

PW9 Patron Animosity

By Dan Hass



With the area already plagued by the continuous violence of fiendish forces, the arrival of new elements threatens to push the region into a devastating, escalating sectarian war. Every incident has the potential to destroy the fragile framework of protection for the downtrodden and innocent. Can heroes address the flashpoints and keep the defenses effective? A Dungeons and Dragons® 5th Edition Adventure for 1-8 9th level characters. Episode 9 in the *Patron Wars*.

Contents

Adventure Summary.....	2
Preparing the Adventure.....	2
Running the Adventure.....	3
Adventure Background.....	3
Adventure Outline.....	4
Starting the Adventure.....	5
Encounter 1: The Trafficking Racket.....	6
Encounter 2: Celestial Influences at the Hub.....	7
Encounter 3: The Pursuit.....	8
Encounter 4: Interference.....	9
Concluding the Adventure.....	10
Appendix 1: DM Maps.....	11
Area Around Farjvad.....	11
Farjvad Riverfront.....	12
Trafficking Warehouse.....	13
Path Near Forest.....	14
Appendix 2: NPCs.....	15
Dante Shadowsoul.....	15
Nimere.....	15
Appendix 3: Random Events Near the Peka/Styx Convergence.....	16

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Adventure Summary

PW9 Patron Animosity is a Dungeons and Dragons® 5th Edition adventure designed for 1-8 9th level characters. It requires a *Player's Handbook*® (PHB), a *Monster Manual*® (MM), a *Volo's Guide to Monsters*® (VGM), a *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*® (XGE), and a *Dungeon Master's Guide*® (DMG). It also uses selections from *Unearthed Arcana* ([here](#)).

While the encounters include scaling for 1-8 characters, parties of 1 or 2 PCs and 7 or 8 PCs are fringe circumstances that may play oddly. Specifically, parties of 1-2 are highly susceptible to a single bad die roll, and 7-8 can slow play dramatically. Ideally a party will be 3-6 PCs.

The Digital copies of the encounter maps are available [here](#).

Campaign Choice

While *PW9 Patron Animosity* is designed to fit within almost any setting according to Dimgaard principles (**low prep time, strong themes, smooth presentation, highly scalable**), it was written using the Dimgaard campaign as its primary influence, and is indicative of the themes in Dimgaard. The Dimgaard campaign guide can be found at www.dimgaard.com.

Preparing the Adventure

It is always a good idea for the DM to read through an adventure before running it. *PW9 Patron Animosity* is no different. There are some rather complex encounters that will benefit if the DM spends a few minutes deciding how she will play them. *PW9 Patron Animosity* can be run with a lot of interaction between the PCs and NPCs depending on the inclinations of the players and DM. The module deliberately gives **just enough** information about NPCs to move the plot along, leaving a lot of room for a DM to individualize these to her campaign. In the encounters, the module deliberately gives **just enough** information about NPCs to move the plot along, leaving a lot of room for a DM to individualize these to her campaign, while Appendix 2 has more detailed information about prominent NPCs. It makes things smoother if the DM spends a few minutes deciding how she will deliver the NPCs' interactions. Some DMs revel in the opportunity to assume the personas of multiple NPCs over the course of a session while others prefer a summary approach.

The decision is a matter of style and showmanship. Similarly, many players look forward to opportunities to interact "in character" while others prefer to summarize. Neither approach is "correct"; both are valid ways to collaboratively build a story, but the DM should try to anticipate her players' preferences (and decide her own) and prepare accordingly. To aid in this process Appendix 2 contains entries for the NPCs in this adventure (taken from the DGN series available on www.dmsguild.com).

A battlemat or dungeon tiles may be helpful, but not necessary.

Items for Review

- Creatures. air elemental, archer (VGM), bugbear chief, knight, martial arts adept (VGM), veteran
- DMG. Poison: oil of Taggit
- Feats. Shield Master
- Magic Items. *cloak of elvenkind*, *disguise self*, *dust of sneezing and choking*, *headband of intellect*, *ioun stone* (absorption), *moon-touched sword* (XGE), *ring of free action*, *stone of good luck*, *vicious weapon*, *weapon of warning*
- PHB. Infernal Legacy
- Spells. *charm person*, *clairvoyance*, *conjure minor elemental*, *glyph of warding*: *spell glyph*, *hold person*, *lesser restoration*, *plane shift*, *sacred flame*, *sending*, *teleportation circle*

Dimgaard Philosophy

Dimgaard's primary principle is that D&D should be an entertaining experience. In particular, it should be fun and interesting. The "best" D&D is a collaborative storytelling event where the DM provides the framework and supporting details, while the players contribute by roleplaying the heroes (their characters) that results in epic tales.

"Epic" implies that the heroes be challenged and that success is a question to be decided by the heroes' deeds and choices. *The Lord of the Rings* is only an epic because the reader doesn't know until the final pages if Frodo, Aragorn and the rest will achieve their objectives or die, fruitless, in their efforts.

A great Dimgaard session (and really any D&D session) is where there is the finest line between success and failure and the heroes **just** manage to win (occasionally, just surviving is "winning"). But for those narrowest of victories to have true meaning, they cannot be foregone conclusions, and likely there will be times when the PCs fail – Boromir comes to mind or Gandalf's expedition to Isengard where he was captured.

PW9 Patron Animosity
By Dan Hass

Running the Adventure

PW9 Patron Animosity is made up of 8 events arranged into 4 encounters. Some are hazards that can be applied in only a few minutes but encounters with NPCs and other creatures that involve combat or roleplaying will take longer. But since the action occurs in a single adventuring day, it should use a single game session.

Often the PCs' actions determine the type of interaction. A combat encounter may evolve into a roleplaying encounter when mistaken identities, misunderstandings, or action based on false assumptions are corrected, thus ending the violence. Other times conversations, interrogations, or negotiations can become heated and erupt in violence changing a roleplaying encounter into a combat encounter.

Dimgaard adventures give the DM opportunities to reward good roleplaying. Good roleplaying can garner an easier path to achieving the desired outcomes.

However, it takes stellar roleplaying to completely avoid combat. The world is a dark and violent place where opponents with short tempers often find violence the most direct route to achieving their goals.

The encounters in *PW9 Patron Animosity* challenge PCs in different ways. The combat encounters are expected to meet the definition of **hard** (DMG p.81), but additionally there are encounters to test the PCs' ability to deal with diplomatic situations and pose difficult questions about their characters' morals.

Modification "Exploits"

Technically each encounter uses a **medium** XP budget per the encounter building guidelines. And for many parties a **medium** encounter may turn out to meet the definition of hard as PCs may be built for roleplaying and the party may not have optimized their tactics.

Modifications have been made to the creatures that do not increase the calculated CR of the creature but do increase the challenge of the creature. These are denoted with a ¹. These are not intended to be used with all parties, nor does a DM need to use every suggested modification. The DM should gauge the effectiveness of the party and decide which of these to use (keeping in mind the definition of **hard** encounters).

Farjvad's Situation

The physical security of Farjvad was achieved relatively quickly (within a few weeks) when The Major (Farjvad's ruler) pragmatically embraced the aid of Asmodeans – experienced demon fighters. However, with all the surrounding territory infested with rampaging demons, Farjvad is isolated. As the most secure location for many miles (at least twenty) Farjvad has been the destination for refugees.

While this influx has included adventurers and campaigners, many of the refugees are displaced commoners who have little to contribute to defense and are burdens on Farjvad's resources. For a while this burden was alleviated by the criminal human-trafficking of the followers of Eldanoth. But, adventurers ended that clandestine operation, leaving Farjvad with a population of destitute and unskilled refugees that are drawing resources needed to maintain the defense.

The Asmodeans – led by Dante Shadowsoul – would like to see the unproductive elements forcibly ejected from Farjvad and the town turned into a focused garrison. However, to avoid conflict with the followers of the celestial patrons, Dante and The Major have agreed to liberal treatment of the refugees – including open-ended protection regardless of their ability to contribute.

Adventure Background

The River Styx has altered course and insinuated itself into the Material Plane. Several miles upstream from the village of Farjvad, it has merged with the Peka River, forming a breach to the Abyss. Several miles downstream it diverges from the Peka River and enters into the Nine Hells, forming a breach to that realm.

The Abyssal breach was the first to form. When it began to manifest a few weeks ago, it immediately disrupted river traffic. The demon lord Yeenoghu attempted to establish an outpost (the topic of *PW2 A Patron's Outpost*) but was thwarted. Following that attempt was an expedition of the demon lord Zuggtmoy, Lady of Fungus. Her minions corrupted the environment around the Abyssal breach (the subject of *PW3 A Patron's Expedition*).

The Peka River has now fully merged with the Styx across the several miles of

PW9 Patron Animosity

By Dan Hass

waterway between the northern and southern planar breaches.

Because of the River Styx's sudden, random change in course, the area surrounding the town of Farjvad has become overrun with demons from the breach to the north. In response, devils have entered the theater through the breach to Baator to the south.

Asmodeus is now an accepted intercessor within the One True Faith, and Farjvad's temple has been turned over to the Order of Asmodeus to coordinate the defense of the area. The Asmodean acolyte Dante Shadowsoul has become the high priest of the temple in Farjvad.

There are several lesser communities within a day's travel of Farjvad, and these have become the focus of different Abyssal or Diabolic powers. Resolving the issues in these communities was the topic of *PW5 The Corrupting Patron*, *PW6 The Criminal Patron*, and *PW7 The Quiet Patron* – as well as *DGD25 The Insurgent Patron*.

As news of the two breaches has spread, other forces have become interested in the area. In *PW8 Celestial Patrons*, forces in the service of the solar Usiel and the empyrean Sareash arrive to cleanse the region.

The cambion Ezen serves Asmodeus and has been assigned to help in Farjvad – answering to Dante Shadowsoul. However, Ezen is quite independent and ambitious. He is prone to acting beyond his authority. He has a following of tieflings that revere him. Hislai is the most dedicated of these tieflings.

Ezen has decided to help by reestablishing a human trafficking system to alleviate the unproductive refugee problem and raise funds for the cause and himself. He has used his charm and natural charisma to convince a Sareash follower named Nimere to use her *teleportation circle* to help “evacuate” many refugees from Farjvad to a “safe location.” In truth, the sigil sequence Ezen provided to Nimere is to a permanent *teleportation circle* secured by Asmodeans who take the refugees and sell them as serfs to rural nobles who need serfs to work their manors.

Collaborating with Ezen is a group of bugbears who specialize in “acquiring serfs” for rural nobles. It is not unusual for isolated fiefs to suffer a population decline because of a disease, crop failure or regional war. When faced with the need to repopulate, a

ruler will often discretely hire specialists to acquire replacements for the lost serfs for a cash fee – and no questions.

The previous day, three people were teleported out of Farjvad. One was Hannes, the teenage son of the smith's assistant Tatu. Hannes – convinced to leave because of *charm person* – left without notifying his father. When Hannes was not home by dinner, Tatu became worried.

At the nearby tavern, Tatu's investigation discovered Hannes was seen with tieflings. Early this morning, Tatu brought his concerns to the Usiel followers (who have the self-professed mission of protecting the innocent against the tyranny of the powerful). The Usielians were already suspicious that the Asmodeans were mining Farjvad for slave labor and Tatu's information has reinforced their belief. They are now actively investigating the recent disappearances (by Ezen's group).

Notes on teleportation circle

Teleportation circle's mechanics play an important part in *PW9 Patron Animosity*. To refresh, the caster must know a sigil sequence for a permanent *teleportation circle*. When the caster casts the spell, it briefly (for a few seconds) opens a portal to the target circle and anyone stepping through during teleports to the permanent circle – no willingness is required.

Parties of a Different Level

While the adventure is optimized for a party of 9th level characters, the DM can present the module to PCs of a different level. The DM must calculate **Party Strength** by summing the PCs' levels and then dividing by 9. The encounter and hazard scaling should be based on the Party Strength rather than the actual number of party members.

Adventure Outline

The PCs are enlisted to investigate a human trafficking operation by Dante Shadowsoul. The operation is likely run by rogue elements of Dante's followers.

If the PCs disrupt the trafficking, they learn that Sareashians have been enlisted by the rogue Asmodeans, and the true culprits flee toward Baator.

The PCs must overtake the fleeing Asmodean tieflings and return them.

Followers of Azazel try to prevent the truth from coming to light.