

1. Diablo IV Encounter Design.

Boss Name: **Master Acton, the Eyeless Shepard** (*The blind leading the blind!*)

Dungeon Name: **Halls of the Blind**

INITIAL DESIGN NOTES

- Originally designed as a WoW Boss based on the Necromancer from D3 ability-wise, with an Azerite-twist.
- Could be leading **"The Cult of the Eyeless"**, however that name is already in the Forgotten Realms setting, so the name would need to be re-worked to avoid complications.
- Decided to make him blind because I came up with a Demon that his cult worships who gives them power if they sacrifice their own sight, and the sight of others. The cult will have Seers (*Hyuk!*), Eye-Gougers, Cannibals, etc.
- Came up with the Demon-patron after seeing an advertisement for glasses in an Optician's window: **"KALEOS"** with the tag **"EYEHUNTERS"** ... and so **"Kaleos, the Eye-Hunter"** was born, and the Eye-Gouger cultists. Though for legal reasons, the name itself may have to be re-worked (*and because it's shockingly lazy!*)
- Master Acton himself is fully blind but can see magically as part of his Demonic Pact.

MONSTER / ENCOUNTER PITCH

Acton The Necromancer:

- Powers similar to those of the Diablo 3 Necromancer, however, he will use Blood & Bone magic abilities, and also have a Shield ability.
- The encounter has multiple phases: A direct Combat Phase where Acton uses Scythe & Blood abilities, a Shield Phase where he will use ranged Bone, Blood & Summon abilities, and then a final phase where he goes back to Scythe & Blood abilities coupled with Summon abilities.

Encounter Space:

- The encounter space is located deep in the cult's lair, where Acton has made a pact with a bound Greater Demon and using its power. Acton wishes to free the Greater Demon, and by the time players reach him, he's on the verge of doing so, which means the goal to stop him after wading through hundreds of his cultists & minor demons.
- There are three main fissures in the ground around the room, filled with roiling & bubbling demonic blood, around which he will use some abilities to summon hordes of minions, and pull blood from the ground.

NPC MECHANICS

Acton's Abilities (*In order of use, see the Encounter Phases section for more details*):

- **Basic Attack** (A small frontal cone attack, where he swings his Scythe).
- **Bloody Scythe** (A wider arcing Scythe swing than the Basic Attack to deal heavy damage. Players hit by this ability are more likely to be targeted by Crimson Eruption if there are multiple players).
- **Crimson Eruption** (Wrenches spikes of Demon Blood from the floor to random players, dealing damage and slowing them if hit by the ability, as they can be seen just before they activate and then avoided).
- **Essence Shield** (Grants Damage Immunity to Acton. His Life-Bar will have two Cyan Shield icons above it, showing how many times it needs to be pierced by a Bone Spear before being depleted).
- **Bone Spear** (A bone-spear; flung out towards a single target. If a player is hit by the spear, they get knocked back a short distance, momentarily stunned, and takes heavy damage. If the spear hits empty ground a player may click it to hurl it back at Acton to weaken his shield by half).
- **Summon Skeletons** (Acton floats above one of the room's fissures and summons spirits of the dead up through the Demon Blood, coating their bones in the substance; strengthening them into Gorebound Skeletal Warriors & Mages).

Gorebound Skeletal Warrior Abilities:

- **Basic Attack** (Regular melee attacks that don't do anything special, however as Acton constantly summons them, the damage from multiple Warriors can build up).
- **Blood of the Damned** (Dead Skeletal Warriors drop pools of Demon Blood that they were covered in; which slow players and cause them to take damage while stood in the pool. However, standing in a pool grants a player attack & cast speed).

Gorebound Skeletal Mage Abilities:

- **Basic Attack** (A ranged bolt of Essence energy. Damage from this ability isn't too high, but as with the Warrior damage, if left unchecked could cause a problem).
- **Dread Singularity** (Deals a moderate amount of damage to a player. If that player is affected by **Crimson Eruption**, then it stuns them).
- **Blood of the Damned** (Dead Skeletal Mages drop pools of Demon Blood; which slow players and cause them to take damage while stood in the pool. However, standing in a pool grants a player attack & cast speed).

ENCOUNTER PHASES

Phase 1: Vulnerable Phase.

- The encounter starts with Acton at **100% Health**.
- Acton will attack the players using **Basic Attack**, **Bloody Scythe**, and **Crimson Eruption**.
- Once Acton drops to **70% Health**, Phase 2 begins.

Phase 2: Shield Phase.

- Acton casts **Essence Shield** and becomes Invulnerable. He will fly up into the air a short distance and cannot be attacked. He will no longer cast **Bloody Scythe** but will continue to cast **Crimson Eruption** more frequently.
- Acton will cast **Summon Skeletons** which summons the Gorebound Skeletal Warriors & Mages from the blood fissures around the room. The Warriors will use **Basic Attack** on the nearest players. This summoning happens on a set timer and will not stop, perhaps increasing in frequency, and with more Skeletons summoned. The Mages will cast **Basic Attack** on random players & **Dread Singularity** on players affected by **Crimson Eruption**.
- The Skeletal Warriors & Mages will drop **Blood of the Damned** when they die, leaving their pools of Blood all over the encounter area. It will decay, but not too fast.
- Acton will also hurl a **Bone Spear** at a random player at pre-determined intervals. If hit, the player is heavily damaged, knocked back, and stunned while covered.
- If the Spear misses the players, it can be picked up, and thrown back at Acton just by clicking on it (*though they will have to likely wade through Skeletons to get to it after having moved away from it to avoid stuns*). Being hit with spear will cause Acton to lose **20% Health**.
- This repeats until all **Essence Shield** charges have been removed. Then Phase 3 begins.

Phase 3: Vulnerable Phase.

- Acton drops down to the room, and back to fight the players.
- He will use the same abilities as in Phase 1; **Basic Attack**, **Bloody Scythe**, and **Crimson Eruption**. In addition, he will continue using **Summon Skeletons**. Players need to efficiently kill them, so they are not overrun, or burn Acton down quickly.
- Once Acton drops to **10% Health** he will emote and look like he's cracking & shattering.
- Once Acton drops to **0% Health**, the encounter ends. He either hardens to a blood-red statue, or melts into a pool of bubbling-gore (*random chance for replays!*). If he turns into a statue the first player to click him will smash & shatter him in a big gory explosion, or if he melts then footprints of blood will be left if a player runs through the puddle!

POST DESIGN NOTES (MORE BASED ON THE WoW ENCOUNTER VERSION)

- **Encounter Flow:** Originally, I created the encounter with two Shield Phases, which led to it having three Vulnerable phases. This would make the encounter feel too long and have too many transitions, so I cut it down to one Shield Phase.
- **Phase Transitions:** The percentage of Health where each phase transitions, and how many times the Essence Shield needs to be hit with Bone Spears are something I had to think hard about, and even now I'm still not sure they feel right even now.
- **Flavor:** I was re-watching Dune while designing the encounter for WoW, and all I could think of was Acton screaming "*The Sleeper has awakened!*" while in his Shield Phase, and "*He who controls Azerite, controls the Universe! The Azerite must flow!*" as he is cracking-up & dying. So, for the D4 version, he may say things like "*The blood of the master must flow!*", and "*The All-Seeing Eye is upon you!*".

Boss Name: **Velkariel, Aspect of Desire**
Dungeon Name: **The Tower of Glass & Mirrors**

INITIAL DESIGN NOTES

- Who doesn't love Fallen Angels? From Urzael, Malthael... now to Velkariel!
- Sitting atop her Tower, Velkariel looks down at Sanctuary with a burning desire to be worshiped by all.
- Like the Queen in Snow White, she believes herself the fairest of them all.
- Sends her minions to capture women to drain their essence.
- Will become even more enraged if a Female PC engages her.
- The tower leading to Velkariel has a lot of glass and mirrors where enemies spawn, obstacles fly out of mirrors, etc. And there will be barriers to smash that are mirror-like in quality.
- Her tower is my *"I was watching Enter the Dragon"* area & boss idea.

MONSTER / ENCOUNTER PITCH

Velkariel, Aspect of Desire:

- Utilizes a lot of ranged attacks, primarily being bounced/reflected with mirrors.
- Can summon minions, or even reflections of herself and the player from mirrors.
- Tries not to stay in melee combat too long and will use reflections to remove herself, backing into mirrors.

Encounter Space:

- In contrast to the Tower, her room is devoid of mirrors initially. However, when it locks in, Mirrors either rotate out from the walls, drop down from the ceiling, or raise from the floor.
- The whole outside of the map is mirrors, with a ring of mirrors at the center.
- If Velkariel summons a reflection of herself or the player, the mirror can be smashed to destroy it quicker, but a new mirror will come in to take its place after that.

Boss Name: **Xal'kardra, the Crimson Widow**
Dungeon Name: **The Sanguine Nest**

INITIAL DESIGN NOTES

- Once a member of Queen Araneae's Brood, she was lured away and captured by Martellos von Strixx's Monster Hunters, who then sold her to a Demonologist.
- Forced to eat Demonic Meat/Blood by her buyer, she grew more powerful until she could easily overpower her captors.
- Escaped and created her own Brood, and now sits as its Broodmother in The Sanguine Nest.
- Her original captor wishes to see her dead to harvest her organs, which is why the player would seek out The Sanguine Nest.
- During her time as Broodmother of the Nest, unlike Queen Araneae she has not grown her brood so large that it becomes *"noticed"* by people in the area, she has been selectively breeding and forming a tight-knit and very organized core of demonic-spiders.

MONSTER / ENCOUNTER PITCH

Xal'kardra, the Crimson Widow:

- While not technically a Demon herself, after years of eating Demon Meat & drinking Demon Blood, she has absorbed some of their power. She will spit acidic blood-bolts and lash out with razor-sharp legs.

Encounter Space:

- In contrast to Queen Araneae's Cave, which is expansive and sprawling, Xal'kardra's nest is very well structured, and everything has its place.
- Her nest room contains many webbed sacks, containing Humans, Beasts, and Demons, which she will try to feed on to regain health part-ways through the encounter, and you can get some burn-time on her, but you need to overcome how fast she regenerates.

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTER OR NPC PITCHES

NPC Name: **Martellos(a) von Strix**

Area Name: **City of Sinners**

Merchant, Debutante... Purveyor of the Demonic. Martellos was once a lowly merchant, who by chance ended up in possession of some demonic artifacts; which he found brought a high price in some of the world's seedier underbellies.

Financing a whole new operation with the money from those Artifacts, he has built up quite the reputation among Witches, Demonologists, and even the wealthy looking for something exciting.

His services include:

- The capture of live demons (for whatever reason; dissection, bargains, etc, not his business to ask)
- The sale of dead demons, or demonic parts & organs.
- The sale of wondrous artifacts (in his words); be they demonic, angel, or otherwise.

(Could introduce the idea of "Monster Crafting" in a later patch from things you find on monsters with this NPC and his Dudes)

Unique Name: **Venthrox the Maligned**

Area Name: **The Fetid Swamps**

A swamp dwelling demon, taking the form of a huge toad.

- **Tainted Spawn** attack, where he has demonic acidic frogspawn on his back and shakes it off around the area, leaving toxic pods
- **Demonic Spawn** hatch if the pods are touched and explode into acidic goo.

Unique Name: **Calder Mountainborne**

Area Name: **Mistvalley Hamlet**

A Barbarian who settled down for a peaceful life after years of demon-slaying. However, his past caught up to him, and his small hamlet was attacked and overrun by demons; killing him and all he cared about in the process. He was raised as an undead by a Necromancer, who was with the demons, and bound to the hamlet as a warning to those who try to escape the ruinous powers.

Players will fight, and defeat Calder, who will then be released from his torment; which should grant something cool. Maybe have him as a ghostly companion, like the companions in D3, but with ghostly abilities.

- **Haunted Hammerstrikes**, which are huge hammers on chains he has around his wrists.
- **Chain-Whirlwinds** where his hammers and chains spin around in a huge area.

Unique Name: **The Hissing Terror**

Area Name: **The Undersewer**

A rat-like monstrosity, much leaner than the D3 ones that have the Shields and Rat Swarms. More like a huge elongated Opossum.

- A **Bile Breath** Attack which goes out in ever expanding, exploding waves.
- **Summon Infected Pack** from vents and crawlspaces to swarm and slow the player.

Unique Name: **Kaldrax Darkvale**

Area Name: **Darkvale Manor**

A Velkharii (Vampire) noble, who has fit into society and built up his estate. In his human guise he has been known to throw extravagant parties that the elite rave about, yet when questioned forget most of the details and think this is normal.

His underling vampires use these parties as their chance to feed.

After a string of disappearances, people are starting to notice, and the players will have to battle through the Manor for the final confrontation with Kaldrax.

- **Blood Lance** attack, where he shoots out lances of blood from his hands at the player.
- Vampire minions during the fight.

Unique Name: **Xiren'shai the Ancient Sorcerer**

Area Name: **The Crypt of Forgotten Magic**

An ancient sorcerer hailing from Xiansai, exiled to the mainland, where they studied under Zoltun Kulle in Kehjistan, before leaving on his own to pursue his own plans.

- **Arcane Bombardment** that targets random areas for the most part, but always has "some" lock-on.
- **Arcane Clones** which run towards the player and detonate.