Vathrex Unchained

Deep below the everburning fires of Vathrex's Forge, the body of a slain pit fiend awakens once again, threatening chaos to the City of Arches above.

"Vathrex Unchained" is an adventure scenario for 11th level 5e characters set in the fiery caverns below Vathrex's Forge in the City of Arches. This stand-alone scenario works with any 5e-based system including D&D 2014, D&D 2024, *Level Up Advanced 5e*, *Tales of the Valiant*, or others. It can also be modified to support other fantasy RPGs.

You can modify this scenario to run as a stand-alone adventure in almost any campaign or setting.

This Isn't a Typical Adventure

This scenario isn't laid out like a traditional adventure. Instead, it presents ingredients to use and a scaffold around which to build your own adventure for your own group, campaign, and story. This scenario gives you adventure hooks, histories, secrets and clues, notable NPCs, potential encounters, locations, and treasure.

Each section in this scenario suggests how to use these components.

Vathrex's Forge

The magical fires of Vathrex's Forge made it an ideal place to smelt metals and forge tools and weapons for the people of the City of Arches. Dating back to the earliest days of the reign of the Nameless King, countless weapons – mundane and magical – came off the anvils of this magically-infused forge. The power of the forge came from the eternal fires spewing from the body of a trapped **pit fiend** known as Vathrex – summoned and bound by the Nameless King and trapped below the forge to fire his forges of war.

Today, devils allied with Vathrex and loyal cultists infiltrated the chambers below Vathrex's forge and threaten to restore the fiend to his former might, threatening the City of Arches.

During this scenario the characters delve into the chambers below Vathrex's Forge, face the devils and cultists attempting to awaken Vathrex, and perhaps bind or destroy the pit lord himself.

Scenario Start

The characters can begin this scenario in several ways:

- One of the characters has a dream in which they see the awakening of the pit fiend Vathrex. When they look into the smoke arising from Vathrex's Forge, they see images of the pit fiend and recognize that they must stop the pit lord's ascendence and risk to the people of the City of Arches.
- When they visit Vathrex's Forge, the characters learn from the forgemaster Erna Ironhorn that cracks started to crack the floors of the storerooms of the forge spewing foul smoke. Two of her apprentices took it upon themselves to investigate the chambers below but haven't returned. Several members of the Golden Knights also went down and they too haven't returned. The Golden Knights now negotiate with the Mages of Kartan for help, but negotiations are slow. Erna hopes the characters can help find the missing apprentices and members of the Golden Knights.
- The Siblings of Everburning Fire – cultists who worship the pit lord Vathrex – proclaim that in mere days their lord will rise from the forge and destroy the city. Roselyn Zeshe puts little faith in the proclamations but cannot be sure. She asks the characters to investigate the forge and see if there's any truth to the proclamation.

Erna Ironhorn offers protections for the characters traveling into the super-heated caverns below. This includes a skin cream that reduces fire damage by 5, oils to apply to weapons that allows them to pierce through resistance and immunity to fire for one minute when applied. She also offers glowing crystals that, when crushed along with other material components while casting spells, allows those spells to pierce through fire resistance or immunity.

Secrets and Clues

Reveal the following secrets and clues as the characters investigate Vathrex's Forge and the chambers below. Characters might discover clues while doing research in the city, talking to NPCs, studying ancient religious texts, or from ancient carvings or statues found in the chambers below. The characters need not discover every secret.

- Almost two thousand years ago the Nameless King and his warlocks summoned and bound a powerful devil known as Vathrex the Pit Lord.
- The warlocks of the Nameless King called upon four of the Lower Twelve gods to fuel their binding of the Pit Fiend including Ivis Hellfire, Lord Halax the Bloodspear, Grimskull the Pale Lord, and Nightwhisper the Silent Needle. Statues of these and other forgotten gods still adorn the chambers beneath Vathrex's Forge.
- Vathrex's burning rage continued to flow from his body, fueling Vathrex's Forge above. Forgemasters

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used the forge for two millennia to build tools and weapons of great power.
- Since the fall of the Nameless King, many forgemasters used Vathrex's Forge with little understanding of where the energy for the forge's many fires came from. They did not question the energy for fear of what they might find.
- A cult named the Siblings of Everburning Fire seek to free Vathrex from his bonds and allow him to bring a purifying flame to the City of Arches.
- Several passageways lead to the lower caverns where the Nameless King bound and trapped Vatrhix. The Siblings of Everburning Fire used these passages to reach Vathrex's chamber.
- The Siblings of Everburning Fire summoned several devils loyal to Vathrex to aid in freeing the pit fiend.
- The statues of three dark gods bind Vathrex in the lowest chamber.
- The slab upon which lies Vathrex is empowered with foul energy but with the right rituals can instead serve as an altar of light.

Key NPCs

The following is a list of key NPCs for this adventure.

- **Erna Ironhorn.** The minotaur foremaster. She has run the forge for forty years building tools and weapons for the people of the City of Arches.
- **Genneth Millbeard**. Dwarven apprentice smith who volunteered to go down into the depths to find out what's going wrong with the forge.
- **Penelope Wintersong.** Elven smith's apprentice who went with Genneth below and hasn't returned.
- **Zennon Fiendblood.** Tiefling **archmage** leader of the Siblings of Everburning Fire. He and his fellow cultists infiltrated the chambers below Vathrex's Forge to free the devil from his bonds and send him against the City of Arches.

Encounters

While exploring the caverns beneath Vathrex's Forge, the characters may run into one or more encounters. The characters might locate Penelope Wintersong or Genneth Millbeard during one of these encounters or by themselves as they attempt to escape the chambers having gotten way in over their heads.

1. Several **hellhounds** hunt for intruders.
2. An **erinyes** leads several **cult fanatics** in a ritual to summon more **bearded devils**.
3. Several **barbed devils** mock and eventually slay frightened **cultists** who got in over their head.
4. Treasure-seeking **bandits** and a **bandit captain,** a group known as the Blood-iron Nails, steal into the chambers seeking fiendish treasure.
5. Wounded Golden **Knights** fight a losing battle against two **bone devils**.
6. Fiendish **salamanders** stalk the halls seeking victims.

Traps and Hazards

While exploring the everburning caverns, the characters may run into one or more traps or hazards. Select from or roll on the list below when desired. Traps and Hazards inflict 44 (8d10) damage to single targets or 33 (6d10) damage to multiple targets and typically have a DC of 20 to detect or disarm.

1. Flame jets spew from cracks in the walls.
2. Infernal glyphs explode, burn, freeze, or blast.
3. A skull screams a psychic scream.
4. Obsidian shards cut through the air.
5. Fiendish tentacles grasp for mortal souls.
6. An unholy egg explodes into a nest of imps.

Penelope and Genneth

Two apprentice smiths and would-be adventurers went down into the chambers to see what caused these new hellish cracks to appear in the walls. They traveled some distance before running into the Siblings of Everburning Fire and the devils they summoned. The two got separated but managed to stay alive. You can decide whether they've been captured or are hiding from the evil denizens of the caverns. Neither has managed to find a safe path back up.

Everburning Caverns

The deeper one goes below Vathrex's Forge, the older the chambers get. Few traveled down below the first floor beneath the forge, knowing the dangers that lurk below. Caverns have 20-foot-high ceilings. Rooms and hallways have 15-foot ceilings.

Chambers are dimly lit with glowing cracks in the walls through which bleeds infernal fire. Collapsed rock in hallways sometimes exposes the incredible shaft of hellfire roaring from area 12 to the forges above.

1. **Entry chamber to the lower vaults.** This is one of several small chambers inside the upper level of Vathrex's forge. Deep cracks in the floor send out waves of heat
2. **Lower vault chamber of Vathrex's Forge.** Boxes of supplies and equipment are stored down here. The smiths of the forge don't venture past areas 2 and 4.
3. **Lower natural cavern.** Waves of heat roll off the walls here.
4. **Auxiliary storeroom.** Older chests and racks include older and often damaged equipment.

Much of it is decades to centuries old. A cracked natural tunnel leads to area 3.

5. **Lower forges.** Three forges here lie unused. Cracks in the floor here are recent and spew heat from below.
6. **Deep cavern.** This cavern hasn't been visited, except most recently by the smith's assistants, in centuries.
7. **Forgotten armory.** A former armory of the Nameless King is locked behind an iron door.
8. **Destroyed infernal storage.** A heavy iron door blocks off a chamber where heavily tainted infernal items were discarded.
9. **Summoning chamber.** Unholy circles on the ground have been used to call the minions of Vathrex from the depths of the hells.
10. **Profane statue.** It depicts Sister Mevys – Lady of Blades – one of the forgotten gods of the Lower Twelve.
11. **Molten cliffs.** The walls here have begun to melt from the extreme heat channeled through the forge.
12. **Cell of Vathrex.** Statues of four of the Lower Twelve gods sit in alcoves – energy channeled to the corpse of Vathrex lying upon a huge slab of black iron. Molten metal channels tremendous heat upwards into shafts leading to the forge above.

The Cell of Vathrex

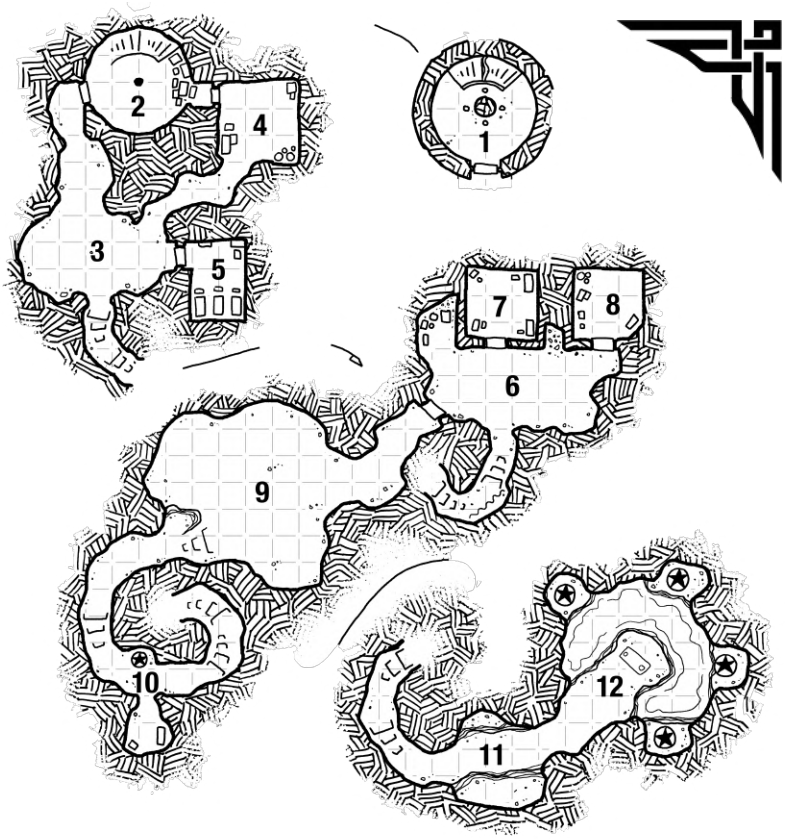
Vathrex's body is held on a huge slab of black iron in area 12, bound from energy flowing from four statues. The statues have begun to break down, releasing the bonds that held Vathrex's soul in place. Should all four statues fall, Vathrex will resurrect as a **pit fiend** and begin his assault on the city above. Even in his current state he might battle as a pit fiend with fewer hit points and fewer attacks.

Cultists and devils channel fell energies into the statues, attempting to destroy the statues and free Vathrex.

The characters can decide whether to stop the cultists, reinforce the bonds of the statues, or face and destroy Vathrex for good. Should the characters defeat Vathrex, his fires stop flowing into the lava and prevent the forge above from working. Should the characters choose to sanctify the unholy altar, they can channel radiant energy into it instead of fiendish energy – replenishing the forge above but with radiant light instead of hellfire.

Treasures

The characters might find treasure as they explore areas 4, 5, 10, and 12.



Monetary Treasure

- 13,823 GP, 785 PP
- 7 × 1,000 GP jade gemstones
- 2,000 GP elven yellow sapphire earrings
- 2,000 GP clockwork silver statue

Consumable Magic Items

You can also include the following consumable magic items somewhere in the tower.

- 2 × *Potions of Superior Healing*
- Infernal bladed finger bone that casts *Delayed Blast Fireball* (DC 18) once.

Permanent Magic Items

Choose one of the following permanent magic items as a reward:

- *Ring of Evasion*
- *Amulet of Proof against Detection and Location*
- *+2 adamantine warhammer that inflicts an extra +1d6 force damage and casts shatter once per day (5th level – 6d8).*

Scenario Conclusion

The scenario concludes when the characters defeat the cults attempting to restore Vathrex and restored the statues. They might instead defeat Vathrex, ending the infernal energies of the forge. They might also rebuild the forge tapping into celestial energies.