

Adventure Log for Planescape Campaign III

Attention DM's: While a few of my group's adventures are wholly or mostly the creations of others (from official TSR materials), some of the adventures mentioned below are my own creations. I'd be happy to share further details of the following adventures. Please [e-mail me](#) if you want this sort of information. -- *Eric*

Adventure Log

"The Red Prison" -- Through chance and bad luck, our heroes are individually caught and incarcerated in The Vault, a Harmonium/Mercykiller prison located on the plane of Carceri. After a few weeks of imprisonment, they are released with weapons and armor. They find themselves in a savage valley that knows only eternal night.

After the ex-prisoners introduce themselves, they decide to travel toward the center of the valley. The region is surrounded by impassable mountains dozens of miles high. The ground and even some of the plants emit a dim red light. The sky is full of dark gray clouds; only occasionally can the PCs spot the glowing red circle of the nearest orb of this layer of Carceri. Loki, a Mercykiller guard who was betrayed by his own kind, knows something of the planes and explains the situation to the rest of the "clueless." The bottom line is thus: there are plenty of portals onto the plane, but Carceri is famous for its lack of exit portals.

After a short walk, the heroes discover one of the incoming portals -- a black, featureless slab of stone. While they are examining it, a savage pack of humans attack the party. After a struggle, the savages are defeated and one is taken captive. It turns out that the savages are Malarites -- worshippers of Malar, the Beast Lord. This part of Carceri is Malar's hunting ground, and his worshippers live their lives attacking animals that wander in through the many incoming portals. The captured hunter also lets slip that certain guards from the Vault were selling prisoners to the Malarites so they could hunt more intelligent prey.

While they are questioning the Malarite, the portal opens briefly and some wild pigs enter the plane. Loki manages to tackle it, and the party moves on, sets up camp, and eats some pig.

Hours later, the landscape is still enshrouded in darkness. The heroes continue their journey toward the center of the valley. A few hours into the march they happen upon an ape who is defending itself from a pack of vicious dogs or wolves. It turns out that the ape is a priest with human intelligence, so the party comes to the ape's rescue. Spells are thrown as well as punches, and soon the dogs are all dead.

The ape, a petitioner of the Beastlands named Uril Kabo, has lived on Carceri for many years after wandering into this plane. He has taken it upon himself to try to care for the other, less intelligent, animals who enter the plane against their will. He offers the party information about the valley, helps them draw an accurate map, and describes where they can find a magical pool that will heal wounds.

As the party heads in that direction, they come across three malformed fiends leading several shackled Malarites. Thaleles Darkshine is in his customary role as scout, and so is the first to see them. He takes it upon himself to cause an illusion of his comrades to appear and attack the fiends. The fiends react violently at first, but they soon sense the illusion. Thaleles casts a *sleep* spell and causes one to fall asleep. The others vanish!

In the meantime the rest of the party has arrived. The two fiends re-appear -- one next to Thaleles, and one next to the holy Sabotai. They attack mercilessly. Richard manages to fire off a some magical missiles, as does Thaleles, and between these magical attacks and the pummeling offered by Ashimar's flying feet of fury, Sobotai's massive katana, and Loki's sword, the fiends are killed. [ending date unknown]

Our heroes free the captive Red Malarites, and in gratitude, the Malarites lead the heroes first to a pool with magical healing properties, and then to their village on the far side of the valley. There, our heroes are able to barter for equipment and food. They decide to investigate the nearby lair of a faratsu gehreleth -- Loki's hope is that as a powerful native of Carceri, the 'leth will know of a way to leave this plane.

The heroes enter the gehreleth's caves and battle several evil vargouilles before encountering the subject of their search. The faratsu is not interested in talking and attacks viciously. Our heroes have no weapons capable of harming the fiend, but Ashimar's feet are quite effective, as are some of the magical spells cast at it. Our heroes take heavy damage, but ultimately manage to remove its sacred obsidian triangle token, subdue it and bind it in Sobotai's magical manacles. The gehreleth answers some questions -- mainly it points them in the direction of a human who lives across the valley. It is said that he is building a contraption that will allow him to fly from this orb to the next one. Given that the gehreleth promises to attack and kill the entire party, the heroes have no choice but to finish it off.

They rest in the leth's cave and take its treasures. They spend the next two days crossing the valley until they arrive at the home of the human -- who turns out to be a doddering old wizard by the name of Lucius. Lucius lives in an observatory; he has used his telescope to spot a portal on the next orb over. He has built a balloon-lofted platform to carry himself to the next orb, and only needs a gehreleth's obsidian triangle (to activate the portal) and the skins of two su-monsters (to finish off his balloons) before he can leave. He indicates that the portal leads to a wonderful safe place. Our heroes agree to get him the su-monster skins and to lend him their obsidian triangle.

They travel for a day, kill the su-monsters, and return to Lucius's Observatory after another day's rest and travel. When they return, Lucius betrays them. He summons three manes tanar'ri and three dretch tanar'ri to fight the heroes while makes preparations to get his balloon contraption going. Ashimar is knocked out of the fight for a bit by a stinking cloud summoned by one of the dretches. All but Loki stay to fight the fiends, while Loki flies to the roof of the Observatory to attack. It turns out that Lucius is a skilled wizard and an Incantifer -- capable of absorbing some of the magic cast at him. Lucius summons three vorr to assist him, and protected by a *stoneskin* spell, manages to blast Loki with an acidic spell which not only injurs the tiefling but also ruins his armor. Sobotai flies to the roof as well but spends a few rounds pinned down by the vicious vorr. Ultimately, the heroes make it to the roof to battle the Incantifer, and ultimately the succeed in destroying him.

The heroes search the bodies, gather up supplies and equipment, and set the balloon contraption aloft, hoping it will take them across the vast gulf between this orb and the next. [ending date unknown]

Among Lucius's belongings was the following note:

An excerpt from the Book of Inverted Darkness...

In the mist-shrouded days of ancient eons long past, a race of men dwelled upon the Outlands. They were a people long and gaunt of face and limb, not comely by the standards of the present. These lean and sturdy folk were known as the tiere. The sharp-eyed tiere, whose name meant "steadfast" in their now-forgotten tongue, were warriors and wizards of wondrous skill. The greatest of the tiere, however, were their priests, worshipping a deity whose name is lost, probably forever.

The tiere focused their energies and resources to construct a massive temple for their god. Their goal was to create a palace so large that the god would come and live in the temple, if only for a short while. They toiled at this task for untold generations until it was finished. Suns and moons were born and died in the time it took to construct the massive temple, but the unwavering tiere were true to their name.

When the temple was finished, its size and grandeur surpassed anything any mortal had ever created. A flock of

ravens or doves could fly straight for days and not touch a wall of the enormous shrine. The god of the tiere was so pleased that he did indeed make the temple his home.

When the temple was complete, other gods dwelling in the Outlands coveted it, and word spread that the temple would be overtaken by outsiders. So the tiere gathered round their temple in hopes that their god would protect his steadfast people. The deity within feared more for his own safety, however, and refused to help his mortal followers.

Instead of weeping at their betrayal, at the knowledge that the work of generations was for naught, the tiere began to chant words of revenge, words to repay an act of infidelity so great that it would condemn the tiere for the rest of eternity. These words of power sealed their enormous temple and imprisoned their once-beloved god within. The god of the tiere was trapped forever in the temple his people had created.

The tiere were consumed by the power of the ritual they performed. The Temple of the Captive God is lost now. It disappeared from the Outlands and was never seen again. As for the tiere, they were swept by the power of their incantation out of the Outlands, into the wind-torn layer of Minethys on Carceri. They now call themselves the gautiere. This is a name that would have simply meant "once steadfast."

"Once Steadfast" -- The balloon platform carries the heroes through the misty void between the two orbs of Carceri over the next couple of weeks. Richard's clever thinking allows the heroes to land the balloon with no damage to themselves. They land near a mist-shrouded group of 30'-tall pillars; atop one is the portal that leads away from this horrid place.

As our heroes prepare to climb the pillars, they hear the sweet sounds of a woman singing. Sabotai is enchanted by the music and starts to walk toward it source. Richard begins using his musical skills to counter the bewitching music, and the others are unaffected. A hideous harpy swoops from the sky and attacks the charmed Sabotai. Richard, Ashimar and Loki make short work of the horrid creature while Thaleles keeps watch for other potential intruders. After defeating her, they find her nest nearby, which is filled with gems and coins.

The heroes climb to the top of the portal pillar and pass through the portal. They find themselves in a stone amphitheater in almost total darkness; it appears that dozens of skeletal remains are in the seats and on the stage of the amphitheater, covered with the dust of countless centuries. When the heroes climb the steps and leave the building, they find that this building is inside an enormous building -- one so high that the ceiling can't be seen, nor can the walls. Referring to the notes found on Lucius's body, the heroes conclude that they are indeed trapped inside the Temple of the Forgotten God of the Tiere. The tall, thin skeletons in the audience and on the stage are clearly the gaunt Tiere mentioned in the scroll.

Nearby is another building of note -- one with light all about it. Our heroes move toward it but are assaulted by undead shadowy spirits. Our heroes make short work of the creatures, and move on to the lighted building. Richard bravely steps into the circle of light around the building and discovers that his wounds have been healed, he now can speak and read the long-dead language of the Tiere, and he senses that the undead shadows will not enter this place. Despite protests from his comrades, Richard climbs the stairs to the entrance of the building. A tall, thin cowled skeleton appears and says, "Only those who bear the Word of God shall enter the Holy of Holies!" And with that, he teleports Richard away!

The other heroes are stunned. They enter the circle of light, and they experience a similar reaction. Suddenly, Thaleles gets the notion to try to use one of Lucius's spell books -- he thinks there might be a useful spell within. He triggers a sepia snake sigil trap that places him in stasis. The other heroes move him near the building, then ascend the stairs. As they guessed, the cowled figure teleports them away as well.

All of the heroes appear at the base of a tower only 200-300 feet away from the Holy of Holies. Outside the

tower are four squat guard posts. Eight tall skeletal warriors armed with battle clubs and spears emerge and attack the heroes as intruders. A deadly battle ensues, but our heroes find it hard to damage the fleshless skeletons with swords. They are ultimately victorious though grievously wounded. They examine the door to the tower and determine it is locked.

Loki flies back to the Holy of Holies to have his wounds healed, and on the way back draws the unwanted attention of one of the shadowy spirits, who attacks the group but is destroyed. Our heroes make their way back to the light around the Holy of Holies and rest. As they rest, they discover that they are neither hungry nor thirsty, and haven't been since they first arrived at this strange place.

The next "day," our heroes decide to visit another unusual feature they saw nearby -- a small roofless chapel. Inside is a robed skeleton attended by armored skeletal warriors. This "lesser lich" greets the heroes and agrees to take them to the tower and inside, where they speak with Ragnok, the leader of a cabal of these "lesser liches."

Ragnok, apparently, has quite a rivalry with another like him called Many Hands. Ragnok offers to help the heroes on their quest to find the Word of God if they agree to steal Many Hands' spellbook. They bargain back and forth and learn that the Word of God is in a nearby library -- a building with no doors that can only be entered by one with the correct key. Ragnok indicates that there is a book of heraldry in Many Hands' lair, The Hall of Knowledge, which will help them find the key to the library. He also tells them that they might look in the Armory of God, a building nearby, for some magical weapons and armor.

The heroes leave Ragnok's Tower and head toward the Armory. They find a couple of magical swords, some battle clubs called "xaens," and two stone statues that animate and attack. Loki's *fireball* softens them up, allowing the heroes to make short work of the guardians of the Armory.

They move toward the Hall of Knowledge but find it surrounded by a glowing red mist. As they enter, they discover that while they were "outside Carceri" before, within the red mist they are "within Carceri" and as such their magic and weapons will be affected. They saunter up to the front door, open it, and find themselves in a tall temple-like room with pews and an altar. Above the altar, 15' off the ground, is a balcony with four skeletal warriors stationed with bows. They start shooting, but our heroes are no sitting ducks.

The nimble Ashimar uses his incredible springing ability to spring from the altar to the balcony; the lionine Richard does likewise. Loki simply flies with his fiendish wings, and Sabotai is tall enough to stand on the altar and climb up by hand. A wicked battle ensues -- Loki and Richard using xaens they found to deal more damage than their swords ever could, Sabotai muscling his opponents, and Ashimar kicking with fury. During the combat, a lesser lich appears and starts tossing spells around. Eventually, the heroes crush their opponents, with Ashimar landing the final killing blow on the lesser lich, sending it plummeting to the temple floor below.

The party continues to explore. They find a secret door leading to the balcony, and beyond it is a tower that serves as a library. Sabotai pokes his head through a trapdoor leading up to the next tower level and gets blasted with a lightning bolt; then as the heroes contemplate what to do, the minor lich in the room above drops a fireball through the trapdoor into the room. Fried and running out of spells, they retreat. They find a wing of the temple in which to rest (after battling some undead shadows). During the battle with the shadows, Thaleles appears (teleported from the Holy of Holies by its guardian), and rejoins the party.

The lich from the upper levels of the library tower pays the party a visit while they are resting and blasts Thaleles and Ashimar with a fireball, but Thaleles manages to snare the undead spellcaster in a web and the party makes short work of it. They continue to explore, defeating undead skeletal guards and finding the heraldry book they seek. Loki is certain that the liches' spellbook must be in this same tower, and helps concoct a scheme to explore it. In the process, Thaleles uses change self to appear as a lich, and this confuses Richard, who blasts Thaleles with magic missiles until the misunderstanding is cleared up. It turns out that the tower doesn't contain the spellbook they seek.

Our heroes continue to explore the temple. They battle several more minor liches, and finally discover the spellbook, though Loki and Ashimar are grievously wounded in the battles. The remaining party members decide to grab the spellbook and beat a hasty retreat. When Thaleles touches the spellbook, Many Hands himself appears. This "boss of the minor liches" is naught but a floating skull and eight floating hands. Each hand can cast from the lich's spell repertoire. Thaleles blasts a few of the hands with a cone of cold from a staff of frost he'd taken from a lich earlier; and between magic missiles from Richard and lighting from Thaleles' other new staff, the hands are destroyed and the skull disappears.

The heroes retreat with the spellbook to the outskirts of the Holy of Holies. They stay there for several hours while Thaleles and Richard copy spells from Many Hands' spellbook. They then return to Ragnok's Tower. The lich is happy to see them, and helps them as promised. Using the book of heraldry, he is able to recall that one Ixii Raama, the High Librarian, was in charge of sealing up the Library with the Word of God inside. Ixii and most of House Raama committed ritual suicide before the Day of Betrayal (thus keeping the secret of entering the library from anyone else). Ragnok suspects that if the heroes can find Ixii Raama's grave, in a nearby mausoleum, that his body might have a device that will let them enter the library. Ragnok warns, however, that an undead tierie known as the Warlord lurks in the tombs.

Our heroes, now armed with the knowledge of how to enter the Library, set off for the Mausoleum. They know they must find the tomb of Iixi Raama, the Head Librarian. They are attacked by shadows along the way, then enter the crypt.

Inside is a network of rooms linked by corridors. Each of the crypt rooms has row after row of burial niches in the walls, each capped by a plaque bearing a carving of the face of the person interred in side. Thaleles touches one of these plaques and is struck by an enfeeblement spell and is hit by magic missiles that shoot from its eyes. They discover that the plaques can talk, though one shouts so loudly that it hurts and deafens some of the party. The deafness is only temporary however.

The heroes battle several tierie wights before finding House Raama's crypt and Iixi's tomb. They convince the plaque guarding the tomb to let them in so they can obtain the object of their quest -- a clay tortoise clutched in the dead Iixi's hands. As they move to leave, they are attacked by a huge tierie wight called the Warlord. His skill at arms and energy draining attacks are fearsome, but the heroes prevail.

They leave the Mausoleum and head to the Library. Richard is the only one who can enter because he carries Iixi's tortoise. Inside he finds the word of God on several glowing scrolls inside a wooden box. He retrieves the scrolls and the heroes are allowed to enter the Holy of Holies.

Inside the heroes talk to the God of the Tierie. He appears as a tierie made out of light. He explains that the stories of the Day of Betrayal are not accurate -- that it was the non-noble tierie, forced to stay outside the temple on that holy day when God would arrive, that cursed the noble tierie and their god, sending them all to Carceri. The God indicates that there is only one tierie who truly believes that their God is blameless and would help them if he were released. The God tells the heroes that if they take the word of God to this faithful tierie, Moran, he will find a way to release them from Carceri.

The God then splits his essence and a part of him enters each of the heroes. They feel full of his power. A long row of pillars appears outside the Holy of Holies and guides them to the huge doors of the temple, three days' journey away. When they arrive, Richard reveals a power he has gained from the God and grows to an enormous size, allowing him to open the door to the Temple of the Captive God.

Outside, the Temple is surrounded by a terrible, perpetual sandstorm. The heroes pass through it but are hurt by the storm. When they emerge, they find a caravan of gautiere. Richard does his best to convince them that they came through the sandstorm, but he is met with skepticism. The gautiere agree to take our heroes to a nearby village where this Moran lives. On the next day of the trip toward the village, the heroes notice that the caravan

has one less member, and assume that he's gone to warn a gautiere named Scarthann (a powerful gautiere who seeks to lead the village and who apparently doesn't like people talking about the God or the Temple or any of the things Moran likes to discuss). While travelling, Loki seeks divine inspiration and learns that Moran is in danger and that he has followers in the village that can help the heroes find him.

A few days later the heroes arrive at the village, which is no more than several dozen tents. The party is offered a tent on the edge of town. Richard manages to captivate several gautiere the next day at the village well with his tales, and Thaleles uses magic to read the minds of some of the audience members. He finds one who knows of Moran, and after some questioning, Moran's follower agrees to meet with the heroes in their tent.

Three of Moran's followers show up, and Richard dazzles them with proof from the Temple -- the history and heraldry books, the jewelry they've found, and even a glimpse at the word of God. Convinced that the heroes have actually been there, they inform the heroes that Moran was kidnapped just before they got to town, and they think he's being held at Scarthan's hideout, a few days from the village through dangerous territory (huge deformed giants and giant lizards that attack travellers). Scarthann himself is said to possess great mental powers and has a small cadre of about a dozen hard-core followers as well. The heroes decide that this is where they must go next. Moran's followers promise to send one who can guide them to Scarthan's hideout.

Our heroes are met by Horace, a gautiere who is friends with Moran, the "faithful" gautiere that the party seeks. Though he is not truly a believer, he offers to guide the party to the lair of the wicked Scarthan. As they head out of the village, the heroes are assaulted by a band of Scarthan's cronies, but Richard's hypnotic harmonies help keep enough of them calm that the rest are easily dealt with.

A couple of days later our heroes find themselves in a valley between two rocky ridges. Loki, flying ahead, spots an ambush -- several gautiere and a pair of wicked formorian giants. Horace notes that this is extremely unusual -- the formorians hate the gautiere and would normally never work with them. The heroes put a plan together to flank the ambushers, but it all goes awry when Scarthan appears next to the invisible Thaleles (scouting ahead), apparently able to see him. Scarthan merely taunts the group, then he and the other gautiere vanish, leaving the heroes to use their might and magic to defeat the huge deformed giants.

When the last of the pair is killed, it whispers something about it not wanting to attack them. Loki feels a tug at his soul and searches the bit of divinity in him (the presence of the Tiera god that all of the PCs carry with them) -- he feels verly strongly that a great deception will be revealed if the heroes can find the lair of these giants. A couple of hours of travel later and they spot an opening in the rocky hillside.

Once inside the lair of the formorians, the heroes have to battle two more giants, and the valiant Sobotai is slain. It has become clear to the heroes that the giants were charmed servants of Scarthan. After resting safely in the cavern, they find one tunnel that has been recently blocked with boulders; from within can be heard a moaning sound. Richard uses his god-given strength to bash open the blockade, and inside they find a horrific sight. All around the room, plastered to the walls with dried mud, are the desicated bodies of about a half-dozen gautiere. In the middle of the room is a smoky shadow -- a spectral formorian giantess. She moans about how the evil one had charmed her sons, how they slew her, and how one of her sons is yet alive. When the heroes ask if "the evil one" is Scarthan, she laughs and points to one of the gautiere bodies on the wall -- "That is Scarthan!" She reveals that the killer of Scarthan and his cronies is a tanar'ri, who is attempting to rally the entire gautiere race into joining the tanar'ric side of the Blood War. With their acidic touch and immunity to fire-based attacks, the gautiere would make excellent shock troops.

The heroes move on to Scarthan's lair, two more day's travel out of the rocky area and back into the dusty desert. There, easily spotted from miles away, stand three tall, fat pillars of stone, linked together by tunnels within and rope bridges without. Each of the spires has a flat top, like a platform. The heroes ascend, and deal with "Scarthan and his gautiere followers" -- really the babau tanar'ri Ootook and his cambion cronies, plus the spectral formorian's last remaining son (charmed, of course). The battle is hard fought among the pillars and on

the walkways, but our heroes finally prevail and destroy this threat to the gautiere and manage to rescue the charmed giant as well.

Atop one of the pillars is the dead body of Moran. Our heroes are stumped -- they'd been promised by the God that one true steadfast tierie remained. Horace tells them that his heart has changed -- if perfect strangers believe in this God so much and sacrificed so much, he must be real. So indeed there is one of the faithful left. The heroes touch him and all of their god-essence flows from them into Horace. Horace glows with bright light and becomes a new being -- part mortal, all god. Horace/God then raises Moran from the dead. Far in the distance, the heroes can see that the perpetual sandstorm that surrounded the Temple of the Forgotten God has vanished and the gleaming temple can now be seen. Around the temple, radiating and moving slowly outward, is a rare color -- green, lush plants are springing from the desert.

Horace/God promises that, though it will take many years, this place will become a paradise and this orb of Carceri will leave the wretched plane for a new place. He also indicates that given time he will burst the shackles of Carceri itself, allowing all who are trapped (and truly want to escape) to flee to other planes as they choose. Just before the heroes depart, he mentions that a beautiful palace was constructed long ago for a bride, should he choose to take one. He offers this magnificent dwelling as a home for the heroes and tells them how to get to it. Then he opens a portal to the Outlands, and our heroes step -- for the first time in many weeks -- onto lush grass under a blue sky.
