


 Paragon
12

DUEL OVER DOMANA

 6 Difficulty
5 Complexity

A standalone encounter for five adventurers.

By Corwin Riddle

Duel over Domana is a standalone encounter designed for five characters near the levels of 11 to 13. As far back as the bards can remember, the plains of Domana have known an endless war between two wizards, Azru and Risham. Night after night, year after year, their ancient duel continues - too equally-matched for a victor to emerge. However, their magic has become more destructive by the day, and the nearby town of Tocasis bears the brunt of every stray fireball, loose monster, and spell gone awry. As the damage to Tocasis worsens, the residents begin to wonder which will reach its end first: the duel, or their town?

BACKGROUND

Long ago, two wizards named Azru and Risham were passing through the grassy plains of Domana when they found themselves in a heated argument. The dispute became an angry squabble and insults were exchanged. Violence ensued, and all of a sudden they found themselves in the middle of a spiteful duel to the death. Azru and Risham each gave an impressive performance, but both were perfectly matched, and, after an exhausting battle, still alive. Too proud to back down, they came to an agreement: neither would leave the plains of Domana until the challenge was settled. Azru built a tower at the west end of the plains, and Risham, one in the east. In the mornings they would study and prepare, and at nightfall the battle would resume. Days passed, then weeks, months, years, and now decades, but there has been no resolution. The wizards themselves have long since forgotten the cause of their dispute, only certain it must have been an irreconcilable difference.

Over time, as neighboring cities expanded and the roads saw more use, the plains of Domana have become populated with a few settlements; the largest of which is Tocasis - a bustling center of traders, merchants, and tourists. However, though its streets are lined with inns and places for weary travelers to rest, Tocasis has known few quiet nights. Each evening, the wizards appear on the top of their towers, exchange insults, and light up the sky with fire, lightning,

mystical monsters, and the most impressive and fantastical spells imaginable; a sight to behold.

The town has tolerated this endless duel for as long as any resident can recall, but recently the battle has gotten out of control. The wizards enhance their powers each day, and their spells have become increasingly more expansive, dangerous, and likely to harm innocent bystanders. What started as a private fight between two individuals has elevated into a war, with Tocasis caught in the middle; buildings have been inadvertently razed and burned down, monsters wander through the streets without concern, and with no resolution in sight, the duel might spell the end for Tocasis.

GETTING THE PLAYERS INVOLVED

Duel over Domana can be used as a standalone encounter, or as the basis of an entire adventure. The characters can stumble upon the plains and the wizards, hear a rumor of their duel while in another city, or be sent there with one or more of the following hooks.

HOOK 1: A WIZARD TOOK IT, I SWEAR

In order to gain the upper hand in their fight, Azru and Risham have begun teleporting to nearby cities and stealing any spellbooks they can find. Recently, one of the wizards teleported into the dormitory room of two arcane apprentices, Sawnto and Donash, and stole their textbooks, with the semester's homework tucked inside. Sawnto and Donash appealed to their master, who didn't believe their story and gave them one week to come up with the missing work or face expulsion. So far, they've tracked their textbooks to Tocasis, and it wasn't difficult to figure out where they are. However, after seeing the powerful wizards in action, the students are too intimidated to intrude and ask for their books. They offer up next semester's tuition if the PCs will enter the towers and bring back their textbooks and homework.

Quest XP: 700 XP and 700 gp for bringing them back both textbooks.

HOOK 2: MADE IN TOCASIS

One of the town's merchants, an elf named Kalya, makes a living from selling replicas to tourists, and is looking for her big break. She recently noticed that both Azru and Risham carry a unique stone adorned with ornate runic symbols, and she thinks this is her chance to make a fortune. However, the stones are attuned to the towers and cannot be removed or stolen. She gives the PCs a soft piece of clay and asks them to enter one of the towers and press the clay against the stone to make a mold. How they acquire the stone is not her concern.

Quest XP: 350 XP and 350 gp for a mold.

HOOK 3: ENDING THE ENDLESS DUEL

The mayor of Tocasis, an ornery man named Kirlos, is fed up with all the fireballs, lightning strikes, earthquakes, floods, giant constructs, elementals, and other countless creations that have caused damage to his town. Azru and Risham have found more power than they can control, and their spells are often unpredictable, wreaking havoc on anything remotely close to their intended targets; their duel needs to end while the town is still standing. Since clearly they are incapable of killing each other without assistance, Kirlos asks the PCs to expediate the duel's end by heading east and killing Risham, who is considered the more destructive of the two. One dead wizard is enough, but he offers to pay double if Azru is killed as well.

Kirlos warns the PCs that both Azru and Risham are extremely proud, and in the past have retaliated strongly against those foolish enough to insult them. He apologizes for not having more information on the wizards, admitting he just somewhat recently arrived to Tocasis; the townsfolk could probably tell them more.

Quest XP: 700 XP and 700 gp for killing Risham, or 1500 XP and 1500 gp for killing both wizards.

SPECIAL FEATURE

If the PCs ask around the town for more information about the wizards, they will learn some of the wizards' histories and stories, filled with embarrassing details. The PCs can use *Arcana*, *History*, *Streetwise*, *Insight*, or *Diplomacy* checks on the townsfolk with a DC 20 to discover insults for provoking the wizards.

Read one of the following townsfolk responses when a PC makes a successful check:

- *"I hear they once tried to settle it with a treaty, and called the old mayor down to moderate it; even then they couldn't come to any resolution. They're most likely illiterate."*

- *"Well my dad told me they each have a mirror that they use to talk to each other during the day - to threaten each other I suppose. No wonder they have trouble controlling their spells - they're jabbering away all day when they should be practicing."*
- *"Once they were fighting with these dragons made of fire, and caught some of the buildings in town on fire too; then, right when they're about to burn each other up, they brought down an ice storm. So much for all that fire - and right when they were actually getting somewhere."*
- *"There was this time last summer, I remember because it was the hottest we'd ever had, enough to singe the crops. They tried to flood each other out of those towers by making it rain for days. Maybe it's just because I'm keen to carpentry, but those towers are the same height - they'd be flooding themselves out too. And wizards are supposed to be smart."*
- *"Something about the wizards? They've been here fighting since before this town ever came to be, and neither one can kill the other? A man is a fragile being; they're either not trying, or incompetent."*

A PC can keep trying until they succeed, but may only succeed once. When a PC does succeed, they gain the following power to use against Azru and Risham:

Jeering Taunt

Special Feature

Using your recent knowledge, you taunt the wizard with a stinging insult. You now have his undivided attention, whether you want it or not.

At-Will ♦ **Martial**

Minor Action **Ranged 10**

Special: You can use this power a number of times per encounter equal to your Charisma modifier (minimum 1), but only once per round.

Target: Azru or Risham

Effect: You mark the target. The target remains marked until you use this power against another target, or until another player uses this power against your target. A new mark supercedes a mark that was already in place.

While a target is marked, it takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls for any attack that doesn't include you as a target (this does not apply to *Returning the Favor*).

GETTING STARTED

Regardless of why the PCs enter Risham's tower, read this when they arrive:

The inside of the tower shows all the signs of a routinely magical life, though there is no sign of Risham. A broom sweeps itself across the floor while books hover in the air, pages slowly turning. A fire crackles in the fireplace, although there is no wood to feed it. Set for two, a small wooden table rests near the back of the room. In the center, a spiral staircase winds its way to the top of the tower.

AREA: TOP OF THE TOWER

Read this when the PCs head up the stairs:

As you venture up the stairs, a voice drifts down from above, resting as if on your shoulder: "If you have your heads about you, consider making yourselves comfortable down below, where you may pass the time with my fine ale and return to Tocasis with a memorable story. Tell them that you fought, and fought well, but I was too much for you - because I promise you, I am."

Read this when the PCs reach the top of the stairs:

The stairwell opens onto the top of the tower, which is covered in ornate pillars decorated with writing and runes - presumably copied from the wizard's spellbooks. Leaning against the balcony is an elderly wizard, twirling a fireball above his fingers while taking in the view below. Nearly every window in Tocasis is filled with an expectant face, and an enormous group of spectators have gathered on the buildings and the nearby hillside, waiting for the battle to begin.

Risham slowly turns around, looking unperturbed, and says: "I cannot say I appreciate your interrupting such a wondrous, awe-inspiring battle of the arcane. But come, let us make the most of your intrusion; perfection does, unfortunately, require practice."

SETUP

1 Risham (R)

1 Azru (A)

Azru appears as soon as combat begins.

When Azru appears, read:

There is a loud cry in the distance, followed by an echoing crack, and suddenly Azru appears next to Risham. He looks around and says: "So, you thought you'd find an advantage over me tonight with this little warm-up? I can see right through this cheap façade."

Risham: *"Ah I should have known you'd find me out, you're nearly as clever as I. Perhaps we could both take this opportunity to hone our skills; there are plenty of targets to share."*

Azru: *"It seems fair - it would be a shame to abandon sportsmanship after all these years. Mind your attacks now, Risham - if you so much as singe my robe with a fireball, I'll electrocute every bone in your frail, less-attractive body."*

Risham: *"Same to you, Azru. Don't even think of trying to weaken me with a stray lightning bolt or some such nonsense. I won't hesitate to incinerate your slightly inferior existence. Now, let's begin!"*

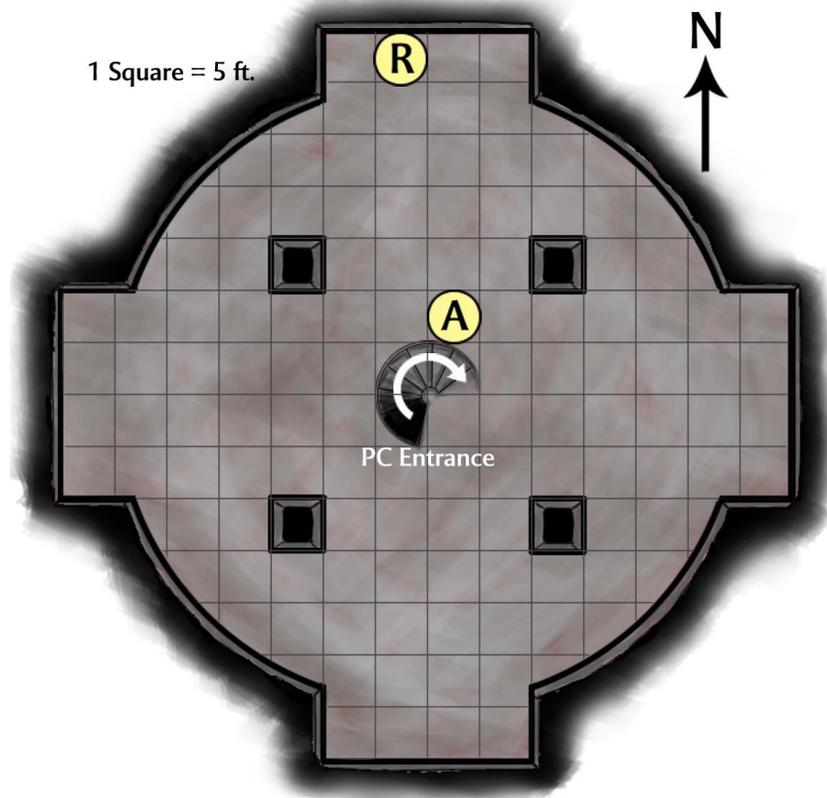
FEATURES OF THE AREA

The top of the tower has no ceiling.

The black pillars are spires, extending 30' into the air. They are impassable and block line of sight.

Risham has cast a spell around the tower to keep himself (and inadvertently, others) from falling off. There is an invisible, 10' high wall along the entire tower edge.

The spiral staircase is difficult terrain, since the players must carefully cross the different elevations.



TACTICS

- Azru and Risham will both immediately summon their orbs, which are then thrown into the initiative order and assigned turns. If one wizard dies, the remaining one gains control of both orbs. *The orbs chase the closest player, or have it chase the wizard's target for more difficulty.*
- The wizards will move to avoid obvious damage from the orbs and any dangerous terrain.
- If damaged by each other, the damaged wizard will use *Returning the Favor* as an immediate reaction against the attacking wizard (this does not trigger another *Returning the Favor*). The wizards will not target each other directly otherwise, but have no problem hitting each other with area attacks if next to their target.
- Azru and Risham will use *Blink* as often as possible to close the distance to their current target.
- The wizards will always focus their attacks on whichever PC marked them with *Jeering Taunt*, as long as that PC is in range and line of sight.
- If an area attack will not hit at least 2 PCs, they will cast *Magic Missile* at their target instead.

PLAYER STRATEGY

- The PCs should be using *Jeering Taunt* to lure a wizard close enough to be damaged by the other wizard's area attacks or orb, triggering their *Returning the Favor* ability.
- To keep Azru and Risham from using their powerful *Magic Missile* attack on a single target, the PCs should form a couple of tight, smaller groups to draw area attacks (which will help also spread out the *Lightning Wave* and *Fiery Burst* damage).
- The PCs can only use *Jeering Taunt* a number of times equal to their Charisma modifier, so they will need to be aware of how many taunts each player has left if bouncing aggro around.
- The orbs are slow, but the PCs will need to stay somewhat mobile to avoid them.
- Once one of the wizards is dead, they can no longer make use of *Returning the Favor*. *If the party deals a lot of damage and tries to burn them down, this won't be a problem - but if they have plenty of heals and are short on dps, they should probably keep both wizards alive as long as possible for their retaliatory attack.*

Azru		Level 13 Elite Controller	
Medium natural humanoid (human)		XP 1,500	
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +5		
HP 285; Bloodied 142			
AC 27; Fortitude 25, Reflex 26, Will 28			
Speed 6			
Action Points 1			
☞ Magic Missile (standard; at-will) • Force +17 vs Reflex; 3d6 + 5 force damage			
⬅ Lightning Wave (standard; recharge [4][4][4][4]) • Lightning Close blast 3; +16 vs Reflex; 3d6 + 6 lightning damage, divided equally between every creature in the blast (rounded up). The squares affected by the blast become infused with lightning until the start of Azru's next turn, any creature that enters one takes 1d6 lightning damage.			
☞ Forked Lightning (standard; recharge [4][4][4][4]) • Lightning Ranged 5; +17 vs Reflex; 2d6 + 7 lightning damage. If successful, the two closest creatures (within 3 squares) take 1d8 lightning damage.			
Summon Lightning Orb (standard; encounter) A Lightning Orb appears within 5 squares of Azru (it cannot be summoned on or adjacent to any creatures). The Lightning Orb counts as a creature with one move action on its turn. It has 100 hit points, defenses of 22, and a speed of 2. If the orb enters the square of any creature, that creature takes 3d6 + 6 lightning damage. Any creature that starts its turn inside or adjacent to the orb takes 2d4 + 4 lightning damage.			
Blink (move; at-will) Azru teleports up to 6 squares, ignoring all difficult terrain and opportunity attacks. If marked with <i>Jeering Taunt</i> , Azru must end this move within 2 squares of the target that marked him.			
☞ Returning the Favor (immediate reaction; at-will) • Lightning Ranged 20; +20 vs Reflex; 5d6 + 6 lightning damage. Triggered when Azru is damaged by any of Risham's attacks or spells, including the <i>Fiery Orb</i> . Damage from <i>Returning the Favor</i> does not trigger this reaction.			
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common		
Skills Arcana +11			
Str 10 (+6)	Dex 14 (+8)	Wis 17 (+9)	
Con 12 (+7)	Int 22 (+12)	Cha 12 (+7)	
Equipment Wand Implement			

Risham		Level 13 Elite Controller	
Medium natural humanoid (human)		XP 1,500	
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +5		
HP 285; Bloodied 142			
AC 27; Fortitude 25, Reflex 26, Will 28			
Speed 6			
Action Points 1			
☞ Magic Missile (standard; at-will) • Force +17 vs Reflex; 3d6 + 5 force damage			
☞ Fiery Burst (standard; recharge [4][4][4][4]) • Fire Area burst 3 within 10; +16 vs Reflex; 3d6 + 6 fire damage, divided equally between every creature in the burst (rounded up). The squares affected by the burst become inflamed until the start of Risham's next turn, any creature that enters one takes 1d6 fire damage.			
☞ Incinerating Web (standard; recharge [4][4][4][4]) • Fire Ranged 10; +17 vs Reflex; 2d6 + 7 fire damage. If successful, all creatures within 3 squares of the target take 1d6 fire damage.			
Summon Fiery Orb (standard; encounter) A Fiery Orb appears within 5 squares of Risham (it cannot be summoned on or adjacent to any creatures). The Fiery Orb counts as a creature with one move action on its turn. It has 100 hit points, defenses of 22, and a speed of 2. If the orb enters the square of any creature, that creature takes 3d6 + 6 fire damage. Any creature that starts its turn inside or adjacent to the orb takes 2d4 + 4 fire damage.			
Blink (move; at-will) Risham teleports up to 6 squares, ignoring all difficult terrain and opportunity attacks. If marked with <i>Jeering Taunt</i> , Risham must end this move within 2 squares of the target that marked him.			
☞ Returning the Favor (immediate reaction; at-will) • Fire Ranged 20; +20 vs Reflex; 5d6 + 6 fire damage. Triggered when Risham is damaged by any of Azru's attacks or spells, including the <i>Lightning Orb</i> . Damage from <i>Returning the Favor</i> does not trigger this reaction.			
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common		
Skills Arcana +11			
Str 10 (+6)	Dex 14 (+8)	Wis 17 (+9)	
Con 12 (+7)	Int 22 (+12)	Cha 12 (+7)	
Equipment Wand Implement			

If you dislike reading full powers and effects to your players, use the following hints instead:

When Returning the Favor is triggered:

- “Your aim seems to be a little careless – perhaps you need an incentive to focus!”
- “You couldn’t help yourself, could you? Well neither can I!”
- “I expected as much from you, I hope you’re prepared for retribution!”
- “Consider this a reminder to control your spells!”
- “If you’re that eager to break our truce, I’ll gladly oblige!”

When a player uses Jeering Taunt on a wizard:

Your insult has found its mark, and he turns toward you with a look of fierce hatred in his eyes. It’s not difficult to tell who his next target will be.

When a wizard casts Magic Missile on a single PC:

“If you insist on scattering like a pile of cockroaches, I’ll easily exterminate you one by one. I do prefer a single target.”

When a PC is damaged by Lightning Wave/Fiery Burst:

The attack’s energy seems to break apart, each creature in the blast suffering a lesser blow.

When Azru or Risham first dies, the other says:

“Nooo! What have you done? We would never... you murderers!”

CONCLUSION

Just as the last wizard dies, he looks out over the town with an expression of melancholy and says: “You came here to stop a selfish war, but the town that sent you will die with our rivalry. So tell me, adventurers, which one of us truly serves the people of Tocasis? Keep your answer... My dear friend is waiting.” On Azru and Risham’s bodies, the PCs will find a level 14 magical item and art objects worth 5,000 gp. If the players attempt to read the spellbooks, they will find the rituals Consult Mystic Sages and Linked Portal. The runic stones are also on the bodies, and the apprentices’ textbooks are found floating below.

When returning to Tocasis, read this to the PCs:

Crossing the plains of Domana on your way back to town, you notice a distinct change in the once vibrant atmosphere of Tocasis. The excited chatter, vendor barking, and bardic songs have been replaced with an eerie silence, interrupted only by the subtle sounds of merchants packing up their carts, or visitors guiding their horses to the nearest gate. As you move through the crowd, you notice mayor Kilros pleading with each group of passing tourists to continue their stay, but the town continues to empty. The tourists are off to another place, far away. “I hear there’s a three-headed giant just outside Phyrexa,” a passerby says, “sounds like something worth seeing.”

ADJUSTMENTS

If you like this encounter but aren’t sure you can fit it into your current campaign, you can adjust and scale it to accommodate your adventure. Here are some suggestions:

We don’t have five players:

If you have less than 5 players, decrease the wizards’ damage and hit points, and get rid of the orbs. If you have more than 5 players, throw in more orbs or a third wizard, using the others as a template.

We’re not the right level:

Unfortunately, the wizards weren’t based off anything in the Monster Builder, so you can’t automatically scale them in the program.

It’s too hard for my PCs, they keep wiping:

This encounter was designed as a fast and furious fight with a lot of movement. If it’s too difficult for your group, or if you don’t like technical encounters, tone down the attack damage, lower the hit points, and have Azru and Risham use Returning the Favor more often, just to spite each other, on a 1d20 roll of 11+ during their turns.

It’s too easy for my PCs, they’re breezing through:

Didn’t you just complain it was too hard?! But seriously, if it’s too easy, your group most likely has great teamwork and is using what some call the “secret synergy bonus” of a good group - which can, unfortunately for you, obliterate a difficult or technical encounter. If it looks like your PCs are going to burn through the fight in no time, use your “secret DM bonus” and bump up the wizard’s hit points and damage, mid-fight. That’ll teach those pesky PCs to work together!

We don’t like the theme/characters/combat hook:

My feelings! Just kidding. If you don’t like some parts, but enjoy even one of the ideas - steal it and dump the rest.

We’d rather play a full adventure than a one encounter:

This encounter is designed to be tossed into any existing campaign as a standalone side trek, but you could turn it into a full adventure by having the PCs fight through groups of summoned monsters that still wander the streets of Tocasis or patrol the road to the tower. Here are some possibilities for some additional encounters you can quickly throw in on their way to fight Azru and Risham:

Encounter 1:

- 2 Rockfist Smashers (MM2)
- 1 Windfiend Fury (MM2)
- 2 Stormstone Furies (MM2)

Encounter 2:

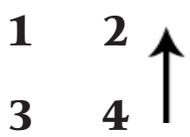
- 3 Hill Giants (MM1)
- 2 Gorgons (MM1)

Encounter 3:

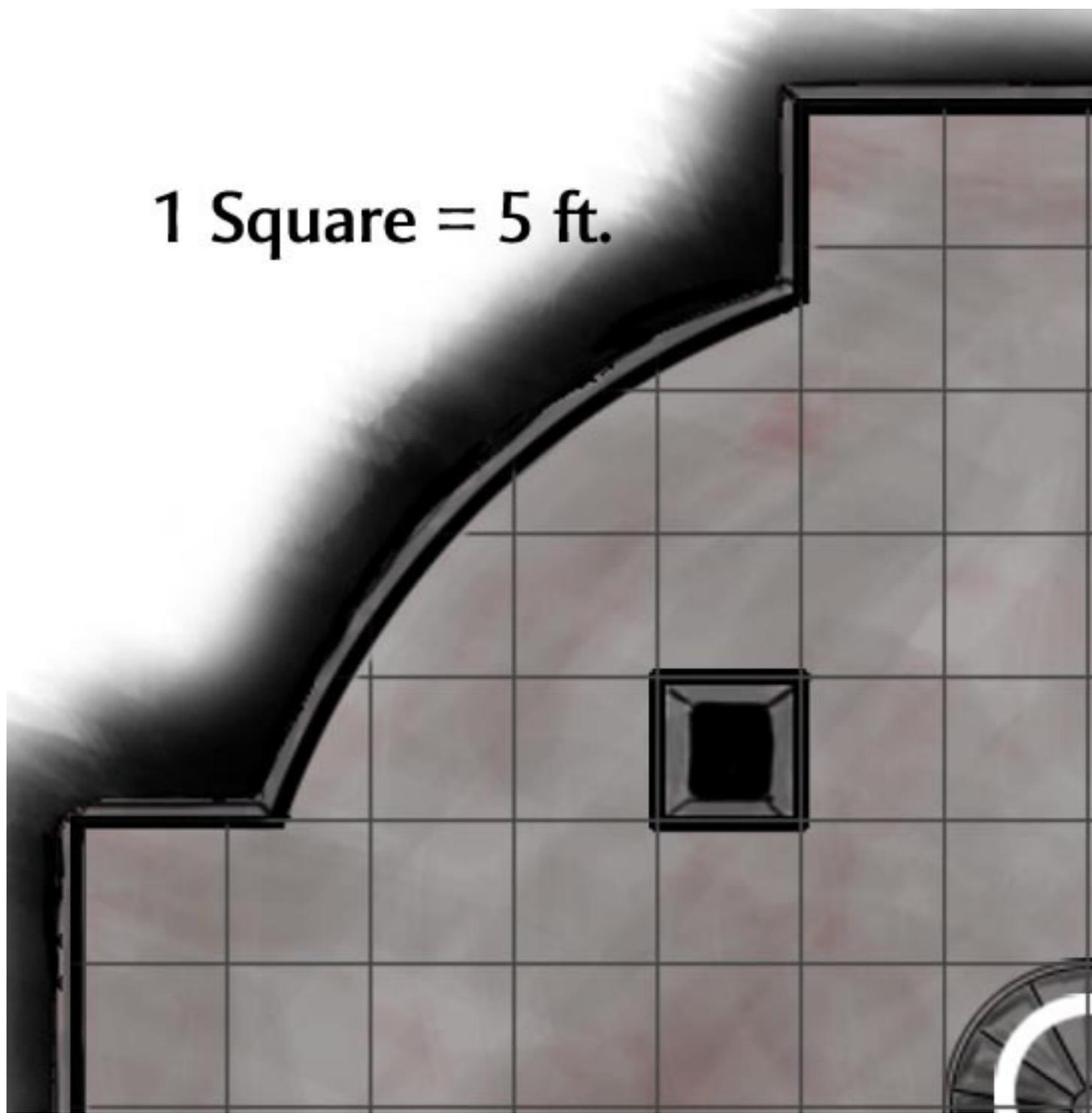
- 6 Fire Elemental Sparks (Revenge of the Giants, Compendium)
- 2 Fire Elemental Firestorms (RotG, Compendium)
- 2 Magma Striders (MM1)



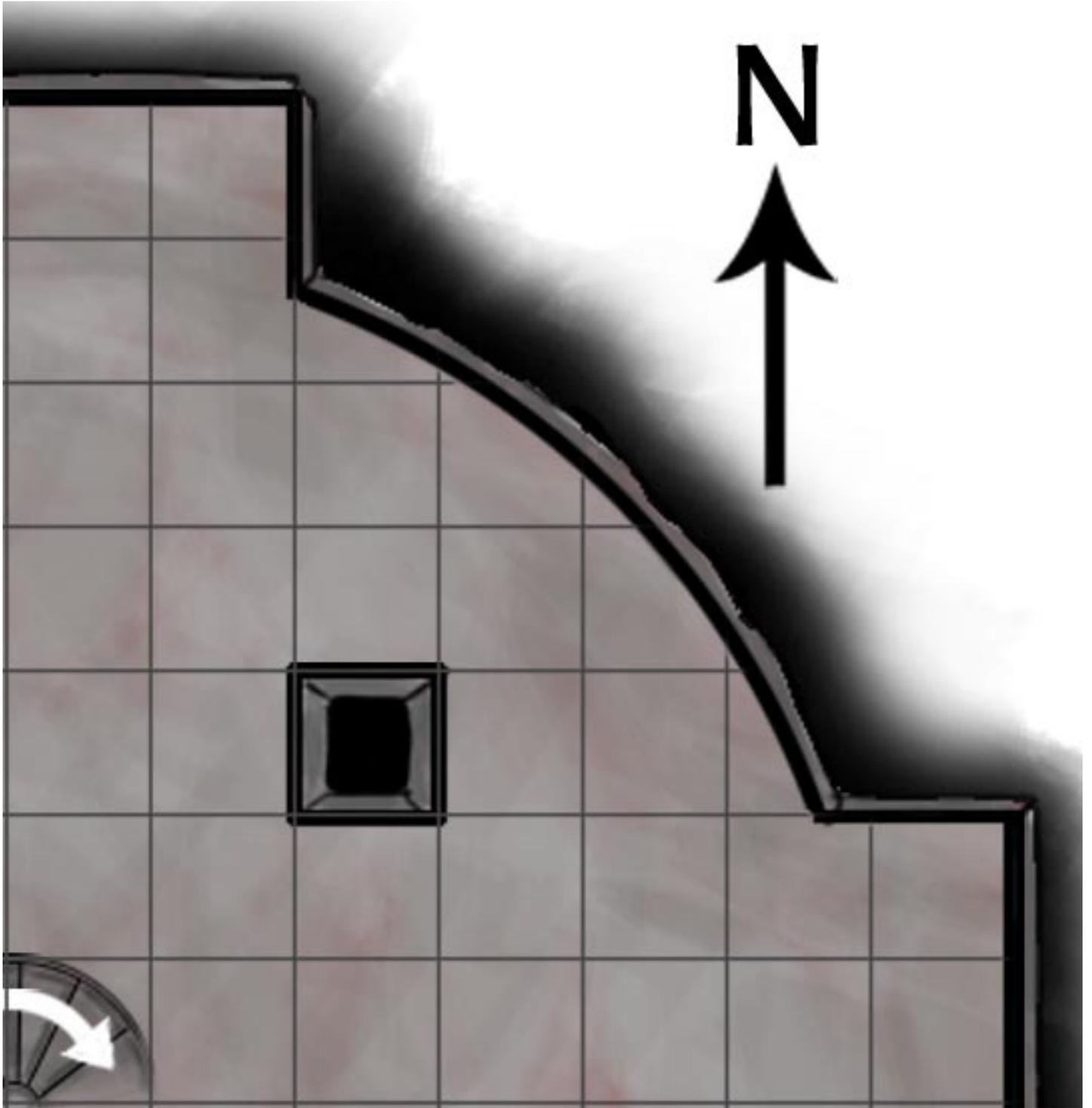
Here's a to-scale map, just print, cut out, and rotate the pieces. They go together like this (the arrows should all face NORTH):



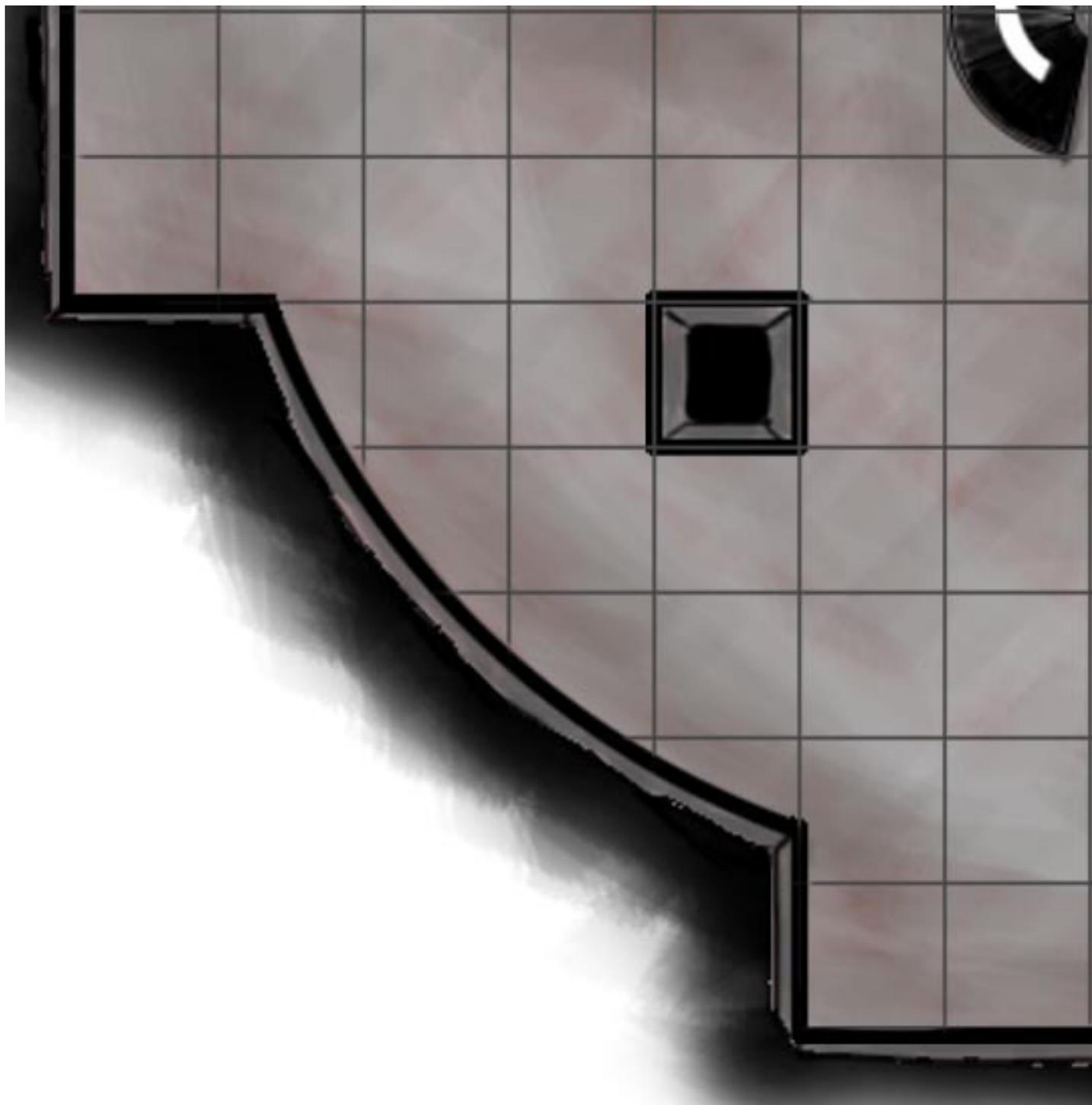
1 Square = 5 ft.



2 ↑



3
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4 ↑

