

Ashes to Life

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A Phoenix returns to the place of its birth, to await his end and to begin the ritual of his re-birth. A band of adventurers discover a remote temple deep within the wilderness. The Phoenix beseeches the adventurers to carry his egg to the innermost part of the sanctuary. Recommended for groups of 4th-7th level, advanced options are marked with "(hard)" for 8th level and up. All given DCs are only proposals by the author and may be adjusted at will.

Potential Quest Hooks: A burning "comet" was observed crossing the sky towards the deep woods; An alchemist guild has hired a band of adventures to collect rare ingredients. An old priest calling himself only "the Last Keeper" approaches a group of adventurers for aid; A bounty is set on a band of bullywogs raiders; Visions of a singbird choking on dark mists and devoured by fiery snakes are haunting members of the party lately.

Phoenix Egg. Upon his death, the phoenix burns up, leaving only a pile of ashes and a golden egg behind, which quickly begins to slip through a sinkhole into a cavern below (DC 17 DEX to catch it in time). It looks to be metallic and feels solid, yet is also light. Warmth and a hint sound of song seem to emanate from it. If the party leaves the temple with the egg, it spoils and crumbles into pieces of coal after 1d4+3 days.

Phoenix Feather. If the party accepts to aid the dying phoenix, he gifts them his last remaining feathers (One per party member). Upon use each feather can once:
◆ Empower a spell (GM's discretion) or an attack (GM's discretion)
◆ Grant benefits of the "Guidance" spell to a skill roll
◆ Give its user the benefits of a short rest (out of combat)
◆ Return a recently deceased character to life with 1 HP.
(Requires 3 feathers to be used together for this action!)
Destroyed after use.

3. Bullywog Lair

A band of thieving bullywogs have made a safe hideout within the caverns. Through cracks in the cliff face they can easily move in and out of their lair using their vertical mobility. Bullywogs are craven and covetous creatures, and will seek to exploit the party any way they can.

BULLYWOG CHIEF
◆ Wears an old hat. Seeks a new crown.
◆ Predecessor chief died "mysteriously."
◆ If noticed, will demand a phoenix feather as tribute to pass.
◆ Wants the treasure of a locked tomb deeper within the sanctuary.
Treasure: Small gemstones, clothes, and art objects worth 3d100 GP, and 2x spell scroll (1st level).

BULLYWOG SHAMAN
◆ 5th lvl spellcaster (Priest)
◆ Stays near the chief.
◆ Knows about the old chiefs' murder.
◆ Knows about the "Shadow" below.
Treasure: Various magical ingredients, basic alchemical equipment, 3xPotion of Healing, 2xPotion of Fire Breath, 3xPotion of Resistance (Fire), 1xPotion of Water Breathing
◆ Locked Chest (DC9) ◆ Trapped with Alarm Spell

4. Flooded Tombs

A half-flooded room, of approximately 100 ft. diameter and 60 ft. height. The sound of rushing water and its' echoes drown out all other noise. Surprisingly the water feels warm and a sulfurous scent hangs in the air.

◆ Steam flows out of the leftmost room. Tracks can be spotted going towards it (DC11 WIS)
◆ Inside a pair of bullywogs rest in the bubbling kneedeep water. The room is hot, the heat seemingly emanating from a strange pair of glowing stonedoors. A blackened greatsword covered in strange runes is stuck between the slits of that door. DC14 INT(Arcana) reveals that it holds the doors shut. With a successful dispel or DC17 STR roll, the sword can be pulled out. Doing so opens a pocket dimension into the Elemental Plane of Fire. Several Magma/Smoke Mephits, 2 Firenewts and a Hell Hound are released, which attack the party.

Gate to the Planes. Passing through the columns on the right, an even larger chamber is revealed. In the center lies a pit of pitch blackness, from which only silence and chilling frost exude. It has a diameter of about 60 ft. To the left stands a tall stone gate, with carved in runes. To open it, the party must simply place the egg in the shrines at A,B,C, and D for 1 full turn. Each time it is done, a bird song emits from the egg, and a bridge of light erupts from the party's position to the next shrine across the pit. This bridge is traversable by the party and their followers/minions and grants +1 AC against the Dark Hand while standing on it. The ground of the pit is to be treated as difficult terrain (black ooze pulling at victims). Any creature dragged into the center of the pit has its' body AND soul obliterated. It may not be resurrected by any spell, even Wish. When all 4 shrines have been activated, the complete pit is enveloped by light, and the dark creature within is suppressed and banished into the Netherrealm.

6. Innermost Sanctum - Ritual Chamber

Passing through the otherworldly portal, the party steps into another cave, though this one is as large as the inner of a cathedral. Intense heat radiates from pools of lava and the ceiling is obscured behind thick plumes of smoke.

◆ Inside a circle of glowing runestones and obelisks, the mangled corpses of several salamanders are scattered around. Pieces of broken chains indicate that there was another creature here.
◆ A Red Dragon Wyrmling/Young Red Dragon (hard) is hiding amongst the thick smoke in the ceiling, observing the party.
(Perception vs. Stealth check)

The dragon isn't immediately aggressive. Its' goal is to devour the phoenix egg, to absorb its' powerful flame into itself, before escaping. It will prefer to do so through cunning. If the party chooses to cooperate, even an alliance might be formed (but only to serve the dragons goals of establishing its' rule).

Lair Actions

At combat start, 3 Fire Snakes crawl out of the lava pools to join the wyrmling. On each subsequent turn, the lair can either:
◆ Spawn 2 additional Fire Snakes from any pool (Recharge 5-6)
◆ or spawn 3 Fire Snakes or 1 Salamander (Recharge 5-6) (hard)
◆ Erupt volcanic gases (20ft radius cloud, causing poison on DC13 Const and light obscuration) from any tile of difficult terrain.
◆ Standing Stones hit by any fire spell/fire breath absorb it and release it as a 5 ft. explosion centered on them on the subsequent lair turn.

Rebirthing the Phoenix. If the wyrmling is defeated, then the egg can be bathed in the fiends boiling blood within the central cauldron. The incubating phoenix can inherit one ability, talent, spell, or skill from each party member. Once hatched he will reward each member with a new set of feathers, with similar powers, but reusable 1/day (except for resurrection). The Phoenix may become a recurring character in the game, if he leaves on good terms with the party. Leaving through the portal, the party arrives now at the temple entrance

High atop a cliffside, overlooking a lake, lies the entrance to a long forgotten shrine. Trails of soot and ash lead into the temple. Inside a large avian creature rests on a rocky basin, feathers and skin charred.

1. THE PHOENIX

◆ Created by ancient sorcerers, who had mastered the planes.
◆ As punishment for his cruelty a tyrant was imprisoned here, forced to share the cycle of birth and death with the phoenix
◆ Since there dwell no other guardians or priest here anymore, it is necessary for another to protect the phoenix's infant form.

2. CAVERN

Below stonebasin in shrine(1.)
◆ Ceiling: 50FT high
◆ Cavern: 90 FT wide, held up by 4 pillars
◆ Water: 30 FT deep, no fall dmg. from jumping into it

Stolen goods and provisions

Climbable Cliffside(15FT)

Bullywog Tracks DC11 WIS to spot

Strong Water Currents Slippery Grounds DC11 STR/DEX to resist

Hidden Passage DC12 WIS to spot

Hidden Switch in the wall DC17 WIS to spot
Contains a Tome of Necromancy (3 Spells; GM Choice) + Figurine of Wondrous Power (Ebony Fly)

Chief Remains "Crown" out of battered copper plates lies there

Deeper within, a Choker waits for its' next victim.

Crown of the Phoenix King

◆ Grants Fire Resistance
◆ Dominate Person (1/L.Rest)
◆ Grants Flight for 10min.(1/day)
Other Treasure :
◆ 10d100 GP gems, art

Royal Tomb Gate Nearly impossible to lockpick

Locked Gate. DC12 DEX

Broken Floor Slide to Pit

High Priest Sarcophagus

Key-to-unlock here. When taken without replacing its' weight, 2 (3 (hard)) Minotaur Skeletons reanimate to protect the key.

ASHURBAHAL THE TYRANT

◆ Once one of the most powerful and hated dragons alive
◆ After a long reign of terror finally defeated and imprisoned
◆ As torment forced into a cycle of rebirth and sacrifice by powerful sorcerers.

5. The Dark Hand.

Within the pit, a shadowy creature seeks to grasp the egg in its' clutch. It seems to consist of only one shadowy limb with five claws at its' end stretching out of a pitchblack hole in the center of the pit. The claws can attack independently from each other. The creature has the attributes and abilities of a Wraith. It can stretch out to any length (80 ft speed shared amongst the claws) and if it loops into itself, it's superfluous part evaporates into a dark mist (acts as a Darkness spell), which lingers for one turn in place. If destroyed, it returns after 1d4 turns.

Space of 5 FT

Difficult Terrain

Climbable Terrain

Impassable Terrain

Thin Wall (Breakable)
Cave Entrance