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## Seventh Gate "The Maiden"

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The autumn moon shines full above Foretelling trials and blackest gloom. Time draws near to flee in fear Or face the fate of certain doom. Many heed the oracle; others door and casement bar Against the force which rises here, Awakened by the evening star. Incarnate evil stirs to life, Long in dormant depths of slumber, To rise in dire sudden wrath And drive the world of man asunder.

In deepest dark of blackest night, The withering wind of winter moans. The Dark Lord summons forth the wraiths Who sleep beneath their crypts of stone. Drawn from tomb and shallow grave, The restless dead emerge in answer. Shadows clad in steel and sable Kneel before the necromancer. The Beast demands a sacrifice: A single maiden, pure and clean. Incubus threatens to unleash his fury Unless satisfied with

a queen. Onward three leagues the chosen ones march, Abandoning hope, departing in haste. Whipping my steed, in sheer madness I speed: A desperate venture, no time left to waste. Short of time, with tortured mind, I march across the crimson field, To wade through gore and sleep no more, Wielding lethal sword and shield. Spectral demons wail and shriek Macabre tales of death and woe, Among the mountains cold and bleak, Forever damned to hell below. Scarlet rains in torrents. Mortal conquers the horde. Carcasses strewn in the valley, Valiant victor defies the Dark Lord. At last atop a rocky crag, I espy the vestal victim there. The manifestation of evil awaits, To die or return to its fiery lair A yard of naked steel unsheathed Detects its mark and plunges deep.

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