving Throws** Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4
- **Skills** Stealth +11 (+15 in dim light or darkness)
- **Damage Resistances** acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained
- **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10
- **Languages** understands all languages it knew in life but can't speak
- **Challenge** 2 (450 XP each)
- **Incorporeal Movement.** The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.
- **Sunlight Sensitivity.** While in sunlight, the specter has disadvantage on attack rolls, as well as on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.
- **Sunlight Powerlessness.** The specter is destroyed if it starts its turn in sunlight.

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- **Incorporeal Touch.** Melee Spell Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. The target must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or its hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0.
  - **Create Spawn.** Any humanoid killed by a specter becomes a specter under Acererak's control in 1d4 hours.

The specters will attack any living creature they see, and will try to drain their life force and turn them into more specters. They can be turned or rebuked by a cleric or a paladin as normal.

The chamber also has a hidden lever that opens a secret door to another chamber. The lever is concealed behind one of the paintings on the ceiling, which can be reached by flying or climbing. The lever can be spotted with a DC 25 Perception check.

The secret door leads to another tunnel that slopes downward.

## **Part 4: The Final Confrontation**

The tunnel leads to the final chamber of the tomb, where Acererak awaits the characters. The chamber is a circular room with a domed ceiling. The ceiling is painted with a mural of Acererak's face, which seems to follow the characters with its eyes. The chamber also has four alcoves along the walls, each containing a statue of Acererak holding a different item: a staff, a talisman, a sphere, and a skull.

The staff is the Staff of the Forgotten One, a powerful magic item that Acererak uses as his weapon. The talisman is the Talisman of the Sphere, an artifact that allows him to control the Sphere of Annihilation. The sphere is the Sphere of Annihilation itself, a black hole that can destroy anything it touches. The skull is Acererak's jeweled skull, which he uses to communicate and cast spells.

Acererak's physical body is hidden behind one of the statues, which he can move with his telekinesis. He can also project his consciousness into his jeweled skull, which he can move with his telekinesis as well. He can use either his body or his skull to attack the characters.

Acererak's goal is to kill the characters and trap their souls in his phylactery. He will use his staff, his eye rays, and his spells to do so. He will also use his talisman and his sphere to create obstacles and hazards for the characters. He will taunt and mock them throughout the fight, and try to break their will.

Acererak has statistics as follows:

## Acererak



*Medium undead (shapechanger), neutral evil*

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- **Armor Class** 21 (natural armor)
  - **Hit Points** 135 (18d8 + 54)

- **Speed** 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

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STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	16 (+3)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

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- **Saving Throws** Dex +9, Con +9, Int +11, Wis +8
- **Skills** Arcana +11, Deception +10, Insight +8, Perception +8
- **Damage Resistances** cold, lightning; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks
- **Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison
- **Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, poisoned
- **Senses** truesight 120 ft., passive Perception 18
- **Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 120 ft.
- **Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP)
- **Shapechanger.** Acererak can use his action to polymorph into a Medium humanoid or back into his true form. His statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment he is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. He reverts to his true form if he dies.
- **Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Acererak fails a saving throw, he can choose to succeed instead.
- **Magic Resistance.** Acererak has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
- **Rejuvenation.** If Acererak's physical body is destroyed, he returns to life in 1d10 days and regains all his hit points. Only destroying his phylactery can prevent this.

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- **Multiattack.** In humanoid form, Acererak makes two attacks with his staff or one attack with his staff and uses an eye ray. In lich form, he makes two attacks with his claws or one attack with his claws and uses an eye ray.
  - **Staff of the Forgotten One (Humanoid Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage, and the target must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or have disadvantage on saving throws against spells until the end of Acererak's next turn.
  - **Claws (Lich Form Only).** Melee Weapon Attack: +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) slashing damage plus 18 (4d8) necrotic damage.



- **Eye Rays.** Acererak shoots two of the following magical eye rays at random (reroll duplicates), choosing one or two targets he can see within 120 feet of him:
  - *Paralyzing Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
  - *Fear Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or be frightened for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.
  - *Enervation Ray.* The targeted creature must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw, taking 36 (8d8) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.
  - *Telekinetic Ray.* If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Strength saving throw or Acererak moves it up to 30 feet in any direction. It is restrained by the ray's telekinetic grip until the start of Acererak's next turn or until Acererak is incapacitated. If the target is an object weighing 300 pounds or less that isn't being worn or carried, it is moved up to 30 feet in any direction. Acererak can also exert fine control on objects with this ray, such as manipulating a simple tool or opening a door or a container.
  - *Sleep Ray.* The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 18 Wisdom saving throw or fall asleep and remain unconscious for 1 minute. The target awakens if it takes damage or another creature takes an action to wake it. This ray has no effect on constructs and undead.
  - *Petrification Ray.* The targeted creature must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the creature begins to turn to stone and is restrained. It must repeat the saving throw at the end of its next turn. On a success, the effect ends. On a failure, the creature is petrified until freed by the greater restoration spell or other magic.
  - *Disintegration Ray.* If the target is a creature, it must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 45 (10d8) force damage. If this damage reduces the creature to 0 hit points, its body becomes a pile of fine gray dust. If the target is a Large or smaller nonmagical object or creation of magical force, it is disintegrated without a saving throw. If the target is a Huge or larger object or creation of magical force, this ray disintegrates a 10-foot cube of it.



- *Death Ray*. The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw or take 55 (10d10) necrotic damage. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit points to 0.
- **Spells**. Acererak is an 18th-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 19, +11 to hit with spell attacks). He has the following wizard spells prepared:
  - Cantrips (at will): mage hand, prestidigitation, ray of frost
  - 1st level (4 slots): detect magic, magic missile, shield
  - 2nd level (3 slots): mirror image, misty step
  - 3rd level (3 slots): counterspell, fireball
  - 4th level (3 slots): blight, dimension door
  - 5th level (3 slots): cloudkill, scrying
  - 6th level (1 slot): disintegrate
  - 7th level (1 slot): finger of death
  - 8th level (1 slot): power word kill
  - 9th level (1 slot) wish

**Staff of the Forgotten One.** This staff can be wielded as a magic quarterstaff that grants a +3 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with it. It also has the following additional properties.

- **Spellcasting.** The staff has 10 charges and can be used to cast the following spells from it, using your spell save DC and spellcasting ability: animate dead (3 charges), circle of death (6 charges), finger of death (7 charges), power word kill (8 charges). The staff regains 1d6 + 4 expended charges daily at dawn. If you expend the last charge, roll a d20. On a 1, the staff crumbles to dust and is destroyed.
- **Soul Siphon.** When you hit a creature with a melee attack using the staff, you can choose to deal an extra 2d8 necrotic damage to the target and regain hit points equal to half that amount. If the target is killed by this damage, its soul is trapped in the staff. You can use an action to release one or more souls from the staff, causing them to appear as spectral servants that obey your commands for 1 hour or until they are destroyed. Each soul can inhabit and animate one corpse or skeleton within 10 feet of it, using its statistics. You can't have more than four souls in the staff at a time.

**Talisman of the Sphere.** This talisman is a gold amulet that bears the symbol of a circle with a line through it. It has the following properties.

- **Sphere Control.** You can use an action to control the movement of one sphere of annihilation within 60 feet of you. The sphere moves as you direct, up to a number of feet equal to 5 x your Intelligence modifier (minimum 5 feet). If you are

within 60 feet of a sphere that isn't under anyone else's control, you can use an action to make a DC 25 Intelligence check. On a success, you gain control of the sphere for as long as you remain within 60 feet of it and concentrate on it as if concentrating on a spell.

- **Sphere Resistance.** You have resistance to damage caused by a sphere of annihilation.
- **Sphere Evasion.** If you are subjected to an effect that allows you to make a Dexterity saving throw to take only half damage from a sphere of annihilation, you instead take no damage if you succeed on the saving throw.

**Sphere of Annihilation.** This item is a black sphere, 2 feet in diameter, that hovers in place until activated. It has the following properties.

- **Devouring Void.** Anything that touches the sphere must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d10 force damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. A creature reduced to 0 hit points by this damage is disintegrated along with its equipment. A disintegrated creature can be restored to life only by means of a true resurrection or a wish spell.
- **Gate Breaker.** The sphere destroys any object it passes through and any spell or effect that comes into contact with it, except for its own movement or effects created by its talisman.
- **Unstoppable Force.** The sphere is immune to any effect that would alter its course or speed, such as gravity, wind, or magic.

**Jeweled Skull.** This item is a human skull adorned with gold and gems. It has the following properties.

- **Spellcasting Focus.** You can use the skull as a spellcasting focus for your wizard spells.
- **Telepathy Amplifier.** While holding the skull, you can use your telepathy to communicate with any creature within sight, regardless of language or distance.
- **Illusion Projector.** While holding the skull, you can use an action to create an illusion of yourself that appears in an unoccupied space within sight and lasts for 1 minute or until you dismiss it as an action. The illusion looks and sounds like you but is intangible and can't affect other creatures or objects. As long as you and the illusion are on the same plane of existence, you can use your action to switch places with it at will, teleporting instantly and appearing in each other's spaces.

Acererak fights with cunning and malice, using his staff, his eye rays, and his spells to their full effect. He also uses his talisman and his sphere to create obstacles and hazards for the characters. He also uses his skull to communicate and cast spells from

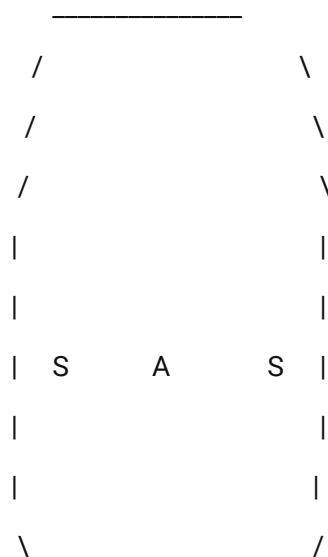
a safe distance. He will taunt and mock the characters throughout the fight, and try to break their will.

Acererak's motivations and goals are as follows:

- Acererak is a powerful lich who has transcended death and seeks to become a god. He has traveled across the planes, exploring ancient secrets and collecting rare artifacts. He has also created many tombs and dungeons to lure adventurers and harvest their souls for his phylactery.
- Acererak's ultimate goal is to unlock the secrets of the Negative Energy Plane, the source of his power and the antithesis of life. He believes that by doing so, he can achieve true immortality and dominion over all creation. He also seeks to destroy any rivals or threats to his plans, such as other powerful undead or deities.
- Acererak views the characters as insignificant insects who have dared to enter his domain. He enjoys playing with them and testing their skills and wits, but he has no intention of letting them live. He wants to kill them and trap their souls in his phylactery, where he can torture them for eternity. He also wants to use their deaths as a catalyst for his final ritual, which he believes will grant him access to the Negative Energy Plane.

The final chamber is a circular room with a domed ceiling. The ceiling is painted with a mural of Acererak's face, which seems to follow the characters with its eyes. The chamber also has four alcoves along the walls, each containing a statue of Acererak holding a different item: a staff, a talisman, a sphere, and a skull.

A possible map of the final chamber is shown below:





S: Statue A: Altar