DEMON BLOCK PARTY

by Ryan Servis

Creature: *Marilith* | **Levels:** *12 - 16*

SYNOPSIS

Demons hate mortals, almost as much as they hate being enslaved. A spellcaster must be very foolish indeed to call forth these fiends, for their chaotic nature chafes at the strict terms of their summoning. Unfortunately for the nearby town of Wolfwater, the local wizard has failed to treat demons with the level of caution they deserve, enslaving them for increasingly trivial purposes; theatrical entertainment, menial labor, and experimentation. Such arrogance inevitably led to catastrophe when a powerful marilith was called forth.

ADVENTURE HOOK

This is an adventure for characters of 12th-16th level. There are various ways the party may come to know of Wolfwater's plight. Perhaps they stumble across the town, are drawn by the sounds of an epic party, or have some connection to a local.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

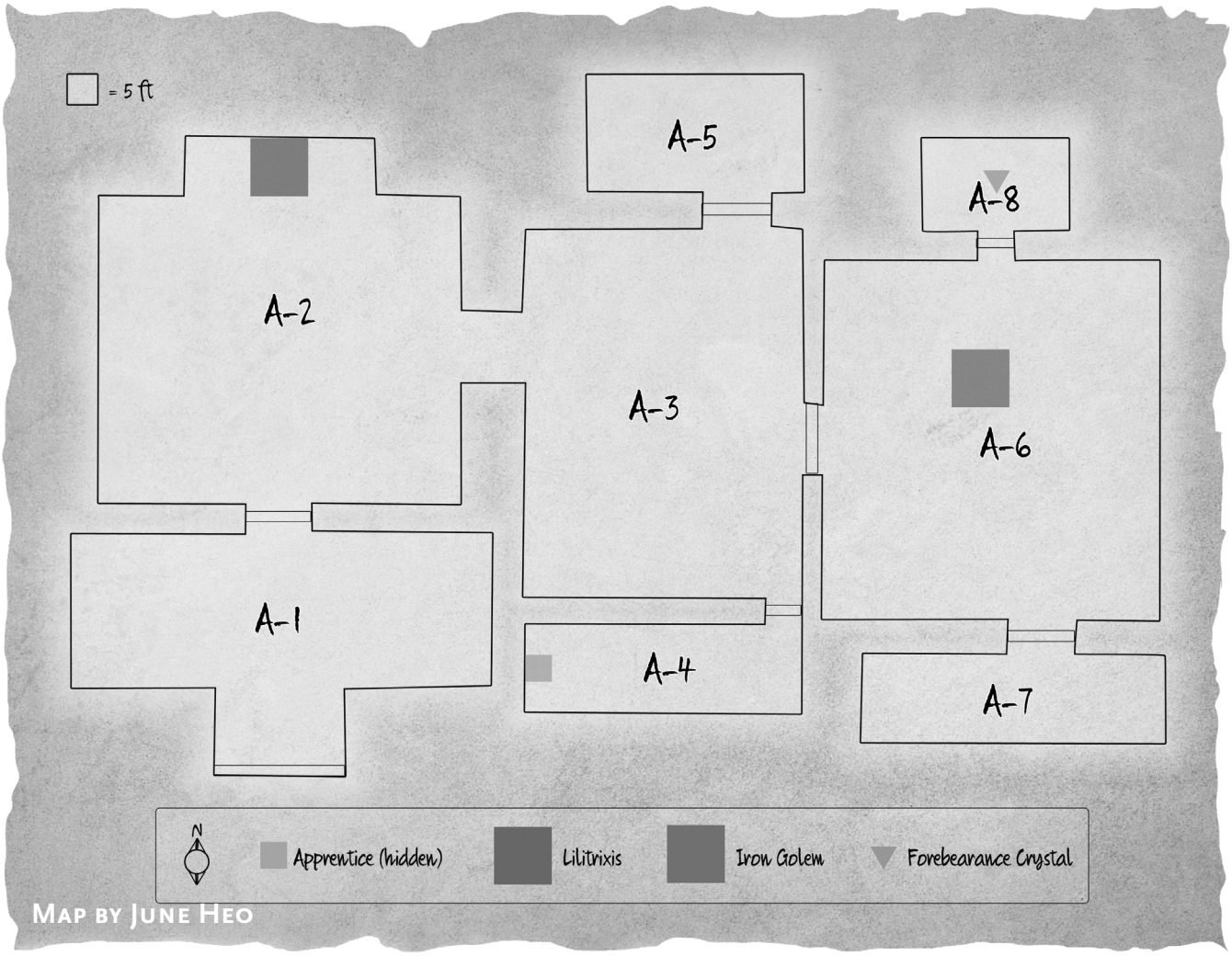
The wizard of Wolfwater is dead, and the marilith Lilitrixis holds court within his keep. The frustrated demons are still magically bound to the fortress and have elected to throw a party of epic proportions, tearing the structure down to dispel the magic binding them to the material plane. The townsfolk are quite thankful the demons are unable to escape, but the party has been raging for three days straight with no signs of stopping. Sleepless nights and rampant exhaustion have put the mayor, Norn Von Skell, in a difficult position. Any adventurers willing to speak with Lilitrixis and politely ask her to "turn it down" will grant the people of Wolfwater some much needed peace and quiet.

CHAPTER 1 – WELCOME TO WOLFWATER

> Before you even saw this cozy seaside town, you heard it. A cacophonous roar of hellish music, laughter, breaking glass, and dancing feet echo far and wide. As you draw closer, locals move sluggishly about their business, clearing suffering from exhaustion due to lack of sleep. Many have covered their ears with whatever they could find, while others shout at each other in a vain hope of being heard above the din. At the center of the community stands a large stone keep, the clear source of all the noise. Its windows shine with flashing multicolored lights and, even as you watch, a few bricks slide loose, victims of a catastrophic party being held inside.

The exhausted and sleepless locals can only point to the mayor's residence when questioned about what is going on. Norn Von Skell (LN male half elf **noble**) is quick to meet the party as soon as he learns they are in town. He explains the situation (he knows nothing about the marilith, only that the demons have gotten out of control), stating the town has little to offer powerful heroes in terms of money, but they are welcome to keep anything they find in the wizard's keep as fair compensation. The mayor doesn't care what happens to the demons, just as long as the noise stops and the fiends never leave the keep.

THE WIZARD'S KEEP



Map by June Heo

CHAPTER 2 - THE WIZARD'S KEEP

The keep is a modest stone fortress, with 2 foot thick outer walls and completely encompassed by a powerful *forbearance* spell (9th level, undead) that prevents teleportation into and out of the structure. This same spell prevents the demons from going home. The only entrance is a pair of large double doors. These doors are locked (DC 20 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) ability check to unlock), are objects (AC 20, 100 HP), and are trapped by a *glyph of warding* (spell save DC 20, 8th level *fireball*) that triggers if the doors are damaged. The windows have no glass, but are instead protected by panels of magical force that repel any damage. The entire keep is lit by magical torches that shed bright light in every room.

The keep has suffered greatly under the mariliths's stewardship. The original owner was clearly a person of posh tastes, filling the keep with elaborate decorations, art, furniture, and magical tools. Only the most sturdy of these items still survive, defiled by demons eager for revenge. Every inch of the building is cracked, burned, scratched, and shattered, with the interior splattered with garbage and debris. The smell is intense; equal parts sweat, intoxicating fumes, and blood.

A map of the keep's layout is provided in the *Appendix*.

A - 1: THE FOYER

What was once an opulent foyer is now a rest room for demons who drank too much. Splinters of furniture, silks, and broken bottles are scattered about. Four demons lie passed out in this room; three of which are massive apelike fiends with blue skin and red hair, while the other is a dog headed monstrosity with a pair of pincers making up one of two sets of arms.

Creatures: **Glabrezu** x1, **Barlgura** x3
Special Traits: The demons have disadvantage on attack rolls and ability checks due to their drunkenness. Additionally, each of the demons is branded with an arcane sigil that belongs to the wizard that once owned the keep.
Terrain. 14x5 grid, carved stone, 15 ft. high ceiling. These demons are completely intoxicated and have fallen asleep. If attacked, they will be surprised, but successful DC 15 Dexterity (Stealth) checks allow the party to easily sneak past without disturbing the fiends. If the demons detect the party as they sneak past, they drunkenly inquire as to who the party are, acting in a menacing manner but not attacking immediately. Unless convinced otherwise, the demons will always want to bring the group to Lilitrixis so she can decide what to do with them. Should the demons be killed and Lilitrixis finds out about it, the party has disadvantage on Charisma ability checks against her until amends are made.

A - 2: DRINKING HALL

What remains of this room is a testament of how hard demons party. The walls are plastered with paints, alcohol, and food, with the furniture pushed aside to make room for a massive pile of presumably empty kegs. All about, demons of various shapes and sizes are singing, dancing, and throwing objects at the body of a robed old man suspended from the ceiling by thick chains. The body has two swords thrust into it, likely belonging to the massive demon coiled around a makeshift throne. Each of her hands is filled with a confection or fancy drink, which she daintily consumes, a fanged smile never leaving her face.

Creatures: Lilitrixis x1 (**marilith** with maximized hit dice, 270 HP, Skill Proficiencies: Insight, Persuasion), **Hezrou** x5, **Succubi/Incubi** x3
Special Traits: All the fiends in the room besides Lilitrixis have been branded with an arcane sigil that belongs to the wizard that once owned the keep.
Terrain. 12x10 + 6x2 grid, carved stone, 25 foot high ceiling.

As soon as the demons become aware of the party's presence, everything freezes comically. The silence is deafening as each demon turns to stare at the intruders, their faces cracking into wide, menacing grins. Before they can act, however, Lilitrixis raises one of her hands and speaks with a soft voice, commanding her "subjects" to hold. Beckoning with that same hand, she gestures for the party to come forward and holds up a bottle of wine invitingly. Lilitrixis speaks the following

in a clear voice, presenting an air of sophistication and danger:

> *"Well this is a surprise. Just when things were getting boring, here new entertainment has arrived. I'm no stranger to the ways of adventurers, so I know why you are here and how such encounters typically end. Before things get too uncivilized let us see if you have the fortitude to drink with a demon of the Abyss? I'll wager you've never done that before in your long careers of slaughtering my kind."*

Lilitrixis is telling the truth here, and wants to explain the situation to the party in hopes they will help her. She wants nothing except to go home to the Abyss and would like to avoid a fight if at all possible. This is because the forbearance effect prevents a fiend from returning to its home plane when killed, ensuring its death is permanent rather than inconvenient. This is a risk she would rather avoid, as the crystal powering the spell is guarded by a deadly iron golem and magical traps. Lilitrixis suspects that if the keep is destroyed the crystal will no longer function (she is correct), but disabling it is far more expedient. Lilitrixis will not call off the demon party until the keep is destroyed, leaving the adventurers with the following options.

Slaying Lilitrixis and all the demons in the keep. This is brutally difficult, as Lilitrixis is already a stronger than average marilith, and has many demons at her disposal. Make it clear through roleplaying with Lilitrixis that this option would be nearly impossible unless the party are willing to risk everything just to spite the demons.

Partying Hard. Should the party chafe at the idea of disabling the crystal, Lilitrixis will offer them the chance to party with the demons and help tear the keep down. This is a dangerous and exhausting course of action, involving five continuous days of drinking, dancing, and general mayhem. The people of Wolfwater will not take kindly to this decision, and will treat the adventurers with all the hostility they can muster. Additionally, some demons may not choose to return home when the forbearance effect ends, instead rampaging through the town. If the group chooses this option, you can introduce the following mechanics to help play out the scenario.

- Exhaustion. In order to partake in the celebration a character must succeed on a DC 20 Constitution check or gain one level of exhaustion over the course of the merry making.
- Demon rampage. Upon the destruction of the keep, the Nalfeshnee from area A - 5 and the ten Quasits from area A - 3 decide to remain in Wolfwater and go on a collective rampage. Lilitrixis doesn't approve of her minions taking such action, but is far too tired to do anything about it and returns home.

Disabling The Forbearance Effect. Disabling the crystal involves both slaying the iron golem in room A – 6 and solving the puzzle in A – 8. Once the forbearance effect ends, the demons voluntarily return home, honoring their agreement at Lilitrixis' behest. Should the adventurers agree to aid Lilitrixis in this manner, she will order her demons in A – 2 to not assault them, but makes no promises for others carousing throughout the keep.

DEVELOPMENT

If the party chooses to disable the forbearance effect, proceed with the adventure through the rest of the keep. If the party chooses either of the other options, play them out and then proceed to Conclusion.

ROLEPLAYING LILITRIXIS

Lilitrixis is far more subtle than other demons. When summoned by a foolish wizard and learning his intentions, she slew him immediately. Seeing her fellow demons branded and exploited in such a manner drove Lilitrixis into a rage. While she has little affection for her fellow demons, the idea that a puny mortal could think to use other beings in such a manner was infuriating. What began as a rage fueled rampage quickly turned into a large party, which Lilitrixis decided was an acceptable alternative to her unending anger. When roleplaying Lilitrixis, emphasize her conversational manner and personability, which is very inconsistent with how a marilith is expected to behave. She will use her Wisdom (Insight) skill to detect any deception from the party, and her Charisma (Persuasion) skill to emphasize the fact that while evil, both she and her fellow demons are victims of a foolish wizard who held no respect for their power.

Lilitrixis has the following personality traits:

- ***Demon Background.*** Demonic Nobility
- ***Demon Personality Trait.*** I will become an abyssal lord someday, and everything I do works toward that goal.
- ***Demon Ideal.*** Ambition. We reach the station in the cosmos that we deserve due to our drive and talents.
- ***Demon Bonds.*** I am a perfect product of creation, destined to one day shape the cosmos to my whims. Everything I do verifies my destiny.
- ***Demon Flaws.*** I rage, but I use anger to distract from my fear of confrontation.

A – 3: Performance Hall

Before the demons had their way, this private theater would have been quite elegant. Now, the curtains are torn and the stage is slightly on fire. Quasits race around the room, playing with the remains of what must have been dozens of fine costumes. To the south the grand stage is adjacent to a door that provides access to a changing room, while to the north another door is ajar and emits the gurgling rumble of someone guzzling an extraordinary amount of booze.

Creatures: Quasits x10

Terrain. 9x12 grid, carved stone, 10 foot high ceiling.

The quasits here are having fun while they avoid the larger demons. They will poke and harass the party, using their Scare trait to startle them. If attacked, the quasits retreat to A – 2 and complain to Lilitrixis.

Costumes of all shapes and sizes line the walls of this narrow room, enough to put on a dozen different plays. Many of them are still in acceptable condition, with a pair of incubi squabbling over the grandest pieces.

A – 4: Changing Room

Creatures: Incubus x1, **succubus** x1, **apprentice** (hidden, CG male human **conjurer**)

The fiends have failed to notice the apprentice hiding behind the costume racks, who has been camped out for many sleepless days. The apprentice requires a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check or passive Perception of 16 or higher to spot. If the party exposes the apprentice's location while the fiends are in the room, the creatures will immediately attack the apprentice and attempt to enthrall him. Otherwise, the fiends will ask the party to kindly depart, mocking them for their failure to observe proper mortal etiquette in the changing room.

The apprentice has five levels of exhaustion and is in no shape to fight alongside the characters, but can explain how the puzzle in room A – 8 works (but not its solution). This character is intended as a blank slate for the DM, to use according to the needs of the adventure. If the party is having a hard time empathizing with Lilitrixis, have the apprentice detail the many poor choices his master made that lead to this scenario. Consult the *Author's Notes* section of this adventure for examples of talking points and questions the apprentice can bring up when engaged in conversation. The young man is having an emotional crisis on multiple levels and is full of doubts about the current situation. Use these doubts to subtly discuss the moral dilemmas of the situation without leading the players by the nose. Consider an encounter with the apprentice a success if it provokes some healthy conversation at your table.

A – 5: WINE STORAGE

Kegs are stacked in this room from floor to ceiling. They are filled with countless fine wines, some centuries old if the labels are to be believed. At the center of it all is a large piglike demon guzzling an entire keg in between thunderous belches.

Creatures. Nalfeshnee x1
Terrain. 7x4 grid, polished wood
Treasure. 7 kegs of fine wine, each worth 1,500 gp.
The nalfeshnee jealously guards the wine store here and attacks any non-demons on sight. Belligerent and angry, the demon cannot be reasoned with, and is so disliked by its fellows that none will come to its aide when fighting breaks out.

A – 6: GOLEM CHAMBER

This large room is barren save for a single massive suit of armor standing in the middle of the room. Unscarred by demons, the area is sweltering hot, the air scalding your throat with each breathe. As you approach, the armor lurches to life, hefting a massive blade with considerable menace.

Creatures. Iron golem x1
Terrain. 11x12 grid, carved stone.
Special Effects. When a creature starts its turn within the room, it takes 7 (1d12) fire damage.
The golem is hostile to everything that enters the area and attacks relentlessly. The golem will pursue creatures that flee from combat, sending any surviving demons scrambling and greatly upsetting Lilitrixis.

A – 7: WIZARD'S BEDCHAMBER

This bedchamber is completely untouched, safeguarded by the golem. Inside is a wealth of fine fabrics, magical materials, and other accoutrements, all of which are yours for the taking.

Terrain. 10x3 grid, carved stone.
Treasure. 5,000 gp in rare alchemical and spellcasting materials, 3 diamonds worth 1,000 gp each, *deck of illusions* (20 cards), *hat of wizardry*, *staff of power*.

A – 8: FORBEARANCE CRYSTAL CHAMBER

This room is completely empty save for a magical crystal about the size of a human head suspended in the air. The crystal is a flamboyant purple and wreathed in a magical glyph in the shape of a pentagon. The clearly magical device glows with a soft blue light and sparks with arcane energies. Some of the pentagon's sides and corners are emblazoned with numbers, but other spaces are unfilled and await some kind of input to complete.

The crystal is an object (AC 12, 30 hit points), shielded inside a magical puzzle that protects it from all damage. If the crystal is destroyed, the forbearance effect enchanting the keep immediately ends. The puzzle cannot be dispelled or suppressed (such as via antimagic), and instead must be solved. The details of the puzzle are found below.



Puzzle



Puzzle Solved

Solving The Pentagon Puzzle. When any character touches one of the empty areas on the pentagon, a magical series of numbers (1-20) appear. When a character touches one of those numbers, the number becomes assigned to the empty slot. The goal of the puzzle is to have each side of the pentagon (5 sides total) have a sum total of 19. This is hinted by the 19 in the center. If the party inputs the incorrect number into the slot (when compared to the solution), they take 26 (4d12) lightning or fire damage (at the DM's discretion). Once solved, the pentagon dissipates and the forbearance crystal can be accessed. If your players are struggling to find a solution, you can offer them a hint by filling in one of the numbers, taking the time between each hint to give them a chance to work it out.

CONCLUSION

How the adventure ends depends on what the party chose to do when they encountered Lilitrixis.

Slay Lilitrixis and all the demons: Assuming the party is successful and isn't simply killed outright, they have brought welcome peace and quiet to the town of Wolfwater. While they will still get all the Treasure Rewards, they will only receive the XP Rewards for monsters slain. They will not receive the Puzzle or Story Awards.

Playing Hard: As expected, the people of Wolfwater do not take kindly to this option. Not only did the party add to the problem instead of solving it, but some demons chose not to return home and rampaged through the town. The citizens of Wolfwater are extremely displeased and lay the blame for the entire affair at the party's feet. A mob of eight **knights** lead by a **warlord** are tasked with delivering capital punishment to the party unless reparations are made.

Disabling The Forbearance Effect: This option, while morally questionable, leads to the best outcome for all involved. Wolfwater gets its peace and quiet back, Lilitrixis and the rest of the demons stick to the bargain and go home, and the adventurers receive all their just (and not-so-just) rewards.

REWARDS

Characters who complete this adventure may earn the following rewards:

XP REWARDS

Add the total XP of creatures defeated by the party, then divide by the number of characters to determine individual rewards.

Obstacle	XP
Barlgura	1,800
Glabrezu	5,000
Hezrou	3,900
Iron Golem	15,000
Lilitrixis (Marilith)	15,000
Nalfeshnee	10,000
Quasit	200
Succubus/Incubus	1,100

PUZZLE REWARDS

Solving the puzzle awards the party 11,000 XP. For each hint the players received for solving the puzzle, reduce the puzzle's XP reward by 1000 XP.

STORY REWARDS

If the party successfully aids Lilitrixis in a manner that meets with her satisfaction, award the party 15,000 XP.

TREASURE REWARDS

Item	Value
Rare alchemical and spellcasting materials	5,000 gp
3 diamonds	1,000 gp each
7 kegs of fine wine	1,500 gp each
Deck of illusions (20 cards)	N/A
Hat of wizardry (XGE)	N/A
Staff of power, DMG	N/A

AUTHOR'S NOTES: OF DEMONS AND FEMINISM

This one shot intends to present the longstanding struggle women face from those who attempt to control their bodies through institutions of power, but with a fantasy twist. It has been a longstanding tradition in *Dungeons and Dragons* that fiends can be summoned and subjugated with no real ethical concerns being raised about doing so. Sure, demons are evil, but that doesn't mean it is okay to enslave them. By focusing on Lilitrxis (mariliths are always women according to the *Monster Manual*) and her desire to return home, you can make the adventure about not just a demon escaping enslavement, but a woman regaining her agency.

However, because Lilitrixis is an evil being with more than a few bad deeds to her name, how the players interact with her can be quite a conundrum. Do they help the marilith return home (and if so, how?), or slay the fiend on the spot? Is Lilitrixis justified in what she did? Can (or should) she be reasoned with? When running this one shot I hope you do your best in bringing these questions to the forefront. Finding a moral and adequate resolution that is consistent with the Players and their character's beliefs is part of the challenge and should be a teaching moment. A successful running of this adventure involves thoughtful discussion and the changing of perspectives.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Ryan Servis lives in Davis, California and works full time for 2CGaming LLC, a tabletop RPG design company. He has contributed writing and design work to 5th Edition 3rd party books *Fate of the Forebears: City of Stands*, *Fate of the Forebears: Lion's Vault, Tyrant and Hellions* and authored *The Epic Legacy Core Rulebook: A Guide To Epic Level 5th Edition*. He can be reached at rmservis@2cgaming.com.