



ELDER EVILS™

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Introduction

When elder evils stir, the world groans; when they awaken, the world weeps. Buried in the deepest bowels of the Underdark, hidden in the farthest reaches of the multiverse, or lost in the gulfs between realities are terrible things that exist only to destroy or horribly remake creation. So mighty are these ancient beings that even the gods think twice about standing against them. Mortals who are aware of their existence viciously suppress that knowledge and destroy any who would serve such things. Even if an elder evil can be forced back to whence it came, its mere presence changes the world forever. In short, it is a campaign ender.

EVIL TO CHALLENGE THE GODS

The *Elder Evils* supplement presents a catalog of some of the most infamous and terrible creatures ever to plague the multiverse. From an undead world “born” at the moment of creation, to terrifying monstrosities that clawed their way out of the Abyss, to unthinkable entities from beyond the planes, these beings exemplify horrors that can destroy not just a kingdom but entire worlds or even existence itself.

Most elder evils have been imprisoned by great heroes, deities, or other powerful beings who fear their release. Yet they are not so easily forgotten: Whispers of their existence seduce the mad and villainous, promising great power in exchange for release. Thus, each elder evil presented here has one or more servants, also described in detail.

Chapter 1. Evil Does Not Sleep: This section provides suggestions for introducing an elder evil into the campaign as well as signs that bring the end times to your world. New feats and malefic properties add horror and power to elder evils and their servants.

Chapter 2. Atropus: This moonlike orb is the stillborn afterbirth of the world’s creation, an undead entity that desires nothing less than the end of the entire multiverse.

Chapter 3. Father Llymic: Although his body lies frozen in a prison of ice, the mind of this utterly alien being is glacially aware. His corrosive form slowly infects his surroundings, reaching gradually to make the world a part of himself. His corrupt Brood roams free, spreading evil in preparation for their master’s awakening.

Chapter 4. Hulks of Zoretha: Left behind in the wake of a world-shaking storm a century past, these enigmatic monoliths hold a secret known by only a few. The Hulks are the seeds of a monstrous colonization project, awaiting a signal from a parallel plane. Once it is received, they will animate to carve a path of destruction.

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Chapter 5. Leviathan: Leviathan is a creature of bestial intelligence whose enormous coils wrap the world. It sleeps in the deepest trenches of the seas, spawning tsunamis, whirlpools, and earthquakes as it restlessly shifts. Now mad cultists seek to wake the beast and submerge all the lands.

Chapter 6. Pandorym: Pandorym is a doomsday weapon, an entity from beyond the multiverse. Ancient wizards summoned it as a deterrent to defend their empire from vengeful deities. However, the raging gods ended the kingdom’s reign before it could release the weapon. Pandorym now lingers, its essence split and imprisoned, waiting for release—and vengeance.

Chapter 7. Ragnorra: Arising in a time before creation, Ragnorra is a force of perverted life that births monstrosities from her swollen body. The deities cast her into the sky, but she reappears as a blood-red comet every 500 years. Dreadful seed and falling stars produce monstrous offspring in worlds Ragnorra approaches—and now she smashes into worlds to remake them directly.

Chapter 8. Sertrous: Sertrous began as a demon, one of the obyriths—a remnant demonic race shuddering toward extinction. With the rise of the tanar’ri, Sertrous was exiled from the Abyss and took the form of a monstrous serpent, granting vile powers to the yuan-ti in exchange for their service. Even though he was slain, Sertrous lingers in spirit and continues to corrupt the snake people. His followers, the Vanguard of Sertrous, employ intrigue and magic to gain influence and ultimately bring about the end of the world.

Chapter 9. The Worm that Walks: This elder evil is the memory of a slain corporeal god. Its essence transferred itself to the worms and maggots that devoured the deity’s corpse, forming a hideous but vaguely humanoid shape. The horror was sealed away in an obelisk by heroes of a previous age. It seeks ever to escape and eat its way to world domination, one writhing victim at a time.

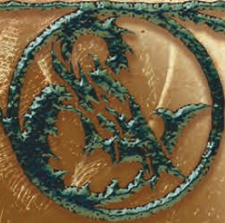
Chapter 10. Zargon: According to legend, Zargon cannot be killed unless his horn is severed from his body, and if his horn is not destroyed, he will inevitably return to claim it. The immortals could not discover a means of destroying his horn, and thus they entombed Zargon and a whole city of his mad worshipers in a place now lost to history.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

To use the information in *Elder Evils*, you need the three core rulebooks for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game—the *Player’s Handbook* (PH), *Dungeon Master’s Guide* (DMG), and *Monster Manual* (MM).

Throughout this book, abbreviations are used to denote game elements and other materials that appear in certain supplements. Those supplements and their abbreviations (often in superscript type) are as follows: *Book of Vile Darkness* (BoVD), *Complete Adventurer* (CA^d), *Complete Arcane* (CA^r), *Complete Divine* (CD), *Complete Mage* (CM), *Complete Psionic* (CP), *Complete Warrior* (CW), *EBERRON Campaign Setting* (ECS), *Epic Level Handbook* (ELH), *Expanded Psionics Handbook* (EPH), *Fiend Folio* (FF), *Fiendish Codex I* (FC¹), *Heroes of Horror* (HH), *Libris Mortis* (LM), *Monster Manual II* (MM²), *Monster Manual III* (MM³), *Monster Manual IV* (MM⁴), *Player’s Handbook II* (PH²), *Spell Compendium* (SC), and *Tome of Magic* (ToM). Having any or all of these supplements will enhance your enjoyment of this book, but they are not required.

Illus. by J. Zhang



And I looked upon the Thing and I wept tears of blood, for I knew my land, my people, my very world was dead.”

—Ancient scroll recovered from the Valley of Death

The following pages present incomprehensible horrors, threats to the campaign setting so powerful as to bring it to an end. These beings have nothing less in mind than the utter destruction of a world or even existence itself. Even if their genocidal plans are not completely realized, they can leave the world unrecognizable.

Elder evils are not just monsters with impressive Challenge Ratings. They are campaign capstones. Their abilities outstrip those of even the most powerful player characters. In some cases, the PCs do not confront the elder evil itself, but only a mighty extension of its foul will. It might be possible to fight and even defeat such creatures, but their very existence unalterably changes the world.

If ending the world isn't on your horizon just yet, the foes described in the following chapters make exciting challenges for your campaign's high-level adventurers. They and their powerful minions are the basis for grand story arcs that pit the characters against the greatest threats facing their existence. As an individual challenge, any of the monsters presented here offers a memorable confrontation. An adventure need not conclude with encountering the elder evil itself; the PCs

might thwart the plans of villains early enough to prevent an apocalyptic outcome.

If you are ready to bring your campaign to a close, though, start with this chapter. It sets out the basics of incorporating these beings into your world's history. As well, it provides some advice on ending it all in a way that is not only memorable and exciting, but satisfying too.

THE END TIMES

“The shrieks, the laughter, the wailing! We were going mad. We knew not why or how, but delusions and hallucinations ruled our feverish minds.”

You might be wondering why you should ever end your campaign: Things are going fine, and you're having fun.

To cite a cliché, all good things must come to an end. Even if you're not ready to stop now, one day you will be. At some point, the PCs ascend the heady heights of epic levels, and fewer and fewer foes can challenge them. When player characters own castles and lands, command continent-spanning organizations, lead entire religious movements, or are generals of armies no longer content with mortal wars, your campaign is approaching a natural close.

You could forge on, having the PCs challenge the gods themselves, but even then, the tale has to end someday.

Ending a campaign is a significant achievement. It is a natural conclusion to all the stories you and your players have told together, and it gives everyone a feeling of accomplishment after years of play. In addition, bringing your campaign to a close lets you embark on something different, exploring new worlds and possibilities—in short, death leads to rebirth.

INCORPORATING ELDER EVILS

Elder evils lurk on the fringes of existence. They have always been and always will be. Although they can be as powerful as demigods—sometimes more so—they are not deities. They aren't interested in mortals except to wipe them out. Gods create and attend their creations; elder evils unravel them.

The mere presence of an elder evil threatens reality. Such power is difficult to conceal. If the PCs haven't heard even a whisper of the entity to date, why and how has it masked its presence? Uncovering this mystery can be as thrilling a challenge as the final confrontation itself.

The secrecy of an elder evil depends on your needs as the Dungeon Master. If you're starting a new campaign and plan to end it in a confrontation with a world-threatening entity, plant the seeds early and drop hints over time. If you've decided recently to bring things to a head, there's nothing wrong with suddenly revealing the elder evil.

When introducing these terrifying entities into an established campaign, use what you already have. Recurring villains or their minions work well when the PCs already have an inkling of the nemesis. For example, when the nefarious high priest of Nerull reveals that she is in fact an accomplice of the Worm that Walks (see Chapter 9), the revelation is as logical as it is horrifying. On the other hand, a major campaign villain might turn out to be the elder evil itself. Faceless, recurring villains hide their identities behind several masks; as the campaign develops, the PCs expose (or believe they expose) their true enemy again and again until you're ready to reveal the ultimate truth.

You can adapt any of the example elder evils in this book so that they fit better into your setting's history. In a planar

campaign, for example, an entity might not just threaten a single Material Plane world, but also be working to destroy all reality. Atropus, the World Born Dead (see Chapter 2), could languish in stasis on the Negative Energy Plane. Once released, it might seek to transform all the Outer Planes into a mass graveyard.

READING THE ENTRIES

Each of the following chapters describes an elder evil, its motivations and servants, and signs of its approach, as well as providing a sample story arc to help you introduce the threat into your campaign. A given entry uses the following format.

Background

This section opens with a paragraph of common knowledge and continues with several paragraphs of specialized knowledge. Learning one of these pieces of information about an elder evil requires a Knowledge check of the appropriate kind. The specific skill and the check DC appears parenthetically at the end of each relevant paragraph in the elder evil's background.

Goals

This section follows the same format as the Background entry, but the lore entries reveal ever more secret details of the elder evil's ultimate purpose.

The Elder Evil in the Campaign

This section sets out a sample story arc with increasingly difficult challenges, culminating in the final confrontation with the elder evil. The Encounter Levels of these challenges correspond with strengthening signs of the apocalypse, as detailed later in this chapter. Each chapter includes a sidebar that describes the game effects of that elder evil's sign.

Two subsections suggest ways to adapt the elder evil to the FORGOTTEN REALMS® and EBERRON™ campaign settings.

Description

Here follow physical details of the elder evil, including its statistics block. Important servants and minions are also presented in this section, along with their statistics.

ELDER EVIL TRAITS

The elder evils presented in this book have many of the traits of abominations, as presented in *Epic Level Handbook*. Unlike abominations, however, elder evils are not the offspring of deities. They are virtually immortal—although they can be weakened or returned to eons-long slumber.

Elder evils speak Abyssal, Celestial, Infernal, and often an elemental language associated with their imprisonment. They have maximum hit points per Hit Die. In addition, they have the following characteristics.

Immunities (Ex): Elder evils have immunity to polymorphing, petrification, and any other spell or ability that alters their form. They are not subject to energy drain, ability drain, ability damage, or death from massive damage. They are immune to

mind-affecting spells and abilities. Most elder evils have immunity to a specific energy type, depending on their nature.

Resistances (Ex): Elder evils have resistance to cold 20 and fire 20. They have high damage reduction, sometimes overcome only by epic weapons, and very high spell resistance.

Summon Creature (Sp): Many elder evils are able to summon associated creatures appropriate to their origins or specific background. See the specific entries for additional details.

Special Qualities: All elder evils can use *true seeing* as the spell at will (as a supernatural ability). They resist detection as if under the effect of a nondetection spell. They have blindsight out to 500 feet. They can communicate telepathically with any creature within 1,000 feet that has a language.

Feats: Elder evils can select epic feats.