



ZEITGEIST

THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION



The Age of Reason



ACT THREE OF THE CRITICALLY ACCLAIMED ADVENTURE PATH

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The Reason for the Age

By Ryan Nock

Imagine if one day the whole world woke up and agreed with you.



That was the hook that led to this entire adventure path. I'd long had in mind the images of starry nights obscured by the steam of enchanted industry, of ghosts in a theater, a colossus broken free, and a woman standing on its shoulder regretting her role in the disaster. I was fascinated by all the revolutions that had gone on during the Age of Enlightenment, just slightly predating the era most 'steampunk' emulates. I'd been high on Obama's inauguration and crestfallen at political impediments to the changes I hoped he'd make.

But I didn't have a core idea, something complex enough to keep gamers involved for potentially years of adventures, and something compelling enough to me that my muse would keep shoving me until it was complete. Then, while brainstorming setting factions in an email thread with E.N. Publishing's owner Russ Morrissey, I wrote

"And here's what I think the Obscurati are up to. We've already got factions with clearly delineated philosophical differences. Insular homeland protection, technological superiority, nihilistic greed, the supremacy of secrets, revenge and the ascendancy of nature, and peacemaking. The conflict isn't existential, but philosophical. One age is about to end, another set to begin, as foretold in the stars."

I'm writing this foreword on November 5th. For Russ, it's Guy Fawkes Day, so I'll admit that a little conspiracy — with the right amount of explosions and villains burned on pyres — can be fun. I certainly hope the campaign we've written is fun for you. For me, though, this evening is mere days from the US Presidential election, and the fact that I don't actually live in a fantasy setting hasn't managed to stop America from believing in two distinct, barely compatible realities.

By the time any of you read this, the election will be decided, the seal closed, and the stars will turn along one course or another. The next morning we won't wake up and all agree with each other, but that doesn't mean we have to accept that this is how the world will always and forever be.

Roleplaying games are escapist, yes, but at their best they are also emboldening, empowering. We battle monsters that exist only as words in the air, and we triumph with the aid only of clever thoughts and clever friends. The dice won't always go our way, but through games we can be heroes.

If all you take away from your ZEITGEIST campaign are memories of heroism, grandeur, and adventure, I'll be honored I could be a part of that. But perhaps, as you and your friends grapple with forces that seek to dictate what the perfect world will be, you'll consider the works of great thinkers past and present, and be empowered with the courage to lend your voice too to the panoply of philosophies arguing the future into being.

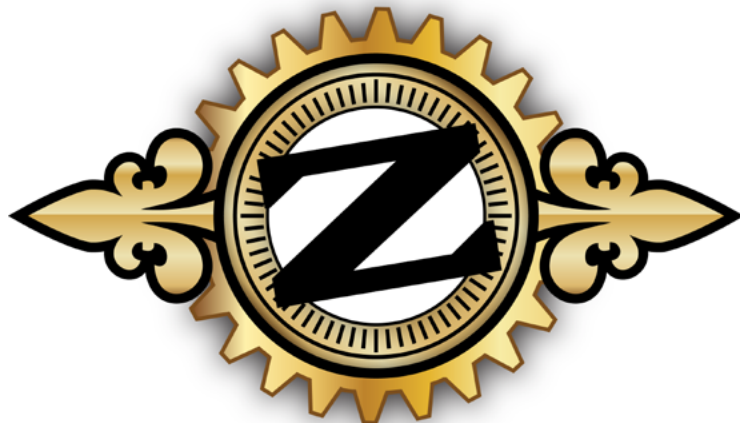


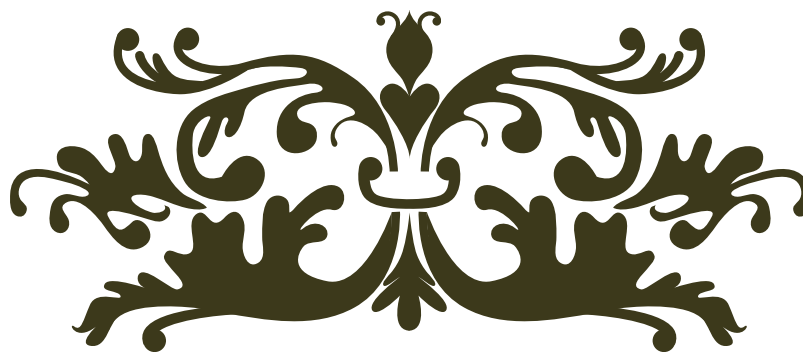
There are too many people to concisely thank for their contributions and support, but above all I must commend Russ for his confidence that we could complete this colossus of a series, Eric for creating the masterpiece aesthetics of the books, Frank for his unflappable professionalism as I risked burn-out near the finish line, Claudio for illustrating our vast cast and for allowing me to use his city as inspiration for Flint, and Thurston for . . . fuck, for being Thurston. Thursty, you made all this work far more fun than I could have imagined. Seriously he's awesome, just hang out with him.

Also, to the ghost of my dad: thank you for getting the moniker "Nicotine Nock" in the Air Force, and thus inspiring my mastermind.



Adventure Number 10
Godmind





From the Pen of

Thurston Hillman

Evocative Cover Illustration by

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Masterful Interior Illustrations by

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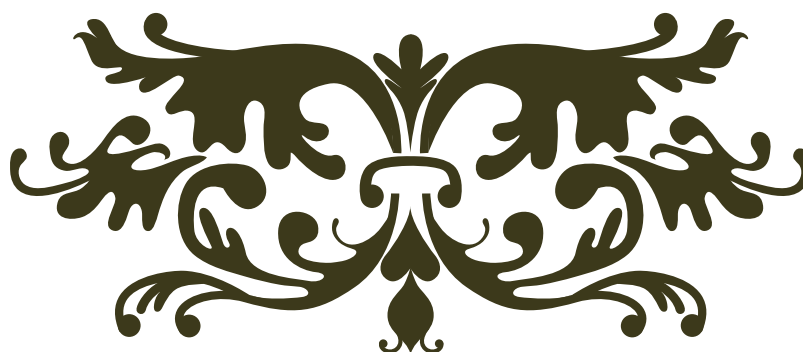
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“Jack Tannery”

Creepy Poems by

Jamie Isfeld

Special Thanks to my mother Brenda. Because you'll never be a Grandma
(at least from me), so Granny Allswell will have to do.



ADVENTURE TEN: Introduction

Wherein Everyone Actually is Out to Get You

The centuries-old Obscurati conspiracy has completed its masterstroke. By altering the world's cosmology they have shifted the nature of reality, and local rituals in each nation have made all of civilization loyal to them. All except the nation of Risur, where the party thwarted the local ritual. While the Risuri populace is still affected by the metaphysical shift—which guides people to be more rational, agreeable, and empathetic—they are still loyal to their homeland, and are the sole bulwark against the Obscurati's global domination.

The great change has created widespread turmoil, however. The sun has vanished, replaced by a gyre-shaped nebula barely brighter than the old moon, and the moon itself is black, visible only for the hole it cuts when it passes in front of the Gyre. Magic functions slightly differently, and it takes weeks of trial and error for spellcasters to regain their previous powers, but even then some magic like teleportation and long-distance communication have to be rediscovered. Nature itself begins to revolt as the fey titans who held sway over Risur

in the ancient past awaken and vie for control. And while the citizenry endure all these changes with excellent—almost frightening—calm, psychic manifestations start to appear wherever groups of too many like-minded people gather.

Meanwhile across the sea, Nicodemus, leader of the Obscurati and now tacit ruler of the world, has called the leaders and greatest thinkers of the various nations to gather in Cherage, capital of Danor. He plans to unify them to create his vision of a utopia, and the first step on the agenda is the conquest of Risur. If the party can stabilize Risur in time to reach this gathering, they might have a chance to undo what the conspiracy has wrought, but they'll find that other forces are already eyeing their newly-vulnerable world.

Background

Three elements are at play in this adventure—the Ob's ritual to change the world, the awakening of the fey titans, and the Ob's efforts to consolidate control of the world.

The Great Eclipse

The world is fed by eight planes, providing energies of fire, air, water, earth, space, time, life, and death. The Obscurati's ritual has changed which planes this world is linked to, and so has altered the nature of reality itself.

Two years ago, the Ob's research into the planes accidentally roused the fey titan known as the **Voice of Rot**, and he has plotted ever since. A primordial manifestation of death, the Voice of Rot sensed the approaching reality shift, and realized it would give him a chance to actually witness the world's destruction. He subtly influenced agents and long-dormant cultists around the world to disrupt the Ob's ritual on Axis Island. Their interference prevented the Obscurati's colossus Borne from closing the Axis Seal, which has left the world drifting away from its sun, pulled toward **The Gyre**.

The Gyre is visible in the charcoal-black sky as a churning cloud of flickering stars, moving like a pair of immense gears. Over the coming months it will grow alarmingly close, and within a year the world will be pulled into that vortex. In truth, the Gyre is a graveyard of the multiverse, where dead or abandoned worlds are drawn in, ripped apart, and scattered in order to create new planes. In later adventures the party will have to go there to recover the planes this world was once linked to—or choose new planes from among the dying remnants—in order to undo the Obscurati's designs.

For now, the nature of magic has notably changed. See *Reality Shift*, (page 311) for full details, but the most pressing one for the party's interests likely is that, unless you can see your destination, it's impossible to teleport somewhere if you have not been there since the Ob's ritual occurred. Similarly, long-range communication like *sendings* only can contact people you have interacted with since the world changed. For at least the immediate future, if the party is curious what's going on somewhere in the world, they will need to trek there the old-fashioned way.



ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

As a stand-alone adventure outside the ZEITGEIST campaign, you'll want to strip away most of the background of *Godmind* and focus on the present. Have the awakening fey titans be a consequence of the same psychic phenomena that are creating the hiveminds. In this way, the adventure deals with 'titans' of forest and field, mountain and sea, and then civilization itself. The Axis Island elements don't fit cleanly into this abridged adventure.

Alternately, if you just want to mine this adventure for your own high-level campaign, the fey titans could show up as reawakened primordial entities or extraplanar invaders. The Axis Island events could be a rescue mission for an inventor who is using the island's strange magic to craft an airship, and who's being pursued by a hostile army. The titular godmind could be summoned by an eldritch ritual, or the result of a person's psychic powers activating and going out of control.

KEEP AN OPEN PLOT

At this point, your players have access to ridiculous powers and resources, and so expecting a particular outcome for any given challenge is foolish. The temporary limits on teleportation and long-distance communication at the beginning of the adventure allow us to at least encourage a starting position, but we expect the PCs to come up with myriad courses after that. Throughout the ZEITGEIST campaign we've enjoyed crafting complex, interlocking series of scenes, but we recognize that at this high level it's best to just throw up interesting obstacles and let the PCs figure out their own path.

We suggest you keep an open mind, and not get worried if they win a few encounters too handily. We'll push them to their limits eventually.

The Fey Titans

The fey titans have over the centuries since Risur's founding occasionally risen up one at a time to vie for control of their domain—the **Ash Wolf's** forests, the **Father of Thunder's** fields, **Granny Allswell's** mountains, **She Who Writhes's** seas, and the Voice of Rot's swamps. Not since the nation's founding have all the titans awoken simultaneously, but the Voice of Rot's battle with the party in adventure nine, combined with the sudden reality shift, has roused their ire.

Traditionally the monarch of Risur has been responsible for subduing any rebellious titans, typically using some mix of physical might and a canny abuse of fey quirks to trick them into defeating themselves. After any such defeat, the titan is compelled to offer a boon and then return to its slumber.

Much of the first act of this adventure occurs in and around the city of Bole, located south of Flint, in more a fey-friendly region of the nation. In the farmlands west of Bole, the gazelle-like fey titan Father of Thunder rampages. Attracting an ever-growing herd of animals to his side, he devastates Risur's breadbasket and will cause a famine if not dealt with.

In the Antwalk Thicket east of Bole, important lumber-providing forests have been caught in rampant blazes. While locals blame the fires on the Ash Wolf, the truth is more complicated. Salamander hunters from the plane of fire, Jiese, came through a portal and killed one of the lupine titan's pups. The titan mistakenly blamed the loggers, and so the Ash Wolf hunts in the infernos to punish them. The fires themselves are the salamanders' doing, since they hope to claim this land as their own.

In Anthras Mountain mines south of Bole, tremors and quakes herald raids by gremlins, minions of Granny Allswell, who desires children to raise as her own. With the mines forced to shut down, Risur is threatened by a shortage of ore for industry.

The party might be willing to leave those problems alone to deal with more urgent threats, but they will need at least to defeat She Who Writhes before they can access the rest of the world. The tentacled titan madly lashes out at any vessel attempting to travel the seas around Risur. Her sheer size, speed, and ability to detect intruders in her waters make any sort of naval travel nigh impossible. While this titan's attacks effectively land-lock the party and the Risuri navy, it also keeps Danor and other nations from attacking. The party might be best-served to deal with all the other titans before confronting the she-kraken.

By contrast, though, the Voice of Rot avoids the party. Indeed, he has already traveled through a portal, and is making his way through the Gyre toward its center, feeding off all the death around him. He will pose a great threat to the party in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.

Obscured No More

During the Obscurati's ritual on Axis Island, the conspiracy's leader **Nicodemus the Gnostic** watched as the great colossus Borne opened the hundred-foot diameter golden Axis Seal, which unleashed devastating magical energies from across the multiverse. The forces damaged the colossus, but Ob mages were present to mitigate some of the destructive power, and the industrial titan was able to rearrange enchanted stone pillars buried beneath the seal. This adjusted which planes the world was linked to, bringing about the new world the Obscurati desired.

To complete the ritual, Borne needed to lower the seal back over the ritual ground, which would create a new star for these worlds to orbit. At this critical juncture, though, cultists of the Voice of Rot who had infiltrated the Ob set off explosions that killed most of those





present and slew the body Nicodemus inhabited. Borne was blasted by waves of planar energy that tore him apart before he could close the seal. The three-hundred-foot tall colossus collapsed in pieces at the edge of the ritual valley, and the Axis Seal fell upon him, pinning the crippled construct.

Nicodemus's spirit form remanifested in Methia where he first died centuries earlier, and it took him several days to find a new host body and reach Cherage, the capital of Danor. Since then he has fumed, not knowing what went wrong with his ritual but suspecting Risur was responsible (which, by a small technicality, it was). The predations of She Who Writhes thwarted his first attempt to reach Axis Island (and cost him another body), and so he is forced to wait and turn his attention to other affairs.

Recognizing Risur and the PCs as a threat, Nicodemus has sent out word to the leaders and the most enlightened thinkers of Danor, Drakr, and Crisillyir, as well as the various smaller nations north of the Avery Sea. He has invited them to Cherage for the Forward Symposium, where he will explain what has happened, and use their mutual worries to unify them into a global government. With the new reality making people more reasonable, he can actually accomplish this goal with relative ease, after which his plan is to launch a massive invasion of Risur in order to wipe out any resistance. Then he'll turn his attention to fixing whatever went wrong at the Axis Seal.

What he doesn't realize, though, is that one of the planes he chose to link the world to, Ratios, had been assimilated by an extraplanar race known as the **Gidim**. These creatures, formed of psychic energies manifested into physical form, tried to invade the world thousands of years ago, but the Axis Seal cut them off. Now they return, and they find the mix of psionic energies the Obscurati have woven into the new reality a handy tool. While the **Gidim** will play a more prominent role in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*, a familiar one of them—the wayfarer **Sijhen**—will attend Nicodemus's conference and help provoke a devastating psychic manifestation.

The Wildcard

In Adventure Six, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, the party thwarted a plot by **Benedict Pemberton** to conquer the nation of Ber. The former dragon tyrant, long disguised as a human industrialist, might even have lost a daughter to the party. But despite his megalomaniacal desire to conquer an entire nation, Pemberton realized the threat posed by the Ob, who were trying to conquer the *whole* world.

In the immediate aftermath of the Axis Seal ritual, Pemberton and his minions invaded Axis Island and defeated the defenders, who were panicked by the failure of the colossus. Expecting a counterattack by the Ob, he had his minions seize the Axis Fortress. But when no attack came (thanks to defense by She Who Writhes), Pemberton began to repurpose the fortress's factories to produce his own inventions.

More importantly, Pemberton can actually see the aftermath of the Obscurati's ritual, and while he doesn't have the acumen to undo it himself, he is inspired by the PCs' perspicacity in discovering his own plot. He intends to contact them and propose an alliance against the Obscurati.

Adventure Overview

The first act is contained to Risur, which the party will likely not be able to leave until they defeat She Who Writhes. If the party does this early without handling the other fey titans, they can handle that threat as they see fit later. In the second act, an ally encourages them to visit Axis Island, and then they'll have a chance to interrupt an effort of the Obscurati to consolidate power, but the party could deal with these two challenges in the other order.

Act One: Against the Titans

The party finds themselves in charge of a changed Risur, where there is no sun and the rules of magic have changed, forcing them to spend at least a few weeks reinventing the wheel, as it were, to regain access to necessary magic. During that time they start to learn about the new nature of the planes, hear reports of the fey titans causing trouble, and witness people's behaviors change toward cooperation and reason.

This last one wouldn't seem so bad, except when a protest against inhumane work conditions turns into bedlam when the unified psychic will of the protesters manifests as a tentacled 'hivemind.' The party has to handle these troubles while cut off from news of the outside world.

In order to get beyond Risur's shores they must subdue She Who Writhes, but allies offer to help, including the mighty eladrin dreadnought **Asrabey Varal** and the archfey of the sea **Beshela**, who believes she can convince She Who Writhes to fight for them if the party can get her close enough. But when the party sails out to confront the fey titan, Asrabey betrays them and tries to kill Beshela and take control of the kraken. Swayed by the power of the new reality, he has decided to ally with the Obscurati.

Act Two: The New Conspiracy

A blood tide rises after the battle with She Who Writhes. The blood carries a message from the demoness **Ashima-Shimtu** (see Adventure Four, *Always on Time*), offering them cryptic advice to investigate Axis Island, deal with their most pressing problems, and then rescue her in due time (detailed in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*).

At Axis Island, the party sees a massive bloom of uncontrolled planar flux erupting into the sky from the island's central valley. Pemberton invites them to explore the Axis Seal for clues on how to undo the Ob's ritual, and if they agree to cooperate on defeating the new rulers of the world, he offers to share one of his innovations with them—airship technology. They'll need it to cross the world quickly and round up allies against the conspiracy. In fact, Pemberton styles himself leader of a *new* conspiracy, since after all he and the rest of the party are now the underdogs fighting against the global order.

Divinations and other clues alert the party to the upcoming Forward Symposium, where dignitaries will discuss plans for a world government founded with Nicodemus's ideology. Pemberton wants to send a sleeper agent in—**Brakken of Heffanita**, a telepathic minotaur and the former ambassador from Ber to Risur. He can form a psychic link with the party so they can see what he sees inside the symposium, and then decide how to respond.





The Ob launch an attack to reclaim Axis Island. Recognizing he can't sustain a prolonged assault, Pemberton invites the party to board their newly-upgraded airship, blow the joint, and fly the hell out of there. The party can then land and hide out near Cherage, since they need to stay within range of Brakken's link.

The Forward Symposium

Heads of state, military leaders, and great thinkers arrive in Cherage, including familiar faces from previous adventures. Nicodemus espouses a prosperous new world of cooperation, and paints Risur and the PCs as villains who will try to stop them. He succeeds in getting an agreement from several nations to unify and attack Risur, and orders are sent out to begin preparations for an attack within a week. But when Nicodemus opens the floor to discussion of other ways to improve the world with the benefits of newfound cooperation, the group's aligned thoughts start to manifest a hivemind, like the one in Flint.

Philosophers suggest ways to improve the quality of life, economists recommend improving labor efficiency, and politicians propose a solution they've always secretly wanted but never have been able to voice: kill everyone who doesn't pull their weight. The normally abhorrent idea is greeted with near-unanimous approval by the assembled group. Possessing a clear purpose, the hivemind grows a tentacle cocoon around the thinkers and sets out to cull the city of Cherage of all undesirables. It has become the Godmind.

Nicodemus flees in horror, but Brakken—trapped inside the cocoon yet able to resist having his consciousness subsumed—is able to communicate with the party and guide them should they try to save the capital of the nation that has long been Risur's enemy.

While the party can totally sit back and let Cherage be consumed by the psychic vortex of murder-philosophers that value economic efficiency over human life, if they swoop in on their airship and save the day, they'll have planted the seeds for Danor to break free from the Ob's control. Now all they have to do is stop every other country's armies, but that's for Adventure Eleven.

Rewards

The party begins this adventure at 17th level, and should reach 18th level after act one, then 19th level at its end. Use the following guidelines for what resources the PCs have access to, now that they're basically in charge of an entire country. We don't provide much specific treasure in these adventures, though the party can acquire various boons. Any miscellaneous 'loot' is probably better used by lesser subjects of Risur, and as usual, count any such gear the PCs keep against their monetary resources.

At the start of this adventure, the royal coffers can provide the PCs 95,000 gp each. At the beginning of adventure eleven they can each access a further 110,000 gp, and 350,000 gp in adventure twelve. The pace of adventure thirteen isn't conducive to shopping.

CAMPAIGN VARIETY

This far into a campaign, different groups may have very different webs of allies and enemies for the PCs. Consider how each of these NPCs will fit into the campaign from here on.

Alexander Grappa. The mindmaker was likely killed in Adventure Seven, though he has enough mind magic to possibly have survived by burrowing into the subconscious of another Obscurati officer. If the party had a close bond with him, he might fill in the role of Brakken of Heffanita.

Amielle Latimer. The tiefling ghost gunsmith might have flown back to Danor and could be spying on the Obscurati. If she was found out, though, she'll want to stay in Flint to help protect it. However, she doesn't want to be privy to any secrets, because if she's destroyed and rejuvenates among the ghost council, they'll be able to compel her to talk. It might be best to keep her off-stage until the campaign climax, when she can make a pivotal sniper shot to save an endangered PC.

Copperhat the Headless. If he survives, Copperhat remains in the Dreaming, spying for the Voice of Rot and poised to cause chaos in Adventure Twelve.

Kasvarina Varal. If she rejoined the conspiracy, she's with Nicodemus running things. Her focus is on military and defense, and she'll direct the multi-pronged assault on Risur in Adventure Eleven.

If she helped the party escape at the end of Adventure Eight, she likely ended up in Elfaivar, where she and Athrylla Valanar prepare the eladrin enclave Sentosa to resist the Obscurati's world dominion. If the party visits her, they can call upon her loyal dreadnoughts for minor missions throughout the world.

Lya Jierre. Likely a member of the ghost council, Lya adopts the role of chief of staff for Nicodemus, which also keeps her by his side as a bodyguard. Nicodemus intends to place her in charge of Risur once the nation is conquered.

Terakalir. If Pemberton's daughter survived adventure six, she is present on Axis Island, polymorphed to resemble a teenaged human with a mechanical prosthetic arm and eye. She doesn't have a significant role, though.

Tinker Oddcog. If he lives, either as an ally of Risur or of Benedict Pemberton, it would be smart to get him onto Axis Island in Act Two (he might ask to go along, or stow away—since he's so, so tiny—on their ship) so he can put the finishing touches on their airship. He could then disappear in the chaos of battle and show up again to help the party deal with the colossus in the campaign's finale.

Remember to highlight any technological innovations the party gained by recovering his designs, but there is not time for further innovation during the rest of the campaign.

Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill. Viscount Price-Hill still runs the RHC, but will operate 'off-screen' for the rest of the campaign unless your party responded to him favorably. His main role is to provide a foil for the party if they decide to ally with the conspiracy. In that case, he assumes leadership of Risur and tries (likely futilely) to defend the nation.

PROLOGUE:

That Was One Hell of an Apocalypse

The party is assumed to begin *Godmind* in the city of Flint immediately following the end of Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky*. Before the real ‘adventure’ begins, the party needs time to settle in after the climax of defeating Governor Stanfield and disrupting his ritual. A montage of scenes highlights in what ways the world has changed.

World of Ruin

Exploration. Montage.

The world has been shattered. Things are forever changed.

While the PCs witnessed the effects of the ritual firsthand during their conflict with the emergent Obscurati forces, only as the adventure begins does the full breadth of the Obscurati’s grand scheme become obvious. The world has changed; the balance of the planar cosmology is upset and new planes of existence align themselves with the world. As the adventure begins, the PCs should have some opportunity to learn about these changes.

Magical Mishaps

One of the Risuri soldiers tries to give a healing potion to an injured comrade. The man swallows, coughs and writhes, then suffocates and dies (barring a surgery kit and a Heal check DC 30). His throat sealed shut with new flesh, blocking his windpipe.

Any magic the PCs attempt above cantrips and orisons either fails outright or goes awry (10% chance of mishap per spell level; it fails if it doesn’t mishap). Activated magic items have a similar chance of failure.

MEANWHILE — AROUND THE WORLD

Other adventures have started with news of events in Risur and beyond, but now the party is cut off. They might discover this information by divination, but due to She Who Writhes cutting off Risur’s sea lanes, the PCs don’t get any firsthand news for months.

Stable Transition. Unlike Risur, other nations have strong cells of Obscurati agents who made sure their local brands of ancient monsters didn’t wake up and start causing trouble. (Even if the party killed some of the Ob’s officers in Adventure Seven, *Schism*, their underlings probably could have taken over.)

Magic now functions normally in Danor and the Malice Lands.

Danor is firmly in league with Nicodemus the Gnostic, who reveals himself and pens letters to several newspapers to explain what has happened (in layman’s terms) and encourage cooperation. He does not assume an official government position, but supported by **Sovereign Han Jierre**, Nicodemus lets the people of the world know that he has answers to their many questions, and invites the leaders and most prominent thinkers of these nations—all except Risur and Ber, which cannot be reached because of She Who Writhes.

I Knew This Was Coming. The eschatologist movement in Drakr prevents almost any chaos, as many simply accept what they’ve seen as another step towards the End Times. In the far north of Drakr, though, **Grandis Komanov** encourages her radical eschatologist sect to raise an apocalyptic army of the dead to sweep across the world. Komanov’s doomsday army is further detailed in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*.

Damned Lies. Crisillyir’s ruling hierarchs have long been subtly swayed by the Obscurati, but the nation sees the greatest turmoil of any. All those who would have resisted were visited in the hour of transition and killed. They left behind

cleverly-forged suicide notes, confessing that their faith was a lie, and that they used myths of gods only so they could hold onto power over the common people.

Meanwhile, the demon **Ashima-Shimtu**, imprisoned for over a thousand years in the *Crypta Hereticarum*, uses blood magic to manifest around Crisillyir and disseminate the *sacrament of apotheosis* (see Adventure Eight). As she hoped, desperate people caught in crises of faith use the ritual to call forth their gods and put them on trial. The fallout of the *sacrament of apotheosis* and its use is further detailed in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*.

Wait and See. The nation of Ber suffers small upheavals as Obscurati agents attempt to seize control, but they are brutally quashed by Bruse Shantus. Sensing the precariousness of his position, he charismatically proclaims that the darkening of the sky heralds that this is Ber’s time to prosper. Since many of the Beran races possess darkvision, the nation of recently-savage people actually remains mostly orderly. Bruse Shantus is wary of Nicodemus, but plans to attend the conference in hopes of maintaining his rule without unnecessary war.

Old Wounds, New Wounds. Even the eladrin living in the colonies that have overtaken Elfaivar respond positively to Nicodemus and the Obscurati. However, those eladrin who hid for centuries in the fey enclaves—which existed between this world and the Dreaming—begin to stream into colonial cities, telling of their enclaves splitting apart and disintegrating. Thousands died. Only one enclave survived; **Athrylla Valanar**, matriarch of the Sentosa enclave, managed to pull her city back into the real world as the Ob’s ritual cut the Dreaming off from the rest of reality. She urges her people not to be tricked, but her voice is mostly drowned out by optimism for reconciliation.



A centuries-old eladrin warrior, Asrabey became one of the many husbands of Kasvarina Varal. For years he trained, and undertook many daring raids until he became famous as one of the greatest eladrin warriors in the world. Two centuries ago Kasvarina sent Asrabey to Risur to offer his services to the Unseen Court, and he unwittingly acted as a critical source of information and influence for the Obscurati.

Stern and unsympathetic to outsiders, Asrabey displays few emotions other than righteous fury. Even with his wife he felt not so much love as intense devotion. After Kasvarina lost her memories, Asrabey rescued her and protected her. However, his foremost loyalty was to the woman he'd married, and *that* Kasvarina was co-running the Obscurati. In the new world order, Asrabey decides that he must serve the Obscurati, which means betraying the party.



An eladrin woman just over 100 years old, Hana can fly at will, control winds, and speak with birds, plus since she received the favor of a member of the Unseen Court she can wield offensive weather magic. Bitter for her treatment by her Danoran 'foster family,' she originally used her powers to sabotage Danor-owned industry, earning the moniker "fey terrorist." After the Great Eclipse she puts aside her political aspirations in order to help Flint defend itself from the Obscurati, though her ultimate loyalty lies with the common people and the followers of traditional druidic faiths.



WHAT'S UP WITH CAULDRON HILL?

The cursed mountain once had a close connection to the Bleak Gate, which was a dark reflection of the real world. That reflection was created by Av, the plane of life with traits of Dreams and Reflections. The Obscurati shifted Av to fill the role of plane of death, which put it at the edge of the 'solar system' of planes that feed energy into the real world.

This has the effect that the old Bleak Gate and Dreaming have been cut off from the rest of the world. They were pulled into the mass of doomed planes around the Gyre. With no specific plane for the dead to linger in, their spirits remain on the real world and are drawn toward places like Cauldron Hill where they can find passage to Av, since it is the new plane of death. Most of these spirits are invisible, but can be seen in reflections.

But Av is still metaphysically linked to the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate, and so every time the Gyre passes above Cauldron Hill (and similar places where 'the veil is thin'), all the spirits collected there are pulled into their appropriate afterlife. Some pieces of the physical world are also torn away and sucked across the cosmos into the Gyre. Within a few weeks, the peak of Cauldron Hill is bald, stripped of all its trees.

Going there during 'noon' when the Gyre is overhead is perilous. PCs would probably just suffer some negative energy damage and feel vertigo. Weaker people might be sucked bodily into the Gyre, lost forever.

Permanent magic items function mostly normally, though perhaps with odd side-effects. Simple *detect magic* reveals that magical auras are almost the same, but most spells are suffused with subtly unfamiliar magic.

Any spellcaster feels that with enough time they could figure out how to use this new mana safely, but it would take days. Likewise, old magic items could be used safely with a bit of training, but unsuspecting people will suffer a lot of accidents in the coming days.

Gyre-Rise

The night sky is black, or rather closer to slate gray. Close observation (Perception DC 24) reveals a darker disk of pitch black where the moon used to be, and only four stars are visible. Skyseers immediately sense that this isn't the same moon, and recognize that three stars are in the location previously held by the planet Apet (and its ring Reida), while the other is where Mavisha used to be. But they aren't the same planets.

A Knowledge (the planes) (DC 34) check recognizes that the energy of the moon matches an obscure star known as Mojang. This was actually the same purple star that the Danoran telescope was pointed at on Axis Island two years ago (see Adventure One, *The Island at the Axis of the World*), though that star was only ever a dot, not the size of the moon's disk. The other planets match stars known as Fourmyle, Baden, Illocus, and Ostea.

After a few hours, when the sun should rise, instead the Gyre ascends into view. The churning Gyre provides as much illumination as a full moon used to, so the new 'day' is bright enough for people to see dimly. Nevertheless, people around Flint panic at the missing sun and start fires. If the party organizes firefighting efforts they can contain most of the blazes, but left alone 10% of the city burns over the next three 'days.'

Stormclouds begin to form over Cauldron Hill, but when the Gyre is directly over the city, no rain falls. Instead, with cracks audible even from the Governor's Island, trees are torn from the stone and carried into the sky. Any Spirit Medium in the party gets a lurching sense of a lot of spirit energy leaving the long-cursed mountain. A Skyseer looking at those clouds recognizes that they are somehow tied to the planet Av, once plane of Life. Indeed, someone with a telescope might spot a tiny dark speck nearly motionless in front of the Gyre. This is the plane of Av, ripped from its old orbit and planted where Nem, the old plane of death, used to be.

Throughout the rest of the day another three planets wheel across the sky in the positions normally held by Jiese, Avilona, and Urim. Jiese is actually still the same; the others are again obscure stars: Perlocus and Ratios.

If the party doesn't figure out what these stars are, a royal astronomer will eventually contact them in about a week with the information.

Fey Affairs

Asrabey Varal and Gale find the party and inform them that it's still not possible to reach The Dreaming, and that their natural eladrin teleportation ability doesn't work anymore. They are accompanied by a Halfling spirit medium named **Fipperry Leafbrowner**, who has a small reputation in Flint for being willing to contact the recently departed for a small fee. Gale introduces Fipperry, and then guides the PCs to the body of someone who died in the recent fighting. She hands Fipperry a handful of coins, and while he calls out elaborately for the spirit of the departed, she produces a mirror.

In the reflection, the spirits of the dead are reflected. Also, she and Asrabey (and any other eladrin) can slightly affect the spirit's reflection by moving their arms through the air where it would be if it were visible. Asrabey says he feels cut off from the Dreaming, but connected to somewhere *else*.

Gale offers to help the city however the party thinks she can. Asrabey excuses himself, saying he is only useful in battle, and that he will return when his sword is needed again.

The medium Fippery excuses himself and starts to follow Asrabey, but the eladrin glowers and the Halfling runs off. (Fippery will return briefly in Adventure Twelve, and his presence now allows him to later contact the party via *sending*.)

Beshela, Archfey of the Sea who brought She Who Writhes to attack the Danoran fleet, vanished into the sea at the end of that battle.

No News is Bad News

Without teleportation or sending magic, at least for now all news must be delivered on foot. Couriers dispatched now by train could get word back from Bole in two days. News from Slate will require horseback travel, and take two weeks or more. News from distant Shale would take over a month to arrive, though by then Risuri mages will have figured out how to cast *sending* and *teleport* again.

The party likely dispatches a ship, perhaps the swift *Impossible*, to get news. Less than half an hour after the messenger ship leaves port, a fire is visible far out to sea. Gale, likely the only person capable of flight, heads out, and returns a couple hours later carrying a single survivor—the ship's young cabin boy, the only person she could physically carry. The boy says they were set upon by She Who Writhes.

Any further attempts to sail through the seas of Risur meet with similar fates if the vessels go into water deeper than thirty feet. The fey titan is able to sense intruders into her domain for hundreds of miles, and the new nature of teleportation magic allows her to catch even the fastest ships.

Who's in Charge Here?

Roland Stanfield is dead. Depending on the events of the previous adventure, Flint could be left without a governing body. **Principal Minister Harkover Lee**, advisor to the monarch, notices that people are confused who to report to, and suggests that whichever PC is now king or queen name at least an interim governor of Flint.

Possible options for a new governor include:

- ♦ **Captain Dale, Guardian of Cauldron Hill:** A likely staunch ally of the PCs, Dale makes for a good military head during the crisis. He focuses on preparing for supernatural threats, and he pursues a personal project of forcibly evacuating squatters from Cauldron Hill, which keep the various monsters in the woods and atop the mountain from causing trouble. However, he neglects more mundane concerns like maintaining infrastructure and paying people.

The city is safe but the people are discontent, and the imminent refugee flood from the south angers the wealthy since Dale won't let them shove the newcomers into slums on Cauldron Hill.

CHIEF INSPECTOR
STOVER DELFT



The party's former boss now obeys their commands. Delft handles the logistical and political drudgery of the Royal Homeland Constabulary, and will deploy his constables throughout the nation and world to get the party whatever information they need (though the new world's changes in magic will make some intelligence slow in coming). He's damned proud of the party, and is fully confident their heroics will save the nation.

Though normally rather easy-going, he gets squinty and condescending when people obstruct important affairs because of politics. Delft chews tobacco, and thinks he looks charming if he grins while sucking on tobacco juices. After several unpleasant run-ins with

mimics (including losing a chunk of his leg seventeen years ago), he walks with a cane, which he'll bang against inanimate objects before he gets too near to them, in case they're waiting to get him.

PRINCIPAL MINISTER
HARKOVER LEE



Perhaps the most powerful mage in Risur (aside from any PC spellcasters), Lee acts as bodyguard and chief of staff to the king. Straight-backed and virile despite being in his 60s, Lee speaks crisply and passionately in a slight Ber-tinged accent, and was said to be quite the ladykiller in his youth. He always dresses in reds and golds and carries a solid gold orb tucked into his robes. He never eats or drinks in public. He was once known as the dragon tyrant Inacht the Hex-Eater, but he has abandoned that identity and is now loyal to Risur.

THAMES GRIMSLEY



A grizzled sailor, still with a full head of hair in his early 50s, Grimsley heads the dock workers guild in Flint and advocates for worker interests in general. He took a gash from a policeman's knife on the side of his face in a docker riot a few years ago. A couple of months working at a theater as a child gave him a very stylized public speaking voice, one full of unnecessary, melodramatic pauses.





♦ **Stover Delft, Head of Flint Royal Homeland Constabulary:**

The PCs have likely grown beyond needing Delft's guidance, and far outclass him in terms of power. Delft will keep Flint stable and is a good moderate contender for the governor position.

He has a great head for logistics, has been in the streets enough to sympathize with the working class, but has done enough politicking to keep those in power happy. But Delft is just a safe choice, and he has no vision for the city. Nothing gets worse, which might be good enough for now.

♦ **Thames Grimsley, Head of the Dockers Union:** Thames takes an active role in reorganizing the city and putting more power in the hands of the people. His governing style rubs major business owners the wrong way, but it does keep the citizens content during the crisis. He and a bunch of his friends will become very rich, but eventually he'll become beholden to the existing power groups, both legal and criminal. During the campaign's final adventure, Obscurati agents might blackmail him into betraying the party.

♦ **Hana "Gale" Soliogn, Alleged Fey Terrorist:** Nearly everyone would hate the idea of Gale becoming governor, but that pervasive distrust and fear would motivate her to never waver in pursuing what is best for Flint. She's sympathetic to working people, but was raised in Danor to handle high society. She has fought for her life a few times and has no fear of organized crime, and her own unexplained magical flight drives her to understand how the magic of the new world could benefit the city.

A Gale governorship would be marred by early protests and conflict, but if the party steps in and offers regular shows of support, she overcomes these obstacles, earns the trust of disparate groups in the city, and pushes for transformative leadership. The city will begin training youths in simple magic (while including more broad education to improve their value to the economy and their understanding of how the world works), and if given enough time the city of Flint will become a progressive beacon.

♦ **Catherine Romana, Obscurati Traitor:** Catherine Romana might have survived and escaped after attempting to assassinate the king in Adventure Nine. If so she disguises herself with illusions and adopts the identity of **Dextra Adienne**, an orphan noble (who Romana murders as part of her cover story). 'Dextra' is firmly on the side of existing power groups, but she promises to keep industrialists and financiers happy so that Flint will cheaply provide supplies for what she expects is an imminent war with Danor. Romana is a consummate opportunist, and only ever joined the Obscurati because she thought it would bring her more power.

♦ **Other Choices:** The party could come up with a myriad of alternate solutions to the leadership conundrum. Most other NPCs who might be qualified aren't Flint locals. (Morgan Cippiano is, but would decline if offered.) Appointing an outsider, organizing a council of representatives, or waiting to hold elections don't give the city solid leadership quickly enough, so for a time chaos will grip the city.

If none of the PCs wear the crown, whoever is the monarch chooses Captain Dale.

And Risur is my Nation

Late in the day, a courier named **Gully Foyle** finds the PCs and frantically asks for help. He's been teleporting. A few times when he was in a rush and he tried to weave through a crowd, he found himself simply stepping straight to a spot he could see. He doesn't know if this is safe, but he can't stop doing it.

By doing a bit of testing, the party can find out he can teleport anywhere he could walk or climb to, even across small bodies of water like Parity Lake or the Stanfield Canal (Delft recommends they should probably rename that). He can't teleport through a fence, through bars of a cell, or onto the roof of a stranger's house, but he can teleport anywhere public or that he has permission from the owner. He also can't cross Flint Harbor or jaunt to the Ayres Islands. (This is because he cannot teleport into claimed territory, and She Who Writhes claims the seas as her own.)

Most creatures can only use this ability once per day as a standard action, and they need 8 hours practicing, after which they must succeed a Dexterity or Wisdom check (DC 20) to learn how to use this ability. Any character with the Run or Mobility feats (or otherwise with a focus on rapid movement) doesn't need to practice to pick up the skill, and can use it once every five minutes.

Most common people hear rumors of this new power but its use takes months to become widespread.

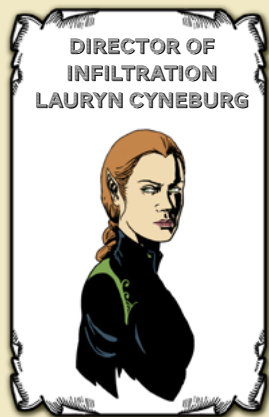
For her part, **Lauryn Cyneburg**, the RHC's minister of infiltration, jokingly offers to give Gully her job, then less-jokingly suggests they lock the man up in a lightless cell so he can't share the secret. She proposes building thin towers across the nation, separated by miles but tall enough to be seen from the next nearest tower, to allow rapid teleportation by approved forces.

Bakers Gone Wild

That night Delft reports of the first outbreak of violence, which was an odd one. A baker's guild meeting somehow led to two dozen bakers roaming the streets, marching in odd lockstep, breaking into businesses and taking various baking ingredients—flour, butter, sugar, and the like. When police tried to arrest them, the bakers fended them off with exceptional teamwork. The police were forced to withdraw, and they say the perpetrators returned to their guildhouse and have been baking all day.

Though over seventy years old, as a half-elf Lauryn only betrays her age with the weariness of her eyes. As the RHC's Director of Infiltration, her expertise in teleportation has seen her delivering agents to missions around the world, and she's tired of seeing them not return when things go wrong.

Lauryn carries herself with an odd mix of stiffness and informality. She'll never let her guard down or expose her own emotions, and she hates jokes because she hates laughing. Though she shows little respect for anyone, not even her superiors, she long ago decided that she had to pick something to care about, or else she'd just end up teleporting around to no purpose. So she chose Risur, because its people don't take themselves too seriously.





MECHANICS OF A BROKEN AGE

The following is a breakdown of mechanics that have changed since the completion of the Obscurati's ritual. Trial and error are the best manner for a PC to discover these mechanical changes, while some high level divination magic may assist in ascertaining the exact changes to the world.

We suggest you let the players discover this information through trial and error, then give them the handout Reality Shift from Appendix C as a reminder. Alternately, a few weeks after the Great Eclipse the PCs get a report from **Asher Henton**, Distinguished Professor of Otherworldly Physics at Kitham University in Shale. In any event, Professor Henton will seek out the new monarch and offer his expertise in understanding the new cosmos.

Applied Astronomy: Characters with the Applied Astronomist prestige class get new powers, detailed in Reality Shift in Appendix C.

Black Hole Sun: Any spell with the light descriptor is 1 level higher, and no spell can produce light for more than 5 minutes. (Magic can produce fire, which emits light; only magical light is affected). All existing magical light effects such as *continual flame* end.

In the new sunless world, *light* is no longer a cantrip, and even high-level heroes might need to rely on torches or lanterns for illumination.

Blood of Ostea: All creatures immediately stabilize when rendered below 0 hit points. Creatures do not die when they reach a negative hit point score equal to their Constitution. To slay a creature, one *must* perform a *coup de grace* on it.

All creatures reduced to 0 or below immediate heal up to 1 hit point after 1 minute unless they are killed first. Creatures regain all hit points after eight hours of consecutive rest.

Death is Death: Slain deva no longer reincarnate.

Flight of the Fey: Eladrin lose access to their racial 'fey step' ability. Instead, all attacks made by eladrin gain the *ghost touch* weapon property due to their connection to the new plane of Death.

Magic Mishaps: As detailed above, whenever a character casts a spell more powerful than a cantrip (either personally or with a magic item), there's a 10% chance per spell level that the effect fails. If it doesn't fail, it causes a mishap of some sort. Supernatural and spell-like abilities function normally.

A character who can use magic of some sort can spend 8 hours researching and practicing, then make a Spellcraft check (DC 20). If he fails he can try again. If successful he becomes able to safely use magic of up to 1st level, with no special chance of failure or mishap. Each further day he can make additional checks to regain mastery of the next higher level of magic, up to whatever is the highest level he knows. A character can only attempt one of these checks per day.

Alternately, a character who has mastered a level of magic can spend 8 hours to aid another character with his or her mastery attempts, granting a +5 bonus to that character's check.

Existing magic items that cast spells are dangerous, but can be rendered safe with a moment's concentration by a spellcaster capable of casting spells of sufficient level.

Reign of the Rational: All creatures gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy check if they use rational appeals rather than emotional ones. All creatures take a -5 penalty to Intimidate and Sense Motive checks.

Impossibly Distant: Planar travel works to any of the new worlds in orbit, but all other planes are out of range. The Dreaming and the Bleak Gate are inaccessible. The Gyre can be reached from various areas in the world, but travel is perilous, and one-way. Summoning spells work normally, though.

Teleportation and Communication. Gold no longer blocks teleportation. However it is not possible to teleport to a location unless you can either see it or you have traveled to it before. Any travel before the Ob's ritual does not count, and scrying is insufficient, so it won't be possible to teleport around the world for a while, until the PCs travel the traditional way first.

Similarly, magical communication cannot contact any creature unless you can either see it or have interacted with it since the Ob's ritual.

You cannot teleport to a spot that is owned or otherwise controlled by someone who has chosen to bar teleporting intruders.

What constitutes ownership tends to follow social consensus. Streets and forests are public unless signs are prominently posted or fences (or even token lines of rope) are set up. The owner of an area can make exceptions for specific creatures or groups of creatures. This restriction only bars teleporting into an area, not out of an area or within an area.

Fourmyle Jaunting. Every creature is able to *jaunt*—to teleport within line of sight as an innate spell-like ability. As a standard action once per day, a character can teleport anywhere he has line of sight to. He cannot teleport to a spot he could not reach normally (e.g., you have to be able to walk or climb there, so no teleporting through a barred cage). He also cannot teleport if he's being held.

A character with the feat Mobility or Run (or who otherwise focuses on fast movement) can instead use this ability once every five minutes.

(There will be a rash of robberies in the coming weeks until word spreads that all you have to do is *think* and you can bar teleporters from your property.)

Three Miles is so Last Age: Spells that restore life to the dead are no longer limited by the body having to travel less than three miles from where it died. However, spirits of the dead are visible in mirrors, standing near their bodies. After a few days, these spirits wander off and might be glimpsed occasionally in reflections.

Wings of Liberty: Magical flight is now possible. Spells such as *fly*, *levitation*, and *overland flight* now have their normal duration, and their spell level is reduced by 1.



If the party goes to them, the bakers mostly ignore them unless attacked. The two dozen men and women move with eerie unity, and if asked questions about baking they respond in unison.

The next day, the party will get word of a larger protest forming in Parity Lake, where newly-emboldened factory workers have invited the entire district to come find the factory owners and force them to provide better pay and safety conditions. Delft worries there might be a riot, and thinks the party has the best chance to stop bloodshed.

Formation of a Hivemind

Social/Action. Tactical. Level 18.

A protest turns riotous, then far more dangerous when a monster appears.

Not one to let a little world-altering-event threaten her profits, factory owner **Jaya Isfeld** has instituted a lock-in. Similar to the events in Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*, factory workers have been forcibly incarcerated within their workplaces, and only allowed to leave when a replacement staff member comes to take their shifts.

Unforeseen Consequence

The Obscurati spent years scanning the heavens for stars that carried the right mix of magical energies. Then they wove magic to pull planets from around that star into orbit with this world, so it could share its energies. The plane of Ratios was selected because it would lead to calmer and more logical discussion. Tests using artificial demiplanes found the world was a barren, lifeless husk, which meant it would be safe to link to our world, though a few researchers mentioned hearing whispers in their mind.

What was left undiscovered by the Ob was a lingering taint of the Gidim, an extraplanar alien race composed of thoughts, which must feed on a diverse diet of sentience to survive. The Gidim had long-since found Ratios and stripped the world bare. Removing its original inhabitants, and siphoning their thoughts away, the Gidim left the world, but also implanted a latent strand of their hive psyche on the world. It lay dormant until the thoughts of large groups began to feed it.

With the new cosmology established, the Gidim have become aware of the presence of a whole civilization of thinking minds, ripe for consumption. It will be a few weeks before the Gidim begin actually arriving on this world, but for now the latent Gidim consciousness on Ratios has crept into the material world. When large groups of like-minded individuals group together, they start to think in unison. The more focused the thoughts of the group are, the stronger the bond. This is called a **gestalt**, and is mostly harmless.

When emotionally charged, though, gestalts can generate **hive-minds**—thoughtform physical entities whose powers and strength are commensurate with the number of thinking minds. As the PCs arrive at Parity Lake to deal with the mob, one of these hiveminds manifests.

Rabble Rabble Rabble

By the time the PCs arrive, the mob has grown to encompass almost five-hundred angered workers; including family, friends, and people who just want to shout against the injustices of the new world. The mob is led by Thames Grimsley who is fed up with the governing system and is finally ready to let his mob loose and forcibly enter the factories to free imprisoned workers. He's busy shouting threats of how if the crowd finds the owners, he can't be held responsible for any bloodshed.

A group of several dozen police officers form a loose blockade between the Isfeld Drilling Cortège and the growing mob. As the PCs arrive, the mob is pushing against the police line, and the officers are shaken and firing off repeated warning shots into the sky. Thames Grimsley shouts at the officers to abandon their posts so no one will get hurt.

Unless the PCs take drastic action against the mob, the situation quickly escalates. A stray rock strikes a police officer and as another officer moves to help him up, a second rock strikes. The downed officer responds with a shot into the crowd, which strikes one of the worker's wives in the gut. From here the mob makes a full push against the police officers, only to be repelled by a volley of gunfire.

Immediately, the mob begins to stamp their feet in unison and chant, "Let our people out! Let us out! Let us out!" The air feels thick with intention. The people in the mob don't notice anything amiss, but the party can spot something huge moving inside the windows of the drilling factory, which flicker with turquoise light. The mob grabs the officers and start dragging them into the center of their mass, yanking at their limbs and breaking bones as the cops scream in panic.

Three rounds after this, the Labor Hivemind bursts out from the inside of the drilling factory, collapsing the entire facing wall onto the police and mob.

Calming and Dispersing

Before the hivemind attacks, the party can attempt Diplomacy or Intimidate checks (DC 35) to either calm the escalating violence or panic some protesters into fleeing. Specifically focusing on Thames Grimsley and succeeding a check snaps the man out of the psychic gestalt, and thereafter the party gets a +5 bonus to the other checks to stop the crowd.

While it's impossible to fully disperse the crowd by talking or intimidation, use of these skills lowers the conviction of the mob. For every success the party has against the mob, the Labor Hivemind gain a negative level, to a maximum of three.

Using magic to calm them is likely ineffective (both because the party probably has no more than 1st level spells available right now, and because the crowd uses the hivemind's Will save, below). Attacking the crowd just improve their conviction and causes the hivemind to attack early.

Mind Strike

The Labor Hivemind manifests inside the factory. A shell of thought-form flesh forms around the workers trapped inside, and massive tentacles smash through walls to help the people be free. Afterward the hivemind is driven to find the owners of the factory and kill them, but it will kill anyone who gets in its way.

The mob remains oblivious to their psychic construct, and attempts to convince them of its presence only irritate the mob and its leader, who see the PCs as trying to make them look simple.

Three rounds after the gunshot triggers the hivemind's creation, it smashes through the factory wall in a flash of blue light. Characters standing with the police can attempt to get out of the way (Reflex DC 24), or be crushed by the falling wall for 5d10 points of damage.

The clearing dust reveals the labor hivemind, a translucent blue mass of brain matter with eight tentacles that end in crude, fleshy hammers and sickles. Eyes twitch along the surface of the orb, and where they look, people's flesh dissolves into ash.

**Labor Hivemind**

CR 17

XP 104,400

N Gargantuan aberration (extraplanar)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifestense, true seeing; Perception +35**Defense****AC** 31, touch 12, flat-footed 25 (+6 Dex, +19 natural, -4 size)**hp** 325 (26d8+208)**Fort** +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +21**Defensive Abilities** all-around vision; **SR** 28**Offense****Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect, elevation limit 20 ft.)**Melee** 8 tentacles +23 (3d6+8/19-20/x3 plus grab)**Ranged** 4 psychic bolts +20 ranged touch (6d6 plus conduit)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.**Statistics****Str** 27, **Dex** 22, **Con** 27, **Int** 28, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 26**Base Atk** +19; **CMB** +29 (+33 trip); **CMD** 45 (cannot be tripped)**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Exhausting Critical, Flyby Attack, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Snatch Arrows, Staggering Critical, Tiring Critical, Weapon Focus (tentacle)**Skills** Acrobatics +35, Bluff +34, Diplomacy +34, Fly +39, Knowledge (arcana) +35, Knowledge (engineering) +35, Knowledge (local) +35, Knowledge (nature) +35, Knowledge (nobility) +35, Knowledge (religion) +35, Perception +35, Sense Motive +32, Spellcraft +38**Languages** telepathy 200 ft.**SQ** thoughtform**Special Abilities****Mental Overdrive (Su)** Whenever the hivemind sustains a grapple, it begins rewriting the target's brain. The target must make a Will save (DC 31) or take 2d4 points of Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom damage. If a creature with 10 or more hit dice has any of these stats reduced below 0 by the drain, the labor hivemind grows an additional tentacle, heals 26 hit points, and may make an additional attack as a full attack action.**Psychic Bolts (Su)** The hivemind can produce up to 4 psychic bolts of force each round with a range of 100 feet. A creature struck by one of the labor hivemind's psychic bolts must make a Will save (DC 31) or become a conduit for the hivemind. A conduit acts normally, but is outlined in a halo of turquoise light. At the end of a conduit's round, it can make a Will save (DC 31) to shake off the effect.

During its turn (including the turn it created new conduits), the hivemind can do one of the following through all creatures currently acting as its psychic conduit:

- Make an attack using one of its tentacles (reducing its normal number of attacks by one), centering the attack on the conduit instead of itself. A tentacle attack from a conduit can still grapple an enemy and acts as though it were from the hivemind, though it falls off if the conduit moves out of range or breaks free of this effect.
- Cast any spell or spell-like ability currently available to the conduit. Using this spell does not prevent the conduit from using it during their action.

Slavery of Thought (Su) Half of the labor hivemind's tentacle attacks are physical, while the other half are a psychic attempt to ensnare the target. Because of this, creatures targeted by a CMB check from the labor hivemind do not fully benefit from *freedom of movement*. Creatures gain a +10 bonus on their CMD and a +10 bonus on CMB checks to gain control of a grapple instead of the normal effects of *freedom of movement*.**Thoughtform (Su)** A creature within 30 feet of the hivemind can spend a move action to try to influence the hivemind with its thoughts. The creature makes an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check and adds its level, which sets the DC of a saving throw the target must make. The attacking creature chooses whether the target makes a Fortitude, Reflex, or Will save.• **Fortitude:** If the save is failed, the hivemind loses incorporeal until the start of the PC's next turn. If it's flying, it must land or fall.• **Reflex:** If the save is failed, the creature can force the hivemind drop all of its grapples (including those from conduits), and move the hivemind 10 feet in any direction.• **Will:** If the save is failed, the creature can cause any number of creatures affecting by the hivemind's conduit ability to cease being conduits. Additionally, the creature cannot be perceived by the hivemind for one round.**Tactics**

The hivemind has all the knowledge of its creators, so it understands the PCs are the immediate threat. It begins combat by unleashing a series of psychic bolts at any PC it can see, preferring to target those in the middle of the group first. From then on, the hivemind tries to use conduits and its own tentacles to grapple every single PC, then use of its Mental Overdrive ability to consume them.

What the hivemind does not expect is that the PCs might be familiar with its Gidim nature. As the PCs have likely had experience with thoughtform creatures in previous adventures, they may think to use thought against the creature.

Any PCs reduced to 0 hit points are dropped and left to die (though the new world traits for healing prevents that), while PCs who are reduced to 0 in a mental ability score are absorbed. Since the party is likely operating without most of their spells, this fight might be overwhelming, forcing them to fall back and find new ways to deal with the monster—cannons, rifle fusillades, or explosives.

Finally, the party can substantially weaken the hivemind if they're willing to attack the crowd of protesters. In this grim scenario, the protesters are effectively noncombatants with 4 HP. Every twenty who are killed impose a negative level on the hivemind.

Aftermath

Slaying the hivemind unleashing psionic boom. Everyone in the crowd that created the thoughtform creature suffers temporary backlash (1d6 points of damage to Charisma, Intelligence, and Wisdom), leaving them dazed and confused for the next several days. After 3 days of rest, Thames Grimsley (if he survived) approaches the PCs and apologizes to them for the display, though he reinforces that something needs to be done as the people are scared of this new world.

If the party is defeated, eventually the rest of the city manages to kill the creature, and any PCs who were absorbed can be rescued, though without magical healing they'll need many days to fully recover.

In either case, people notice a few other incidents of telepathic gestalts linking together groups of people. Without guidance from the PCs, the city suffers a few other attacks by hivemind monsters, and people become paranoid of going out in public or gathering in groups larger than 3 or 4. If the party offers reassurance and explanation, they can convince people not to panic, and can train the public to recognize the early signs of a gestalt and how to break free of it. Nevertheless, police break up groups larger than a dozen (though they realize the problem this causes when prisoners start forming gestalts).



Small Things

Social. Montage.

Various things that happen in the coming days and weeks.

Some time after the hivemind rampage, Morgan Cippiano politely requests an audience. In the past he's been used to inviting the PCs to meet him, but he respects their authority. Regardless of whether the party has been friendly or antagonistic with his branch of The Family, he has the same proposal. He suggests that some persistent opposition from the city's criminal element will help keep things unsteady; whoever Governor Stanfield worked for wanted everyone to get along, so perhaps some discord will be good for the soul.

Each of the four fey titans detailed in the next act prevents some part of Risur's economy from functioning right.

Morgan Cippiano heads the local branch of the Family crime syndicate, based out of Crisillyir. Indeed, he's a devout Clericist, but has to act without guidance from the hierarchs now that communication is cut off. Though gruff-voiced and cocky, Morgan has an unusual fascination with fashion. He rejects trends, but has a good eye for classical styles that people of any culture can appreciate. He hopes someday to be seen as a father figure to his community, but isn't above ordering some throats slit to keep the right people safe.



The fires in the Ash Wolf's forest starves Risur of lumber, now in high demand as people hope to drive back the perpetual gloom. Wood is also needed for ship-building, paper, and even cooking. The first effects get noticed after two weeks. If the party doesn't deal with the titan within a month, there will be major shortages, and after two months people start chopping down Flint's own forests en masse.

The Father of Thunder's stampede disrupts Risur's crops and harvests. After two weeks there's still plenty of grain and vegetables, but meat basically disappears from shops. After a month people start to hoard food, and after two months famine grips the nation.

Granny Allswell's gremlins wreak havoc with mines in the Anthras Mountains. After two weeks every industry reliant on steel or stone slows to a crawl. After a month people start having to cannibalize existing items to perform basic repairs, and after two months mass riots occur in Flint as factories close and leave families unpaid and unable to support themselves.

All sea trade is blocked by She Who Writhes, so after two weeks prices spike for foreign luxuries like Elfaivaran fruit, high-quality Drakran firedust, or leaf of Nicodemus from the Yerasol Isles. After a month, Risur depletes its own reserves of spell and ritual components, since it imports heavily from Crisillyir; magic items that normally cost under 2,000 gp have their costs doubled. After two months, every spell with a material component costs at least 5 gp to cast.

If the party completely dallies, in three months the Obscurati organize a fleet action to kill She Who Writhes, and then they invade Risur.



ACT ONE: Against the Titans

Legendary forces from ages past stir across the nation. Awoken by a shared sense of unease at the changes to the world, the Fey Titans of old have each risen from their long torpor and have begun to wreak havoc. All but the Voice of Rot—who is oddly absent—damage the stability of the country, complicating the party's ability to stand against the Ob.

In this act, the city of Bole is a hub of fey titan activity, with the Ash Wolf threatening the Antwalk Thicket to the east, the Father of Thunder tromping through croplands to the west, and Granny Allswell's gremlins disrupting mining and dams to the south. The party must also deal with She Who Writhes in the seas around Risur, but advisors suggest they wait to subdue that titan last, because at least she's keeping the Danorans at bay.

Rather than follow a pre-set order, you should read each of the Fey Titan encounters listed below. Each encounter begins with a description of the effect the titan has on Risur. PCs should judge which of the threats they deem to be highest priority, and deal with those encounters in order. Cautious PCs might wait a week or two until their spellcasting allies regain use of their magic, but doing so risks letting the titans run amok.

Refugee Crisis

Exploration. Montage.

News travels slowly once again, and most is delivered by refugees fleeing devastation around Bole.

The first word of trouble in Bole arrives as the Gyre sets, less than 24 hours after the Obscurati's ritual. **Tad Hilly**, owner of the Thinking Man's Tavern in Flint's Bosum Strand district, has old family ties to Bole, and so in the weeks after the Great Eclipse, many refugees congregate there. The party only hears vague rumors unless they assign someone to check out the tavern, or if they personally go.

The first night, porters who came in on the railroad spread rumors that Bole's druids sensed something amiss, that storms of unheard-of power are brewing to the west, forest fires were spotted over the horizon to the east, and that a dozen men dressed like miners were found floating dead in the Slywater River, a tributary of the Great Delve River. A Knowledge (local) check (DC 20) recalls that the Slywater was dammed upstream in the Anthras Mountains a few decades ago as part of new mining operations.

On the second day, hundreds of refugees arrive. They'd heard rumors that, somehow, Flint still had a sun. In any case, they're happy to be in a bigger city, away from the eerie woods that surround Bole. Ominously, people actually haven't seen *any* fey in the forest, as if they knew something bad was coming and fled.

On the third day, the trains from Bole are overloaded with a thousand refugees. The people have no doubt that a great disaster will soon befall their city, though there are only a few eyewitnesses with useful information. By chance—or perhaps by a sympathetic, psionic link—they've congregated in Tad Hilly's tavern.

First-Hand Accounts

With a bit of digging into the arrivals, the PCs find a few outspoken refugees telling their stories in the Thinking Man's Tavern.

Ash Wolf in the Antwalk Thicket

Barnaby Krist is something of a folk legend in Bole, a hunter of repute with a strong stomach for drinking and a stronger mouth for telling stories. Almost seven-feet tall and seemingly made up of scars and body hair, Barnaby speaks with a heavy accent that he says is the by-product of 'true forest folk'.

He explains that he saw distant fires and climbed to an overlook to see the extent of the blaze. From miles away he noticed that the fire was spreading outward in a ring, which isn't how forest fires travel. They follow the wind. Something was lighting the fires. He then asks for a drink to loosen his tongue before he shares his big reveal.

"On m'a way oout of de forest, I saw a black pup runnin' at me. Naw, pup is a bad word, cause it was the size of that stuffed bear I used ta have in me home. I thought it was getting' away from dat big fire, cause der was smoke coming off da beast's back. No flame, just smoke. It was like they may'a been on fire afore, and dem eyes still glowed, ya see? Still burned from within. I hollered at it and it turnt off, but I seen it prancin' in front o' dat fire."



The legends about the Ash Wolf (Knowledge (history or nature) DC 25) tell of the Smoldering Wolves, akin to dire wolves with an aura of perpetual smoke that follows them. When wounded or enraged, they burst into flame and viciously fight to the death. Some stories say they can speak, but they only ever seem concerned with hunting, or with driving off those who threaten their father. They dance when near flames because their mother was caught in a forest fire and let herself become the flames. Their father only ever stirs when there are mighty blazes, in hopes of seeing his lost mate again.

As a hunter, Barnaby is quite familiar with the local terrain, and can point out the exact area the encounter occurred at on a map—start at Bole, follow the rail line to the east, and when the tracks turn north go another twenty-three miles east-northeast, in the craggy woods near ‘dat ol’ layer-cake ruin.’ (He’s referring to the Ancient ziggurat of Av.)

Father of Thunder in the Weftlands

Slim Chance, a rancher living fifty miles west of Bole, plays harmonica with the tavern’s band (headed by **Jered Lawman**, whom the PCs might recall from Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*). Slim’s dog **Hank** sits with him, howling along occasionally to the music.

Slim was out on a drunken bender in the cattle pasture (Hank had been chewing silage and was a little drunk too) when all the stars fell away a few days ago. He spotted a massive bolt of lightning strike a few miles away, but the bolt didn’t fade. It just kept flashing and rumbling for minutes. The cattle around him all turned and stared at the spectacle, and Slim just enjoyed the light show, too out of it to really worry. An hour later the lightning stopped, and he heard the loudest roar in the world from where the bolts had been striking, and then every single cow around him starting making a ruckus and walking in that direction.

Figuring it was his boss’s problem, Slim kept drinking until morning (such as it was, with only the Gyre and no sun). He woke with a blistering hangover, made worse by Hank barking and snarling constantly. He realized the dog was keeping him from getting trampled; hundreds of cows, some with brands from other ranches miles away—as well as the occasional deer or goat—were all heading in the same direction.

So Slim went the other way as fast as he could. On his way back to the ranch he thought he heard a whole mounted procession of knights in plate armor riding out in the middle pasture, blaring on trumpets, but that *definitely* was his boss’s problem. He got his horse, his leaf of Nicodemus, and enough food for him and Hank and rode like hell toward Bole. He basically kept running until he got to the edge of the sea, and now he’s still drinking.

Legends of the Father of Thunder (Knowledge (history or nature) DC 25) tell that his presence is heralded by great storms and great drinking, for the king of herd beasts is an uncontestable lush. He calls a mighty herd to surround him, impregnates many mares and sows and does, and imbues the offspring with his boon, transforming them into wondrous steeds for any who can capture them. The Great Hunt—who is stranded in the real world after they annoyed the Voice of Rot and were banished from the Dreaming—traditionally take all their horses from among these blessed steeds.

NEWBORN FOR A NEW WORLD

Long-time customer and occasional musician **Jered Lawman** is at the Thinking Man’s Tavern with his girlfriend, celebrating the birth of their daughter Alice. Since the world has so suddenly changed, he’s nervous about things that might endanger her, so he gets his band-mates to practice modern versions of classic lullabies that are supposed to keep away fey. While the party is present he performs a jaunty remake of *All’s Well*, a tune miners drink to after a day with no mishaps in the mines.

Later in this adventure if the party gets the miners of Favela to sing this song, they can weaken Granny Allswell and make it easier to fight her.

Granny Allswell in the Anthras Mountains

Grandma Goudada, a hang-lipped crone who isn’t shy about knowing a few hexes, came into town with a gang of Fortunad nomads—a long-derided ethnic minority, mostly half-elves of muddled ethnicity forced to wander because they don’t fit in anywhere except with other misfits. She’s happily terrorizing the various children in the tavern; refugees see an old lady, assume it’s safe to leave their kids with her while they drink, and wonder later why little Timmy is having nightmares.

Grandma Goudada and her gang were at a small mining town in the Anthras Mountains called **Favela**, and she was trying to read some government lady’s fortune (**Katlin Eisner**, see page 27) to know what fate awaited in this starless world. Goudada got as far as pulling three cards before doing the unthinkable—she gave the woman her money back, hobbled away, and told her family they had to get as far from the mountains as possible. Her grand-nephew **Emilian** got them on a train to Bole, then to Flint, which seemed like a good idea until Goudada saw Cauldron Hill.

If properly flattered (or paid), Goudada explains with great portentousness that the cards showed the King wanting to trap and kill a grandmother under a mountain. She glares at the PCs, warning them that if they’re with the king, they should know better than to come after *this* old granny.

Legends of Granny Allswell (Knowledge (history or nature) DC 25) tell that the grandmother of gremlins was last defeated by Queen Zidi Wheatling in the year 218 A.O.V. After brawling failed, Zidi took some of her royal treasure and buried it inside three elder earth elementals, which left bits of themselves like a trail of breadcrumbs into a deep mountain cave. While the fey titan tried to pull the ‘owies’ from the elementals, Zidi tricked the granny’s gremlin minions into breaking the wooden supports that kept the cave entrance from collapsing, sealing Granny Allswell away for nearly three centuries.





City of Bole

Exploration. Montage.

The RHC branch in Bole is dubious of Risur's new monarch.

Bole was capital of its own nation in ancient times, and it still maintains its grandeur today. Historically rich from lumber and from fertile forest gardens cultivated with the aid of fey, in recent years it has boomed as a hub of trade. The **Barret Damworks**, a network of mill dams and locks completed three decades ago, tamed several tributary rivers from the Anthras Mountains, allowing the Great Delve river to flow smoothly westward, all the way through Slate and on to Shale. The concurrent development of steamships fostered traffic of great barges traveling up and down the river, while the railroad linked it to Flint. Today raw materials pass through Bole to and from nearly every corner of Risur.

For the purposes of this adventure, the main features of Bole the party needs to be aware of are the **forest gardens** which stretch out from it miles in every direction, the **logjam** along the Great Delve river where lumber is collected and processed after it flows in from logging sites upstream, and the **theater district** which is home both to the local RHC headquarters and to several famous distilleries and breweries.

The RHC in Bole

The Chief Inspectress in Bole, a viperous half-elf named **Shaiaila Lundquist**, is uncomfortable with the party's ascent to power, and just a little bitter that no one under her watch had as meteoric a rise in prestige. She can't help but think of the PCs as just normal constables, and in particular she has a deep-seated respect for the fey and Unseen Court, and naturally assumes anyone from Flint would disagree with her.

She'll send a letter asking them to see her before they get personally involved in local affairs. She prefers to meet in her office across the street from a playhouse which has been closed, out of fear that audiences might manifest hiveminds. (This is a horrible violation of protocol; indeed, she should be arranging royal accommodations and ensuring the party's safety, meeting them wherever they need her.)

Shaiaila has several theatrical posters hanging on the walls of her office, and a primitive phonograph in the corner is loaded with recordings of several famous opera singers. Her one accommodation to the party's prestige is to offer them some whisky and beer, made just down the street.

Titanic Problems

Shaiaila explains that the refugee situation is straining the city, but having fey titans—which most people thought were just tall tales—wreak havoc is at least giving people something immediate to try to deal with, since no one has any idea what the sudden disappearance of the sun and stars means. Her local agents have collected a lot of eye-witness sightings of the Father of Thunder to the west, but only a few of the Ash Wolf in the east, and none of Granny Allswell, though miners to the south report an unprecedented uptick in gremlin sightings, equipment breaking, and items made of metal going missing.

She's looked into the old records, and it's been seventeen centuries since all the titans were active at once. And never before did multiple seem to be focused on destroying one city. Shaiaila pours herself a stiff whisky, throws herself into her chair, and asks what the hell the party intends to do now.

Personnel Management

If the party just tries to order Chief Inspectress Lundquist around or if they have a reputation for being hostile to fey interests, Shaiaila agrees to follow whatever orders they give, but then works against them behind their backs. She thinks Bole can solve the fey titan problems on its own, and that the party's plans will spell disaster in the long run. After all, they were the ones who failed to stop the colossus in Flint from being activated, or stop the Obscurati from changing the whole world in one fell swoop. She's suspicious of them, and thanks to the new world order, her subordinates readily follow her lead.

However, if the party is attentive to the Chief Inspectress's concerns, and if they respect the fey titans or at least don't immediately propose attacking them, she offers her agents to help scout and coordinate any odd plans they might come up with. She'll still second-guess them, but it will be to their face.

The White Tongue in Bole

Before the party leaves, the Chief Inspectress advises they speak with **Ochran Eisner**, the city's Minister of Fey Affairs. A classically-trained druid, Ochran's duties include appeasing the fey spirits in the forest gardens and along the railroads to deter attacks. Only a meager few fey are still in the real world—they were stranded when the Dreaming was cut off by the Ob's ritual—but Shaiaila thinks Eisner might have useful information about how to keep the fey titans from attacking Bole directly.

Ochran is not personable, is uncomfortable with eye contact, and only responds to people if directly addressed multiple times; he's usually too involved thinking to himself to pay attention to the outside world. These days he is busy directing a citizen volunteer unit, painting archaic sigils on trees and stones in the woods around Bole. He claims these wards will keep the titans at bay, though he cannot guarantee their minions won't enter the city. If the party examines the sigils, a Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) recognizes them as obscure icons that are anathema to fey titans. However, if the same PC also succeeds a Knowledge (nature) check (DC 25), he realizes the sigils are being deployed in exactly the wrong way.

Ochran has placed sigils facing outward, explaining they will drive back the titans. In truth, these sigils will just anger the titans, drawing them toward the city. If the sigils faced the city, any titans who entered would be goaded away and back out into the wilderness.

In truth, Ochran is a servant of the Voice of Rot, who offered the druid eternal solitude on a world bereft of civilization. If confronted with his mistake, Ochran struggles to come up with an excuse (Sense Motive DC 15). When he realizes the jig is up, he hisses at the party, revealing a forked white tongue, then attempts to flee by *wildshaping* into an air elemental.

He's no physical threat to the party, but if not caught he sabotages efforts to protect Bole. He desires to guide the fey titans into the city to destroy it. If interrogated, he'll eventually confess to his allegiance to the Voice of Rot, but say that he hasn't heard from any of his lord's messengers since the sun disappeared. Intense interrogation can also get him to reveal that his sister, **Katlin**, is working at similar purposes in the mining village Favela (see page 27).



Threat One: The Ash Wolf

*Rise and flicker, red and white,
A howling fire burns this night.
Awaken hunter, warrior beast!
The flames have risen—time to feast!*
- Hunters' chant

FLAMES FROM THE EAST

Exploration. Montage.

When the great forests burn, the Ash Wolf stirs and will reclaim his domain.

The fires in Antwalk Thicket actually don't burn out of control; Risuri foresters have done a good job of allowing small burns each year to limit the amount of brush for fuel. But day by day the flames advance, and by the third day after the great eclipse, over a thousand people from villages in the woods have fled to Bole.

The truth of the forest fire's origin does not begin with the Ash Wolf, but is actually the byproduct of the Obscurati's reorganization of the planes. Long ago the Ancient civilization built a ziggurat here linking to the plane Av, but the Ob's ritual caused the magic to go awry and link instead to Jiese, the plane of fire.

Jiese itself was once part of the true plane of fire, but was cut off by the Ancients into its own separate world. Only a few families of salamander miners who lived on the frontier of the great efreeti empire came along, and just a single efreeti was trapped on the plane. She was eventually enslaved, and the family who controlled the efreeti's power styled itself after the princes and generals of the great City of Brass. While lesser salamanders hunted the fierce elemental beasts that roamed Jiese's surface, or mined out precious gems of solid fire, the princes built palaces to celebrate their uncontested dominion.

A century ago the enslaved efreeti tricked the ruling sultan into making a wish that led to the salamander royal family splintering. The factions began constructing massive siege engines and fought horrific wars. Finally one salamander claimed control of the efreeti, and he proclaimed himself **Sultan Kuyler**, though he ruled over only a few thousand surviving salamanders.

In the grand scheme of things, the salamanders are basically inbred yokels—especially the royal family. Supernaturally-powerful, incredibly-skilled-at-battle, able-to-control-fire-with-a-thought yokels. They might have access to arcane siege weapons, but their manners are atrocious.

Salamander Invasion

Sultan Kuyler immediately sensed when the Axis Seal opened, and his scouts found a portal that led to the ruined Ancient ziggurat in Risur's Antwalk Thicket. Within a day Kuyler had marched through with his 'army' and started burning all the wonderful trees around him. This attracted the attention of the recently-awoken Ash Wolf, who sent forth one of his pups to investigate. The wolfling came into conflict with the salamanders, who slew it, then magically erased traces of their presence before retreating to the ziggurat.

When the Ash Wolf discovered the death of his son, he went into a seething rage, believing the humans of Risur had committed the act. He has begun hunting on the edges of the forest fires, feeding on villagers to regain his strength after a long sleep. In a few weeks the fires will reach Bole, at which point he intends to slay every child so that he can have his revenge.

Salamanders have lit fires and killed one of the Ash Wolf's pups, but the titan blames Risur. Either the fey titan or the interlopers from Jiese must go.

Kuyler wants his people to colonize a new bountiful land where there are always things to burn, but he's content to watch the Ash Wolf spread terror through the woods. He sends his men to spread the fires and lure the massive wolf into human territory, using the magic of his bound efreeti to keep his warriors hidden from the fey titan.

Ancient Ziggurat

Barnaby and many other woodsmen of Antwalk Thicket know the general location of the old ruins that once were the ziggurat of Av. Due to a wish by Kuyler, the last mile of forest around the ziggurat is still burning, and the trees—though dead—don't crumble away. He likes the aesthetic, and it keeps interlopers away.

I Dream of Liesi

Salamanders are not the most intelligent of creatures, and neither Kuyler nor any of his warlords, viziers, or dervishes understand the meaning of the sun's disappearance. But one of his minions does.

Liesi, the bound efreeti whom Kuyler's family has controlled for millennia, senses that she could return home finally. She suspects something is amiss with the sky, and has implored her master to *wish* for an explanation. The petty Kuyler prefers to waste the daily wishes she grants on dalliances and frivolous comforts. Already he has wished for the boring ziggurat of Av to be transformed from stone into brass, as befits a sultan.

Liesi knows Kuyler will never release her, and hopes she can warn someone of at least moderate intelligence of the threat she sees in the stars. When she meets the party she'll try to persuade them into finding the *efreeti bottle* that controls her, then releasing her so he cannot use her *wishes* against them.

The Wolfpack

The Ash Wolf's long dead mate spawned countless pups as she perished, though normally only a few are active. They guard a great mossy cave where the Ash Wolf slumbered for centuries. Only when forest fires break out do the other smoldering wolves appear, and if the fires are great enough their father awakens so he can go hunt for his lost love in the ashes.

The Den of the Wolf

The Ash Wolf's lair lies some forty miles from Bole, in a mossy cave beside a river bank, seventeen miles from the ziggurat of Av. It's practically impossible to stumble upon, but tracking the smoldering wolves (a DC 30 Survival check for every five miles) or using divination magic can lead the party to the fey titan's cave. The forest fires have cut swaths through the area, though patches of woodland remain unburnt.

If the party intends to fight the Ash Wolf, their best chance is to corner him in this cave so he cannot use his speed to his advantage. But his pack might detect the party's approach.



Heralds of the Ash Wolf

The Ash Wolf's strongest children, known as Smoldering Wolves, can share their senses with their father. If the party is exploring the forest on foot, these scouts can sense the touch of greater magic on them. The party

might spot one several hundred feet away in the woods, but initially the wolves don't attack, and will flee if approached.

PACK TACTICS

Action. Tactical. Level 25.

The Ash Wolf intends to kill the party, but can be reasoned with.

This battle might occur anywhere in the forest fire, but we suggest you have the Ash Wolf make its first appearance while the party is near a Risuri town that's endangered by fire.

One such town is **Mulshoe**, population four thousand, located twenty miles east of Bole. It lies in a valley clearing, surrounded on all sides by forest. Many have fled the forest into Bole, but townsfolk plead for help to fight the fires and evacuate those too weak to make the long journey. Lumberjacks are desperately trying to clear the trees nearest the town, and the forest fire is almost upon them when the party arrives.

(Yes, whether the party comes here 3 days after the great eclipse or 30, Mulshoe is just lucky that way. If the party doesn't come, the following encounter can happen anywhere in the forest, but we thought the setting of a town surrounded by a forest fire would be interesting, given how the scale of the Ash Wolf would contrast with houses and streets.)

Whichever PC is the monarch feels a surge of power, which he or she will come to recognize as the sign that a foe of great strength is nearby and about to contest for control of the land. See the Rites of Rulership in Adventure Nine for details.

(Since the party is 17th level, the monarch should get a +8 bonus to AC, attack rolls, and saving throws; a +9 bonus to Strength-, Dexterity-, and Constitution-based checks; fast healing 8 in addition to the normal fast healing 10 the monarch always has; and can interact with the titan as if he or she were also colossal.)

Wolf Pack (see Appendix A: Combat Catalogue)

- ♦ 24 Smoldering Wolves
- ♦ The Ash Wolf

Terrain and Environment

Smoke from the forest fire wafts through the town, providing concealment to creatures beyond 60 feet, and total concealment beyond 120 feet, though the general shapes of trees can still be seen when backlit by the forest fire.

The town's buildings are only one or two stories tall, and the streets are narrow enough that the large wolves could only fit through one at a time. The Ash Wolf treats the town as difficult terrain, crushing buildings if he walks across them. However, he prefers to stay at the edge of town, charge in, and jump *over* the buildings, using Spring Attack to snap up a PC and carry him off into the smoke.



The forest fire stops about sixty feet outside the edge of town, where lumberjacks have cut a firebreak, but a PC might be tricked out into the woods or carried out there by the Ash Wolf. Breathing the air inside the forest fire causes a character to take 1d6 points of fire damage per round (no save). In addition, a character must make a Fortitude save every 5 rounds (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. A character who holds his breath can avoid the lethal damage, but not the nonlethal damage. Those wearing heavy clothing or any sort of armor take a -4 penalty on their saving throws. Those wearing metal armor or who come into contact with very hot metal are affected as if by a *heat metal* spell.

The smoke is not thick enough to be debilitating.

Tactics

The Ash Wolf approaches within a half mile of Muleshoe and sends his pack of two dozen smoldering wolves out to surround the town. They howl, but the smoke and soot conceals them until they're within 60 feet of the party (Perception DC 30). Any townsfolk would be well-served to flee indoors, but a few remain outside and will be attacked by the pack. These wolves attack at the edge of the PCs' vision, in an attempt to split them up.

Four of the wolves are empowered by the titan's *pack bond* power, and if the party splits up they engage someone at the edge of the group. Otherwise they circle the party through the town streets for about a minute, waiting for their father to give the signal. Before having the pack attack, the Ash Wolf says, "Risur has slain my child. Burnt my home. By the old rites, I demand blood and flesh." His voice seems to come from all directions, as the roaring forest fire itself speaks for him.

The pack then charges in. The Ash Wolf, able to see through their eyes, uses *fire storm* to burn the party and ignite the buildings around them, or perhaps *transmute metal to wood* if the party is at the edge of the town near the fire.

The four empowered smoldering wolves focus their attention on a single target, while the other twenty stay about a hundred feet away, watching. If any of the empowered wolves are reduced below 50 hit points, the Ash Wolf has that child withdraw from battle and shifts its power to another, which then charges in.

After two rounds of this, or if any of his pups is reduced to 0 hit points, the fey titan uses *hunting surge*, howling loud enough to shake

the ground and trees. With his speed briefly increased to 300 feet, he charges in and will try to snatch a spellcaster (and can jump high enough to easily clear rooftops, bite someone beneath him, then clear 110 feet horizontally) and carry him off. If possible he rips off a leg, dumps the victim a hundred and fifty feet away in the forest fire, and circles around the edge of the battle, staying far enough away to remain unseen.

Generally he'll attack every other round, and will punctuate his assaults by condemning the hunters who speared his son, recounting how his mate died thousands of years ago and he'll never have more children, and threatening to burn the whole nation until he has his revenge.

Aftermath

The Ash Wolf should be fairly terrifying, a predator that can kill any PC in a round or two, but he initially assumes the party is not a threat. He'll try to wound several and scatter the group, and will only focus on killing them one-by-one if he's reduced below 207 hit points, which triggers the arrival of his long-lost mate, a titanic wolf spirit composed of smoke and ash. If reduced below 0 hit points he will yield, offering to serve them if they at least spare his children.

The party might instead convince the fey titan to break off his attack if they offer to find out who slew his son. He'll be distrustful (i.e., you have an excuse to get in a few terrifying strafing runs before he relents), but then he'll agree to give them one day before he resumes his hunt.

Mourning a Lost Child

If the party reaches the Ash Wolf's cave—by sneaking in or by parlaying with him—they find the body of a Smoldering Wolf lying on its side, smoke pouring out of various wounds.

Examining the deceased wolf reveals odd wounds not common among Risuri weaponry (Heal DC 20). Further investigation reveals the weapons were made of obsidian and radiated an extreme amount of heat (Heal DC 30).

The Ash Wolf will offer to have one of his children accompany the PCs to the site where the body was first found. However, due to a *wish* by Liesi, the salamanders left not physical trail, and magic to pursue them yields no information unless the caster succeeds a DC 22 caster level check. Brute force searching takes several days (though it goes faster if the party splits up or brings help), and eventually they'll find a patch of forest still burning long after it should have died.

THE FLAMING ZIGGURAT OF AV

Action/Social. Real-Time. Level 18.

Meet your new neighbors, the Salamanders of Jiese!

A one-mile diameter swath of forest burns perpetually around the old Ancient ziggurat, which has been transformed into brass. Several dozen wormlike thoquua roam the woods near the building, and they screech if they detect any intruders (Perception +10). Two falcion-wielding salamanders guard the entrance of the ziggurat, and within Sultan Kuyler and some of his best buddies from Jiese spend most of the day doing nothing.

Kuyler is a foul-mouthed, illiterate alcoholic, who peaked long ago when he took control of Liesi the efreeti. He's been living the easy life on wishes ever since. But with a new world suddenly available—one a damn sight more fun to burn than his own 'sultanate'—the salamander

sultan sees an opportunity to give his no-good children something they can conquer, so they can be as great as their father.

For now he just has a small expeditionary force, and he's sending out scouts to find out who he'll have to fight to conquer this place. He's only recently seen humans for the first time, and had his men capture a few. He keeps them in a pit in the ziggurat, and is trying to figure out how to get them to fight for his amusement.

The Jiese-end of the portal is fairly far from his palace, so no reinforcements will be readily forthcoming. For now, Kuyler's forces are limited. Forty or so rank-and-file salamander soldiers scout the woods, while only a dozen guard the ziggurat itself. Since so far they've only encountered panicked, harmless townsfolk, the initial reactions of the invaders from Jiese when they see the party will be reminiscent of a



hunter spotting a deer. They're excited, not worried, and will coo at the party like they're talking to a dumb animal that doesn't realize they're about to kill it.

Salamander Invasion

- ♦ Kuyler, Salamander Sultan
- ♦ Liesi, Bound-Efreet
- ♦ 4 Salamander Viziers
- ♦ 8 Salamander Dervishes



Environmental Effects

The immediate area outside the Ziggurat is considered severe heat, while the inside of the ziggurat is considered to be an area of extreme

heat. This heat lasts as long as the ziggurat maintains a connection to the plane of Jiese.

Walls of Flame

Repurposed by the salamanders, the ziggurat's interior is fairly stark. With a few *wishes* Kuyler created a plethora of permanent *walls of fire* to break up the monotony of the ziggurat's interior. While harmless to the salamanders, these walls are extremely effective defense mechanisms.

Each wall (marked on the map) is treated as a *wall of fire* (caster level 11th) with the *permanency* spell added. These walls do not radiate heat in a specific direction, so creatures will only take damage from passing through the wall.



Ziggurat Interior

Interior walls of the ziggurat, once weathered stone with barely visible carvings, are now transmuted into polished brass. The only light sources are the walls of fire and the portal to Jiese itself. The constant fire actually mutes sound fairly well, and a battle probably wouldn't be heard more than 100 feet away.

1. **Entrance.** Two more dervishes and one vizier guard here, though for them guarding consists of boasting about the monsters they've slain back home.
2. **Prisoner Pit.** Kuyler keeps a dozen humans down here, and has placed walls of fire at the doors to keep them from leaving. A dervish stands guard outside either entrance.
3. **Map Room.** An ancient world map on the floor has attracted Kuyler's interest, and he's set up tiny firegem carvings of warriors on shelves here. He expects to plan an invasion, fight maybe a few thousand humans, and conquer the world. He has no idea of the scale of the map.
4. **Throne Room.** Kuyler and three viziers party here, drinking and dragging in various trophies from outside so they can burn them for fun.
5. **Bare Halls.** The walls and floor show signs of once having had traps installed in them, which were long ago destroyed or disabled, and then more recently transmuted into brass.
6. **Dervish Quarters.** The dervishes sleep here on huge stone beds.
7. **Boring Spot.** Kuyler makes Liesi stand here and do nothing when he's used up his wishes for the day but hasn't finished drinking out of her home.
8. **Portal to Jiese.** Two more dervishes stand guard here.

**Kuyler, Salamander Sultan**

CR 16

XP 76,800

M Salamander Fighter (polearm master^{APC}) 10

LE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22**Defense****AC** 34, touch 13, flat-footed 31 (+14 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural)**hp** 253 (18 HD; 8d10+10d10+154)**Fort** +25, **Ref** +18, **Will** +14**DR** 10/magic; **Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**Offense****Speed** 15 ft.**Melee** +4 *cold iron halberd* +33/+28/+23/+18 (1d10+18/19–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire),

tail slap +20 (2d6+3 plus 1d6 fire and grab),

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)**Special Attacks** pole fighting –2, steadfast pike +2, polearm training +2, flexible flanker, constrict (2d6+4 plus 1d6 fire), heat (1d6 fire)**Statistics****Str** 24, **Dex** 20, **Con** 26, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 40**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Greater Vital Strike, Greater Weapon Focus (halberd), Improved Critical (halberd), Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lunge, Power Attack, Stand Still, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (halberd), Weapon Specialization (halberd)**Skills** Acrobatics +12, Bluff +17, Craft (weaponsmithing) +5, Intimidate +13, Knowledge (planes) +3, Perception +22, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +13;**Racial Modifiers** +4 Craft (weaponsmithing)**Languages** Ignan**Other Gear** +5 *mithral full plate*, +4 *cold iron halberd*, *belt of physical perfection* +4, *cloak of resistance* +4**Special Abilities****Contingent Wishes (Su)** Kuyler's indentured genie servant Liesi has honored countless *wishes* for her master, and as such, Kuyler has a plethora of *wish*-based personal effects. Each *wish* effect is a one-time use ability and is described below. Each contingent *wish* counts as cast by an 11th level caster.

- **Back Up:** If there are no friendly allies within 60 feet of Kuyler, the salamander warlord can expend this wish as a free action. Doing so summons 1d4 salamander dervishes or viziers within 60 feet. These salamanders can immediately act and are loyal servants to Kuyler.
- **Expert Wrassler:** If Kuyler fails a CMB check against an opponent (such as with his constrict ability) he can immediately re-roll the attempt with a +10 bonus. If the opponent is under the effects of a *freedom of movement* or similar effect, it is suppressed for 1 minute.
- **Uh Oh:** If reduced below 100 hit points, Kuyler is immediately targeted by a *heal* spell. Any ability that impairs his ability to act (dazed, stunned, grappled, pinned, etc), ends and he gains the benefit of *freedom of movement* for one minute.

Liesi, Bound Efreet

CR 8

XP 4,800

LE Large outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic*; Perception +15**Defense****AC** 21, touch 13, flat-footed 17 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, –1 size)**hp** 95 (10d10+40)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +10, **Will** +9**Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**Offense****Speed** 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)**Melee** 2 slams +15 (1d8+6 plus 1d6 fire)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** change size, heat (1d6 fire)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 11th; concentration +13)Constant—*detect magic*At will—*plane shift* (willing targets to Jiese or Material Plane only),*produce flame*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 14), *scorching ray*3/day—*invisibility*, quickened *scorching ray*, *wall of fire* (DC 16)1/day—grant up to 3 *wishes* (to non-genies only), *gaseous form*, *permanent image* (DC 18)**Statistics****Str** 23, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 31**Feats** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Deceitful, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (scorching ray)**Skills** Bluff +19, Disguise +10, Fly +13, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (The Planes) +14, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +8**Languages** Auran, Aquan, Common, Ignan, Terran; telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** change shape (humanoid or giant, *alter self* or *giant form I*)**Special Abilities****Bound(Ex)** Several pacts and unique *wishes* bind Liesi in service to Kuyler. For game effects, she cannot willingly attack Kuyler and must defend the salamander to the best of her abilities. This effect can be dispelled with three successful dispel attempts. The caster level to dispel the associated magical binding is 20th level.**Change Size (Sp)** Twice per day, an efreeti can magically change a creature's size. This works just like an *enlarge person* or *reduce person* spell (the efreeti chooses when using the ability), except that the ability can work on the efreeti. A DC 13 Fortitude save negates the effect. The save DC is Charisma-based. This is the equivalent of a 2nd-level spell.



LIESI'S BETRAYAL

Liesi is bound to a bronze bottle that Kuyler carries at all times. Indeed, whenever he deigns to let Liesi out of the bottle, he proceeds to fill it with fiery alcohol so he can mock her all day long by drinking out of her home.

Liesi has been forced to serve the salamanders for thousands of years, though she hasn't been aware of all the time. The arrival of the PCs presents her with a unique opportunity to arrange Kuyler's assassination and her freedom. Of course, she's still evil, and derives pleasure out of tricking people into miswording wishes to their own detriment. Trusting her is a bad idea.

Kuyler has forbidden Liesi from leaving the ziggurat without his permission, but if the party comes inside she'll seek them out and hide them from the salamanders long enough for her to make her pitch. Alternately, if the party attacks and withdraws, she'll convince Kuyler to send her out to scout

invisibly. He agrees, but forbids her from talking to anyone while she's out. So she bends the letter of the order, and has a *permanent image* talk for her.

Liesi probes the PCs with various questions about the world, specifically about the Gyre and whether it's possible to go to other planes. In exchange, she offers detailed descriptions of Kuyler's motivation and his forces. In addition to the pittance here, he has several thousand warriors back on Jiese.

If the party doubts her, Liesi swallows her immense pride and tells the PCs that she merely wishes to leave this world, so she needs the party to free her from Kuyler. She knows she's risking that she's just trading one master for another, and so she might avoid even mentioning her discontent if she thinks the party is worse than a drunken salamander.

Salamander Vizier

CR 10

XP 9,600

M Salamander Evoker 8

LE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

Defense

AC 28, touch 13, flat-footed 25 (+4 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural, +4 shield)**hp** 160 (16 HD; 8d10+8d6+88)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +15**DR** 10/magic; **Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold

Offense

Speed 20 ft.**Melee** +2 *spear* +16/+11/+6 (1d8+5/x3 plus 1d6 fire), tail slap +9 (2d6+1 plus 1d6 fire and grab),**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)**Special Attacks** intense spells (+4 damage), constrict (2d6+4 plus 1d6 fire), heat (1d6 fire)**Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +13)

At will—elemental will (8 rounds/day)

8/day—*force missile* (1d4+4)**Evoker Spells Prepared** (CL 8th; concentration +13)4th—*fire shield*, *dimensional anchor*, *obsidian flow*^{UC} (DC 19), *shout* (DC 20)3rd—*fireball* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *slow* (DC 18)2nd—*blur*, *flaming sphere* (DC 18), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*, *shatter* (DC 18)1st—*burning hands* (DC 17), *mage armor*, *magic missile* (3), *protection from law*, *shield*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *resistance***Prohibited Schools** divination, necromancy

Statistics

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 27**Feats** Eschew Materials, Greater Spell Focus (Evocation), Greater Spell Penetration, Iron Will, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Perception), Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration**Skills** Acrobatics +22, Bluff +20, Craft (weaponsmithing) +20, Intimidate +20, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (planes) +24, Perception +28, Sense Motive +14, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +22; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Craft (weaponsmithing)**Languages** Auran, Common, Ignan, Terran**SQ** arcane bond (+2 *spear*)**Other Gear** +2 *spear*, *cloak of resistance* +2

Salamander Dervish

CR 10

XP 9,600

M Salamander Inquisitor of the Unremitting Conflagration 8

LE Medium outsider (extraplanar, fire)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +29

Defense

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 25 (+3 armor, +3 Dex, +7 natural)**hp** 184 (16 HD; 8d10+8d8+104)**Fort** +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +14**DR** 10/magic; **Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold

Offense

Speed 20 ft.**Melee** +2 *falchion* +22/+17/+12 (2d4+9/18–20 plus 1d6 fire), tail slap +9 (2d6+2 plus 1d6 fire and grab)**Ranged** +2 *composite longbow* +20/+15/+10 (1d8+7/x3 plus 1d6 fire), tail slap +9 (2d6+2 plus 1d6 fire and grab)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tail)**Special Attacks** bane (8 rounds/day), constrict (2d6+4 plus 1d6 fire), heat (1d6 fire)**Inquisitor Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +9)7/day—*fire bolt* (1d6+4 fire)At will—*detect alignment***Inquisitor Spells Known** (CL 8th; concentration +9)3rd (3/day)—*burst of speed*^{UC}, *dispel magic*, *heroism*2nd (5/day)—*hold person* (DC 16), *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 16), *see invisibility*, *spiritual weapon*1st (5/day)—*command* (DC 15), *divine favor*, *doom* (DC 15), *inflict light wounds* (DC 15), *true strike*0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *daze* (DC 14), *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Domain Fire

Statistics

Str 20, **Dex** 18, **Con** 20, **Int** 12, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +14; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 33**Feats** Cleave, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Step Up, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (greatsword), Back to Back, Coordinated Maneuvers**Skills** Acrobatics +23, Bluff +18, Craft (weaponsmithing) +16, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +29, Sense Motive +19, Stealth +15; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Craft (weaponsmithing)**Languages** Common, Ignan**SQ** cunning initiative, judgment 3/day, monster lore +4, solo tactics, stern gaze, track +4**Combat Gear** *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +2 *composite longbow*, +2 *falchion*, *bracers of armor* +3, +2 *flaming arrows* (20)



Tactics and Talking

The salamanders are well-trained in fighting animalistic monsters, not people. They tend to rely on brute force or cruel tricks rather than actual tactics. Once Kuyler figures out the party won't go down easily, he'll *wish* for Liesi to teleport him and all his allies in the ziggurat to the top level of the room with the prisoner pit. From there he'll threaten to kill his prisoners unless the party talks.

With a break in the fight, Kuyler tries to figure out whether killing the PCs will let him rule the world. If it becomes clear it won't, he offers

instead to get a few thousand of his men to help them kill the giant furry critter that's running amok in these lands. Then he and his people will control this region and sell weapons and magic to Risur. He promises not to try to invade for at least a few years.

At that, Liesi loudly suggests to Kuyler that in a few years the world might not be here, because of that odd thing in the sky. Again she'll suggest he wish for her to find out more about it. He yells at her, swigs the last of his ale from her bottle, then orders her back into it, but he'll call her back out if the fight renews, in which case he uses his remaining wishes fairly simply, like wanting his halberd to be *human-bane* or to dispel any fire resistance the party has.

RECONCILIATION

Social. Montage.

Risur might ally with the salamanders, or earn the favor of the Ash Wolf.

There are multiple ways the PCs can handle the salamander's intrusion. The most likely outcome is that Kuyler is defeated or forced out of the world and back to Jiese. In this situation, the PCs can inform the Ash Wolf what has happened, and the fey titan will have a Smoldering Wolf inspect the ziggurat, then order his pack back into the woods. The forest fires burn out naturally before they reach Bole.

If the Ash Wolf is appeased by having the salamanders driven off, he owes the PCs two boons—one for helping him get revenge, and one for showing him the error of his aggression. For the former, he offers to aid Risur in one battle within the coming year. For the latter, he offers to tell one PC how to find a perfect mate and lover. If a PC accepts, the Ash Wolf instills in that character the identity and general location of someone who would be whatever they want and need in a companion.

In the event that the PCs negotiate with Kuyler, the exact nature of the salamander's offer is met to the letter. If the Jiese natives are allowed to stay, Kuyler brings further reinforcements to secure the eastern forestlands of Risur; standing with the PCs against the Ob should they attack. While Kuyler believes he can eventually take the humans of Risur, he lives a long time and won't be a problem in the near future.

If the party kills Kuyler or drives him away, the salamanders won't risk another incursion.

If the party gets hold of Liesi's *efreeti bottle*, they can call upon her one time to get three wishes, after which she's able to *plane shift* back home thanks to the change in the Axis Seal. Alternately they can keep her around to aid in more mundane ways, though each time they call her there's a 10% chance she simply *plane shifts* away for good. If the party was kind to her, there's no chance she attacks the party.

Threat Two: Father of Thunder

Please bless our land, o Father,

Give rains and summers warm.

Grant much in fall, o Father

And bless with every horn.

Please bless our herds, o Father,

That they may graze our fields.

Please bless our home, o Father,

And bless our evening meal.

- Prayer to the Father of Thunder

Storms and stampedes ravage Risur's breadbasket, but with the aid of the Great Hunt the party can ride down the fey titan. He's stubborn, and won't listen to reason unless someone can defeat him in battle. He just so happens to equate carousing to battle, however.



The Drunken Stampede

Exploration. Montage.

There's a giant gazelle-bison-rhinoceros running around the countryside, trampling all the crops, impregnating all the mares and sows, and drinking all our liquor!

The Father of Thunder stands fifty feet tall at the shoulder, with horns jutting and curling and curving out of his back and head and shoulders in myriad odd angles. His mere presence sires children in female herd animals—horses, cows, sheep, and more—and those children possess supernatural speed, might, and resilience. Harvested grains he sets his gaze upon ferment into alcoholic silage. Massive

herds surround him and follow him wherever he goes. The huge horned beast loves nothing more than getting drunk and tromping across the countryside in a constant celebration.

His bacchanalia is ruining Risur's ability to grow crops and raise livestock, not to mention he occasionally stampedes through towns, crushing buildings under his hooves. For now he stays near Bole, tempted by its whisky distilleries, but it will be a few months before he's gathered a large enough herd for him to risk entering the city to get at that fine liquor.



Do You Hear Thunder?

The Father of Thunder's rollicking herd roams somewhere between twenty and fifty miles from Bole. High-level magic or old-fashioned tracking can pinpoint them fairly quickly, but finding a way to actually deal with the problem will take longer.

Empowered by the fey titan, the stampede moves at a ludicrous speed (300 ft. per round, or over 30 miles an hour), utterly destroying everything in its path. The sheer speed of the herd makes it next to impossible to successfully engage or disrupt it. Reckless attempts by the party to close in likely end with the party being simply outrun, or trampled into the ground, or shot out of the sky by the Father of Thunder's lightning bolts. Even if the party can get close enough and actually hits hard enough for him to notice, the titan has enough disposable herd animals that he can order a few hundred to knock away any enemies.

If the PCs' plan seems reasonable, give them a chance, but most likely they'll need the Great Hunt's help. The riders can lend fast enough steeds to the party, and will kill creatures of the herd that try to interfere with the party's assault.

Talking to the Titan

The Father of Thunder assumes any non-herd animal is a threat, and won't even consider talking unless he's exhausted 'attacking' and 'running away' as options. Even trying to magically communicate with him won't turn out well, due to his Stormy Presence ability.

He hates people who interrupt his fun by wanting to talk, though he might respond to a challenge or insult by attacking and trying to trample the offending party-pooer. Exceptionally good music (Perform DC 35) can entertain him enough to let someone get within a hundred feet, though the sight of weapons and armor will spook him into fleeing.

The Clever Option

The Father of Thunder loves drinking, but his binges out in the wild never go deep enough to really slow him down. If the party lures him into Bole's theater district (a mighty challenge itself), they can let him wreck a couple distilleries while chugging to his limit, and he'll be far easier to handle. Getting him that

drunk effectively gives him 5 negative levels and weakens his defenses.

Alternately, the party might leave a trail of whisky barrel breadcrumbs, lure him into Bole, and then trick him into chasing them across the logjam in the Great Delve River. He can swim, but isn't anywhere near as fast as on foot, and his herd is mostly harmless when they're panicked and trying not to drown.

The Great Hunt

During the events of Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky*, Riffian—a bold fey knight clad in silver plate—accompanied the PCs back into the material world, along with the other riders of the Great Hunt. Traditionally the Great Hunt pursues the grandest game, and upon learning that the Father of Thunder had awakened, Riffian led his riders to Risur's heartland so they could hunt the fey titan's magical offspring.

Riffian has bivouacked his riders just outside of Bole. He knows that by themselves the Great Hunt can only manage to get the offspring, but he will gladly aid the party in an effort to bring down the titan himself.





Riffian's Camp

Less than ten miles outside of Bole, Riffian and his assembled riders wait and prepare for their hunt against the Father of Thunder. Mounts are left untethered, allowed to wander the forest gardens as they see fit, with riders having no fear of losing their steeds. Dire mastiffs patrol the edges of the camp. If the PCs rode with Riffian in Adventure Nine, the hounds remember their scent, with some even giving forceful but playful head-butts.

Each rider is humanoid with the stature of an elf, but their whole bodies are hidden beneath supple mithral plate armor. Each knight's mask is decorated with different static expressions, many resembling roots digging into the ground. Few of the riders speak, only performing basic actions like feeding their mounts or sharpening weapons. They save their voices for singing during meals or while on the hunt.

Riffian works at the center of the camp, singing to sooth a pair of colts recently captured from the Father of Thunder's herd. Riffian explains that they're less than a month old, and already are nearly grown to be fit to bear a rider on the hunt.

Riffian's not much for planning, but his advice for subduing the fey titan would be to ride in disguised under bison hides to appear innocuous, get close, then have the party attack while he and his knights keep the herd at bay.

Cut 'em Out, Ride 'em In

Riffian first asks for hides for the PCs and each of his dozens of riders. With the size of the fey titan's herd, and the exceptional skill level of the PCs and the Great Hunt, you can easily reduce this to a few Handle Animal and Ride checks, or Stealth and Survival checks, representing cutting off a few bison at a time, or sneaking in and killing a few animals discreetly that will be left behind when the Father of Thunder moves on.

RIDE OUT, AND MEET THEM

Action. Tactical. Level 25.

Riding out to take down a fey titan—all in a day's work.

Riffian's men take a few days to treat the hides and give them minor enchantments. When the party is ready, Riffian offers them each a steed and has everyone bundle under their hides. Disguised as somewhat lumpy bison, the party and a couple dozen fey huntsmen can weave into the midst of the herd. Have each PC make a simple Stealth check (DC 10) four times, with each check representing a quarter-mile worth of herd they've passed through.

After a single failed check the Father of Thunder sniffs, stands up, and watches where the PCs are, looking for signs of trouble. He drops a lightning bolt nearby, just enough to spook the party. Then he returns to partying. A second failed check, though, causes him to bellow and get the herd moving. If the party gets closer, he likely spots them when they come within 100 feet. Once the titan becomes aware of the threat, the PC who is the monarch feels a great strength flow into him, as detailed in the Rites of Rulership (see Adventure Nine).

The Grand Stampede

♦ The Father of Thunder (see Appendix A: Combat Catalogue)



STEEDS FROM THE GREAT HUNT

We intentionally designed the Father of Thunder to mostly ignore the party's steeds. Even his lightning bolts don't affect them. However, in case it matters, treat the steeds the Great Hunt provides as a heavy warhorse with a base speed of 150 ft., enough to keep up with the Father of Thunder, and grant the steed a +48 bonus to Acrobatics checks to jump. (This encounter likely calls for a few long jumps, though the onus is on the PC to direct the steed properly with a Ride check.)

Additionally, each horse has 35 temporary hit points, renewed at the dawn of each day.

Battling the Father of Thunder

See the Father of Thunder's stats in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue. His herd is an environmental hazard, which the Great Hunt protects the party against, allowing the PCs to focus on the fey titan.

His likely course of action is to flee while dropping lightning bolts on those who give chase and stomping or goring anyone who rides too close. Once injured enough (to about 2/3 his maximum HP) he stumbles, which triggers an earthquake and gives him a chance to break away over uneven terrain full of perilous chasms. When he's desperate (reduced to about 1/3 hit maximum HP), he stops running and calls down a tornado that draws enemies close for him to crush.

Raucous and bawdy, the Father of Thunder will yell at the party during battle, demanding they let him have his fun and keep bringing him more ale and mares if they don't want him to demolish their cute little cities. If while fleeing he can manage to get at least 400 feet from the party, he'll roar, "We feast tonight in the woody city! Run fast or there won't be any whisky left for you!"

Then he sprints straight for Bole. With speeds fairly evenly matched, he'll slowly draw farther and farther away since rough terrain doesn't slow him down. A huge storm sweeps into the city ahead of him, and he starts tearing into buildings looking for liquor. When the party catches up, he'll call down his tornado and proclaim that he is master of this land. If he wins, his herd ends up trashing the city and he lingers for a few days and finishes off all the alcohol before heading back into the wetlands with a massive hangover.

Can't We All Just Get Along?

The Father of Thunder surrenders when reduced to 0 hit points, and the stampede comes to an abrupt halt. Full of braggadocio, the fey titan pretends he was just confused, and that he was game to talk all along.

A victorious party can simply demand the Father of Thunder return to his slumber, at which point he'll walk out into the wilderness, pull a hillside over himself, and grumpily take a nap for a few centuries.

Or the party can make a deal with him. Like a rowdy neighbor, he'll agree to temper his parties and stay away from farmland that is marked by fences decorated with lightning bolts. He demands monthly



offerings of alcohol – several hundred gallons at least. And he wants to have sex with any women in the party, promising them mighty children (should they go through with it, the titan's spirit, not body, does the deed). In exchange, he'll provide three favors.

First, he promises to ride into battle to defend the weftlands should the Obscurati dare to tread on Risuri soil. (The Obscurati don't have any interest in invading the heartland of Risur, though, so it's kind of useless.)

Second, he'll use his storms and his manure to bless the crops of Risur. For the next year, everyone who eats from those crops gains 5 temporary hit points each day. Individually it's not much, but should war occur thousands will survive wounds that normally would have killed them.

Third, he'll grant one PC unmatched virility (with facial and body hair to match), plus the ability to call down a 5d8 lightning bolt (per *call lightning*) once per day as a swift action.

Threat Three: Granny Allswell

*Bedtime, children. Please, please hush.
You don't want Granny waking up.
If she hears, she'll surely rush
to snatch you, misbehaving pup.
Then she'll drag you, way way down
to live in darkest gremlin town.
If you want naught to join her crew
then make no peep the night on through.*
-Common Risuri Nursery Rhyme

In mines near a mountain town, Granny Allswell has abducted children and murdered miners. An agent of the Voice of Rot is trying to goad the fey titan into destroying a dam that will kill thousands in Bole, and revealing her tricks might make Granny angry enough at her fellow titan to actually ally with Risur.

MOUNTAINSIDE MADNESS

Exploration. Montage.

Favela is in turmoil.

After the great eclipse, earthquakes began to shake Risur's Anthras Mountains, focused around an iron-rich peak known as Redcap. At first the miners waited for the tremors to stop, but then children started going missing in the night, tools and machines started to break, and shiny objects of all sorts disappeared in droves. The Fortunad nomads, normally to blame for such troubles, started doomsaying and fled en masse. The superstitious miners recognized all the hallmarks of the fey titan known as Granny Allswell. Those miners who could afford to leave and who had not already lost their children to the gremlins in the mountains followed the Fortunad, and now only the most desperate remain.

With most of the miners and local officials evacuated, the most respected authority figure left in town was **Katlin Eisner**, illusionist proprietor of a brothel and sister of the druid **Ochran Eisner** from Bole. Like her brother she is a minion of the Voice of Rot, and she imagines herself as a future sorceress-queen once the serpentine titan destroys most of Risur's civilization.

Town Background

Favela was once a community of outcast Risuri and former slaves from Ber who lived on the steep hillside outskirts of a long-gone town. When Risur built the Barret Damworks thirty years ago to tame the flow of the Great Delve River, the old town was flooded, but the slums were above the water line. The steadier river flow made the town an attractive central point for mining operations in the area, since ore and precious metals could be easily barged downstream to Bole. More and more settlers came in, crowding into the already-cramped community.

The White Tongue's Goal

The Voice of Rot tasked Katlin with directing the malice of Granny Allswell toward a specific purpose. Katlin intends to goad Granny and her gremlins into destroying the massive dam that holds back Favela's lake.

Toward this goal, Katlin has been placing *magic mouths* around Favela to make the sounds of playing children. When the gremlins emerge from the mines at night seeking shinies for their Granny, the sounds attract them. There aren't any children left in the town, so Granny grows frustrated at being unable to find these phantasmal youths. She's considering going out herself, but she still has a few abducted kids to keep her occupied. In the meanwhile, she has her gremlins break everything that can clank, rumble, and squeak so they might better hear where the kids are hiding.

WHERE DO GREMLINS COME FROM?

Folk tales tell of a child who disobeyed his parents and kept breaking plates, windows, and everything else he could. His parents, on the edge of poverty and unable to keep replacing the destroyed property, took their son into the woods and told him to play a game: close his eyes and sing a song about breaking dishes, down from ninety-nine dishes until there were none left.

While the boy counted, the parents snuck away, hoping the boy would die and they'd never have to replace another broken item. But his singing attracted Granny Allswell, who loved his voice and adopted him to sing for her forever, along with all the other children who had been abandoned in the woods. He became a gremlin, and on his birthday the next year, his parents found everything they owned cracked and shattered.



Whenever Granny does emerge, she'll hear children singing from *inside* the dam. If the party doesn't intercede, two months after the great eclipse she'll futilely destroy the dam, thousands in Bole will drown, and each death would provide another small boost in the Voice of Rot's power.

Bem Vindo ao Favela

When the party arrives, the town is mostly abandoned, but three hundred miners have gathered at the docks on the lake, where 'Mayor Eisner' is hosting the daily lottery. Huge braziers of firegems burn throughout the favela – a dangerous fire hazard, but the townsfolk are horribly afraid of the dark.

Everyone is terrified of the gremlins and the fey titan, but since without the mines everyone here would go hungry, the remaining handful of mining foremen have a rule: anyone who wants to stay in the town and not abandon their abducted children must put their name into the lottery, and every evening five people must go into the mines and play folk songs that are said to sooth Granny Allswell.

The miners believe that the songs keep the gremlins away, so that the next day whatever tunnels they sang in will be free of damage or traps. Those miners whose names come up in the lottery risk their lives at night to make the mines safer during the day for the rest of the men and women.

Katlin draws out names from a hat, eliciting despairing outbursts from those chosen. The mass of people and their combined dismay begins to manifest a small glowing seed of a hivemind over the crowd, which none of them notice. If the group is interrupted, the hivemind fades away. Katlin, not realizing who the PCs are, asks with a stutter if anyone in the party wants to take the place of the lottery winners.

Soothing Granny hasn't actually worked so well, and every day there's a small chance the gremlins snatch one of the miners, either the night-time singers or the day-time workers. But a Perform check (DC 35, including +2 bonuses from each assisting musician) keeps the gremlins from murdering any townsfolk. It won't, however, keep Granny from demanding the children be given to her.

Royal Aid

The town is completely unprepared for a royal visit, and Katlin tries not to panic when she finds out who the party is. The miners are both totally obsequious and desperate for help, throwing themselves at the party's feet to beg they rescue their children. Katlin, beautiful but surprisingly timid for the proprietor of a brothel, gingerly suggest the party talk to her indoors. She takes them to her place of business, where the 'Oremongers' sign has been hastily covered with one that reads 'City Hall.'

She discounts people's fears that an actual fey titan is here, and she says she's confident it's just gremlins being bolder because it's darker than usual. She worries for the children, of course—why, one of her employees, **Natalie Distaff**, is due to give birth any day now—but she's confident as soon as the sun comes back people are going to be mining here again, and she's not going to abandon her business just because of some bad weather.

Katlin deals in deception and seduction, so is a much better liar than her brother (Sense Motive DC 30). If caught, though, she claims that the world is doomed anyway, so why shouldn't she stand highest atop the ruins?

If the party takes more than a couple days to resolve affairs in Favela, young Natalie gives birth, but Katlin forbids her from leaving. That night a dozen gremlins ambush the brothel and steal the baby.





Local Rumors

With a few purchased drinks and greased palms, multiple survivors can confirm the existence of ‘rather polite’ fey in the Redcap mines. (These are the gremlins Glower, Guffaw, Pout and Tremble, servants of Granny Allswell.)

The miners can provide some rough and often-contradictory maps of the mines, but all of them remember that there’s a large section that has been abandoned for a few years. They broke through some debris and found a much-older section of tunnels, then went in and started setting up cranes, a rail car, and a steam engine to drive them, but then a representative of King Aodhan showed up and ordered that section of the mine closed. Checking with the bureaucrats back in Slate reveals that they were pretty sure that section of tunnels was where Granny Allswell had been buried.

GATHER ‘ROUND CHILDREN

Action. Montage. Level 19.

Servants of Granny Allswell lure intruders to the mines of the Redcap into traps.

Unless the party wants to wait for Granny to come out (and endure Risur’s mining operations being disrupted for two months), they’ll need to enter the Redcap mines and find her.

Granny’s witchy magic has given her a general description of each PC, and she has told her favored children to be on the lookout for them. Soon after receiving these instructions, the gremlins had a series of mistaken identity situations, bringing random miners from the Favela lottery to see Granny. The miners that met the fey titan were driven mad and fed to the kidnapped children as stew. The gremlins took the resultant scolding of Granny to heart and opted to craft a series of tests for those who entered the mine.

Redcap Peak—Above Ground

The entrance to the Redcap mines is a lonely grouping of temporary dwellings spaced between shafts leading into the mountain. The buildings were once the homes of dozens of miners, as well as support shops, meeting areas, recreation, and lavatories. All of the buildings are abandoned; their interiors stripped clean, with goods transported back to Favela or dragged into the mines by the gremlins.

No metal remains here. Doors have hinges crudely removed, fences picked clean save for the wood mounts, and even the handles on the latrines are missing. Each of the entry shafts save one are broken beyond mundane means of repair. Crashed elevators and broken cabling tell stories of destruction for each, while the sole working elevator has a crude wooden sign post erected at the entrance. Written in haphazardly splashed blood is the following:

This mountain is ours. Come and play. Play and be ours too.

A 15-ft. square platform acts as the elevator, with support ropes on every corner and a central rope that connects to a pulley 20 ft. above the entrance. The elevator can be turned on – sending the cart down at a rate of 30 ft. per round – from a lever on the platform. The shaft descends 350 ft. into the mountain and ends at a juncture of several horizontal tunnels.

Long-Term Gremlinry

Favela’s miners operated in dozens of mines in the area, with Redcap just being the most prominent and profitable. These mines’ outputs fall off rapidly after the Great Eclipse, and then other mines farther away start having trouble. Granny’s old joints take a while to limber up, so she hasn’t gone out personally, but she’s using her witchy magic from beneath the earth to create gremlins all throughout the Anthras Mountains. Given enough time, bands of the little buggers will start marching into Redcap carrying children and shinies nabbed all along the mountain range.



Trap: A single gremlin waits 100 ft. down the shaft nestled in a small cubby. For the most part, the gremlin spends its days sleeping and lazing about in its hole, but is woken by the sounds of the elevator if it is activated. The creature hides in the darkness (Perception DC 30) waiting for the elevator to pass, at which point it comes out and cuts the support cables.

Creatures on the platform who fall from this height take 20d6 points of falling damage along with 6d6 points of piercing damage from broken debris. PCs on the platform can attempt to grab onto the wall though they need to make a quick jump and find a handhold on the smoothed shaft walls (Reflex DC 28 followed by a DC 20 Climb check).

The Greatest of Gremlins

A group of four gremlins are considered to be the favorite of Granny Allswell’s rambunctious children. Named **Glower**, **Guffaw**, **Pout**, and **Tremble**, these gremlins take great joy in acting as ambassadors for those who dare travel into the mines. Having a very twisted sense of diplomacy and proper manners, these gremlins are not immediately hostile and do their best to act as guides for the PCs.

The posse of four waits at the exit of the elevator, expecting visitors the moment the elevator activates. They’re initially hostile but feign friendship, unless the party is playing music (Perform DC 20) in which case they’re unfriendly. They’ll still try to trick the party into danger unless the PCs make a genuine effort to befriend them. If made helpful, they’ll explain that there are traps up ahead, but that Granny only wants survivors to make it to her, so they have to endure the traps to prove they’re not just more boring miners.

The four gremlins are:

- ♦ **Glower:** A stunted (for a gremlin) blue-skinned creature with a perpetual look of frustration on his face. He wears a finely tailored suit that is clearly sized for a child along with an appropriately sized bowler hat. Glower spends his time talking about how nothing impresses him, and acts bitter towards everyone and everything that is not him. The inside lining of his jacket is filled with hooks that dangle dozens of tiny children toys, which he occasionally pulls out and plays with to illustrate his ennui. The only time Glower shows any emotion beyond his irritation is when questioned on the origin of his toys, to which he simply responds with a rictus grin and no answer.



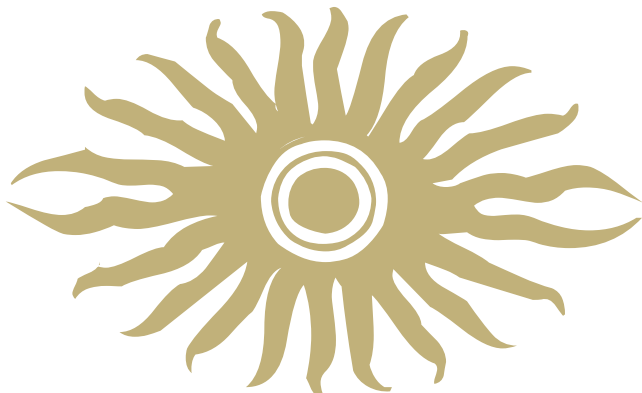
- ♦ **Guffaw:** A humorously obese gremlin with orange-tinged flesh riddled with freckles, Guffaw has the drooping ears of a basset hound. He begins every sentence with a chortling “Huh huh huh!” and ends with a simple “Eh?” Guffaw dresses in rags that are a patchwork of quilts and blankets each of which is inscribed with a different name. When mocked by his siblings, Guffaw’s most common response is to nervously break wind and begin crying.
- ♦ **Pout:** The only female of the group, Pout is garbed in an elaborate crimson dress and acts like a meek teenager talking to her first crush. Her purple hued skin meshes with the dress, but a close inspection of the fabric reveals it to be originally a white dress now covered in blood. Pout rarely speaks, but often has moments of seemingly random disagreements with her siblings. Most of these disputes turn into savage mauling as Pout attacks those who disagree with her after she puts her foot down.
- ♦ **Tremble:** A gray-skinned gremlin with a full head of disheveled white hair, Tremble eternally shakes as his name suggests. One of his two eyes is milky white, while the other is slit like that of a cat, constantly blinking open and closed. Tremble is the most talkative of the group, often initiating conversation with an odd twinge of movement, probing newcomers with endless questions about the foods they’ve eaten, the places they’ve visited, their favorite color, why they chose the weapons they chose, who their favorite celebrity is (for the record Tremble’s is ‘Rock Rackus, the greatest of all humans’), and continual questions about why they’ve entered the Redcap mines. The gremlin’s only other quirk is his need to stab things with his rusted kitchen knife, an addiction he considerably fills on the local insect life.

GODS VS. GREMLINS

Let’s take a look at this objectively, shall we? The PCs are 17th level at this point and have the ability as a group to bring armies to heel with concentrated spell casting and martial prowess. Standing against them in the Redcap mines is a gaggle of disorganized gremlins with only 4 of them having any notable abilities.

Not a fair fight.

Mischievous as they are, the gremlins don’t pose a threat against the PCs. What make Granny’s children an annoyance are the traps that fill the mountain, and the plethora of passive abilities Glower, Guffaw, Pout, and Tremble present. Used together, these could pose a major hindrance to the PCs, weakening them before they meet the fey titan herself.



Glower, Guffaw, Pout, & Tremble

CR 8

XP 4,800 each

Gremlin rogue 9

NE Tiny fey

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

Defense

AC 24, touch 20, flat-footed 16 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 size)**hp** 77 (10 HD; 9d8+1d6+30)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +15, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +3**DR** 10/cold iron; **SR** 20

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** +3 *dagger* +18/+13/ (1d2+1/19-20)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +5d6**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 9th)At-Will— *quicken mage hand*

Statistics

Str 6, **Dex** 24, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +6; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 20**Feats** Alertness, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Bluff +14, Climb +11, Craft (traps) +12, Disable Device +22, Escape Artist +20, Intimidate +10, Perception +18, Ride +8, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +32**Languages** Common, Primordial, Sylvan**SQ** rogue talent (bleeding attack, fast stealth, powerful sneak, stand up), trapfinding +4**Other Gear** +3 *dagger*, *bracers of armor* +4

Special Abilities

Each gremlin has an aura that is a mind-affecting effect that does not work on animals, or other gremlins.

Angry Aura [Glower Only] (Su) Glower radiates an aura of anger to a radius of 20 feet.

Any creature in this area gains the confused condition anytime it misses with an attack or fails a skill check. This condition lasts for 10 rounds, during which the subject always counts as rolling ‘Attack Nearest Creature’. Once the confusion effect ends, the creature can be affected by this ability again.

Incompetence Aura [Guffaw Only] (Su) Guffaw radiates an aura of incompetence to a radius of 20 feet. Any creature in this area must roll two d20s whenever a situation calls for a d20 roll (such as an attack roll, a skill check, or a saving throw) and must use the lower of the two results generated.

Timid Aura [Pout Only] (Su) Pout radiates an aura of timidity to a radius of 20 feet. Any creature in this area who initiates an action (full-round/move/standard/swift) has a 20% chance of not performing that action. The creature cannot select a new action in the place of the one they failed to act on; the action is considered spent.

Twitching Aura [Tremble Only] (Su) Tremble radiates an aura of uncontrollable shaking to a radius of 20 feet. Any creature in this area can move up to double their normal speed as a move action. Anytime a creature moves in this aura, they must make a DC 20 Acrobatics check or fall prone.



Trouble in the Dark

The caverns of the Redcap mines are filled with twisting turns and narrow passages, necessitated by Risur's druid-overseen mining practices, which favor appeasing nature spirits instead of strip mining. Each section of the mine is reinforced with wooden struts and every 100 feet or so there's a secured bunker complex where miners could seek shelter in the case of a collapse. There are no lights, and the winding tunnels are typically 4 feet wide and 5 feet high, with only occasional openings into larger chambers that once contained profitable veins.

Simple wooden tracks for mining carts weave through the mine, though a few sections are missing where the tracks were metal. These are typically nearby dismantled steam engines, which were used to propel heavily-laden carts up slopes.

The nature of the path allows the gremlins to take the PCs through a variety of traps and tricks to 'test' them before they meet with Granny Allswell. If the party disarms a trap, the gremlins might reset it using *quicken mage hand* (Perception DC 42 to notice). If the party doesn't go with the gremlins, they still encounter the traps since they're along the route to Granny.

The gremlins pretend to be dumbfounded about how all these traps got here, and they blame the miners for having unsafe working conditions.

Trap One—No Sleeping in Mine

A ladder that descends thirty feet has several long wooden slivers coated with poison. Initially only one ladder rung has these poisoned splinters exposed, but the gremlins can use *mage hand* to trigger different traps for each PC. If any PCs fall unconscious, the gremlins want to strip them naked, scatter their gear in nooks around the mines, and then eat their flesh.

Poisoned Quills

CR 8 per PC

XP 4,800

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 23**Trigger** location; **Reset** repair**Effect** Atk +15 melee (2d4+2 hp plus blue whinnis poison);**Blue whinnis poison.** Injury. **Save** Fortitude DC 14**Frequency** 1/round for 2 rounds**Initial Effect** 1 Con damage; **Secondary Effect** unconsciousness for 1d3 hours;**Cure** 1 save

Trap Two—Please Use Handrail

Wooden planks form a simple bridge over a 10-ft. wide ravine. Bundles of mining supplies dangle from it, include coils of rope with swinging hooks. The gremlins have the bridge collapse when the third PC is on it, and the ropes snag and pull victims down into a 15-ft. deep pit filled with stone spikes pointing in many odd angles. The spikes are coated in purple worm venom.

Footgrabber Pit

XP 19,200

CR 12

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 27; **Disable Device** DC 25**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual**Effect** Reflex DC 25 avoids fall into pit full of spikes. Atk +15 melee (1d4+2 spikes for 1d6+1 damage each plus entangle plus purple worm poison); an entangled creature cannot move from its space, but can make an Escape Artist or Strength check (DC 20) as a full-round action, which deals 2d6 additional damage whether the check is successful or not.**Purple worm poison.** Injury. **Save** Fortitude DC 24**Frequency** 1/round for 6 rounds**Initial Effect** 1d3 Str damage; **Cure** 2 consecutive saves

Trap Three—Deadly Supply Bunker

Ladders, ropes, and wheelbarrows fill this 20-ft. wide, 100-ft. long chamber. Racks of picks and other metal implements fill the walls. This place looks really dangerous—Perception (DC 25) determines that any large force would cause a lot of sharp things to fly through the air—and it takes a separate Disable Device checks (DC 25) to make any given 10-ft. square safe. (Even if the party does this, the gremlins discreetly reset everything when they're not looking, using *mage hand*.)

Surprisingly, though, nothing bad happens here the first time the party comes through.

Trap Four—Don't All Miners Stow Giant Boulders at the Tops of Slopes?

Shortly after the deadly supply bunker room, a 60-ft. long, 10-ft. wide passage has a few nooks along the ground (Perception DC 30), each big enough for a Tiny creature to stand safely in as a boulder rolls past. The end of the passage slopes up, and as soon as anything heavier than thirty pounds steps there, a huge boulder clunks loudly, falling from the ceiling 60-ft. further ahead (120 ft. from the deadly supply bunker).

Roll initiative; starting at initiative count 24 and again at each next initiative count until count 0, the boulder advances 5 ft. down the hall, back toward the deadly supply bunker. It careens for two rounds until it hits the end of the bunker room, and as it moves it triggers the flinging metal traps.

Rolling Boulder

XP 9,600

CR 10

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 30; **Disable Device** DC 20**Trigger** location; **Reset** manual**Effect** rolling boulder (12d6 bludgeoning damage and knocked prone; Reflex DC 25 for half); targets all creatures whose space it enters. Strength DC 25 to halt, hardness 8, 400 hp

Flinging Metal

XP 12,800

CR 11

Type mechanical; **Perception** DC 25; **Disable Device** DC 20**Trigger** location; **Duration** 4 rounds; **Reset** manual**Effect** sharp metal (Atk +18 ranged, 1d4 darts per target for 1d4+1 damage each plus wasp swarm poison); flying picks (Atk +18 melee [1d12+1/x3]); multiple targets (all targets within room)**Wasp swarm poison.** Injury. **Save** Fortitude DC 13**Frequency** 1/round for 4 rounds**Initial Effect** 1 Dex damage; **Cure** 1 save



Allswell Down Here

Social. Real-Time.

Granny Allswell seems too crazy to be a real threat, but she's as malevolent as the Voice of Rot and cleverer than anyone gives her credit.

After being suitably led through the mine by their gremlin guides, the PCs hear a murmur of dozens of tiny voices, accompanied by the hearty but somehow off-putting smell of a stew cooking. The tunnel grows taller, and a scaffolding on the left leads up to a small air vent. Beyond it, the passage opens up into a vast chamber, lit only by a dim fire-light emerging from a pit to the north. Magical fire runes around the pit keep warm the stew cooking 30 feet below.

The chamber is filled with various lesser fey gremlins, most of which stand less than a foot tall in height, though their coloration is that of a sickly rainbow. In all there are over a hundred gremlins of differing sizes and shapes who cower in front of the wall at the opposite end of the chamber.

The wall the gremlin horde stands in front of is actually a trio of powerful earth spirits sent under Redcap Mountain by Queen Zidi centuries ago. Zidi had tricked the elementals into absorbing some of her gold royal treasure, which kept them from simply earthgliding through the stone. Granny Allswell was trapped with them, and she made them her pets, nursing the wounded elementals back to health and extracting all the shiny metal from their owies.

As the PCs enter the chamber, the elementals have taken the form of a wall and only Granny's head is visible, poking out of the stone some twenty feet above the ground. Suspiciously, the stone of the wall doesn't quite match that of the rest of the mines (Perception DC 35), and has a lot of tiny holes. At the foot of the wall lies a pile of tons of shiny (and not-so-shiny) metal doodads acquired by the gremlins. The mining cart rails run directly into the pile, but any miner could tell that the tracks seem out of place stopping at the wall (Knowledge [engineering] DC 20).

On the right side of the room, a mass of makeshift metal cages hold dozens of children, ranging between infants and twelve years old. Behind the cages sits a huge pile of red barrels marked with a fiery icon to warn of explosions; these hold firedust used for blasting. Several of the children have their wrists tied to the bars of the cages with twine, and wooden signs hang around their necks, painted in blood with the word 'Naughty.'

Don't Take Granny for Granite!

Tremble steps forward to address Granny, whose eyes—previously pointed in different directions, spin to lock onto the party, then twitch independently to examine each PC.

Granny calls for her children to calm down. At first the gremlins around the chamber don't seem to listen, but a forceful shout of "BE QUIET NOW!" causes them gremlins to freeze in their tracks and slowly slink to the edges of the room. Even the four named gremlins retreat back in response to Granny's outburst. Once the gremlins are settled, Granny calls for the PCs to come closer so she can "get a better look at them."

Granny Allswell knows the PCs are indeed powerful and tries to gently ply them for information, starting with, "Why don't cha tell Granny what this is all about now?"

Fey Demands

Hearing about a sunless world makes Granny grin and chortle, but then she demures and coos that Risur's children must be so scared of the dark. At that point she looks into the corner of the chamber that holds the children in cages. "Look how safe they are in there."

Granny wants control of the Anthras Mountains, and she wants a steady stream of children—just the naughty ones, though—to make part of her family. She even has a proposal: have all the miners move out of the mountains, and instead send her all the children old enough to sing a song or swing a pick. She'll keep them until they're twelve, teaching them obedience if she can, or making gremlins out of the ones who won't behave. Then on their thirteenth birthday she'll send them back to civilization with whatever they mined.

Before all that, though, she wants all the children the people of Favela are hiding from her. Her gremlins have heard kids playing, so she knows there are more they're keeping from her, and she does not appreciate the rudeness.

Of course, there are no such children; it's just a trick by Katlin Eisner to get Granny to destroy the dam. It also gives the party an opportunity to avoid a fight, if they're perceptive.

Think it Over

If she's denied, Granny suggests the PCs take a night to think about it. Would they rather have her protecting their nation's children, or snatching them away? If the party does leave, overnight Granny weaves a spell – the mountain is limned in red faerie fire, and quakes cause buildings to collapse in Favela. After an hour there's a crescendo of thunder and then a rancid stench wafts outward and covers the entire nation. All the milk that touches the lips of children that night curdles, terrifying thousands of mothers and causing thousands of children to become sick.

However, the great expenditure of power imposes a negative level on Granny for the next week, a consequence the party might realize (Knowledge [arcana] DC 30). Heartless PCs might goad her into repeating the curse for several days to weaken her.

If the party arranges for a hundred people to sing the song *All's Well* (see page 16), they can stop the grand hex from affecting the nation, but Granny Allswell is still weakened.

Titan Against Titan

If the party finds out what Katlin is up to and drags her to Granny, she compels the woman to speak the truth. Upon learning the Voice of Rot tried to trick her, Granny offers a new deal: Risur can keep its children, but she wants the Voice of Rot's tongue, delivered within a year. Until then, any miners in 'her mountains' will need to sing as they dig, or else she'll collapse the tunnels on them.

Changeling Option

The party might be able to negotiate her to let miners still operate and leave Risur's children alone if one of them offers his or her own child, who will be raised among the gremlins. Granny then lets the PC pick among Tremble, Guffaw, Glower, and Pout to have as a new child.

The Old Fashioned Way

Or the party can fight. Whenever battle begins, a PC who is monarch feels the loyalty of the Risuri people flow in and empower him or her.

FIGHTING THE OLD HAG

Action. Tactical. Level 25.

Granny Allswell is smart enough to have allies of her own—hordes of gremlins and three corrupted earth spirits.

If the party attacks, the collected gremlins start to swarm in from the edges of the room, and the wall Granny's head emerges from breaks apart, transforming into three huge earth elementals with a bitter grudge against the Risuri monarchy. They attack the party, revealing Granny herself—warty green skin, sixty feet tall, her arms unnaturally long and gangly compared to her body, and her eyes twitching in different directions.

Granny's Gremlin Gang

- 3 Corrupted Earth Spirits (see Appendix A: Combat Catalogue)
- Granny Allswell

Terrain

We include two maps—a full map here (and in the appendix at the back of the book), plus a player map (in the appendix only). As the PCs enter they can't see the far chamber or the side tunnel 'air vents.' The 'air vents' that run along the north provide a hiding spot, though Granny can send her gremlin gangs in, or just *wall of stone* them shut if she's really annoyed.





The small pit full of stew deals 1d6 fire damage to a creature caught in it each round.

If the firedust casks take more than 10 points of fire damage, they'll explode, dealing 20d6 damage to each creature within 30 ft. This kills the children.

The steam engine and cranes in the eastern half of the room are all damaged, but *make whole* or similar magic could make them available if PCs get clever ideas about dragging Granny into the big pit or something similar.

The piles of shinies are difficult terrain, and mostly worthless.

Tactics

Granny uses her *hordeling outburst* to control nine gangs of gremlins at a time, and the little bastards run all across the PCs, trying to disarm or disrobe them. While the earth spirits provide beef and initial melee damage, Granny starts by using her two *evil eye* powers to disrupt the party, then uses her exceptionally long reach to attack. She prefers to focus on spellcasters so she can steal magic they might be using.

If she can, she'll use her hurl foe ability to knock PCs into the stew pit. If enemies get behind her, she'll instead throw them into the massive mining shaft.

KOOKY TALK

"Aww, look what'chu you gone done now. Those little rocks was just needing a few more kisses from ol' Granny."

"Ho ho, nice spell you cast wee one. Nice, tasty spell. Granny thinks she wants it."

"Don't cha be hurting my children... well, don't cha hurting them too much, I know kids'll be kids and all."

"Hehehe, dat tickled ol Granny a little bit. Maybe after this rough'n'tumble you can come scratch me back a little."

Once she has used each evil eye power on each PC, she starts using her swift action to cast *bestow curse*, or *quicken hostile juxtaposition* (which lets her swap positions with an enemy whenever she'd be attacked or affected by a damaging spell, causing the enemy to become the target instead).

Bringing Down the Mountain

When Granny is first reduced to 0 hit points, she'll spit in defiance but stops fighting. She'll agree to return to her torpor, but makes one last offer: give her Redcap Mountain to be her personal playground, let her remain awake, and in exchange she'll send nightmares into sleeping minds of the party's enemies. She'll cast thirteen *nightmare* spells (Will DC 25) each night for a year, targeting whoever the party desires.

If the party continues to attack her, the fey titan's face contorts into a visage of tension and anger, almost comical since her eyes roll in their sockets. The hilarity ceases soon after, when the entire mountain begins to tremble. Two rounds later Granny's cave collapses around them, dealing 5d6 damage per round (Reflex DC 20 negates). If the party moves at a quick pace out of the mines they can outrun the cave-in, but the four named gremlins—who avoided the previous fight—show up along the way to stymie the party.

Fleeing out of the mountain requires backtracking (Survival DC 20 to avoid getting lost, each failed check incurs another 5d6 damage from falling rocks). This takes the party through all four of the gremlin's traps, which have been reset. Once up past the splinter-trapped ladder, another Survival check (DC 20) is necessary to reach the elevator. At that point, use your judgment as far as how much time the party has to make its way up the 350-ft. shaft before the hole mine falls in on itself.

If you think it adds to the climax, Granny can appear beneath the party (the old witch polymorphed herself to navigate the tunnels), and she starts climbing up after them. All it takes is one good hit or clever idea to stymie her ascent, and then the shaft collapses on her as soon as the party makes it to the surface.

Threat Four: She Who Writhes

Lady Beshela serves as steward of the domains of the fey titan She Who Writhes. With armies of sea creatures at her command, the beautiful fey was like a queen of her own land, but since the Great Eclipse her kraken mistress has wrought havoc upon those people.

Four decades ago Beshela was saved from captivity by Ethelyn, the sister of Risur's former king. Her pride and eagerness to help Ethelyn in a coup made her an enemy of Risur for a time, but she has come to realize the real threat was the Obscurati. Now she humbly hopes to aid the party in defeating her mistress She Who Writhes, both to save her own domain and to repay her debt to Risur.

BESHELA,
ARCHFEY OF
THE SEA.



*Arms of thousands make men weep,
She lurks in tides of murky deep.
Brave souls gone without a trace,
Grasping ships with sweet embrace.
Fishers, merchants, pirates, each
Will tremble when they see her breach.
When sailors wail 'neath stormy skies,
It's time for dinner, She Who Writhes.*
-Risuri Sea Shanty



WAVES OF RAGE

Exposition. Montage. Level 17.

No ship is safe from She Who Writhes!

She Who Writhes may have assisted the party in Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky*, but only accidentally. She sees all intruders on the seas as enemies, and so now no ship can come within thirty miles of Risur's shores without being attacked.

As the PCs race around Risur dealing with threats, Beshela the Archfey of the Sea searches for her fey titan mistress to try to calm her. By the time the PCs are ready to deal with She Who Writhes, Beshela has returned, and has the rough outline of a plan.

Eladrin dreadnought Asrabey Varal offers to aid the party in Beshela's plan to soothe the rampaging fey titan. However, Asrabey—already doubting his opposition to the Obscurati, since it was co-founded by his wife Kasvarina—has decided in light of the Ob's ritual to switch sides. He intends to betray the party and weaken Risur so the Obscurati can more easily accomplish its goals of dominating the world.

AN EXCESS OF CAUTION

Asrabey does not underestimate the party. While they are out of Flint, he secretly acquires numerous *elixirs of glibness* (granting a +20 bonus to Bluff checks to conceal the truth). Unless the party put a tail on him, by the time they come back to deal with She Who Writhes, Asrabey will glibly avoid dropping any hints of his betrayal (Sense Motive DC 30).

The only real hint the party might easily notice is that he has acquired an enchanted crown. This item hides the magical aura of his elixirs, both while they're on his person and after he has drunk one. If asked about it, he claims it makes him more personable, but with the gruff eladrin it doesn't seem to make any difference.

Fey in Water

At an appropriate point (likely after the other three fey titans are defeated), Beshela makes herself known to one or more of the PCs. She uses an effect similar to *programmed image* spell, enchanting the bathwater at the party's likely residences. The next time one of them bathes or shaves, her image seems to rise out of the water to address them.

"The fey titans contest with Risur, but none will cause more damage than my mistress, She Who Writhes. When you are ready to grapple with this menace of the seas, you may find me by placing a bouquet of white lilies on the water at your docks."

If the PCs contact her, the archfey Beshela rises from the water atop the head of a giant octopus which emerges from the water. As the octopus rises, a half-dozen merfolk mounted on the backs of armored oversized seahorses appear, acting as the archfey's escort. Beshela's demeanor depends heavily on her previous interactions with the party. This time, though, she operates mostly on bluster, and the forces with her are all the aquatic allies she could muster. Most of the marine denizens have fled to deeper retreats.

If the party declines to work with Beshela, about two months after the Great Eclipse Asrabey approaches her with Gale as back-up. The three sail out in a small ship, and Beshela is able to contact the fey titan, but Asrabey's betrayal goes off without a hitch. Gale is horribly wounded but manages to fly away so she can tell the party what happened.

Beshela's Plan

Beshela says she knows a way to calm She Who Writhes. They must head out to sea and force the titan to rise, then trap her in a temporary storm, at which point Beshela will need to maintain physical contact with the titan for a minute to cast a spell that would charm her. Beshela could then explain the situation with the Obscurati and open up negotiations between the party and her mistress.

She suspects She Who Writhes would agree to aid the party for a year if Risur abandoned use of steam engines and made regular offerings of virile men and golden treasure. If the party cannot come to terms with She Who Writhes, at least the titan would be in a vulnerable place so the party could defeat her, driving her back to sleep. Beshela would regret having to betray her mistress in that way, but she recognizes the greater stakes to the world.

Depending on their relationship with Beshela, the PCs may not trust her. After all, Beshela tried to sink the party's ship during Adventure Seven, *Schism*, and before that she assisted in an assassination attempt against King Aodhan. If questioned on her previous actions, Beshela has no regrets, reminding them that had Duchess Ethelyn of Shale been allowed to complete her coup, it is quite possible the Obscurati would have been stopped much earlier.

Asrabey offers to stand by Beshela and protect her while the PCs handle subduing the fey titan. In truth, he plans to use an eladrin ritual from the high age of Elfaivar to steal Beshela's powers and become an archfey himself. He intends to strike while Beshela is bonded to She Who Writhes, granting him both magical power and temporary control of the titan.

Important Warning

Beshela warns the party that She Who Writhes has the power to unleash a deadly ululation that drives people so mad that they kill themselves in order to not have to hear it anymore (effectively, this is *wail of the banshee*). She suggests that whatever the party decides to do, they be ready for that threat.

I'm on a Boat!

The first part of Beshela's plan requires luring She Who Writhes from the ocean into shallow water. This should not be difficult for the PCs to arrange, as the fey titan has been attacking pretty much any vessel of notable size that ventures into water deeper than thirty feet. The party's advisors suggest taking the *Coaltongue*, the *Impossible*, and any Danoran ships that were seized at the end of adventure nine (since Flint's own fleet was mostly sunk). As for how to get to She Who Writhes, several options are possible.

First, the party can use illusion magic to shout challenges underwater, drawing the titan's attention. They'll linger close to a wide sandbar that is hidden at high tide, and if possible they'll simply goad the titan into beaching herself.



Second, each ship will have its cannons adjustable so they can aim downward into the sea. Special enchantments will be needed to allow the projectiles to travel more than a few feet through the water, costing 25,000 gp per ship.

If that fails, the third option is to have the other ships harpoon her or drop jagged anchors to try to snag her. If at least three ships get hold they can try to drag her onto the sandbar.

As a back-up, a fourth option is to have several dozen spellcasters on board with *control water* scrolls. If cast simultaneously they can simply pull the water out from under She Who Writhes, even if she won't come into the shallows.

The party will discover that She Who Writhes can teleport (just like everyone else due to the plane of Fourmyle). They might try to break her line of sight, but since she can see through water their best bet would be to churn the seas, such as with a tornado or hurricane created by *control weather*. An unprepared party is liable to lose many ships and perhaps a few PCs just trying to get close enough to She Who Writhes to talk.



SHE'S WRITHING ALRIGHT!

Action. Real-Time. Level 19.

The queen of the sea tries to kill intruders to her domain.

The battle against She Who Writhes is divided into three phases; the first phase being the party's effort to beach the titan so they can climb atop her without her simply submerging and teleporting away. The second phase of the battle has the party defend Beshela for a minute as she attempts to charm her mistress. The final phase of the encounter begins when Varal stabs Beshela, then takes her power to become an archfey himself.

If your campaign does not use the *Admiral o' the High Seas* rules for naval combat, the first phase of this encounter can be mostly handled narratively. The party just needs to figure out how to thwart She Who Writhes's teleportation, perhaps taking a few crashing waves across their deck in the process.

Part One: Battle at Sea

Let the party pick where they want to confront She Who Writhes. There is plenty of nautical terrain within a few miles of Flint harbor, or they might even engage her in The Ayres. Once they set out, it's only half an hour before the waters grow turbulent, and a look-out spies something approaching under the waves.

The first naval round occurs when She Who Writhes reaches long range, and she attempts to make the party's boat list with *waves and whirlpools*. The following round she teleports (since after all, any creature can teleport now) to the opposite side of the party's fleet and tries to capsize the ship by hitting it with waves again. The party might not be prepared for her amazing mobility, and unless they can stop her from teleporting or have very long-range weapons, she'll keep jaunting around until the party's whole fleet is drowning.

She stays in water that's at least 30 ft. deep, but if the party has their allies use a massive number of *scrolls of control water*, they can drop She Who Writhes into a watery depression, too shallow for her to teleport out of. The party will only have one naval round to close the distance (which entails piloting into a whirlpool with steep sides), after which She Who Writhes manually crawls her way out of the area of lower water and continues her attack.



SIMPLER ENGAGEMENT

Since the big twist of this encounter is battling Asrabey, you might simplify the scene. If your group isn't into the naval combat rules, just skip that part of the encounter.

The party can sail out, and when She Who Writhes approaches the water starts to heave around them, but Beshela performs a ritual to conjure a hurricane and pull the fey titan to the surface. The party then has to reach the 'face' of She Who Writhes, where Beshela needs a minute to commune with her mistress. If the party can keep Beshela alive that long, She Who Writhes stops fighting them. Beshela starts to explain the threat of the Obscurati, but then Asrabey stabs her in the back with his flaming sword. He draws out her power and orders the kraken to destroy the party, while he grimly explains why he has betrayed them.

TRUE TENTACLED HORROR

She Who Writhes manifests as a creature akin to a giant squid, her body a hundred feet long and her tentacles stretching hundreds more. However, most of her body is a not solid mass of flesh, but rather thousands upon thousands of smaller tentacles—some suckered like an octopus, some scaled like a shark, others leafy like kelp or covered in jagged golden rasps trawled up from ancient sunken treasure.

Her 'face' has two massive eyes—capable of charming those she sees and luring them to a drowned death—but those are merely her most prominent. Dozens more eyes probe out from her body attached to pseudopods, granting her near perfect awareness of her surroundings. Masses of tentacles along the crown of her head defend the primary eyes, and if they grapple creatures they pull victims *through* the titan's flesh into her body's interior. Likewise, creatures bitten and swallowed by her are drawn to this churning organ.

Therein, the figure of a beautiful woman glows with bioluminescence, while around her writhe the mindless but still-alive bodies of hundreds of previous victims, their expressions rapt with physical ecstasy. Creatures who can resist the psychic onslaught here can see the true formlessness of She Who Writhes, for even this female figure is just a ruse, like the tempting orb of an anglerfish. Up close she is nothing more than dozens of wriggling tentacles, slick with bloody mucus.



Godmind

SHE WHO WRITHES

1 = 5 feet



The party might instead try to goad her into attacking them and leaving their allied ships alone, though pulling that off is challenging (some appropriate show of force, plus Intimidate DC 35). Or they might have their allies flying for the duration—an expensive undertaking, but possible. In this case, She Who Writhes waits until she capsizes the party's vessel, then closes to devour them, at which point the *control water* spells can strand her long enough for the party to climb aboard her.

We imagine your party will think of other clever solutions.

She Who Writhes, Fey Titan

Gargantuan Leviathan

Level 28 Leviathan

Hull Integrity 4

Command +14

Defense 30

Maneuverability 8

Speed 14

Perception +13,

Blindsense

Dimensions

Body 100 ft. x 40 ft. Tentacles 110 ft. Feeding tentacles extend an extra 160 ft.

Tentacles

The kraken lashes out with two feeding tentacles, then pulls herself close and grasps with the other eight. Slowly, unstopably, it crushes, until even steel bends within its coils.

When She Who Writhes rams, she stops 50 feet from her target and takes no damage from the collision. The target cannot move until the tentacles take damage (treat as a component that can be targeted) or the titan releases her grip.

Crush and Bite

Crunching from beneath the water line is followed quickly by an alien ululation from belowdecks. Crew members issue horrified screams about a massive beak, inhuman eyes, grasping tendrils lined with barbs, and snapping jaws.

She Who Writhes bites and crushes only at short range, but acts as a weapon with a +25 attack bonus (effectively +30 due to range).

Waves and Whirlpools

She breaches for a moment to fix an eye on your vessel, and then the sea beneath it begins to churn.

In addition to her *crush and bite* attack, She Who Writhes can afflict any one ship within long range with heavy chop. She can only affect one ship this way at a time. This requires a Command check (DC 25) or else the ship is struck by a wave. Each creature on deck must make a Reflex save (DC 10) to avoid being washed overboard. Failing the command check by 5 or more causes the ship to list from the wave's impact. If the ship is already listing, instead the ship is capsized.

Additionally, regardless of the result of the captain's check during the Terrain phase, a ship in heavy chop has its speed and maneuverability ratings reduced by half.

Titanic Resilience

Cannonballs simply bounce off the massive creature.

Reduce all damage She Who Writhes takes by 1 strike. If her 'hull integrity' is reduced to 0, she submerges and teleports away. If she cannot submerge (or is otherwise prevented from teleporting), she is unable to take any actions other than to slowly crawl toward deep water. She heals to her full health after about five minutes.

Mistress of the Sea

She can teleport anywhere she in her seas.

Due to the new nature of the planes, She Who Writhes can teleport around the battle as long as she can submerge fully, unless magic is used to stop her. She can choose not to make a Command check during the Location or Bearing phases, and instead to simply teleport to any stage she wishes with any bearing she desires.

Part Two: Beshela's Ritual

Once the PCs have managed to stop She Who Writhes from playing keep-away, they have to climb aboard her. The map is just a static image of her body, but in truth her tentacles are constantly flailing about. Creatures on her outer tentacles must succeed an Acrobatics check (DC 20) each round or else fall into the water, and those who fall into the water must succeed a Swim check (DC 20) each round or take 2d6 bludgeoning damage from mighty waves and more submerged tentacles.

Tentacles sprout all over the titan's body, and these try to pull PCs into her interior, where she can *dominate* them and have slow, viscous congress with them until she grows tired of such carnal pleasures. The larger tentacles try to knock away melee threats, or simply crush them. If no enemies have reached her main body, She Who Writhes can use whirlwind attack to strike every enemy within 160 feet of her main body.

While the party figures out what to do, Asrabey guides Beshela to She Who Writhe's face. There he readies actions to attack any tentacles that threaten Beshela, but he suggests the party target other parts of the kraken to distract her attention. If Beshela can survive ten rounds on the titan's face, she completes her communion, and the titan stops attacking.

Beshela's Communion

Amidst the chaos of battle and the continuing torrent of water, the spot where Beshela touches the titan's face begins to glow. For a moment, the contained storm calms, and the tendrils that make up the face of She Who Writhes part, revealing the interior and the titan's feminine avatar.

"Mistress!" Beshela calls out. "You have awakened to a world in peril. We are not your enemies! We need your aid to save all our lands from the threat of a great power. Please listen to my—"

The moment is shattered. With a single lightning fast movement of his blade, Varal impales the archfey Beshela through the back. He rapidly intones the syllables of some eladrin curse, and the dreadnought undergoes a hideous transformation.

His skin shifts from its usual brown tan to a blighted green, and his cloak of smoke peels away as shadowy tentacles erupt from his back. He shrugs Beshela's body off his sword, dropping her body into She Who Writhes' interior. Then he sweeps his flaming blade as a challenge to the party and proclaims:

"I am Asrabey Varal, Archfey of Obedience and loyal ally to the rulers of this new age! After centuries of spilling blood in vengeance, now I see the path of justice is one of order and control. We must obey the Obscurati! Champions of Risur, we have been allies, and I respect your devotion, but you walk the wrong path! You shall either abandon your rebellion, or you will taste my blade."





Part Three: Seriously...*You're* Betraying Us?!

Varal now has control over She Who Writhes, and he directs her attacks to keep him from being overwhelmed by the PCs. Let the party's past interactions with Varal determine whom he targets first; he might be loyal to the Obscurati, but he's still emotional and will gladly repay any past slights with bloodshed.

Varal's goal in this combat is to escape with the fey titan under his control. To do so, he needs to get She Who Writhes back into open water so she can teleport them away, after which he'll present the titan to the Obscurati as a new weapon. First, though, he needs to kill the PCs, or at least knock them off She Who Writhes, and the titan needs a few minutes to crawl into deep enough water. If there are any ships within reach, Asrabey could command She Who Writhes to grasp the vessel and threaten to kill all aboard if the party doesn't surrender. Mostly, though, his plan is just to defeat them in battle.

Beshela teeters on the brink of life (-1 hp), but is disregarded by Varal. She can be brought back to consciousness by concerned PCs, at which point she will try to use her actions to re-commune with She Who Writhes, immediately making her a prime target for Varal. If she can spend three rounds uninterrupted at this task, she manages to calm the fey titan and convince it to turn against Asrabey. Of course, rescuing Beshela likely entails entering the interior cavity of the kraken, where She Who Writhes can dominate intruders.

Screaming Titan

If She Who Writhes hasn't already used her deadly ululation (*wail of the banshee*), she unleashes it now. Asrabey is immune to this effect, as is Beshela. If the party guesses Asrabey's intention to betray them and stops him, instead have She Who Writhes wail halfway through Beshela's attempt at communion, since it can create a nice moment of desperation.

Back to the Bottom of the Ocean

When either Asrabey or She Who Writhes is reduced to 0 hit points, She Who Writhes sags in exhaustion and coughs blood into the sea. She gurgles out that she yields, and asks to be allowed to return to her slumber. A moment later her entire body seems to unravel into millions of smaller tentacles, which dissolve into the sea.

If the titan's retreat was caused by saving Beshela and having her complete her communion, She Who Writhes punishes Varal. As her form departs she grasps him in her tentacles and drags him along screaming.

After she is gone, the sea is darkened with blood. The party has a few minutes' reprieve before another challenge presents itself, detailed in Act Two.

Rewards

If the party has dealt with the four fey titans—Ash Wolf, Father of Thunder, Granny Allswell, and She Who Writhes—they should go up to level 18.

Threat Five: Voice of Rot

*Whosoever ventures near,
Be forewarned that Death lives here.
If you should note the smell of death,
Then soon shall come your final breath.*
-Sign outside the High Bayou

The Voice of Rot is not present in the High Bayou. Much like how the Ziggurat of Av in the Antwalk Thicket relinked to the plane of fire, Jiese, the Ziggurat of Apet relinked to Baden, a ghost moon that was once in the Gyre. The Voice of Rot slithered through the ziggurat and emerged on Baden, and from there found his way to the Gyre. He awaits the end of the world there, and likely will confront the party in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.

In the meanwhile, the party finds nothing here. The fey titan moved the swamp around the ziggurat and caused it to sink into the mire after he traveled to Baden. Barring intense excavation efforts, the party won't be able to get inside the mud-flooded ruin to pursue the white serpent.

However, coming here is not worthless. Strange magic summoned the spirit of a long-dead orc druid **Toteth Topec**, original architect of the Axis Seal ritual. Only a small sliver of his consciousness survives after so long, but the party can find him near the ziggurat, drinking a citrusy alcoholic beverage while leaning against a tree.

Toteth vaguely answers questions posed about the original Axis Seal ritual, but the information he provides comes down to just three main facts.

- ♦ They needed to find eight safe worlds to link to, worlds that didn't have hostile forces that could invade. Orcs did all the hard work fighting invaders, and he's kind of disappointed that humans ended up taking over most of the world.
- ♦ They needed a proper balance of energies – air, earth, fire, water, life, death, space, and time. A bad mix could have made the world uninhabitable or completely stolen free will. It took them years to find the right worlds, because they had to journey to each on foot. It was easier to travel between planes back then; kids these days wouldn't appreciate it.
- ♦ The golden seal itself linked the world to a star. Back in his day, you see, there wasn't a sun. He came up with the idea of having one. Well, alright, he saw it on another plane and thought it was a good idea. It kept the monsters away for half the day.

Also, he shares the recipe for a long-forgotten orc beverage: the margarita.

ACT TWO: The New Conspiracy

Wild magic from around the cosmos continues to pour out of the ground in the center of Axis Island, rising in glowing tendrils toward the sky. From his secret lair just a few islands over, **Benedict Pemberton** (AKA Gradiax the Steel Lord, former Dragon Tyrant) couldn't skip a chance to find out what happened.

Shortly after the completion of the Obscurati's ritual, Pemberton's forces assaulted Axis Island. Managing to wrest control of the island from the Danoran military stationed there, Pemberton was fascinated at the technology he discovered. But he was isolated, and worried that soon the Ob would regroup and invade from mainland Danor.

Once the seneschal of the old Demonocracy, Ashima-Shimtu was captured by the Clergy and would have been executed like thousands of other fiends, tossed into the volcano Enzyo Mons. But she knew the *Sacrament of Apotheosis*, a ritual which could give physical form to a belief, and the Clergy hierarchs greatly desired the secret. She was unwilling to share, and they were unwilling to lose a chance to learn the ritual, so they imprisoned her in the Crypta Hereticarum, a vault of curses and heresies on the isle of Odiem, where she has remained for a thousand years.

Initially vengeful, she has turned to meditation and detachment to endure her endless incarceration. She speaks as if narrating events, never referring to herself in the first person. Now that she senses a chance to be free, she hopes to convince the party to release her, after which she wants to roam the multiverse. But centuries of torture have convinced her that the Clergy must be destroyed so it can harm no one else, so before she departs she intends to give the followers of that faith the tools to tear it down.



The Ob forces remaining on Axis following Pemberton's strike fled into the mines (the same mines the PCs used in Adventure One to sneak onto the island). There, the group seethed with a unified rage, eventually bringing a hivemind into existence. The Ob hivemind nested into a disabled battle construct and attempted to kill Pemberton, but was easily repelled by the dragon industrialist's forces.

Meanwhile in Danor, Nicodemus and Sovereign Han Jierre prepared a strike force against Axis using Danoran naval assets, but have been forced to wait until She Who Writhes is no longer a threat. Pemberton, likewise, can't get off the island, so he has fortified his position and put his fanatical gnoll servants to work building weapons for war, using the Obscurati's own factories.

During all this, a stowaway on the island revealed himself to Pemberton. The ruler of Ber had feared another coup attempt by the old dragon tyrant, so **Brakken of Heffanita**, a telepathic minotaur diplomat, volunteered to infiltrate Pemberton's forces. In light of the world having changed, though, Brakken offered to work with Pemberton for the common goal of thwarting the Obscurati. Together, the minotaur and the dragon have tried to figure out a long-term plan against the Ob. The conclusion they've come to is that they need Risur's help.

The act begins just after the PCs have defeated She Who Writhes.

From the Blood of a Demon

Social. Real-time. Level 17.

An old demonic friend sends an informative message in a bloody sea.

Far from the party's battle with She Who Writhes, the cursed island of Odiem lies off the coast of Crisillyir. Its *Crypta Hereticarum* (Vault of Heresies) acts as prison to the sole surviving member of the ancient Demonocracy—Ashima-Shimtu. The demon resides in the lowest levels of the Crypta, suspended above a pool of holy water, and all but forgotten beneath the weight of history. The new planar cosmology brought forth by the Ob has weakened the wards that hold her. Though she is still trapped, her magic can reach far, carried on currents of her blood that has for centuries dripped into the holy water well.

Ashima-Shimtu studied many of the intricacies of blood magic during her role as seneschal of the old demon empire, and now feels the new connection with the plane Ostea. She initially sought to tempt mortals to free her, but her escape plan was thwarted by a group of extraplanar visitors on the surface of Odiem; a choir of angels.

The Axis Seal had kept servants of gods away for thousands of years, but it did not stop them from hearing people's prayers. With the seal now open, the angels knew the vault was a source of great evil that the Clergy could no longer protect, so they came to guard it. The various demon-worshippers and heretics who responded to Ashima-Shimtu's summons were killed almost as soon as they stepped on the shore.



BOND OF BLOOD

In Adventure Four, *Always on Time*, we asked you to note any PCs whose blood might have entered the holy water pool beneath Ashima-Shimtu. In Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*, the party will learn that the demoness has used the same sort of projected image she contacted the party with to speak to religious dissidents throughout Crisillyir. In this way, she spread the *sacrament of apotheosis*, a powerful ritual that can conjure an avatar of a god by drawing upon the power of the faithful. In the Ob's new world of rationality, doubting followers put those gods on trial for failing to uphold their duties to mortals, and as each in turn is executed, the followers who remain loyal and fervent die as well.

Ashima-Shimtu might not desire revenge *per se*, but she has come to see the Clergy as exploitative of the worshippers, and so she wants to watch it destroy itself. If the party learns of her involvement and tries to attack her, any PCs whose blood she was able to get a sample of will be magically compelled to defend her. To lay the narrative foundation for this, we suggest when the demoness appears here that you tell the appropriate PCs that they feel an unusual heat in their skin and a quickening of their pulse.

Thusly trapped, the demoness has used her blood magic to observe the world as best she can, since her vantage point is limited to waters where blood flows. She witnesses Pemberton's invasion of Axis Island, and suspects that the party would be interested. Of all the people she has had contact with, she thinks the PCs are the ones most likely to release her, so she tries to earn their good will by telling them what she knows.

Bloody Tidings

A few minutes after She Who Writhes has been defeated, spots of the sea begin to glow red wherever blood touched the waves. The glowing blood drifts and begins to coalesce in a single spot, from which rises a bloody female figure – Ashima-Shimtu's *projected image*. (She might even appear during the conflict, such as to rescue a drowning PC, though she lends no offensive power to the battle.)

Once Ashima-Shimtu summons her bloody duplicate, read or paraphrase the following:

From the pool of blood emerges a form of pure crimson, feminine but with jagged edges. As the figure rises, a dozen scab-colored chains strike out from the pool, trailing from hooks in her arms and back and legs as she approaches.

"Long did the seneschal of the Demonocracy wait in her prison, roiled with bitterness and hungry for her revenge. As she bled into the sacred well, Ashima-Shimtu found she could see through the seas and glimpse the tide of history. But centuries tempered her anger, and a foreign power—empathy—began to stir within her.

"In this new age, her bonds are weakened, and the red waters of a world named Ostea grant her the power to do more than simply watch. Yet Ashima-Shimtu seeks not to use these powers for herself. She remains a prisoner, and places the decision to free her in the hands of foreigners. She wishes to show good will, however, and so offers tidings that may be of interest.

"First, a glimpse. Philosophers and politicians of several nations travel west, but toward what end Ashima-Shimtu cannot see.

"Second, a warning. When Ashima-Shimtu gazed upon the western shore of the land of beastmen and fallen dragons, something gazed back. She had not seen its like in this world.

"Third and final, an opportunity. The island at the axis of the world, much contested these past decades, fell to invasion shortly after the heavens rained and the sun departed. A fleet of gnolls under the banner of a steel dragon conquered the island, and may have prevented the one called Nicodemus from completing his grand design. Retaliation was attempted by the navy whose flag bears scroll and sword, but the kraken queen drove them back.

"Now the titan's dominion has passed, and the seas reopen. Soon the axis may shift again, and whatever secrets lie there will once again be obscured. Ashima-Shimtu entreats her heroic jurors to reach the island while they still can. Her own liberation on another mysterious island can wait."

The PCs have only a few rounds before Ashima-Shimtu's *project image* ends, which is displayed as the edges of her body dry to scabrous powder. In that time she might answer one or two questions. (The party can just cast *sending* to her if they want more information, though she's verbose, and might need a few allotments of twenty-five words to really convey anything useful).

If the PCs decide to go meet directly with Ashima-Shimtu, her prison has new jailers in the form of an angelic host. This is described in more detail in Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*.

Timeline Options

The timeline following the defeat of She Who Writhes is left intentionally vague, letting you ensure the PCs reach Axis at an appropriate point. Danor's attempt to retake the island should take just long enough to give the party a day or two on the island before it comes under attack.

If there are still fey titans rampaging around Risur, the PCs should not be punished for handling those threats, but it should be clear that Danor is readying to retake the island, and the PCs' window to investigate is short.

Accessing Axis

We assume the PCs take a ship to Axis Island, since we intend to give the party an airship, retrofitted courtesy of Benedict Pemberton. Teleportation is out (since the PCs have not visited Axis since the reshaping of the world), but the party might use other means to reach the island without taking a boat. In that case, Pemberton has a ship already in production which he offers to the party.

As the party nears the island, they spot debris drifting on the sea, remnants of wrecked ships the Danorans sent that were ravaged by She Who Writhes.

The party can simply sail into the walled harbor of Axis Fortress, but if they're cautious they might use the same insertion method as in Adventure One, *The Island at the Axis of the World*: an underwater tunnel that led to an abandoned mine shaft. The complication there is that the Obscurati agents who escaped Pemberton's assault have all holed up in those mines. Most have died of starvation, but only after their consciousnesses manifested a hivemind, which persists even now after the original bodies have withered away. Only a single Ob agent survives, and if the party enters this way, see Needlewire Parlay (page 47).



Alternately, they might make a beach landing, which triggers magical alarms. Pemberton sends gnolls to invite the party in, but before the gnolls arrive, the hivemind finds them. It attacks, occupying the body of a damaged golem. See Golem Smash (page 44).

Pemberton Industries Axis Divison

Social. Real-Time. Level 18.

My esteemed nemeses, welcome to my factory. I must apologize for the state of repair.

Following the events of Adventure Six, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, the industrialist Benedict Pemberton all but disappeared from the public spotlight. The PCs have doubtless had encounters with the Industrialist since, though his exact location was a mystery. In truth, Pemberton retreated to an island lair in the Yerasol Archipelago.

Since taking control of Axis Island, Pemberton has come to terms with the changes to the cosmology in the wake of the Ob's actions. While not as studious as his fellow dragon Inatch the Hex-Eater (AKA, Harkover Lee, principal minister to the monarch of Risur), Pemberton correctly assumes his ability to fly has been restored. Still, the industrialist is not ready to reveal his true form, and works beside his fanatical gnoll worshippers to reinforce the island while he also searches for clues on what the Obscurati's end game is with the world so drastically altered.

The Island Fortress

Pemberton claimed the old Danoran fortress as his main base of operations, but was quick to make alterations to the site. His gnolls tirelessly worked at removing the remnants of the old hedge maze, replacing it with a defensible trench line surrounded by manned turrets and small bunker emplacements. The former central keep was repurposed to be a personal study for Pemberton, while the external buildings were redesigned into small factories and production facilities.

Perhaps the greatest of changes enacted by Pemberton and his minions was reinforcing the docking ring of the fortress. He lined the outer wall with cannon turrets. Dozens of sniper nests and bunkers line the wall, making the fortress a deathtrap for all but the most determined of military assaults.

When Pemberton assailed the island, he temporarily took to his draconic form, swam up to the wall, and breathed fire into the various bunkers, cooking the defenders. As part of cleaning up that damage, the gnolls have adorned the fortress with a giant logo of Pemberton Industries.

A Dragon's Trust

Pemberton is no fool, and keeps the PCs at arm's length until he is sure they are not here to kill him. If they arrive by boat, he is confident of the outer wall's ability to blast them out of the water; he negotiates a parlay by means of a megaphone from the upper ramparts. Whenever he does go to meet them, he comes in a duplicant, and is escorted by his highest advisor, the gnoll **Pardo** (also in a duplicant; his real body is on Pemberton's original island lair a few dozen miles away). Only once the Obscurati attack the island (see page 51) will he appear in person.

DUPLICANTS

If you're not familiar with the events of Adventure Six, Pemberton had genius gnome inventor Tinker Oddcog design **duplicants**. These humanoid constructs—which normally resemble metal husks with finely articulated plates for their skin—are linked to a particular person via a rare substance called witchoil. A duplicant completely resembles the creature it is linked to, even to the point of detecting as it would to various divinations.

The duplicant can then be controlled remotely, either by the linked individual (if Pemberton trusts them), or by one of his gnoll minions, a select few of whom have been trained as expert infiltrators. Even if Pemberton does let a person control his own duplicant, he has final say over its actions, and can command it as if the person were dominated.

Physically, most duplicants are mass-produced and thus no stronger than a normal person, but Pemberton has produced a variety of them, some of which are quite battle-ready. Most of the time when Pemberton is out and about, he is actually controlling a duplicant, and his real body is hidden away in the central tower of Axis Fortress, under heavy guard and with magical alarms so he won't be caught by surprise when he's paying attention somewhere else.

CULT OF THE STEEL LORD IDEOLOGY

Taught centuries ago by their lord Gradiax that flesh must be stronger than steel, the cult avoids touching metal. Of course Pemberton needs his minions to be able to fire cannons and work factories, so his gnoll followers all wear heavy gloves and carry scarves or kerchiefs if they need to have fine handling of something metal. Pemberton's most-trusted minions get duplicants of their own, though even then they prefer not to touch metal, not quite seeing the hypocrisy of their actual bodies being metal.

As always, Pemberton is a paragon of genteel charm, offering the PCs to have his gnolls deliver some fine limeade to accompany their discussions (Pemberton prefers lemonade, but the limes in the archipelago are good for the occasional beverage). He questions them about what has happened outside of Axis in the time he's been trapped on the island.

If the PCs mention defeating the fey titans, Pemberton boasts that 'In my youth, I once heard the Father of Thunder was up and about, and I thought, Grady, it'd be a damned shame not to take a crack at the old son of a gun before whichever king was in charge of Risur put the titan back to sleep. I tell you, that hairy bastard did *not* appreciate me strafing his herd. Zapped me good.'

If the cosmology change is discussed, Pemberton can't help but give a wide smile, knowing his ability to fly has truly been restored.

Unless the PCs attack Pemberton, or are outrageously rude, the dragon is willing to talk. Even if the PCs slew his daughter Terakalir, Pemberton realizes the threat and power of Ob eclipses his own; he needs allies to win against them, and the PCs have proven themselves. He invites the party to 'lay down their burdens' for a few days, and to meet with him and Brakken to discuss a little shindig he has in mind. But he asks they not come to the central keep, saying that his followers are very protective of what they deem to be his 'lair.'

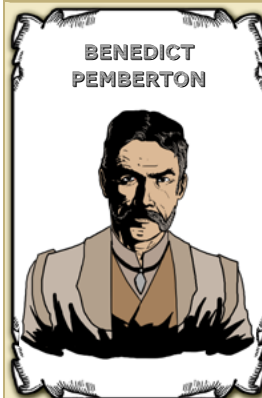
If the party balks at taking that much time, Pemberton winks, and says that wherever they're headed, Pemberton Industries is building something to get them there faster.

Let's Take a Trip

Pemberton invites the party to come with him to see the remains of the Obscurati's ritual, and to link up with another of his honored guests—Brakken, who is out with some of the gnolls, using his psychic powers to try to track down the Obscurati loyalists who are hiding somewhere on the island.

He's confident there's nothing on the island that can threaten the party, but there are odd planar fluctuations and he doesn't want to risk his loyal subjects. He just wants this trip to be the PCs, him, and Pardo. It's a few miles to where Brakken is searching, but handily the Obscurati built roads, so Pemberton will be driving them in his still-experimental steam-powered road car. The vehicle has a very industrial aesthetic with lots of exposed metal; Pemberton hasn't gotten around to gussying them up yet, but of course for public production they'll have fine upholstery and leather seats. They have no roofs or windows.

Since each car only seats 4, he'll probably need to show one or two PCs how to drive a second and possibly third one—the transmission is a little awkward right now, but it just takes a few minutes to get the hang of it—and they'll caravan.



The dragon Gradiax, Lord of Steel, has almost never resumed his true form for the past two centuries, and until recently when he was outed by the party he maintained his eccentric alternate identity as a businessman and technologist. Though he only looks about fifty, and has the verve of a young man, he jokingly exaggerates his aged infirmities. He speaks slowly with a deep, country-accented voice, and often leans back and tucks his thumbs in his belt loops as he talks. (Imagine a more laid-back Foghorn Leghorn.)

Though he likely disdains the party for thwarting his plans in adventure six, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, Pemberton is devoting his resources—advanced constructs and fiercely loyal gnoll worshippers—to fight the Obscurati, which he sees as a greater threat.



The current leader of the Cult of the Steel Lord, this gnoll teaches the followers of Gradiax that mortal flesh is weak, and to achieve the strength of the great dragons of old they must live pure. Though he fervently believes his own faith, Pardo is a consummate liar and manipulator, which he sees as just another example of having inner strength despite outer corruption.

Pardo wears simple clothes with no decorations. He refuses to use metal tools, and carries a handkerchief for things like door knobs. However, he typically wears a duplicant body—metal itself—which he sees as his true flesh. He serves his lord Pemberton with religious zeal, and believes in time his people will transcend their flesh and all become steel.



The hivemind benefits from improved cover inside the golem's body. The hivemind can exit if it wants and still control the golem, but once the golem is destroyed the hivemind must emerge, at which point it mostly relies on tentacle attacks.

The entity normally lurks near the Axis Seal, but it came out to hunt Brakken. If the party doesn't defeat it here, it might harass them later.

Driving a Roadcar

On the driver's turn, the driver of each car sets the car's speed for the round. The speed can be **reckless** (300 ft.), **fast** (200 ft.), **moderate** (150 ft.), **slow** (100 ft.), **idle** (50 ft.), stationary, **reverse** (50 ft. backwards), or **reckless reverse** (100 ft. backwards). The car then moves a distance that must be between its current max speed or the next slowest speed. So if you are driving at reckless speed, the driver has leeway between 205 and 300 feet.

The driver can adjust the speed up to 1 step in a given turn without spending an action, or up to 2 steps by spending a move action.

If there is no driver, the vehicle continues to move on the previous driver's initiative. If a new person becomes the driver, he must delay to the previous driver's initiative count before he can take control of the vehicle.

Steering: The driver must spend a move action if he wants to steer; otherwise the car travels in a straight line. When steering, in order to turn 90 degrees the car must travel at least 5 feet for every step of speed above stationary. For example, if you're driving at reckless speed (five steps above stationary), the car must travel at least 25 feet before it can turn 90 degrees; if you only want to turn 45 degrees, it takes half as much distance.

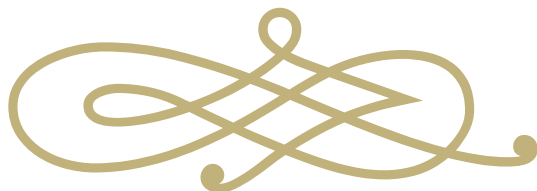
If the driver spends a standard action to drive instead of a move action, whenever he turns he can make a Dexterity check (DC 5) to steer the car as if it were moving one step slower. For every 10 points he beats the DC by, he can steer one step better—for example, a check of 25 can have a car at reckless speed only need 10 feet to turn.

Collisions: If the car runs into a solid object it takes 1d6 damage for every 25 feet of its maximum speed for this turn, as do the creatures in the vehicle (Reflex DC 15 half). If it runs into the jungle at the edge of the parking lot, reduce the damage by 1d6. Colliding with a creature deals an equal amount of damage to that creature and functions as a bull rush (CMB +10 plus the vehicle's speed divided by 5).

Stats: Each car has 150 hit points, hardness 10, and AC 10. The cars are 15 feet long by 10 feet wide, with the engine in front and four seats.

Pemberton and Pardo

Pemberton focuses on driving (+0 Dexterity check), and in any event doesn't know any useful combat magic. Pardo's not particularly useful in this fight (though his punches ignore the golem's DR), and so he leaps out of Pemberton's car to try to distract the monster. He spends most of the combat casting spells at the golem to no effect. His stats are presented below, though, just in case.



Terrain

The construction site is a wide swath of cleared jungle, more than 200 feet to a side, scattered with a building materials, half-assembled steel structures, bins of firedust, an excavator, and a pair of cranes the size of huge creatures. The golem moves at a surprising speed of 60 feet, but Pemberton's roadcars have a top speed of 30 miles an hour.

Pardo

CR 12

XP 19,200

Male duplicant gnoll oracle 10

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init -1; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +2

Defenses

AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 13 (-1 Dex, +4 natural)**hp** 118 (12d8+58)

Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +8

Defensive Abilities constructed; **DR** 10/adamantine; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, *sleep*; **Resist** fire 10**Weaknesses** metal shell

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** unarmed strike +12/+7 (1d3+4)**Special Attacks** burning magic, fire breath 2/day (15-ft.cone, DC 19, 10d4 fire)**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 10th; concentration +14)5th (3/day)—*mass inflict light wounds* (DC 19), *slay living* (DC 19),*summon monster V* (fire elementals only)4th (6/day)—*divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 18),*wall of fire*3rd (7/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds*,*inflict serious wounds* (DC 17), *fireball* (DC 17), *magic vestment*2nd (7/day)—*augury*, *death knell* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16),*inflict moderate wounds* (DC 16), *resist energy*, *shatter* (DC 16)1st (7/day)—*burning hands* (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *doom* (DC 15),*inflict light wounds* (DC 15), *murderous command* (DC 15), *sanctuary* (DC 15),*shield of faith*0 (at will)—*bleed*, *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*,*resistance*, *stabilize***Oracle Mystery** flame (burning magic, fire breath, molten skin); **Curse** wrecker

Statistics

Str 18, **Dex** 8, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 19**Feats** Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Bluff), Toughness**Skills** Bluff +22, Diplomacy +17, Knowledge (history) +11, Intimidate +19, Linguistics +2**Languages** Common, Draconic, Gnoll

Special Abilities

Burning Magic: When a creature fails a saving throw and takes fire damage from one of Pardo's spells, that creature catches on fire. The fire lasts 1d4 rounds, doing 1 damage per spell level. The character can spend a move action to make a Reflex save (same as the spell's original DC) to put out the flames.

Wrecker: Pardo's attacks against inanimate objects ignore up to 10 points of hardness, and his attacks against constructs ignore any non-epic DR. Objects he holds gain the broken condition for as long as he holds them.

**Obscurati Golem**

CR 17

XP 153,600

N Huge construct

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0**Defense****AC** 33, touch 8, flat-footed 32 (-1 Dex, +25 natural, -2 size, +1 dodge)**hp** 226 (23d10+100)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7**DR** 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic**Weakness** vulnerable to positive energy**Offense****Speed** 60 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +33 (2d12+22/19-20 plus 1d6 negative energy) plus 1 hasted slam (as normal slam)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** powerful blows, witchoil discharge**Before Combat****Spell Effects** *haste*, *heat metal* (heals 1 or 2 damage per round and negates *slow* for the first 3 rounds of combat)**Statistics****Str** 40, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1**Base Atk** +23; **CMB** +40; **CMD** 49**SQ** hivemind house**Special Abilities****Immunity to Magic (Ex)** The golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. Certain spells and effects function differently against it, as noted below.A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows an iron golem (as the *slow* spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw.

- A magical attack that deals fire damage ignites the witchoil fuel leaking from the golem. This breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it does not go above its maximum, but instead is hasted for one minute. The golem gets no saving throw against fire effects.
- The golem is affected normally by rust attacks, such as those of a rust monster or a rusting grasp spell.

Hivemind House (Ex) The minds of the former Obscurati survivors has formed a hivemind which inhabits the golem. The hivemind benefits from superior cover until the golem is destroyed or it is shunted out (see hivemind statblock below). Until the golem is rendered inactive, both the golem and hivemind act separately in combat.

If the hivemind is destroyed before the golem is, the golem is blinded and mostly loses interest in combat.

Powerful Blows (Ex) The Obscurati golem inflicts one and a half times its Strength modifier and threatens a critical hit on a 19–20 with its slam attacks.**Witchoil Discharge (Su)** As a free action once every 2 rounds, the Obscurati Golem can create a 10-foot cube of discharged witchoil within 100 ft. This cloud persists for 5 rounds; any creature within the area when the golem creates it (as well as any creature that passes through the cloud while it persists) is exposed to the concentrated witchoil's poisonous effects. This poison is magically created each time the golem uses this power.*Witchoil Poison*—inhaled; save Fort 22; frequency 1/round for 3 rounds; effect 1 Constitution damage and dazed for 1 round; cure 1 save. The save DC is Constitution-based.**Witchoil Infused Construct (Su)** The golem's body leaks witchoil from most orifices. The substance splashes onto targets hit by the golem and deals an additional 1d6 points of negative energy damage on each attack that hits the target. This substance also gives the construct vulnerability to positive energy as though it were undead, though negative energy will not heal it.**Axis Hivemind**

CR 17

XP 102,400

N Large aberration (extraplanar)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense, *true seeing*; Perception +35**Defense****AC** 32, touch 15, flat-footed 26 (+6 Dex, +17 natural, -1 size)**hp** 275 (22d8+176)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +19**Defensive Abilities** all-around vision; **Immune** mind-affecting effects; **SR** 28**Offense****Speed** 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)**Melee** 4 tentacles +24 (1d6+8/19–20)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 17th; concentration +23)At will—*greater dispel magic*, *mind fog* (DC 21), *quicken fireball* (DC 19)5/day—*black tentacles* (DC 20), *dominate monster* (DC 25)3/day—*mass suggestion* (DC 22), *quicken rainbow pattern* (DC 20)1/day—*power word stun***Statistics****Str** 27, **Dex** 22, **Con** 27 **Int** 28, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 22**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +25 (+29 trip); **CMD** 41 (43 vs. trip)**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Deflect Arrows, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Staggering Critical, Tiring Critical, Weapon Focus (tentacle)**Skills** Acrobatics +31, Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Fly +37, Knowledge (arcana) +31, Knowledge (engineering) +31, Knowledge (local) +31, Knowledge (nature) +31, Knowledge (nobility) +31, Knowledge (religion) +31, Perception +31, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +34**Languages** telepathy 200 ft.; *tongues***Special Abilities****Double Agent (Su)** Whenever the Axis hivemind uses one of its mind-affecting spell-like abilities against a target, that creature must make a second save if the first is failed. Failing the second save allows one of the Obscurati minds to graft itself onto the creature. Anytime the creature makes an action that would counter the aims of the Obscurati that requires a dice roll, the creature must roll twice and take the lower result. This effect can only be broken by a *break enchantment*, *miracle*, or *wish*.**Eerie Strike (Su)** The hivemind is a being of thought and ideas, and so it is particularly powerful against foes who are not physically grounded. The hivemind and the golem's attacks can ignore the limits of their normal reach when targeting enemies who are flying or who otherwise are not touching a contiguous path of solid objects between them and the target. The attack is an incorporeal touch attack, bypassing armor, and if it hits, the target is unnaturally teleported to a space adjacent to the golem, as if it had always been that close.**Hivemind House (Ex)** The Axis hivemind inhabits the Obscurati Golem. Effectively, the Axis hivemind shares the same space as the Obscurati golem, but takes separate actions during a combat round. This joining imparts the golem with additional powers as long as the hivemind is not separated from it:

- The golem begins combat *hasted* since it has taken fire damage.
- Anytime the Obscurati golem hits with a slam attack, the Axis Hivemind can make an attack of opportunity against the struck target with one of its tentacle attacks. This attack counts as having the trip universal monster rule.

Thoughtform (Su) A creature within 30 feet of the hivemind can spend a move action to try to influence the hivemind with its thoughts. The creature makes an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check (DC 15), and chooses to make the target take one of the following saves—Fortitude, Reflex, or Will (DC 31 for each). A character can only attempt this once per round.

- ♦ **Fortitude:** If the save is failed, the hivemind loses incorporeal until the start of the PC's next turn. If it's flying, it must land or fall.
- ♦ **Reflex:** If the save is failed, the creature can move the hivemind 10 feet in any direction.
- ♦ **Will:** If the save is failed, the creature can force one creature affected by any of the hivemind's ongoing spell-like abilities to make a new save against the effect. Additionally, that creature cannot be perceived by the hivemind for one round.

Aftermath

Once the commotion of battle dies down, Brakken and a squad of gnolls emerge from the nearby jungle. Brakken is mentally exhausted, having been focusing all his psychic powers to keep the hivemind from sensing them. He spares a happy smile to the party, then rushes to the body of the monster. He holds a hand out to it and thinks, then announces that he has a sense of where it came from—one of the mines a quarter mile up the mountain. He guesses the Obscurati hold-outs are there.

Brakken is pleased to see the party, and takes some time to catch up on recent events. He also makes a point of explaining that while he and the Bruse of Ber were nervous about Pemberton's ultimate motives, he's sensed enough of the dragon's emotions to trust that he actually does want to cooperate against their mutual enemy, the Obscurati.

Needlewire Parlay

Social. Real-Time.

The party returns to the same mines they once used to sneak onto Axis Island.

Cosette Arianne has survived in the old mine since the completion of the Ob's ritual on Axis. She fled there with the rest of the Ob agents who sought shelter while waiting out Pemberton's siege. When reinforcements did not come, the other Ob agents began to act strangely, often speaking at the same time with the same sentences, or eerily completing each other's thoughts. Cosette was protected due to her *ring of mind shielding*, and when the hivemind fully manifested, the thoughtform being fled the mines leaving Cosette alone with dozens of catatonic companions.

In the intervening weeks Cosette resorted to cannibalism, but now her food supply is running low, and she's worried that eating too many of her cohorts will bring the hivemind back. The only thing keeping the junior Ob agent going is a small spool of Needlewire she found on another agent's body. She is vaguely aware that she can inject it into herself to contact the Ob leadership, but has been holding off, hoping for conventional reinforcements.

Party Arrival

Since there's not a handy road up to the mine, Pemberton and Brakken stay behind with the cars and some of Pemberton's gnoll followers who were injured fleeing from the golem. They're about a ten minute hike away. Pemberton offers to send Pardo along with the party.

When the PCs enter the cave, Cosette likely hears them when they first discover the bodies of some of her comrades. She assumes they are not allies, and uses the Needlewire to call for Nicodemus. It takes mere moments for Nicodemus to possess her body. His first action is to survey the dead bodies of his former agents. Though the context of



Nicodemus's history and motivations are detailed in the *Campaign Guide*. He seldom reveals his true ghostly form, preferring to wear the bodies of others. Since the Great Eclipse and his failure to secure the world he long dreamed of, his desire to be benevolent has fallen away, and he's increasingly obsessed with achieving his goals, no matter the cost.

their death is lost on him, he hopes to find out information of what went wrong on Axis Island. He hears the PCs' approach and quickly hides the Needlewire syringe.

When Nicodemus sees the PCs, he pretends to be just an average agent of the conspiracy (Sense Motive DC 42). Posing as Cosette, he bargains, asking for food and drink. In exchange he says he'll show the party the colossus and explain whatever is left of the ritual. His goal is to get them to take him to the central valley so he can see the state of Borne and the Axis Seal. He tries to act somewhat delirious, and wants to get away from 'all her dead friends.' Nicodemus can concoct a convincing backstory for who Cosette is and what happened, though he has no idea the dead Ob agents created a hivemind, so he just answers honestly that he doesn't know how they died.

If the party doesn't realize 'Cosette' is a fake, as they leave the cave a *magic mouth* appears on a nearby rock and says, with a Beran accent, "The woman you are with is actually Nicodemus, head of the conspiracy. Do not allow him to learn anything useful."

(This is a sort of narrative contingency we've put in, to help avoid the party revealing to Nicodemus that they're allied with Brakken at the Forward Symposium. The in-game explanation is that Beran spymaster El Extraño divined that this encounter would occur, and was clever enough to warn the party before Nicodemus sees Brakken.)

Whenever the party figures out who he is, Nicodemus asks to talk for a moment, and for some leaf of Nicodemus to smoke.

No More Use Pretending

Nicodemus is courteous, but is subtly more on edge than the last time the party met him. He laments the death of his agents and his own inability to protect them. And he asks the party how they managed to sabotage the ritual. The mastermind, who has had to deal with the party's interference for two years now, assumes they were responsible for the explosion that killed him and many of his allies. Divinations performed to find out what happened reported that the saboteur's orders came from Risur (technically true, since the Voice of Rot is from Risur).

If the party denies their involvement, he's wary, assuming they have some trick up their sleeves. He assures them that if they'd only cooperated with him, the ritual would have been safely completed. The world would still have a sun, for one thing!

He promises that the Obscurati will try again, and this time they won't allow any resistance. Even after five hundred years, he had still hoped a



gentle hand could guide people to the right path, but now he will have to take more forceful measures. Fortunately, Risur is the only nation holding out against him. He is proud to announce that leaders of many nations are *en route* to attend his Forward Symposium, where he will advise them to rally against the rebellious Risur. Perhaps the ensuing war, while tragic, will help cement the bonds forming now between the obedient nations of the world.

After a bit of back and forth, Nicodemus thanks the PCs for dealing with the threat of She Who Writhes, informing them that it will be much easier to conquer Risur now. Once the conversation reaches a natural close, Nicodemus asks the party to make sure this woman survives, and then he vacates her body.

If the party brings her back to the cars, Pemberton has her sent away with his gnoll minions to be kept prisoner in the fortress. Then, unless the party pays close attention, he just kills her when they're not looking.

Disaster Zone

Exploration. Montage.

What is the Axis Seal, and what happened here?

After seeing the mine and determining there aren't any significant Obscurati hold-outs left on the island, Pemberton sends the gnolls who were with Brakken back to the fortress, then brings the minotaur and the party with him to the island's center. Tendrils and arcs of planar energy trail hundreds of feet upward from here, where a modest lake has been drained and its tributaries dammed and diverted.

Pemberton stops at the shore. Off to the right of the road are stone bunkers, once covered in protective wards, which have been exploded from within.

Up ahead the flashing energy rising from the ground makes it hard to see quite what happened in the dry lakebed, but a quarter mile away the colossus has clearly collapsed in several pieces, and some huge metal disk lies atop it.

The Axis Ritual in Detail

The ritual actually involves the entire island, but it is centered on the Axis Seal—a hundred-foot diameter disk of gold. That seal lies atop bedrock, the center of which is a twenty-foot diameter hemispherical depression, ten feet deep. It is from this depression that intense blasts of energy from across the multiverse flare out. If the seal were properly seated atop this bedrock, it would focus that energy and create the sun.

Around that depression, carvings of primitive orc runes form seven rings, each ten feet farther out. Spaced somewhat irregularly around these rings are vertical pits. The rings represent, in order outward:

- ♦ The plane of fire.
- ♦ The plane of air.
- ♦ The world itself, which has no pit, but is surrounded by a smaller ring that does have a pit, representing the plane of life.
- ♦ The plane of water.
- ♦ The plane of earth.
- ♦ The plane of space, which is surrounded by a smaller ring that has its own pit, representing the plane of time.
- ♦ The plane of death.

Each pit is about five feet in diameter and contains the fifty foot long white stone shaft of a petrified tree. Halfway down that shaft, a small alcove holds a golden icon that represents a particular plane—those icons are marked with symbols representing a constellation associated with each plane, and are enchanted with powers linked to that plane's energy. (The Ob bent the rules a bit, and in the alcove of the shaft for the plane of space they shoved a second small icon representing Baden, the ghost moon with a Flight trait.)

The hundred-foot disk of the seal lies atop the legs of the toppled three-hundred-foot colossus Borne. The colossus has suffered immense damage across his body, which has cracked his torso and has blown apart half an arm and one-and-a-half legs. The witchoil furnace in his chest burst, leaving him with insufficient strength to move, so he collapsed into stasis.

Arcs of energy from the central depression mostly crackle upward, but every minute or two one will slice out laterally to a distance of several hundred feet. The force is enough to blast back anyone who tries to come too close, though if the party wants to try their luck the first strike should only *nearly* kill them. No form of defense the party has access to now can protect them from the deadly energy.

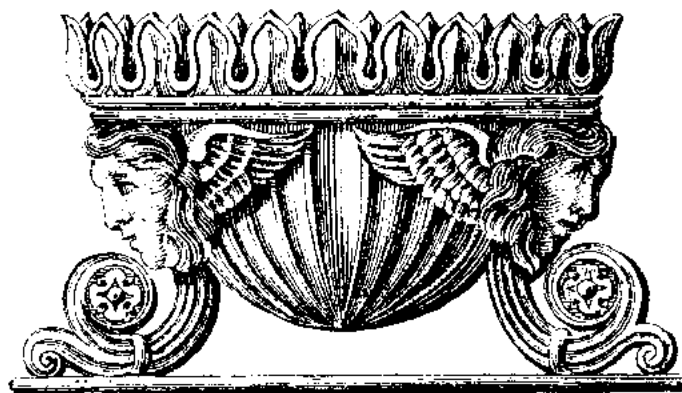
Sometimes where one of these arcs strikes, a sliver of a world appears—a forest, a crackling lava field, a waterfall—only to vanish a few seconds later. Sometimes even creatures are visible in these slivers.

Investigation

Hidden among the rubble of the bunker by the road, the party can easily spot that the burn marks from the explosion have a strange arcane pattern. A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) identifies the pattern as being fey, and a slightly better check confirms that yes, the power of the explosion was provided by the Voice of Rot, who transmuted the flames to not just burn flesh, but to consume life force and dispel magical defenses.

It's not possible to get close enough to the ritual to actually interact with it—and long-distance magical attempts to use *telekinesis* or *clairvoyance* act as a conduit, channeling the destructive energy from the seal directly into the caster if he or she maintains the spell for more than a minute or so.

Pemberton, though, has had a few months to examine this, and he thinks he grasps the basics enough. Standing at the lake's shore within sight of the seal and the seemingly uncontrollable energy leaking out it, he asks the party to listen to his and Brakken's proposal.





Founding the Rebellion

Social. Real-Time.

It's time to plan how to save the world.

Eventually the party might want to teleport back to Risur to bring in other allies, but for now Pemberton just wants to hear their thoughts. Best to keep the foundations of a conspiracy as secret as possible, he reminds them. It's only Pemberton, Brakken, Pardo, and the party.

If the party hasn't already used divination magic to find out news of the world, Pardo explains the basics, as detailed in *Meanwhile... Around the World* (page 3). They don't have perfect knowledge, but a dozen divination spells every day for a month or more add up.

Brakken steps in and emphasizes how global the Obscurati's support seems to be. Most people are just naturally loyal to them, and only a few who had dealt with the group before were able to resist being so swayed. Risur is, simply put, outnumbered. A direct fight won't succeed.

"We have to work," Pemberton says, "like a conspiracy. Our mission is to figure out how the Ob pulled it off, and then put it back on. That might not be the right metaphor, but nevermind. They're sucking the life and fun out of the chaotic mess I liked living in. I don't want to turn into a cog in their machine, but they basically rule the world now. Fortunately for us, I have experience with fighting authority and concealing my intentions. We have to be discreet, be brilliant, and then be gone before they catch us."

Pardo interjects. "Given the name of the Obscurati, if we're opposed to them, I think we should call ourselves the Illuminati."

Pemberton scoffs, then tells Pardo to explain the colossus and ritual.

Pardo briefly explains that the Obscurati performed a ritual in this central valley. Someone set off an explosion that killed numerous mages involved in the ritual, and the colossus was damaged before it could close the Axis Seal. They were able to interrogate a mage who survived, and learned that the original plans for the ritual were stored in a vault somewhere in Alais Primos, the capital of Crisillyir. A necrotic curse took the man in the end, though.

Redoing the Ritual

Pemberton says this is mostly where he needs the party's help. If they want to redo the ritual themselves and fix the world, someone needs to break into that vault.

The specific incantation to perform the ritual would need to be recovered, but the larger hurdle is that it seems each of the eight shafts in those pits has a golden icon that is infused with energy from a specific world. In the various mines around the island, the gnolls have discovered similar petrified trees and golden icons, which appear to have directed the magic of the ritual outward into the rest of the world.

The best Pemberton can reckon, to undo the ritual they just need to get icons linked to the same planes the world used to have. Or, if they're being clever, they could make icons linked to new planes, and do what the Ob did: make the world the way they want it to be. Of course, he's not going to hold his breath and expect that the party will agree with him on how the world should be.

HOW TO DESTROY NICODEMUS

Nicodemus is sustained by his certainty that he can make the world a better place, and that things would be perfect if not for all the power structures that kept idealists like him from effecting change. To defeat him, he must see his ideology be rejected by the people he wants to help. We will present an opportunity for this in Adventure Thirteen, *Avatar of Revolution*.

Failing that, the party can just alter reality so undead can't exist. That's also a possibility.

Pardo explains that in order to create those icons, it seems necessary to travel to the worlds they'll be linked to. The Obscurati used an eldritch telescope on this island to aim at planes. But now the night sky is starless. Even if Pemberton Industries could create a colossus of its own—a machine strong enough to withstand the energy coming out of the open seal—it would be useless without the appropriate icons. And they're not sure how to get those.

(The party might have access to the Golden Icons of Apet, Avilona, Nem, and Urim, and the island already has an icon of Jiese, but Av, Mavisha, and Reida's icons are unavailable. Finding appropriate replacements is the party's main goal in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.)

The Cherage Conference

Brakken says that the 'golden icons' point is something they're stuck on, which is why he's been busy trying to plan the other key part of the conspiracy: not getting caught and killed.

Brakken reiterates that the Obscurati is now no longer hidden. In Crisillyir, Danor, Drakr, and even the states of the Malice Lands, the Obscurati openly work side-by-side with the local governments to establish new laws set forth by the Ob's leadership. Most governments seem open to cooperating with the Obscurati, and Nicodemus has called a conference in a few weeks in the Danoran capital of Cherage to decide the future of the world.

Brakken wants to infiltrate the conference, learn the Ob's plans, and possibly delay hostile actions against Risur, Pemberton, and anyone else involved in this rebellion. Pemberton laments that the Obscurati have caught onto his use of duplicants, so that option's off the table.

If the party proposes to stop the conference, Pemberton and Brakken warn against that. Trying to stop 'an open discourse' will make it easy for the Ob to paint Risur as enemies.

Let the PCs consider their options, but as a baseline, Brakken has a plan.

An Offer of Mind

Since the Great Eclipse, Brakken has expanded his psionic abilities. Now he can form a minor gestalt consciousness with other willing creatures. While others inhabit his mind, Brakken can use their abilities and skills as an extension of himself. Brakken is confident he could house several minds in his body; effectively allowing a group like the PCs access to the conference, with him as their eyes and ears.



The spymaster of Ber is always known as El Extraño (The Strange One), and traditionally they adopt bizarre personalities so that their true intentions are harder to intuit. Indeed, some say the actual spymaster only works behind the scenes, and that El Extraño is just a mask he hides behind. (The rumor's false, though El Extraño thinks that *would* have been a great idea.)

The current spymaster is a kobold wizard with uneven eyes, finely-tended fleshy whiskers, and exceptional skills at legerdemain. He casually mentions ridiculous and unlikely events that he participated in, and will legitimately expend powerful *teleportation* magic to make dramatic exits. He prefers to give directives, or at most offer two options that he will pursue, and is no fan of actually discussing things, at least not until someone can actually surprise him. He has a bit of dragon blood in him, and smokes pipes of cinnamon-laced cloves.

El Extraño's motivation is to do his job excellently, and to maintain the honor of his title. A contingency will annihilate his body in fire should he die, to maintain the uncertainty to his true fate.



Pemberton insists on his own 'ticket' to the Cherage conference, willing to share headspace with the PCs. Brakken assures them that there's no sharing of actual thoughts; people have to intentionally communicate within the gestalt, so it's not like anyone's going to be controlling anyone else's mind.

Endgame

Pemberton and Brakken's overall plan, then, is first to infiltrate the Forward Symposium and get information to help this new conspiracy avoid being tracked down by the Obscurati. Second they need to retrieve the details of the ritual from Alais Primos. Third is finding a way to relink the lost planes, or to find new planes to link to. Fourth will be redoing the ritual. Somewhere in there, they need to figure out how to destroy the Obscurati and Nicodemus himself once and for all.

A PC might be able to reason out (Knowledge (religion) DC 20) that normally ghosts are tied to the location where they died, and linger on if they have unfinished business; but Nicodemus can roam, which could be because (as discovered in Adventure Eight) his death occurred at the moment of the Great Malice, which affected the whole world. He's certainly more cogent than a typical ghost, and there are clearly some parallels in his rejuvenation and the reincarnation of devas, so perhaps his power is tied to the death of Srasama.

As for how to destroy him, some divinations might be in order. Some ghosts can be 'brought peace' so they pass on, but that would probably entail letting Nicodemus win, so Pemberton discounts that.

Appropriate Compensation

Pemberton claims there's a good foundation here. Obviously some details need to be worked. For instance, what he gets out of this for helping the party instead of just joining with the conspiracy. He's not looking to conquer Ber anymore, but once the Ob are gone Danor might be in sore need of a leader. Failing that, he wants at least a large swath of Elfaivar to establish his own nation, since the place is mostly empty now. And he wants the party's promise that, whatever they agree on, they'll be friendly after this is all over.

Give the party here time to discuss plans, both short-term and long-term. They might decide to try to deal with the Obscurati themselves, or to prioritize Alais Primos over the Forward Symposium (in which case, see Adventure Eleven). We can't begin to guess what your PCs might want at this stage of the campaign.

Caveat

Once discussions are coming to what seems like a decent stopping point, Brakken raises a concern he has about his infiltration plan. His psychic link can only be maintained within a few miles; he's not sure quite how far. The PCs will need to be somewhere close to Cherage at the time of the conference in order to properly maintain their link with Brakken. Given the increased military and Obscurati presence in Danor, this could be exceptionally difficult.

Pemberton shrugs, and says he has an invention that will help with that. Before he can explain more, though, an intruder interrupts them: the Beran spymaster El Extraño.

Do Not Be Impressed

El Extraño turns on one of their cars and honks the horn to get their attention, having appeared out of nowhere. When the party comes out, he has some information for them.

"I am here to save you, despite this dragon's attempt to conquer my homeland. We, of course, defeated our overlords long before you even considered defeating this Obscurati. The noble line of El Extraño can keep a secret, and just like the enlightened people of Ber, we shall cooperate with those who are unlike us, no matter their flaws."

The kobold points at Pemberton and snarls, "Do not interrupt! My operatives traversed the ocean by hiding inside of undead whales, which your kraken could not detect. I am amazed you did not consider this option. They then spread across northern Lanjyr and have reported to me critical intelligence. They have already located a location near this Forward Symposium where you will be able to hide. It is large enough."

Again he points at Pemberton, his face severe, and cuts the man off just as he's about to interrupt. "Failed usurpers will wait their turn to speak!"

"The Obscurati have placed a divination beacon that disrupts information in a factory complex in Cherage, where they are slowly constructing a second colossus. My people discovered it by granting hivemind consciousness to the rats of the city and establishing two competing spy guilds, which we reward with pepper cheese. These rats have excellent taste. We regrettably have not refined their fashion sense."

"Without being detected they have inscribed the names of Pemberton, Brakken, and the Risuri constables into the beacon's stone obelisk. Now you shall be protected by the same anti-divination wards the Obscurati ringbearers had. Their preparations for the symposium will likely keep them from detecting our sabotage, but do not rely on it in the long term. My eyes will handle the mundanities of your mission to this symposium, and will report any information they discover in the city."

El Extraño glares at Pemberton and twitches the scaled tendrils of his moustache. "You will want to remove the pyrotechnics I hid inside your bedchamber. That was not an assassination attempt. I had a better surprise appearance planned, but I had to abandon it because a fleet of Danorans is about to attack the island, and it is in our mutual interest for you to evacuate. You should get to the fortress now, but not to defend. The facility was never designed to resist an attack with the current nature of magic."



He throws a large bag out of the car in front of you, then shifts the vehicle into gear.

"Use these scrolls to reach the fortress. Once you are there, Pemberton will show you what he thinks is a great surprise." He scoffs at the idea. "Do not be impressed."

With that, he drives away into the jungle.

He has left behind enough *scrolls of teleport* to get the party, Pemberton, Brakken, and Pardo back to the fortress. If the party tries to thwart El Extraño's dramatic departure, it only serves to annoy him, and he teleports away. The kobold spymaster will return in a later adventure.

Airship Factory

Back at the Axis Fort, Pemberton sends Pardo to make his loyal cultists ready for a fighting retreat, then hurries to show the party one factory which he has repurposed to produce light-weight steam engines that are enchanted with flight magic. He thought that he might as well take advantage of the world's new arcane physics. Whether the party is surprised or not, he does hope they appreciate his gift.

Dragon Fliers

He has a few prototype flying machines parked on the roof. Unlike his roadcars, he *has* gotten around to decorating these: each flier's nose has a draconic face with twin autocannons at the sides of its mouth, its two-level wings are framed with mithral resembling dragon scales, and the stabilizing tail boasts a proud Pemberton Industries logo. The wings are covered with glowing white glyphs, and the engine crackles with lightning when it revs. The two seats—for a pilot and a spotter—are even comfortably upholstered.

They are basically enchanted biwings. They have limited ammo, and they can only carry enough fuel to fly for about twenty minutes, but their top speed is eighty miles per hour (800 feet per round).

Piloting: Piloting a flier functions much the same as driving one of Pemberton's roadcars, though their speed categories are **reckless** (800), **fast** (600), **moderate** (450), **slow** (300), and **idle** (150). The plane needs to go at speed 300 or higher to take off and maintain its flight; any slower than that and the plane stalls and falls. (Idle is only really used while on the ground.) The planes need 20 feet of turning space for each speed category.

It can ascend by no more than 60 feet per round.

Weapons: Each flier has three hundred rounds (thirty bursts' worth) of ammo for its autocannons. *Range Increment* 120 ft. *Damage* 2d8. *Critical* x4. *Misfire* 1-2.

(An autocannon attacks all creatures in a line. Make a separate attack roll against each creature in the line. Each attack roll takes a -2 penalty to account for recoil, and its attack damage cannot be modified by precision damage or damage-increasing feats such as Vital Strike. Effects that grant concealment, such as fog or smoke, or the blur, invisibility, or mirror image spells, do not foil an automatic weapon's line attack. An automatic weapon misfires only if all of the attack rolls made misfire.)

Stats: Each flier has 300 hit points, hardness 10, and AC 10. The fuselage is twenty feet long by five feet wide, with a twenty-five foot wingspan.

Piece de Resistance

Inside the factory, though, is the main attraction. The gnolls are putting the finishing touches on a collection of retrofits that can be installed onto an existing seafaring vessel to grant it flight capability. (Alternately, if the party didn't come by boat, he's just built his own airship, which can exit through the roof, which opens up.) The key is that the party has access to a ship to get off the island and fly to Danor for the Forward Symposium.

As part of the retrofit, Pemberton can also equip the party's ship with docking arms. These allow the dragon fliers to both launch and dock at the side of the vessel with a Dexterity check (DC 5), as long as the airship is flying at least 150 feet per round.

It will take a couple hours to install the flight components on the party's ship (or to finalize the airship for launch). If there's a Technologist among the PCs, Pemberton encourages him to assist in the fine-tuning and installation. The timeline will be cutting it close, and the Danoran navy will arrive when the gnoll workers need just a few more minutes.

We leave the aesthetics of these flight components to you. Do you prefer industrial, a more gizmo-based steampunk aesthetic, something truly magical like whirling rings of fire, or an understated 'winged keel' and 'wingsails' that lift and stabilize?

Danor's Assault

Action. Montage. Level 20+.

The Danoran navy moves to attack Axis. They're supported by elite Obscurati agents, a fleet of war ready ships, and a doomsday super weapon.

With She Who Writhes no longer a factor, the Danoran fleet massed under orders of Sovereign Han Jierre. Instructed by Nicodemus to retake Axis Island at whatever cost necessary, Han has redirected all of the forces poised to strike at Risur to the capture of Axis. This includes a massive naval element, supported by fully loaded transport ships, as well as the flagship of the Danoran fleet—*La Lux du Raison*.

The fleet departs from the docks at Cherage, making its way towards Axis Island. By the time El Extraño delivers the warning of the Danoran fleet movement, the fleet is mere hours away. During this time, Pemberton prepares his defenses, while the Danorans ready for a brutal assault.

Knowing of Pemberton's true draconic nature, Jierre's military has retrofitted several escorts and warships with 'upwards facing cannons,' allowing the Danoran fleet to properly engage flying targets. For larger targets such as a transformed Pemberton, or even the Axis Fortress gate, the Danoran flagship is equipped with an experimental weapon, the Lantern Cannon.

ASRABEY AND HIS MISTRESS?

If Asrabey got away with She Who Writhes under his control, the two of them join the attack on Axis Island. Asrabey's less gung-ho than he was in Adventure One, since he fears the party. Mostly they provide support and defend the fleet from any aquatic counter-attacks.



The Stratagem Must Advance

Han Jierre's plan to retake Axis is straightforward; he'll send the entire might of the Danoran military against Pemberton and his followers, then smash them aside. His forces outnumber Pemberton's twenty to one, and the Sovereign knows even a dragon can be defeated, so he's not bothering to consider a siege. The Obscurati want Axis Island back, and they want Pemberton and the party dead.

Stage 1 (Insertion & Chaos): The navy pushes towards the Fortress's Sea Wall but remains out of reach of the cannons in the sea wall bunkers. Submersibles blast a submerged section of the fort's main gate and enter underwater. They surface, and now that they are inside the fortress, Obscurati-augmented strike teams of the *Porteurs de Mort* teleport directly into the bunkers along the eastern side of the sea wall, fighting gnolls in close combat. They light chemical flares to illuminate whichever bunkers they're inside.

One group of Obscurati agents take the lighthouse, then place a custom magic item, a *wayfarer's jaunter*, on the house's beacon. This magical device disrupts teleportation that would arrive within 200 feet of the lighthouse, redirecting it to where the light shines. The Obscurati agents aim the beam out into the middle of the Danoran fleet, so anyone who attempts to teleport in and aid the battle will end up splashing in the sea.

Stage 2 (Landing): Half of the fleet approaches at full steam, firing forward turrets at any bunkers along the eastern line of the sea wall that aren't illuminated by flares. After about half an hour of bombardment, five ships pull up beside the wall, while others form lines behind them, connected with bridges. Troops climb onto the wall. A few escort ships stay at the edge of this formation, watching the skies in case Pemberton appears.

The other half of the fleet heads for the sea gate, which is damaged when the submersibles detonate charges at its hinges. The gate dangles loose, which might hold, but at the same time the eastern fleet is making landing on the wall, *La Lux du Raison* engages its Lantern Cannon. A blinding flash of light strikes the gate and vaporizes a twenty-foot wide span. The beam travels far enough to also singe parts of the docks on the other side of the sea wall harbor. It takes the beam two minutes to recharge, and then it fires again. It's at this point that a hivemind begins to form (which is not part of the Sovereign's plans). See Mind for War, below.

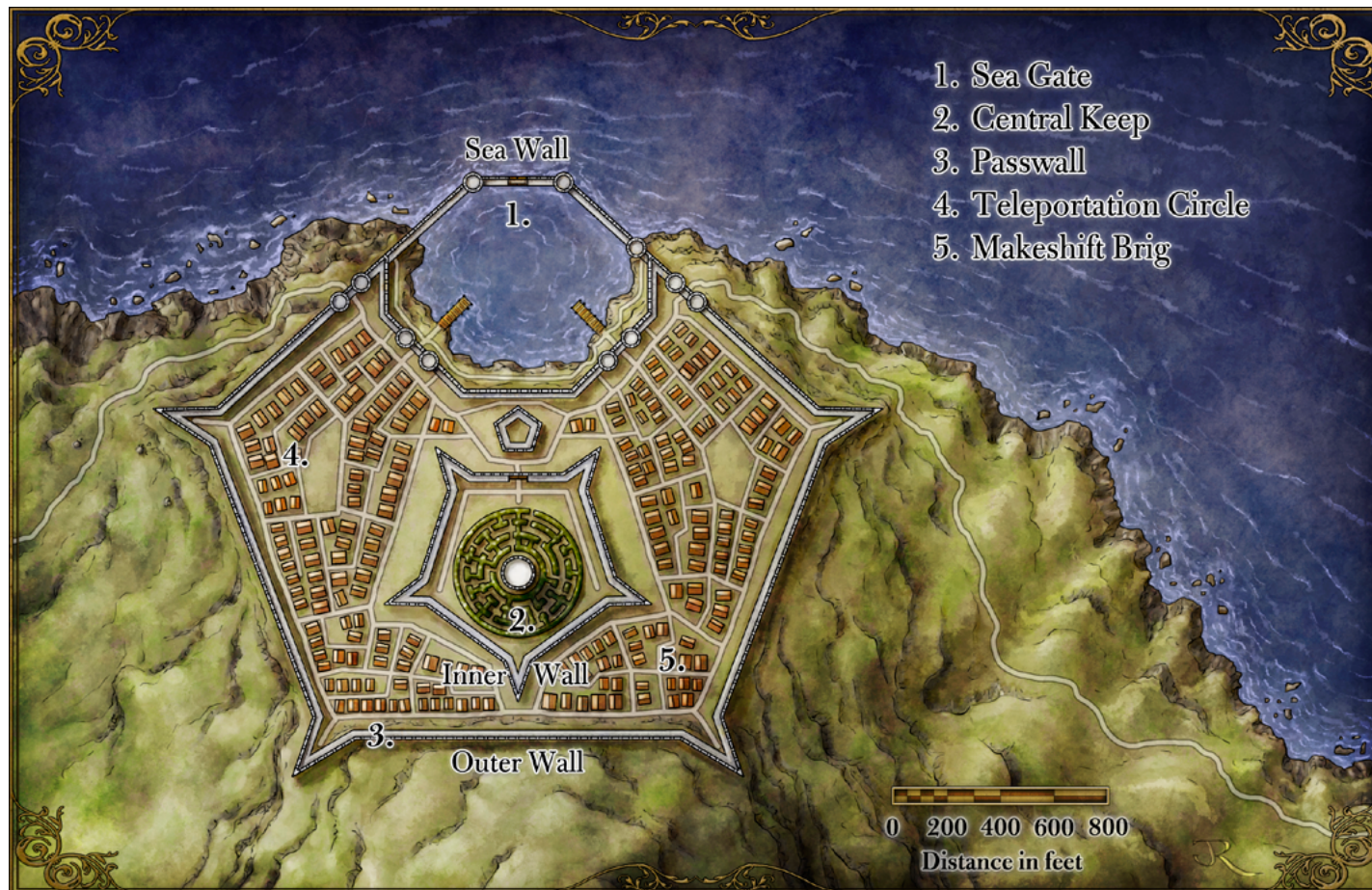
Stage 3 (Raze): The Danorans take no chances and thus no prisoners. Scout squads sprint through the fortress with orders to locate Pemberton or the party, then light flares and teleport away. Once flares are lit, the fleet launches mortars at those locations.

Additionally, lookouts who inserted earlier on the island outside the fortress watch likely escape routes. They light flares if they spot large groups heading inland, which brings in more mortar fire.

A Mind for War

When the Danorans finally reach the fortress, their combined desire to conquer Axis and begin a fifth Yerasol War has unexpected effects. High above the battlefield, a growing cloud of protoplasmic energy roils. Starting as a small mote, this tiny spark of energy represents the nascent form of a hive mind in the making.

The PCs can recognize this manifestation for what it is almost immediately. The Danoran troops are oblivious to their growing creation, while Pemberton's forces consider it another Danoran weapon, sending them into further panic and disarray. Unlike other hive minds,





though, this one doesn't get a chance to act, because Sovereign Han Jierre targets it with the Lantern Cannon. This gives the party a window to escape before the cannon can shoot them down.

The Stakes

The attack on Axis is a critical part of the Obscurati plan, since Nicodemus intends to try the ritual again. As such, the Danoran forces under Ob supervision will stop at nothing to reclaim Axis Island.

Allowing Axis to fall to the Ob is not necessarily a major setback for the PCs, though, as there's little the conspiracy can do here in the near future. There are several worldwide events that paralyze forces the Ob thought they could call upon for assistance, and soon enough events in the Danoran capital of Cherage will spiral out of the Ob's control. It won't be until Adventure Thirteen, *Avatar of Revolution*, that the Obscurati are ready to attempt the ritual again.

The party can achieve a victory by just getting away, or a major victory by delaying the landing and breach until Pemberton's gnoll followers can escape. Over a thousand gnolls work here, and perhaps the party might flee with a hundred or so while the others hide on the island or die fighting.

If on the other hand the party manages to stop the assault and keep control of the island, that's an impressive victory, and it causes Nicodemus to overreact in anger. Instead of sending the navies of the world to invade Risur, his first goal is to retake and secure Axis Island, which changes the backdrop of adventure Eleven. Risur won't be invaded, but militaries of Ber, Crisillyir, Danor, and Drakr will instead converge on Axis Island, leaving those nations vulnerable to various doomsdays. Even if your PCs throw all they have to keeping the island, the party will still probably need to leave the world in Adventure Twelve. By the time they get back, the Ob will be in control.

From the Party's Perspective

The party is high enough level to deal heavy blows to the Danoran forces, but eventually the thousands of soldiers and their elite allies will prove too much.

The party's primary mission should be to protect their ship as its retrofit is finalized; secondary to that will be saving Pemberton's gnoll forces so they can evacuate – either by piling onto the party's ship or fleeing into the island mainland. If the party can cast *teleportation circle*, that can get a great deal more to safety, though the gnolls will have to abandon their posts, so it's critical to wait until the last few minutes before ordering an evacuation.

The Retrofit

Pemberton disappears for a bit to plan the fortress's defense. He shucks his duplicant body (and has some gnolls carry it into the party's ship if they'll let him), then returns in his own actual body, still polymorphed into human form. His focus is on getting the airship ready to launch. He keeps Pardo nearby coordinating the fortress defenders, and has Brakken waiting somewhere safe on the party's ship, since he is critical to infiltrating the symposium.

A couple hours after work begins, the party hears look-outs shouting warnings, and some sporadic cannon fire. Give the party a chance to go up on the wall and see the dozens of ships coming for the fortress, dimly visible by the lights on their decks.

ENEMY FORCES

Several different types of Danoran troops and Obscurati agents are involved in the attack, which you can use to create encounters if the party sticks around or goes looking for trouble out in the fleet. Their statistics can be found in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue.

- **Porteur Du Mort Alchemist:** Geniuses in their field, these battle alchemists work to enhance fellow Danoran soldiers. Any group of Danorans including one of these alchemists is likely under the benefits of a *communal stoneskin*, as well as various other available extracts. Using tiny technologist devices, these alchemists can effectively deliver their extracts at range, while otherwise standing far away to toss acidic or maddening bombs at their enemies.
- **Porteur Du Mort Murderer:** Handpicked members of the Danoran military, these tieflings were chosen at birth for their masochistic tendencies. During the assault on Axis Island, these rogues maneuver in pairs to try and ventilate opponents who stand against them. When engaged with multiple opponents who outclass them, these murderers use their ability to cast *deeper darkness* to facilitate an escape route and sneak to strike again from a better position.
- **Porteur Du Mort Revelation Sniper:** Armed with state of the art magically enchanted weapons, these snipers number less than a handful in all of Danor. Each of them uses enhanced and unique ammunition that required years of training and specialty craftsmanship from arms manufacturers in the Malice Lands. These snipers hide and take advantage of their Deadly Aim feat and various grit abilities while shooting *lander rounds* to bring down flying PCs.
- **Obscurati Divinist:** Hailing from Drakr, these dwarven oracles have long served the Obscurati in small numbers. During the attack, these diviners use their powers to ensure the Danorans don't fall into ambushes, and that they can locate the party, who are primary targets.
- **Obscurati Master Builder:** Tasked with assisting in repairing of the world's cities following the Ob's ritual, these engineers have dedicated themselves to constructive magic. They secure tactical locations for the Danoran forces by walling them off and using offensive magic to keep intruders at bay.

Pemberton says they need about another half hour to finish the retrofit. It's shortly afterward that a small explosion disturbs the water near the sea gate (Perception DC 20), and a minute later two submersibles surface. The *Porteurs du Mort* emerge, then teleport in and attack the bunkers.

Porteur Assault

Four squads of five *porteurs* each teleport to the eastern sea wall bunkers. One squad arrives near the party. They light flares and dispatch the gnolls in the bunkers within two rounds. Then they use the bunkers (simple twenty-by-fifteen stone rooms with a door facing the harbor and holes for cannons to shoot outward) as a defensive location.

Meanwhile, Danoran ships start bombarding the sea wall, blasting the bunkers that the *Porteurs* aren't in.

Every minute the *Porteurs* abandon one bunker and assault another. There are a total of sixteen bunkers along this side of the sea wall—two rows of eight. If not interrupted, they clear them out in less than five minutes.



Porteur Assault Squad (CR 18)

- ♦ 1 Porteur du Mort Alchemist
- ♦ 3 Porteur du Mort Murderers
- ♦ 1 Porteur du Mort Revelation Sniper



The party might notice (Perception DC 25) that one squad has attacked the lighthouse near the sea gate, and that they've moved the lighthouse beam to point out to sea. From this point on, within 200 feet of the lighthouse anyone who tries to teleport will get redirected to the middle of the Danoran fleet. If things look bad for a *porteur* squad and at least five minutes have passed so they can teleport again, they'll flee and rejoin the fleet.

Attacking the Fleet

Summoned water elementals, swarms of meteors and fireballs, destructive weather magic—all these things can ruin the Danorans' day. So of course the Danorans have prepared for them. Enchantments on the ships protect those on board from the first 50 damage that would be dealt to them by any spells unless the attack originates from within 50 feet. Other wards deal fire damage to creatures who attack from underwater, and the ships have experimental depth charges. The Danorans have even brought along a loyal druid who is concentrating on her own *control weather* spell, to keep the party from just wiping out the fleet with a hurricane.

Make sure the party sees that their high level magic is effective, but that there are enough enemies who have mid-level magic that they can't win through sheer brute force.

If the party does try to engage a ship, rather than handling the crewmen as singular creatures, use the Danoran Frigate Crew stats, which represent the combined might of two hundred sailors and a few elite mages and technologists.

The party can still delay the Danorans, though, and strafing runs with the dragon fliers would go fast enough to avoid cannon counterattacks, though small arms might still be a threat. If the PCs don't pilot the biplanes, Pemberton has some gnolls fly them, and they'll dock with the PC's ship as it takes off.

Industrious PCs might seek out the capital ship, *La Lux du Raison*.

La Lux du Raison (CR 22)

- ♦ 2 Danoran Frigate Crew
- ♦ 2 Obscurati Master Builder
- ♦ 2 Obscurati Divinist
- ♦ Sovereign Han Jierre



In addition to those enemies, the party will likely have to contend with at least 4 other Danoran Frigate Crews on nearby ships. As for the sovereign, despite having focused his life on politics rather than warfare, Han Jierre has learned how to use new magic to tap into the psychic gestalt that latently links all the soldiers under his command. This allows him to call in attacks from many directions with just a thought.

If Han is knocked unconscious, a *contingency* teleports him back to Cherage.

Breach and Evacuation

After half an hour, it's possible to hear steam engines of the Danoran ships close on the other side of the sea wall. The Danorans use siege machinery to surmount the wall and unload hundreds of soldiers. Almost

simultaneously, a blinding flash of light tears through the sea gate and scorches the far side of the bay. Everyone present is blinded for a minute (Fortitude DC 15 each round to shake off the effect).

At this point, the hivemind appears in the sky over the harbor. Pemberton orders his gnolls to evacuate and flee inland, though he hopes the party will permit a few on their ship. That ship, handily enough, is ready to fly.

Blasting Away

Action. Real-Time. Level 18.

The airship ascends, but the Danorans have prepared for a flying target. Luckily, they weren't expecting TWO flying targets.

Waiting on the deck of their newly upgraded vessel is an incensed Pemberton. The sheer gall of the Danorans—as well as their use of overwhelming force—has soured the dragon's typically generous mood, and he angrily paces the deck of the PCs ship. In truth, Pemberton's seething is more a result of his inner turmoil, as he prepares to make a life threatening decision to try and save the world.

Airship Complete

Pemberton will have already explained how to pilot the flying vessel. If you're using the *Admiral o' the High Seas*, the vessel is now equipped with the Skyship piloting component. This upgrade effectively allows the vessel to fly at any altitude, as well as generating a 30 foot bubble where creatures within move with the ship and gain the effects of a *fly* spell. Once a creature passes outside the 30 foot bubble, they fall as normal, but with the benefit of a *feather fall*.

Given the deteriorating situation, Pemberton aggressively suggests that everyone 'gets a move on' and prepare to launch the ship. The Danorans should be just cresting the sea wall and streaming through the sea gate when the party's ship takes off.

Kill the Mind

While the PCs ship ascends, the Hivemind growing over Axis continues to expand, seemingly ignored by the Danorans below. As the incorporeal mass seems ready to burst into proper reality, *La Lux du Raison* fires a single shot from the Lantern into the air, dissipating it in seconds. Unaffected by the malaise affecting other Danorans, Han Jierre recognizes the threat of the hivemind and opts to destroy it.

Luckily, this shot from the Danoran superweapon renders it ineffective for some time as it recharges, but it alerts the party that the Danorans are prepared to shoot upward.

GET OVER HERE!

As the airship ascends into the sky, Pemberton moves to the back of the ship—or side depending on what has a better view—staring out at the assembled Danoran fleet. The destruction below causes smoke plumes to rise, and the shouting and yells become an inaudible sound as the ship continues to rise.

Once the ship has reached 200 feet in altitude, several Danoran escort craft fire specialty bolts up at it. Each shot is a magically reinforced set of chain with a specialized drilling tip. Meant to pierce the hide of a dragon and leave it vulnerable to standard fire, these shots are quickly repurposed by the Danorans to bring down the first airship of the era.



Evasive Maneuvers

If a PC was acting as lookout and succeeded a Perception check (DC 25) to detect the harpoons being aimed upward, the captain can make a Command check (d20 + half-character-level + Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier), and if there is a devoted PC pilot the captain can add the pilot's Dexterity modifier to this roll. If the result beats DC 15 the ship is able to dodge one shot. If it beats DC 25 it can dodge two, at which point the sole remaining chain isn't strong enough to hold the party's ship. It snaps and the party can escape without any more trouble.

Grabbed

Up to three harpoons impact the hull, ripping into the PCs' ship and chaining it in place. The chains begin to slowly retract. The angles of the various ships and the slow mechanisms cause the PCs airship to descend at a rate of 5 feet per round.

Within a minute, the Danoran fleet will be able to reclaim their weapons at the party's ship and blow it out of the sky, unless drastic action is taken.

Pemberton Handles Things

With the airship stuck in place, Pemberton's mind becomes set on a drastic course of action. Unless the PCs have come up with a particularly inventive solution, Pemberton decides to take the fight to the Danorans and give the PCs some time to deal with the chains holding them in place.

Read or paraphrase the following:

Benedict Pemberton turns away from his scrutinizing of the Danoran fleet, his arms lowered and his thumbs locked through his belt.

"Well now, this is one hum dinger we have here. By the looks of things, our friends down there came with toys to use against me. I so hate to disappoint them, and more, I'd hate to lose this fine ship I spent so much time on. I do believe it's time to join the rodeo."

Turning his back to the party, he strips off his gentleman's coat and his pants, then hands them to Pardo to fold. "I'll leave it to you fine folk to get this new-fangled ship unstuck. I'll deal with these ruffians below."

With that, Pemberton leaps from the side of the ship, assuming his draconic form while falling. The following round, Gradiax the Lord of Steel flies once more, leading a vicious assault on the Danoran fleet.

The exact description of the fight between Gradiax and the Danorans should be left to the GM, as it is meant to be a backdrop to the PCs freeing their vessel from the chains that reel it in. Pemberton's move forces the Danorans to retrain their guns on the dragon, and gives the PCs time to properly remove the chains and escape. Every few rounds he strafes one of the ships holding a chain in order to kill the soldiers who are preparing to ascend the chain.

If you need stats for him, treat him as a very old red dragon.

The Chains That Bind

Spread the three chain strikes at roughly equidistant points across the hull of the PCs ship. Each point becomes a breaching site for the Danorans, who have specially designed the chains to convey teleportation magic to the point of impact.

Obscurati Assault Golem: The round after Pemberton dives overboard, the first attackers teleport in. Knowing the original Danoran commandos would be quickly defeated by the forces onboard, the Obscurati step in and instead use the chains to teleport over golem defenders for the impact points.

These golems stand ready to fight against the PCs, but have specific instructions not to move beyond the impact points. Effectively, this ensures each of the breaching points has one golem defender.

The next round troops start pouring in, appearing in huge masses near the edge of the spikes. These are Danoran Boarding Squads (a somewhat oddly-designed enemy meant to be threatening to the party despite being comparably low-level). A new one appears each round.

Breach Points: Following their initial impact into the hull, the shells at the end of the chains bloom into a metallic flower that clamps onto the hull. Each of these points is effectively an inanimate object that must be destroyed in order for the PCs ship to escape the Danoran fleet.

The impact points cover a 10 x 10 foot area and have 300 hit points with hardness 15.

For every 100 points of damage suffered, the breach point emits a blast of fire throughout the area. All creatures within 20 feet of the breach suffer 10d6 points of fire damage. A successful DC 16 Reflex save allows creatures in the area to take half damage. The Obscurati Assault Golems automatically fail this save and gains a number of hit points per its Immunity to Magic rule.

Destroying one impact point keeps the ship from being reeled in any lower, while destroying two gives the ship enough lifting power to snap the third chain and escape.

Failure

If the party takes so long that their ship gets pulled down to surface level, the whole Danoran fleet will be able to target it with cannons, and it will be blown to pieces. The attendant explosions likely kill the party. If they defeated She Who Writhes but made friends, it is possible she might be obliged to rescue them from the sea. Later adventures get more difficult without an airship, though.

Into the Sunset (if there were a sun anymore)

With the chains destroyed, the PCs can effect a proper escape from the Danoran fleet. Pemberton continues a few last strafing runs on the Danorans.

If the party did not spend any effort to help Pemberton, then he gets struck by a grappling chain, then blasted by the blinding beam of the Lantern Cannon, which seems to annihilate him utterly. In truth, a magical contingency teleports him away at the last moment, though his various divination wards make it difficult to determine his fate.

Should the party bother to aid Pemberton, he makes it out of the fight bloodied but alive, and he flies away from Axis Island alongside the party's airship. The Lantern Cannon strikes him a glancing blow, and he manages to crash land onto the deck of the party's ship as he polymorphs back into human form. The weapon has scrambled his magical energies, making him unable to be aided by healing magic for a few weeks. He'll be present to contribute his thoughts during the Forward Symposium, but won't be in any shape to fight, and will make a point of getting teleported out before any more fighting occurs.

Still, the party's ship flies far faster than the Ob fleet can pursue. It's a straight shot for them to reach Danor.



Forward Thinking

Social. Montage.

The party has a few days to breathe.

Nicodemus has called a great conference in the Danoran capital of Cherage. He seeks to unify the leaders of the world, design a path forward for guiding the world into an enlightened age, and stoke anger for the worldwide change towards Risur.

With the aid of Brakken, the party can enter the conference by sharing a mental link with the Beran ambassador. The party has the unique opportunity to overhear the Obscurati plans, and can potentially turn the tide of opinion back in favor of Risur.

Unknown to either side, the Gidim—alien creatures of living thought who threatened the world ages ago—have begun a new invasion, and one of their scouts is in Cherage. The new psychic resonance that makes the hivemind phenomenon possible gives the Gidim great power. Though Nicodemus and the Obscurati anticipated hiveminds and have procedures in place to keep them from developing, the Gidim will be able to nudge a nascent hivemind formed at the Forward Symposium and cause it to manifest into a sort of psychic singularity—a Godmind.

The godmind will consume all thinking creatures around it in an insane pursuit of one goal. In this case, that goal will be ‘improve the world,’ which for the godmind is best accomplished by killing all but the ‘best’ people. If the party does not intervene, Cherage and most of Danor will fall before the surviving Ob members are able to bring enough force to bear to destroy the monstrosity.

In Adventure Eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*, five invading forces will threaten Risur—the armies of Danor, Drakr, Crisillyir, Ber, and the various minor nations of the world. If they save Cherage here, Danor will begin to doubt Obscurati propaganda and so will delay their invasion.

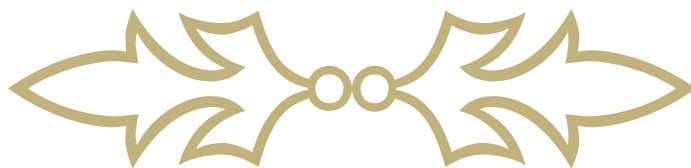
Likewise, saving other world leaders and helping their nations deal with doomsday threats next adventure can stop those nations from invading, and get them on the party’s side for the showdown in the campaign’s finale.

Regroup and Prepare

With access to the world’s first airship, the PCs have a great mobility advantage over the forces of the Obscurati. Returning to Risur following the events at Axis is possible, as the PCs may want to stock up and prepare for the upcoming conference in Cherage. Alternatively, the PCs might decide to start using their airship as a base of operations, teleporting allies to them to determine the plan on infiltrating the Forward Symposium.

The party can go straight to Danor, or wait, but given how much trouble high-level PCs can get into with even a single day to spare, it might be best to tell them that the Symposium is only a couple days away, to keep them from flying to Alais Primos for the next leg of the adventure.

We focus mostly on the events of the conference. If your players seem interested in ‘sneaking into Danor,’ ‘sabotaging Cherage,’ or ‘disrupting the Obscurati,’ you can make things complicated enough to satisfy them. Our assumption, though, is that high-level PCs will be able to get into the country undetected, and that all the interesting things happen at the symposium.



The Conference

Set to take place in the Congressional Hall of Danor, the Forward Symposium has put the career politicians of Danor out on the street, with only a few allowed to attend. With the recent changes in the world, the congress has been relegated to a lesser role while Sovereign Jierre and Nicodemus temporarily take direct control of matters of state. Characters familiar with architecture know that the Congressional Hall of Danor is famous for its retractable metal plated roof, a device that is opened on days of fair weather in the Danoran capital city.

Through political connections, divinations, or asking El Extraño’s spy network, the party can learn that the following dignitaries will be in attendance. Each dignitary also has a small gaggle of attendants and aides, bringing the total number of people present to over a hundred.

- ◆ Nicodemus the Gnostic (Obscurati representative)
- ◆ Sovereign Han Jierre (Danor government representative)*
- ◆ Minister of War Eloise Duffet (Danoran military representative)
- ◆ Brakken of Heffanita (Beran government representative)
- ◆ Prime Cardinal Tito Banderesso (Crisillyir government representative)
- ◆ Chancellor Dmitra Takhenova (Drakr government representative)
- ◆ Sagu Jacksdotter (League of Malice States government representative)
- ◆ Lord Kulp (Nalaam economic representative)
- ◆ Betronga Sidhon (Eladrin survivor representative)**
- ◆ Vlendam Heid (Eschatologist philosophy representative)
- ◆ Various military and opposition political representatives from each of the major nations.
- ◆ Various locally-notable politicians and philosophers from Border States, Malice States, and colonies in old Elfaivar.

**While Han Jierre is scheduled to attend, he will be absent as he directs the retaking of Axis. His wife Gelsey stands in for him.*

***If Betronga died in Adventure Eight, another non-weretiger eladrin attends in his place.*

Brakken’s Plan

The assumed method of getting the PCs into the Forward Symposium involves Brakken entering the conference and acting as the Beran representative. He’ll be linked telepathically to the PCs (and Pemberton if he is here), though the party will have to stay within ten miles. El Extraño’s spies have found a secluded valley their ship can land in that is within range, and they have secured the perimeter so the party will be safe.

Once Brakken has entered the conference, he intends to stay long enough to learn the Obscurati’s plans and the goals of other national leaders, and perhaps to put in a few words against invading Risur. He tells the party that while linked to him, they’ll have the ability to direct his actions—they can basically act as if they were in his body—though he asks them to promise not to do anything rash and get him killed.



Brakken's Bond

Brakken is willing to test his abilities on the PCs to ensure the joining works, and that the PCs are familiar with the effects. Treat Brakken as having a Charisma modifier of +8 for purposes of the bond. The following is a summary of rules while the PCs are linked with Brakken:

- ♦ All members of the bond (including Brakken) gain the benefit of *telepathic bond* as per the spell.
- ♦ By concentrating (a move action) any member of the bond can shift their senses of hearing and sight between Brakken's perspective and their own. The bond persists even if a character resumes his own senses, and he can go back into Brakken's later if he desires.
- ♦ While viewing the world through Brakken's eyes, the PCs can attempt to speak through the minotaur. Unless Brakken or another linked member resists the words being spoken this happens automatically. If Brakken or another linked member attempts to resist, have them make opposed Charisma checks to see who wins.
- ♦ While viewing the world through Brakken's eyes, the PCs can attempt to take control of the minotaur's movements and actions. Brakken prefers to be asked and then follows directions, and normally will resist this (as above). But he will let a PC do it if his life is in danger. A character controlling him in this way can use all her own personal skill and prowess.
- ♦ Brakken can attempt to eject a PC from the mental bond as a full round action. He must succeed three consecutive opposed Charisma checks to do so.

All of the mental bond's abilities work within a maximum range of 10 miles. While normally not an issue, this prevents the PCs from sitting in Risur while Brakken travels to Cherage.

Cherage, Capital of Progress

Cherage is built upon several hills around the La Baie du Violet, a bay named after the violet hue it gives off during sunsets. Small islands in the bay each support immense artillery batteries—weapons installed after a brazen Risuri attack forty-two years ago.

The city builds upon itself in layers, with the more affluent citizens residing on hilltops, while the common folk reside in an almost literal 'melting pot' between the hills and the bay. North past the hills, great fields of industry churn out smoke and soot, which can faintly be tasted on the air even in the finer parts of the city. Small surface rail moves citizens between the industrial sectors and the central city, while traditional carts and carriages are required to navigate up to the hills.

Obscurati enforcers walk side by side with Danoran police in protection of the city. The increased enforcement, coupled with the subtle shift in behaviors since the Great Eclipse, has led to fewer acts of disobedience or direct sabotage. As a result the Danorans have cancelled their previously mandated curfew in the city.

The industrial district of Cherage (technically located out of city limits to the north) is abuzz with new job opportunities. Folks from all over Danor are flocking to the capital city for well-paying work churning out improved firearms, war equipment, and revolutionary constructs. Many people are fascinated by the possibility of learning magic, long unavailable in Danor, even if in truth not many people will find a teacher.

Warehouses along the docks of Cherage have stockpiled with war materiel, and despite attempts to maintain some security, gawkers are fascinated by the steady arrival of man-sized constructs dressed in Danoran military uniforms.

A Nation Changed

People in Danor do not work against the Obscurati or see them as any sort of evil conspiracy; instead, they see the Ob as a group on the cusp of bringing about their salvation.

Indeed, the people of Cherage are predisposed to hating Risur. Obscurati propaganda has informed the populace that all the positive changes of the Great Eclipse—magic returning to Danor, improved healing, people being less prone to violence—are the Ob's doing. And all the faults with the ritual—hiveminds, the sun disappearing, and She Who Writhes disrupting shipping—were due to Risuri meddling.

The One Percent, The One Mind

Social. Real-Time.

The leaders of the old world meet. The Godmind comes.

The Obscurati don't do anything to interfere with Brakken's plan to enter the Forward Symposium. Elite military guards watch the entrances to the event, and corridors are patrolled by large golems that can see through most magic. Security screenings check for illusions, polymorphing, mind control, possession, and being a duplicant, but Brakken's link with the PCs is not detected.

The Congressional Hall of Cherage rests atop the highest hill in the city. The massive metallic structure of the domed roof is currently open, which traditionally allows for an impressive view of the sky, though now the black heavens are fairly underwhelming.

Arrival and Mingling

Prior to the official start of the conference, a brief gala in the hall provides an opportunity to mingle with the other attendees. The Obscurati guards stay out of the way to ensure the attendees don't feel pressured by the Ob's watchful eye. However, Nicodemus is actually present, possessing a new body and serving as a waiter so he can eavesdrop.

Delegates have arrived in the city over the past few weeks, and they come to the hall with their aides and attendants. The government representatives from Crisillyir and Drakr—**Prime Cardinal Tito Banderesso** and **Chancellor Dmitra Takhenova**—are already here, talking with **Gelsey Jierre**, wife of Sovereign Han who sadly will not be in attendance.

Sagu Jacksdotter, the representative of the newly-formed League of Malice States, is giddily telling stories of horrible magical mishaps she has seen, which she will never have to experience again thanks to the Obscurati. **Betronga Sidhon**, head of the eladrin contingent from Elfaivar, talks with representatives of the various colonies who have taken their land. They warily trade tales of violence that each perpetuated, but are relieved that such warfare might be no more.

Brakken makes a bit of a stir by arriving alone, and attendees from various minor states gather around him. Despite Ber being a large nation, the minor states see it as a kindred spirit since Danor, Drakr, and Crisillyir have long treated it as inconsequential too. Many people express concern that Ber might have been in danger because it shares a border with Risur.



Give the party a chance to converse and sway people's opinions if they want. Being politicians with personal ambitions or philosophers with something to prove, most attendees are eager to talk. Only one person, **Lord Kulp**, the master of games from Nalaam (and — the party might know — a Vekeshi Mystic), keeps to himself.

Big Players

Brakken's conversation with the other representatives is interrupted when the lead attendees from Drakr and Crisillyir step in. Brakken quickly fills in the party telepathically to who they are.

Chancellor Dmitra Takhenova, an obese dwarf woman who wears a robe woven with tiny runes that convey her core philosophy, is nearing the end of her six-year stint as leader of Drakr, having been appointed by a council of philosopher-politicians. She's been ruthless in using security forces to hunt down internal dissidents, though she was recently dealt a humiliating defeat when some of her supporters were bombed by followers of Grandis Komanov, the radical eschatologist. She also made a few public statements blaming Risur for the high-profile destruction of a railyard in Mirsk last year.

Prime Cardinal Tito Banderesso, rail-thin and sporting an impressive moustache, is rumored to be the highest-ranking member of the Clergy who did *not* commit suicide during the Great Eclipse. He's a powerful divine spellcaster, and his public statements have always been fairly traditional and positive, but Brakken wouldn't be surprised if he's an elitist, like most of the Clergy hierarchs were.

Dmitra asks if Brakken has any first-hand knowledge of the disasters that have befallen Risur since the sky changed, and then she rattles off the various accusations the Ob have made about how Risur nearly doomed the world.

The Cardinal opines that the Risuri people must be truly bereft of leadership, and that the noblest thing to do would be to 'kill the wolves who rule them, so that the sheep might live the simple lives meant for them.'

Dmitra says she'd sooner see the savages of Ber return Risur to a land of beasts than to let the Clergy's classical brand of delusion take root there.

It's about this time that **Minister of War Eloise Duffet** joins in, admonishing the two to save their anger for Risur, not each other. They all agree Risur must be conquered.

Dmitra asks if they think it will be a long war. Trying to hide her enthusiasm, she suggests that it would be risky to change leadership in the middle of an ongoing conflict.

The Minister of War offers to give them a preview of her presentation about the invasion plan. She even has prepared letters of intent that the Chancellor and Cardinal can sign if they agree. They can send those letters out immediately so preparations for the invasion can begin.

Invasion Plans

If the party wants to listen in, they'll need to have Brakken convince Eloise Duffet, since she recalls Brakken in Flint (in Adventure Five, *Cauldron-Born*) and thought he was too friendly with Risur. They'll need to form some sort of rapport with her or the other two leaders, then offer an argument for being involved in the early discussions.

For example, they could pretend that Brakken has reevaluated Risur in light of the new world order. Plus Ber is one of the nations best poised to invade Risur, so the two other leaders would want to be take the Beran perspective into account before signing on to any plans. Or you can just simplify things to a Sense Motive check (DC 25) to figure out

PARTY INVOLVEMENT

As with any large social event, we can only guess how your players might choose to interact here. We present the situation as it occurs barring PC interference, and leave it to you to adjust in response to their actions.

In particular, they might dramatically reveal their identities. Nicodemus would denounce them in front of the audience while stalling for reinforcements to arrive. If they just engage in debate, pretty much everyone except Heid, Kvarti, and Lord Kulp already have their minds made up to invade Risur, but excellent diplomacy from the party can make a few of them start to doubt. Eventually, though, the delegates from Crisillyir and Drakr steer the discussion toward culling the inferior, triggering the hivemind.

If a fight breaks out, though, the hivemind is driven by a desire to destroy Risur (instead of an economic desire for everyone to 'contribute'). It rapidly grows into a Godmind and goes out of Nicodemus's control, at which point it begins consuming people across the city in order to gather an 'army.'

The party might instead just murder the attendees without talking. Good job. Risur gets blamed for the assassination, Nicodemus will get a new body, and the Obscurati will be able to lead fervent armies against the party in a matter of weeks.

They might instead wait for the hivemind to begin forming, *then* kill attendees in order to weaken it. This actually is a pretty solid idea, except that by the time it starts to form, Brakken will be caught in it. They'll only manage to harm a few of the dozens of attendees before Brakken is paralyzed, but they should be able to tell that killing parts of the 'brain' did actually weaken the hivemind.

We've loaded the symposium with enough sympathetic NPCs that hopefully the party won't just abandon them to die. If they do, though, the Godmind consumes the population of Cherage and expands westward until the Danoran and Drakran armies annihilate it with immense firepower. The Ob will blame Risur for it.

what to say to establish rapport, a Bluff check (DC 25, or 30 if they failed the Sense Motive check) to actually earn their trust, and then a Diplomacy check (DC 25) to be given the chance to listen in.

The details of the plans are touched upon in Adventure Eleven, but the party will be better-served undertaking perilous quests than directing military movements.

Two-Pronged Strategy

The general strategy, however, is for Danoran soldiers and golems to take the Avery Coast Railroad to Trekhom and Sid Minos, where they'll board ships from Drakr and Crisillyir, since the Danoran navy is depleted. Additional forces from those two countries will launch two invasion fleets.

The Drakran fleet will target Flint, but instead of a frontal assault the fleet will drop off its soldiers 10 miles to the east. Though there's no suitable harbor, the soldiers will be trained to teleport to make landfall from a safe distance. Then the fleet will begin bombarding Flint proper while the army advances through the Cloudwood.

Meanwhile, the Crisillyir fleet will make landfall in southeast Risur, on the northern shore of Marrajado de Oro (the riven sea of gold), near Ber. Minister Duffet had hoped the fleet could assist a bridging action to march Beran forces into Risur as well. The two armies would have a hundred-mile march to reach Bole, where they would cut off the rail supply lines to Flint.

The western Risur city of Shale, though it has great symbolic prestige from past wars with Danor, will only be harried by a token fleet to keep them from sending reinforcements to Flint. Most of Danor's remaining navy will be needed to protect Cherage, where they'll be constructing a new colossus. That ordeal will take perhaps a year, so it won't be available for the invasion.

Once Flint and Bole are captured, they'll take a few months to rebuild industrial facilities, and then they'll invade down the Great Delve River to capture the capital Slate.

Blind Spots

Some flaws of the minister's plan are, first, the fey titans might be allied with Risur. Danor has been designing depth charges to use against She Who Writhes, but it would take a month for Drakr to build cannons of sufficient size to threaten the Father of Thunder and the Ash Wolf. Granny Allswell isn't useful in direct battle, though her curses could send foul weather at the force trying to take Bole.

Second, taking military forces out of Drakr will make it easier for Grandis Komanov's radical eschatologists to attack. Though Chancellor Takhenova is concerned enough about them to leave behind some defenders, she doesn't know that Komanov is raising an army of undead and frost giants to annihilate civilization.

Third and fourth, similar doomsday threats will strike Crisillyir and Ber, namely the god trials using the *sacrament of apotheosis* and the invasion of the Gidim. While the invasion of Risur would succeed within three months, the rest of the countries would be devastated.

Fifth and finally, no one predicts the Godmind that is about to threaten Danor.

Where Do I Sign?

Unless the party effectively raises concerns about the plans, the Chancellor and Cardinal agree and sign expedited orders, which the Obscurati will deliver to the respective military leaders of Drakr and Crisillyir. A teleporting courier is waiting out in the foyer.

If the party gets the two leaders to hesitate, or if they manage to stop the courier somehow without being discovered, then the Godmind will strike before official orders can be sent out. This will cause a significant delay, and next adventure the party will have a comfortable buffer before the invasion begins.

Familiar Faces

Everyone's attention turns when **Vlendam Heid** teleports in with his bodyguard **Kvarti Gorbatiy**. Heid makes a point of using the new nature of magic in his arrival, because he intends to speak out against the changes and wants to do all he can not to be labeled as reactionary and afraid of change.

Dmitra Takhenova sees him and says, "Vlendam, I'm glad you finally arrived. I know you appreciate endings, so why don't you leave and come back when we're done?"

"Dmitra," Heid says with a chuckle, "I hear you're taking to heart my advice to plan for the end of your chancellorship. Invading Risur, very good idea! I wager if you could out-debate the dockside poets in Flint, they'll gladly let you be in charge of a shipping guild or something."

"Guilds," scoffs Cardinal Banderesso. "Just common people trying to get a taste of real power. I am not impressed by the ability to make a high-quality shoe."



Obscurati. While he finds their public statements of ideology reasonable, his core ideal is that discourse between philosophies is necessary, and he disapproves of one group dictating how everyone must think.



What can be said about the world's most famous philosopher that has not already been written in hundreds of other books? Born into a family of well-to-do thinkers and soldiers, Heid's interests focused on mythology and how people perceive the world. His famous "On the Proper Endings of Things" had a grand effect on the cultural identity of Drakr.

Since the Great Eclipse Heid has quit making money on speaking tours, and instead has tried to prepare the people of his homeland for possible imminent disaster. He called upon Kvarti Gorbatiy to help him in case his words fail and firepower proves necessary. Unlike the sniper, however, Heid is strongly suspicious of the

A dwarven locksmith-turned-mercenary, Kvarti found a book of Heid Eschatol philosophy in the hands of a man he had assassinated. Though he presents a weary face to maintain his reputation, he tries to go through life content. All his affairs are in order, but he has repeatedly managed to survive missions he thought might have spelled his end. Now he has pledged himself as bodyguard and 'operator' for Vlendam Heid himself, for both men would prefer they not leave the world in its current condition.

Kvarti is honestly uncertain whether he should cooperate with the Obscurati or resist it, and we leave it to the PCs to help him decide.

He chants a prayer, and conjures a shining angel. The crowd gasps, few having ever seen a true celestial. It bows to the cardinal. (Yes, this is a planetar, named Adimel. Banderesso had already summoned it with *greater planar ally*, and his spell was just to call it to his side.)

"Go fetch me some shoes," he tells it. "Red leather, please."

The angel stands, glances at the gathering with a hint of disapproval, then flies out of the open roof.

Chancellor Takhenova claps. "We should give it a rifle instead of a sword, but still, good. I'm glad to have such magic on our side for the war against Risur."

Heid says, "Now come, we've all gathered together here in peace. Can't we make peace with Risur too? I say let's not *jump* so hastily to conclusions, and I just teleported here from a mile away. I'm getting quite good at it, don't you think?"

Standing beside him, his bodyguard Kvarti shrugs. "Yes, but now we cannot flee quickly. You must be prepared for your life to end here."

"I always am, my friend," Heid says. "Well, perhaps not before I get a drink. Chancellor, Cardinal, I look forward to our discussions. Ambassador Brakken, please allow me to get you something as well."

Heid wants to talk for a bit with Brakken, mostly to mention the synchronicity that his current bodyguard was unwittingly part of the terrorist group that nearly blew Brakken up in Flint a year ago. He's curious what the minotaur thinks of the Risuri people. During the conversation he drops hints that he doesn't trust the Obscurati. If



Brakken (i.e., the party) agrees with him, his bodyguard Kvarti offers a counter-argument, and explains that he's not made up his mind yet.

After a few minutes to talk, a waiter (Nicodemus) whispers something to Gelsey Jierre, who politely calls the delegates to take their seats around the chamber. The keynote speaker will be arriving momentarily.

Enter Nicodemus

Once he gets a chance to swap bodies, Nicodemus—now wearing a bald, somewhat heavy-set man whose face looks eminently friendly and trustworthy—enters from a side door, flanked by any major Ob players still active, such as Kasvarina, the ghost of Lya Jierre, and any loyal officers the party might recall from Adventure Seven, *Schism*.

Once Nicodemus reaches the center of the chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

"It's heartening to see so many gathered in one place, meeting in peace and willing to discuss how we can work together and set aside old differences. Before I get into the meat of things, I want to take a moment to thank you for showing me that my long faith in people's capacity for good was not misplaced.

"My name is Nicodemus." He pauses to light up a cigarette and smiles. "An old nickname from my monastery days. More recently, though, I devoted myself to leading an organization on a dangerous path. We hid most of our actions because we knew our ultimate goal would be opposed by many people in power. People like you, if I may be honest. It would be easy for governments to assume that our aim was to take power for ourselves. It's a sad fact of the world that it's hard to believe that someone's intentions are benevolent.

"But I knew that once we accomplished what we set out to do, it would place before the world evidence of the common sense of the matter. Already changes are happening that are so positive that they must command the assent of those who witness them.

"You've no doubt read by now the generalities of how we enacted this change, and I'll be glad to give you more technical specifics later if anyone has any questions. But I want you to understand that our ritual was sabotaged just before we could finish it. Operatives on order from Risur detonated a bomb that killed many of my friends and could have had catastrophic consequences. One particularly brave friend named Borne was able to continue with the ritual, but he was killed before he could secure it.

"It's a flaw of my character, I feel, that I empathize with the leaders of Risur. I can understand why they'd fear to lose their power. For two centuries they waged war with Danor and tried to crush this nation before its industry could be strong enough to challenge their magic. But I wish Risur's ruler were here today so we could show that cooperation will benefit us all.

"My organization tried to save the world, and Risur nearly doomed us all. It will be months before we'll be able to fix their sabotage—and I assure you we will; I miss the sun as much as you—but between now and then our foremost goal should be eliminating the threat Risur poses. I have personally met some of the agents of Risur's Homeland Constabulary, and they're dangerous people.

"Danor's navy, sadly, is very depleted, but thankfully Risur's is as well. I'll call upon Minister Duffet in a few minutes to explain the invasion plan, but I hope we can count on your nations to lend their ships for a full-scale invasion of Risur in one week's time.

"I don't want to focus on the specter of war. This symposium is for looking forward, and I'd like to propose a comprehensive agenda where we talk about positive changes. We can determine how our nations and philosophies will best cooperate to deal with international challenges such as long-standing grievances, constant military build-ups, and territorial disputes, as well as local challenges like alleviating poverty, negotiating with and integrating rebellious populaces, and most intelligently making use of natural resources.

"I think you'll find that in the new world we have brought forth, it will be much easier for us to agree on paths that are a net benefit for everyone."

At this moment, an advisor leans in and whispers in Nicodemus's ear, then backs away.

"Right," he says with a smile. "We've all heard or even seen the worrisome 'hivemind phenomenon'—an unfortunate consequence of Risur sabotage of our ritual. We understand the mild risk we'd have with everyone focusing on solving the same problems, but don't worry. We have guards and magical wards set up to detect any precursor energies that could lead to a hivemind. You're all perfectly safe. Unless an element of risk is intellectually stimulating, in which case by all means, panic a bit.

"Again, it is an immense honor to stand here among you, and to see the first steps toward a better, united world. Before I call up Minister Duffet for her invasion presentation, does anyone have any questions?"

Good Intentions

Unless the PCs urge Brakken to speak immediately after Nicodemus's speech, the first reply comes from Chancellor Takhenova. The large dwarf voices Drakr's support for the Obscurati, and talks about how she looks forward to a new future alongside them. She admits that she will be glad to rally her nation's military might to use against Risur.

Nicodemus seems pleased, smiling calmly.

Prime Cardinal Banderesso is the next to address the crowd, citing Crisillyr's current turmoil and the need for immediate order. The Cardinal states that he was worried that there was some plot against his religion; he found it suspicious, after all, that so many of his colleagues recanted their faith and killed themselves at the exact moment the Obscurati took power. However, he agrees the invasion plan for Risur should benefit the Clergy—and the Crisillyiri people, he adds somewhat sheepishly. He is willing to direct his people to work with Obscurati, but he is concerned that not all of his nation will recognize the clear logic of this war.

He offers to contribute to the war effort if the Obscurati are willing to work with his nation in quelling the more rebellious elements of society, particularly the lower class.

Nicodemus seems slightly taken aback, but before he can reply, the Drakran chancellor voices her support. She already has agreements with other leaders in her nation to undertake grand industrial projects, but there were concerns that they would meet opposition from the working classes. She's sure the war effort against Risur would be more efficient if these dissidents could be...persuaded, rationally of course, to contribute.

Nicodemus interrupts and says that the Obscurati changed the world so that everyone could prosper. Yes, military production will need to increase, but people will be more enthusiastic to work the factories if they can share in the prosperity. Rather than maintaining existing power structures, he believes that the overall quality of life could be improved if those gathered here were willing to consider more unorthodox social structures.

Lord Kulp from Nalaam asks if he means communal ownership and wealth redistribution.

Betronga of the eladrin scoffs and says of course not. He heard rumors about the Obscurati conspiracy, and they would kill those who got in their way. That's why he and the eladrin representatives came. He wanted to show that they were willing to change, and to help however they can to make life better for those willing to contribute.



Sagu Jacksdotter of Orithea agrees, and vigorously. She came because she hoped to get help with violent warbands who roam what were once the Malice Lands. It's too great an issue for Orithea to tackle on its own, but eladrin hunters and Drakran soldiers could make quick work of them, if they would contribute.

Chancellor Takhenova clenches her fist in support. Those who will not contribute will be destroyed, she says. They're ultimately just a net drag on society anyway. This new world only wants people who contribute.

Nicodemus clears his throat and calmly starts to admonish people that they're starting to sound like a hivemind. He is ignored. Vlendam Heid tries to speak up too, but is cut off.

A representative from a minor state asks if this is the sort of unorthodox social structure Nicodemus was suggesting. Nicodemus said to share the prosperity, and obviously some people don't have much prosperity to contribute.

Cardinal Banderesso agrees. Some people are just inferior. They're a net drag on society. We could easily remove them. This is a cause to which I could gladly contribute.

Contribute, murmur a dozen people in unison.

Nicodemus steps away, looking concerned, and he confers with his fellow Obscurati members. While the rest of the crowd continues to speak in synch, he shouts to Heid, Brakken, Kulp, and a few others who seem unaffected.

"We took precautions! There should not be a hivemind here. Can anyone see it forming? We need to destroy it!"

Psychic Meddling

A hivemind is indeed forming, but its presence is being hidden by the psychic powers of a Gidim scout. The being has created a psychic blind spot in the minds of those present, and is masking the floating tendrils of the hivemind with an illusion. The former effect fools *true seeing* by making creatures simply not notice what they've seen, and the latter makes it so someone protected by magic like *mind blank*—who would be immune to the blind spot—still can't just easily see the hivemind. Normally only a creature with both effects active would notice the forming hivemind.

Brakken's own psychic talents give him a special perception unlike the other attendees, so grant each PC a Will save (DC 25). Those who succeed can make a Perception check (DC 28) to pierce through the blind spot and the illusion. Overhead they spot a swirling hivemind—a fleshy ball of tentacles pulsing with brilliant blue-white light as the fervor of the delegates begins to empower it.

Evacuation

Brakken says with complete calm that he feels something taking control of his thoughts, and he is being compelled to contribute to the discussions. He'll only be able to carry out actions on behalf of the PCs for one round, after which he's paralyzed. Across the room, Heid falls to his knees and clutches his head. Lord Kulp struggles to cast a teleport spell, but he fumbles the words.

Nicodemus starts to back out of the room, shouting to his fellow Obscurati officers—who are protected from mental intrusion by Ob magic—to flee. But Eloise Duffet stands still, and even as Nicodemus shakes her she does not respond.

"You sons of bitches," Nicodemus says to the room. "I give you the chance to do something wonderful, but *this* is what unifies you? This is who you really are, ha? Am I the only one power hasn't corrupted?"



A semi-humanoid being of the Gidim race, Sijhen belonged to an invasion force that was trapped for thousands of years by the Axis Seal. Obscurati meddling released it, and it eventually found a way back to its homeworld.

The Gidim can possess corporeal creatures, but in their natural forms they can waver between wholly physical and existing only as barely-visible thoughtforms. Normally they assume the appearance of gray-skinned bipeds with tentacled heads. They subsist on thoughts, not physical food, and their own sentience is dependent on consuming enough complex ideas as sustenance. Their homeworld is itself a thinking being, but the Gidim could only expand by keeping mortal races as slaves.

Sijhen was ancient compared to its people, and it was granted great power in thanks for the news it brought. The Gidim have watched the world for an opening, and when the Axis Seal was broken, they found easy ingress through the dead, stony plane of Ratios, which they stripped dry ages ago.

In this adventure Sijhen merely cameos, but it will be a significant antagonist in Adventure Eleven.

Let this madness take you! You're a cancer upon civilization, and I'll cut you out like I should have from the start?"

At the urging of Lya Jierre's ghost, he leaves the room right as the hivemind begins to surge.

Thoughtflesh Horror

Vicious white light flashes through the room, but Brakken doesn't even blink. The air itself seems to peel open like the petals of a flower at dawn. Tendrils appear throughout the hall, growing outward from random points and then connecting the people caught up in the hivemind. Each tendril is thick, fleshy, and segmented, like an arm at an elbow, but with a new joint every few feet. When they finally connect two people, their eyes begin to glow blue, and tiny arcs of energy stream up and down the tendrils connecting them.

As more and more connections form, the arcs and glowing eyes grow brighter, and the speech of the assembled delegates fades out into a thrum and drone that heaves across the room like waves. The web of skin and nerves begins to spread across each person in the hivemind, rooting them to the ground and leaving only their mouths and their glowing, catatonic eyes exposed. Guards begin to walk in from outside the chamber, and they too are consumed.

The open roof is covered by a spreading mass of thoughtflesh, and the entire building begins to heave upward. There is a sensation of swaying, lumbering steps, which shake the entire structure. Faintly in the distance, people begin to scream.

Otherwise, the chamber is still. Then, in the blue glow from arcing thoughts and the victims' eyes, a figure reveals itself, casting aside a psychic cloak that made it impossible to perceive. The creature—a blue-gray semi-humanoid with tentacles floating around its head and four slits of black eyes—steps into Brakken's field of vision.

A thought reaches into Brakken's mind:

I can sense you there. The role-reversal—you in another body, trying to learn secrets so you can get back your world—it is a complex, ironic, and delicious thought. Whatever was done to this planet, it has made you so wonderfully vulnerable. You have seen a hivemind, but now you shall



witness a Godmind. I urge you not to despair. The Gidim shall consume your world, but I will savor the challenge of defeating you.

With that, the Gidim, whom the party should recognize as **Sijhen** from Adventure Three, *Digging for Lies*, reaches his hand into Brakken's face. Brakken begins to spasm and a psychic pain begins to drive the party out of his mind. Before they are forced back into their bodies, though, they see Sijhen step away and vanish in a flash of blue-white light.

From their parked airship, they can just barely see, a few miles away, the top of the hill of the Danoran Congress. The entire building is moving, crawling along on massive tentacles that flicker with blue-white light. After a moment it disappears behind the hill, heading toward Cherage's poorer districts.

Godmind

Action. Real-Time. Level 25.

The murder philosophers have birthed a terrifying entity, a psychic singularity that draws in all conscious thought and assimilates all flesh.

Unlike previous hiveminds the PCs have encountered, the Godmind has united several existing latent psychic gestalts. People of different nations and philosophies naturally look to their leaders, and so nearly all the attendees of the Forward Symposium were already stewing in psychic energies. Once Sijhen thwarted the Ob's defenses against hiveminds, the different gestalts rapidly collapsed into one of immense power. Now any weak-willed creature that sees the thoughtform flesh of the Godmind will be compelled to contribute to it, or to let it kill them if it deems them unworthy.

In order to defeat this threat, the PCs will need to destroy the psionic mass within, but that is being continually strengthened by the acquisition of new minds. To mitigate that the party can damage the Godmind's outer shell of flesh, which immobilizes it for a time. They might be able to do that from their airship, or could put the nearby Danoran artillery to use in attacking the creature. They can also influence the entity through their psychic link with Brakken, though they might be driven mad.

Of course, the party might simply decide it's not worth it to them to get involved. They could just fly away and let the Obscurati handle it. If Pemberton is present, he's unconcerned about civilians, but worried that the monster might grow too strong to defeat if not confronted now.

A Minotaur on the Inside

Brakken maintains his mental connection with the PCs. He is in constant pain because he's struggling to resist having his personality subsumed, and if any PCs attempt to share their senses with him, they feel this pain too, and must make a Will save (DC 20) each round or be shunted back to their own senses.

Brakken can sense the general thoughts and goals of the Godmind and can relay them to the PCs. This primarily translates to Brakken giving PCs updates on the hourly mark as to how the Godmind proceeds. After eight hours, he loses his battle with the entity, and his mind is destroyed.

Until then, though, he can let the party know if their attacks are affecting the monstrosity. In addition, he thinks he might be able to let them enter into mindscape – a psychically-created mental construct where they could engage in a metaphorical battle with the Godmind, to weaken it from the inside. However, it would need to be distracted from outside first, or else the psychic pain would make it difficult for the PCs to stay in the mindscape for long.

The Godmind's Weakness

When the party is about to launch any sort of attack on the Godmind, Brakken telepathically explains that he's figured out why the Godmind is so strong. Each person here is head of a latent hivemind formed from all the people who see that individual as a leader. If those people could be killed in the real world, it would weaken the Godmind, but just as effective would be finding a way to remove someone from the gestalt in the mindscape.

How? Brakken suggests that someone come into the mindscape and debate with the members who make up the Godmind, while the rest of the party deals with the monster in the physical world. Influencing the attendees' opinions could actually affect the outside body. He just warns them to not mention him, because he's busy hiding from the Godmind, and if it realizes he's not 'contributing,' it might kill him.

Spreading Like Insane Ivy

Unless stopped, the Godmind proceeds in methodically overtaking the people of Cherage. Most citizens stand in awe at the creature as it looms over them, or they actively approach it. A few strong-willed individuals manage to recognize the danger and flee.

The central body of the creature is a hundred foot high mass of flesh and stone that surrounds the Congressional Hall, with tiny bits of the metal dome visible at its "head." The entity crawls along on massive tentacles, but it doesn't so much move its limbs as grow its tentacles outward and then pull the body along. Tendrils spread out in every direction that they sense conscious thought, and they gradually encircle the Danoran capital to cut off escape.

These fleshy vines twitch and occasionally blossom with black flower-like petals. Those petals can fire beams that disintegrate nearby creatures, though it only targets those it deems unworthy.

Hour 1: The roots of the Godmind spread through the district surrounding the Congressional Hall. Hundreds of Danorans are joined into the growing hivemind, struck immobile by psionic tendrils. Due to the noble demographics of the district, most people are spared upon their joining with the Godmind, though a handful of invalids and less common servants are slowly burnt to ash by the black flowers.

Hours 2-3: The roots grow around the borders of Cherage, spreading through the hillsides and sparing the more populous areas below. The added influx of nobility and highborn minds increases the criteria for acceptance, and disintegrations among those touched becomes far more common. Thousands die, and black ash of those bodies begins to float across the city. Following these two hours escape becomes impossible for the people in the city proper, with only the boats on the docks providing any sort of refuge from the growing mass of psychic energy.

Hours 4-5: Spreading into the city of Cherage, the roots of the Godmind move through the lower class districts. The massed belief of the noble class deems them unworthy, and hundreds of thousands are disintegrated. Its final act before turning northward is to knock over an orphanage and kill the children inside.

Hours 6-8: Having consumed the city proper, the Godmind heads north to the industrial district. Luckily by now most people have been evacuated, but anyone left behind is consumed.

Hour 8+: After its first eight hours of existence, the Godmind fully overruns the city of Cherage and the surrounding hills. Less than a tenth of the populace manages to flee. Luckily, the lower volume of people outside the city limits inhibits the Godmind's growth, and it will take days to reach the next major inhabitable city to the west.



Breaking the Shell

On their airship just outside of Cherage, the PCs should be able to reach the city within the first half hour. From their aerial vantage, the PCs can assess the situation, but if they come any closer than a thousand feet they start to feel a tug to contribute to the Godmind's mass. While the PCs can readily resist this, the ship's crew won't hold out for long.

The party can probably pilot their airship with a skeleton crew, or they might come up with a way to protect the minds of their crew. *Magic circle* spells work, and a stirring speech might bolster them enough to resist for a couple minutes, enough time to strafe and get to a safe distance.

Mechanically, the Godmind does not have a statblock. It's the size of a small mountain, and the shell of flesh is too massive and amorphous for normal attacks to kill the Godmind. Damaging it requires narrative solutions, not high attack bonuses.

Godmind Counterattacks

The Godmind is lumbering and slow, but it does not rely on physical might to defend itself. It can affect creatures that come within 800 feet with *mass suggestion* (DC 28), typically compelling them to approach and either be consumed by tendrils or annihilated by the disintegrating blooms.

Against creatures within 250 feet, it can sprout a fleshy black blossom and fire one *disintegrate* each round, with a +20 attack bonus, caster level 25th. The blossom only has 50 hit points and AC 20, and once it is destroyed it takes a minute for the Godmind to grow a new one.

Against creatures that come within 100 feet, it can swing a massive tentacle, equivalent to a naval attack of +30, or a normal attack with a +50 bonus that does 100 damage, and can target everything in a huge sweeping arc.

Finally, since the Godmind controls Cardinal Banderesso, it was able to command the planetar Adimel he summoned to approach, at which point it was dominated. The angel struggles against the domination of the Godmind, and if the party can free it, it will serve them. It recognizes the flawed morality of its summoner, but still must protect him.

Aerial Bombardment

If the party's airship was retrofitted from the R.N.S. *Coaltongue*, its brand has sufficient power to blast a hole in the shell. Otherwise, a normal broadside of cannons is equivalent to a single battery of artillery—enough to distract the monster, but not open its skin.

However, when the ship comes into range, the Godmind targets the ship with *disintegrate* in an attempt to disable its flight support. If the party hasn't prepared countermeasures, the ship begins to spiral out of control. PCs acting as engineer and pilot can keep it aloft long enough for it to land safely, but then the Godmind will slowly advance. Perhaps the ship crashes amid tendrils, and while they rush to repair the levitationals, the party must kill disintegration flowers that keep sprouting up.

The party could ram the Godmind, but it would cripple the ship and likely doom the crew. They might also pick up munitions from barracks and the artillery batteries, and then bomb the Godmind.

Artillery

Some PCs may realize the potential of using the Danoran artillery batteries on the islands in the bay. The Danorans assume the party is hostile and fight to defend the installation, possibly even firing at the party's ship if they stand still long enough. Getting the artillery's aid

requires subduing the defenders (equivalent of a Danoran Frigate Crew, page 249), then finding the commander and convincing him to go along with the plan (Diplomacy or Intimidate DC 30) to turn their weapons on their own city.

If the party just kills everyone, it takes them half an hour to set up the battery to fire. If they don't kill the defenders, the crew can be ready to fire in ten minutes, and the commander will be willing to talk to the other battery commanders, to avoid more combat. At least three of the four batteries must be trained on the Godmind for its outer shell to break, though a single battery is enough to distract the entity enough for a mindscape attack.

Boarding Action

The party could land and hack through the skin over the dome, spending a minute or so creating a big enough hole for the party to squirm through. Each round the skin on the surface pulses with blue-white energy, and PCs must make a Will save (DC 25) or be teleported somewhere that the Godmind has tendrils; basically this scatters the party around Cherage. They'll need something like *dimensional lock* to keep from being driven away, or else they'll have to succeed Escape Artist checks (DC 30) to squeeze through without being touched by the writhing tendrils around the hole.

It might seem like the most direct approach is to teleport into its brain and start cutting up 'neurons' (i.e., the symposium attendees). But like with a boarding action, creatures that try to teleport inside must succeed a Will save (DC 25) or be redirected to somewhere else the Godmind's flesh reaches.

Once they get inside, though, teleporting around doesn't risk being redirected.

Clash of the Titans

What do you get when a PC uses *teleportation circle* to bring in one of the fey titans, who might have agreed to defend Risur? You get an amazing battle between colossal monsters. This certainly counts as a distraction so the party can engage the Godmind in the mindscape, and if they lend some aerial aid to the battle their titan ally can tear a hole in the Godmind's face so the party can physically attack its 'brain.'

Mindscape Debate

If the party distracts the Godmind with heavy damage—airship broadside, artillery bombardment, etc.—Brakken alerts them that there's an opening for them to confront the gestalt in charge of the creature.

Any PC who shares Brakken's senses for the next minute appears in a shimmering version of the Congressional Hall, except that the walls have become windows that look out upon the devastation the Godmind is wreaking. Psychic constructs of the major attendees are present, while the other attendees' faces press out of the walls and floors.

Initially, all the attendees are immobile and do not notice the PCs, but if a minute passes without the Godmind being distracted, it does a sort of 'mental security sweep.' Each PC sharing Brakken's senses must succeed a Bluff or Stealth check (DC 20) each round to hide as the attendees lazily look around the mindscape for intruders. If a PC is spotted in this way, the Godmind assaults him with psychic pain, forcing him to make a Will save (DC 25) each round or be expelled from the mindscape.



Should the PCs try fighting in the mindscape, this demiplane is just a mental construct, so no injuries suffered here carry over to the real world. However, psychic effects function, and within the odd logic of the mindscape other magic can be effective. *Invisibility*, for instance, can hide one's presence, even though the Godmind isn't using real eyes to see you.

Influencing the Mind

Some options include:

- ♦ **Rescue.** Cast *invisibility* on an attendee, then *restoration* to restore Wisdom damage done to them, and *protection from evil* so they won't be affected again. This frees their minds to act in the mindscape (perhaps aiding the PC in any other debate tactics), though their bodies will still be physically trapped by fleshy tendrils in reality.
- ♦ **Defame.** Argue that a particular member of the symposium is unworthy, perhaps by bringing up economic comparisons of their nation's contributions versus other nations (Knowledge [history or local] DC 20 and then Diplomacy DC 30). At your discretion, a successful argument could cause the Godmind to disintegrate one of the minds making up its gestalt, which removes one of the mindscape ectoplasmids from the Inside the Brain battle.
- ♦ **Impeach.** Untether a particular member of the symposium from his followers. This requires convincing the person that he is unfit to lead the group, or that the group is unworthy to follow him. This requires forming a rapport with the person (Sense Motive DC 25), then either a challenging deconstruction of the person's identity (Diplomacy DC 40) or a severe personal attack (Intimidate DC 40). Success here removes one of the mindscape ectoplasmids from the Inside the Brain battle, but does not kill the affiliated attendee.
- ♦ **Reframe.** Reframe the debate, in an attempt to turn the goal of the Godmind away from economic efficiency and instead toward moral magnanimity. This is difficult, and first requires showing oneself as an equal in the Godmind's eyes (Knowledge [local or nobility] DC 25 and Sense Motive DC 25 to know what to discuss, then Diplomacy DC 30 to form an intellectual rapport). Next the PC has to make a compelling morality argument (Knowledge [religion] DC 25 and Diplomacy DC 30). While this isn't enough to defeat the Godmind, it gets it arguing amongst itself for a few minutes, enough time perhaps for the PCs to get into its brain.

For any of these options, a Bluff check can stand in for a Knowledge check, but increase the DC by 10 in order to spout sufficiently convincing academic babble.

Inside the Brain

Once the PCs manage to find a way inside the Congressional Hall, they discover over a hundred people trapped inside knotty thoughtflesh that pulses with arcs of energy. The only real clear space is up near the speaking dais, since most of the Ob officers who were up there managed to avoid being trapped. Otherwise it's a thick tangle of trunk-like tendrils with only narrow paths between them.

Sixty feet up near the roof and relatively hidden are two of the black disintegration 'flowers' (Perception DC 34). They remain coiled up, but will blossom and begin attacking if the party takes any hostile actions.

The eyes of the trapped attendees glow. Three of those attendees in particular—Dmitra Takhenova, Tito Banderesso, and Eloise Duffet—have enough sway over the gestalt that they have manifested ectoplasmic bodies that defend the brain of the Godmind. These resemble the original people, but are white-green slime.

Mindscape Core

- ♦ 3 Mindscape Ectoplasmids
- ♦ 2 Black Blossoms



Mindscape Ectoplasmid

CR 17

XP 102,400

LE Medium ooze

Init +7; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft.; Perception +25

Defense

AC 32, touch 32, flat-footed 28 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +28 profane)

hp 270 (20d8+180); **regeneration** 10 (chaotic spells, chaotic weapons)

Fort +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities amorphous, DR 15/—; **Immune** acid, bludgeoning damage, electricity, mind-affecting effects, ooze traits, piercing damage; **Resist** cold 30

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (average)

Melee slam +20 (6d6+7 plus 1d3 Wis drain)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th; concentration +22)

At will—*charm person* (DC 18), *detect thoughts* (DC 17), *telekinesis* (DC 20)

3/day—*charm monster* (DC 19), *quicken charm person* (DC 18), *mind fog* (DC 20)

Statistics

Str 20, **Dex** 17, **Con** 26, **Int** 21, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +20 (+24 grapple); **CMD** 34 (can't be tripped)

Feats Ability Focus (charm person), Dodge, Great Fortitude, Hover, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (charm person), Spring Attack, Toughness

Skills Fly +3, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (arcana, history, religion) +25, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +25

Languages Celestial, Common, Dwarven, Elven, Primordial; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ compression, corrupt ally, no breath, thoughtform

Special Abilities

Corrupt Ally (Su) Any creature charmed by the mindscape ectoplasmid takes 1 points of Wisdom damage per round. When a charmed creature's Wisdom damage equals its Wisdom score, it becomes completely subservient to the Godmind (as *dominate monster*, except it even obeys self-destructive orders) and loses the Wisdom damage it has taken from this ability. Killing the ectoplasmid frees the creature.

Thoughtform (Su) As the labor hivemind (see page 13).

**Black Blossom**

CR 10

CN Large aberration

Init +0; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft.; Perception +25**Defense****AC** 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20 (-1 size, +11 natural)**hp** 50**Fort** +3, **Ref** +3, **Will** +12**Offense****Speed** 0 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 25th; concentration +30)At will—*disintegrate* (DC 21)**SQ** thoughtform**Special Abilities**

Concealed Thoughtflesh (Ex) Due to the sheer amount of fleshy matter around the Godmind, it's challenging to spot the black blossom until it unfurls, revealing the dark insides of its 'petals.'

Regenerate (Su) One minute after a black blossom is destroyed, the Godmind grows another one.

Thoughtform (Su) As the labor hivemind (see page 13).

Terrain

The Congressional Hall is a roughly two-hundred foot diameter room in a much larger building, with a southern dais and a horseshoe of seating on three levels, each five feet above the next. Dozens of fleshy trunks grow up from the ground where symposium attendees were trapped, and aside from the dais there's not more than ten feet of open space in any given area.

One section near the north wall of the hall has enough tendrils to effectively form a cage that traps any creature larger than Tiny. The tendrils are easy to strike and it takes 50 hit points of damage to clear an opening.

Many of the thoughtflesh trunks leave narrow gaps that function as difficult terrain and require an Escape Artist check (DC 15) to weave through without touching either trunk. If a creature touches one of the trunks – either from failing this check or being forced into it – it must succeed a Will save (DC 20) or be teleported to any location in the hall. Typically it will send creatures to the 'cage.'

Tactics

The three ectoplasmids pursue the PCs through the tendril forest. One starts by creating *mind fog*, and the others close in to attack. They use spring attack if possible to strike and slip away; as oozes, they don't have to slow down to squeeze through the forest. Each round they also sling *quicken charm persons* to try to make some enemies stop fighting so they can focus on the others.

Their regeneration might make them unkillable, but if the PCs either kill or free the people whom the ectoplasmids are based on, the oozes lose their regeneration.

Meanwhile, the black blossoms fire *disintegrates* each round, though they're easy to destroy.

Free Your Mind

The hundred or so people trapped here can be freed if the tendrils holding them are destroyed (about 50 damage frees one victim), though most of them are comatose from extreme Wisdom damage. Area attacks can take out many at once, but will kill the people inside.

If the party simply kills the three ectoplasmids, they basically have free reign of the brain to cut it to pieces. But if the fight is ongoing, once thirty people are killed or freed, the Godmind's outer body stops moving and begins to shake in agony. The tendrils' pulsing turns from blue to red, and the entire Congressional Hall topples sideways, upending the battle and forcing creatures to climb or fly through a web of tendrils. From now on, creatures who touch a tendril are not teleported, but instead are targeted with *greater dispel magic* (caster level 25th).

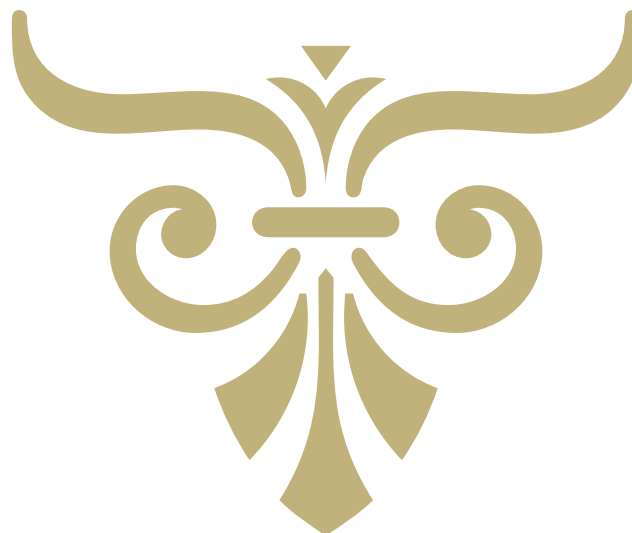
Once either all the ectoplasmids are destroyed and the party does some brain surgery, or at least sixty of the victims are freed or killed, the Godmind gives out a psychic whimper, and its entire thoughtflesh mass begins to dissolve. Over the next minute the Congressional Hall tumbles to the ground, but the building survives with enough integrity that the people inside can be rescued with time.

Around the city, every person who was trapped by the Godmind knows that it was the party who saved them. Though wary of forming a new hivemind, the population begins to surge toward them to thank them for saving the city, and an impromptu parade is arranged if the PCs will have it.

Aftermath

Well, the PCs have stopped the Godmind from consuming the world. Nicodemus and the Ob—who abandoned the city at its hour of need—will try to paint the Godmind as a result of the party's meddling. But the survivors of Chorage will actually speak out in favor of the PCs' heroism, and will slow Danor's march to war against Risur.

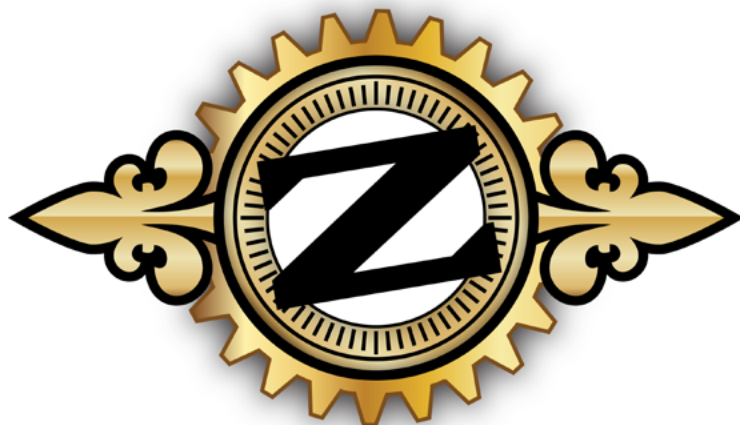
Still, Drakr, Crisillyir, Ber, and the other nations will be steered toward war by Nicodemus. And as the party has just seen, there are threats from other planes threatening this world. Things aren't as bleak as they might have seemed when the sun and stars vanished, but the victory is not won yet. ☹

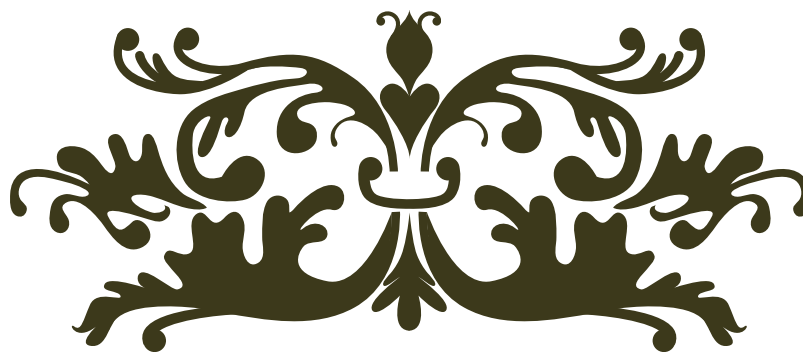






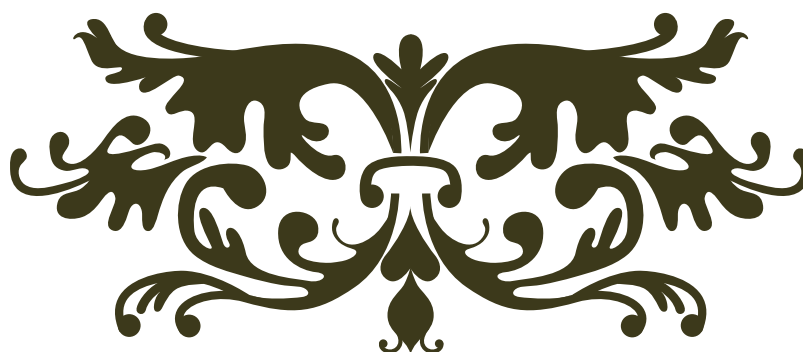
Adventure Number 11
Gorged on Ruins





From the Pen of	Liz Courts and Ryan Nock
Editing and Conversion	Ryan Nock
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Stunning Cartographic Displays by	James Hazelett Jonathan Roberts
Masterful Interior Illustrations by	Renan Moraes, Claudio Pozas, Dede Putra, ShenFei, and artists of history
with Layout and Graphic Design by	Frank Michienzi
Ably Produced and Facilitated by	Russell Morrissey

Special Thanks to YouTube, for letting me rewatch “Invaders from Mars” in Spanish so I could try not to recreate that terrible, terrible movie.



ADVENTURE ELEVEN: Introduction

Wherein Things Fall Apart

Nicodemus and the Obscurati officially control the nations of Lanjyr, with the party's homeland of Risur the sole hold-out. However, in Adventure Ten, Godmind the party might have taken the first steps in eroding the Ob's total control by saving Cherage, the capital of Danor, from a horrible psychic monster that would have killed tens of thousands of people.

Nicodemus is mobilizing every military under his command to conquer Risur, which he erroneously sees as the chief obstacle to him creating his perfect world. Taking only military prowess into account, Risur will fall in a matter of weeks. But if the party saved Cherage, Danor's military will drag its feet. Three other great nations—Ber, Drakr, and Crisillyir—constitute the bulk of the Obscurati's military forces. If the party can change the minds of their people as they did the Danorans, Risur can be spared an invasion, and the domination of the Obscurati can be weakened.

Fortunately, those three nations are just as doomed as Danor was, each in their own unique way.

Calls for help come from Ber—to investigate a city from which no one is allowed to leave; from Drakr—to halt the advance of an army of mad men and frost giants led by warlords not seen for millennia; and from Crisillyir—to spare the capital Alais Primos from tearing itself apart in apocalyptic despair. And though the party might not realize at first, each doomsday holds the possibility to acquire items or knowledge that will help them in their upcoming mission to the Gyre in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*.

ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

If you use *Gorged on Ruins* as a standalone adventure, you can simply use one of the three acts in a place that fits your campaign, or you'll need a unifying thread to tie them all together—one without all the baggage of ten previous adventures. The lost riders could have been released by the trials in Alais Primos, but what do the Gidim have to do with it? You might use that act independently from the others, or move Ursaliña to near Alais Primos, and have the Crypta Hereticarum as the secret under the city. The psychic invaders instead become monsters released from the vault, and once the party defeats them, a host of angels arrive to cleanse the rest of the vault.

MEANWHILE AT THE OBSCURATI?

This adventure challenges the party with little direct threat from the Obscurati—they're busy planning a vast military action and designing a way to fix the colossus to try to fix the Axis Seal.

Thanks to the spycraft of *El Extraño* of Ber, the party is mostly shielded from divinations by the Obscurati, so unless they go announcing their plans, the Ob won't be able to keep up with the PCs. In truth, Nicodemus's pool of mastermind henchmen has been seriously eroded by the RHC's efforts; with fewer geniuses suggesting clever ways to outwit their enemies, Nicodemus has to rely on cruder brute-force solutions like overwhelming military force.

As a baseline we assume the party has staved off the most serious threats to Risur, and so can count on their people's loyal aid. The main challenge is that time is tight before disaster strikes other nations, not that Risur might fall into chaos. Of course, Risur might still be in trouble if the party actually failed in Adventure Nine, *The Last Starry Sky* to stop the activation of the Ob's lighthouse in Flint.

However, we don't want the party to forget that the world is under the Ob's control, so during each act we'll highlight Obscurati activities. The Ob agents the party encounters won't be equipped to challenge high-level Risuri constables, and they're less concerned with fighting Gidim, eschatologists, or gods than they are with forcefully eliminating dissent.



Multiple Days of Doom

Three great threats endanger different regions of the world, but each offers an advantage to the party in their overarching quest to undo the Obscurati's ritual.

Introduction

The party's allies and agents report a variety of threats to them, and it's up to the PCs to decide what is most important. Their ultimate goal—or at least the one advocated by the party's advisor Harkover Lee—is to travel to the Gyre and make bonds so they can connect this world with other planes. First, though, they must find out how to repeat the Obscurati's ritual. And it wouldn't hurt if they could stop three invading countries from conquering Risur while they're at it.

If the party decides to head straight for the Gyre, they'll have a hard time of it, and if they get back you can use this adventure as a starting point for all the catastrophes that gripped the world while they were gone.

High Power, or Epic?

The party is saving the world, their homeland is being invaded, and cosmic threats are afoot. But some groups will prefer a more down-to-earth play style, while others are fine with the PCs becoming the Justice League. For the former, we offer options for the party to take their time, understand the situation, interact with NPCs, and use alliances to win the day. For the latter, they have an airship. It's perfectly valid for them to fly in, attack from above, and ask questions later.

Act One: Shackled Thoughts

A Gidim leviathan—a ship that acts as a seed for colonization by the psychic race—has reached this world and taken root beneath the Beran city of **Ursaliña**. **Glaucia Evora**, a gnoll lawkeeper from Ber, calls upon the party to help discover why the city has gone silent. If the party can save the city, the ruler of Ber can be convinced to call off his part of the invasion of Risur. More importantly, the leviathan carries a *vortex array*, a type of living sensor that will help the party find the magical energies they need in Adventure Twelve.

A semi-humanoid being of the Gidim race, Sijhen belonged to an invasion force that was trapped for thousands of years by the Axis Seal. Obscurati meddling released it, and it eventually found a way back to its homeworld.

Sijhen was ancient compared to its people, and it was granted great power in thanks for the news it brought. When the Axis Seal was broken, they found easy ingress through the dead, stony plane of Ratios, which they stripped dry ages ago. While other Gidim coordinate the colonization of Ursaliña, Sijhen's mission is to proactively combat the party and others who might try to stop the consumption of their world.



Background—Gidim Harvesting

The Gidim—psychic entities from a far plane, which the party first learned of in Adventure Three, *Digging for Lies*—were barred for millennia from this world. Now that the Axis Seal is open, they seek to claim it and use it as a psychic feeding trough for their sentient homeworld.

The Gidim are composed of thought that is capable of taking physical form. Just as normal creatures need to consume various nutrients for health, the Gidim need a diverse diet of thoughts and emotions. They have built an entire civilization around 'farming' other planes. Any world with animal life can produce simple thoughtfood like fear, satisfaction, or affection, but it takes other intelligent minds to produce delicacies such as ennui, schadenfreude, saudade, or agape.

They began their colonization in Ursaliña because its vibrant culture produced strong emotions that drew the leviathan like the scent of sizzling bacon. For a few weeks the Gidim stealthily infiltrated the structures of government, snaring the minds of leaders and killing trouble-makers. The people of Ursaliña have realized something is amiss, and they do their best to avoid attracting attention, but the Gidim-controlled leadership issue decrees to try to force the city to keep up its festivals and arts, to keep the 'nutrients' flowing.

The Gidim control is based in **Cadagyr Palace**, the city's seat of governance. They have a major operation in the **Jaula de Oso**, a prison that serves as public arena for sports and the city's famous bear duels, which they use as a breeding pit for Gidim warbeasts. And the leviathan itself materialized in caverns once inhabited by the Ancients, beneath the city's bardic college **Triunfo Vida**. Invisible creatures called oculi float above the streets looking for trouble, and the city police brutally crush anyone who publicly questions all the strange goings-on.

The Gidim leviathan is commanded by experienced infiltrators (or, more accurately, Gidim personality-constructs that have cloned the knowledge of previous colonists of other worlds), but they are advised by **Sijhen**, the same Gidim wayfarer whom the party contested against in Adventure Three and briefly encountered at the end of Adventure Ten. Sijhen waits for the PCs, but underestimates how much they have grown in power.

Liberty Calls for Help

Before the Obscurati enacted their grand ritual, they identified those with the authority and ideology to oppose their new world order. In Ber, that meant the *executores dola liberta*, an elite force of lawkeeping women who are charged with punishing those who would steal the liberty of others. The Ob assassinated a handful of high-ranking *executores*, leaving enough of a hierarchical vacuum that the remaining members haven't been able to keep Obscurati officers from taking control.

The one surviving executore of high rank is Glaucia Evora, a stern gnoll whom the party met and traveled with in Adventure Six. She's dispatched lieutenants across Ber, and a bit of foresight motivated her to send a couple subordinates over the Anthras Mountains and into Risur, one to Flint and the other to Slate. They keep in touch with Glaucia via *sending*, and so are able to relay a request for help.

Glaucia asks for the party to meet her in Seobriga where she can give them details in full. (Also, she's being hunted by Obscurati agents, and needs the party to stop them.) She worries the Obscurati are doing something foul in Ursaliña. No news comes out of the city, and the *executores* she sends in never report back. She tempts them with the idea that if they can prove the Ob are hostile to Ber, she can convince the Bruse to call off Ber's invasion of Risur.

You Are Being Watched

It's only a matter of days before Ursaliña is consumed and a massive tendril rises up into the night sky, allowing the Gidim homeworld to begin to feed.

Any allies the party looks for in Ursaliña are either hiding or mind-controlled. The party's activities are being observed by oculi throughout the city, and if they are suspicious then the city police will try to bring them in to meet the local lord. Getting caught or causing enough of a commotion will bring them to the attention of Sijhen, who will do whatever it needs to kill the PCs, with no concern for casualties among the civilians, who after all the Gidim consider to just be chattel.

In the midst of this, a more secretive agent of the conspiracy operates in the shadows; **Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen** seeks specimens of the Gidim in order to understand their psychic physiology and report back to Nicodemus. His involvement foreshadows a dramatic development in the campaign's finale, when the Obscurati leader takes control of the hivemind and uses its power to dominate the entire world.

Events might progress slowly with the party carefully figuring out who they can trust, discovering the horrible truth of the Gidim invasion, and then launching a surprise strike to destroy the leviathan. Or the party might storm into the city, attract every Gidim warbeast and mind-controlled soldier into a quick massive brawl, and hope to survive long enough to clean up the aftermath.

In either case, once the party attacks the leviathan, Sijhen has the living ship tear its way out of the ground. It takes to the sky and begins to raze the city, prompting an aerial skirmish visible to an audience of tens of thousands.

Act Two: When Doom Came to Drakr

The fey titan known as the Voice of Rot once laired in the far north, what today is the nation of Drakr. With his gaze he could command the corpses of beasts and the spirits of men, but Ancient heroes drove him south after a battle in which they plucked out one of his eyes. Now he can only control the dead that rot, and has no sway over spirits and ghosts.

Now five comets—like white serpents in the black sky—streak out from the Gyre and crash into Drakr's frozen north, heralding the return of mythic warlords who seek a final battle. **Grandis Komanov**, a cult leader and follower of the Voice of Rot, will use their might, an army of radicals, and the recovered eye of her lord to murder all who would resist. Every death she claims for her lord will strengthen the white serpent as he waits in the Gyre for the end of the world.

Background—Doomsday Eschatologists

Politics in Drakr have long had a heavy philosophical component, where charismatic and erudite thinkers sought the support of open-minded lords. Recently the most dominant philosophy has been Heid Eschatol, based on the writing of **Vlendamd Heid**, who advocated a focus on proper endings—and inherent in that, following through on complex tasks in order to achieve those good endings.

However, a radical faction of the eschatologists arose under the influence of Grandis Komanov, who wove old, weighty myths together with Heid's teachings, convincing many that the end of the world was nigh, and indeed that it was their obligation to bring about its conclusion. Unsurprisingly, the Great Eclipse caused by the Obscurati massively swelled the ranks of Komanov's followers, and now tens of thousands have been swept up in a crusade to provoke the fall of civilization.



Grandis traces her bloodline to the oldest dwarven warlords from before Drakr, before the Clergy, and before even the Demonocracy. Raised a common metalsmith by her bitterly poor father, she studied magic so she could make her fortune.

Once, while trapped in a massive winter storm, Grandis read a book of the teachings of Vlendamd Heid on the nature of endings. Her interpretation of his philosophy was markedly unorthodox, and she cultivated her own radical branch of eschatology based not on preparing for how things end, but in actively ending things.

By delving into forbidden lore over the years, what was once mere greed and narcissism has been corrupted into a genuine insane longing for the end of the world. She made contact with the Voice of Rot, a primordial entity who exists to witness the world's death. Since Grandis believes truly nothing is more important than her, and some day even she must die, it is merciful to kill everyone, lest they have to endure a world without her.

Now the army besieges **Bhad Rhyzhavdut**, the easternmost city of Drakr. Their forces far outnumber the defenders, but most of the soldiers are gripped with apocalyptic excitement, taking the 'end of the world' as an excuse for debauchery and sin. The 'hivemind' effect created by the Obscurati's new planar energies has linked the entire army together psychically. Bereft of free will and surrounded by a living blizzard, they slavishly obey the orders of Komanov, who stands aloof from her fanatical horde.

Drakran legends tell of the five Lost Riders, the **Vsadni**, warlords who pridefully set out into a blizzard to find a great battle, and disappeared after they refused to seek shelter or ask for directions. To aid his minion Komanov, the Voice of Rot called down five comets, each bearing a dark titan crafted from the matter of dying worlds. Grandis bound these enigmatic heralds of the Gyre to the souls of the Lost Riders, and ordered them to lead her army to the world's ultimate battle.

The army claimed part of the old city of Bhad Rhyzhavdut, but then settled in for a siege. The doomsday army contents itself with a wild festival of costumes and drinking, and four of the Lost Riders simply patrol the city perimeter on their steeds, playing ancient songs of war to keep the soldiers in a frenzy. Meanwhile, the fifth Vsadni helps Komanov assemble her lord's lost eye into an arcanoscientific weapon that tears the souls from whoever it is aimed at.

Komanov could simply destroy the city, but when her weapon is ready, she'll be able to turn every one of its defenders into another soldier in her army.

Mystery Box

After spotting the comets crashing far to the north, the party receives a package out of thin air. Vlendamd Heid, lured to Bhad Rhyzhavdut by agents of Komanov, was caught in the siege and realized what the Vsadni were. Unable to directly *send* the PCs (Heid doesn't know the spell, and no one there who does knows the PCs), he used his novel understanding of post-Eclipse teleportation magic to send them a box containing a plea for help and a brochure about archaeological curios tied to the ancient tales of the Lost Riders.



The situation when they arrive depends on how long they wait to help. Komanov has nearly assembled her arcanoscientific weapon, but it takes her a week to work out the kinks and be able to safely use it. Then within hours the city falls, and her army is bolstered by tens of thousands. She captures Heid as a trophy, and then heads for Mirsk. They lay siege a week later, as Komanov retunes her weapon, and a few days later Mirsk is annihilated. Then Komanov turns her gaze toward Trekhom, capital of Drakr.

Even with their power level, the PCs aren't likely to be able to face an entire army themselves. They might defeat the Vsadni, which lowers the army's morale and slows their advance. Or they could sneak through the army and find Komanov tinkering, and try to cut off the head of the snake. But Komanov is empowered by her fanatics. Indeed, the best way to defeat a doomsday philosopher is to debate her. If the party can cut down the pillars of her ideology, the army will doubt her, which dispels the hivemind and breaks her power.

However they defeat Komanov, she pledges that her master the Voice of Rot will witness this world's end. But for now, stopping the radical eschatologists will make the PCs heroes to Drakr, which will convince the Drakran military to turn back from their invasion of Risur to defend their homeland.

Act Three: Trial of the Century

The people of Crisillyir gather by the tens of thousands to place their gods on trial. Each execution kills not only the god, but all those who have remained devout despite the Ob's ritual, which has made people more rational and less faithful. And as those followers perish, the web of wards placed upon the nation to hold back dormant evil falter. Left unchecked, they'll unleash a fiery cataclysm on the capital city.

Tasked with rooting out demonic influence, Vitus learned of the Obscurati's conspiracy and was captured trying to infiltrate it. After his escape (or rescue by the party), he discovered how deeply his religion's leadership had been twisted by the Ob's influence. With the Great Eclipse he has decided it is his destiny to cleanse his religion.

A *geneu credeto* (literally "spirit of belief," but more colloquially known as a "godhand"), Vitus's flesh and faith are one, and in battle his fists carry the weight of the combined devotion of tens of millions of adherents to the Clergy. He grew up in a monastery, then spent two decades traveling across Lanjyr defeating and capturing evil remnants of the Demonocracy.

Serene yet imposing, Vitus believes everyone has within them the potential to transcend mortal frailty and the temptations of sin, and he humbly strives to be an example of that path. Curiously, he has a great fondness for board games, which he justifies as being an encouragement for mental improvement. One of his bracers unfolds into a game board, which can be played with simple stones.

He will be wary of interference, even if the party saved him in Adventure Seven. If he was not rescued, he nevertheless could have escaped at a later time. If he died, another figure can fill his same role.



Before then, the party needs to gain access to a holy vault in the city's grand library. Only there can they find the details of the Ancient ritual the Obscurati used to open the Axis Seal and alter the world's link to the cosmos. If the library burns down, the party might never be able to undo the Ob's grand design.

Divine Trials

The Clergy of Crisillyir lost many of its hierarchs during the Great Eclipse. Those who weren't secretly part of the Obscurati the whole time were killed, and fake suicide notes were left wherein they recanted their faith. Now the public has turned resentful of the gods, and they have taken to putting them on trial.

This is not merely metaphorical. The old demoness **Ashima-Shimtu** long hid the secret *sacrament of apotheosis* ritual, and for refusing to share its power the Clergy imprisoned her in their Vault of Heresies. But the spells binding her weakened, and she was able to reach out via blood magic and share the ritual with a few people she knew would use it against the Clergy.

Adventure Overview

Morgan Cippiano, head of the Flint branch of the Crisillyir-based Family crime syndicate, asks to accompany the party to try to save his homeland. In the capital city of Alais Primos he introduces the party to **Donna Aneenya**, overall head of the Family.

The goal of finding the Axis Seal ritual leads the party to the Grand Library, which is across the square from the site of the ongoing god trials. The library's demiplane vault can only be opened if two people agree—the nation's secular leader **Arch Saecula Degaspere** and the godhand who is putting its gods on trial, **Vitus Sigismund**. Degaspere won't help unless the party can stop the trials and save her city, and Sigismund insists on finishing off his pantheon before he'll aid the party.

Sigismund knows the church was corrupt, but hopes that the 'tribunal of the people' will find the foundation of the church—the teachings of the beloved god Triegenes—to be true. Though he claims impartiality as a judge, his fanatic ally **Legate Tullius** incites bitter verdicts from the mob, and together they will likely doom the city.

One possible resolution to the madness that has gripped the city would be to put the god Triegenes himself on trial, and then to achieve a not guilty verdict. Degaspere suggests evidence might be found in the Vault of Heresies, and if the party has investigated the motivations behind the god trials they might want to confront Ashima-Shimtu on their own.

The moment they arrive at the vault, however, old wards placed by the Clergy call in a host of angels. Long forbidden by the Axis Seal from answering the Clergy's prayers, they come now to purge the vault. The party will find the celestial beings obdurate and unwilling to delay, so to find the evidence they need they'll have to rush, or perhaps attack the holy messengers. As for Ashima-Shimtu, the demoness has complex desires, and though she wants to see the Clergy fall, a nascent empathy within her might lead her to aid the party in order to stop innocents from dying due to Triegenes's execution.

Back in Alais Primos the trial begins, with Morgan Cippiano standing in as a proxy for Triegenes. If Triegenes is found guilty, Morgan will be used as a focus for the *sacrament of apotheosis*, and then he'll be executed. The gathered masses jeer and shout for a guilty plea, but the godhand



AIRSHIP JOURNEYS

The party should have an airship courtesy of Benedict Pemberton, and if we assume an average speed of 10 knots (or ship speed 10), the ship should be able to travel about 300 miles in a day. Use the following baseline for travel time between major points in the adventure.

FROM:	HOURS OF TRAVEL TO:					
	Flint	Seobriga	Ursaliña	Bhad Rhyzhavdut	Alais Primos	Sid Minos
Flint	—	56	40	74	42	48
Seobriga	56	—	64	100	34	30
Ursaliña	40	64	—	124	74	75
Bhad Rhyzhavdut	74	100	124	—	62	68
Alais Primos	42	34	74	62	—	8
Sid Minos	48	30	75	68	8	—

AERIAL ENCOUNTERS

Because of weak air mana, the world did not have flying creatures larger than albatrosses until a few months ago, so any monsters that might accost the party while they're flying would be new arrivals from other planes.

If you want to sic a random encounter on your players as they travel, you could have a storm roll upon them, but instead of thunder created by lightning, the storm roars with an open portal to another plane. As the winds buffet the party's ship, they can glimpse a hole in the sky, and beyond it what appears to be a world being ground to pieces by invisible gear teeth. Then the portal can collapse, spitting something out at the last second that can attack the party.

DOCKING AND DEFENSE

The enchantments Pemberton granted the party's ship means that it can hover, and the PCs can simply jump overboard and *featherfall* to the ground. Getting back on board is as simple as a fly spell or *dimension door*. Landing the ship probably isn't feasible.

Smart players will realize that, with a near pitch-black sky, it's possible to fly the ship over even an inhabited area and have it not be detected (though sailing ships work better for this than ones with steam-powered propellers). Most people don't look skyward, and if the PCs are careful they have amazing stealth options.

If the party gets discovered by enemies, enemy militaries have enough troops to slowly damage the ship with sustained small arms fire, and each force has some preparations against new flying threats. Drakrans have immense cannons that can wheel upward if needed. Crisillyir has plenty of trained priests capable of calling down pillars of flame, and a few who can summon actual angels. Beran druids are learning to adopt winged forms, and reckless skylancers are practicing with deployable backpack gliders so they can teleport straight into the air and land on the deck of the party's vessel.

Vitus makes a show of letting the party offer evidence. But even should the party make a convincing enough argument to sway the maddened crowd, Vitus refuses to accept, and he uses himself as the focus of the *sacrament*, then kills himself.

This causes thousands of years of wards to crumble, foremost those around the volcano Enzyo Mons that looms over Alais Primos. It erupts, and the evil essence of every heretic and curse hurled into its maw takes the form of a titanic lava dragon, which sweeps toward Alais Primos. With little time, the party must decide whether to enter the library's vault and get the precious ritual, or try to fight the dragon and save hundreds of thousands of lives.

Rewards

The party begins this adventure at 19th level, and should reach 20th level at the end. From that point on, the party's motivations should be how they can change the world, not how they can get more power.

What Comes Next?

To help you manage your players' expectations, know that in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*, the party will receive a call for help from the Unseen Court in the Dreaming, which they can answer on their way to the Gyre.

When the spiraling cloud passes over Flint, if the party flies their ship to the peak of Cauldron Hill they'll be drawn to the edge of the Gyre, where the plane of Av and the mirrored worlds of the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate are being sheared free from each other. Ships carrying warriors of the Golden Legion of Egal the Shimmering pillage the planes, looking for treasure before the worlds are torn apart.

The party can try to evacuate some of the fey, but the Dreaming itself shatters as it crashes into the Gyre. By questing through dying planes they can form a link to the anima of those worlds, which will give them the option to restore the plane when they recreate the Axis Seal ritual. All the while the Voice of Rot coils tightly around Reida, the plane of time that defines the fate of the party's homeworld, and in order to spare the world from destruction they must free Reida from the fey titan's grasp.

That probably entails driving him into a black hole. So don't be afraid to go epic in this adventure; we've got crazier stuff still left ahead.

PROLOGUE: Fortress Risur

Good Talk

Social. Real-Time.

The party and their allies get a briefing on a half-dozen global doomsdays.

At the place of the party's choosing, Principal Minister Harkover Lee, RHC Chief Inspector Stover Delft, and various royal advisors detail the international threats. Give out Player's Handout—Risuri National Defense, which explains the threats they face.

Harkover highlights the report on each army's "heroic dangers," and clarifies that they're so named because they will kill people who are too heroic. He waxes nostalgic about Queen Hibiscus of the Argent Rampant, who provoked the First Yerasol War when she—and allies from a military company she had served in before taking the crown—teleported to a Danoran shipyard in the Yerasol Archipelago, intending to raze it and claim the island.

Instead, she discovered Danor's secret weapon—firedust—when she set off a lightning bolt in a ship's magazine. The story only came out a decade later after one of her allies was retrieved in a prisoner exchange. The queen had warded herself and her group with layers of defense against arrows and tiefling fire, and grew overconfident in her supposed invulnerability.

After a moment to ponder that, Harkover produces three calls for help.

Glaucia's Courier

Mysana del Salvatia, an orc *executore dola liberta* from Ber, is missing an arm below the elbow, which she had to amputate after a snakebite she suffered in the High Bayou. (She had magic to neutralize the first poison's bite, but there were a lot of snakes.) Though exhausted, she still proudly wears the broken chain badge of her office.

Mysana explains that she hiked from Ber and has been in occasional contact with **Glaucia Evora**, who is the highest rank *executore* left. Her information is limited because of the brevity of *sendings*, but Glaucia suspects the Obscurati conspiracy is active in the western city of Ursaliña, which has had no contact with the outside world for several weeks. Glaucia can provide more information if they meet her in Seobriga, at Palacio Justicia de los Huesos del Tirania Widoreva (the courthouse which holds the bones of the dead dragon tyrant Widoreva).

While the fate of a single city may not interest the party, Glaucia has told Mysana that proof of hostile Obscurati acts against Ber would let her pressure the Bruse to postpone or even cancel his army's invasion of Risur.



After the party saves the day in Danor (or possibly left Cherage to be consumed by a horrid godmind), Principal Minister Harkover Lee requests they return to Risur for some necessary governance, and to speak with some couriers who request succor. If nothing else, their ship likely needs repairs and restocking. This gives the PCs an opportunity to use the royal coffers to acquire new magic items (detailed in Adventure Nine), and to deal with personal plots in their homeland.

It's up to the players whether they'd rather return to Flint where they likely have the most allies, or to Slate, the official capital of Risur. In either case, time is short, since four nations are preparing to invade. Magic aids any repairs the ship needs, and it becomes the work of half the city to get the monarch and his or her allies what they need.

As soon as the party has had a chance to sleep and prepare for a new day, Harkover can arrange for a meeting of allies and supplicants. This is at least two or three days after the Forward Symposium in Cherage was attacked by the godmind.



The Titan Box

Harkover then brings out a mithral lockbox of sturdy design, big enough to hold a few books. Ornate carvings depict the fey titans of Risur. (The box belonged to the Risuri ambassador to Drakr, and technically had already been on Risuri soil since the Great Eclipse, which was enough of a connection for Heid to cheat a bit and teleport it back to its homeland.) Harkover explains that he set up teleportation interdiction to protect the party, and this item arrived just this morning. It contains the following items:

- ♦ A letter from Vlendam Heid (Player's Handout—Letter from the End of the World), begging for aid.
- ♦ A map of the city of Bhadrhyzhavdud and its surroundings (Player's Map—Bhadrhyzhavdud).
- ♦ A brochure for a museum exhibit and a holiday tour of the history of the Lost Riders (Player's Handout—Museum Brochure).

A wood carving on the tower's original drawbridge is depicted in the brochure. It shows five warriors on rampant steeds, with some sort of knot pattern in the background. Each rider's head is turned upward as if to look at something, but that piece of the carving is rotted away.

A Knowledge (history) check (DC 25) reminds a PC that old texts contain illuminations of that door, and the top was a serpent's head. A Knowledge (nature) check (DC 25) recognizes that the same style of knot is used in depictions of the Voice of Rot in Risuri art. A Knowledge (religion) check (DC 25) recalls that the five Lost Riders were said to have offered souls of the defeated to their patron, known as Speaker of Snow, Heart of Black Ice, and the Warden of the Bleak Gate, who it is said had an eye torn out by an ancient hero.

A Favor That is Too Great to Ask

Finally, Harkover admits a petitioner—**Morgan Cippiano**, head of the Family crime syndicate's operations in Flint. He says the first ships since the starfall have begun to reach Risur from Crisillyir, and they bring stories of madness in the land his forefathers came from. High priests and those of renowned piety are being attacked by confused mobs, and there is talk of putting the gods themselves on trial. In an eerie omen, one of his neighbors, fervently devoted to the goddess of night, simply fell dead a few hours ago. His holy symbol had turned to ash.

In the past, Morgan says, he's made deals with the party—helping them with some issue if they give him leeway in his business affairs. Today, he kneels with humility and removes his fishhook necklace—symbol of the Clergy. He has family who are dying in Crisillyir, and he's going to return to save them if he can. He has nothing to offer the party, but he also knows no one else who might be able to help as they can.

Quietly, Harkover Lee will remind the monarch PC that they'll need the ritual of the Axis Seal, which as best they can determine is being kept in the Grand Librarian in Alais Primos.

Other Affairs

After this adventure, the party won't have any more chances to deal with personal plotlines. Once they go to the Gyre and return, events will reach a climax very quickly. For narrative closure, we suggest you weave any ongoing storylines personal to the PCs into this adventure (or find a creative way to tie them to the dying worlds of the Gyre).

At this point, it's up to the party to decide what to pursue. Use the following acts as guidelines for stories personalized for them.

MORGAN CIPPIANO



Morgan Cippiano heads the local branch of the Family crime syndicate, based out of Crisillyir. Indeed, he's a devout Clericist, but has to act without guidance from the hierarchs now that communication is cut off. Though gruff-voiced and cocky, Morgan has an unusual fascination with fashion. He rejects trends, but has a good eye for classical styles that people of any culture can appreciate. He hopes someday to be seen as a father figure to his community, but isn't above ordering some throats slit to keep the right people safe.

MEANWHILE... AROUND THE WORLD

In addition to the briefings the PCs receive from their allies and advisors, the newspapers are running the following stories.

War! As news spreads of imminent invasions from the rest of the world, the people of Risur stand stalwart, and many are eager to volunteer for military service to defend their homeland. Fearful citizens are glad to have a concrete threat to prepare against, since so far there seems to be no solution to the strange dark skies.

What is It? Though the shipping lanes have been opened since Risur's monarch defeated She Who Writhes, sailors have sighted strange new leviathans, their skin slick and red as if with blood. Were these creatures always here and merely held at bay by the fey titan, or did they arrive after the stars fell from the skies? So far no one has reported any attacks by these bloody beasts.

Good. Clericists and adherents of the Old Faith are meeting in Dawn Square each day this month to debate the nature of goodness, and to discuss ways to increase overall prosperity in this dark time. Organizers have asked both Flint police and the Dockers Guild to volunteer watchmen with a mission to prevent hiveminds from forming. Local entrepreneur Morgan Cippiano lamented that there was so much will to effect change, but the dangers of hiveminds forces them to act slowly.

Four. Ambassadors from Ber, Crisillyir, Danor, and Drakr have all lodged formal declarations of war against Risur. However Methan duNadria, head of the Danoran consulate in Flint, states that the Danoran people are not committed to the invasion. Indeed, they feel a debt of obligation to the Risuri monarch and those allies who managed to slay a titanic hivemind that threatened their capital city of Cherage.

Absolutely Nothing. Asher Henton, Distinguished Professor of Otherworldly Physics at Kitham University in Shale has completed a detailed survey of the dark sky in search of new stars. What lies out there? "Absolutely nothing," he says, aside from a handful of readily visible planets and the swirling vortex that has been dubbed The Gyre. And what is the Gyre? Henton refused to comment until he has a clearer understanding, though he ominously stated that it comes more into focus every day.



TIMELINES

From the day the adventure starts, it will take about four weeks for Risur to fall to the invaders, barring PC involvement. Meanwhile, the threats presented in the following three acts progress even if the party isn't present. If in adventure ten the party somehow managed to hold Axis Island against the Danoran assault, that buys Risur an extra four weeks. Likewise, effective spying or politicking at the Forward Symposium could get them a spare week or two. A compiled timeline is provided in Appendix C (page 311).

NEVERMIND QUEEN HIBISCUS

If your party wants to go fight a war—four or five high-level PCs versus armies—there are too many variables for us to fit them into an adventure. Consider that in the real world, militaries have been able to deal with tank divisions, squadrons of fighter jets, and fleets of destroyers by knowing what to expect and preparing countermeasures.

The other armies can have high-level characters of their own (but they probably cap out at level 15). Ignore the rules a bit, and you can justify strange battlefield defenses produced by the interaction of bardic music and a thousand soldiers singing along. Crisillyiri war bells have a tradition of hedging out teleportation, and could be tuned to thwart various PC tricks. Don't forget, the other side has diviners too who can predict what threats are out there.

If the PCs turn invisible, fly, then teleport in with the intention of raining death from above, a teleportation beacon could shunt them into a wagon loaded with iron maidens that automatically begin dispelling the party's magic. Once they escape from that (not if), they discover the army's banner redirects hostile magic cast from more than fifty feet away, and projects an aura that reveals invisibility, and it's guarded by mages poised to turn back any dispel attempts. Then there are the hundreds of warriors with muskets or rifles, bound outsiders, and a variety of amateur wizards who are just smart enough to point a *wand of magic missiles* and swarm whichever target looks like he can't cast *shield*.

Now, disrupting supply lines, killing a few hundred soldiers off on their own, aiding their own army in a major engagement? Sure, that works. But they aren't invincible enough to take on tens of thousands of soldiers by themselves. That'll have to wait until Adventure Thirteen.



ACT ONE: Shackled Thoughts

The Gidim have implanted a leviathan under the Beran city of Ursaliña, and Gidim influenced police have sealed off the city so no one will discover it. As the leviathan consumes psychic energy from this once-festive city, it begins to sprout into a feeding tendril for the Gidim homeworld.

WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?

Ursaliña lies on the opposite side of Ber from the capital Seobriga, but the party will likely still reach out to the Beran government for help, or at the very least to parlay saving Ursaliña into the Beran military halting its invasion of Risur.

In Adventure Six, *Revelations from the Mouth of a Madman*, the party probably saved Bruse Shantus from Benedict Pemberton's coup. But Shantus might have died, in which case the most likely successor would be Cavallo de Guerra, an orcish warlord with strong naval forces loyal to him. Either man will feel some sense of obligation to the party, but also either would have fallen under the sway of the new nature of the world, and will be loyal to the Obscurati.

Whoever is ruler of Ber, he isn't thrilled to be making an enemy of the party, and if the PCs unshackle Ursaliña, they'll be able to convince their people that Risur is a potential ally. Shantus is mostly paying lip service, as his main concern is living comfortably, and a war threatens that. Cavallo's family has deep-rooted disdain for the Cadagyr family that governs Ursaliña, but he's a strong believer in the ideals of Ber, and won't leave his fellows under psychic dominion.

SPYMASTER EL EXTRAÑO

What does Ber's kobold spymaster know of events in Ursaliña? Very little so far. He's working on sneaking in a mage who can suppress the city's teleportation beacon to let agents escape the city, but that won't happen fast enough.

Time for a Savage Beating

Action. Tactical. Level 18.

Glaucia Evora comes out of hiding to meet the PCs, giving Ob agents a window to assassinate her.

If the party seeks Glaucia out, her *executore* messenger will *send* and relay that she wishes to meet in Seobriga, at Palacio Justicia de los Huesos del Tirania Widoreva (the courthouse which holds the bones of the dead dragon tyrant Widoreva). For the past few weeks Glaucia has been keeping a low profile, but she comes out of hiding to meet the PCs. At a pre-arranged time she will wait in front of the massive draconic skeleton that fills the courtroom.

She has a spell of *true seeing* active, and is suspicious of duplicants and other duplicity.

"Let us be brief. Here in Ber we thrash slavers, but most of the nation is blind to their new chains. I am not blind, and so enemies seek me. I made a blunder as I came to meet you." She smiles, all canines. "Some of them will be arriving soon. You wouldn't let me come to harm, would you?"

Indeed, within two minutes an Obscurati assassination squad arrives, easy pickings for the party. Glaucia nonchalantly keeps talking up to and even through any fight that ensues.

"Executore Salome Nieves is one of my enforcers. Loyal, and a foolish novice. But I am forced to work with who I have left. She's the second woman I sent to Ursaliña. The first reported an ambush on the road outside the city by 'tiny pink dragons' that killed her porter. She sounded addled, and never contacted me again.

"Salome managed to enter the city and *send* to me once. 'City unusually docile. Perfectly polite, but sad bearing. Feigned joviality. Except merchant Flida. Says she saw something glowing, flying over city days after stars fell.'

"I sent her with two *sending* scrolls because she couldn't cast it herself. As I said, she's a novice. We had an Executores Lodge in Ursaliña, but who knows what's actually there? Not a single other word has come out of that city in weeks. The Bruse only cares because he cannot launch attacks on your west coast without this port. But if our friendly new world rulers are harming the people of Ursaliña, I could convince him to stop his invasion. Risur has, after all, been a great ally this past year."

Around that point, the Obscurati assassination squad arrives. They are led by Obscurati Ambassador Shuman Larkins, a formerly-Risuri member of the ghost council who has found his magic empowered since the Axis Seal ritual. In an effable way, his presence reflects the will of the Obscurati and all those loyal to him, making him far more powerful than he would be alone.

Assassination Squad

- + 1 Empowered Ghost Councilor
- + 4 Great Eclipse Killers



**Shuman Larkins, Empowered Ghost Councilor**

CR 16

Male human ghost wizard 15

LE Medium undead (human, incorporeal)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +22**Defense****AC** 15, touch 15, flat-footed 14 (+4 deflection, +1 Dex)**hp** 140 (15d8+75)**Fort** +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, incorporeal, rejuvenation;**Immune** undead traits**Offense****Speed** fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Melee** corrupting touch +10 (16d6; DC 21)**Special Attacks** malevolence, telekinesis**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 15th; concentration +19)8th—*greater prying eyes*, *orb of the void*^{UM} (DC 24)7th—*finger of death* (DC 23), *greater arcane sight*, *power word blind*6th—*circle of death* (DC 22), *globe of invulnerability*, *unwilling shield*^{APG} (DC 22), *veil*5th—*quicken magic missile* x2, *sending*, *suffocation* (DC 21), *telepathic bond*4th—*bestow curse* (DC 20), *communal protection from energy*^{UC}, *fear* (DC 20),*greater invisibility*, *screaming*3rd—*dispel magic* x3, *ray of exhaustion* (DC 19), *vampiric touch* x22nd—*locate object* x2, *see invisibility*, *steal voice* x3 (DC 18)1st—*magic missile* x5, *ray of enfeeblement*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *message***Statistics****Str** —, **Dex** 12, **Con** —, **Int** 19, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 18**Base Atk** +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 22**Feats** Alertness, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Persuasive, Quicken Spell, Quicken Spell-Like Ability, Spell Focus (necromancy), Toughness**Skills** Bluff +17, Diplomacy +21, Fly +9, Intimidate +21, Knowledge (arcana) +17,

Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (planes) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17,

Perception +22, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +22

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Primordial**Special Abilities**

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of its incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, the ghost inflicts 15d6 damage. This damage is not negative energy—it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A Fortitude save (DC 21) halves the damage inflicted.

Malevolence (Su) Once per round, the ghost can merge its body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (CL 15th), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the ghost must be adjacent to the target. The target can resist the attack with a successful Will save (DC 21). A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours.

Quicken Telekinesis (Su) The ghost can use *telekinesis* as a standard action once every 1d4 rounds (CL 15th). Three times per day he can do it as a swift action.

Great Eclipse Killer

CR 13

Male shadow-touched human slayer 12/shadowdancer 2

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +17**Defense****AC** 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +4 Dex, +4 shield)**hp** 138 (12d10+2d8+56)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +12, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** evasion, uncanny dodge**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** eclipse claw +18/+13/+8 (1d8+2+1d6 negative energy)**Ranged** +2 *human bane hand crossbow* +19/+14/+9 (1d4+2/19-20)

Special Attacks slayer talents (assassinate [DC 17], fast stealth, hunter's surprise, lasting poison, poison use, swift poison), sneak attack +4d6, studied target (+3, 3 targets, swift action)

Statistics**Str** 15, **Dex** 18, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 29

Feats Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (hand crossbow), Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (eclipse claw)

Skills Acrobatics +21, Bluff +16, Climb +19, Intimidate +16, Perception +17, Perform (dance) +4, Sleight of Hand +19, Stealth +27, Survival +17

Languages Common, Primordial**SQ** hide in plain sight, shadow man, stalker, swift tracker, track +6

Combat Gear ; **Other Gear** +2 *human bane hand crossbow*, 20 bolts, +3 *studded leather*, +3 *light steel shield*

Eclipse Claw (Su) One of a Great Eclipse Killer's arms has been transformed into a hideous claw. The claw acts as a natural weapon and deals an additional 1d6 points of negative energy damage on a successful strike. Once per round as a free action, a Great Eclipse Killer may extend his reach with the appendage to 15 ft. and attack with the claw.

Shadow Man (Su) A Great Eclipse Killer takes damage from positive energy and heals from negative energy damage as though he were undead. He is also affected by abilities that affect undead. As a move action, he may become an insubstantial mass of shadows. During this time, he is considered to be incorporeal, but cannot initiate any attack actions. He can only maintain his shadowy state for up to 5 minutes per day, though he may space these out into smaller groupings (effectively 50 rounds worth). Shifting back to corporeal form is a move action. If a Great Eclipse Killer is targeted by positive energy while in this state, he immediately shifts back to corporeal form and is dazed for one round.



Glaucia Evora CR 14

Female gnoll cleric 15

LG Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +13**Defense****AC** 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+1 natural)**hp** 129 (17d8+49)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +9, **Will** +19**Resist** Aura of protection (+2 deflection to AC, resist 10 against all energy types, 15 rounds/day), enforcer (see below)**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +5 *merciful holy quarterstaff* +16/+11 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 nonlethal plus 2d6 against evil)**Special Attacks** channel positive energy 7/day (8d6, DC 19)**Domain Spell-like Abilities** (CL 15th, concentration +18)6/day—*resistant touch* (+2)At will—*aura of protection* (15 rounds/day), *freedom's call* (15 rounds/day), *liberation* (15 rounds/day)**Cleric Spells Prepared** (CL 15th; concentration +18)8th—*destruction* (DC 22), *shield of law*7th—*circle of clarity*^{UM}, *greater restoration*, *repulsion*6th—*blade barrier*, *greater dispel magic*, *harm*, *heal*5th—*break enchantment*, *flame strike*, *screaming*, *true seeing* x24th—*discern lies* (DC 18), *freedom of movement*, *restoration*, *sending* x23rd—*dispel magic* (2), *invisibility purge*, *magic circle against evil*, *protection from energy*2nd—*enthral* (DC 16), *shield other*, *silence* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*, *zone of truth* (DC 16)1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 14), *forbid action* (DC 15), *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*, *remove fear***Domains** Liberation, Protection**Statistics**

Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 18, Cha 13

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 21**Feats** Alertness, Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Extra Channel, Iron Will, Selective Channel, Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Skill Focus (Stealth)**Skills** Sense Motive +22, Stealth +11**Languages** Common, Gnoll, Giant, Orc**SQ** aura**Other Gear** +5 holy merciful quarterstaff**Enforcer (Su)** Attacking an *executore* is against the law, and crime demands a reciprocal punishment. Whenever a creature attacks Glaucia for the first time each day, it is affected by *power word stun*.**Tactics**

Shuman's *greater prying eyes* show up (well, they're invisible) at the end of Glaucia's explanation, and the four great eclipse killers slide in stealthily a minute later (Perception DC 37 to detect as they hide in plain sight).

Shuman will already have active *greater arcane sight*, *telepathic bond*, and *communal protection from energy* against an energy type the Obscurati are aware the party uses. Additionally, just before he enters he casts *unwilling shield* on a burly young man he keeps around for this contingency. The man's drugged and obedient, and can soak up to 40 damage for Shuman.



A female gnoll from the unincorporated southern tribes, Glaucia joined Executores dola Liberta fifteen years ago after gnolls in the Cult of the Steel Lord attacked her village and tried to kidnap the children to convert them. Her mate died in the fighting, and she was cornered with her pups. When the leader of the raid party reached out for her youngest son, Glaucia stabbed the boy in his heart and vowed that her family would die before it would be made slaves. As the raid leader tried to decide what to do, she placed the knife to her next child's throat. The raiders let her family go with the justification that she would tell of the cult's might.

Instead, she trained herself and her surviving children to defend themselves. She pledged herself to the Executores and was bestowed with divine power. Among the notoriously hierarchy-adverse sisterhood of the Executores, Glaucia is one of the most respected, famous for her piercing blue eyes and her lack of sympathy for those let themselves be controlled.

Shuman floats into the courtroom with a threat: surrender to him, or else even if they defeat him, he will rejuvenate in a few days and punish the populace of Seobriga for Glaucia's insolence. This is an idle boast, because he would rejuvenate with the core of the ghost council, a thousand miles away.

If he thinks the party won't oblige, Shuman telepathically orders his allies to strike. The Great Eclipse Killers—Berans who volunteered to be transmogrified into darkness—fight in pairs, each pair targeting a single PC, whom they will have studied carefully for potential assassination. Though they originally thought they were here for Glaucia, the PCs are a more tempting target.

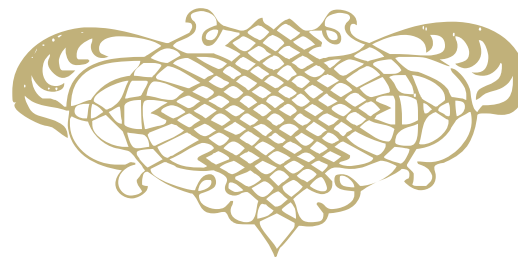
In a fight, Shuman creates an *orb of the void* that he sweeps through the party, then fires off the big guns to blind or or simply kill PCs. He picks one enemy as a primary target and focuses his quickened magic missiles and quickened telekinesis at them, flinging them into his void orb if possible.

For her part, Glaucia casts *destruction* on one killer, then fearlessly enters melee beside the PCs.

Aftermath

A defeated Shuman lingers as his form dissolves, giving the party a chance to talk. He displays an emotion rare for the undead—honest fear. He says that Nicodemus is furious at his repeated setbacks, and he dreads the mastermind's rage for failing to thwart the party.

As for Ursaliña, Shuman is sincerely unaware of any special Obscurati operations there, though now he'll have to mention the oddity to his superiors once he reaches the ghost council.





Ursaliñā, the City of Bears

Exploration. Montage.

People of Ursaliñā maintain an eerily friendly façade and refuse to admit anything is wrong in case something is watching them.

Named after its traditional bear fights, Ursaliñā lies along the rocky northwestern coast of Ber, where the sea meets the Anthras Mountains. Those peaks once made it a prize domain for the dragon tyrants, and like every Beran city their influence persists in the architecture. The city rises and falls in steep terraces on four main hills, each crowned by a major civic building. Poorer neighborhoods weave through the low 'troughs' between hills, and imposing bridges connect the terraces in labyrinthine combinations.

Fanciful fountains thread mountain streams along the terraces and bridges, and fierce gusts of winds in the troughs kick up mist that cools the cramped streets and alleys. The hills fall sharply near the coast, where ornately-carved staircases link the harbor to the different levels of the city.

Similar areas of steep hills and valleys dot the landscape around Ursaliñā, and for centuries servants of the dragon tyrants bred and domesticated megafauna in these natural paddocks. Countless caves provided lairs for the famed local dire bears, allowing the predators to hide and survive despite fervent attempts to exterminate them.

Today, two centuries since the dragon tyrants fell, Ursaliñā proudly claims a two-headed dire bear as the city sigil. Many of the civic buildings have been restored to their original splendor, straddling a line between glorifying a brutal past and patriotism for what the Beran people managed to build.

The population is majority orc, with minotaurs and half-giants the next most common races.

Coming and Going

Each of the hill-tops is ringed with a defensive curtain wall with only a handful of gates, all well-guarded and requiring tolls unless a traveler carries a city passport (which costs 5gp per year). Boards at each gate post the latest news (see Player's Handout: Ursaliñā News). The low-lying areas are effectively undefended, though, and normally people could come and go as they please. Practically everyone must pass through the Troughs first before reaching the hills.

These days, though, the Gidim have established a perimeter around the city. Several rings of cerebral mesh run through every road and trail into the city, allowing the leviathan to sense creatures as they cross it. Anyone spotted trying to leave the city is deterred first by city police on the outskirts, and those who will not turn back are set upon by Gidim flying horrors (see Appendix A: Combat Catalogue).

Arrival

Should the party fly in on an airship, as long as they stay out of range of the locals' darkvision they should remain unseen. If the PCs make a big show of arriving, see Breakin' the Law (page 84).

Like most large cities, Ursaliñā has a teleportation beacon. Those who teleport more than a mile at a time and aim anywhere within three miles of the city are shunted to just outside a customs station in the western docks. However, the Gidim don't want people sneaking out, and so have also set up a planar net using the power of the cerebral mesh to hedge the city in. Any teleportation effect used within the city that would go more than a mile shunts back to the same customs station.

Cadagyr Estate

Northern District

Atop the northern hill of the city, broad gardens overflowing with aromatic flowers ring the manor house of Lord Winslow Cadagyr, orc governor of Ursaliñā and the surrounding state. Wealthy Ursaliñāns live here, with access to the freshest water from the mountains, and the most distance from the fish stench of the docks. Streets teem with fountains and statues of statuesque orcish women.





The flowers here slightly mask the cloying scent of Gidim cerebral mesh. Lord Cadagyr and most of the other heads of household in this district have been deluded by psychic memory modification into becoming loyal servants of the Gidim. However the lord's son **Dieter Cadagyr** lives in his own house in the Triunfo Vida district, and has not been affected.

One eyesore in the district is the relatively new **Executores Lodge**, an unadorned, imposing cube of steel-gray granite, built thirty years ago as a reminder to the wealthy not to abuse their power. Normally it houses a detachment of a dozen executores and their house staff, and its only two public spaces are a training field where onlookers can gawk at women practicing brutal combat, and the stocks, which are seldom occupied.

By the time the party arrives, the lodge is empty and locked, with all the local executores taken to the psychovivisection chamber of the Gidim leviathan. Salome Nieves remains in hiding, though some of her belongings still sit unmolested in a bedroom in the lodge; a half hour search turns up the second *sending* scroll Glaucia mentioned.

An oculus (see Appendix A: Combat Catalogue) hovers over the lodge at all times, softly hissing and moaning as it watches.

Jaula de Oso

Southern District

Colloquially known as the Jaula or Cage, this arena's long and vicious history put Ursaliña on the map. Gladiatorial games were held within the towering edifice for centuries, but since the unification of Ber the site has been limited to animal bouts, concerts, and the occasional formal duel.

Constructed of the same granite that coats the city in steel gray, Jaula de Oso consists of three upper levels for spectators and a lower level for combatants and administrative offices. A small villa nearby is the home of Arena Master **Pili Roque**. Maestra Roque is currently fuming because her Cage has been shut down for a week due to 'safety inspections.' In truth, the Gidim have been experimenting on the bears kenneled beneath the arena, crafting warbeasts. Maestra Roque and a pair of staff still come and go to feed and tend to the beasts, but Gidim psionics cause them to ignore the animals' deformities and the extraplanar beings operating around them.



TIMELINE OF URSALIÑA

These days are relative to whenever the adventure starts, since normal calendars no longer seem to apply.

- **Day 1+:** Every day a few people go missing, their consciousness consumed to nourishing the feeding tentacle being grown in the Gidim leviathan. Lord Winslow Cadagyr mandates a curfew, orders the prisons opened, and has prisoners assigned as guards for all city gates to prevent anyone from exiting.
- **Day 5:** A protest outside Cadagyr Estate about missing people is brutally suppressed by the police. Lord Winslow Cadagyr threatens arrest of any shopkeeper who does not keep normal hours.
- **Day 10:** The streets are noticeably emptier than usual, though some are tempted out by the new bloodsports at the Jaula de Oso. People hear strange beasts during curfew.
- **Day 15:** Lord Cadagyr orders mandatory parades each day to force high spirits, but otherwise people almost never leave their houses.
- **Day 19:** Lord Cadagyr's son Dieter loads a backpack with potions of invisibility and attempts to sneak into the Jaula. He is captured and brought to the leviathan's psychovivisection chamber, then converted into a shock trooper.
- **Day 20:** Lord Cadagyr makes attendance of the daily bloodsport in Jaula de Oso mandatory. Executore Salome Nieves begins to rally marines at the city's docks.
- **Day 22:** Marines storm Cadagyr Estate, kill several Gidim, but then are overrun by Gidim warbeasts.
- **Day 23:** Sporadic looting begins and fires sprout, since most homes are empty. The Gidim openly unleash warbeasts in the streets to keep people from fleeing.
- **Day 24:** Gidim infiltrators go door to door, abducting children as final psychic sustenance for the tentacle.
- **Day 25:** The tentacle emerges, and nearly every thinking creature within 30 miles is slain. Thousands more Gidim begin to stream into this world, and they ride warbeasts toward Reo Pedresco.

DIVINATIONS AND GIDIM DEFENSES

The Jaula de Oso, Triunfo Vida, and nearly the entire northern district of Ursaliña are criss-crossed with threads of *cerebral mesh*, a Gidim thought-crafted material that enhances psychic abilities, provides structural support, and prevent detection through mental interference. Areas with the mesh exude a cloying floral scent, which conjures up nostalgic memories of some family gathering that's impossible to quite recall.

Each hour a character is in an area with cerebral mesh (or if a character specifically searches an area), have him or her make a Perception check (DC 30) to notice strands stretching along the ground and walls, like a cross between spider silk and ivy.

The mesh functions like lead for detection spells blocked by that material. Other divinations like scrying aimed at the area covered by mesh produce a psychically projected memory of reality when nothing suspicious was happening. The caster of the divination must make a Will save (DC 25) or receive a false, innocuous result.

Gidim are attuned with the material, and creatures standing within five feet of any of the mesh suffer a -4 penalty to Will saves against Gidim abilities. Additionally, as a standard action any Gidim can have up to a thirty foot length of mesh produce a psychic wall of repellant ideas. Any thinking creature that attempts to enter or pass through the wall takes 20 damage (Will DC 20 half). The wall lasts for five minutes, or until the Gidim who created it dismisses it or falls unconscious.

STRAY THOUGHTS

Finally, any magic that communicates or projects thoughts over a distance might be detected by the Gidim. *Sending* and *detect thoughts*, for instance, will cause the Gidim to send out an elite police squad (page 85), with orders to arrest whoever used the magic.



An oculus hovers in or near the arena, but the building is too large for it to watch all at once, so it flies a slow circuit. The creature's sussurus is drowned out by a large sizzling brazier within the arena, whose flame has been kept alive for two centuries. The only people allowed into the arena aside from Roque and her aids are those who deliver shipments of wood and oil to keep the fire burning.

This district also is home to many prosperous restaurants that serve dishes thick with beans and cheeses, the best of which have high balconies with grand vistas.

Mercado Delicias

Western District

The primary market for Ursaliña, this plaza sprawls across nearly the entire top of the city's western hill. A dizzying array of foodstuffs can be found, from fresh fish hauled in from the ocean, to all manner of game meats, to even stranger fare such as the megafauna that inhabit Ber's interior. City ordinances, however, prevent the operation of restaurants in this district—a concession to the business interests of the Jaula de Oso district.

In addition to food, the Mercado also holds goods imported from all over the world, as befitting a coastal trading town. Of interest to many weary travelers is the assortment of brothels, like the high-class Vela Roja or the more affordable Cristal Azul that is popular with sailors and fishers.

Two obelisks of black diorite, polished to a mirror finish and pierced through in regular intervals, flank the east and west sides of the wide paved plaza, once served as timekeeping devices for merchants by tracing the sun's path along floor mosaics. Now they're just reminders of daytime the world will never have again. Both obelisks predate the founding of the city, and Jaula de Oso's records indicate that the monuments existed well before the current arena did.

Gidim oculi only make occasional passes over this plaza. Instead the city police keep watch, and arrest or beat anyone who starts to question what's going on.

Triunfo Vida

Eastern District

The traveling minotaur bards of Ber are the first to hear of any rumors in the nation, and capable of delivering scathing rhetoric to inflict lasting damage to reputations in all social classes. The Triunfo Vida is the local branch of the loosely affiliated bardic colleges within Ber, and this edifice of bright blue stucco walls, adorned with white marble statuary and fluted columns holds some of the most lavish pageants and shows in its grounds.

Bards that study at the Triunfo often make their living through dance and acrobatic performances, and the patronage of the wealthy Lord Winslow Cadagyr is hotly contested among the students and staff. Or it was. Now the college is closed to visitors due to 'renovations,' and most of the former occupants have scattered to other parts of the district.

The most active site for entertainment now is the **Red Peacock Café**, a fine restaurant with adjoining art gallery and fine clothier shop. Local working class citizens dress nicely and come here on special occasions to

experience upscale life. All the staff are beautiful orc women in the finest fashion, or tiny goblins and kobolds who slink around practically unseen in drab hoods. At least one spy for El Extraño always works here.

Likewise, this district was home to Ursaliña's rudimentary industrial capacity, but with the city in lockdown these factories have run out of firegems for their furnaces. Like so many other cities, when things go bad the poor workers suffer first, protest first, and are punished first.

Dieter Cadagyr, son of the city's lord, keeps a house here. He often spends his evenings at the Red Peacock.

Resto del Pescador

Western Docks

The city docks are currently idle, and sailors tell tales of strange glowing albatrosses descending upon ships that attempted to leave the harbor. A contingent of two thousand marines on twenty frigates that were scheduled to sail up and assail the Risuri city of Shale are stuck in dock, and the soldiers get progressively rowdy as time goes on. Their orc commander, **Commodore Anjela Deinosa**, grits her tusks in frustration but still waits for orders from the Bruse that won't arrive.

New merchant vessels arrive until Day 10, after which rumors about the city deter further crews from coming here.

Just off the southwest docks and warehouses lies an expanse of lush green grass, dotted here and there with sprawling shade-providing trees. A popular destination for both the noon meal or to enjoy the cool breeze that wafts from the ocean, the Resto is a welcome break from the hustle and bustle of industry.

Many open celebrations are held at the city's public house, Casa dola Biches, and parades typically muster here then march through the city, weaving along the bridges between hilltop districts.

The Troughs

The low-lying areas between the high districts are crowded and dark. Executore Salome Nieves hides here, and travels without her badge of office to remain inconspicuous.

Cowed and suppressed by the city patrols, the populace runs about its daily business, knowing that people who act out of line disappear. It's become a quiet protest for people to sarcastically adopt repetitive speech patterns, especially when police are around. If standing out will get you arrested, then they'll just all say the exact same thing so no one stands out. Two of the most popular phrases are, "Come inside to shop and get out of that harsh sun," and "Fool's Day was even better than last year! Lord Cadagyr's patronage truly showed in the costumes. Such a variety of colors!"

From dawn to dusk, Ursaliña follows a regular schedule: merchants set up their booths, display their wares, and then close up promptly when the dim light of the Gyre sinks to the west. People are borderline brusque in their behavior, but in the presence of police they feign joviality. Most ignore the PCs even if directly addressed. A Sense Motive check (DC 25) reveals that people are affected by some sort of psychic effect similar to hiveminds, but more restrained.





SECRETS AND PARANOIA

Aside from a few people who managed to resist the Gidim's pervasive psychic presence, everyone in Ursaliña is affected by constant low-level enchantment magic, similar to *charm person* except that it produces an unwillingness to be curious, rather than friendship.

People don't want to talk about what's going on, but if the party picks a bystander and presses them, something horrifying occurs. The Gidim leviathan is constantly sensing its environment for interesting energies and emotions, and the sudden spike of panic from the bystander causes the leviathan to try to establish a psychic link with the poor Ursaliñan citizen the party picked.

His demeanor will shudder through wildly disparate emotions: eager, despairing, violent, revolted, and finally white-knuckle horror. He begs or screams at the party to stop asking him questions, but if they keep pressing he bends over backwards, he clutches his head, and then with a solid crack that the PCs can feel in their skin, his skull splits open and his brain explodes onto the ground in a bloody mess.

This only ever happens once. If the party continues to harass citizens, the leviathan is able to sense the party's activities and dispatches the city police.

SPIRIT OF THE CITY

The Urban Empath prestige class has powers that make discovering the Gidim fairly trivial, so this scenario should be a perfect one for that PC to shine. Perhaps play up the oddness a bit, include a few hallucinations courtesy of the cerebral mesh throughout the city, but ultimately Ursaliña will tell its tales.

What a Lovely Day

Social. Real-Time.

A handful of allies can be found in the city, trying to avoid detection by enemies they don't understand.

The party likely enters in the lowland Troughs and must then make their way to one of the hilltop districts. Before they go blundering in and getting discovered, a merchant named **Flida** will try to warn them.

Goblin Pickle Vendor

A few minutes after the party gets into the city, they're passing the stall of **Innwung**, a goblin pickle vendor, who sits grumpily atop his barrel of pickles, glaring out at the crowd. At the same time, a pair of orc police officers walk up and order him to open up for business.

Innwung mumbles that he's not going to play along anymore. The police ask him to repeat that, and the goblin yells out, "I'm not pretending everything is normal anymore! You should be looking for the people who are missing, not bothering me. No one gets any pickles until you fix this city!"

The police laugh, slug the goblin unconscious, and carry him away. They leave the barrel of pickles behind.

Flida's Finest

A thick faded blue canvas overhangs this booth, and piles of blankets, hand towels, rolls of unbleached rough-spun cotton, and other household linens form a wall of fabric. Behind the piles of goods, a lanky orc woman with a broad smile calls out, "Foreigners! You look like you've traveled a bit. Need any clothes mended, loves?"

She has stringy blond hair held in place by a kerchief decorated with rose patterns, and wears a well-tailored tunic and trousers. A pocketed apron holds a pair of small scissors, shears, a measuring stick, and a long length of twine knotted at intervals. Unlike basically everyone else in the city, Flida aggressively tries to get the party's attention. Should any PC acknowledge her, Flida gestures them closer, speaking in a hushed voice, "Let's get out of the sun. It's so bright today."

Am I the Only One Who Saw That?

Despite the dire situation, Flida is condescending because she expected help ages ago. She demands proper manners, and prods people in the chest with a measuring stick if they are rude.

Flida has previously met with Executore Nieves, and will tell the party as she told her that about a week after the stars fell from the sky many people spotted something large in the sky, glowing like maybe it had dozens of candles all over it. It was at least the size of a fishing boat, and after a few moments it simply disappeared. People talked about it for a few days, but then some of them started going missing, and those who asked questions were beaten and arrested. Now no one talks about it.

Then the Fool's Day celebration was canceled, and ever since then things have gotten steadily stranger and more dangerous. Flida had a customer in Cadagyr District—a housemaid for a wealthy house. Flida asked her to deliver a message to the Executores Lodge. She never saw her customer again, and it was weeks before an executore came by. The executore mentioned she was going to investigate the Jaula, but Flida never saw *her* again either.

Flida warns them not to get spotted by the city guards, who have a habit of arresting outsiders and taking them to the governor, Lord Cadagyr. Which reminds her of an odd rumor she heard of a masked vigilante. Apparently some police were accosting a young cripple girl who was out after curfew, and were about to arrest her, when a person in a mask swept in and killed the police. When another patrol arrived, their bodies were missing. Flida wonders if this might be Nieves, but the news she heard mentioned something about the bodies being cut apart, which doesn't sound like an executore. (It's actually Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, investigating on behalf of the Obscurati.)

Flida also mentions the factories shut down in Triunfo district because no raw supplies are coming in, and that the Lord's eldest son, Dieter Cadagyr, briefly made a ruckus about the odd goings-on—rumor was he got thrown off his father's estate. People say he's letting unemployed workers live in his own personal house.

Finally, she warns that the skies aren't empty. She sometimes hears things overhead—hissing and moaning, reminding her of her old grandmother's snores before she died. But she never sees anything.



Flida's Fate

A day after the party talks to her, unless they were particularly stealthy or they make a point to hide her, Flida vanishes. The police take her away, and she's fed to the bears in the Jaula. They might find her rose-patterned kerchief in a bear cage there.

Dieter at the Red Peacock

Should the party seek Dieter, the eldest son of Lord Winslow Cadagyr, they can likely find the twenty-something orc at the bar of the Red Peacock, putting on a show of being a rich dilettante. He wears a well-manicured beard and impeccable fashion, though he appears to have nibbled on the fingers of his calfskin gloves. He's quite the charming dandy, and drinks copiously.

Each night after the establishment closes, however, Dieter waits behind and meets with informants, spies, and the occasional factory worker who needs his help.

Dieter is convinced someone has mind-controlled his father, and he's trying to be inconspicuous so people don't come for him. A few days ago he made a public speech trying to rally support, but the police came and violently broke up the event. He went to confront his father, but was spooked, feeling like he was being watched all throughout the Cadagyr District. He fled to the Red Peacock, hoping for news from the outside world. It was there that Salome Nieves found him and warned him to be careful.

There's a rumor going around that the Jaula de Oso is going to have a big tournament. People say they've seen a few trouble makers arrested and dragged there, and Dieter wonders if his father will re-institute old blood sports. But even that doesn't make any sense, because Pili Roque—the arena master—would be buying beasts.

Other foul things are happening, but he's not sure how much is connected. He doesn't want to seem paranoid, but people talk of graves being robbed, fountains going dry for a few moments and voices coming out before the water restarts, and the police being brutally violent in pursuit of some masked vigilante who's vivisectioning criminals. He thought it might have been Salome, but she's more of a blunt instrument.

Dieter is wary of the party's help. He like most everyone else believed the Obscurati's claims that Risur was to blame for the Great Eclipse, but if they can change his mind he might be able to keep the fleet in Ursaliña's bay from invading.

BARDS' LAMENT

When the party enters the Red Peacock, an argument is ongoing between minotaur bard **Ganillo Ducera**, and half-giant bard **Tekla Sixeves**, over which of them gets to perform. Ganillo has a sonorous singing voice. Tekla plays a brisk guitar. But neither knows the other's music, and so their efforts to collaborate stumbled awkwardly. They bicker in the aftermath of a poorly received song about the end of the world.

If pressed, both complain that they've been locked out of the Triunfo Vida and can't get to their sheet music. A PC who makes a good enough impression (Diplomacy DC 20 to get them to cooperate, then Perform DC 30 to entertain as a trio, for instance) can convince the two to spill all they know about the Triunfo, including the Ancient ruins underground and how the night before they were kicked out everyone remembered having strange dreams about being stranded far from home.

The Hidden Enforcer

The executore Salome Nieves rents a back room in a cramped hillside house in the Troughs. Finding her shouldn't be hard with high-level magic, or the party can find Dieter, who knows a baker he can leave a message with. A few hours later a message reaches Dieter at the Red Peacock, agreeing to meet in a trash-filled gorge at the eastern edge of the city. There, near a burning pile of rancid refuse, they find Salome—tall, well-groomed, with short-cropped black hair and a physique built for smashing evil-doers with a staff.

She's grown paranoid and constantly glances skyward or hushes the party to listen for the hiss-groan of invisible observers. She says that she figured out 'they' don't like noxious fumes. She knew she was being followed one time, something floating above her, always watching, and for a while she tried hiding in tunnels. But she was only able to shake them when she fled through an open air alchemy market where strange smoke was always thick in the air.

She's also convinced that someone was able to listen to the *sending* she sent, because minutes after it officers came to arrest her. There was a fierce fight in the Executores Lodge, and after she and her sisters defeated the police she entreated them to flee, but they wouldn't. She dared not go back there.

She suspected the Obscurati, but she hasn't seen any of their agents, and elsewhere in Ber they acted openly. There are no hallmarks of Pemberton's duplicants—apparently those who act odd are still eating, which duplicants do not. She has detected no undead who might be possessing people. She doesn't know who these invaders are, but they have control of the Jaula, the Triunfo Vida, and Cadagyr's Estate. She suspects a stern thrashing with a stick won't deter them.

Breakin' the Law

Action. Tactical. Level 5 to 19.

Standing out and not blending in will cue up the guards, who will put you down.

Getting in trouble brings out differing levels of response from authorities. These groups are described below, and their stats are in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue.

If the party gets noticed at all by authorities—such as by random patrols or at the gate to a district—a Police Squad will ask to take them to Cadagyr Manor, where they'll need to remove their weapons to meet with the governor. See Cadagyr Estate, below.

If the party causes a commotion, gets spotted trespassing, or if any of the oculi or other Gidim have been killed, as soon as a patrol spots the PCs they'll try to blow trumpets to call for an Elite Police Squad. It typically takes three minutes for one to arrive, but stealthy parties might be able to hide.

If the party has breached any of the key facilities, the Gidim won't screw around. Any alarm from the police brings out a Warbeast Unit. An oculus and flying horrors arrive within a minute, almost invariably tracking the party unless they flee through stinking fumes. The rest of the squad arrives a minute later.

Talking Out

Small patrols can be intimidated or persuaded not to bother the PCs (Intimidate or Diplomacy DC 20), and simple lies (Bluff DC 15) are enough to make them decide not to harass the well-heeled foreigners.

Larger patrols require harder checks (+10 DC), and if the warbeasts come out, their accompanying police patrols are nearly impossible to deter (+20 DC).

Hostile Forces

Police squads pose practically no threat. Elite squads typically have a sergeant demand surrender. If the party doesn't oblige, a lawmage attempts to hold them, and if they resist the marksmen open fire while the sergeant bolsters with Ursaliña's peculiar brand of musical law enforcement.

Warbeast units typically engage when the oculus locates the party and creates psychic walls with the cerebral mesh in a bid to delay them. The flying horrors defend the oculus and prefer to remain incorporeal and evasive in order to buy time. Once the police squad arrives, they send the fleshwarped direbears in with orders to maul a single target, then lend focused musket fire and spells to try to down foes one by one. The lieutenant's bardic performance inspires even the gidim creatures, which thrive on the surging emotions of the poor humanoids.

Police Squad (CR 7)

- 4 Ursaliñan Riot Guards

Elite Police Squad (CR 10)

- 2 Ursaliñan Marksmen
- 1 Ursaliñan Lawmage
- 1 Ursaliñan Sergeant

Warbeast Unit (CR 19)

- 4 Ursaliñan Marksmen
- 2 Ursaliñan Lawmage
- 1 Ursaliñan Lieutenant
- 3 Fleshwarped Direbears
- 3 Gidim Flying Horrors
- 1 Gidim Oculus

Tyranny and Terror

If the PCs reveal themselves, Sijhen has Lord Cadagyr order the police to start rounding people up and drag them to the Jaula. As they do, they tell the populace to spread the news to 'the Risuris' that prisoners will be executed if they do not turn themselves in, unarmed and one at a time, to Lord Cadagyr.

The situation likely escalates very quickly thereafter, but if the party dithers, each day another hundred people are rounded up and executed. If the party removes Lord Cadagyr, instead Sijhen sends out spare shock troopers to simply cut swaths through the city.

Who Was That Masked Man?

Social. Real-Time.

Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen is doing mad science for the Obscurati.

We've dropped a few hints that might tempt PCs to go looking for the so-called 'masked vigilante'—a person who slew some police who were accosting a cripple girl, then cut up their bodies. There's also talk of grave-robbing. If the party tries to find this vigilante, he's made sure to hide from the Gidim, but an old-fashioned manhunt can easily locate a foreigner.

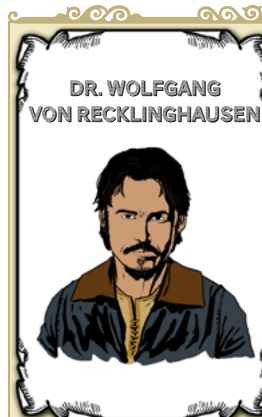
One possible lead would be alchemists mentioning an orc man who had a foreign accent and a very still face, who asked for suggestions about necromantic reagents that were available now that the Bleak Gate was gone. The man said he would come back, so the party could wait.

Alternately, they might find the cripple girl who was being harassed by the police. She now has a new, freshly-attached lower leg, recently exhumed and obviously too large for her body. If befriended, she can lead the party to a shack in the troughs which Wolfgang has turned into a laboratory.

Serendipitous Meeting

It's hard to script a meeting by happenstance with high-level PCs, who might come and go via teleportation, or by dropping in from an airship, or flying in as the wind itself. But at some point, try to have the party cross paths with Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen, ideally after they've investigated Cadagyr Estate or the Jaula and have already fought the Gidim or one of their creations.

A short orc swoops in, wearing a hood, wielding a rapier in one hand and some strange arcanoscientific device that crackles with electricity in the other. He can point up at the air and fire it, and it swerves through the air, drawn to an invisible creature—an oculus or flying horror, perhaps. It strikes and the creature becomes visible, then quickly withdraws. This delights the good doctor, who pulls off the orc face he's been wearing as a mask. A spool mechanism on the device begins to rewind itself, and it pulls back a chunk of something semi-tangible, being constantly zapped with electricity. Wolfgang smiles, for he has been desperately trying to get a sample of these invaders' bodies.



A distinguished, intelligent, and poised gentleman in his late 30s, Dr. von Recklinghausen speaks elegantly with a hard-to-place accent. He appears fairly innocuous, though his sharply-groomed goatee and the rapier at his hip give him a hint of menace.

After years of intense study and experimentation, with his marriage in tatters and his fortune nearly depleted, Wolfgang finally achieved his goal of combining medical knowledge with sorcery in order to restore a corpse to life. His creation drove him from his home, and Wolfgang remained in hiding for years. Eventually his 'son' was captured by the Obscurati, who tracked him down and recruited him for his excellent skills in magical necropsy.



CSI: URSALIÑA

In the unlikely event the party looks into the city morgues, they can find the bodies of five police officers who were viciously cut apart, their bodies dumped in an alley. Close examination (Heal DC 15) reveals that their bodies were cut apart after death, and that the killing blows were a few surgically-precise strikes that slit arteries or punctured lungs.

Each of the bodies had its organs removed and opened, and further incisions were made all across the bodies. One guard, an orc, had his entire face—from brow to tusked jaw—sawed off. The lead sergeant of the patrol had a peculiarly deep incision into the base of his neck. The skin is heavily torn and disturbed, as if someone had stuck fingers in the hole to probe it. A faint magic aura of abjuration lingers there.

Dr. von Recklinghausen used the orc's face (which he has kept alive) as a mask to let him travel inconspicuously. From the sergeant's neck he removed an *oculus prism* (see page 254), which makes him invisible to the Gidim warbeasts.

OTHER OBSCURATI

If your players are enjoying the sneaking about in Ursaliña, you might give them another factor to worry about: Obscurati politicians who arrive from Reo Pedresco, who are trying to rally the populace to their side. They might be a red herring to distract the party from the Gidim, potential allies against the invaders, or you might showcase the horror by having even the Ob panic when they realize they can't get out of the city.

Lies of Omission

When it's safe to talk, Wolfgang asks how the party has been doing. He explains—quite convincingly (Sense Motive DC 35 to notice that he's not being entirely truthful)—that he heard of trouble in Ursaliña and came to help. He managed to figure out the threats were psychic beings, and that they had police working for them, which suggested some way those police could be marked as safe.

He points out an incision he has made in the base of his neck, where he implanted an *oculus prism*. He says it makes the creatures ignore him. He has been studying the floating gas sacs for a while now—difficult, since they're invisible—but now that he has a sample of one's flesh he might be able to find a weakness.

Of course, the party's own experience in Adventure Three and the knowledge they got at the Ziggurat of Apet is quite sufficient for dealing with the Gidim. Wolfgang cannot really help here, though he's willing to remove his *oculus prism* and give it to a PC. It will keep the creatures from noticing that PC at first, but they'll still retaliate if attacked.

The Truth

Wolfgang has joined the Obscurati, and that conspiracy knew through copious divinations that this city would be where the Gidim would return. The doctor's job is to figure out how the Gidim work, and more importantly how their homeworld works. He won't be able to complete his mission until he gets a look at the leviathan, but he'll wait to do that until after the party leaves.

Dr. von Recklinghausen is in no way hostile to the party, and if he can help them figure out how to save the city without him personally having to get into battle, he'll oblige. But he'll report all he learns to the conspiracy, and eventually his research will give Nicodemus a way to exploit the Gidim's psychic nature to create stable psychic gestalts to let the Obscurati control the public without the threat of hiveminds. But that's an issue for Adventure Thirteen.

Wolfgang's Ob ring is his original wedding band, which he wears in memory of his bride who died at the hands of his creation Andrei. The inscription on the inside morbidly reads *One Bride Gone*.

If the party finds him out, Wolfgang explains that all his mission consists of is to find out how to fight the Gidim. He's privy to no secrets the party doesn't already know. He knows the identity of a few Ob representatives throughout Ber, but they operate in the open now.

Cadagyr Estate

Social/Action. Real-Time. Level 20.

City police take the party to the mind-controlled governor of Ursaliña if they are detected.

Gidim infiltrators operate in Lord Winslow Cadagyr's estate, so it's likely they will identify the party from Sijhen's description if they come here. It's possible the party might come here without attracting attention, though.

Cadagyr's estate has a wide, poorly-guarded wall painted with ornate images of epic heroes. Within, gardens lead up to a three-story manor with various satellite buildings. The garden is thick with flowers, slightly withered due to the lack of sunlight and the absence of gardeners, but the thick scent masks the cloying presence of the Gidim. A meager detachment of four guards keep watch on the gate in the wall, with no patrols.

The estate grounds are thick with cerebral mesh, and if the party hasn't noticed it yet, grant them a Perception check (DC 30) to detect it as they near the manor. They can hear wheezing groans in the air above the garden, and dark figures watch their approach from unlit windows of the manor house. The front door, however, is open and illuminated, and a prim goblin butler named **Trugido** welcomes arrivals, checking for appointments in a heavy leather-bound book.

Meeting Cadagyr

Revealing their identity earns the PCs easy entry, though Trugido asks them to wait in the foyer so he can make sure his lord is decent. It also triggers an ambush.

Concocting a bluff excuse to meet with Lord Cadagyr without revealing themselves (Bluff DC 30 and Diplomacy DC 30) prompts a grumble from the butler. Lord Cadagyr comes out a few minutes later and invites the party into a drawing room to discuss matters. The room was moments earlier occupied by Gidim, and the seat cushions are still depressed (Perception DC 15).

Lord Cadagyr's primary goal is to get rid of undesirables, or determine if someone might be useful for the Gidim to dominate and put into their schemes. Large groups are dangerous, though, so he'll be pleasant for five or ten minutes, then ask everyone to leave but perhaps invite one PC back to meet one-on-one later. The Gidim would then plan to mind control that person when they return.



Bleak House

The whole manor house feels fairly neglected and untidy, but the PCs get the sense that there's always someone just around the corner. Lanterns feel warm to the touch though none are lit. A few rooms even contain house staff, but they aren't working; they just sit in chairs and act as if this is perfectly normal.

If the PCs manage to explore the manor (which is quite rude), the Gidim stay out of sight (Perception DC 35). A sneaky PC (Stealth DC 35) can catch five Gidim unaware as they're conferring telepathically in the kitchen, which they thought was safe.

Gidim Ambush

If the party doesn't hide their identities, the Gidim politely ask Lord Cadagyr to keep the party busy for five minutes, which is enough time for the invaders to set up an ambush. Unless they've already showcased their talents, the Gidim don't know how much stronger the party has become since Sijhen encountered them, so they won't use *unfairly* overwhelming force.

Stats for this encounter appear in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue.

Cadagyr Estate Ambush

- 4 Gidim Infiltrators
- Lilore, Gidim Overseer
- Gidim Oculus



The five Gidim abuse their powers. First Lilore, the overseer in charge of this manor, uses *greater invisibility* on itself. Then the four infiltrators each use the cerebral mesh to create psychic barriers (see page 81) to try to trap the party in a single room. They leave the ceiling and floor unblocked, however, allowing them to dangle through the ceiling in thoughtform to use *charm monster* on some of the party, *telekinesis* on the rest.

Overseer Lilore proceeds to enter the fray, using its claws to send enemies who aren't disabled into *mazes*, and pepper those who resist with *quicken magic missile*. The infiltrators converge on one foe, first using *ego whip* to stun, then overwhelming with sneak attacks. They wield jagged chains of living steel, composed of insectile creatures made of metal that cling together but bend and twist to their wielder's will.

The oculus hovers outside, and creates horrid illusions to try to deter the party from leaving the 'safety' of the building. If a PC gets out, though, it's not beyond grappling him and consuming his eyes.

The Unfair Version

If this isn't the party's first time facing the Gidim, Overseer Lilore needs Lord Cadagyr to stall for ten minutes, during which a pair of flying horrors fly in carrying seven shock troopers. The shaggy shock troopers storm the manor. The oculus hovers above it and occasionally deludes the party with illusions, but primarily waits for one or two PCs to exit. At that point the flying horrors will use their *sucking wind* to immobilize them, while Lilore creates psychic barriers using the cerebral mesh to trap the rest of the party inside. Stragglers are set upon by the infiltrators.

Aftermath

Defeated PCs are dragged to the leviathan's psychovivisection chamber, where they are taunted by Sijhen. The excruciating process of psychic flaying to make them loyal to the Gidim will take a few days.

If the party wins, they can free Cadagyr from control by removing the *oculus prism* in his neck and either dispelling his modified memories or simply sticking him in *magic circle against evil*. If they haven't discovered the invisible oculus, though, it might explode his brain first.

If he survives, he has a short breakdown, then warns that they must get away before the invaders send more monsters. But he knows all about the Gidim's operations, and can direct the party to the Jaula to rescue prisoners, and the Triunfo Vida to find the Gidim's main base of operations.

The Mysterious Circle

Exploration. Real-Time. Level 18.

The Jaula de Oso hides a Gidim facility for crafting warbeasts.

The party could avoid this place entirely, and if they do the warbeasts stored here will likely attack them elsewhere. However, exploring the empty arena and finding hideous beasts beneath it can make for an excellent scene of building horror. And it can easily shift into action as a single Gidim telekinetically opens all the monsters' cages.

Villa Roque

Arena master Pili Roque lives in a simple villa near the arena, observed intermittently by a Gidim infiltrator. A central courtyard features a fountain and a lush assortment of water lilies, ferns, and rushes, the pleasant trickle of water echoing off the tiled walls. A wrought iron gate decorated with the sigil of a collared bear swings on rusted hinges.

Roque is oblivious to the Gidim. Even though she sees it watching her all the time, her memory never recalls it. She is bubbly and excited about 'making the games perfect,' and is not bothered that the games are canceled and her arena closed. She refuses to let anyone see the arena. If the party tries to sneak in, an oculus spots them and calls in a warbeast squad.

Jaula Entrance

Numerous archways lead from a public courtyard to the arena's outer breezeway. Linked chains of iron stretch across the archways, forming a barrier that deter passage, but could be easily climbed through. Affixed to the walls with brass bolts, thick slabs of slate provide a list of times and dates for upcoming bouts, all of which are crossed off.

Around the breezeway, a handful of staircases lead up to the seating. Four barred wooden doors lead to stairs down to the Holding Cells.

Seating

Eight tiered rows of stone benches surround an enormous elliptical field of gravel and sand. Dark stains mottle the sandy floor, and a ten foot high wall separates the lowest seats from the floor itself. Enormous canopies hug the uppermost reaches of the arena, retracted and tied into position. On the northern side of the arena, portions of the seats are cordoned off into private seating, with colorful awnings stretched to cover them from sun and weather.



Maestra Dais

Curling wisps of smoke rise from an enormous brass censer in the center of a raised platform at the east end of the arena. From here, the master of ceremonies would direct events.

The brass censer, covered in stylized flames and comets and consecrated to a god of pyrrhic victory, hearkens to an ancient custom. Many believe that the god's favor would be passed onto them by touching the edges of the censer when it was lit. The censer is now fed by an enchantment that keeps it smoldering at all times, and urns full of flower petals and other potent aromatics sit beside it. The oculus that watches the arena can be weakened substantially by tossing a whole urn into the censer while the creature is within 30 feet.

Holding Cells

The stench of sweat, blood, and rot overwhelms the senses in these dark corridors, which lie beneath the arena floor. A deep thrumming vibration ripples through the ground, inaudible, yet intense enough to make teeth rattle and bones shake. A maze of hallways (like, literally a maze—this country has minotaurs galore) has numerous side chambers for operations and storage, but signage points to one main chamber, which is lined with barred cells.

In that main hallway, a first section of this hall holds arena beasts—currently eleven direbears, which appear fairly normal but in truth have been modified by Gidim magic. They are well-fed, but press against their cages if they smell anyone moving past. One will even swipe at a passer-by, which is remarkable because the bars are certainly too narrow for the animal to have gotten a limb through.

Mechanisms beside each cell can—with the mere crank of a lever (swift action) open the ceiling of the cell, then lift a platform so the occupant can emerge into the main arena floor. Narrow aisles (three feet wide, so a squeeze for medium creatures) run behind the cells to allow access to the gearwork. Should the party shove any angry bears up to the arena floor, they'll spend a round tearing the lifting platform apart, and then can squeeze back into the basement.

The west wall holds various spear-like implements used for prodding the beasts. They poke out hazardingly, and a creature that shoves an enemy into its space can make a free attack at their highest base attack bonus, dealing 4d6 damage on a hit.

At the southwest end of the hall, a steel door leads to the abattoir, which might hold NPCs who have been abducted, if they haven't been fed to the bears yet. A thoughtlock seals the door (see page 254), and a ward hidden on the far side triggers a false memory for anyone who manages to breach the door.



Memory Trap

CR 11

Type magical; **Perception** DC 29; **Disable Device** DC 29

Trigger visual (*darkvision*); **Reset** automatic; **Bypass** telepathically communicate the concept of a cup with a pineapple on it.

Effect spell (*modify memory*, DC 18 Will save to negate)

Detail creatures within sight of the door when it opens remember the room beyond as just being eight empty cells, but they found a note hidden in one cell which read, "If you find this, please retrieve the evidence and weapon I hid in my quarters in the Executores Lodge."

The purpose of the trap is to deflect suspicion from the arena and direct troublemakers to the lodge, where they can be spotted and attacked. It's likely at least one PC resists the effect, though.

Abattoir

Noticeably colder than the stone around it, this sixty-five foot by forty foot chamber has eight cages along the north wall, sized for livestock but sufficient to hold a prisoner in a pinch. The skinned carcasses of many different animals dangle from hooks in the ceiling throughout the room, and a pit at the north leads to an open sewer tunnel. The metallic smell of spilled blood mingles with the omnipresent stench of offal, and amidst it all is a constant bone-rattling vibration. A metal table holds a selection of knives and saws, along with a half-dressed carcass.

Upon closer examination, the carcasses are not cow and pig but rather minotaur and orc, their heads, hands, and feet severed and their skin and organs removed. A pile in one of the cages contains personal belongings of dozens of people, including many of the colorful costumes worn by bards at the Triuno Vida.

Eleven patches of brown mold cling to parts of the walls and floors, emanating cool air. Living creatures within 5 feet of the mold take 3d6 points of nonlethal cold damage. Fire brought within 5 feet of brown mold causes the mold to instantly grow into that space. Cold damage instantly destroys it.

Finally, in the far south end a fleshy orb like an eye is cemented to the wall with huge mats of cerebral mesh. This strange vesicle thrums with vibration, and acts as a channel of psychic power from the leviathan. The Gidim infiltrator who operates in the arena uses that energy to warp the dire bears.

Bear Trap

The sole Gidim infiltrator here will let the party reach the holding cells. It stays *invisible* to see if the *modify memory* trap catches them. If it doesn't, the Gidim waits for them to go into the abattoir, then uses *telekinesis* to open the cages of the warbeasts and telepathically commands the eleven horrid direbears to slither into the bloody, moldy room and attack.

Any battle will likely become very cramped very quickly. Though each bear is not much threat to the party, as they die they begin to merge with the remaining bears, granting them extra attacks which can be devastating if the party isn't able to keep its distance.

Oculus Prism

If someone bothers to hack up the strange vesicle, within it they can retrieve an *oculus prism* (see page 254), which can let at least one PC appear nonthreatening to the Gidim's beasts.

Employees Only

Exploration. Real-Time.

Bards of Triunfo Vida refuse entry to their college, in the tunnels beneath which lies the Gidim leviathan.

With the information gathered beneath Jaula de Oso or from Lord Cadagyr, the PCs should be ready to check out Triunfo Vida. When Sijhen selected a location for the leviathan to set down and begin a new Gidim colony, he selected a natural cavern beneath the bardic school. With easy access to minds of middling to extraordinary talent, Sijhen could build up the colony's strength slowly, using the infiltrators as needed to expand influence and identify potential problems.

While the extent of their control of the city varies based on how soon the party gets involved, the Gidim already have a solid position in the Triuno Vida.

College Campus

The Triunfo sits at the highest tier of its hill, and a path weaves through various gardens around the campus walls. The flowers are all withered from the lack of sunlight, but the cloying scent of the cerebral mesh still creates an oddly floral tone. Several archways lead through this wall to the inner garden, though wooden barricades block off all of them.

The grounds are officially closed, and an oculus serves as the first line of defense. It creates frightening illusions to deter trespassers: eerie music and creaking trees coming from thin air, angry figures with bloody blades just barely visible at the edge of darkvision but never approaching, and false archways in the wall that shudder with morbid moans if anyone comes close, then fade away.

If the party tries to enter one of the barricaded archways, an elderly voice from the other side demands to know who they are. He claims to be **Maestro Eusebio Telderón**, headmaster of the college. He refuses to let anyone in, saying the repairs are treacherous, and the remaining bards are quite busy playing for an exclusive audience. If a PC provides a virtuoso performance (Perform DC 35), the maestro is swayed to let them in and join the performance. The barricade shifts to provide a three-foot wide opening.

On the far side of the wall, there's no one to be found. If the party continues to explore, the oculus telepathically alerts the Gidim in the leviathan.

Ring Garden

Inside the wall, a simple farming garden takes up a large swath of the campus, with limestone walkways and the occasional tasteful topiary. The college hall sits in the center of the campus, a two-story building with a pair of single-story wings. There are no lights on in the building.

The whisper of silken banners fluttering lightly in the breeze disturbs the stillness. Off to the north wing of the hall—the dormitory—heavy wooden tables are set for a banquet. Empty carafes, pitchers, and platters remain, their contents long gone. Beneath one plate sits a stack of correspondence addressed to Maestro Telderón. (A postman was willing to come this far, then left in fright.)



Main Building

Orchestral string music is faintly audible coming from the second story window. Doors enter from multiple directions, but the most obvious approach is the front door, flanked by statues of bears playing cello and tuba.

Inside, doors lead to the north wing (for students), south wing (for classes), and back to the headmaster's salon. Stairs lead up to a second floor foyer outside the performance theater. The music gets louder the closer one gets to there.

Emotions—Aura of Doom. Throughout the building, different strains of music play, each producing a different emotion effect. It's unlikely the party will need to worry about this in battle; it's just to set an uneasy ambience. In the entry foyer, creatures must make a Will save (DC 20) or become shaken as long as they can hear the music, or until a different emotion affects them. A creature that saves is free of that particular emotion effect, but may fall under the music of another room. All of these are sonic, mind-affecting effects.

MUSIC SUGGESTION

I had Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* in mind while writing this scene. While the traditional style fits for exploration, if a fight breaks out, you can kick it off with Vanessa Mae's *Storm*, a reinterpretation of "Summer: III. Presto."

Ladder to the Dig

In the foyer, a section of floor has had its wood removed, and is now covered with a tarp. This is the entrance to the Ancient archaeological site in a cavern under the college. Beneath the tarp descends a stone shaft with ornately-painted orc figures and fantastic acoustics, thirty feet wide. Forty feet down there appears to be a metallic floor, but it undulates like a muscle. This is actually living steel that has been grown out of the walls, centered on a sphincter-like aperture, blocking the way to the larger cavern below.

A creature that comes within 5 feet of the aperture receives a psychic impression of it being a door in need of a key. It is thoughtlocked, and trapped to boot. Maestro Eusebio has the mental combination to unlock it.

Electrified Aperture

CR 11

Type mechanical and technological; **Perception** DC 32; **Disable Device** DC 29

Effects

Trigger touch; **Reset** automatic (1 minute)

Effect 10d8 electricity damage (DC 25 Reflex half) to anyone touching the living steel floor; only triggers if a creature fails to open the thoughtlock.

Headmaster's Salon

Inside the central part of the college hall, a first floor foyer leads to the headmaster's salon. Couched in opulent velvets, gilt-framed portraits, and brocaded settees, this room appears to function as a private performance hall. Enormous stained glass windows on the north wall depict performers of many different races, and an enormous mahogany desk and high-backed chair sits in front of it.

On the wall behind the desk hangs a painting of a stunning red-headed elf woman dressed in traditional Beran clothes. The placard beside it reads "Savina Tullius—Most Promising Student, and Most Beautiful." (This is just a small shout-out because Savina appears in Act Three.)

Emotions—Smug Narcissism. Though the music is the same, somehow the air carries it differently, like it's meant specifically for the listener. Creatures must save (Will DC 20) or be overcome by smug narcissism. This imposes a -2 penalty to all skill checks.

Dormitory

The north wing is a long hall dominated by workbenches, musical instruments, and bunk beds in various states of disarray. Clothes, bedding, and footwear lie scattered through the room, much of it blood-stained.

Emotions—Terrible Remorse. The music shifts into a dark minor key. Each round creatures must save (Will DC 20) or else deal 1d8 points of damage + its Strength modifier to itself using an item held in its hand or with unarmed attacks. If the creature saves, it is staggered for 1 round and takes a -2 penalty to Armor Class, after which the emotion passes.

Refectory

At the end of the north wing, this vaulted dining room has long, unadorned wooden tables with benches flank the length. An enormous hearth, filled with cold ashes and a half-empty cauldron graces the wall opposite the room's entrance. A small but efficient kitchen is tucked behind the hearth.

Emotions—Manic Glee. A lone figure is seated at a bench—or more accurately is cocooned from the waist down onto the bench by cerebral mesh. His upper body is exposed, and at first seems hunched over, fiddling furiously on a violin, trying to match the faint music from the performance theater but failing in fits and starts. In a moment it becomes clear the figure actually has no head.

Creatures here must save (Will DC 20) or be overcome with manic glee. The effect is similar to a barbarian rage, granting +4 to Strength and Constitution, a -2 penalty to AC, and a compulsion to never stand still. When the glee ends, the creature is fatigued.

Classrooms

In the south wing, stone debris and shattered wood litter the dim hallway between six small classrooms, with some of the interior walls completely destroyed. The smell of rot mingles unpleasantly with the scent of jasmine and plumeria, and a faint gusting sigh echoes through the corridor.

Emotions—Utter Contempt. Sharp notes raise hairs on the back of listeners' necks. Those who fail a save (Will DC 20) are driven to first slander, then abuse, and finally murder those nearby them. Each round the target takes 2 Wisdom damage and can attempt a new save to break free.

Performance Theater

The walls and floor outside the upstairs theater are so thick with cerebral mesh it's easily visible, and it vibrates like strung catgut. The pungent scent of summer flowers exudes from the doorway.

Within, tall windows on the far side of the room let in the dim glow of distant city light, faintly silhouetting the orchestra. Two aisles descend past sparsely-filled seats, leading to a stage where three dozen musicians play strings, a harpsichord, and percussion, but no wind instruments. Weeping comes from the audience, which consist of dozens of disembodied heads spliced into cerebral mesh, still attached to beating hearts and heaving lungs.

These are the bards of the Triunfo Vida who were not smart enough to leave, and their bodies are on stage, hollowed out with exposed rib cages, headless, playing from muscle memory. Only the conductor is still fully intact—the maestro Eusebio Telderón, his body wholly intact but his mind somewhere else.

Indeed, if the party stops to listen, a psychic image of Eusebio appears beside them to explain the nature of the piece, which he calls “The Contest Between Harmony and Invention.” In a whisper he says that each movement of the concerto is intended to evoke a different emotion, and their patrons positively drink up the reactions of the audience.

Eusebio has literally lost his mind, or rather his mind has lost his body, and he's unable to remember any idea that the college might be in trouble. If the party lets the concerto finish, though, he can be convinced to call for an interlude before ‘the three hundred and seventy-fourth encore’ in order to give the party a tour of the amazing archaeological site beneath the building. Why, this site has apparently been used for music-making since ancient times.

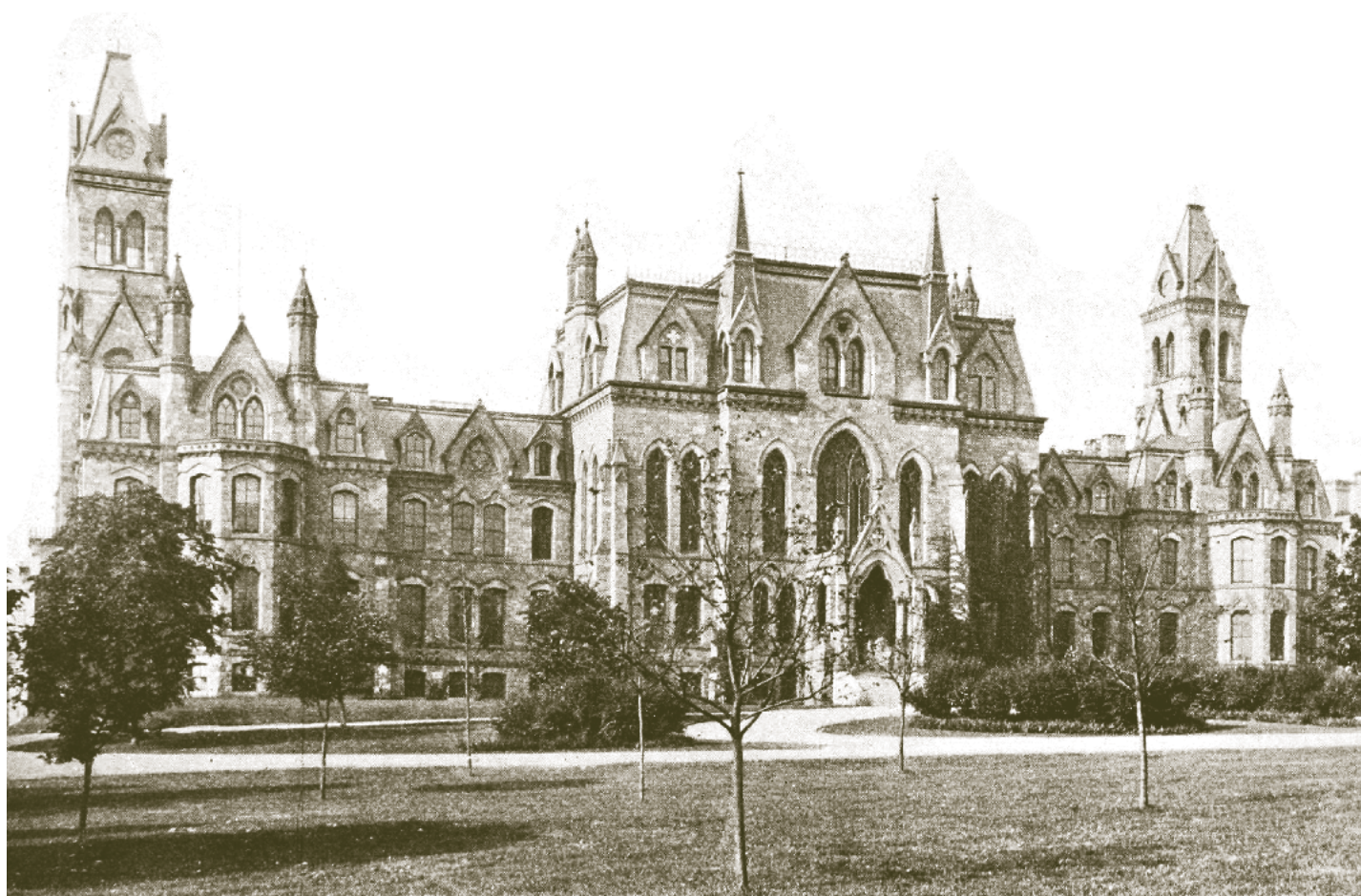
Emotions—Crushing Despair. Those who fail a save (Will DC 20) take a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, skill checks, and weapon damage rolls until the concerto finishes or they get out of earshot.

Proactive Attack

The Gidim can sense through Eusebio if the party looks to be affected by the emotion magic. If so, Sijhen sends forth an attack force, which charges the performance theater. The oculus that watches the Triunfo will smash in the window and join the battle, though the ceiling is only twenty feet high, so it cannot simply fly away. Any forces sent here aren't present defending the leviathan.

Concerto Attack Force

- ♦ 5 shock troopers
- ♦ 1 Gidim infiltrator





Belly of the Beast

Action. Tactical. Level 23.

A ship of living steel acts as the egg for a gestating psychic tentacle.

The most direct route into the Gidim leviathan is down from the college's main hall, into the cave, and through the electrified, thought-locked, living metal sphincter. Other methods of reaching the Gidim ship might involve burrowing, phasing, teleporting, or casting *earthquake* and clambering through the debris.

The cave around the leviathan has forty-foot-high ceilings riddled with stubby stalactites. The cavern extends outward and downward in many directions, but the Gidim haven't strayed beyond the leviathan.

Grown from living steel, the ship's overall shape is reminiscent of a squid, three hundred feet long and eighty feet wide, with fat eyestalks in place of tentacles, glowing with pale green bioluminescence as they extend a further fifty feet. A loading dock orifice opens at what would be the back of a squid's head or mantle, and a gaping maw splits its dorsal side, leading to an area called the flesh fens. The opening to the flesh fens lies forty feet directly beneath the living steel sphincter, so unprepared creatures that open it will fall in to be consumed and deposited into an incubation vesicle.

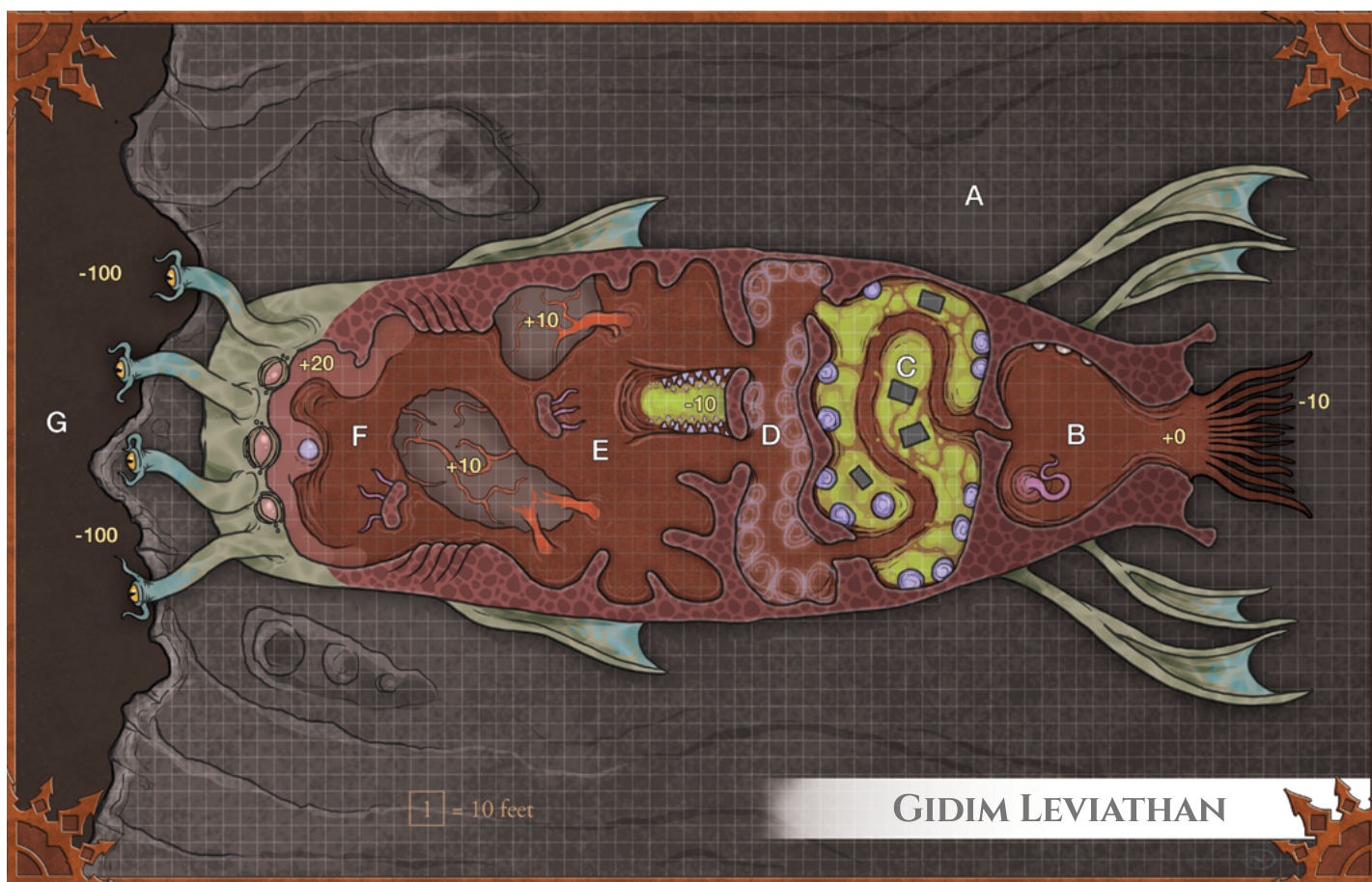
Take-Off

Sijhen wants the ship to remain in place long enough for it to create a link to the Gidim homeworld, but if it looks like the party is going to get into the ship, it directs the leviathan to tear free from the cave floor and fly above the city.

The moment any PC is detected in the ship's cavern, Sijhen orders a take-off. The cave begins to quake, the skin of the leviathan glows with bioluminescence as bright as daylight, and five rounds later the vessel rises from the cave floor. On the sixth round it slams into the ceiling of the cave and cracks it, crushing anyone caught between them (20d6 damage, Reflex DC 25 half). For the next three rounds it presses its way through the solid rock, until on the tenth round it smashes up from beneath the Triunfo Vida, obliterating the building.

During all this, the party might be fighting their way into the vessel or getting out of the way. Once the leviathan rises into the air, if the party's airship is anywhere nearby they'll likely fly in to examine this bizarre glowing and levitating squid monster.

The leviathan begins to thrum and warble and ululate, singing music that fills the entire city with waves of wild emotions. If left alone, every minute it telekinetically grasps a city block worth of buildings atop one of the hills and flings them into the troughs, killing hundreds and sparking fires that will eventually consume the city.



Battling the Leviathan

A ship to ship battle in the sky gives the party a chance to bring the ship down and kill some of its crew. Each successful strike should reduce 2 shock troopers or infiltrators to half their maximum hit points. The leviathan is neither fast nor maneuverable, but if it can hit with a *telekinetic rend* it holds on and tries to get close enough to ram. Then the battle can turn to a boarding action, albeit one where the leviathan will continue to attack every minute, while the party's crew might be distracted and unable to fire back.

If things look unwinnable, Sijhen activates the leviathan's self-destruct sequence and then joins the battle against the PCs to stall and try to take them out.

Gidim Leviathan		Level 24 Leviathan
Gargantuan Leviathan		
Hull Integrity 4	Defense 30	Command Rating +18
Maneuverability 6	Speed 16	Perception +12, blindsense

Dimensions

Body 300 ft. x 80 ft. Tentacles 200 ft.

Leviathan

The leviathan is a living creature, acting on its own and requiring no crew. After an extended rest, it heals all damage as long as it has at least 1 Hull Integrity. It can fly at any altitude.

Grasping Eyestalks

When the leviathan rams, it stops 25 feet from its target and takes no damage from the collision. The target cannot move until the eyestalks take damage or the leviathan releases its grip.

Telekinetic Rend

The leviathan reaches out and tears apart enemies as a weapon with a +21 attack bonus that can attack in any direction, including up and down. If it strikes an enemy ship, the two ships cannot move farther apart from each other until either Sijhen chooses to release the grab, or this armament component becomes damaged. While the grab persists, the leviathan gains a +10 bonus to Command checks when closing to short range.

Psychic Inulnerability

The leviathan exists partially as mere thoughts and emotions, and its crew is shielded both by living steel flesh and a mighty psychic consciousness.

Crew of the leviathan cannot be targeted from outside the vessel. Creatures cannot teleport into or out of the vessel, but they can move to and from the ship's skin.

When in flight, the vessel's "loading orifice" is closed. A strike that damages the orifice opens it for one naval round; a second strike keeps it open permanently.

Emotional Flux

Those who hear the ship's ululation struggle to control their emotions.

Enemy ships must make a ship saving throw (d20 + captain's Charisma bonus vs. DC 10). Those that fail are treated as having half as many crew, which may impose a penalty to Command checks (-5 for below Full Crew, or -10 for below Minimum Crew). Clever ideas might mitigate the emotions created by the leviathan.

Layout

From the loading orifice entrance, a passageway threads through the psychovivisection chambers, where prisoners are mentally deconstructed and then retrained so they can become vital agents or shock troopers. Some are left so crippled they're only good for food, and they are delivered to the Jaula.

From there, crew quarters flank the hall, each filled with intense psychic energy to create pocket planes where beings of thought can exist without flesh. The hall splits to either side of the flesh fens and continues past various pulsing vital organs, then ends at the navigation chamber, just before where the eyestalks emerge.

The whole living ship has few hard corners, and instead its spaces sweep and circle into each other. Currently the flesh is transforming itself into the seed of a thoughtform tentacle that, when fully grown, will erupt through the surface and stretch away into the stars.

The interior of the ship is riddled with sensory organs, which allow anyone in the navigation chamber to observe anywhere in the ship.

Loading Orifice (Area B)

Resembling the mouth of a whale shark, this passage can open as wide as forty feet across, or slowly clamp shut. A 'ramp' of fleshy tendrils rises ten feet from the cave floor. The muscular floor inside can create a sort of teleportation circle once per day, allowing anything on it to teleport to anywhere within 1000 feet that a Gidim oculus can see. Likewise, it can teleport willing creatures to it. This is how the flying horrors come and go, and they sleep here when not active.

Psychovivisection Chamber (Area C)

Four metal slabs hang suspended from the vaulted ceiling, held in place by rigid cables and transparent tubing. Rusted red stains smear across the metal surface, and the acrid scent of chemicals hangs heavily in the room. Curls of white vapor wrap around brightly colored vials in a transparent glass sphere, and next to it a table filled with delicate and deadly scalpels, probes, and clamps.

This chamber is where the Gidim keeps high-value prisoners. The chamber also functions as a medical lab, should the PCs figure out how to make it function, and the living steel instruments can cast *cure critical wounds* once per minute (caster level 20th).

Prisoners are each held in transparent vesicles filled with oxygenated endoplasm, and each vesicle is thoughtlocked.

Mindscape Quarters (Area D)

Gidim are naturally incorporeal, so they need special psychic quarters to avoid drifting away when they slip into a state that for them is equivalent to sleep. This area is divided into fourteen 'mindscapes,' rooms that only exist as mental constructs, each lavish and comfortable for thoughtform creatures. Other creatures perceive the walls and 'furniture' as unreal. Indeed, while thoughtform creatures treat these objects as real, normal creatures can move through them.



Flesh Fens (Area E)

The overwhelming scent of flowers clashes horribly with the underlying odor of rot and blood within this circular chamber. Spherical niches along the floors, walls, and ceiling hold ragged bits of flesh. Grotesque remnants of humanoid bodies fused to the walls, and an inch-deep layer of unknown effluvia swirls in slow eddies along the floor.

The fens serve as both barracks and laboratory for the Gidim. When their victims have all their mental energies drained out in the Psychovivisection Chamber, their comatose bodies end up here for modification. The Gidim have mutated townsfolk into shock troopers. Fifteen shock troopers reside here, crouched in the corners. If the party has killed any, the Gidim can create five new ones per day.

Acid Bath. A central acid bath pool lies directly beneath the living steel sphincter that blocks off the shaft over the cave. A muscular flap can open and close over this bath, and if anyone falls inside it slams shut. Creatures in the acid bath take 6d6 acid damage each turn. The flap can be opened with a Strength check (DC 25) or by dealing 50 damage to it. It is immune to acid damage.

Navigation Chamber (Area F)

Clustering together like enormous grapes, a sac of fleshy nodules ripples with purple electricity that courses and flows across the fine mesh that blankets the chamber in thick ropes and webs. The walls display vague images of areas of the ship. Touching one grants a full psychic connection with the sensory organs in that spot, and allows the ship's captain to use the leviathan internal defenses (see below).

Another creature in the navigation chamber can make a Use Magic Device check (DC 30) to also gain access to these powers. A creature capable of telepathy gains a +5 bonus to this check. If by some chance Xambria or her consciousness is still with the party, she automatically knows how to control the ship.

Vortex Array. Growing from a pillar in the floor, a circle of glistening metal, diamonds, and flickering energy projects a three-dimensional model of Ursaliña into the air. Some *thing* moves in the same space, representing the psychic idea of the feeding tentacle being grown within the leviathan.

The device projecting this image is known as a *vortex array*. It's not attached to the leviathan, but rather stands alone, for these arrays are complicated to craft, and are thus reused after the feeding tentacle has been birthed. The array consists of a living metal pillar that rises seven feet, around which floats a ring of metal rods. When the array is inert or has completed a scan, the rods link together into a solid circle, but when they detect magical energies they rotate to point toward it, lengthen or shorten to represent distance, and glow dimly or bright to indicate intensity. Each rod is attuned to a different type of energy.

A creature standing within arm's reach of the array is mentally linked to this device of living steel, and it will obey orders to search for specific types of energy. It can also produce three-dimensional psychic maps of areas that it scans.

SECOND ASSAULT

Should the party locate the leviathan but don't go down to it, the Gidim's goal is to survive until Day 25, when the tentacle will emerge. Sijhen, despite being granted great power by its race, is not a tactician, so it stays on the defensive. At most, the Gidim send out one warbeast unit to hunt the party in the city, but if the PCs survive that attack the remaining Gidim withdraw to the leviathan and only send out one or two infiltrators at a time, invisible, to try to maintain the sense of dread among the populace. With the use of illusions from oculi, Sijhen hopes to create the appearance of a much larger invasion force and draw attention away from the Triunfo.

Clever parties don't need to face the Gidim alone. Once they figure out the contours of the threat, simply explaining the enemy to the public is enough to get the police to stop serving them. It wouldn't be hard then to convince the marines stuck at the docks to help perform a 'boarding action,' potentially overwhelming the vessel before it can escape the cave.

Reactive Defenses

The leviathan is guarded by a small force, but the Gidim likely have some warning the party is coming. The total complement of Gidim forces are presented in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue, but many of these will not be present when the party first arrives.

Cave Defense (CR 21). If the party takes more than ten minutes to go from entering Triunfo Vida to reaching the leviathan, two of the flying horrors and two oculi will lurk in the corners of the cave, having been recalled and teleported in. The oculi can produce false monsters with *persistent image* to distract the party while the flying horrors attack. Sijhen keeps five shock troopers inside the leviathan, but sends the rest (a maximum of ten) out to keep the party from getting into the ship.

Ship Defense (CR 23). If those defenders fail and the party makes it to the cave and is spotted, Sijhen launches the ship. The openings atop the flesh fens and at the back of the loading orifice seal shut (Strength DC 30 to open; 50 hp to break seal), and a ship-wide *dimensional anchor* effect manifests, trapping the party inside. Sijhen is unaffected by the dimensional anchor. For five rounds the ship shudders, and on the sixth round it lifts off the cave floor.

The five withheld shock troopers and seven infiltrators station themselves behind cover as best they can, trying to watch the entrances through the flesh fens and the loading orifice. When battle begins, the shock troopers keep their distance from the Gidim, so as not to electrocute them; they'll try to abduct a PC and drag him into the acid bath in the flesh fens—or throw him off the ship once it's airborne. The infiltrators try to stick to cover and abuse ego whip from range.

Meanwhile, Sijhen oversees the battle from the navigation chamber and makes use of the following powers as a standard action, targeting any space inside the ship. All these powers have caster level 25.

- ♦ Defensive—*dimensional anchor*, *dispel magic*, *fog cloud*, *mass cure light wounds*
- ♦ Offensive—*hold person* (DC 19), *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *sound burst* (DC 18)
- ♦ Spite—The ship begins a five minute countdown to explosion. See Self-Destruct, below.

Sijhen Showdown (CR 21). Once most of the other Gidim have fallen, or when a PC gets to the navigation chamber, Sijhen splits into two (see its ability *eightfold wayfarer*) and has one copy activate the ship's self-destruct sequence. The ship's song stops, but it begins to pulse slowly with light. The pulses come faster and are joined by a rising whine as the leviathan grows closer to detonation.

The ancient Gidim advances on the party, splitting into more and more copies until there are eight of it. Its bravado has faded compared to when it taunted them in the previous adventure, but it will briefly try to bargain.

"In the navigation chamber, you'll find a *vortex array*. If your mission is anything like what the Ancients did, you will need it to navigate the Gyre. This ship will destroy itself in a few minutes if I do not stop it, and you'll be lost. Consider a trade.

"I give you the array, and accompany you on your journey, operating the device and finding planes with the power sources you need, so you might have a chance to save your world. After all, if it dies it is useless to the Gidim. In exchange, you leave this ship. In days it will form a link to the Gidim homeworld. Not ideal for you, since the Gidim will begin to feed on the psychic energies of this city. But you must have a high estimation of your abilities. Perhaps you can sever the connection once you return."

If they decline, all Sijhen says is, "I was and always will be a soldier, and a servant of my homeworld. The will of the Gidim is unified, and I shall not flee."

Sijhen is lying, by the way. If it is confident it cannot prevail, it uses *greater teleport* to evacuate to the surface, and will go into hiding (though it likely never shows its face again in this adventure path). And the party doesn't actually need Sijhen's help to operate the *vortex array*.

Self-Destruct

If Sijhen (or a crazy PC) triggers the self-destruct, the ship begins the process of tearing apart its own living steel flesh to release the psychic energies gathered for the tentacle's birth. The ship pulses and begins to screech, and five minutes later finally explodes. Only in the last few rounds, as the ship begins to spasm, does it open up exits and let the *dimensional anchor* field end.

The explosion deals 24d6 damage (Reflex DC 25 half) to everything within five hundred feet, collapsing the cave and Triunfo Vida. Inanimate objects in a one-mile radius—ranging from pens to boulders to entire streets—acquire varying amounts of self-awareness and gain the ability to move and hunt on their own.

Sure, the creatures kill a few hundred people, but Ursaliña eagerly begins capturing these monsters for use in the arena.

The countdown can be aborted if Sijhen (or a creature with access to the leviathan's controls) commands it. Alternately, it can be turned inward, so the destruction only tears apart the leviathan. The idea of a tentacle tries to reach to the dark sky, but it dissipates and vanishes.

Some time later, Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen will gather what thoughtflesh remains and unlock eldritch powers that will let Nicodemus take control of the whole world.

The Vortex Array

Aura *overwhelming divination*; **CL** 20th

Slot —; **Weight** 30 lbs.

Description

A column-like contraption made of cerebral mesh, diamonds, and living steel, the *Vortex Array* is a masterpiece of Gidim biotechnology. A ship equipped with one can scan regions as small as a single building (taking mere moments) or as vast as a thousand miles (which could require several hours), detecting all magic in it as per *greater arcane sight*. It also provides an overview of the general magical demeanor of a region, detailing any planar traits it might have.

If the *Array* is damaged, there is a chance that its readings will not be accurate when it is activated. The *Vortex Array* can be repaired with a Craft (metalworking) check (DC 30) by a character with the Technologist feat.

Conclusion

If all goes well, the PCs manage to halt the Gidim invasion in Ursaliña, though there is the chance that a few Gidim still lurk within the nation of Ber. Saving the day earns the party the *vortex array*, and if they manage to do it fairly quickly the citizens of Ursaliña spread word of their heroism, convincing the Bruse to call off his invasion of Risur.

Alternately, the city might fall, and a giant tentacle will erupt into the sky, stretching an infinite distance to the Gidim homeworld, which will begin converting the landscape around the city to its own biology. At that point, only renewing the ritual of the Axis Seal will stop the invasion.

A middle ground could see Sijhen pretending to aid the party, but in truth the Gidim will betray them in the most destructive way it can during the next adventure.



ACT TWO: When Doom Came to Drakr

The end times have come, and for the dwarves of Drakr this was no surprise. Grandis Komanov's army of fanatical doomsday eschatologists besiege the city of Bhad Rhyzhavdut, bolstered by five titans suffused with the souls of legendary warlords known as the Lost Riders. They seek the eye of their lord, once called the Speaker of Snow, Heart of Black Ice, and the Warden of the Bleak Gate. Today he is called The Voice of Rot.

TIMELINE

These days are relative to whenever the adventure starts, since normal calendars no longer seem to apply.

- **Day 0:** Vlendam Heid arrives in Bhad Rhyzhavdut, believing he'll be beginning a new, post-Eclipse political movement. He (and his bodyguard Kvarti) are trapped in the city when Komanov's army assaults it. The army breaks through part of the old wall and seizes a section of the old city, but then settles in for a siege. Heid teleports a lockbox to the party.
- **Day 1:** Komanov retrieves the lost eye of the Voice of Rot and begins to assemble her arcanoscientific weapon. It fires but can't create wraiths.
- **Day 7:** Komanov completes the weapon. Her army attacks and slays the entire city. She claims the souls of the dead for the Voice of Rot. The only person she spares is Vlendam Heid, taking him as a trophy.
- **Day 8:** After a night of sadistic revelry, the Vsadni conjure giant sleds of ice, which are blown by winds of the army's hivemind blizzard. These vessels travel scores of miles in a day, carrying the doomsday force toward Mirsk. Along the way they wipe out a few minor towns and settlements.
- **Day 15:** The army arrives in Mirsk. Komanov begins to prime her weapon again.
- **Day 20:** With the weapon ready, Komanov sacks Mirsk. She lets a few survivors flee by rail for Trekhom.
- **Day 22:** The army launches again across frozen ground, bound for the capital.
- **Day 31:** The army stops outside Trekhom for Komanov to prime the weapon once again.
- **Day 38:** Doomsday eschatologists attack Trekhom. The city actually holds off their assault for a time, but it falls the next day.
- **Day 39:** With nearly the entire nation of Drakr slain, Komanov orders all her followers to commit suicide and sends their souls to the Voice of Rot. She then heads to the Gyre to witness the end of the world.

The Siege of Bhad Rhyzhavdut

Exploration. Montage.

How will the party deal with a doomsday army?

One of the ancient bastions of Drakr's might lies under siege. The city of Bhad Rhyzhavdut and its famed tower fortress have for centuries guarded traffic along the Volgir River, where frigid mines in the Shawl Mountains feed ore to the eastern sea. The new rail lines that cross Drakr's frontier have stolen some of the port city's prosperity, but it still serves as a bastion against potential invasion by frost giants of the north.

Some twenty thousand people live in Bhad Rhyzhavdut, many in subterranean compounds dug into the hills alongside the river. The highest hill rises five hundred feet above the river, and from its peak rises a two hundred foot-high tower fortress. Several thousand more farmers who lived around the city have either fled or been slaughtered.

The 'Old City,' that section of Bhad Rhyzhavdut on the surface along the banks of the river, has been seized by an army, cutting the city off from supplies. Under the command of radical eschatologist Grandis Komanov, the besieging army consists of a core of a few hundred fanatics, tens of thousands more Drakran citizens who joined her cause after the stars fell, the occasional phalanx of skeletons, and a couple hundred frost giants who due to deception and language barriers think Grandis intends to conquer Drakr and give them a section to rule.

Most of the non-giants in the army are linked in a hivemind, which creates a perpetual winter storm around Bhad Rhyzhavdut. Low clouds hang two hundred feet above the ground, concealing the tops of the highest hills, though the highest levels of the fortress Tower Mekram rise above the storm. The cold has frozen the Volgir River, and the army surrounds the city on all sides.

Most in the army are dwarves, and likewise in the city, but enough of each group are humans so they keep braziers or bonfires burning to provide illumination.

APPEAL TO POWER

If the party contacts the leadership of Drakr, they are warned not to approach Trekhom or else they will be attacked, as they are a hostile force. The leadership—various politicians and plutocrats, influenced by Obscurati representatives and perhaps led by Dmitra Takhenova—are convinced Risur is the primary threat and will not be swayed. The only way they'd consider focusing on Komanov as a threat would be if the party surrendered and let themselves be executed.

Approaching the City

If the party flies above the low clouds, they can see the top floors of Bhadr Rhyzhavdut's fortress rising out of the storm, lit with hearth fires and torches. This allows them to meet with the defenders before having to face the army and its forces. See Meeting the End with Dignity (page 99).

However, a ship breaking downward through the clouds will be noticed, because the hivemind's link to the blizzard will allow them to sense anyone approaching through the storm. See Anti-Air Defenses (page 100).

Approaching on foot runs the more mild risk of the party being spotted by the Lost Riders, who patrol in circular sweeps around the city accompanied by frost giants. If the party is even slightly cautious (e.g., a scout moving forward to observe their pattern and succeeding Stealth DC 15), they can enter the city during the ten minute gap between the riders. The next rider through will spot their tracks, though, unless they conceal them.

There is no teleportation ward over the city, just a typical beacon that deposits people near the tower fortress, which is not controlled by Komanov's forces. The handful of Drakrans capable of teleportation were already recruited to aid the invasion of Risur. A few dozen people try to sneak out on foot every day, but their tracks are invariably spotted and they are run down.

The party might try to sneak into the army camp, which is practically unguarded. Unless the party is clearly hostile, the psychically-linked soldiers assume they're no threat, and might even invite them to join in the partying.

Camp Doom

Wispy tendrils thread from the backs of the soldiers' heads, floating up to the stormclouds that form their hivemind. The soldiers are busy fucking and occasionally eating their prisoners and each other, or drinking and dancing and performing every wild act of cruelty they'd ever heard of but never had been willing to try. Every few minutes a crowd will send up a toast, "To the end of the world!" The cheer rolls through the entire army and eventually becomes a guttural roar.

The warriors wear the dull expression that most people stuck in a hivemind have, but if engaged in a conversation many will admit that they are kind of disbelieving they're here. They all had families, goals, and morals, but if the world is going to end, they want to play a role.

Uncommitted

By contrast, the few hundred frost giants who accompany the army keep to themselves in four camps spaced around the city. They don't speak much Common or Dwarven, and so Komanov's dictats do nothing for them. They follow simply because they believe it will help them conquer a land for their own. Their leader, **Jarl Klar Pyaar of Clan Tundar**, has had her ego stroked by Komanov, but she could be convinced of the truth of the cult leader's plans, which would turn her against the army. Someone just has to explain things to her in Giant.

Riders Returned

After vanishing into the far north thousands of years ago, the Lost Riders known locally as the Vsadni were given new titanic undead bodies by the magic of the Voice of Rot. The frozen corpses of the long-dead dwarven warlords are held in the ribcages of massive skeletons crafted of the bones and stones of dead worlds. Their new bodies stand twenty feet high, with the rough body shape of an immense dwarf, wearing stylized stone plate armor covered with hundreds of skulls. Purple lightning crackles out of their hollow eye sockets and across their entire bodies.

Four of the Vsadni stay with Komanov's army, and at least two patrol around the city at any time, riding equally massive ice horses carved from a glacier. The fifth (Nebo) aids Komanov in excavating the Voice of Rot's eye from an older layer of ancient settlements buried beneath Bhadr Rhyzhavdut.

The five Vsadni have distinct personalities.

- ♦ **Nebo**, the leader. Growly and competent at coordinating armies. His surrogate body is entirely clad in black adamantite armor, and tendrils of darkness form a huge beard that flows down to his knees. Fights with a long morningstar. He carries no instrument, but instead sings. Rides the frost worm Distemper.
- ♦ **Betel**, the vain axeman. Believes himself superior to all others, but likes the majestic destruction he can accomplish with his fellow riders. Yellow vapors flow around his jaw like a thick, coiled beard. The haft of his bone and brass axe functions as a primitive three-valve horn.
- ♦ **Yarost**, the naïve axeman. Always follows Betel's lead and fights beside him. Has no aspirations, but is just really good at slaughter and music. Jagged shards of ice dangle from his chin in a serrated beard. He also wields a horn-axe.
- ♦ **Tzertze**, the upbeat wardrummer. Acts 'down to earth' despite being a titanic doom warlord from the dawn of history. Selfish and looks for ways to help himself, but would never betray his fellow riders—at least not seriously. Cool red flames wreath his face. Wields twin picks and wears a huge drum at his hip; during combat he maintains a constant percussive mix of clanging metal and deep drumbeats.
- ♦ **Hamul**, the hateful scum. Mumbles and whines. Loathes everyone, even himself. The other riders despise him, but he's too mean to die, and their hate of him enhances their camaraderie. Craggy brown stone clings to his face like muttonchops. Shamelessly carries an immense harp, but when he snaps the strings it flips open into a thirty-foot long scythe.

The Vsadni all share a vulnerability; the icy shard in their chest that holds their original body can be destroyed, which will collapse the stone and bone body around them.





Dear Leader

Grandis Komanov, with the aid of the Vsadni Nebo and twenty of her loyal cultists, is busy magically excavating a collapsed tomb under Bhadr Rhyzhavdut's Old City. At the end of Day 1, they recover the lost eye of the Voice of Rot, which the fey titan once used to command the souls of the dead. The eye is withered and calcified, but Komanov and her followers have designs to channel its power into a weapon.

When completed, *the cyclopean revelation* will be a twelve-foot-long contraption of cold iron and obsidian wrapped around the pale eye. Its shape is that of a slender cannon with twin handles reminiscent of a scythe. It weighs a ton but floats effortlessly in Komanov's hand.

It must be attuned in each location to connect to the Voice of Rot's own power; once moved more than three miles from where it was attuned, it loses its powers, and the fey titan will not renew them for anyone other than Komanov. Attuning it takes about a week.

When not attuned, it functions as a terrifying cannon, producing a 1000-ft. black beam, 20-ft. wide, that disintegrates anything in its path (Reflex DC 28 to dodge out of the path and fall prone; 40d6 damage, Fortitude DC 28 half if struck) and dispels any magic it touches (dispel check of d20+25).

When fully connected to the Voice of Rot, *the cyclopean revelation* further causes any creature slain by it to rise as a wraith loyal to the wielder. A few minutes of carving through castle walls and slaying those within will produce hundreds of new allies. A day after wiping out a city, all those souls will be drawn into the Gyre to power the Voice of Rot himself.

Hourly Sermons

At the top of every hour, one of the Vsadni will blow a horn, and the camp will quiet down. Then groups of Komanov's most loyal cultists weave through the army, handing out alcohol rations while loudly proclaiming their ideology:

"All must end. The world is all we know. The world must end. Let us witness that end. A serpent wraps its white coils around our destiny. Let our strength bolster his. Let our souls feed him. Let our glory be the last image seen by his cyclopean gaze. The battle is nigh."

The Carnage Parade

The cultists's benedictions occur twelve times per day. After the final such pronouncement, the four Vsadni make their way through the camps, playing doom-laden music while roughly reshaping the crowds into something resembling proper formation so they can have their evening meals. While the army feasts, the four undead titans gather at the head of a short parade, consisting of them, their steeds, and sleds bearing the core fanatics of Komanov's cult.

The fifth Vsadni—Nebo—then arrives from the excavation site in the Old City, along with Grandis, who has taken a break from preparing her doomsday weapon. She sits atop a throne on a huge sled of gold-highlighted steel, drawn by Nebo's steed. When the parade is about to begin, she stands, and thousands of men go silent.

The various braziers and bonfires around the camp are snuffed, their flames replaced by a wavering blue light in the shape of Grandis Komanov's face so that each of her followers can see and hear her. She

THE SACRAMENT OF APOTHEOSIS

In Adventure Eight, *Diaspora*, Grandis may have learned the ritual for the *sacrament of apotheosis*. If the party let her get away with that, then in this adventure Komanov is perpetually adorned with the proper blood runes to activate the ritual at a moment's notice, and her mute lackey always has the components available to perform it.

The duration is short enough that she won't deploy it unless she knows she'll be facing a major threat, but even in the midst of battle, her lackey can activate the ritual in the span of just two rounds. If she can predict when a fight will take place, she'll use the ritual in advance.

Komanov's followers number in the tens of thousands, but their faith is relatively weak compared to what powered the same ritual during the Great Malice.

The ritual grants her the effects of *divine vessel* (APG), lasting for one hour (caster level 25th). Modified stats are presented in Appendix A. If Komanov is slain, the backlash consumes all her followers in her army as well.

addresses them with a five-minute long speech, slow and intimate at first, reinforcing the bonds they share through recent suffering and a shared history of conflicts that never could bring peace.

Slowly, though, she ratchets up the intensity of her rhetoric, elucidating a condensed list of grievances in order to paint the leaders of Drakr in the darkest terms possible—as oathbreakers and cowards. She names the great cities of Drakr, landmarks in each, and with grandiosity proclaims that the monuments crafted by these corrupt leaders must be torn down.

As she speaks, the strands that link each warrior with the hivemind storm grow more solid, and some even glow. Tellingly, though, no such strand links Grandis to the hivemind; she views herself as above these people.

Finally she ends with:

"Warriors of the Final Army, the world's end is nigh. Its eyes? Dark! Its heart? Like a frozen river! Its breath? Crushed from it like a goat trapped in the coils of a serpent. None of us can be saved. All that remains is for us not to shrink in fear from the icy end of the earth, but to be brave, to stand like giants until the final light. The song of our people, the tales of our families, has lasted centuries, and now we shall give that song—that epic legend—the grand finale it deserves. We shall sweep across this land like a scythe, and our march shall leave no life behind to suffer a pathetic, whimpering death. Glory! That is what we bring! For if this world is to die, let it be in battle! Let it be in passion! Let it be at our hands!"

To thunderous applause, the five Vsadni gallop through the entire camp as they sing a rousing war song—they have a wide repertoire—to whip up frenzied adulation of Komanov. Dozens of people incidentally die during the parade, either trampled by the beasts or pulled up onto the sleds for gruesome sacrifice.

When the parade concludes, Komanov returns to her weapon, while the army begins the long process of debauching itself to exhaustion.



Meeting the End with Dignity

Social. Real-Time.

Perhaps some boisterous debates will turn the tide.

Unlike the chaos outside, the twenty thousand citizens inside Bhad Rhyzhavdut are stoic and restrained. Though of course many are scared, Vlendam Heid has spoken publicly to encourage people to accept the possibility of their deaths. That accomplished, they can turn their minds away from dread and toward a solution.

They've been doing a proper *Magnificent Seven*-style training regimen, arming and practicing battle tactics, setting up traps and ambush spots, reinforcing walls, and occasionally scouting the doomsday army's forces. When the attack comes they plan to hold a fighting retreat back to the tower fortress. It's all for naught, though, because they're simply too outnumbered, and Komanov's *cyclopean revelation* will simply carve through any wall in its path. The defenders' morale is high, but they stand no chance.

Rally the Defenders

Despite his predilections for talking, Vlendam Heid won't waste time waxing philosophical with the party. He'll explain the situation as he knows. If the party hasn't scouted, Kvarti can take them to a low hill just beneath the clouds where they can observe the whole camp and witness Grandis's speech and parade.

We assume the party will be able to take on the army by themselves, albeit not all at once. However, if the party wants to involve the Bhad Rhyzhavdut militia, Heid can liaise with the city defenders for them. Of course, it's likely simpler to just have their effect be in the background, and adjust how many enemies the PCs have to face directly based on how well they deploy their allies. If you need stats, however, use these as a basis for a militia unit.

Bhad Rhyzhavdut Militia

CR 11

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf, troop)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +10

Defense

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 dodge, +6 natural)

hp 81 (6d8+54)

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3

Defensive Abilities troop traits

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee troop (2d6+4)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks rifle volley (DC 20)

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 11, **Con** 28, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +4; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25

Feats Ability Focus (rifle volley), Dodge, Toughness

Special Abilities

Rifle Volley (Ex): The squad can fire a fusillade of rifle bullets as a standard action.

This attack takes the form of up to two lines with a range of 200 feet. These lines can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. All creatures in one of these lines' areas of effect take 3d10+15 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC 23 for half).

Talking Philosophy

While the party considers what to do, Heid laments to them that Komanov's command over the army is wholly based on how she has framed the nature of the new age. He finds it a tragedy that so many are willing to throw their lives away in service to such a flawed philosophy. After all, he asks, the world *isn't* going to end, is it?

It's likely the party just goes after Komanov the old fashioned way, but they might come upon the idea of having a philosophy duel. If the army could be convinced that the world isn't ending, or if Komanov's rhetoric were undercut, her power would fade and perhaps even the hivemind would be destroyed.

If the party tries this, see Madness of Grandis (page 103)

Choose the Form of Your Destructor

Action. Tactical. Level 20+.

A variety of threats await.

The party could tackle Komanov's army in many ways. Here are some potential combat encounters. Stats for all these foes are presented in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue (page 258).

Perimeter Patrol (CR 20)

Four of these patrols circle the city, with one passing through any given area around the edge every ten minutes or so. Three frost giants ride dire polar bears, while the Vsadni rides his fimbulwinter steed, a massive horse crafted from glacial ice. They're confident, but if things look bad, the Vsadni will blow a horn or beat a drum to call for aid.

- + 1 Vsadni (Lost Rider)
- + 1 fimbulwinter steed
- + 3 frost giant riders
- + 3 dire polar bears

Camp Brawl (CR 15)

Provoke a fight in the army camp, and a few hundred hivemind-empowered warriors will swarm the party, aided by a nearby phalanx of skeletons. If the PCs can defeat these, it takes a few minutes for reinforcements to gather in sufficient numbers to risk a follow-up attack.

- + 3 doomsday army squads
- + 1 skeletal phalanx

Duel with Death (CR 19)

The party might be able to enter the camp and goad one of the Vsadni into arrogantly fighting the party all by himself. Hurtful taunting (Intimidate DC 40) can provoke such a battle. Less severe insults (Intimidate DC 30) can either yield a two-on-two duel with Betel and Yarost, or a one-on-one duel against Tzertze or Hamul. A proper offering (Knowledge (history) DC 30 to realize a mammoth meat feast was beloved by the Riders) can grant a +10 bonus to the necessary Intimidate check.



•Anti-Air Defenses (CR 22)

Should the party fly in, the hivemind conjures a gargantuan blizzard elemental. Its roars alert the four Vsadni, who mount up and ride into the sky, their steeds' hooves creating solid platforms of ice in the air for them to gallop across. The party will be able to hear their blaring horns, rumbling drums, and—discordantly—light harping from the distance as they ride in from all directions.

On the ground, a dozen frost giants with barbed harpoons hurl them up at the party's ship. It takes some a few tries, but three manage to snag the party's ship each round and begin climbing. Distracted by the blizzard elemental, the party might not hear the harpoons' impact over the roar of the storm (Perception DC 30).

Assuming the party stays about 200 feet up, three frost giants clamber aboard the party's ship each round starting on the tenth round of combat. Two rounds later Vsadni Betel and Yarost are visible two hundred feet out, and the other two Vsadni arrive five rounds after them.

- 1 endtimes blizzard elemental
- 4 Vsadni (Lost Riders)
- 4 fimbulwinter steeds
- 12 frost giant hunters

•Assassination (CR 21)

Komanov is at her most vulnerable in the underground excavation where she crafts her lord's eye into a weapon. Defeating her out of sight of her army will cause the thousands of warriors to go mad and lay waste to whatever city they're nearest to, but they'll then lose cohesion and cease their march upon Drakr.

- Grandis Komanov
- Vsadni Nebo
- Frost worm Distemper
- 2 doomsday cultists
- 1 doomsday sniper
- 1 doomsday army squad

•Overwhelming Odds (CR WTF)

A public battle before the whole army is likely a losing proposition.

- Grandis Komanov
- Komanov's Lackey
- 5 Vsadni Nebo
- Frost worm Distemper
- 4 fimbulwinter steeds

The following units are also present, and would be replaced nigh infinitely the round after the last is defeated, so there are always this many such enemies attacking the party at once.

- 1 endtimes blizzard elemental
- 1 remorhaz
- 2 doomsday cultists
- 1 doomsday sniper
- 1 skeletal phalanx
- 8 doomsday army squads
- 12 frost giant hunters

•Showdown (CR 25)

If the party convinces the army not to interfere, they might have a shot at taking on Grandis and her loyalists all at once.

- Grandis Komanov
- Komanov's Lackey
- 5 Vsadni (Lost Riders)
- 4 fimbulwinter steeds
- Frost worm Distemper
- 8 doomsday cultists
- 4 doomsday snipers

Komanov's Tactics

Each day Grandis casts *foresight* and *divination*, which gives her enough forewarning to have the following spells active at the beginning of any encounter: *death ward*, *spell resistance*, *freedom of movement*, *greater spell immunity*, *mind blank*, and *true seeing*. She'll typically open battle by conjuring a dancing greatsword, then casts *implosion*. As she concentrates on that she'll cast quickened cure spells, or perhaps trade out spell slots for quickened inflict wound spells.

If she has prepared her doomsday weapon *the cyclopean revelation*, she'll use it at the start of combat, but then must wait 4 rounds for it to recharge. (Timing can go 1—cyclopean, 2—dancing, 3—implosion, 4—implosion, 5—cyclopean, 6—dancing, 7—energy drain, 8—destruction, 9—cyclopean, etc.)

Komanov's mute lackey opens by casting *invisibility* and he tries to use his bolster ability on each of the Vsadni. If he survives that long, he uses *finger of death* and *disintegrate* (modified with his enlarge metamagic rod), or might cast *wall of force* or *dimensional anchor* for utility.

She might also benefit from the *sacrament of apotheosis* if the party let her learn that in Adventure Eight, but only if the party is not smart enough to call her by name, letting them harm her.

Devout Devouring

If Komanov believes she is going to die, she casts *miracle* to call upon the power the Voice of Rot is consuming in the Gyre. She pleads, "Devour me, Voice of Rot, and take this world with me!"

A planar rift appears, causing reality around it to bend and swirl as if being pulled into a black hole. Grandis is slowly torn to pieces and drawn into it, screaming as she dies over the course of five rounds. During that time, the earth starts to break apart and intense winds pull creatures and objects toward the rift. Every Medium or smaller creature within a mile must succeed a DC 15 Strength check each round or be knocked prone, pulled 40 feet toward the rift, and take 4d4 nonlethal damage. A creature that is drawn into the rift takes 250 damage each round (Fortitude DC 28 half). At the end of the fifth round, the rift seals shut with a slow, rumbling sussurus.

The Old Cairns

Social. Real-Time.

One Vsadni offers to betray Grandis Komanov out of spite.

If the party attacks the army but doesn't finish the job within a few hours, Tzertze, the Vsadni wardrummer, creates a dozen ghouls and sends them out as messengers. They might find the party, or just be slain by city defenders and their messages brought to the PCs. Tzertze wants to betray Grandis.

Unlike his other kin, Tzertze does not believe that Komanov is a true speaker of the end times, and is not eager to resume the mantle of warlord under her. Unwilling to stand against his kin directly, Tzertze wants to help the party kill her. His message reads:

"I apprehend you to be unmatched warriors whom I could call peers. I welcome you to a place of negotiation. Let us set aside titles and honors and speak among the ancient stones. Much time has passed since I rode through these lands, and I will ask of you what has changed since the Three-Eyed Knight walked the Star Road. Perhaps the Speaker of Ice and Snow will perish before this world will."

A DC 30 Knowledge (arcana or geography) check (Skyseers automatically know this) reveals that Tzertze refers to an ancient method of timekeeping using the constellations. A hilly region across the Volgir River is home to an ancient ring of plateaus—the Old Cairns. Centuries ago giants crafted these eight-hundred foot megaliths as an immense astronomical clock. Later, dwarves and humans buried their dead among the massive stones. Now the center of the ring, some thousand feet across, is filled with a snow-capped forest.

Friendly Traitor

Tzertze is old-fashioned but polite. He comes alone, save for his steed, and volunteers the essence of Komanov's plan: excavate the eye, craft a mighty weapon that will send souls to her master, then destroy every city in Drakr and order her army to kill itself. Tzertze is simply bored with the idea, because so far he doesn't see any real challenge or difficult battle.

Tzertze begins as Unfriendly to the party, and needs to be offered something for a Diplomacy check to have any chance of making him him Friendly or Helpful. If told of the Ob's ritual, he's offended by the arrogance needed to rewrite the cosmos. He could be enticed to fight alongside the party, either in the Gyre or currently against the armies invading Risur.

Generally, a DC 25 Diplomacy check makes Tzertze friendly enough that he'll stay out of any battle against the party, and will tell them the powers and personalities of his warlord brethren and the array of the army. A DC 30 check will make him helpful enough that he'll mark them with a symbol—a bloody-eyed skull with a green forked tongue—visible only to them and the frost giants, indicating they're not to be harmed. He'll also create an opening for them to get into the camp to challenge one of the other Vsadni, or even the tunnels under the Old City to assassinate Grandis.

It takes a DC 35 check to get him to agree to join the fight against his brothers.

Negotiating in Poor Faith

Only after the party thinks they have a deal does Tzertze start to add complications.

Oh, he adds, he also wants a harem. He'll figure out the specifics of how he'll actually have sex with his new body, but he wants twenty women from Bhadrhyzhavdut to serve him. And he wants this city as his, so he can use the tower as his fortress. He promises he'll let the citizens live and do dumb farm stuff. Finally, he wants all his fellow warlords' magic weapons as trophies.

Refusing these requests imposes a -10 penalty to the party's Diplomacy check, but it's possible to convince him that the world isn't a place for such domineering tyranny. He is, after all, old-fashioned, and is just doing the sorts of evil things he thinks are right. He could be persuaded to be less direct in his villainy, and instead just attract lady followers.

Fighting Tzertze

If attacked, Tzertze first *dimension doors* away to the top of one of the plateaus, and curses at the party for being petty and mediocre. He hopes to goad the party into approaching, then calls down a *meteor swarm*. In addition to the normal threat, this also triggers an avalanche, as rocks and snow from all the plateaus fall upon the center of the ring, counting as the 'bury zone.' Anyone within a hundred feet of the plateaus but outside the ring is caught in the 'slide zone.' Tzertze surfs down it and enters melee.

Characters in the bury zone take 8d6 points of damage, or half that amount if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. They are subsequently buried. Characters in the slide zone take 3d6 points of damage, or no damage if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. Those who fail their saves are buried, and are considered paralyzed.

Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, he must make a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

Thereafter, he'll either try to flee on his steed if still outnumbered, or will descend to coup de grace buried foes or possibly give a stand-up fight to a PC if only one is standing.





Excavating the Eye

Exploration. Real-Time.

The radical eschatologist rants philosophically to her minions as she completes her doomsday device, giving the party a chance to catch her by surprise.

The planned site of Bhadr Rhyzhavdut's rail station sits along the Volgir River, and while track has been laid to make transport of industrial goods easier, the actual station itself is just a hole in the ground for now. A well-guarded hole in the ground, patrolled by the frost worm steed (named Distemper) of Nebo, leader of the Vsadni, as well as a detachment of loyal soldiers with experience in mining glaciers.

Excavation Surface Guards (CR 14)

- ♦ Frost worm Distemper
- ♦ 1 doomsday army squad



Cranes around the site have dug out huge cubes of ice, allowing access to an ancient burial chamber in the bedrock. It is here that Grandis Komanov retrieves the eye of the Voice of Rot and crafts it into a doomsday weapon.

Sanctum Defenders (CR 21)

- ♦ Grandis Komanov
- ♦ Komanov's lackey
- ♦ Vsadni Nebo
- ♦ 2 doomsday cultists
- ♦ 1 doomsday sniper



The Sanctum of the Bleak Gate

This chamber was long-ago flooded by the river, then frozen each winter. Originally the chamber was effectively a two-hundred foot cube of open space, supported by columns of natural rock woven with calcified corpses of dead warriors. The top thirty feet of each column is still exposed, since the water did not flood the entire chamber. From that level, wide passages of ice have been cut out, each tall enough for the Vsadni Nebo to move through them, all the way down to the bottom of the chamber. Within the small glacier the eye glows, and every surface glistens with moisture and reflected light.

The eye itself was contained in a case of adamantite, then placed into a pocket dimension and sealed in cursed stone. Bypassing those defenses takes Komanov until the end of day one, at which point she retrieves the ancient eye. It takes her a further six days to build and attune her doomsday weapon. She sleeps each night in a *mage's sanctum* cast by her mute lackey.

The sanctum contains a small force, making it ideal for an assassination. More than that, though, it is here that Grandis feels comfortable boasting about her true goals, and those of her master. If the party is able to get down here without the surface guards sounding an alarm, they can easily listen from the top of the chamber as Komanov rants and rambles.

If your party is the type to enjoy stealth, you could have a few extra guards lurking around the sanctum, which the party can take out quietly as Komanov talks.

The Nature of the Apocalypse

As she works on the doomsday weapon, Komanov boasts to Nebo, mostly to hear herself talk:

"I should be angry. I hate warmth. I adore ice. It's what brought me my prosperity—you could ask my lackey, but he lacks the tongue to tell the tale. I was a caravan guide, and he and many other fat, chatty merchants were with me when a weeks-long blizzard trapped us in the mountains. It was my magic alone that protected them from freezing to death. Believe that, my magic, keeping those arrogant dragon-minded misers alive while I was being paid a pittance.

"My family always claimed we were descended from you or your brethren. We had the blood of warlords. But modern temperance had led us into pathetic poverty. I spent long evenings reading a book of philosophy—old man Heid's treatise—and I got to thinking of how my life might end. I would be damned if I would leave this world a failure. Well I say, I demanded my fair payment, and one of the merchants did not much appreciate that. I think it was when I ate his tongue that the others changed their minds.

"As I say, I adore ice. That blizzard made me rich, and killed everyone who could testify upon my sins. Warmth serves me little.

"But oh how it warms my heart to see the morbid desperation of our army. They see the death of the world and beg me for a way to have a twinkle of meaning before the end. And the Tundar? Ho ho, those giants believe anything. Thank their pride for keeping them from learning our tongue and realizing what jiggery pokery I've fed them.

"Eh, I do them a favor. If they die, their souls linger now, until such time as the plane of ruins passes between our world and the Gyre. No point to such a death. No afterlife, no value in a soul. The Ob, however they changed the world, they tore the plane of dreams from its place as our moon and cast it to the edge of the night. The undiscovered tomorrow which lies beyond the gate lies there no more. The green maze that traps those seeking their final end is itself dissolving in the starless sky.

"But these fools who fight for me, they pay the bill for my apotheosis. Our lord, as his coils tighten around the arc of time and draw it toward the Gyre, shall feast upon their souls. And he shall reward me with godhood. This frozen planet will be torn to dust, and I will walk forever on through the heavens.

"First, of course, we must win this war. I'm pleased to have you warlords, to finish the final battle. What greater reward could you desire than to be the last victor, standing atop a world of corpses?

"Godhood, I suppose. But that's just for me. Betray me and the Voice of Rot shall snap your soul back right away. As Heid said, we must design our affairs to achieve good endings. And now everything goes according to my plans."





Madness of Grandis

Social. Real-Time.

The fullest victory will be to destroy not just her army, but the cause it fights for.

The party might challenge Grandis to a philosophical debate. Why not? Earlier they had a rap battle with a faerie and a pirate astronaut. If the party realizes how much Komanov disagrees with her troops, or how most of the troops are not truly committed to her ideology, just desperate, they could realize this is the easiest way to defeat her.

To attempt such a debate, however, the party would need to get everyone's attention, which would probably entail interrupting the daily carnage parade. This would prompt at least some fighting as the Vsadni tried to kill the intruders. But if they have a way to be heard by the whole army and can get a moment to talk, the PCs can attempt a Diplomacy check (DC 30) to convince Komanov's followers that their dear leader ought to debate them—for the honor of the army, if nothing else. Drakr's politics are tightly wound up in philosophical debates, so she won't dare refuse and lose the army's absolute trust.

Format

Drakran tradition divides such debates into five 'rounds' for each speaker, typically limited to ten minutes each. Given the short tempers and urgent matters of war, precedent exists to instead have brief exhortations of just a minute or so, with occasional interruptions from each side. A free-for-all is also fine.

Heid on their Side

Vlendam Heid might accompany the party, but he has no combat skills to speak of, and so the party would need to protect him from the Vsadni. Or he could coach them before they go out (or via *telepathic bond* or the like). If he's with the party, you can let him roll a Diplomacy check (d20+25) in addition to whichever PC speaks, and use the higher result.

Five Reasons

Komanov is more of a rhetorical speaker than a scholar, and so she crafts her arguments in a way to capture the emotions of her followers. She doesn't care so much about logic or consequences. The five key points in her speech are:

- ♦ The world is going to end, so personal consequences are immaterial. People should do what they want.
- ♦ The history and traditions of the world are personal and worthy of respect, and so she wants everyone to fulfill a great destiny to give the world a fine ending.
- ♦ The best way to do that is to tear down all the corrupt and weak who kept the world from achieving its highest greatness. In this case, that would be the political leaders of Drakr and their followers.
- ♦ To rile up the army, she details a half-dozen high profile actions by those in power, which offended the masses, some ancient, some recent.
- ♦ She ends by comparing the army to various mighty heroes from myth and legend, and comparing the party to cowards, tricksters, and the same politicians who they are out to destroy.

For each point, the party can attempt a specific check (DC 30) to recognize a flaw in her argument and figure out how to properly present it to the audience in a way they'll grasp. Then whoever speaks for the party can make a Diplomacy check (DC 40), with a +5 bonus if they identified her argument's flaw.

They gain a further +2 bonus to each Diplomacy check if they can repeat Komanov's insults about the army (or succeed a DC 30 Bluff check to make them up even if they didn't hear them). They take a -2 penalty if the speaker is both not from Drakr and not an eschatologist.

- ♦ **Knowledge (planes).** The world isn't assured to end. While planar mechanics are complicated, it's possible to explain what happened and how they intend to fix it.
- ♦ **Knowledge (history or nobility).** Taking a nihilist tack, the party can recount the stories of other once-great leaders or heroes, figures who fell from power and are nearly forgotten by history. This highlights that there never is a single narrative in world affairs, just a constant roil of different elements rising and falling.
- ♦ **Knowledge (religion).** Every religion, nation, and family has stories of martyrs who, when faced with an unavoidable death, chose to maintain their ideals rather than seek revenge. Comparing Grandis to historical traitors can show that her path is the wrong one.
- ♦ **Knowledge (local).** Naming a variety of positive influences in modern Drakr, as well as neutral groups who will suffer at the army's hand, will make them less fanatical.
- ♦ **Perform (any).** Komanov has the weight of myth on her side, in no small part due to her having musical warlords proclaiming her majesty. A grand performance by a PC can put them on the same footing as Komanov.

If the party succeeds three of the five Diplomacy checks, the army is divided and the hivemind destroyed. A handful of soldiers will still fight by Komanov's side, but others will fight against them, leaving the party to only really have to worry about the Vsadni and a few cultists.

Four successes, and the entire army stands aside. Five successes, and they turn on their former leader and help the party tear her apart. If she is slain, the Lost Riders (except for Tzertze, if he agreed to stay out of a fight) are pulled into the rift created when she calls upon the Voice of Rot, and they are annihilated.

Conclusion

If the party stops Komanov's army, word will spread naming the PCs as saviors and heroes, and within a week Drakr halts its invasion of Risur. If the party completely discredits her and pulls that off before Bhadr Rhyzhavdut falls, the army stops immediately and aids Risur against the other invaders.

The eye of the Voice of Rot still functions as a mighty, destructive beam, but the party won't be able to use its wraith-creating power since the fey titan isn't a fan of theirs. However if they bring the eye with them to the Gyre, they'll dramatically improve their chances in a fight against the doomsday serpent.

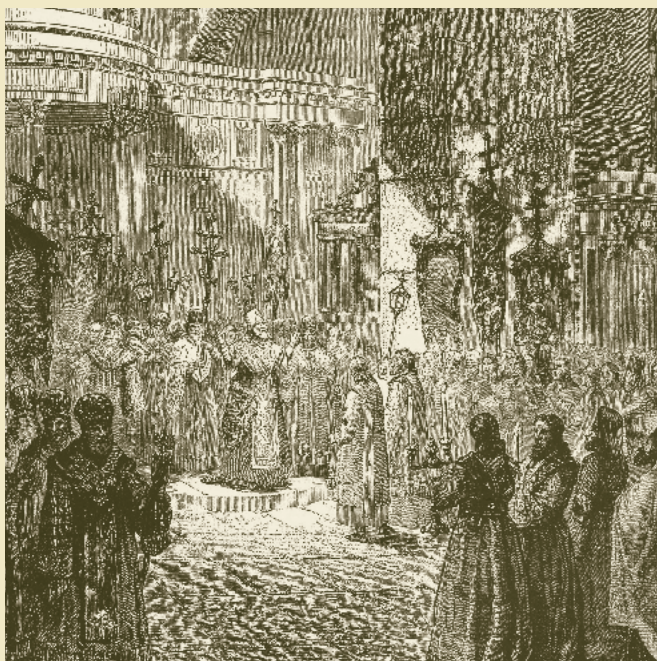
If the party fails and Drakr falls to Komanov's army, the cult's leader will appear by the side of her lord in Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven* as they await the end of the world.

ACT THREE: Trial of the Century

In the new world order, not even the gods are free from judgment. The *sacrament of apotheosis*, once a deeply buried secret, has fallen into the hands of former godhand Vitus Sigismund. He holds public trials of the various gods of the Clergy, which always end in a sentence of death, then uses the ritual to transform their high priests into avatars for the execution.

Amidst this chaos, the party comes seeking details of the Axis Seal ritual so they can undo the changes made by the Obscurati. The Ob kept a copy of the ritual in the Grand Librarium of Alais Primos, but to open the extradimensional vault that contains it, the party will need to make a deal with the devil.

Okay, technically a demon. Possibly a tanar'ri.



Pyres of Judgment Day

Exploration. Montage.

Alais Primos is burning itself to death.

Morgan Cippiano, head of the Family in Flint, will want to accompany the party. If they do not bring him along, he'll arrange transportation on his own and will have a *sending* relayed through Harkover Lee, asking them to meet him at the Lamplano Pescateria restaurant near Vanale Cemetery when they arrive.

Welcome to Alais Primos

Alais Primos is framed by a crescent of verdant hills and low mountains, foremost among them the volcano **Enzyo Mons** which rises high to the south. Half a mile tall and three miles from the city center, Enzyo Mons is accessed by a trail of shrines and chapels, with one devoted to every god in the Clericist pantheon, no matter how minor. At the edge of the caldera stands the Cathedral of Triegenes, devoted to the founder of the Clergy who they claim ascended to godhood upon death.

A stained glass window above the cathedral's rostrum is continually back-lit by the glow of the lava in the caldera, and a broad balcony behind the cathedral overlooks that pit of fire. Traditionally, priests have held ceremonies to cast into the volcano any items believed to be possessed of evil. They also cast in offerings of gold and jewels, though they don't throw as far; a tier just beneath the balcony, out of sight of the public, catches these valuables, which are recovered later.

The mountain is not particularly tall in the grand scheme of things, but its obsidian black face stands out starkly, making the rolling green hills around it seem even more beautiful by comparison. Due to the prayers of the faithful it has not erupted in over 700 years.

City Layout

Aqueducts feed water down from the hills into canals, which flow through the city. Alais Primos is roughly divided into four sections: three sprawling harbors along the coast, the cathedral district which is circumscribed by the old city walls, the common neighborhoods that ring the cathedrals, and finally the sheltered farmlands that lie between the city and the hills. Beyond the semi-circle of hills and mountains many more small towns and farms lie scattered, while a few beautiful churches rise up from garden islands just off the coast.

Hundreds of small chapels dot the city, normally places for confession and prayer, but today the squares in front of nearly every chapel are filled with burning pyres. A constant stream of smoke rises from Enzyo Mons; this blocks out the sky, but the dull orange glow of the city's fires reflects off it, making it seem like the city is trapped inside of an oven.

Throughout the cathedral district and beyond, church windows are destroyed, shrines defaced, and black banners hang from rooftops. The bitter scent of funerary incense rides harsh on the wind, mingling with sulfurous fumes.

NAMES OF GODS

by Ryan Nock

In keeping with E.N. Publishing tradition, we generally don't name gods in our settings unless they play a prominent role that might not be filled by standard fantasy pantheons. *PATHFINDER* and *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* come with pre-assumed deities, so we let groups use whatever gods they are comfortable with. I've always been a fan of Wee Jas from Greyhawk and Calistria from Golarion, but when publishing for multiple systems it's easier if we just have the gods be vague.

For *ZEITGEIST*, that means we've only named Triegenes and Srasama. (We might've tossed in one or two other gods along the way, but nothing really significant.)

That now poses a small problem as we get to an adventure where specific gods are being executed. (Or more specifically, the human concept of that god is being killed, eliminating its psycho-socio-cultural power.) Since we don't know what deity names you're using, we just list gods in this adventure by their focus. You should probably have specific god names for each of them.

In this setting's metaphysics, it's never been clear whether gods are real, and all instances of witnessed divinity are actually due to the *sacrament of apotheosis* converting massed faith into godlike power. Divine spellcasters, at least in my mind, get their power by tapping into that shared faith, though it's certainly possible to access such magic simply by sharing morality without necessarily sharing a specific religion.

With that in mind, if you have a paladin or cleric PC, by all means, have the mob threaten a god the PC worships instead of Triegenes. If a PC's god dies, the PC is probably tough enough to survive the backlash, and come Adventure Thirteen might even take that god's place, ascending via the *sacrament* or some other transcendent power.



TIMELINE OF EXECUTIONS

Every other day a new god is executed, and each victim only empowers the burgeoning evil in the volcano Enzyo Mons. When it erupts, each god so slain grants it new powers and abilities.

In addition to the gods listed below, Velkali goddess of oases will be executed the first time the party goes to witness one of these trials, and the god of music will be executed a day later. Just bump the dates a bit to make room. If the party waits too long, Vitus eventually executes even Triegenes, and the god trials end as the city of Alais Primos is consumed in lava.

- **Day 0:** God of the night sky. **Blindsight** 120 ft.
- **Day 1:** God of beasts and magnolias. **Immune** poison, and hellhounds are birthed from the lava to chase down fleeing innocents.
- **Day 3:** God of sun and archery. **Sunburst** at-will (caster level 25th).
- **Day 5:** God of stone and pottery. **Senses** tremorsense 120 ft.
- **Day 7:** God of the sea and tidepools. A massive cloud of steam from the canals surrounds the dragon, providing total concealment beyond thirty feet. When the dragon takes any hostile action, this steam fades until it spends a standard action to recreate it.
- **Day 9:** God of storms and weddings. **Resist** electricity 15.
- **Day 11:** God of winds and mountain air. **Fly** 120 ft. (clumsy).
- **Day 13:** God of forges and evocation. **Aura** blistering heat 30 ft. Creatures who begin their turn in the aura are affected by *heat metal*, allowing no save.
- **Day 15:** God of the love and healing. **Fast healing** 15.
- **Day 17:** God of fortune. **Aura** shifting fortune 60 ft. All enemies in the aura roll twice for all d20 rolls and take the worse result until they get a 17 or higher on the lowest roll, after which they are immune to the aura for one day.
- **Day 19:** God of time and synthesis. **Regeneration** 10 (force). This replaces its fast healing abilities.
- **Day 21:** God of children's games. **The floor is lava.** All stone surfaces within 30 ft. of the dragon become molten. A creature that touches the lava takes 2d6 damage, and damage continues for 1d3 rounds after exposure. A creature that falls in the lava dies, no save.

Harbor Docks

While thousands have fled the city, even more have been drawn by news of the god trials, and so the docks are overflowing with ships. Nearly all the military vessels have already departed for the invasion of Risur, and the city doesn't have any forces strong enough to maintain order.

Common Neighborhoods

Tens of thousands of people live and work in the city, and they can take *regattos*—long rowed barges—down canals between neighborhoods.

The Family crime syndicate is spread among dozens of different mansions and businesses, but its leadership currently gathers at the Lamplano Pescateria, a canal-side restaurant specializing in seafood, which lies adjacent to the Vanale Cemetery. The location is not simply scenic, it's also a civic service; Family bravuras keep watch on the cemetery, which has spawned the occasional walking dead or possessed sepulcher, since the old *hallow* spells are fading.

Worse, grave-diggers are kept busy as hundreds of people inexplicably die each day. So far the public has not realized that the execution of their gods has been killing devout worshippers.

Cathedral District

Towering cathedrals with grand domes and black-veined marble loom as ominous landmarks between streets marked with shrines on every corner and at the edge of every canal. In the district center, the Plaza Hyperion connects four great civic buildings. Itself a wonder of architecture and landscaping, the plaza's mosaics depict the rise of Triegenes and his defeat of the demonocracy, with a central rosette displaying his ascendance to godhood encircled with the fish that the humble fisherman once caught. Arbors of grapes and honeysuckle lining a circular canal once provided shade from the hot sun, but now the plants have wilted.

At the plaza's north and south ends rise academies devoted to the study of war and to magic, while the eastern end is home to the ecclesiastical governmental palace known as Praetorio Urbis. At the western end squats the Jenevah Grand Librarium, the largest repository of written knowledge in the world.

Every other day at noon, Legate Savina Tullius holds god trials in the plaza, with thousands in attendance.



TOWN CRIER

Wherever the party first arrives in the city, they might hear a town crier shouting out the news.

"Open your eyes, citizens! The gods protect us no longer. Bear witness to their failures, for they are all around you. Behold the theft of our sun. Taste the bitter fruit of wilted vines. Smell the soot of the hells themselves, rising up to claim us!

"Bring these false gods to face the people's judgment for their crimes, and bring their snake-tongued priests to Plaza Hyperion. A generous bounty awaits champions of the people. The Prime Cardinal has fled justice, but every other bishop and hierophant must be brought forth to face their accusers.

"Even the Arch Secula, hidden away in the library, shall reap what she has sown. Though she claims distance from the governance of our religion, her hands reek of the same filth as the hierarchs. The greatest bounty of all shall go to those who bring her in.

"And if you cannot hunt the gods, fear not! You can still levy judgment. At the twelfth hour, join our march to the crown of Enzyo Mons, where all present can help decide the fate of the prophets who lied to us. Testify to their crimes, and we shall cast their evil forms into the maw of the mountain!"



WHEN THE SHEPHERD FLEES THE FLOCK

The nation of Crisillyir is an elected ecclesiastical monarchy, where church and state are one. Vitus Sigismund's ideal target for the *sacrament of apotheosis* would be Prime Cardinal Titus Banderesso, head of the Clergy (if he survived adventure ten). The godhand and his followers are armed with a mountain of evidence tying the prime cardinal to the Family criminal organization. But he has been smuggled out of the city, paying for his freedom with church relics and indulgences.

While the office of prime cardinal deals with matters of the faith, the arch secula keeps the nation of Crisillyir running, and until recent events, did so quite well. With Banderesso gone, Arch Secula Natalia Degaspere has become the primary target (and blame) for the nation's woes. She has taken refuge in the Jenevah Grand Librarian, since it is still a building that carries some authority, but doesn't have the strongly religious overtones of the main palace.

The Crux of the Problem

Exploration/Social. Montage.

Saving Alais Primos is ultimately secondary to the goal of retrieving the ritual of the Axis Seal. That ritual is held in a pocket dimension vault within the Jenevah Grand Librarian.

Unlike the Crypta Hereticarum (Vault of Heresies), which contains magic, texts, and beings anathema to the faith, the vault of the Jenevah Grand Librarian simply contains magic of great power which the Clergy has tucked away for a rainy day. Much of its contents were released to arm the forces invading Risur.

The vault is directly beneath the central atrium of the library, a location normally visible to dozens of people on three floors. Reading desks surround it on ground level, and overhead balconies of the bookshelves look down upon it. Nine of the statues in the area directly face the atrium floor, magically watching it.

Normally if the Clergy leadership wish to open the vault they close and secure the library first.

If any PC occupied the body of Ken Don in adventure seven, they are intimately aware of the vault's defenses, but would still need to make checks to bypass them.

Jenevah Grand Librarian

The main doors are watched by a pair of towering basalt statues of scholars, which each contain bound dread wraiths. Compelled by divine magic, their only duty is to subdue would-be thieves. Additionally, as honored employees of the library near a death by old age, many volunteer to have the wraiths extract their souls so they can be bound to the building as Bibliogeists. Serving as shelvees, guides, and janitors, they can sense the presence of living creatures, and will shriek an alarm if anyone moves invisibly through the library. Similarly, slivers of the souls of scribes who died as children have been woven into threads and placed in the binding of many of the more valuable books in the collection, so the bibliogeists can sense their movements as well.

Layers of anti-divination magic have been crafted into the building, which created a dull muffled hum. Readers praise the white noise for helping them concentrate, and it makes it less likely a spellcaster will accidentally discover the whole building is basically undead.

Atrium Floor

The green marble floor of the atrium is traced with gold filigree resembling stitching, and in the center of the floor is what appears at first glance to be a decorative keyhole pattern. However, a person can channel positive energy in order to transform it into an actual keyhole, after which a 3-ft. key must be inserted. The real key is kept in the government offices at Praetorio Urbis, though the guards watching it are short-staffed and nervous about the massive crowds outside. Priests who serve as librarians can conjure a *spiritual weapon* in the form of that key, or the lock can be picked, though this is difficult.

Picking the holy lock requires a Disable Device check (DC 40), though if a character happens to have huge lockpicks he gets a +5 bonus. Each failure triggers one of the following cascade of countermeasures. Each of these has a caster level 15th and lasts for one hour.



- ♦ *Wall of force* shaped into a dome trapping anyone within 10 ft. of the keyhole.
- ♦ *Dimensional lock* affecting the area inside the dome of force. This does not interfere with the creatures summoned into the dome by the library.
- ♦ *Deeper darkness*.
- ♦ *Magic mouth* ordering you to cease your tampering or face your doom.
- ♦ *Insect plague* summons five wasp swarms.
- ♦ *Magic mouth* reciting a prayer for your soul.
- ♦ *Blade barrier*. This remains up for an hour, filling the entire dome.

From the Vault

When the vault is unlocked, the ‘stitching’ on the floor slowly breaks apart over the course of three rounds, at which point the floor folds away into some extradimensional space, revealing a ten-foot-wide opening with stairs spiraling down twenty feet. At the bottom of the stairs lies a room that contains the desired item. The floor remains open for five minutes, then stitches itself shut, trapping in stasis anyone still inside.

However, the greatest defense of the vault is that only one item is ever accessible at a time. Each item exists in a distinct demi-plane. Moreover, the vault will actually be empty if it is not opened in the presence of two people—one who must be the highest secular authority of the nation in Alais Primos, and one who is the highest religious authority in the city. Typically this is the Arch Secula and the Prime Cardinal.

Even if those two figures are present, and the vault is unlocked, the nine watching statues around the atrium sense whether either of those two are affected by charms, compulsions, possessions, illusions, and the like. As a countermeasure against effects like *mind blank* or *mislead*, each statue uses *detect thoughts*, and the two figures must each acknowledge that they are of sound mind and not coerced.

If the two figures are present but are not acting of their own free will, the stairs instead lead down to a prison plane. It’s merely twenty feet down, but upward travel loops infinitely, making it impossible to reach the exit without dispelling the effect or using some manner of planar travel.

Negotiations

While a heist is possible, otherwise the party will somehow have to convince both Arch Secula Natalia Degaspore and the godhand Vitus Sigismund to let them into the vault.

Sigismund will not allow it unless the party can prove trustworthy, and that at the very least entails helping him finish executing his pantheon, all the way through up to Triegenes. If they lie to him and manage to trick him into helping open the vault, they still need Degaspore’s approval.

Degaspore was a low-tier member of the Obscurati who was promoted after the great eclipse. She knows what the Axis Seal ritual can do, and realizes how important it is for the Ob’s goals to keep it out of the PCs’ hands. That said, she’s not eager to watch thousands of people die in the god trials. So far she’s kept her mouth shut and avoided attracting the ire of the godhand, but if she thinks the party has a chance to stop Sigismund, she would demand they save her city before she’ll help them.

Of course, if they come with Sigismund in tow and demand the ritual, the arch secula will perform some quick mental calculus, and will probably rat the party out, explaining to the godhand what the ritual really does. She pretends to be helping Sigismund avoid trickery, but she really hopes the party will be forced to fight him.

If the party kills Sigismund (and Legate Tullius and his other key followers), they can put pretty much any priest in charge of the religion, at least long enough to fool the vault. Likewise if Degaspore dies, a member of the Family can readily claim to be the secular authority. The watching statues around the atrium aren’t actually intelligent, so committing murder and taking someone’s office right in front of them isn’t a problem.

What is a problem is that Sigismund has already prepared the *sacrament of apotheosis* for himself, so as he dies he will take on the power of Triegenes, and his demise will cause the long-trapped evil in Enzyo Mons to awaken.

The Ritual of the Axis Seal

We’ll explain details of the ritual in the next adventure. For now, it should suffice to say that the ritual is recorded in a heavy tome, with notes in multiple languages, sheets of traced symbols from Ancient ruins, and a complex mix of instructions and suppositions that will take a week of effort to piece together.

Holy Family

Social. Real-Time.

The criminal organization known as the Family is once again breaking the law—this time by keeping their faith in a time of apostasy.

If he comes with the party, Morgan Cippiano advises they meet with the heads of the Family at the Lamplano Pescateria. If he isn’t with the party, he finds his own way to Alais Primos. (The Family has a lot of old wealth and contingency plans; a *wind walk* scroll gets a mage to Flint who can use a *teleport* scroll to get them both back in a jiffy.)

The three-story stone restaurant has a wide lawn on three sides and a canal on the fourth. Guards patrol the grounds, several of them divine spellcasters. Warm lanterns try to keep a pleasant air about the place, but the mood is wary. Eyes watch the nearby cemetery for disturbed graves. Approaching strangers are ordered to stop so a paladin among the guards can detect for evil; though the Clergy produces few paladins and they would normally never consort with the Family, this crisis makes strange bedfellows.

Donna Aneenya

A half-dozen heads of different Family households work out of the restaurant, but they defer to **Donna Aneenya**. A burly woman in her sixties, the Donna wears her white wedding dress and has adorned herself with silver chains and pendants devoted to various gods. Foremost among them is a malachite violin, holy symbol of the god of musicians; her late husband played the violin at their wedding. She is taking a stand for piety, and in a life where she’s ordered murder, theft, and violence, the closest she ever felt to her church was on her wedding day.



Morgan can introduce the party to the gathered Dons, and he emphasizes the mighty foes the PCs have defeated. One wiry old Don, **Don Stoyan**, mutters that they sound as preposterous as stories about Triegenes pulling the sea a thousand miles inland so his navy could attack a demon's tower.

Donna Aneenya shushes him, and she points out that her grandson can teleport now; it's a damned hassle since he'd only just started toddling before the great eclipse. Now he keeps bursting into the kitchen and bothering her when she's cooking. If a wee one-year-old bambino can do that, she'll believe what Morgan says of the party.

Things Got Dark

The Dons have fingers in every part of the city, and they've been coordinating ways to keep order, using generosity when possible, broken noses when necessary. Donna Aneenya can give the party a brief synopsis of Crisillyir's woes, and what is beyond their control.

The stars vanished, many hierarchs killed themselves and left suicide notes claiming they had lied about the gods, but the military was able to keep order. Then Prime Cardinal Titus Banderesso left for Danor to meet with this Obscurati group that claimed they were trying to save the world from Risur. Things became unstable, and the high priest of the goddess of the night sky claimed that he would call forth a miracle to fix the heavens. That, of course, did not work, and he was dragged out to Plaza Hyperion by a mob. They were about to just kill the man, but then a godhand appeared.

The man, Vitus Sigismund, explained that the gods may have failed them, but the people of Crisillyir should not follow the gods' lead. He said they should not punish the priest, but the goddess herself. He stalled the mob's anger for a day, and it seemed like perhaps he was trying to make peace. But he demanded the remaining ecclesiarchs send a lawyer to defend the goddess, and anger rose. Riots were just starting when Legate Savina Tullius came to the plaza and announced that the government was silent and offered no defense for the goddess, but she would advocate for the people.

They held that first trial in the square, and Legate Tullius made a case that the goddess must have been negligent in letting the night sky go dark. The high priest said the accusations were a lie, and that some evil force had overpowered his goddess, but that she would return. That was when Sigismund spoke to the crowd. He claimed he could call the god down and deliver the people's judgment. The crowd cried out that the goddess was guilty, and should be executed.

Sigismund then called for the crowd to follow him and bring the priest to the top of Enzyo Mons. Vitus said he would use the power of Triegenes—the man who became a god—to transform the priest into his goddess. And to the crowd's astonishment, after an hour-long hike up the mountain to the edge of the caldera, he did just that. He slaughtered some animals (and found preserved dragon entrails in a musty old museum), painted the priest with their blood, then performed a spell.

The priest transformed, grew, and where shadows fell across his body stars could be seen through him. Then he fully became the form of his goddess, but was still reeling in confusion. The godhand pronounced that the goddess had been found guilty and was sentenced to death. And then he struck the huge woman and hurled her over the ledge into the volcano. The crowd looked down as she fell into lava and vanished. For a moment a beam of holy light rose up to the clouds, but then it guttered and died.

OBSCURATI INFILTRATION

One of the Dons, a scheming cleric of the god of time named Don Stoyan, is working with the Obscurati. He reports to them with *sending*, but he's not going to make any hostile move against the party. He dies on Day 19 if the party lets his god be executed.

His only real role is that if the Family is in a position to assign leaders of the new Crisillyir, he'll campaign for one of his allies, **Elva Bentoni**, who will follow Ob orders and refuse to cancel the invasion of Risur. Elva is a popular and beautiful half-elf athlete and celebrity, chosen to act as a figurehead, but she desires to have actual power. If she rises to power, she might come to the party looking for boons from Risur in exchange for outing Don Stoyan and others whom she knows are in with the Ob.

And Then Things Got Worse

The very next day, the military got orders to launch for the shores of Risur, to aid the other nations in an invasion. (The Prime Cardinal may have returned briefly, if he survived Adventure Ten, but has since been smuggled out.) With no military to keep the peace and no head of state to try to control the mob, the city became gripped with a mad desire to punish more gods.

Just how many gods have been killed depends on when the party shows up, but typically one has been executed every other day since the start of the adventure. (See the sidebar *Timeline of Executions*, page 105.)

The Family can help those people who are afraid of the chaos, but those who revel in it are mostly beyond their power to control. The crime syndicate doesn't have enough strength to fight back. They considered assassination, but they know Sigismund shared the spell he cast with others who are loyal to him. Removing him would just incite the mob more.

To make matters worse, there seems to be some strange plague or curse afoot. People are dying without rhyme or reason. The prevailing theory is that as the gods die, spells their priests had cast have ended, and so old wards that held demonic forces and evil ghosts locked away have faltered. (The second part is basically accurate, but most of the deaths are being caused by backlash against devout followers of those gods who have been executed.)

A Friend in the Family

Donna Aneenya isn't used to talking to heads of state, but she has a bold proposal. There is close to no government in Crisillyir now. If the party can help save the city, the Family will be well positioned to either run the country, or decide who does. And they would owe a huge debt of gratitude to Risur.

On a more pressing matter, if the party wants to get the Axis Seal ritual, the Donna would be quite willing to lend a helping hand. Give her a day and she's sure *someone* in her extended family has detailed knowledge of the Grand Librarian, since rare spellbooks can be quite a fine heist. See Library Heist (page 112) if the party goes this route.

Saving the City

How to save Alais Primos? The dons are in disagreement. Before they share their possible plans with the party, the Donna asks if the PCs have any ideas.

After the party proposes, Aneenya lists the three main contenders they have come up with:

- ♦ **Coordinated Strike.** Audacious plan to get close to the godhand Sigismund, his main ally Legate Tullius, and a half dozen other priests who allegedly can cast the godhood ritual, and then kill them all at the same time.
- ♦ **Evacuate to Sid Minos.** This would require rescuing dozens of high-ranking priests who are in hiding so Sigismund wouldn't have anyone to use as the focus of his spell, and then fleeing to Sid Minos which apparently is more peaceful than here. The hope is that the fervor will peter out.
- ♦ **Not Guilty.** So far the populace has found every god guilty of doing more bad than good. This risky plan would encourage Sigismund to place the god Triegenes—the most beloved and respected god of the pantheon, who is nearly above reproach—on trial. And then they'd have to manage to win a not guilty verdict, which won't be easy, considering how much of a firebrand Legate Tullius is.

If the party goes for Coordinated Strike plan, they would be expected to handle Vitus Sigismund, who will probably have allies close at hand, as well as divine intervention on his behalf. However, Donna Aneenya won't approve this plan until someone goes to try to talk the godhand out of continuing the trials. He is an honorable man, and it is bad etiquette to kill a decent man without looking him in the eyes and trying diplomacy first.

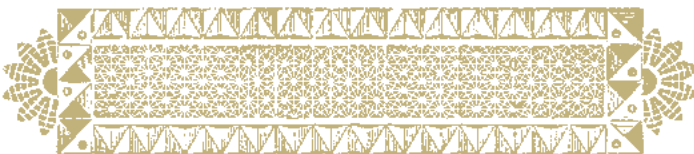
The Evacuate plan is not particularly dramatic itself, but it would necessitate a heist in the Grand Librarium since Sigismund would not approve the opening of the vault.

The Not Guilty plan is the one we presume as most likely, and its main snags are that the PCs would need solid evidence to defend the history of Triegenes, and that someone would have to stand as proxy for the god. The former can be found in Triegenes's biography in the Crypta Hereticarum (which the Arch Secula knows about). For the latter, Morgan Cippiano will volunteer.

In Exchange

Normally a huge angry crowd surrounds the Jenevah Grand Librarium. The Family can smuggle the party into the building through secret underground tunnels, avoiding the supernatural defenses at its main entrances. Beyond that, they have the layout of the library and know some of its defenses.

During their time in the city, god hunters seeking bounties on priests might accost the party. While the PCs probably don't need the help, Family bravuras who are shadowing them will come out to scare off the god hunters.



Later Developments

As detailed in The Whole World in His Hand below, the first god trial the party witnesses should be that of Velkali, a goddess of travelers and oases. We want there to be low stakes, a god no one is particularly invested in, so it's more likely the party will witness what's happening and then talk to Vitus Sigismund afterward, instead of jumping into battle. (If they fight early, though, so be it.)

However, the day after Velkali's trial, word reaches them that the mob plans to execute the god of musicians. If the party doesn't avert it, the backlash causes the Donna to suffer a heart attack (effectively she drops to -1 hit points and dies a few rounds later unless healed). This should be enough to make it obvious that the death of the gods also kill the followers, in case the party hasn't realized that yet.

The Whole World in His Hand

Social. Real-Time.

The god trials are run by godhand Vitus Sigismund and his allies.

Huge crowds gather in Plaza Hyperion to seek news of the god trials or to bring in priests for bounties. Others simply beg for aid, since many basic civic functions of government have fallen apart. Even amidst the fervor there are brave souls who come to the plaza to lend aid however they can.

The plaza is generally overseen by **Legate Savina Tullius**, an elf orator from Risur who trained in Ber then came to Crisillyir and converted. She recently renounced the formal religion, and her skill at keeping a crowd's attention is sufficient that no one questions any inconsistencies or hypocrisies in her statements. Her goal is to ride out the current upheaval and emerge on top, so she's trying to arrange for Vitus Sigismund to become leader of whatever remains of the nation of Crisillyir once the god trials are over. He has entrusted her with the details of the *sacrament of apotheosis* so she can continue his work if he dies, but she's a politician, not an idealist.

Hiveminds are a concern, but Savina has hit upon a novel solution. Since only those of like mind are caught up in hiveminds, she ordered a dozen non-Clergy foreigners who were in the city's jails released. In exchange for her keeping them safe from the mob, they are tasked with looking out for nascent hiveminds. Every couple hours one will begin to form as the crowd gets too excited, at which point she'll order the plaza cleared.

Testimony Against Oases

The dull roar of a crowd in Plaza Hyperion can be heard from over a mile away. When the PCs get to the Plaza, they are treated to the spectacle of a makeshift stage assembled from toppled marble masonry, rising ten feet above the rest of the plaza. Atop it, eight armored priests, their platemail doused in volcanic ash, hold the ends of chains. Together they watch a feeble manacled prisoner—an old deva woman wearing tattered priest robes.

Legate Savina Tullius paces around the accused. Tall, beautiful, and endowed with spells to fascinate the crowd, Savina is making a grand show for her audience.



ANGELIC ONLOOKERS

Old spells cast centuries ago called for the aid of angelic hosts. The priests who cast them did not expect actual angels to come; unbeknownst to them, the Axis Seal prevented such long-term aid. But the spells did work. They were just delayed. Now that the seal has opened, centuries of magic compels these divine messengers to serve the highest authority of the Clergy, which today is Vitus Sigismund. They are newcomers and don't understand the politics of this world, and so they assume the punishments being meted out are just. If the magic binding them could be dispelled, they could be persuaded to see the madness for what it is, and might turn against Sigismund.

INTERRUPTIONS

Nonviolent interruptions cause the crowd to grab the trouble-maker and drag them out of the cathedral. Anyone resisting that causes the clerics and monks to approach and threaten to lock up anyone who opposes the will of the tribunal. Actual violence causes the proceedings to pause as angels swoop in at Sigismund's command.

"You have all gathered here to bear witness and hear the crimes of Velkali, the goddess who shelters travelers and offers rest at oases. What oases? I note from an epistle of the ecclesiarch Stella Amphora, who wrote in the year 157 B.O.V. that Velkali was welcomed into our pantheon by the request of the people of the northeast. Any traveler who has gone there knows that land is dry and parched, its people dead. Today that waste has spread throughout our country, and aside from this sheltered garden that *people* have crafted, our nation is unsafe.

"What did this god do when the great calamity struck our people? Nothing! Not a finger was raised to provide succor to her people in the hour of their need.

"I quote from the holy poem of Agraman, sacred to Velkali, 'And she said to the desert folk / let this pledge be never broke / that in your lean and hungered days / your suffering I shall assuage.'

"I ask that this tribunal take this as evidence that Velkali has forsaken her core vow. She is derelict in her duty."

The elf makes a sweeping gesture towards the crowd. "Who would bear testimony for Velkali? Any?"

None of the assembled crowd step forward. The deva priestess who stands in for her goddess doesn't bother to defend herself, since she's heard enough of these trials to know they're a farce. Provided the PCs don't make any attempts, the trial proceeds. Should the party intervene, the crowd jeers them. You can use the guidelines in *Advocatus Piscatoris* (page 118) to handle the defense, but without supporting evidence the crowd will almost certainly find the goddess guilty.

March to Execution

"And thus it is so," says Savina. "The god has not done was she was pledged to do. Even the humblest tailor can complete their task given to them. Should we not expect any less of gods? Take her. We march for the mountain."

The crowd parts as the armored guards drag the chained priestess down from the stage. The whole mass of several hundred people heaves out of the plaza and onto the road that leads to Enzyo Mons. Many sing an old song that prays for condemned men as their souls head to the afterlife. (Of all the gods in the Clergy pantheon, no one disputes that the god of death is doing his job.)

The trek takes a little over an hour. On the path up the mountain various shrines and small chapels have been toppled or burned down, and crude wooden grave markers erected with the names of dead gods. Between these, beggars huddle under blankets and hide their faces as they hold out pleading hands for alms.

The cathedral of Triegenes looms at the edge of the volcanic caldera, and shining forms circle in the sky above—angels, called to serve Vitus Sigismund, their armor and blades reflecting the hellfire light of the lava.

The Final Authority

The crowd marches through the open doors of the cathedral, where priests in soot-dappled armor and monks in funereal robes watch for signs of dissent. The monks intone low hymns, slowly repeating parts of the chant for the *sacrament of apotheosis*.

Ten-foot wide fluted columns rise eighty feet to support the ceiling, from which statues of holy figures hang, their eyes turned skyward. Some of them have been recently cracked and removed, their white marble pristine beside the ash-coated surfaces of the rest of the ceiling.

Rows of pews stretch the length of the building, which is constructed with a slight downward slope akin to stadium seating. Aisles flank the pews, lined with ornate statuary that depicts the life and ascendance of Triegenes. Grand stained glass windows beyond the rostrum permit crimson light, but where a traditional cathedral would have a back wall behind the pulpit, here the building opens to a wide balcony with pitted and burnt stone tiles. Grandiose fountains lie on either side of the balcony, each consisting of stone sailors on boats, holding silver chains that end in harpoons and fishhooks, the symbol of Triegenes. A railing encircles most of the balcony, but leaves a fifteen foot wide section open, perilously overlooking the burbling molten rock in the mouth of the volcano.

From the moment one enters the cathedral, a single figure is visible all the way down the length of the building, standing at the precipice. Bald, silhouetted by the fiery haze, Vitus Sigismund raises one hand and beckons the mob and the condemned to meet him on the balcony.



Sermon on the Volcano

The crowd fills the cathedral and many flow out onto the edge, though priests stop the group before a dangerous number press through. The onlookers form a half-ring around Sigismund as Legate Tullius and her priests guide the priestess of Velkali to the edge. Ritual components have been set up, identical to what the PCs witnessed in the memory event at the climax of Adventure Eight.

Sigismund begins to speak, and as he does, his fellow monks bring out vials of blood and begin to paint symbols on the priestess.

"I understand," Sigismund says, "that the tribunal of the people has found the goddess Velkali guilty of forsaking her pledge to protect us in our time of suffering. Before you lay sentence, heed this sermon, children.

"I have faith. I know you do. Say, do you have faith?"

The crowd murmurs in agreement.

"Do you have faith! Don't lie."

A louder, pleading response from the crowd cries yes.

"I hear your uncertainty. I feel it too. I do not wish to see those who I pray to be shown as liars. I pledged my life to the gods, foremost of all to Triegenes. The core of our faith is this. A man can overcome adversity to become anything he chooses. A hero. A king. A god.

"But too many of us choose the wrong path. We become braggarts. Blackguards. We swagger and slander and become tyrants over whatever small world we can grab.

"And this new world, this dark and damned world we see around us? I tell you it has changed because those who once led us were lying to us for years. They did not trust us. I tried to find the truth, and they killed and cursed righteous friends who would have pulled their schemes into the light. And their scheme, I tell you, was to decide what we would be. They decided what they thought was right. And they did not give us a choice. They did not let us test ourselves. If the meaning of life is to choose what you become, they tried to eliminate it. That's as good as killing us all.

"Our hierarchs betrayed their vows to us. I'm sure the king and philosophers and sovereigns of the rest of the world did the same to their people. They should be punished, and we, the children, should retake a world they have stolen from us.

"I say to, none of us is different. Our leaders abandoned us. The gods? They abandoned us! And you, each of you! You know you have abandoned your brothers and sisters. Do not think we are better because we sit in judgment. We are all weak.

"But we are all strong too, in that any man can rise above his frailties. Any ruler can be just. Any god can obey his pledge to this world. I shall ask you to lay sentence, but know when you judge, you judge yourselves as well. Have you, children, risen to what you could be?"

He pauses for a long moment of silence.

"This goddess, Velkali, is guilty! She has forsaken us, and like a soldier who leaves his post, her crime cannot be forgiven. Tribunal, what is your sentence?"

As one, the crowd roars, "Death."

Godfall

With swift confidence, Vitus begins to chant. He grasps the priestess's head and somehow compels her to intone with him, "Before I was nothing but words. Now I am all that is believed. I am faith made flesh. I am flesh made a god."

The monks remove the chains on the prisoner, who falls over, gasps, and begins to swell in size. Blue-white energy arcs off of her body in fiery blazes, and she staggers to her feet, fifteen feet tall, with long blue-green hair flowing and rippling like water. She looks down at her hands, then lifts her gaze to the crowd.

She opens her mouth to speak, but beside her Sigismund has planted his feet solidly, and he lunges into her, pressing with one hand. The blow hurls the goddess off the edge of the balcony. The crowd holds its breath. Sigismund draws himself up straight. The red haze flashes bright orange for a moment just as a heavy impact and splash sound reaches the crowd. A column of blue-green light lances into the sky, the mountain rumbles, and in an instant the light is gone.

Some in the crowd seem to faint. (Actually they were worshippers of Velkali who have died in the backlash.)

Sigismund says to the crowd, "Go home and pray. Pray that the gods witness us and know that they will be held to account. It is not too late for them to live up to the faith we have placed in them."

After that the crowd disperses and heads back to Alais Primos. Legate Tullius and a few dozen priests and monks remain behind to confer with Vitus. The angels who circled above land and silently pick up the bodies of those who perished. They carry them to a side chamber where they will receive last rites and then be brought down to the city for burial.

Meeting the Godhand

It takes a bit of clout to get a meeting with Sigismund, but if the party is willing to give him five minutes to pray after what he has done, he'll listen readily. If they force the issue, he distrusts them, even if they saved him on Mutravir Island.

Sigismund prefers to speak in the presence of **Advorel**, the leader of the heavenly host he called down to serve him. While the other angels are 'traditional' winged humanoids, Advorel towers eighteen feet high, its body composed of androgynous armor. Its lower body resembles a four-legged lion crafted from steel, its upper body that of a humanoid, with two massive wings of steel with sapphire feathers. Divine light glows out through the joints of the armor.

Advorel must obey the commands of the highest religious authority of the Clergy, which currently is Sigismund. It never speaks; Sigismund has commanded it to keep its words to itself except when he speaks to it, because he doesn't want it planting doubt in others. Its face is expressionless save that the light from the eyeslits of its helmet flares with disapproval at some of Sigismund's hubris.





Catching Up

Sigismund is interested in the events of the wider world, and he's sympathetic to efforts in opposition to the Obscurati. But he views it as his sacred duty to continue the god trials, and he will not be swayed from his path. Even if he finds his own god Triegenes wanting, he will fulfill the duty that the gods will not. He might like to help the party, but will only do it once every shirking god is cast down.

He also is hesitant to let them access the Axis Seal ritual from the vault in the Grand Librarium until he can be more certain about their intentions. He is long past blindly trusting those who claim to share his beliefs. He'd ask that they help him finish his task with the trials, and then if they have demonstrated the proper character he'll agree to help them.

They might just lie to him, perhaps saying they want something else from the vault. Due to the nature of the vault's magic, though, unless they explicitly request the Axis Seal ritual they won't get it. They'd need to come up with an explanation for what the ritual is that would convince Sigismund that he needs it to complete the god trials.

Triegenes Trial

Sigismund is planning to save the trial of Triegenes until the end of his inquest, but he could be convinced to move it up if the party has someone (like Morgan Cippiano) who will stand for the god. He admits that he wants to find his own god innocent, but he will abide by the decision of the tribunal of the people. He advises the party to compose a good defense.

Discovering the Sacrament

Sigismund is guarded about where he learned the *sacrament of apotheosis*, but if they share their own knowledge of the ritual he will tell his tale of how he learned it. A boy came to him—the son of a butcher—saying that he'd seen a woman in the canal outside their slaughterhouse. The woman had said there was a man with the hand of a god who had escaped an island in shadows, and after some prodding the kid had realized it must be Sigismund, who had recently made a name for himself by claiming he had found a cabal of villains on an island, and that the island needed to be exterminated.

The boy said the woman wanted to speak to him, so he went. They had to slaughter a pig and let its blood drain into the canal, and then she appeared. She was clearly a being of the low planes, and she never spoke in the first person. They had a long conversation about the nature of just leadership, wherein she implied that she had once known Triegenes. Then she explained to him the nature of the *sacrament of apotheosis*, and suggested he use it to become a proper leader of his faith.

He did not trust her, and suspected somehow the power would corrupt him. But instead of using it for himself, he had the idea to wield the ritual as a weapon to tear down the false gods. Once he is done orchestrating his trials, he intends never to use the ritual again. It is too powerful and dangerous.

Getting Aggressive

Sigismund suspects the party disapproves of his trials, but if he senses a coming altercation he entreats them to take time to reconsider. He might very well lead this country when it recovers, and they will need allies, even if they don't agree on all accounts.

However, if he thinks a physical confrontation is imminent and unavoidable he'll make the first move. See *Fire is a Living Thing* (page 120).

Library Heist

Exploration. Real-Time.

The party might attempt to break into the grand librarium's vault.

The Family can inform the party of the following elements of the defenses of the grand librarium's vault.

- ♦ **Specters and Geists.** Undead spirits roam the library and sound the alarm if anyone is invisible. And horrid spirits lurk at the main entrance to catch thieves. Somehow they know if any book crosses the threshold. However, the tunnels that lead into the building's cistern are just watched by the lesser bibliogeists, which can be banished. If one of these spirits spots a thief, though, it can alert the whole building with its shrieks. The librarium has plenty of guards, especially now since the Arch Secula resides there.
- ♦ **Vault Lock.** The entrance to the vault is on the floor of the main atrium. It's clearly extradimensional somehow, because tunnels pass directly under it, so there's no physical space it could occupy. Stories say that the lock motif on the floor has to be affected by positive energy, turning it into an actual lock. The librarian-priests can use *spiritual weapon* to summon the key, but perhaps it could be picked if you are willing to risk whatever traps are there. A couple centuries ago someone tried to break in at night; his body was found sliced to bits and chewed up as if by ants.
- ♦ **Observation.** At least five of the statues around the atrium are enchanted to watch the vault. *Greater arcane sight* might reveal what they look for, but no one in the Family could cast such a high-level spell.
- ♦ **Opening the Vault.** Whoever opens the vault says the name of what he or she wants, and only that item is present. The biggest problem, though, is that the vault is only ever opened in the presence of two people. One must be the head of the religion, and the other is the highest secular authority in Crisillyir. Short of regime change, the Family doesn't know how to avoid that defense.

Sneaking In

In the current environment, only dignitaries and guards are allowed into the librarium. Arch Secula Degaspore would of course meet with representatives of Risur, which could be a good way of luring guards away from the atrium and the vault. A PC who can do a convincing Crisillyir accent might even be able to get assigned as a guard.

Sewer tunnels lead into the library, but a bibliogeist lurks in each of the four tunnels that lead in. They mechanically are CR 5 wraiths, and must be dispatched before they know they've been attacked (Stealth DC 20) or else they'll sound an alarm.





From there, shapeshifting or teleporting can get you up into the bath rooms in the basement. The bibliogeists in the main library don't actively patrol, but rather tend to the collection. Anyone who looks like a presentable library patron (Bluff DC 20) can move about freely and reach the atrium. A handful of scholars read in the atrium, so they'd either need to be convinced to leave somehow, or the PCs would have to find a way to open the vault in plain sight without being detected. Illusionists should love this.

Pop a Lock

As mentioned earlier, opening the lock requires channeling positive energy, then either getting a *spiritual weapon* key or the actual key in the Praetorio Urbis. Alternately, the lock can be picked (Disable Device DC 40), but failure traps the thief and leads to a series of unfortunate events.

Even if the lock is opened, it will lead to an empty extradimensional space if the two proper dignitaries aren't present. That, however, can be spoofed if someone's clever enough. *Misdirection*, while technically only supposed to work on a limited set of spells, will function here to confuse the watching statues if the party is able to cast it on both Sigismund and Degaspere and get back here before it wears off. Alternately, each PC pretending to be someone else can make a Use Magic Device check (DC 30) in front of each of the statues to fool them. However, the Family only knows of five of the statues; they'll need to discreetly *detect magic* to recognize the statues overhead are also watching.

Finally is the challenge of *detect thoughts*. If the party has used *greater arcane sight* or perhaps some good auguries and divinations to learn about this layer of defense, the two PCs posing as Degaspere and Sigismund just need to think that they're acting of their own free will and let the statues detect their thoughts. It's a matter of keeping one's cover (Bluff DC 20 or Will DC 20) to not let any other thoughts ruin the ruse.

An alternate arcanoscientific solution could be to get next to the vault and activate the lock with positive energy, but instead of opening it try to scan the planar energy coming off it in order to find the right demiplane. If the PCs schlep the whole Gidim vortex array into the library, this only takes a minute, and then they can just target a *greater teleport* or *plane shift* spell to get in and another to get out. Barring that, let your party be imaginative in what magical lock-picking looks like—maybe it's *clairvoyance* and *locate object* combined with DC 40 Knowledge (arcana) and (planes) checks; maybe it involves turning ethereal and summoning monsters into the vaguely-visible demiplanes, then using telepathy to figure out which room has what you want.

Results

Should the party pull off all those things, they can get into the vault and retrieve the leather-bound tome that contains the ritual of the Axis Seal. If they mess up, they might get trapped in a wall of force and chopped to bits, or simply open an empty vault, or be stuck in a demiplane they can't escape from that will trap them in stasis after five minutes. As with any good heist, it might be best if something goes awry at the last minute, forcing a dangerous exit from the building.

The Secular Authority

Arch Secula Natalia Degaspere should play into this scene in some way, either as someone the party can use as a distraction to lure guards and onlookers away, or as the first person on the scene when they screw up.

A PC might talk to her and she could ask them straightforward for help retrieving the biography of Triegenes, to use as proof to avoid the execution of the most important god of their pantheon. She has no allies who can reach it, since it lies in the damned Crypta Hereticarum.

Or, if the party pulls off the heist without a hitch, perhaps use her to plant a seed of doubt as to whether the party should just get out of dodge and leave the city to die. They might overhear her talking with some of the scholars, begging them to search faster for a solution that won't require going to the Crypta.

If the party screws up sneaking in, Degaspere arrives with wraiths and geists and a half-dozen guards, but quickly surmises the party is beyond the power of her and her allies, so she asks to talk instead of fight. She ultimately wants something from the party before she'll help them, but with a library full of scholars at her disposal she has figured out a possible way to avoid execution for Triegenes.

The point I'm getting at, there are a lot of ways things can go down, but if the fact that a demoness gave the *sacrament* to Vitus isn't enough to get them to check out the vault, *someone* ought to suggest the party go there.

Prayers Answered

Action. Real-Time. Level 20.

Wards on the Crypta Hereticarum finally summon angels who have long been barred from offering aid. They proceed to destroy heresies the party needs.

Tucked away among all the dangerous artifacts in the Crypta Hereticarum is Triegenes' autobiography, filled with the life of the man before he led a massive rebellion and gathered an army to topple the demonocracy.

Triegenes was aided in this legendary task through the power of the *sacrament of apotheosis*. Originally used by the demons themselves, the ritual was given to him by Ashima-Shimtu, whose motives even she does not clearly remember. Triegenes knew that over time, the *sacrament* would corrupt even the purest of heart, and the potential backlash against the faithful was not worth its price. His death was mourned across the nation he founded, and with his death, the knowledge of the *sacrament* was lost.

With the horrors of demonic rule still fresh in many minds, the Clergy demanded that Ashima-Shimtu hand over the details of the rite to them. She refused, and for that, the immortal demon was imprisoned. For centuries, the hierarchs of the faith performed rituals around the vault of heresies to ensure those within could never escape. Among their prayers were pleas to servants of their gods to come and defend the vault should any intrude. The nature of the Axis Seal prevented angels from answering those summons, but now those restrictions have lifted. When the party comes to the vault, a backlog of centuries of prayers calls down a vast heavenly host.



Island Arrival

As the last time the party visited, the island's coast of rusted and pitted metal beckons. As before, if they wait until sunset undead rise from the seas to attack. The lighthouse that rises above the entrance to the Crypta Hereticarum is as forlorn and hollow as ever.

A voice whispers into the party's minds, "Deceptions and foul deeds were long the domain of Ashima-Shimtu. Perhaps the visitors to her prison wonder if she enjoys the suffering and death of the pious in Alais Primos. The religion that imprisoned her is shattered. She senses as blood flows through the city's canals, but though she provided the hammer, it is not her hand that swings it.

"Alas, it seems all of Ashima-Shimtu's plots to ensure her release have come to naught. Should the doors to her prison be opened, her sentence of the oubliette shall become the scythe. Execution awaits her, yet these visitors might prove her salvation. Though it may be revealed as hypocrisy, she demands a favor be repaid. She beckons her visitors, come and speak in person."

If long ago in adventure four any PCs had their blood enter the well beneath the demoness, she can now compel them, like a *geas*, to enter the vault and reach her quickly. Any magic that could block this compulsion is repeatedly affected by *greater dispel magic* (caster level 15), once each round. Characters so affected are not dominated nor compelled to act recklessly, but their foremost goal becomes reaching Ashima-Shimtu so they can speak to her in person.

FINDING THE BIOGRAPHY

We figure the party will use divination magic to get a clue where the book is—in the demiplane painting representing the vice Envy, in chamber four, blasphemous artworks. Without that, the party might manage to ask around and get the cursed priest **Orhalder Skarathi** who took the book to admit he has it, in exchange for a promise to save him from the angels. Failing that, the angels who find the book aren't able to destroy it due to strong divine magic shielding it. Their leader Hezophiel will bring it and a handful of other items into the final chamber, where he intends to destroy them all—and Ashima-Shimtu—at the same time.

If all else fails, the demoness herself knew Triegenes in life and can testify in his trial if the party can rescue her.

ALREADY EMPTY?

If your party already cleared this place of danger, there's no need to repeat old encounters, but you could have the angels literally pull evil spirits out of the walls and floor, showing that whatever the party might have defeated previously still lingered here, and has enough malevolence to fight back as the celestials banish them to a proper final fate.

Angel's Herald

As Ashima-Shimtu finishes speaking, a single figure appears atop the lighthouse, a trumpet archon named **Aezusat**. He proclaims, "None shall attempt to enter the vault, lest they face the wrath of the gods. All within is suspect. We cannot allow the evil here the leave, so if you open those doors, we will not stop until this isle is cleansed. Do you come here as thieves and looters, or do you also wish to purge the unholy?"

Aezusat doesn't stop the party from trying to open the vault, but if they go down toward its doors—or if they claim they want to help cleanse the vault—the archon blows his trumpet, and the sky glows brighter than it ever did when there was a sun.

Blessed Reaper

Lances of light plunge into the surface of the island, each a divine creature—angel, archon, and the like. First to arrive is **Hezophiel the Reaper**, a black-clad planetar who wields a scythe. Moments later an astral deva lands beside him, and then in a ring arrive a pair of trumpet archons, four movanic devas, and eight legion archons. The lances of heavenly light continue for a minute more, each bringing a flock of critics—swarms of angels, each small enough to fit on the head of a pin. Hezophiel invokes a holy *forbiddance* across the island, preventing any further creatures from teleporting or being summoned onto or off of the island. Then he orders the heavenly host to destroy everything within the vault.

•Angelic Host (CR 20)

- + Hezophiel the Reaper
- + 1 astral deva
- + 3 trumpet archons
- + 4 movanic devas
- + 8 legion archons
- + Effectively limitless critic angel swarms

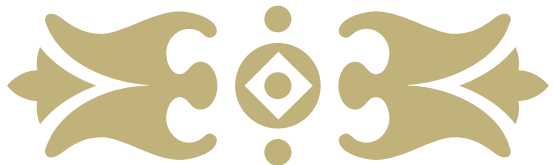


Feigned Alliance

If the party claims to be allied with Hezophiel, he asks to speak with them for a minute. He explains that he knows not the context of this vault, only that centuries of prayers have suddenly ascended to the heavens. He has seen that the wards that once made this place nearly impregnable have failed, so he has been charged with eliminating the evil within before it can escape. He cannot open the doors himself, though; that must be done by a mortal. But first he wants to know he can trust the party. He asks their business.

Hezophiel has *discern lies* active (Will DC 20), and even if a PC can avoid that, it still takes a Bluff check (DC 37) to convince the angel that the party will aid him. If he realizes they're lying he pretends not to have noticed, so that the party will open the vault for him. Thereafter, if he ever sees them trying to take anything out of the vault he will order his host to attack. Alternately, a Diplomacy check (DC 42) can explain a context around the angel's orders, enough for him to agree to let the party perhaps examine and catalog items within the vault before they are destroyed. In either event, he will insist on purging everything—even the innocent but tormented angel Linia, the trapped lillend Somnia, and the demoness Ashima-Shimtu.

Quick thinking—or mere speed to reach parts of the vault ahead of the angels—can let the party grab items without the angels seeing it. Whether the party rushes into the vault with angels on their heels, or tries to cooperate, they are on a clock as the hosts complete a thorough sweep of the place.



Vault Redux

Rather than reprint the entire vault, we encourage you to refer to the Crypta Hereticarum appendix in the Act One compilation. Alternately, you can purchase the standalone version of the vault of heresies from various online vendors, or download it as an EN World subscriber.

We leave it to you how the angelic host interact with the party, but here's a chance to revisit any NPCs the party enjoyed previously, or to give the PCs a chance to get revenge against any foes they didn't stand up to the first time they came here. We assume the party will prefer to outrun the angels rather than fight them all.

(If you had the vault be mostly empty and deserted when the party visited, you can just skip to the end, in Ashima-Shimtu's chamber.)

Angelic Progress

The critic angels lead the way, fluttering through the vault in one huge swarm that splits apart so scores can scout each of the vault chambers. They fly at 120 feet per round, easily crossing the entire half-mile

complex in about two minutes. Over the next ten minutes the miniscule angels pick up items and destroy them with their magic, or carry off items beyond their power so Hezophiel can shatter them.

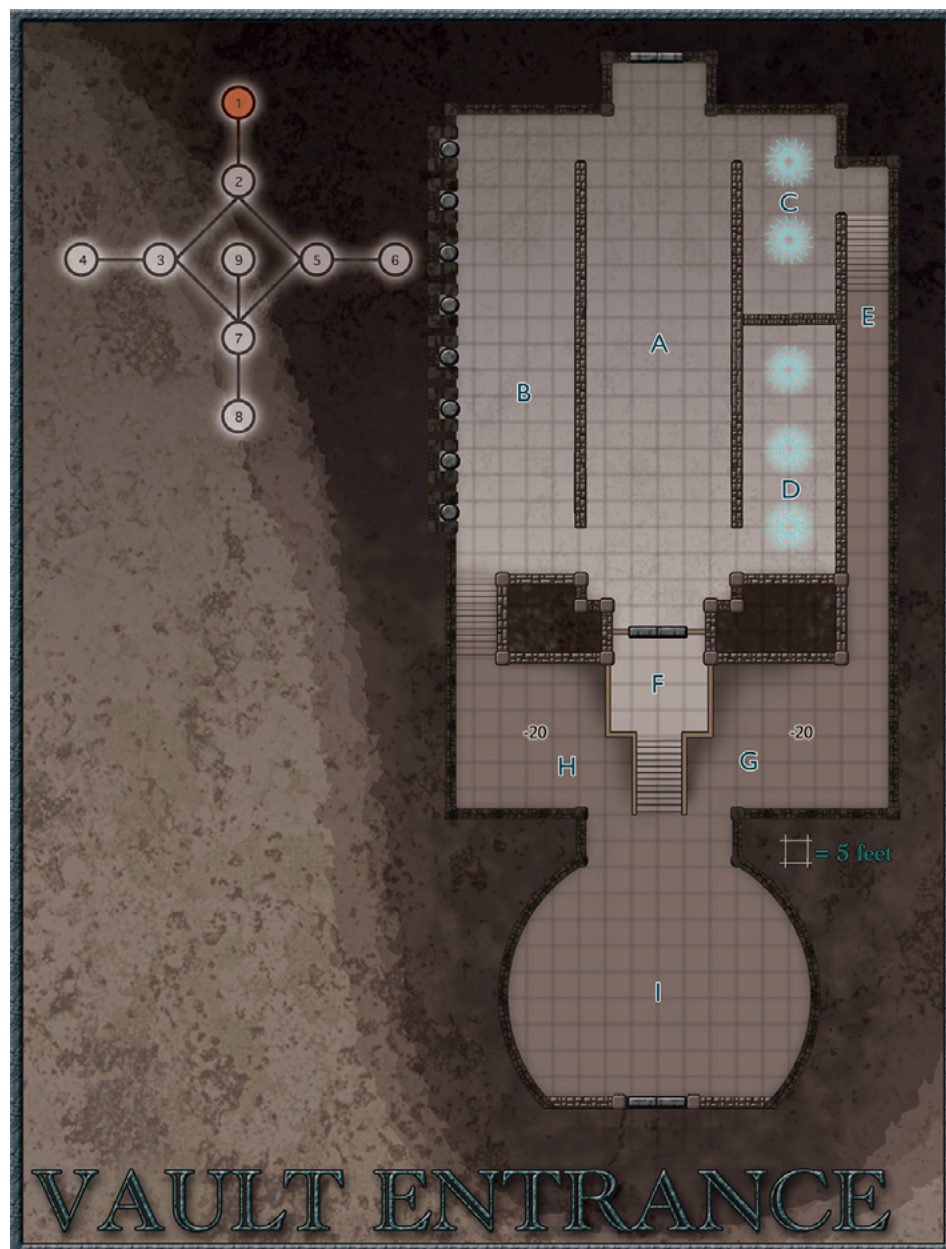
The trumpet archons are the second rank, advancing in a methodical march. Every round they blare their horns, which shatter the bones that coat the hallways and strip away traps and wards. Once they pass, skeletons will no longer reanimate when blood is spilled on the floor. Then the movanic and astral devas shatter anything more sturdy, while Hezophiel watches. The legion archons seem to merely 'stand guard,' but in truth are performing critical efforts perceptible only in a metaphysical realm, as they guide the evil essences trapped here away from this world and on to a proper plane in the multiverse.

The angels move through the chambers in numbered order, purifying one every two minutes. Only a handful of things (noted below), are too resilient for them to destroy, and Hezophiel carries them with him. He intends to destroy them all in the vault's final chamber.

Vault Layout

As a refresher, the vault has haunted hallways connecting nine main chambers. The leaden curse is still active—turning any gold taken beyond the end of chamber one into lead—but the gold and various wards built into the island's bedrock no longer block teleportation. Instead, Hezophiel's *forbiddance* blocks planar travel, though it can be dispelled (caster level 20th).

- 1. Vault Entrance.** Here the chained angel Linia begs for mercy. The wards holding her have ended, but she is too weak to escape on her own. A *heal* and *greater restoration* cures the long torment she has suffered, restoring her as a fully-powered astral deva—one who owes a great debt to the party.
- 2. Heretical Texts.** The biography of Triegenes was here, but was carried off to chamber four, and now resides in the painting of the vice Envy. The angels dispel abjurations that kept the books from burning, then ignite the whole chamber. The scrap of the *Book of Lorem* survives, and they bring it along.
- 3. Unholy Arms and Armor.** The angels sunder everything here to bits.
- 4. Blasphemous Artwork.** Crackles of electricity drive back the critic swarms, and it takes an actual battle for the angels to destroy this chamber, as Giovanni the painter is able to hurl lightning bolts out of the storm in his painting. The angels step into each of the paintings' pocket dimensions and pull out the actual people within before they burn the frames and canvases.





A priest named **Orhalder Skarathi** sold his soul in order to become a hierarch, but ended up imprisoned here, and he stole the biography of Triegenes because he felt himself better than the founder of his faith. The angels seize and slay him, but they cannot destroy the book. The biography itself is a small foolscap with a weathered vellum cover, locked with a leather band ending in a crude fishhook, noteworthy only for the intense smell of sea and salt. (See Player's Handout—The Biography of Triegenes, page 332.)

Under assault from lighting bolts, Hezophiel slices the frame of Giovanni's titanic painting, rupturing its demiplane and casting the painter into some unknown realm.

5. **Accursed Items.** Angels can manifest new weapons if theirs rust, so the giant rust monsters here fall swiftly. Hezophiel brings along the *cursed rod of negation* if it's there for later destruction.
6. **Afflicted Innocents.** The angels release the architect, purge the ice devil that is possessing him, then kill them both (though they show a bit of compassion for the old man, at least).
7. **Damned Souls.** The leaden legion of the bearded devil Belcamp puts up a pathetic defense. The angels pause for a few minutes to let the lillend Somnia sing a dirge for herself, and then Hezophiel beheads her. He takes the *first blade of Srasama* if it's there, to destroy later.
8. **Beasts of the Infernal Horde.** The bloody juggernaut and hell hounds manage to kill one of the legion archons, but then they fall.
9. **Final Vault.** The angels smash the doors down, and the rattling of Ashima-Shimtu's chains sound through the entire vault.

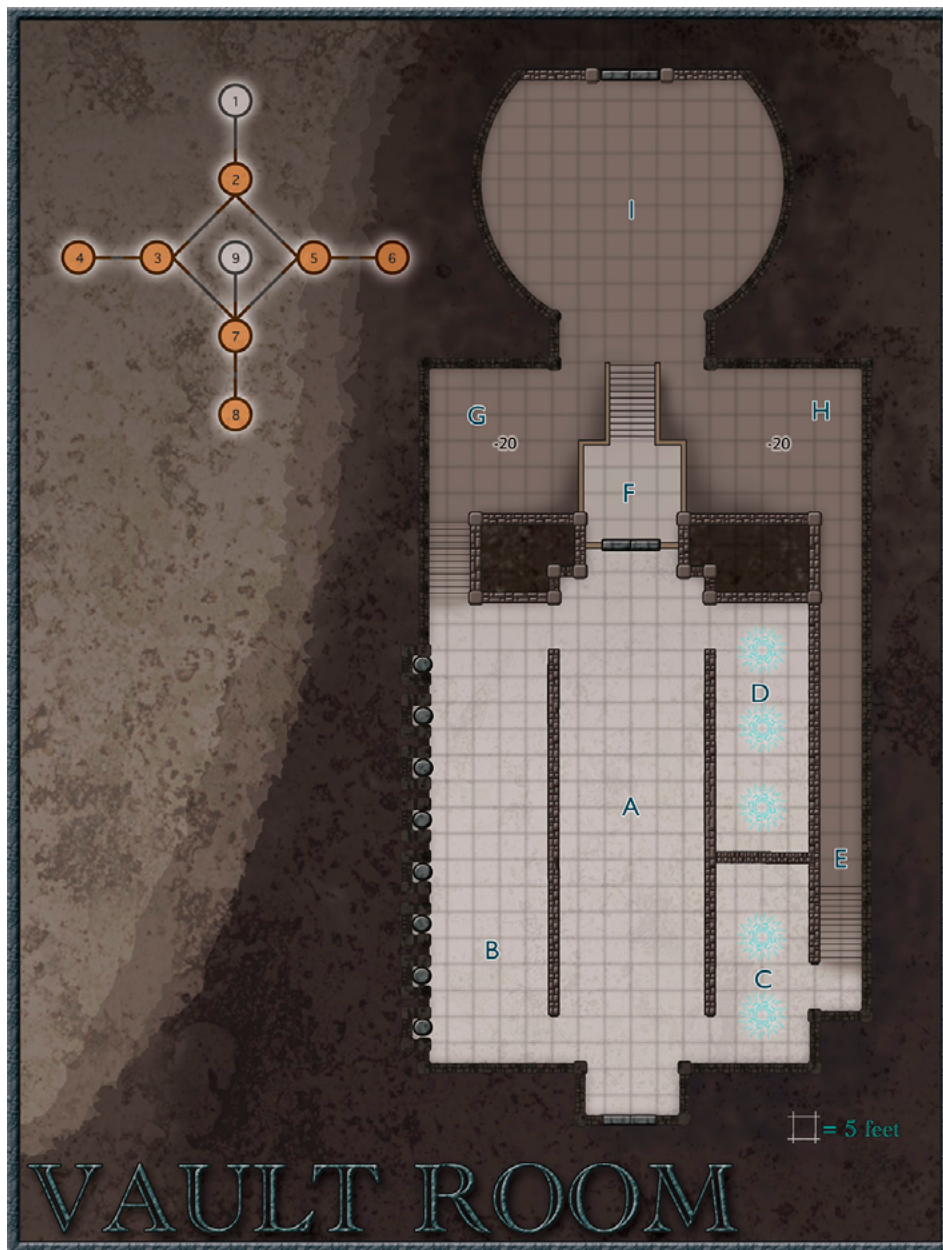
The Hammer and the Hook

As the party arrives in her chamber, Ashima-Shimtu speaks to them. Any compulsion the PCs previously had ends

"This island is to be cleansed, but is that salvation or oblivion? Ashima-Shimtu forswears her past, but is still so vain as to desire her last words. She speaks of the hammer and the hook.

"This final moment matters not in the life of the one known as Senechal of the Demonocracy, the Last of the High Fiends. She has reflected, and believes a tale bereft of choice is unworthy of the telling.

"She asks, is a hammer that crafts a cathedral good? Is a hammer that shatters a skull evil? Ashima-Shimtu was not wielded. She chose her path, a long story that she might never have opportunity to tell. If she is to be shattered, she shall accept this long-forbeared punishment.



"But this execution is not the act of evil men, nor good angels. It judges nothing, for the hand that hefted this hammer has vanished. It falls unguided. Where it strikes is no more a choice than where a pebble rolls in a stream.

"A choice did matter once to the Lady of the Forked Tongue. Like a fish in a stream she was snared by a hook, plucked from the world she was born to trawl. Perhaps the fisherman desired a wish in exchange for Ashima-Shimtu's life, but she thinks not. He spoke these words, 'Challenge yourself.'

"For an age and more, Ashima-Shimtu has hung, chained, voiceless. She had none to corrupt or tempt. What challenge was there, then, but herself? She is not as she was when condemned to this vault.

"If there is to be an end to her story, let it be that as once a fisherman granted her a gift of change, so has she given a choice to the faith he inspired. Their tongues have become as forked as hers, but they might challenge themselves. Such as she can, she prays that the hand that swings the hammer chooses wisely."



With that, she speaks no more unless someone removes her from her chains. If Hezophiel witnesses her speech, he lets her finish, then replies, “This is oblivion.” He decapitates her with his scythe if given a chance.

Ashima-Shimtu could possibly compel some PCs to defend her. It’s up to you whether she has orchestrated all of this to have them be the judge of if she deserves rescue—in which case she will not compel them—or if she intentionally has destroyed the Clergy in order to weaken the wards holding her so she can escape—in which case she’ll force them to fight off Hezophiel and his host.

Freeing the Fiend

Releasing Ashima-Shimtu is as simple as breaking the hooked chains that hold her, or just tearing her free. She’s been kept at basically the brink of death of centuries, so is in no condition to fight, and she’s conflicted as to whether she’d want to if she could.

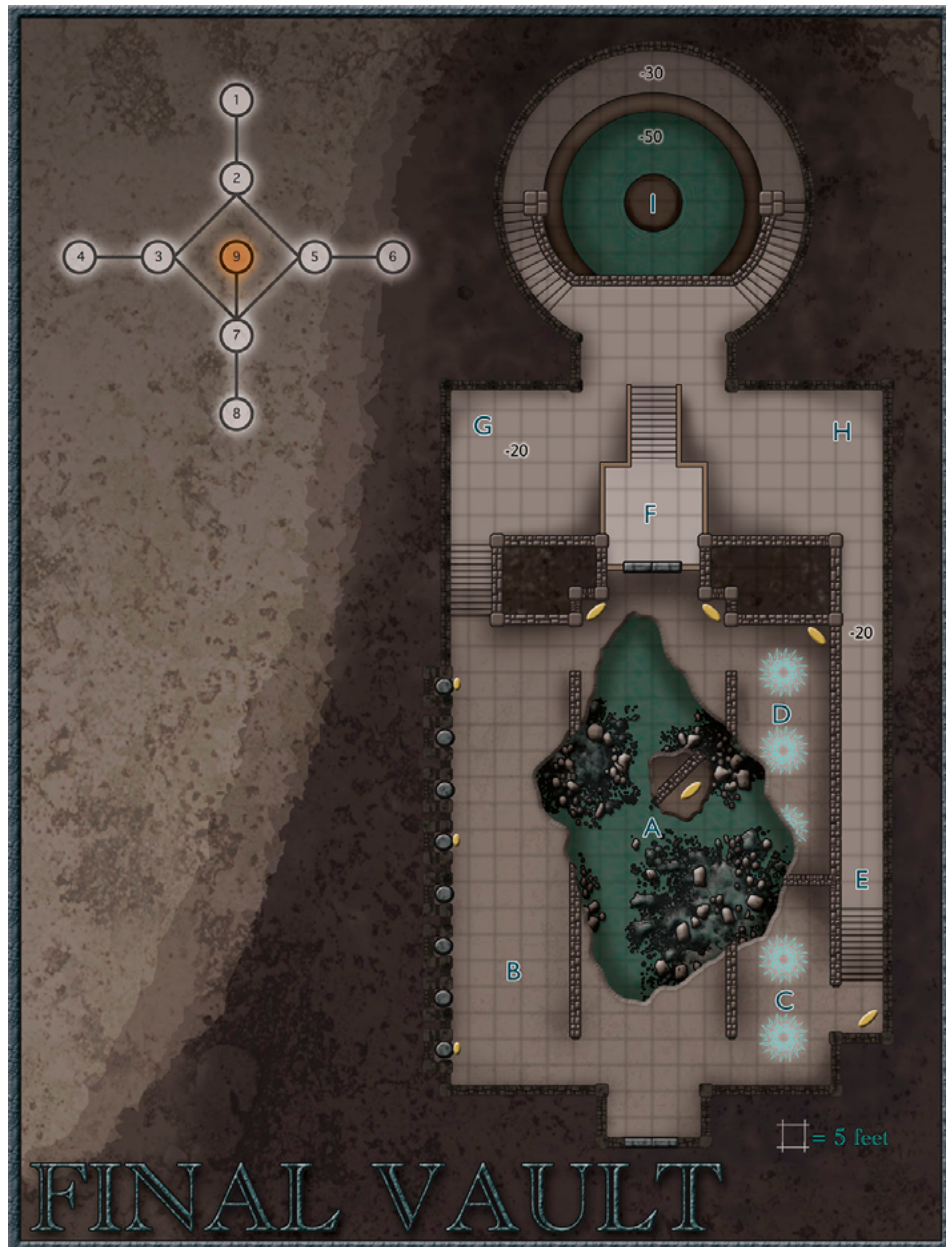
If the party just wants to escape, they could dispel the *forbiddance* then teleport away, or they could swim out the well, which no longer has any wards to dispel water-breathing effects. Or Ashima-Shimtu could, with a gallon or so of blood, create a conduit in the water to teleport herself and the party anywhere they want to go—probably Alais Primos.

If they’re sneaky, the party can get away; the planetar will merely be confused where they went and finish obeying the letter of his orders. However, Hezophiel will pursue the party if he sees them flee the vault with anything, even so far as interrupting at a critical moment elsewhere in this adventure.



EVIL DEMON

We have Ashima-Shimtu as sympathetic and complex. If you want to have her as a villain, though, we’ve included a stat-block for her in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue. In the main version of things, though, she’s a non-combatant.





Advocatus Piscatoris

Social. Real-Time.

A stirring defense of the god Triegenes can put an end to the god trials, but a defeated godhand will still try to destroy the faith he feels betrayed him.

Returning to Alais Primos, the PCs see plumes of smoke curling from the caldera of Enzyo Mons, lit up from below in lurid reds and oranges. Over the Plaza Hyperion, dark grey storm clouds flicker with ripples of black lightning, a sure sign of ominous portent obvious to even amateur skyseers. The amount of time passed since the PCs last left the Plaza should be noted, as it's possible that more gods have died in their absence. Returning to Legate Tullius, the PCs find her writing and signing more warrants for arrests of hierarchs, high priests, seers, acolytes—any who worshipped deities.

Call Your Witnesses

With the biography in hand, the party can attempt to provide a defense for Triegenes. The city is given a day's notice, and more than ten thousand people fill Plaza Hyperion. At the tolling of the twelfth hour, Legate Tullius takes the stage, along with whichever PCs intend to act as defense, and whoever stands in for the accused (likely Morgan Cippiano). Since this is the first time someone has offered an actual defense in a god trial, Legate Tullius shouts for the crowd to listen as she explains the procedure.

Here in the plaza they will hold the trial—she will present her accusations and evidence, the defense will do the same, and they're allowed to briefly ask questions of each other—and angels shall oversee it, using their magic to ensure no one can lie. Then the crowd will march the accused to the top of Enzyo Mons, where each side shall give their closing remarks to Vitus. The godhand will then ask for a verdict. Should the god be found innocent, his surrogate shall be released and none shall harm him. But if the tribunal of the people find him guilty, he shall join the myriad objects of evil before him, and be thrown into the volcano.

Legal Tactics

Morgan Cippiano has plenty of experience with legal systems, and Crisillyir's is not as advanced and scientific as Risur's. The party will mostly need good rhetoric, and should play the crowd while discrediting each of Savina's accusations. Unlike Drakr and its philosophical debates, the tribunal of the people are a mob, and they'll be swayed by emotions, not logic.

Evidence is secondary, best revealed for a dramatic conclusion. Since the PCs will be watched by the angels, lying will likely be discovered, which will ruin their credibility. Deceptive phrasing works, though. And luckily no one will question their statements, no matter how outlandish they may be.

In a 'trial' of this sort, since there is basically no physical evidence, what matters is precedent, dogma, and scripture.

Mechanics

The two angels each have *discern lies* active (Will DC 20 to lie without being detected), and before anyone can speak they will each cast *dispel magic* four times to try to remove spells that might bypass their truth-saying (like *misdirection* or *glibness*).

If your group isn't much for courtroom bloviation, you can just present the accusations in three bullet points, then once Tullius finishes give the party a chance to compose a counter to each and make skill checks to determine how well they craft a defense. Or you can roleplay it all, allowing skill checks to give the PCs clues of ways to improve their argument, then use a skill check to arbitrate how well their actual arguments are received.

Prosecution

Legate Tullius doesn't know how persuasive the party is, so she reserves her rhetorical flourishes for her closing statements. She is, however, determined to tear down Triegenes, and wouldn't mind having the mob turn on the party as well. She initially presents her accusations in a subdued fashion, especially compared to her normal firebrand style. The crimes of Triegenes consist of:

Firstly, he created a nation that stretched from Danor to the edge of Elfaivar, making him responsible for hundreds of thousands every generation. He proclaimed that he created the Clergy so that every person would be able to pursue their own path without punishment or enslavement. But when the Great Malice rendered half the nation uninhabitable, cursed the nation's holy leaders, and left the remaining half of the nation vulnerable, Triegenes did not intercede. This most noble nation was once the greatest in the world, but its power has been surpassed by heathenous fiends in Danor, and primitive animists in Risur. (A Risuri speaker who is aligned with the Old Faith suffers a -2 penalty to his or her Diplomacy check against this point.)

Secondly, he has been prayed to by millions, but his blessings have only gone to the hierarchs of his religion. Tullius predicts a possible counter-argument that, since Triegenes promoted self-growth, perhaps only the hierarch performed acts of sufficient merit. To counter this, she enumerates many examples of hierarchs achieving their positions through politics, and of martyrs and heroes suffering despite grand deeds they accomplished. The Legate accuses Triegenes of showing hypocritical favoritism.

Thirdly, he gave no warnings of the Great Eclipse, and so let the world fall into chaos. She paints a grandiose picture of all the death, destruction, and despair visited upon Crisillyir, and quotes scripture for each that suggests it was within the duty of Triegenes to stop it from happening.

This finishes her accusations. The party has a few minutes to make a plan and offer their defense.





Defense

For each of the Legate's three arguments, one Diplomacy check represents the counter argument, and closing arguments require a Perform (oratory) check. For each of these, the PCs can attempt up one of the following checks to improve the party's Diplomacy check. Time constraints limit each PC to only one bit of aid on each of the primary checks, and none of the following options can be used more than once to assist a given check.

- ♦ **Bluff.** If the party can manage to outwit the angels' lie detection, a speaker can make a Bluff check (DC 37 or higher, depending on the scope of the lie) to gain a +5 bonus to a primary check. A failure means one of the angels gets suspicious and they repeat their *dispel magics*.
- ♦ **Diplomacy.** A DC 30 check lets the party take advantage of pauses in the Legate's rhetorical flourishes to interject and throw off her pacing, but to do so politely and with the right decorum so it does not upset the crowd. This grants a +2 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Intimidate.** A DC 30 check is able to slightly turn the angry crowd against Legate Tullius. This grants a +2 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Knowledge (history).** A DC 20 check dredges up an obscure fact about Clergy history, granting a +2 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Knowledge (local).** A DC 20 check injects a bit of local culture that the crowd responds to well, reducing their skepticism of the party as foreigners. This grants a +2 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Knowledge (nature).** Savina's first point criticizes Elfaivar and Risur, but a DC 15 check can cite elements of the faiths of those nations to show they are not actually inimical to the Clergy. This grants a +2 bonus to the Diplomacy check to oppose the Legate's first point.
- ♦ **Knowledge (religion).** Legate Tullius is a master scholar of her religion, but a DC 35 check shows the PCs as equally familiar, granting a +5 bonus to the primary check.
- ♦ **Linguistics.** If the speaker makes a DC 15 check, he or she gains a +2 bonus to the primary check by using the proper language for this trial.
- ♦ **Profession (barrister).** Any lawyer on the party (3 or more ranks in an appropriate Profession) automatically grants a +2 bonus to all the checks the party makes, both the main Perform and the checks to aid. This doesn't count as that PC's one aid per round.
- ♦ **Sense Motive.** The crowd wants blood, true, but more importantly they want this all to have meaning. A DC 30 check forms a rapport with the audience and helps get them on the side of the speaker. This can be attempted once per primary check, and each success grants a cumulative +2 bonus (so potentially a +8 bonus on the final Perform check).

Once the party has pooled their ideas, articulated the general structure of their rebuttal, and made their checks to aid, have the main speaker make a Diplomacy check (DC 41, which is the Legate's check) for the three points of the prosecution. You might grant a modifier of up to +5 or -5 depending on the quality of their ideas, and if they actually bring Ashima-Shimtu along, they get a +2 bonus to their checks. If they don't have the biography of Triegenes, though, that's a -5 penalty.

Finally, the party has an odd ace up their sleeve that the biography reveals Triegenes never became a god. Revealing this is deathly risky, though, because the crowd will respond in denial and anger. The threat of such a reaction should be made obvious to the party, and if they bring up that fact during any of the counter-arguments against Legate Tullius's three accusations, it provokes a mad riot as tens of thousands of people attempt to attack the party.

The only safe time to bring up this revelation is in the closing remarks, when the solemnity and intensity of the moment will make people actually listen.

Meditative Ascent

Once both sides have finished their arguments, Legate Tullius directs the crowd to follow them to "the Cathedral of the accused" where they will make final closing remarks. She suggests this time is for reflection on the arguments. For the first time since the god trials began, the mob's climb to the mountain top is hushed, rather than raucous. People suspect this will be the last trial.

Vitus waits at the balcony, watched by templars, monks, and angels. The thousands who come cannot fit inside, but magic carries the voice of the party and the priests to all. Legate Tullius briefly whispers to Vitus the general state of the trial so far, and then he asks for closing statements.

Closing Statements

The prosecution goes first, and Legate Tullius spends three minutes repeating the highlights of her accusations, criticizing the arguments of the PCs if they failed any of their checks, and then looking up to the top of the cathedral as she finishes.

"All of these failures," she says, "are symptoms of this god's original sin. He has lied to us. He promised us divinity, said he would guide us to godhood. But in the thousand years since his ascendance, no other mortal has become a god. The closest to that are these very trials, wherein we the people's tribunal have bound the gods to mortal flesh so they could be punished for abandoning us.

"Like the corrupt hierarchs and cardinals, Triegenes rose high, and he looked down at us and sniffed in disdain. In his arrogance, he decided his lofty position was for him alone. We could be gods, he said. But he kept that secret for himself.

"We have executed many of our deities for abandoning the pact they made with us. As founder of our faith, Triegenes is responsible for all those beneath him. As we found them guilty, so we must do for him. This liar god must be punished. To the fires with him. Burn away his evil so he may no longer lead us astray."

The Final Word

As above, the party can aid the speaker, but now he or she makes a Perform (oratory) check (DC 41 again) for a closing argument.

There are two main ways this might go. A straightforward defense could focus on Legate Tullius's overwrought demands, as if nothing is ever allowed to go wrong; indeed, in the teaching of Triegenes, this time could be a great trial to challenge the faithful.



Or the party could go for the dramatic revelation that Triegenes never was a god, that it was the hierarchs that lied, and that all they were ever praying to was their own idea of a god. The proof is written in the man's own hand in his biography. These trials haven't been accusing actual gods, but have been accusing the people of Crisillyir themselves. The gods only have ever been what the people made of them. A vote to execute Triegenes is a damnation upon them all.

This, of course, angers people, but if the PC speaker succeeds his or her check, the mob is enthralled enough to consider the world-changing revelation. If they try this gambit but fail the check, any previous successes they made are moot; the mob cries out for an execution, both of Triegenes and the PCs.

Consequences

It depends how well the party lawyered up.

Denial. If the party tried to reveal the truth about Triegenes and failed the final Perform check, or if they failed two or more checks out of the four total (three accusations and the closing statements), then the crowd is unswayed, and they cry a guilty verdict and demand an execution. Vitus tries to perform the *sacrament of apotheosis* on the surrogate for Trigenes (likely Morgan). Triegenes takes the form of a lanky and lean human male in his fifties, dressed like a fisherman and stooped as from a great weight. If anyone interferes Sigismund will attack. See Fire is a Living thing, below, for battle details.

Agnostics. If the PCs succeeded three of the four checks, the crowd is uncertain and divided. Legate Tullius is shocked and looks to Vitus for direction, but the godhand refuses the tribunal's verdict. He orders his templars to perform the ritual, and then haltingly tries to explain that with an undecided verdict, it is his duty to lay sentence. As above, he'll stop anyone who tries to interfere, but if a fight breaks out his allies are less unified, and they'll quickly abandon him if the party is dangerous.

Pride Before a Fall. Should the party pull off a perfect defense and succeed all four checks, even Legate Tullius accepts when the crowd shouts 'innocent,' 'mercy,' 'release him,' and the like. Vitus looks at the mob in disbelief, then shoves the surrogate of Triegenes to them. A moment later he yells for everyone to back away, and even his allies and the angels give him room. Then he pulls open his shirt to reveal that he has already painted himself with blood for the *sacrament*.

He roars, "They've tricked you, as I suspected. You're all impure! Deceived by pleasant lies. Triegenes, you have failed me, and I have failed my people. I shall become you, and together our failure will burn away the lies and reveal a glorious truth!"

After that monologue he begins the chant for the *sacrament of apotheosis* ("Before I was nothing but words. Now I am all that is believed. I am faith made flesh. I am flesh made a god."). If he completes it, he flings himself over the edge of the balcony, into the lava.

It takes about five rounds from the verdict for him to make this move, and the party might have one last round to intervene and arrest his fall (ideally by flinging one of the lovely giant fishhooks and chains that decorate the cathedral to snag him just before he hits the lava). If they do, Vitus-as-Triegenes collapses and sobs, a shell of a man with no purpose left. Congratulations, the PCs have averted a catastrophe, and they never have to face that lava dragon that ShenFei illustrated for this adventure's cover.

But if Vitus (or any surrogate for Trigenes) hits the lava, the *sacrament* takes hold of him just as he is dying. His body glows with holy light, which then beams into the sky, spirals, collapses back into the caldera, and finally explodes outwards.

The backlash of an avatar of Triegenes dying will either kill tens of thousands or merely leave them reeling. It depends on if the PCs revealed to the crowd that Triegenes was never truly a god (and succeeded their Perform check). In that case, their doubt is enough that the *sacrament* never truly takes hold; it's enough to dissolve the wards around the volcano, but not enough to kill the faithful. But if the city thinks their god is dead, over half the people across Crisillyir fall over and begin to die as their hearts fail.

That Other Problem. If a Triegenes avatar dies, the entire volcano heaves and the cathedral begins to tumble. An earthquake begins, lasting nearly a minute, after which the lava in the volcano begins to rise like a living thing. A dragon with a body of lava claws its way out of the caldera, stretching three hundred feet from molten teeth to searing tail. It smashes the cathedral to bits, then makes its way for Alais Primos. It would seemingly take a miracle to stop it.

Fire is a Living Thing

Action. Real-Time. Level 25.

A titanic lava dragon erupts and consumes Alais Primos. Will the party fight it, or use the distraction to acquire the ritual they need?

If the party interferes with the execution of Triegenes (or if they attacked Vitus much earlier in the adventure), they only have to deal with mortals and angels, which they might succeed against. The lava catastrophe dragon is practically invincible.

Godhand and Allies

How loyal Sigismund's allies are depends on the circumstances. They'll fight to the death normally, but if the party did a convincing job in the trial, they'll start abandoning their leader, one or two every round after the first of their group goes down. Statblocks are presented in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue.

Godhand and Allies (CR 23)

- Godhand Vitus Sigismund
- Legate Savina Tullius
- 4 divinely-sanctioned templars
- 2 divinely-sanctioned monks
- 2 planetar of the clergy
- Advorel, heavenly emissary





Tactics

Sigismund will open by sprinting up and striking with *quivering palm*, causing his right arm to glow with divine light as he attempts to simply snuff a foe with a single strike. Thereafter he generally uses a flurry of blows each round, lobbing a couple power-attacked stunning fists (attempting to first stun then paralyze) before using flying kick to leap 60 ft. and hit another enemy. This provokes an attack of opportunity, but that's moot if the enemy is stunned (and his AC is insane anyway). If no enemy is adjacent at the start of his turn he can flying kick to get adjacent, then make a full attack (and possibly flying kick away to another enemy).

Critically, though, he will try to use the threat of the volcanic caldera and his Bull Rush Strike feat to knock enemies off the balcony whenever he crits them. He'll always try to maneuver so he's got his enemy between him and the ledge.

Legate Tullius casts *brilliant advice* on Sigismund (letting him roll twice and use the better result on all d20s, until he rolls a 20), then shouts a bardic performance of a war hymn, inspiring courage in her whole side (granting a +4 competence bonus on attack and weapon damage rolls). Thereafter she uses *mass cacophonous call* to nauseate the party, *greater shout* if she can hit multiple foes without striking any allies, and *greater dispel magic* to undo any tricks the PCs pull.

The templars use *summon monster VII* to call forth four greater elementals (one of each type—benefiting from Augment Summoning), then stand within 30 feet of each other, cast *flame strikes* and *searing light*, and horribly abuse their ability to channel positive energy as a move action (though each such use counts as 2 of their daily allotment of 7). They'll use *reach heal* (range 55 ft.) to heal Vitus at range if necessary.

The monks initially use a ki point to cause their fists to glow with fire for 6 rounds, then keep out of melee range while they hurl flurries of their fishhook shuriken. If they can snag an enemy they try to yank them near the edge of the balcony and kick them into the lava. Otherwise they wait until a foe is alone or already endangered, and then they sprint in, use a ki point to turn their strikes into touch attacks, and each deliver a stunning fist.

The planetars each pick an enemy and try to fight an honorable duel. Advorel uses *greater invisibility*, mostly for style, then stomps through battle striking each foe with claws in order to affect them with *weight of conscience*. It hopes the battle can be ended with one side surrendering, and if Sigismund is defeated it will be free to speak to the party of its disapproval of the god trials. Indeed, Advorel will willingly fail Will saves against the party's effects if it knows the magic would give it leave to speak out.

Aftermath

Should the party be defeated, Sigismund has them stabilized, then has his templars cast *quest* on them so they will not interfere in the god trials. He'll keep them around long enough to witness the execution of Triegenes (though the party might shirk the compulsion before then).

Deliverance

Each morning Legate Tullius meets with Sigismund and casts *getaway* on him, herself, the monks, the planetars, and Advorel; if things look untenable she'll cry, "Deliver us!" as a swift action, which teleports the group to the storage basement of the Cathedral of Triegenes. Even if the fight is happening just upstairs, the sudden disappearance should confuse the PCs, and give Sigismund enough time. If he doesn't think he'll win the fight, he'll complete the *sacrament of apotheosis*. Then he'll climb up to the balcony overlooking the caldera and throw himself to his death.

Similarly, if the party manages to defeat Sigismund, the latent power of the *sacrament* keeps him conscious enough to mutter the ritual words. He'll likewise try to kill himself to destroy his god.

The death of an avatar of Triegenes causes an eruption, unleashing the living catastrophe.

The Living Catastrophe

The three-hundred-foot long lava dragon is not the first immense foe the party has faced, but unlike the fey titans the party will (likely) not be able to invoke Risur's rites of rulership to aid their fight. (If they can get someone in charge to cede Alais Primos to become part of the territory of Risur, though, the rites apply. After the trial, a little more legalese sure comes in handy.)

They do have an airship this time, though.

Ravenous, driven by centuries of evil urges that were poured into the caldera, the beast clambers out of the caldera of Enzyo Mons, smashes the Cathedral of Triegenes, and breathes goutts of flame to consume hundreds of onlookers. It perches high and roars into the dark sky, and all who hear it know its name: **Esurientes, the Hungering**.

The Dragon's Hunger

The molten monster descends the mountainside toward Alais Primos. It is drawn to Plaza Hyperion, where the greatest crowds have gathered, and where hundreds of old spells hum in the buildings. The screams of the dying are sweet music to this unnatural creature, and it will often pause in its euphoria of ruin to listen to the citizens of Alais Primos as they die. A hellish cloud of soot follows it out of the mouth of the volcano, and lightning constantly flashes overhead. An aerial approach is perilous but possible.

It takes the monster half an hour to reach the outer edge of the city, at which point it tramples homes, conjures firestorms in every direction, and sets alight nearly every structure within a quarter mile. It pauses for a bit to stalk panicked innocents and devour them, then surges toward Plaza Hyperion, creating a wake of destruction. An hour after the trial concludes, it reaches the center of the city. Most have already fled, but desperate scholars who are trying to carry books from the Grand Librarium to safety have a front-row view as the dragon simply stands atop the Praesidio Urbis and turns the stone liquid from its presence. A few minutes later it notices the activity at the library and proceeds to annihilate the building.





With the heart of the city a cinder, Esurientes revels for another hour, slaughtering all it can—including anywhere like the Family's restaurant that the party might care about—before finally tearing itself apart from within. Its body jerks and spurts, and it staggers through the city, shedding parts at every canal until it finally collapses into inert lava. The glowing stone flows through the canals, consuming the rest of the city before flowing into the harbor and hardening.

If not stopped, Esurientes takes the lives of hundreds of thousands and leaves Alais Primos a dead city cloaked in poisonous vapors.

Fighting Hunger

The party might attack Esurientes as soon as it appears, but truly defeating it likely requires a bit of preparation and clever thinking. Or they might ignore it and race ahead, hoping to retrieve the Axis Seal ritual before the city is destroyed.

Tactics that might help include magically conjuring a rainstorm, which could harden its skin and slow it to half speed as long as the storm persists; driving it into a canal, which could deal 2 Constitution damage for every round it is substantially submerged; firing upon it with cannons, which deal 50 damage per strike (though after day 7 the dragon can call up a shield of mist to make it impossible to spot and target from long range); having an eschatologist call forth the *icy end of the earth* to create a wall the beast basically cannot enter; or performing the *sacrament of apotheosis* on Morgan Cippiano to get an allied Triegenes, who then does uses *miracle* to draw the ocean up into the city, which immobilizes the monster, and stabilizes any dying believers. “Take on that creature,” he says. “I shall attend to my family.”



A stand-up fight would probably be lethal, but if the party goes for it, let them tear the evil thing to pieces with whatever ridiculous attacks they have at their disposal. Considering the size of the thing, you'd probably need to climb onto it to reach anywhere vulnerable.

Aftermath

If Alais Primos survives, the people of Crisillyir owe their lives to the party, and they recall their army from invading Risur. If the city falls, even if the party saved figures in power, none have the authority to call back the army, and indeed the Clergy's forces become fanatical, believing they must now claim Risur as their new home.

As long as the party recovered the Axis Seal ritual, they can return to Flint and make their way to the Gyre, where they can find what they need to undo the Ob's dominion over the world. Without that ritual, a last-ditch possibility would be to head into the Gyre and reach Reida, the plane of time, where they might witness the original Ancients performing the ritual. Unfortunately, the Voice of Rot has wrapped himself about that plane, and intends to pull it—and with it the destiny of the whole world—into oblivion.

What's Next?


In Adventure Twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*, we expect the party to take their airship and fly through the planar rift above Cauldron Hill in Flint. This transports them to the Dreaming, floating at the edge of the Gyre, as it is about to be crushed and shattered by colliding with other dead worlds. The party can save some of the fey of the Dreaming, but must press on and explore the Gyre in order to find planes that possess the proper magical energies necessary to stabilize their world.

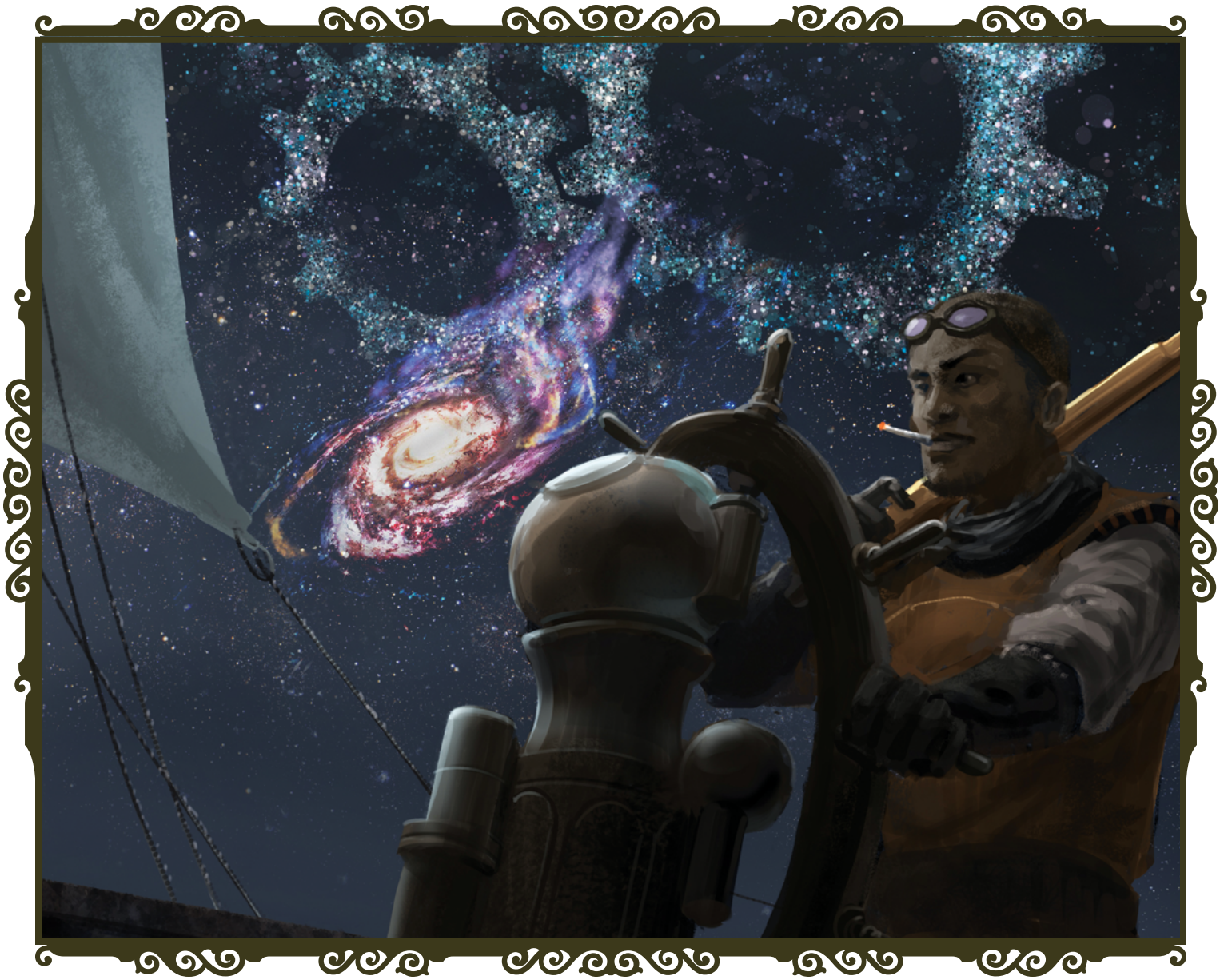
Three complications, though:

First, the Voice of Rot has hold of the world's former plane of Time, and if the party doesn't defeat him, the world is automatically doomed and will be pulled into the Gyre itself.

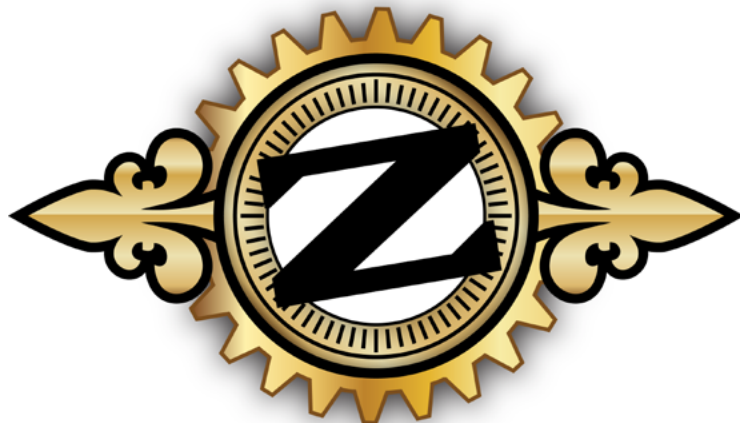
Second, the power of the Dreaming copies the party, leaving one version of them in the real world, and a mirrored reflection trapped in the graveyard of the multiverse. For one group to save their world, the other must perish in the Gyre.

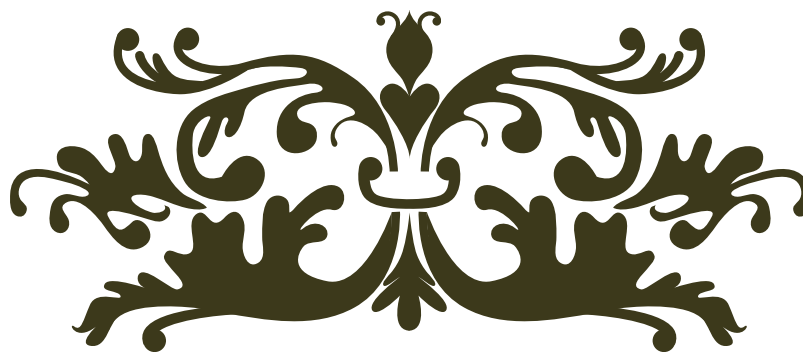
Third, Nicodemus has a plan to get this world back under his control, and it involves the Gidim. While the party is gone, he uses knowledge of the creatures' thoughtflesh physiology and begins intentionally triggering hiveminds around the world, which he is then able to possess and gain control of—effectively turning the entire world into a single gestalt consciousness under his control. If the party did well in this adventure and saved the other nations, Nicodemus has not yet managed to enact this plan; but if they let chaos and despair grip the world, they'll return to find it solidly under Nicodemus's control. The handful of people who resist hide in desperation, and unless the party can ignite a spark of revolution, free will shall be no more.

Effectively, if the party 'won' this adventure, they just need to hit the Gyre and defeat the Voice of Rot, then fly back home and battle Nicodemus. If they 'failed' this adventure, they will have another chance to heroically unite the people of the world. Ideally without resorting to mind control. 



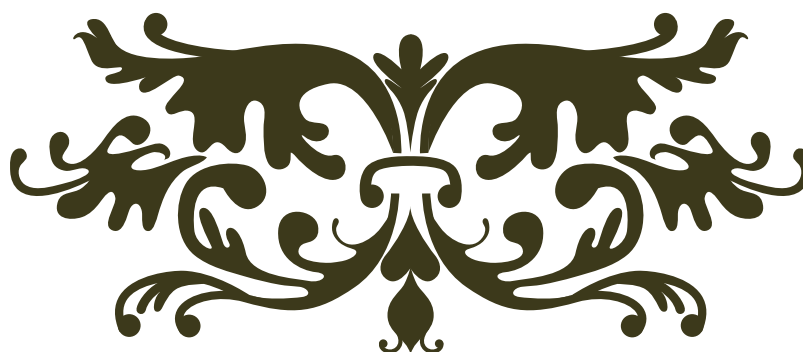
Adventure Number 12
The Grinding
Gears of Heaven





From the Pen of	Ryan Nock
Clever Conversion by	Russell Torres
Evocative Cover Illustration by	ShenFei
Stunning Cartographic Displays by	James Hazelett
Masterful Interior Illustrations by	ShenFei, Claudio Pozas, Dede Putra, Eleni Tsami, and artists of history
with Layout and Graphic Design by	Frank Michienzi
Fastidious Proofreading by	Isaac Everett, Milanovsky George, Nathan Meister, and Jack Tannery
Ably Produced and Facilitated by	Russell Morrissey

Special Thanks to Jason, a.k.a. The Lord of Motion, for teaching me that sometimes the winning move is not to play. Also WOPR from *Wargames*.



ADVENTURE TWELVE: Introduction

Wherein the End Has Already Begun

This all began with a squad of constables finding evidence of a conspiracy to mislead their nation's king and misappropriate their city's industrial material to some secret purpose. The mysterious group operated out of Cauldron Hill, a cursed mountain that loomed over the city—or more accurately the mountain's analogue in the Bleak Gate, that dark reflection of the world from which undead horrors are born.

Further investigation unearthed the scope of the conspiracy, whose interests ranged from archaeological digs of ancient rituals to arcanoscientific inventions that could more easily pierce the barriers between dimensions. They finally learned the group's name – the Obscurati. Aided by self-interested allies and saboteurs inside the organization, the constables penetrated the Cauldron Hill facility and discovered a three-hundred-foot tall mechanical colossus, which activated prematurely. The constables' king was able to banish the titan to the Dreaming, another reflection of the world, one ruled by faeries and other mystical creatures.

Though the colossus was temporarily driven away, the king tasked the constables with gaining control over it before their enemies could retrieve it. This mission took them to the other great nations of the world. They located the three key creators of the colossus – the Gearbuilder, the Steelshaper, and the Mindmaker. The last of that triad helped them infiltrate a gathering of the conspiracy, where they finally learned the Obscurati's ultimate goal. The colossus was to open an immense golden seal over a prehistoric ritual, which had linked this world to other planes and determined the nature of reality. By altering what planes were linked together, the Ob could control the fate of the world.

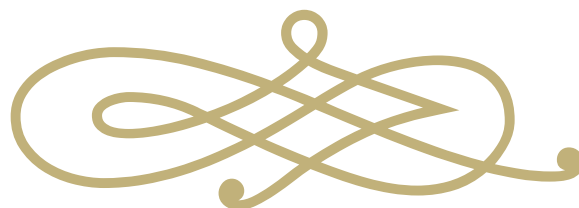
In many ways, the Obscurati had noble intentions, but their ruthlessness in pursuing those aims would make anyone hesitate to trust them. Delving into the history of the conspiracy's founders, Kasvarina and Nicodemus, showed they would sacrifice anyone to advance their plans.

Despite their best efforts, the constables were only able to defend their homeland from falling under the Ob's control. The conspiracy regained control of the colossus and performed their ritual, but something disrupted them at the last moment.

That interference came from the Voice of Rot – an immense fey creature that typically takes the form of a white serpent with a single eye. This world's manifestation of the very concept of death, he is something like a god, and in the Ob's meddling with reality he saw a chance to cause the wholesale destruction of the world. Whether the world's end would annihilate him as well or allow him to ascend to a true divinity is of little consequence to him. With his deceptive tongue he fostered cultists in many nations and planted saboteurs among the Obscurati.

At the moment that would have been the Ob's triumph, those saboteurs disrupted key elements of the ritual. The colossus was overcome by the intense energy beneath the ancient seal, and while the nature of reality was changed, the ritual was incomplete. The world, detached from its previous links to other planes, floated at the edge of the cosmos. It began to drift toward the Gyre, the graveyard of the multiverse where dying planes are annihilated to create the raw starstuff for new worlds.

The constables are now leaders of their homeland. They are renowned as heroes across their world. They need only embark on one last quest to undo the disastrous tinkering of the Obscurati and remake reality into an age of their own design. That quest will take them to the Gyre, where they will rescue other dying worlds to help restore their own, and where they must defeat the Voice of Rot. If they fail, their homeworld will be drawn into the Gyre and annihilated utterly, and all their investigations and heroism will have been for nothing.





Climax Helix

We're trying something experimental for the finale of ZEITGEIST: THE GEARS OF REVOLUTION. We worry about players getting climax fatigue; once you've defeated an army of the dead and five or six monsters the size of an entire battle map, there's just not that much left that can threaten them. It's time to wrap things up.

The problem is, there are two main foes remaining – the **Voice of Rot**, who has coiled himself around the physical manifestation of the fate of the world so he can drag it to its final death; and **Nicodemus**, who after watching his best intentions to save the world instead turn to ash has decided to seize power and mystically force everyone to obey him.

We don't want to have a dramatic final battle against the Voice of Rot... and then have to rebuild tension again for another dramatic final battle, this time against Nicodemus. So we're doing them at the same time.

At the end of the first act of this adventure, the party is in the Dreaming, a manifestation of Av, which has a 'mirror' aspect. When that world smashes into the edge of the Gyre and shatters, the party is reflected in two. One version of them survives in the Gyre, while the other is cast back to the real world. Neither is aware of the other, initially.

In-game, we focus on the Gyre PCs first, who likely assume they're just on the next leg of their quest. They start to explore the planar motes of dying worlds, seeking energies they can use to re-do the Axis Seal ritual when they get back home. Eventually they come upon a plane where they find the goddess Srasama in a deathlike sleep, being watched over by a version of Nicodemus who was trapped here at the moment of the Great Malice, five hundred years ago. This version, who refers to himself by his birth name of William Miller, explains that the party has been split from their real selves, and that this version of them is trapped here forever. But they can send their memories from here to their selves in the real world if they willingly enter the cosmic gears that grind apart dead worlds at the end of the Gyre.

At that moment, in the middle of Adventure Twelve, we begin Adventure Thirteen, *Avatar of Revolution*. The PCs—having moments earlier witnessed the destruction of the Dreaming—arrive back in Risur, but months later than it should be. They aren't aware of what is happening in the Gyre, not yet at least.

They find their world almost completely bereft of free will. Their erstwhile ally Benedict Pemberton, who has managed to survive and hide, tells them that Nicodemus has stolen power from the Gidim and used the godmind phenomenon to take control of nearly everyone's mind in order to finally create his perfect society. With order restored, Nicodemus is now working at the site of the Axis Seal, trying to repair the colossus so he can redo the ritual.

The narrative then returns to the Gyre, where the party can then finish their exploration. To secure some of the most useful planes, they have to prove themselves allies to the survivors by rescuing prisoners or treasures from an infernal group known as the Golden Legion. When they are prepared to challenge the Voice of Rot, they land on the remnants of Reida, the plane of time, at which point we weave back to the real world. A montage sees the party calling upon various figures around the world they helped during the campaign, freeing them from Nicodemus's control and rallying enough support to perform the *sacrament of apotheosis* on one of the PCs, creating a literal Avatar of Revolution. Then the party heads to Axis Island to confront Nicodemus.

The moment they come within sight of the Axis Seal, we return to Adventure Twelve for its climax. The party defeats the Voice of Rot, and then destroy themselves here in order to send the vital information to their other selves.

Throughout this adventure, we'll have you keep track of how quickly the party links to the various worlds, and in what order. On Axis Island, in the climax of Adventure Thirteen, knowledge of those worlds begin to flood into the party's minds round-by-round, and as they contest with Nicodemus and his indestructible colossus for control over the ritual, their actions in this adventure will determine their options there. Effectively, the battle against Nicodemus and the battle against the Voice of Rot occur simultaneously, and only once the party defeats the fey titan does it become possible to kill Nicodemus once and for all.

If you want a more traditional ending you can do it the way we originally had in mind—fight the Voice of Rot, fly back to the real world, then do Adventure Thirteen—but we think this more metaphysical structure nicely weds the local and the cosmic scope of the campaign. And if the party in the Gyre dies, their other selves will receive flashes of what they experienced, enough that they might have the slimmest hope of still saving the world.

Frayed Threads

It's not necessary to tie up every loose plot thread. While we want to encourage the party to leave quickly for the Gyre, there are myriad personal matters they might want to resolve before setting out on a mission they don't know if they can return from. You don't have to give them closure on everything—especially not the personal matters—but here are some setting-level topics you might want to consider revisiting.

- ♦ Who's in charge in Flint's government? How have they been received by the citizens?
- ♦ How much tension is there between industry and the workers now? If Ob-loyal forces conquered the place, industry is humming and those who speak out are reeducated via magic.
- ♦ Who runs the RHC?
- ♦ What are the fey titans up to?
- ♦ How have the major cities of Risur—Flint, Slate, Shale, and Bole—been affected by the invasion?
- ♦ How many major Obscurati figures are still at large? Nicodemus, Han Jierre, Lya Jierre? Depending on who your players remember from the convocation in adventure seven, *Schism*, you could drop mentions of some Ob officers who survived and are still at work around the world. Certainly bring back any Ob officers whom the PCs possessed, if any of them survived.

Obscurati Control

Danor is still loyal to the Obscurati, and the nation is fanatically building war machines and training armies unless the party helped fend off the Godmind, in which case the population is divided, with many protesting and demanding a peaceful resolution of conflict. A major figure in the debate is **Gardienne du Cherage**, an Ob officer (mentioned in adventure seven) who originally was responsible for making Danor less hostile to Risur. Now she's doing mental gymnastics to convince Danor they must liberate Risur's masses—who yearn to become civilized like Danor—from the superstitious leadership of the PCs.



ADAPTING THE ADVENTURE

First, if you decided to buy the twelfth adventure in a thirteen-part adventure path without intending to play the rest of the series, thank you, you crazy strange gamer you.

Second, 20th level adventures give PCs the ability to save a world in an afternoon. You can easily get the party into the Gyre by changing their motivation. Maybe they need to go here to get a Macguffin, and the Voice of Rot is simply the guardian at the edge of the Gyre who keeps people from escaping. Or perhaps a villain from your own game can take the Voice of Rot's place, as perhaps he tries to use the power of the Gyre to reawaken an ancient kingdom, or destroy the world, or whatever other hip thing super-villains are doing these days.

Drakr might be completely leaderless if Komanov destroyed the government in Trekhom, in which case the army and navy are under Han Jierre's command. Otherwise, even if the party saved the day, Drakr is still officially allied with the Obscurati, with **Hastenschrieff Willimarkanova** (a dwarf philosopher who was an Ob officer mentioned in adventure seven) sending down dictats from Nicodemus to the politicians. The nation's arcane forges have begun crafting mechanical humanoid constructs to use as soldiers, which have the benefit of perfectly obeying orders but not having a mind that makes them susceptible to the hivemind phenomenon.

Crisillyir is in disarray, either because the leadership all died, or because Sigismund's god trials scattered them and ruined the chain of command. In the vacuum, the Crisillyiri military has fallen under the command of Danoran **General Shane Wallisonne** (a human who was an Ob officer mentioned in adventure seven).

Elfaivar has been placed under the technocratic rule of **Solace Petrov**, a human economist (mentioned in adventure seven) who has catalogued the resources of the newly-cooperative eladrin survivors and brought them into the world economy by having them sell all manner of magic items once hoarded for an eventual war against the Clergy. In any event, **Kasvarina Varal** is not in Elfaivar. Nicodemus has either kept her imprisoned or kept her as his right hand, depending on how things shook out in adventure eight, *Diaspora*.

Axis Island

After retaking the island in Adventure Ten, Danor's forces have dramatically increased security. Teleportation traps redirect potential intruders. Regular divinations warn of approaching threats by sea or sky. Two lux cannons have been mounted on turrets in the fortress and sea gate to deter attacks. Factories have been restarted to produce construct warriors, as well as equipment to repair the colossus.

Kasvarina and the Colossus

One mystery is likely what happened to Kasvarina Varal, who was separated from the party at the end of Adventure Eight, when she either joined the Obscurati—in which case she works at the right hand of Nicodemus—or when she rejected the Ob but was carried away by wild teleportation magic—in which case she was deposited in Elfaivar but has since been captured and kept prisoner because Nicodemus hopes to still use her.

In either case, she'll appear in Adventure Thirteen and have a strong influence on the actions of the colossus Borne.

A Different Kind of Underworld

Classic mythic archetypes see the hero entering the land of the dead on his greatest quest, before returning home with a great boon. The Gyre fills that mythic role, while also providing a bit of picaresque grandeur at the end of the campaign. ZEITGEIST is ultimately about deciding what the world should be, and so it seems appropriate to show a variety of possible worlds to suggest to the players that they don't have to settle for what's normal.

Adventure Thirteen is the end, and if your players want a technological utopia, an orgiastic empire where they are the god-kings, or a pastoral return to humble nature like something out of Tolkien's Shire, this is their chance. Maybe they'll come to a consensus, or maybe they'll end up fighting for who gets control, or perhaps they'll be boring and decide it's not their right to decide the fate of the world and just put it back to what it used to be: a world whose nature was decided ten thousand years ago by a bunch of alcoholic orcs who were high on primitive druidic narcotics.

The Grinding Gears of Heaven begins with the destruction of Av and ends with confronting the Voice of Rot, but in between it's very free-form. There are thirty planes to explore, and we hope that we've provided enough options and details for you to round out your campaign the way you think your group will best enjoy it.

We're conscious of the backlash against the ending of the **Mass Effect** trilogy, so if your players want some high-powered fun and aren't in a rush to get to the climax, let them have an odyssey through the Gyre. If they are the nostalgic types, well, the Bleak Gate crashed into the Gyre too, so ghosts of dead people the party might enjoy encountering could be wandering around the motes of dying worlds. And if they're seriously just ready to finish this campaign after nearly five damned years, they can barnstorm their way through each plane in ten minutes, then ram their airship into the Voice of Rot and get to beating the Obscurati back home.

This adventure is a last hurrah, so make it as silly or somber as you want. Some underworlds are filled with fire and demonic spiders, and others are endless fields of grain where your wife and daughter enjoy peaceful eternity, but a few have dancing calypso skeletons with a lot of tequila.





BROKEN MIRROR

We hope your players will respond well to the twist that the destruction of Av creates two copies of their characters, and we suspect most will get a kick out of having an opportunity to pull the classic heroic sacrifice while still having another version of themselves survive. It also gives you a chance to gruesomely murder the PCs one by one in the finale against the Voice of Rot, and I'm sure after a campaign this long, that would be quite cathartic.

Adventure Tone

True, the Obscurati took control of the world and convinced most nations to ally with them in creating a new world order, but their current level of domination will vary wildly depending on the party's success.

At this stage in the campaign, the PCs might have undercut the Ob's power base by saving Danor, Drakr, Ber, and Crisillyir from various doomsdays, resulting in a secure Risur that just needs to wrest control of Axis Island back and perform the Axis Seal ritual. Or they might have let Cherage be annihilated by a godmind, Trekhom conquered by Komanov, Alais Primos left an unholy mound of smoldering basalt, and Seobriga transformed into a farm of madness by the Gidim. Risur could be in chaos – its defenses shattered but the occupying armies left without leaders from their homelands to guide them, so they turn to Nicodemus for guidance.

The tone of the adventure will vary based on the circumstances the PCs have found themselves in – heroic and triumphant if they are in good standing, or a desperate last-ditch effort if everything is falling apart. In either case, we plan to throw the party a curveball to make sure the stakes are appropriately high in the final adventure.

Act One: Turning and Turning

Those who are allied in resisting Nicodemus and the Obscurati make plans to send the party into the Gyre. By now the party should have the details of the ritual of the Axis Seal (recovered from Crisillyir), a Gidim *vortex array* (recovered from Ber) to sense the energies of worlds and determine whether they would be useful for the ritual, and possibly the left eye of the Voice of Rot (recovered from Drakr), as well as an understanding that they're probably going to have to face the fey titan.

The Gyre is full of motes of dying worlds, each barely thirty miles across, which clump up near the mouth of an immense nebula that resembles two spinning cogs. There the worlds are slowly eroded by the 'gear teeth' of the nebula, until after untold centuries they are drawn into the mouth of the Gyre and finally crushed.

The party (or their advisor Harkover Lee) can discover from the Axis Seal ritual how to form a metaphysical bond to a plane, which they'll need in order to use a plane in the Axis Seal ritual. For most the process is challenging and perilous, but the party has the will of a nation behind them, and immense experience to boot. For each world they want to bond to, they'll need to land on one of the world-motes, find a place of

importance, and craft a golden icon that is linked to that plane. The process takes a month if done with brute force, but if you properly understand the plane (i.e., learn how it died and ended up in the Gyre) or become a hero of it (i.e., do a great favor for any survivors living there), crafting takes only an hour. The icon can be used by anyone in the Axis Seal ritual, which will need eight different planes.

The Ancients who first performed the Axis Seal ritual bonded to eight of the myriad planes of the multiverse, because they had access to them all. But something that went wrong with the Ob's ritual left them cut off from most of reality. The planes of the Gyre are the only options they have.

Small Medium, Large Ego

During the party's deliberations, a halfling spirit medium contacts them, claiming he has a message from notorious celebrity and adventurer **Rock Rackus**. Rackus, who bodily possesses the short spiritist, reports that devils in an impressive golden airship, wearing impressive gold chains, have attacked Thistle Palace and are enslaving people. He had been dating this ghost woman, and she guided him to safety, through a crack in the earth. Av, he claims, is hollow. The outside of the shell is the Dreaming, and the inside shell is where the Bleak Gate lies.

Rock tells the party to hurry up and come save all the faeries. He can tell them how to get there.

Telescopes and skyseers verify that the planet Av—currently the farthest planet in the night sky—is drifting near the Gyre. They predict soon it will be shorn apart by the nebula, and some remnant of it will join the other world motes. (Conveniently, these world motes seem to 'float' in the aether, with a consistent 'up' and 'down.' They don't obey real-world gravity.)

Flying into the Underworld

The path to the Gyre begins above Cauldron Hill in the city of Flint. There the veil between the real world and the Bleak Gate has always been thin, and if the party flies their airship over the mountain at the correct time they'll be drawn through a planar rift. They arrive above the Cauldron Hill analogue in the Bleak Gate, where Rock can guide them back to the Dreaming side of the world.

They find Av—the plane of dreams, which creates two reflected versions of the real world—mere hours from crashing. The Gyre fills the sky. They're almost immediately set upon by soldiers of the Golden Legion of Egal the Shimmering, an extraplanar foe teased as early as back in Adventure Two, *The Dying Skyseer*.

The Dreaming has been conquered by the legion – or rather a sliver of the legion that has survived in the Gyre for thousands of years, constantly conquering new worlds as they are drawn in. (Millions more legionnaires serve Egal the Shimmering in some layer of Hell, which is beyond the scope of this campaign.) Av is the legion's newest acquisition, and their focus is on Clover, the largest city, where they plunder whatever gold they can find. The legion uses gold chains to bind slaves and turn them into loyal warriors



LAST FAREWELL

You may be tempted to try to wrap up all the loose ends before the party sets out on this adventure. Characters have families to protect, enemies to give come-uppance to, personal goals to achieve, and other story arcs. But remember that a good story not only has a dramatic climax, but also a satisfying denouement. From an old French term for 'untying a knot,' you want to unravel all the complexities that the campaign has produced and leave a sense of normalcy for the characters and catharsis for the players.

When it comes time for the party to say their last good-byes in case their mission to the Gyre fails, try to engineer a few relationships that don't get resolved. You can always use them for a pleasant wrap-up after the world is fully and properly saved.

RISURI GOVERNMENT IN EXILE

If the PCs took too long in adventure eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*, Risuri might have fallen to the invading armies. We assume the party gathers in Flint for their final mission, but they might instead have to meet their allies in secret, perhaps in a Yerasol island or in the caves of the Anthras Mountains where they're hidden away by Granny Allswell.

Perchance to Dream

The party ultimately just needs to hop from the Dreaming to the other worlds of the Gyre, but they may have friends in Clover they want to rescue, or they might feel some obligation to try to save the whole plane. The Golden Legion has airships of its own, so some of the fey could escape and fly back through the rift inside the hollow shell of Av, but most of the plane is doomed. If the party wants to save innocents, they'll need to bond with Av and create a new golden icon for it, which will let them (mostly) restore the plane when they perform the Axis Seal ritual in Adventure Thirteen.

Bonding with Av requires the consent of the monarch of the Unseen Court (exactly who that is depends on the party's actions in Adventure Nine), and so the party can try to defeat the defenders—many of whom are fey enslaved by the legion's golden chains—to reach the palace throne room. Unfortunately, the monarch already has been captured and enslaved, and the legion's airships have carried him or her away to their base on the world mote *Egalitrix*.

In any event, it's not long before meteors begin to smash into the surface of the world, shattering it like the glass orb it is. Fire begins to explode up from the hollow center, and as soon as the party makes it to their ship they're knocked unconscious as the plane crashes into the edge of the Gyre and is obliterated.

For a moment, the party dreams that they've been shunted back to the real world, and that they're stranded, unable to return to the Gyre, unable to find a way to defeat the Obscurati. Then they awaken amid debris of the dead world.

Act Two: Spiritus Mundi

They see massive boulders threaded with gold, signifying they have found **Urim**, one of the planes originally linked to their world. A few surviving legionnaires attempt to finish off the party, and the battle is complicated by immense undead spiders – servants of the Voice of Rot who serve as his eyes throughout the Gyre. The fey titan knows the party is coming, and he sees them as peers of a sort because they have fought before, so he will wait for them to witness as he destroys the world. He'll still sic the spiders on them, though, because he wants them dead.

After the battle, a prospective ally finds the party and offers to guide them through the graveyard of the multiverse.

Over thirty planes in various states of annihilation float and crash against each other as they slowly are drawn toward the teeth of the Gyre. The party needs to bond with at least one plane that possesses energy of each of the eight elements of the Axis Seal ritual – Air, Earth, Fire, Water, Life, Death, Space, and Time. We intend to damage their ship a bit so they have an incentive to explore and get supplies for repairs, rather than rush straight to the Voice of Rot. But generally they'll have free rein to explore a handful of planes every day. If you prefer a long exodus you can cripple their ship entirely and force them to trek by foot and spell (and giant undead tortoise) between the floating island worlds, though the adventure assumes they'll have their ship for some of the final encounters.

We also expect the party to use the *Gidim vortex array* so they can tell generally what energies are active in nearby worlds without having to land on them. There isn't an actual deadline for how fast the party explores—the Voice of Rot will wait up to a year to have the PCs witness the end of their world—but the *vortex array* should let the party feel like they have more control over their journey.

Bonding with a plane originally linked to the party's world is a quick process, but for the other planes it is necessary to either accomplish a quest to aid the survivors or to discover the cause of the plane's demise, so that it will not be forgotten. This provides a bit of investigation for the 'constables' even while they're far from street crime. Finding out these secrets won't be particularly hard, of course, given the magic likely available to the party.

Each plane offers some different trait that would influence the new world the party will create (see GM's Map – Gyre Exploration for more details). There are a mix of good, decent, and terrible options, which should give the party a lot of leeway in creating a new world. Some planes are bad for the long term, but they could prove tactically useful while battling Nicodemus for control of the Axis Seal in Adventure Thirteen.

General Plan

We assume the party will want to bond with **Av**, to use it as a plane of life. However, the monarch of Thistle Palace has been claimed by the fiendish commander of the Golden Legion, His Celestial Eruption General Paelyrion XVIII, which means the party will need to attack *Egalitrix*, their flying volcano fortress plane.



The party might keep the existing fire plane **Jiese** which enabled the industrial revolution, but they have a few options if they would rather the world stop being steampunk. The original plane of **Mavisha** is still fine for water energy, but the telepathic sea monsters of **Shabboath** have claimed it so unless the party wants them hitching a ride they must be driven back. **Urim**, the same plane of earth the party's world originally had, is still perfectly serviceable, but since we offer few good options for planes with Space energy, we hope they'll use Urim for Space, which is its secondary energy trait.

In its place as earth plane, the fan-service option is **Dunkelweiss**, a plane crafted as a tomb for a dwarf king, where the streams are literally beer. But to bond with it the party must recover artifacts stolen by the pirates of **Hunlow**, an evil god trapped in the form of an ocean. That god handily can be goaded into killing the sea monsters of Shabboath.

The safest air-aligned plane, **Caeloon**, is controlled by flying monks, one of whom befriends the party and hopes they'll rescue her master after they bond with the world. The master was taken by the Golden Legion, giving the party another nudge to attack Egalitrix.

Iratha Ket, a surprisingly friendly plane of death, is being threatened by an aggressive and semi-intelligent dwarf sun **Obliatas**, which can be lured away, driven off, or outright destroyed with powerful enough magic. However, Obliatas can also serve as any type of elemental energy, which could create a moral quandary.

Finally, the jungle plane **Ascetia** provides time energy, but more interestingly it is home to a lighthouse built by a reflection of Nicodemus. Nicodemus was present at the events that caused the Great Malice, and was fleeing through a dimensional portal right as the eladrin goddess Srasama died. The explosion of energy fractured him. In the real world he survived as a ghost and went on to pose as a philosopher, using his birth name William Miller. That attempt at peace was trampled by the Clergy, so he abandoned his 'William Miller' identity, then eventually founded the Obscurati.

But at the moment the Great Malice occurred, a reflection of Nicodemus was cast into the Gyre, along with the dead goddess and the spirits of millions of eladrin women who perished simultaneously. This man, who still calls himself William Miller, holds vigil over the body of the dead goddess, and he built the lighthouse to show the Gyre that it was still possible to create something amidst all this decay. That act had the strange effect of keeping Ascetia stable and motionless for five centuries, while countless other planes have drifted past and been consumed.

Inflection Point

William Miller—the reflection of the Nicodemus who is the party's nemesis—is vaguely aware of what his other self has done in the real world, having gathered news from the spirits of those who died since the Great Eclipse and ended up in the Gyre. He knows from experience that the PCs are trapped here, and that their options are either to survive as long as they can in the Gyre, or to cast themselves into the gears. If they take the second choice and have the proper mental preparations, their memories will flood back to the real world and join with the other reflection of themselves.

It's at this point in the game where you can begin Adventure Thirteen, *Avatar of Revolution*, though the versions of the PCs in the real world will be oblivious to what's going on in the Gyre. Their consciousnesses won't interconnect until near the climax of the two adventures.

After some action in the real world, the focus will return to the version of the PCs in the Gyre. We expect they'll visit the lighthouse and meet William Miller before they attempt to attack Egalitrix, and so the battle with the Golden Legion will likely wrap up the second act of this adventure. But if they don't want to keep Av, they might simply skip that battle and push onward. Once the party has finished exploring the Gyre (and hopefully has settled on which planes they intend to use in the Axis Seal ritual), the focus follows the real world until the party arrives at Axis Island.

Then we slip back to the Gyre, where the Voice of Rot awaits just outside the grinding gearteeth.

Act Three: Blank and Pitiless

One of the planes originally linked to the party's homeworld was **Reida**, known as the arc of history. A planet-sized incomplete ring that gleamed silver in the night sky, it was said to contain the entire fate of the world, tracing an arc around it like the passage of the hands of a clock. The final moment captured in it was when the Obscurati completed their ritual and detached it from the world, and though it no longer shapes the planet's future, it is tied in a primordial way to the world's past.

The Voice of Rot entered the Gyre, found the drifting world, and wrapped his coils around it, then used magic to pull the plane to within a breath of the Gyre's teeth. Though once a vast world thousands of miles in diameter, in the Gyre Reida has shrunk to only a few hundred feet across. If it were left alone it would eventually be ground apart, but if it is destroyed while the Voice of Rot clings to it, he'll channel its destruction across the whole of history, snuffing all life on the PC's homeworld.

Intense winds draw debris toward the Gyre, making it dangerous to fly near Reida, and spelling a near certain death for anyone knocked off the plane. The Voice of Rot, out of a perverse sense of fey fairness, waits to destroy the world until the party is present to try to stop him. But he has grown stronger by feeding off all the death in the Gyre, not to mention the temporal magic of the ring he is wrapped around.

Battle Across the Ages

The surface of Reida is charged with history, and those who touch it cause it to manifest phantoms of the past that, with a bit of willpower, can become temporarily real. Starting at roughly "eight o'clock" on the ring and progressing clockwise, different sections represent eras of the ancient past, the time of the founding of Risur, the era of the Great Malice, the Yerasol Wars, and recent events.

Because the Voice of Rot was present throughout all these ages, here on Reida he cannot be harmed unless he is simultaneously attacked in two different eras at once. Additionally, while his titanic fangs are deadly and his magic can turn the land against them, the primary threat is his voice. As he speaks, the plane around him slowly decays, as history itself withers away. This can only be stopped if someone else is near him as he speaks, but the colossal serpent constantly slithers around the ring. The party is thus forced to spread out across history.



(You might need to adjust the exact pace of how fast the world decays. Some groups will aggressively attack, so you'll need to push the timeline so the drama escalates before the fight ends. Other groups might be more defensive or chatty, and we don't want to force them to rush during an epic showdown.)

During the battle, the party might seek answers to history's greatest questions by exploring past eras, and they can call upon allies such as the orcish Ancients who crafted the Axis Seal, King Kelland who founded Risur, and perhaps even foes they have previously killed during the campaign. (Psychopath or not, Lorcan Kell wouldn't approve of the world ending.)

After a grueling fight on a world that is literally disintegrating beneath them, perhaps the world's history is destroyed, and the PCs will all plunge into the Gyre, their souls being devoured by the Voice of Rot as he ascends to godhood and finds new worlds to destroy. But if the party manages to preserve at least part of Reidia until the Voice of Rot is defeated, the fey titan loses his grip on the plane and is pulled into the teeth of the celestial gears, screaming in denial as he is utterly annihilated.

CLIP SHOW

One fun thing you can do during this battle is have the party literally walk through their own past. A PC might be knocked into a phantom of their first infiltration of Axis Island, or witness again an argument with a now-dead friend. Nostalgia is powerful, and if the fight ends with the Voice of Rot having destroyed all the ring except for the part nearest the 'end of time,' having the whole city of Flint cheering the party on is pretty damned perfect.

Using Character Themes

Dockers find an easy rapport with the pirates of Hunlow (plane 33), and a few of the scalawags might want to team up to topple Admiral Taracle. Eschatologists find many people willing to discuss the end of the world, since everyone here has experienced it in one form or another. Gunsmiths should have a chance to use the fusils of the Golden Legion against them, perhaps even retooling the burning brand tower to fire at the legion's command center.

Martial Scientists can learn the *stance of the paper wind* from the monk Calily. Skyseers should have strong and clear visions of the threats each world poses as they approach. Spirit Mediums can commune with many dead planes to ask their histories, especially the plane Bhoior (plane 41) which can serve as a sort of ferry for the party and their allies. Technologists have the best chance of sabotaging the fortress of Egalitrix, and Yerasol Veterans can call upon the memory of other Risuri heroes in the final battle against the Voice of Rot.

Vekeshi Mystics have the greatest opportunity of any character theme, as they will find a remnant of the goddess Srasama on Ascetia (plane 24).

Finally

With the Voice of Rot defeated, the time comes for the PCs to plunge willingly into the Gyre. In so doing, they'll carry all their knowledge about the planes to their selves in the real world. Any planar icons they carry will magically manifest in the real world, for the icons are a physical representation of a metaphysical connection.

The actual passage through the Gyre will be surreal, like the end of 2001.



ACT ONE: Turning and Turning

After final preparations, the party flies their airship across a rift over Cauldron Hill to the plane of the Dreaming.

MEANWHILE IN THE APOCALYPSE

The following news reaches the party from around the world.

Shedding Skin. Around the world, huge numbers of snakeskins are being found, all white and hollow. Snakes are dying en masse by constantly shedding and reshedding their skin until muscle and bone becomes visible.

Pardon Me. Prisoners across Risur seek pardons so they can be with family. However, two unrepentant prisoners—the dragonborn brothers Eberardo and Valando—desire release solely so they can fight in Risur's army and burn as many people in the opposing armies as possible before they die.

Utopian Societies. While most of the world fell to chaos recently, Obscurati control has been impressively solid in the Malice Lands and Elfaivar, where there was little existing government to contend with. Model communities have sprung up, each an experiment to test different ways of solving local problems. The residents are all cooperative, or so report the Ob-endorsed couriers.

One-Armed Rebel. In rural Ber, a one-armed eladrin who had lived harmoniously with the locals for centuries was attacked for unknown reasons by government forces. The government lost the engagement, and the fugitive has disappeared. Local newspapers received boxes with grisly trophies from the battle, and letters allegedly from the fugitive demanding, "Kasvarina should come face me herself."

Briefing

Social. Real-Time.

The party's allies prepare them for a mission to the stars.

We have to keep some details generic for this scene because the circumstances around it depend heavily on how well the party has defended Risur, which NPCs are friendly with the party, and who has managed to survive this far. If it's in Flint, it likely takes place at the governor's mansion; in Slate at the royal palace; and if Risur has fallen the party will need to gather their allies aboard their airship and hold the meeting far from anywhere in particular.

In any case, we suggest you have it occur at 'noon,' when anyone who looks skyward can see the Gyre is growing closer. Harkover Lee assembles burning reagents for a ritual. Stover Delft scowls and chews tobacco while shuffling through reports from his agents. Gale paces—or rather floats back and forth—and keeps glancing around as if she expects someone to attack. Brakken of Heffanita quietly reads the surface thoughts of aides who come and go just in case any of them might be mind controlled.

Other possible allies who would be present include Viscount Inspector Nigel Price-Hill and the constables of the 'B-Team' from earlier adventures, Morgan Cippiano from Crisillyir, and Kvarti or Vlendam from Drakr. It might even be all hands on deck, with former hostiles like Duchess Ethelyn or maybe even Sijhen present.

Make sure *not* to have present the Beran spymaster El Extraño, nor Benedict Pemberton. Even if Pemberton wasn't seemingly obliterated in front of the party's eyes in Adventure Ten, the old dragon prefers to operate in secret so he won't come, but he might send a duplicant of his chief advisor, the gnoll Pardo. Likewise, actual world leaders like the Bruse of Ber or the new rulers of Crisillyir cannot afford to come, but if the party is on good terms with them they might have sent envoys.

This isn't a final hurrah, though, so don't feel compelled to bring everyone in yet. That said, one person who would be very interested in the party's upcoming journey is the demoness Ashima-Shimtu, who would like to leave this world. She's been here since the Axis Seal was first erected, and while she doesn't have any special knowledge here, she's curious enough to want to watch.

Undoing the Obscurati's Ritual

Let the PCs direct the discussions, but Harkover Lee offers guidance to steer the party toward a journey to the Gyre. He points out that undoing the changes the Ob wrought in the Axis Seal ritual will give them an upper hand in freeing the world from the dominion of Nicodemus. Perhaps more urgently, the ritual offers a way to avert the looming threat of the Gyre.

The following information might be discovered by the PCs' own observations, or by allied astronomers and skyseers, but use Harkover to explain anything the party doesn't understand.



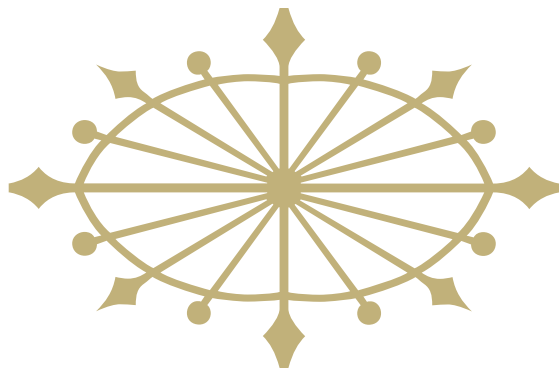
Explaining the Axis Seal Ritual

The Axis Seal Ritual is detailed in a document the party (hopefully) recovered in Adventure Eleven. If they did not get that document, all the best minds of Risur can surmise is:

- ♦ The ritual seems to need eight different planes, though just what determines a good match is unclear. The Ob kept Jiese, and they moved Av, but the other six planes were swapped out.
- ♦ The Axis Seal had a golden cover, and Danoran excavations on Axis Island discovered golden icons linked to the worlds of the night sky. The party likely recovered at least one of these icons (Nem, Avilona, or Urim in Adventure One; or Apet in Adventure Three), so they can figure out how to craft similar icons. Crafting one requires visiting the world you want to link to, and the only place available with worlds is the Gyre in the sky above.
- ♦ Very dangerous energy is pouring out of the center of the ritual crater on Axis Island, and the sun was at the center of the planetary system. Since the sun is missing and the seal is open, maybe something needs to be put in the middle, or maybe the seal just needs to be closed.
- ♦ It's unclear how to survive the energy of the seal, but even the colossus wasn't strong enough by itself. It required defensive magic performed by Ob mages in nearby bunkers, and when someone killed them, the seal's power tore the colossus apart.

If the party recovered the ritual text from Alais Primos, they additionally know:

- ♦ You need at least one plane with each of eight energy types – Air, Earth, Fire, Water, Life, Death, Space, and Time. Most planes have two primary energies they can be used for. Each world chosen will lend some of its nature to the party's homeworld.
- ♦ Any physical object can function as an icon for a world; the Ancients just used gold because they had tons of it and it was long-lasting. Crafting an icon requires visiting a world and channeling its native energies into an object, which it absorbs over several days. Then you need only to mark the icon with some symbol to represent the world.
- ♦ The sun will appear when the ritual cover is lowered.
- ♦ The Ancients had specific chants performed by several hundred allies at the site of the ritual to keep the energy from going out of control. The Ob apparently used those same chants, and it was working until they were sabotaged. (In Adventure Thirteen, we'll recommend the party has their allies around the world chant – quantity overcomes distance, protecting them even if they don't use the *Sacrament of Apotheosis*.)



Threat of the Gyre

Gale, who has long been friendly with the skyseers, points out that the Gyre is drawing near. A group of young skyseers collaborated with astronomers from Slate, and they tuned telescopes to examine the Gyre's structure. They saw small fragments of worlds float near the teeth of the grinding nebula. Already it is close to consuming Av, the plane of dreams. Av is no more than a few days from destruction, and the party's homeworld will be taken a few months later, a year at most.

Since the various golden icons and the golden plate of the Axis Seal itself were decorated with constellations that depicted the world's place relative to the stars, it seems a fair bet that completing the ritual and closing the seal will return the world to where it used to be, safely away from the Gyre.

Harkover is trying to test a planar travel spell to reach the Gyre, but so far he has been unsuccessful. Divinations have suggested that a path will be revealed to them soon, though.

The Mission

Someone needs to enter the Gyre, visit the remnants of the worlds there, bond with them, then return and use those worlds to link this world to a new system of planes. Then they'll need to close the seal, which likely is now guarded by Obscurati forces.

Sure, the PCs could send someone else, but for something this unknown and perilous, there's only one choice for whom to send.



The aged Beran seems more comfortable now that the PCs are aware of his secret, that before he swore allegiance to Risur he was a dragon tyrant named Inacht the Hex-Eater. Straight-backed and virile despite appearing to be in his 60s, Lee speaks crisply and passionately. He always dresses in reds and golds and carries a solid gold orb tucked into his robes.



Rock Rackus stumbled his way to national celebrity, then kept on stumbling ever higher. Most people throughout Risur saw him as an idiot at best, a blasphemer at worst. But he leads a charmed life, with his strange mix of oblivious narcissism landing him in hot water but never quite getting him killed.

He wields a diamond-encrusted gold pistol that was a prize for cuckolding the fey king of the Unseen Court. An unlikely expert in teleportation magic, Rock used to rob from ancient tombs and give to the working man, but he was never quite at home among the working class. After being fake-killed in the Dreaming, he realized that he and the fey think alike, and now that they are in peril, he's determined to prove himself more than a buffoon.



CREATING A PLANAR ICON

To create a planar icon, characters must succeed two DC 30 checks – one Knowledge (planes), one Spellcraft. A single character can make both checks, or two can cooperate. Once a character has formed a link with a plane, he channels the world's energy into some small object that will act as the icon. Any handheld object can function as an icon. The time it requires to create the icon depends on how strong a bond the character has with that world.

If a character is studying the plane from afar (such as by a telescope as the Obscurati did on Axis Island), it takes a year to craft the icon. Actually being on the plane reduces the time needed to a month.

Whenever a character begins to make an icon he intuitively knows that this would go faster if he could form a meaningful bond with the world. That entails either accomplishing a great quest for the survivors of a world, or sufficiently understanding the cause of the world's demise if there are no survivors. If the character has such a bond, crafting the icon only takes a month from afar, or only an hour if the character is actually on the plane.

Because the party knows exactly what happened to the planes that were linked to their world, they only need an hour on Avilona, Av, Mavisha, Urim, Apet, and Nem. (Reida is going to be destroyed before the party can get a chance to bond with it.)

After an icon is created it steadily absorbs energy, and over the course of a few centuries it will become a magic item with some minor powers related to its plane, which some future adventurers can find.

Small Medium, Large Ego

"I've learned to cast *sending*," comes the voice of Rock Rackus inside one of the PCs' heads, "and the fey taught me some tricks about teleporting. Where are you? You need my help. Expect a little guy."

Shortly, Rock Rackus teleports wherever the PCs are, if they tell him. Otherwise, he *sends* again intermittently with snippets of information, growing increasingly frustrated. When he does arrive, though, he's not his typical human self, but rather is possessing the body of a halfling spirit medium named **Fipperry Leafbrowner**. Fipperry, who in adventure ten briefly met the party while revealing how eladrin and the dead were affected by the Great Eclipse, has a shop in Flint where he communes with the recently departed for a modest fee, Rock—who is currently in the Bleak Gate—tracked down the analogue of that shop and started pestering the Halfling until he agreed to let Rock control his body for a bit.

Rock has dressed Fipperry in a long fur coat with a rose on the lapel. He has eschewed any gold decorations, and if any PCs are wearing gold he says their fashion is in poor taste. Rock explains that he's not dead,

just in the Bleak Gate, and that the Bleak Gate is on the inside of the Dreaming. And the Dreaming is about to smash into some giant gears in the sky. And there's an army of people dressed in gold chains, led by devils, who are enslaving all the fey they can get their hands on.

After a falling out with Thisraldion, monarch (or possibly former monarch – or possibly dead former monarch) of the Unseen Court, Rock started dating a ghost from the Bleak Gate, and when the devils attacked Thistle Palace the ghost woman helped Rock escape through a crack in the earth into the land of the dead. It turns out, this whole time the moon—or what used to be the moon—was hollow. Fey lived on the surface, and dead people unlive on the inside. Except every once in a while dead people disappeared and went to the afterlife, or at least that's how it used to work. But now all the dead people are piling up because they can't go anywhere. So the inside of the place that used to be the moon is getting crowded and spooky.

But that's not the point. The point is the Dreaming, where all the faeries are, is in trouble, and Rock needs the party to be his back-up when he goes to save them. His girlfriend says that if the PCs go on top of Cauldron Hill when the weird gears in the sky are overhead, they'll get pulled to the Bleak Gate. Then they can go through a big hole in the ground—it seems like the moon is cracked and not doing so well—and end up in the Dreaming, then get to Clover.

When Rock realizes the party has an airship, he nods, and says they're popular these days. The devils came in ships covered in gold chains that flew through the sky and carried off slaves. He thinks if he has a ship of his own he can start flying faeries back to the real world. He thanks the party for giving him a good idea. (When the party meets him in the Bleak Gate, he'll have cajoled some sailor ghosts to lend him a ghost ship, which he is able to make fly because he's convinced it should.)

He doesn't know anything about the nature of the Gyre—frankly all this planar stuff confuses him a little—but he thinks the PCs will do a great job at whatever they're up to.

No Time to Waste

After explaining things, Rock grimaces, and says that his halfling host wants him out. He's going to teleport Fipperry back home, and he hopes to meet the party at the Bleak Gate version of Cauldron Hill soon. If he doesn't see them within a day, he's leaving and going back to save the Unseen Court himself.

Expedition Requisitions

Harkover Lee can coordinate acquiring any items the party needs for their expedition to the Gyre. The crew of the party's airship can be ready to depart at a moment's notice. If Risur's still intact, Lee, Delft, and others are confident they can keep Risur running for a few days or weeks while the party is away.

Unbeknownst to any of them, the party will be gone far longer than that.





Slipstream

Action. Real-Time. Level 18.

The flight through the planar rift above Cauldron Hill is worse than any oceanic storm.

When the party is ready, they need to fly their ship above Cauldron Hill. If Flint has fallen to hostile forces, their arrival elicits some errant small arms fire, and a scramble to aim heavy cannons at them, but the party should be gone long before the occupying force can harm them.

For a few minutes on either side of 'noon,' when the Gyre is directly overhead, anyone who is atop or above the long-cursed mountain in the center of Flint is pulled upward into the clouds. From a viewer's perspective on the ground the party's vessel fades away into mist, but from the perspective of the PCs, they begin flying upward into a funnel

of swirling thunderheads, within which lightning spirals and tries to reach out and grasp them like a living thing. Within moments winds stronger than a hurricane threaten to keel over the ship, anything loose is stripped away and carried off, and any debris that is torn free dramatically explodes when it touches the inner edge of the storm funnel.

Miles away overhead, the funnel seems to terminate in darkness, but minute by minute that black void grows closer.

A spirit medium will see literally thousands of ghosts rising up with the party's ship, and might even spot a few people the party killed in the past couple months.

Surviving the Rift

While the party is almost certain to survive the planar rift, their crew might not be so lucky. Over the course of fifteen minutes (three five-minute stages) their airship is wracked by the storm, and they'll need to tend to the ship to make sure it arrives in one piece.

Winds have unnatural currents that threaten to topple the ship and tear it to pieces. Worse, the air is filled with gravel dissolved from the top of Cauldron Hill, and angry ghosts eventually notice and attack the ship as it nears the Bleak Gate.

Stage One – Entrance Turbulence

First, the ship's lookout must make a Perception check (DC 30) to identify and alert the crew of the air turbulence, which shifts rapidly and has few visual clues other than the drift of dust and debris in a storm that's constantly flashing with disorienting lightning. If the lookout fails, whenever anyone makes a Command check during this stage, he rolls twice and takes the worse result.

Second, the captain of the ship must make a Command check (d20 + half his character level + his Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier) against DC 20. Failure means the ship rocks dangerously, and each crew member must make a Dexterity check (DC 8) or be blasted off the ship. They are pulled fifty feet per round toward the outer edge of the funnel, which is two hundred feet away. Anyone who touches the outer edge of the funnel takes 20 fire and lightning damage, plus another 20 each stage they remain un-rescued, until at the end of Stage Three they fall from the sky into the Bleak Gate version of Cauldron Hill. That plunge deals a further 20d6 falling damage.

If the captain fails the Command check by 5 or more, the ship lists. It is 'immobilized,' which means that the captain can never succeed Command checks. (He still has to roll, though, to see if he fails by 5 or more.)

If the captain fails a second Command check by 5 or more before the ship is righted, instead it capsizes. On a flying ship, this effectively means the vessel is tumbling out of control, and everyone must cling to something or be flung away.

Officer Assistance. If you're using *Admiral o' the High Seas*, a PC acting as bosun can direct the crew to aid the captain's checks, and a second lookout could grant the captain a bonus in addition to the first lookout's removing the 'roll twice' disadvantage. An engineer can attempt to right a listing or capsized ship.

A navigator can help with every command check required to maneuver, making his own check (d20 + half his character level + his Dexterity, Intelligence, or Wisdom modifier). The captain can use his own check or the navigator's.

MYSTERIES OF THE MULTIVERSE

First, we know you're curious, but we don't have anyone particular in mind for who Rock's ghostly girlfriend is. It could be someone the PCs know who has died, but we like to assume it's just the ghost of a woman who wrote the best song of all time. Of all time. Rock's living out a childhood dream, and he isn't turned off by her spooky skull face.

Second, the way the afterlife used to work was that the souls of the recently departed would briefly appear in the Bleak Gate, then travel on to Nem, the plane of ruin, where they'd move on to some other realm whenever a line from the real world through Nem pointed at the appropriate destination in the multiverse. Those who had particularly traumatic deaths might linger in the Bleak Gate until they either went mad or found closure.

Now, though, Av—the plane that created the Bleak Gate as a reflection of the real world—is no longer in orbit of the real world. So the souls of those who die linger, invisible, in the real world, and they lurch toward places like Cauldron Hill that were once closely linked to the Bleak Gate. Those souls are then drawn into the Bleak Gate whenever Av (and the Gyre) is overhead, but there is nowhere for them to go to because the world is too far from the rest of the multiverse. Instead of going on to a final reward or punishment, the souls just crowd around the Bleak Gate analogue of Flint.

When Av reaches the Gyre and shatters, tens of thousands of souls of those who died since the Ob's ritual will be scattered across the planar motes in the Gyre. If there's any unfinished business the party has with someone who died in the past few months, you can have them encounter their soul here.

You might also let the PCs use this situation to resurrect people whom they've lost, even if you're normally opposed to returning people from the dead. All they need to do is bring the souls along with them when they jump into the Gyre's teeth after defeating the Voice of Rot, and those people can be returned to life at the site of the Axis Seal in the real world.



Stage Two – Lightning and Debris

As before, the lookout can make a Perception check to help alert the crew to danger.

As before, the captain must make a Command check (DC 20) to keep the ship stable enough for the crew to work safely.

Additionally, the captain must make a second Command check (DC 28) to guide the ship through thrashing tendrils of lightning and past massive boulders that have been caught up in the vortex. A failure deals a 'strike' to a random ship component, and creatures in that area take 5 damage. A failure by 5 or more deals two strikes to different locations. (**Roll 1d10**: 1-2 – hull integrity; 3-4 – sails or engine; 5-6 – armaments; 7-10 – quarters, hold, and miscellaneous.)

Stage Three – Ghost Pirates

The winds grow powerful beyond any storm on earth as the ship gets closer to the dark end of the vortex, near the Bleak Gate. Then, amid the strobing flashes of lightning, thousands of ghosts become visible, hanging in the air. Until this moment they had been aimless, but as they become aware of the party's ship, they begin to groan in unison, "Ship. Escape. Kill."

As before, the lookout can make a Perception check to avoid hazards.

As before, the captain must make a Command check to keep the ship stable, but the winds are stronger, so it would be nearly impossible for most captains who aren't high level (DC 25).

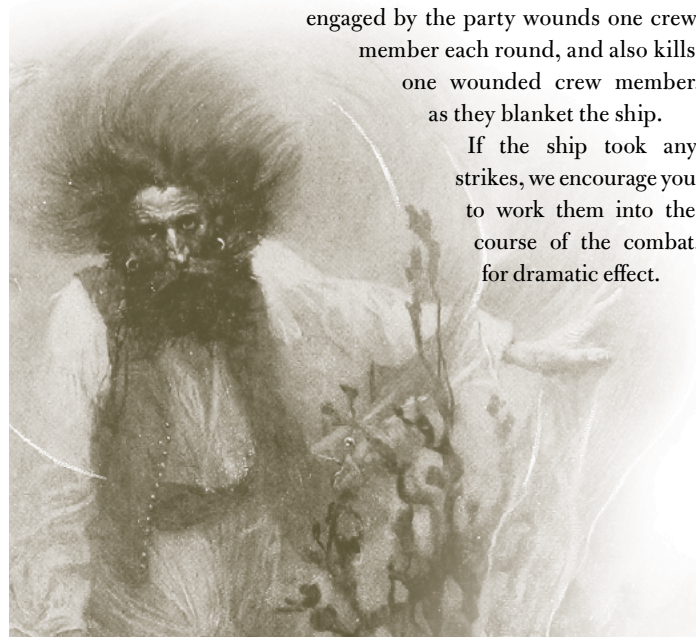
As before, the captain must make a second Command check (DC 28) to avoid taking strikes from immense threads of electricity and tumbling, flaming trunks of trees that were stripped from the peak of Cauldron Hill.

Finally, the ship is attacked by an immense swarm of ghosts, which desire to take the vessel and fly it into the Gyre so they no longer have to endure this eternity of lingering. This number only represents the ones that are able to reach the ship; most are too slow to catch it as it passes by. The threat here is more to the party's crew than the PCs themselves, and honestly we're throwing masses of weak foes at them so they can feel appropriately badass at the start of this adventure.

Don't have them all swarm the PCs, though. Some should phase through the hull and cause havoc on lower decks, while others attempt to crudely pilot the ship until there's an opening for them to attack. In general, you can assume that each horde that isn't

engaged by the party wounds one crew member each round, and also kills one wounded crew member, as they blanket the ship.

If the ship took any strikes, we encourage you to work them into the course of the combat, for dramatic effect.



Ghostly Vortex Hijackers

+ 20 Vortex Ghost Hordes



Vortex Ghost Horde

CR 9

XP 6,400

NE Medium undead (incorporeal, troop)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense; Perception +27

Aura unnatural aura (30 ft.)

Defense

AC 17, touch 17, flat-footed 13 (+3 Dex, +3 deflection, +1 dodge)

hp 104 (16d8+32)

Fort +9, **Ref** +10, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities troop traits; **Immune** undead traits

Offense

Speed fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee troop (4d8 negative energy)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attack

Statistics

Str –, **Dex** 16, **Con** –, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Diplomacy +23, Fly +7, Intimidate +23, Perception +27, Sense Motive +21, Stealth +22, Survival +21

Languages various from around the world

Special Abilities

Telekinetic Tear (Su) As a standard action, a vortex ghost horde can target one creature within 30 feet. The ghosts use their latent telekinetic abilities to tug and tear their victim's body in multiple directions at once. The target takes 8d6 points of damage (Fortitude DC 21 negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unnatural Aura (Su) Animals do not willingly approach within 30 feet of a vortex ghost horde, unless a master makes a DC 25 Handle Animal, Ride, or wild empathy check.

Deathly Silent

The roar of the storm cuts out in an instant. Up is down, and the ship is plummeting toward a midnight black reflection of Cauldron Hill and the city of Flint. From a height of thousands of feet, the party's airship tumbles, and the party has a brief window of five rounds to try to right it. (We're roughly estimating a ship isn't very dense, and so its terminal velocity is only about 30 meters per second, but if you've got math nerds in your group, don't tell them how high they are or else there's a good chance they'll want to calculate things.)

The levitational components Pemberton installed on the ship are not designed to function while upside down, and the ship cannot arrest its plummet until it is righted.

Flipping a ship is far more difficult than simply correcting a lateral list. First, the crew must be able to attend to their stations, which is difficult since the ship is in freefall. Second, an engineer must adjust the ship's flight profile (i.e., modify the propellers or sails) to operate in this unorthodox position. Finally, the captain must direct the crew to regain control of the ship's flight path.



Step One – All Hands to Emergency Stations!

If the party has a steam-powered airship, their full crew requirement is likely 32. If they have at least 4 they count as having minimum crew, and any fewer than that is a skeleton crew.

With a sailing vessel, the full crew requirement is likely 64, with a minimum crew of 16.

Each round during the freefall, figure out how many crew are able to meaningfully contribute, which requires an Acrobatics or Climb check (DC 15) to maneuver while upside down, even with the aid of the flight magic the vessel's Skyship trait grants.

When the engineer attempts his Intelligence check in Step Two, or the captain attempts a Command check in Step Three, the number of crew will determine his modifier. Full crew imposes no penalty; minimum crew imposes a -5 penalty; and skeleton crew imposes a -10 penalty.

Step Two – Adjust the Flight Profile! Recalibrate the Levitationals!

A PC acting as engineer must succeed at a Knowledge (engineering) check (DC 25) to adjust the ship's flight profile. In effect, he has to make the ship capable of being steered while upside down in freefall. An engineer can attempt one check each round, and multiple PCs can each roll, or they can aid the primary engineer. Remember, insufficient crew imposes a penalty.

If a PC proposes a clever trick to flip the ship — such as with extreme telekinesis, firing all the weapons on one side, deploying a sail as a 'wing' to produce drag on one side, and so on — grant the engineer a +2 to +5 bonus to his or her check.

It takes two successful checks in different rounds to adjust the ship's flight profile, or one check that succeeds by 5 or more.

Step Three – Pull with All Your Might!

Once the engineer succeeds in adjusting the ship's flight profile, the captain must direct the crew in a complex maneuver to actually flip the ship upright. This requires a Command check (d20 + half the captain's level + his Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma modifier) against DC 30.

Alternately, in the fifth and final round the captain might try to soft-land the ship while it's still upside down, which only requires beating DC 25. However, as the ship grazes the tops of hills and plunges through haunted forest canopies, it takes 8 strikes scattered among random components ship, which might cripple the vessel or kill some of the crew.

If the captain can't succeed one of these checks, the ship crashes at the start of the sixth round, dealing 20d6 falling damage plus 100 damage from the crushing weight of the ship (and possibly 50 more fire damage from an exploding steam boiler, depending on the ship's propulsion system).

If the captain does succeed, though, the ship sweeps just past the pinnacle of Cauldron Hill but is able to pull up and level off as it flies a wide arc over the ghost-filled analogue of Flint. The only light is atop Cauldron Hill, where Rock Rackus has lit a bonfire to lure away the evil spirits while he sits safely in a ring of blood, awaiting the party's arrival.

Through a Cracked Looking Glass

Rock Rackus links up with the party by flying over in his own airship — or rather, the ghost of a ship. Choose some vessel the party sank or destroyed previously in the campaign — Rock found it in the Bleak Gate, lured some ghosts into it by singing, and convinced the ship it could fly.

He's glad the party brought their own ship, and as soon as the party's ship is air-worthy, Rock leads with his vessel, guiding them to a fissure in the woods near what would be the capital city Slate in the real world. With a bit of careful maneuvering the party can pilot through what appears to be a ten-mile deep canyon of glass, where reflective shards spin in freefall. Rivulets of black fluid — witchoil — seeps between the cracks, and that oil positively glistens with souls that are trapped in it.

At the 'bottom' of the canyon Rock and the PCs must flip their vessels and rise up amid the burning chessboard forest near the fey capital city Clover.

Overhead they can see the Gyre looming stupendously close. The two cog-shaped nebulae span the sky from horizon to horizon, and it becomes clear that they're mere hours from being caught in the immense gear teeth, or dashed to bits upon some other dying world. Indeed, dozens of jagged shards of rock float overhead like shattered moons.

It is while they take in this spectacle that their arrival is noted by a patrol of the Golden Legion of Egal the Shimmering.

ROCK'S "LEADERSHIP"

Rock recognizes the party's ship is better, so once they're through the rift he has his ghostly crew dock his vessel and boards the party's ship. He insists he's in charge, then asks for advice. Ultimately he'll say something like, "I was gonna say the same thing. Follow me."

If the party's ship is wrecked beyond repair, Rock lets them on board his ship as his formal guests with a fancy ceremony involving cigars and whisky.

See Appendix A: Combat Catalogue for Rock's stats.





Legion's Initiative

Action. Tactical. Level 22.

The pit fiend Brhan Kinoro attacks the party as soon as their airship appears above the Dreaming.

The party has encountered references to the Golden Legion to the past – a PC might have a wand of solid gold, and in the Crypta Hereticarum the devil Belcamp tried to make a legion of his own, albeit with lead chains instead of gold. Now they meet their first true legionnaires, and these foes would be horrifying for any lesser heroes.

A slaver vanguard spots the party's ship and dives under the canopy of the chessboard forest outside Clover. Sharp-eyed PCs (Perception DC 32) can notice the devils before they move into cover at a distance of five hundred feet. The devils reach the party's ship five rounds later. They take advantage of most landbound creature's unfamiliarity with three-dimensional movement by staying low until they're directly beneath the party's ship.

Av Slaver Vanguard

- Brhan Kinoro, Golden Legion pit fiend
- 4 Golden Legion horned devils
- 1 Golden Legionnaire company



See Appendix A: Combat Catalogue for stats.

Tactics

Led by the pit fiend **Brhan Kinoro**, the patrol expects to kill a few mortals and then easily cow the rest. The pit fiend leader will summon a company of twenty-five Golden Legionnaires at one side of the ship, and then it and its four horned devil allies rise on the other side of the ship.

After the initial attack, Brhan laughs and flares with fire. He shouts, "Hubristic mortals think you can ply these skies? They belong to the Golden Legion! All wealth is the legion's! Those who oppose us shall be enslaved. Show loyalty, however, and we shall share our limitless wealth with you. Loyalty is prosperity. Prosperity is freedom."

He'll be understandably shocked if the party actually attacks, and moreso when they actually hurt him. He orders the horned devils to focus on one PC at a time to chain and enslave them, while he tries to kill someone who looks vulnerable.

If one horned devil can stun a PC, it can attempt to dominate him on its next turn, turning him against the rest of the party until the party can manage to remove the chains from him and remove the effect that enslaves him. The enslaved PC will fight until defeated. Don't let too-clever players split the party by saying their now-enslaved PC wants to flee and join the rest of the legion. That can happen later (see Flying Fortress, page 167).

Aftermath

If the party takes Brhan Kinoro prisoner, he won't answer questions, but he can be goaded into boasting about the Golden Legion. He serves Paelyrion XVIII, general of a detachment of the Golden Legion that has been stranded in the Gyre for thousands of years, ever since a world they were conquering was destroyed in spite by its inhabitants. The legion has survived, however, by attacking all the new worlds that arrive in the Gyre, plundering them of gold, and enslaving useful warriors. Though the ground of the Gyre inexorably is drawn into the teeth of the storm for destruction, the legion forever marches.

Or rather they did, until a decade ago, when they conquered a plane of volcanism and strange steam-powered machinery, which they renamed Egalitrix. Now it serves as the flying fortress of the legion, invincible and unassailable.

Among the other devils, the last left standing (likely a member of the Golden Legionnaire unit) positively quakes in self-revolt. "Curse these chains," he screams, "for without them I would yield to you, you who are more mighty than my lord, His Celestial Eruption General Paelyrion the Eighteenth! But the legion demands I defend our territory! I owe no loyalty; take my treasure! Take my prosperity! I renounce my freedom!"

If the party can manage to take one alive and remove his chains, the horrible evil thing briefly manages to proclaim his unending loyalty to the PCs, and he can tell them the information above. Then, mere minutes after he abandons his loyalty to the legion, the spots on his body where the chains previously wrapped turn black, and his body eats away at itself in less than a minute, until his bones crumble to dust and he dies in screaming agony.

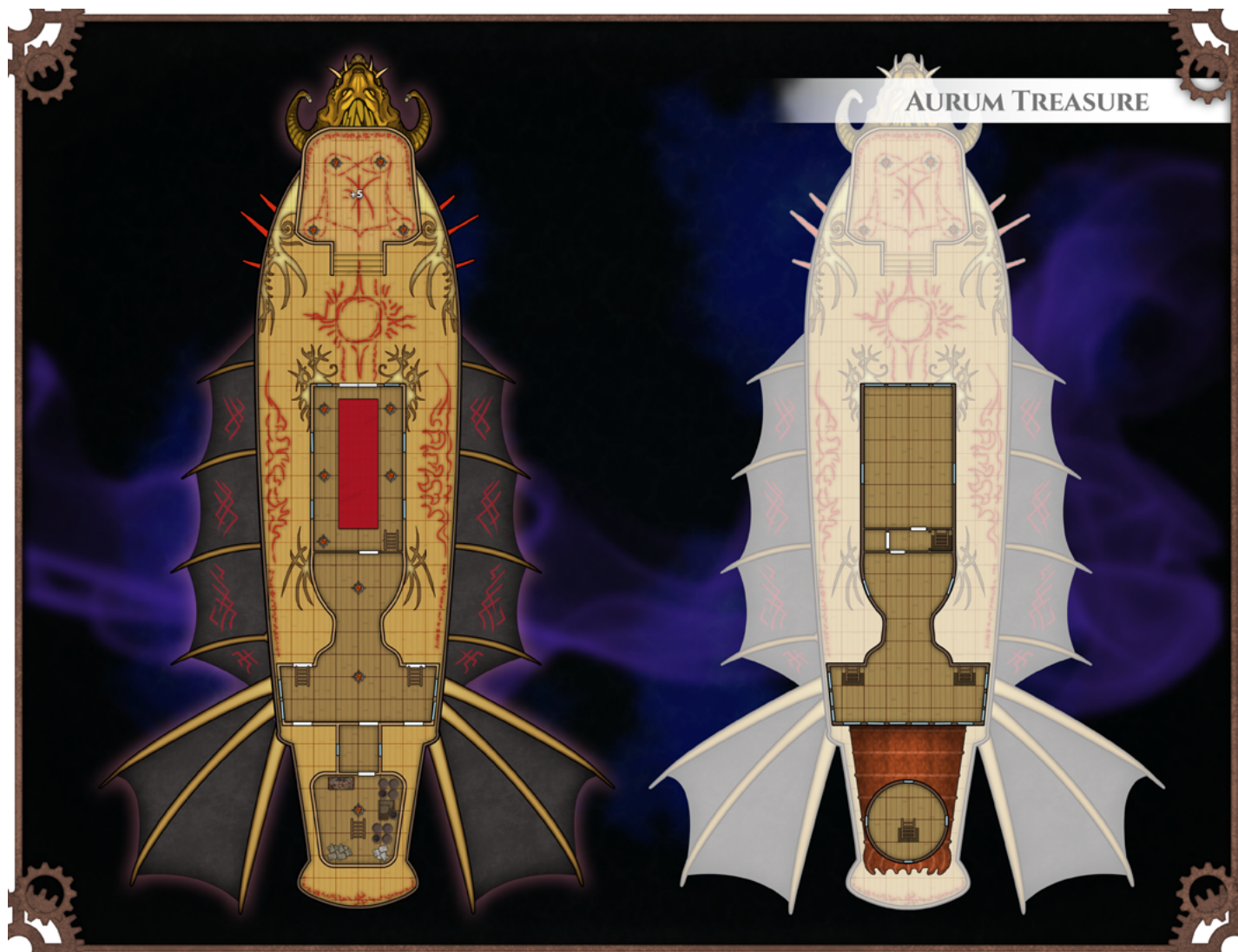
FREEING LEGIONNAIRES

The golden chains all legionnaires wear compels them to be loyal to the Golden Legion. They simply cannot disobey or act against the interests of the legion, making most charm and compulsion effects useless unless the person directing the legionnaire words his commands cleverly.

Removing the golden chains (either out of combat, or with special attacks in combat) ends the compulsion to be loyal to the legion, but a curse still lingers. If a legionnaire who has had his chains removed knowingly defies the legion's interests, he takes damage equal to one quarter of his maximum hit points each round unless he puts his chains back on.

It's infeasible in the short term to save all those enslaved by the Golden Legion, but it's possible to safely free someone from the curse. This requires a *break enchantment* against a caster level 20 effect. The commander of a given division of the legion (in this case, Paelyrion XVIII) can also release someone with a word.





Aurum Treasure

Exploration. Montage.

Legionnaires seek golden plunder in the capital city of Clover as the Dreaming nears a collision with the Gyre.

After dealing with the slaver vanguard, the party is not in immediate danger. They might go flying on to Thistle Palace spells blazing, or take a more discreet approach. Here's the status of the capital of the fey in the Dreaming.

Clover Outskirts

A century of one hundred Golden Legionnaires marches a slow perimeter around the city of Clover, gradually widening the area it covers as it searches for fey in hiding. Currently they're east of the chessboard forest, and those woods burn in their wake.

The century is commanded by a horned devil, and it has two erinyes scouts who disguise themselves as frightened nymphs calling for help, in a bid to flush out would-be rescuers. As backup against possible spellcasting threats, they are accompanied by four steam-powered golden thopter golems crafted in the fortress of Egalitrix.

Golden Legion Patrol Century (Level 22)

- + 4 Golden Legionnaire companies
- + 1 Golden Legion horned devil
- + 2 Golden Legion erinyes
- + 4 golden steam golems



Clover City

The capital city burns in places, and the Great Delve River has drained through one of the cracks in the world, leaving behind a muddy grotto that splits the city. The noble east bank has the most damage, with its wealthy houses thoroughly ransacked for gold.

The poorer west bank is too chaotic for the Golden Legion to bother with, aside from Thistle Palace. The legion's grand airship, *Aurum Treasure*, hovers four hundred feet above the palace. Nearly two hundred feet long, the airship belches diesel smoke from behind two broad steering wings woven of gold thread. Narrower stabilizing fins line the port and starboard, also gold. In fact, the entire hull is painted gold, and anything that can be made of metal is ostentatiously gold. There are even golden grills on the bottom of the hull, in a bid to conceal the churning arcane fans that act as the ship's levitational.



Dozens of arcane fusils sit behind closed weapon ports along each side of the ship, though the crew of legionnaires has never had occasion to use the weapons against another vessel, so the armament is poorly tended.

Lesser devils escort cargo thopters from elsewhere in the city to the huge infernal treasure ship, and the crew offloads assorted golden items into the hold. Crew quarters are minimal, because the enslaved legionnaires are capable of sleeping straight as a board with little personal space. Most of the complement of soldiers are on the ground, but deadly monsters bred on the plane Elofasp (plane 21) lurk in the vessel, and elite legionnaires guard the erinyes captain, **Star Marshall Lacacia**.

Crew of the *Aurum Treasure* (Level 22)



- + Star Marshall Lacacia
- + 2 Golden Legion horned devils
- + 4 Golden Legionnaire elite stars
- + 1 Golden Legionnaire company
- + 3 enslaved supplicants of Elofasp

Airship Defense

If the treasure ship is attacked, a crewman cracks a rod that causes the ship to begin a booming infernal chant that thunders out for miles in every direction. In addition to alerting the legionnaires in the area to return (the first arrive about a minute later, and it takes ten minutes for everyone to get back aboard via teleportation, flight, or cargo thopters), the intensely loud alarm might literally deafen intruders. Each round a creature is in the area it must make a DC 20 Fortitude save at the start of its turn or be deafened for that round. A creature that succeeds two saves in a row is able to ignore the noise and have functional hearing.

The legion acts with regimented precision even if they're deaf, and Lacacia can telepathically convey orders as needed. If she feels like death is near, she'll order the soldiers to leap off the ship, then she uses *alter self* to disguise herself as one of them and fly away in the confusion.

If Lacacia escapes she flies for the distant Egalitrix, but not before sending a telepathic message to an engineer imp operating in the bowels of the ship. That imp will lock the vessel's levitationals. A screech sounds from belowdecks, and a round later the ship goes into freefall. Two rounds after that it crashes on the grand lawn of Thistle Palace and the engine explodes in a burst of burning diesel fuel.

If the party manages to thwart this, the ship contains gold worth roughly five million gold pieces. Otherwise, the fey of Clover—should the party save the Dreaming—will be very busy digging the gold from the rest of the slagged ship. Sadly, none of this gold will make it out of the Gyre.

All the above presumes the party tries to board. If the party attacks the vessel with their own shipboard weapons, they sound the alarm as before, and Lacacia orders the crew to try to close for a boarding action. Stats for the ship are presented in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue.

Thistle Palace

The palace is much as the party last left it, except that every bit of gold has been stripped. The servants who are worth anything in a fight have been enslaved by gold chains and now make up some of the defenders—satyrs and gremlins and centaurs who show only the slightest taint of infernal transmogrification. The other servants have been clustered in three places—the drawing room, the diplomatic reception, and the mask gallery (Areas 8, 11, and 15)—watched over by giant mantis beasts called enslaved Elofasp supplicants.

Those monsters disguise themselves as immobile wooden statues of praying figures, which canny PCs will recognize as out of place. Each group of prisoners has also been infiltrated by an erinyes, who listens for useful chatter while disguised as a hag. Should the party free any of these prisoners, they recount hearing the devils searching for the monarch.

The halls of the palace are being ransacked by legionnaires, who now have an (obviously difficult) goal of finding the Unseen Court. Each of four companies is accompanied by a steam golem, which carries all the gold they find.

So far they've captured Furg the Toadstool Sage and Sallin the Dryad, plus Beshala of the Hedgehog Court. (Adjust as needed based on who's alive after adventure nine and who the party might care about rescuing.) They keep these prisoners in the Unseen Court's chamber (Area 17), watched by four elite stars of legionnaires and an enslaved Elofasp ravant—the most deadly warbeast the Golden Legion possesses. They are commanded by **Rayo**, a horned devil who has piled dead fey bodies onto the palace throne, testing its possible magical defenses.

If the party finds Rayo and his very important prisoners, he triggers a mechanical siren that calls all the warriors around the palace to his aid. The sum total of all the devils at the palace include:

Forces at Thistle Palace (Level 24)

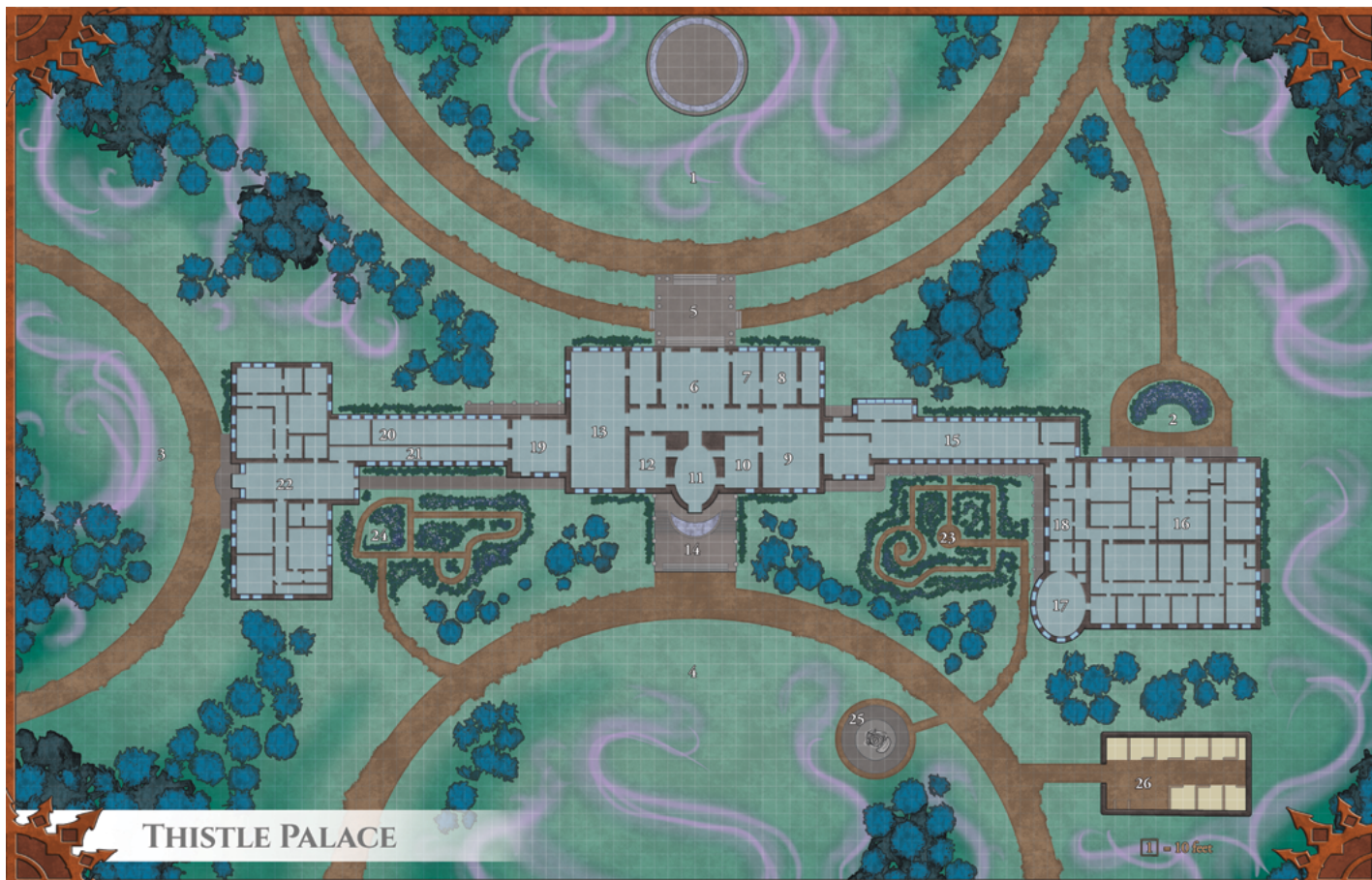


- + 1 Golden Legion horned devil
- + 4 Golden Legionnaire elite stars
- + 4 Golden Legionnaire companies
- + 4 golden steam golems
- + 3 Golden Legion erinyes
- + 3 enslaved supplicants of Elofasp
- + 1 enslaved Elofasp ravant

Aftermath

After driving off Star Marshall Lacacia and freeing the prisoners in Thistle Palace, the party can learn that the monarch (and possibly other NPCs the PCs might care to rescue) was knocked out and carried off on a flying warship a few hours ago. One of the surviving prisoners (likely Furg) states that the Dreaming is about to be destroyed, but that if the monarch is rescued it might be possible to restore the world with a ritual on a grand scale.





THISTLE PALACE

PALACE LAYOUT

1. **Foreigner Fountain.** The fountain is dry, its source drained away into the Bleak Gate.
2. **House of the Unseen Court – Entrance.** Dryads who held up this portico are scorched and butchered.
3. **House of Mayflies – Entrance.** Dismembered pixies lie trampled on the ground.
4. **Grand Lawn.** Corpses of palace defenders are dragged out here, looted, then thrown into a pyre.
5. **House of Perennials – Entrance.** A great battle here left a pile of dead – armored stags, nymphs, treants, dozens of legionnaires, and several wolf-like warbeasts.
6. **Entrance Foyer.** Piles of priceless but non-gold treasure is scattered here, like platinum, paintings, and gems.
7. **Guard Post.**
8. **Drawing Room.** There are canvases and charcoal here so people can draw. Prisoners are kept here.
9. **Game Room.** This room's furniture was taken to the grand lawn to serve as fuel for a pyre, meant as a signal to the city that their palace had fallen.
10. **Antechamber.** Dead goblins are piled in here.
11. **Diplomatic Reception.** A jail cell holds more prisoners.
12. **Library.** This room is currently on fire.
13. **Chamber of the Hedgehog Court.** It shows signs of a battle.
14. **Balcony.**
15. **Mask Gallery.** Prisoners cower here, looking to the masks of former Unseen lords for guidance.
16. **The Runaround.** The whole eastern wing of the palace is often eerily empty, with magic keeping the place in fine condition. It's currently busy scrubbing away blood.
17. **Chamber of the Unseen Court.** Very important prisoners are kept here – including Furg, Sallin, and Beshala. (Adjust as needed.)
18. **Fool's Chamber.**
19. **Commons.**
20. **Party Hall.**
21. **Champion Gallery.**
22. **Offices.**
23. **Monarch Garden.** Statues of Risuri monarchs that stood here have been shattered.
24. **Hood Garden.** Hooded lanterns sit on poles amidst this grove of trees. The lanterns are always lit, but the hoods over them mean they only light the ground directly beneath them, leaving the area gloomy.
25. **Titan Shrine.** Statues depict the five fey titans. The Voice of Rot's statue has grown larger than the last time the PCs were here.
26. **Stables.**



Before anyone has time to start making plans for a rescue, a roar and flash of light come from outside the palace. “Constables,” Rock Rackus speaks with awkward solemnity. “Is that an asteroid I do spy?”

It disappears from view, but a moment later light flashes through the darkened forest from where it landed. The ground leaps, and only then comes the ear-shattering explosion of the impact.

“Son of a bitch!” Rackus abandons all attempts at civility. “There’s more of ‘em! Follow me!”

He runs outside and heads for the party’s airship. The Gyre fills the sky in all directions, but massive dark shapes herald potential meteors. Every three rounds an asteroid falls somewhere across the sky. The ground keeps shaking, and cracks begin to form – truly gaping rifts that reveal that the ground is a massive hollow shell of crystal. Soil and trees tumble into the chasms, where they incandesce from the white-hot fire of the asteroids that have shattered the surface and ignited the interior.

Cracked Shell

Action. Tactical. Level 18.

The world shatters around the party as they return to their airship, pursued by the Golden Legion.

The party might just teleport to their ship, but they have a few hundred fey in the palace that they might be able to save from the end of the world. Plus, they might be short on crew. If they try to shepherd survivors, they have three minutes before the world is torn apart, give or take what’s necessary for proper drama; this is the Dreaming afterall, and time has never flowed here at normal speed.

The party’s ship—and Rock’s too, possibly—has landed in a safe spot, possibly right on the palace lawn. The crew lights five torches that they wave to get the party’s attention.

Moving in parallel with the party is a small band of devils, trying to reach the party’s ship before they can. They run at full speed, occasionally teleporting to avoid obstacles. If they reach the party’s ship first, they’ll slaughter the crew and launch within a minute. They’re not much of a threat, but the party needs to decide whether to help the fey or chase the devils.

Golden Legion Hijackers (Level 18)

- 4 Golden Legion elite stars
- 1 Golden Legion glabrezu



Terrain

When the party is about two hundred feet away from their ship, the ground in front of them shatters, creating a 30-foot chasm, hundreds of feet long. The rift widens another 5 feet every round as the two pieces of the world literally fall away from each other.

Fire roars in the chasm, and it is joined by psychic screams of souls trapped in Bleak Gate witchoil as the explosion consumes them. Changes in gravity as the world enters the Gyre mean that anyone falling in only descends sixty feet per round. They do, however, take 10 fire and 10 negative energy damage each round they are in the chasm.

When only one PC is left on the same side of the ravine as Thistle Palace, another meteor strikes the palace itself. The blast annihilates the building and most stragglers, and the explosive concussion threatens to hurl the last PC into the bottomless gorge of fire. He can attempt a DC 30 Reflex save to catch the edge of the ravine.

It doesn’t particularly matter if the PCs make it to their ship, but do keep track of who manages to get on board. PCs who are caught out by themselves will survive what comes next, but any fey refugees will be killed.

Within a few rounds the ground of the whole planet begins to be riven with cracks, and in under a minute chunks, forty feet across or smaller, start flying away as the world is torn apart. Then the Gyre overhead is blotted out, eclipsed by thousands of massive, pitted stones, some of them hundreds of feet across, all of them etched with veins of gold. A cry of terror goes up from across the whole plane of Av as it strikes those asteroids and is utterly destroyed. An entire world worth of magical energy blasts outward, and each PC is rendered unconscious by the collision. For a time, they dream.

You Awake

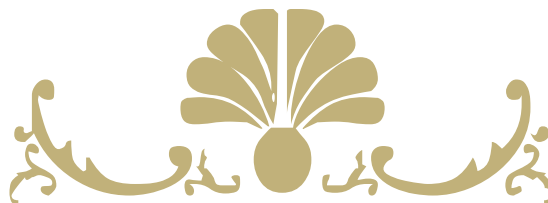
You awake, scattered across the ground in a forest. Embers of blazing thistles drift by on a wind, briefly providing enough light to make out the devastated debris of your ship, nearly crippled but otherwise lying without even a hushed whisper in this night-time wood. Your injuries won’t kill you, and the damage wrought by heavenly hailstones on your vessel can be repaired, but as your gaze drifts upward through a crooked slit in the canopy, you see a starry abyss looking back, its nebulous teeth poised to crush your world, as they have crushed Av.

You’re back in Risur. Your mission has failed. Your path to the Gyre has been cut off, and what little hope you had left has, like a candle reaching the end of its wick, guttered and turned to smoke.

Then you awake, gasping in pain, disoriented by the roar of explosions and the thunder of shattering stones. You shake the dream away and take stock of your quite-real peril.

ACT TWO: Spiritus Mundi

Sailing above the dying worlds of the Gyre, the party seeks the power to save their own.



Exploring the Gyre

As the party explores, use GM's Tracker – Gyre Bonding to record what day of their journey the party bonds with each plane. That will determine which round of combat in adventure thirteen they'll get access to the energy of that plane.

GYRE TRAITS

Some individual worlds will have their own specific traits, but in general the following rules apply in the Gyre.

A God Dwells Here. Any creature with links to divine power—clerics, paladins, angels—sense that while they can still hear their own deity for now, there is a god physically here in the Gyre. Those creatures innately know the god desires followers, but nothing more of the god's nature. They always feel a slight tug in the direction of Hunlow (plane 33).

Dead End. It is impossible to travel out of the Gyre, except by passing through the gears. This typically is lethal. Any effect that would let a creature travel to another plane can function as a sort of teleport to any of the worlds in the Gyre, but if an effect would take a creature to a plane outside the Gyre, a devastating manifestation occurs. Shining mist, like the nebula itself, appears surrounding the creature that was going to travel. The mist grinds into the shape of cogs, large enough to crush the creature, and then the gear teeth pull at the target. The mist persists until the end of combat. At the beginning of each round, every creature in or adjacent to a square with mist must make a DC 25 Reflex save or take 2d6+8 points of damage and gain the grappled condition. Creatures take this damage each round they remain grappled by the mist. It has an effective CMD of 35 for the purposes of escape attempts.

The pirate priests of Hunlow are particularly dreaded because they always prepare banishment effects, which rather than sending creatures to their home plane simply grind them to nothing.

Similarly, no magic short of the power of a god allows communication into or out of the Gyre.

Bags of holdings and the like still work, though. We're not monsters.

With Teeth. The sides of the Gyre are lined with whorls of dim crackling debris that segregate into thunderheads and troughs eerily reminiscent of the teeth of a gigantic cog. Anything that goes into those areas is slowly ground to dust in a matter of days, but it is possible to pass through temporarily.

Two Dreams. Eladrin here have both their fey step ability and ability to affect incorporeal spirits.

Variable Gravity. Gravity for individuals is objectively directional toward the 'bottom' of the Gyre, even though there's nothing 'down there' to exert a pull. Falling is slower than usual, and a creature only descends 60 feet per round.

Particularly large objects have their own strange gravity that causes them to drift near each other in chaotic paths that rarely intersect, and these paths can be affected by magic more easily than one would expect. Any sort of telekinetic effect that could move an object of at least 300 pounds can move an object as large as 100 feet across, albeit no more than 60 feet per round, and once intentional control is released the objects will shift back to their previous pathways.

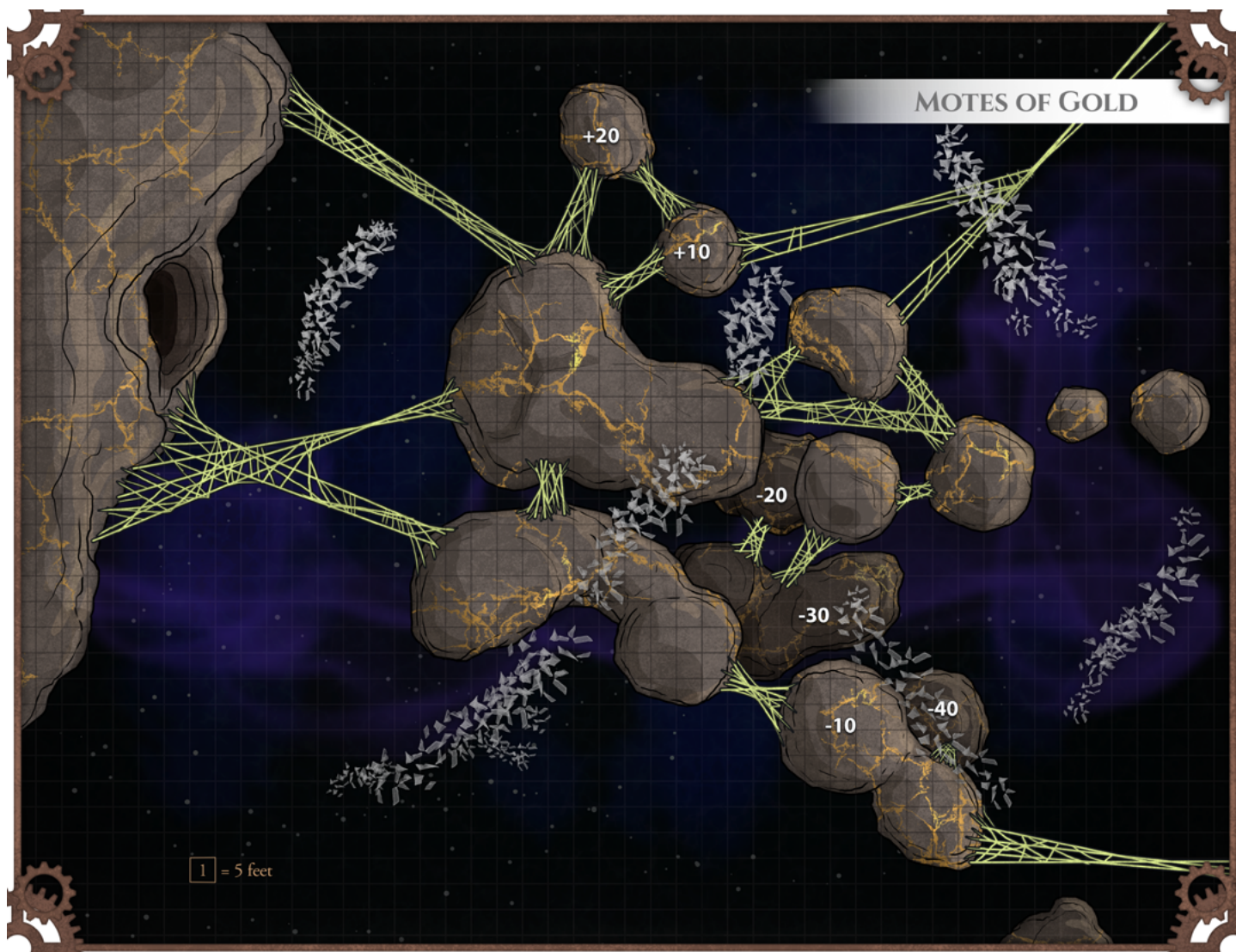
Weather. Wind is light and seldom stronger than 30 miles per hour. Rain clouds do manifest occasionally, but it only ever snows on Wilanir and Dunkelweiss (planes 35 and 31), and the only strong storms are on Gardbora (plane 15).

Passage of Time. The Gyre normally glows about as bright as the Milky Way, but from all sides, providing more light than a full moon at all times. Only caves or odder geographic features can blot out enough light to create full darkness.

Obliatas (plane 19) is a small sun, and as it flies in search of undead to smite it irregularly rises above the 'horizon' of all the various planes, creating periods of bright light that can last for as little as ten minutes. Miles of air lie between that sun and the southern edge of the Gyre, so when Obliatas rises the air across the northern horizon simply glows, brighter white due north and fading gradually in a ring-like sunset.

The people of the Gyre keep track of time by the steady rhythm of Teykfa (plane 2), a massive clock that floats near the teeth. It ticks once every twenty-seven hours, creating a sound like thunder that can be heard the length of the worlds here. Occasionally, when things are just quiet enough, you might hear a brief melody chimed on bells, ringing every fifty-one minutes.

It takes years for worlds to be ground to pieces. Teykfa has spent over a millennium since it first arrived, and it will be a few more months before it reaches the gear teeth. Reida (plane 1) is ahead of it only because the Voice of Rot carried it closer.



Motes of Gold

Action. Tactical. Level 21.

In the aftermath of the Dreaming's shattering, the party comes to on scattered remnants of the plane of Urim, where minions of the Voice of Rot lie in wait.

The plane of Urim once consisted of thousands of asteroids, but in the Gyre it has been reduced to just a dozen of any significant size, as well as countless boulders that all orbit each other haphazardly. As the handful of miles-wide asteroids spin and crash together in a sprawling debris field, immense worms burrow through them, leaving tunnels threaded with gold. Those tunnels serve as nests for other eerie creatures that can survive in the thin atmosphere, and of those, the vaknids – gargantuan undead space arachnids – serve as eyes of the Voice of Rot.

The party has arrived scattered across a field of huge boulders which are tethered by strands of green webs that glow with phosphorescence. Separated from them by an expanse of over a hundred feet, the party's ship and most of those they rescued from the destruction of Av have

crashed on a larger asteroid. Fields of jagged, glassy debris from the dead plane of dreams make the air nearby hazardous, as do the devils of the Golden Legion who have also been marooned here.

As the party tries to regroup, the devils attack, and once the two sides are engaged (and the party has a round or two to perform healing, if necessary), the vaknids pick off the vulnerable. Stats are in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue.

Golden Legion Castaways

- + 3 Golden Legion elite stars
- + 1 Golden Legion erinyes
- + 1 Golden Legion glabrezu



Vaknid Ambush

- + 2 vaknid vortexweavers
- + 1 vaknid webmaster



Terrain

The boulders are huge, lumpy rocks threaded with gold veins. Teleportation does not work at all within thirty feet of any of the boulders or the larger asteroid.

The air is thin here, and sound doesn't carry well. Creatures that fly move at half speed.

The green webs of the vaknids are as strong as wood and horrifically sticky to anyone that isn't capable of climbing along webs. A creature that touches one of these webs is entangled (Escape Artist or Strength DC 22 to escape).

Cascading fields of debris slice through the space around Urim. These jagged pieces of the destroyed Av are like a makeshift blade barrier. Any creature that enters or ends its turn in one of these fields takes 20 damage.

Tactics

The party starts out scattered around the edges of this small asteroid field. Their ship is crashed and nearly crippled on the 'western' asteroid. Since teleportation doesn't work here, it's up to flight or perilous jumping and climbing to reach their allies. The devils, who start off closer together in the center of the asteroids, are mostly a speedbump for the party.

The vaknids start off hidden underneath the floating boulders, invisible. Even those who can see invisibility would need to get under the surface level of the battle to spot the giant spiders, and even then their pitted hollow husks are hard to distinguish from the rest of the terrain (Perception DC 32).

At the end of the second round of combat, the vaknids clamber up from below and target creatures that are separated from potential allies. The gargantuan webmaster tromps through the battle, magically conjuring webs with every step in order to pin interlopers for consumption later. The vortexweavers munch on their preferred meals, and conjure sucking orbs to split the rest of the group apart.

Taunting

The roaring wind from the web vortices becomes a deep rumble, and at end of the third round of combat, the Voice of Rot speaks. "What have my precious little eyes found for me? Ah, I witness the last lords of a dying land. Come, foes, if you can."

Pick two areas of stone about 30 feet across that PCs are standing on. Each of those areas cracks and becomes difficult terrain.

The Voice of Rot is unable to hear the party, so banter will have to wait until they're actually in his presence at the adventure's end.

At the end of the fourth round, the Voice of Rot continues (even if the spiders are dead). "At the end of time, I await you. Our homeworld has withered, but I cannot kill it until its last champions have lost either their lives, or their will."

The previously cracked areas completely crumble apart, dropping anything standing on them. Choose four more areas of stone, each 30 feet across, to crack under the power of the fey titan's voice.

Finally, at the end of the fifth round, the Voice of Rot finishes. "Come, scions of Kelland, inventors of civilization. Contest against the harmony that is rot, and be witnesses to the completion of my destiny."

THE AXIS ISLAND ICONS

If a PC is carrying the *golden icon of Urim* recovered from Axis Island in adventure one, he senses a link to the vaknids. If he spends a swift action he can mentally give orders to one of the vaknids, effectively turning it into an ally until the start of his next turn, though the icon can only influence one vaknid each round.

Similar benefits apply on Mavisha to control the krakens and elementals serving the savants of Shaboath. The party might also have icons from Nem and Apet, but there aren't particularly dangerous monsters on either of those planes.

SPACE ROCK

No, not asteroids. Rock Rackus. He's close enough to being a member of the Unseen Court that divination that looks for him finds nothing. Since he was already on Av when it was pulled into the Gyre, he does not have a mirror image in the real world like they do. But he's still alive, having his own adventures. He might cross paths with the party, but we suggest he narrowly miss them, with NPCs (perhaps Sargon of Uggat, whose father was the cupbearer of Ur-Zubaba) recalling that he recently passed through.

By hook or crook, we'd like him to show up to help the party out when they're in a bind. After Av shatters, he rounds up a few guys for a posse and then tracks down the wreckage of the legion's windship-of-war *Aurum Treasure*. He repairs it enough to get it airborne and renames it the Aural Pleasure, then haphazardly flies it northward. If the airship fell out of the sky and exploded, Rackus instead finds his way to Egalitrix (plane 18) and gets captured, but during the party's assault (or on his own, if the party never comes) he escapes, steals one of the windscreens, and makes a break for it, carrying rescued prisoners and a lot of loot.

He finally swoops in to help the PCs during the confrontation with the Voice of Rot, where his flamboyance will provide a distraction. The fey titan's speech is deadly, but Rock's weapon of choice is also the power of his voice.

Once again, the previously cracked areas fall apart, and then the entire rest of the battlefield, aside from the large asteroid to the 'west,' cracks and becomes difficult terrain. One round later, the roaring wind dies, and in the silence, all the remaining boulders disintegrate.

Aftermath

These are not the only vaknids of the Gyre. Whenever the party reaches a new plane, they should spot one of these undead spider spies lurking in the shadows, observing and reporting back to their master.



Strange New Worlds

Exploration. Montage.

Three dozen worlds are intact enough to warrant exploration.

The party's ship is damaged. It can fly, but it needs regular stops to recharge the levitationals. Effectively this means that, until the party can find the right supplies to effect a full repair, the ship cannot travel more than about twenty miles without needing to land for 6 to 8 hours.

The intention of this is to keep the party in the initial 'southern' half of the Gyre for a while and encourage them to deal with the pirates of Hunlow. There's a gap of at least thirty miles to cross before they can get to the 'northern' half. Repairs to the levitationals require a new plane with the air trait, and the best option is Caeloon, which can only be bonded to if the PCs save the monks enslaved by the pirates. (There are also Bhoior, which is hard to learn the history of; Avilona, which actively makes long-term flight impossible; Wilanir, which is lair to a powerful dragon; Apet, which is hard to reach; and Drozani, which the pirates guard.)

This first section exposes them to a variety of planes and has its own somewhat-freeform plot. Once they cross the expanse, they'll meet William Miller and learn that they've been split across two realities, which will likely spur them to hurry, so we're trying to make it easy for them to take their time here.

To provide a common plot thread for this first half of their exploration, we introduce **Calily Buen**, a monk from the plane Caeloon (plane 50) who comes to investigate the party's crash. She knows the Gyre very well, but she intends to divine the party's true nature before trusting them with information about her people.

See GM's Handout – Gyre Planes for a quick overview of the thirty-six worlds. See the Creating a Planar Icon sidebar (page 134) for a refresher of how the PCs can link to planes they want. And remember to use GM's Tracker – Gyre Bonding to record what day the PCs bond to each plane.

A student of the monastery of the paper wind, Calily has the white hair and aged skin of a seventy-year-old woman, but she moves with youthful vigor. In defiance of her master's devotion to detachment from worldly needs, she chose to remain optimistic. Her own opinion on detachment is that the burdens of life should not weigh you down, and that the natural state of a person should be joyous. She grins like a teenager, though from time to time can't help herself from fawning over young outsiders and offering them sage advice.

Since she had to wear a ring of sustenance for most of her life, food to her is a treasure, and she exults in any new flavor. The things she misses most about her old world, though, are the storms. She has learned of the storms in Gardboral, and hopes to experience them before she dies. But she doesn't intend to die any time soon, nor will she abide any despair. Suffering passes and is forgotten, so any wait is worthwhile since it might lead to something new and wonderful.



Precious Planes

Some of the worlds are rather unsavory, a few are of middling value, and a handful might be extremely useful. Each of the useful worlds, though, has a problem in need of a solution. These challenges have been too great for the surviving natives of those planes (if any do survive) to solve, but the party should be able to knock a few out in an afternoon. Each of those worlds has its own prominent scene, but don't force the party to deal with worlds that don't interest them.

As a reminder, we assume as a baseline that the party will want to use the following planes in the Axis Seal ritual. Each plane can be attuned to by 'brute force' if the party spends a month making a planar icon, but whenever a PC begins to make an icon he intuitively knows that this would go faster (i.e., just take an hour) if he could form a meaningful bond with the world. If the world still is inhabited, that means doing some favor for the survivors. If the world is dead, that means discovering how the world died. A key purpose of a graveyard, after all, is to ensure the dead are not forgotten.

- ♦ **Air.** Caeloon (plane 50). The monks' Master Chyak has been enslaved by the Golden Legion, and other survivors were taken by pirates of Hunlow. Rescuing either accelerates the bond.
- ♦ **Earth.** Dunkelweiss (plane 31). Returning the artifacts stolen by the pirates of Hunlow accelerates the bond.
- ♦ **Fire.** Jiese, already linked.
- ♦ **Water.** Mavisha (plane 48). Linking is already easy, but telepathic sea monsters from Shabboath have gained control, and if they're not removed they'll come along with the plane and eventually threaten the party's homeworld.
- ♦ **Life.** Av (plane 53). Linking requires rescuing the fey monarch from the Golden Legion.
- ♦ **Death.** Iratha Ket (plane 17). Saving it from the sun Obliatas forms a bond.
- ♦ **Space.** Urim (plane 47). It can easily be linked to while the PCs are fixing physical damage to their ship.
- ♦ **Time.** Ascetia (plane 24). Paying respects at the grave of Srasama will form a bond.

Don't show the party the map of the Gyre just yet. Let them be a little in the dark at first. Soon, Calily can show them a map she has compiled, but allow their first hours of exploration to be uncharted.

Repairs and Reconnoitering

After defeating the vaknids, the party can take stock of their ship and whom they managed to rescue from Av. Unless the party has special powers to speed this up, it will take the crew eight hours to right the ship and perform enough repairs that it can fly, but it's apparent that something about the levitationals is off.

A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) reveals that with a bit of tinkering that the levitational enchantment relied on energy from the plane Baden, the ghost moon. The plane's power only faintly reaches the Gyre, so the ship can only fly for a little at a time. Unless the party can find a new power source (i.e., by creating a planar icon to a plane with Air energy), the air-ship will only be able to fly for about twenty miles, and then will need 6 or 8 hours to recharge.



So, where can they find a plane with the right air elemental energy? If the party recovered the Gidim *vortex array* in the previous adventure, they can detect the adjacent planes.

- ♦ North (plane 38). No energy of note, suggesting it's altogether desolate. Indeed, with a spyglass it is possible to see that it is plundered ruins, which appear to have been abandoned for ages. The array detects minor energy of fire and time coming from the plane north of it.
- ♦ North-east (plane 43). Likewise, no energy of note. Visual inspection reveals it's just a field of dead motes, barren rocks of a world torn apart by the churning edge of the Gyre.
- ♦ North-west (plane 42). Frustratingly, this is also plundered ruins, though the array faintly detects magical energies of life and time coming from beyond it.
- ♦ South-west (plane 50). By good fortune, this plane registers air and life energy. A lookout can just make out a forested hill in the distance. The plane beyond it shows traces of fire and water magic.
- ♦ South and south-east are empty voids. No stars or planets lie in that direction, and though the party's own home world is out there somewhere, there's not enough light to see it.

In any event, the mundane repairs take long enough that the party should be able to form a planar icon for Urim (if they don't still have the one they found way back in adventure one).

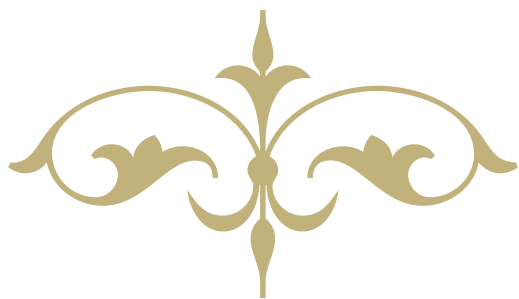
JUMPING AHEAD

If the party wants to just teleport between worlds so they don't have to go find an air plane to recharge the ship's levitationals, let them. However, it will take them much longer to explore on foot. They'll still probably want an airship when they take on the Voice of Rot.

A Friendly Visitor

The wind stirs around the party while they make plans, and then a woman's voice whispers, "I am Calily Buen of the Kinava monastery. I know disaster has befallen you. Will you promise my safety if I come to render aid?"

Calily is three miles away, and her spell will carry back the party's reply. If told no, she nevertheless sneaks closer and eavesdrops invisibly. But if the party approves, she jogs lightly into view half an hour later, wearing loose-fitting sand-brown clothes that cover everything but her face, and even that is shrouded by a hood, strands of gray hair drifting out of it in the breeze. She carries a staff, clearly worn from great use, and when close enough to make eye contact she pulls back her hood to reveal the face of a woman far older than her agility would suggest.



Half a Hundred Years of Solitude

Calily was seventeen when her world died. The plane of Caeloon was scoured in fire by the Demon of the West Wind, but Calily's monastery survived by flying on paper wings. When the smoke cleared, she and her fellow monks found themselves in the Gyre, and the only remnants of her world was a scorched forest. Shortly thereafter they were raided by the Golden Legion, who took slaves from among the survivors, but left enough to nurture the forest back to health because they desired regular tribute in the form of lumber.

There was no food, and no animals survived in the smoldering woods, but the legion gave the monks enchanted rings that would sustain them without food. It was an act born of efficiency, not mercy, but the monks—divorced from even the mundane comforts of food—devoted themselves wholly to asceticism. Their master, Chyak San-Cho, guided the monastery to enlightened detachment, where the goal was to be empty, like the air. In the wake of their world's death, they endured without purpose, looking inward and awaiting their own inevitable deaths. Fifty years later, only a few dozen of the monks survive.

Calily also mastered the techniques and self-discipline, but she was defiant of the oppression of the legion. Though she has the body of a woman of nearly seventy, her training has spared her the infirmities of her long years, and she acts with a cultivated, youthful optimism. She has ranged to all the worlds of the Gyre she can reach – and has even brought back the occasional game animal to feed her fellow monks.

She has tried to rekindle their interest in life, but it was not until a few months ago, when new worlds crashed into the Gyre, that the monks were jostled from their routine. The legion sent scouts to investigate new planes, but found them devoid of potential slaves. Not wanting to return to Egalitrix empty-handed, they came to Caeloon, where Chyak San-Cho agreed to go with them if they left his students. Where Calily's own pleading had failed, Master Chyak's sacrifice inspired the monks, who now prepare for a strike against the Golden Legion. If they are to die, they will take a final stand against the forces of destruction.

What to do after the World Ends

Enthusiasm bubbles from the old monk as she greets the party and all those with them. She offers them a bit of salted fish, which she calls an Amrou Hunlow Snapper, and then she warns them to ration their food because there's very little to be found here. She mentions that her own monastery was raided by the Golden Legion, and she only has survived the past...she guesses fifty years...because of her *ring of sustenance*.

While Calily is willing to tell the party nearly everything she knows about the Gyre, she hides the full nature of her monastery, and prefers to imply it was abandoned after the legion struck. She doesn't want to endanger her fellow monks until she can get a proper measure of the newcomers.

She initially assumes the party just wants to live in the remnants of Av (plane 53), and so she offers to guide them safely back there. But once she realizes their intentions, their power, and the fact that they have a ship that can cross the gap between the northern and southern half of the Gyre, she becomes excited. She asks about their experience with the Golden Legion, and says she can help them repair their ship. She demands nothing in exchange, but she hopes they will decide on their own to strike against the legion.



The first order of business will likely be finding a plane with air energy, in order to craft a planar icon and restore the party's airship to full capability. The closest option is of course Caeloon, which Calily will gladly guide the party to. There they'll discover that crafting will take a month unless they can form a bond to the plane. Calily has no idea how these planar icons work, but if they're looking to do her world a favor, she explains that some of her friends were taken by the Golden Legion and by the pirates of Hunlow. The legion is on the far side of a huge void in the Gyre, but reaching Hunlow with a few short airship jaunts (or on foot) is possible.

If the party doesn't want to do a favor for Calily there are other ways across the gap between the north and south Gyre. The undead tortoise that is Bhoior (plane 41) will set out once enough spirits from the Bleak Gate reach it. Or the party might steal an airship from legionnaires exploring Av (plane 53) or Apet (plane 39). In any event, the party's airship can still hop from plane to plane, giving them incentive to explore each world.

Local Guidance

Calily warns that if the party wants to go searching, Shabboath and Hunlow (planes 45 and 33) have deadly foes living there, while Padyer and the Plain of Rice (planes 52 and 51) are just fatally inhospitable. She mentions that a half-dozen worlds crashed into the Gyre in the past year, and Av is the seventh. She hasn't explored them yet, but she knows where they are, except for one that was shaped like a silver ring. She saw it dragged away by something like a comet, white and serpentine, toward the mouth of the Gyre.

In any event, she suggests they come first to Caeloon, where she can get them a map that will help them explore better.

The Nomadic Monastery

Social. Real-Time.

Aeromancer monks, struggling to survive, ask for aid to rescue their master from the Golden Legion.

It takes a few hours of hiking through the asteroids of Urim (and leaping the occasional bottomless pit) to reach the edge of Caeloon.

Calily's home is a land of rolling hills covered with pines, where a light breeze constantly wafts between still tree trunks. No animals live here, and only a few bushes and weeds grow on the forest floor. A handful of great pines survived the fires that burnt the world to death seventy years ago, and they rise high above their neighboring children.

The plane appears abandoned at first glance, but a small ruined monastery, consisting of just a handful of rooms, lies in a clearing upon the highest hill. The wind whistles through cracks in the wall and flutters paper shutters scribed with calligraphic meditations. The walls are nothing more than stiff paper as well, and what at first appears to be an irregular texture of vertical stripes are actually, on closer examination, thousands of lines of text, written directly onto the building. Outside the building the breeze spins a brass wheel cylinder attached to a small windmill, clattering as the prayer embossed in the metal endlessly repeats.

The clearing is far larger than the tiny ruined building, because most of the monastery is folded. The building is one grand extradimensional

space woven into an ornate origami-esque text. Almost every room can be expanded, and every doorway can be unfolded to reveal a chamber beyond. Manipulating the building in this way requires reciting the proper lines of text along the seams of a fold, half of which is visible, half of which lies in the room to be revealed. This makes it nearly impossible for an outsider to discover even a single extra room without instruction by a monk of the monastery. Powerful magic, however, can reveal that there is more to the building than initially visible, and divinations could provide the words necessary to open a passage.

For now, Calily keeps the monastery folded in this innocuous form. A few dozen monks live in the folded space, able to look out by briefly cracking a window where there was not one before. At full grandeur, the monastery rises seven stories high and sprawls hundreds of feet with courtyards, rock gardens, meditation chambers, sparring fields, personal quarters, and a vast library of scrolls. Or, when needed, it can be shrunk down to the size of a single sheet of paper, folded into a myriad of animal shapes.

Guided Tour

If Calily brings the party to this world, she stops at its edge to 'meditate respectfully' for a minute. When she is done, she says, "I left the map I made in the small remains of my monastery. My home is humble, but I would like you to see it."

In truth, she has sent a message ahead to the monastery, so that they'll know to fold it into a modest shape, and to leave her map of the Gyre in the visible exterior rooms. When she takes the party there, the clearing is large enough for their airship to land. She shows them the map (see Player's Map – The Gyre for details), brews some pine needle tea, and asks the party to tell her how they came here, and whether they're skilled enough fighters to defeat the Golden Legion. Her fellow monks can listen through the walls, unseen in the extradimensional rooms.

She invites the PCs to rest as long as they wish, but asks for clarification on where they're from and what their ultimate plans are. She's also interested in sparring with a PC, to compare their relative fighting styles. A martial scientist who spars with her can learn the *stance of the paper wind*. (See Appendix B, page 310, for stats.)

Heading Out

Calily sees the party as the best chance of defeating the legion and even—if she dares to be hopeful—escaping the Gyre. She asks to accompany them, and explains that she has been to nearly every plane in the southern Gyre. She's not sure how the party can form a bond with her world, but if the party explained what happened to their world and what planes were formerly bonded to it, she thinks she knows where to find Avilona, the plane of air.

The Grand Return

When the party returns, likely many days later, if they have impressed her with their decency she asks them to land by her monastery again, then goes inside and whispers the phrases necessary to unfold the entire building. With a crackle of paper, the small outer ruins grow into the majestic, well-tended full monastery. Only three dozen monks remain in the whole sprawled structure, but they come out now, bow, and then follow Calily's lead in a brief martial kata to showcase their fighting technique.



Calily offers herself and her fellow monks as allies in the fight against the Golden Legion. If the party agrees, the other monks show serene approval, then return to the monastery. It folds down to the size of an origami bird, which Calily carries with her. When the time comes to fight the legion, she'll open the monastery, which will fly into battle beside the party's airship.

Hex-Crawling the Southern Gyre

Exploration. Montage.

Twenty worlds sit ready for exploration while the party waits for their airship to be flight-worthy.

Each hex of the Gyre map is 30 miles across. The gaps between planes are exaggerated for style. The surviving pieces of planes don't fill the entire hex, so in some places miles of empty space can separate two adjacent planar motes, but most neighbors have at least a few spots where jutting landforms literally grind together. Crossing on foot entails a bit of ranging about, and then some perilous rock climbing. The main exceptions are Avilona, which must be flown to, and Drozani, whose staircase access is guarded by fallen angels of Hunlow.

New worlds usually arrive only once every few decades, and the worlds' progress toward the Gyre's teeth takes about a century for every thirty-mile hex traveled. For instance, Teykfa (plane 2) has been in the Gyre nearly a thousand years. Ascetia (plane 24), where William Miller settled after the Great Malice, has been around just over five hundred.

Player's Map – The Gyre lists what Calily knows of each plane, some of which is conjecture. It does not tell what energies exist on which planes.

GM's Handout – Gyre Planes tells what planes have what energy types, and briefly notes what the PCs will find at each place, as well as what effect those worlds have if the party uses them in the Axis Seal ritual.

This section proposes encounters the party can have on each plane of the southern Gyre, presented in descending numerical order. Planes marked with an asterisk (*) were originally linked to the party's homeworld. Planes marked with a dagger (†) are planes where primary plot scenes occur.

Energies and Traits

Each plane provides elemental energies, which the party can easily determine via the *Gidim vortex array*. If they don't have it, they'll have to land on the plane and succeed the checks necessary to create a planar icon in order to discover what energies it offers.

Additionally, every plane will grant some trait to the party's world if they use it in the Axis Seal ritual. Those traits are a bit more subtle, and while the party might easily guess that some places (like Padyer, where all water burns like fire) probably are too dangerous, if they want to know for sure they need to succeed two DC 40 checks – some combination of Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nature), Knowledge (planes), and Perception depending on the details of the trait. Each attempt takes an hour, with a +5 bonus if the party sticks around for at least a day. Once the party succeeds both, they get a clear enough sense of how the world differs from their own in order to predict what trait it would grant.

Successfully crafting a planar icon provides this information automatically.

Exodus of the Dead

While most planes are fairly self-contained, one phenomenon spans the entire southern Gyre. Ghosts of thousands who sought Cauldron Hill to reach the Bleak Gate now float across the gaps between worlds. Over the course of a week they thread a trail, their glowing spirits visible from miles away. They glide from Av (plane 53) to Nem (plane 49) to Bhoior (plane 41) to Amrou (plane 36), where they find themselves thwarted by that plane's warding salt flats.

A few keep floating onward across the deep void, but most cluster atop the undead turtle that is Bhoior. Careful observation notes that the miles-wide creature is slowly turning, rotating to north. About ten days after Av crashes, most of the spirits of the Bleak Gate will have reached the chasm between south and north, at which point with a quiet rasp the immense turtle sets out through the void, slowly walking across an invisible firmament. Three days later it makes 'landfall' at Ascetia (plane 24), deposits the spirits from the Bleak Gate, then wheels about ever so slowly and returns to its previous position.

The Flashing Beacon

From Ascetia (plane 24), a white beacon strobes every thirty seconds, bright enough to be visible from a hundred miles (three hexes) away. The party basically can't fail to notice it, and the way its light pulses is reminiscent of a lighthouse.

DEAD MOTES. PLUNDERED RUINS. AND EMPTY VOID

These three types of hexes don't have anything of note planned for them, but the party might have random encounters there or explore to find resources. You could also put scenes of your own devise there.

Typically, dead motes are completely barren floating rocks, bereft of any life, energy, or structures. But refugees might have perished there, leaving simple grave markers that might contain warnings of nearby planes, or perhaps even powerful artifacts that survived the death of their homeworlds.

Plundered ruins were bits of civilization that survived the end of a world, but were usually enslaved by the Golden Legion, captured by the Hunlow pirates, or simply starved or killed themselves in despair. Structures are mostly destroyed. Amid the ruins the party might find mundane treasure, solemn monuments to forgotten gods, or roaming warbeasts or ghosts.

Empty voids might pose a navigation hazard, requiring some maneuvering to avoid striking small asteroids, or where the party could spot a distant windskiff of the Golden Legion on patrol.

Creating a planar icon for any of these places is impossible.





*#53. Av, Plane of Mirrors

Planar Trait: Reflections hold magical influence.

What remains of Av is a twenty mile stretch of the plane's glass sphere. It tumbles slowly, revolving once every day, and its cracked edges reflect like jagged mirrors. One side is the Bleak Gate analogue of Flint, complete with Cauldron Hill. The other is the Dreaming analogue of the city, where old growth forest has withered in spots that coincide with where factories were built in the real world.

For now, there are still thousands of fey desperately confused in the Dreaming half, and tens of thousands of spirits drifting away from the Bleak Gate half toward Nem (plane 49) as part of their exodus toward the teeth of the Gyre. Other survivors who crash landed around the Gyre will make their way here over the coming week.

Ideally the party should find someone they know here – a Vekeshi Mystic contact, the ghost of someone who died the night the stars fell, possibly even Ellik, the creepy fey who guided Gale into the Bleak Gate before Adventure Two. The survivors set up base in Dawn Square, where a convenient crack creates a tunnel between fountains on the two sides of the world.

Searching for Survivors

When the party visits, they spot a Golden Legion windskiff scouting the area for treasure to steal and people to enslave. They leave for Egalitrix after a few hours. The skiff is just thirty feet long, powered by diesel engine levitationals, with stabilizing sails and propellers for thrust. It has no weapons, and is slower than the party's ship, in part because it has a whole company of devils clinging to its sides, since there's not enough space on the deck for all of them.

Golden Legion Windskiff (Level 14)

- + 1 Golden Legionnaire Company
- + 1 Golden Legion Erinyes



*#52. Padyer, a Clean Realm

Planar Trait: Water burns and purges.

Sometimes the experiments of mad wizards are disastrous. So it was with Padyer, so named because the only landform is a cracked tower of white ceramic which has over the door carved sigils that resemble 'Padyer.' The elemental mage who once resided there captured avatars of the gods of fire and the sea and tried to bind their power into a staff. He then sent out a burning wave to annihilate his enemies in a coastal kingdom, but the wave did not stop. It carried its scalding heat across the entire world, until finally it reached the mage's own tower.

He managed to ward his tower against the wave, so all his research (and dozens of spellbooks) survives, but it was not long before all the water in the world became hotter than the ignition point of flesh and wood. The mage plane-shifted away, taking his deadly staff with him, but leaving behind a dead world.

For the party's purposes, Padyer is completely useless, except perhaps if they wanted to lure someone to their death. It looks beautiful, an eerily smooth tableau that resembles porcelain, but which tilts in slow wobbles like a top about to stop spinning. A lapping sea drifts around the world based on the complex tides of the Gyre. Of course, the water actually is impossibly hot, enough to slag metal, yet it never is sullied by other substances.

This plane is mostly intended to highlight that some worlds are dangerous traps, not worth bonding with. However, the party will have to land here briefly to let their levitationals recharge. If the party thinks to predict the path of the drifting sea, a Knowledge (nature) check (DC 30) determines how the tides affect it, letting the party land in a spot that will stay safe long enough. Otherwise they're caught by surprise as the sea rolls in, just chest deep, but hot enough to set fire to wooden ships or weaken metal hulls. The party can take off, and if they can effect repairs fast enough, the ship won't be crippled, letting them limp to the edge of the next nearest plane.

Also, this is the only plane with no vaknids to spy on the PCs.

*#51. The Plain of Rice

Planar Trait: The worldwide water level is raised enough that most land is submerged.

This is just a field of rice, ankle deep with water, stretching for miles. When they make the ZEITGEIST movie, this is my excuse to fly to Asia to film on location.

No evidence survives to explain the world's demise, but magic might reveal that a god of desert storms sent a flood that would kill all civilization, but the tribes rose up and slew the god. It did not stop the flood, though, and once everyone was dead, the only plants able to survive were rice.

*#50. Caeloon, the Paper Wind

Planar Trait: People are more resilient in the face of tragedy. This is too complex to represent mechanically.

The visit here is detailed in The Nomadic Monastery (page 148).

*#49. Nem, the Plane of Ruin

Planar Trait: Incorporeal creatures like ghosts have a +2 to AC, attack rolls, and saves here. Undead with physical bodies (like zombies or vampires, but not living creatures possessed by ghosts) suffer a -2 penalty to AC, attack rolls, and saves.

Every surface of this world is dark gray, except for the glowing spirits on their exodus from the Bleak Gate side of Av. One of the few notable landmarks is a railroad track running along what was once a coast line. A train lies abandoned here, exactly where the train was in Adventure Four, *Always on Time*, when the party managed to escape being dragged into Nem. A certain tiefling gunslinger (or his ghost) might even still be here, depending on how things played out.

*#48. Mavisha, the Mysterious Deep

Planar Trait: Islands conceal secrets. Divinations about events on islands are more difficult.

Mist-Shrouded Sea

Supernatural forces keep the sea of Mavisha from pouring away into the void. The surviving chunk of the plane has a rocky seabed and a handful of small islands, but a steadily heaving sea covers most of the world, and at the plane's edge the water simply crashes into an invisible barrier. That barrier is permeable by intentional movement, but inanimate objects are stopped by it.

The seas are teeming with life – turtles, schools of fish, sharks, dire anamalocarises, and the like. A few despondent fish men, just intelligent enough to grasp their world's doom, dangle listlessly at the edge of the



sea, looking into the void. They know they're doomed, and are amazed if the party flies overhead. They come to gawk, ululate prayers to their gods, but then cower and flee if addressed. Their tiny villages lie on the sea floor, but they know some malevolent force is calling away those dwelling in villages along the north-eastern edge of what remains of their world.

Waxy Bridge

Along where the north-eastern edge of Mavisha abuts Shabboath (plane 45), a thirty-foot wide tunnel of wax has extruded from rock wall, and it extends into the edge of Mavisha's sea. However, the tunnel is masked by illusions, and just resembles a cluster of drifting stones—common enough in the Gyre—shrouded with mist. If one pierces the illusion, the tunnel spans a hundred feet, and is malleable enough to stretch and compress as the two planes bump against and away from each other. This is how the savants of Shabboath intend their grand savant to reach this new sea.

So far, the savants have enslaved several dozen fishermen, and are directing them to construct a tower of wax—also concealed by illusions—atop one of the islands near the north-eastern planar edge. The sixty-foot-wide tower rises two hundred feet, its exterior and interior traced with strange sigils that weave conjuration, enchantment, illusion, and necromancy magic together, and once complete it will extend the psychic powers of the savants to this new world, letting them dominate everything here. Only once it's safe will the grand savant come to explore the surface.

If the party grows suspicious and explores enough to find the island and its invisible wax tower, one of the savants is coordinating construction, guarded by a kraken and a swarm of water elementals who are filled with dead fishermen.

Mavisha Tower of Domination (Level 21)

- 1 slumbering savant
- 1 kraken guardian
- 4 elemental chum swarms



If assaulted by aerial foes, the savant flees through a flooded tunnel out the bottom of the tower to the sea floor. Otherwise it tries to confuse intruders with illusions, disguising its *schistic projection* as a humanoid while its primary mind plies PCs minds for weaknesses so it can dominate them. It wants to know more about the Gyre, but its goals are small of scope: it intends to do everything necessary to protect the grand savant so the mighty creature can see the open sky one last time, then submerge until the world ends.

Ancient Legionnaire

Meanwhile, at the opposite end of the plane, the PCs can spot a shipwreck, mostly submerged, rocking against the edge of the world. The vessel's enchanted wooden hull has survived thousands of years of abuse, but the aesthetic is unmistakably that of the Ancients, the orcish civilization that first crafted the Axis Seal.

If the party explores the boat, the hold is filled with golden weapons looted from legionnaires the orcs fought millennia ago, as well as a gold plate that acted as a star chart of planes in the multiverse. It seems this vessel was once capable of sailing between seas of different worlds.

Amid the pile of treasure a corpse lies face-down, wrapped in tarred cloth that preserved its flesh. His hands have been chopped off, and the deck has ancient stains from where he bled out. If the treasure is disturbed, the mummy stands up, revealing an orcish face whose tusks and brows are pierced with gold chains. For a moment his hollow eyes take in the party with a primordial menace, but then he falls to his knees and holds up his stump arms in a plea.

In life, the orc's name was **Athotoc**. In the tongue of the Ancients he says that he betrayed his people, but not by his choice. He was enslaved by the legion and told them of the plan to find the soul of this plane. Fortunately his people survived the ambush, but they butchered him, not understanding he was not a traitor. As he bled to death, he shouted a warning, naming the world that one of the legion's generals, Paelyrion XVIII, was mustering his forces in. Athotoc perished, but his soul remained, waiting for news that his people succeeded.

If the party tells Athotoc of the Ancients' success in creating the Axis Seal, he is content, and tells them to see the nearest island, and find a golden oval, wrapped in wolf fur, buried in a mass grave where his kin disposed of the legionnaires. He asks them to destroy it, so that his soul can be free. And he warns not to look themselves in the eyes in the golden mirror's reflection, or else they will be slaves too.

Mirror of Opposition

The nearby island Athotoc directed them to is choked with vines covered in fine fibers that glow at their tips, and horseshoe crabs wearing golden helmets scrawl eerie patterns in the sand. The mass grave is easily found, since nothing grows over the sea-smoothed stones of a huge cairn.

The excavation can turn up the weapons and chains of hundreds of legionnaires tangled with bone fragments. Buried in the center is indeed a tattered wolf pelt wrapped around a golden mirror, itself somewhat warped with time. If a creature gets within a foot of the mirror and looks in the eyes of its own (slightly distorted) reflection, it must attempt a DC 22 Will save. If it fails, the creature's soul is trapped in the mirror and it becomes evil and loyal to the Golden Legion. In either case, the mirror darkens and cannot be used again for one day. Members of the Golden Legion are immune to the mirror's effects.

The mirror can hold only one soul, but a ritual known to the Golden Legion can extract and consume the soul without harming the mirror, leaving the victim permanently turned. *Break enchantment* spells cast with both the mirror and the victim present can restore the soul and return the creature to its former self. Dealing damage to the mirror deals an equal amount of hit point damage to the creature whose soul is trapped in it. Once that creature is reduced below 0 hit points, the mirror can easily be destroyed. This frees the trapped soul.

The mirror isn't intended to be a major threat, but it will help the party realize the incredible dangers posed by the mirrors in the Egalitrix Legion Command chamber (see Celestial Eruption, page 173).





*#47. Urim, the Shattered Golden Chain

Planar Trait: Teleportation on Urim is impossible. If Urim is used in the Axis Seal ritual, rings of gold block teleportation.

The party already crashed here, and if they look for gold they find that much has already been excavated by the Golden Legion over the past six months since Urim fell into the Gyre.

The PCs might have the idea to try to use Urim's power to block teleportation as a weapon against the legion. Let them be creative in how to best harness the plane's power. We suggest perhaps they would need to subdue or befriend one of the giant worms of Urim (equivalent to an advanced purple worm), then somehow bring it along with them in the hold of their ship. At the party's command it could unleash an aura causing gold to act like it used to on their world, with any loop of gold blocking teleportation. This would completely stop every devil in the legion from teleporting.

#45. Shabboath, the Severed Sea

Planar Trait: Tunnels riddle the world, creating an underdark, much of it consisting of vast sunless seas.

The surface of Shabboath is a bog dotted with jagged spurs of karst limestone. The swampy ground is mostly muddy and flat enough to traverse on foot, but it can rapidly shift to painfully sharp rock concealed by the murk, or drop away completely into huge flooded tunnels. Every few miles, one of these sinkholes sits miraculously hollow, water flowing down its sides into sunless depths, but never filling the pit.

The swamp is fairly teeming with vaknids, but they're all too listless to get into a fight.

A creature that rests on the surface of Shabboath is confronted with visions and dreams that entice it downward. Every few minutes, characters that are in a group must succeed a Sense Motive check (DC 30) to realize that one of their companions did not actually suggest they go underground; in truth, it was a phantasm projected into the creature's mind. On a failed check, the creatures are free to make their own decisions, but the peer pressure could trick an entire group into thinking it was everyone else's idea.

A creature that sleeps on the plane is even more vulnerable. If it fails a DC 25 Will save, the creature becomes invisible, then sleep-walks toward the nearest tunnel, trying to be stealthy. It awakens five minutes later, probably lost underground. If it succeeds, the creature snaps awake from a vivid dream, where its friends had disappeared, and it tracked them into a tunnel leading under the surface.

Those tunnels lead down to the severed sea, a wholly subterranean lake some ten miles across. The water there has eerie waxy structures that channel the flow and leave dry certain areas that look to long ago have served as slave pens carved out of stalagmites. In other sections, the wax seals the surface entirely, except for tiny holes that barbed eels peek out of to snatch the bats and bugs that flutter in the dark.

It is in those most still waters, where the cave bed is littered with bones of humanoids, that the savants endure. Each once ruled from one of four inverted towers – hollow shafts descending hundreds of feet, sized for a whale to navigate. The four towers lie within a quarter mile of each other, surrounding a luxurious waxy cave floor where the Grand Savant lies in an idyllic dream of its own creation.

The Savants

Imagine the back of a horned turtle, enlarged to the size of a house, with fleshy valves between joints in the shell where three red eyes sleepily watch all that transpires in their presence. A muscular beak at the end of a squat trunk attaches the monster to the side of a flooded cave, and four meaty tentacles float limp in the current. The creature slumbers, sharing its dreams with its kindred, slowly digesting the thoughts they have plucked from the brains of tens of thousands of slaves, whose rotting corpses lie along the floor of the cave, turning the water a soupy mix of slime and decayed flesh.

Four shabboath savants survive, as does their master the Grand Savant, a creature whose corpulent grandeur has cracked its own shell, allowing pallid folds of flesh to sprawl and serve as anchors for psychic barnacles. The Grand Savant desired to dominate all the minds of its world, but in its success it grew too complacent. With no more challenges, it was only a few centuries before the savants became bored, drifted to sleep, and forgot to order their slaves to eat or procreate.

Ages passed, and the overlords of the dead world only awoke when reality had crumbled around their severed sea, leaving only a small fragment trapped in the Gyre. They stirred briefly, saw no threats, and returned to their dreams. But in the past few months they have dreamt of Mavisha, a world of fresh seas for them to dominate. The Grand Savant desires to rise to the surface, feel the frigid air upon its slimy flesh, and take in the end of the world in its tripartite vision. The savants of Shabboath chose one of their number to go prepare that world, and if uninterrupted for a few months they will dominate all life on Mavisha.

When the Grand Savant sees the Gyre and is convinced it has survived to the end of time, it will be content, and let itself die.

Freeing Mavisha

If the party wants to bond with Mavisha, they need to be careful not to bring the savants along for the ride. If the Grand Savant learns there is a chance it can prolong its existence, it will brutally try to dominate the party. It was once a cunning creature, but has long become too arrogant in its might. Its alien mind hardly understands the concept anymore that other creatures have thoughts of their own.

Negotiating with the savants is difficult and maddening, with the best chance requiring either letting a savant dominate a PC, or dominating a savant, so that the psychic link helps bridge the gap between creatures that have so little in common. The party could learn that the Grand Savant's journey is one of suicide and simply wait for it to finish, never letting on that Mavisha can survive.

Tricking the savants is possible. They are paranoid about threats to their master, and if the party happens to lure to Mavisha a few pirates from Hunlow (plane 33), the savants will decide they must kill the bloody sea god on that world. They'll flood the interior cavity of the undead turtle Bhoior (plane 41) and dominate the creature so it carries them to Hunlow. The savants realize that Hunlow's power comes from its followers, so they compel all the weak-minded mortals to fling themselves into the void. The whole expedition takes a month, giving the party plenty of time to escape the Gyre and bind Mavisha when there are no savants on it.

And of course aquatic combat is an option, but if the party makes enemies of the savants, they are supremely intelligent, with access to almost any sort of occult magic to ruin the party's day, dominate their allies, and ultimately remove the threat they pose to the Grand Savant.



*#44. Avilona, the Final Murmur

Planar Trait: Flight, and other air magic, never lasts more than five minutes.

This planar mote is smaller than most, barely ten miles across, and it floats at least a mile from whatever neighbor it has drifted nearest to. The surface is mostly barren, with just a few scraggly grasses and brushes inhabited by flightless birds. Angular wind-eroded stone dominates the landscape, with slender uneven arches, knife-like overhangs, and huge boulders balanced precariously on pillars of weaker rocks that have been weathered away.

All the erosion is ancient, though. The wind is practically still, but some unseen presence murmurs irregularly, disturbing the silence.

Reaching Avilona is risky, since if the airship lingers for more than 5 minutes within a hundred feet of the world, its levitationals rapidly drain of power. If the party doesn't take the hint, their ship will be permanently grounded. But if they are dropped off and the ship pulls away to a safe distance, they find the remains of Avilona are the literal remains of something like a dead god. Ages ago, an eagle whose wings spread a thousand feet perished here, and as the elemental air energy that empowered it drained from its body, feathers, flesh, and skeleton turned to stone.

Now the titanic petrified eagle lies sprawled on its back. Its neck has twisted in death so its head—skull and eye sockets exposed—lies near its chest. There the killing blow is revealed: its heart was torn out by another creature just as colossal as it. The cracked ribs were wrenched open, and now the hollow of its breast yawns up to the sky.

While the party is present (perhaps if someone tries to look into the cratered chest), the creature shudders. Its lungs draw in a thin breath, and its head shifts slightly so one empty eye socket can glimpse the party. Then, like a sigh, it exhales. The murmur that had previously kept the plane feeling somewhat alive ends.

*#41. Bhoior, the Walking Whisper

Planar Trait: Sounds echo, sometimes years later. This has no mechanical effect, but people are innately more aware of the past, and are less likely to repeat the mistakes of it.

The plane is indeed a miles-wide turtle composed of stones filled with fossils that have trapped the souls of the dead. Now many thousands more spirits from the Bleak Gate fill this world, unable to make it into Amrou.

Visitors here find just barren stone, without even any plant life. The souls trapped in the fossils whisper to living visitors, teasing that they know secrets but never revealing them except to those who knew the souls when they were alive. Long ago another, greater turtle bore several continents upon its back, and when it neared its proscribed death it traveled for the spawning ground of its mighty species where it could transfer the people who lived on its shell to another. Alas, the great turtle died before it could reach its destination, and so died an entire world.

Centuries later a new turtle awoke from the huge dead body, and it could hear the mournful memories of those it never had a chance to save.

Steering the Great Tortoise

If the party creates a planar icon for this plane, they can steer the plane, though it travels at a rate of less than a mile per hour. It's not stealthy, but it gives them a novel way to navigate.

*#39. Apet, the Distant Plane

Planar Trait: Planar travel is limited to the local system. In the Gyre, that restriction is redundant.

From afar, Apet is just a ball of whirling dust cloaking any solid surfaces. Once on the world, though, it becomes more bizarre than one would expect, for it is not a place of stone and rock, but of pure solid force. The ground consists of scattered platforms akin to *walls of force*—translucent sheets, impossibly thin and completely impenetrable. Most of these platforms are slightly off kilter from being horizontal, and they span a few dozen feet, always assuming simple two-dimensional geometric shapes with perfect symmetry like circles, triangles, squares, and on, up to octagons.

The force platforms have a slight static charge to them, causing the gritty dust that swirls around Apet to stick to it and provide traction enough to walk. Visibility is fair out to about thirty feet, beyond which everything has concealment out to sixty feet. Beyond sixty feet, everything is fully concealed. Certain patches of heavier dust might cut visibility to just five feet.

Liontaming

A Golden Legion windsiff is carefully patrolling the dusty world in a grid pattern, searching for beasts to capture and enslave. The only surviving beings on this world are mad descendants of Gidim war-beasts from thousands of years ago, which slaughtered most of the legionnaires sent the first time. Now the legionnaires come with a pit fiend, **Laroj Roh the Liontamer**, who carries a staff that will force the beasts to be corporeal so they can be captured.

The party might come across the windsiff by first finding a legionnaire lying dead in the sand, with strange tracks in the dust made by tentacles pointing the way the monster fled. Following it comes upon the devil crew as they attempt to wrangle a few dozen flying things. A fight's not necessary, but since word hasn't spread through the whole legion about the events on Av, Laroj Roh and his minions are excited at the chance to take more slaves.

Golden Legion Liontaming Crew (Level 21)

- + Laroj Roh, Golden Legion pit fiend
- + 2 Golden Legion horned devils
- + 1 Golden Legionnaire Company
- + 1 Golden Legion Erinyes



Laroj Roh wields a +4 *adamantine ghost touch staff* instead of a +4 *flaming unholy mace*.

A Plea from the Homeworld

The Gidim flying things don't try to attack the party, but instead desperately fling their incorporeal bodies into and *through* anyone they can. If any of them survive the inevitable opportunity attacks, their passage deposits a thought in the creature they fly through: the Gidim homeworld, represented by a sphere of purple flesh with infinite eyes and tendrils reaching out to the stars, has a tiny black leech stuck to its side, siphoning its power. The emotional sense conveyed is revulsion and violation, mixed with intention to avoid the source of the leech in the future.



This is because the Obscurati in the real world have managed to tap into the Gidim's psychic connection to strengthen the godmind phenomenon. By the time the party gets back to the real world, Nicodemus will have used that power to compel nearly everyone to obey him. For now they just have a hint of what the Ob are up to.

#37. Thrag, the Beastly Bounty

Planar Trait: Reincarnation is rapid, and memories are retained.

The first thing one notices approaching Thrag is the screaming. Everything on this world was once a person, but after mortals slew a divine child who had been born to the god of death and the goddess of life, the mourning deities altered the cycle of reincarnation so that no one would ever die again. No new people were born, but souls remembered their past lives as they took on new forms. Every being on this world recalls thousands of births, thousands of lifetimes of being trapped in primitive bodies incapable of fully composing higher thought, and thousands of savage deaths.

All animal and plant life here is ambulatory, even grasses that crawl and battle for the most nutritious soil, occasionally forming electrogenic colonies that can deliver stunning bolts to larger creatures so the grass can swarm it and consume its flesh. All the while, they wail in perpetual agony and angst that they will never be free of this cycle of suffering.

There is little to be gained from bonding with this world, but PCs might try anyway. If someone dies, within a minute he or she reincarnates in a bestial creature that tears its way free of the soil even as his or her previous body decays and is consumed by worms and other smaller beings. Typically these forms are equivalent to goats, wolves, or grouse, nothing fit for wearing armor and wielding weapons. A character stuck in such a body can be restored on Ascetia (plane 24) if the party doesn't have magic of their own to fix the problem.

Eerily, the local wildlife completely ignores anything undead. The party should spot the spidery husk of a vaknid nestled in the boughs of a screaming tree, which is oblivious to its passenger.

Mandala Beasts

A handful of souls on Thrag, known as the mandala beasts, have learned through their incarnations a measure of calm. Giving themselves over to their savage nature, these carnivores combine physical might, supernatural powers, and the cunning mind of a predator that has had a hundred lifetimes of experience.

Every mandala beast is accompanied by a psychic manifestation behind its head, depicting a beautiful glowing ring of abstract patterns in vivid colors. When its body is slain, it devises a new form and reincarnates into that body, completely unfazed by the temporary death. The only way to keep one at bay is to scorch the earth beneath its body after it dies, because burnt soil is unable to devour the corpse, and the course of reincarnation is slowed until its flesh decays at a more natural pace.

Stalking Mandala Beast (Level 21)

♦ 1 carnivorous mandala of Thrag (see page 284)



Wherever the party lands, the screaming of existential horror likely distracts them as the mandala beast prowls around them, its glowing



manifestation dim. It psychically compels brush and trees around the party to wail and crawl toward them in order to conceal its own approach (Perception DC 39). The flora is too slow and weak to be a threat, but when the mandala beast is only five feet away it stands, flares its mandala, and tackles a creature.

If the party kills it, it keeps assuming different forms in order to best attack them. The beast is smart enough to know that a dead foe reincarnates, so it uses its *mantle of stability* to heal dying enemies while paralyzing them. If it wins a battle, it takes powerful paralyzed creatures to a burnt-out lair and gnaws on their flesh for days, killing the creature again and again each time it reincarnates.

It's not really possible to permanently defeat the creature, short of taking it off this plane. Scorching the earth beneath it will at least stop its reincarnation, but this is not a fight that can be won.



#36. Amrou, the Salt Waste

Planar Trait: Mundane counters against supernatural threats are stronger. If a creature puts down a line of salt, whenever a demon, devil, spirit, or similar entity attempts to cross, it must make a Will save (DC 10 + HD of the creature that set down the salt) or be unable to cross the barrier for a day. Salt also burns such creatures, dealing 5 damage per turn (or more, depending on the quantity) and keeping them from willingly touching it. Indeed, affected creatures cannot even use tools to intentionally move salt, though they can create circumstances (like drafts from open windows, or asking a normal mortal) that can affect salt.

Likewise, holy bells can drive away faeries, jade hurts aberrant monsters, and presented holy symbols create safe shells as if you were constantly surrounded by a ring of salt.

The Wee Tombs

After an onslaught of supernatural foes wiped out all the large folk, people similar to halflings came to power in the world known as Amrou. For a time they ruled and wielded powerful magic to keep the monsters at bay, and in fact used benevolent necromancy to preserve their greatest heroes. Mighty rulers were entombed for eternity with their servants, who were tasked with praying throughout their unlife in order to maintain the wards against evil.

But eventually they were betrayed, and the world fell to darkness. The vile priest-king responsible was destroyed, but the world could not be saved. Now all that remains is the sprawling salt wasteland where the tombs were hidden. One mummified ruler, **Sargon of Uggat, whose father was the cupbearer of Ur-Zubaba**, recently emerged from his tomb when he realized the world had ended centuries ago. His servants, their souls preserved and bolstered by the enchanted treasures buried in his tomb, were fading away. The magical artifacts he had been entombed with were almost powerless. So Sargon of Uggat, whose father was the cupbearer of Ur-Zubaba, tightened his cloth wrappings, draped himself in a ragged white cloak to better hide in the wastes, and searched for travelers.

This halfling mummy pickpocket just wants to preserve his servants, and he's not clear enough in his mind to realize that they long ago failed their original purpose of defending their world against evil. If the party lands here to try to bond with the plane, they'll likely not notice the mummy's light fingers picking their pockets for enchanted trinkets (Perception DC 46).

Tracking Sargon of Uggat, whose father was the cupbearer of Ur-Zubaba, is fairly easy, since he's the only thing leaving footprints on the whole plane. His tomb's magical defenses are long-since faded, and his only real defense is that the door and hallways are sized for three-foot-tall tomb robbers.

If he's confronted, the former pharaoh has all manner of minor magic items that might prove useful to the party, which he'll gladly trade for items of equivalent power. He's not one to fight, but his phenomenal stealth skills could make him a useful scout if the party can convince him their quest will find more treasure to protect his servants.

As for the servants, they still have preserved wines and fruit from before the world ended, plus palm fans and oils for luxurious massages. Since they have no civilization of their own to protect anymore, they're quite doting on anyone who is friendly, even giants like the PCs. Ultimately, forming a bond with Amrou is as easy as filling the treasure vault of Sargon of Uggat, whose father was the cupbearer of Ur-Zubaba, with a few hundred thousand gold pieces worth of treasure. Chains of Golden Legionnaires serve quite well for this purpose.

#35. Wilanir, the Lair of Discontent

Planar Trait: Guilt weighs heavily, like a fog. Fog appears more readily and more thickly, especially around those who have committed wrongs. The first time each encounter that a creature hidden in fog strikes another creature unaware of it, it gains temporary hit points equal to the amount of damage it deals, which last until the end of the encounter.

Eerie Fog

Winter snow sits sullen on Wilanir, and although herbivores like rabbits, deer, and birds still roam the landscape, all predators have perished. This includes the elves that once lived here, their stolid castles and hovels abandoned and snowed in. A low range of mountains in the center of the plane is home to a series of ruined forts, which serve as the lair of **Doverspike**, a vampire red dragon who destroyed the world (see page 286).

It wasn't quite his intention. He had threatened a nation ruled by an elvish archmage-emperor, whose people made regular offerings of blood as a sign of obedience. When Doverspike used an epic spell to slay the emperor and everyone in his bloodline, the effect cascaded through most of the population of the world. The dead animated as zombies and inexorably wiped out all the other survivors. Eventually their bodies rotted away, leaving Doverspike as the only sentient being on the whole world. Soon thereafter the world was drawn into the Gyre.

Today the immense dragon is unhinged from a mix of guilt, loneliness, and the simple fact that he hasn't had the blood of sentient beings in centuries, aside from a few members of the Golden Legion. He wasn't able to follow the devils back to their base, and the legion decided better than to throw more soldiers to their death.

Encountering Doverspike

If the party lands, thick fogs roll in within a half hour. This is Doverspike himself, transformed into the fog. In this form he can still suck creatures' blood, manifesting as a faintly visible draconic maw limned with crimson amid the white mist. However, he has quite lost his previous confidence and villainy. If attacked by a magical weapon he recoils, gibbers out an apology while screaming "it wasn't my fault!" in Draconic, and then the fog flows away at thirty miles an hour back to one of his fortress lairs.

If they pursue, those fortresses are prowled by a few zombies that have survived the centuries, but nothing that could really threaten the party. They can find Doverspike curled and shivering atop an ice-trapped treasure hoard, black miasma pouring out of his nostrils, across the scales of his face, which are deep red flecked with dead white at their edges. He'll fight back if forced, but he just wants to be left alone. If pestered to talk, he turns to one of the zombies, tells it to shut up, then blasts it with fire. When he sees what he did he is stricken, and scurries into a corner, horrified.

The poor monster is broken psychologically, but sympathetic or simply deceptive PCs could coax Doverspike to their side. He has no experience with the concept of penance, and is not quite motivated by a desire to make amends for what he did. He's simply horrified, and selfishly wants to stop feeling that. Perhaps he could be convinced that the best way to push away the pain he feels would be to save a world, to balance the scales. Or he might be willing to just go on a suicide mission against the Golden Legion or the Hunlow pirates.

The most fair punishment, though, is probably to sic the sun Oblitas (plane 19) on him, giving the undead-hating star a chance to find its own peace while annihilating an undead horror that destroyed another world.



†#33. Hunlow, the Place for Pirates

Planar Trait: The ocean is literally a blood-thirsty god who loves villains. An offering of the blood of someone you have victimized, dripped into the sea, grants you the ability to reroll any d20 roll once in the next day.

Never Trust a Pirate

When a great Adversary awoke and went to war against the gods who had imprisoned him ages earlier, most of those gods quavered before his wrath. But Hunlow, that world's minor god of pirates, cheered the Adversary's vengeance, and disrupted plans of a band of plucky heroes to reimprison him. By way of thanks, when the Adversary tore out the heart of the world and draped the flayed skins of the gods across the heavens, he let the blood rain into Hunlow's seas, giving him the divine power necessary to survive the end of the world.

The Adversary is long gone, but Hunlow gleefully persists on his own fragment of the destroyed plane. He physically *is* the ocean—a thirty-mile sea of water whose waves turn blood red at their crests, dotted with a skull-shaped chain of islands—and he controls the flow of currents and the storms. Nothing lives on his immortal body unless he desires it. But oh does he love scoundrels.

Bonding with the plane requires only that Hunlow likes you. If the party finds a way to defeat the sea god, the plane dies and can provide no planar energy.

The Cutthroat Clergy

Over three centuries, a variety of mortals have found their way to Hunlow's shores. He killed most, but eventually some showed themselves vile enough for him to keep them around. Most of the pirates smartly devoted themselves to worship of Hunlow, and eventually his clergy arranged for him to impregnate a slave, who gave birth to his half-god son **Taracle**.

Taracle commands the pirates of Hunlow as their admiral. His skin constantly seethes in pain when he's out of water, so he keeps himself draped in long cloaks which he soaks in his father's saltwater body. Under those his body has a lobster-like carapace and dozens of tentacles. If anyone displeases him he'll order the offender disemboweled so he can eat their intestines. However, he seldom talks, preferring to let his second-in-command Thrusty speak on his behalf.

Captain Thrusty is a fat former fiend returned to human form, whose love of logistics keeps Hunlow's coves stocked with the right type of slaves. A hundred years ago a pit fiend of the Golden Legion made the mistake of tussling with the pirates, who subdued him, stripped him of his gold, and then in a bid to make a convert to their cruel god, broke the curse over him. Over the years the former fiend, who took the name 'Thrusty' because he'd forgotten his original name, shifted into something of a hybrid of man and devil. Corpulent and scaled, he stands less than five and a half feet tall, but still has all the strength of his previous form.

Thrusty revels in his newfound free will, but old habits die hard, so after his conversion he took control of the pirates' slave market, making sure the mortals lived long enough to be useful. He wears all black, even a black domino mask and bandana as a cap. His greatest possession of value is his rapier, which was forged from the tooth of a gold dragon and blessed by Hunlow himself.

Straightforward slaughter would eventually leave the pirates starved and doomed, but Thrusty has made a point of cultivating prisoners who can keep a functional economy working. Indeed, for the sake of not letting short-sighted sea scum ruin everything, Thrusty keeps most of the slaves on the adjacent plane of Drozani (plane 25). He only brings people over when they're needed for sacrifices, for raping, or for more mundane breeding, since Drozani's curse smothers children born there. Similarly, the goblins of Etheax tend to herd animals that feed the pirates. The pirates don't often use them as sacrifices because they're so amenable to everything it's hard to get the goblins to really *suffer* enough for Hunlow to care.

The pirates are the reason so many planes in the southern Gyre are empty ruins, since they captured everyone useful and killed the rest. They even took a few monks of Caeloon who were too curious when the plane first arrived. (Calily has some nieces and nephews she doesn't know about.) They never made it past Thrag or Padyer, though, and so don't know much about the severed sea of Shabboath.

Preparing to go A'plunderin'

The crash of Av made waves, though. Hunlow senses there are plenty of slaves for the taking there, so he's having his priests perform mass sacrifices to gird him for a journey of his own. When the party arrives, Captain Thrusty is making final arrangements for the ritual. The next time the distant sun of Oblitas dips under the horizon, wild parties will erupt all over the skull islands, human bonfires will light the night, and the thirteen ships of Admiral Taracle's fleet will sail a circle around the island chain, slitting arteries of hundreds of slaves and leaving a trail of fresh blood.

When the several-hour ritual is complete, Hunlow himself will be able to reach forth from the rocky mote that lies beneath his watery body, and he will crawl from world to world, a crashing flood carrying the fleet with him. In four days he'll sweep across Thrag, Bhoior, Nem, and then reach Av.

Before then, Captain Thrusty might be willing to parlay with the party. He's far-sighted enough to see the value of cooperation, but he would fully intend to backstab the party as soon as he figured out their weaknesses. He cares nothing about escaping the Gyre, nor do his pirates nor his god. They simply want the best plunder and a steady supply of poor bastards to inflict themselves upon. The Golden Legion is an occasional hassle, but the pirates' ships don't fly, and they don't want to go into battle just on foot.

At Odds with a God

The flagship of the fleet, *Adversary's Favor*, is commanded by Admiral Taracle, with Captain Thrusty serving at his side. In a fight, Thrusty lets Taracle deal with all the party's attention, then swings in to take out vulnerable enemies. Clergy throw dozens of spells, with their preference being *banishment*, which conjures grinding mists (see Gyre Traits, page 143). Another sixty pirates are all unholy warriors with divine blessings. If the party defeats Taracle, they can retrieve the radiant axes of King Ron the Grand, and return them to Dunkelweiss (plane 31).

The other twelve ships have smaller crews, but each is still vicious. The ships lack any sort of cannons, but they make up for it with unified spellcasting might, and Hunlow can adjust the weather so that in ten minutes powerful lightning and whirlwinds will arise, potentially knocking the party's airship to the sea.



Adversary's Favor **(Level 25)**

- Admiral Taracle
- Captain Thrusty
- 3 priests of Hunlow
- 5 unholy boarding crews



Twelve other Hunlow Pirate Ships **(Level 18 each)**

- 2 priests of Hunlow
- 4 unholy boarding crews

Fighting Hunlow himself is basically impossible. While the party has faced big enemies before like fey titans, this enemy stretches *miles*. No conventional attack can even perturb him.

A smart option is just to avoid him. But a smarter option is to remove the source of his power. If the pirate clergy are killed, Hunlow has no ability to travel beyond his own plane. Indeed, if his clergy is wiped out while he's traveling abroad, he'll dissipate and pour over the sides of whatever plane he's on, vanishing into the void.

A straight-up fight is possibly even harder than going against the Golden Legion, but the savants of Shabboath can be tricked into attacking Hunlow if they see him as a threat, or the slaves on Drozani could be rallied into battling their masters. No doubt clever players can find other ways to defeat the sea god, if they care.

#31. Dunkelweiss, the Fermented Peaks

Planar Trait: Alcohol is good for you. It produces the same intoxicating effect as before, but does no damage to long-term health. Indeed, hangovers are easily held at bay with a brisk workout, meaning the heaviest drinkers tend to be the most fit. A night of intense carousing functions as a *restoration* spell (caster level equal to the drinker's hit dice).

The Tomb of King Ron

The dwarven all-king known as Ron the Grand ruled his people nobly for a century. Upon his death, the dwarves did not merely craft him a tomb, but petitioned their gods to create a demiplane that would encapsulate all that made Ron so damned Grand. Alas, the high priests got too drunk celebrating after the funeral, and they accidentally left the key that opened a portal to the world inside the world itself. King Ron was at peace, and his planar tomb drifted through the cosmos, like a burial at sea.

Centuries ago Dunkelweiss, a thirty-mile mountain range of soaring snow-capped peaks, majestic forests, and brisk mountain lakes, crashed into the Gyre. Such was the dwarven craftsmanship that it was barely jostled by the impact, and the borders of the world are quite sturdy. Celestial goats frolic on its grassy hills, and bearded eagles soar over the mausoleum, keeping watch of the king's rest.

But woe grips those eagles, and each day they shed a single tear, for they failed at their duty. Decades ago pirates from Hunlow snuck onto the world and plundered the tomb, carrying back many treasures, including King Ron's two radiant axes. (These items are in the possession of Admiral Taracle, leader of the pirates of Hunlow, plane 33).

Anyone new who arrives is confronted by one of the eagles, who is wary of outsiders. He invites the PCs to drink their fill of the beer streams (they turn back into water when they reach the lakes), but says no one will be allowed into the tomb except to return the stolen treasures. If the party

tries to bond with the plane without first retrieving the stolen axes, the eagles screech and strafe them, but don't actually attack.

#29. Etheax, the Tended Flame

Planar Trait: Patience and fire magic are both easy. Anyone with Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma of 10 or higher can perform cantrips to create and control small fires.

Something Bad Happened, but the Goblins Didn't Notice

The cave-riddled mountains of Etheax are sharp and steep, with flat grassy valleys between looming granite mesas. A handful of goblin tribes live in these valleys, tending to the plants and animals in order to keep a stable environment. They also tend to fires at the mouths of all their caves, and can communicate across the plane in a hurry by means of shadow puppets in front of the fires.

The Etheax goblins are excessively friendly, and while they're rambunctious and nasty to people whom they know, to outsiders they maintain a demeanor of quaint, folksy manners. They of course get along well with the pirates of Hunlow, taking care of livestock for them without asking anything in return. Captain Thrusty long ago promised them he'd pay them back for all the work they're doing, and the goblins are patient enough to wait.

Bonding with this plane is as easy as asking the goblins. They're that friendly.

#28. Ship Graveyard

In this region of mostly empty space drift thousands of once-famous dead ships from hundreds of worlds, including Boato, the King of Boats.

#25. Drozani, a Dead City in the Clouds

Planar Trait: Slowly the birth rate dwindles to zero.

A Beautiful Prison

A small rocky island floats at the edge of this plane, forming a shore with the sea of Hunlow. From there, a majestic pink marble staircase rises two hundred feet over the void, up to a pillow of clouds upon which sits a desolate city of rose wood and marble. Two fallen angels of Hunlow guard the staircase, allowing access only to those their god approves.

Within the city, the pirates keep thousands of slaves, who are kept in line because nothing grows there. The pirates have to import food from Etheax and fish from Hunlow or else the slaves will starve. Slaves typically busy themselves crafting clothes or weapons for the pirates, and are only brought out when Thrusty decrees they need to breed, or when the pirates are getting randy and want to rape something.

The lives of the slaves is wretched and degenerate, to the point that a hierarchy has arisen where those most in favor with the pirates might be given a chance to become pirates themselves, and so the other slaves look up to them. They desire freedom more than they value their own ideals. A few exceptions to this exist, most notably the children and grandchildren of Caeloon monks who were captured a few decades ago. Their asceticism makes them pariahs, but the slaves and pirates let them pass along their martial arts traditions as long as they are willing to submit to whatever debased demands the pirates make.

This once-great flying metropolis is damned, and perhaps the closest thing to Hell the Gyre has to offer.





Surviving the Deadly Northern Gyre

Exploration. Montage.

More worlds lie beyond a wide expanse, but most of these planes are lethal beyond mortal ken.

Once the party is ready, they can travel across the thirty mile void between the southern and northern Gyres.

The plane that calls out to them most should be Ascetia with its lighthouse, which is the first encounter we detail. The battle at Egalitrix, if the party cares to take on the legion, is complex enough that we give it its own encounter entry as well, particularly since the PCs might want to check the rest of the Gyre for allies before hitting the devils' volcano airship. And the final confrontation with the Voice of Rot is presented in Act Three.

†#24. Ascetia, the Hidden Jungle

Planar Trait: People are more aware of history. By the time everyone is an adult, they naturally acquire a +5 bonus to Knowledge (history) checks.

A flashing beacon strobes twice every minute, visible from up to a hundred miles (three hexes) away. As one approaches to within ten miles, a lighthouse appears, rising up from the edge of a tangled jungle which extends all the way to the precipice of the floating world. The lighthouse is unostentatious but solid, constructed of hand-carved limestone bricks thrusting a hundred feet above the jungle canopy. A small barn and a few satellite buildings surround it in a fifty foot clearing, and a walkway of logs leads from the lighthouse's door to the very edge of the world. As if its resident expects visitors, a basket of small tart jungle fruit sits next to a bench a few feet from where the sidewalk ends.

The top of the tower has a roof covering the mechanism of the beacon, which is rotated by simple gears governed by a weight that descends through the shaft of the lighthouse. This top floor has open windows with shutters but no glass, and it is here that William Miller spends most of his time, meditating while keeping watch for travelers.

The rest of the planar mote consists of short mountains that feed streams that thread through the jungle. A barely visible foot-path from the lighthouse leads into that verdant tangle, and half a mile later reaches the grave of Srasama. Beneath a high canopy, the body of the once-towering eladrin goddess lies with her six arms crossed over her chest. Shafts of shock quartz, six feet tall and roughly hewn, circle the grove, and each sparkles like a stream in sunlight. Touching one of these obelisks summons a wash of memories of thousands and thousands of eladrin women who perished in the Great Malice. By concentrating it's possible to speak with a specific spirit and learn her story. This is their graveyard, crafted by Miller as penance and as reminder of his hubris.

Srasama's body seems vividly alive despite numerous wounds. She neither breathes nor bleeds, but she looks capable of standing up at any moment.

The Revelation of William Miller

After the Great Malice, the reflection of Nicodemus was stranded in the Gyre. After a period of denial and introspection, he began to refer to himself again by his birth name, William Miller. Though he is also a ghost like the Nicodemus of the real world, Miller has had a very different experience, and rather than becoming bitter and Machiavellian, he devoted himself to humility and penance.

Importantly, the prime-Nicodemus is unaware of his reflection. Miller, here in the Gyre, has over the centuries figured out that there's still a version of him in the real world, and in the past few months since the Great Eclipse has met spirits of those who died on the party's homeworld and learned vague details of his duplicate's activities.

Miller has come to understand the nature of the Gyre, such as that he, and anyone else who is similarly reflected by the plane of Av, could obliterate themselves and send their consciousnesses back to the versions of them in the real world, but so far he has seen no need to do so.

As a ghost, Miller is practically unkillable. And while magic can destroy his manifested form temporarily, he'll rejuvenate in a day or so as long as there's still a link to the version of him in the real world. Namely, as long as the plane Reida still exists, Miller cannot be destroyed. He sees no need to fight, and is unafraid of any threats.

When the party reaches Ascetia, then, Miller comes out to meet them, hoping to offer aid or guidance. Expect some turbulence and paranoia as the party realizes that Miller isn't quite their nemesis. But he tries to explain things:

"Despite how I look, I'm not your enemy. I'm his reflection, and five hundred years ago I broke off from him. I'll help you, if you'll let me, because when I look at my reflection now I don't like what I see.

"The first thing to know is that I'm arrogant. Five centuries ago I thought I could broker a peace agreement between Elfaivar and the Clergy during a holy war. They threw us into a prison – my accomplice was an eladrin woman, Kasvarina. She didn't deserve what happened to her because of me.

"That prison was supposed to be punishment and torture. And there were horrors there, definitely. But the most dangerous thing locked away in there was my own pride. I found a ritual, a way to end the war, a way to summon a god. My plan was to trick the Clergy into summoning its own god of war, which the eladrin would kill. The ritual warned that all the followers of the god would suffer the same fate as the one they worshipped. If my plan had worked it would have killed thousands of people. People who worshipped the same way I did. I didn't care. I had been thwarted once, and I needed to succeed.

"I was blind to the fact that I was a puppet. The Clergy had used Kasvarina and me to get the ritual – there was a demon, she wouldn't tell them; it's complicated. The hierarchs I hated so much summoned an *eladrin* goddess, killed her. When I figured it out I tried to escape, and I was caught in the middle of the backlash, right as I was straddling two sides of a portal. In the same moment that every eladrin woman died, I was torn in two.

"So here I am, a ghost in a place of ghosts. You can imagine the denial and rage, but eventually I realized there was no point to that. Not too far from here I built a memorial to the goddess they killed, and to all the people who died because of me. This lighthouse, also, was my attempt at penance. I thought if people came here, I could offer shelter or guidance. I suppose I've been waiting for you.

"I can't see what the other me is doing, but ghosts have been showing up for months, and I've heard stories. Stories of what that other me is doing.



" 'The other me.' Hell, this will get confusing. Look, it's been centuries since I thought of myself as Nicodemus anyway. It was only a moniker. A 'nick' name, which my fellow monks thought was so damned clever. There's this herb from the Yerasol Islands called leaf of Nicodemus. You burn it, inhale the smoke. I remember loving the sensation. It was soothing. I dreamed of cultivating it and sharing it with more people around the world. But, well, there was a holy war. More pressing matters.

"Anyway, this place is basically my grave, so I might as well be buried with my real name. I'm William Miller, and I have some good news, and some bad news. Two sides of a mirror, if you don't mind me belaboring the point.

"You see, there's a way to get back to your world. At the center of the Gyre, if you dive into the teeth and let yourself be ground up and annihilated, your soul, or consciousness, or in any case all the useful things you've learned here—and I've got an inkling why you're here—all of that will go back to...Well, here's the bad news.

"You've been reflected too. Av, the moon. It's a plane of mirrors, and the realm you pass through when you're stepping through a portal. Its power tore me in two five hundred years ago. And when Av shattered a few days ago, the same thing happened to you. One version of you is back home, and the other version is here. Nothing you do here can change what happens there, and nothing the other yous there can do will make a difference in saving your world, not unless you fling yourself into the Gyre. If you want the other version of you to succeed, you're all going to have to die."

Inflection Point

Now is when you should start Adventure Thirteen, *Avatar of Revolution*. Once the party completes the Introduction, return to events in the Gyre.

Respite and Explanation

The PCs are unaware of the events in the real world. From their perspective, Miller has just finished telling them that they're reflections of their real selves. He's willing to answer any questions they have, and offers to let them stay here as long as they desire. His lighthouse has rooms for guests, and the Golden Legion avoids this place because the spirits of thousands of eladrin wiped out the last warship that flew over Srasama's grave.

He explains that with the proper mental preparation, someone who falls into the teeth of the Gyre can avoid being outright annihilated, but can instead choose where his or her consciousness ends up. It requires the right sense of connection to the world you wish to return to. He's spent centuries meditating on the nature of the Gyre, and while he has no proof, he knows it will work.

If the party believes him, Miller can teach them how to reconnect to their other selves. It requires an emotional connection to someone else in the world who misses them, and who can help guide them home. Also necessary is a goal, some change that they want to make, to give them an impulse to travel across the cosmos.

And of course their other selves have to be alive.

CONSEQUENCES OF REUNION

Unbeknownst to Miller, Nicodemus will have already gained near total domination of the world by the time the PCs' other selves return to Risur. Due to the fluid nature of time on Av, days spent in the Gyre won't sync with days in the real world, and the PCs' consciousnesses won't return to their other selves until they're in the midst of the climax at the Axis Seal.

However, the act of the PCs choosing someone as their 'emotional link' to the world will free that person from Nicodemus's control, even before Adventure Thirteen begins. Before the PCs arrive at Reida (plane 1), have them each choose a person they want as their link to the real world, whom they hope will draw them back. If you agree that there actually is a connection of value, when the players go back to Adventure Thirteen, they'll find those people are ready as allies.

This might not line up perfectly, so don't overthink it.

REJECTING MILLER

It's reasonable for the PCs to think Miller is an enemy, or just not to trust his 'certainty' that throwing themselves into the Gyre is a good idea. In that event, they can kill the Voice of Rot, then hang around in the Gyre on their airship for about a year until the real world is on the brink of crashing into the other planes of the Gyre. Then they can simply fly back to the real world and link up with their duplicates. It's up to you whether to let the PCs double-team the villains, or just to have them automatically merge together when they get near themselves.

Miller as an Ally

Miller sees his role as one of guide, not ally. Unlike Nicodemus in the real world, Miller never became a powerful spellcaster, so he's no good fighting alongside the PCs, not that he would if they asked. He's no pacifist—he wholly endorses destroying the Golden Legion, for instance—but he believes that change is only possible for the living. He can instruct and warn, but he fears that trying to take an active hand in events would only bring out his worst traits of bitter arrogance.

He has tried to meditate to overcome those flaws. Honestly, though, he's convinced he cannot change his nature. It's better, in his opinion, that he not be involved. After all, he's basically the same person as Nicodemus, and Nicodemus's refusal to accept failure has perhaps doomed the world.

It would behoove the party to change Miller's mind, because his aid can be pivotal in the defeat (and potentially the redemption) of Nicodemus. Swaying the ghost is difficult. But if they make Miller an ally, it becomes possible for them to take him to the teeth of the Gyre. When the party dives into the teeth to send their consciousnesses back to their other selves, Miller can do the same, but he won't be able to reach and influence Nicodemus without an emotional connection.





That connection is Kasvarina. He believes that she died along with all the other eladrin women when Srasama was killed, and his overall guilt for the destruction he caused is focused on the memory of her in particular. He tricked Kasvarina into helping him, and because of that she had to watch her own daughter be violated and murdered.

If Miller learns that she's still alive but was working with Nicodemus, he comes as close to crying as a ghost is capable of. After all that he knows he was guilty of, discovering that his sway over Kasvarina continued as Nicodemus and led her to a life of revenge devastates him. But by the same note, if during the climax of Adventure Thirteen the party manages to get Kasvarina to their side and turn her against Nicodemus, Miller and Nicodemus will be reunited. The two sides of his soul will battle, and briefly Miller will be dominant, long enough to lower his defenses and let the party destroy him for good.

It's possible to defeat Nicodemus without Miller's active involvement, but if you want a 'Luke redeems Vader' moment in your game, here's a chance.

Slightly Out of Place

Currently Miller's only other guest is **Catahoula**, an undead court wizard and masterful drum major from Iratha Ket (plane 17). Once a human, now he's just a skeleton, looking lanky and jaunty in a black cotton jacket with red epaulets and white buttons. He bobs his whole upper body from side to side as he talks, giving his speech a natural beat.

When things became desperate on his world, Catahoula scryed on Ascetia but saw nothing. However, of the worlds left it was his best option, so he chose to teleport here blindly. He can explain the woes of his home, and does so in a song if they let him, conjuring magical music to accompany his tale.

Healing and Restoration

Though not as powerful as his real-world duplicate Nicodemus, William Miller has sufficient magical knowledge to deal with most afflictions the party might be suffering from when they arrive. He can break curses on those enslaved by the Golden Legion, or restore the original forms of people reincarnated on Thrag. For these tasks he entreats the body of Srasama. Though the goddess is dead, she still can lend a small amount of power.

Communing with Srasama

A Vekeshi Mystic (or other interested PC) who visits the eladrin graves can speak with the spirit of Dala, Kasvarina's daughter who died while acting as vessel for the worship of Srasama. She wears a necklace with a three-piece amber pendant representing the three forms of Srasama: maiden, mother, and crone. Though Dala is certainly a young woman, she is flanked by faintly visible, skeletal-faced ghosts of other eladrin women. She refers to them as a ranamandala, a ruling circle of queens.

On their behalf, she asks what happened to their world, their families, and their people. The other spirits are somber and silent as they hear about the Great Malice and its aftermath, but Dala is perpetually light-hearted, with comments like, "Mother once got angry that I broke her favorite drinking glass fighting with my sister. She told me I needed to not be so careless. It would probably be mean if I reminded her of that."

Dala presses, wanting to know what became of her sister Launga, and of Kasvarina. She ends up sympathetic for her mother, knowing how she must have felt to lose both of her daughters. And if the PC doesn't

know of Launga's fate, Dala asks him or her to find the truth, and make sure she is remembered.

After that, Dala has an important question: what should become of Srasama? If the party carries a token of the dead goddess into the teeth of the Gyre and survives to return to the real world, even in death she still has enough power for one final act. The ranamandala are divided between seeking vengeance, or resurrecting the dead eladrin women. Either path will be the last act Srasama ever takes.

Dala takes off her amber necklace, and asks for the PC's choice. She offers first vengeance, holding the necklace in a clenched fist, and then she shifts it to her open palm, offering resurrection. She explains the choices, and once the PC picks she puts the necklace back on and nods in thanks.

- ♦ **Vengeance.** Dala says that Srasama will aid them in their battle against Nicodemus. In the climax of Adventure Thirteen, Srasama will fully manifest and join the battle on the party's side. This is the path of the maiden, a strong warrior.
- ♦ **Resurrection.** Dala says that upon the party's return to their world, all of the tens of thousands of eladrin women who died in the Great Malice will be resurrected. They will be aware of what the party has told them this day, and will know that a great time has passed, which should cool potential desire for revenge. She's unsure what consequence this would have, but it would certainly change the world. This is the path of the mother, the giver of life.

Finally, the PC could make a third choice, the path of the crone, by snatching the necklace from her hand.

- ♦ **Usurpation.** A PC could take the necklace and try to claim the power of Srasama for him- or herself. Dala demands it back, accusing the PC of trying to steal the goddess's power, and if the PC doesn't immediately oblige, the avatar of Srasama will rise in the midst of the grove and attack the treacherous PC. If the PC succeeds, he or she becomes a minor deity of womanhood. See Appendix B for stats and for details of this boon.

After any of these choices, the shimmering of the quartz obelisks goes dark, and the body of Srasama fades into glowing motes that drift like stars into the night sky.

#21. Elofasp, the Spawning Hive

Planar Trait: Animals are larger but more obedient. Any living creature with Intelligence 2 or less can be trained, and a Handle Animal check (DC 20) can goad an untrained creature of animal intelligence to take a simple action at your command.

The Insect Apocalypse

Spindle spires of waxy gravel rise from the cracked ground of this plane. The monstrous native creatures have excavated canyons of soft rock from the remains of their dead world, and mixed the debris with biological excretions to create pillar hives, some as wide as a hundred feet and four times as high. Here and there bits of civilized structures or colossal humanoid statues with tentacled faces have been integrated into the hives, suggesting that the world was once inhabited.



Elofasp was once a colony of bizarre alien beings of colossal intellect, but one of their elder brains was slain and consumed by an immense telepathic insect. Massive spawn rose up around the world and overwhelmed the original inhabitants.

An explorer would find each hive controlled by a different breed of horrific monster, yet they never fight or have territorial disputes. Each hive has a 'princess,' daughter of the queen which resides at the bottom of the largest hive in the center of the plane. The queen is a bloated mix of segmented limbs, thrashing tentacles, furred heads, and scaled tails, and today it is wrapped heavily in golden chains. Each brood line on the plane is loyal to the queen, and the queen is enslaved by the Golden Legion.

It took the legion a few centuries to pull it off, but eventually a great battle let them break the central hive and capture the queen. Ever since they have had their pick of the fiercest monsters, and under the direction of the pit fiend **Pahlo Vil**k they have plied the queen with gifts to try to coerce her into birthing specific types of horrors.

Anyone wearing the chains of the legion is ignored by the beasts of Elofasp, but any other intruder is attacked relentlessly by thousands of huge monsters, and innumerable swarms of smaller savage beasts. (Basically, feel free to use any unintelligent monster you want on this world.) Trying to travel across this world without some sort of concealment or ruse is practically impossible, since every ten feet another monster would try to kill the PCs.

If somehow the party could reach the queen, she is sessile and helpless unless you're foolish enough to come within her grasp. Killing or freeing her would cause all of the warbeasts stationed across Egalitrix to turn against the devils. For that reason, Pahlo Vil has a powerful force guarding the wax-latticed cavern where she resides.

Guardians of the Hive Queen **(Level 23)**

- Pahlo Vil, Golden Legion pit fiend
- 2 enslaved Elofasp ravants
- 1 enslaved supplicant of Elofasp
- 3 Golden Legion elite stars
- 2 Golden Legion horned devils



The party hopefully takes into account that, after killing the hive queen, disguising themselves as legionnaires won't help them escape.

#19. Obliatas, the Devouring Light

Planar Trait: Any undead caught in the sun's light takes 1 point of positive energy damage every minute. When used as a plane for the Axis Seal ritual, instead it deals damage to any undead that can see its place in the sky. Depending on where it is placed in the system, it's possible that roughly half the year, night-time would be safe for undead, while the other half day-time would be.

Wandering Star

The star Obliatas was the center of a system where the planets were drained of life by a cosmic undead horror. Originally the avatar of a sun god, Obliatas was stranded after all the followers of the god perished. It swore it would destroy all the undead it found, but the horror left the system, and Obliatas eventually found itself in the Gyre.

Obliatas has been in the Gyre for nearly a thousand years, and after a period of mourning and losing its mind, the sentient sun began to wander. Eventually it discovered the undead civilization surviving on Iratha Ket (plane 17), and has spent all of its years since near it, harassing the inhabitants but kept at bay by the daily song rituals, which channel the magic of King Calcasieu. This is actually the cause of the irregular day-night cycle in the Gyre.

Now Obliatas endures as a two-hundred foot wide orb of white light, which is blinding to anything within a thousand feet, and which does 10 fire damage each round to anything that lands on it. It can sense and telepathically contact anything within a mile. Despite its immense size and power, its mental voice is shrill and unhinged. It flies faster than walking speed, slower than airship speed, and calls out to anyone who comes near.

A Source of Great Power

Obliatas is unique in being able to provide any type of energy the party might need for the Axis Seal ritual. It would create a second sun, though not bright enough to disrupt life, since it would probably be dimmer than a full moon (depending on where the party puts it; putting it in the 'plane of life' slot as the world's moon is a Bad Idea™, since it will bake the planet to death).

The dilemma is that bonding with Obliatas requires earning its favor. It wants to destroy the undead on Iratha Ket, which it sees as abominations. The sun is too mad and single-minded to realize that they are actually benevolent undead. It would seem at first brush that the party would have to decide between the utility of Obliatas, or the moral choice of saving Iratha Ket.

The party might, though, try to cure the deluded fixation of Obliatas, or simply to turn its ire against a more serious villain, the vampire dragon Doverspike on Wilanir (plane 35). If they guide the sun to that world and let it have its revenge against a true undead horror, it will quickly forget about Iratha Ket.

Though powerful in many ways, Obliatas cannot really hurt any non-undead creatures. It might be able to fly in front of the party's airship to conceal its approach on Egalitrix, but it cannot fight.

If somehow the party gets Obliatas to follow them to the battle with the Voice of Rot, the fey titan's Necrotic Aura and Timeless powers only apply for one round, after which a pulse of light from the wandering star sears the serpents flesh and keeps it from using those powers.

#18. Egalitrix, Fortress of the Golden Legion

Planar Trait: Fantastic grand industry will develop, driven by greed. This will not necessarily lead to evil, but it must be carefully balanced against to avoid dystopia.

The defenses of this plane are detailed in Flying Fortress (page 167).

Volcanic Overview

Before the Golden Legion conquered the world, it was a plane of vast steam and diesel technology, but the constant belching smoke choked nature and killed nearly everyone in the world. The last survivors were wealthy industrialists who watched the planet die from the lap of luxury, atop a volcano that provided an endless supply of power. Eventually the rest of the world crumbled away, leaving behind just this bastion of avarice and exploitation.

It of course was ideal for the Golden Legion to claim as its capital in the Gyre.



The fiery heart of the volcano continued to thrum with limitless heat, and the dripping underbelly of magma cooled into an inverted second mountain peak. Smoke plumes and cinders waft from both calderas. With the aid of the surviving industrialists and their obedient ambulatory machina, the legion expanded existing power plants that captured the geothermal energy. They constructed barracks and hangars along the circumference, girded it with armor, and adorned it with myriad magical fusils that can fire blasts of infernal energy. The iron and steel superstructure stretches nearly a half mile around the front of the volcano, while the sides and aft mount immense propellers spun by churning, smoky turbines.

The whole mountain flies at barely a mile per hour, but that's fast enough for it to avoid being pulled into the teeth of the Gyre.

The industrialists who were most loyal to the legion were transformed into horned devils. Others were gibbeted across the broad iron prow, and their bloodstains never cleaned.

Predicting Eruption

After seeing Egalitrix from afar, grant each PC a DC 25 Knowledge (nature check) to realize that the volcano produces a self-destructive amount of heat and magma. It looks like it should already have erupted, so somehow the machinery of the fortress must be siphoning away some of the energy.

#17. Iratha Ket, the Graveyard Revel

Planar Trait: Greater altruism. Everyone has natural aptitude for singing, dance, or some sort of musical instrument. A number of times per day equal to his or her Charisma modifier, while performing music a character can grant himself or an ally engaged in the same musical number a +2 bonus to a single attack roll, save, skill check, or ability check as a free action.

Unkillable Optimism

Centuries ago, a magical plague swept across a world, so vile that even the mages of the great crescent city of Iratha Ket could not cure it. It had infected everyone, and death was only a matter of weeks away. The ruler King Calcasieu, a man renowned for his soulful lyrics and effortless dances, realized that the world was doomed, but he refused to surrender hope.

In a ravishing and rakish duet, **King Calcasieu** and his **Queen Atchafalaya** captured the hearts of all their subjects. They decreed that all the young lovers should sleep, paired together in a gentle stasis where the disease could progress no farther. They would be the hope of the future, that some day their people might find a cure and create a new generation. The greater task fell to the older generation. They would be a sustaining song, keeping alive the magic and ceaselessly seeking a way to defeat the disease.

To fulfill this duty, however, they would have to give themselves over to undeath, persisting as skeletons so they would have no flesh that could carry disease. To ensure they would not lose sight of their precious mission, every month two lovers would be awoken, giving the mages another chance to find a cure, and giving the lovers an opportunity to remind the rest of their civilization of how brief and precious life is. Each new pair of lovers would receive a love song of their own. The city would celebrate their awakening, and they would be given all the luxuries the city could provide. If they could not be saved they would also become undead, but the spirit of their people would be refreshed.

Every month a new couple is awoken, and every day songs fill the streets of Iratha Ket, culminating in a parade that runs from the ever-expanding city graveyard (filled with tombstones but no bodies) to the palace, where the couple resides as honored guests of the king and queen. Skeletons in colorful clothes whirl and croon and dance and play instruments to celebrate that they have not yet fully perished.

And at the end of every month, the two lovers watch each other waste away and die.

PRONOUNCIATION GUIDE

King Calcasieu – KAL-kuh-shew. Imagine him as Michael Jackson late in life, distrusted by many, reculsive, and struggling between depression and the purest generous optimism.

Queen Atchafalaya – A-chuh-fuh-LIE-uh. Imagine her as Eartha Kitt at her cattiest.

Mourning King

Since his decree, King Calcasieu has seen over seven thousand loving couples come and go. The rest of the world crumbled away, and only the crescent remnant of Iratha Ket and its mighty river remains. The greatest wizards of an entire civilization have never found a way to stop the plague, and though tens of thousands of skeletal citizens endure, only a few hundred more couples survive in stasis. The king has fallen into a depression, fearing the ultimate death of his people.

Worse, the undead-hating sun Oblitas now assails the city with greater intensity. King Calcasieu's magic once kept the monster at bay, causing it to withdraw and 'set' occasionally. For the past year, though, Queen Atchafalaya has had to adjust her romantic duets to become solos, and the devouring light has managed to destroy many hundreds of the city's undead citizens. Those who remain are growing reluctant to sing the necessary songs to keep the stasis magic active, and the latest romantic couple is honestly having a pretty rough time because the singers keep missing their cues.

Rolling Out the Red Carpet

The party's arrival is celebrated by, of course, song! With seemingly perfect coordination, disparate groups of townsfolk throw miles of red carpet down to create a guide-path, then cajole the party through the city as they sing of the history of the plague, show off the headstone-filled graveyard, introduce the two current lovers **Pookie** and **Bunk** (still in the early stages of the disease), and pause outside the palace to look up at the black curtains drawn across the window of the king's chambers, before finally surging up the stairs where Queen Atchafalaya awaits.

The song ends, and the queen—her bony wrists jangling with cat-shaped red bracelets, her white skull dotted with black paint to give her a dubious smirk, her dress slinky and provocative even though she has no flesh anymore—invites them to dine with her and the still-living couple. She's not hungry, of course, but there is plenty of food—beans, corn tortillas, peppers, and cheese mostly—for guests. Plus enough tequila to last until the world is ground to dust.



The queen laments that her husband is sick, not in his flesh because he has none, but in his soul. It seems the lot of her people that they will fail to heal those they love. Moreover, without Calcasieu's aid, the angry star is slowly destroying their people, since not everyone can get indoors fast enough. The fishermen, especially, have had trouble since there's no cover on the water. To this, Bunk mentions that he's not really that big a fan of fish anyway. This draws attention to the fact that he hasn't actually eaten anything on his plate. Neither has Pookie.

The party should get a sense of the selflessness and determination of the people of Iratha Ket. Yes, they're dead, but they maintain a belief that the needs of the living are the priority. If they had to end their existence permanently to save the remaining sleepers, they'd do it gladly. They have a bit of fun with their bodies — popping off limbs for gags and such — but they're certainly not terrifying monsters. (The court jester, **Kisatchie**, has popularized his catch-phrase, "Wait, that's not my femur!")

Atchafalaya would like to help the party, but she worries that if they use her world's energy, the plague will spread to their world.

The Nature of the Plague

Will the party remember their adventures in public health from their visit to Ber in adventure six? The key to solving an epidemic like this is determining the cause, and if that's elusive, look for when or where it originated.

The actual cause is telepathic brain parasites crafted by the Gidim, who deployed them as a superweapon that was actually too strong. It killed the world too fast, leaving few minds to actually harvest.

The parasites are thoughtforms, and normally have no physical form, instead taking up residence in the thoughts of their hosts. They first altered the minds of their victims, keeping the infected mildly euphoric so they don't think anything is wrong. But meanwhile the parasites made the brain trigger destructive immune responses around the body, then slowly shut down control of autonomous functions. The victim would no longer feel hunger, and eventually their heart and lungs would stop operating.

Divinations reported that there was a parasite, but with no physical form, they were impossible to find in autopsies. Healing spells could not help when the victim had lost the will to live. The Iratha Ketians haven't quite developed psychotherapy, which would work if they tried it.

Of course, the PCs have experience with Gidim, so as soon as they realize what they're up against they know that 'thinking at' the parasites the right way can drive them out and make them corporeal. The trick is discovering that the Gidim are to blame.

Evidence of the Infection

If the PCs use divinations and ask specifically about Gidim, they should easily discover the truth. Otherwise, they need to put together clues.

The lack of physical injuries suggests magic, but normal efforts to detect magic show nothing. Effects that block compulsion or charm had a confusing result — the patient seemed to get sicker (this was due to withdrawal as the parasite no longer could make the patient ignore its pain; if the doctors had continued this treatment, the patients would actually have gotten better, but they assumed it was a dead end).

The healers have tried herbal medicines, prayers, trials of faith, bleeding, burning, various poisons, moving the victim to nearby planes (which always led to the destruction of many bodyguards because the neighborhood is very unfriendly), and even resurrection magic. The last option didn't work at first, but once they tried waiting a few months it was a temporary success, but the person got sick again within a month, even without other living people around to reinfest him. In any case, the city does not have enough spell components to resurrect all the people in stasis.

What about the origin of the plague? The royal physician **Opelousas** (who keeps a bottle of tequila inside his ribcage, which he insists gets him drunk despite his lack of metabolism) doesn't think about what happened so long ago, and he says the king took all the record books to his private quarters, and has just been dwelling in the past ever since. The party will have to sneak past the king's huge skeletal guards to reach his chambers, but he won't be hostile, just forlorn. He explains that the texts record how shortly before the plague sprung up there were many reports of people having strange dreams, like they were being watched from the stars. Many more saw swooping colors in the sky one night.

And what about all the singing? True, the king was a great musician, but people never spontaneously broke into musical numbers before the plague. Ever since it struck, though, people have felt somehow more connected to each other. They think this is just a natural selfless attitude, but it's amplified by the alterations made to everyone's minds by the parasites. When the nation as a whole shed their living flesh and became skeletons, they kept the same slightly unhinged mindset.

Healing the World

All it takes to cure the disease is the right method of thinking at the mental infection, and by teaching the survivors this skill they can inoculate anyone else who might be awoken. Of course, on this plane that grand salvation has to be accompanied with music. In fact, once the party realizes the true nature of the disease, the opening notes of a triumphant song begins to rise from around the city, and the PCs feel and urge to sing their good news. (They can resist, but that's not as fun.)

Queen Atchafalaya ends up taking their revelation about 'healthy thinking' and swirls it into a sympathetic song about the depression that has gripped the king, and she quickly awakens dozens more of the loving couples, then has them accompany her (physically and lyrically) as she professes her love once more to Calcasieu. Thousands of citizens of Iratha Ket are jangling their bones in jubilation when ominous light rises, and Oblatas begins to sear the undead.

The song pauses (though a really devoted violinist keeps playing a worried trill). People look to the skies, feeling cheated. Then the black curtain on the king's chamber is pulled aside, and the king leaps into the sun, spinning as he lands and raising a defiant voice. The people cheer, and the king sweeps past the PCs, asking them to join him as he sings that this news demands a celebration, and the best parties go deep into the night, so the sun should come back tomorrow. As if scolded, Oblatas retreats, and a massive carnival atmosphere grips the plane.





#16. Apo, the Unknown Disk

Planar Trait: Every minute there's a 1-in-20 chance of a tiny black orb similar to a sphere of annihilation appearing in any given area. A character that enters or starts its turn in the sphere's square must make a DC 20 Reflex save or take 30 damage.

Killing the Cat

This world was created by a god of trapsmithing in order to defeat epic adventurers. It succeeded, then fell into the Gyre. Now it appears as a twenty-mile-diameter hoop, its edge a hundred-foot-wide shelf of mortared bones. This surrounds a vast plain of segmented plates with complex repeating patterns that form a labyrinthine road, fifty feet wide, which weaves toward the center. It looks like there might be some puzzle to decode, but scattered around the plane's perimeter (so there's always at least one visible) are roughly-carved wooden signs that read "Warning: Invisible Lava."

(There is no invisible lava.)

If anyone spends more than five minutes on the surface, seven spots on the 'labyrinth' road begin to glow with red light. The nearest is right where the bone shelf touches the pattered floor. If someone tries entering the labyrinth there, the first spot stays red, but the rest change to orange, suggesting a path that would span miles and miles. Finding one's way to the second glowing spot without leaving the roadway requires a DC 20 Intelligence check; each attempt takes an hour.

Crossing the second glowing spot turns the remaining spots yellow; and so on through green, blue, and indigo. But then upon reaching the seventh spot, purple, which is only a half mile from the center of the plane, the deathtrap triggers. The plates of the patterned plain crack apart and release a blast of prismatic magical energy. All creatures on the plane are affected as if they had passed through a prismatic wall (DC 22).

If the creature survives all of that, it's suddenly standing over an open void, ten miles from the nearest solid ground. Without magic, it will fall to oblivion. Surviving the trap creates a bond with the plane.

#15. Gardboral, the Chimeric Maelstrom

Planar Trait: Elementals grow larger, and mundane phenomena can generate them.

The Stone of Ragnar

This world underwent a final epic battle between giants and normal men, and the giants won and were rewarded by ascending to the form of titanic storms. Now nothing persists here except immense elementals who want to destroy any interlopers. At best, one of the elementals might be goaded into attacking Egalitrix in order to take its treasure (see page 167).



#14. Ringes, the Barren Moor

Planar Trait: Creatures with Intelligence 3 or greater are driven to murderous violence.

The Maddening Cat

This barren moor appears to have no animal life more dangerous than crocodiles and leeches, but the architect of that world's demise still survives. **Ystis** was once the familiar of a plague wizard, and when his mistress was slain he consumed the woman's soul and took control of her power. He learned to emit from his body a disease of invisible parasites that would burrow into creatures' minds and drive them into a violent rage toward each other.

Though Ystis is a consummate lurker who never lets himself be seen, the wretched feline's dander leaves a trail of black wherever he prowls. Ages ago he commanded the last few zombies in the world to construct him a throne at the edge of the world, where he lazes in the light of Oblitas. When threatened he hides, circles his foes, and waits for his plague to drive them to kill each other.

Unlike Iratha Ket, the parasites here are real creatures and do respond to magic to cure diseases. See Appendix A (page 287) for Ystis' stats.

#12. Guay, the Grove of Dreams

Planar Trait: Dreams create demiplanes. While someone dreams, a small portal floats nearby them, and it is possible to enter these portals, explore the plane beyond, and interact with the dreamer's thoughts. Items in the dream can be plundered, which strip thoughts from the sleeper's mind. Likewise, ideas can be implanted. Sleeping with strangers becomes perilous.

The Loathed Muse

This world was a pleasure plane created by a god of artists as a gift to his beloved, a mortal painter. Trees of countless varieties seem to be perpetually lit by a setting sun, and every surface is unreal, its shape and texture either cloudy like watercolor or stiff and layered as if painted in oils.

The artist enjoyed her time here, but the god kept making excuses why she could not leave, so she painted a mural on the inside of her villa, showing the god as he slept, with a doorway beside him. When next the god slept, indeed this door appeared, and she stepped into her lover's dreams, discovering that he had killed everyone else who had ever seen her work, so that he alone could enjoy it. Still inside his dream, she painted another mural, this showing the god finding the artist dead by hanging. Then she left his dream and hid, and when the god awoke he was convinced the artist was dead. In despair he hung himself.

The foolish painter, though, thought she could paint a portal back home, but she was trapped. She eventually went mad and hung herself too, but not before desperately painting every surface she could: her home, boulders, tree trunks, and even the withered corpse of the god. A recurring motif is windows within windows, and beautiful women whose eyes are hidden by flowing hair desperately trying to smash their way free. Often it seems like the women are trapped inside the painting, trying to get out.



An Impossible Encounter

While exploring, a rival from the party's past confronts them. Ideally this should be someone who completely could not be here; if you don't have someone specific to the party, then **Leone Quitl** the Steelshaper works. The enemy brings up the weaknesses of one of the PCs and makes a prediction that someone will betray him, but as soon as anyone tries to retaliate, the whole group awakens in a clearing, not having realized they were asleep.

Every hour the party stays here they suffer a similar episode, with dreams providing glimpses into the real world, or of events on another plane in the Gyre. If they stay here six hours, they are addressed by the Voice of Rot, who slithers and crashes through the forest just out of line of sight. He says that he can see the deaths in their pasts that they most regret, and then he bursts from the treeline with incredible speed, devouring the PCs one by one.

When they awake from that nightmare, they're fully rested.

#9. Metarie, the Swamp of Sabotage

Planar Trait: Technology is disrupted. Each round that a firearm or other mechanical or technological device is used, there's a 50% chance it acts as if broken.

Worse than Bedbugs

Oily three-armed gremlins have infested an otherwise quite lovely swamp demiplane. This world consists of nested layers of marsh. Each layer has bits of boggy ground covered in tall grass separated murky ponds, all of it beneath a looming canopy of moss-draped trees. The gremlins scuttle through the forest, their too-wide eyes glowing in a slowly shifting order of green, and blue, and white. The other prominent creatures are newts the size of crocodiles, which are too curious for their own good.

The lower levels of the swamp are each twenty feet tall, with soggy ceilings instead of forest canopy. The roots of the trees above weave into columns that support each layer, and many of these columns have their trunks infested with carnivorous fireflies.

All told, thirty layers can be navigated, and could potentially serve as a dungeon site if you're desperate for a crawl. Otherwise, it's mostly just icky creatures dropping gears as breadcrumbs, trying to lure outsiders into a cottage whose doorway drops directly into a cauldron which the gremlins use to make stew.

Long, long ago Metarie was a nature preserve in a great plane-wide city whose people relied on innovative mechanical technology to keep their world alive even as they hollowed out its core. Carelessness led the people of that plane to ignore for too long the primitive three-armed gremlins, who out of jealousy sabotaged the machines that ran to the core. The world collapsed under its own weight, and only the gremlins survived, frolicking in the ruins of a culture they still instinctually resent.

Why Even Bother?

When the party first arrives they can hear a rumbling engine, similar to that of the Golden Legion's large airship, the *Aurum Treasure*, but closer to the hiss-churn of a steam boiler than the growl of diesel. Indeed, one of the legion's earlier vessels crashed here, and the gremlins have revved it up to lure the party into their domain. The ship is not on the top layer, however. Its crash punched a hole a hundred feet wide, which swamp water pours into. Down three layers it sits, its hold full of treasure, and its

pit fiend captain — **Kebez Pol** — still alive, locked inside the steam boiler after the gremlins rusted the hatch shut. The boiler still runs, and the heat cannot kill him.

Kebez Pol is insane from isolation, and doesn't have enough sense to realize if he's being tricked, so he'll gladly answer any question about the legion, in exchange for being freed from his oubliette. The ship is too far gone to repair, but its fusils could help strengthen the party's ship's arms.

Waiting for an Opportunity

The gremlins are patient and mean. If the party lands here, a handful of them sneak on board the party's ship (Perception DC 35), though they wait until the PCs are gone and only lesser crew are acting as look-outs. They stow away and wait for the highest stakes — likely the battle with the Voice of Rot, but possibly against the legion — before they sabotage the ship so it has to land or else will crash.

If the party doesn't look for the gremlins, they'll be at a great disadvantage against the fey titan.

#5. Bonilathe, the Storm Claw

Planar Trait: Storms spawn creatures, typically reptilian.

Stormclaws

The coastal flats of Bonilathe shudder with thunderstorms, as the sentient staff of a long dead weather mage tries madly to stop itself from being drawn into the Gyre's teeth. The staff is trying to create intelligent life by striking pools of primordial ooze with bolts of lightning, but so far the best it can do is conjure reptilian beasts of high animal cunning. They typically kill each other before they can do anything useful for the poor, desperate staff.

This plane is an excuse for you to seed a final magic item for the PCs, and to provide an excuse for there to be dinosaurs in whatever new world the party creates.

#2. Teykfa, the Ticking Pendulum

Planar Trait: People are more aware of the scale of time, and they can better weight long-term consequences. Time can be manipulated.

The Long Now

One of the first worlds with intelligent life in the multiverse saw its last sentient life end eons ago, but the plane did not enter the Gyre because of the steady ticking of Teykfa, a megastructure carved into the heart of a parched desert mountain. Crafted of rust-resistant metal alloys and perfectly balanced with dozens of redundant structures, the mechanism functions as a clock that keeps time on a geologic scale. Once vigilant stewards wound its counterweight, but even after they perished it took millions of years for the structure to run down. Soon it will tick its last.

This world is the party's last chance to rest before confronting the Voice of Rot. Fortunately, time flows quickly here, so if the party lands and spends a week preparing, only a day will have passed in the outside world.

Should the PCs desire to bond with this plane, they should adjust the rate the clock ticks before they leave, or else there might be unforeseen consequences. With this plane in the sky, magic that manipulates time becomes possible, albeit difficult.



Flying Fortress

Action. Montage.

A gold-adorned volcano fortress serves as the Golden Legion's base in the Gyre, and holds many prisoners, including the engineers who maintain a steampunk thopter mechanism that allows the entire plane to fly.

If the party wishes to rescue the monarch of the Unseen Court so they can bond with Av, or to bond with this plane and its potential for fabulous technology, they'll need to defeat the leader of the Golden Legion, His Celestial Eruption Paelyrion XVIII. The warlord resides in the legion Command (area 19) an opulently decorated corridor that runs between the outside slope of the volcano and its caldera.

To get there, though, the party must survive the defenses of an entire hellish citadel.

Likely Courses of Action

Killing Paelyrion XVIII isn't enough to defeat the Golden Legion since the force has a chain of command, but the throne room/command center has controls that can destroy the fortress.

The trick is getting there.

As a vehicle Egalitrix is too slow and cumbersome to avoid the party's approach, but it has immense firepower. Also, the party should be careful of being too clever, because the legion is masterful at teleportation magic.

An aerial approach likely gets spotted, provoking a dogfight detailed in *Battle in the Sky*. The party might land and treat the fortress as a dungeon crawl, in which case we present various encounters for combat, stealth, and sabotage in *Legion Interior*. When they reach the command throne room, Paelyrion XVIII awaits in *Celestial Eruption*.





Or the party could think outside the box and bring along asteroids from Urim, then hurl them at the fortress from half a mile away to kill half the legion and cause chaos, then teleport in a fire-proof invisible saboteur to overload the caldera heat regulators, triggering the only two-sided volcanic eruption they'll ever have the pleasure of seeing.

A weakness that might be quickly apparent is that the designers were still thinking two-dimensionally and assumed the ship needed only offense, not defense, since the fortress has no major weapons mounted below its middle section. While a ship approaching from below would take fire from smaller fusils that could be adjusted downward, it could reach the fortress largely unmolested.

Unseen Monarch

You can have the monarch of the Unseen Court kept wherever you like. It hasn't been long enough for him or her to become a full loyal slave of the legion, so Paelyrion wouldn't keep the monarch as a trophy in his throne room. But you might have the monarch as a prisoner in a golden cage in one of the treasuries inside the fortress, or just have him or her show up as a low-ranking legionnaire, still retaining some of his or her original form but growing horns through a golden veil that covers his or her face.

If you forget about the monarch and the party leaves without rescuing him or her, don't worry, Rock Rackus can save the day.

TELEPORTATION REDIRECTION

Any creature that teleports onto Egalitrix from a distance of more than 60 feet has his arrival noted by the lord of the legion, His Celestial Eruption Paelyrion XVIII. The creature senses some pressure against his arrival and must make a DC 20 Will save. If it fails, the creature's arrival is delayed by one round, and instead of where it intended to arrive, it appears in a spot of Paelyrion chooses anywhere in the fortress. Each creature redirected this way ends up in the same location. Typically Paelyrion chooses the magma reservoir (area 15), where they fall into molten rock. (See lava dangers in the *PATHFINDER RPG CORE RULEBOOK*.)

NARRATIVE, NOT MECHANICAL NAVALRY

If the party tries to fly straight at Egalitrix, instead of making attack rolls and command checks you can just narrate the barrage of fusils. In a direct approach with no tricks, the party's ship gets crippled and set on fire at Long range, at which point six windsiffs swoop in and circle at close range, blasting the ship to try to knock it out of the sky. This should prompt the PCs to leap from ship to ship to take out their enemies and find a new vessel.

With a cleverer or sneakier party, their ship might take some damage, get holes smashed in its hull, and suffer a fire, which slows it enough for one wave of windsiffs to close in, but once they win the fight they'll be able to fly to Legion Command.

Battle in the Sky

Action. Real-Time.

Egalitrix fusils and windsiffs lash out as the party approaches.

Egalitrix is a mountain in the sky, and thus is visible from over sixty miles away. The party of course has magic, so they might try to sneak and avoid a confrontation altogether, or they could end up flying in with the Caeloon monastery, an elemental titan from Gardbora, and Doverspike the vampiric dragon as wingmen.

Unless the party finds a way to approach with stealth, their airship would be spotted from miles out, at which point the legion would prepare its swarm of windsiffs. Six that are already on alert would launch first, hoping to time their advance so they could close to attack and board right as the party comes within range of the fortress's weapons. After those first skiffs depart, more are scrambled, and so once aerial combat begins, another four windsiffs arrive each naval round.

Even if they find some way to arrive unseen, once they get within 500 feet various *true seeing* wards will detect them, and the alert squadron of windsiffs will launch and be ready to engage right as the party is closing within landing distance. The largest fusils won't be able to hit them, but point defenses will.

Stages in Combat

This battle is roughly divided into stages, each about 500 feet across. The basic stages you'll need to track are the prow, the port, the starboard, the aft, the peak, and the under-peak. Also at play are two stages in each direction outward, representing the sky through which the party approaches. It will typically take a ship one naval turn (one minute) to move across one 500-foot stage, but the swarm of legion windsiffs will try to slow them so they'll take more fire from the fortress's weapon batteries.

Incoming Fire

The fortress has ten weapon batteries:

- ♦ **Brand Towers.** These only fire forward, but to extreme range.
- ♦ **3 Heavy Fusils.** One battery faces forward, another port, another starboard. They can strike at long and medium range.
- ♦ **6 Point Defenses.** One battery each faces forward, port, starboard, aft, up to defend Legion Command, and down under the superstructure. They can strike at medium and close range.

The party will need to cross from extreme range (over 1000 feet away), to long range (between 500 and 1000 feet), to medium range (within 500 feet), and then to close range (within 25 feet). Each naval turn that the party's ship is in a stage that a weapon can target it, that weapon will fire. That's a lot of attacks, so the party needs five or six aces up their sleeves if they want to try a frontal assault.

Counter attacking is valid, and each battery has its own defenses. Due to their size, a single strike that hits a battery will just impose a -5 penalty to further attacks by that battery. A second strike disables the battery, and a third creates a crowd-pleasing explosion that kills all the gunnery crew.

**Brand Towers**

(Extreme, Long, Medium, and Close; prow only)

Two metal horns glow and spurt a thousand foot stream of magma through the sky. Where it strikes it weaves and burns a brand in the shape of a hellish horned face in profile, like the head of a coin.

Attack: +15 at extreme range, +20 at long, +25 at medium, +15 at close. An attack that misses at close range instead strikes the vessel's superstructure.

Damage: One strike, plus an additional strike for every 5 points the attack roll beats the ship's defense. Each strike hits a different place, but instead of causing damage it inflicts the *burning* condition and deals 2d6 fire damage to each creature in that area.

Burning: At the end of this round and each naval round thereafter, for each component that is burning, the captain makes a saving throw (d20 + Charisma modifier). On a 20 or higher, the fire is put out. A 10 or higher prevents any damage. A 5 to 9 deals a strike to the component. A 4 or less has the fire spread to an adjacent location.

Engineers can use their naval action and make an Intelligence check (DC 20) to extinguish a fire, assuming he has crew available equal to the ship's Minimum Crew (who won't count toward full complement for the round). Some magic might also work, or just provide a bonus to the save.

Defense 30; Crew 5**Heavy Fusils**

(Long and Medium; one each forward, port, or starboard)

Nine immense fusils cover each of the forward, port, and starboard approaches. They fire sizzling bolts that arc like black comets.

Attack: +20 at long, +25 at medium.

Damage: One strike, plus an additional strike for every 5 points the attack roll beats the ship's defense. Each strike hits a different place.

Defense 30; Crew 300**Point Defenses**

(Medium and Close; one each in all directions)

Dozens of smaller fusils, some handheld, fire bolts of golden arcane energy. They screech like shearing metal, then explode on impact.

Attack: +20 at medium, +25 at close.

Damage: One strike, plus an additional strike for every 5 points the attack roll beats the ship's defense. Each strike hits a different place.

Defense 20; Crew 300**Aft Exhaust Cloud**

Egalitrix's engines belch not just smoke and steam, but infernal toxic air that is magically evil. Approaching from behind is clever but perilous. The ship needs to maneuver behind the fortress at an extreme distance and stay hidden by the smoke cloud, then actually enter the cloud and pass through it for about three minutes. They're magically detected at Medium range, and when they emerge from the cloud directly above the aft, the first six windskiffs will be scrambled to attack.

Each minute the party's ship is in the smoke cloud, each character who breathes in the smoke must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage.

From Below or Above

Approaching from below will still get the party spotted, so they'll have to deal with waves of windskiffs, plus point defenses at Medium and Close range. Then they could board some lower section of the superstructure and move through the fortress on foot, or pop up to the upper level.

Dropping in from above works much the same, except it allows immediate access to the Legion Command, whose point defenses probably can't do much before the party rushes the throne room.

Windskiff Skirmish

The legion's flagship *Aurum Treasure* was either destroyed by the party's actions at Av, or damaged and reclaimed by Rock Rackus. However, entire squadrons of smaller and nimbler windskiffs remain. The legion's windskiffs are individually weak and fragile, so this gives the PCs a chance to play the indomitable dreadnought, but if they aren't proactive the party might be swarmed and destroyed. Of course, then they can just jump between legion ships until they're on whichever one happens to still be flying.

Golden Legion Goonswarm .Alert Force (Level 22)

+ 6 infernal windskiffs

**Goonswarm .Alert Crew (6 ships, each Level 17)**

+ 1 Golden Legion horned devil
+ 1 Golden Legionnaire company

Golden Legion Goonswarm Reinforcements (Level 25)

+ 18 infernal windskiffs

Goonswarm Reinforcement Crew (18 ships, each Level 18)

+ 2 Golden Legionnaire elite stars
+ 1 golden steam golem





Tactics

The legionnaires have been briefed about the party's power, and they know better than to get into close combat. The ships are likely too small to ram the party's ship to any effect, and they don't attempt to board. But if the party manages to get close enough to start attacking the infernal crews directly, the rest of the swarm clusters around the party's vessel, then join the mass melee. If they can, they try to shove or drag enemies overboard and hurl them into the depths of space.

We assume an initial six windskiffs attack. If the party gets spotted on their approach, up to five waves of four more windskiffs arrive each naval round thereafter. However, once the party destroys or cripples 18 ships, the remaining vessels peel off, deeming the engagement too costly.

Flying Allies

A few dozen 15th level monks might help, as might a vampiric dragon, a titanic elemental, or a country-sized turtle.

Kinava Monks of Caeloon

Calily and the monks of the Kinava monastery can fold the building into a gargantuan flying vessel which uses its wide wings (in the building sense) as literal wings.

Unfortunately, because it's made of paper, it is flammable and very vulnerable to the legion's weapons. If the party has some way to minimize the threat of fire (like using a spell to create a rainstorm in space, or B.S.ing some epic magic to use the energy of Etheax to make it so only intentional fires burn here), then the monks provide air support.

You can handwave a bit and have them do clever things to take out a few incoming windskiffs and maybe block one strike per round. The monastery is probably larger than the party's ship, so it can fly ahead fully unfolded to make them harder to see, and when fusil shots come streaking in the monks can rapidly fold in whole sections to dodge those attacks.

Another trick is for the monastery, which has wide open 'courtyards,' is to descend like a titanic hawk and maneuver so it surrounds a windskiff or two, then fold the whole courtyard away in order to tuck those ships into an extradimensional space where they can do no harm, or where monks can be gang up on the crew.

Doverspike the Worldslayer

The vampiric dragon can transform into mist and conjure fog banks a quarter mile across, big enough to spare the party from fusil fire as they approach, and to cause the windskiffs that do arrive to be uncoordinated and scattered. As a combatant he remains hidden and only strikes when his target has no nearby allies who might retaliate. If he has a chance, he'll just incinerate entire companies of legionnaires, their fire resistance useless against his life-draining breath. This has the effect of taking out one windskiff in the fog bank each naval round.

Doverspike is fascinated by the possibility of treasure that rivals his own hoard, which after all was claimed from a world whose entire population had died. If not kept on a short leash, once he reaches the fortress he is drawn to the brand towers, glides up one in mist form, and manages to take out most of the defenders before one horned devil triggers a detonation that consumes the whole tower — and Doverspike — in an explosion of magma.

Titan of Gardboral

If such a titan can be goaded to target Egalitrix, it's best just to let it cause havoc and move in during the confusion. The chimeric elemental can cripple one or two weapon batteries as it closes in, but then it falls beneath the unified onslaught of a thousand legionnaires.

Bhoior, the Walking Whisper

A spirit medium could convince the undead turtle to go where he wants it. The legion really can do nothing to hurt something this big, but the turtle is so slow all it will really accomplish is letting the PCs directly board the flying fortress without an aerial fight. Afterward it can bite one of the wings off, which is spectacular but not particularly useful against Paelyrion XVIII.

Legion Interior

Action. Montage.

This is basically your last chance for a dungeon crawl in this campaign.

Here's a general overview of what the party runs into in each area of the fortress. Forces move somewhat in response to the party's actions, and whenever the party encounters a group with an erinyes, it will use *report and reinforce* to teleport away to another location that has erinyes. One of the erinyes in that location will rally nearby units, and five rounds later will open a new portal leading back to the original battle.

We don't expect the party to kill the Golden Legion to the last devil, so we want the party to feel harried and outnumbered. It should be clear that if they try to take on the whole legion they'll probably be worn down, not allowed to rest, and eventually killed. If they try to teleport away Paelyrion will redirect them to the magma reservoir, hoping to incinerate them. It's certainly possible to sneak past the legion, or rush through less-occupied areas in a mad dash to the throne room.

Then again, the party is 20th level. If they want to try to kill a whole legion, and you think you'll enjoy it, let them.

Total Legion Forces at Egalitrix

- + Paelyrion XVIII
- + 2 Golden Legion pit fiends
- + 34 Golden Legion horned devils
- + 69 Golden Legion erinyes
- + 4 Golden Legion glabrezu
- + 180 Golden Legionnaire companies (4500 devils in total)
- + 60 Golden Legion elite stars (300 elite devils)
- + 30 Golden Legion steam golems
- + 12 Enslaved Suplicants of Elofasp
- + 4 Enslaved Elofasp ravants
- + Hundreds of non-combatant slaves





Layout and Defenses

Each 'deck section' on the map is thirty feet high, though they might be divided into shorter decks not individually shown. The total mapped area is about a thousand feet long in total. The forces typically found in each area are listed first, then a description.

1. Brand Tower. *3 horned devils, 2 erinyes, and 2 glabrezu per tower.*

These two forward towers jut like horns from the prow of the fortress ship. The tips of each are clad in layers of hellish sigils and are fed by an arcane pipeline of magma, which charges them with destructive power. At the command of a legion warmage, each brand can unleash a stream of magma that arcs a thousand feet or more.

2. Elite Officer Barracks. *10 horned devils and 8 erinyes per tower.*

The highest ranking members of the legion, who are possessed with some modicum of free will, lodge here, though their amenities amount merely to personal beds, rather than the cramped floorspace and bunks where lesser legionnaires sleep. Small suites are available for crafting and enchanting.

3. Slave, Servants, and Supplies.

Those who serve the elite officers reside in torturous confinement here.

4. Alert Barracks. *2 elite stars and 2 companies per tower.*

The bottom level of each of the two towers has both quarters and a sparring gym filled with all manner of spiked obstacles.

5. Prow Treasury. *3 enslaved supplicants of Elofasp and 2 elite stars*

The legion literally derives power from wealth, and all told it owns gold sufficient for multiple dragon's hoards. This prow treasury has golden statuary and art objects worth over 2 million gold pieces, which helps charge the weapons in the brand towers. Destroying that treasure would deactivate those weapons.

6. Forward Fusils. *8 steam golems, 16 companies, 8 erinyes, 2 horned devils*

A bank of eight turret-mounted arcane fusils, each over a hundred feet long, loom along the prow. Hundreds of legionnaires are necessary to load and aim these colossal weapons, even with the assistance of twenty-foot-tall golden constructs. Scores of smaller fusils array the perimeter, allowing for more precision defense. Each fusil fires blasts of arcane force or hellfire.

7. Armory. *4 companies, 2 elite stars, 2 enslaved supplicants of Elofasp*

This holds personal weapons, as well as components to repair the fusils and enchanted crystals that store explosive energy.

8. Flight Deck. *6 companies, 6 erinyes, 4 steam golems, 1 elite star*

The surface of the metal superstructure has a half-dozen windskiffs secured and ready to launch with just a few minute's notice. Each skiff carries a company of legionnaires, commanded by an erinyes. Thick mechanical hatches open to permit access to the hangar below.

9. Airship Hangar. *7 enslaved supplicants, 1 enslaved ravan*

Twenty more windskiffs are kept stored here, only lightly guarded. However, Elofasp warbeasts lurk in the shadows, and will attack intruders.

The following areas are mirrored, with equivalent locations on both the port and starboard side of the fortress.

10. Mechanics Shop. *4 companies, 1 erinyes*

Slaves who possess skills at crafts might be spared joining the legion if they obediently serve to repair the fortress's machinery and warships. The choking black smoke here cuts visibility to less than twenty feet, and life expectancy to less than twenty years.

11. Broadside Gundeck. *9 steam golems, 18 companies, 9 erinyes, 2 horned devils*

Nine more immense fusils, like the ones in section 6, aim out across the port wing, and likewise the starboard. Hundreds more legionnaires operate them.

12. Secondary Armory. *2 companies, 1 elite star*

The legion has never had to face an assault; it has always been the aggressor, so the broadside weapons are comparably weak and under-maintained.

13. Galley and Ritual Chambers.

Food, kitchens, and very minimalist galleys serve the crew here. The spaces double as ritual chambers, and so every surface is adorned with binding or channeling sigils. The horned devils will occasionally lead hundreds of legionnaires in mass chants to focus divination or defensive spells.

14. Engine Room. *5 elite stars, 10 companies, 2 erinyes*

Each wing contains a huge turbine, fueled by magmatic energy, which spins propellers at the wingtip and along the aft of the ship. These components are heavily armored, and in any event their size makes them difficult to sabotage. Nevertheless, they require a ton of men to operate and maintain.

15. Magma Reservoir. *2 companies, 1 enslaved ravan, 1 succubus*

The underbelly of the superstructure is filled with magma, the heat from which powers the engines. A long-neglected eldritch machine sits at the side of the reservoir, its press stamp and sacrificial blood siphon designed to channel human suffering into molten stone to create the volatile ammunition the fortress uses.

16. Primary Barracks. *12 elite stars, 34 companies*

Over a thousand legionnaires reside in these cramped quarters, circulating as needed to man their various posts.

17. Treasury. *1 horned devil, 2 erinyes, 5 elite stars, 10 companies, 4 enslaved supplicants*

The greater wealth of the legion is split along the two flanks of the vessel, and each of these chambers has wealth worth over twenty million gold pieces. Stacked ingots rise to the ceiling. Currently it's under renovation as legion wizards try to figure out how to make gold floors and columns strong enough to be load-bearing.

18. Forge. *4 companies, 1 erinyes*

Here are crafted larger components for expanding the fortress or building new warships.

19. Legion Command. *Paelyrion XVIII, enslaved master Chyak, 2 pit fiends, 1 enslaved ravan, 2 elite stars*

A winding staircase weaves from the flight deck up to this comparably small throne room. The chamber runs from the edge of the volcanic caldera to a forward overlook. Paelyrion XVIII directs the legion from here, his commands carried to and fro by erinyes messengers. This chamber doesn't actually have direct control over the fortress or its weapons, but it does have machinery to regulate the heat of the caldera. Much as at the climax of adventure two, *The Dying Skyseer*, disrupting this system can cause the entire mountain to explode.



Metal and Gears

There are five main ways to sabotage the fortress.

First, each **engine room** has diesel engines and steam turbines which would require hours to dismantle or detonate, and even mighty magic would need minutes to get the job done, all while reinforcements swarm in. However, a DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) check can deduce how the machinery is controlled, and a DC 35 Disable Device check can change the pitch, yaw, and roll of the fortress, then damage the mechanism enough that it will take hours to repair. In the meanwhile, the PCs could leave the fortress tilted so its main weapons cannot bear on the PCs as they approach, or cause it to slowly steer toward the stormy outer edge of the Gyre nebula.

Unlike airships which can 'sink' into the void below the Gyre, Egalitrix is a plane and so will float even if the engines are destroyed.

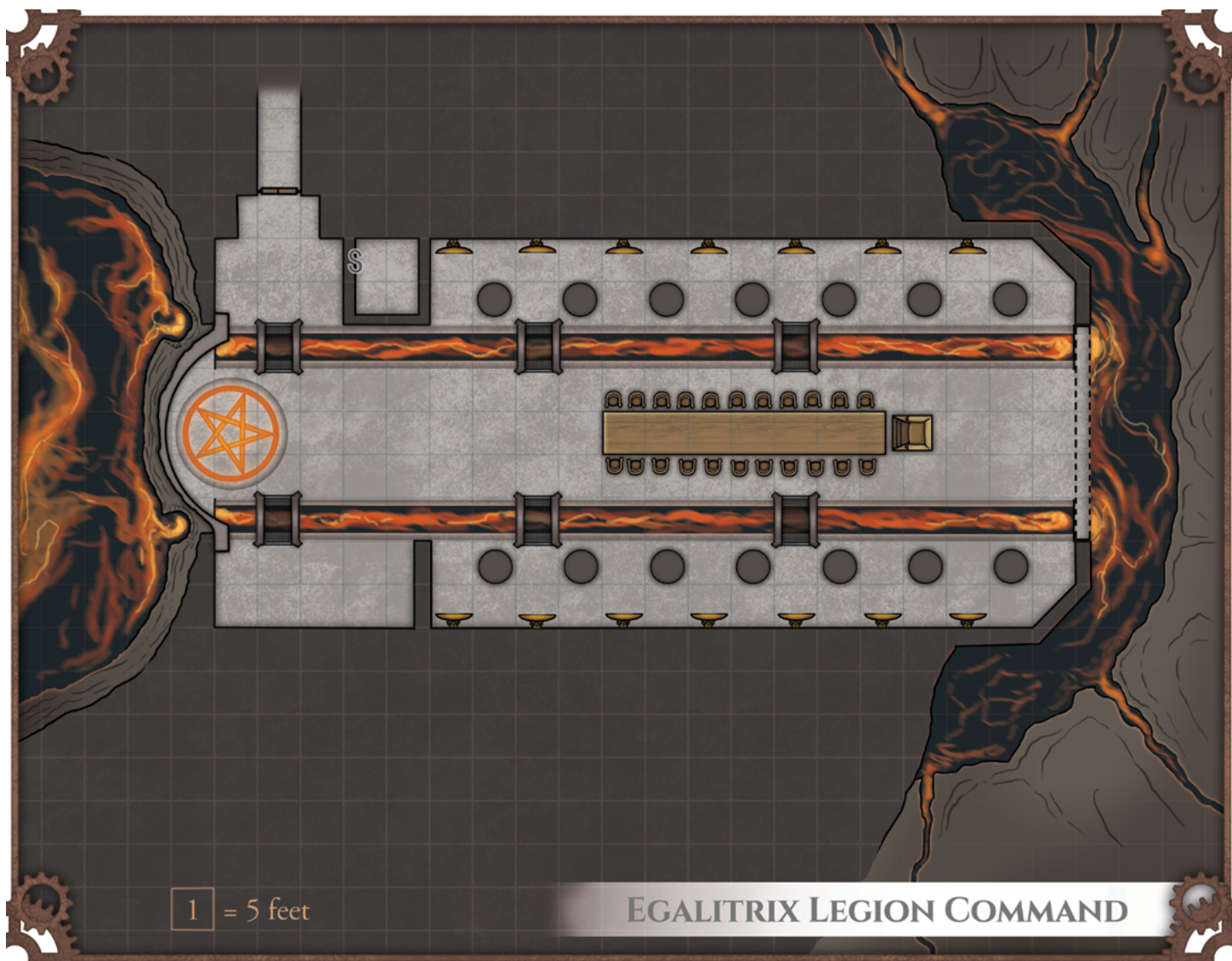
Second, any of the three **armories** (prow, port, and starboard) are filled with explosive crystals that can be detonated. The legion has never come under attack, so their safety here is quite lax, and a single fire or lightning effect that deals at least 40 damage will set off a cascade of explosions, and

within a minute the whole armory will explode, dealing 100 damage to everyone in the area and damaging each component adjacent to it.

Third, the **gundecks** can be similarly detonated, but they have less ammunition lying around, so it requires an attack that does 60 damage, and the explosion only does 50 damage to those caught in it. It also damages adjacent components.

Fourth, the **magma reservoir** can be drained by huge relief valves (Disable Device DC 35 to figure out the proper method) or by dealing 2 strikes with a naval weapon. This causes lava to pour out the bottom of the fortress, and saps the engines and brand towers of their power.

Fifth, the three **treasuries** (prow, port, and starboard) literally grant the greed-fueled legion its power. Damaging one of these chambers (such as by detonating a gundeck, striking it with a naval weapon, or ramming it with a giant turtle) imposes a -2 penalty to the AC, attack rolls and saves of all legionnaire companies and elite stars. A second strike destroys the treasure, causing it to slag and pour out of holes in the side of the fortress. Each strike increases the penalty, to a maximum of -12 for six strikes destroying all three treasuries.



Celestial Eruption

Action. Tactical. Level 32.

Intruders to the throne room of General Paelyrion XVIII are destroyed with well-trained efficiency. And with piles of gold.

The throne room of Legion Command is dominated by a long table reminiscent of a real-world corporate board room. Twin rivers of lava, bridged by six iron grates, run through channels down the length of the room, fed by the caldera and pouring into a pool on the face of the mountain. An open window looks out this lava pool, and beyond to the brand towers and whatever poor spot the legion decides to attack.

The table seats twenty-four, reserved for the pit fiends and a mix of horned devils and erinyes, but now most of the seats are empty. A golden mound of machinery and chains form the throne of Paelyrion, which can swivel to face any direction. Columns flank the central table, and the shadowy edges of the room are lined with full-length mirrors of polished gold. These are *mirrors of opposition*, similar to the one that might be found on a Mavisha island.

The pentagram next to the caldera is a localized teleportation circle which anyone can activate by stepping into it and thinking of any location in the fortress.

A staircase from the flight deck weaves up the mountain, then heads into a tunnel that leads to the throne room's main entrance. A hidden room accessed by a secret door (Perception DC 35 to notice it amid the golden decorations) houses a pet ravant, trained to exit and attack intruders at the sound of battle.

Legion Command Defense

- ♦ General Paelyrion XVIII
- ♦ Enslaved master Chyak
- ♦ 2 Golden Legion pit fiends
- ♦ 1 Golden Legion enslaved ravant
- ♦ 2 Golden Legion elite stars



is not important, only the treasure it yields. While evil, he sees no need to destroy those who are no threat, but anyone who jeopardizes his treasure is an enemy who cannot be spared.

Ages ago, Paelyrion was an advisor to Egal the Shimmering, lord of the Golden Legion. He was tasked with conquering a young world with rich resources, which was being contested by numerous forces from across the planes. Somehow a native civilization of orcs managed to enact a ritual that cut off the plane he was mustering on from the rest of the multiverse, and he and a thousand legionnaires became stranded in the Gyre.

Paelyrion is immortal, and he learned long ago that so is gold. He intends to escape the Gyre somehow, but until then he might as well acquire as much gold as possible for himself. Like his master Egal, the conquest

Businesslike Battle

General Paelyrion XVIII is not a talker. The moment he spots the party, he and his advisors attack using well-drilled tactics. Paelyrion expects attention to be focused on him, and his *fire* shield punishes any foe who engages him in melee.

If he can catch at least two foes he prefers crushing them under gold with avalanche of gold, and he saves fireball and fire storm for when it won't hit any of his allies (they're not immune to the unholy damage portion of his abilities). He enjoys using mass charm monster and commanding those who succumb to peer into one of the mirrors of opposition, because the greatest victory his side can achieve is to turn an enemy into a loyal slave.

Speaking of slaves, Paelyrion is attended by master Chyak San-Cho, former leader of the monks of the Kinava monastery on Caeloon. Now wrapped in golden chains, Chyak is a trophy and whipping boy for the general, and for the first few rounds of combat Paelyrion even forgets that he's around. Then he realizes he's not been using all his resources, and he sends the monk into battle. If the party has Calily with them Chyak will not attack her or anyone near her, and he visibly struggles with the chains.

Meanwhile, the two pit fiends attempt to summon a Golden Legionnaire company if there's room. They assault the party with melee attacks and spell-like abilities. The elite stars of legionnaires will try to grab foes and drag them beside the mirrors of opposition. And the ravant is just a savage monster, loyal to Paelyrion to the point that it will provoke opportunity attacks to get by his side.



Mirrors of Opposition

Similar to what was set up in the final vault of the Crypta Hereticarum (see adventure four, *Always on Time*), golden mirrors line the wall. Any creature that is adjacent to the mirror sees his reflection smiling evilly. If he is still adjacent to the mirror at the end of his next turn, he must attempt a DC 22 Will save. If it fails, the creature's soul is trapped in the mirror and it becomes evil and loyal to the Golden Legion. In either case, the mirror darkens and cannot be used again for one day. Members of the Golden Legion are immune to the mirror's effects.

The mirror can hold only one soul, but a ritual known to the Golden Legion can extract and consume the soul without harming the mirror, leaving the victim permanently turned. *Break enchantment* spells performed with both the mirror and the victim present can restore the soul and return the creature to its former self. Dealing damage to the mirror deals an equal amount of hit point damage to the creature whose soul is trapped in it. Once that creature is reduced below 0 hit points, the mirror can easily be destroyed. This frees the trapped soul.

Aftermath

When Paelyrion falls below 0 hit points, he survives long enough to try to stagger into lava. He clutches his gold chains and shouts that they'll never take it from him, right before he collapses and dies. If somehow they can take Paelyrion alive, he'll try to bargain for his life, offering to free anyone in the legion they want as long as he gets to keep the fortress and all its golden treasure.

Master Chyak can be freed with the proper magic to remove the curse of the golden chains, which would earn the undying loyalty of the Kinava monks. Even if the party has to kill him, though, they will be able to bond with Caeloon because they put the honored man to rest.

About two minutes after the battle begins, erinyes will teleport in as reinforcements. A few minutes later other devils start arriving. Before then, the party would be advised to either flee or find a way to give the legion something else to worry about.



Unintentional Self-Destruct Sequence

His Celestial Eruption General Paelyrion XVIII's throne has controls that can adjust the flow of magma from the caldera to the rest of the fortress. This was installed as a safeguard in the event saboteurs or traitors tried to wrest control of Egalitrix from him. He would be able to cut off power to the engines or flood certain sections (areas 13 and 16, the galley and barracks) with magma to crush resistance.

He's never had to use this function. In fact, he's forgotten all about it.

If the PCs failed their Knowledge (nature) checks (DC 25) when they first saw Egalitrix (see Predicting Eruption, page 163), let them attempt it again now that they're here to realize that the volcano isn't stable. If that heat weren't being siphoned off, such as by the engines, fusils, and brand, it would rapidly build up and cause the volcano to erupt. A DC 35 Disable Device check as a standard action can set the controls on the throne toward such a calamity, and a second check (DC 35) can sabotage them so the process cannot be reversed.

After the controls are triggered, the whole mountain rumbles. One round later lava begins to spit and bubble in the caldera at the back end of Legion Command. Each round thereafter the lava wells up and spreads 3 squares up the length of the chamber. Eventually lava fills the chamber and begins to roll down the side of the mountain, and one round later the volcano begins to erupt in earnest. In a matter of minutes every living thing that cannot escape Egalitrix will either be incinerated or fatally trapped in searing basalt.

It takes a day for the lava to cool enough to return, at which point the party could bond to the plane if they so desired.

ACT THREE: Blank and Pitiless

When the party is ready, the Voice of Rot is waiting at Reida, the plane closest to the teeth of the Gyre.

The Stage of History

Exploration. Montage.

The plane of Reida, trapped within the coils of the Voice of Rot, contains all the history of the party's homeworld.

Beyond Teykfa floats a field of cracked debris, the celestial backwash of grinding teeth at the center of the Gyre. The thunder of stone crushing against stone resounds from every direction, and what clear paths there are don't last long. Filtering through the rubble comes a pale glow from the last life of ancient worlds being snuffed, and something glints silver just at the precipice of annihilation.

As they fly through the miles-wide debris field and near the shining silver ring of Reida, the edges of the nebula to either side grow closer and closer, their misty thunderheads occasionally flickering with lightning. By the time they're clearing the drifting stones, the walls of the universe are only a thousand feet apart, and they narrow rapidly. What from a distance appeared as placid patterns in clouds here are visible as tight bands of roaring wind that carry shredded shards of stone toward the ultimate nexus of the Gyre. There the two halves of the geartooth nebula crash into each other, creating a sucking vortex too bright to look at.

Emerging from the asteroids, it takes a moment for the PCs' eyes to adjust, and then they see floating just three hundred feet off their starboard bow is Reida. Though once a vast world thousands of miles in diameter, in the Gyre Reida has shrunk to only a few hundred feet across, missing a segment some fifty feet wide. The reflection of the Gyre's light off the ring is like a mirror in the sun, but something immense shifts and slithers along the plane's shadowed side.

Powerful Gyre winds begin to drag the party's ship toward oblivion, and the vessel doesn't have enough power to resist for long. Somehow Reida is motionless, resisting the hunger of the Gyre, but for the party the only choice now is whether to meet the Voice of Rot where he waits, or to give up and let themselves be sucked away and ground to starstuff.

Falling into a Black Hole

The Voice of Rot has wrapped himself around the plane, keeping mostly to the shadowed side facing away from the Gyre's teeth. The intense wind creates the effect of normal gravity, with 'down' being toward the Gyre teeth. Anything 'above' Reida is relatively safe, but should anyone fall off the edge of the plane they'll plummet toward their deaths. The teeth of the Gyre are miles away, so there remains the slightest chance of rescue, such as by long-range teleportation, but considering that solid ground on Reida is only 30 feet wide, the party would be wise to mind their footing.

If a PC does fall into the Gyre, he can still transfer his consciousness back to his other self in the real world, but that's useless if the Voice of Rot wins and kills the world.



Honored Foes

The Voice of Rot has a brief welcome as the party flies in.

"Five ages have I glimpsed, my honored foes. Lo from the Golden Dawn, to First Crown, from the High Demonocracy, through the Malicious Victory, and now to the Obscuring Steam. Long did I await the end of this, a beautiful and dying world. I ask that you challenge me, that I may smother the last high hope. If it be yours, then I will kill and you shall rot. If it be mine, you will return home and I shall despair. Either way, I shall be appeased."

You can give the party time to trade words with the titan, but they need to land soon, and during the battle the Voice of Rot will only speak to his own grandeur and how the world's death shall let him ascend to godhood. He has little desire to talk to the PCs, but something sufficiently dramatic will make him pay attention, causing him for at least one round not to use *sussurus of decay*.

Landing

First, though, they need to survive the landing. If the party never went to Metarie (plane 9), they can reach Reida safely, though the ship and crew are still at risk from the Voice of Rot. The ship can actually remain airborne as long as it stays within 30 feet of Reida, because of the pocket of stability it creates. Straying beyond that causes the ship to shudder in the tidal forces of the Gyre, equivalent to heavy chop that might capsize the vessel.

If there are gremlins on board, though, the vessel's levitationals start to fail as soon as the ship clears the debris field and comes within view of Reida. Winds buffet the ship and chunks of debris strike it all about, making navigation unsteady. The captain needs to decide where to try to set down, then make a Command check (d20 + Int, Wis, or Cha modifier).

The party approaches from about the 7 o'clock angle, and the Voice of Rot stretches from around 2 o'clock (tail) to 6 o'clock (head). Landing directly on either side of the gap requires a DC 20 check. Landing around 11 o'clock or 4 o'clock is a DC 25 check, and making it all the way to 1 or 2 o'clock on the opposite side of the gap is DC 30. A navigator can help with these checks.

On a success, the ship soft-lands and lists slightly, but it remains solidly on the surface of the plane. Failure means the ship skids and won't stop. The party and their crew have a round to leap off the ship and onto Reida before the ship careens into the abyss. Failure by 5 or more means the ship is short, and it crashes into the edge of the ring. The vessel abruptly cracks from the impact, and everyone must make a DC 26 Reflex save or be knocked prone. Thereafter they have one round to make it off the ship before it falls away.

The Rough Beast

Action. Tactical. Level 34.

The Voice of Rot has existed for the entire life of the world, and he must be battled across the ages.

In adventure nine, *The Last Starry Sky*, the party briefly faced off against the Voice of Rot, so they'll have an idea of his powers. More importantly, you'll have an idea of how the party managed against the threat of the fey titan. Since every 20th-level party is dramatically different, we encourage you to tweak the tactics and powers of the Voice of Rot to provide a sufficient challenge for this climax.

A Ticking Clock

There are two main elements at play in this battle. First, of course, the Voice of Rot will bite and overrun PCs to try to wound and kill them.

Second, he needs them to witness the destruction of the world, so as he moves he uses *sussurus of decay*, both growling and hissing in his eerie way, and in so doing his voice causes whichever of the five segments of Reida he is over to crack visibly. If he uses it a second time, the whole area shatters, leaving large chunks of stone separated by gaps five or ten feet wide. If he uses it a third time, that whole section falls away into the Gyre.

If there are any PCs or their allies in the same section of the plane as the Voice of Rot, and those characters are not below half their maximum hit points after the damage dealt by *sussurus of decay*, their vigor keeps that section from cracking, shattering, or falling away. However, if all five ages are destroyed, the Voice of Rot wins. For the party to win they need to destroy the Voice of Rot or knock him off the plane while at least part of their world's history survives.





The chief complication there is that the Voice of Rot is able to tap the power of history. Because he is so ancient, any attack against him here fades away without effect at the start of his turn unless he was struck in parts of his body that are in at least two different ages. This encourages the party to split up (and rewards PCs with long-range attacks, who can target spots in multiple ages).

Depending on how aggressive your party is, you might need to speed things up, and have a given section fall away as soon as it is hit a second time with *susurrus of decay*. It depends heavily on how much damage your party dishes out and whether they might survive the Voice of Rot's attacks.

Five Ages

Starting from about 8 o'clock and moving clockwise, the five sections of the plane of Reida (separated by 5-ft. wide cracks) represent the or-dominated dawn of time when the Axis Seal was created, the era when the first human nations arose, the centuries when the Demonocracy was in power, the period of the two Victories and their immediate aftermath, and the rise of industry to the modern day. This has little mechanical impact, but as the PCs move across these areas you can have them witness flashes of events past or relive memories from those time periods.

This is a perfect opportunity to fill the PCs in on any parts of the campaign's backstory they are unclear about.

A Moving Titan

The Voice of Rot constantly moves, and perhaps the easiest way to track his immense location is to get a snake skull to represent his head and thirty coins (one every 10 feet) to represent his body. When he moves, move the head, then remove sufficient coins from the tail end to fill in the spaces between where he started and where his head ended up. At times he might swing his head off the side of the plane so he can spin around and bite someone close behind him, but as long as more of his body is on the world than off it, he is stable.

Other times he might slither over the edge of Reida and move along the side facing the Gyre's teeth, which you can represent by flipping the coins from heads to tails (to show where he is under the plane and likely out of reach of attacks). As above, he makes sure to keep most of his body on the 'up' side of Reida. If somehow the party manages to trick or force the Voice of Rot so more than half his body is either off the plane or on the 'bottom,' he flails, loses his grip, and descends 30 feet per round toward the Gyre. He might still be able to swing back up and get back on top of Reida.

(Use your discretion whether he can actually hold on. For instance, if 60% of him is on the bottom, but his 'middle' is on the top, he's still probably good to go.)

Falling to his own ironic demise becomes more likely as more of the plane is destroyed. He won't use his *susurrus of decay* a third time to destroy a given segment of the plane unless he has a stable position, though if only one segment remains and he destroys it, he wins.

Ship and Other Terrain

The Voice of Rot easily slithers over the ship, wherever it landed, or he can attack it and try to grab and drag it off the edge of the world. The party's vessel's weapons are not powerful to harm the near godlike hide of the decaying serpent, though ramming would have a fair shot of dislodging a wide swath of his body from its grip on the plane.

Gyre Wind

Staying on the windward side of Reida is safe. Any creature that moves over an area without solid ground beneath it falls 150 feet at the end of its turn if it cannot fly, and still falls 30 feet even if it can fly.

Non-melee attacks with weapons that pass over the edge of the plane suffer a -4 penalty to the attack roll.

Balancing for Allies

This encounter gives you an opportunity to bring back dead characters whom the party enjoyed or hated. By default we assume the PCs arrive with crew members on their ship, who will all die after one or two uses of *susurrus of decay*. Even if they survive for a while, once the titan is wounded and uses *ages of war*, most survivors will be slain unless they're particularly strong or are being defended by the PCs.

If the PCs have several powerful allies with them, you might add one or two of the following attacks each round, as corpses rise from the ground and strike at the PCs. (+32 to hit, 3d6+15 damage.) Pick a type of enemy appropriate to whatever age the PC is in, and if they're in the modern age, we suggest using any foe the party would remember who died before the end of adventure 9. These are just corpses conjured by the Voice of Rot, without the actual souls of the deceased.

Similarly, if you feel the PCs are having a rough time of it, particularly if they're devoting a lot of resources to defending helpless NPCs, an ally from history can arise and make one attack per round. (+32 to hit, 3d6+15 damage.) The historical figure also emits a 15-foot-aura that reduces all damage dealt to allies by 5. These are just memories stored in Reida itself, not real people. The defenses are a good stopgap, but if the Voice of Rot is annoyed by them he'll use *comet fall* to take out stubborn survivors.

A Yerasol Veteran PC feels a calling to the 'modern' section of the ring. There some veteran hero or perhaps a whole unit of soldiers manifest and follow his commands. This gives a Yerasol Veteran a chance to fight alongside other war heroes from Risur's past.

Finally, if the party failed to thwart Grandis Komanov in adventure eleven, *Gorged on Ruins*, she appears here and fights to ensure her lord's ascent to godhood. Likewise with Copperhat the Headless in adventure nine, but he's more prone to changing sides if he thinks the party can avert the end of the world, which he's rather fond of.

The Eye of the Voice of Rot

The party might have found the Voice of Rot's long-lost other eye. While the fey titan's remaining eye lets him control the bodies of the dead, his lost eye let him control the souls. If the party brought it with them, it is too withered and calcified to have its full power, but its mere presence gives the Voice of Rot a -2 penalty to AC, attack rolls, and saving throws.

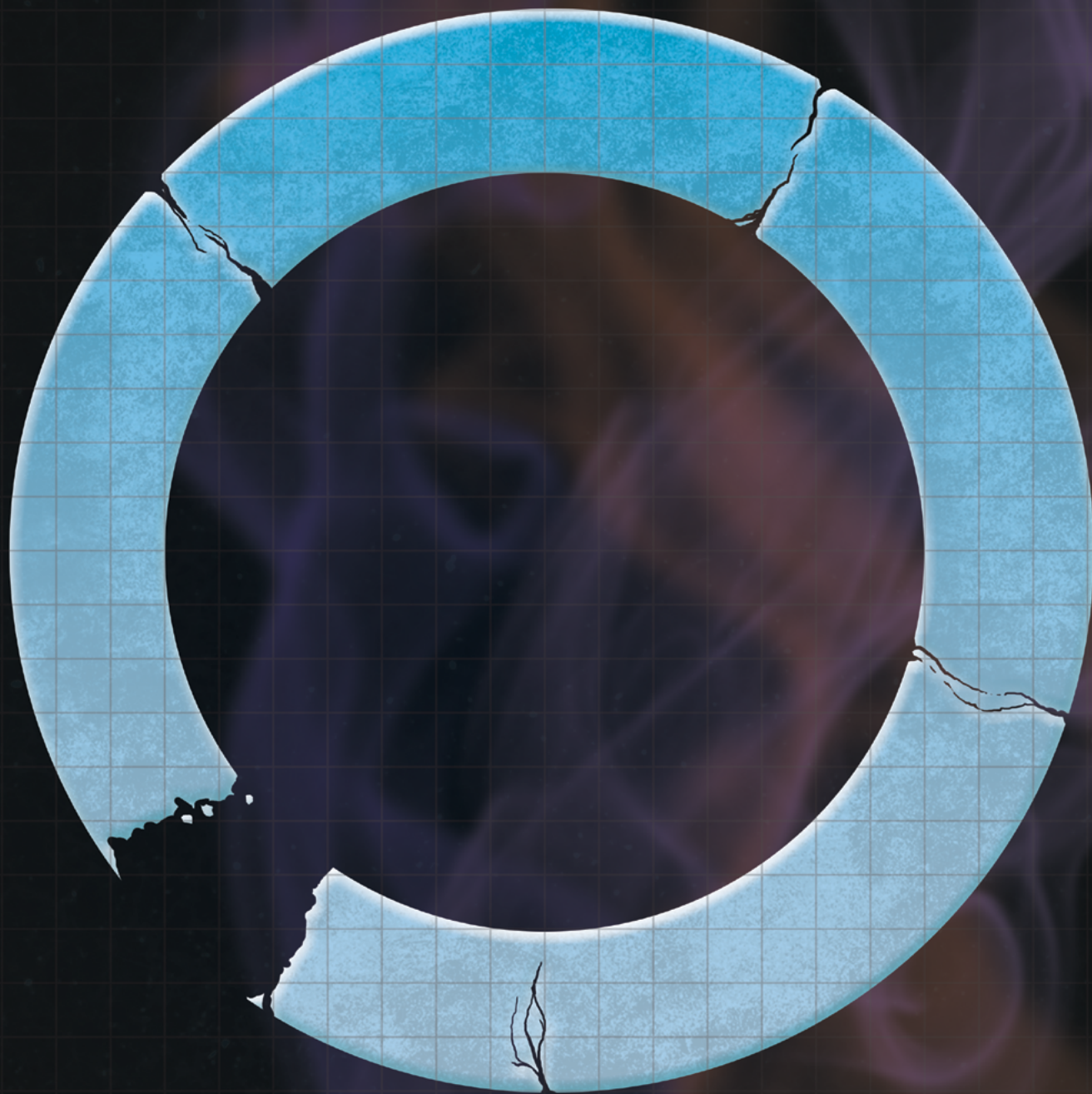
Additionally, a character who holds the eye can use a swift action to conjure a comet, just as can the Voice of Rot.

The titan's first order of business will be to knock whoever has his eye into the Gyre. If he succeeds in destroying his own eye, though, he is stunned for one round and actually stops moving from the pain.

If someone's crazy and puts his eye back into its original socket, he laughs with satisfaction and can immediately call down six *comet fall* attacks without spending an action.



REIDA, THE ARC OF HISTORY



1 = 10 feet



Rock of Ages

And, of course, Rock Rackus can show up to aid when things get real. Piloting the *Aural Pleasure*, he's first noticeable as a cocky laugh audible over the roar of Gyre Wind and the rumble of his ship's engines. Then a round later he bursts out of the debris field and starts firing shots of his *diamond-encrusted piece* just before ramming the Voice of Rot. This shoves a 9-square wide swath of the serpent 5 squares laterally.

He hops off the ship and blithely walks up to whoever's nearest, telling them to 'get your men out of here, because I rigged that thing to explode.' (Huge radius, 100 untyped damage, and maybe bull rushing the serpent 20 feet or so.) Or, if an explosion won't be useful he can swing by, pulling off a crazy piloting stunt to have his crew (including some erinyes he freed from the legion) grab the PCs and carry them wherever they need to go around the ring.

He can get into close combat if necessary, but mostly Rock should act as a mix of mobility and distraction. If he's flung into the Gyre he assumes someone will rescue him. Even if he dies here, if the party uses Av in the Axis Seal ritual in the next adventure, Rock will be restored when that plane is recreated.

Aftermath

If defeated, the Voice of Rot falls into the Gyre, screaming in denial since he could not imagine he would lose. Should the party's world survive, another fey titan would need to arise in the High Bayou, and whichever PC dealt the killing blow should have rights to determine the nature of that being.



Carried Through Eternity

Perhaps only a remnant of Reida survives, but it is enough to keep the party's homeworld intact long enough for them to complete the Axis Seal ritual and create a new age that won't be metaphysically bound to the last.

From this point, only the PCs and others who came with them to the Gyre will be able to send their consciousnesses back to their other selves in the real world. Anyone else with them—Rock, Calily, and any other friends or prisoners they acquired here in the graveyard of the multiverse—will have to hope the party chooses their world as part of the eight that will be linked in the Axis Seal.

The party must prepare themselves mentally and choose someone they have an emotional connection to back home, and to focus on the change they wish to make. Then they are ready, and they can leap into the teeth of the Gyre.

Ground to Starstuff

Have you seen 2001: A Space Odyssey? Shedding clothes to be nude as a babe. Shedding skin like a snake. Shedding flesh and bone altogether to fly, a soul unbound by the limits of crude matter, to make yourself whole.

The Voice of Rot

CR 25

XP 1,638,400

CE Colossal undead (fey titan)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., lifesense, *true seeing*; Perception +42**Aura** necrotic (30 ft., DC 27)

Defense

AC 46, touch 1, flat-footed 46 (-1 Dex, +45 natural, -8 size)**hp** 542 (35d8+385); fast healing 30**Fort** +21, **Ref** +12, **Will** +25**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, recovery; **DR** 20/epic;**Immune** undead traits;**Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, positive energy 30, sonic 30

Offense

Speed 20 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.**Melee** bite +45 (6d6+36/19-20 plus energy drain and grab)**Space** (head only) 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** channel negative energy at will (10d6, DC 37), comet fall, constrict (6d6+36), energy drain (2 levels, DC 37), gaping maw, hurl foe, susurrus of decay**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 25th; concentration +34)Constant—*freedom of movement*, *greater magic fang*, *true seeing*At will—*bestow curse* (DC 23), *create undead*, *control undead* (DC 28), *entangle* (DC 21)3/day—*circle of death* (DC 24), *geas/quest*, quickened *suffocation* (DC 25),1/day—*horrid wilting* (DC 28), *finger of death* (DC 27)

Statistics

Str 52, **Dex** 8, **Con** -, **Int** 26, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 30**Base Atk** +26; **CMB** +55 (+59 grapple); **CMD** 64 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Channel Smite, Critical Focus, Extra Channel, Great Fortitude, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Lunge, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (suffocation), Staggering Critical, Vital Strike, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)**Skills** Appraise +43, Bluff +44, Climb +65, Heal +38, Intimidate +47, Knowledge (arcana) +46, Knowledge (nature) +43, Knowledge (religion) +46, Perception +42, Sense Motive +42, Stealth +21, Swim +66**Languages** Primordial; *tongues***SQ** titanic



Special Abilities

Comet Fall (Su) Once per round as swift action, the Voice of Rot can call down a comet in a 5-foot radius burst anywhere within 500 feet. Creatures in the area take 6d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 37 for half). The save DC is Charisma-based.

The square at the center of the burst, if it is on the surface of Reida, is destroyed. Creatures in that square must attempt an additional DC 25 Reflex save to fall prone in and adjacent space. Those who fail are exposed to the Gyre wind, and will likely be pushed toward the Gyre.

Ever Moving (Ex) In addition to his normal movement, the Voice of Rot automatically moves 10 feet after each PC's turn. Any creature adjacent to the Voice of Rot when he ends this movement must make a DC 27 Reflex save or take 2d8+20 damage, be pushed sideways 5 feet and fall prone. On a successful save the creature takes no damage but can let itself be pushed aside (and remain standing) in order to avoid having to make another save the next time the fey titan moves. The DC is Constitution-based.

Lifesense (Su) The Voice of Rot notices and locates living creatures within 60 feet, just as if it possessed the blindsight ability.

Gaping Maw (Ex) The Voice of Rot's bite attack hits all creatures in a 20-foot cone. Make one attack roll and compare it to the AC of each target. The Voice of Rot can attempt to grab more than one creature hit by the same bite attack by taking a -20 penalty on each CMB check. Damage from the bite attack counts as epic and magic for the purposes of overcoming DR.

Hurl Foe (Ex) When a fey titan damages a Huge or smaller foe with one of its natural attacks, it can try to hurl the foe as part of that attack by attempting a combat maneuver check. On a successful check, the foe is knocked back 10 feet in a direction of the titan's choice and falls prone. The distance the foe is hurled increases by 10 feet for every 5 points by which the titan's check exceeds the foe's CMD. If an obstacle stops the hurled creature before it travels the whole distance, the hurled foe and the obstacle struck each take 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet of distance remaining and the foe is knocked prone in the space adjacent to the obstacle.

Necrotic Aura (Su) Any creature that starts its turn within 30 feet of the Voice of Rot's head must make a DC 27 Fortitude save or take 10d6 points of negative energy damage and be sickened for 1 minute. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Recovery (Ex) Whenever a fey titan fails a saving throw against any mind-affecting, paralysis, petrification, polymorph, or immobilizing effect (including binding and temporal stasis but not including imprisonment), it can attempt a new saving throw at the end of its turn to remove the effect. Doing so takes no action. A fey titan can attempt a new save to end the effect as often as it wishes, but can attempt to remove only one such effect per round. Once per year, if a fey titan takes an amount of damage that would normally kill it by reducing its hit points to a negative amount equal to its Constitution score, the damage instead heals the fey titan of twice the amount of damage—but this healing leaves the fey titan disoriented and demoralized. At this point, the creature becomes nauseated and seeks only to return to its lair. Any amount of damage dealt to it by an external source before it reaches its lair, though, immediately negates the nauseated effect and allows the fey titan to end its retreat and attack.

Susurrus of Decay (Su) As a swift action, the Voice of Rot can growl and hiss as he uses his channel negative energy attack. If there are no enemies in the same age of Reida as the Voice of Rot's head, or if all enemies in that age are below half their maximum hit points, the ground of this age of Reida cracks. If the ground is already cracked, it instead shears apart. If it has already sheared apart, the whole area is drawn into the Gyre.

When one of the ages of Reida is drawn into the Gyre, any surviving creatures in that age are left adrift and must make a DC 25 Fortitude save each round or die. The save DC increases by 1 for each round they are adrift. If they die, they are drawn into the Gyre and are annihilated. If all five ages of Reida are drawn into the Gyre, the plane is destroyed and all life on the party's homeworld perishes. The Voice of Rot transcends into a god of death and vanishes.

Timeless (Ex) Reality appears to flicker around the fey titan, as his body shudders between the dozens of different forms he has taken over the centuries. Moments after something wounds him, his body might shift into another era, undoing that damage as if he'd had centuries to heal. However, if he is wounded in two Ages at once, his whole body snaps into a single form, and the wound becomes visceral, existing across his whole history.

Track the damage and conditions that affect the Voice of Rot each turn. At the start of each of his turns, if he only took damage on parts of his body in a single age of Reida since the start of his last turn, undo all damage and conditions that affected him during that time. Effectively, the Voice of Rot must be hit by enemies in at least two Ages at a time for it to have any effect on him.

Titanic (Ex) The head of the Voice of Rot occupies a 20 foot square, and his body trailing behind him is 15 feet wide, a total of 300 feet long. Any part of his body can be targeted, but he has DR 20/- everywhere but his head. Due to his size, he cannot turn more than 45 degrees for every 10 feet he advances (so he must travel at least 40 feet in order to turn around). Because he is so massive, uneven ground and other terrain features that form difficult terrain do not hinder the Voice of Rot's movement, though crashed airships are considered difficult terrain to him. A Huge or smaller creature can move through any square occupied by the Voice of Rot, and vice versa. The Voice of Rot can make attacks of opportunity only against foes that are Huge or larger, and can only be flanked by Huge or larger foes. It's possible for a Huge or smaller creature to climb the Voice of Rot. This requires a DC 30 Climb check, and unlike the normal rules, a Small or larger creature that climbs on the Voice of Rot's body provokes an attack of opportunity from the fey titan if within reach of his head.

The Voice of Rot has two hit point thresholds.

Threshold I – Ages of War When the Voice of Rot first drops below 360 hp, all negative status effects on him end and he moves 75 feet as an immediate action. Every surface of the arc of Reida erupts with corpses of long-dead warriors, who rise from the dirt of history. Spaces occupied by the dead count as difficult terrain, and any enemy that enters or starts its turn in a space occupied by these dead takes 5 damage.

The dead have AC 10 and 1 hit point, and they are unaffected by the Voice of Rot's attacks. It is possible for the party to clear a path by attacking the dead (or just using auras or area attacks), but this will slow them down.

Threshold II – The White Tongue When the Voice of Rot first drops below 180 hp, all negative status effects on him end and he moves 75 feet as an immediate action. All enemies on Reida must make a DC 37 Will save. Those who fail become a conduit for the Voice of Rot, choking as the titan's voice emerges from their mouths and their tongues writhe in their throats.

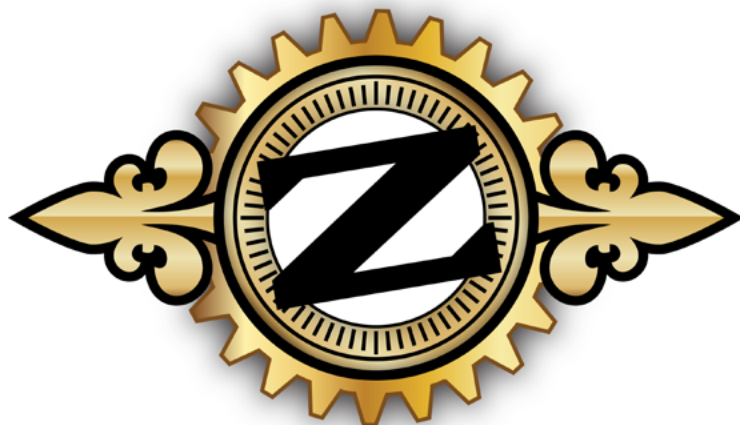
"Would you desire songs of your deeds?" he asks. "Would you be paintings of kings? Even if you should win this day, the time that you live shall be dwarfed by that when you are but misremembered history. I seek to fulfill my purpose, for I was created to witness death. You iron-clad brambles desire salvation of a world that is meaningless."

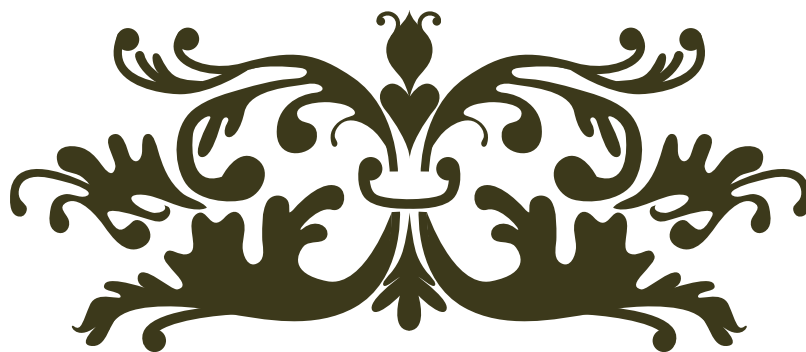
They cannot speak or attack until the end of their next turn. At the end of their next turn, they lose one quarter of their maximum hit points as they vomit a Small white serpent that pulses with their heartbeat in an adjacent space. The serpent has the Voice of Rot's AC and saves, 1 hp, and a speed of 30 feet. If it can enter the Voice of Rot's space, it merges with the fey titan, healing him for an amount of hit points equal to amount lost by the creature from which the serpent emerged. ☞



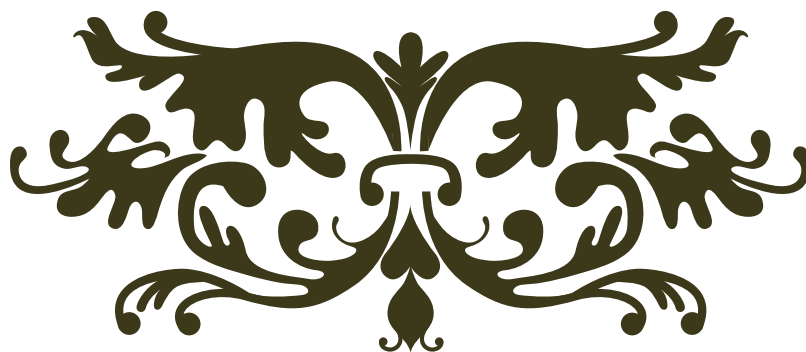


Adventure Number 13
**Avatar of
Revolution**





From the Pen of	Ryan Nock
Clever Conversion by	Russell Torres
Evocative Cover Illustration by	ShenFei
Stunning Cartographic Displays by	James Hazelett Jonathan Roberts
Masterful Interior Illustrations by	Claudio Pozas ShenFei, and artists of history
with Layout and Graphic Design by	Frank Michienzi
Ably Produced and Facilitated by	Russell Morrissey
<i>Special Thanks to</i> Erik Freund. You know what you did.	



ADVENTURE THIRTEEN: Introduction

Wherein Our Hand Moves the Stars

At the convocation of the Obscurati, Nicodemus the Gnostic, founder of the conspiracy, introduced his grand plan with these words:

The motions of the stars allow different ideals to gain ascendance: war, decay, chaos, exploration, order, creation. But no longer shall the procession of heaven obey the whims of an ancient, absent clockmaker. Now the hand that moves the stars shall be ours!"

The party was present then, and though they were only *disguised* as officers of the Obscurati, today they are the closest thing to peers Nicodemus has. As much as he hates them and wants to be the architect of their failure, he respects that they were able to challenge him. Soon they will have their final contest, and Nicodemus believes that even should he be defeated—which, despite all his arrogance, he knows is surely possible—his ideology will triumph. He refused to accept the world as it was, and he is certain that even if he falls, the party will take it upon themselves to reshape reality in their image. That is the age he has created: one founded in the determination to create something new, in the ideal of revolution.

On its surface, the question of this whole campaign has been, what is the best of all possible worlds? Will the party defeat Nicodemus only to become tyrants themselves, creating a world where they alone have power? Will they seek to represent the will of the masses, who they might not see as enlightened as themselves? Will they turn on each other? Or will they reject the very premise of the question, and ask instead whether the choice is theirs to make?

Adventure Synopsis

This adventure serves both as climax and epilogue, and we pay more attention to what becomes of the world as a result of all the heroics of the PCs than to the details of battles. While we want the players to have a chance to exult when they finally vanquish the Obscurati and destroy Nicodemus, we want to give them a chance to experience the world after the fighting is over. They will have decided the nature of the new age, and they should get to enjoy it a bit before we close the book for good.

Prologue: Contingency

A version of the party that was moments earlier on Av as it was crashing into the Gyre awakens in a forest in Risur, their airship nearby and mostly unharmed. **Benedict Pemberton** and his lieutenant the gnoll **Pardo** are waiting, having seeded duplicants at locations where they guessed the party might return.

Pemberton explains that as far as he knows he and Pardo are the only people in the whole world who haven't fallen under the Obscurati's control since the party has been gone. And the party has been gone for months. In that time the Ob figured out something about the hiveminds and used it to enact wide mind control.

It turns out Pardo was not immune himself, though, as he signaled the Ob the moment the party arrived. A strike force led by **Lauryn Cyneburg**, Risur's former Minister of Infiltration, teleports in and attacks the PCs and Pemberton. With them is **Nicodemus** (temporarily possessing the body of someone unimportant), who warns them not to stand in his way. He's only a day away from fixing the mistakes of the first time the Obscurati performed the Axis Seal ritual, and he's too close to victory to be a victim of sentiment.

In the ensuing battle, the party might manage to shake some of the attackers free of the Ob's control, and perhaps the fey titan known as the **Ash Wolf** will come to the party's aid. When Nicodemus's host body dies his spirit returns to Axis Island, but not before he swears that if they interfere with his plans in the next day he'll order every nation's capital city razed in retaliation.

The party is back on their homeworld, and though they do not know that other versions of themselves are in the Gyre, they are filled with a sense that not all hope is lost. However, to defeat Nicodemus without him killing hundreds of thousands in retaliation, they have to save multiple cities around the world, and then reach Axis Island and perform the ritual themselves, and they have only one day to do so.

After this introduction, return to the second half of adventure twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*. When the party nears the Voice of Rot, continue this adventure.



GYRE CONSEQUENCES

Generally, anything that the party did in adventure twelve in the Gyre after the destruction of Av has no effect on this adventure until the PCs gain the memories of their other selves during the climax. Until then, any boons or items they acquired aren't accessible. However, once the memories start flooding into the PCs, they'll gain access to those boons and items gradually, just like their ability to link to planes comes in round by round.

In particular, boons of Srasama don't take effect until the PCs get access to the plane Ascetia during the Axis Obscura encounter. If they chose Vengeance, Srasama manifests and fights with them. If they chose Usurpation, a PC who seized Srasama's divine powers can use them. And if they chose Resurrection, most of the eladrin woman who are restored to life appear far from this battle. But Dala, Kasvarina's long-dead daughter, will appear beside one of the PCs. She'll know what they did for her, and though she's wholly a noncombatant, she'll desire to find her mother.

Act One: World of Ruin

As the PCs make a plan for how to destroy the Obscurati without them killing countless innocents, Pemberton gives the PCs what information he has about the state of the world. Namely, everyone is their enemy, and the few scattered pockets of resistance are being pursued with industrial efficiency.

Gaslight infrastructure in most major cities, including Flint, has been adapted to function like a distributed version of the *wayfarer's lantern*, burning oil that channels planar energy to keep people obedient and a latent hivemind at the optimal level for control. Trainloads of troublemakers from rural regions are carted in to be pacified, and even former allies of the party are fervently loyal to Nicodemus and his minions.





Airship vs. Dragon

To prevent the Ob from enacting their scorched earth policy, the PCs can head to Flint, where the local hivemind is led by new head of state of Risur, **Harkover Lee**. Once the chief advisor of the king, he has retaken his much older form as the red dragon **Inacht the Hex-Eater**. As such, he is perhaps the only individual aside from Nicodemus himself who could by himself pose a threat to the party.

As added deterrence, Lee has flooded the city's gaslight network with energy from Jiese, the plane of fire. If the party just rushes in they'll not only be facing a dragon on the wing, but will have to prevent the entire city from exploding while stymied by former allies such as **Stover Delft** and **Gale**. After bringing the dragon low and averting the fiery conflagration, the party finds the people of Risur receptive to them, ready to be rallied into a revolution.

Action Montage

Other cities have their own tyrants loyal to the Obscurati, who will destroy their people to punish the party's opposition. In Trekhom, **Hastenschrieft Willimarkanova** undertakes a parade, protected by military constructs and the overwatch of sniper **Kvarti Gorbatiy**. In Seobriga, **Bruse Shantus** oversees the mass execution of undesirable goblinoids that are deemed not intelligent enough for civilization, but if the PCs move against the Ob, the city's lanterns will burn with Illocus energy to provoke a wild massacre. In Alais Primos a heartbroken **Morgan Cippiano** helps disassemble the cathedral of Triegenes under the command of **Arch Secula Natalia Degaspere**, who is prepared to activate the city's lanterns, using Av energy to pull people's souls from their bodies. And in Cherage, the demoness **Ashima-Shimtu** watches impassively as wretched people volunteer to be put to death because the propaganda of **Gardienne du Cherage** has convinced them they are not useful enough.

The party will have to move on multiple places simultaneously. With the aid of Pemberton's duplicant technology, the party can fight together to free Flint, then immediately split up across the world, with all the PCs controlling different duplicants to save all four cities before the Ob can react.

If you have more PCs and need a fifth target, or if a Vekeshi mystic character could use some closure, the enclave Sentosa in the forests of Elfaivar is besieged by Kasvarina's former aide-de-camp **Cula Ravjahani**.

No Time to Rest

The party has only hours to reach Axis Island. They know that the site of the ritual will be flooded with destructive energy, and the only way they can safely resist it is to perform the *sacrament of apotheosis*, channeling the trust of the world into them, granting the PCs the power of gods. However, to do this the party must have allies, and so it is only feasible if the party managed to save at least one major city (Flint, Cherage, Trekhom, Alais Primos, or Seobriga). Alternately, the party might believe that this boon is not worth the risk, and follow the example of Triegenes by refusing to use the ritual, even it means they're imperiled.

Nicodemus has no such qualms, and he uses the *sacrament* to enhance himself with the loyalty of his followers. However, each city the party saved strengthens them in the upcoming battle.



TIME IS TIGHT



We intend this adventure to take place in just one day. Aside from the obvious desire for a ticking clock to raise the stakes, by this point you should have plenty of evidence that the PCs are ludicrously strong when they can use all their powers in a single encounter. By forcing them to complete this adventure without resting, we give the villains slightly better odds of not being wiped out by whatever optimized alpha strike your party is capable of.

The party wakes up in the Antwalk Forest at roughly 8 a.m., rested and at full strength. The Gyre is close enough that its edge already covers half the sky, and its brighter center is just over the horizon.

By noon they should be at Flint, and by 1 p.m. either they'll have found a way to avert the Ob's scorched earth deterrence, or Alais Primos, Cherage, Seobriga, and Trekhom will be toast. Then they'll fly for Axis Island, some 500 miles from Flint. The party reaches Axis Island just before 'dawn,' and the final battle will conclude just in time for the Gyre to vanish and, if the PCs triumph, a new sun to rise.

It's fine to handwave their airship traveling at faster than normal speeds, but if you have a fan of Star Trek's Scotty among your group, let them make some checks to push the vessel to its limits, or get favorable winds from Gale, in order to achieve the impossible.

If the party dallies or somehow screws up, leaving without enough time to fly to the finale, it's possible to find another way there. Lauryn Cyneburg could manage a draining spell that teleports them through the defenses of Axis Island, but leaves them down one airship. Pemberton could give them coordinates to teleport to his hidden island lair (again, *sans* airship), from which they can set out in a squadron of small 'dragon flier' propeller planes. Or, hell, just cheat. If they use the *sacrament of apotheosis* and become gods, who's to deny their will of simply stepping onto the island from thousands of miles away?

It's over five hundred miles from Flint to Axis Island, which if the party pushes their airship to its limit they can cover just in time to arrive as Nicodemus begins the ritual of the Axis Seal. Though the flight takes hours, the party will find that if they try to rest and recover their spells or daily-limited abilities, they see flashes of themselves in the Gyre, poised on the edge of oblivion. Somehow their reflection from their other selves has made it impossible for them to regain their full strength.

When the party finally reaches Axis Island, the world is just beginning to rumble with the planar confluence of the coming ritual. In the glow of wild energy lashing out of the Axis Seal, they can see the colossus Borne standing up.

Upon completion of this act, return to adventure twelve for the climax against the Voice of Rot. After the party casts themselves into the Gyre, move on to act two of this adventure.





Act Two: Axis of the Revolution

Nicodemus has gathered his strongest allies to his side: **Han Jierre**, **Lya Jierre**, and the ghost council, as well as units with the most advanced arcanoscientific weapons the world has devised.

These forces are primarily positioned on the *Revolution*, the Obscurati's own airship. Serving as the vessel's doctor is **Wolfgang von Recklinghausen**, who might be swayed to the party's side depending on their previous interactions. Meanwhile, Nicodemus takes the drastic step of performing the *sacrament of apotheosis* on himself, linking himself to those around the world who still adhere to his ideology. Using his near-divine power he restores the colossus Borne and commands it to complete the ritual of the Axis Seal while the *Revolution* keeps the party at bay.

When the party reaches Axis Island, knowledge that their other selves acquired in the Gyre begins to flood into their minds. Once combat begins they gain access to the energies of the various planes of the Gyre in the order they bonded with them, and each round they must weigh whether to attack their enemies or try to seize control of the eight nexuses in the ritual circle, each of which grants them access to cosmic power. An unforeseen consequence, however, is that meddling in the ritual links the party to Nicodemus. By embracing his methods, they are drawn into the pool of those who grant power to him via the *sacrament of apotheosis*.

Throughout a complex puzzle of a final battle, there are four paths to ultimately defeat Nicodemus: they can complete the ritual themselves and use its power to destroy him; they can convince his other self in the Gyre, William Miller, to try to overpower the mastermind and render him briefly vulnerable; they can metaphysically sap him of all power by rejecting his ideology and destroying the ritual site without laying claim to how the world should be; or they use his true name to break the protection granted to him by the *sacrament*, at which point they can harm him like any other foe.

(They might have learned his true name in adventure eight, or learn it now by getting Kasvarina on their side, or wait until knowledge reaches them from their other selves in the Gyre, who met the ghost of William Miller. And a proofreader reminded me that the *Humble Hook* and *Crown of Risur* can also reveal this information, though the intention was for the crown to just let you know the name they use, not their true name. The hook would work fine, though.)

If eight planes are linked and the golden seal is shut, stars begin to burn into being in the night sky, sweeping in an unfamiliar starscape that heralds a new destiny for the world. As the roar of the ritual fades, dawn begins to rise to the east.



Act Three: How to Deliver a Denouement

The choices the party makes at the Axis Seal determine the nature of the whole world, and we want them to have a chance to see what kind of world that is.

How to do this partially depends on what you know of your players. Give them the ending they want, as much as it's appropriate to how they fared in the ritual of the Axis Seal. These final few adventures have been fairly epic and somewhat surreal, so we suggest grounding events and returning to the mundane.

Toward that goal, we present nine potential scenes for you to use as a montage of sorts, to put a bow on the ZEITGEIST campaign. Each is linked to one of the setting-based character themes introduced in the Player's Guide, and will serve as an opportunity to demonstrate some element of the new world and how the party's actions shaped it. As needed, you might shuffle some of these scenes into Act One, and save the ones your players will appreciate more for the aftermath.

A Dock Opera. The low-class dockers and the most upscale industrialists of Flint are drawn together by the first great performance at the Navras Opera House after the world is saved, a performance which spills out into the streets and carries on to the docks themselves.

Group Portrait. A *nouveau* eschatologist is popularizing primitive photography, and adds an addendum to the Heid Eschatol movement that, as we prepare for the end, those who survive us should be able to remember us, both our faces and the lessons we learned. He asks to photograph the party for the annals of history.

Government Issue. As law and order get back to normal, the police force and constabulary are issued new weapons, and one or more PCs are encouraged to speak to them and set the tone for how laws will be enforced in the new world.

It Came From Beyond. The military has caught and killed a creature never before seen on this world—the nature of which depends on how the party linked their world to other planes. As they make plans for how to deal with this unfamiliar threat, a young martial scientist expresses his admiration of the party's battlefield ingenuity.

Telescope in the Clouds. Astronomists ask for permission to build an observatory atop Cauldron Hill.

Join Our Family. Morgan Cippiano invites the party to a fashionable wake to discuss how he and his family can keep the criminal element of Flint civil.

Borne Again. Either the salvage of a destroyed colossus is brought to Flint, leaving the party to decide if they should recreate such a mighty machine, or the intact colossus seeks to transfer his consciousness to a smaller body, for he is unfit to wield the power that was given to him.

Unmasking. The Old Stag, elder head of the Vekeshi mystics in Flint, seeks to rehabilitate the order's image, as more of a fraternal society for social justice rather than a secret assassination guild.

Medals and Prizes. At the memorial for veterans of the Yerasol Wars, a huge crowd has gathered to cheer the many heroes of Risur.





Dramatis Personae Redux

What has become of everyone? Below we list the NPCs likely to still be active and important, as well as their most likely status. Of course, adjust as needed depending on how the party may have influenced (e.g., killed) the NPCs.

1. **Arch Secula Natalia Degaspere.** Crisillyiri head of state.
2. **Ashima-Shimtu.** Observing the 'new world' in Cherage.
3. **Athrylla Valanar.** Repelling a siege on her enclave Sentosa.
4. **Benedict Pemberton, aka Gradiax the Steel Lord.** Conspiring with the PCs.
5. **Brakken of Heffanita.** Aid to Bruse Shantus.
6. **Bruse Shantus.** Beran head of state.
7. **Cula Ravjahani.** Besieging the enclave Sentosa in Elfaivar.
8. **Damata Griento.** Swashbuckling understudy of Sor Daeron.
9. **El Extraño.** Stowed away on the airship *Revolution*.
10. **Glaucia Evora.** Bound for execution in Ber.
11. **Han Jierre.** Commanding the airship *Revolution*.
12. **Hana "Gale" Soliogn.** Risur minister of nature.
13. **Harkover Lee.** Risuri head of state.
14. **Lauryn Cyneburg.** Head of the Obscurati alert strike force.
15. **Kaja Stewart.** Part of the above strike force.
16. **Kasvarina Varal.** Axis Island.
17. **Kvarti Gorbatiy.** Guarding the Drakran head of state.
18. **Lya Jierre.** Probably dead and a ghost. Otherwise alive, but in either case loyal to Nicodemus, aboard the *Revolution*.
19. **Morgan Cippiano.** Indentured to the Crisillyiri head of state.
20. **Nicodemus the Gnostic.** Axis Island.
21. **Pardo.** With Pemberton, preparing to betray him.
22. **Rock Rackus.** Stranded in the Gyre. Your hero cannot save you now.
23. **Sor Daeron.** Raining destruction upon Ob operations in Ber.
24. **Stover Delft.** Head of the Flint secret police.
25. **Vlendam Heid.** Hostage in Trekhom.
26. **Doctor Wolfgang von Recklinghausen.** Ship's doctor of the airship *Revolution*.

Two major NPCs we sort of let fall off the map were the "Gearbuilder" Tinker Oddcog and the "Mindmaker" Alexander Grappa. Our assumption is that Tinker either died or is toiling away in some workshop, but you might have him appear on the airship *Revolution* as part of the 'halfling and gnome repair crew.' His powers make fixing damage to the ship a breeze, and he can serve as a surprise opponent, albeit one who panics if he gets a clear view outside to see how huge the colossus is.

And we figured it was likely Grappa died during the course of adventure seven, but he could have survived (or transferred his consciousness into someone else) and thus show up alongside Pemberton to explain how to break the hiveminds.

Many other NPCs from previous adventures might be alive (or ghosts) but weren't necessarily prominent enough that we expect every group will care about what happens to them. Consider who you think your players would be interested in seeing again. Particularly if a character played a major role for one adventure, it can remind the players of all they've accomplished by bringing them back.

For instance, perhaps in Act One while a PC is trying to liberate a city, he could run across the Ob officer whose body he possessed in adventure seven. Perhaps Duchess Ethelyn, freed from her house arrest during revolutionary riots, teleports to Flint, and asks the PCs what happened to the Unseen Court. If the PCs saved Andrei von Recklinghausen from being possessed by Nicodemus, he could be on the defensive line of Sentosa, defending his adored Isobel and other eladrin. Amielle Latimer might be held in spectral chains aboard the *Revolution*, as the rest of the ghost council intends to toss her soul into the engine of Borne, which will consume her as fuel.

It could even be something as simple as, in the middle of the battle at the Axis Seal, the mine foreman from the first adventure, Nicholas Dupiers, gawks as he recognizes the PCs and marvels at how greatly they have changed.



PROLOGUE: Contingency

If you're interweaving adventures twelve and thirteen, these scenes occur right after the party learns from William Miller on Ascetia that they've been split in two. The players should know that their characters in the real world aren't aware of anything happening to the version of them in the Gyre.

HOME AGAIN

Remember, now that the party has returned home, all the odd magical effects of the Ob's new world order are available. People stabilize instead of bleeding out, light-producing spells are hard to cast, ownership can block teleportation, but every creature is able to *jaunt* once a day (or more if the GM deems them appropriately mobility themed), which lets them teleport within line of sight as a standard action.

WEAKENED DEATH

Since the plane Av was destroyed in adventure twelve, this world's link to elemental Death energy is weakened. As a result, undead creatures are sickened. Incorporeal undead no longer take half damage. Reduce by half all negative energy damage that would be dealt. (Additionally, eladrin do not have their deathlink ability, but that's moot because there aren't any incorporeal foes it would apply to.)

Because of this, the Obscurati ghost council are remaining out of the fray as long as possible, and don't appear until the finale. These effects persist until someone links to a new plane of Death in the Axis Seal ritual. (See Draining Magic, page 225.)

ICY END OF THE EARTH

After months without sun, even the supernatural temperate climate provided by the planet itself has waned. Global temperatures are at or below freezing, and snow or ice coats the ground wherever the party goes, with the exception of Axis Island, where otherworldly energy provides a pittance of warmth. From the moment the party arrives in the forest near the ziggurat of Av, it should be clear that the world is freezing to death.

Hello Old Friend

Social. Real-Time.

Dark times make strange bedfellows.

When Av was shattered, one version of the PCs (and their ship and its crew, but not Rock Rackus or anyone else who was on Av when the Great Eclipse occurred) was hurled across the cosmos, and they materialized in the woods near the city of Bole, outside what was once the Ancient ziggurat of Av. (Salamanders from Jiese briefly took it over in adventure ten, and its exact condition depends on the party's actions.)

Due to the odd nature of time on Av, where events happen when is most dramatic rather than in a strict chronolinear progression, the party returns to their homeworld months after they left. In the intervening period, the Obscurati has taken control, and one of the few people who resists their dominion is **Benedict Pemberton**, once the dragon tyrant **Gradiax the Steel Lord** but most recently an inventor, industrialist, and would-be conqueror of Ber in the guise of a gray-haired human.

As more and more of the world fell under the sway of the Ob, Pemberton's efforts to strike back just resulted in him losing his limited forces. The dragon realized his only chance for victory was to count on the party actually completing their mission to the Gyre. He set duplicants up at various locations he thought they might return to, and when the party appeared near the ziggurat, he and his loyal minion **Pardo** activated two duplicants to investigate.

It's important in this adventure to bear in mind whether Pemberton's daughter Terakalir survived adventure six. If she did, he mostly genuinely likes the party, and his motivation is to ensure the world will be one where his daughter can grow up powerful and feared. But if the party killed Terakalir, Pemberton is only feigning cordiality, and the moment he's sure the Obscurati has been defeated and the Axis Seal ritual corrected, he'll be poised to have his long-deferred revenge.



BENEDICT PEMBERTON



The Ambush

Pemberton is still actually on an island somewhere in the Yerasol Archipelago, along with a small cadre of loyal gnolls. Unbeknownst to Pemberton, the Obscurati located the island weeks ago but chose not to attack. Instead they infiltrated Pardo's mind, forcibly integrating him with a hivemind composed of dominated gnoll slaves who serve the Ob. He is always accompanied by two invisible members of the ghost council who ensure his obedience. They have kept watch on Pardo, and through him on Pemberton, so that they will know as soon as the party returns. They aren't simply 'invisible,' but in fact are occupying Pardo's body, somewhat akin to ghostly possession.

The Obscurati has an ambush party waiting to teleport in, composed of powerful warriors, two of whom—**Lauryn Cyneburg** and **Kaja Stewart**—are, like Pardo, partially subsumed in a hivemind. This has made it impossible for them to disagree with the plans of Nicodemus, and has infused them with greater power, as they now wield the meta-physical might of dozens of people at once.

Once the party arrives, it is only a matter of minutes before the Obscurati attack.

You Awake

You awake, scattered across the ground in a forest. Embers of blazing thistles drift by on a wind, briefly providing enough light to make out the surprisingly intact hull of your ship, lying without even a hushed whisper in this night-time wood. Your injuries are mysteriously healed, and the damage wrought by heavenly hailstones on your vessel has vanished, but as your gaze drifts upward through a crooked slit in the canopy, you see a starry abyss looking back, its nebulous teeth poised to crush your world, as they have crushed Av.

You're back in Risur. Your mission has failed. Your path to the Gyre has been cut off, and what little hope you had left has, like a candle reaching the end of its wick, guttered and turned to smoke.

Then you hear a gasp of shock, and a deep-voiced laugh. Disoriented, you sit up and see, at the edge of the light, Benedict Pemberton and his gnoll lieutenant Pardo. Pemberton raises a glass in toast—distilled water, with a celery stick for flavor. He wears a black patch over his right eye.

"Constables," he says. Then he nudges Pardo. "I told you they'd come back. They can't help saving the day. It's pathological."



PARDO

You're My Only Hope

Pemberton talks as the party comes to their senses. They have arrived a few dozen feet from the entrance of the ziggurat where the salamander Kuyler set fire to the Antwalk Thicket (see adventure ten, *Godmind*). The once-stone building is still brass, and the fires have long-since died out, but the trees and undergrowth survived, and their greenery has grown back. Bizarrely, though, the whole scene is coated in an inch of snow and the temperature is freezing. The leaves are brittle and coated in ice.

A few dozen feet away, a section of the forest has been cleared to make way for a railroad, and it stretches away to the south. It appears a train was parked here, but the crash of the party's airship derailed it.

The PCs and their crew are wholly uninjured and rested, and while their ship is on its side (just off-map south-west of the ziggurat), a few minutes of heaving will get it righted so it can fly.

Pemberton and Pardo were waiting in the doorway that led into the underground chambers. Pemberton's just wearing the eyepatch so one of his eyes can be adjusted to darkness, even if bright light ruins his night vision in his other, but he'll play it off briefly as if in the time the party was gone he suffered a grievous injury. He tries to be patient and cool, though inwardly he's never felt happier in his life since he was basically convinced he was doomed without the party's help.

He explains, first, that the new ruler of Risur built this railroad to help access the plane of Jiese through the portal in the ziggurat, but 'local fauna' forced them to abandon that project, so they sealed the portal. That was several months ago, and the world has gotten dangerously cold since then, but he's not sure if the two are related.

As far as anyone cares, Pemberton says, the party is dead. He is the only friend they have left in the whole world. But of course, he has made a plan that can get them out of this hole.

The Fall to the Dark Side

Pemberton starts recounting the events of the past few months. It began with soldiers captured from the invading armies in Risur, soldiers who were possessed by powerful Obscurati ghosts. They let themselves be taken to prisoner of war camps, where they overpowered the unexpected guards, then triggered the formation of hiveminds. Somehow the possessing ghosts managed to stabilize the hiveminds so they were able to draw people in and make them obey, but the hivemind did not become insanely single-minded like previous manifestations had. The Risuri soldiers, outnumbered by the prisoners, weren't able to resist the combined psychic will, and they became loyal to the Obscurati. This continued like an avalanche rolling down a hill; the more people caught in the hivemind, the more easily it could pull others into itself.

It spread faster than a disease; it spread like an idea, and almost as soon as someone became aware of the risk, their minds were overwhelmed.

Most of Pemberton's duplicitous spies were discovered and absorbed into these new hiveminds, but before that happened he learned of panic in numerous cities. People had only a vague idea what was happening, but knew that crowds were a threat, so many fled into the wilderness. Pemberton and his gnolls are fairly safe on their island, he hopes.



KAJA STEWART

with them are five people. Kaja Stewart, who once crafted weapons for the Ob, holds up empty hands, ready to conjure firearms, while her four-armed eidolon stands defensively beside her. Two black-robed mages are shrouded in shadow, and they flank a third, nondescript figure holding a cigarette. Lauryn Cyneburg, formerly Risur's minister of infiltration, pulls the portal shut with a snap of her fingers.

"Hm," she says, glancing at how close they arrived. "My aim has improved?"

In the center of the ambush party, the nondescript man says, "Of course you *would* show up a day before I solve this. I suppose you think you're swooping in to," he chuckles, "'save the world'?"

"Your former allies, who now see the wisdom of my new world order, told me your mission. You were going to use the Axis Seal yourself with your own new planes.

"Imitation is flattery, and I'm glad you wanted to follow my lead, but it was your noses stuck where things didn't need sticking that caused the situation we're in. I assure you we have 'saving the world' in hand, and this will all turn out tidy and safe if you don't cause any more trouble. But maybe you've found something useful."

He sucks in a long drag from his cigarette, cracks a charming smile, and gestures for the party to explain themselves.

Answer Time

The Nicodemus who is here is occupying a random body by means of *needlewire*. He's incapable of using his actual magical abilities, so he's here merely as an onlooker.

This is basically the party's last chance to interact with the campaign's main villain outside of combat, but you don't want to let the conversation drag on too long. Players are apt to ramble, but a good villain is concise and in control.

Question Time

Any PC who succeeds a Sense Motive check (DC 36) at this point realizes that Pardo has drawn away from the conversation, and looks conflicted. Just before the ambush begins, he scratches at his own scalp and hunches. Head cocked at a maddened angle, he says, "I'm sorry, master."

A shining portal opens in the air within arm's length of the party, and a horde of foes materialize. Four dozen metal humanoids stand poised to attack, their limbs ending in weapons, and

Nicodemus wants to know whether they have the necessary planar links to perform the Axis Seal ritual, and if there are any worlds in the Gyre that might be better than the planes he's planning to use. But since the PCs here right now don't know about what the other version of them did in the Gyre, Nicodemus will think they've failed.

Hit the following three beats in the conversation:

- ♦ Nicodemus asks what they learned in the Gyre. He's willing to give information about what the Obscurati have done in order to keep the PCs talking. In particular, he'll admit that Wolfgang von Recklinghausen was able to use autopsies of Gidim to figure out how to stabilize the hivemind effect. He nonchalantly says it's much more complicated and technological than just that, but he'll only reveal more to those who are members of the conspiracy.
- ♦ He offers them a final chance to work with him, rather than against him. He assures them that he has a new plan for the Axis Seal which will put an end to all the chaos that broke out since the Great Eclipse, and he promises that if they pledge their loyalty he'll surrender to them once the ritual is complete, to let them judge if his actions were justified. Of course, pledging loyalty in this case entails being bonded to a hivemind, effectively dominating the PCs and making it quite hard for them to turn against him at the eleventh hour.

If pressed about his plan, he lies (Bluff +35) and claims that he's adopting the Arboretum plan that was proposed at the Obscurati conclave on Mutravir Island. The conspiracy made planar icons for all the planes that would have featured in any of the five main Ob plans, and he's willing to adopt a more muted alteration to the nature of reality now that the hiveminds have given him a chance to bring societies closer together.

- ♦ If they refuse, he mocks them for failing their mission to the Gyre. He accuses them of being sentimental saboteurs, blindly valuing antiquated morals and the suffering of people today over progress and the needs of countless yet to be born. He is creating the shape of things to come, and in that new world, people like the party will have to go.

At that point, or if the party makes any hostile moves, he orders his ambush squad to attack. If the fight breaks out early, he'll continue talking. The body he's in is only a temporary vessel, not prepared to carry his full power, and so he's incapable of contributing in a battle.



LAURYN CYNEBURG



NICODEMUS



Contingent Ambush

Action. Tactical. Level 24.

The mastermind was prepared for the party's unlikely return.

There aren't many combats in this adventure, so we encourage you to ramp this one to as over-the-top a scene as you can. In a frozen forest, between an immobile (but still armed) airship, a train filled with clear-cutting machinery, and an ancient ruined ziggurat, the party must defend against a master of teleportation, a woman with the most powerful small arms anyone has ever invented, soul-fueled mechanical warriors, mages who control shadows, and a gnoll death priest. Also, the man currently serving as vessel for Nicodemus carries a black crystal that when shattered (either intentionally, or if he is killed) releases the screaming malice—a gargantuan many-headed monstrosity the party drove off in adventure four.

People should be knocked across the battlefield and shatter whole trees. An entire unit of constructs should explode at a single strike from a PC's weapon. The malice should pluck PCs and thrash them about in the forest canopy. A PC ought to suplex the train on top of Pardo. And after one or two rounds of battle, a howl in the distance heralds the arrival of the Ash Wolf, a fey titan who at the least wants to drive out interlopers, and who might be willing to help the party.

Stats are presented in Appendix A: Combat Catalogue.

Alert Strike Force

- ✦ Lauryn Cyneburg
- ✦ Kaja Stewart
- ✦ Pardo
- ✦ 4 Obscurati construct squads
- ✦ 2 Obscurati elite occultists

Potential Ally

- ✦ The Ash Wolf

Noncombatants

- ✦ Pemberton
- ✦ Nicodemus



SWITCHING SIDES OR BETRAYING EACH OTHER

If the party does side with Nicodemus, you need to use a bit of Schroedinger's Plot and adjust things the party isn't aware of. Rather than the PCs fighting minions of Nicodemus to rally the world in an uprising, they're sent to quell resistance and clear the way for a unified planet to support Nicodemus as he performs the ritual at the Axis Seal. They'll need to defeat Harkover Lee in Flint, then suss out and thwart a plot by their former allies who were trying to inspire revolution around the world.

Only during the Axis ritual will an ally—likely El Extraño—break the party free of the ghost council's control and explain that Nicodemus intends to end free will. Of course, the party might still side with the Ob, slice the kobold spymaster to bits, and surrender their free will in order to create a utopia.

The real problem comes if some of the PCs go for it and the rest don't. Let that play out, but perhaps talk to your players out of game and see if they're okay with fighting each other, or if they want you to provoke one side or the other to have a change of heart. The Ob agents can easily stabilize or revivify PCs who are near death, allowing you to take them prisoner.

Basically, be ready for the players to accidentally steer themselves into a ditch, and perhaps get their opinions of how they'd like things to end before you give them a chance to make the campaign crash and burn so close to the end.

Terrain and Tactics

The forest near the once-burning ziggurat has a mix of massive trees and undergrowth dotted with smaller trees. The ziggurat lies to the north, with the party's ship to the south-west and the rail line and derailed train on the south-east. (We didn't put a crashed ship on the map because we don't know what sort of ship the party has.)

Lauryn, Kaja, and Pardo each are bonded to a hivemind that uses psychic attacks throughout the battle, which should clue in the PCs that their foes aren't acting wholly of their own free will.

When the battle begins, a droll Lauryn remarks, "They're used to fighting fey titans. Perhaps our overwhelming shortness will confuse them. Cannon fodder, lead the way." She opens combat by using *maze* against the most dangerous PC. Thereafter she conjures a *teleport trap* at the top level of the ziggurat in order to cut PCs who try to teleport off from the rest of their allies. (This would normally take 10 minutes, but the hivemind lets her cast the spell as standard action.) Then she uses her other spells at range while keeping allies between her and the PCs. Typically she'll use a quickened *hold person* or *scorching ray* each turn, or simply quickened *invisibility* then dimensional hop to get out of trouble.



Kaja tries to stay in the middle of the battle so she can keep the PCs in the first range increment of her firearms. Over the course of three turns she'll summon an *arcane cannon*, then use *artillery barrage*, then summon her double-barreled shotgun. She only relies on her revolvers for opportunity attacks, or if she survives more than three rounds.

Pardo uses *destruction* on a spellcaster, then follows up with *fire storm*. He'll use *repulsion* to try to keep enemies out of melee range, though those who get past the spell have to deal with his wrecker ability to destroy weapons that strike him.

The construct squads are mere cannon fodder, and they try to surround a single foe, making them gloriously vulnerable to area attacks. The elite occultists try to keep out of melee, either using their attack spells or trying to dispel the party's annoying buffs.

End of Round One. Pemberton doesn't fight, but halfway through the first round he apologizes but says he'll be right back. Then his duplicant falls to the ground, shifting into an inert metallic form. Pemberton has gone back to his island fortress, where he can deal with Pardo while the gnoll is unaware of what's happening to his body.

Finally, at the end of the first round of combat Nicodemus draws and smashes the black crystal holding the screaming malice. Or the crystal shatters when the party attacks Nic; his body crumples easily, but his spirit lingers long enough for the dead body to have some parting words. (See Aftermath.)

Later Rounds. Starting in the second round, the malice ponderously wades into battle, serving more as a mobile obstacle that is best dealt with by keeping away from it. At the end of the second round, Pardo screams and begins taking 50 damage each round, since his real body is being clawed by Pemberton hundreds of miles away.

At the start of the third round the party hears the howl of the Ash Wolf, they see his approach on the fourth round, and on the fifth round the fey titan leaps upon a foe, either to drive the malice back or save an imperiled PC.

Of course, the party is at maximum level. This might end up being a cakewalk for them. If so, consider the encounter a test run for you to figure out what sorts of tricks and defenses Nicodemus needs for the climax to be a challenge.



Aftermath

Ideally the party should figure out how to free people from the Obscurati hivemind control, or at least take people alive so they can experiment on finding a solution. In the heat of battle, it's fair to let clichéd efforts like shouting, "This isn't you!" actually have a chance (DC 40 Diplomacy) of dazing a foe, but this only works the first time it's attempted.

The body which Nicodemus has possessed remains under his control even in death, giving the mastermind an opportunity to witness the party's prowess. He seems to note their powers and vulnerabilities, but at the sight of a fey titan he huffs a laugh and begins to say his parting words. As he speaks, a darkness seeps into his features, until finally he is nothing but a shadow and an echoing voice.

"It's not worth throwing more resources against you in open battle. You're a terror to behold, true, but you will fail because you lack leverage. I do not. If you can set your pride aside for one day, I will have this fixed and we can stop this worthless violence. But continue to move against me and I promise you, every city on this world will burn. In a thousand years, no one will remember their names even if millions die. They will only know that I secured a perfect world. My conscience can abide a scorched earth. Can yours?"

At this point, return to adventure twelve.

THE LOST EYE

Keep track of who among the party has the lost eye of the Voice of Rot, which grants control over spirits of the dead. In the context of this adventure, whichever PC carries the withered and calcified eye is immune to the *gestalt strike* powers of hivemind-enhanced foes, as well as any attacks from the ghost council itself at Axis Island. Additionally, the character gains a +5 bonus to any checks to break people out of control of the hiveminds. Finally, the bearer will intuitively understand how Nicodemus can be defeated or destroyed.



ACT ONE: World of Ruin

The Obscurati are ravaging the world in order to stamp out dissent against their supposed high-minded ideals, but the party can incite a revolution against their rule.

Clarity of Will

In adventure twelve, before reaching the plane Reida, the PCs should each choose someone they are linked to back in the real world. Whoever they pick will snap free of the Ob's control, starting now.

Those connections give them some early allies they can leverage to start freeing others from the Ob's control. It might even make some combat encounters unnecessary. Do note, though, that even if someone chooses to have a connection to a person, he or she might still be willingly cooperating with the Ob, even without the need of mind control.

No Rest for the Weary

If the party does anything that seems particularly restful, they're distracted by a nagging sense of falling into an abyss. If they try to sleep, or to replenish any daily abilities (barring those that can be replenished by other daily abilities), visions assail them of standing at the edge of a world, staring down into the maw of the Gyre. Until the end of Act Two, the party finds it impossible to benefit from any long-term rest or otherwise replenish spells or daily abilities. They can still take time to heal between encounters, but even that fills them with a sense that if they are too slow, they might fall into a chasm they can never escape.

HIVEMIND CONTROLLED HEROES?

For simplicity's sake, we assume that the PCs are powerful enough and canny enough about the hiveminds that they aren't in any danger of being sucked into one, unless they're captured and the villains have time to brainwash them. Indeed, NPCs such as Delft were able to hold out against the hiveminds, and so they had to be targeted individually, even after whole cities had already been turned.

Raise a Banner

Exposition. Real-Time.

The party plans how to save the world.

Nicodemus's threat lingers. Move against him, and he'll make every city in the world burn. But more urgent was the timeline, because he asked for them to 'set their pride aside for one day.' Whatever Nicodemus is planning, the window to stop it is limited.

A few moments after the fight outside the abandoned ziggurat ends, Pemberton's duplicant body becomes active again. If it was destroyed, he *sends* to the party a few minutes later, and gives them directions to a safe house halfway to Flint, where he stashed another duplicant. He's reluctantly willing to give them directions to his island hideout too, but that's an eight hundred mile flight, and there's no time to detour to visit him.

In the meanwhile, any survivors of the battle denounce the party unless they were freed from the hivemind. The Ash Wolf explains that his powers have waned since the Dreaming was torn away. His wounds heal slowly now, resisting even magical recovery, so he's wary to go with the party and aid them elsewhere. Times are dire, though, and if the party makes a good argument, he could be convinced.

Planning with Pemberton

Pemberton explains that he has dealt with Pardo, and is inches away from killing the gnoll, but if the party knows a way to break someone out of the Obscurati's control, he would rather appreciate his minion coming back to his senses. Solving that issue will be important, because perhaps all the party's former allies are now enemies, and they won't have much chance if they can't get them back. It's time to make a plan.

The Big Goal

If the party wants to perform the Axis Seal ritual, they could just go to Axis Island, but there are two obstacles.

First, Nicodemus has threatened a scorched earth policy, and so good heroes ought to find a way to stop that before they strike the island.

Second, as Pemberton showed them in adventure ten, the ritual site is flooded with destructive energy. The colossus was built to resist it, and even that machine needed mages chanting spells to keep it secure. Once the mages were killed by agents of the Voice of Rot, the colossus was torn apart.

Leave it to the party to speculate how Nicodemus is going to perform the ritual this time, but if the PCs want to avoid being disintegrated while they alter the seal, they could use powerful magical protection. The most likely solution is performing the *sacrament of apotheosis* so they have godlike invulnerabilities. In adventure eight, Pemberton likely witnessed at least part of the memory event where Ashima-Shimtu revealed the nature of the *sacrament*, and if the PCs don't think of it, he'll suggest they keep it in mind.



Moreover, since the power of the *sacrament* depends on the strength of belief of those who support the target or targets, saving people around the world from Nicodemus's malice is a fine way to rally followers who can lend you their faith. The *sacrament* has great risk, however, and it is not absolutely *necessary* for success. Let the PCs decide whether they think it is worth it. See *Player's Handout: Final Sacrament* for details of how that ritual functions.

Free Your Mind

Getting followers for the *sacrament* means freeing people from the control of Obscurati hiveminds. Fortunately, the party has at least one test subject (Pardo) to experiment on, and possibly others (Lauryn and Kaja). Let the PCs tinker for a bit, and if they come up with something clever, let it work even if it's not what we suggest.

Our suggestion is that to break an individual out of a hivemind, you need to deal positive energy damage to them, which weakens the hold of whichever member of the Ob ghost council is keeping the hivemind under control, and then you need to exhort them and guide them out of the mind control (DC 40 Diplomacy). If you want to play up the challenge, retool the Interrogating a Suspect mechanics from the *Player's Guide*, so freeing the person requires you figure out how their mind has been misled and then help them find the core of their identity to resist the control. The first attempt typically just takes moments to snap someone free, but if that fails subsequent attempts require several minutes of interaction to disentangle the psychic bonds.

Yes, in the midst of a technological and political revolution on par with the latter half of the 19th century, the PCs might accidentally invent Freudian psychoanalysis.

To break a whole mass of people out of a hivemind, though, there are two options. First, you could give that whole crowd of people something they cannot ignore. Once they're paying attention to something new, you can attempt to free them all at once by inspiring them to resist the compulsion (DC 40 Diplomacy). The challenge, though, is that if you only free a portion of the people in an area, it's just a matter of time before the hivemind reclaims them. To free, for instance, the city of Flint, you'd need to be noticed by nearly a million people and address them all.

Alternately, you could find the ghosts in charge of the hivemind and either control them or take their place. Typically the ghosts will accompany whichever living person (or dragon) has been placed in charge of an area. Subdue that person, and if you can control the ghosts with magic, you can command them to end the hivemind; or if you destroy the ghosts you'll need to give the people who were in the hivemind a new directive, and convince them you're in charge.

That is intentionally a bit hand-wavey. In game, it means that to free Flint the party will need to overcome Harkover/Inacht, and to liberate the other nations they'll need to similarly defeat the leaders whom the Obscurati placed in charge. 'Defeat' need not require combat, but in Flint, at least, their foe is prepared for a battle.



Known Unknowns

Pemberton's information is over a month out of date, but this is what he's sure of.

In Risur, fellow dragon **Inacht the Hex-Eater**, who for two centuries served as principal minster to the monarchy in the guise of **Harkover Lee**, has been placed in charge of the nation, and the seat of power has moved to Flint. Slate, which has no industrial sector, was not useful to the Obscurati. Flint, by contrast, was set to begin producing enchanted machinery. A lot of cargo ships from Flint have been going to Axis Island, laden with what Pemberton assumes are parts to repair the colossus.

Rural Risur seems to be more contentious, and Pemberton has seen military units march onto farms in order to domineer people into a hive-mind, since the new dark world is struggling to produce enough food.

In Ber, it seems the more savage races like goblins and Pemberton's beloved gnolls have proven resistant to hiveminds that are based on the idea of civilization, so the Beran military has been rounding up 'primitives' in camps. He doesn't know what happens to them after that.

Pemberton had few spies in Crisillyir, but the Clergy was effectively out of power. There was a rumor that Nicodemus was looking for a female eladrin who was held in a Clergy prison, not to punish her but to recruit her.

Danor was already loyal to the Ob, but they were releasing some ludicrous propaganda trying to convince people that everything was going according to plan. Pemberton wonders if maybe there was some secret core of resistance causing them trouble.

The state of Drakr depends on how the party handled adventure twelve. If Komanov won, Drakr is an empty land, where Ob loyalists are retaking territory and trying to rekindle the fire of industry. If the party defeated Komanov, the nation is producing gargantuan anti-aircraft cannons to be delivered and installed at Axis Island.

Elfaivar is the one place for which Pemberton has absolutely no information.

The day after the party left, the strange phenomenon that had been happening atop Cauldron Hill stopped. Now the mountaintop is bare stone, but still no one goes there. Even the ghosts that were once drawn there and which could be seen in mirrors now seem listless, because they no longer have a way to reach the Bleak Gate and find their eternal rest.

Unknown Unknowns

What Pemberton doesn't know is that Risur under the directives of Harkover Lee has begun bringing thousands of people from the countryside into the city in order to pacify and reeducate them before sending them back out to create hiveminds of their own. The whole city of Flint has had its streets lined with gas lamps that function as *wayfarer lanterns*, which modulate the mood of all of its million inhabitants, and eight large lantern towers enhance the control over each district.

In Ber, the Bruse is personally overseeing mass executions of undesirable primitives. In Crisillyir, pious individuals are being punished by having to disassemble by hand religious buildings of the Clergy, and showing signs of faith will get you punished with reeducation in Vendricce. Danor has convinced people to doubt their own loyalties, and to turn themselves in for voluntary execution so they won't threaten progress. Nothing particularly surprising is happening in Drakr, but in Elfaivar the eladrin enclave run by **Athrylla Valenar** is besieged. The Ob's forces could easily crush the city, but Nicodemus desires a civilized, formal surrender as a sort of gift to Kasvarina.



Thwarting Scorched Earth

If your party is capable of teleporting between cities, they can probably liberate Flint, then go from city to city in less than an hour. If they can defeat the head of each nation's hivemind, that should stop them from enacting the scorched earth plan. However, it takes just one person casting *sending* to alert the Obscurati, and from there Nicodemus would order his allies around the continent to retaliate. Since the party doesn't know how Nicodemus intends to follow through on his threat, will they risk acting?

We have a suggested solution, detailed below, but PCs might come up with their own plan, like rescuing Andrei von Recklinghausen from Sentosa and having him pose as Nicodemus (after all, Nic used his body for a few months) to call off the scorched earth plans.

Operation Ettin

Pemberton has what he calls a 'two-headed solution.' He knows the Obscurati had magic items that could intercept *sending* spells, but their area of coverage was limited. However, Flint's own cursed mountain Cauldron Hill always had a strong sway over the city, and with a bit of creative spellcasting one of those devices placed atop the mountain could blanket the entire city. That would let the party deal with their home city without the news reaching the Ob, at least not right away.

Other cities don't have handy sites to focus a powerful ritual, so while the PCs might be able to take their time to do Flint right, the other cities will need to be done simultaneously. Pemberton has a handful of duplicants stashed around the world, and he could get into each major city. He can jury-rig the magic necessary to let the PCs control duplicants, and after the party combines forces to defeat Harkover Lee and free Flint, each PC can take control of a duplicant in a different city. Acting via telepresence, they'll be able to strike four or more cities simultaneously. Divination magic or interrogating Harkover would help them know which cities they need to worry about.

The Ob has only prepared their scorched earth countermeasures in five cities—Flint, Alais Primos, Cherage, Seobriga, and Trekhom. If you have more PCs, they can double up, or the party might use their own magic to try to help the enclave Sentosa in Elfaivar. If Trekhom was conquered by Grandis Komanov in adventure eleven, there aren't enough people there to warrant the Ob destroying the place, so you can shift its scene to take place in Slate or Nalaam, whichever the PCs will care about more.

Pemberton's real body is still in the Yerasol Archipelago for all of this, since he's busy readying for another attack on Axis Island. Once the party finishes saving the other national capitals, they'll need to return to their real bodies in Flint, then take their airship to Axis Island. (If the ship gets destroyed, they can just teleport to Pemberton's island lair. See *Dragon-Riding*, page 218.)

Duplicant Technology

For a character to control a duplicant, he or she must lie down and wear a steel skullcap etched with draconic iconography, to which is attached a blindfold and muffling ear covers. A flat stone shard marked with a series of seventeen numbers in draconic is placed on the person's chest, and then a drop of witchoil must be poured into a divot in the stone. That draws a fragment of the subject's soul into a specific duplicant, which has a witchoil reservoir marked with the same seventeen numbers. Pemberton has memorized the codes for all his duplicants, and can easily adjust which duplicant a given skullcap and chest stone link to.

(If you want maximum steampunkery, instead of a skullcap these can be top hats.)

As a show of good faith, Pemberton reminds the party that his original duplicant control designs forced the subject to loyally obey his commands. He's had a slight change of heart after seeing what the Obscurati has done with mass domination, and so all his new duplicants are not designed for mind control. He laments, though, that he won't ever be able to mass produce them and sell them to the public, because his supply of witchoil is finite. With the Bleak Gate severed from this world, he'll never be able to make more.

That's another reason to go to Cauldron Hill in Flint first. Unless the party has a stash of witchoil, he'll need to recover some of the fluid from cracks and fissures in the mountain. His duplicants around the world already have their own reservoirs of witchoil, but he'll need a few ounces of the stuff in order to let the party link to them.

Glimpse the Age of Reason

Exploration. Montage.

The utopian veneer of the new world order hides callous oppression.

Before diving into grand acts of world-saving, the PCs might stop over somewhere more low key. This could be a farming village to make plans with Pemberton, or a town outside of Flint to check on the safety of a family member, or possibly just a train stopped to clear the tracks of snow that they spot while flying overhead in their airship.

At first glance, everything should seem serene and positive. Everyone has their heads held high. No one squabbles. All affairs proceed in an orderly fashion. Farmers erect arcanoscientific gas lamps to shed dull red light over their crops to keep them warm, and then with the aid of soldiers begin to operate a steam-powered autoplow to till the field. Streets are swept and faintly-lit by brown gas lamps, all the houses and buildings are in good order, and police take the time to visit every house and ask if anyone needs assistance. In addition to the freight cars, passenger cars look to have been recently assembled in order to manage the increase in travel demand, and seats are comfortable and clean, with each car lit up with the dim blue glow of gas lamps.

But no one speaks, except when necessary to coordinate action. Food is unseasoned. No one seems to be daydreaming, or preoccupied, or bored. Everyone functions like a cog in a machine. If pressed, they're not lacking in free will or personality, but they simply aren't inclined to express themselves or do anything selfish. They're quick to agree to help if anyone needs aid, but since everyone is generally content, no one has a reason to ask. There is peace, but in the same way a well-tended garden is peaceful. Left to its own devices, nothing will change.





Disobedience Will Not Be Tolerated

In whatever scenario the party finds themselves observing these behaviors, some sort of outsider will disturb this serenity. A gnome mage named **Weebit Vallshadow** was hiding—lurking in the fields, creeping through the sewers, stowing away on the train—but he's out in the open when his *invisibility* spell ends. He panics for a moment and glances at the people around him.

"He's *wrong*," says a bystander. "We must help the little bastard."

Weebit tries to cast a spell, but as one everyone nearby converges on him, and they grab and hoist him off the ground. Weebit cries out, "Let me go! I'm not causing any trouble!"

Another local person says, "You shouldn't hide. That's so old-fashioned. Cooperation is the new thing!"

Weebit keeps yelling, and so someone muffles his mouth. He bites the person, who frowns but ignores the pain.

Someone else says, "He must be sick of loneliness. The rumors spooked him. Here, wee one. Let us help. We shall subsume your fear so your mind will no longer be capable of dissent. It's much more cooperative?"

If no one helps him, Weebit at this point begins to calm and relax. His vision drifts into the middle distance, and then he slowly nods. "I understand now. Thank you. Let me go find where I can be useful!"

The crowd puts him down and claps briefly, and one person stays nearby talking to Weebit about how his magic might make him a security risk, so he should travel—in a group of course, so he's safe—to the reeducation schools at Dawn Square in Flint.

A 'Gandalf the White' Moment

If the party interrupts this, no one can possibly pose a threat to them. By revealing who they are in a dramatic way, they have a chance to snap the people here out of their control. But unless the freed group is kept a fair distance from others who are in a hivemind, it won't be long before they start to be drawn back in.

People are excited that the party has returned, and everyone mentions how empty they've felt these past few months. They only know snatches of information about what really happened to the world, but they've heard of the PCs and trust that they can fix this. They want to know how they can help, and quite in contrast to their 'cooperative' demeanor moments earlier, now they're angry.

March on the Capital

Exposition. Montage.

The party takes back control of Flint.

Flint has changed since the party left. The Obscurati-generated hiveminds subdued the populace, and eventually Harkover Lee submitted to them as well. With the former dragon in charge, Flint has undergone rapid construction.

The most obvious thing visible from afar is that each of the city's eight 'civilized' districts has a sixty foot high tower capped with a massive version of the *wayfarer's lantern*, shedding unhealthy brown light to dull the populace's emotions. These distributed lanterns, as well as myriad street lamps around the city, are fed by gas lines which originate from the governor's mansion, where a small refinery of spire-like exhaust towers burn off remnants of the refining process in spurts of fire. While the lanterns help keep people orderly, simply turning them off (such as by blowing up the refinery, destroying the lantern towers, or even just closing valves in underground gas lines to stop the flow) isn't enough to end the Ob's control, since people are also held in a hivemind.

Other changes are spread throughout the city. Wherever the Ob have changed things, instead of Flint's eclectic style of architecture inspired by a cosmopolitan mix of neo-classical and druidic designs, the new buildings are drab and functional, like something out of the most dystopian visions of Soviet Russia.

Anyone capable of seeing invisible things notices thousands of shimmering strands stretching from the ground to above the rooftops, where warty yet somehow subdued shapes float, weaving together everyone's consciousness into a shared hivemind.

The Ayres

Industrial fishing has overtaken what were once luxury homes on these islands. Every piece of land that could sport a pier now hosts a fishing trawler. Where once these isles were refuge from the industrial stench wafting out of Parity Lake, now the odor of tons of fish and whales drift on the sea breeze.

The wealthy who lived here have been reeducated, and those with valuable management skills were brought to Central District to handle bureaucracy. Others were encouraged to serve as hosts for the fishermen, who reside in crowded mansions-turned-tenements. An unsightly truss bridge is halfway-constructed, extending from North Shore with the intent of linking the islands together with a rail line.


The Ayres Lantern Tower rises from a magically extruded rock island in the central lagoon of the islands.





The City of Flint



1. Governor's Mansion
2. Pardwright University
3. Dirigible Shipyard
4. Sharon M. Baker Station
5. King's Station
6. RHC Headquarters
7. Thinking Man's Tavern
8. Dawn Square
9. Stanfield Canal
10. Cauldron Hill
11. Sechim's Alkahest & Etchings
12. Theater of Scoundrels
13. Danoran Consulate
14. Smuggler's Wharf
15. Waryeye's Apothecary
16. Cippiano Coffee
17. Nevard's Henge
18. Gallo's School for Boys
-  Lantern Tower

Bosum Strand

The docks are busy as ever, and Stanfield Canal is being widened. Freight rail threads through the district, with a major hub just beside Dawn Square. The square is the site of the Bosum Strand Lantern Tower, and the buildings around the field have been converted into lodging for the city's reeducation camps. Tall brick fences capped with barbed wire surround the whole area, and a riflery detachment keeps watch from atop the lighthouse tower.

The subrail lines connecting Central District and North Shore have just been bored out, and track has been laid, but lighting has not been installed, leaving miles of black tunnels under this district.

Central

The royal docks have been expanded into a towering airship construction yard. The frame of a dirigible is complete and partially coated with the pressure vessel. Tanks containing hydrogen are dangerously huge and unguarded. (If you suspect your party will get their ship blown up in the fight with Harkover Lee, you might change the nature of the airship being built here, so the party can have a fresh vessel for their final fight against Nicodemus and the colossus.)

The former RHC headquarters has been renovated, and the Central Lantern Tower rises from it. **Director of the Secret Police Stover Delft** still operates from the building.

Cloudwood

The forest is being clear-cut for farms, which are lit by gaslight lanterns. The Bridal Veil waterfall (where the party first met Gale) was detonated, because dissidents in this district had found a way to use it to cast 'veils' that would shield them from hiveminds. Now an ugly tumble of boulders forms rapids, rather than the serene and beautiful falls.

A scar of a rail line cuts its way from Central to the Cloudwood Lantern Tower, where lumber is loaded for construction purposes. **Minister of Nature Hana Soliogn**, formerly known as Gale, operates from here, and every day she casts a spell to call thick clouds over the entire city. This is done for morale, so people won't need to see the frightening Gyre looming overhead, and because the clouds reflect the brown lantern light to ever so slightly brighten the gloom.

North Shore

While the beautiful beaches are open to the public, no one feels any need for recreation, so they are empty. The North Shore Lantern Tower rises like a beacon from atop the lower of the two 'ears' of the Great Horned Mountain at the northwest tip of the district. The higher of the two peaks has been cored and flattened at its top so immense turrets can aim skyward and at the harbor.

Parity Lake

The factories here are going faster than ever. One of the few actual improvements in living conditions in Flint is that workers have been moved from tenements to slightly safer housing, and are able to take subrail to work. The Parity Lake Lantern Tower rises from the center of the (somewhat toxic, marginally flammable) lake.

The factories along Alchemy Row (such as where Sechim's Alkahest and Etchings operated) now all serve as a single immense munitions plant. Here, at least, the firegems and firedust are warded to prevent runaway explosion.

Pine Island

This district is viewed as less economically useful, so most of its residents have been 'suggested' to join the military. Barracks and training fields dot the area. The Pine Island Lantern Tower sits near the northern tip of the district. Because of the length of the district, people in the south-central part of Pine Island are less affected, and so a few desperate former dockers like **Thames Grimsley** hide there, hoping to avoid discovery. They resist being drawn into hiveminds by reminding each other daily of the wonderful individuality they were able to express before the Obscurati came to power. They accepted a harsh life as long as they could speak their minds, so the Ob's promise of security held little sway over them.

Stray River

This middle class district has been little changed, though a new rail station is under construction meant to service rail lines that will eventually stretch westward across all of Risur. The Stray River Lantern Tower sits on the east bank.

The Nettles

Mostly abandoned over a year ago, the slum buildings still stand, serving as an excellent hiding place for those who want to avoid the hiveminds.

The Ob have not built anything new here, not even a lantern tower, because they're unsure how stable Cauldron Hill is. The Bleak Gate facility tore its way into the real world when the colossus Borne escaped, and then the Gyre began to strip away everything but the bare stone of the peak. Though now the Bleak Gate is apparently inaccessible, the mountain still possesses great and mysterious power.

If the party wants to prevent communication in and out of the city, they'll want to sneak atop Cauldron Hill and perform a discreet ritual (the details of which are inconsequential for PCs of their level).

Freeing Flint

A lot will depend on how the party pursues this goal. Whatever they decide, go with it, but it should inevitably lead to a battle with Harkover Lee in dragon form.

If we were to script this, the party would let a train load of people they'd freed from the Ob hivemind reach Flint, and word would spread that the heroes of Risur have returned. The PCs discreetly enter the city in disguise and set up necessary ritual components and duplicant tech atop Cauldron Hill. Then they contact Gale, Stover Delft, and possibly other allies, freeing them from the hivemind and preparing them to act at the right moment. Those allies warn that Harkover is strongly compelled and it would be necessary to weaken his control over the city before he could be freed.



STOVER DELFT



GALE SOLIOGN



THAMES GRIMSLEY



Thames Grimsley would organize a theatrical performance on the docks of Bosum Strand to try to rally people stuck in the reeducation center to resist, and right as the defense forces are closing in to apprehend him, the party activates the ritual to block *sendings*, then descends in their airship from the cloud cover over the city. They take out the anti-air defenses on the Great Horned Mountain, destroy the lantern tower in Bosum Strand, then land and reveal themselves in Dawn Square.

Before they can make any big speeches, they notice that the unpleasant brown glow from the city's street lamps is turning red, spreading out block by block from a nexus at the governor's island. Then Harkover Lee teleports in, still in human form, greets the party, and tells them he has been ordered by Nicodemus to raze the city if they oppose the Obscurati. The battle begins just before noon, only a few hours after the party woke up near the ziggurat.

Incidentals

If they succeeded, the party can call upon a whole city. Don't make them expend any resources to heal, and if they want any mundane gear they will not be denied.



HARKOVER LEE

You and Your Friends

Action. Tactical/Real-Time. Level 24.

The dragon Inacht the Hex-Eater, once Harkover Lee the loyal advisor to the kings of Risur, battles the party across the length and breadth of Flint.

Whenever the party reveals themselves or makes their move in Flint, Harkover first has the city-wide gas lines flooded with energy from Jiese, and then he confronts the party. If the party ambushes him, his aides know to set off the scorched earth operation. If the PCs are canny they might target the refinery on the island of the governor's mansion, and if they're stealthy enough they might be able to destroy it and head off this whole scene.

However, Harkover resides at the island and between his own magic and the ghost council that controls him, it's likely he'd notice the party's approach. If the PCs have a fool-proof plan — one that can get past spectral hounds that can sniff invisible creatures, widespread wards that illuminate anyone disguised or polymorphed (so Harkover always glows), bound nature spirits that warn of anyone magically traveling through the earth or water, and teleportation beacons that redirect intruders to the Pine Island barracks — let them Mission: Impossible this. But we think the following scene is exciting, so we hope it gets to happen.

Treacherous Vizier

Harkover can *jaunt* once per day to teleport and get within range to speak to the party. He arrives in human form, flying with the aid of the ghost council, and his voice is magically magnified so hundreds or thousands of onlookers go silent as he calls to the PC who he previously served. His voice is jaunty, his Beran accent tinged with restrained mockery.

"Greetings, my former monarch and honored heroes of Risur. I ask that you surrender. For the past three years that I have watched your rise, you have been nothing if not loyal to your nation, and now if you wish to save your citizens, you will do the bravest thing and let yourselves be defeated.

"Your nation coerced me into becoming a docile pet, and when Nicodemus freed me he promised he would do the same to the people of Risur. Now they are *my* pets. If you persist in your arrogant belief that you have the right to direct the fate of these people, then your last directive shall be for them to perish in fire."

He cups his gold wizard's orb in one hand, then gestures with his other hand at the glow of red lantern light, slowly spreading through the city from the direction of Central District.

"Moments ago I gave the order for the city's gas lines to be flooded with energy from Jiese — pure elemental fire. In a matter of minutes it will reach high enough concentrations that it will explode, obliterating this city and all its people. Even if with your royal prowess you do manage to avert this, we have alerted Nicodemus, and the capital cities of the other four great nations are each lighting their own funeral pyres. You cannot save them all.

"Cast down your crown. Forsake the throne. Or this great city will die."

At any hostile action or attempt to stop the fire, Harkover adopts his draconic form as Inacht the Hex-Eater and tries to ensure the party cannot save the city.





Stopping the Explosion

The party can thwart this five main ways: shut off the fuel lines, disable the refinery, destroy the towers, recalibrate the lanterns, or force Harkover to call it off.

Shut Off the Fuel Lines. The party could head underground into the subrail tunnels to turn valves and shut off the flow of gas going to each of the eight districts. Harkover would pursue as best he can, and the tunnels are big enough for a huge creature to run but not fly.

To find a place where the pipe flow can be controlled, a character can try to recall or infer the layout of the city's gas pipes. Roll a secret Perception or Knowledge (local) check (DC 35) for the character, and then give the PC a location within five hundred feet, which probably takes about a minute to travel to. If the check failed only slightly, the actual control valve might be close to where the PC thought it was (requiring a round or two of searching to locate it), but if the check fails by 5 or more, the character will have to guess again and try somewhere else another five hundred feet away or so.

Instead of finding a safe control valve, a PC might intentionally damage the pipes anywhere in the underground tunnel. Dealing at least 50 damage causes gas to fill the area. Three rounds later a small explosion goes off in a 50-foot-radius burst, dealing 15d6 fire damage (Reflex DC 25 for half). Following the initial explosion, the area is littered with irregular structures composed of threadlike firegems as the fire solidifies.

If the character does find a valve safely, it takes a DC 30 Disable Device or Spellcraft check (automatic for a technologist) to operate the mechanism. A failed check means the pressure builds up, and then the pipe cracks. As above, gas fills the tunnel and will explode in three rounds. The explosion happens instantly if the check is failed by 5 or more.

A character can keep trying to stop the flow of a gas leak, making another DC 30 Disable Device or Spellcraft check. If *this* check is failed, an explosion goes off immediately, and the fire runs down the length of the pipeline. A mile-long stretch of the city bursts into flame as the pipeline explodes underground and street lamps ignite on the surface. While a PC might survive this, and it does stop the larger explosion Harkover intends to wipe out an entire district, thousands still die.

Disable the Refinery. The governor's mansion and its refinery is heavily guarded with ten Obscurati construct squads (see page 292). You can reuse the map in adventure nine, or if the party tries to get into the underground pipeline the construct squads can pour into the service tunnels. A gunfight with unintelligent rifle-wielding constructs in close proximity to explosive gas is a terrible idea. Or wonderful, if you're Michael Bay.

Should the party enter the refinery and attempt to disable the flow there, they still need to shut each valve off separately (same mechanics as above), and it's obvious that if any of the pipelines explode, it will spread through the entire city. Again, this only wipes out parts of the city above the subrail lines, but it is still devastating. As for the refinery itself, if it blows up, repeat the attack above for three consecutive rounds, encouraging PCs to get the hell out of there.

Destroy the Towers. The PCs can destroy all the lantern towers, but they're scattered across the city, and even in their airship it takes five minutes for them to fly from one district to another. If the party splits up and everyone uses their ability to *jaunt*, plus other teleportation magic, they might be able to get to them all in time. They also could have allies if they have freed people from Ob control.

See the Lantern Tower map for details, though the layouts of the towers vary. Each has an Obscurati construct squad on the ground floor, and two city defense squads stationed outside. Inside, tanks hold a small quantity of gases infused with eight different planar energy types, and a main line receives gas from the refinery at the governor's mansion. That runs up through the second floor (which typically has a mechanism controlling four clocks on the tower's four faces), and up to the top of the tower where the lantern burns.

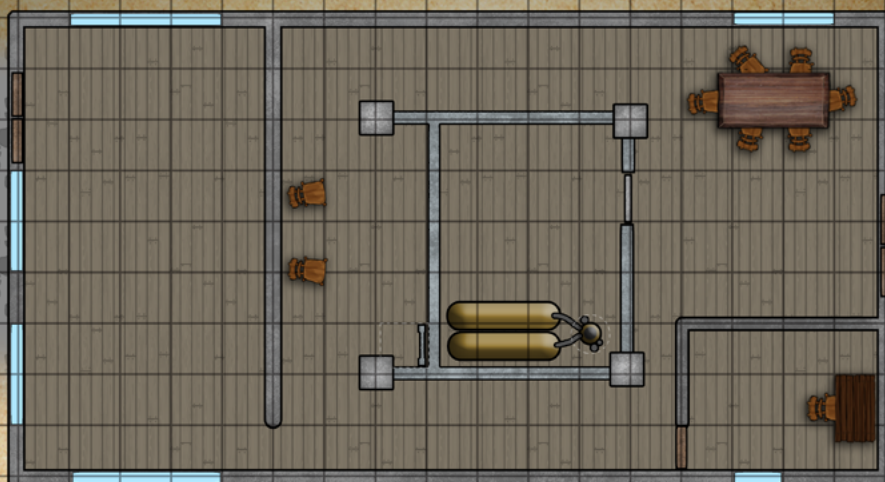
A good volley of ship's weaponry will take out a tower in a round, triggering an explosion, the same as the other explosions described above. A pressure valve shuts off flow if the lantern itself is destroyed, preventing the tower from constantly burning if the party decides to blow the place up.

If a PC gets inside a tower and reaches its controls at the top floor, clever sabotage (DC 35 Disable Device or Spellcraft, automatic for a technologist) can vent the gas into the air, where it burns off safely in a constant stream. Failing means the tower will explode in three rounds, as above. Failing by five or more causes an immediate explosion. And of course intentionally breaking the pipes can blow up the towers easily, if a character's confident he'll survive the explosion.

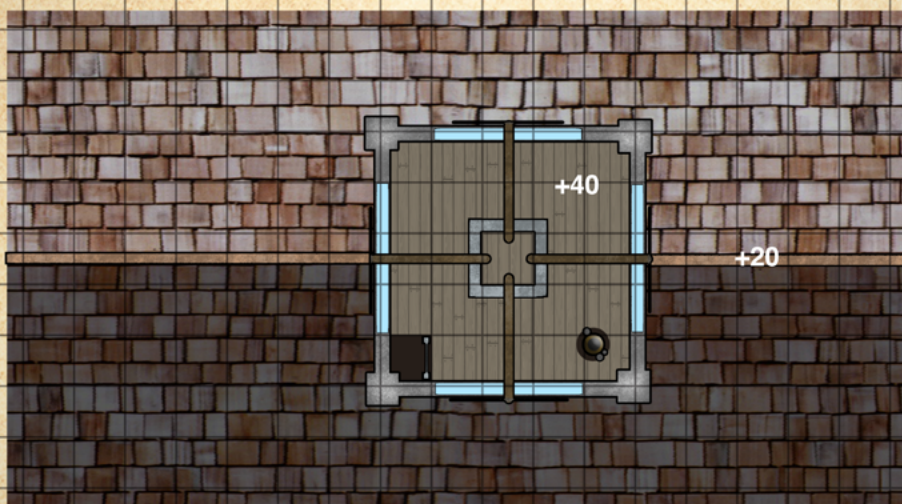




Ground



Clock



Lantern



1 = 5 feet

LANTERN TOWER



Recalibrate the Lanterns. The refinery on the governor's island can produce energy keyed to any of the different planes the Obscurati used in their Axis Seal ritual. Normally it emits a hazy brown light with energy from Ratios, to encourage reason and restraint. Harkover has switched it to Jiese's fire energy and has increased the flow rate.

If they reach the refinery, instead of just shutting off the lanterns, they could switch to a different energy with a DC 35 Knowledge (planes) check. Fourmyle's 'empowerment' trait would help people break free of the Ob's control amidst a green glow. Ostea's purple glow would suffuse everyone with healing energy. Baden's pale white light would let everyone fly. Once the refinery is recalibrated, the effect spreads about a mile per minute through the city. Each attempt takes a minute.

Harkover Calls it Off. If defeated and freed from control of the Obscurati, Harkover Lee can order the workers at the governor's island refinery to shut off the pipeline.

Battle on the Wing

Harkover's draconic form as Inacht the Hex-Eater (see Appendix A: Combat Catalogue) is designed to give him mobility and range so he can engage the party on the wing as they rush through the city trying to stop the coming explosion. We encourage you, each round before you decide what he does, to ponder several rounds ahead. This is a brilliant, intelligent foe, not a mere clawed monster, and time is on his side.

Additionally, unless the party freed Delft and Gale from their hive-minds, those two each defend one of the two lantern towers—in Central District and the Cloudwood. Jaunting lets them move elsewhere if the party tries to avert the explosion without going to those towers.

Finally, an Obscurati construct squad and two city defense squads guard each lantern tower. If the party moves through the city at ground level, feel free to throw one or two city defense squads at the party every few minutes. They're barely speed-bumps at this level, but it gives you an excuse to describe the landscape of the city and clarify the party's progress through the city streets.

You and Your Friends

- **Harkover Lee**, Dragon Tyrant
- **Stover Delft** of the Secret Police
- **Hana Soliogn**, Obscurati Loyalist
- numerous Obscurati construct squads
- countless city defense squads



Tactics

We want this fight to last several minutes and span as much of Flint as possible. Don't closely track time, as long as the party is keeping active; the detonation might happen in as few as five or as many as thirty minutes, so long as the party feels the pressure is on. But it's impossible to predict whether the PCs will split up and head for different lantern towers, or if they'll board their airship and charge the dragon, or lure him within range of the North Shore anti-air cannons, or rush the refinery on governor's island forcing Harkover to engage them.

Let this combat stretch out, and don't have Harkover close the distance unless he can attack an isolated PC. If the party tries to take him out directly, he withdraws and circles, running down the clock. He stays between 150 and 200 feet out, and if the party has attacks that can reach him he swoops between buildings only slightly above the ground so that they have trouble getting a shot at him.

DEFENDING THE KINGDOM



A PC who is monarch of Risur is empowered in this battle by the rites of rulership, as described in adventure nine. In particular, this grants a +10 bonus to AC, attack rolls and saving throws; a +10 bonus to Strength-, Dexterity-, and Constitution-based checks; fast healing 20 (in addition to fast healing 10 that is innate in the rites); and counts as Huge for abilities that depend on size. Because of this, Harkover prefers not to target the monarch until there are no other foes left.

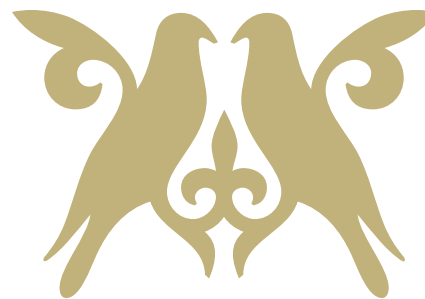
(If the Ob had been smart they would have followed the rites and had mind-controlled nobles revoke the monarch's power and name a new ruler, but Nicodemus thought the party was dead and didn't want to perpetuate the monarchy.)

Harkover will fire a few *delayed blast fireballs* from afar to try to keep the party focused on him, and if they move to try to deal with the impending explosion, he watches from afar and tries to get ahead of them in a wide arc. He'll dive out of sight if possible (even if the party's flying above the rooftops, it's hard to spot even a huge flying foe at night when he's a thousand feet away), then try to be waiting to attack from a direction they don't expect. They'll almost certainly hear him coming, but should only have a round of warning before he flies past and either pops them with more fire spells, or strafe them with his breath weapon if the PCs are clustered.

He should almost never use his melee attacks unless cornered, and even then he prefers to reposition enemies away so he can withdraw. If he's ever struck with multiple conditions that he cannot easily recover from, he'll *dimension door* away and look for a different tactic.

The greatest threat to him is probably the party's own airship, since it keeps him from using the city as cover, and it removes his chief advantage of speed. But the airship isn't fast enough to get to all the lantern towers in time, so the party will have to split up. If the PCs get on their ship and rush him, he reverts to human form, teleports to the ground and ducks into a building, in which he'll wait for the PCs to give up looking for him.

After some initial long-range bombardment and possibly one close engagement, have Harkover vanish for a bit. Give the party time to deal with one or two of the pipelines or towers, and then have the dragon return and target whoever's most vulnerable, then warily withdraw. Give the party time to come up with a plan to deal with him, and come up with a way for Harkover to thwart their first plan. Then, when they're just past halfway to saving the city, try to steer events so the party is all able to do something when Harkover is forced to actually get in close.





Flint Nostalgia

The reason, of course, to extend the length of the battle is to give as many familiar faces and places an opportunity to have a cameo. If the party freed Delft before the fight, their old Chief Inspector might be able to disable the lantern tower at the RHC headquarters, saving the party time; and ditto Gale in the Cloudwood. (Without the hiveminds empowering them, neither is strong enough to fight Harkover.)

Perhaps the party enters the subrail tunnels through the same station where the eschatologists took hostages in adventure five. Soldiers under Ob control might start shooting at the party, only to themselves fall under attack by former Kell Guild scoundrels. Maybe the building Harkover throws at them was part of the natural history museum, complete with murals of Ancients and their artifacts. While running down the length of an old subrail tunnel, a PC might glimpse a blood-streaked access hatch from which a man huddled in rags watches them (yeah, we never did anything with the rag man either).

If it looks like they're out of time, and the party can't reach the North Shore tower, a last-minute attack led by Julian LeBrix from the old Danoran consulate can shut it off before it blows.



Aftermath

When reduced to 0 hit points, Harkover crashes and shapeshifts back to human form. Clinging to life solely through magic, he curses Nicodemus for making him betray his nation. The ghost councilors bound to him stagger away, and if the party stabilizes Harkover they can free him from the hivemind. If they leave him to die, his last words are a warning that Nicodemus has ordered Alais Primos, Cherage, Seobriga, and Trekhom destroyed.

If saved, Harkover surrenders and warns that the other capital cities will be exploding soon too because he *sent* to Nicodemus. He's unaware of any countermeasures the party put into place. He can share the same information as above, plus the fact that the figures in charge are at the Cathedral of Triegenes in Alais Primos, the Cherage rail enclave, Seobriga's central square, and a parade route that starts at Trekhom's parliament building.

By this point Pemberton will have collected the witchoil he needs from atop Cauldron Hill, and is ready to let the party activate their duplicants. First, though, the PCs may want to address the city, whose populace will all be looking for guidance. If needed, Gale can use her magic to magnify their voices so all of Flint can hear them. If they've defeated Harkover and saved the city, the power of the hivemind is weakened. All it takes now is giving the people of Flint some other purpose so they can resist the Ob's attempts to reclaim them. Any good heroic speech should do the trick.

As the party speaks, the clouds over Cauldron Hill break, and a gap that resembles the spread wings of a raven reveals the sparkling glow of the Gyre overhead.

Versus Me and the Revolution

Action. Montage. Level 20.

In order to liberate the oppressed masses of other nations, avert a scornful scorched earth, and incite a revolution, the party must strike multiple international targets simultaneously, one for each of them.

The party should move on the other capital cities within minutes of defeating Harkover Lee if they want to be certain the Obscurati aren't able to burn them down. Even if the party blocked *sendings* from Flint to keep specific information from being delivered, there are enough psychic gestalts active in the ranks of the Ob that its officers don't take long to realize that their powers have waned noticeably. Within half an hour they pinpoint that Flint has been cut free from the Ob's network of hiveminds. If the party procrastinates more than an hour, then the cities of Alais Primos, Cherage, Seobriga, and Trekhom will be laid to waste.

The PCs can of course use their own teleportation magic to reach the cities instead of using Pemberton's duplicants, but the key factor to this scene is that all four cities must be saved at the same time. If the whole party spends five minutes in Cherage, warning will be sent ahead to the other three cities, so it will be too late to save them.





Simultaneity

In our experience few gamers can maintain rapt attention on their fellow players' actions when their own character isn't in the scene. If you are blessed with such a group, by all means, run each of the scenes below independently.

If your group is less patient, or at least experimental and forgiving, you can try running all four or five scenes in parallel. Have each PC roll initiative, then play through a snippet of a scene with the PCs in turn order, cycling through them and advancing the plot bit by bit. The first cycle establishes where the PC awakens in their duplicant, the second gives them a chance to figure out where the threat to the city is based, and in the third they make their way to that spot and get into conflict of some sort. If anyone starts a combat, put that PC on hold until all the PCs are in combat, or at least in some other time-sensitive challenge.

Then run all the battles at the same time, resolving each PC and all of their foes for one turn, then the next PC and foes, and so on. Clever parties will use some manner of magic to let them communicate with each other, or you can simply have Pemberton's tech grant the PCs the ability to talk to other duplicants. (Or, depending on what technological advances they pursued in adventures seven through nine, they might have radios.) You can then justify table-talk, or perhaps even bizarre tactics like swapping duplicants mid-fight.

Of the scenes below, the events in Cherage probably have the strongest emotional impact, but if you figure one in particular will resonate with your group, try to have that one resolve last.

Distant Situations

Pemberton had his duplicants hidden away, so when the PCs take control of them they aren't necessarily anywhere near where they need to be. If they didn't save Harkover and learn where to go, each PC will have to figure out how the city is imperiled and make their way to a place they can avert calamity.

As always, if any of the NPCs referenced below are dead, you can introduce a new character to fill the same general role. We've designed these encounters to be exceptionally dangerous, because at this point in the campaign failure should have a major, lasting effect. If only one or two PCs succeed in saving the city they go to, then the other cities fall. Because they're in duplicants, it's possible to 'kill' a PC and have him fail this mission, at which point he'll awaken in his real body.

Disabling, destroying, or recalibrating the lantern towers in any of these cities functions the same as in Flint, though cities without fire energy don't have exploding towers.

Alais Primos

The city doesn't have a network of gas lines for handy detonation, but the Ob have created four Lantern Towers, each with its own fuel supply, to pacify the city. Currently the head of state of Crisillyir **Arch Secula Natalia Degaspore** is overseeing the systematic disenchanting and dismantling of the Cathedral of Triegenes, which sits on the mouth of the volcano Enzyo Mons. Among the workers is **Morgan Cippiano**, who will recognize and warn of any PC who appears here. If alerted, either by Morgan or by guards ringing the bells in the lantern towers, Degaspore commands the towers to switch to fuel derived from the now-destroyed plane of death, Av, which causes the souls of everyone in the city to leave their bodies, trapping them in a purgatory while their physical bodies slowly perish.

DUPLICANT MECHANICS

Pemberton has two duplicants in each of the cities in this scene, so a PC might go solo or, if there are enough PCs, the party can put two constables per conflict. Perhaps if a PC's first duplicant is destroyed, he can 'respawn' and try again after healing.

The duplicants mimic all the character's abilities unless otherwise stated, even those of the character's worn equipment. As for melee weapons, upon activating the duplicant the character will need to find something of similar size and shape of whatever weapon he wants to wield, which will be transformed and empowered by the magic of the soul link.

Ranged weapons function somewhat similarly, but they need to have at least somewhat similar form—you can't pick up a simple iron bar and have it function as a gun, but any musket can work as a vessel for the power of a PC's +5 *undead-bane rifle*. Note that the duplicants in Trekhom were intended for an assassination, and so they have rifles handy when they arrive.

Because of the magical link to the pilot's soul, damage to the duplicant is also dealt to the pilot, and likewise healing affects both, so potentially one PC could stay behind to communicate with everyone and heal them as they become injured. If the duplicant is reduced to 0 hit points, it is destroyed, and the pilot awakens in his own body with 1 hit point. The pilot can also choose to sever his connection as a standard action.

A duplicant has DR 10/adamantine while above half its maximum hit points. While below this threshold, he or she takes a -2 penalty to AC and saving throws. The duplicant has darkvision 60 ft., blindsense 30 ft., and is immune to poison and disease. They aren't technically alive, but effects transfer to the pilot's body, so blood loss or psychic attacks that make you unable to breathe are still a threat (though blood loss that does less than 10 damage isn't a problem as long as the duplicant is above half its maximum hit points).

The character is generally unaware of what is happening to his or her own body, which is considered helpless. Damage dealt to a real body manifests on the duplicant. The pilot can also distantly hear things around their real body.

If PCs decide they don't have the right skills for a given mission and want to swap with someone else, the pilot can sever his connection as a standard action. It takes two move actions to swap the linking apparatus with an ally (which pulls that ally out of his duplicant), and then another standard action for each creature to reestablish a link. From the point of view of people in distant cities, the PC's features will shift into the metal body of a duplicant, which will slump but remain standing. Don't be too mean and have the bystanders attack the briefly defenseless machine.





Cherage

The demoness **Ashima-Shimtu** is moving among masses of Danoran citizens who are convinced their lives are too wretched to be worthwhile to the new world. They have gathered at the Cherage Rail Enclave, where the city's gas lines originate, and where undesirables are loaded into trains to be disposed of under the direction of Danor's minister of propaganda **Gardienne du Cherage**. Ashima-Shimtu is uncertain about her role now that she has freedom, and she will fight against any PC who tries to work against the Obscurati's will.

Seobriga

In the central square of the Beran capital, **Bruse Shantus** oversees a systematic mass execution of goblins and gnolls, whose recalcitrance about becoming civilized has helped them resist the Obscurati's pacification efforts. **Brakken of Heffanita** helps corral the prisoners, among whom is **Glaucia Evora**, who was strong-willed enough to resist the Ob's influence. Guarded by trained tyrannosaurs, the hivemind-controlled Bruse is ready to order the city's Lantern Towers to be flooded with Illocus energy, from the plane of time, causing the city's emotions to rapidly cascade. He'll then release the goblins and gnolls so they can attack, provoke a panic, and drag the city into a bloodletting melee. The PC receives unexpected aid in the form of the suave **Sor Daeron**, a one-armed eladrin warrior who years ago served Kasvarina, but who now intends to dismantle the power of the Obscurati.

Trekhom

The new head of state of Drakr, **Hastenschrieff Willimarkanova** (an Ob officer philosopher), runs a parade route through the capital city Trekhom. War constructs escort her, and she rides in a carriage with the philosopher **Vlendam Heid** beside her as a dwarven shield. At the end of the parade she'll enter a heavily-fortified underground bunker, then detonate the city's lanterns, so there's little time to strike. But her route is watched from afar by sniper **Kvarti Gorbatiy**, who can teleport between the city's lantern towers to maintain near-constant overwatch.

Optional—The Siege of Enclave Sentosa

Eladrin matriarch **Athrylla Valenar**'s enclave of Sentosa found itself drawn fully into the real world when Av was shattered in the Gyre, and now **Cula Ravjahani**, former aide-de-camp of Kasvarina, commands a siege around the city. The Ob have sufficient firepower to obliterate the small number of hold-outs, but Cula has been ordered to take Athrylla prisoner. Defeating Cula will weaken the hivemind's control on its soldiers and earn the party powerful allies among the eladrin.

The Mission

In each location, one PC will need to find out what specifically is threatening the city, and then avert that. Afterward, the survivors will be easily swayed to help the party, so it would be useful to give them orders to keep them working against the Obscurati. If the party intends to use the *sacrament of apotheosis*, they should make sure the people they save know who rescued them, and spread the word so that in a few hours when they are called upon to help, everyone will know to answer. Once everyone is done they should return to their real bodies, leaving their duplicants inert, and then they'll set out together for Axis Island.

The *sacrament* requires people to have faith in a specific named ideal or entity, so if the PCs are going that route, they should probably decide on a term to refer to themselves as a group. This could be as simple as 'the RHC' or 'the heroes of Risur.' If they want something a bit more impressive, Pardo once again recommends 'the Illuminati.'

Alais Primos—God is Dead

The PC who tackles Alais Primos activates a duplicant lying atop a bed, covered in a white sheet, in a tower not far from the Grand Librarium. A cracked skylight has let in recent rain, and the whole building's core of wooden frame is rotting, but a glass door opens out to an ornate marble balcony that overlooks a majestic view of the city. As everywhere else, snow has fallen and the air is below freezing. Notably, Alais Primos does not have the ubiquitous gaslight lamps of Flint, but it does have four lantern towers dispersed around the valley, glowing a docile brown. But it's one *missing* light that stands out most starkly: across several canals, past various monuments of the old faith, and up the scorched slope of the mountain Enzyo Mons, the volcano's maw is dark, its lava cool. In its place, hundreds of small lanterns light up what remains of the Cathedral of Triegenes.

The distant cathedral that sits at the edge of the caldera looks different; most of its higher levels are missing, though it appears to have been carefully disassembled, not merely demolished.

(If the dragon Esurientes destroyed the cathedral in adventure eleven, you could instead have Natalia overseeing the construction of a geothermal power plant on the volcano.)

Sounds of weeping waft up from the base of the tower. On the ground level, a mass prayer of defiant worshippers has sprung up despite new laws that forbid all religion. A few dozen people have managed to resist the control of the city's hivemind, but at this very moment city guardsmen approach the crowd from two directions. If not stopped they'll beat and arrest the worshippers, then carry them away to the city's newly-constructed rail depot so they can be loaded into trains and carted away for reeducation or elimination.

The top floor of the tower is only 70 feet up, so a dramatic leap and rescue is heartily encouraged. A single City Defense Squad threatens the faithful, which is hardly a speedbump for even a solitary PC.



ARCH SECLA NATALIA DEGASPARE



MORGAN CIPPIANO

The Secular Deconstruction

From rescued faithful, the police, or some other source, it's easy to learn that the new head of state of Crisillyir, Arch Secula Natalia Degaspere, is at the Cathedral of Triegenes overseeing its methodical deconstruction. Hundreds of people cling to scaffolding around the building, chipping free bricks one at a time, then carrying them down so Natalia can disenchant them.

Among the workers is Mogan Cippiano, former head of the Family crime syndicate's branch in Flint. If a PC spots him first (DC 30 Perception), he might be freed from control, at which point he can warn the PCs of Natalia's powers. Otherwise he might spot the PC and warn Natalia. In a fight, the arch secula shouts for workers to ring the cathedral bells, which alerts the lantern towers in the city. Then she dampens any magical powers the PC has while the local police fill him with bullets. Her bookpin bodyguards try to shield her, and will chase after a PC who flees.

Alternately, a PC might simply target the lantern towers directly, but they're separated by about a mile each. The lantern towers are laid out generally the same as those in Flint, except instead of clocktowers they have belltowers. The old golden bells still hang throughout the city, inscribed with magic chants that have not been used in centuries. In the two Victories, those bells were often rung to create city-wide defenses, from mere teleportation wards to immense shimmering walls of force. In this scene they'll most likely just be rung as an alarm (cords can activate them from the ground floor), but if things go terribly wrong they offer a chance to save the city.

If the PC lets the defenders sound an alarm bell – either at the cathedral or in one of the lantern towers – two things happen. First, a golden light rolls outward from the bell; this has no effect, but a PC might realize with a DC 20 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (history) check that the bells once harnessed the power of Urim to block teleportation. Second, within a minute of the signal, all the towers activate their failsafe, and their lanterns shed a swirling purple-green light.

Alais Primos Lantern Towers (4)

- + 2 City Defense Squads
- + 1 Obscurati Construct Squad



Cathedral of Triegenes

- + Arch Secula Natalia Degaspere
- + 1 Bookpin Bodyguard Squad
- + 1 City Defense Squad

Things Go Terribly Wrong

If the failsafe activates, the towers burn fuel infused with the power of Av, which before it was shattered in the Gyre served as the plane of death. Each tower covers a quadrant of the city, ripping people's souls from their bodies. Unable to reach the destroyed Av, thousands of souls float in a limbo that vaguely resembles Alais Primos, and over the course of an hour the lights of the lantern towers gutter and die. If the PC cannot find a solution by then, the city perishes.

Those at the Cathedral of Triegenes are safe from this power, but once the lanterns turn on there's no one at the towers alive to turn them off. It would appear venturing into the city is hopeless.

If a PC is caught in the lantern light, he must make a DC 30 Will save each round or his soul is pulled into the shared limbo of Alais Primos.

A PC might be able to withstand this effect long enough to destroy or disable one or more of the towers, which only have their construct guards, since the city defense squads will have lost their souls. Fighting while resisting the lantern's effect (and briefly glimpsing flashes of the limbo where people's souls scream for help) will be risky and desperate, and eventually a natural 1 will probably pull the PC into the limbo, at which point the PC will need a new way to save the people of Alais Primos. Once in the limbo, the character cannot end his connection to the duplicant, because his soul is no longer in his original body.

Of course, other PCs might be able to finish their missions and somehow come and help. But the solution we have in mind is for the PC to be trapped in limbo and see that the light of the towers is slowly fading. If he goes to a tower, he'll realize that the bells are the only solid thing in what's left of the world. It's possible to inscribe a new spell onto the bell with a DC 24 Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (religion) check, so that when it tolls that spell peals out across the city. Many options would work, ranging from sonic attacks to shatter the lantern glass to some manner of countermagic to restore everyone's souls.

If the city falls into limbo but then is rescued, the survivors are freed from the hivemind, yet still feel an intense kinship. For a brief moment, their souls began to mingle, and strangers throughout Alais Primos seek each other out, weeping and hoping they can serve each other better as friends and neighbors.



Cherage—Another Kind of Chain

The demoness **Ashima-Shimtu** was given a promise of immunity by Nicodemus, as the mastermind ultimately ascribes his motivation to found the Obscurati to Ashima-Shimtu's offer of the *sacrament of apotheosis* five centuries ago. She is escorted at all times by a pair of ghost councilors who ensure that no one accosts her. The only restriction Nicodemus has placed on her is that she must not come to Axis Island. So Ashima-Shimtu went to Cherage, thinking to witness the glorious new age in the mastermind's seat of power. Thus far she finds this new world closer to the rule of the Demonocracy than the rumored perfection of the celestial heavens.

While Ashima-Shimtu was in chains, she indulged in the idea of abandoning her evil nature and pursuing some form of noble redemption, but the demoness is giving herself time to ponder her course of action now that she actually has the option to enjoy malevolence again. Her first taste of freedom in centuries was tempered with the cloying moral imperative of the Obscurati's new world order, and she is uncertain if she actually has any choice in how she acts.

She has found herself strongly affected by the propaganda that is present everywhere in Cherage. The Obscurati's master of propaganda **Gardienne du Cherage** (a tiefling who attended the Obscurati conclave in adventure seven) has implemented a widespread campaign to teach the people of Danor the proper way to live in the new world, and slogans regularly adorn walls or newspaper headlines:

- ♦ "Visit Your Local Library for Detailed Tracts on the Proper Way to Live?"
- ♦ "You Need Only Ask! The New World Will Provide?"
- ♦ "Create Progress! Aid Your Fellow Man?"
- ♦ "Reject Your Greed. Your Community is More Important Than You?"
- ♦ "Know Your Talents. How Can **YOU** Best Help?"
- ♦ "Is Your Neighbor a Threat to Order? Be Brave! Report Him!"
- ♦ "This is the Best of All Possible Worlds?"

Struggling to understand her place in this world, Ashima-Shimtu has followed thousands of other confused and yearning souls to the Cherage Rail Enclave. People know that this is where undesirables go when they are to be carted away and disposed of for the greater good. So prevalent and affecting is the propaganda that myriad citizens have been filled with dolorous despair. Wishing to no longer be a burden on their community, they want their government to kill them.

Fuel Depot

The gas for Cherage's lantern towers is originally refined north of the city proper, and trains deliver it in tanks to the rail enclave, from which it is fed to the whole city. A wayfarer's lantern was added atop the clock-tower (building 2 on the map), and it casts the enclave in dull brown light, unless the Obscurati have been alerted, in which case the guards are rapidly working to turn valves and switch over to the red glow of fire energy.

Enclave guards line the sides of the rail tracks to keep suicidal citizens from flinging themselves into the paths of trains, but otherwise the streets and buildings of the enclave are overrun by disconsolate folk. Yerasol War veterans who never learned skills other than combat, single mothers whose children have died, orphans who have no one to guide them, and desperate drug addicts who perversely are helped by anyone they ask to help fund their habits – people of these sorts see the supposedly inspirational propaganda slogans and instead have determined that the way they can best help their fellow man is to cease to be a drain on society.

Ashima-Shimtu, wrapped in a fine robe of red silk, sits on a rooftop beside a withered old tiefling woman who goes by the name **Ruby** (actual name **Willa du Zirteim**). Ruby shivers from fey pepper dementia. She became dependent on the drug to lift her spirits when the sun disappeared, but a few months ago when Av was shattered in the Gyre she could no longer get glimpses of the Dreaming. Normal life was too mundane for her to tolerate, and so she took ever increasing doses of the pepper, hoping to recapture the high that would never come. Instead, every time she smoked she would hallucinate feelings like she was lashed with chains and pulled in a thousand different directions. The metaphor struck a chord in Ashima-Shimtu, and she desires to help the woman, though she cannot decide how.

In the meanwhile, Gardienne du Cherage, acting as public face of the government of Danor since Han Jierre is at Axis Island, has come to the enclave, and she stands at the top floor of the fuel depot in front of the lantern, shouting at the suicidal masses, trying to undo the psychological damage she inadvertently wrought. Guards follow her in order to deter attacks, but with her bond to the ghost council she's quite capable of defending herself from low-level foes.





A Threat to Order

A PC in the Cherage duplicant becomes active in a warehouse near the city's harbor, lying on a pallet in a corner and covered in a sheet. The city is just as tranquil and bland as Flint, but if the PC asks for guidance, a helpful local woman wearing a scarf, veil, and hooped dress will gladly point out that the city's lanterns are fed by the depot at the rail enclave, about a mile from the harbor. Close examination of this helpful local woman reveals her to be a small colony of rats, operating as a hivemind and piled atop each other so they can shuffle about in vague human form. They function as spies for El Extraño (see adventure ten, page 50), but if questioned directly they might panic and disperse into the sewers.

Lines of hopeless people stretch out from the enclave, and here at least people chatter, sharing word of the rail schedules so that they can know how long it will be before they'll be carted off to be killed. After finding some way through or above the crowd, it's easy to spot the fuel depot beneath the lantern tower, and Gardienne du Cherage—standing right next to the glowing lantern—has a presence to her that suggests she is at the head of the city's hivemind.

Ashima-Shimtu could easily be missed as just one face in the crowd (DC 35 Perception), but she notes the PC's arrival and watches curiously, since her rooftop is right across from the lantern tower. Gardienne knows what the PCs look like, but a stealthy PC might avoid detection. At any meddling with the tower, though, the propagandist orders the lantern to be switched to its failsafe—explosive fire energy from Jiese. Before Gardienne or her guards can attack, Ashima-Shimtu intervenes, pulling the PC away with chains and flinging him onto the train tracks.

She demands an explanation in her own peculiar third-person way ("A train approaches to deliver Ashima-Shimtu away, and time is short for her acquaintance to explain the reason behind this attack?"). The Ob forces start to try to take advantage of the opening, but the demoness threatens them with her chains too. She's too conflicted to let them kill the PC without trying to listen first.

A low, long horn and vibration in the tracks announces the approach of a freight train, only a few minutes away.

Wretched Audience

Fighting is certainly an option, but Ashima-Shimtu can be convinced that the Ob should be stopped, though it will take some persuading. In her current mindset, she's willing to believe that if the Obscurati have decided to destroy the whole city, she deserves it, and so she will fight to keep the PC from interrupting the scorched earth plan. Changing her mind requires understanding what's happened with this wretched crowd, and if the PC engages Ashima-Shimtu in conversation, she is reticent and uncomfortable with the unfamiliar emotion of shame.



ASHIMA-SHIMTU

Coaxing the demoness to open up can use the mechanics of 'interrogating a suspect': first establish rapport (DC 32 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Knowledge (religion) check; after one failure you can try only one more, at DC 42), and then extract the information (DC 32 Sense Motive; failing twice loses rapport). A PC that pays particular attention to the desperate crowd and seems like he or she understands their plight should get a +5 bonus. A PC who asks about Ruby, who was sitting beside the demoness only moments ago can automatically get rapport if he listens to the tiefling's story.

If successfully coaxed, Ashima-Shimtu explains, starting off sneering but quickly losing her composure and ending up desperate.





"Centuries in a prison, and Ashima-Shimtu only attempted escape once. Surely she was a perfect prisoner. Her will was restrained, so what could she do but obey the Clergy and meditate on her sins. She meditated on the *Clergy's* sins as well. She had known Triegenes. *He* was a man of true light. But Ashima-Shimtu never saw the world he promised.

"No, she saw everything break and fall. She...pulled, she thrashed at her chains. She wept until the bleeding left her too weak to resist. She refused her identity, so she could believe all that pain was happening to someone else. But she doesn't deserve pity. Even a prisoner, Ashima-Shimtu was selfish. She was filled with malice, but when she tried to take revenge, all she achieved was just to make sure she did not bleed alone.

"But that was someone else, she told herself. Except there was no self left to tell.

"She could not be free. She was forbidden the choice even to die.

"Finally, finally her chains broke. She crawled out into a world without a sun. She believed she could do whatever she desired. Wretched, dragging her chains with her, she yearned for the old villainy.

"But she cannot! She.../ cannot!

"Triegenes promised all could be redeemed. I thought I'd *changed*. But now I feel it, in the air. I cannot choose. I must do what...what *they* say is right! There's no temptation to overcome, so how can I be redeemed? If this is freedom, it's worse than the chains ever were.

"It is worse a lie than any ever told by Ashima-Shimtu, and I will tell it no more! I don't want this false freedom. If it's the only choice I am granted, give me death."

After that plea, she can be swayed to the PC's side with any decent argument, at which point she'll turn all her infernal talents toward intimidating Gardienne into surrender.

If Ashima-Shimtu is not swayed, though, she'll resign herself to fighting, and the crowd will surge forward in awe, convinced she is their savior and a loyal contributor to the community. The demoness tries to hold the PC on the tracks, and the train is only three rounds away.

Cherage Fuel Depot

- Gardienne du Cherage
- 2 bookpin bodyguard squads
- Ashima-Shimtu



Aftermath

A failure here likely means a PC's duplicant body being shattered apart by an oncoming train, and shortly thereafter the whole city explodes.

Stopping the Ob from destroying Cherage snaps the masses out of their despondence, and they're inclined to march on the sovereign's palace, burn it to the ground, and execute anyone in a position of power. Ashima-Shimtu, should she survive, honors the request of Nicodemus not to interfere with Axis Island, and instead she boards a train and sets out to free other Danoran cities.

Seobriga—Civilized Execution

Pemberton's duplicant in Seobriga had to be hidden far from the city center, because the authorities were all too aware of the threat duplicants posed. When the PC activates his duplicant, he awakes in the loft of a stable, covered in a white sheet, and he can hear jeering from outside. The stable lies along the Monument Road on the northern border of the city, and a crowd has gathered to jeer a line of prisoners being carted toward Seobriga's central square.

Bruse Shantus (or whoever succeeded him) has decreed that the 'primitive tribes' of goblins and gnolls be eliminated. The military set up a vast prison camp on the outskirts of Seobriga, since the Bruse intended their execution to be a regular public event, meant to reinforce that Ber embraces civilization and rejects savagery.

Alas, Nicodemus, like many people who should have died a long time ago, is more racist than he presents himself to be, and so for Ber's part in deterring the PCs from moving against the Obscurati, he planned what he thinks is a humorous irony. Rather than using Jiese energy to engulf the city in flames, the lantern towers in Seobriga will be fueled with Illocus energy. The power of the plane of time causes emotions to rapidly cascade, and if it coincides with a bloody mass execution it will drive the population into a violent frenzy.

Anyone in the crowd will gladly share that the prisoners are bound for execution in the central square of Seobriga, where the daily protests used to occur before everyone learned the value of obedience. The killing should be starting any minute, and this will be a good one, because they're killing an *executore dola liberta*, some gnoll who refused to obey.

If the PC wants to get to the square soon enough to save Glaucia Evora, it's time for dashing, Zorro-esque heroism. We have handily put horses in the stable to kick things off at a gallop.



BRUSE SHANTUS

The Killing Field

The Beran capital doesn't have street gas lamps, so like in Alais Primos the Ob have just erected four lantern towers. One is in the central square, directly above the teleportation beacon where the party arrived in adventure six. Ropes stretch out from its first story roof of the tower to the roofs of the buildings surrounding the square, and propaganda flags hang from them.

A squad of marksmen arrayed around the lantern tower have their guns at ready for a conflict. Below them, the square is filled with a few dozen orc, half-giant, and minotaur soldiers who watch over a line of one hundred manacled goblins and gnolls, kneeling on the flagstones. Onlookers peer out of the multistoried windows of the buildings surrounding the killing field.

The streets directly outside the square are clogged with crowds who want a look. And, as it so happens, some particularly interested onlookers are hidden on the roofs.



GLAUCIA EVORA

The Old Master and the Young Apprentice

The eladrin Sor Daeron has for the past several months taken it upon himself to disrupt as many Obscurati activities as possible. He knows Kasvarina is involved with the Ob, and he wants to lure her out to finish what he started four hundred years ago (see adventure eight, *Diaspora*). She has not deigned to come to Ber, but Sor Daeron has found himself genuinely swayed by the plight of the people. Though he was originally a general and holy warrior, Sor Daeron sincerely believes in the tenets of Vekesh, and wants to ensure the people of Ber will survive the dominion of the Obscurati.

Early on as the Obscurati hiveminds were taking over in the cities of Ber, Sor was injured and fleeing soldiers, and he took shelter in the home of **Damata Griento**, half-orc businessman and would-be railroad tycoon. After the immediate danger passed, Damata's brave dreams got the better of him, and he insisted his wife and children go into hiding to avoid being caught in a hivemind, while he would serve as Sor's masked sidekick and assistant. Together, the two have weakened the Obscurati's foothold in Ber, and today they hope to show the Beran people that they can resist the Ob.



SOR DAERON



Defiant Last Words

As the PC approaches the square, he feels a psychic projection in his mind, granting him a view of the imminent execution.

Bruse Shantus walks down a long row of prisoners, flanked by a pair of king-bred tyrannosaurs draped in royal raiment, and accompanied by Brakken of Heffanita, who telepathically projects the ruler's proclamation. Other Berans of note might be present, such as Zarkava Ssa'litt or Kenna Vigilante, but none of them are empowered by hiveminds, and thus aren't a threat in battle.

The Bruse shouts, "Don't look away, citizens! These savages before us were given a chance to obey our laws, but they rejected us. Disobedience is an uncivil serpent, and we must strike off its head before it poisons us. Let all who would resist our unity smell the blood spilled today, and know we shall come for them soon!"



BRAKKEN OF HEFFANITA

"We were never a nation of obedience, tyrant! We were a nation of justice. On this killing field, you might cut us down, but our blood will water a new crop of revolution. Better a savage than a slave?"

Nick-of-Time Heroics

Whether by leaping his horse over the crowds or Assassin's-Creed-parkouring over rooftops to dive into the killing field, the PC can manage arrive just in time to witness Glaucia Evora's defiant last words. If the PC doesn't rush in, though, Sor and Damata swoop in before the gnoll is beheaded.

The half-orc and eladrin have watched from a rooftop at the edge of the square, and when it becomes clear Bruse Shantus is about to execute one of the prisoners – or if the PC who's here moves first—Damata triggers a series of arcane pyrotechnics Sor secretly placed earlier in the day, which cause the ground of the square to catch fire in the shape of a giant S hundreds of feet across. Then smaller pyrotechnics trigger in the side streets, scaring the crowd away and creating a path for the prisoners to escape.

Sor leaps into the killing field and engages the Bruse and his tyrannosaur pets. He'll cooperate with a PC, and when the lantern tower's light begins to change, Sor suggests they both deal with the tower first. A round later Damata swoops in on one of the ropes that lead from the outer buildings to the tower, and he fights off soldiers while tossing weapons to the prisoners so they can make a break for it.

If the PC doesn't join in, the two heroes are overwhelmed and have to flee before they can stop the lantern tower, and the city falls to mass carnage. The vigilantes survive, though, because Damata has read *How not to get shot*, and is very good at dodging bullets while running.



DAMATA GRIENTO

Freedom Fighters

Bruse Shantus was warned about the party interfering, so the moment there's an interruption he waves at the soldiers on the lantern tower. One round later the tower's brown glow changes to strobing red-white. From that point on, whenever a creature anywhere in the city is threatened—ranging from a full-on attack to an overly-rough jostle in a crowd—they respond even more aggressively. For NPCs you can handwave this, but if a PC or ally is threatened or harmed, he must make a DC 20 Will save or retaliate within the next minute. If he does not, after ten rounds he begins to take 1 point of damage each round until he attacks someone, falls unconscious, or ends his turn with no line of sight to any other conscious creature.

Once he has signaled the tower, the Bruse drops his ceremonial sword, draws his earth breaker and charges in, coordinating his attacks with his guardian tyrannosaurs. The nearby City Defense Squads shoot if their target isn't within the Bruse's *primitive presence* aura, but otherwise stay at their posts – one on the roof of the Lantern Tower, and three others stationed around its base.

Beran Forces

- + Bruse Shantus
- + 2 Ob-Bred Tyrannosaurs
- + 4 City Defense Squads



Allies

- + Sor Daeron
- + Glaucia Evora





Damata is here too, but he's much lower level than the major players, and so generally keeps his distance. Ideally a tyrannosaur will try to bite off one of Sor's limb, and he'll let it chomp through his salt arm, which he can immediately regrow.

Aftermath

If the PC fails here, the citizens of Seobriga kill each other nearly to the last man within an hour. But if the Bruse is defeated and the hivemind's control broken, the people of the city surge to the square, seeking guidance. Sor Daeron defers to Damata, who boldly calls on the crowd to march on the nearby prison camp and free the rest of the 'savages.' The crowd cheers, but before they depart, Glaucia Evora grabs the half-orc and threatens that if he tries to turn this revolution to his personal gain, she will beat him until he wouldn't need a mask to conceal his face anymore.

As the crowd marches with Damata at its head, Glaucia and Sor turn their attention to the PC. Glaucia wants to know how she can help, though sadly the answer is not much, other than to be ready to rally people.

Sor Daeron explains that while his long-term memory is not clear, he knows that Kasvarina works with the Obscurati, and if he had a chance to hurt her he could not sit idly by. He rambles about how she was responsible for the death of Srasama and the fall of their people. Out of the heat of battle his awareness of the world becomes somewhat addled, and he assumes the PC is an eladrin like him.

If the PC mentions Nicodemus at all, that provokes a moment of lucidity. He sniffs, recalling a smell, and recounts how a man – or was it a ghost? – who smelled of the smoky leaf brought news to him and the other two matriarchs. The smoking man told them how Kasvarina colluded with the Clergy and caused the death of Srasama, and after many divinations to confirm it, they tried and failed to lure the traitor into an ambush. Sor wishes he could see Kasvarina and finally punish her for what she's done.

Critically, if the PCs aren't aware already, this meeting is a chance to learn that Nicodemus goaded the eladrin matriarchs into betraying Kasvarina and killing her daughter. Sor doesn't know who Nicodemus is, nor his reasons: Nic needed Kasvarina to help him with his plan to use the Axis Seal ritual, but Kasvarina had grown weary of conflict, so he needed to give her one more tragedy to provoke her to action.

Trekhom—The Chancellor's Motorcade

The PC's duplicant or duplicants activate standing up, draped in a sheet, in a closet. Two scoped rifles lie against the wall, loaded and ready. The door out of the closet is bricked over on the outside, though. After breaking through, the PC finds himself in the mostly empty halls of the Drakran parliament building.

Only light security staff remains, because everyone else in the city was required to attend the military parade of **Hastenschrieff Willimarkanova**, an Ob officer now acting as the nation's head of state, and who is head of the city's hivemind. The parade began an hour ago just outside the parliament building, and the crowds here have mostly dispersed. The route is about to enter the industrial district and will conclude in about half an hour, at which point Willimarkanova will enter a subterranean bunker, putting her beyond the ready reach of the PC.

Willimarkanova travels through the parade in an open-top wagon drawn by an Obscurati lantern walker—a four-legged crab-like construct the size of a horse—which scuttles along near the tail end of a parade of thousands of soldiers, military constructs, and wheeled artillery cannons. Seated beside Willimarkanova is famed Drakran philosopher **Vlendam Heid**, who has been trapped in the hivemind and waves and laughs to the crowd. The Ob's intention is to motivate and cheer the population, which has heavily been pressed into service in the city's rapidly-expanding arcane factories. But, y'know, they're also ready to kill everyone if the PCs meddle.



VLENDAM HEID

At the moment the PC arrives, the parade nears a roughly triangular industrial district, about a quarter-mile across. The parade route will weave through this district, which is thick with crowds. Willimarkanova is empowered by a hivemind and so can defend herself, but Heid is a noncombatant.

Immediate Parade Defense

- Hastenschrieff Willimarkanova
- 8 city defense squads
- 2 Obscurati construct squads
- Obscurati lantern walker
- Kvarti Gorbaty (from afar)



Per-Round Reinforcements

- 2 city defense squads

If Willimarkanova is attacked, the lantern walker automatically detaches from the carriage and tries to get between the head of state and her attacker. Two construct squads walk directly in front and behind of the carriage. Eight city defense squads are within sixty feet, and at the sound of fighting the rest of the parade will turn around and rush back to help, such that another two city defense squads arrive each round.

After a couple rounds of combat, soldiers will grab Willimarkanova and rush down the length of the parade toward the front, where another walker is dragging an immense cannon. It takes them ten rounds, but once they reach it they'll detach the cannon and ride onward with the walker, heading for the bunker, which is a few minutes away. Spotters in surrounding spires will notice the attack and will signal the various lantern towers in the city to turn on the Jiese fuel, which will cause the city to explode in less than half an hour.

Willimarkanova is loyal to the Obscurati, so knocking her out of her link to the hivemind won't change her attitude.



You'll Have to Imagine the Spire

Instead of a frontal assault, the PC might prefer assassination from afar, or simply trying to deactivate a lantern tower. There are a half-dozen lantern towers scattered throughout the city, but only one in the industrial district.

The industrial district's corners are marked by a trio of spires (please recall that Drakrans see spires and towers as a symbol of power, and so they build a lot of them). A fourth tower rises in the center of the district, this one capped with a *wayfarer's lantern*. The corner spires are each separated by about a thousand feet, and the lantern tower in the center is five hundred feet from each of the corner spires.

Each spire rises over 150 feet, as does the lantern tower (as opposed to 60 feet for the lantern towers in other cities). The top levels of each

spire and tower have sight-line to nearly the entire parade route, since most of the other buildings in Trekhom are only one or two stories. Importantly,

the tower and spires all have line of sight to each other.

The **North Spire**, **East Spire**, and **West Spire** are guarded at ground level by a city defense squad, but their top floors are unoccupied.

The **Central Lantern Tower** has two city defense squads and

a lantern walker at ground level. At its lantern level **Kvarti Gorbatiy** provides overwatch of the parade, and he is guarded by an Obscurati construct squad.

Spire Defense

- 1 city defense squad (each)

Tower Defense

- 2 city defense squads
- Obscurati lantern walker
- Kvarti Gorbatiy
- Obscurati construct squad

Kvarti paces the railing of the lantern tower, rifle in hand, and he continuously scans the rooftops and other spires (an opposed Stealth check against his Perception +22 once per minute to hide from him). If he spots a potential threat he'll first fire a tracer round to light up the target, and thereafter will try to put the target down with continual shots. If the PC gets into a fight at ground level, Kvarti should be able to get in one or two good shots unless the PC intentionally sticks to cover. If he cannot get a clean shot, he might use his *shadow teleport* power to get directly beside his foe and rely on pistol and grappling.



KVARTI GORBATIY



However, like other previous allies, Kvarti can be snapped out of control of the hivemind if the PC manages to talk to him (difficult because of the construct squad with him). If he can be freed from the hivemind, he'll explain that the Ob granted him a boon to let him teleport between the lantern towers in Trekhom, better to defend them. He readily assassinates Willimarkanova, and then can take the PC with him to the other towers to order the construct squads to deactivate the lanterns.

How to Snipe Someone

Hit points and snipers don't quite mix. However, hit points normally represent a character's ability to survive in the thick of combat, or a random unlucky disaster. But a focused, intentional assassination eliminates the variables that would let the mark's "luck" save her.

Once in position in one of the spires or tower, the PC can attempt the following checks to line up a shot as the motorcade travels its route. Each check takes one round, and if the PC makes ten checks in a row (rather than breaking off and hiding for a bit), he is spotted by Kvarti, whose *sniper's eye* lets him see through illusions and invisibility. Even if some other effect keeps the PC hidden, the PC only gets two attempts before Willimarkanova makes it to a bunker. (If the PC can rapidly reach another sniper roost, such as by jaunting to a different spire, that provides another two attempts.) And a missed shot is almost certainly detected.

To even attempt this, the PC needs an attack that can reach at least 300 feet. The duplicant had a scoped rifle right beside it, but the PC might also have access to magic attacks that have sufficient range.

- 1. Determine a Window.** Knowledge (local) or Perception (DC 20). You note the path of the parade and figure out a stretch where you'll have several rounds to line up a shot. Success gives you five rounds, and every 5 points you succeed by gets you an extra round before you have to start over. If you fail, you have to wait a minute or two and try again, and the motorcade might be moving out of sight soon.
- 2. Predict Movement.** Sense Motive (DC 30). Willimarkanova and Heid are exchanging comments, waving to the crowd, and occasionally leaning out of their seats to speak to specific bystanders. You predict their behavior so they'll be mostly stationary when you fire. If you fail, you must try again next round.
- 3. Take Aim.** Perception (DC 30). You push aside all distractions and line up your shot across a great distance. If you fail, you can try again next round.
- 4. Fire.** Attack roll against Willimarkanova (AC 30). On a hit, you deal normal damage. However, if the damage equals or exceeds her Constitution score (18), the shot is fatal. On a miss, your aim is still lined up, so if you have an opportunity to take another shot before your window closes, you can. However, Willimarkanova will take cover on her turn, increasing her defenses.

Any other actions the PC takes, such as casting spells to improve their attack roll, uses up the limited time in their window.

Alternately, a PC who can use mind-affecting effects or deal positive energy damage from that range can target the ghost councilors linked to Willimarkanova, but she was originally a member of the Obscurati, and so would still follow through the scorched earth plan.

Aftermath

This city is actually set up to be the hardest to win with brute force, and a full frontal assault will probably be over before a PC can finish Willimarkanova off. But even if the PC takes her out, the lantern towers still fill with Jiese energy. The PC might escape and take out the towers himself, or manage to forestall being filled with bullets long enough to snap Heid out of the hivemind and get him to take charge and call off the scorched earth plan. The safest method is to link up with Kvarti, get him on the PC's side, and then have him shut down the towers.

If the city is saved, there are still plenty of Ob loyalists in control of the factories. Dealing with them will occupy the population for a few hours, until the PCs need to call upon them to potentially aid the *sacrament*.

Sentosa—Voice of Authority (Optional)

Pemberton has no duplicants in or near Sentosa, and the nature of teleportation magic in this world makes it impossible for the party to simply use magic to get here unless they made a point to come this way since the Great Eclipse occurred. If the PCs really care about this enclave they could probably come up with some way to bypass that restriction, the same way Vlendam Heid was able to send an official Risuri diplomatic case back to Risur since it was technically part of Risur already. For example, a PC who acquired the *arsenal of Dhebisu* from Sentosa might be able to teleport to the temple of Hewanharimau where it lay for centuries. (But if they do that, see below for details of the grisly sight they'd arrive to.)

The moment a PC arrives, it's clear that powerful magic is at work. A roaring thunderstorm covers the city, blocking visibility beyond a few dozen feet, and the intense wind and reverberating thunderclaps are disorienting. Moreover, the storm is interwoven with a novel ritual which (DC 35 Knowledge (arcana) to identify) prevents pocket dimensions from being accessed. *Bags of holding* and the like are sealed away underneath the storm.

A DC 30 Perception check is necessary to navigate to where the PC wants to go. Failing means a 50-50 chance of reaching the locals or the besiegers.

The Defenders

Sentosa's population of roughly 4,000 eladrin has withdrawn into the city center of old Rumah Terakir, where due to the recent magical overlay of the real world and the Dreaming, many buildings are half-maintained, half-ruined. A ring of the city has been abandoned as a no-man's-land, laden with glyphs and physical land mines. Most people cluster in homes beneath Akela Sathi, a sacred brothel built into a huge tree that is woven into a statue of Srasama's maiden aspect.

In lieu of an actual wall, arcane alarms ring the perimeter. Weary and twitchy rajputs will confront anyone who enters, and they will aggressively insist the PC waits while they notify their matriarch. **Athrylla Valenar** will agree to meet, and the rajputs lead a path through anxious eladrin who all appear exhausted and starved.

The matriarch and her advisors wait in the shelter of a 20-ft. diameter magical force dome that keeps out the storm, conjured just beside the old temple of Srasama. Athrylla and all her allies have been denied rest for weeks, because the besiegers constantly refresh their storm. She has tried to conserve her spells, but now is effectively helpless. The Ob forces could sweep in and take them at any time.

Athrylla has some basic information about the besiegers' camp and their overwhelming force of ten thousand soldiers and mechanical monstrosities. The siege began with an artillery bombardment that encircled Sentosa, a few strikes by construct warriors targeting her mages who conjured arcane walls to block the cannonfire, and then a child messenger bearing a letter. It alleged to be from Kasvarina, demanding that Athrylla surrender and hand control of all the lands that were once Elfaivar over to **Cula Ravjahani**, who was for many years Kasvarina's second in command at the enclave Ushanti.

Athrylla had been defiant, and that was when the unending storm began. When there were brief breaks in the storm, the edge of the enclave would be pounded with artillery. It became nearly impossible to sleep. It was only a few days later that they realized the child had been magically infected with a plague that rapidly spread through the city. Sentosa depleted its stock of scrolls and other magic items in a fight against the disease, and those whom they could not cure they quarantined at the temple of Hewanharimau. They're all dead now.

The Besiegers

By contrast, the forces under command of Cula Ravjahani camp serenely over a mile from the city, while the no-man's-land perimeter is watched by construct squads and a handful of officers equipped with enchanted helms that baffle the roar of the thunder and let them act normally without losing their nerve. Artillery batteries, newly built in Drakr, are aimed with precision to panic the people of Sentosa without the risk of accidentally killing the leader.

The army is made up of warriors drawn from the many colonies that until recently controlled Elfaivar.

Now united under the Ob's banner, the soldiers are all ensnared in the same hivemind, with Cula as its head.

Soldiers go out on patrol in large platoons every hour, and every eight hours one of three mages renews the spell that keeps the storm raging.

Cula's mission is to get a proper surrender. The reason varies slightly on whether at the end of adventure eight the party had swayed Kasvarina to their side or not.



ATHRYLLA VALENAR



CULA RAVJAHANI



If not, Kasvarina wants to force Athrylla to grovel, and to admit that she was ever wrong to doubt Kasvarina's methods. But if Kasvarina ended adventure eight hostile to the Ob, the 'peaceful' surrender is a gambit by Nicodemus to convince his long-time partner Kasvarina that he is no monster.

Breaking the Siege

A straight up fight might be winnable, honestly, if the party as a whole attacked, though it would take time they might not be able to spare. Ten thousand men under Cula are formidable, but if the Ob can use devastating magic, so can the PCs.

A cleverer solution might be to feign surrender. Athrylla could send a messenger to announce she is going to yield. The storm would abate. With a large escort, Cula would come out to the no-man's-land, ideally at the same gate where the party once faced a ten-headed lion, in a rain-filled pit that was carved by the foot of the colossus. A PC could pose as one of Athrylla's own rajputs. Once within striking distance, if the PC managed to kill Cula it would break the hivemind's control, at which point most of the army would march back to the colonies they were recruited from.

Siege-Breaking Full War

- Cula Ravjahani, Vekeshi Apostate
- 3 Elite Obscurati Occultists
- 12 Bookpin Bodyguard Squads
- 10 Obscurati Construct Squads
- Thousands of soldiers (equivalent to 100 'frigate crews' from adventure ten)



Siege-Breaking Trickery

- Cula Ravjahani, Vekeshi Apostate
- 1 Bookpin Bodyguard Squad
- 1 Obscurati Construct Squad

Aftermath

If the party doesn't intervene here, perhaps this scene can be woven into the denouement, with a confused Cula barely keeping control of a disorderly army. She will threaten and cajole them into a strike against the enclave. The PCs, arriving right before a tragic bloodbath, could broker peace or deliver judgment, as they see fit.

If Athrylla is saved, she asks to accompany the party to confront Kasvarina. Seeing her will help sway Kasvarina to reject Nicodemus. If the party also brings along Sor Daeron from Ber, the two eladrin can easily convince Kasvarina to ally with the party if they get a chance to talk to her.

Bask in the Shadow of Yesterday's Triumph

Social. Real-Time.

The party's allies encourage them to invoke the sacrament of apotheosis in order to bring the full might of the revolution to bear against Nicodemus and the Obscurati.

With the most immediate threat to the cities of the world concluded, it's time for final preparations before setting course for Axis Island. Let them gather allies and (briefly) discuss what will come next. Give your group Player's Handout: The Ritual of the Axis Seal.

Final Mission Briefing

The first critical issue to resolve is, well, just what are the PCs going to do in the Axis Seal ritual. It's a fine time for a meeting, perhaps with a corkboard where the PCs can mock up potential arrangements of planes. This is just one more mystery to solve, albeit on an interplanar scale.

Ever since they woke up in the Antwalk Forest the PCs have been certain that the means to complete the ritual will present itself. Now that the PCs are nearing the time to perform the ritual, they become aware of which planes were in the Gyre, though they can only guess how they have that knowledge. They still don't have the ability to create planar icons for those worlds, but don't worry, those will manifest later.

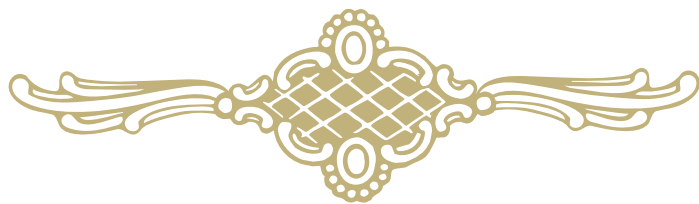
Consider cutting out the individual tokens of Player's Handout: Axis Puzzle. You can use them as props during the planning, and then later they can help you keep track of what plane is slotted in which place of the ritual circle.

The PCs know that the ritual calls for eight different planes, and that each plane will lend a trait to the nature of the world. Linking to these planes requires extracting a several ton pillar of stone from the earth and placing a planar icon into a slot, then lowering the pillar back into the ground. On a straightforward physical level, the PCs need a way to accomplish this. The *sacrament of apotheosis* is one way, since it will give them godlike strength. Another is to attach a crane and hoist mechanism to their airship. Or they can just wait for the Ob to remove the pillars and hope they can get in and use their planar icon first.

Once those performing the ritual are satisfied with the chosen set of planes, they must close the golden seal. If the seal is not closed, the new planes will still link to this world, but it will be comparably simple to switch them. However, once the seal is closed immense power is needed to open it again. Closing the seal would be challenging even for a group of them empowered by the *sacrament*. If they refuse the sacrament, they might need the aid of the colossus to complete the ritual and ensure the world's sun returns.

What Exactly are We Cooking Up?

Pemberton, for his part, very much wants to be involved in discussions of what type of world they'll create. He's particularly insistent that no high-minded ideals cause him to lose the advantages he has due to being a dragon, or to ruin his technological innovations. Honestly, he was quite satisfied with the world as it was before the Ob meddled, but if they ask his opinion, he wouldn't mind being able to travel to other planes. After all, his romantic prospects on this world are limited, but he's sure there have to be eligible dragon bachelorettes somewhere in the multiverse who'd appreciate his industriousness.





If the players cannot come to agreement, don't let arguments drag on too long. Assume that the PCs are at an impasse, but they don't have time to convince each other. They'll just have to go to Axis Island and see how things shake out.

Best Laid Plans

The chaos of combat in the final encounter will make enacting precise plans difficult, so even if the PCs have all agreed on the type of world they want to make, it's likely they won't be able to get all the planes they need. We want the battlefield to be altered on a cosmic scale round by round, and for the final world the PCs create to maybe be a little less than perfect.

Or at the very least, they should feel like there's a chance they'll fail. Uncertainty in the midst of reality-warping magic should raise the tension.

Supporting Cast

Second, it's time to decide who is coming along. Bear in mind, the final encounter is fairly complicated by itself, without including a gaggle of NPCs.

We suggest that the simplest way to streamline the finale is to stress that the energy pouring out of the Axis Seal is dangerous enough that it would be suicidal to bring some less-powerful allies along. If the party intends to use the *sacrament*, their allies can stay behind in major cities to channel the will of the people. Anyone who does accompany the party can fade into the background. Perhaps they land elsewhere on the island and undertake critical missions to take out Ob support or fulfill other obscure elements of the Axis Seal ritual.

To convey an epic scope of the battle, though, the Axis Obscura encounter does have an option for 'invoking' allies. See page 223.

Moment of Calm

At some point before the party reaches Axis Island, we suggest you have a moment of calm and reflection. Give the PCs a situation where they're all gathered together with an ally so they can roleplay and have a few smiles, in case the ending of the campaign gets grim. They might enjoy the irony of having Delft, as head of the RHC, come to them and mock-obsequiously request funding to pay for extra constables, since he's pretty sure some of his best men are about to die. Or pick one of the scenes from Act Three.

The key is to give the players a chance to all bounce off each other once last time, in case any of them die.

Sacrament or Not?

Pemberton reminds the PCs about the dangerous energy coming out of the seal, where it's not safe to spend even a minute in the area around it. They'll either need to be fast – an airship helps – or come up with some superior defense. It's likely Pemberton overheard at least some of the details of the *sacrament of apotheosis* when his duplicant saw a meeting with Ashima-Shimtu in adventure eight, so if the party doesn't bring it up he'll suggest, with reserve, that they use the ritual. He wishes he'd chosen to be the figurehead of this whole revolution business, but since he's chosen to operate behind the scenes he won't benefit as much from the ritual, even though he'd make a fine god.

The mechanics of the *sacrament of apotheosis* are presented in *Player's Handout: Final Sacrament*.

We don't intend to punish the PCs if they choose to use the *sacrament of apotheosis*. It's the smart move if they think that living in a world controlled by the Obscurati is as bad as dying; in that case, anyone who perishes in backlash for their belief empowering the PCs has not really lost anything.

However, it's not entirely necessary for the PCs to have the ritual's power in order to win the final conflict. Indeed, because of the nature of the ritual, anyone who knows the subject's name can ignore any resistances or immunities the *sacrament* grants, and Nicodemus will have almost certainly discovered the names of all the PCs and shared them with his allies. The party will have increased ability to manipulate the world around them, and the wild energy coming out of the seal won't harm them, but they won't gain any advantage in combat.

By contrast, it's unlikely that the PCs – at least the ones here, rather than in the Gyre – know that Nicodemus's real name is William Miller unless they really went out of their way in adventure eight and investigated the ruins of Pala. This makes Nicodemus effectively invincible at the beginning of the final encounter. Eventually that information will reach them, either through the aid of a friendly Kasvarina (who's the only person alive who knows Nic's true name) or when the knowledge of their selves in the Gyre reaches them. Until that point, though, they'll have to focus on seizing control of the Axis Seal rather than simply attacking their nemesis.

Rejecting Godhood

Without the *sacrament*, the party will need to assiduously avoid the tendrils of energy lashing out of the Axis Seal. It's challenging, but not insurmountable.

The main reason for avoiding the *sacrament* is to win a moral victory of sorts. The Clergy believed that Triegenes performed it to become a god, but in truth the holy man refused to risk other people just to protect himself even in the most dangerous battles. When the party battles Nicodemus, his other self in the Gyre – William Miller – watches. Miller does not intend to intervene, but if he sees enough signs of the party's humility and goodness, namely rejecting the ritual, he will cast himself into the Gyre so his consciousness merges with that of Nicodemus. Granted an enlightened, detached perspective on the past five centuries since his death, Nicodemus repents his hubris and ceases fighting so that the party can destroy him.

Again, this narrative beat is not necessary, but it might be satisfying for groups who have been tempted by the Obscurati's ideology, and don't see Nicodemus wholly as a villain.

Performing the Sacrament

The ritual lasts long enough that the party can perform it in Flint, or wait until they're en route to Axis Island. Let the players decide how to perform the ritual—in seclusion, subtly drawing faith from their allies; or openly, rising above the masses like gods to be worshipped. The only ritual component that would be difficult to acquire are the entrails of a dragon, and Harkover Lee (if alive) willingly offers a piece of his flesh to make amends for his forced betrayal of them.

The more people who share the power of the *sacrament*, the more diluted it is. Moreover, people who don't have a strong enough sense of self will be overwhelmed by the shared faith. Really only the PCs should participate in the ritual, and perhaps one particularly close ally.



DEFAULT AIRSHIP

By default, we assume the party travels in a retrofitted ocean-faring vessel, likely either the *R.N.S. Coaltongue* or a more traditional sailing frigate. You can use these stats as a baseline, if your party hasn't tinkered with the ship in their adventuring.

AIRSHIPS IN TACTICAL COMBAT

The upcoming encounter won't last long enough to use traditional naval rounds. You can still call for Command checks to pull off maneuvers in close quarters, such as to ram effectively, but usually the ships will move up to their speed at initiative count zero, and can turn 45 degrees once during that movement.

As for naval weapons, you can either opt for the simple—the PC's ship can fire one volley every 10 rounds at full attack bonus—or the complicated—each round that there are sufficient crew, they can make two cannon attacks, taking a -8 penalty to the listed attack roll.

Attacks can target an enemy vessel and deal strikes, or target creatures in a 5-foot-radius burst within 1,000 feet. Against a creature, each hit does 50 damage and knocks the target prone, or does half damage on a miss.

R.N.S. Coaltongue

Gargantuan Vehicle

Hull Integrity 4**Command** by PC**Defense** 30**Full Crew** 32**Maneuverability** 8**Minimum Crew** 4**Speed** 18**Total Complement** 200

Design

Length 205 ft. Beam 50 ft. Two level central bridge. Steam engine with two propellers. Pemberton-crafted arcane levitationals. Five decks.

Armaments

Dozens of cannons fire to either broadside.

Crew: 100. *Attack:* +25 to broadsides. Can use acidic, chain shot, flaming, freezing, and shocking attacks, but no more than one in any given round in a single firing arc.

Capacitor and Brand

The ship's greatest weapons are its capacitor which magnifies the spells of mages who cast from the main deck, and its brand which can launch a blast of arcane flame from the prow.

If a spellcaster of level 10 or higher stands in the capacitor on the main deck, the ship can also make attacks with a +22 bonus forward or aft. However, it can apply no more than one special trait (e.g., flaming, freezing) in any given round in a single firing arc.

The captain can choose to fire the brand, making an attack with a +30 bonus in the forward firing arc. This depletes the ship's store of arcane power, requiring 1d4 naval turns (1d4 x 10 normal combat rounds) to replenish. During that time, the ship's speed is reduced by 4, and it cannot use the abilities of its capacitor and brand.

Eldritch Defenses

The ship gains a +5 bonus to saving throws against the burning condition. Any spells that originate more than 50 feet from the ship deal 52 less damage to targets within that area.

Skyship

Arcane levitationals allow the mighty vessel to sail through the sky.

The ship can fly at any altitude, and is surrounded by a 30-ft. aura of levitation. Any creature that starts his turn in the aura gains a fly speed of 40 feet (average) until the start of his next turn. Once this flight wears off, the creature falls at a reduced rate, ignoring the first 1000 feet of falling damage.

Frigate

Gargantuan Vehicle

Hull Integrity 4**Command** by PC**Defense** 25**Full Crew** 64**Maneuverability** 4**Minimum Crew** 16**Speed** 22**Total Complement** 120

Design

Length 250 ft. Beam 45 ft. Four masts, 150 ft. high. Pemberton-crafted arcane levitationals. Three decks.

Armaments

Eleven heavy cannons on the maindeck to each broadside.

Crew: 40. *Attack:* +20 to broadsides, or +17 fore or aft.

Skyship

Arcane levitationals allow the mighty vessel to sail through the sky.

The ship can fly at any altitude, and is surrounded by a 30-ft. aura of levitation.

Any creature that starts his turn in the aura gains a fly speed of 40 feet (average) until the start of his next turn. Once this flight wears off, the creature falls at a reduced rate, ignoring the first 1000 feet of falling damage.

DRAGON-RIDING

So Harkover destroyed the party's airship? Not to worry! Pemberton can give the PCs guidance so they can teleport to his island lair a dozen miles from Axis Island. There Pemberton has a squadron of dragon fliers (first introduced in adventure ten), which the PCs can pilot into battle. They won't have the survivability of a full airship, so smart PCs will try to board the *Ob's Revolution* before they're shot down, or land on the shoulders of the colossus.

Pemberton Dragon Flier

Small Vehicle

Design

Length 20 ft. Width 5 ft. Two levels of wings, 25 ft. wide, covered in glowing white glyphs. Pemberton-crafted arcane levitationals. Nose and wings decorated with mithral scales to resemble a dragon. Lightning crackles from the nose-mounted engine, just behind twin autocannons.

Stats

HP 200, AC 15, Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +5, hardness 10

Piloting

Each turn, pilot can set flier's speed, adjusting by one category as a free action, or two as a move action. Speeds categories are **idle** (under 30 squares), **slow** (31-60), **moderate** (61-90), **fast** (91-120), or **reckless** (121-160). Flier must go speed 60 or higher or else it stalls and falls.

Steering is a move action. Flier needs to move 10 feet (2 squares) per speed category before it can turn 45 degrees (e.g., 8 squares at 'fast'). Flier can ascend up to 12 squares per turn.

Armaments

Two nose-mounted light autocannons.

Autocannons are martial ranged weapons. They have a range increment of 200 feet and deal 2d12 damage.

Line of effect: An autocannon attacks all creatures in a line. Make a separate attack roll against each creature in the line.

Levitationals

Arcane levitationals allow the winged vehicle to maneuver nimbly.

If the levitational is disrupted, or when the flier is below 100 hit points, the flier cannot travel faster than moderate.



When the *sacrament of apotheosis* takes effect, the PCs feel their bodies expand across the horizon, and their senses flit among the minds and hearts of thousands or millions of people who believe in them. The shared faith – granted willingly, not compelled – fills them with unbridled confidence. With a single gesture they can fulfill the will of myriads. Motes of dancing energy, like fiery blue moths only they can see, swirl before them and grow brighter as they move toward Axis Island. As their ship nears the crux of the world's fate, these manifestations of destiny surge in the air like dolphins breaking above the waves at the prow of a ship under full sail.

Mechanics and Boons

The benefits of the *sacrament* are detailed in Player's Handout: Final Sacrament. They gain certain boons of their choice from a list in that handout. Determine the total number of boons using the method below; the PCs split those boons amongst themselves, so each will likely end up with between and 1 and 3.

The total number of boons is equal to:

- ♦ The number of groups the party has Prestige 6 (to a maximum of 5 – Risur, Flint*, Unseen Court, Family, and Ob); plus
- ♦ One if they saved Cherage in adventure ten; plus
- ♦ The number of disasters they averted in adventure eleven (to a maximum of 3 – Ber, Drakr, and Crisillyir); plus
- ♦ The number of disasters they averted in this adventure (to a maximum of 5 – Risur, Danor, Ber, Drakr, and Crisillyir).

* If the PCs befriended reporter Melissa Amarie in adventure six, count Populist prestige as a separate score from Flint prestige, but still to a maximum of five boons.

The PCs should choose which boons they gain as soon as they perform the *sacrament*. Be wary of the 'spell-like ability at-will' boon; it's intended to reflect godlike magic, but there are enough weird spells in this game that min-maxers could probably find something that perpetually auto-stuns their enemies, or something like that. Try to encourage the players to quickly pick a spell that is thematically appropriate, rather than tactically optimal.

Martial Scientist Fun-Time

Any martial scientist feels a flood of inspiration as he nears Axis Island. As a special treat for Martial Scientist PCs, they are considered to have all their martial scientist techniques prepared for the final encounter and can use each of them, including *Stance of the Paper Wind* despite the oddities of being split in two during adventure twelve.

Sail on the Steel Breeze

Exploration. Montage.

It's 550 miles to Axis Island, we've got a full bin of firegems, half a pack of cigarettes, it's dark, and we're wearing goggles. Hit it.

As the party comes within sight of Axis Island, the shores are dark, but some barely audible thrum reverberates, like hundreds of bass drums playing asynchronously. The lashing tendrils of energy from the Axis Seal rise into the sky, stretching out toward the leading edge of the Gyre as it rises over the horizon.

Only the faintest hints of human activity are visible around the island's perimeter, where hooded lanterns seek not to illuminate tiny work crews as they busy themselves with digging equipment and cranes. These crews have ensured all the petrified trees buried in the island are stable and prepared for the ritual. Elsewhere, out of sight but clearly audible, house-sized steam-powered machines pound the bedrock in a mechanical approximation of a ritual chant, channeling power into protective wards.

The fortress where the party first faced Asrabey and heard the Duchess warn of a conspiracy is abandoned.

The forests which they crept through when they first infiltrated the island wait motionless.

The island's roiling terrain is stable, for all the chaos and transmuting forces have been drawn to the Axis Seal.

Offered Sacrament

Flying over the jungle hills, the party finally gets a view of the ritual field itself, when they feel a tug at their thoughts.

Images flash in their minds of a ghost solemnly stepping into the body of a nervous, shirtless man; of the man's posture changing as he is possessed; of chanting specters encircling him with entrails; painting him with blood; slicing open his throat.

Lights around the PCs darken for a moment. Winds thrash, graced with the subtle scent of blood and burnt paper and flesh.

The PCs feel that they are being offered a choice. Do they believe in the Obscurati? If so, their faith will empower Nicodemus. (They are considered bonded to Nicodemus for his *Welcome to the Obscurati* trait.)

Once they make their decision, one last vision shows the blood-painted body gurgle and sag to the floor, but Nicodemus's ghostly form remains standing, flanked by the psychic impression of ten million minds. Then Nicodemus turns, and gestures. The vision ends, but with their real eyes the PCs see the huge, crippled mass of the Obscurati's colossus stirs. He sits up weakly on the bedrock and heaves the golden seal off his body. It crashes in an unoccupied space of the ritual field.

The titan then rolls onto crippled knees and his single intact arm. The shattered pieces of his injured limbs lift from the ground and slide into place with a metallic screech. The colossus bellows in pain, but then with a surprised gasp as strong as a gale, he shifts his weight and pushes himself to his feet.

The ghostly form of Nicodemus rises into the sky and meets the titan at eye level.

"Borne my boy," Nicodemus says, and his voice is heard by everyone in the entire world. "We were sabotaged, but you were perfect, indomitable. Before you fell, you nearly completed our grand design.

"The world we created truly is better, thanks to you, but outside forces," and he gestures to the sky, clearly indicating your approach, "were able to move against us. I have restored you, son. I know you are confused and have questions, but you have to trust me. Together, you and I, we'll finish this ritual and set it all right. But first, we need to pull those pests from the sky. Do you understand, Borne?"

The colossus turns his head to scan the entire horizon. He pauses at the sight of the Gyre, but only a moment passes before he narrows his eyes in a confident smile.

"Guide me, father."

ACT TWO: Axis of the Revolution

The Obscurati and the party contest for control of the Axis Seal ritual, to decide the fate of the world.

Axis Obscura

Action. Tactical. Level 28.

Blind to his hypocrisy, Nicodemus chooses to abandon his principles and impose his absolute will, rather than to admit all his plans were for naught.

This encounter is grand and complicated.

The party wants to stop Nicodemus from completing the ritual, but he's practically invincible because of the *sacrament of apotheosis*, and the colossus Borne is just generally nigh impregnable, so early in the battle the PCs will need to split their efforts between fighting Ob forces (including an airship and the ghost council) and interfering with Nic and Borne's work on the ritual. Attacking Nic at first is pointless, unless the party went out of its way and discovered his true name thanks to the *arc of Reida* back in adventure eight.

The PCs gradually receive knowledge from their other selves in the Gyre so they can affect the ritual, and eventually they'll learn that Nic's true name is William Miller. At that point, it will be possible to overcome the *sacrament* and harm the mastermind. This can lead to four possible endings.

First is 'destruction.' The PCs defeat Nicodemus the old fashioned way by attacking him. Once he's gone, they can somberly finish the ritual, if they so desire.

Second is 'completion.' By completing the ritual and closing the seal in the midst of the battle, the party channel the energy released to destroy Nicodemus. This requires the party to choose at least five of the eight planes, and then to close the seal, which is quite a challenge.

Third is 'redemption.' If the PCs save Kasvarina, reveal to her how Nicodemus betrayed her, and let her confront the mastermind, this convinces the spirit of William Miller in the Gyre, who has for five centuries felt guilt for tricking Kasvarina and causing the Great Malice, to intervene. His memories flood into Nicodemus, and for a while Miller is in control, and will let the party destroy him.

Fourth and final is 'rejection.' If the PCs destroy enough parts of the ritual it becomes impossible to complete, and the world's link to other planes will gutter and die. The party has no way of knowing what will happen in this case, but it's certainly a refusal to follow the Ob's ideology that someone should be allowed to change the whole world for everyone else. The result is that the world is cast into a random place in the multiverse, and Nicodemus's whole purpose for surviving is undone. He'll wither away and vanish.

Whatever happens, in the aftermath the world will witness the first sunrise of a new age.





Pacing and Structure

We have an array of enemies providing threats along different axes and at different stages during the battle so that the encounter isn't just any old combat. We want this climax to be punctuated with moments of action and moments of maneuvering. The distance scale of the encounter – a 400-ft. diameter ritual field (you might want to use a 1 inch = 10 ft. resolution) – should mean that PCs won't be fighting every round, which we hope encourages them to try solving the puzzle of the ritual instead of just chopping through hit points until their enemies are gone.

Three 'narrative arcs' are at play, and you'll need to keep them all moving along and building tension in parallel, all while dropping hints so the players realize that pursuing goals along one arc can help in another. For instance, fiddling with the Axis Seal ritual can make it easier to defeat the Ob's airship and ghost council; but it's pretty hard to affect the ritual if the colossus keeps on trying to smash your airship while it's parked, so if you can slow the colossus down, you can take advantage of the opening.

Arc One—Airships and Ghosts

The bulk of living Obscurati forces are aboard the *Revolution*, an adamantine-plated, enchanted dirigible armed with the most advanced heavy cannons ever deployed in battle. Commanded by **Sovereign Han Jierre**, who is himself guarded by his niece **Lya Jierre** (who's probably a ghost), the *Revolution* attacks the party's airship.

Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen serves as miracle-working doctor of the airship, but he's not entirely loyal to the Ob. **Kasvarina Varal** is also aboard, either as a well-treated prisoner, or an additional foe in battle, depending on how the events of adventure eight shook out. Their presence gives a social axis to any fighting on the airship. Reaching and speaking with Kasvarina is one way to learn Nicodemus's true name, and she is the catalyst for the Redemption ending.

We've slightly bullshitted excessive defenses for the *Revolution*, so that the party will have a hard time destroying it from afar. This encourages boarding the vessel and getting into close combat with Lya. A solid resolution to this arc would see the airship crashing into the ghost council and exploding, destroying them both, perhaps with the PCs rescuing Kasvarina and leaping to safety at the last minute.



Arc Two—The Pivotal Ritual

The ritual itself dynamically affects the nature of reality during this battle. The Ob start by removing the link to the plane of air, which ends magical flight. If the party doesn't avert this quickly, their ship (which is held aloft by magic and arcane levitationals) will descend to the ground and be a sitting duck, while the *Revolution* (held aloft by physics and hydrogen gas bladders) will remain airborne.

We've set up foes with schticks that can be nullified by fiddling with the ritual columns. Cannons and engines on the *Revolution* can be crippled by unplugging the plane of fire; the ghost council starts weak but grows stronger once the plane of death is linked; and the colossus's invulnerability can be cracked just a bit by swapping the plane of earth. Additionally, whenever anyone switches a plane and reseats the column, they can control the surge of energy produced, making it quite rewarding to link planes.

The options for what planes the PCs can link to start off very limited, but expand in scope round by round. This should keep the complexity *slightly* more manageable at the start of combat.



SOVEREIGN HAN JIERRE



KASVARINA VARAL



DR. WOLFGANG VON RECKLINGHAUSEN



THE EYE OF THE VOICE OF ROT

If a PC carries the lost eye of the Voice of Rot, recovered in Adventure Twelve, the moment that PC spots Nicodemus he intuitively understands the following three things. (If no PC has the eye, you could instead grant this insight to a Spirit Medium PC, or just let the party fumble about until they figure it out.)

- ✦ Nicodemus is practically invincible due to the *sacrament of apotheosis*, but if someone completes the Axis Seal ritual he'll be able to briefly wield enough power to destroy the ghost permanently.
- ✦ The people whose faith is empowering him with the *sacrament* want him to change the world. If he becomes unable to complete the ritual, their faith in him would falter, making him vulnerable.
- ✦ There is a link between Nicodemus and some other spirit in the Gyre, but not the Voice of Rot. That spirit is watching from afar, but perhaps that link could be exploited to harm Nicodemus.

ONE LAST THING

If the party killed Pemberton's daughter back in adventure six, he'll fight as a devoted ally all the way through the battle, but the moment the Obscurati are defeated he'll catch his breath, assess if he has a shot, and then try to kill whoever delivered the killing blow to his daughter. Anticlimactic, perhaps, but Pemberton would never forgive them, and the PCs are lucky he's only killing one of them.

Arc Three—The Philosophical Colossus

Throughout all of this, Nicodemus splits his time between directing Borne and mocking the PCs. He only takes potshots at them, since his focus is guiding Borne through the ritual. However, if the party manages to affect the ritual and link to a world they want, Nicodemus realizes that by doing so they are tacitly agreeing with his ideology, which strengthens him due to the *sacrament of apotheosis*. At this point he grows more bold and cruel.

Borne, by contrast, is skeptical. He was raised to be rational, but with all the chaos of battle Borne is having to trust Nicodemus and take actions without understanding the consequences. The party can try to nurture his uncertainties and make Borne pause, and it's possible even to goad Nicodemus into explaining what he intends to do with the ritual this time: take away free will altogether, so the world will be perfect. This is anathema to what Borne was raised to believe, and will cause the colossus to abandon the encounter entirely.

Another method is to leverage Kasvarina's influence over the colossus, though this requires either having gotten her on the party's side in adventure eight, or bringing along Sor Daeron and/or Athrylla Valenar to reveal the truth about how Nicodemus arranged the death of Kasvarina's daughter four hundred years ago because he wanted her to recommit to the Obscurati. If the PCs can get Kasvarina within a few dozen feet of Borne so she can talk to him, she'll plead with him to stop—or if the party has already made Borne doubt Nicodemus, she can actually turn him into an ally in battle.

Primary Forces

If the party brings along a lot of allies, you can include more bad guys to keep them distracted. Perhaps there are smaller airships with less elite crew, or ground-bound construct squads, or a couple summoned outsiders. All of those foes can provide a backdrop of mass combat, handled narratively without any dice-rolling, while the party deals with the core enemies.

A few allies are important enough that they can join the battle. In adventure twelve, the PCs might have gained the aid of the dead goddess Srasama, who will appear partway through the battle (in the same round the PCs get access to the plane Ascetia). Kasvarina and Dr. von Recklinghausen might side with the party. And if things are going very badly for our heroes, Pemberton rockets in using an advanced dragon duplicant, giving the PCs a chance to regroup and heal.

Primary Enemy Forces

- ✦ Nicodemus, Mastermind
- ✦ Borne, Obscurati Colossus
- ✦ Ghost Council Swarm
- ✦ Lya, the Ghost Scion
- ✦ Sovereign Han Jierre
- ✦ Kasvarina Varal
- ✦ Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen
- ✦ 6 *Revolution* Elite Crews



Primary Allied Forces

- ✦ Avatar of Srasama
- ✦ Benedict "Gradiax" Pemberton



Invoking Allies

We've attempted to balance the final encounter – as much as an encounter *can* be balanced for 20th level PCs – with the assumption the party consists of five PCs. If the PCs bring along allies, most of them aren't strong enough to actually harm the enemies here (and their stats earlier in the adventure were all bumped by being linked to hiveminds, which they're now free from).

If you want, though, perhaps at the end of each turn you can have the players take turns narrating something one of their allies does. Usually this won't have a direct effect on the PCs' foes, but Gale could create environmental effects or move the party's airship, Lauryn Cyneburg could teleport a PC across the battlefield, and Harkover Lee could ram and slightly knock aside the colossus's leg so a PC isn't crushed.

Don't let the PCs decide what Pemberton does, though. If he is present, you control him.

Location

The general landscape is detailed in Player Handout—The Ritual of the Axis Seal. It's a 400-ft. wide span of stone with concentric rings carved into the bedrock. Each ring has one or two 50-ft. deep slots in which sit white stone columns—petrified trees—each of which links to a different plane. The PCs have to decide if they want to spend their actions fiddling with the ritual or fighting. We assume it takes about three rounds worth of actions by a PC to link a column to a new plane, and so we grant a reward roughly equivalent to three standard actions to incentivize using the ritual.

To the northwest of the ritual field a small bunker sits currently unoccupied, but it's a fine place for people to end up if they fall off a ship, teleport to safety, or need a dramatic place to stand to call out to the colossus.

At the beginning of the encounter, the colossus has just stood up at about 7 o'clock (if we treat the ritual space as a clockface). The stone pillar for the Plane of Death is already out of the ground, having been ejected when Av was destroyed in adventure twelve, *The Grinding Gears of Heaven*. The golden seal itself (100-ft. in diameter) lies on the ground just north of the colossus, in a spot with no pillars.

Energy Tendrils

At the start of the encounter, place a marker at about 10 o'clock on the map. A crackling line of extraplanar energy lashes out from the center of the ritual to that spot. Any creature that enters its path or ends its turn there takes 25 acid, 25 fire, 25 electricity, and 25 negative energy damage unless he's protected by the *sacrament of apotheosis*. The tendril lashes up and down, and so affects creatures as high as three hundred feet off the ground.



At the beginning of each round, roll 1d6 to determine what the tendril does.

- 1 The tendril stays put.
- 2-3 The tendril moves about 30 degrees clockwise.
- 4-5 The tendril moves about 30 degrees counter-clockwise.
- 6 The tendril stays put. However, roll a d12 to determine a 'clockface' around the ritual field. Place a new marker there. That spot begins to glow, but is harmless. At the beginning of the next round, instead of rolling, the tendril jumps to this new spot.

The party is likely immune because of the *sacrament*, so the tendrils become a unique weapon. Nicodemus and Borne are immune too, but the rest of the Ob forces try to keep as far away from the deadly thing as possible. And if a PC can manage to destroy the integrated *wayfarer's lantern* inside Borne's torso, the tendril can quickly cripple the slow-moving colossus.

The Ritual

In addition to the mechanics presented in Player's Handout—Ritual of the Axis Seal, there are some surprises in store.

Timeline of Remembrance

In adventure twelve, we asked you to keep track of the order the PCs linked to the various worlds there. In this encounter, they get access to those worlds in the same order they linked to them. This should cut down slightly on analysis paralysis; in the early rounds of combat, they only have a few planes they can contest over, so the decision is 'do I try to pull up a column and link to that plane or not?' rather than 'which of these 30 planes do I pick now?'

Now, the rate at which planes become available is up to you a little. We generally assume it took the party 8 to 12 days to complete adventure twelve, in which case each round corresponds with one day. But if they rushed through the whole thing in a blur, or if they spent weeks learning every nook and cranny, adjust it a bit to provide a good pace. In general, you want one or two planes becoming available every round, though some might have none, and some might have several. The party should have access to all of them no later than round seventeen, when Nicodemus would be finishing his changes if he's not interrupted.

When a plane becomes available, each PC becomes aware that they can manifest whatever item they used to create the planar icon. Manifesting an icon is a free action, but once it's manifested, it's solid and real, and no other PC can manifest the same plane's icon. The party might also start with a few icons if they kept the ones from the various Ancient ruins. These items are resilient enough to survive normal combat, but you might really wreck the party's plan if, say, Lya Jierre slices off the hand of a PC holding an icon, then kicks the thing into the center of the seal, where the chaotic energy obliterates it.

Whenever the party gets access to the plane of Ascetia, the PCs also receive knowledge of Nicodemus's true name. At this point they can start attacking and actually harming him. (Likewise, if in adventure twelve they called upon Srasama to aid them in battle, she appears at this point.)



THE AXIS SEAL





OBSCURATI RITUAL PLAN

Barring PC interference, Nicodemus has Borne adjust the ritual in the following order. Each of these corresponds to one turn's worth of actions, if the colossus isn't interrupted.

If at any point the party's airship is within 50 feet, and the airship is immobilized due to the air column being out of the ground, Borne takes a turn off from the ritual to use *crushing fist* to punch it. The PCs have until the start of Borne's next turn to somehow thwart this, such as with an impenetrable force wall, or just moving their ship away from where he aimed. If they don't, though, their ship suffers 2 strikes, one to hull integrity, and one to a random component.

1. Move to the Air pillar (orange) and lift it completely out of the ground. (But set it down gently so it doesn't break.)
2. Move to the Life pillar (green) and lift it. Nicodemus will take the icon of Mojang, and place the icon of *Patricalus*.
3. Release the Life pillar so it slides into the ground. Move south to the Earth pillar (gold).
4. Lift the Earth pillar. Nicodemus will remove the icon of Ratios and replace it with the icon of Mojang. (*Without Ratios, hiveminds will no longer form, but any current hiveminds persist.*)
5. Release the Earth pillar so it slides into the ground. Move east toward the Death pillar (purple).
6. Continue moving to the Death pillar, which is lying on the ground. Lift it. Nicodemus will remove the icon of Av, and place the icon of *Jiquus*.
7. Release the Death pillar so it slides into the ground. Move north toward the Space pillar (gray). (*The ghost council, which previously had been keeping its distance, will now seek to get into melee.*)
8. Continue moving toward the Space pillar. Lift it. Nicodemus will remove the icon of Fourmyle, and place the icon of Urim. He leaves the icon of Baden, the ghost moon.
9. Release the Space pillar so it slides into the ground. Turn around and lift the Time pillar. Nicodemus will remove the icon of Illocus and place the icon of *Regulus*.
10. Nicodemus orders the colossus to release the Time pillar, and he makes a grandiloquent monologue as it slides into the ground.
11. In the bonus turn granted by linking a Time plane, the colossus moves west toward where the golden seal lies.
12. He picks the air pillar off the ground and puts it in its slot.
13. He continues moving to the golden seal.
14. He finally reaches the seal and picks it up.
15. He slowly moves back to the central depression. Destructive tendrils of energy threaten to annihilate the colossus.
16. The colossus maneuvers the seal into proper position. Nicodemus completes his grandiloquent monologue.
17. The colossus releases the seal, completing the ritual and securing victory for the Obscurati.



Draining Magic

When a pillar linking to a particular energy type is removed from the ground entirely, it becomes difficult to use magic of that type. At the start of a round, see below for the effects of a removed pillar.

- ♦ **Air.** Creatures and vessels flying with magic can no longer control their movement. Flying creatures become prone (but remain at their current elevation), and vessels list. If a flying creature is already prone or vessel listing, it descends 20 feet instead. Creatures flying with wings or vessels that could fly without magic are unaffected. Additionally, reduce by half all electricity and/or sonic damage that would be dealt.
- ♦ **Death.** Undead creatures are sickened. Incorporeal undead no longer take half damage. Reduce by half all negative energy damage that would be dealt.
- ♦ **Earth.** Creatures lose any magical resistance to nonenergy damage. (Namely, the colossus takes full damage from non-typed damage.)
- ♦ **Fire.** Cannons cannot fire and vessels with steam engines are immobilized. Reduce by half all fire and/or electricity damage that would be dealt.
- ♦ **Life.** Living creatures cannot return from the dead. Reduce by half all healing of damage by living creatures.

- ♦ **Space.** Teleportation is impossible, and the range of magical powers is limited to a maximum of 50 feet.
- ♦ **Time.** Any form of precognition is impossible. Creatures cannot use spells such as *haste*, *slow*, or *time stop*.
- ♦ **Water.** Honestly, there really aren't that many magical water effects in Pathfinder. Um, reduce by half all acid and/or cold damage that would be dealt, and each round instead of rolling 1d6 for the tendril's motion, roll 1d10, and any result of 6 or higher has the result of rolling a 6.

When a column is placed back in the ground, if it has an icon for a plane with the right type of energy, magic of that type immediately starts functioning again.

Each column has hardness 8 and 100 hit points, but the simplest way to break one is to have the colossus step on it, or drop it from at least thirty feet. If all eight columns are broken, the ritual is permanently ended. Likewise, if all eight columns are out of the ground at the start of a round, the energy tendril vanishes and the central glow dims. At the start of the next round, if no columns have been re-seated, the ritual ends. See the Rejection ending in Conclusion (page 233).



Reconnection Reward

Whenever a PC places an icon in a column, when that column is fully reseated (which generally takes one round once released) a surge of planar energy is released. That PC can choose either the General reward, or one that matches the energy type of the column.

- ♦ **General.** You summon in a space within 6 squares a standard monster of CR 15 or below that can be found on the plane you just linked. It acts immediately.
- ♦ **Air.** You and each ally within one mile gains a fly speed of 200 feet (perfect) until the end of your next turn. During that time, the first time each of you hit an enemy on their turn, you can move that creature 50 feet in any direction.
- ♦ **Death.** Negative energy rises in a 30-foot-radius column centered on a space you can see, hundreds of feet high. Until the end of your next turn, each hostile creature that enters or ends its turn in the area takes 50 negative energy damage.
- ♦ **Earth.** Creatures in a 20-foot-radius burst centered anywhere you can see fall prone and lose all resistances and immunities until the end of your next turn. (Yes even the colossus. Vehicles that fall prone descend 60 feet.)
- ♦ **Fire.** As per Death, except it is a column of fire.
- ♦ **Life.** Each living ally within one mile heals 5d8+20 hit points. You heal to full.
- ♦ **Space.** Until the end of your next turn, you or one ally of your choice can choose to treat any space as if you (or they) were occupying it for the purposes of attacks or other abilities. Changing which space is a free action, within reason (e.g., you can make one attack of opportunity from a space anywhere you can see, but you don't get to make attacks of opportunity every time anyone you can see moves).
- ♦ **Time.** Immediately after your turn ends, the world aside from you and each ally within one mile freezes in time. You and your allies can communicate for roughly a minute, during which your bodies move slowly enough that you can only accomplish one round's worth of combat actions. During this time stretch you can freely affect inanimate objects, but cannot move, harm, or otherwise influence creatures that are paused. This otherwise functions as a *time stop* spell.
- ♦ **Water.** Now and at the start of the next round of combat, you can change where the energy tendril coming from the center of the ritual points, and can have it weave around spaces in order to avoid allies. Additionally, until the end of your next turn, you and allies within one mile are unaffected by area spells or effects unless you choose to be.



Planes might also yield different effects appropriate to their nature, at your discretion. We suggest the following specific options.

- ♦ **Caeloon.** Any dead allies within one mile are restored to life, and each ally in that area regains 5d8+20 hit points.
- ♦ **Iratha Ket.** Until the end of your next turn, each enemy within one mile is staggered. (Actually, they spend a move action compelled to sing or dance to express their feelings.)
- ♦ **Metarie.** Until the end of your next turn, the colossus and any other mechanical creatures are stunned, firearm attacks take a -5 penalty, and any mechanical vehicles are immobilized.
- ♦ **Obliatas.** Until the end of your next turn, undead gain vulnerability to positive energy (taking 150% damage), and if they are incorporeal they lose that trait.



PLANES OF THE WATCHMAKER



In addition to the planes currently linked to the world, and those found in the Gyre, Nicodemus has icons associated with three planes – Patricalus, Regulus, and Jiquus – which will allow him to create a world as planned by the Watchmaker faction of the Obscurati.

- ♦ **Fire.** Jiese is retained.
- ♦ **Air.** Perlocus is retained.
- ♦ **Life.** A new world, *Patricalus*, makes people more obedient and susceptible to compulsion.
- ♦ **Water.** Ostea is retained.
- ♦ **Earth.** Ratios is replaced with Mojang, currently serving as plane of life.
- ♦ **Space.** Fourmyle is replaced with Urim, which was plane of earth in the original cosmology.
- ♦ **Time.** A new world, *Regulus*, has clockwork precision in its control of time. The planar icon is a thick scroll in a gold scroll tube, which lists all the events that are to occur over the next thousand years.
- ♦ **Death.** A new world, *Jiquus*, dominates all, and slays those who stray from the written course of history.

When combined, these planes will for one thousand years enslave all creatures on the plane, forcing them to experience lives of comfort and charity so that when the clock winds down, people will naturally continue their decent ways. Nature will remain obedient due to Mojang, and predators will only eat parts of creatures, which will heal rapidly due to Ostea. Urim makes extraplanar interference unlikely but, in a fatal flaw for this plan, the nature of Jiquus leaves an opening for undead from other worlds to ignore the clockwork control. Nicodemus intends to stay and act as a benevolent guide and guardian, but it won't take long for something to go wrong.



Cheating

The ritual assumes you put one planar icon in each column, and that you'll have a total of eight planes. It is possible, however, to put multiple icons in a single column. When the column sinks into the ground, whoever placed the extra icon must make a DC 32 Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (nature), or Knowledge (planes) check. If the check fails, the column refuses to sink, and the energy tendril immediately switches location to strike the person who tried to make that linkage.

It's also possible to complete the ritual with fewer than eight columns, since most planes provide multiple energy types. You could link *only* to Oblitas, though the resulting world would be bland and over-lit. Or you could cleverly put two icons each in a pair of columns, and those four planes could potentially have all eight energy types.

Completing and Closing

When all eight columns are submerged and the ritual has links to eight different energy types, the immense golden seal rises into the air, and each character who linked to a plane understands that they can easily control it. A single move action can lift the seal and move it 40 feet. The seal remains aloft for up to five minutes, so it's possible to keep making alterations.

The moving golden plate doesn't deal damage if it hits someone, but it easily pushes aside even the colossus. If the PCs choose to drop it, it will crush and kill anyone who's not incorporeal.

Once the seal is moved directly over the central pit and lowered to the ground, if no one moves it away within a round, the ritual is completed. See the Completion ending under Conclusions (page 232).

Enemies

There are four main enemies or enemy groups: Nicodemus, the colossus, the airship forces, and the ghost council.

Mastermind. Nicodemus flies with Borne as the colossus moves, and on some turns he spends his actions to swap icons in the ritual columns, as detailed in the Obscurati Ritual Plan sidebar. Other rounds he tries to disrupt the PCs from afar with his spell-like abilities. We've designed the 'first stage' of his stats to be relatively low-threat. He's probably invincible at this time due to the *sacrament of apotheosis*, and we want the other enemies to pose a more immediate risk so the party is more likely to deal with them first.

We've provided a sort of suggested script for Nicodemus to convey his descent into villainy (see Grandstanding Archvillainy, page 230), but again, you should probably hold off on him monologuing too much at the start of the combat. He's busy directing Borne. Let the other enemies have a chance to trade words with the PCs before they're defeated, and save Nicodemus for later.

When the PCs get access to the knowledge of Nicodemus's real name, William Miller, Nic shifts gears and goes on the offensive, while still trying to direct Borne from afar. Nic's melee attack, *worldwide rebuke*, can strand a PC away from the fight and slow them, giving the colossus a chance to stomp the PC before he can move out of the way.



Colossus. Borne moves with immense slowness, and so spends most of his turns simply moving. If he attacks with hands or feet, he has to spend one round winding up, and his blow won't land until the next turn, giving foes time to dodge. He can readily unleash a blast of spirits from his eyes, but Nicodemus wants him to focus on the ritual. Borne, too, is basically invincible at the start of this encounter.

Destroying him requires some combination of powerful attacks that can overcome his hardness 50, mind-affecting attacks which bypass his resistances, the 'reward' for linking a plane of earth energy, and breaking through weak spots on his body to target fragile internal components. Even cannons from the PCs' airship probably can't do more than scratch him.





Airship. The *Revolution* keeps a relatively slow speed because it needs to maneuver tightly. Barring odd circumstances, it stays above the ritual circle and flies up to 80 feet per round, moving at Han Jierre's initiative.

The forces aboard the *Revolution* try to ground the PCs' airship, but Han Jierre might order the vessel's cannons aimed at the ground to take out PCs who attempt to interfere with the ritual columns. If the opportunity presents itself, Lya Jierre will lead a boarding action, but it's more likely she'll be defending the airship. Han commands a hivemind gestalt of all the living soldiers on the airship.

Swarm of Undead Philosophers. The ghost council keeps its distance at the beginning of battle. The undead are vulnerable because the pillar of the plane of death is not properly seated, so they try to stay as far away as possible while using *unrefined evocation* every round. Once a plane of death is relinked, the council seeks to enter melee. You can throw them at PCs who aren't engaged in the puzzle or in a narratively-weighty clash against one of the named NPCs.

Destroying the council is arduous, but in turn its attacks are intended more to create peril than to kill a PC instantly. If one PC is having his soul sucked out, another PC can feel heroic swooping in and knocking the spectral swarm away.

Possible Allies. If the PCs get within a hundred feet or so of the *Revolution*, they spot Kasvarina through the window of the dirigible's bridge. If she is unfriendly to the PCs, she uses flight magic to let Lya and some of the crew try to board the PCs' ship, or otherwise go after a group of PCs. If she's friendly with the PCs, Han Jierre keeps her under watch, unaware that she has hidden the true extent of her powers. She'll wait for the PCs to be near before she makes her move. She'll kill the dirigible pilots and possibly some of the gunnery crews, then fly and join the PCs, urging them to not destroy Borne if they can avoid it.

Meanwhile, Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen stays on the *Revolution* and heals the living crew with blasts of revivifying lightning, keeping the ship from suffering crew loss unless the PCs really work at it. Depending on how friendly he is with the party, he might seek an opportune moment to start healing the PCs.

Finally, if the PCs are having trouble with the *Revolution*, you can have them spot a commotion on the bridge, as the pilots are attacked by a squad of kobolds who crawled through the vessel's superstructure and emerged from underneath the bridge's control panels. Han Jierre is blasted out onto the gundeck by concussive magic, and then the kobolds seal the door to the bridge. Through the window, **El Extraño**, kobold spymaster of Ber, nods to the PCs, then orders his kobold crew to bring the ship within firing range of the colossus.

'Joining the Conspiracy'

Using the ritual to change the world was Nicodemus's idea, and now Nicodemus is empowered by the *sacrament of apotheosis*, so those who believe in him grant him power. Thus, if the PCs use the same tactics as him, they are themselves contributing to the faith that empowers him.

The first time a PC manages to link to a plane and then reseal the column, Nicodemus laughs as he suddenly realizes that his enemies are playing into his hands. Thereafter, whenever Nicodemus would take damage (which assumes the party manages to bypass the defenses granted by the *sacrament*), for each PC who linked to a plane during this encounter, prevent 10 of that damage and instead deal that 10 damage to the PC. Additionally, each time a PC links a plane, Nicodemus may take an extra standard action on his next turn.

This link ends if the column the PC lowered is destroyed.



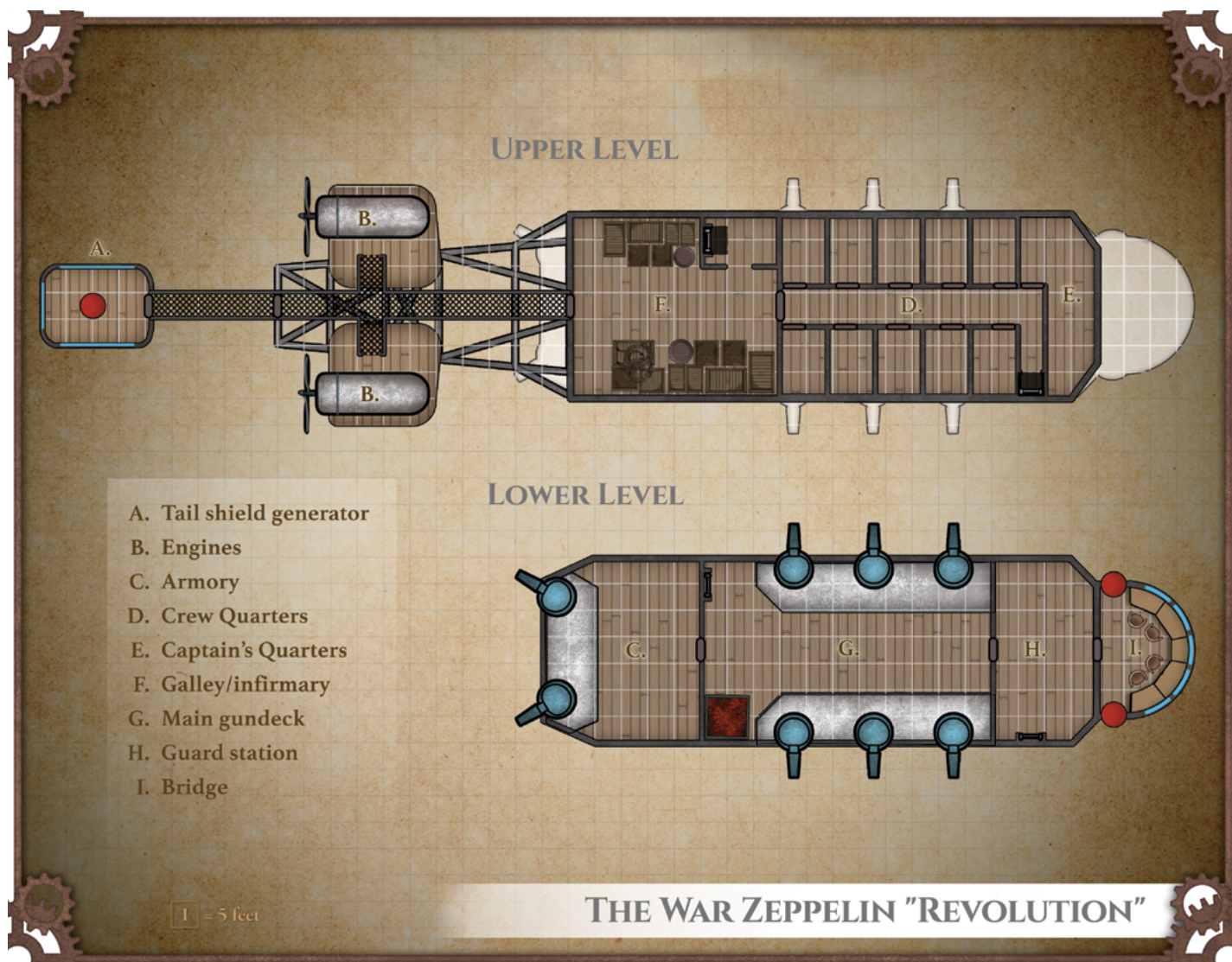
EL EXTRAÑO

War Dirigible *Revolution*

Han Jierre commands the airship from its bridge, which has a non-combatant crew. If an enemy gets into the bridge, the bridge crews surrender, and the ship coasts to a stop. Six elite crew units (consisting of 12 soldiers each) fill the remainder of the lower deck, with each crew manning a different turret. They can move to the aft turrets if needed. Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen stays in the infirmary, ready to heal crew.

Kasvarina typically stays on the bridge, and Lya Jierre roams through the different sections of the ship, ready to battle intruders. They are both prepared to take the fight to enemies who come nearby, using Kasvarina's *fly* spell if an enemy ship gets within 120 feet.



**Revolution, War Dirigible**

Huge Vehicle

Level 30

Vehicle

Hull Integrity 4**Defense** 30**Command** +23**Maneuverability** 4**Speed** 16**Full Crew** 16**Minimum Crew** 3**Total Complement** 100**Design**

The lifting body consists of a 500-ft.-long cluster of hydrogen bladders, each woven out of mithral and enchanted to be fire resistant. The crewed section on the map consists of a 120-ft.-lower and upper decks, plus an upper aft tail, open to air, leading to the propellers and a rear lookout post.

Armaments

Three heavy enchanted turrets aim to each broadside, with a pair aiming aft. Incendiary bombs can be dropped directly below.

Crew: 40. **Attack:** +20 to broadsides, or +18 aft or down. The weapons cannot attack upward, but in exchange they can be used on targets directly below regardless of distance. Attacks made straight downward are with flaming weapons.

See the stats for *Revolution Elite Crew* (page 307) to see how they can fire these weapons in normal initiative, instead of the longer one-minute rounds of naval combat.

Lifting Body

The dirigible can fly as high as 13,000 feet. A strike to the air bladders causes a small localized explosion, but it does not spread. If the fire wards are dispelled, an explosion in one bladder engulfs the entire lifting body, and the vessel falls from the sky.

Repair Crew

Hivemind-empowered halfling and gnome technologists scurry through the ship, fixing what's broken.

As long as Sovereign Han Jierre remains in command of the *Revolution*, any effect that would immobilize it or render it incapable of shooting is repaired after one round.

Eldritch Defenses

Some magical shield absorbs your attacks. Every hit causes red light to flash, perhaps indicating the location of the shield.

Wards along the lifting body grant the ship immunity to the burning condition.

Three red arcane orbs – one in the tail, two in the cockpit – produce wide resilient spheres. Each orb has 50 hit points and produces an invisible 50-ft. radius sphere of protection. This has two effects:

- A spell or non-ship-based weapon attack that originates outside the sphere deals 60 less damage to targets within the sphere. A design flaw did not properly calibrate the size of the shields, meaning the aft gun deck has an area which can be struck with ease.
- Any naval weapon attacks that originate outside the sphere cannot damage the dirigible. This means shipboard weapons can only function at Close range.

A DC 25 Knowledge (engineering) or DC 35 Perception check recognizes this flaw, though taking advantage should require some creativity.



Grandstanding Archvillainy

Coming up with villain dialogue in the midst of a battle is hard. Here's some we suggest.

Lya Jierre's Mournful Duel

The fight with Lya probably won't last long, so we want to give some pathos to her defeat. She laments that she has lost her free will and the spark of innovation now that she is an uneasy spirit bound to Nicodemus.

"It's an honor to cross blades with you again. Despite our past disagreements and their consequences-" She pauses mid-sentence, and shakes her head at her own words. "No, I said that before.

"I'm afraid I must apologize. I wanted an exciting contest of ideology, but it seems both my swordfighting and my repartee are frozen in the past.

"Before I died, my uncle told me he feared the whole world would remain stagnant if we succeeded. Nicodemus and a council of ghosts, not a beating heart among them, would rule this world.

"Remember our first meeting, when I challenged you to break the rules of a puzzle? Well sadly, that's impossible for me now. But perhaps you still can. Nicodemus has set the rules of our grand finale, but you don't have to follow them."

Nicodemus's Taunts

Nic keeps fairly quiet and understated at the beginning of the battle. He directs Borne, and if the PCs interfere with him while he's invincible due to the *sacrament*, he just chides them for wasting his time. But then as the battle develops you can use the following lines to keep Nicodemus alive as a character as well as an opponent.

Welcome. The first time a PC links to a plane and lowers a column back into the ground, Nicodemus laughs, arrogant.

"I told you earlier, imitation is flattery." He pauses for a moment to pull out a cigarette. "You think you're fighting me, but you're using my own methods. Oh, we might have different goals, but at the core, you agree with me: this world needs to be changed. You already voted with us how we should do it, too. So let me be the first to say it. Welcome to the Obscurati, constables." The cigarette ignites as he puts it to his spectral lips.

Scorn. We want to establish that Nicodemus genuinely wants to kill the PCs. There's no time left for making deals.

"You're going to fail, you know. You'll fail, and I will kill you. The wisest minds of twenty generations agreed to join with me, but you-" His eyes flare like bonfires. "My new world is almost complete, and I'll burn you alive before I let you ruin it."

Taunt. Nicodemus mocks the party if his allies are doing well against them, or when he is forced to start fighting.

"Your feeble attempts to stop the Obscurati will be forgotten by history. You were well intentioned, sometimes almost ingenious, so I promise I'll remember you fondly."

Nostalgia. This can help remind the PCs of how long they've been battling Nicodemus.

"Are you as clever as I thought, or was it just chance that you kept stumbling into my way? We first met in the garden of Mayor Macbannin's manor, on Cauldron Hill. Do you remember? We talked about chaos."

Betrayal. This sets up a fine opportunity for someone to reveal to Kasvarina that Nicodemus betrayed her centuries ago.

"Chaos let my Kasvarina slip away from me, because I was distracted by your interference. Without her, I hesitated. I compromised my ideology. I was sentimental, put my trust in people. But we know that people are too selfish to be trusted to choose the right path."

Pride. Make sure to reflect that the power of the *sacrament* is exacerbating Nic's natural self-righteousness.

"I'll admit, I was afraid people would reject my grand design, but now I can feel their faith. I've opened their eyes to the truth, and they empower me. They know I will save them."

Confession to Kasvarina. If the PCs reveal to Kasvarina how Nic arranged the murder of her daughter in order to bring her back under his control four centuries ago, he snaps in fury.

"You'd lost your way, Rina! After all we lost against the Clergy, you and I were cutting them down. We were making the world better! But you wanted a 'family,' like some idiot girl! You were better than that. Yes, I had Launga killed, and I did you a favor! If I'd left you alone, the world you would have given her would have been as wretched as it ever was. Who cares if you lost a daughter? I let you give birth to the future!"

Confession to Borne. If the PCs goad Nicodemus about what the ritual will do, or if they are close to convincing Borne to reject his father, Nicodemus is put on the back foot, metaphorically.



“Son, don’t listen to them. I made you, and you trust me. It’s a damned combat, Borne, not time to discuss the nuances of philosophy. I can hear them, son. Millions of people crying out for you to save them! We finish this now.”

If pushed, though, his pride is such that he cannot deny his intentions. He unleashes a diatribe and demands Borne do what he is told.

“Order. Justice. That’s what I’m creating. Selfishness will no longer destroy what is good when free will is no more. People will be moral because they’ll have no choice. For a thousand years, chaos will be no more, and when the watch’s hand winds down, yeah, then I’ll give these worthless people their freedom back. But they won’t know suffering. I’ll have been their god, one who can truly answer their prayers, who won’t have to let evil into my world. I’m creating heaven, where no man will fear tyranny. Whatever empty value you place on ‘free will’ pales to the paradise this world will be.”

Victorious Monologue

If the Obscurati ritual gets far enough that Borne is about to drop in Jiquus, the new plane of Time, Nicodemus begins his victorious grandstanding, but only as long as victory is in sight. If thwarted at this last moment, he finally loses his temper and attacks recklessly. But if he’s not interrupted, he finishes his speech right as Borne drops the golden seal and secures the world for the Obscurati.

“This is the last piece. All the flaws of Creation will be gone, and all the universe will see that I have made the most perfect world. I wish you dirt-minded fools hadn’t opposed me, or I could’ve spared so many more. But now, witness the end of the Age of Chaos, and the dawn of the Age of Reason!”

“Let me give you a moment. You’ll marvel at its glory, and then, when you beg forgiveness for ever doubting me, I will lift you up and reveal the place I have made for you in my celestial clockwork. You’ll all have a place in this living heaven, and I will look down upon you, your savior, and smile at a new world without selfishness, or apathy, or loathing.

“Well, maybe a little loathing. You’ll remember the world as it was. I’ll make sure of that. Silently, inwardly, you’ll weep that you failed. You’ll try to rebel, to resist, but day after day you’ll praise me to everyone you meet. When all the rest of civilization has forgotten the meaning of the word evil, you’ll be remembered as great heroes of the Obscurati, who were loyal to me until the day you died.

“Now Borne, close the seal, and at long last our grand design will be complete!”



CHECKLIST FINALE

Doctors and airline pilots use checklists so they don’t forget important steps of complex actions. Spend a moment to refer to this checklist each round.

1. At the start of the round, roll to see if the energy tendril moves.
2. Determine if unplugged (or replugged) planar columns cause a change in what magic works.
3. Determine what Nicodemus wants Borne to do with the ritual this round.
4. Decide on something for Nicodemus to say, either on his turn or in reaction to a PC.
5. Decide who Han Jierre thinks is a key threat, and which resources he’d use to target that PC: rifles, ship cannons, or a boarding action led by Lya.
6. Tell the PCs which of the planes their other selves linked to in the Gyre they now have access to. If they gain access to Ascetia, remind them that Nicodemus’s true name is William Miller.
7. Everyone takes their turns. Look for a way to isolate a PC with a natural nemesis, like a Martial Scientist with Lya, or a Vekeshi with Kasvarina. Try to set up that encounter if it’s not tactically futile.
8. When a round ends, assess how the three arcs – airship, ritual, and colossus – are progressing. Decide if you need to highlight events in one arc in particular.
9. If the party is making headway toward the Redemption ending, tell the PCs that they feel a presence in the Gyre watching and weighing their actions.
10. If they’re working on the Rejection ending, describe some dramatic heaving in the earth and lightning in the sky as reality shudders chaotically.



Conclusions

However this encounter ends, the consequences should be decisive.

Failure

If Nicodemus gets all the planes he desires and closes the seal, the whole world becomes suddenly calm. Tell the players that their characters throw down their weapons and begin to smile and cheer at the Obscurati's victory. A full moon begins to rise to the east, and though they try to resist, each of them walks up to Nicodemus, thanks him, then kneels and ask for forgiveness.

On the ground, looking up at their savior, they see the ghost of Nicodemus smile, and he reaches out to the heavens and sweeps his hand. The gesture casts time forward, and in a moment the PCs experience day and night and day and again, years in a flash, as they travel the world spreading the heroism of Nicodemus, crafting monuments to his name, attending annual celebrations on Axis Island where Nicodemus basks in their adoration. And every moment, each of them screams without a voice, unable to act against the path he set for them.

Until finally, decades later, their will long broken, they no longer know that they attest to a forced faith. They awake with a smile they believe is their own. They have relented, and understand that Nicodemus was right, that this world is truly without selfishness. Finally, as the year ends, they attend the celebration here again on Axis Island.

Thousands have come to listen to Nicodemus give them guidance and encouragement. But the man does not appear. This matters nothing to the crowd, whose responses were dictated long ago. They applaud a speech not given by a hero not present, and then they leave and continue on with their lives, forced to obey. But inwardly, silently, they remember.

Destruction

When Nicodemus is finally reduced to 0 hit points, he sags and shakes his head in disbelief. His form begins to dissipate, and he reaches out toward one of the PCs to say, "It's all still chaos. Whatever world you create, it will always fall apart."

Then he convulses, bends backwards upon himself, and explodes with blinding radiance, spreading outward like a wave to all his followers across the world. The colossus Borne is utterly disintegrated, leaving just a shadow of smoke in the air that slowly drifts away. Any Ob forces who had survived this long are likewise annihilated. Additionally, because PCs who contributed to the ritual became linked to Nicodemus through the *sacrament*, they each suffer backlash, taking 100 damage.

In the relative calm afterward, whatever remains of the party has little trouble completing the ritual, though they might still squabble over what planes to bind. Let them finish the ritual, while they ponder just how many were killed by the backlash from Nicodemus's defeat.

Completion

When the golden seal falls into place, the whole valley shakes with the impact, and the once-blinding light pouring out of the center of the ritual vanishes. In the following few seconds, magic readjusts on a worldwide scale, and clouds roil overhead as energy gathers to this spot. Just as how linking to a single plane granted a reward, now completing the ritual grants each PC who contributed incredible power.

Let the players know that each of them can effectively do any one thing they desire, on par with a *wish*. They must choose quickly before the magic dissipates, but as they ponder, Nicodemus shouts in disbelief and clenches his fists, then shakes his head once and cracks a forced grin. He pulls out one last cigarette, haughty and defiant.

"Enjoy your victory, constables," he says. "I told you, we agree this world had to change, so whatever new world you've made, it was made in my image. But my work is not complete. This is just a delay. My followers and I will try again. You cannot kill an idea, and I will see my grand design fulfilled."

Of course, the party can just keep fighting if they want, but with their momentary surge of power, victory is practically automatic. Hopefully at this point, one of the PCs chooses to obliterate Nicodemus, which has the result detailed in Destruction above, though the PC has a choice of whether to just destroy Nicodemus, or to destroy all his followers as well.

If by some chance the party lets Nicodemus go, he's true to his word. Though the *sacrament* fades away after a day, he and those who believe in him continue to toil in the shadows, seeking another opportunity to achieve Nic's goal and create a perfect world. That's a problem for tomorrow, though. For now, the sun begins to rise.

Redemption

If the party gets Kasvarina to confront Nicodemus, and if they haven't done anything that William Miller would find morally reprehensible, *and* if you feel the scene has had sufficient drama – it might help to have Nicodemus attack Kasvarina and nearly kill her – then Nicodemus's other self leaps into the Gyre in order to merge their consciousnesses into one.

The sky rumbles with deafening thunder that rolls in from the horizon where the Gyre hangs, and then Nicodemus falls to the ground and grips his head in both hands. His form distends, like a second person is trying to move inside a single body, hands and faces pressing out against his spectral skin. For the next round Nic is stunned as he argues with himself.

Nic groans in confusion, "Who are you? Get out of my mind!"

Then his voice changes slightly. "I'm who you should have been. We opposed the holy war because the hierarchs cared more about victory than following any sort of moral code. Now you're just like them, and just as blind. Our arrogance caused the Malice. You should have been horrified by what you'd done, but you were too proud to stop fighting. Well dammit, I've spent five centuries with the ghosts of those you killed. Feel what they lost."

He stumbles and screams, and through the power of the *sacrament of apotheosis* everyone in the battle notices this. The Ob forces pause to see what will happen.

Then on the next round he snaps free of his confusion. His posture changes to guarded optimism. Miller, now in control of the ghostly body, calls to the party. "I have only a moment. For now he's overwhelmed, and I've ended his link to the *sacrament*. Quickly, destroy me. I don't have time to apologize for it all, but I can help you stop him."

Already he's starting to twitch again, but if at least one PC strikes him, Miller yields to it and lets it destroy him. The blow begins to unravel him, and he looks to Kasvarina for forgiveness before he collapses silently into darkness.



Or play it up with a big explosion, if you prefer. In the wake of this, the ghost council screams and disperses, the colossus falls to its knees to mourn his father, and Han Jierre surrenders. The party can then complete the ritual at their leisure.

Rejection

When the party destroys the last column of the ritual, or when a round has passed with no columns in the earth, the ritual sputters to an end. The energy tendril vanishes. Nicodemus is shocked, and he screams at the party, “You could have made whatever world you wanted, and you just reject that chance? You’ve doomed the whole world!”

The planet shudders, mountains crumble, and the glow of the Gyre streaks across the sky as the air fills with a high-pitched keen. The heavens glow brighter, every dark spot turned blinding white, and an immense force shoves everyone to the ground. For a moment the whole world is just unendurable brilliance and deafening thunder, and then in an instant reality becomes still.

The party finds themselves and whoever remains of their foes lying on the floor of the valley. Clouds float overhead in a dark sky, but as their eyes adjust they spot stars twinkling through gaps. A purple glow like dawn rises to what was the north, as if the world had spun off its axis.

Nicodemus shoves himself righteously to his feet and throws out a hand to smite a PC, but nothing happens. The power of the *sacrament* has ended, and magic itself barely works. Borne groans, too weak to move, and the ghost council cries out as they begin to dissolve. Nicodemus is unable to sustain them. He only ever endured through his certainty that he could remake the world into what he desired, and by rejecting his whole ideology on a planetary scale, the party has completely sapped him of power.

A single blow can destroy him.

A New Dawn

Once the battle ends, the party’s allies gather around them to cheer, weep for those who fell, and tend to those who survived. In the midst of their interactions, a beam of sunlight shines above the mountains at the edge of the valley and illuminates the forest on the far side. Within minutes, night is pushed away for the first time in months by the sunrise. Just what the world it shines upon looks like depends on the party’s choices, but here on Axis Island, the air is crisp and the sky clear.

(And if the party pissed off Pemberton, now’s when he attacks.)



ACT THREE: How to Deliver a Denouement

Take a smoke break
and get some dinner.

After all climax has concluded, we must unravel the tension, and either mourn or celebrate what the party's actions have wrought. We recommend a time jump of a few days or weeks. You can use the following scenes to imply how the world fares in the aftermath.

Any prominent NPC who survived, and who can reach this world (for instance, if the party didn't link to Av, Rock Rackus and the Unseen Court are stranded in the Gyre for eternity), should show up at least briefly. Consider what planes the PCs linked to, and choose a scene to at least slightly highlight the changes. Each scene might involve just one or two PCs, or the whole party.

Our descriptions assume the party got a happy ending and maintained a world with technology. If the world is bleaker or the party set themselves up as tyrants, change the tone of each scene as necessary. The dock opera could be a protest, and the Vekeshi unmasking could be an execution of dissidents. If the party chose a more pastoral world, the Government Issue scene could be retraining people in the use of bows or even domesticated falcons.

Docker—A Dock Opera

Prominent NPCs: Rock Rackus, Thames Grimsley, Glaucia Evora, Lady Beshela

Likely Plane of Interest: Water

On barges in Flint Harbor that were once a floating reformatory, a gaggle of dockers are decorating for an upcoming performance to remember those who died in the aftermath of the Great Eclipse. Thames Grimsley coordinates hundreds of vibrantly-dressed men and women, but his interest in the PCs is for one specific role: pall-bearers for an empty coffin.

The concert will be a memorial, and Grimsley wants at least two of the 'heroes of Risur' to help carry the coffin onto the stage, then place it on a pedestal high at the rear of the stage. It will serve as a focus for the more somber songs, which will be performed by musicians from all throughout Flint and even some foreign countries. But the plan is for the concert to switch to a more celebratory, uplifting tone, and at the night's end the coffin will be set adrift, to be carried away with the tide, inspiring the whole city to think of the whole wide world.

Thames would also love any docker PCs to perform, especially if they have any words to commemorate Rock Rackus, who has not been seen since before the Great Eclipse. (Even if the party linked to Av, the fate of Rock is unknown.)

During the discussion, the gnoll Glaucia Evora briefly interrupts and thanks the party for how the conditions for workers in Parity Lake have improved. She suggests they meet some time about establishing a branch of the *Executores dola Liberta* here in Flint, but admits that she is sincerely interested to experience Risuri musical culture.

Jump forward to that evening, as ships float all around the lashed-together barges that make up the stage. Thames personally rows a longboat while the PCs and other pall-

bearers—lit by spotlights (chemical, magical, perhaps even electrical) hold the empty casket. (If they check, yes, it's empty.) A druid on stage sings a traditional funeral song, and as the ship reaches the barge and PCs carry the casket onto the stage, she reaches the end of the song. People watching from dozens of anchored boats cheer.

Then, as the PCs near the pedestal where the casket should lie, it shudders in their hand. A muffled voice comes from inside the box, urgent, and one of the other pallbearers panics and



LADY BESHELA



ROCK RACKUS

lets go of the coffin. The crowd gasps in shock, and the spotlights fixate on the casket. Its lid flies off and white fog pours out.

From the fog rises a skeletal hand, and then the woman it belongs to pulls herself out and pirouettes as she lands on the stage. It is a dancer from the plane of Iratha Ket, her bones painted and her clothes colorful and somehow curvaceous despite her lack of flesh. Then she reaches back into the casket and helps out Lady Beshela, who emerges gracefully and nods to the PCs. Then Beshela extends a hand to help a third person out of the coffin.

A gold pistol, encrusted with diamonds, rises out of the fog, and Beshela grabs the barrel and yanks, pulling up Rock Rackus. The audience screams in disbelief as Rock climbs from the casket (completely stealing attention away from those who died, like the asshole celebrity he is).

"I've got a long story to tell you," he says, as music begins to play out of nowhere, "but I think you know where it starts."

He breaks into his famous song – *I Had a Threeway* – about how he got into trouble for having two lovers at once. The crowd sings along, while Beshela and the skeleton spin and dance around him. Occasionally he'll break into normal speech to explain that Risur and the Dreaming are his two lovers now, and he hopes they can be together forever.

He finishes to thunderous applause, and while his fans cheer he leans in close to the PCs and says he's got a dungeon he'd like to go plundering with them some time. Lady Beshela can fill them in on what she knows about the status of the fey of Av, and just where the Dreaming and the Bleak Gate have gone off to.

Thames's elaborately-planned event devolves into an impromptu jam session as Rock cheers on or duets with all the other performers, encourages the PCs to sing, and occasionally drops songs about how he escaped the Gyre and found his way back home, to the city and the people he loves. As the concert comes to a close, he announces that he's running for Governor.

Out in the dark of the night, a deep ululation sounds — the approval of the fey titan, She Who Writhes. With that, Rock and Beshela dive into the sea and are carried away on an immense wave.

Eschatologist — Group Portrait

Prominent NPCs: Captain Smith

Likely Plane of Interest: Time

Captain Rutger Smith knocks at the door of one of the PCs. With him is Bartholomew Pryce, editor of the newspaper *Pryce of Progress*. Together they invite the PC and the rest of the 'heroes of Flint' to this week's meeting of the Flint Society of Eschatologists. Smith doesn't expect a speech or anything, but he says that Pryce has been experimenting with the new field of photography, and they would like to record a picture of the party for posterity. Even if they can't all come, Smith hopes that there might be some event coming up where all the heroes will be together at once.

He admits, it might seem a little strange for eschatologists, who are supposed to be paying attention to how things will end in the future, to care about recording events that have already happened. But Smith explains that as he sees it, endings only matter in context, and as we prepare for the end, those who survive us should be able to remember us, both our faces and the lessons we learned.

You might have the party just meet up with the club and take a photo, or save the commemoration for some other gathering, such as the Medals and Prizes scene.



CAPTAIN RUTGER SMITH

Gunsmith — Government-Issue

Prominent NPCs: Stover Delft, Kaja Stewart

Likely Plane of Interest: Earth

A shooting range has been set up in a courtyard outside the RHC Headquarters in Flint. Stover Delft guides one or more PCs in to meet a half-dozen new recruits. Kaja Stewart, under the watchful eye of elite Risuri soldiers clad in black gentleman's suits and tophats, is clearly delighted as she instructs the recruits. She twirls a pair of firearms by their trigger guards and explains the specifications of the newest technology. Any innovations a PC gunsmith came up with are now standard issue for constables (but only for mundane technology, not the blaster powers of a Mad Shootist).

Upon seeing the PCs, Kaja grows serious and admits that she was once in a gunfight against the party, but because she was taken prisoner she had a second chance, and was able to reform and help Risur. That's why it's important, she jokes, to hit your enemies in their kneecaps.

One of the recruits raises his hand and asks if that's how Chief Inspector Delft got his limp.

After that, Delft uses Kaja so he can show the recruits how to place mage-cuffs on a suspect. He laments that the ribbon of gold in the cuffs probably needs to be removed, now that it doesn't block teleportation anymore (unless the party kept Urim). He's about to move on to a tour of the underground cells, but another recruit asks if they can test their marksmanship against the PCs.



If they'll indulge the recruits, Delft shouts to a secretary to bring out the 'good silver,' and a minute later she returns with a bundle full of knives, swords, and machetes that once belonged to Lorcan Kell. He walks out 70 feet from the firing line where wooden targets have been set up, and then he stabs the weapons through the back of the targets so they poke forward. With a grin he spits some chewing tobacco on the front of the target and smears it to make a rough angry face with two eyes and a down-turned mouth.

"The late Duke of Slaughter," he says with a bow.

His prop completed, he gets back to safety and lets the crew bond over blowing away the famous scoundrel.

Martial Scientists—The Body is Missing

Prominent NPCs: Lauryn Cyneburg, Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen

Likely Plane of Interest: Space

The PCs are escorted by Battalion trainees into a damp and somewhat moldy basement in the military base. Gas lamps flicker along the walls, each placed near a sign that reads "Special Clearance Required For Entry." Guards stand at attention in front of several doors and salute as the PCs pass.

As they near the end of the hallway, one of their escorts will confess to a martial scientist PC that he's read their thesis, and thinks it should be standard training for all Battalion recruits.

At the end of the hall the door opens to reveal Minister of Infiltration Lauryn Cyneburg and Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen. Inside the room, bright lamps illuminate an autopsy table, now empty, but stained with purple blood. A chalkboard on the wall hosts a diagram of some alien monster. (I'm thinking protean, but pick what works for you.)

Lauryn informs the PCs that the monster was found by roving diviners working for the Battalion, and after they killed it with an excess of bullets, its body was brought here and the doctor was brought in for his expertise. Dr. von Recklinghausen cut it open, tested its organs for magic potentiality, and saw no sign that the thing was capable of slithering its way out of the facility. But when he came this morning, the body was missing. Guards were stationed here the whole time, and no one reported seeing it leave.

To be clear, Lauryn says, the thing isn't a Gidim, and it isn't from any plane they're aware of. She wonders if the party saw anything like it in the Gyre. Then she offers her opinion that, honestly, she would have kinda liked the pirate plane. She thinks she'd look dashing with an eyepatch.

Back to business, though, she says the more worrying development is that the same time this disappeared, secret research about the psychic vulnerabilities of the Gidim went missing. She asks whether they should notify the S.C.P. division of the RHC, or try to resolve this themselves.

Skyseer—Telescope in the Clouds

Prominent NPCs: Hana "Gale" Soliogn, Heward Sechim

Likely Plane of Interest: Air

Followers of the late and beloved skyseer Nevard Sechim have called a meeting with civic and business leaders to discuss a proper commemoration. For promotional reasons the meeting occurs on the roof of **Heward Sechim's** factory in Parity Lake, beginning about an hour before sunset (giving you an opportunity to showcase what the industrial sector of the city looks like today).

Heward Sechim has asked for the respectable influence of the PCs to help arbitrate the dispute. Gale leads the contingent of skyseers, and as a stunt she has created a column of clear air directly above the factory, so that the blue sky overhead contrasts with the smoke covering the rest of the district. The skyseers are requesting that the factories must develop a way to capture their smoke and keep it out of the air, which the factory owners balk at as unworkable.

Gale argues that since the heavens have changed, the work of the skyseers is now more important than ever, so that the people of Risur can best understand their place in the multiverse. One factory owner, **Boothman Drumpf**, scoffs and says that what the people of Risur want is a return to normalcy, with no more magic or prophecies. He's tempted to just burn extra coal in spite, to drive the skyseers out of Flint.

The PCs might be able to broker something, but at some point—either as a concession or as an extra demand—Gale says that the skyseers want to lay claim to Cauldron Hill. Since its peak is often above the clouds, they'd like to build a telescope observatory, paid for by a new 'clear sky' tax on industries that produce smoke and other ill vapors.

As the meeting winds down, the sun begins to descend in the new west, which has the unfortunate effect of revealing that, y'know, the pollution kinda makes for a beautiful sunset.



HEWARD SECHIM

Spirit Medium—A New Underworld

Prominent NPCs: Morgan Cippiano

Likely Plane of Interest: Death

One or more PCs are invited to attend the funeral of a murdered young girl named **Nilana** in Stray River, a reminder that sorrows still exist in the new world. It's a traditionally Crisillyiri affair, though the liturgy is somewhat self-conscious since the memories of the god trials are still fresh. A spirit medium in attendance might spot the departed girl's ghost lingering, depending on the nature of how people die in this new world.

After the ceremony ends, Morgan Cippiano meets the PC on the veranda. He hopes there'll be an offer to find justice for Nilana, but in any event he wants to discuss how he and his family can help keep order. As long as there's anger, jealousy, suffering, and desperation, people are going to commit crimes, and there should be some structure to the criminal underworld, so that even the criminals have a code they won't violate.



Morgan admits, after all he's been through, he doesn't want to keep corralling finger-breakers and smugglers, but he also can't just turn over his people to the law, or else he'll lose their trust. He asks if perhaps one of the PCs would consider joining the Family and becoming involved in its affairs. After all, the party has plenty of experience with conspiracies. If it sweetens the deal, he can introduce them to a quite talented tailor.

Whatever the PCs decide, Morgan pours them all a glass a wine and toasts their good health.

Technologist — Borne Again

Prominent NPCs: Borne, Benedict Pemberton, Kasvarina Varal

Likely Plane of Interest: Fire

This scene can go a lot of ways. At the outskirts of Flint – perhaps out in the Ayres where there won't be as many gawkers – the colossus Borne sits on an island. Or what remains of him. If he survived, he has come to Flint so that he might transfer his consciousness into a smaller golem body, and that his titanic form might be disassembled so it can never be used as a weapon. If he was destroyed, his remains have been brought here to salvage.

Kasvarina Varal, if friendly and alive, wants to cooperate with Benedict Pemberton to craft Borne a new form – mechanical still, but capable of feeling like a real person. She cannot have children (or at least, believes she cannot), and Borne is her son. Alternately, if Borne is dead, Kasvarina wishes to have his remains disposed of respectfully.

In either case, Pemberton is eager to get his hands on the secret innards of the colossus, but he puts on a very convincing show of lamenting the situation and the suffering of poor, innocent Borne. And the Risuri military, of course, does not want a private citizen – especially not a dragon – to get access to such powerful technology. **Colonel Schneider**, who corresponds with industrialists in Parity Lake, is red-faced and apoplectic at Pemberton's casual mention of his plans to ship Borne's remains to Ber.

A technologist PC can moderate the situation, and perhaps help devise a new body for the colossus. Or Borne might be convinced to keep his body for a time, long enough to assist in some major earth-works projects. Or, best yet, a Steamsuit Pilot might give Borne a Medium-sized body of his own, then learn to pilot the colossus. Most of the people of Risur would be wary of this outcome, however.

Vekeshi Mystic — Unmasking

Prominent NPCs: Damata Griento, Athrylla Valanar

Likely Plane of Interest: Life

The Old Stag wants to rehabilitate the image of the Vekeshi Mystics. In a public event in Dawn Square, publicized in the local papers days in advance, a dozen members of the Vekeshi Mystics come out in their ornate ceremonial robes and masks. In front of a crowd of several hundred, they reveal themselves one by one (see the Vekeshi Mystics player handout in Act One for names), explaining that they sought positions in society where they could be a force to help the common man without resorting to violence.

The PCs have been asked to witness, and help prevent violence, since the Vekeshi are viewed as terrorists and murderers. A Vekeshi PC would also be asked to unmask himself, but this is voluntary.

The local police are on hand, and they intend to arrest the unmasked mystics so they can go to trial. But after the Old Stag has revealed himself, the crowd is surprised when a half-orc bounds onto stage. Damata Griento, who has been hobnobbing with railroad builders in Risur, says that he sympathizes with these masked men and women.

He explains that during the Great Eclipse, when his nation of Ber was in peril and its leaders were taking the wrong course, he too put on a mask. He too fought and hurt law enforcement officers who were doing their duties, and once even killed an agent of the Obscurati. Today everyone sees the Ob as the villains, and so his actions are viewed as noble, not criminal. But he wants the people of Risur to consider the intentions of the Vekeshi. They acted not in self-interest, but to fight back against forces they felt were a threat to innocents.

The police pull him off stage, and an officer shouts that the gathering is over. Damata is carted away with the mystics. Depending on how you want things to play out, they might go peacefully to face a fair justice system, or Damata – with the aid of Sor Daeron – could break the mystics out of their prisoner wagons and spirit them away to Ber.

Yerasol Veteran — Medals and Prizes

Prominent NPCs: Lord Inspector Nigel Price-Hill, Harkover Lee, Stover Delft

Likely Plane of Interest: This one.

The monarch of Risur and a couple of other PCs ride in a carriage with Lord Inspector Nigel Price-Hill and Principal Minister Harkover Lee. Harkover is just concluding a briefing about meeting the new...he pauses at the amusing word... “president” of Danor. The tone depends on how well Danor fared, though it's likely the nation is suffering from a Second Malice because of the millions who placed their faith in Nicodemus and died for it.

The Lord Inspector turns to a ‘more serious’ topic, as a joke. He insists that the peak of Cauldron Hill be used as the site for a monument to the monarch and those who saved the world. He knows it will upset the skyseers who want their telescope, but he'd rather the city's most prominent landmark not be controlled by a religious cult full of secrets.

Before the conversation goes too long, the carriage approaches the sound of cheering and music. Looking out the window, the PCs can see crowds gathered on the bridge to the Royal Shipyard. The assembled citizenry of Flint sing a stirring rendition of the Risuri national anthem, and then the carriage stops at the royal docks. Any other PCs who weren't in the carriage are already present, along with Stover Delft.

Delft welcomes them, and turns to present the new flagship, ready for launch, the *R.N.S....* we'll let you name it. But it's probably an airship.

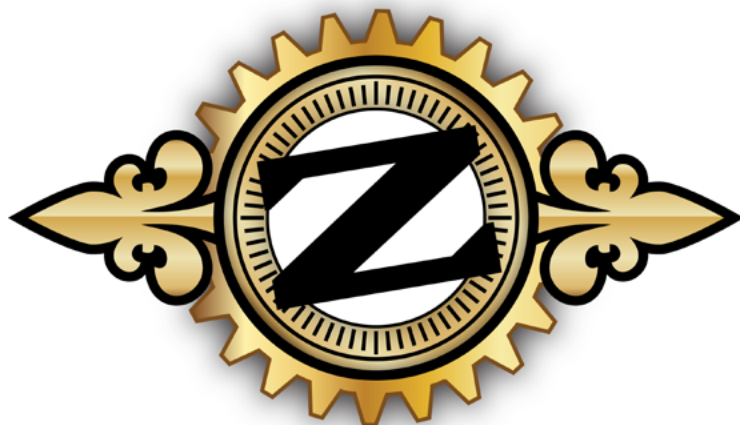
Delft then gestures to a stage on the docks ahead, where a crowd of dignitaries await. He runs through the names of three constables – **Erik Freund**, **Cynthia du Emorie**, and **Laureen Zell** – who will be receiving medals for cracking the case of an extraplanar monster that was lurking in the sewers under Parity Lake. They'll be coming aboard for the maiden voyage of the new vessel. Hopefully no royal siblings will be along for the ride this time.

If someone desires, let a PC give a speech to the crowd, giving the campaign its final word. Then a bottle of champagne is brought forth, and the monarch smashes it against the hull, launching the ship for a first voyage in this new age.





ZEITGEIST Adventure Path Appendices



APPENDIX A: Combat Catalogue

Herein find nearly all the combat stats of these adventures. We present them in order of the scene they likely appear. Refer to the chart below if you need to find their stats to use them in a different encounter.

Entries marked with asterisks are enemies whose stats occur in the main body text and are not repeated here. We include a page reference for the sake of completeness.

(Why did we put those stats in the main text, and not in the appendix? We're not sure. But it'd be too much of a hassle to change now.)

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The Fey Titans

Adventure 10

Titan Traits

All fey titans have the following abilities, unless otherwise noted.

Ferocity (Ex) The fey titan remains conscious and fighting even when below 0 hp. It is staggered, loses 1 hit point each round, and still dies when it reaches negative hp equal to its Constitution score.

Fey Link (Su) A fey titan exists simultaneously in the real world and the Dreaming, and can see and affect both worlds. It is vaguely aware of any large-scale actions occurring within an area it deems its native terrain (generally, this is forests, mountains, swamps, plains, or seas); it could sense a massive mining operation, but not a handful of burrowing creatures.

When in its native terrain it can transport creatures it can see between the real world and the Dreaming, as per *plane shift* (at-will, caster level 20th). It can only affect unwilling creatures if those creatures have contested its authority and been defeated.

When a fey titan is killed, its animating spirit dissipates into its native terrain, and in the following years new creatures will be empowered by that energy. It might take centuries, but eventually one creature will defeat all contenders and consume their energy, becoming the new fey titan of that area.

Hurl Foe (Ex) When a fey titan damages a Huge or smaller foe with one of its natural attacks, it can try to hurl the foe as part of that attack by attempting a combat maneuver check. On a successful check, the foe is knocked back 10 feet in a direction of the titan's choice and falls prone. The distance the foe is hurled increases by 10 feet for every 5 points by which the titan's check exceeds the foe's CMD. If an obstacle stops the hurled creature before it travels the whole distance, the hurled foe and the obstacle struck each take 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet of distance remaining and the foe is knocked prone in the space adjacent to the obstacle.

Titanic (Ex) Because fey titan are so massive, uneven ground and other features that form difficult terrain generally pose no significant hindrance to their movement, though areas of forest or settlements are considered difficult terrain. A Huge or smaller creature can move through any square occupied by a fey titan, or vice-versa. A fey titan can make attacks of opportunity only against foes that are Huge or larger, and can be flanked only by Huge or larger foes. A fey titan gains a bonus for being on higher ground only if its entire space is on higher ground than that of its target. It's possible for a Huge or smaller creature

to climb a fey titan—this generally requires a successful DC 30 check, and unlike the normal rules about fey titan and attacks of opportunity, a Small or larger creature that climbs on a fey titan's body provokes an attack of opportunity from the monster.

Recovery (Ex) Whenever a fey titan fails a saving throw against any mind-affecting, paralysis, petrification, polymorph, or immobilizing effect (including binding and temporal stasis but not including imprisonment), it can attempt a new saving throw at the end of its turn to remove the effect. Doing so takes no action. A fey titan can attempt a new save to end the effect as often as it wishes, but can attempt to remove only one such effect per round. Once per year, if a fey titan takes an amount of damage that would normally kill it by reducing its hit points to a negative amount equal to its Constitution score, the damage instead heals the fey titan of twice the amount of damage—but this healing leaves the fey titan disoriented and demoralized. At this point, the creature becomes nauseated and seeks only to return to its lair. Any amount of damage dealt to it by an external source before it reaches its lair, though, immediately negates the nauseated effect and allows the fey titan to end its retreat and attack.

The Ash Wolf

CR 25

XP 1,640,000

CN Colossal magical beast (fey titan)

Init +18; Senses darkvision 600 ft., true seeing, scent; Perception +38

Defense

AC 44, touch 17, flat-footed 21 (+14 Dex, +1 dodge, +27 natural, -8 size); +4 vs. opportunity attacks

hp 413 (25d8+300); fast healing 30

Fort +26, Ref +28, Will +20

Defensive Abilities ferocity, recovery; DR 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** fire 50, acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30

Offense

Speed 100 ft.

Melee bite +36 (6d12+40/17-20 plus grab or trip)

Space 60 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks carry off, critical hits, hurl foe, hurl tree

Spell-like Abilities (CL 25th; concentration +35)

Constant—freedom of movement, pass without trace, true seeing

At will—bestow curse (DC 23), pyrotechnics, transmute metal to wood

3/day—commune with nature

1/day—fire storm (DC 27)

Statistics

Str 48, Dex 38, Con 34, Int 15, Wis 30, Cha 24

Base Atk +25; **CMB** +52 (+56 grab); **CMD** 76 (80 vs. trip)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Dismembering Critical,* Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth),

Spring Attack

*Yeah, we made that one up

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+42 to jump), Knowledge (nature) +27, Perception +38, Perform (sing) +32, Stealth +29

Languages Primordial

SQ fey link, pack bond, smoky mate, titanic

EPIC DAMAGE REDUCTION

As a reminder, per the *Mythic Adventures* rules, any magic weapon whose total bonus is +6 or higher can bypass DR -/epic. So a +5 flaming sword, a +3 dancing scimitar, or a +1 ghost touch holy keen shock bohemian earspoon could hurt a fey titan. Mostly, such DR is just an excuse for why you can't have a thousand peasants kill a titan with slings.



Special Abilities

Carry Off (Ex) Due to his immense size and incredible speed, the Ash Wolf's preferred tactic is to dash out from the smoke of a forest fire, bite and grab a foe, then sprint away to separate his victim from his allies. To accomplish this, the Ash Wolf uses *hunting surge*, then spring attacks in, jumps over the party, makes a bite attack (typically against an unarmored foe), and takes a -20 penalty to his combat maneuver check to grapple the target. If he succeeds, he does not gain the grappled condition himself and can carry the creature off

Critical Hits (Ex) Due to his critical feats, when the Ash Wolf confirms a critical hit with his bite, he inflicts 2d6 bleed damage, and the target must succeed a Fortitude save (DC 35) or lose a limb. He has a +4 bonus on all critical confirmation rolls.

Hunting Surge (Su) As a swift action, the Ash Wolf releases a howl that focuses his predatory might. Until the end of his turn he gains a +200 bonus to his speed (granting him a total of +122 to jump checks, so he can easily clear 30 vertical feet). He cannot use this power again on his next turn.

Hurl Tree (Ex) If the Ash Wolf attacks a tree (or other massive object) it can uproot it and hurl it up to 400 feet. The area affected varies slightly based on the projectile, but creatures in a roughly 40-ft. radius take 20d6 damage (Reflex DC 30 half). The hurled object likely knocks down a swath of other trees in its path, and at the GM's discretion creatures in a 40-ft. wide line out to the destination take 5d6 damage (Reflex DC 24 half).

Pack Bond (Su) If the Ash Wolf is within a mile of his children, he can sense through them and share some of his prowess. At any given time he can bestow this power to up to four smoldering wolves. They gain a +10 sacred bonus to AC and attack rolls, as well as their father's DR, resistances, and immunities, but when any damage dealt to them an equal amount of damage is dealt to the Ash Wolf.

As a free action once per round he can switch which four wolves he empowers in this way; typically when one of his empowered children is reduced below 50 hit points, he has that child withdraw from battle and grants his power to another.

Smoky Mate (Su) When first reduced below 207 hit points, the Ash Wolf's desperation calls forth the spirit of his long-dead mate, who emerges from the forest fire somewhere within 100 feet. Her body resembles a similarly-titanic wolf composed of ash and smoke.

She starts with 207 hit points, and has the same stats as the Ash Wolf, except she has a fly speed of 80 (perfect) and is incorporeal. Her natural armor bonus is +0, but she has a +7 deflection bonus, making her AC 24. As is normal with incorporeal creatures, she is immune to nonmagical damage and takes half damage from magical attacks. Force attacks affect her normally, and due to her nature so do cold attacks.

The smoky titan's attacks ignore natural armor, armor, and shields. She cannot grapple or trip her foes.



Smoldering Wolf

CR 12

XP 19,200

N Large magical beast (fire)

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., keen scent, low-light vision; Perception +11**Aura** choking smoke (10 ft., DC 23)

Defense

AC 26, touch 18, flat-footed 17 (+8 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural, -1 size)**hp** 168 (16d10+80);**Fort** +15, **Ref** +18, **Will** +6**Immune** fire**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold

Offense

Speed 50 ft.**Melee** bite +23 (2d8+12/19-20 plus burn and trip)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** burn (2d10 fire, DC 23)

Statistics

Str 26, **Dex** 26, **Con** 20, **Int** 9, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 44 (48 vs. trip)**Feats** Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Step Up, Wind Stance**Skills** Perception +11, Sense Motive +5, Stealth +20, Survival +5**Languages** Common, Primordial**SQ** pack hunter, raging burster

Special Abilities

Choking Aura (Su) A smoldering wolf is surrounded by an aura of smoke that clings near its body. This haze grants the smoldering wolf 20% concealment, or a +20% bonus on other forms of concealment. All other creatures within 10 feet make a DC 23 Fortitude save at the beginning of their turn or be sickened.

Pack Hunter(Ex) A smoldering wolf can always use the aid another action in combat as a free action when aiding another wolf engaged with the same target.

Raging Burster (Su) When reduced below half its starting hp (84 hp or less), the smoldering wolf erupts in a blast of fire. Every creature within 15 feet of the smoldering wolf takes 8d6 fire damage (Reflex DC 23 for half). After this, the smoldering wolf gains the benefit of the haste spell and its burn damage increases to 3d8. These effects last until the smoldering wolf is slain or an hour passes, at which point it returns to normal until it next suffers damage.





The Father of Thunder

CR 25

XP 1,640,000

CN Colossal magical beast (fey titan)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 600 ft., true seeing; Perception +44**Aura** stormy presence (1200 ft., DC 30)

Defense

AC 43, touch 1, flat-footed 36 (-1 Dex, +44 natural, -8 size)**hp** 563 (25d8+450); fast healing 30**Fort** +32, **Ref** +13, **Will** +20**Defensive Abilities** ferocity, recovery; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** electricity 50, acid 30, cold 30, fire 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30**Weakness** susceptible to booze

Offense

Speed 150 ft.**Melee** gore +36 (6d12+27/19-20/x3), 2 stomps +36 (2d12+19/19-20 plus trip)**Space** 60 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** critical hits, herd crush, hurl foe, tromping attack, toppled quake**Spell-like Abilities** (CL 25th; concentration +40)

Constant—freedom of movement, true seeing

At will—bestow curse (DC 28), greater shout (DC 33), plant growth

3/day—commune with nature

1/day—heroes' feast

Statistics

Str 48, **Dex** 8, **Con** 46, **Int** 10, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 40**Base Atk** +25; **CMB** +52 (+56 bull rush); **CMD** 61 (63 vs. bull rush, 65 vs. trip)**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Critical Mastery, Improved Critical (gore), Improved Critical (stomp), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Natural Attack (gore), Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical**Skills** Acrobatics -1 (+47 to jump), Intimidate +40, Perception +44**Languages** Primordial**SQ** fey link, titanic

Special Abilities

Critical Hits (Ex) Due to his critical feats, when the Father of Thunder confirms a critical hit with his gore, he stuns the target for 1d4 rounds (Fortitude DC 35 reduces the effect to staggered) and inflicts 2d6 bleed damage. When he confirms a critical hit with a stomp, he only stuns, and doesn't inflict bleed. He has a +4 bonus on all critical confirmation rolls.**Herd Crush (Ex)** A herd encircles the Father of Thunder in a quarter-mile radius. When the herd is in motion, any hostile creature the fey titan is aware of within the herd must succeed a Reflex save (DC 24) at the start of its turn or else take 10 damage from the crush of animals. Herd animals such as horses are not in danger of this crush.

A creature unable to keep up with the herd (such as if he's dismounted or his steed is knocked prone) must instead make a Reflex save (DC 30) or else take 40 damage from being trampled. (It typically takes 4 rounds of trampling for the herd to move past an immobile creature.)

Note that in this encounter, the Great Hunt's assistance grants the PCs each a +10 bonus to these saves.

Stormy Presence (Su) Lightning constantly strikes in a 1200-ft. radius around the Father of Thunder. Normally it lands harmlessly, but when a creature angers the fey titan the lightning expresses his displeasure. As an immediate action when a creature in the area targets him with a spell that affects his mind or grants a Will save, or when a creature tries to engage him in conversation, the Father of Thunder can cause a bolt of lightning to fall from the sky (as a maximized call lightning storm) and strike that creature. He cannot target any creatures that are directly underneath him, as such bolts redirect to his horn.The bolt deals 50 points of electricity damage (Reflex DC 30 half) and makes a dispel check (caster level 25th) as greater dispel magic against each creature damaged this way. The lightning does not injure herd animals or minotaurs. Horns alone aren't enough, though; tieflings are fair game.

The Father of Thunder can also direct this lightning to strike as a swift action on his turn, usually aiming it at people who dare to try to fly over his herd. And as an odd corner case, he can cause this lightning to strike creatures even hundreds of miles away in response to them casting sending or similar communication to bother him, responding with lightning instead of words.

If the Father of Thunder is not standing on ground beneath an open sky, he cannot use this power.

Tromping Attack (Ex) Due to the mobile nature of the fey titan and his herd, on his turn the Father of Thunder can take a full attack while also taking two move actions. If his foes aren't also moving at his pace, he can only make a single attack against any given creature. But we assume the party will engage him while mounted.

To represent the mobile herd and battle, place the Father of Thunder in the middle of a battle map. Each mounted combatant can direct his or her steed to adjust his position relative to the titan by up to 30 feet by spending a move action and succeeding a Ride check (DC 10). For every 5 points he succeeds by, the rider can adjust his steed another 10 feet. A rider can take a -15 penalty to this check to accomplish it as a free action, allowing him to take his full turn.

On his own turn the Father of Thunder can adjust 30 feet as a free action. Additionally, three times per round, after a foe completes his or her turn, the fey titan can adjust himself 10 feet without spending an action. If the Father of Thunder falls prone, all of this movement and adjustment stops until he can stand back up again.

Assume that all creatures in the encounter keep the same general heading, and it doesn't particularly matter where the herd as a whole moves, except as detailed below.

Due to his immense size, the Father of Thunder doesn't turn very quickly. He can only make gore attacks against creatures roughly within his forward reach, and stomp attacks only against creatures not in reach of his gore attack.

As a standard action, a character riding within 30 feet of the Father of Thunder can make a Handle Animal check. (We recommend you be generous with bonuses if the character comes up with a good excuse, like if there's an illusion of a giant dragon to cause the herd to turn away.) The Father of Thunder then makes a Will save against a DC equal to that check's result, representing his control over the herd. If he fails, the character can direct the herd to move in a particular direction for the next round. The fey titan will likely turn his ire against that character, though, and of course the herd doesn't pivot on a silver piece.

Topped Quake (Su) When the Father of Thunder is first reduced below 376 hit points, he stumbles and trips. On his next turn he will attempt get up and move 150 feet (instead of his normal movement of 300 feet). He'll still be able to make a full attack, but this perhaps gives PCs who fell behind a chance to catch up.

The first time per day that the Father of Thunder trips (whether due to the above damage or because of enemy attacks), his collision with the ground creates a massive earthquake. The landscape within 1200 ft. buckles, and deep fissures and jagged hills appear in the area.

For the following four rounds, unless the Father of Thunder is unable to move or a character's Handle Animal check lets him take brief control of the herd, each round the fey titan guides the herd through one of these hazards.

- ♦ **Small Chasm.** Each rider must succeed a Ride check (DC 15) to coax their steed to leap across a twenty foot gap. Failed checks mean the steed balks and instead swerves around the gap, causing the rider to fall back 60 feet relative to the Father of Thunder. Because some members of the herd fall in, reduce the DC for Herd Crush by 2.
- ♦ **Vast Chasm.** Each rider may attempt a Ride check (DC 20) to get their steed to leap a fifty foot gap. Forgoing the check means the steed falls back 120 feet relative to the Father of Thunder. Attempting the check and failing means the steed and rider take 10d6 falling damage and need to find a way out of a 100-ft. chasm in order to rejoin the battle. This removes a huge amount of the herd, reducing the DC for Herd Crush by 5.



Stubborn Tornado (Su) When the Father of Thunder is first reduced below 188 hit points, he stops running and engages the party in close combat. A tornado manifests around him, creating 200 mile per hour winds. The tornado remains centered on the Father of Thunder as he moves, though he is big enough to be clearly visible through the dust of the funnel cloud. It lasts until the Father of Thunder is reduced to 0 hit points, at which point the titan sags and yields.

Ranged weapon attacks become impossible. Creatures Large or smaller must succeed a Strength check (DC 15) each round or else be knocked prone and pulled 1d4x10 feet toward the fey titan, taking 1d4 damage per 10 feet. Those who end up adjacent to him are picked up by the tornado and whirled around for 1d10 rounds, taking 6d6 points of damage per round from debris and the occasional flying cow, before being violently expelled (falling damage might apply).

Susceptible to Booze (Ex) If allowed to consume truly epic amounts of alcohol, the Father of Thunder's intoxication affects him as if he had 5 negative levels. The herd's also a bit drunk. In addition to the normal effects of negative levels, reduce the DCs of all saves prompted by the Father of Thunder's abilities by 5, except for the tornado.



Granny Allswell

CR 25

XP 1,640,000

CN Colossal fey (fey titan)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 600 ft., true seeing; Perception +10

Defense

AC 44, touch 6, flat-footed 21 (+4 Dex, +10 deflection, +17 natural, -8 size)**hp** 563 (25d6+475); fast healing 30**Fort** +27, **Ref** +18, **Will** +26

Defensive Abilities ferocity, recovery; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30

Offense

Speed 80 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +29 (d20+19)**Space** 30 ft.; **Reach** 60 ft.

Special Attacks evildest eye (no more tricky & not so impressive now), hurl foe, steal spell

Spell-like Abilities (CL 25th; concentration +35)Constant—*freedom of movement*, *true seeing*At will—*bestow curse* (DC 25), *quicken charm monster* (DC 26),*quicken hostile juxtaposition*^{UC} (DC 27), *stone shape*, *wall of stone*3/day—*commune with nature*, *polymorph*1/day—*maze*

Statistics

Str 48, **Dex** 18, **Con** 48, **Int** 30, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 24**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +45; **CMD** 49**Feats** Greater Spell Focus (conjuration, enchantment, necromancy),

Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (various), Spell Focus (conjuration, enchantment, necromancy), Spell Penetration

Skills Bluff +35, Disable Device +32, Heal +38, Intimidate +35, Knowledge (all) +38, Sense Motive +38, Spellcraft +38

Languages Common, Draconic, Primordial, Terran**SQ** fey link, titanic, scattered spellbooks

Special Abilities

Evildest Eyes (Su) Granny's eyes can spin in different directions. This lets her use both No More Tricky and Not So Impressive Now as a single swift action. (Usually she'll aim the former at a magic-user and the latter at a warrior.) If she would be blinded, she loses sight in one eye but can still use the other effect.

At the end of each of the creature's turns he can attempt a new save to break free of each evil eye effect on him. Remove curse, break enchantment, and similar powers can also end one of these hexes. Once the effect of a given hex ends, the creature cannot be affected by that same evil eye power again.

Hordeling Outburst (Su) At any time Granny Allswell can control up to nine gangs of gremlins, born out of the mountain and powered by her life force. Each gang fills the space of a large creature and has AC 40 (flat-footed 26, touch 24), Fort +19, Ref +24, Will +19, CMB +32 (+36 to steal), CMD 47, and the same immunities and resistances of their granny. Each gang starts with 27 hit points, and damage dealt to them deals an equal amount of damage to the Granny (though if a single effect damages multiple gangs, damage is only transferred once). Because they consist of multiple creatures, area attacks do double damage, and single-targeted attacks do half to them.

At the start of Granny's turn, each of the nine gangs acts, and if any gangs have been dispersed by previous damage, another gang appears somewhere that is at least 30 feet away from any hostile creature, burrowing out of the ground if necessary. Each gang has a movement speed of 50 ft., and a burrow speed of 20 ft.



On its action, each gang can either attack or steal.

Melee Attack: slam +32 (2d8+5).

Steal: Make a CMB check. If successful, the gang steals every unattended item the character is carrying or has in a pack (basically everything not held or worn, including spell components). If the check succeeds by 10 or more, the target must make a Reflex save (DC 25) or else his armor gains the broken condition.

The gang holds the stolen gear and uses it to beat on the PCs, and if a gang is reduced to 0 hit points the survivors disperse, dropping their loot in their space.

No More Tricky (Su) As a swift action, Granny Allswell cocks her left evil eye at a creature she can see and admonishes him for not playing fair. Unless that creature succeeds a Will save (DC 30), the creature is limited in many ways to only things a normal person could accomplish without magic. His speed cannot be higher than 30 feet, he cannot have any alternate movement modes, and he cannot cast spells or use spell-like or supernatural abilities.

Not So Impressive Now (Su) As a swift action, Granny aims her right evil eye at a creature not affected by her other evil eye. Unless the creature succeeds a Will save (DC 30), whenever he would roll a d20, he instead rolls a d6. If he fails to break free of the hex on his next turn, he can start rolling d8s. If he still fails the next round, he can roll d12s. The hex automatically ends after affecting the target for 3 rounds.

Scattered Spellbooks (Ex) Granny has hundreds of old scrolls and spellbooks in various states of disrepair, scattered throughout the Anthras Mountains. Give her a couple days and she can get access to any wizard spell written in the last two thousand years.

Steal Spell (Su) Once per round when Granny hits a creature with a fist, she can choose a single spell active on that creature and end it, then cast the same spell herself as a free action. She cups her hands as if holding an adorable kitten, cuddles it close to her face, then shoves it in her mouth. She's particularly fond of haste and prayer.



Corrupted Earth Spirit

CR 15

XP 51,200

N Huge outsider (earth, elemental, extraplanar)

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +23

Defense

AC 23, touch 7, flat-footed 23 (–1 Dex, +16 natural, –2 size)

hp 230 (16d10+120 plus hampering blow)

Fort +18, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

DR 10/–; **SR** 20

Special Attacks wasting strikes

Offense

Speed 20 ft., burrow 20 ft., earth glide

Melee 2 slams +20 (4d8+12/19-20)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks earth mastery

Statistics

Str 34, **Dex** 8, **Con** 22, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +34 (+38 bull rush, +38 overrun, +36 sunder); **CMD** 43 (45 vs. bull rush, 45 vs. overrun, 45 vs. sunder)

Feats Awesome Blow, Cleave, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Overrun, Improved Awesome Blow,^{AGG} Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (slam), Improved Natural Attack (slam), Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack

Skills Appraise +23, Climb +35, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +23, Knowledge (planes) +23, Perception +23, Stealth +14

Languages Terran

Special Abilities

Hampering Blow (Su) A creature struck by the slam attack of a corrupted earth spirit is subjected to some of the latent sympathetic energy from being trapped underground so long. A struck creature is prevented from moving more than 10 feet per round, and cannot be the subject of any teleportation effect. A DC 24 Fortitude save negates this effect. The DC for this save is Constitution-based.

Wasting Strikes (Su) The damage of a corrupted earth spirit's slam attacks counts as adamantine for the purposes of ignoring hardness and damage reduction. An object damaged by the slam attack of a corrupted earth spirit takes 1d6 points of additional damage bypassing all hardness for the following 6 rounds.

She Who Writhes

CR 25

XP 1,640,000

CN Colossal magical beast (fey titan)

Init +18; **Senses** darkvision 600 ft., true seeing, scent; Perception +30

Defense

AC 44, touch 17, flat-footed 21 (+14 Dex, +1 dodge, +27 natural, –8 size); +4 vs. opportunity attacks

hp 563 (25d8+450); fast healing 30

Fort +32, **Ref** +28, **Will** +14

Defensive Abilities ferocity, recovery; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, fire 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30

Offense

Speed 20 ft., swim 140 ft.

Melee bite +36 (3d12+40/19-20 plus grab), three tentacles +36 (1d12+9 plus grab), one huge tentacle +31 (6d12+60 plus grab)

Space 100 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (bite or tentacles) or 160 ft. (huge tentacle)

Special Attacks controlling tentacles, hurl foe, swallow whole (see below, AC 23, 56 hp), whirlwind attack (huge tentacle)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 25th; concentration +35)

Constant—*detect thoughts*, *freedom of movement*, *true seeing*

At will—*bestow curse* (DC 23), *quicken charm monster* (DC 24), *control water*

3/day—*commune with nature*

1/day—*control weather*, *wail of the banshee* centered on her mouth (DC 29)

Statistics

Str 48, **Dex** 38, **Con** 46, **Int** 15, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 30

Base Atk +25; **CMB** +52; **CMD** 76

Feats Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (charm monster), Spring Attack, Whirlwind Attack

Skills Bluff +35, Knowledge (nature) +27, Perception +38, Stealth +29, Swim +45

Languages Primordial, telepathy

SQ fey link, titanic, unavoidable grasp

Special Abilities

Controlling Tentacles (Ex) Numerous 10-ft. long tentacles can sprout from anywhere along the fey titan's body, up to three of which can attack per turn. Of her dozen or so primary tentacles, only one can attack per turn, though they're all always in motion.

Typically she takes a -20 penalty on grapple attempts since she's just using one part of her body, though if necessary she'll devote her whole action to swallowing someone whole. Because of her structure, she can grapple an effectively unlimited number of creatures at a time. However, the smaller tentacles only have 20 hit points; damage dealt to them also wounds She Who Writhes, and a destroyed tentacle releases its victim.

As a free action at the start of her turn, She Who Writhes can make a combat maneuver check to move each creature grabbed by one of the small tentacles up to 20 ft. along her body, or to move a creature grabbed by a huge tentacle anywhere within reach. Typically she does this to pull them toward her main body. Once a creature is on her main body, she can use Swallow Whole on the next turn to pull them through her flesh into her interior cavity.

Swallow Whole (Ex) The interior cavity of She Who Writhes is roughly twenty-five feet in diameter, with a glowing female figure in the middle. Creatures inside are affected by dominate monster at the start of each of their turns (DC 29), and those who fail are compelled to fight their allies. Once the battle is over and She Who Writhes is no longer in danger, she orders her playthings to strip naked and join the orgy within her.

A creature who resists can try to cut a path out (and isn't restricted just to light weapons). Alternately, if the glowing figure is destroyed (AC 23, 56 hp), the dominate effect is suppressed for one minute until a new one grows in to replace it. In the meanwhile, though, She Who Writhes floods her internal cavity with digestive juices, dealing 10d6 acid damage per round.

Unavoidable Grasp (Su) Effects like freedom of movement that would let a creature avoid being snared by She Who Writhes' tentacles are weakened in her proximity. Instead of granting immunity to being grappled and allowing automatic success at Escape Artist checks to escape a grapple or pin, the recipient receives a bonus equal to the spell's caster level.



Asrabey Varal, Archfey of Obedience

CR 19

XP 204,800

Male eladrin fighter 20

LN Medium humanoid (eladrin)

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +13

Defense

AC 35, touch 16, flat-footed 31 (+12 armor, +2 deflection, +4 Dex, +2 natural, +5 shield)

hp 214 (20d10+100); **DR** 5/–

Fort +15, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

Immune charm, compulsion, fear

Defensive Abilities bolstered will, bravery +5, freedom of movement

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee Vekeshi Blade +35/+30/+25/+20 (1d8+17/17–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire)

Always confirms critical hits.

or Vekeshi Blade with vital strike +35 (4d8+17/17–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire)

Always confirms critical hits.

Special Attacks weapon training (heavy blades +4, light blades +3, natural +2, thrown +1); weapon mastery (longsword), disruptive (+4 to Concentration DC to cast defensively in his threatened area), compelling strike*

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 20, **Con** 16, **Int** 10, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 70

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 43

Feats Cleave, Critical Focus, Disruptive, Great Cleave, Greater Vital Strike, Greater Weapon Focus (longsword), Greater Weapon Specialization (longsword), Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Power Attack, Staggering Critical (DC 30), Step Up, Stunning Critical (DC 30), Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Acrobatics +18, Climb +17, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (nature) +6, Perception +5, Sense Motive +6, Swim +10

SQ armor training 4, armor mastery, fey step

Languages Elven, Primordial

Gear amulet of natural armor +2, belt of physical perfection +4, cloak of smoke, glamer plate, lion shield, slippers of spider climbing, crown of aura masking (conceals his elixirs of glibness from magical detection and instead detects as providing a bonus to Charisma), twenty elixirs of glibness



Special Abilities

Compelling Strike (Su) Whenever Asrabey hits a creature with an attack, that creature must make a Will save (DC 30) or be affected by a command of Asrabey's choice. If the attack is a critical hit, Asrabey may instead affect the target with dominate monster (DC 30); the dominated creature may make a new save at the end of each of its turns to break free.

Critical Hits (Ex) Asrabey's longsword attacks that are critical threats automatically confirm, and if he chooses not to dominate the victim, he can instead stun them for 1d4 rounds (Fortitude DC 30 reduces it to staggered for 1d4 rounds).

Elite Gear (Su) Asrabey possesses the following items.

- ♦ **Vekeshi Blade** Normally a +3 Flaming Longsword, the Vekeshi Blade wielded by Asrabey Varal is a potent artifact tied to the fall of the goddess Srasama. The wielder of the Vekeshi Blade can transform the weapon into a whip-like form that has 15-ft. reach and can be used to make trip attacks, but which still deals damage as a longsword. The blade shifts and reverts as a free action at the wielder's control.
- ♦ **Lion Shield** A specially crafted +3 Heavy Wooden Shield, the Lion Shield can also be loosed to attack on its own. It fights for 4 rounds using the base attack bonus of the one who loosed it and then drops. For combat purposes, the Lion Shield is treated as having a 2d6 damage bite attack with the Grab special rule (CMB equals the CMB of the wielder). While attacking, it cannot make attacks of opportunity, and the person who activated it is not considered as having the shield equipped. The shield is considered wielded or attended by the creature for all maneuvers and effects that target items. While attacking, the shield shares the same space as the activating character and can attack adjacent foes. The shield accompanies the person who activated it everywhere, whether she moves by physical or magical means. If the wielder who loosed it has an unoccupied hand, she can grasp it while it is attacking on its own as a free action; when so retrieved, the shield can't dance (attack on its own) again for 4 rounds.
- ♦ **Cloak of Smoke** An ornate cloak from the lands of the Unseen Court, this cloak fills the air around the wearer with a constant roil of smoke, causing enemies to take a 20% miss chance due to concealment. The wearer can see through the smoke without trouble, and can dismiss or invoke the smoke as a free action. In addition the wearer receives a +2 deflection bonus to AC.
- ♦ **Glamered Plate** Woven of a distilled essence made from stories of warriors dodging deadly blows, this cloth tunic protects its wearer as well as +3 full plate, but does not hinder his movements or skills.

Freedom of Movement (Sp) As long as Asrabey is in command of She Who Writhes, he benefits from *freedom of movement* (caster level 25th).

Beshela, Archfey of the Sea

CR 14

XP 38,400

CN Medium fey (water)

Init +10; Senses low-light vision, ripplesense; Perception +21

Defense

AC 25, touch 25, flat-footed 18 (+6 Dex, +8 deflection, +1 dodge)

hp 162 (16d6+96)

Fort +12, Ref +16, Will +12

DR 10/cold iron; Immune poison, Resist acid 20, cold 20

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 30 ft., swim 60 ft.

Melee 2 slams +15 (1d6+8 plus push)

Special Attacks corrosive tempest, kraken tentacle strike, push (slam, 20 ft.), summon the kraken

Spell-like Abilities (CL 16th, concentration +24)At will—*control water*, *cup of dust* (DC 19), *hydraulic push*3/day—*summon nature's ally VII* (aquatic creatures or water elementals only)

Statistics

Str 26, Dex 22, Con 20, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 26

Base Atk +8; CMB +16; CMD 41

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Toughness, Whirlwind Attack

Skills Bluff +27, Diplomacy +27, Knowledge (geography) +21, Knowledge (nature) +21, Intimidate +24, Perception +21, Sense Motive +21, Swim +35

Languages Elven, Primordial, Sylvan

SQ fey dive, unearthly grace

Special Abilities

Corrosive Tempest (Su) When Beshela is first reduced below half of her hit points, she can conjure dark clouds overhead, which spew forth black rain in a quarter-mile radius centered on her. Any creature that ends its turn without some sort of cover from the rain takes 1 point of acid damage. The clouds move with Beshela and last for five minutes.

Fey Dive (Su) As a move action, Beshela can teleport from one area covered in water to another area covered in water within 50 feet, as long as there is a contiguous path of water between the two spaces.

Kraken Tentacle Strike (Ex) If Beshela has summoned kraken tentacles, as a swift action, she can command one or both to move up to 20 feet through areas covered in water and make an attack against any adjacent target.

Kraken Tentacle +15 (3d6+8 plus grab); CMB +20; constrict 3d6+12

Ripplesense (Su) Beshela perfectly knows the location of any creature within half a mile if there is a contiguous path of water between its space and hers.

Summon the Kraken (Su) Once per day, Beshela can conjure

a massive tidal wave in a quarter-mile radius burst centered on herself. All creatures hit by the wave must make a Fortitude save DC 26 or be knocked prone and pushed away 20 feet. Water floods the quarter-mile radius to a depth of two feet, though it may flow away quickly based on terrain. In addition, Beshela summons two kraken tentacles made of seaweed within 50 feet of her. Each tentacle is a Large creature with Beshela's AC and save bonuses, and 40 hit points. If a tentacle is ever completely out of water, it is destroyed.

Unearthly Grace (Su) Beshela adds her Charisma modifier as a deflection bonus to her AC and her CMD.





Danor's Assault

Adventure 10

Porteur Assault

Porteur du Mort Alchemist

CR 13

XP 25,600 each

Human alchemist 14

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +24

Defense

AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +1 natural)**hp** 108 (14d8+42)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +14, **Will** +7**Immune** poison

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** +1 short sword +10/+5 (1d6/19-20)**Ranged** +2 pistol +15 (1d8+2/x4)**Special Attacks** bomb 20/day (7d6+4 fire, DC 21)**Alchemist Extracts Prepared** (CL 14th)5th—*elemental body II*, *communal stoneskin*^{UC}4th—*air walk*, *cure critical wounds*, *dragon's breath*^{APG} (DC 18),*freedom of movement*, *spell immunity*3rd—*burst of speed*^{UC}, *communal darkvision*^{UC}, *displacement*, *heroism*,*protection from energy*2nd—*ablative barrier*^{UC}, *aid*, *alter self*, *bullet shield*^{UC}, *invisibility*, *see invisibility*1st—*bomber's eye*^{APG}, *enlarge person* (DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *longshot*^{UC}, *shield*,
true strike

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 19, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +10; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 26**Feats** Feats Brew Potion, Deadly Aim, Dodge, Extra Bombs^{APG}, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Craft [alchemy]), Skill Focus (Perception), Throw Anything**Skills** Acrobatics +17, Craft (alchemy) +27, Disable Device +20, Heal +18, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (engineering) +18, Perception +24, Spellcraft +21, Use Magic Device +17**Languages** Common, Danoran, Dwarven, Primordial**SQ** alchemy (alchemy crafting +14, identify potions), mutagen (+4/-2, +2 natural, 14 hours), discoveries (acid bomb, dispelling bomb, fast bombs, infusion, madness bomb [-2d6 hp damage, +1d4 Wisdom damage] precise bombs [4 squares], smoke bomb,), persistent mutagen, poison use, swift alchemy, swift poisoning**Other Gear** +3 studded leather, amulet of natural armor +1, belt of incredible dexterity +2, cloak of resistance +2, headband of vast intelligence +2, ring of protection +3

Special Abilities

A Round for All! (Ex) A Porteur du Mort Alchemist can use his infusion ability to share communal extracts with multiple targets and not just a single individual. The infusion requires each recipient be within 5 feet of the alchemist, and each recipient is considered to drink the extract.**Technologist Delivery (Ex)** As a swift action, a Porteur du Mort Alchemist can activate a tiny-sized construct which can deliver a single potion to a willing target within 30 feet. The construct loses power and gracefully self-destructs after delivering the potion. This can be used with the Porter's infusion ability so they can effectively deliver potions at range.

Porter De Mort Murderer

CR 13

XP 25,600

Tiefling fighter 7 / rogue 7

LN Medium outsider (native)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +18

Defense

AC 25, touch 16, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)**hp** 118 (14 HD; 7d10+7d6+49)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5; +2 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** bravery +2, evasion, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge, mobility**Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

Offense

Speed 30 ft.,**Melee** longsword +20/+15/+10 (1d8+9/17-20)**Ranged** pistol +16 (1d6+1/x4)**Special Attacks** weapon training (heavy blades +1), sneak attack +4d6**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th, concentration +12)1/day—*darkness*

Statistics

Str 16 **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 123 **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +15; **CMD** 30**Feats** Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Critical (longsword), Improved Feint, Improved Initiative, Lunge, Mobility, Step Up, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)**Skills** Acrobatics +19, Bluff +0, Climb +15, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (engineering) +8, Perception +18, Stealth +21, Survival +18**Languages** Common, Danoran**SQ** armor training 2, rogue talents (bleeding attack +4, stand up, surprise attack), trapfinding +3**Combat Gear** *potions of cure serious wounds* (2); **Other Gear** +3 mithral breastplate, belt of physical might +2 (Str, Con)

Special Abilities

Murderers-At-Arms (Ex): Porteur de Mort Murderers have trained together and work best when standing side by side or flanking. A Murderer who stands beside another marine engaged with their target counts as flanking. If a marine flanks their enemy, they gain an additional 3d6 points of sneak attack damage.**Shots in Shadows (Ex):** At the end of any full attack, a Porteur De Mort Marine can fire their pistol in combat without provoking an attack of opportunity. Following this shot, the pistol becomes the target of a deeper darkness spell as from a 14th level caster.

Porter Du Mort Revelation Sniper

CR 13

XP 25,600

Human gunslinger 14

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; **Senses** Perception +19

Defense

AC 28, touch 23, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +3 deflection, +5 Dex, +5 dodge)**hp** 137 (14d10+56)**Fort** +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** nimble +4, mobility

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** rapier +15/+10/+5 (1d6/18-20)**Ranged** rifle +23/+18/+13 (1d10+8/19-20/x4)**Special Attacks** grit (2), gun training (rifle, revolver, shotgun, +5)



Statistics

Str 10 **Dex** 21, **Con** 16, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 36

Feats Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Deadly Aim, Dodge, Far Shot, Gunsmithing^{UC}
Improved Critical (rifle), Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot,
Skill Focus (Stealth), Snap Shot,^{UC} Weapon Focus (rifle)

Skills Acrobatics +22, Disguise +13, Escape Artist +19, Perception +19, Sense Motive +16,
Stealth +25

Languages Common, Danoran

SQ deeds (bleeding wound [5], dead shot, deadeye, expert loading, gunslinger
initiative, gunslinger's dodge, lightning reload, pistol-whip, quick clear, startling shot,
targeting, utility shot), gunsmith, gun training (rifle, revolver, shotgun, +5)

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*; **Other Gear** +2 studded leather,
belt of physical might +2 (Dex, Con), smokestick (2)

Special Abilities

Adaptive Ammo (Ex): When firing their rifle, a Porter De Mort Sniper can select a
specialty type of ammunition used with each shot for the round. This is a unique
ability partly based on training, and partly due to specialized Danoran ammunition.

- **Acid Grinder Shot**—The shot deals an additional 4d6 points of acid damage,
as well as an additional 2d6 points of damage on the following round.
- **Chillflame Shot**—The shot deals an additional 6d6 points of damage,
half of which is cold and the other half is fire.
- **Electromagnetic Shot**—The shot deals an additional 2d6 points of electrical damage,
and the target is staggered for one round if they are wearing any metal armor.
- **Lander Rounds**—Made of a laden material, this shot causes any creature flying above
ground to descend 30 feet each time they are struck by a round. Such movement
does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

La Lux du Raison

Danoran Frigate Crew

CR 15

XP 51,200

LN Medium humanoid (human, troop)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +28

Defense

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural)

hp 226 (21d8+131)

Fort +15, **Ref** +15, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities troop traits, embedded spellcasters

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee troop (6d6+12)

Space 40 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks fusillade (DC 25), grenade volley (DC 23)

Statistics

Str 34, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +31; **CMD** 40

Feats Ability Focus (fusillade), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will,
Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Spell Focus & Greater Spell Focus
(enchantment), Toughness

Skills Climb +24, Craft (firearms) +4, Knowledge (engineering) +1, Perception +28,
Profession (soldier) +6, Stealth +10, Survival +8

Languages Common

Special Abilities

Fusillade (Ex): The crew can fire a fusillade of rifle bullets as a standard action. This
attack takes the form of up to four lines with a range of 200 feet. These lines can start
from the corner of any square in the troop's space. All creatures in one of these lines'
areas of effect take 6d10+15 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC
25 for half). The save DC is Dexterity-based, and includes the bonus from the troop's
Ability Focus feat.

Grenade Volley (Ex): The crew is equipped with grenades. As a move action, it can
target up to four squares up to 60 feet away with volleys of fragmentation grenades.
A volley deals 15d6 points of piercing and slashing damage in a 30-foot-radius burst
(Reflex DC 23 for half); overlapping areas do not multiply the damage.

Embedded Spellcasters (Sp): A handful of mages in each crew let the unit cast four
spells from the following list each round as a single swift action, at caster level 5th.
The unit can use the same spell multiple times or cast a mix: magic missile, silent
image, fog cloud, gust of wind, see invisibility, resist energy, hold person (DC 15),
and dispel magic.

If assaulted by flying enemies out of range, they produce clouds of fog. If the unit
uses all four of its spells to dispel, they effectively aid each other, making a dispel
check with +11 bonus.

Obscurati Master Builder

CR 15

XP 51,200 each

Half-elf conjurer 16

LN Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +18

Defense

AC 22, touch 15, flat-footed 18 (+5 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)
hp 122 (16d8+64)

Fort +11, **Ref** +11, **Will** +13; +2 vs. enchantments

Immune sleep

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 quarterstaff +10/+5 (1d6+2)

Ranged +1 pistol +12 (1d8+1/x4)

Special Attacks bomb 20/day (7d6+4 fire, DC 21)

Arcane School Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +22)

At will—*dimensional steps* (480 feet/day)

9/day—*acid dart* (1d6+8 acid)

Conjurer Spells Prepared (CL 16th; concentration +22)

8th—*polar ray*, *quicken acid pit*^{APG} (DC 21), *wall of lava*^{APG} (DC 25)

7th—*phase door*, *prismatic spray* (DC 24), *quicken fireball* (DC 20),
summon monster VII

6th—*freezing sphere* (2, DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *wall of iron* (2, DC 23)

5th—*cloudkill* (DC 22), *extended wall of fire* (DC 21), *icy prison*^{UM} (DC 22),
wall of force (2), *wall of stone* (DC 22)

4th—*acid pit*^{APG} (DC 21), *dimensional anchor*, *wall of fire* (2), *wall of ice* (2, DC 21)

3rd—*spiked pit*^{APG} (2, DC 20), *stinking cloud* (DC 20), *fireball* (2, DC 20), *wind wall*

2nd—*bullet shield*^{UC} (2), *create pit*^{APG} (2, DC 19), *glitterdust* (DC 19), *shatter* (2, DC 19)

1st—*alarm*, *feather fall*, *hold portal*, *magic missile* (3), *shield*

0 (at will)—*acid splash*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*

Opposition Schools divination, illusion

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 22, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +9; **CMD** 24

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Extend Spell, Greater Spell Focus
(Conjuration), Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Scribe
Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge [engineering]), Spell Focus (conjuration), Spell Focus
(evocation), Spell Penetration



Skills Appraise +25, Craft (alchemy) +25, Craft (stonemasonry) +25, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (engineering) +31, Perception +18, Spellcraft +25

Languages Common, Danoran, Elven, Primordial

SQ arcane bond (amulet), summoner's charm (8 rounds), elf blood

Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds, potion of invisibility, scrolls of summon monster VIII (2); Other Gear* *amulet of natural armor +2, belt of physical might +2 (Dex, Con), bracers of armor +5, cloak of resistance +3, headband of vast intelligence +4, ring of protection +1*

Obscurati Divinist

CR 14

XP 38,400 each

Dwarf oracle 15

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision; Perception +3**Defense****AC** 24, touch 11, flat-footed 24 (+9 armor, +2 deflection, -1 Dex, +4 shield)**hp** 131 (15d8+60)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +17; +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like abilities**Offense****Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** +2 frost flail +13/+8/+3 (1d8+2 plus 1d6 cold)**Special Attacks** hatred**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 15th; concentration +19)7th (4/day)—*dictum* (DC 21), *greater scrying* (DC 21), *vision*,
*mass inflict serious wounds*6th (6/day)—*find the path*, *greater dispel magic*, *harm* (DC 20), *mass owl's wisdom*,
*mass inflict moderate wounds*5th (6/day)—*breath of life*, *flame strike* (DC 19), *scrying* (DC 19), *true seeing*,
contact other plane, *mass inflict light wounds*4th (7/day)—*blessing of feror*^{APG}, *death ward*, *divination*, *freedom of movement*,
legend lore, *inflict critical wounds*3rd (7/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *continual flame*, *searing light*, *speak with dead*
(DC 17), *locate object*, *inflict serious wounds*2nd (7/day)—*death knell* (DC 16), *find traps*, *hold person* (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16),
sound burst (DC 16), *tongues*, *inflict moderate wounds*1st (7/day)—*bane* (DC 15), *command* (DC 15), *comprehend languages*,
cure light wounds, *deathwatch*, *identify*, *inflict light wounds*0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 14), *create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *light*,
mending, *read magic*, *stabilize***Mystery** lore**Statistics****Str** 10, **Dex** 8, **Con** 16, **Int** 18, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 18**Base Atk** +11; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22 (26 vs. bull rush, 26 vs. trip)**Feats** Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Eschew Materials, Extra Channel,
Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll**Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +22, Knowledge (geography) +22, Knowledge (history)
+22, Knowledge (nobility) +22, Knowledge (planes) +22, Knowledge (religion) +22,
Linguistics +19, Perception +0 (+2 to notice usual stonework), Spellcraft +22**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven,
Giant, Gnome, Goblin, Gnome, Halfling, Ignan, Infernal, Orc, Sylvan, Terran, Undercom-
mon, Danoran, Primordial; tongues (understand only)**SQ** oracle's curse (tongues [Infernal]), revelations (arcane archivist, brain drain,
focused trance, mental acuity, sidestep secret)**Combat Gear** *potion of invisibility, scroll of greater glyph of warding (2),*
wand of cure serious wounds (25 charges); Other Gear +3 breastplate,
+2 heavy steel shield, belt of mighty constitution +2, cloak of resistance +3,
headband of mental prowess +2 (Int, Cha), ring of protection +2**Sovereign Han Jierre**

CR 20

XP 307,200

Male unique tiefling

LN Medium outsider (native)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., all-around vision, Perception +39**Defense****AC** 36, touch 22, flat-footed 29 (+9 armor, +5 deflection, +5 natural armor, +1 Dex,
+6 dodge)**hp** 357 (34d8+204)**Fort** +19, **Ref** +15, **Will** +22; one reroll per day of each save**Defenses** slippery mind; **Immune** paralysis and effects that limit mobility**Resist** fire 30**Offense****Speed** fly 60 ft. (good)**Melee** n/a**Ranged** rifles +35 eight times (1d8+9/x4)**Special Attacks** gestalt commander, infernal wrath of the Jierre bloodline**Statistics****Str** 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 22, **Int** 22, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 26**Base Atk** +24; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 41**Feats** Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Iron Will,
Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes**Skills** many and various**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Primordial**Other Gear** *ring of freedom of movement, headband of mental perfection +6,*
*+5 mithral shirt, ring of protection +5, amulet of natural armor +5, boots of flying***Special Abilities****Gestalt Commander (Su)** As a standard action, Han can call upon the combined force of
the navy to attack targets of his choice. Other soldiers fire, but use his attack bonus
and trace range as if from him. This allows him to make eight rifle attacks.This is only the most obvious use of his psychic connection to the navy. Many
others are possible, at your discretion.**Infernal Wrath of the Scion of the Jierre Bloodline (Su)** Once per round as an immediate
action when hit by an attack or targeted by a spell, Han can cause the creature who
attacked him to take 5d6 points of fire damage. The creature must make a DC 34 Reflex
save or catch on fire, taking an additional 5d6 points of fire damage each round until
the flames are extinguished.



Blasting Away

Adventure 10

Obscurati Assault Golems

CR 17

XP 102,400

N Large construct

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

Defense

AC 31, touch 11, flat-footed 29 (+2 Dex, +20 natural, -1 size)**hp** 181 (18d10+60)**Fort** +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7**Defensive Abilities** magnets...bitch!; **DR** 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, immunity to magic

Offense

Speed 20 ft.**Melee** 2 slams +32 (2d10+16/19-20)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 32, **Dex** 14, **Con** –, **Int** –, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +22; **CMB** +34; **CMD** 46

Special Abilities

Reinforced Hull (Ex) Due to specialist construction methods, an Obscurati Assault Golem gains an additional 30 hit points.**Immunity to Magic (Ex)** An Obscurati Assault Golem is immune to spells or spell-like abilities that allow spell resistance. Certain spells and effects function different against it as noted below.

- ♦ A magical attack that deals electricity damage slows and golem (as the slow spell) for 3 rounds with no saving throw.
- ♦ A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. An Obscurati Assault Golem gets now saving throw against fire effects.
- ♦ An Obscurati Assault Golem is affected normally by rust attacks, such as those of a rust monster or a rusting grasp spell.

Magnets...Bitch! (Ex) The metal that comprises the Obscurati Assault Golem is partially magnetic. While not enough to impede movement, any metallic weapon striking the golem is immediately subject to disarm attempt by the golem as an immediate action. If the weapon is successfully disarmed, it sticks to the body of the golem and can only be removed by a disarm check against the CMD of the assault golem.

Danoran Boarding Squad

CR 11

XP 12,800

LN Medium humanoid (human, troop)

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +10

Defense

AC 20, touch 14, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)**hp** 63 (6d8+36)**Fort** +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3**Defensive Abilities** troop traits

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** troop (2d6+4)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** fusillade (DC 23), grenade volley (DC 21)

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 17, **Con** 22, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25**Feats** Ability Focus (fusillade), Dodge, Toughness

Special Abilities

Fusillade (Ex): The squad can fire a fusillade of rifle bullets as a standard action. This attack takes the form of up to two lines with a range of 200 feet. These lines can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. All creatures in one of these lines' areas of effect take 3d10+15 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC 23 for half).**Grenade Volley (Ex):** The squad is equipped with grenades. As a move action, it can target up to two squares up to 60 feet away with volleys of fragmentation grenades. A volley deals 7d6 points of piercing and slashing damage in a 15-foot-radius burst (Reflex DC 21 for half); overlapping areas do not multiply the damage.

Gidim Forces and Beran Allies

Adventure 11

While the Gidim have effectively unlimited police officer allies, they have relatively few infiltrators and warbeasts. If the party is clever and judiciously kills enemies then withdraws, they might leave the leviathan depleted of defenses.

Local forces include:

- ♦ **Ursaliñan Guard (CR 3)**
- ♦ **Ursaliñan Marksman (CR 4)**
- ♦ **Ursaliñan Lawmage (CR 6)**
- ♦ **Ursaliñan Sergeant (CR 6)**
- ♦ **Ursaliñan Lieutenant (CR 8)**
- ♦ **Lord Winslow Cadagyr (CR 12)**

The Gidim also have the following resources.

- ♦ **Eleven fleshwarped direbears (CR 12).** These stay in cells beneath Jaula de Oso.
- ♦ **Five flying horrors (CR 15).** Two typically patrol the inland borders around the city, and three the water routes. They remain invisible unless they attack.
- ♦ **Seven oculi (CR 17).** There's always one at the executores lodge, Triunfo Vida, Jaula de Oso, and Cadagyr estate, while the rest drift between the districts and the troughs, looking for trouble or occasionally stalking suspicious characters.
- ♦ **Fifteen shock troopers (CR 11),** created in the leviathan under Triunfo Vida. If some troopers die, the Gidim can create another five in a day, but they only have area to keep fifteen active at a time.
- ♦ **Twelve infiltrators (CR 15).** Four of them manipulate Lord Cadagyr, one watches Pili Roque at the arena, and the other seven operate in the leviathan.
- ♦ **Overseer Lilore (CR 18),** who directs the political machinations in the city from Cadagyr manor.
- ♦ **Wayfarer Sijhen (CR 21),** who is in charge of the whole expedition but typically stays in the leviathan.



Ursaliña Forces

The average police officer in Ursaliña is an orc with some military training, though they recruit many bards and sponsor lavish contests with other cities to push their high-ranking officers to greatness.

Ursaliñan Guard

CR 3

Orc fighter 2/rogue 2

LN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision (60 ft.); Perception +10

Defense

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +1 Dex)**hp** 34 (2d10+2d8+14); ferocity**Fort** +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +1; +1 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** bravery +1, evasion

Offense

Melee mwk khopesh +7 (1d10+3/19–20)**Ranged** pistol +5 (1d8/x4, misfire 1)**Special Attacks** sneak attack +1d6

Statistics

Str 20, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 16**Feats** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (khopesh)**Skills** Acrobatics +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (nobility) +2, Perception +10, Profession (guard) +5, Sense Motive +10, Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +8**Languages** Draconic, Orc**SQ** rogue talent (combat trick), trapfinding +1**Combat Gear** *potion of cure light wounds*, *potions of stabilize* (2); **Other Gear** masterwork chain shirt, pistol, masterwork khopesh, guardsman uniform

Ursaliñan Marksman

CR 4

Female orc ranger 3/fighter 2

LN Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +3 (+5 in urban terrain); **Senses** darkvision (60 ft.); Perception +7

Defense

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14 (+4 armor, +2 Dex)**hp** 41 (5d10+10); ferocity**Fort** +7, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2; +1 vs. fear

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** masterwork short sword +9 (1d6+3/19–20)**Ranged** masterwork musket +10 (1d12/x4, misfire 1–2)**Special Attacks** favored enemy +2 (Humanoid, orc), Point Blank Shot, Deadly Aim

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 8, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +5; **CMB** +6; **CMD** 18**Feats** Dodge, Endurance, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Weapon Focus (musket), Deadly Aim**Skills** Climb +11, Knowledge (geography) +6, Perception +7, Stealth +8, Swim +9; Modifiers +1 to Survival checks made to follow tracks; +2 bonus on Knowledge (geography), Perception, Stealth, and Survival when in urban terrain**Languages** Draconic, Giant, Orc**SQ** wild empathy +2, favored terrain, bravery**Combat Gear** *wand of cure light wounds* (34 charges); **Other Gear** +1 studded leather armor, masterwork musket, masterwork short sword, 125gp

Ursaliñan Lawmage

CR 6

Goblin Abjurer 7

LN Small humanoid (goblin)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +5

Defense

AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 12 (+1 deflection, +4 Dex, +1 size)**hp** 41 (7d6+14)**Fort** +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6**Defensive Abilities** energy absorption (21/day), resistance; **Resist** cold 5

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)**Ranged** mwk dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)**Abjurer Spells Prepared** (CL 7th; concentration +11)4th—*black tentacles* (2), *charm monster* (DC 18)3rd—*dispel magic*, *gaseous form*, *stinking cloud* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 17)2nd—*glitterdust* (DC 16), *hold person* (3, DC 16), *see invisibility*1st—*alarm*, *magic missile* (3), *shield*, *unseen servant*0th (at will)—*detect magic*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic***Opposition Schools** illusion, necromancy

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 18, **Con** 15, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +3; **CMB** +2; **CMD** 15**Feats** Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Spell Penetration**Skills** Appraise +9, Knowledge (arcana, planes) +14, Linguistics +14, Perception +5, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +12, Survival +7**Languages** Abyssal, Ancient, Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Ignan, Infernal, Orc, Terran**SQ** arcane bond (ring), protective ward (4 rounds, +2 deflection, 7/day)**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *scrolls of dispel magic* (2, CL 7th), *scroll of haste*, *scrolls of mage armor* (2), *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th, 15 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork dagger, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of vast intelligence* +2, *ring of protection* +1, spell component pouches (2), spellbook, 98 gp

Ursaliñan Sergeant

CR 6

Orc Bard 7

N Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +10

Defense

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +1 Dex)**hp** 49 (7d8+14); ferocity**Fort** +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** masterwork bastard sword +11 (1d10+6/19–20) or mwk dagger +10 (1d4+6/19–20)**Ranged** dagger +6 (1d4+6/19–20)**Special Attacks** bardic performance 20 rounds/day (move action; countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion)**Bard Spells Known** (CL 7th; concentration +11)3rd (1/day)—*confusion* (DC 17)2nd (4/day)—*cure moderate wounds* (DC 16), *detect thoughts* (DC 16),*eagle's splendor*, *silence*1st (5/day)—*charm person* (2, DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *unseen servant*0th (at will)—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*



Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 13, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22

Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Perform [comedy]), Weapon Focus & Proficiency (bastard sword)

Skills Bluff +14, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +16, Knowledge (arcane, geography, history, local) +7, Linguistics +7, Perception +10 (+12 to notice unusual stonework), Perform (comedy) +17, Perform (sing) +14, Sense Motive +10

Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin, Orc, others

SQ bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (comedy, sing)

Combat Gear *elixir of vision*; **Other Gear** +1 chain shirt, masterwork dagger, belt of giant strength +2, 198 gp

Ursaliñan Lieutenant

CR 8

Orc Bard 9

N Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

Defense

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15 (+5 armor, +2 Dex)

hp 62 (9d8+18); ferocity

Fort +4, **Ref** +7, **Will** +6, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 *living steel bastard sword* +15 (1d10+8/19-20) or +2 *dagger* +14 (1d4+8/19-20)

Ranged +2 *dagger* +9 (1d4+8/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 24 rounds/day (move action; countersong, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, suggestion, dirge of doom, inspire greatness)

Bard Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +13)

3rd (4/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *confusion* (DC 17), *invisibility sphere*

2nd (5/day)—*cure moderate wounds* (DC 16), *detect thoughts* (DC 16),

eagle's splendor, *silence*

1st (6/day)—*charm person* (2, DC 15), *expeditious retreat*, *unseen servant*

0th (at will)—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 14, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 24

Feats Persuasive, Skill Focus (Perform [comedy]), Weapon Focus & Proficiency (bastard sword)

Skills Bluff +16, Diplomacy +8, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (arcane, geography, history, local) +7, Linguistics +7, Perception +12 (+12 to notice unusual stonework), Perform (comedy) +19, Perform (sing) +16, Sense Motive +12

Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin, Orc, others

SQ bardic knowledge +3, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (comedy, sing)

Combat Gear *elixir of vision*; **Other Gear** +2 *living steel bastard sword*, +1 chain shirt, +2 dagger, belt of giant strength +2, 198 gp



Gidim Warbeasts

Flying horrors resemble pale, mammoth-sized fleshy dragonflies, with sharp beaks at the tip of a nimble elephantine trunk on their head, and a tail that seems to consist of independent floating segments ending in a sharpened hammerhead stinger.

An oculus is a floating mass of gas-filled sacs from which hang pulsing multihued and faceted eyes, but normally is entirely invisible. A gentle exhale of air causes this horror to float above the ground, and the audible wheeze-groan are normally the only clue to its presence. It typically hovers twenty feet up, where its long tendrils can feel everything with a feather-light touch. Even creatures with the ability to see invisibility detect light bending and shimmering around it.

Fleshwarped direbears are grizzlies the size of a large shack. Their fur hides most of the mutations the Gidim have inflicted upon them, but in battle their necks stretch out a dozen feet, and they can squeeze through tight spaces like an ooze.

Shock troopers are created from humanoid stock, granted massive shaggy fur coats that contain intense electrical energy. They lumber about like apes, and are designed to sow confusion and distract foes so the Gidim can get into better position. Occasionally a shock trooper snaps out of his conditioning and turns against his masters, but they seldom last long against a pack of their fellow warbeasts.

Fleshwarped Direbear

CR 12

N Large animal

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +20

Defense

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 20 (+3 Dex, +11 natural, -1 size)

hp 207 (18d8+126)

Fort +18, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Immune critical hits, precision damage

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee bite +22 (2d6+10), 2 claws +23 (2d6+10 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 30, **Dex** 17, **Con** 25, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 34 (38 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Survival), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Perception +20, Swim +25

SQ fleshwarped

Special Abilities

Fleshwarped (Ex) The Ursaliñan warbeast's limbs and neck are elongated, granting it a reach of 10 feet. It can move through spaces as small as a foot wide without trouble. They are immune to precision damage and critical hits.

When a fleshwarped direbear is knocked unconscious, its body continues to twitch until reduced to -25 hit points. Before that time, if another fleshwarped creature moves within 10 feet of the corpse, it integrates the dying flesh with its own body. The creature gains extra attacks in the form of all the dead creature's natural attacks, and its space and reach increase by 5 ft. each.



GIDIM EQUIPMENT

Whatever event first spurred the Gidim to venture from their original home, it created mindcrafting: a process where raw materials are shaped into a desired form by pure thought. While the Gidim prefer more indirect methods of combat, their servitors highly prize the living steel weapons that are provided, grown from special vesicles within a Gidim colony.

Gidim living steel only differs from the living steel presented in *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Ultimate Equipment* in how it is harvested; it is otherwise the same (reprinted here).

Living Steel. This glossy green metal slowly repairs itself. An item made from living steel repairs damage to itself at a rate of 2 hit points per day, or 1 hit point per day if it has the broken condition. Items not primarily of metal are not meaningfully affected by being partially made of living steel.

Armor and shields made from living steel can damage metal weapons that strike them. Whenever the wielder of a metal weapon rolls a natural 1 on an attack roll against a creature wearing living steel armor or wielding a living steel shield, the item must make a DC 20 Fortitude save or gain the broken condition. If the weapon already has the broken condition, it is instead destroyed. Living steel cannot damage adamantine weapons in this way.

Gidim who are in thoughtform can benefit from living steel weapons and armor as if they had the ghost touch quality.

Living steel has 35 hit points per inch of thickness and hardness 15.

Thoughtlocks. Some Gidim structures are keyed only to allow Gidim entry, functioning like locks but requiring a proper twist of mind rather than a physical key. Each lock has a special mental pattern that can open it, but these can only be used by creatures capable of telepathy. Any other creature who touches the thoughtlock can make an Intelligence check (DC 10) to sense the psychic contours of its structure, and can then attempt to unlock it with a Bluff check (DC 30), representing an effect to outwit the lock's primitive but wary consciousness. Each attempt requires a standard action.

Oculus Prism. Formed in much the same way that Gidim weapons are crafted, an oculus prism allows select non-Gidim to pass as Gidim within strongholds or without alerting the various sentries employed within their bases and ships. Oculus prisms are not merely an item to be carried: these parasites graft themselves to a living host, subtly influencing their mental signature so that a Gidim oculus and various warbeasts will not view them as a threat, unless one attacks them. A DC 20 Heal check can safely remove an oculus prism, while implanting it merely requires 1 minute of time.



Flying Horror

CR 15

N Huge aberration

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +26

Aura frightful presence (90 ft., DC 24)

Defense

AC 29, touch 16, flat-footed 26 (+5 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +13 natural, -2 size)

hp 207 (18d8+126)

Fort +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +16

Defensive Abilities thoughtform, deflecting winds, partial invisibility; **SR** 25

Offense

Speed 5 ft., fly 70 ft. (good)

Melee beak +21 (1d8+15/19-20), 2 wings +21 (1d8+5), stinger +21 (1d8+10 plus poison and bull rush)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attack ray of dark and light (+13 ranged touch), sucking wind

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +19)

At-Will—*gust of wind* (DC 19), *wind wall*

1/day—*whirlwind* (DC 23)

Statistics

Str 30, **Dex** 15, **Con** 24, **Int** 2, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +24 (+28 bull rush); **CMD** 42

Feats Combat Reflex, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (beak), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Fly +27, Intimidate +6, Perception +26, Stealth +15

SQ Thoughtform (see below)

Special Abilities

Deflecting Winds (Su) The flying horror's mastery over wind and air allows it to surround itself with blasts of precisely aimed gusts, granting the creature a +5 deflection bonus to its Armor Class and a +4 resistance bonus on Reflex saving throws.

Partial Invisibility (Su) A flying horror's body constantly flickers and shifts, passing from visibility to invisibility in a seemingly random pattern and often not wholly at once, leaving the creature's body in what appear to be multiple sections. This ability makes it difficult to target the creature, granting it a 20% miss chance against all attacks. By concentrating, a flying horror can become fully invisible.

Poison Stinger (Ex) The tail of the flying thing slams into a creature, pumping it with poison and then hurling it away.

Sting—Injury; *save* Fort DC 26; *frequency* 1/round for 6 rounds; *effect* 1d4 Str and 1d4 Dex; *cure* 1 save.

Ray of Dark Light (Su) A flying horror can produce a magical ray with a range of 1000 feet. Every 1d4 rounds, it can fire the ray as a standard action. A ray deals 10d6+10 points of negative energy damage to any target struck. Every round after being struck by a ray, the target suffers 10 additional point of negative energy damage. It makes a Will save (DC 24) at the start of its turn to end this effect. While a target is taking damage from the ray, the flying thing loses its thoughtform trait. Firing a ray does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Sucking Wind (Su) This attack allows the flying horror to send an eerie wind out to slow and eventually stop a creature's escape. The wind itself isn't particularly strong, but it creates a peculiar sucking sensation as if it were attempting to pull creatures back toward the flying horror. Activating this ability is a full-round action, and it must concentrate each round to maintain the effect. The sucking wind manifests as a 100-foot-radius spread, with the flying horror at the center. Each round the horror maintains concentration, the sucking wind's radius increases by 100 feet, to a maximum radius of a mile. A flying horror can detect creatures within this area via tremorsense.



As a free action, it can increase the effects of the sucking wind on up to five different creatures within the area at one time. Each targeted creature must succeed at a DC 26 Fortitude save each round it remains in the area of the sucking wind or it is slowed until it leaves the area. A creature already under the effects of any slowing effect (such as from this sucking wind or a *slow* spell) that fails this save is held in place for 1 round. It is not helpless, but cannot move via any means. *Freedom of movement* protects against the effects of the sucking wind, and *control winds* negates its effects in the area of effect of the spell. Natural windstorms or other powerful winds have no effect on a sucking wind. A flying horror can activate a sucking wind once per day, and can maintain concentration on the effect for up to an hour.

Gidim Oculus

CR 17

NE Large aberration

Init +9; **Senses** all-around vision, *true seeing*, watchman; Perception +60

Defense

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 23 (+5 Dex, +14 natural, -1 size)**hp** 221 (26d8+104)**Fort** +12 (-5 vs. gases, contact and inhaled poisons), **Ref** +15, **Will** +20**Defensive Abilities** amorphous, refractive shield, thoughtform**Weaknesses** breathing skin

Offense

Speed 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect)**Melee** 2 tentacles +24 (2d6+5/19-20 plus grab)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** blood drain (1d4 Con), consume eyes**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +22)Constant—*greater invisibility*, *pass without trace*, *true seeing*At will—*alarm*, *arcane mark*5/day—*mirage arcana*, *persistent image*3/day—*quicken invisibility purge*

Statistics

Str 20, **Dex** 21, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +19; **CMB** +25 (+29 grapple); **CMD** 39 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Combat Casting, Death From Above^{UC}, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Hover, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (invisibility purge), Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Spell Penetration, Stealthy**Skills** Acrobatics +5, Escape Artist +7, Fly +44, Perception +60, Spellcraft +29, Stealth +48**Languages** telepathy (1 mile, other Gidim only)

Special Abilities

Breathing Skin (Ex) A Gidim oculus takes a -5 penalty on Fortitude saves vs. gases, contact poison, and inhaled poisons. In areas of any strong stench or unpleasant gas, the oculus's *true seeing*, *refractive shield*, and *watchman* powers cease to function, and it treats enemies as having total concealment.

Blood Drain and Consume Eyeballs (Ex) A Gidim oculus that has an opponent grappled deals 1d4 points of Constitution damage at the end of its turn. Its tentacles wriggle for the creature's face and ephemeral suckers slurp sinus fluid through its eyeballs. Each turn when the oculus maintains the grapple, the grappled creature must make a Fortitude save (DC 28) or have an eye gouged out. If it fails by 5 or more, it loses two eyes.

Whenever the oculus consumes an eyeball in this way, it loses its thoughtform and refractive shield traits for one round (regardless of how many eyes it consumes), and it learns everything those eyes have seen in the past three days.

Refractive Shield (Su) A Gidim oculus can activate a shield that absorbs and redirects light and magic around it. While the shield is active, the oculus can change the target of any ray effects that target it (effectively bouncing the ray), and it is immune to any light effects.

Watchman (Ex) Designed and engineered for a singular purpose, a Gidim oculus gains a +20 racial bonus to Perception checks.

THOUGHTFORM

Creatures native to the Gidim homeworld have the thoughtform trait.

Creatures with this trait are similar to incorporeal creatures. Thoughtform creatures are immune to all nonmagical attack forms. Thoughtform creatures take half damage (50%) from magic weapons, spells, spell-like effects, and supernatural effects. Also, they ignore difficult terrain and can move through obstacles and other creatures, but they must end their movement in an unoccupied space.

Thoughtform creatures take normal damage from psychic attacks, and from the attacks of other thoughtform creatures. Their own attacks can affect corporeal enemies normally, though they have trouble with fine manipulation of matter.

Intelligent Gidim (as opposed to their warbeasts) can choose to become corporeal at will. Most also have the ability to dominate a creature, and if a Gidim has a sufficiently intelligent person dominated, it can hide wholly within that creature's mind. If the creature dies or the domination ends, the Gidim reappears beside the creature's body.

THINKING AGGRESSIVELY

Under certain conditions, some thoughtform creatures will lose their thoughtform trait, and mental attacks can force them to be corporeal. A creature within 30 feet of any creature with the Thoughtform special quality can spend a swift action to try to influence the Gidim with its thoughts. The 'thinker' makes an Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma check with a bonus equal to his or her level, and chooses to make the target take one of the following saves—Fortitude, Reflex, or Will (DC equal to the check's result).

Fortitude. If the save is failed, the creature loses incorporeal until the start of the thinker's next turn. If it's flying, it must land on its turn or fall.

Reflex. If the save is failed, the thinker can move the creature 10 feet in any direction. This move provokes attacks of opportunity.

Will. If the save is failed, the thinker is invisible to the creature until the start of the thinker's next turn.

Gidim Shock Trooper

CR 11

CE Medium monstrous humanoid

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +17

Defense

AC 26, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+4 Dex, +12 natural)**hp** 162 (12d10+96); **DR** 5/non-metal**Fort** +14, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13**Immune** electricity, sonic**Defensive Abilities** crackling cascade

Offense

Speed 40 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +23 (1d6+12 plus grab), gore +23 (2d6+12)**Special Attacks** abduct, roar

Statistics

Str 35, **Dex** 19, **Con** 26, **Int** 7, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +24 (+28 grapple); **CMD** 38**Feats** Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lunge, Mobility^B, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)**Skills** Acrobatics +5 (+17 to jump), Climb +20, Perception +17, Stealth +27, Survival +8**Languages** Giant, Orc**SQ** snap out of it

Special Abilities

Abduct (Ex) When a shock trooper successfully grabs a Medium or smaller opponent, on that turn it can spend a swift action to move up to its speed. This movement provokes attacks of opportunity as normal. A shock trooper that succeeds at a second grapple check against the opponent can move up to its full speed as a swift action instead of up to half its speed.

Crackling Cascade (Su) A creature that ends its turn adjacent to the shock trooper takes 5 electricity damage. A creature also takes this damage every time it hits the shock trooper in melee, or the shock trooper hits it. The shock trooper can turn this power on or off as a standard action.

Every time the shock trooper takes damage, its anger rises, and the amount of damage this ability deals increases by 5, to a maximum of 20. As the energy crescendos, its fur rises more and more on end.

Roar (Su) When a shock trooper spends a standard action to turn off his *crackling cascade*, the energy begins to glow inside his mouth. He draws in a deep breath. At the beginning of his next turn, the shock trooper can let out a savage roar as a free action, like *greater shout*. Creatures in a 60-ft. cone must make a Fortitude save (DC 24) or take 10d6 sonic damage and be stunned for 1 round and deafened for 4d6 rounds. A successful save negates the stun and halves the damage and duration of the deafness.

Snap Out of It (Ex) A shock trooper who fails a Will save against an effect created by an enemy of the Gidim temporarily breaks free of the creature's psychic conditioning. It turns on its masters, and if it can spend an hour without coming into telepathic range of another Gidim or oculus, it permanently regains control of its mind. Such poor creatures often lose their minds anyway when they realize what freakish monsters they have become.

Gidim Invaders

These humanoid creatures spend most of their time in thoughtform, where their appearance shifts based on mood and intention. But generally Gidim have lanky bodies with four-digitated limbs, four-eyed faces, and four sensory tendrils off the back of their heads. The colors of their flesh run the whole spectrum, but tend to blue, red, and purple.

Gidim Infiltrator

CR 15

NE Medium aberration, rogue 10/fighter 2

Init +7; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25

Defense

AC 29, touch 13, flat-footed 26 (+3 Dex, +6 natural, +10 armor)

hp 182 (17d8+2d10+95)

Fort +15, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11

Resist thoughtform

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee +2 living steel spiked chain +20/+15/+10 (2d4+5) plus claw +15 (1d6+3 plus grab)

Ranged ego whip +16 touch (5d6 plus stunned [DC 25])

Special Attacks ego whip, mind grasp, sneak attack +5d6

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th, Concentration +15)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 20)

1/day—*charm monster* (DC 19)

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 16, **Con** 20, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +17 (+19 disarm, +21 grapple); **CMD** 30

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Disarm, Improved Vital Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus & Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain)

Skills Acrobatics +22, Disable Device +9, Fly +4, Heal +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15,

Perception +25, Spellcraft +15, Stealth +25, Survival +13, Use Magic Device +10

Languages telepathy 100 ft.

SQ thoughtform, rogue talents (befuddling strike, canny observer, fast stealth, hide in plain sight [urban], survivalist)

Equipment +4 living steel breastplate, +2 living steel spiked chain

Special Abilities

Befuddling Strike (Ex) When the Gidim infiltrator deals sneak attack damage against an opponent, that opponent takes a –2 penalty on attack rolls against the infiltrator until the infiltrator's next turn.

Ego Whip (Su) The Gidim infiltrator can target an opponent with a psychic blast, as a ranged touch attack as a standard action, with a range increment of 60 feet. Targets struck by the ego whip takes 5d6 damage and must make a Will save (DC 22) or be stunned for one round. A creature that succeeds its save against this effect one time grows slightly resistant; if he fails any further saves against an ego whip attack in the next 24 hours, he is only staggered for a round, not stunned.

The ego whip cannot deal sneak attack damage.

Mind Grasp (Sp) At the beginning of a round in which the Gidim successfully maintains a grapple (either using its grab ability or *telekinesis*), it can attempt to dominate the target as per the *dominate person* spell (DC 25 negates). The Gidim can only dominate one target by using this ability, and upon successfully dominating a second target, the first is released from its control.

Gidim Overseer

CR 18

LE Medium aberration

Init +6; **Senses** all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft., hive mind; Perception +35

Defense

AC 32, touch 6, flat-footed 32 (–3 Dex, +26 natural, –1 size)

hp 252 (24d8+144)

Fort +15, **Ref** +13, **Will** +20

Resist thoughtform

Offense

Speed 35 ft.

Melee 2 claws +27 (4d8+10 plus *maze*)

Special Attacks ego whip, maze claw, mind grasp, telepathic feedback

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 17th; concentration +24)

At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 19), *magic missile*, *invisibility*, *telekinesis* (DC 21)

1/day—*greater invisibility*, *modify memory* (DC 21)

3/day—*hold monster* (DC 22), *empowered cone of cold* (DC 22), *permanent image*, *quicken magic missile*, *repulsion* (DC 23)

Statistics

Str 6, **Dex** 5, **Con** 20, **Int** 19, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +28 (+32 grapple); **CMD** 35

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell-Like Ability (cone of cold), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (magic missile), Spell Penetration, Toughness

Skills Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +34, Knowledge (arcana, nature) +28, Knowledge (dungeoneering, engineering, geography, local, planes) +12, Perception +35, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +28

Languages telepathy 200 ft.

SQ hivemind

Special Abilities

Ego Whip (Su) The Gidim overseer can target an opponent with a psychic blast, as a ranged touch attack as a standard action, with a range increment of 60 feet. Targets struck by the ego whip takes 5d6 damage and must make a Will save (DC 25) or be stunned for one round. A creature that succeeds its save against this effect one time grows slightly resistant; if he fails any further saves against an ego whip attack in the next 24 hours, he is only staggered for a round, not stunned.



Hivemind (Sp) Allied Gidim within range of the overseer's telepathy are affected by *haste* and *telepathic bond* (caster level 17th). The Gidim overseer's initiative at the beginning of an encounter is equal to whichever allied Gidim has the highest initiative.

Maze Claw (Sp) A creature struck by the overseer's claw must make a Will save (DC 30) or be affected by *maze* (caster level 17th). Once a creature escapes one of these psychic mazes, it is immune to the overseer's maze claw ability until the overseer has time to sleep and dream a new maze.

Mind Grasp (Sp) At the beginning of a round in which the Gidim successfully maintains a grapple (either using its grab ability or *telekinesis*), it can attempt to dominate the target as per the *dominate person* spell (DC 25 negates). The Gidim can only dominate one target by using this ability, and upon successfully dominating a second target, the first is released from its control.

Telepathic Feedback (Su) As a standard action, the overseer can unleash debilitating telepathic feedback. Non-Gidim creatures within its telepathic range must succeed at a DC 29 Will save or take a -2 penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, ability checks, and skill checks for 1 minute. A creature that succeeds at the save cannot be affected by telepathic feedback for 24 hours. This is a mind-affecting effect.

Lord Winslow Cadagyr

CR 12

Male orc bard (court bard) 13

N Medium humanoid (orc)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +1

Defense

AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10 (+1 Dex)

hp 62 (13d8)

Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +9; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +4 brilliant energy living steel longsword +13/+8 (1d8+4/19-20)

Special Attacks bardic performance 33 rounds/day (countersong, distraction, fascinate, glorious epic, inspire greatness, mockery, satire, soothing performance, suggestion)

Bard Spells Known (CL 13th; concentration +18)5th (2/day)—*greater dispel magic*, *ki shout*^{UM} (DC 20)4th (4/day)—*denounce*^{APG} (DC 19), *hold monster* (DC 19), *modify memory* (DC 19), *truespeak*^{APG}3rd (5/day)—*charm monster* (DC 18), *confusion* (DC 18), *discharge* (DC 18), *glifness*, *haste*2nd (6/day)—*enthrall* (DC 17), *focused scrutiny*^{APG}, *honeyed tongue*^{APG}, *hypnotic pattern* (DC 17), *sound burst* (DC 17)1st (7/day)—*adoration*^{UC}, *charm person* (DC 16), *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *memory lapse*^{APG} (DC 16), *negative reaction*^{UC} (DC 16)0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *know direction*, *lullaby* (DC 15), *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *unwitting ally*^{APG} (DC 15)

Statistics

Str 10, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 21

Base Atk +9; CMB +9; CMD 20

Feats Ensemble^{UM}, Improved Initiative, Lingering Performance^{APG}, Persuasive, Rhetorical Flourish^{UC}, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Voice of the Sibyl^{UM}

Skills Bluff +22, Diplomacy +38, Disguise +7, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (engineering) +7 (+12 to understand technology), Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (local) +24, Knowledge (nobility) +24, Linguistics +6, Perform (dance) +21, Perform (oratory) +22, Perform (sing) +21, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +11

Languages Ancient, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Orc

SQ heraldic expertise, versatile performances (dance, oratory, sing)

Equipment oculus prism embedded in the back of his neck

Special Abilities

Bardic performance Winslow has the following bardic performances. Winslow's bardic performance abilities may affect targets in an 80-foot cone or a 40-foot radius (instead of a 30-foot radius). The benefits and penalties from his performance linger two rounds after he stops performing. Bardic performance is a language-dependent, mind-affecting ability that relies on audible components.

♦ **Glorious epic (Su)** Winslow can weave captivating tales that engross those who hear them. Enemies within 30 feet become flat-footed unless they succeed at a Will save (DC 21). A save renders them immune to this ability for 24 hours.

♦ **Mockery (Su)** Winslow can subtly ridicule and defame two individuals at a time. The bard selects one or two targets who can hear his performance. They take a -4 penalty on Charisma checks and Charisma-related skill checks as long as the bard continues performing.

♦ **Satire (Su)** Winslow can use performance to undermine the confidence of enemies who hear it, causing them to take a -3 penalty on attack and damage rolls (minimum 1) and a -3 penalty on saves against fear and charm effects as long as the bard continues performing.

Heraldic expertise (Ex) Three times per day, Winslow can add +6 to Diplomacy, Knowledge (history), Knowledge (local), and Knowledge (nobility) checks.

Orc Ferocity (Ex) Winslow remains conscious and can continue fighting even if his hit point total is below 0. He is still staggered and loses 1 hit point each round.



Sijhen

CR 21

NE Medium aberration

Init +11; Senses all-around vision, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +13

Defense

AC 38, touch 23, flat-footed 30 (+7 Dex, +5 deflection, +15 natural, +1 dodge); +4 against opportunity attacks

hp 297 (22d8+198)

Fort +21, Ref +19, Will +21

DR 15/special (see Gidim boons); SR 32 (special, see Gidim boons)

Resist thoughtform; Immune forced teleportation

Offense

Speed 40 ft., teleport 40 ft. (see eightfold wayfarer)

Melee 2 claws +29 (3d6+12 plus grab)

Ranged ego whip +23 touch (6d6 plus stunned)

Special Attacks ego whip, mind grasp

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 22nd, Concentration +27)Constant—*freedom of movement*, *protection from good*At will—*dimension door*, *telekinesis* (DC 27)1/day—*invisibility*, *greater teleport*



Statistics

Str 25, **Dex** 24, **Con** 29, **Int** 20, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +23 (+27 grapple); **CMD** 45

Feats Combat Expertise, Dodge, Combat Reflexes, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (claw), Whirlwind Attack

Skills Acrobatics +6 (+10 to jump), Bluff +32, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +11, Fly +22, Heal +27, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (local) +23, Knowledge (planes) +33, Perception +34, Sense Motive +36, Spellcraft +30, Stealth +31, Survival +20, Swim +14, Use Magic Device +20

Languages telepathy 100 ft.

SQ eightfold wayfarer, Gidim boons, thoughtform

Special Abilities

Ego Whip (Su) Sijhen can target an opponent with a psychic blast, as a ranged touch attack as a standard action, with a range increment of 60 feet. Targets struck by the ego whip takes 6d6 damage and must make a Will save (DC 27) or be stunned for one round. A creature that succeeds its save against this effect one time grows slightly resistant; if he fails any further saves against an ego whip attack in the next 24 hours, he is only staggered for a round, not stunned.

Eightfold Wayfarer (Su) On its turn, Sijhen can make two simultaneous move actions, moving its speed from the same original but ending in different locations. While split, Sijhen can make attacks and be targeted as if in either location. When attacked, if Sijhen is split it can choose to no longer be in the threatened location, and that copy of it vanishes. However, on its next turn, it can continue to split each of its previous versions into another two copies, to a maximum of eight copies of itself. It can also have some of its previous copies disappear if it no longer needs them and wants to create a new one.

If an effect stuns, dazes, or otherwise disables one of the copies, that copy of Sijhen vanishes (as long as there is another spare copy of Sijhen). Likewise, all the copies must remain within 100 feet of each other; any that is forced beyond that range vanishes.

On each of its turns, Sijhen can take a single standard action for each copy of itself.

This ability is mentally exhausting, however, and Sijhen can only use this power 22 rounds per day.

Gidim Boons (Su) Empowered by the sentient homeworld of the Gidim, Sijhen has a +5 enhancement bonus to saving throws and its claw attacks, and is constantly protected by *freedom of movement* and *protection from good*. It cannot be forced to teleport anywhere against its will.

Sijhen has DR 15, which can only be bypassed by weapons that have traveled to another plane (the Dreaming and Bleak Gate count; simply slipping through the astral plane while teleporting does not). Additionally it has SR 32 against spells and spell-like abilities that originate from more than 30 feet away.

Mind Grasp (Sp) At the beginning of a round in which Sijhen successfully maintains a grapple (either using its grab ability or *telekinesis*), it can attempt to dominate the target as per the *dominate person* spell (DC 25 negates). The Gidim can only dominate one target by using this ability, and upon successfully dominating a second target, the first is released from its control.

Prismatic Whirlwind (Su) When Sijhen uses the Whirlwind Attack feat (which it can do with every copy of itself), a synaesthetic whirlwind of blinding light and psychic screams surrounds it. Sijhen cannot grab enemies during a whirlwind attack, but instead each foe adjacent to it must make a Fortitude, Reflex, and Will save (DC 27). Each failure has one of the following effects.

- **Fortitude.** The creature takes an additional 5 sonic damage, is deafened for one round, and is knocked prone.
- **Reflex.** The creature takes an additional 5 electricity damage and is blinded for one round.
- **Will.** The creature takes an additional 5 force damage and Sijhen can teleport it adjacent to any other copy of itself.

Doomsday Army

Adventure II

Grandis Komanov has a few hundred cultists, ten thousand soldiers, a half-dozen skeletal phalanxes, two hundred frost giants, the five Lost Riders, and a hivemind-generated blizzard that can produce effectively limitless blizzard elementals.

Soldiers, Cultists, and the Hivemind

Most of the warriors are no threat. A few experienced fighters might provide a speedbump, but typically the snipers will use covering fire to aid one of the Vsadni. The real danger comes from the massed units and the blizzard elementals that emerge from the hivemind storm that hovers above the army.

Doomsday Sniper

CR 9

Male dwarf fighter 10

CE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +2, **Senses** darkvision; Perception +14

Defense

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 85 (10d10+30)

Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee warhammer +10 (1d8/x3)

Ranged +1 *unholy rifle* +15 (1d10+3/19-20/x4, misfire 1)

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 14, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +10; **CMB** +10; **CMD** 22

Feats Far Shot, Greater Weapon Focus, Improved Critical, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (rifle), Weapon Specialization (rifle)

Other Gear scoped rifle with 200 metal cartridge rounds, warhammer

Covering Fire (Ex) The sniper can use the aid another action with a ranged attack against an opponent, regardless of whether the opponent threatens an ally.

Doomsday Cultist

CR 9

Male dwarf rogue 3/cleric 7

CE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +1, **Senses** darkvision; Perception +14

Defense

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +4 armor)

hp 75 (10d8+30)

Fort +11, **Ref** +3, **Will** +9

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee warhammer +7 (1d8/x3)

Ranged shotgun +11 (1d8/x2 in a 30-ft. cone, misfire 1-2)

Special Attack sneak attack +2d6, channel negative energy (4d6, Will DC 11 half, 1/day)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 7th; concentration +9)

4th—*divination*, *inflict critical wounds*

3rd—*dispel magic* (2), *seek thoughts*

Domains loss, thought

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 11, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 6

Base Atk +8; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 19

Feats Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (shotgun)

**Doomsday Army Squad**

CR 11

CN Medium humanoid (dwarf, troop)

Init +0; **Senses** Perception +10*Defense***AC** 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (+1 dodge, +6 natural)**hp** 81 (6d8+54)**Fort** +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +3**Defensive Abilities** troop traits*Offense***Speed** 20 ft.**Melee** troop (2d6+6)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** shotgun volley (DC 20), suicide grenades (DC 18)*Statistics***Str** 22, **Dex** 11, **Con** 28, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +4; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 25**Feats** Ability Focus (shotgun volley), Dodge, Toughness*Special Abilities*

Shotgun Volley (Ex): The squad can fire a rolling volley of shotgun blasts as a standard action. This attack takes the form of up to two 30-ft. cones originating from the squad. All creatures in one of these cones' areas of effect take 3d10+15 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC 20 for half).

Suicide Grenades (Ex): The squad is equipped with grenades, and their hivemind willpower animates even dead or dying warriors enough for them to pull their pins. When the squad is reduced to 0 hit points, all the squad members pull grenade pins. One round later an explosion of shrapnel and body parts fills the squad's space and every square within 10 ft., dealing 7d6 points of piercing and slashing damage (Reflex DC 18 for half).

Skeletal Phalanx

CR 15

NE Medium undead (troop)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision; Perception +28*Defense***AC** 32, touch 20, flat-footed 22 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +10 natural, +2 shield); +4 vs. opportunity attacks**hp** 116 (21d8+21)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +21, **Will** +10**Defensive Abilities** troop traits, curse-filled breasts**DR** 10/bludgeoning; **Immune** undead traits*Offense***Speed** 60 ft.**Melee** troop (6d6+12)**Space** 40 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** javelin volley (DC 23)*Statistics***Str** 34, **Dex** 29, **Con** -, **Int** 3, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +31; **CMD** 46**Feats** Ability Focus (javelin volley), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack, Toughness*Special Abilities*

Javelin Volley (Ex): The phalanx is equipped with several javelins each. As a move action, it can target up to four squares up to 60 feet away with volleys of hurled spears. A volley deals 15d6 points of piercing damage in a 10-foot-radius burst (Reflex DC 23 for half); overlapping areas do not multiply the damage. It can use this attack three times before it must recover its javelins.



Curse-Filled Breasts (Su): Various items of anathema have been hung amidst the ribcages or shoved into the skulls of these skeletons. Whenever a creature deals damage to the phalanx, the attacker must make a Will save (DC 20) or be affected by *bestow curse*. The most common curse is a -6 decrease to Constitution. If a character is affected by a second curse, it grants a -4 penalty to attack rolls, saves, ability checks, and skill checks.

Endtimes Blizzard Elemental

CR 19

NE Gargantuan outsider (elemental, extraplanar, time)

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +39*Defense***AC** 32, touch 22, flat-footed 22 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 insight, +10 natural, -4 size)**hp** 324 (24d10+192)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +25, **Will** +26**Defensive Abilities** foresight; **DR** 15/special;**Immune** elemental traits, temporal magic; **SR** 28*Offense***Speed** fly 100 ft. (perfect)**Melee** 2 slams +27 (2d8+16 plus icy end)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** freeze time (DC 21)*Statistics***Str** 34, **Dex** 28, **Con** 26, **Int** 14, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +24; **CMB** +40; **CMD** 66**Feats** Cleave, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (slam), Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Weapon Finesse**Skills** Fly +38, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (arcana) +33, Knowledge (history) +33, Perception +39, Sense Motive +33, Stealth +28, Survival +33**Languages** Auran, Dwarven**SQ** winter native



Special Abilities

Foresight (Su) The elemental can see a few seconds into the future. This ability prevents it from being surprised, caught flat-footed, or flanked. It also grants the elemental an insight bonus to AC equal to its Wisdom bonus. This ability can be negated, but the elemental can restart it as a free action on its next turn.

Freeze Time (Sp) The elemental can create an effect similar to a *time stop* spell once per day (caster level 24th). The air itself freezes, and every other creature within 1000 ft. must make a Fortitude save (DC 21) or be held in place and unable to act for 1d4+1 rounds. Creatures so affected cannot be harmed or interacted with in any way, but they are aware of events transpiring around them.

Icy End (Ex) Damage dealt by the elemental's slam attack does not heal naturally (but it can still be healed magically). A creature slain by the elemental can only be raised through the successful casting of a *miracle*, *true resurrection*, or *wish* spell.

Additionally, a creature hit by the elemental must make a Fortitude save (DC 21) or age one aging step (from adulthood to middle age, from middle age to old, from old to venerable, and venerable to dead). If a character ages, he takes all the effects to his physical ability scores, but does not gain any of the bonuses to his mental ability scores. A venerable creature affected by this ability dies and cannot be restored to life by mortal magic.

This effect can be reversed with *break enchantment*, *greater restoration*, or *regenerate*.

Special Damage Reduction (Ex) The elemental has DR 15 which can only be bypassed by flaming weapons or weapons that have been in contact with fire in the past minute.

Winter Native (Ex) The elemental is not slowed by snowy air, and can see perfectly fine through even white-out conditions.

Frost Giants

Tundar Rider

CR 14

Frost giant cavalier 5

CE Large humanoid (cold, giant)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +13

Defense

AC 27, touch 11, flat-footed 25 (+6 armor, +2 Dex, +9 natural, +1 shield, -1 size)**hp** 204 (14d8+5d10+114)**Fort** +19, **Ref** +7, **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** rock catching; **Immune** cold**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** +1 *cold iron warhammer* +23/+18/+13 (2d6+9/x3) or *mwk cold iron lance* +23/+18/+13 (2d6+12/x3) or 2 slams +17 (1d8+4)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** banner +2, cavalier's charge, challenge 2/day, greater tactician 2/day (Intercept Charge, 5 rds), rock throwing (120 ft.)

Statistics

Str 27, **Dex** 14, **Con** 23, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +24 (+26 overrun or sunder); **CMD** 36 (38 vs. overrun or sunder)**Feats** Animal Affinity, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Intercept Charge^{ACG}, Martial Weapon Proficiency (greataxe), Mounted Combat, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth)**Skills** Climb +10, Handle Animal +19, Knowledge (geography) +1, Knowledge (nature) +1, Perception +13, Ride +20, Stealth +10 (+14 in snow), Survival +9; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Stealth in snow**Languages** Giant**SQ** expert trainer +2, keeper, mount (mammoth)

Combat Gear *potion of resist fire 10*; **Other Gear** +2 *restful mithral chain shirt*, *mithral light steel quickdraw shield*, +1 *cold iron warhammer*, *mwk cold iron lance*, bedroll, belt pouch, flint and steel, hemp rope (50 ft.), mess kit, pot, saddlebags, soap, trail rations (5), waterskin

Special Abilities

Banner (Ex) Allies who can see a Tundar rider's banner gains +2 save vs. fear and +1 to hit while charging.

Challenge A Tundar rider can make a free bull rush or trip combat maneuver anytime he takes the full-attack action against the target of his challenge. This free combat maneuver does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Intercept Charge When an opponent charges an ally, as an immediate action the Tundar rider can move up to 40 feet toward any square in the path of the charge. If the Tundar rider ends its movement in the path of the charge, the opponent must stop when it becomes adjacent, and then attack the Tundar rider instead of the rider's ally. The movement from using this feat counts towards movement on your next turn.

Dire Polar Bear

CR 10

Giant advanced dire bear

N Huge animal

Init +4; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; **Perception** +20

Defense

AC 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19 (+11 natural, -2 size)**hp** 207 (18d8+126)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +11, **Will** +7

Offense

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** bite +21 (2d6+10), 2 claws +22 (2d6+10 plus grab)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 31, **Dex** 11, **Con** 25, **Int** 2, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +25 (+29 grapple); **CMD** 35 (39 vs. trip)**Feats** Cleave, Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (Claw), Power Attack, Run, Skill Focus (Perception), Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (Claw)**Skills** Perception +20, Swim +25

Tundar Hunter

CR 12

Male frost giant fighter 3

CE Large humanoid (cold, giant)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; **Perception** +11

Defense

AC 31, touch 11, flat-footed 31 (+11 armor, +9 natural, -1 size, +2 Dex)**hp** 213 (14d8+3d10+125)**Fort** +19, **Ref** +6, **Will** +9; +1 vs. fear**Defensive Abilities** rock catching; **Immune** cold**Weaknesses** vulnerability to fire

Offense

Speed 40 ft.**Melee** *mwk heavy pick* +25/+20/+15 (3d6+18/19-20/x4) or 2 slams +23 (1d8+11)**Ranged** rock +14 (1d8+16), harpoon +14 (3d6+16/x3)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** rock throwing (120 ft.)

Statistics

Str 33, **Dex** 14, **Con** 26, **Int** 8, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 9**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +25 (+27 overrun or sunder); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. overrun or sunder)**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Critical Focus, Impaling Critical, Improved Critical, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Climb), Toughness, Weapon Focus (heavy pick), Weapon Specialization (heavy pick)



Skills Climb +24, Intimidate +16, Perception +11

Languages Giant

SQ armor training 1, bravery +1

Impaling Critical (Ex) The frost giant gets +4 to critical hit confirmation rolls. If he crits with a pick, he can impale his target. At the start of each of the victim's turn, the creature takes another 3d6 damage. The giant can pull the weapon out as an immediate action, and must do so when the victim moves beyond his reach or else let go of the weapon. The victim can remove the weapon as a move action. When the weapon is removed, the creature takes another 3d6 damage.

The Lost Riders

If you haven't figured it out yet, they're basically Dethklok. The Lost Riders all share the same general stats, but each have personalized traits.

Vsadni, "Lost Rider"

CR 19

NE Gargantuan undead

Init +9; **Senses** greater arcane sight, darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +31

Defense

AC 35, touch 11, flat-footed 30 (+5 Dex, +24 natural, -4 size)

hp 319 (22d8+220); **fast healing** 15

Fort +17, **Ref** +12, **Will** +19

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, light to dark; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and good;

Immune cold, undead traits; **Resist** acid 15, lightning 15; **SR** 30

Offense

Speed 50 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +26 (2d8+14 plus 3d6 electricity and energy drain), 2 claws +27 (2d6+14/19-20 plus 3d6 electricity)

Ranged eye beam +17 touch (10d6 electricity and 10d6 force)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks eclipse, energy drain (2 levels, DC 31), song of the doomsday

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +29)

Constant—greater arcane sight, fly

At will—bestow curse (DC 24), deeper darkness

3/day—animate dead, contagion (DC 23), dimension door (self plus mount if present), haste

1/day—create undead, polar ray

Statistics

Str 39, **Dex** 21, **Con** —, **Int** 14, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 30

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +29; **CMD** 44

Feats Awesome Blow, Combat Reflexes, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Point-Blank Shot, Power Attack, Precise Shot, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (various), one other

Skills Fly +35, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (planes) +25, Knowledge (religion) +30, Perception +31, Spellcraft +23, Survival +21, Use Magic Device +30

Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarven

SQ icy remains

Special Abilities

Eclipse (Su) Anytime a Vsadni casts deeper darkness, any creatures in the area of darkness when it is created take 8d6 points of cold damage (DC 31 Fortitude for half). Any creature that takes damage from this effect becomes staggered as long as it remains in the area of darkness and for 1d4 rounds after it leaves that area.

Eye Beam (Su) As a standard action, a Vsadni can fire a glowing beam of force from its eyes at a range of 100 feet as a ranged touch attack dealing 10d6 points of force damage and 10d6 points of electricity damage.

Light to Dark (Su) As an immediate action up to three times per day, a Vsadni can convert a positive energy effect within 30 ft. into negative energy. If channeled positive energy, a *cure* spell, or similar would affect a creature within the area, it becomes negative energy instead.

Song of the Doomsday (Su) As a swift action for up to twenty-two rounds per day, a Vsadni can perform a doom-filled song. Enemies within 60 ft. who hear the song must make a Will save (DC 31) or become shaken for as long as it can hear the song, even if it leaves the area. A creature who succeeds a save against any Vsadni's song cannot be shaken by it again.

These songs stack differently than normal fear effects. An enemy that hears two Vsadni playing at once must make a save (even if it resisted being shaken) or else become frightened. An enemy who hears all five Vsadni performing must make a save or become panicked. The fear effect lasts for as long as the victim can hear at least one of the Vsadni's performances.

Only Nebo, the leader, sings. Betel and Yaros can use their greataxes like massive horns, Tzertze can bang his picks like drums, and Hamul can fold his scythe into a harp.

Icy Remains (Ex) In the hollow of the Vsadni's titanic ribcage sits a chunk of glacier containing the original body of the Lost Rider. A creature may attempt to target that chunk of ice if the Vsadni is helpless, or if the attacker is in control of a grapple against the gargantuan monster. (Nebo, the leader, wears plate armor which protects his chest.)

The glacial chunk has the same defenses, resistances, and damage reduction as the main Vsadni, but has vulnerable to fire and 100 hit points. Damage to it also damages the Vsadni. If the chunk is reduced to 0 hit points, the lost rider's corpse falls to the ground and shatters. This destroys the rider's massive stone and bone body.

Critical hits against the Vsadni count their damage against the ice chunk.

Individual Riders (Ex) Each of the Lost Riders has his own unique powers.

Nebo, the Leader

AC 43, touch 11, flat-footed 38 (+5 Dex, +24 natural, +8 armor, -4 size)

hp 343; **fast healing** 15

Melee +5 gargantuan morningstar +31/+26/+21/+16 (5d6+19)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +29)

1/day—wail of the banshee

Feat Toughness

Betel, the Vain Axeman

Melee +5 gargantuan greataxe +31/+26/+21/+16 (6d8+26/x3)

Feat Improved Initiative

Paired Resilience (Su) If Yarost fails a save against an effect that either doesn't affect

Betel or that Betel saved against, Yarost can make an additional save to break free at the start of his next turn. (If one was paralyzed with *hold monster* and the other was stunned by a *power word*, it's the GM's discretion whether the two effects are similar to count as the same thing.)

Yarost, the Naïve Axeman

Melee +5 gargantuan greataxe +31/+26/+21/+16 (6d8+26/x3)

Feat Improved Initiative

Paired Resilience (Su) As per Yarost's ability, but vice versa.

Tzertze, the Upbeat Wardrummer

Melee +3 gargantuan heavy pick +25/+20/+15/+10 (5d6+19/x4) and +3 gargantuan heavy pick +25 (5d6+19/x4)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +29)

1/day—meteor swarm

Feat Two-Weapon Fighting

Hamul, the Hateful Scum

Melee +5 gargantuan scythe +31/+26/+21/+16 (3d8+26/19-20/x4)

Feat Improved Critical (scythe)

Too Mean to Die (Su) Hamul cannot be reduced below 1 hit point unless either the icy chunk holding his body is destroyed, or he is affected by a magical emotion that puts him in a positive mood.



Frost Worm Distemper

CR 15

Giant plague bearer frost worm (*Pathfinder Roleplaying Game: Bestiary 2*
“Frost Worm,” *Advanced Bestiary* “Plague Bearer”)

N Colossal magical beast (cold)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +17

Aura disease cloud (bubonic plague, leprosy, 30 ft., DC 28)

Defense

AC 23, touch 4, flat-footed 21 (+2 Dex, +19 natural, -8 size)

hp 248 (16d10+160)

Fort +20, **Ref** +12, **Will** +10

Immune cold, disease

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 30 ft., burrow 10 ft., fly 60 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +21 (8d10+18 plus 4d6 cold plus disease)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks breath weapon (60 ft. cone, 15d6 cold, Ref half, 1/hour), death throes, disease (blinding sickness, mindfire, DC 28), trill

Statistics

Str 35, **Dex** 14, **Con** 31, **Int** 2, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +16; **CMB** +36; **CMD** 48 (can't be tripped)

Feats Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Stand Still, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +17, Stealth -3 (+5 in ice, snow); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth in ice, snow

SQ carrier, cold, diseased flesh (mummy rot), quick incubation

Special Abilities

Carrier Distemper carries infections even though it is immune to disease.

Disease Natural attacks inflict two diseases, blinding sickness and mindfire (DC 28 Fortitude).

Disease Cloud (Ex) Distemper spreads two diseases in a 30 foot radius around it, bubonic plague and leprosy (DC 28 Fortitude).

Diseased Flesh (Ex) Distemper's flesh carries mummy rot (DC 28 Fortitude).

Quick Incubation All the diseases Distemper carries have an immediate onset.

Death Throes (Su) When killed, a frost worm explodes in a 100-foot-radius burst that deals 12d6 cold damage and 8d6 piercing damage (DC 23 Reflex half).

Fimbulwinter Steed

CR 13

N Colossal outsider (air, cold, elemental, water)

Init +2, **Senses** darkvision, snow vision; Perception +27

Defense

AC 30, touch 0, flat-footed 30 (-2 Dex, -8 size, +30 natural)

hp 372 (24d10+240)

Fort +24, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8

Immune cold, elemental traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 80 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Space 30 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Melee two hooves +35 (3d8+19/19-20/x2 plus 3d6 cold) or bite +30 (3d12+27 plus 3d6 cold)

SA numbing cold (Fort DC 32), trample (2d8+28)

Statistics

Str 48, **Dex** 6, **Con** 31, **Int** 4, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +24; **CMB** +51; **CMD** 59 (63 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (hoof), Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Skills Fly +25, Escape Artist +22, Perception +27, Stealth +6

SQ icewalking, massive

Special Abilities

Massive (Ex) The steed can only make opportunity attacks against foes that are Huge or larger (unless the creature is climbing the steed), and can be flanked only by Huge or larger enemies.

Numbing Cold (Ex) When a fimbulwinter steed deals cold damage to a creature, that creature must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 32) or be staggered for 1 round.

Dear Leader

If the party confronts her after day one, Grandis Komanov has at least a functional doomsday weapon—the *cyclopean revelation*. If they attack her on a day when she has managed to attune the weapon to the Voice of Rot, she can use its full power to turn those it kills into wraiths.

She is accompanied at all times by her lackey, whose tongue she tore out many years ago. The emotionally-crippled man is hideously loyal to her, and his body is covered with self-inflicted scars.

Komanov's Lackey

CR 13

Male dwarf necromancer 14

NE Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., life sight (20 feet, 14 rounds/day); Perception +1

Defense

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+5 armor, +4 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 65 (14d6+14)

Fort +8, **Ref** +10, **Will** +14; +2 vs. poison, +4 vs. spells and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities defensive training; **SR** 18

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +1 *adamantine battleaxe* +9/+4 (1d8+2/x3)

Special Attacks hatred (+1 bonus on attacks against orcs and goblinoids)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 14th; concentration +18)

7th—*finger of death* (DC 23), *mass hold person* (DC 21), *prismatic spray*

6th—*analyze dweomer*, *disintegrate* (DC 20), *eyebite* (DC 22), *legend-lore*

5th—*mage's private sanctum*, *symbol of pain* (2, DC 21), *wall of force*

4th—*bestow curse* (2, DC 20), *dimensional anchor* (2), *enervation*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*

3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *fireball* (DC 17), *lightning bolt* (2, DC 17), *tongues*, *vampiric touch*

2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *flaming sphere* (DC 16), *invisibility*, *scorching ray*, *spectral hand* (2)

1st—*color spray* (DC 15), *identify*, *magic missile* (3), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17)

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue* (DC 16)

Opposition Schools Conjuraction, Transmutation

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 19, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 12

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24 (28 vs. bull rush, 28 vs. trip)

Feats Arcane Blast^{APG}, Command Undead, Cosmopolitan^{APG}, Craft Wondrous Item, Fast Study^{UM}, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Prodigy^{UM}, Scribe Scroll, Spell Focus (necromancy), Steel Soul^{APG}, Undead Master^{UM}

Skills Acrobatics +2 (-2 to jump), Bluff +6, Craft (glass) +11, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (geography) +9, Knowledge (history) +17 (+19 on checks that pertain to dwarves or their enemies), Knowledge (local) +13, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +1 (+3 to notice unusual stonework), Perform (oratory) +22, Profession (teacher) +12, Sense Motive +18, Spellcraft +21; **Racial Modifiers** +2 Knowledge (history) on dwarves or their enemies, +2 Perception to notice unusual stonework

Languages understands Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Orc, Primordial (mute)

SQ arcane bond (*staff of many rays*), bolster, power over undead, mute spellcasting



Combat Gear *lesser enlarge metamagic rod, potion of cure light wounds (3), potion of cure moderate wounds (2), black robe of the archmagi, staff of many rays; Other Gear* +1 adamantine battleaxe, bookplate of recall, engineer's workgloves, ring of mind shielding, ring of protection +4, 4 pp

Special Abilities

Bolster (Sp) As a standard action, this mute lackey can touch an undead creature and infuse it with negative energy 7 times a day. It gains a +3 profane bonus on all attack rolls and saving throws, as well as 3 temporary hit point per Hit Die and a +6 bonus to its turn resistance. These bonuses last for 7 rounds. The bonuses and temporary hit points are immediately dispelled if the creature is within the area of a *consecrate* spell.

Lessons of the End The lackey's spellbook is no minor tome, but is an artifact created by the reworking of the world. Made of supple midnight blue leather with silver and onyx gussets, this spellbook contains every necromantic spell that was ever known in the world. The owner of this book can command this artifact to absorb a standard, non-magical spellbook as a way to keep an entire library's worth of spells while traveling. The lackey has attached the *bookplate of recall* to *Lessons of the End*.

Mute Spellcasting (Ex) Due to his prolonged lack of a tongue, the lackey has learned how to cast spells without requiring verbal components, and instead scrapes patterned steel against stone to create sparks and sounds to call forth the magic.

Grandis Komanov

Female dwarf cleric 20

CE Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision; Perception +9

Defense

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 27 (+14 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 193 (20d8+100); diehard

Fort +18, **Ref** +10, **Will** +26

Immune death effects (death ward), mental effects (mind blank), paralysis (freedom of movement); **Resist** cold 10; **SR** 32

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee +5 *dancing frost greatsword* +24/+19/+14 (2d6+8 plus 2d6 cold/17–20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 4/day (DC 23, 10d6), aura of forgetfulness

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 20th; concentration +29)

9th—*energy drain*^p (DC 28), *foresight*, *implosion* (DC 28), *mass heal*, *miracle*, *quicken breath of life*

8th—*greater spell immunity*, *mass inflict critical wounds* (2, DC 27), *mindblank*^p, *quicken cure critical wounds*, *stormbolts* (DC 27)

7th—*destruction* (2, DC 26), *greater restoration*, *power word blind*^p, *quicken cure serious wounds*, *regenerate*

6th—*banishment*, *find the path*^p, *greater dispel magic*, *harm*, *heal* (2)

5th—*break enchantment*, *flame strike* (2, DC 24), *slay living* (DC 24), *spell-resistance* (2), *true-seeing*^p

4th—*blessing of fervor*, *death ward*, *divination*^p, *freedom-of-movement*, *inflict critical wounds* (DC 23), *restoration*, *spell-immunity*

3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 22), *daylight*, *dispel magic* (2), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 22), *magic vestment*, *speak with dead*^p

2nd—*detect thoughts*^p, *lesser restoration* (2), *silence* (2), *spiritual weapon*, *status*

1st—*bane* (2, DC 20), *doom* (DC 20), *inflict light wounds* (3, DC 20), *obscuring mist*^p, *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*bleed* (DC 19), *create water*, *mending*, *stabilize*

D Domain spell; **Domains** Loss, Thought



Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 13, **Con** 18, **Int** 12, **Wis** 28, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 32

Feats Combat Casting, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (greatsword), Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Skill Focus (Perform), Weapon Focus & Proficiency (greatsword)

Skills Bluff +23, Diplomacy +9, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perform (oratory) +23

Languages Common, Dwarven, Primordial

Combat Gear potions of cure serious wounds (2); **Other Gear** +5 frost-resistant full plate, cloak of resistance +3, headband of mental prowess +6 (Charisma and Wisdom), belt of physical might +6 (Constitution and Strength), ring of protection +3, +5 dancing frost greatsword

Special Abilities

Aura of Forgetfulness (Su) Grandis can activate this aura as a swift action. Each round, enemies within 30 ft. of Grandis must make a Will save (DC 29) or when they leave the aura they forget the events that transpired while within it. Additionally, spellcasters who fail this save lose one prepared spell or spell slot of 1st level or higher. Grandis can maintain this aura for up to 20 rounds per day.

Dancing Greatsword (Su) As a standard action Grandis can conjure a sword out of jagged ice, which functions as a +5 dancing frost greatsword, and starts attacking immediately. She must spend another standard action to renew this every four rounds.

The Cyclopean Revelation (Su) As a standard action, Grandis can use this arcanoscientific weapon to fire a 1000-ft. long beam with a 10-ft. radius, which disintegrates all inanimate objects in its path, cutting a 20-ft. wide swath out to its maximum distance. Creatures in the path may make a Reflex save (DC 28) to dive free of the path, moving to the nearest edge of the beam and falling prone. Those caught in the area take 40d6 damage (Fortitude DC 28 half). Additionally, it makes a dispel check against any effect in that area (caster level 25).

Creatures slain by the beam rise as wraiths 1d4 rounds later. The next time the Gyre passes over the world at noon, all such wraiths are drawn to the Voice of Rot.

After firing this weapon, it cannot be used for the next four rounds.



Sacrament of Apotheosis (Sp) Komanov's lackey can activate the ritual in only two rounds, which modifies Grandis's stats as follows. This change lasts for one hour.

Size Large; **Perception** see in darkness

Defense

AC 30, touch 13, flat-footed 29 (+14 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +3 natural, -1 size)

hp 223 (20d8+130); diehard

Fort +21, **Ref** +10, **Will** +26

Immune death effects (death ward), mental effects (mind blank), paralysis (freedom of movement); **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

DR 10/good; **SR** 37

Offense

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee +5 dancing frost greatsword +28/+23/+18 (2d8+14 plus 2d6 cold/17–20)

Space 10 ft; **Reach** 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 24, **Dex** 13, **Con** 24, **Int** 12, **Wis** 28, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 37

God Trials

Adventure II

Few in Crisillyir would be a threat to the party, but those that are possess immense divine power.

Godhand's Team

Sigismund always has angels, monks, and templars nearby. Legate Tullius just has templars nearby unless she happens to be near Vitus, and if she gets in trouble she'll use *getaway* to link up with the godhand.

Godhand Vitus Sigismund

CR 20

Human Unchained Monk 20

LN Medium outsider (human, native)

Init +12; **Senses** Perception +28

Defense

AC 42, touch 34, flat-footed 33 (+8 armor, +5 deflection, +8 Dex, +5 monk, +5 Wis, +1 dodge)

hp 150 (20d10+40)

Fort +19, **Ref** +25, **Will** +16; +2 vs. enchantments

DR 10/chaotic; **Immune** disease, poison, paralysis (*freedom of movement*)

Defensive Abilities improved evasion, flawless mind (roll twice and take better on Will saves)

Aura halo of menace (20-ft., enemies must save Will DC 20 or take -2 to attack rolls, saves, and AC until that enemy hits Vitus or affects him with a spell or ability)

Offense

Speed 90 ft.

Melee +5 unarmed strike +34/+29/+24/+19 (2d10+9, 19–20 critical style) or flurry of blows +34/+34/+34/+29/+24/+19 (2d10+9, 19–20 critical style)

Ranged +5 *brilliant energy seeking sling* +33/+28/+23/+18 (1d4+4 brilliant energy) or flurry of blows +33/+33/+33/+28/+23/+18 (1d4+4 brilliant energy)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (20/day, DC 25)

Statistics

Str 19, **Dex** 26, **Con** 14, **Int** 18, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +28 (+34 bull rush); **CMD** 58 (62 vs. bull rush)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Bull Rush Strike, Critical Focus, Deflect Arrows, Dodge,

Exhausting Critical, Extra Ki, Greater Bull Rush, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Tiring Critical, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +31 (+55 when jumping), Bluff +23, Climb +14, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (religion) +27, Perception +28, Sense Motive +28; Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (planes) +24, Perform (oratory) +23

Languages Common, tongue of the sun and the moon

SQ fast movement, ki pool (24 points, adamantite, lawful, magic, cold iron, silver), purity of body

Other Gear *amulet of mighty fists* +5, *belt of physical perfection* +6, *bracers of armor* +8, *cloak* (stole) of resistance +5, *headband of mental superiority* +6, *ring of freedom of movement*, *ring of protection* +5, *jaunt boots*^{UE}, *gauntlets of the skilled maneuver* (bull rush)^{UE}, *halo of menace*^{ARG}, +5 *brilliant energy seeking sling*

Special Abilities

Ki Power (Su) Vitus can spend a ki point to:

- Grant himself a fly speed with perfect maneuverability, as a swift action, lasting one minute. If he doesn't end his turn on a surface that can support his weight, he falls.
- Grant himself a +4 dodge bonus to AC until the end of his next turn, as an immediate action.
- Add one extra attack on a flurry of blows, as a swift action.
- Add 1d6 fire damage to his unarmed strike, as a swift action, lasting one minute.
- Release a 30-ft. cone of fire, dealing 20d6 damage (Reflex DC 25 half) (costs 4 points).
- Become ethereal for one minute, as a swift action (costs 3 points).
- Grant an ally within 30 ft. a reroll on an attack roll or save, as an immediate action (costs 2 points).
- Cause his hand to glow, then make an unarmed attack as a standard action that is a touch attack. He gains a +20 bonus to damage on this attack.
- Activate his godhand (mechanically, this is *quivering palm*) and make an attack as a standard action. If he hits, he plunges his shining arm through the target's chest and pulls out their soul. At any point in the next 20 days, he can as a free action will the creature to die. It perishes unless it succeeds a Fortitude save (DC 25). (Costs 4 points).

Stunning Fist (Ex) Twenty times per day Vitus can declare he is attempting to stun a foe. If he hits with his next unarmed strike, the target is stunned unless it succeeds a Fortitude save (DC 25). Alternately, he can choose to fatigue the target, sicken it for 1 minute, stagger it for 1d6+1 rounds, permanently blind or deafen it, or paralyze it for 1d6+1 rounds.





Style Strike (Ex) When Vitus uses flurry of blows, he can declare two attacks to also be style strikes. For each strike he can choose:

- ♦ *Defensive spin.* If he hits, he gains a +4 dodge bonus to AC against attacks from the target until the start of Vitus's next turn.
- ♦ *Flying kick.* Before the attack Vitus leaps 60 ft., and can do this even between different attacks. He typically uses this at the end of a flurry to withdraw from a dangerous melee foe.
- ♦ *Knockback kick.* If the attack hits, he can make a free combat maneuver check. If he succeeds, he pushes the foe 10 feet away, plus an additional 5 ft. for every 5 he beats the defender's CMD by. He'll attempt this if he can maneuver an enemy between him and the balcony over the lava.
- ♦ *Shattering punch.* The attack ignores any damage reduction the target has. This attack is most useful against summoned creatures or mages with *stoneskin*.

Critical Fighting Style (Ex) Vitus's unarmed attacks crit on a 19 or 20, and he gains a +4 bonus on rolls to confirm his hits. If he confirms a critical hit, the target becomes exhausted. Additionally, he compares his confirmation roll against the target's CMD and if he succeeds he bull rushes the target. A target bull rushed this way provokes opportunity attacks from Vitus's allies.

Legate Savina Tullius

CR 18

Female elf bard (demagogue^{UM}) 19

LN Medium humanoid (elf)

Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +17

Defense

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 19 (+8 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex)

hp 89 (19d8)

Fort +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11 (+5 resistance vs enchantment); +2 vs. enchantments, +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Immune sleep

Aura rallying armor (allies within 30 ft. gain +6 on saves against fear)

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Ranged +3 *seeking sword cane pistol* +19 (1d4+3/x3)

Special Attacks bardic performance 44 rounds/day (swift action; countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate [DC 23], frightening tune [DC 23], gather crowd, incite violence [DC 25], inspire competence +6, inspire greatness, inspire heroics, righteous cause [DC 23], soothing performance)

Bard Spells Known (CL 19th; concentration +23)

6th (4/day)—*brilliant advice*^{APG}, *deadly finale*^{APG} (DC 20), *getaway*^{APG}, *greater shout* (DC 20)

5th (5/day)—*mass cacophonous call*^{APG} (DC 19), *greater dispel magic*, *mind fog* (DC 19), *shadow walk* (DC 19), *mass suggestion* (DC 19)

4th (6/day)—*denounce*^{APG} (DC 18), *hold monster* (DC 18), *legend lore*, *serenity*^{UM} (DC 18), *truespeak*^{ARG}

3rd (6/day)—*cure serious wounds*, *lesser geas* (DC 17), *phantom steed*, *see invisibility*, *terrible remorse*^{UM} (DC 17)

2nd (6/day)—*ghostbane dirge*^{APG} (DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 16), *misdirection*, *communal share language*^{UC}, *silence* (DC 16)

1st (6/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *feather fall*, *hypnotism* (DC 15), *identify*, *undetectable alignment* (DC 15), *unprepared combatant*^{UM} (DC 15)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *lullaby* (DC 14), *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *sift*^{APG}, *summon instrument*, *unwitting ally*^{APG} (DC 14)

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 15, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 26

Feats Ability Focus (bardic performance: incite violence), Antagonize^{UM}, Breadth of Experience^{APG}, Discordant Voice^{UC}, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (firearms)^{UC}, Expanded Arcana^{APG}, Persuasive, Prodigy^{UM}, Spellsong^{UM}, Voice Of The Sibyl^{UM}

Skills Bluff +26, Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +14, Knowledge (engineering) +14, Knowledge (geography) +18, Knowledge (history) +36, Knowledge (local) +22, Knowledge (nature) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +22, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (religion) +36, Linguistics +7 (+12 to Linguistics checks to identify forgeries), Perception +17, Perform (comedy) +26, Perform (dance) +26, Perform (oratory) +31, Perform (sing) +26, Profession (barrister) +28, Sense Motive +31, Spellcraft +16 (+18 to identify magic item properties), Stealth +10

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome

SQ bardic knowledge +9, elven magic, famous, jack-of-all-trades, masterpieces (the requiem of the fallen priest-king^{UM}), sacrament of apotheosis, versatile performances (comedy, dance, oratory, sing)

Combat Gear *potion of blur*, *potion of cure moderate wounds* (2), *potion of protection from chaos*, *potion of protection from evil*, *potion of resist fire* 10, *potion of sanctuary*;

Other Gear +4 *glamered rallying*^{UE} *mithral chain shirt*, +3 *seeking sword cane pistol*, alchemical cartridge (dragon's breath) (5), alchemical cartridge (entangling shot) (3), firearm bullet (10), *boots of the cat*^{UE}, *ring of protection* +1, *ring of sustenance*, *seducer's bane*^{UE}, *spectacles of understanding*^{UE}, *stole of justice*^{UE}, signet ring, leatherbound journal, 4 pp

The requiem of the fallen priest-king (Su) If Savina has performed a god trial in the past week, she can convert the fame she garnered into a burst of power. She can expend five rounds worth of her bardic music to gain a bonus standard action, which she can only use to perform non-magical actions like attacking or moving.

Divinely-Sanctioned Templar

CR 12

Human Cleric 13

LN Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Perception +15

Defense

AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 15 (+3 armor, +2 shield)

hp 90 (13d8+32)

Fort +13, **Ref** +7, **Will** +18

Defensive Abilities unity (2/day)

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mace +8 (1d8–1)

Special Attacks channel positive energy 7/day (DC 18, 7d6)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th; concentration +20)

10/day—calming touch, inspiring word (6 rounds)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th; spell penetration +2, concentration +20)

7th—*reach heal* (range 55 ft.), *refuge*^D (DC 24), *summon monster VII*

6th—*banishment* (DC 23), *heal* x2, *quest*^D

5th—*breath of life*, *flame strike* (DC 22) x2, *telepathic bond*^D, *true seeing*

4th—*air walk*, *dimensional anchor*, *discern lies*^D, *greater magic weapon*, *order's wrath* (DC 21), *tongues*

3rd—*create food and water*, *dispel magic*, *magic vestment*^D (2), *prayer*, *protection from energy*, *searing light*

2nd—*aid*, *calm emotions* (DC 19), *enthral*^P (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19), *sound burst* (DC 19), *spiritual weapon*, *status*

1st—*command* (DC 18), *comprehend languages*, *divine favor*^D, *hide from undead* (DC 18), *protection from chaos*, *sanctuary* (DC 18), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *read magic*

^D domain spell; **Domains** Community, Nobility

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 15, **Int** 12, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 18

Feats Augment Summoning, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Extra Channel, Quicken Channel, Reach Spell, Selective Channeling, Spell Focus (conjuraton), Spell Penetration



Skills Diplomacy +11, Heal +11, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +10, Knowledge (religion) +16, Linguistics +10, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +16

Languages Common, Elven, Primordial, Sylvan

Combat Gear *lesser metamagic rods* (extend, silent), *wand of eagle's splendor* (50 charges), *wand of silence* (50 charges); **Other Gear** masterwork studded leather, +1 *buckler*, cold iron dagger, light crossbow with 10 cold iron bolts, *belt of mighty constitution* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *eyes of the eagle*, *headband of inspired wisdom* +4, *incense of meditation*

Quick and Selective Channel (Su) The templar can channel positive energy as a move action by expending two uses, and can choose not to affect up to two creatures in the area.

Divinely-Sanctioned Monk

CR 12

Human Unchained Monk 13

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +20

Defense

AC 23, touch 21, flat-footed 21 (+2 armor, +1 deflection, +2 Dex, +3 monk, +5 Wis)
hp 107 (13d10+32)

Fort +10, **Ref** +11, **Will** +10; +2 vs. enchantments

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **Immune** disease, poison

Offense

Speed 70 ft.

Melee +1 unarmed strike +18/+13/+8 (2d6+4) or flurry of blows +18/+18/+18/+13/+8 (2d6+3)

Ranged fishhook shuriken +16/+11 (1d2+3) or fishhook shuriken flurry of blows +16/+16/+16/+11/+6 (1d2+3)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (13/day, DC 21)

Statistics

Str 16, **Dex** 15, **Con** 12, **Int** 10, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +19 (+21 trip); **CMD** 37 (39 vs. trip)

Feats Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Extra Ki, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lunge, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Toughness, Weapon Focus (shuriken, unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +15 (+43 when jumping), Climb +11, Knowledge (geography, local) +4, Knowledge (history) +6, Knowledge (religion) +7, Linguistics +3, Perception +20, Sense Motive +18, Stealth +15, Swim +7

Languages Common, tongue of the sun and the moon

SQ fast movement, ki pool (13 points, lawful, magic, cold iron, silver), purity of body

Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potion of mirror image*; **Other Gear** fishhook shuriken (20), *amulet of mighty fists* +1, *belt of giant strength* +2, *bracers of armor* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *ring of protection* +1, 46 gp

Ki Power (Su) The monk can spend a ki point to:

- Add one extra attack on a flurry of blows, as a swift action.
- Add 1d6 fire damage to his unarmed strike, as a swift action, lasting 6 rounds.
- Become ethereal for one minute, as a swift action (costs 3 points).
- Grant an ally within 30 ft. a reroll on an attack roll or save, as an immediate action (costs 2 points).
- Cause his hand to glow, then make an unarmed attack as a standard action that is a touch attack. He gains a +12 bonus to damage on this attack.

Stunning Fist (Ex) Thirteen times per day the monk can declare he is attempting to stun a foe. If he hits with his next unarmed strike, the target is stunned unless it succeeds a Fortitude save (DC 21). Alternately, the monk can choose to fatigue the target, or sicken it for 1 minute, or stagger it for 1d6+1 rounds.

Style Strike (Ex) When the monk uses flurry of blows, he can declare one attack to also be a style strike. He can choose:

- *Flying kick*. Before the attack the monk leaps 40 ft., and can do this even between different attacks. He typically uses this at the end of a flurry to withdraw from a dangerous melee foe.
- *Knockback kick*. If the attack hits, the monk can make a free combat maneuver check. If he succeeds, he pushes the foe 10 feet away, plus an additional 5 ft. for every 5 he beats the defender's CMD by. He'll attempt this if he can maneuver an enemy between him and the balcony over the lava.
- *Shattering punch*. The attack ignores any damage reduction the target has. This attack is most useful against summoned creatures or mages with *stoneskin*.

Shuriken Reel (Ex) The monk's fishhook shuriken are attached to threads of adamantine that stretch up to fifty feet. If the monk hits with a shuriken, the hook snags the target's flesh or clothes. Removing a hook is a swift action. The monk may replace an attack with a combat maneuver check against a target snagged by one of these hooks, gaining a +2 bonus for each hook snagging the creature beyond the first. If the check succeeds, the monk can pull the creature 5 feet closer and knock it prone. If the check fails, all hooks snaring that creature snap their threads. Clever use of this ability combined with fulcrums might let the monk yank a foe in all sorts of odd directions.

Planetary of the Clergy

CR 16

NG Large outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, low-light vision, *true seeing*; **Perception** +27

Aura protective aura (20-ft. radius, *magic circle against evil*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, and +4 resistance bonus to saves against evil foes)

Defense

AC 32, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +19 natural, -1 size; +4 deflection vs. evil)

hp 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 10 (evil weapons and effects)

Fort +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +19; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil

DR 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee +3 holy greatsword +27/+22/+17 (3d6+15/19-20) or slam +24 (2d8+12)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th)

Constant—*detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *true seeing*
At will—*continual flame*, *dispel magic*, *holy smite* (DC 21), *invisibility* (self only), *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear* (DC 18), *speak with dead* (DC 20)

3/day—*blade barrier* (DC 21), *flame strike* (DC 22), *power word stun*, *raise dead*, *waves of fatigue*

1/day—*earthquake* (DC 25), *greater restoration*, *mass charm monster* (DC 25), *waves of exhaustion*

Spells Prepared (CL 16th)

8th—*earthquake* (DC 25), *fire storm* (DC 25)

7th—*holy word* (DC 24), *regenerate* (2)

6th—*banishment* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *heal*, *mass cure moderate wounds* (DC 23)

5th—*break enchantment*, *dispel evil* (2, DC 22), *plane shift* (DC 22), *righteous might*

4th—*death ward*, *dismissal* (DC 21), *neutralize poison* (DC 21), *summon monster IV*

3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *daylight*, *invisibility purge*, *summon monster III*, *wind wall*

2nd—*align weapon* (2), *bear's endurance* (2), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *eagle's splendor*

1st—*bless* (2), *cure light wounds* (4), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *purify food and drink*, *stabilize*, *virtue*



Statistics

Str 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 24, **Int** 22, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 40

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +24, Craft (any one) +26, Diplomacy +27, Fly +26, Heal +24, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +20

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

SQ change shape (*alter self*)

Advorel, Heavenly Emissary

CR 18

LG Huge outsider (angel, good, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +28

Aura protective aura (20-ft. radius, *magic circle against evil*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, and +4 resistance bonus to saves against evil foes)

Defense

AC 36, touch 15, flat-footed 29 (+7 armor, +7 Dex, +14 natural, –2 size)

hp 297 (18d10+198)

Fort +21, **Ref** +18, **Will** +13, +4 resistance vs. evil

DR 10/evil and silver; **Immune** cold, dismissal, electricity, fire, poison, sonic; **Resist** acid 10; **SR** 29

Offense

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)

Melee 2 claws +28 (1d12+12 plus weight of conscience), 2 slams +26 (1d12+6), wing buffet +26 (3d6+6)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks weight of conscience

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +23)

At will—*gaseous form*, *greater invisibility*, *scorching ray* (from its eyes), *whispering wind*

3/day—*dispel magic*, *ethereal jaunt*, *fireball* (DC 20), *harm* (DC 23), *heal* (DC 23), *hold monster* (DC 22), *wall of stone*

1/day—*greater scrying* (DC 21), *hallow*

Statistics

Str 34, **Dex** 25, **Con** 30, **Int** 23, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +32 (+36 bull rush); **CMD** 49 (51 vs. bull rush, 53 vs. trip)

Feats Awesome Blow, Flyby Attack, Greater Bull Rush, Hover, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatic +25 (+29 when jumping), Bluff +28, Diplomacy +28, Fly +24, Intimidate +28, Knowledge (arcana, planes, religion) +27, Perception +28, Sense Motive +28, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +20; Racial Modifier +4 Acrobatics when jumping

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

Weight of Conscience (Su) The angel's assaults leave cause the target to recall flashes of past actions every time he is struck. These memories of evil or cowardly acts weigh the creature down, perhaps causing them to relent from battle and surrender.

Advorel's claws inflict an extra 2d6 points of nonlethal damage with each hit, and each round thereafter. This weight of conscience deals further 2d6 damage each round (non-cumulative) until the creature falls unconscious or is affected by magic that creates or calms emotions. If Advorel is defeated, the damage ends, and it can end the effect as a free action if it wishes.

The Vault of Heresies

Angels guard the fiends of the Crypta Hereticarum. In total they consist of:

- + **Hezophiel the Reaper**, a planetar
- + **1 astral deva**
- + **3 trumpet archons**
- + **4 movanic devas**
- + **8 legion archons**
- + **Effectively limitless critric angel swarms**

Hezophiel the Reaper

CR 16

NG Large outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, low-light vision, *true seeing*; Perception +27

Aura protective (20 ft.)

Defense

AC 36, touch 17, flat-footed 32 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex, +19 natural, -1 size)

hp 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 10 (evil weapons and effects)

Fort +23, **Ref** +15, **Will** +23; +4 vs. poison

DR 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee +3 *ghost touch keen cold iron scythe* +27/+22/+17/+12 (2d6+15/19-20/x4) or slam +19 (2d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +23)

Constant—*detect evil*, *detect snares and pits*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *true seeing*

At will—*continual flame*, *dispel magic*, *holy smite* (DC 21), *invisibility* (self only), *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*, *speak with dead* (DC 20)

3/day—*blade barrier* (DC 23), *flame strike* (DC 22), *power word stun*, *raise dead*, *waves of fatigue*

1/day—*earthquake*, *greater restoration*, *mass charm monster* (DC 25), *waves of exhaustion*

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 16th; concentration +23)

8th—*dimensional lock*, *holy aura*

7th—*destruction* (DC 24), *dictum*, *mass cure serious wounds*

6th—*banishment* (DC 23), *heal*, *mass bull's strength*, *undeath to death* (DC 23)

5th—*break enchantment*, *dispel chaos*, *dispel evil*, *flame strike* (DC 22), *righteous might*

4th—*dimensional anchor* (2), *dismissal* (DC 21), *order's wrath* (DC 21)

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *invisibility purge*, *locate object* (2), *remove curse*, *searing light*

2nd—*consecrate*, *gentle repose* (2, DC 19), *make whole* (2), *status*, *zone of truth* (DC 19)

1st—*bless*, *bless water* (DC 18), *cure light wounds* (4), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mending*

Statistics

Str 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 24, **Int** 22, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +26 (+28 sunder); **CMD** 44 (46 vs. sunder)

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +24, Craft (books) +26, Diplomacy +27, Fly +26, Heal +24, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +20

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome, Infernal; truespeech

SQ change shape (*alter self*)

Other Gear +3 *ghost touch keen cold iron scythe*



Special Abilities

Protective Aura (Su) Hezophiel has a +4 deflection bonus to its AC against attacks or effects from evil creatures. Hezophiel's aura also grants a +4 resistance bonus on saving throws to those within 20 feet of the angel, and also grants the effects of a *magic circle against evil* and a *lesser globe of invulnerability* (CL 17th).

Astral Deva

CR 14

NG Medium outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +26

Aura protective aura

Defense

AC 29, touch 14, flat-footed 25 (+4 Dex, +15 natural; +4 deflection vs. evil)

hp 172 (15d10+90)

Fort +16, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil

Defensive Abilities uncanny dodge; **DR** 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification;

Resist electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 25

Offense

Speed 50 ft., fly 100 ft. (good)

Melee +2 disrupting warhammer +26/+21/+16 (1d8+14/x3 plus stun) or slam +23 (1d8+12)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 13th)

At Will—*aid*, *continual flame*, *detect evil*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *dispel evil* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *holy aura* (DC 24), *holy smite* (DC 20), *holy word* (DC 23), *invisibility* (self only), *plane shift* (DC 23), *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*

7/day—*cure light wounds*, *see invisibility*

1/day—*blade barrier* (DC 22), *heal*

Statistics

Str 26, **Dex** 19, **Con** 21, **Int** 18, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 23

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +23; **CMD** 37

Feats Alertness, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (warhammer)

Skills Acrobatics +22, Craft (any one) +22, Diplomacy +24, Fly +26, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (planes) +22, Knowledge (religion) +19, Perception +26, Sense Motive +26, Stealth +22

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

SQ change shape (alter self)

Special Abilities

Stun (Su) If an astral deva strikes an opponent twice in one round with its warhammer, that creature must succeed on a DC 25 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d6 rounds.

Trumpet Archon

CR 14

LG Medium outsider (archon, extraplanar, good, lawful)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +22

Aura aura of menace (DC 22), *magic circle against evil*

Defense

AC 27, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+3 Dex, +14 natural; +2 deflection vs. evil)

hp 175 (14d10+98)

Fort +16, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14; +4 vs. poison, +2 resistance vs. evil

DR 10/evil; **Immune** electricity, petrification; **SR** 25

Offense

Speed 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee +4 greatsword +23/+18/+13 (2d6+11/19-20)

Special Attacks trumpet

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th)

Constant—*magic circle against evil*

At will—*aid*, *continual flame*, *detect evil*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *message*

Spells Prepared (CL 14th)

7th—*mass cure serious wounds* (2)

6th—*banishment* (DC 21), *heal* (2)

5th—*dispel evil* (DC 20), *mass cure light wounds*, *plane shift* (DC 20), *raise dead*

4th—*dismissal* (DC 19), *divine power*, *neutralize poison* (DC 19), *spell immunity*

3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *daylight*, *invisibility purge*, *magic vestment*,

protection from energy

2nd—*bull's strength*, *consecrate*, *cure moderate wounds* (2), *lesser restoration* (2),

owl's wisdom

1st—*bless*, *cure light wounds* (3), *divine favor*, *sanctuary* (DC 16), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *purify food and drink*, *stabilize*, *virtue*

Statistics

Str 20, **Dex** 17, **Con** 25, **Int** 16, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +19; **CMD** 32

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Persuasive, Power Attack

Skills Diplomacy +24, Escape Artist +17, Fly +24, Handle Animal +20, Knowledge (religion) +20, Perception +22, Perform (wind instruments) +20, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +20

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

Special Abilities

Trumpet (Su) All creatures except archons within 100 feet of the trumpet's blast must succeed on a DC 19 Fortitude save or be paralyzed for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based. The archon can also command its trumpet to become a +4 greatsword as a free action. Out of the archon's hands, it is a chunk of useless metal.

Movanic Deva

CR 10

NG Medium outsider (angel, extraplanar, good)

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., detect evil, low-light vision; Perception +26

Aura protective aura

Defense

AC 24, touch 13, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +11 natural) (+4 deflection vs. evil)

hp 126 (12d10+60)

Fort +12, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil

Defensive Abilities nature's pacifism, protected life force; **DR** 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, electricity, fire, death effects, energy drain, petrification; **SR** 21

Offense

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee +1 flaming greatsword +17/+12/+7 (2d6+7/19-20 plus 1d6 fire)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 8th; concentration +12)

Constant—*detect evil*

At will—*aid*, *discern lies* (DC 18), *dispel evil* (DC 19), *dispel magic*, *holy smite* (DC 18), *invisibility* (self only), *plane shift* (DC 19), *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear*

7/day—*cure serious wounds*

1/day—*antimagic field*, *awaken*, *holy aura* (DC 22)

Statistics

Str 19, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 17, **Wis** 17, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 29

Feats Cleave, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike

Skills Diplomacy +19, Fly +22, Intimidate +19, Knowledge (planes) +18, Knowledge (religion) +18, Perception +26, Sense Motive +22, Stealth +18, Survival +18

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

Special Abilities

Nature's Pacifism (Ex) Animals and plant creatures do not willingly attack a movanic deva, though they can be forced to do so by magic. If the deva attacks a plant or animal, its protection against that creature ends.

**Legion Archon**

CR 7

LG Medium outsider (archon, extraplanar, good, lawful)

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft. detect evil, low-light vision; **Perception** +13**Aura** aura of menace (DC 17)**Defense****AC** 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+9 armor, +1 Dex, +3 natural; +2 deflection vs. evil)**hp** 76 (8d10+32)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +3, **Will** +8; +4 vs. poison, +2 vs. evil**DR** 10/evil; **Immune** electricity, petrification; **SR** 18**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., fly 90 ft. (average)**Melee** +1 flaming burst greatsword +13/+8 (2d6+5/17-20 plus 1d6 fire)**Ranged** +1 flaming javelin +10 (1d6+4 plus 1d6 fire)**Special Attacks** flames of faith**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 8th; concentration +11)Constant—*detect evil*, *magic circle against evil*At will—*aid*, *continual flame*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *message*
3/day—*align weapon*, *mirror image*, *versatile weapon***Statistics****Str** 16, **Dex** 12, **Con** 19, **Int** 10, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 17**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +11; **CMD** 22**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (greatsword), Power Attack, Vital Strike,
Weapon Focus (greatsword), Whirlwind Attack**Skills** Diplomacy +14, Fly +12, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (religion) +11, Perception +13,
Sense Motive +9, Survival +9**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**SQ** second skin**Special Abilities****Flames of Faith (Ex)** A legion archon can manifest a +1 flaming burst greatsword or +1 flaming javelin as a move-equivalent action. The legion archon's sword vanishes if it leaves its hand, and its javelin vanishes after striking or missing its target.**Second Skin (Ex)** A legion archon is proficient in all forms of armor. It takes no reduction to its speed or any armor check penalties from wearing any sort of armor. Most legion archons wear full plate armor. Where shield archons are the bulwarks of the armies of Heaven, legion archons are the swords, sent in file after file to match evil's boundless hordes.**Flock of Critics**

CR 5

NG Fine outsider (angel, extraplanar, good, swarm)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; **Perception** +5**Aura** lesser protective aura (5 ft.)**Defense****AC** 26, touch 23, flat-footed 23 (+2 deflection, +3 Dex, +3 natural, +8 size)**hp** 13 (2d10+2)**Fort** +6, **Ref** +8, **Will** +4; +4 vs. poison**Defensive Abilities** swarm traits; **DR** 5/cold iron or evil; **Immune** acid, cold, critical hits,
flanking, petrification, precision damage, staggered; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10**Weaknesses** vulnerable to area effects**Offense****Speed** fly 60 ft. (perfect)**Melee** swarm (2d6)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 12)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 3rd; concentration +3)Constant—*detect evil*, *know direction*At-Will—*shatter* (DC 12)1/day—*aid*, *daylight*1/week—*commune* (six questions, CL 12th)**Statistics****Str** 1, **Dex** 17, **Con** 12, **Int** 6, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +2; **CMB** —; **CMD** —**Feats** Iron Will**Skills** Diplomacy +2, Fly +19, Knowledge (planes) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2,
Perception +5, Sense Motive +4, Stealth +23**Languages** Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech**SQ** change shape (dove, dog, *polymorph*), perfect memory**Special Abilities****Distraction (Ex)** A creature with this ability can nauseate the creatures that it damages.

Any living creature that takes damage from a creature with the distraction ability is nauseated for 1 round; a DC 12 Fortitude save resists this effect.

Lesser Protective Aura (Su) The flock has a lesser form of the protective aura possessed by more powerful angels. This protective aura grants the flock a +2 deflection bonus to its AC against evil foes, and a +2 resistance bonus on all saving throws made against evil effects or spells cast by evil creatures. This aura extends to a radius of 5 feet, but can only benefit one additional creature other than the flock at any one time. A flock's protective aura is fragile, and as soon as an evil creature successfully strikes it, or as soon as it fails a saving throw against an evil source, its protective aura fades away and is no longer applicable. The flock can reactivate its protective aura by spending 1 minute concentrating upon the task.**Perfect Memory (Ex)** Angelic critics have perfect memories and remember everything they see or hear. They can faultlessly recite conversations they heard hundreds of years before. They also have the power to erase portions of their own memories, which they do (usually under orders from superior angels) to protect sensitive information.**Swarm Attack** Creatures with the swarm subtype don't make standard melee attacks. Instead, they deal automatic damage to any creature whose space they occupy at the end of their move, with no attack roll needed. Swarm attacks are not subject to a miss chance for concealment or cover.**Vulnerable to Area Effects** The flock of critics is vulnerable (+50% damage) to spells and effects that damage an area.**Catastrophe Dragon**

The dragon, composed of lava and all the evil forces hurled into the volcano, heads for Plaza Hyperion, and will incinerate the library (and tens of thousands of people) if it isn't stopped.

Esurientes Draco in Ruinam

CR 25

CE Colossal dragon (earth, evil, fire)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 120 ft., tremorsense 120 ft.; **Perception** +45**Aura** frightful presence (300 ft., DC 28); ash cloud (300 ft., DC 28)**Defense****AC** 43, touch 0, flat-footed 43 (-2 Dex, +43 natural, -8 size)**hp** 558 (36d12+324)**Fort** +28, **Ref** +18, **Will** +20**Defensive Abilities** negative energy affinity, fire shield (warm), recovery; **DR** 30/good;
Immune emotion, fear, fire, paralysis, sleep; **Resist** acid 30; **SR** 36**Weaknesses** vulnerable to cold**Offense****Speed** 60 ft.**Melee** bite +45 (3d6+16/19-20 plus 4d6 fire), 2 slams +44 (3d6+16), tail slap +42
(2d6+8)**Space** 100 ft.; **Reach** 60 ft.**Special Attacks** breath weapon (200-ft. cone, 24d6 fire damage, Reflex DC 36 for half, usable every 1d4 rounds), magma breath, pyroclastic vomit, rend (2 claws, 3d6+24), swallow whole (2d10 plus 4d10 fire plus one negative level, AC 31, 52 hp)

**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 29th; concentration +29)

Constant—*fire shield* (warm)

At will—*delayed blast fireball* (DC 32), *firestorm* (DC 33)

5/day—quicken empowered *wall of fire*, quickened *scorching ray*

Statistics

Str 42, **Dex** 7, **Con** 26, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 41

Base Atk +36; **CMB** +60; **CMD** 68 (70 vs. trip)

Feats Ability Focus (pyroclastic vomit), Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*wall of fire*), Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*), Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*wall of fire*), Skill Focus (Perception), Snatch, Spell Penetration, Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Acrobatics -2 (+10 to jump), Climb +16, Fly -10, Knowledge (geography) +23, Knowledge (history) +19, Knowledge (local) +39, Knowledge (nature) +19, Knowledge (religion) +39, Perception +45, Spellcraft +39, Survival +23

SQ death throes, devouring essence, impure flame

Special Abilities

Ash Cloud (Su) A cloud of ash and tephra swirls above the dragon's head, covering a 300-ft. radius, but only in regions between one hundred and three hundred feet above the ground. Any creature that ends its turn in the ash cloud must make a Fortitude save (DC 28) or be nauseated for one round by the poison gases and noxious fumes. Additionally, it must make a Reflex save (DC 28) or take 5d6 electricity damage from the constant crackle of lightning in the cloud. Basically, flying above the dragon is a bad idea.

Death Throes (Su) When killed, Esurientes explodes in a blinding flash of magma that deals 60 points of damage (half fire, half unholy damage) to anything within 60 feet (Reflex DC 36 halves).



Devouring Essence (Su) Esurientes is a damned creature. Lacking any true soul of its own, it hungrily devours all living creatures, trying to sate its emptiness. Esurientes cannot be resurrected, raised, or otherwise brought back to life—once the unholy energies holding it together are dispersed, it is truly dead.

However, a creature swallowed by it has unique access (however briefly) to the dragon's evil essence. Attacks from within bypass the dragon's DR, SR, and various resistances (but not its immunity to fire). Positive energy damage dealt to it from inside is doubled. If a creature frees itself from inside the dragon after being swallowed, Esurientes is stunned for one round.

Impure Flame (Su) Half of any fire Esurientes deals, either through natural attacks, special attacks, or spells, is converted into unholy damage.

Magma Breath (Su) Three times per day, Esurientes can breathe of lava instead of fire. In addition to its normal damage, the breathe weapon entangles any creature that fails its Reflex save against the attack (Strength or Escape Artist DC 20 as a move action to escape). The area of the attack becomes superheated, and any creature that starts its turn in the area for the next hour takes damage equal to half the breath weapon's normal damage.

Water or extreme cold can cool the magma and stops it from dealing ongoing damage, but doesn't free creatures, since they're now trapped in solid basalt instead of molten lava.

Pyroclastic Vomit (Ex) As a standard action, Esurientes can vomit forth a ball of molten rock that explodes upon striking a target, showering the target and adjacent creatures in magma. This attack has a range of 1,200 feet, and deals 3d6 points of fire damage and 3d6 points of unholy damage (Reflex DC 38 half) to the primary target and 1d6 points of fire damage to any creatures within 20 feet of the primary target. The magma continues to burn for 1d3 rounds, dealing the same damage each round that it initially did.

Ferocity (Ex) The dragon remains conscious and fighting even when below 0 hp. It is staggered, loses 1 hit point each round, and still dies when it reaches negative hp equal to its Constitution score.

Hurl Foe (Ex) When the dragon damages a Huge or smaller foe with one of its natural attacks, it can try to hurl the foe as part of that attack by attempting a combat maneuver check. On a successful check, the foe is knocked back 10 feet in a direction of the dragon's choice and falls prone. The distance the foe is hurled increases by 10 feet for every 5 points by which the check exceeds the foe's CMD. If an obstacle stops the hurled creature before it travels the whole distance, the hurled foe and the obstacle struck each take 1d6 points of damage per 10 feet of distance remaining and the foe is knocked prone in the space adjacent to the obstacle.

Titantic (Ex) Because the dragon is so massive, uneven ground and other features that form difficult terrain generally pose no significant hindrance to its movement, though areas of forest or settlements are considered difficult terrain. A Huge or smaller creature can move through any square occupied by the dragon, or vice-versa. The dragon can make attacks of opportunity only against foes that are Huge or larger, and can be flanked only by Huge or larger foes. The dragon gains a bonus for being on higher ground only if its entire space is on higher ground than that of its target. It's possible for a Huge or smaller creature to climb the dragon—this generally requires a successful DC 30 check, and unlike the normal rules about dragon and attacks of opportunity, a Small or larger creature that climbs on a dragon's body provokes an attack of opportunity from the monster.

Recovery (Ex) Whenever the dragon fails a saving throw against any mind-affecting, paralysis, petrification, polymorph, or immobilizing effect (including binding and temporal stasis but not including imprisonment), it can attempt a new saving throw at the end of its turn to remove the effect. Doing so takes no action. It can attempt a new save to end the effect as often as it wishes, but can attempt to remove only one such effect per round.



Slipstream

Adventure 12

Rock Rackus's Final Form

Rock has complicated songs, but he's not a complicated fighter. He's still a glory hog, but he's learned to funnel the magic that suffuses his celebrity in order to bolster his allies.



Rock Rackus

CR 19

XP 204,800

Male human bard (celebrity) 20

CG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +7; Senses Perception +13

Defense

AC 24, touch 17, flat-footed 20 (+7 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 185 (20d8+91)

Fort +15, Ref +17, Will +14; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 rapier +19/+14/+9 (1d6+4/18–20)

Ranged diamond-encrusted piece +21 (1d8+3/x4)

Special Attacks bardic performance 49 rounds/day (swift action; countersong, deadly performance, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, frightening tune, gather crowd, inspire competence +6, inspire greatness, inspire heroics, mass suggestion, soothing performance, suggestion)

Bard Spells Known (CL 20th; concentration +27)

6th (6/day)—*animate objects*, *heroes' feast*, *irresistible dance* (DC 25),
overwhelming presence (DC 25), *project image* (DC 23)

5th (6/day)—*bard's escape*, *dream*, *mislead*, *greater heroism*, *song of discord* (DC 24)

4th (6/day)—*cure critical wounds*, *dimension door*, *freedom of movement*,
hold monster (DC 23), *zone of silence*

3rd (7/day)—*blink*, *charm monster* (DC 22), *dispel magic*, *haste*, *see invisibility*,
slow (DC 20)

2nd (7/day)—*invisibility*, *mirror image*, *misdirection*, *silence*, *suggestion* (DC 21),
tongues

1st (7/day)—*charm person* (DC 20), *cure light wounds*, *expeditious retreat*, *hideous laughter* (DC 20), *silent image*

0th (at will)—*dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 17), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 17), *lullaby* (DC 19),
prestidigitation, *unwitting ally* (DC 19)

Statistics

Str 14, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 24

Base Atk +15; CMB +17; CMD 34

Feats Dodge, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Skill Focus (Perform [act]), Spell Focus (enchantment), Still Spell, Toughness

Skills Bluff +20, Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana, history, nature, nobility, planes) +15, Knowledge (local) +23, Perception +13, Perform (act) +35, Perform (sing) +25, Spellcraft +13, Stealth +8, Use Magic Device +17

Languages Common

SQ bardic knowledge +10, famous +5, jack-of-all-trades (use any skill, all skills are class skills, take 10 on any skill), shining star, versatile performance (act, oratory, dance, string, percussion)

Combat Gear *scroll of heal*, *scroll of restoration*, *scrolls of teleport* (2), **Other Gear** +3 chain shirt, +2 rapier, *diamond-encrusted piece*, *belt of physical perfection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of alluring charisma* +4, *ring of invisibility*, *ring of protection* +3, 276 gp

Diamond-Encrusted Piece This extravagantly decorated +3 *pistol* is so gaudy and impressive that anytime it is fired, all creatures within 30 feet that see the wielder suffer a –2 penalty to all attack rolls against any creature other than the wielder until the wielder's next turn.

The Golden Legion of Egal the Shimmering

Adventure 12

While it's not necessary to defeat the Golden Legion in order to accomplish their mission, the party will find more allies and friendlier worlds if they stop this devilish scourge.

Airships

The legion has one great industrial airship, the *Aurum Treasure*, which is nearly two hundred feet long and bristling with arcane fusils, and twenty-six thirty-foot-long windsiffs.

Aurum Treasure, Windship of War

Level 21 Vehicle

Huge Vehicle

Hull Integrity 4

Command +24

Defense 30

Full Crew 32

Maneuverability 10

Minimum Crew 8

Speed 8 (flight)

Total Complement 400

Design

Length 175 ft. Beam 50 ft. Two lower wing sails, two stabilization sails. Main deck, bridge, gunnery deck, crew quarters, barracks deck, and treasury hold. All covered with gold and infernal sigils.

Daunting Demeanor

Your first few shots fail to perturb the hellish vessel.

The first attack against the ship each combat takes a –5 penalty. Hostile creatures that board the ship treat their first square of movement as difficult terrain.



Fiery Armaments

Five light arcane fusils and four full fusils to each broadside, a lower deck with six heavy fusils per side, and an undercastle (not shown) with six light fusils that can aim downward. Each fusil fires an eldritch blast of black, crackling magical fire.

Crew: 110. **Attack:** +20 to broadsides, or +17 forward, aft, up, or down. The weapons can strike at long range, with a -10 penalty. If a volley deals two or more strikes to the hull, one of those strikes can cause the burning condition instead of reducing hull integrity.

Shield of Greed

Sparkles of gold are visible, though most of the precious metal is stained with blood and coated with soot. This is a domain of the wealthy and prosperous, and only those rich enough are allowed to attack.

An eldritch shield defends the crew of the windship, powered by the treasure hoard in its hold and the unified greed of its crew. The ship is immune to the burning condition, and any spell that originates more than 50 feet from the ship cannot come inside that area. Two ships with shields that have overlapping auras merge the shields so neither shield protects against attacks in the other shield's area.

If the treasury is significantly depleted, this shield fails. Likewise, any creature that willingly destroys wealth worth at least 10,000 gp while launching an attack can ignore the shield's defenses for that attack.

Industrial Dominion of the Winds

Mighty growling engines burn infernal diesel that has refined magma, hatred, and the flesh of sacrificed mortals into a muddy red fuel. Enchantments lighten the massive vehicle, but constant downward thrust is required to keep it aloft. It leaves a contrail of toxic smoke as it flies.

The ship can fly at any elevation. Any vehicle in the same naval stage that is behind the airship is cloaked in smoke if it is the same size or smaller, and such vessels roll twice and take the worse result for Command checks and attack rolls. Prolonged exposure can poison creatures.

Infernal Windskiff

Level 17 Vehicle

Small Vehicle

Hull Integrity 2

Command +15

Defense 10

Full Crew 4

Maneuverability 10

Minimum Crew 1

Speed 16 (flight)

Total Complement 12

(currently overloaded)

Design

Length 30 ft. Beam 10 ft. Diesel engine belching fire and smoke, turning a trio of propellers along the aft. Gold-threaded wing sails for stabilization.

Overloaded

Too many legionnaires are aboard, so over a dozen cling to the outer hull. For each point of hull integrity damage the ship takes, deal 20 damage to one of the crew on board. (This is not reduced by the *lesser shield of greed*.)

Lesser Shield of Greed

The gold that lines the deck and fills the hold generates a shield that blocks outside attacks.

Any spells that originate more than 50 feet from the ship deal 34 less damage to targets within that area.

Armaments

Six light fusils—like longswords made of steel and gold, with massive red quartz crystals mounted at their tips—are chained to the deck with golden hooks, and the company of legionnaires clinging to the side of the hull can readily aim in any direction.

Crew: 5. **Attack:** +13 in any direction.

Ramprow

The gold plating has been stripped away from a spiked ram prow.

When this ship rams another, prevent the first strike of damage the rammed ship would deal back to it.

Industrial Dominion of the Winds

A small growling engine burns infernal diesel, and the vessel leaves a contrail of toxic smoke as it flies.

The ship can fly at any elevation. Any vehicle in the same naval stage that is behind the airship is cloaked in smoke if it is the same size or smaller, and such vessels roll twice and take the worse result for Command checks and attack rolls. Prolonged exposure can poison creatures.

Pit Fiend

The Golden Legion has two pit fiends out on conquest objectives, one in charge of the hive queen of Elofasp, and another two guarding His Celestial Eruption General Paelyrion XVIII in the fortress Egalitrix. These devils have been in the Gyre with the legion since they were first stranded.

Golden Legion Pit Fiend

CR 20

XP 307,200

LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +13; Senses darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; Perception +33

Aura fear (20 ft., DC 23)

Defense

AC 38, touch 18, flat-footed 29 (+9 Dex, +20 natural, -1 size)

hp 350 (20d10+240); regeneration 5 (good weapons, good spells)

Fort +24, **Ref** +21, **Will** +18

Defensive Abilities golden chains; **DR** 15/good and silver; Immune charms, compulsions, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 31

Offense

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Melee +4 *flaming unholy mace* +36/+31/+26/+21 (2d6+17 plus 1d6 fire), claw +30 (2d8+6), 2 wings +30 (2d6+6), bite +30 (4d6+6 plus poison and disease), tail slap +30 (2d8+6 plus grab)

Space 10 ft., **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks constrict 2d8+19

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +26)

At will—*blasphemy* (DC 25), *create undead*, *fireball* (DC 21), *greater dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *greater scrying* (DC 25), *invisibility*, *magic circle against good*, *mass hold monster* (DC 27), *persistent image* (DC 23), *power word stun*, *scorching ray*, *trap the soul* (DC 26), *unholy aura* (DC 26), *wall of fire*

3/day—*quicken fireball* (DC 21)

1/day—*meteor swarm*, *summon* (level 9, any 1 CR 19 or lower devil, 100%)

1/year—*wish*

Statistics

Str 37, **Dex** 29, **Con** 35, **Int** 26, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +34 (+38 grapple); **CMD** 53

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (fireball), Vital Strike

Skills Appraise +17, Bluff +31, Diplomacy +31, Disguise +27, Fly +30, Intimidate +31, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (planes) +31, Knowledge (religion) +31, Perception +33, Sense Motive +33, Spellcraft +31, Stealth +28, Survival +22, Use Magic Device +28

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Special Abilities

Golden Chains (Su) Hundreds of pounds of spiked gold chains wrap the fiend from head to toe. They are enchanted to ensure unswerving loyalty, granting the fiend immunity to charm and compulsion effects. They have hardness 15 and 40 hp, and can be damaged with a successful sunder attempt. If the chains are destroyed, the fiend is stunned for 1 round and shaken for 1d4 rounds thereafter.



Disease (Su) Devil Chills: Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 32; *onset* immediate; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Str damage; *cure* 3 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Poison (Ex) Bite—injury; *save* Fort DC 32; *frequency* 1/round for 10 rounds; *effect* 1d6 Con damage; *cure* 3 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Horned Devil

The forty or so horned devils in the Golden Legion serve as commanders or aides to the pit fiends and other important leaders. Their golden spiked chains allow them to enslave foes they defeat. Great warriors who are taken by the legion over time eventually transform into horned devils.

Golden Legion Horned Devil

CR 16

XP 76,800

LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness; **Perception** +24**Aura** fear aura (5 ft., DC 23)

Defense

AC 35, touch 17, flat-footed 27 (+8 Dex, +18 natural, –1 size)**hp** 217 (15d10+135); regeneration 5 (good weapons, good spells)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +17, **Will** +13**Defensive Abilities** golden chains; **DR** 10/good and silver; **Immune** charms, compulsions, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 27

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)**Melee** +1 *unholy spiked chain* +26/+21/+16 (2d6+11 plus stun), bite +22 (2d8+5), tail +22 (2d6+5 plus infernal wound) or 2 claws +24 (2d6+10), bite +24 (2d8+10), tail +22 (2d6+5 plus infernal wound)**Special Attacks** enlist (DC 23)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th; concentration +22)At will—*dispel chaos* (DC 21), *dispel good* (DC 21), *magic circle against good*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *persistent image* (DC 21)3/day—*fireball* (DC 19), *lightning bolt* (DC 19)

1/day—summon (level 6, 3 barbed devils, 35%)

Statistics

Str 31, **Dex** 27, **Con** 28, **Int** 14, **Wis** 22, **Cha** 23**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 44**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (spiked chain)**Skills** Bluff +24, Diplomacy +21, Fly +15, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (planes) +20, Perception +24, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +20, Stealth +22**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Special Abilities

Enlist (Sp) As a full-round action, the horned devil can attempt to dominate an adjacent creature that it has stunned with its spiked chain. The creature must make a DC 23 Will save or be affected by *dominate monster*, becoming slavishly devoted to the Golden Legion. The save DC is Charisma-based.**Golden Chains (Su)** See entry for Golden Legion pit fiend.**Infernal Wound (Su)** The damage a horned devil deals with its tail causes persistent wounds that deal 2d6 points of bleed damage. Bleeding caused in this way is difficult to staunch—a DC 26 Heal check stops the damage, and any attempt to heal a creature suffering from an infernal wound must succeed on a DC 26 caster level check or the spell does not function. Success indicates the healing works normally and stops all bleed effects.**Stun (Su)** Whenever a horned devil hits with a spiked chain attack, the opponent must succeed on a DC 27 Fortitude save or be stunned for 1d4 rounds. This ability is a function of the horned devil, not of the spiked chain. The save DC is Strength-based.

Erinyes

Most erinyes in the legion were once just slaves who thought they could be clever enough to resist the compulsion of the chains. Over time their deceptive nature transformed them into erinyes. The legion deploys these fiends as scouts and infiltrators.

Golden Legion Erinyes

CR 12

XP 19,200

Erinyes fighter 4

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., see in darkness, true seeing; **Perception** +16

Defense

AC 25, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+8 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural)**hp** 166 (13d10+95)**Fort** +17, **Ref** +15, **Will** +9; bravery +1**Defensive Abilities** golden chains; **DR** 5/good; **Immune** charms, compulsions, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 19

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (good)**Melee** +2 *longsword* +21/+16/+11 (1d8+11/19–20)**Ranged** +2 *flaming composite longbow* +22/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+10, 19–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire) or golden chain +21 touch (entangle)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 12th; concentration +17)Constant—*true seeing*At will—*alter self, fear* (single target, DC 19), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *unholy blight* (DC 19)

1/day—summon (level 3, 2 bearded devils, 50%)

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 28, **Con** 25, **Int** 14, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 38**Feats** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Far Shot, Improved Critical (longbow), Mobility, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Shot on the Run, Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (longbow), Weapon Specialization (longbow)**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Bluff +19, Diplomacy +14, Escape Artist +12, Fly +20, Intimidate +18, Knowledge (planes) +8, Knowledge (religion) +8, Perception +16, Sense Motive +10, Stealth +16**Languages** Celestial, Common, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** armor training 1

Special Abilities

Entangle (Su) Each erinyes carries a 50-foot-long golden chain that entangles opponents of any size as an *animate rope* spell (CL 16th, DC 22). An erinyes can hurl its chain 30 feet with no range penalty. An erinyes's chain functions only for the erinyes who made it and no other. The save DC is Dexterity-based.**Golden Chains (Su)** See entry for Golden Legion pit fiend.

Turned Glabrezu

A few glabrezu were turned recently, and they have not yet transformed into horned devils.

Golden Legion Glabrezu

CR 14

XP 38,400

LE Huge outsider (chaotic, demon, evil, extraplanar)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Perception +28

Defense

AC 32, touch 10, flat-footed 30 (+2 Dex, +22 natural, –2 size)

hp 210 (12d10+144)

Fort +20, **Ref** +6, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities golden chains; **DR** 10/good; **Immune** charms, compulsions, electricity, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 24

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 pincers +22 (2d8+12/19–20), 2 claws +22 (1d6+12), bite +20 (1d8+12)

Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.

Special Attacks rend (2 pincers, 2d8+18)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th; concentration +21)

Constant—*true seeing*

At will—*chaos hammer* (DC 21), *confusion* (DC 21), *dispel magic*, *mirror image*, *reverse gravity* (DC 24), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only), *veil* (self only), *unholy blight*

1/day—*power word stun*, summon (level 4, 1 glabrezu 20% or 1d2 vrock 50%)

1/month—*wish* (granted to a mortal humanoid only)

Statistics

Str 35, **Dex** 15, **Con** 35, **Int** 20, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +12; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 38

Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Critical (pincer), Persuasive, Power Attack, Vital Strike

Skills Bluff +30, Diplomacy +24, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (history) +20, Knowledge (local) +20, Perception +28, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +9, Use Magic Device +19

Languages Abyssal, Celestial, Draconic; telepathy 100 ft.

Special Abilities

Golden Chains (Su) See entry for Golden Legion Pit Fiend.

Legionnaires

The rank and file of the Golden Legion are enslaved from myriad worlds, and over time as they wear the chains their skin becomes scaled and they sprout horns from their foreheads.

Golden Legionnaire Company

CR 13

XP 25,600

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful, troop)

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic*, see in darkness; Perception +28

Defense

AC 28, touch 14, flat-footed 24 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +14 natural)

hp 171 (18d10+90)

Fort +12, **Ref** +14, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities troop traits; **DR** 5/good; **Immune** charms, compulsions, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 24

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee troop (4d8+8)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks hellfire breath (DC 25)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +12)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*greater teleport* (troop members plus 50 lbs. of objects per member only)

Statistics

Str 26, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 38

Feats Ability Focus (hellfire breath), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Perception), Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness

Skills Knowledge (engineering) +21, Intimidate +21, Perception +28, Profession (soldier) +22, Stealth +26, Survival +22

Languages Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

Special Abilities

Hellfire Breath (Su) Three times per day as a standard action, the members of a golden legionnaire company can exhale gout of flame that fill all squares within 10 feet of the company. Creatures in the area take 9d6 points of fire damage (Reflex DC 25 for half). The save is Constitution-based.

Golden Legion Elite Star

CR 14

XP 38,400

Magaav fighter 8

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect magic*, see in darkness; Perception +19

Defense

AC 31, touch 18, flat-footed 23 (+5 armor, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +8 natural)

hp 165 (15d10+83)

Fort +15, **Ref** +14, **Will** +7; +2 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities golden chains; **DR** 5/good; **Immune** charms, compulsions, fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 17

Offense

Speed 20 ft., fly 50 ft. (average)

Melee +1 *ranseur* +24/+19/+14 (2d4+13/x3) or 2 claws +21 (1d6+6 plus 2 bleed)

Special Attacks noxious breath, lightning fusil, rend (2 claws, 1d6+9 plus 2 bleed), weapon training (polearms +1)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 12th; concentration +12)

Constant—*detect magic*

At will—*greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only)

1/day—*summon* (CL 3rd, 1 magaav 40%)

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 24, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 39

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Hover, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lunge, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (ranseur), Weapon Specialization (ranseur), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +16 (+12 when jumping), Escape Artist +16, Knowledge (engineering) +11, Fly +16, Intimidate +20, Perception +19, Stealth +16

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ armor training 2, master grappler, shared senses

Special Abilities

Golden Chains (Su) See entry for Golden Legion pit fiend.

Lightning Fusil (Ex) An elite star wields an arcanoscientific fusil powered by a steam-powered backpack. As a standard action, he can fire the fusil, dealing 10d6 electricity damage to all targets in a 15-foot-radius burst within 200 feet. After firing the weapon, it takes a minute to recharge before it is ready to fire again.

Master Grappler (Ex) An elite star can wield a weapon and still attempt grapple checks. While not wielding a weapon, an elite star gains a +4 bonus on grapple checks.

Noxious Breath (Su) Three times per day, as a standard action an elite star can exhale a breath that reeks of pure corruption upon a creature within 5 feet. The target must



succeed at a DC 17 Fortitude save or be sickened for 1d4 rounds. Creatures that successfully save cannot be affected by the same elite star's noxious breath for 24 hours. This is a poison effect. The save DC is Constitution-based.

Shared Senses (Su) All elite stars within 100 feet of one another share the same senses. Thus, if one individual perceives something (for example, with a successful Perception check), all others within range are immediately aware of it. Senses are instantly relayed from one elite star to the next, allowing for the senses of a single devil to potentially spread through and inform an entire legion instantly. It is still possible for an elite star to be flat-footed for other reasons even if other elite stars nearby are not.

Constructs

The artificers of the Egalitrix fortress have crafted steam-powered flying golems out of gold. Though they have the same general shape and size of a horned devil, the steam golems have massive ornithopter wings modeled after those of a dragonfly.

Other non-combat constructs serve as pack mules, flying treasure and war materiel from airships to whatever plane is being attacked at the time.

Golden Steam Golem

CR 17

XP 102,400

N Huge construct

Init –1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

Defense

AC 33, touch 7, flat-footed 34 (–1 Dex, +26 natural, –2 size)**hp** 205 (30d10+40)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10**DR** 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, magic

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (clumsy)**Melee** 2 claws +41 (4d8+13/19–20)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** clunky steamcraft (DC 25), rend (2 claws, 4d8+19), steam rupture

Statistics

Str 36, **Dex** 9, **Con** –, **Int** –, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1**Base Atk** +30; **CMB** +44; **CMD** 53

Special Abilities

Clunky Steamcraft (Su) As a free action once every 1d4 rounds, a golden steam golem can expel a cloud of smoke and cinders that fills a 20-foot cube. This functions as an *incendiary cloud* that persists for 1d6 rounds, dealing 6d6 fire damage (DC 25 Reflex for half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Immunity to Magic (Ex) A golden steam golem is immune to any spell or spell-like ability that allows spell resistance, except as noted below.

- A magical attack that deals cold damage slows a golden steam golem (as per the *slow* spell) for 1d6 rounds, with no saving throw.
- A magical attack that deals fire damage breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage the attack would otherwise deal. If the amount of healing would cause the golem to exceed its full normal hit points, it gains any excess as temporary hit points. A golden steam golem gets no save against fire effects.

Steam Rupture (Ex) When a golden steam golem is destroyed, it begins to vent steam and flail uncontrollably. Unless its remains take at least 10 points of cold damage, it explodes one round later. All creatures within 30 feet of the golem take 12d8 points of fire damage (DC 25 Reflex for half). The save is Constitution-based.

Warbeasts

The plane of Elofasp provides many obedient monsters which the Golden Legion uses to reinforce their devils.

Enslaved Supplicant of Elofasp

CR 15

XP 51,200

N Large magical beast

Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18

Defense

AC 31, touch 15, flat-footed 25 (+5 Dex, +1 dodge, +16 natural, –1 size)**hp** 225 (18d10+126)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +16, **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** golden chains; **Immune** charms, compulsions, fire, illusions

Offense

Speed 30 ft., climb 30 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +25 (1d8+7/19-20 plus grab)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** adamantine claws, angelic arrival, fall to your knees, lunge, mandibles, sudden strike

Statistics

Str 24, **Dex** 20, **Con** 24, **Int** 1, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +26 (+30 grapple); **CMD** 41 (45 vs. trip)**Feats** Dodge, Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Mobility, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack, Weapon Focus (claw)**Skills** Perception +18, Stealth +20; **Racial Modifiers** +4 Perception, +4 Stealth**SQ** praying illusion

Special Abilities

Adamantine Claws (Ex) A supplicant's claws overcome damage reduction as if they were made of adamantine.

Angelic Arrival (Su) When a supplicant attacks, the spines on its back produce bright light in a 30-ft. radius. If the supplicant takes an action to hide, the light ends, and the sudden darkness grants the supplicant to hide even if there is no other cover or concealment.

Fall to Your Knees (Su) As a swift action once per minute, a supplicant can warp the light around it and conjure a fractured landscape of towering holy figures. Creatures in a 30-foot-radius burst around the supplicant must make a DC 21 Fortitude save or be permanently blinded. The area of effect becomes a zone of illusory terrain that provides total concealment to creatures within it. A DC 21 Will save disbelieves the illusion. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Golden Chains (Su) See entry for Golden Legion pit fiend.

Lunge (Ex) A supplicant's limbs are capable of reaching much farther than normal for a creature of its size. As a full-attack action, it can make a single attack with its claws at double its normal reach. When a supplicant attacks with a claw in this manner, it gains a +4 bonus on its attack roll. A supplicant cannot make attacks of opportunity with its lunge.

Mandibles (Ex) A supplicant that grabs a foe can make a bite attack against that foe as a secondary attack. The supplicant's bite is a +19 attack that inflicts 1d6+3 points of damage on a hit.

Praying Illusion (Su) When a supplicant sits motionless, it is cloaked by an illusion making it resemble an inanimate object appropriate to the area, but typically reminiscent of a praying figure. The supplicant can take 20 on its Stealth check to hide in plain sight while immobile. A DC 21 Will save disbelieves the illusion, allowing a creature to perceive the supplicant's true form. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Sudden Strike (Ex) A supplicant is particularly adept at moving quickly when its foes are surprised. During a surprise round, a supplicant may act as if it had a full round to act, rather than just one standard action.

**Enslaved Elofasp Ravant**

CR 19

XP 204,800

N Large magical beast

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +18**Defense****AC** 35, touch 19, flat-footed 25 (+10 Dex, +16 natural, -1 size)**hp** 330 (20d10+220)**Fort** +22, **Ref** +22, **Will** +11**Defensive Abilities** ferocity, golden chains; **Immune** bleeding, charms, compulsions, fire, paralysis, sleep, staggering, stunning**Offense****Speed** 50 ft., burrow 20 ft., climb 50 ft., fly 60 ft. (average), swim 50 ft.**Melee** bite +30 (2d6+10/19-20), 2 claws +30 (2d6+10/19-20)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** rend (2d6+15), ripping claws**Statistics****Str** 30, **Dex** 30, **Con** 30, **Int** 1, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 6**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +31 (+33 bull rush or overrun); **CMD** 46 (48 vs. bull rush or overrun, 50 vs. trip)**Feats** Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (claw), Improved Overrun, Improved Vital Strike, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (claw)**Skills** Perception +18, Stealth +19**SQ** diamond form**Special Abilities****Diamond Form (Ex)** As a swift action, a ravant can compress its form so natural armor plates slide into place to protect it. Until the start of its next turn, the ravant gains DR 20/-, resistance 20 to all energy types, and its speeds increase by 30 ft. While in this form, it cannot attack. A ravant cannot use this ability in any round which it has already attacked.**Golden Chains (Su)** See entry for Golden Legion pit fiend.**Ripping Claws (Ex)** If a ravant deals damage to a creature with its rend ability, it can attempt to dismember that creature. The ravant attempts a grapple check; if successful, it pulls off one of the target's legs or arms. The target is sickened until it receives magical healing (or until it recovers to full hit points by natural means), and takes 2d6 points of bleed damage each round. A creature with only one arm cannot perform actions requiring two arms or two hands. A bipedal creature with one leg missing cannot walk or run; it can crawl or hop, but is denied its Dexterity bonus against all opponents. A quadrupedal creature with one leg missing is reduced to half normal speed. At the GM's discretion, creatures with more than four legs affected by this attack may be able to move at normal speed.**Unique Figures**

These are the leaders and champions of the Golden Legion. The actual leader of the legion, Egal the Shimmering, is off somewhere in hell.

Star Marshal Lacacia

CR 18

XP 153,600

Handmaiden devil bard 6

LE Medium outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., true seeing; Perception +28**Defense****AC** 34, touch 20, flat-footed 24 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +14 natural)**hp** 319 (15d10+6d8+207)**Fort** +20, **Ref** +23, **Will** +16; +4 vs. bardic performance, sonic, and language-dependent**DR** 10/good; **Immune** fire, poison; **Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 25**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)**Melee** 2 claws +27 (2d8+8/19-20/x3), 2 tentacles +25 (1d6+4 plus grab)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with tentacle)**Special Attacks** tentacle cage (4d8+12 bludgeoning, AC 17, 31 hp)**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 14th; concentration +21)Constant—*spider climb*, *true seeing*At will—*alter self*, *dispel good* (DC 22), *enthrall* (DC 19), *greater teleport* (self plus 1 entrapped creature and 50 lbs. of goods only), *persistent image* (DC 22)3/day—*black tentacles*, *charm monster* (DC 21)1/day—*summon* (level 5, 3 erinyes 65%)**Bard Spells Known** (CL 6th, concentration +13)2nd (5/day)—*blur*, *heroism*, *invisibility*, *reckless infatuation* (DC 19)1st (6/day)—*alarm*, *ear-piercing scream* (DC 18), *unnatural lust* (DC 18), *ventriloquism* (DC 18)0 (at will)—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *message*, *open/close***Statistics****Str** 26, **Dex** 28, **Con** 29, **Int** 22, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 24**Base Atk** +19; **CMB** +27 (+29 trip, +31 grapple); **CMD** 46 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Acrobatic Steps, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will, Multiattack, Nimble Moves, Strike Back, Toughness**Skills** Acrobatics +27 (+31 jump), Bluff +32, Diplomacy +25, Disguise +29, Escape Artist +24, Fly +16, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (planes) +30, Perception +28, Perform (dance) +32, Perform (sing) +32, Sense Motive +22, Spellcraft +21, Stealth +33, Use Magic Device +32**Languages** Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal, telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** agile grapppler, bardic knowledge +3, bardic performance 21 rounds/day (counter-song, distraction, fascinate, inspire competence +2, inspire courage +2, suggestion), lore master 1/day, versatile performance (dance, sing)**Special Abilities****Agile Grapppler (Ex)** Lacacia does not gain the grappled condition if she grapples a foe.**Tentacle Cage (Su)** If Lacacia successfully grapples a creature, she transfers that creature into her lower body's nest of cage-like tentacles. This works like swallow whole. Lacacia's tentacles are AC 17 and have 31 hp for the purpose of an entrapped creature cutting itself out. Lacacia's tendrils heal quickly, allowing her to use this ability 1 round after a creature cuts itself free.

**General Paelyrion XVIII**

CR 21

XP 409,600

Advanced immolation devil

LE Large outsider (devil, evil, extraplanar, lawful)

Init +10; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +30**Defense****AC** 40, touch 19, flat-footed 30 (+10 Dex, +21 natural, -1 size)**hp** 390 (19d10+285); regeneration 5 (good weapons or good spells)**Fort** +25, **Ref** +21, **Will** +16**Defensive Abilities** golden chains; **DR** 15/good and silver; **Immune** fire, poison;**Resist** acid 10, cold 10; **SR** 20**Offense****Speed** 30 ft., fly 80 ft. (good)**Melee** bite +32 (2d6+14 plus burn), 2 claw +32 (1d8+14 plus burn), gore +32 (2d8+14 plus burn), 2 wings +30 (1d8+7)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Special Attacks** avalanche of gold, burn (2d6, DC 33), hellfire**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 19th; concentration +27)Constant-*fire shield*, *true seeing*At will-*fireball* (DC 22), *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lbs. of objects only),*persistent image* (DC 24), *wall of fire*3/day-*dictum* (DC 26), *fire storm* (DC 27), *mass charm monster* (DC 27)

1/day-summon (level 9, any 2d4 devils of CR 10 or lower, 90%)

Statistics**Str** 38, **Dex** 30, **Con** 39, **Int** 28, **Wis** 27, **Cha** 28**Base Atk** +19; **CMB** +34; **CMD** 54**Feats** Blind-Fight, Blinding Critical, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes,

Critical Focus, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Stand Still, Toughness

Skills Bluff +31, Diplomacy +31, Disable Device +29, Fly +34, Intimidate +31,

Knowledge (arcana, nobility) +29, Knowledge (engineering, planes) +31,

Perception +30, Sense Motive +30, Spellcraft +31, Stealth +28

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.**Special Abilities**

Avalanche of Gold (Su) As a standard action, Paelyrion can summon a portion of his immense treasury to bury his foes under literal tons of golden treasure. The treasure rains down and pelts all creatures in a 5-foot-radius burst within 100 feet, dealing 15d6 points of bludgeoning damage (Reflex DC 28 for half). A creature that fails its save also falls prone. The squares in the burst become difficult terrain. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Golden Chains (Su) See entry under Golden Legion pit fiend.

Hellfire (Su) Any fire damage caused by Paelyrion's abilities and spells is half fire damage, half unholy damage.

Enslaved Master Chyak

CR 19

XP 204,800

As Calily Buen, except:

Defensive Abilities golden chains; **Immune** charm and compulsions

The Nomadic Monastery

Adventure 12

Calily, Aerial Monk

Calily's fighting style has many options, but generally she closes with *stance of the remembered migration*, then strikes with *moon lights the day*. Thereafter she uses basic attacks while hovering out of reach. If an enemy is able to close the distance or makes powerful attacks, she lands, shifts to *stance of the paper wind*, and punishes the foe for being too strong.

Calily Buen

CR 19

XP 204,800

Female venerable human unchained monk 20

LG Medium outsider (human)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +29**Defense****AC** 33, touch 28, flat-footed 29 (+5 armor, +2 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 monk, +8 Wis)**hp** 133 (20d10+20)**Fort** +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +18; +2 vs. enchantment**Defensive Abilities** flawless mind, improved evasion; **DR** 10/chaotic;**Immune** disease**Offense****Speed** 90 ft.**Melee** +3 *unarmed strike* flurry of blows +28/+28/+28/+23/+18/+13 (2d10+7)**Ranged** mwk shuriken flurry of blows +23/+23/+23/+18/+3/+8 (1d2+4)**Special Attacks** flurry of blows, quivering palm (DC 28), stunning fist (20/day, DC 28), style strike (2/round; defensive spin, flying kick, foot stomp, knockback kick)**Statistics****Str** 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 10, **Int** 16, **Wis** 27, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +24 (+26 disarm); **CMD** 47 (49 vs. disarm)**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows, Dodge, Gorgon's

Fist, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved

Vital Strike, Lightning Stance, Medusa's Wrath, Power Attack, Scorpion Style, Spring

Attack, Stunning Fist, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike), Wind Stance

Skills Acrobatics +20 (+64 when jumping), Bluff +16, Craft (origami) +14, Diplomacy +16,

Fly +22, Heal +20, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge

(religion) +11, Linguistics +5, Perception +29, Sense Motive +31, Stealth +18

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven; tongue of the sun and moon



SQ fast movement, ki pool (18 points, adamantine, cold iron, lawful, magic, silver), ki powers (abundant step, diamond resilience, diamond soul, empty body, high jump, quivering palm, slow fall, wind jump, wholeness of body), perfect self, stance of the paper wind, timeless body

Combat Gear *dust of appearance*; **Other Gear** masterwork shuriken (50), *amulet of mighty fists* +3, *bag of holding* (type I), *belt of giant strength* +4, *boots of elvenkind*, *bracers of armor* +5, *cloak of resistance* +4, *headband of inspired wisdom* +6, *ring of protection* +2, *ring of sustenance*, healer's kit

Special Abilities

Stance of the Paper Wind (Ex) As a move action, Calily moves her speed and enters the stance of the paper wind. While in this stance, any attack or damaging effect that allows a Reflex save cannot do more than 30 points of damage to her at once. If an attack would deal more than 30 damage and the attacker is within range, she may make a melee or ranged attack against the attacker as an immediate action.

Additionally, when a creature she has not targeted with an attack since the start of her last round attacks her, she may make a Reflex save (DC equals the attack roll). On a success, she completely ignores the attack. **Move Actions**

Caeloon Ascetics

Most of the monks of Caeloon aren't familiar with battle, though their training has made them strong enough to aid the party.

Caeloon Ascetic

CR 14

XP 38,400

Human unchained monk 15

LN Medium humanoid

Init +3; **Senses** Perception +23

Defense

AC 25, touch 24, flat-footed 22 (+1 armor, +1 deflection, +3 Dex, +5 monk, +5 Wis)

hp 127 (15d10+45)

Fort +12, **Ref** +13, **Will** +11; +2 vs. enchantment

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **Immune** disease

Offense

Speed 80 ft.

Melee unarmed strike +19/+19/+19/+14/+9 (2d10+3/19-20 plus 1d6 electricity)

Ranged masterwork shuriken +19/+19/+19/+14/+9 (1d2+3)

Special Attacks flurry of blows, stunning fist (16/day, DC 22, fatigued, sickened, staggered), style strike (2/round; defensive spin, flying kick, knockback kick)

Statistics

Str 17, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +22 (+26 to trip); **CMD** 42 (44 vs. trip)

Feats Gorgon's Fist, Greater Trip, Improved Critical (unarmed strike), Improved Trip, Improved Unarmed Strike, Improved Vital Strike, Lunge, Medusa's Wrath, Power Attack, Scorpion Style, Skill Focus (Acrobatics), Snatch Arrows, Spring Attack, Stunning Fist, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (unarmed strike)

Skills Acrobatics +25 (+60 jump), Climb +10, Escape Artist +10, Heal +10, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (religion) +5, Perception +23, Profession (gardener) +10, Sense Motive +20, Stealth +20, Survival +6, Swim +10

Languages Common; tongue of the sun and moon

SQ fast movement, ki pool (12 points, cold iron, lawful, magic, silver), ki powers (abundant step, diamond soul, high jump, slow fall, wholeness of body, wind jump)

Combat Gear *oil of align weapon* (2), *potion of cure light wounds* (2) **Other Gear** quarterstaff, masterwork shuriken (50), *amulet of mighty fists* (shock), *belt of physical perfection* +2, *bracers of armor* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of inspired wisdom* +2, *monk's robe*, *ring of protection* +1, *ring of sustenance*

Pirates of Hunlow

Adventure 12

The evil aquatic god Hunlow survives as a living sea (plane 33). He lets pirates ply his waters if they show sufficient reverence, meaning most of the pirates of Hunlow are high-level clerics.

Clergy Captains

Though they use the same stats, bear in mind each of these priests survived epic events in his or her life to reach this power level. Most were once champions and hierophants of other gods before being stranded in the Gyre and converting in order to survive.

Priest of Hunlow

CR 14

XP 38,400

Human cleric 15

CE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +20

Defense

AC 22, touch 12, flat-footed 21 (+9 armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 natural)

hp 131 (15d8+60)

Fort +12, **Ref** +9, **Will** +17

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 cutlass +15/+10/+5 (1d6+4/15-20)

Special Attacks channel negative energy 2/day (DC 16, 8d6), lightning lord (15 bolts/day, DC 20), weapon master (15 rounds/day)

Domain Spell-Like Abilities (CL 15th; concentration +22)

10/day—battle rage (+7), storm burst (1d6+7)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +22)

8th—*power word stun*⁰, *stormbolts* (DC 27)

7th—*blasphemy* (DC 26), *control weather*⁰, *destruction* (DC 24),

6th—*antilife shell*, *banishment* (DC 23), *blade barrier*⁰ (DC 25), *harm* (DC 23)

5th—*dispel good*, *greater command* (DC 22), *flame strike*⁰ (DC 24), *insect plague*, *righteous might*, *slay living* (DC 22)

4th—*divine power*⁰, *freedom of movement*, *giant vermin*, *greater magic weapon*, *poison* (DC 21), *unholy blight* (DC 23)

3rd—*call lightning*⁰ (DC 22), *contagion* (2, DC 20), *deeper darkness*, *dispel magic*, *wind wall*



2nd—*bear's endurance*, *death knell* (DC 19), *fog cloud*,^o *gentle repose*, *hold person* (DC 19), *spiritual weapon*

1st—*bane* (DC 18), *divine favor*, *doom* (2, DC 18), *entropic shield*, *obscuring mist*, *shield of faith*

0th (at will)—*bleed* (DC 17), *light*, *resistance*, *virtue*

^o Domain spell; **Domains** War, Weather

Statistics

Str 15, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 10, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 8

Base Atk +11; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 25

Feats Combat Casting, Critical Focus, Extra Channel, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Critical (cutlass), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (evocation), Toughness, Weapon Focus (cutlass)

Skills Bluff +5, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (local) +6, Knowledge (religion) +9, Perception +20, Profession (sailor) +18

Languages Common

SQ aura

Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*; **Other Gear** +3 *mithral breastplate*, +1 *cutlass*, *amulet of natural armor* +1, *belt of giant strength* +2, *cloak of resistance* +1, *headband of inspired wisdom* +4, *ring of protection* +1, unholy water, cold iron unholy symbol (worth 500 gp), onyx gems (worth 1,000 gp), silver dust for desecrate (worth 25 gp), 2,482 gp

Common Crew

Even the normal crew were tough enough to survive at least a low-level apocalypse.

Unholy Boarding Crew

CR 13

XP 25,600

CE Medium humanoid (human, troop)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +20

Defense

AC 29, touch 15, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +14 natural)

hp 171 (18d8+90)

Fort +12, **Ref** +17, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities troop traits

Offense

Speed 30 ft., surge 40 ft.

Melee troop (4d8+8)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Special Attacks skulls of the tortured (DC 23)

Statistics

Str 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 33

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +17, Intimidate +7, Perception +20, Profession (sailor) +17, Swim +15

Languages Common

Special Abilities

Skulls of the Tortured (Su) An unholy boarding crew carries cracked skulls charged with negative energy. As a standard action once per day, they can hurl these skulls into the air, where they begin to glow and scream as they converge on a spot within 200 feet. They explode in a 20-foot-radius burst, dealing 8d6 points of negative energy damage and 1d6 points of Strength damage to all creatures in the burst. A successful DC 23 Will save halves the negative energy damage and negates the Strength damage. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Surge (Su) When an unholy boarding crew moves, they can conjure upsurging waves that hurl them through the air. This effectively allows them to fly at a speed of 40 feet, but they must land at the end of their movement.

Fallen Angels

Every being that relies on divine power who reaches the Gyre comes to realize that only one God has true power here. Many lesser angels fall under his sway. Some patrol the skull islands, but two always watch the stairs to Drozani (plane 25).

Fallen Angel of Hunlow

CR 16

XP 76,800

Variant planetar

CE Large outsider (angel, extraplanar, evil)

Init +8; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *detect good*, *detect snares and pits*, low-light vision, *true seeing*; Perception +27

Aura protective aura

Defense

AC 32, touch 13, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +19 natural, –1 size; +4 deflection vs. good)

hp 229 (17d10+136); regeneration 10 (good weapons and effects)

Fort +19, **Ref** +11, **Will** +19; +4 vs. poison, +4 resistance vs. evil

DR 10/evil; **Immune** acid, cold, petrification; **Resist** electricity 10, fire 10; **SR** 27

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 90 ft. (good)

Melee +3 *shock trident* +27/+22/+17 (2d6+15 plus 1d6 electricity) or slam +24 (2d8+12)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 16th; concentration +23)

Constant—*detect good*, *detect snares and pits*, *discern lies* (DC 20), *true seeing*
At will—*continual flame*, *dispel magic*, *invisibility* (self only), *lesser restoration*, *remove curse*, *remove disease*, *remove fear* (DC 18), *speak with dead* (DC 20), *unholy blight* (DC 21)

3/day—*blade barrier* (DC 21), *flame strike* (DC 22), *power word stun*, *raise dead*, *waves of fatigue*

1/day—*earthquake* (DC 25), *greater restoration*, *mass charm monster* (DC 25), *waves of exhaustion*

Spells Prepared (CL 16th; concentration +23)

8th—*earthquake* (DC 25), *fire storm* (DC 25)

7th—*blasphemy* (DC 24), *regenerate* (2)

6th—*banishment* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *heal*, *mass cure moderate wounds* (DC 23)

5th—*break enchantment*, *dispel good* (2, DC 22), *plane shift* (DC 22), *righteous might*

4th—*death ward*, *dismissal* (DC 21), *neutralize poison* (DC 21), *summon monster IV*

3rd—*cure serious wounds* (2), *daylight*, *invisibility purge*, *summon monster III*, *wind wall*

2nd—*align weapon* (2), *bear's endurance* (2), *cure moderate wounds* (2), *eagle's splendor*

1st—*bless* (2), *cure light wounds* (4), *shield of faith*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *purify food and drink*, *stabilize*, *virtue*

Statistics

Str 27, **Dex** 19, **Con** 24, **Int** 22, **Wis** 25, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +26; **CMD** 40

Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +24, Craft (any one) +26, Diplomacy +27, Fly +26, Heal +24, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (history) +23, Knowledge (planes) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Stealth +20

Languages Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; truespeech

SQ change shape (*alter self*)

Special Abilities

Protective Aura (Su) Against attacks made or effects created by good creatures, this ability provides a +4 deflection bonus to AC and a +4 resistance bonus on saving throws to anyone within 20 feet of the angel. Otherwise, it functions as a *magic circle against good* effect and a *lesser globe of invulnerability*, both with a radius of 20 feet (CL 17th).

Captain Thrusty

This jovially sadistic captain wields his rapier with bizarre agility considering his stocky, overweight frame.

Captain Thrusty

CR 22

XP 614,400

Male half-fiend human swashbuckler 20

CE Medium outsider (native)

Init +14; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +20

Defense

AC 35, touch 28, flat-footed 21 (+3 armor, +3 deflection, +8 Dex, +6 dodge, +1 insight, +4 natural)

hp 250 (20d10+140)

Fort +16, Ref +20, Will +11

Defensive Abilities evasion, improved uncanny dodge; DR 10/magic;

Immune poison; Resist acid 10, cold 10, electricity 10, fire 10; SR 33

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (good)

Melee +1 human-bane flaming rapier +34/+29/+24/+19 (1d6+12/15–20/x3 plus 1d6 fire plus 20 precise strike)

Ranged mwk dagger +33 (1d4+9/17–20/x3 plus 20 precise strike)

Special Attacks smite good 1/day (+3 attack, +20 damage), swashbuckler weapon mastery, swashbuckler weapon training +4

Spell-like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +23)

3/day–darkness, poison (DC 17), unholy aura (DC 21)

1/day–blasphemy (DC 21), contagion (DC 17), desecrate, destruction (DC 20),

horrid wilting (DC 21), summon monster IX, unhallow, unholy blight (DC 17)

Statistics

Str 20, Dex 26, Con 20, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 17

Base Atk +20; CMB +25; CMD 52

Feats Blinding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Extra Panache, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Mobility, Signature Deed (opportunistic parry and riposte), Spring Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +23, Climb +18, Diplomacy +6, Heal +5, Intimidate +26, Knowledge (religion) +21, Perception +20, Profession (sailor) +15, Stealth +18, Swim +13

SQ charmed life 7/day (+3) deeds (bleeding wound, cheat death, deadly stab [DC 28], derring-do, dizzying defense, dodging panache, evasive, kip-up, menacing swordplay, opportunistic parry and riposte, perfect thrust, precise strike, stunning stab [DC 28], swashbuckler's edge, swashbuckler's grace, swashbuckler initiative, subtle blade, superior feint, targeted strike), panache (5 points), swashbuckler finesse

Languages Abyssal, Common

Combat Gear potion of cure serious wounds; Other Gear +1 human-bane flaming rapier, masterwork dagger, amulet of natural armor +3, belt of physical perfection +4, boots of speed, bracers of armor +3, cloak of resistance +3, dusty rose prism ioun stone, ring of protection +3, 3,726 gp

Swashbuckler Combat Thrusty has a pool of panache points that he uses to fuel his deeds. He regains 1 panache point each time he confirms a critical hit or reduces a creature to 0 or fewer hit points with a light or one-handed piercing melee weapon attack. He always confirms critical hits with his rapier or dagger.

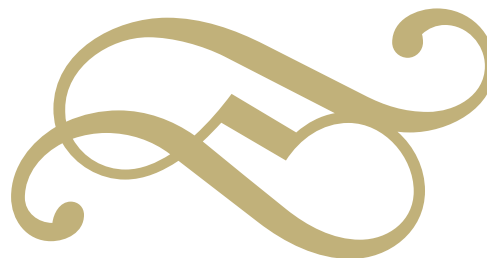
While he has at least 1 panache point, he gains the following benefits:

- He gains a +2 bonus to initiative.
- He gains the benefits of evasion, improved uncanny dodge, and uncanny dodge.
- He can take 10 on any Acrobatics, Climb, Escape Artist, Fly, Ride, or Swim check, even while distracted or in immediate danger.
- He takes no penalty for moving at full speed when he uses Acrobatics to attempt to move through a threatened area or an enemy's space.
- He is immune to disarm, steal, and sunder combat maneuvers made against a light or one-handed piercing weapon he is wielding.
- He adds his swashbuckler level to the damage dealt with a light or one-handed piercing melee weapon. Any creature that is immune to sneak attacks is immune to the additional damage granted by precise strike, and any item or ability that protects a creature from critical hits also protects a creature from the additional damage of a precise strike. This additional damage is precision damage, and isn't multiplied on a critical hit. As a swift action, he can spend 1 panache point to double his precise strike's damage bonus on the next attack. This benefit must be used before the end of his turn, or it is lost.
- When he hits an opponent with a light or one-handed piercing melee weapon, he can choose to use Intimidate to demoralize that opponent as a swift action instead of a standard action.
- He can kip-up from prone as a move action without provoking attacks of opportunity. He can kip-up as a swift action instead by spending 1 panache point.
- He can, as a standard action, purposefully miss a creature he could make a melee attack against with a wielded light or one-handed piercing weapon. When he does, the creature is denied its Dexterity bonus to AC until the start of the swashbuckler's next turn.
- He can as a full-round action make a perfect thrust, pooling all of his attack potential into a single melee attack made with a light or one-handed piercing melee weapon. When he does, he makes the attack against the target's touch AC, and ignores all damage reduction.

Because of his Signature Deed feat, Thrusty can use opportunistic riposte and parry for no cost, so he usually uses his attacks of opportunity to parry melee attacks against him (up to 9 per round). He either uses his immediate action in a round to make an attack against an opponent he has successfully parried, or spends 1 panache point to use dodging panache to try to deny a particularly dangerous opponent a full attack.

When Thrusty scores a critical hit, he will either spend 1 panache point to attempt a deadly stab or 2 for a stunning stab. He prefers to use the latter if Taracle is nearby to allow the admiral a chance to use his eat alive ability.

If reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, Thrusty will spend all of his remaining panache to use cheat death. He tries to flee thereafter.





Admiral Taracle

Hunlow sired a child, and this wretched being has commanded the Hunlow pirates for centuries. Like his father, he's not subtle. He likes to eat people alive, but for appearances he usually starts battles with a pair of dwarven axes looted from the tomb on Dunkelweiss (plane 31). These radiant axes were the personal weapons of the dwarven king Ron the Grand.

Admiral Taracle

CR 22

XP 614,400

CE Medium outsider (chaotic, evil, native)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25**Aura** divine presence (60 ft.; DC 29), *unholy aura*

Defense

AC 39, touch 18, flat-footed 35 (+4 deflection, +4 Dex, +25 natural)**hp** 390 (20d10+280); regeneration 20 (good spells and weapons)**Fort** +30, **Ref** +14, **Will** +18**Defensive Abilities** ferocity; **DR** 10/epic; **Immune** electricity, poison;**Resist** acid 10, cold 10, fire 10

Offense

Speed 40 ft., fly 60 ft. (good), swim 60 ft.**Melee** +4 *courageous glorious dwarven waraxe* +33/+28/+23/+18 (1d10+17/x3),
+4 *glorious invigorating dwarven waraxe* +33/+28/+23 (1d10+17/x3), bite +31
(1d8+6), pincer +31 (1d6+19/x3 plus poison)**Space** 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with pincer)**Special Attacks** deadly pincer, eat alive**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +28)Constant—*freedom of movement*, *unholy aura* (DC 26)

Statistics

Str 36, **Dex** 19, **Con** 36, **Int** 14, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 28**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +33 (+35 bull rush); **CMD** 51 (53 vs. bull rush)**Feats** Bull Rush Strike, Double Slice, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Multiattack, Power Attack, Toughness, Two-Weapon Fighting, Two-Weapon Rend**Skills** Bluff +32, Fly +8, Intimidate +32, Knowledge (religion) +24, Perception +25, Profession (sailor) +25, Sense Motive +25, Swim +21, Survival +25**Languages** Abyssal, Aquan, Common**Gear** +4 *courageous glorious dwarven waraxe*, +4 *glorious invigorating dwarven waraxe*

Special Abilities

Deadly Pincer (Ex) Taracle always applies 1-1/2 times his Strength modifier to damage dealt by his pincer attack, and deals triple damage on a critical hit.**Divine Presence (Su)** Allies within 60 feet of Taracle gain a +2 profane bonus on AC, attack rolls, and saving throws. Enemies take a -2 penalty to AC, attack rolls, and saving throws. A DC 29 Will save negates these penalties and renders a creature immune to Taracle's aura for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.**Eat Alive (Su)** Taracle can perform a coup de grace with his bite attack as a standard action. If this kills his foe, Taracle gains 1d8 temporary hit points plus 1 per Hit Die of the target and a +2 profane bonus to Strength. These effects last for 1 minute per Hit Die of the target.**Poison (Ex)** Pincer—injury; *save* Fort DC 33; *frequency* 1/round for 10 rounds; *effect* 1d6 Strength damage; *cure* 3 consecutive saves. The save DC is Constitution-based

Beasts and Horrors

Adventure 12

Only nigh invincible monsters survive the end of the world, so every monster in the Gyre is horrifying.

Vaknids of Urim

The great worms of Urim (plane 47) are too slow to be a threat, but vaknids, though still immense, are dangerously swift. These undead spiders purge their surroundings of air, and so their movements are always completely silent, which makes their immense scuttling even more unsettling.

Vaknid Vortexweaver

CR 16

XP 76,800

NE Huge undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +23**Aura** vacuum (15 ft., DC 20)

Defense

AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 26 (+1 dodge, +2 Dex, +18 natural, -2 size)**hp** 210 (20d8+120)**Fort** +11, **Ref** +7, **Will** +12**Immune** fire, sonic, undead traits

Offense

Speed 50 ft., climb 50 ft.**Melee** bite +28 (3d8+22 plus grab)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** suck the life, trample (3d8+22, DC 35), vacuous orb

Statistics

Str 40, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +32 (+34 bull rush, +36 grapple); **CMD** 45 (47 vs. bull rush, 57 vs. trip)**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike**Skills** Climb +38, Perception +23, Stealth +29; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth**SQ** compression

Special Abilities

Aura of Vacuum (Ex) A vaknid vortexweaver forcibly sucks the air out of the lungs of creatures within 15 feet of it. Creatures in the aura who fail a DC 20 Fortitude save or take 2d6 points of damage and must attempt Constitution checks each round as if they had run out of breath. An affected character can't speak, use breath weapons, cast spells with verbal components, or do anything else that requires breathing. The save DC is Constitution-based.**Suck the Life (Su)** If a vaknid vortexweaver starts its turn grappling a creature, it deals automatic bite damage and gains the amount of damage it deals as temporary hit points that last for 1 hour.**Vacuous Orb (Su)** As a standard action once per day, a vaknid vortexweaver can spin a man-sized ball of glowing green silk with a gap at one end and hurl it to any space within 100 feet. The orb creates a 50-foot radius spread of severe winds blowing towards the orb. (See wind effects in the *PATHFINDER RPG CORE RULEBOOK*.) Each round, creatures in the spread must make a DC 25 Fortitude save or be pulled into the orb's space, clogging the hole. While the hole is clogged, the aura is suppressed, but the creature is grappled and takes 15d6 bludgeoning damage each round.

The orb has AC 20, 50 hp, and an effective CMD of 35 for escape attempts.

Destroying the orb disperses the winds. Vaknids and creatures in their vacuum aura are immune to the winds.

**Vaknid Webmaster**

CR 17

XP 102,400

NE Gargantuan undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Perception +23**Aura** vacuum (30 ft., DC 22)**Defense****AC** 31, touch 9, flat-footed 28 (+1 dodge, +2 Dex, +22 natural, -4 size)**hp** 252 (24d8+144)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +9, **Will** +14**Immune** acid, fire, sonic, undead traits**Offense****Speed** 50 ft., climb 50 ft.**Melee** bite +34 (4d8+28)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** acid web (+16, DC 22, 24 hp), bristling bones, trample (4d8+28, DC 40), web mastery**Statistics****Str** 48, **Dex** 14, **Con** —, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 20**Base Atk** +18; **CMB** +41 (+43 bull rush or drag); **CMD** 54 (56 vs. bull rush or drag, 66 vs. trip)**Feats** Awesome Blow, Cleave, Dodge, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Drag, Improved Initiative, Improved Vital Strike, Power Attack, Toughness, Vital Strike, Weapon Focus (bite)**Skills** Climb +38, Perception +23, Stealth +29; **Racial Modifiers** +8 Stealth**SQ** compression**Special Abilities****Acid Web (Ex)** This ability works like the web ability, but affects all creatures in a 10-foot-radius burst. In addition, any creature caught in the web takes 15d6 acid damage each round.**Aura of Vacuum (Ex)** See entry under vaknid vortexweaver.**Bristling Bones (Ex)** As a standard action, a vaknid webmaster can tug on webs covering its body, causing the bones of its ancient meals to lash out at those nearby. The vaknid makes an Awesome Blow attack against all creatures sharing its space.**Web Mastery (Su)** As a swift action, a vaknid webmaster can cause a strand of web to stretch up to 50 feet from any other webbed space, even in defiance of gravity, as long as it remains within 150 feet. Alternatively, the vaknid can make a bull rush or drag attempt against any target within 150 feet in contact with a web.**Savants of Shabboath**

Those who cross the pockmarked, flooded surface of Shabboath (plane 45) feel drawn into murky tunnels that lead to a sunless sea. In their dreams, immense imposing beings demand their obeisance.

Slumbering Savant

If savants expect combat, they'll spend time manifesting a waxy slime that they can shape into baroque structures that provide cover and create a labyrinth to confuse intruders. These walls can be broken through fairly easily. A creature that succeeds a Strength check (DC 20) can pry open a hole sufficient to move through, then pass through five feet, as a standard action. Alternately, a character can attempt to ram through (Strength DC 27), and on a success it treats the space as difficult terrain, and leaves a hole in its wake.

The savant's real body remains immobile and hidden against one of these walls, and it only moves if it is confident no enemies will see it before it can become invisible again (see natural invisibility). Meanwhile its

schistic projection engages the party, typically by swimming into melee, using attacking with a tentacle, and then vanishing when the real body spends a swift action to dismiss it and conjure it elsewhere. If an enemy is struck by the tentacle, the real body uses *mass suggestion* or quickened *dominate person* to draw the victim close enough for it to grab and draw into a mindscape. While the savant flays open the mind of its victim, the projection repeatedly uses slime cage to keep enemies from engaging its real body.

Slumbering Savant

CR 17

XP 102,400

LE Huge aberration (aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +28**Defense****AC** 32, touch 6, flat-footed 32 (+4 armor, -2 Dex, +22 natural, -2 size)**hp** 270 (20d8+180)**Fort** +14, **Ref** +6, **Will** +19**Defensive Abilities** natural invisibility; **Immune** acid, mind-affecting effects;**Resist** cold 20; **SR** 28**Offense****Speed** 10 ft., swim 50 ft.**Melee** 4 tentacles +25 (2d6+12 plus grab and sense-link)**Space** 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.**Special Attacks** create mindscape, schistic projection, sense-link, slime cage**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 20th; concentration +26)Constant-*mage armor*At will—*detect thoughts* (DC 18), *dominate person* (DC 21), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 18), *illusory wall* (DC 20), *mirage arcana* (DC 21), *persistent image* (DC 21), *programmed image* (DC 22), *veil* (DC 22)3/day—*dominate monster* (DC 25), quickened *dominate person* (DC 21), *geas/quest* (DC 22), *mass suggestion* (DC 22)**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 12th; concentration +18)6th (4)—*symbol of persuasion* (DC 23)5th (6)—*symbol of pain* (DC 22), *teleport*4th (7)—*dimension door*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 20), *symbol of slowing* (DC 21)3rd (7)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *explosive runes* (DC 20), *hold person* (DC 19), *secret page*2nd (8)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 18), *invisibility*, *levitate*, *symbol of mirroring* (DC 19), *touch of idiocy*1st (8)—*charm person* (DC 17), *comprehend languages*, *erase* (DC 17), *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *silent image* (DC 17)0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *ghost sound* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*, *touch of fatigue***Statistics****Str** 34, **Dex** 6, **Con** 26, **Int** 21, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 22**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +31 (+35 grapple); **CMD** 43 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Arcane Strike, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Eschew MaterialsB, Extend Spell, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (dominate person), Toughness**Skills** Knowledge (arcana) +25, Knowledge (history) +25, Knowledge (nature) +25, Perception +28, Sense Motive +25, Spellcraft +28, Stealth +15, Swim +37, Use Magic Device +26**Languages** Abyssal, Aquan, Aklo, Draconic, Infernal, Undercommon, telepathy 100 ft.**SQ** anchored



Special Abilities

Anchored (Ex) As a full-round action, a savant can affix itself to a solid surface. While anchored, it cannot move, and it gains a +4 bonus to its CMD on all checks to resist being bull-rushed, dragged, overrun, or repositioned. This bonus increases by +4 for each size category larger the savant is compared to the opponent attempting the maneuver. The creature can unanchor itself as a full-round action.

Create Mindscape (Su) If a savant grabs a creature, it can draw that creature into a mindscape as a swift action. This functions as the psychic spell *create mindscape*. The savant usually creates a mindscape that is veiled and harmful (DC 26 Will save to disbelieve), and it can choose to give the mindscape the rapid time trait. Each round, a longer period of subjective time occurs within the mindscape (however long works to keep the combat pacing going). A creature can exit the mindscape by making a DC 41 Diplomacy check to come to an understanding with the savant, or a DC 32 Sense Motive check to navigate its own subconscious to create an exit.

For more information on mindscapes, see OCCULT ADVENTURES.

Natural Invisibility (Su) A savant is invisible when motionless. It loses this invisibility and remains visible for 1 round in any round in which its main body moves or makes a melee attack. This invisibility extends to any creatures it is grappling.

Schistic Projection (Su) As a swift action, a savant can manifest a projection of part of its consciousness in any space within 100 feet, which resembles the savant but more stylized, often glowing with deep red or purple hues, or surrounded by schools of fish composed of motes of fire. This functions as *project image*, except that the projection can make tentacle attacks and be damaged as if it were the real savant. The projection and the savant share a single hit point pool, but conditions affect each version of the savant separately. A savant can use this ability to dismiss his current projection and conjure a new one. The new projection suffers no conditions that were affecting the previous projection.

Sense-Link (Su) A creature hit by a savant's tentacle must make a DC 26 Will save or have its sense linked with the savant. While linked, the savant is aware of whatever the target senses, understands all languages the target understands, and is never flat-footed against the creature's attacks. The creature takes a -2 penalty to all attack rolls and skill or ability checks that are based on Strength or Dexterity since it cannot sense its own body. Additionally, whenever the savant takes damage, each creature linked to it takes 5 damage from psychic feedback. The target may attempt an additional Will save at the end of its turn to end this effect. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Slime Cage (Sp) A savant can conjure a barred cage of slime in any space within 50 feet. This functions as the barred cage version of *forcecage* (CL 20th, Reflex DC 23 negates), except the viscous slime that fills the area deals 5d6 points of acid damage each round to creatures inside the cage.

Grand Savant

Where the lesser savants are subtle and tricky, the grand savant has grown lazy with its immense strength.

Grand Savant
XP 409,600

CR 21

LE Gargantuan aberration (aquatic)

Init +2; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., darkvision 120 ft.; Perception +33

Defense

AC 36, touch 2, flat-footed 36 (+4 armor, -4 Dex, +30 natural, -4 size)

hp 387 (25d8+275)

Fort +20, **Ref** +4, **Will** +21

Defensive Abilities corpulent turgidity; **Immune** acid, mind-affecting effects;

Resist cold 20; **SR** 32

Offense

Speed 5 ft., swim 10 ft.

Melee 4 tentacles +31 (3d6+16/19-20 plus grab)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (3d6+24), devastating probe, placid consumption

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +29)

Constant-mage armor

At will—dominate person (DC 24), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 21), *illusory wall* (DC 23), *mirage arcana* (DC 24), *persistent image* (DC 24), *programmed image* (DC 25), *veil* (DC 25)

3/day—dominate monster (DC 28), *quicken dominate person* (DC 24), *geas/quest* (DC 25), *mass suggestion* (DC 25)

Statistics

Str 42, **Dex** 2, **Con** 30, **Int** 21, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 28

Base Atk +18; **CMB** +38 (+42 grapple); **CMD** 44 (can't be tripped)

Feats Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (dominate person), Toughness, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Skills Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (history) +30, Knowledge (nature) +30, Perception +33, Sense Motive +30, Spellcraft +33, Stealth +18, Swim +52, Use Magic Device +31

Languages Abyssal, Aquan, Aklo, Draconic, Infernal, Undercommon;; telepathy 100 ft.

SQ anchored

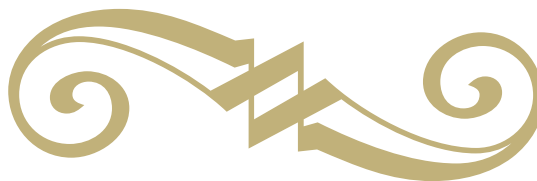
Special Abilities

Anchored (Ex) As a full-round action, the grand savant can affix itself to a solid surface. While anchored, it cannot move, and it gains a +4 bonus to its CMD on all checks to resist being bull-rushed, dragged, overrun, or repositioned. This bonus increases by +4 for each size category larger the grand savant is compared to the opponent attempting the maneuver. The creature can unanchor itself as a full-round action.

Corpulent Turgidity (Ex) After any attack that targets the grand savant, spaces adjacent to it that would have been in the path of the attack become waxy walls (as described above), unless there is a creature occupying that space, in which case they become difficult terrain. Single-target attacks just fill one square, but a fireball along the grand savant's side would create a wall in every square adjacent to the parts of its body caught in the burst.

Devastating Probe (Su) The grand savant can detect thoughts as per the spell of the same name (CL 20th). It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. When the grand savant uses this ability, it always functions as if it had spent three rounds concentrating and thus gains the maximum amount of information possible. A creature can resist this effect with a DC 30 Will save. The save DC is Charisma-based. If a creature fails its save, it takes 10d6 damage from psychic feedback. The grand savant grants allies within its telepathy range a +2 insight on attack rolls, AC, and saves against creatures whose thoughts it has read.

Placid Consumption (Ex) If the grand savant begins a round with a grabbed foe, it automatically bites the foe with its gnashing beak mostly hidden under the monster's layers of barnacled fat, dealing 3d6+24 damage.





Aquatic Minions

The savants recently enslaved some creatures from Mavisha to use as bodyguards.

Kraken Guardian

CR 18

XP 153,600

NE Gargantuan magical beast (aquatic)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +28

Defense

AC 32, touch 6, flat-footed 32 (+26 natural, -4 size)**hp** 290 (20d10+180)**Fort** +21, **Ref** +12, **Will** +11**Immune** cold, mind-affecting effects, poison

Offense

Speed 10 ft., swim 40 ft., jet 280 ft.**Melee** 2 arms +26 (2d6+10/19–20 plus grab), 8 tentacles +24 (1d8+5 plus grab), bite +26 (2d8+10)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft. (60 ft. with arm, 40 ft. with tentacle)**Special Attacks** constrict (tentacles, 1d8+10), ink cloud, rend ship**Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 15th; concentration +20)1/day—*control weather*, *control winds*, *dominate monster* (DC 24, animal only), *resist energy*

Statistics

Str 30, **Dex** 10, **Con** 29, **Int** 21, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 21**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +34 (+38 grappling); **CMD** 44 (can't be tripped)**Feats** Bleeding Critical, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Improved Critical (arm), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Multiattack, Power Attack**Skills** Intimidate +25, Knowledge (geography) +25, Knowledge (nature) +25, Perception +28, Stealth +11, Swim +41, Use Magic Device +25**Languages** Aquan, Common**SQ** tenacious grapple

Special Abilities

Ink Cloud (Ex) A kraken can emit a cloud of black, venomous ink in an 80-foot spread once per minute as a free action while underwater. This cloud provides total concealment, which the kraken can use to escape a fight that is going badly. Creatures within the cloud are considered to be in darkness. In addition, the ink is toxic, functioning as contact poison against all creatures caught within it. The ink cloud persists for 1 minute before dispersing. The save DC against the poison effect is Constitution-based.

Kraken Ink: Ink cloud—contact; *save* Fort DC 29; *frequency* 1/round for 10 rounds; *effect* 1 Str damage plus nausea; *cure* 2 consecutive saves.

Jet (Ex) A kraken can jet backward as a full-round action, at a speed of 280 feet. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.

Rend Ship (Ex) As a full-round action, a kraken can attempt to use four of its tentacles to grapple a ship of its size or smaller. It makes a CMB check opposed by the ship's captain's Profession (sailor) check, but the kraken gets a cumulative +4 bonus on the check for each size category smaller than Gargantuan the ship is. If the kraken grapples the ship, it holds the ship motionless; it can attack targets anywhere on or within the ship with its tentacles, but can only attack foes on deck with its free arms and can't attack foes at all with its beak. Each round it maintains its hold on the ship, it automatically inflicts bite damage on the ship's hull.

Tenacious Grapple (Ex) A kraken does not gain the grappled condition if it grapples a foe with its arms or tentacles.

Elemental Chum Swarm

CR 15

XP 51,200

N Tiny outsider (elemental, extraplanar, swarm)

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +25

Defense

AC 28, touch 22, flat-footed 18 (+9 Dex, +1 dodge, +6 natural, +2 size)**hp** 241 (21d10+126)**Fort** +19, **Ref** +18, **Will** +10**Defensive Abilities** swarm traits; **Immune** elemental traits

Offense

Speed 20 ft., swim 90 ft.**Melee** swarm (5d6 plus blood drain and distraction)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Special Attacks** distraction (DC 25), drench

Statistics

Str 11, **Dex** 29, **Con** 20, **Int** 4, **Wis** 13, **Cha** 10**Base Atk** +15; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 27**Feats** Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Toughness**Skills** Acrobatics +33, Escape Artist +33, Perception +25, Stealth +39, Swim +31**Languages** Abyssal, Common

Special Abilities

Blood Drain (Ex) Whenever an elemental chum swarm damages a foe with its swarm damage, it also drains blood, dealing 1d6 points of Strength damage. A swarm that drains blood from a target with 0 Strength instead deals 2d4 points of Constitution damage.

Drench (Su) An elemental chum swarm's touch puts out non-magical flames of Large size or smaller. The swarm can dispel magical fire it touches as *dispel magic* (CL 21st).

Miscellaneous Beasts

Use these other monsters as needed, though the party might never encounter them.

Carnivorous Mandala of Thrag

The Thrag mandala beasts use tactical reincarnation, throwing themselves into deadly encounters so they can come back as a more advantageous form. Every form they live in, though, can manifest a *mantle of stability* so that its prey does not actually die. As long as a creature is unconscious and stable, it will not reincarnate, giving the mandala beast time to drag it away to its lair to repeatedly feast on it through multiple lifetimes.

Carnivorous Mandala Beast of Thrag

CR 21

XP 409,600

Form of the Stalker

NE Large magical beast

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +26**Aura** mantle of stability (30 ft.)

Defense

AC 36, touch 16, flat-footed 29 (+7 Dex, +20 natural, -1 size)**hp** 310 (23d10+184)**Fort** +21, **Ref** +20, **Will** +11**Defensive Abilities** adaptive incarnation, intentional reincarnation;**Immune** fear, paralysis, poison, sleep**Weaknesses** vulnerable to fire

**Offense**

Speed 50 ft.

Melee bite +35 (2d8+13/19-20 plus trip), 2 talons +35 (2d6+13/19-20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks lash out, pounce, rend (2 claws, 2d6+19), steer the cycle, soul undertow (DC 25)

Statistics

Str 36, **Dex** 25, **Con** 27, **Int** 3, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +23; **CMB** +37; **CMD** 54

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Critical Mastery, Exhausting Critical, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (claws), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Skill Focus (Stealth), Tiring Critical

Skills Acrobatics +19 (+27 when jumping), Perception +26, Stealth +21 (+29 forests), Survival +3 (+23 tracking); **Racial Modifiers** +8 Acrobatics, +10 Perception, +4 Stealth (+12 forests), +20 Survival when tracking

Special Abilities

Soul Undertow (Su) A creature staggered by this ability cannot make ranged attacks or cast spells with a range greater than touch.

Form of the Harrier

NE Large magical beast

Init +11; **Senses** blindsense 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Perception +26

Aura mantle of stability (30 ft.)

Defense

AC 36, touch 16, flat-footed 29 (+7 Dex, +20 natural, -1 size)

hp 310 (23d10+184)

Fort +21, **Ref** +20, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities adaptive incarnation, intentional reincarnation;

Immune fear, paralysis, poison, sleep

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 20 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee bite +35 (2d8+13/19-20 plus push), 2 wings +30 (2d6+6/19-20)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks lash out, push (15 ft.), steer the cycle, soul undertow (DC 25)

Statistics

Str 36, **Dex** 25, **Con** 27, **Int** 3, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +23; **CMB** +37; **CMD** 54 (can't be tripped)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Critical Mastery, Exhausting Critical, Flyby Attack, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Critical (wing), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Tiring Critical

Skills Fly +23, Perception +26, Stealth +14, Survival +3 (+23 tracking);

Racial Modifiers +8 Fly, +10 Perception, +20 Survival when tracking

Special Abilities

Soul Undertow (Su) A creature staggered by this ability flees from the mandala beast as if frightened.

Form of the Field

NE Large plant

Init +11; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +26

Aura mantle of stability (30 ft.)

Defense

AC 36, touch 16, flat-footed 29 (+7 Dex, +20 natural, -1 size)

hp 310 (23d8+207)

Fort +21, **Ref** +14, **Will** +11

Defensive Abilities adaptive incarnation, *freedom of movement*, intentional reincarnation;

Immune plant traits

Weaknesses vulnerable to fire

Offense

Speed 10 ft.

Melee 3 bites +30 (2d8+13/19-20 plus grab and poison)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks constrict (2d8+19), lash out, steer the cycle, soul undertow (DC 25)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +24)

Constant—*freedom of movement*

Statistics

Str 36, **Dex** 25, **Con** 27, **Int** 3, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 18

Base Atk +17; **CMB** +31 (+36 grapple); **CMD** 48 (can't be tripped)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Critical Mastery, Exhausting Critical, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Tiring Critical, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +26, Stealth +28, Survival +3 (+23 tracking);

Racial Modifiers +10 Perception, +10 Stealth, +20 Survival when tracking

Special Abilities

Soul Undertow (Su) A creature staggered by this ability drops an item it is holding at the start of its turn. If it is not holding anything, it must spend an action to draw a weapon or retrieve an item, then drop it.





A mandala beast possesses the following special abilities in all of its forms:

Adaptive Incarnation (Ex) When first encountered, a mandala beast has no energy resistance. When damaged by an attack that causes cold, electricity, or sonic damage, it gains resistance 30 to that energy type the next time it reincarnates. If an attack causes more than one type of energy damage, the mandala beast gains resistance 30 to all the types of energy damage dealt.

Intentional Reincarnation (Ex) Whenever the mandala beast dies, its body dissolves into the ground. At the start of its next turn it reincarnates, rising in a new form of its choice in any space within 100 feet at full hit points. It can make a Stealth check to hide as part of its reincarnation.

The mandala beast has three main forms it favors. It begins in the form of the stalker, and when it dies, it returns on its next turn in the form of the harrier. When that dies, it returns in the form of the field. If that form is killed, the beast returns once again in the form of the stalker (with some cosmetic differences), once again at full hit points.

The reincarnation cycle can be stopped if either the mandala beast is stabilized before its next turn, or if at least 50 acid or fire damage is dealt to the ground beneath its body, in order to prevent it from being absorbed by the living soil. If it must decay naturally, its reincarnation is delayed by a few days.

Lash Out (Ex) As a swift action, a mandala beast can make a single bite attack. A mandala beast cannot lash out on the same round it charges.

Mantle of Stability (Su) Creatures reduced below 0 hp in the aura immediately stabilize and cannot die, regardless of how much damage they take. A creature whose negative hp exceeds its Constitution score immediately dies if it leaves the aura.

Steer the Cycle (Ex) As a swift action, a mandala beast can lash out and kill a tiny creature on the ground, then kick the dying animal to another space within 30 feet. The tiny creature is instantly consumed by the soil, and a moment later, walls of thorny foliage burst screaming from the ground. The foliage fills two adjacent 10-foot cubes and functions as a *wall of thorns*. Additionally, any creature caught in or passing through the wall takes 2d6+20 points of sonic damage each round from the screams. A mandala beast can use this ability once per incarnation.

Soul Undertow (Su) As a standard action, a mandala beast can launch its mandala at a target within 100 feet. The target must make a DC 25 Will save or take 20d6 damage and be staggered for 2d4 rounds. While staggered, the target screams constantly, feeling the perpetual suffering of the entire plane. It can attempt a DC 25 Will save each round to end the staggered effect early. The save DC is Charisma-based.

The attack has an additional effect depending on the beast's form. These effects last as long as the target remains staggered from the attack.

Doverspike the Vampiric Dragon

Doverspike won't attack the party, but he might be goaded into fighting with them.

Doverspike

XP 614,400

CR 22

Male vampire wylm red dragon

CE Gargantuan undead (augmented dragon, fire)

Init +4; **Senses** dragon senses, smoke vision; Perception +36

Aura fire (10 ft., 2d6 fire), frightful presence (330 ft., DC 30)

Defense

AC 49, touch 7, flat-footed 49 (+1 dodge, +42 natural, -4 size)

hp 337 (27d8+216); fast healing 5

Fort +22, **Ref** +17, **Will** +23

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4; **DR** 20/magic, 10/magic and silver;

Resist cold 10, electricity 10; **Immune** fire, undead traits; **SR** 31

Weaknesses vampire weaknesses, vulnerability to cold

Offense

Speed 40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +41 (4d6+26/19-20), slam +41 (2d8+18), 2 claws +41 (2d8+16), 2 wings +39 (2d6+8), tail slap +39 (2d8+26)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Con), breath weapon (60-ft. cone, DC 23, 22d10 half fire, half negative energy), crush (Medium creatures, DC 23, 4d6+22), dominate (DC 30), energy drain (2 negative levels), manipulate flames, melt stone, tail sweep (Small creatures, DC 23, 2d6+22)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 27th; concentration +34)

At will—*detect magic*, *find the path*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 20), *wall of fire*

Spells Known (CL 17th; concentration +24)

8th (4/day)—*greater shout*, *prismatic wall*

7th (6/day)—*limited wish*, *mass hold person*, *spell turning*

6th (6/day)—*antimagic field*, *contingency*, *greater dispel magic*

5th (7/day)—*polymorph*, *telekinesis* (DC 22), *teleport*, *wall of force*

4th (7/day)—*fear* (DC 21), *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *haste*, *tongues*

2nd (7/day)—*alter self*, *detect thoughts*, *misdirection*, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *grease* (DC 18), *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Statistics

Str 47, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** 22, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +27; **CMB** +49; **CMD** 59 (63 vs. trip)

Feats Alertness, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Stunning Critical, Toughness, Vital Strike, Wingover

Skills Appraise +36, Bluff +44, Diplomacy +37, Fly +16, Intimidate +37, Knowledge (arcana) +36, Knowledge (history) +36, Knowledge (religion) +36, Perception +50, Sense Motive +50, Spellcraft +36, Stealth +26

Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Orc

SQ change shape (dire bat, wolf), gaseous form, shadowless, spider climb

Special Abilities

Fire Aura (Su) All creatures within 10 feet take 1d6 points of fire damage at the beginning of Doverspike's turn.

Gaseous Form (Su) This functions as a normal vampire's gaseous form ability, except he gains a fly speed of 50 feet (perfect). When he assumes this form, he also conjures a fog cloud that covers a quarter-mile radius which moves with him.

Manipulate Flames (Su) Doverspike can control any fire spell within 110 feet as a standard action. This ability allows him to move any fire effect in the area, as if he were the caster. This ability also allows him to reposition a stationary fire effect, although the new placement must be one allowed by the spell. Finally, for 1 round following the use of this ability, the dragon can control any new fire spell cast within his area of control, as if he were the caster. He can make all decisions allowed to the caster, including canceling the spell if he so desires.

Melt Stone (Su) Doverspike can use his breath weapon to melt rock at a range of 100 feet, affecting a 55-foot-radius area. The area becomes lava to a depth of 1 foot. Any creature in contact with the lava takes 20d6 points of fire damage on the first round, 10d6 on the second, and none thereafter as the lava hardens and cools. If used on a wall or ceiling, treat this ability as an avalanche that deals fire damage.

Smoke Vision (Ex) Doverspike can see perfectly in smoky conditions (such as those created by *pyrotechnics*).



Chimeric Elementals

On Gardboral (plane 15), elementals link together like chains hundreds of feet long, composed of all manner of energetic forces. The greatest are the maelstrom avatars, colossal humanoid figures of living fire, lightning, ice, and stone. After their world ended with the ascendant doomsday war of the god of giants, the ground, sky, sea, and fire below were commanded to fill the tomb of the victorious god with all the world's treasure. They deconstructed the entire world, and now the god's paraelemental avatars roam, seeking more treasure.

Chimeric Elemental Titan

CR 20

XP 307,200

N Colossal outsider (air, earth, elemental, fire, extraplanar, water)

Init +14; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

Defense

AC 35, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+10 Dex, +1 dodge, +22 natural, -8 size)**hp** 330 (20d10+220)**Fort** +23, **Ref** +22, **Will** +8**DR** 15/-; **Immune** acid, cold, electricity, elemental traits, fire

Offense

Speed 50 ft., burrow 20 ft., fly 100 ft. (perfect), swim 90 ft.; earth glide**Melee** 2 slams +31 (4d8+16 plus 2d8 electricity plus burn)**Space** 30 ft.; **Reach** 30 ft.**Special Attacks** burn (4d10, DC 30), vortex (DC 30), whirlwind (DC 30)

Statistics

Str 42, **Dex** 31, **Con** 30, **Int** 10, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +16; **CMB** +40; **CMD** 63**Feats** Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Mobility, Power Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (slam), Toughness**Skills** Acrobatics +29, Escape Artist +29, Fly +14, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (planes) +23, Perception +23, Stealth +13**Languages** Auran, Aquan, Ignan, Terran

Ystis, the Maddening Cat

On Ringes, the Barren Moor (plane 14), this feline lich survived an apocalypse caused by the wizard he was once a familiar of. He responds to intruders by hiding and waiting for them to go violently mad, but if he sees anyone wander off alone, he's confident enough to strike. He retreats if allies come, and while remaining hidden uses *plague storm* and *epidemic* to infect foes with virulent diseases.

He's also a cat, though, vain and lazy. If someone offers him a chance to get off this plane and a comfortable living situation, he could be tempted to tag along. He has sadistic tastes, though.

Ystis, the Maddening Cat

CR 21

XP 409,600

Awakened cat lich wizard 20

CE Tiny undead (augmented magical beast)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Perception +39**Aura** fear (60 ft., DC 24)

Defense

AC 24, touch 19, flat-footed 22 (+5 deflection, +2 Dex, +5 natural, +2 size)**hp** 221 (20d6+3d8+138)**Fort** +17, **Ref** +13, **Will** +18**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, rejuvenation; **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic; **Immune** cold, electricity, undead traits

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** 2 claws +17 (1d2-4), bite +17 (1d3-4) or touch +17 (1d8+11 plus paralyzing touch)**Space** 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.**Special Attacks** hand of the apprentice (11/day), metamagic mastery (8/day), paralyzing touch (DC 24)**Wizard Spells Prepared** (CL 20th; concentration +25)9th—*curse earth*, *energy drain*, *foresight*, *time stop*, *wail of the banshee* (DC 29)8th—*discern location*, *horrid wilting* (DC 28), *mass charm monster* (DC 26), *moment of prescience*, *symbol of death* (DC 28)7th—*epidemic* (DC 27), *finger of death* (DC 27), *plague storm* (DC 27), *prismatic spray* (DC 25), *spell turning*, *waves of exhaustion*6th—*circle of death* (DC 26), *chain lightning* (DC 24), *greater contagion* (2, DC 26), *greater dispel magic*, *unwilling shield* (DC 26)5th—*blight* (DC 25), *cloudkill* (DC 23), *plague carrier*, *possess object*, *suffocation* (2, DC 25)4th—*bestow curse* (DC 24), *dimension door*, *enervation*, *greater false life*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*3rd—*dispel magic*, *protection from energy*, *stinking cloud* (DC 21), *suggestion* (2, DC 21), *vampiric touch* (2)2nd—*invisibility*, *mirror image*, *resist energy* (2), *shatter*, *spectral hand*, *web* (DC 20)1st—*mage armor* (2), *magic missile* (3), *ray of enfeeblement* (2, DC 21)0th (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Statistics

Str 3, **Dex** 15, **Con** -, **Int** 26, **Wis** 20, **Cha** 23**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 24 (29 vs. trip)**Feats** Combat Casting, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Greater Spell Focus (necromancy), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Spell Focus (necromancy), Spell Penetration, Still Spell, Toughness, Weapon Finesse**Skills** Bluff +29, Climb +10, Intimidate +29, Knowledge (arcana, history, nature, planes) +34, Perception +39, Sense Motive +36, Spellcraft +34, Stealth +36;**Racial Modifiers** +4 Climb, +8 Perception, +8 Sense Motive, +8 Stealth**Languages** Abyssal, Aklo, Aquan, Auran, Common, Draconic, Ignan, Infernal, Terran; feral speech**SQ** arcane bond (*ring of protection* +5), arcane discoveries (feral speech)**Gear** headband of mental superiority +6, *ring of protection* +5

The Dead Goddess

If a PC tries to seize the power of Srasama, her avatar rises and attempts to kill the impudent mortal.

Avatar of Srasama

CR 25

XP 1,638,400

N Gargantuan outsider (extraplanar)

Init +12; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +42

Defense

AC 42, touch 30, flat-footed 29 (+12 Dex, +1 dodge, +9 insight, +12 natural, +2 sacred, -4 size)**hp** 555 (30d10+390); fast healing 20**Fort** +24, **Ref** +30, **Will** +27**Defensive Abilities** evasion, mind blank; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, death effects, fire, poison, negative energy; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30; **SR** 36



Offense

Speed 80 ft.

Melee +5 flaming burst longsword +41/+36/+31/+26 (4d6+19/19-20 plus 1d6 fire),
+5 flaming burst longsword +41/+36/+31 (4d6+19/19-20 plus 1d6 fire)

Special Attacks final scorn, guttering desperation

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 25th; concentration +33)

Constant—*freedom of movement*, *mind blank*, *tongues*, *true seeing*

At will—*alter self*, *greater arcane sight*, *greater dispel magic*, *greater invisibility*,
greater scrying (DC 26), *greater teleport*, *wall of thorns*

3/day—*banishment* (DC 27), *quickened greater dispel magic*, *heal*,
empowered horrid wilting (DC 27), *spell turning*

1/day—*limited wish*, *mage's disjunction* (DC 28), *power word kill*

Statistics

Str 38, **Dex** 34, **Con** 34, **Int** 30, **Wis** 28, **Cha** 28

Base Atk +30; **CMB** +50; **CMD** 76

Feats Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Deflect ArrowsB, Die Hard, Dodge, Endurance, Empower Spell-Like Ability (*horrid wilting*), Great Fortitude, Greater Two-Weapon Fighting, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Two-Weapon Fighting, Iron Will, Power Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Toughness, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*greater dispel magic*)

Skills Acrobatics +45 (+65 to jump), Appraise +40, Bluff +42, Climb, Diplomacy +39, Heal +42, Intimidate +42, Knowledge (history) +40, Knowledge (nature) +40, Knowledge (planes) +43, Knowledge (religion) +43, Perception +42, Sleight of Hand +42, Sense Motive +42, Stealth +33, Use Magic Device +39

Languages Elven; *tongues*

SQ dead god, focused animosity, tripartite aspect

Special Abilities

Dead God (Ex) Once a creature attacks or otherwise actively opposes the Avatar of Srasama, that creature takes 1 point of Constitution drain at the end of each of its turn

until the avatar is destroyed or Srasama chooses to end the battle. Whenever a creature takes Constitution drain in this way, the avatar can either make a new saving throw to remove a negative condition affecting her or gain 5 temporary hit points.

Final Scorn (Ex) When Srasama is slain, she chooses one foe that has most earned her ire. The three aspects teleport adjacent to that creature and merge into one. Srasama makes a full attack against that foe, then collapses and dies. All creatures within 500 feet must make a DC 34 Will save or be stunned for 1 round. If they have less than 50 hp, they fall unconscious instead. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Focused Animosity (Ex) Srasama begins combat with only 185 hit points. Her attacks can only affect the PC who grabbed the necklace from Dala, and they simply pass through other creatures harmlessly.

However, if another creature attacks or intentionally impedes Srasama, she gains the ability to harm that creature, she adds 185 hit points to her hit point pool, and she can now take two standard actions on her turn, divided between two bodies.

If a third foe interferes, she gains another 185 hit points (to her maximum of 555 hit points) and each of her three bodies can act each round.

If more than 3 foes attack Srasama, she does not gain any more power.

Guttering Desperation (Su) As a standard action, Srasama can command enemies within 100 feet of her to grovel for their lives. Any target that fails a DC 34 Fortitude save catches on fire, taking 15d6 damage each round. Half of this damage is fire damage, but the other half results directly from divine power and is therefore not subject to being reduced by resistance to fire-based attacks. If a creature ends its turn prone, it can attempt another DC 34 Fortitude save to end this ongoing damage. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Tripartite Aspect (Ex) At the beginning of combat, Srasama divides into three bodies. Each body can take a move and a swift action every turn, and each can make attacks of opportunity, but only one body can take a standard action any given turn (or a full-round action if it doesn't take a move action). They share hit points, but conditions only affect the specific body they struck.



Contingent Ambush

Adventure 13

Ob forces use Lauryn Cyneburg's teleportation powers to divide the party while Kaja and constructs deliver withering gunfire. Pardo and the occultists blast the party with devastating spells, making it critical to take them out early. The screaming malice is a big dumb monster that the PCs might want to keep their distance from. The Ash Wolf can come to the party's aid, if needed.

Lauryn Cyneburg

CR 18

XP 153,600

Female half-elf sorcerer 19

CN Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +7; **Senses** low-light vision, *true seeing*; Perception +14

Defense

AC 28, touch 17, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +3 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge, +3 natural, +4 shield)**hp** 159 (19d6+61)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +17, **Will** +20; +2 vs. enchantments, +5 vs. spells or spell-like abilities**Defensive Abilities** hivemind presence; **DR** 10/adamantine (150 points);**Immune** charms, compulsions, fear, sleep

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Melee** mwk fist +13/+8 (1d4-1)**Ranged** mwk insult +17 (mild embarrassment)**Special Attacks** gestalt strike**Sorcerer Spells Known** (CL 19th; concentration +30)9th (4/day)—*dominate monster* (DC 26), *freedom*, *teleportation circle*8th (6/day)—*discern location*, *maze*, *protection from spells*, *power word stun*7th (7/day)—*delayed blast fireball* (DC 24), *greater hostile juxtaposition* (DC 24), *greater teleport*, *phase door*, *teleport trap* (DC 24)6th (7/day)—*contingency*, *sending*, *true seeing*, *veil*5th (7/day)—*damnation stride* (DC 22), *dominate**person* (DC 22), *mind fog* (DC 22), *prying eyes*, *teleport*4th (7/day)—*dimension door*, *dimensional anchor*, *greater invisibility*, *locate creature*, *screaming*, *wall of fire*3rd (8/day)—*dispel magic*, *hold person* (DC 20),*major image*, *nondetection*, *protection from energy*2nd (8/day)—*darkvision*, *invisibility*, *rope trick*, *scorching ray*, *spider climb*, *whispering wind*1st (8/day)—*disguise self*, *identify*, *mage armor*, *shield*, *unseen servant*0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 18),*ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic***Bloodline** arcane**Contingency** When knocked unconscious, teleport to Flint's teleportation beacon

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 16, **Con** 16, **Int** 13, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 25**Base Atk** +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 24**Feats** Agile Steps, Combat Casting, Dimensional Agility, Dodge, Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Improved Counterspell, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, Nimble Moves, Silent Spell, Quicken Spell**Skills** Bluff +19, Knowledge (arcana) +13, Knowledge (geography) +13, Knowledge (planes) +24, Perception +14, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +17**Languages** Common, Elven, Primordial **SQ** bloodline arcane (+1 to DC of spells affected by metamagic), bonded item (any known spell 1/day), hivemind presence, metamagic

adept (5/day, no increase of casting time), dimensional hop (teleport as move action, in 5-ft. increments, up to 190 ft. per day; can bring willing creatures, but each uses an equal amount of your distance)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of fly*; **Other Gear** *amulet of natural armor* +3, *belt of physical might* (Dex, Con) +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of alluring charisma* +6, *ring of protection* +3, ivory statuette worth 1,500 gp (focus for *contingency*), diamond worth 500 gp, (for *protection from spells*), eye ointment worth 250 gp (for *true seeing*), powdered lodestones and silver worth 500 gp (for *teleport trap*), diamond worth 25,000 gp (because why not?), 4,000 gp

Defensive Spell Suite Before combat, Lauryn casts *mage armor*, *shield*, *true seeing*, and *protection from energy* (against a type of energy a PC favors). She casts *protection from spells* on herself, Kaja, and Kaja's eidolon. She also benefits from Kaja's *greater heroism* and *communal stoneskin* spells. These effects are factored into her stat block.

Special Abilities

Gestalt Strike (Su) At an initiative count 10 points higher than her own, Lauryn's hivemind lashes out at a creature within 200 feet, dealing 10d6 damage and causing the target to move its speed in a direction of Lauryn's choice (Will DC 26 negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Hivemind Presence (Su) Two ghost councilors are bonded to Lauryn through the Obscurati's hivemind. Their presence grants her a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect), renders her immune to charms and compulsions, and allows her to use gestalt strike. Whenever she fails a Will save against a harmful effect, instead of harming her it harms the ghosts. The first time this happens, the councilors snarl as they become briefly visible. Once this happens three times or if the ghosts are dealt 50 points of positive energy damage, they are destroyed. She loses all the benefits of this ability, and while she remains loyal to the Obscurati, a DC 40 Diplomacy check or a successful *break enchantment* spell against a 20th caster level effect can snap her out of the hivemind altogether. A spirit medium who sees a creature with this ability immediately knows how it functions and how to overcome it

Kaja Stewart

CR 18

XP 153,600

Female human unchained summoner 19

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +11; **Senses** Perception +14

Defense

AC 37, touch 20, flat-footed 30 (+8 armor, +3 deflection, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +5 natural, +4 shield)**hp** 199 (19d8+114)**Fort** +20, **Reflex** +20, **Will** +21; +4 vs. spells or spell-like abilities**Defensive Abilities** greater shield ally, hivemind presence, life bond;**DR** 10/adamantine (150 points); **Immune** charm, compulsions, fear; **SR** 20

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Ranged** +1 *revolver* +23/+18/+13 (1d8+1/19-20/x4) and +1 *revolver* +23/+18/+14 (1d8+1/19-20/x4)or +1 *double-barreled shotgun* +25/+20 (1d8+1 spread or 2d6+1 slug)**Special Attacks** artillery barrage, gestalt strike, summon ballistics 6/day



Summoner Spells Known (CL 19th; concentration +22)

6th (4/day)—*acid fog*, *banishment* (DC 19), *greater heroism*, *summon monster VII*
 5th (5/day)—*communal stonesskin*, *greater dispel magic*, *hold monster* (DC 18),
hungry pit (DC 18), *sending*
 4th (5/day)—*charm monster* (DC 17), *communal protection from energy*,
greater invisibility, *major creation*, *transmogrify*
 3rd (6/day)—*ablative barrier*, *displacement*, *fly*, *minor creation*, *greater magic fang*,
pellet blast (DC 16)
 2nd (6/day)—*ablative barrier*, *barkskin*, *cat's grace*, *create pit* (DC 15), *fog cloud*,
protection from arrows, *see invisibility*
 1st (6/day)—*alarm*, *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *shield*, *unseen servant*,
ventriloquism (DC 14)
 0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *read magic*, *resistance*

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 22, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +17; **CMD** 33

Feats Deadly Aim, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Critical (revolver), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Skill Focus (Knowledge [planes]), Two-Weapon Fighting

Skills Craft (weapons) +19, Knowledge (arcana) +29, Knowledge (planes) +35, Perception +14, Spellcraft +29, Use Magic Device +30

Languages Common, Orc, Primordial

SQ bond senses, greater aspect (ability increase [Con x2]), life link, maker's call 4/day, merge forms (19 rounds), transposition

Gear +4 *mithral shirt*, +1 *revolvers* (2), *belt of incredible dexterity* +4, *bracelet of second chances*, *cloak of resistance* +4, *extend metamagic rod*, *ring of protection* +3, *scarab of protection*, 3 diamonds worth 1,000 gp each (focus for *protection from spells*), diamond dust worth 1,500 gp (material component for *communal stonesskin*)

Defensive Spell Suite Before combat, Kaja casts *shield*, *barkskin*, and *communal protection from energy* on herself and her eidolon. She casts *greater magic fang*, *cat's grace* and *fly* on her eidolon, and also casts *greater heroism* and *communal stonesskin* on herself, her eidolon, and Lauryn. The spells are factored into their stat blocks.

Special Abilities

Artillery Barrage (Su) Once per day, Kaja can conjure a trio of mortar shells fired from miles away to her location. They fall from the sky and strike three squares within 500 feet. These squares must be at least 30 feet apart. The shells explode upon impact, dealing 6d6 points of bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage to all creatures in a 30-foot radius (Reflex DC 25 for half). A creature that fails its save is also knocked prone. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Gestalt Strike (Su) At an initiative count 10 points higher than her own, Kaja's hivemind lashes out at a creature within 200 feet, dealing 10d6 damage and causing the target to fall prone as it tries to avoid hallucinatory explosions (Will DC 22 negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Hivemind Presence (Su) Two ghost councilors are bonded to Kaja through the Obscurati's hivemind. Their presence grants her a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect), renders her immune to charms and compulsions, and allows her to use gestalt strike. Whenever she fails a Will save against a harmful effect, instead of harming her it harms the ghosts. The first time this happens, the councilors snarl as they become briefly visible. Once this happens three times or if the ghosts are dealt 50 points of positive energy damage, they are destroyed. She loses all the benefits of this ability, and while she remains loyal to the Obscurati, a DC 40 Diplomacy check or a successful *break enchantment* spell against a 20th caster level effect can snap her out of the hivemind altogether. A spirit medium who sees a creature with this ability immediately knows how it functions and how to overcome it.

Summon Ballistics (Sp) As a swift action six times per day, Kaja may summon any firearms she owns into her hands. They appear fully loaded. She can use this to summon two +1 *revolvers* or a single +1 *double-barreled shotgun*. Alternatively, she may use two uses of this ability to duplicate the effects of an *arcane cannon* spell (CL 19th).

Iron Bodyguard, Kaja's Eidolon

CR –

LN Large outsider (inevitable)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +23

Defense

AC 45, touch 16, flat-footed 38 (+2 armor, +6 Dex, +1 dodge, +23 natural, +4 shield, -1 size)

hp 161 (15d10+79)

Fort +16, **Ref** +15, **Will** +13; +4 vs. enchantment, mind-affecting, paralysis, sleep, stun; +8 vs. spells and spell-like abilities

Defensive Abilities improved evasion; **DR** 10/adamantine (150 points), 5/chaotic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, fear necromancy effects, nonlethal damage, poison, sleep; **SR** 30

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee 4 +1 *slams* +29 (2d6+10/19-20 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Statistics

Str 28, **Dex** 22, **Con** 16, **Int** 7, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +29 (+33 grapple); **CMD** 42

Feats Bodyguard, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (slam), In Harm's Way, Power Attack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Acrobatics +27, Intimidate +23, Perception +23, Stealth +23

SQ evolutions (grab, limbs [arms] x2, limbs [legs], large, slam x2, spell resistance), link, share spells, true speech



**Pardo, Hand of the Obscurati**

CR 18

XP 153,600

Male duplicant gnoll oracle 16

NE Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +3; **Senses** blindsense 30 ft., darkvision 60 ft.; **Perception** +2**Defenses****AC** 28, touch 13, flat-footed 24 (+7 armor, +4 deflection, -1 Dex, +6 natural, +2 shield)
hp 183 (18d8+106)**Fort** +15, **Ref** +10, **Will** +15; +4 vs. mind-affecting, paralysis, poison, and stun**Defensive Abilities** constructed, hivemind presence; **DR** 10/adamantine;**Immune** charms, compulsions, disease, exhaustion, fatigue, fire, sleep**Weaknesses** metal shell**Offense****Speed** 40 ft., fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Melee** +1 *spear* +19/+14/+9 (1d8+8/x3)**Ranged** +1 *spear* +13 (1d8+8/x3)**Special Attacks** burning magic, fire breath 4/day (15-ft.cone, DC 25, 16d4 fire),
firestorm (16d6, DC 25), gestalt strike**Oracle Spells Known** (CL 16th; concentration +23)8th (3/day)—*incendiary cloud* (DC 25), *mass inflict critical wounds* (DC 25),
unholy aura (DC 25)7th (6/day)—*destruction* (DC 24), *fire storm* (DC 26), *mass inflict serious wounds*
(DC 24), *repulsion* (DC 24)6th (7/day)—*blade barrier* (DC 25), *fire seeds* (DC 25), *harm* (DC 23), *heal*,
mass inflict moderate wounds (DC 23)5th (7/day)—*flame strike* (DC 24), *mass inflict light wounds* (DC 22), *slay living*
(DC 22), *summon monster V* (fire elementals only)4th (7/day)—*air walk*, *divine power*, *freedom of movement*, *greater command* (DC 21),
inflict critical wounds (DC 21), *poison* (DC 21), *righteous might*, *wall of fire*3rd (8/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 20), *cure serious wounds*, *dispel magic*,
inflict serious wounds (DC 20), *fireball* (DC 22), *magic vestment*2nd (8/day)—*augury*, *bull's strength*, *death knell* (DC 19), *hold person* (DC 19),
inflict moderate wounds (DC 19), *resist energy*, *shatter* (DC 21)1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 20), *command* (DC 18), *doom* (DC 18), *inflict light*
wounds (DC 18), *murderous command* (DC 18), *sanctuary* (DC 18), *shield of faith*0 (at will)—*bleed*, *create water*, *detect magic*, *guidance*, *light*, *mending*, *read magic*,
resistance, *stabilize***Mystery** flame**Statistics****Str** 20, **Dex** 8, **Con** 18, **Int** 10, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 25**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 31**Feats** Acrobatic Steps, Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Nimble Steps, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spell Focus (evocation), Toughness**Skills** Bluff +26, Diplomacy +21, Disable Device +14, Knowledge (history) +14, Intimidate +26, Linguistics +2**Languages** Common, Draconic, Gnoll**SQ** oracle's curse (wrecker), revelations (burning magic, cinder dance, fire breath, firestorm, molten skin)**Gear** +1 *hide armor*, +1 *spear*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of physical might* +2 [Str, Con], *cloak of resistance* +4, *headband of alluring charisma* +4, *ring of force shield*, *ring of protection* +4, tiny reliquary worth 500 gp (focus for *unholy aura*), unholy symbol worth 500 gp (focus for *destruction*)**Special Abilities****Burning Magic (Ex)** When a creature fails a saving throw and takes fire damage from one of Pardo's spells, that creature catches on fire. The fire lasts 1d4 rounds, doing 1 damage per spell level. The character can spend a move action to make a Reflex save (same as the spell's original DC) to put out the flames.**Gestalt Strike (Su)** At an initiative count 10 points higher than his own, Pardo's hivemind lashes out at a creature within 200 feet, dealing 10d6 damage (Will DC 26 negates). A creature who fails its save also moves its speed as a free action and makes an attack or casts a 1st-level spell of Pardo's choice against another target of Pardo's choice. The save DC is Charisma-based.**Hivemind Presence (Su)** Two ghost councilors are bonded to Pardo through the Obscurati's hivemind. Their presence grants him a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect), renders him immune to charms and compulsions, and allows him to use gestalt strike. Whenever he fails a Will save against a harmful effect, instead of harming him it harms the ghosts. The first time this happens, the councilors snarl as they become briefly visible. Once this happens three times or if the ghosts are dealt 50 points of positive energy damage, they are destroyed. He loses all the benefits of this ability, and while he remains loyal to the Obscurati, a DC 40 Diplomacy check or a successful *break enchantment* spell against a 20th caster level effect can snap him out of the hivemind altogether. A spirit medium who sees a creature with this ability immediately knows how it functions and how to overcome it.**Wrecker (Ex)** Pardo's attacks against inanimate objects ignore up to 16 points of hardness, and his attacks against constructs ignore any non-epic DR. Objects he holds gain the broken condition for as long as he holds them. He can make Disable Device checks to destroy non-magical traps as a move action without the need to use tools or take any action beyond simply touching it. Whenever he is dealt damage by an attack with a manufactured weapon, he can require the weapon's wielder to make a DC 25 Reflex save to avoid having the weapon collapse into dust immediately after striking him (magical weapons receive an additional saving throw against this effect).

**Obscurati Construct Squad**

CR 15

XP 51,200

N Medium construct (troop)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +30**Defense****AC** 34, touch 14, flat-footed 30 (+4 Dex, +20 natural)**hp** 152 (24d10+20)**Fort** +8, **Ref** +12, **Will** +8**Defensive Abilities** troop traits; **DR** 15/adamantine**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** troop (4d10+10)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** concussive grenades (DC 26), turret fusillade (DC 26)**Statistics****Str** 30, **Dex** 18, **Con** -, **Int** -, **Wis** 11, **Cha** -**Base Atk** +24; **CMB** +34; **CMD** 48**Feats** Combat Reflexes^(B)**Languages** Common (can't speak)**Special Abilities**

Concussive Grenades (Ex) As a standard action once per day, an Obscurati construct squad can hurl concussive grenades at any four squares within 100 feet. They explode upon impact, dealing 6d6 sonic damage in a 10-foot-radius burst (DC 26 Reflex for half). Creatures that fail their saves are pushed 10 feet away from the center of the area. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Turret Fusillade (Ex) An Obscurati construct squad can fire a fusillade of bullets from their shoulder-mounted turrets as a standard action. This attack takes the form of up to four lines with a range of 200 feet. These lines can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. All creatures in one of these lines' areas of effect take 6d10+4 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (DC 26 Reflex for half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Witchoil Fueled (Su) Engines churn in the chests of these black metal humanoids, and rotten smoke billows from vents behind their shoulders. Whenever the squad takes damage that is not from a positive energy source, its space becomes stained with witchoil. Creatures that enter or end their turn in that space must make a Fortitude save (DC 22) or take 1d4 points of Constitution damage. The witchoil is highly flammable, though, and any fire damage to the area ignites and clears it.

Elite Obscurati Occultist

CR 15

XP 51,200

Male human illusionist (shadow) 16

N Medium humanoid (human)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +18**Defense****AC** 22, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+4 armor, +4 deflection, +4 shield)**hp** 136 (16d6+21)**Fort** +13, **Ref** +11, **Will** +16**Offense****Speed** 30 ft.**Melee** +1 dagger +8/+3 (1d4/19–20)**Illusionist Spell-Like Abilities** (CL 16th, concentration +27)

at will—shadow step (390 ft. per day)

7/day—binding darkness

Illusionist Spells Prepared (CL 16th, concentration +27)8th—*greater shadow evocation* (DC 27), *orb of the void* (DC 25),
scintillating pattern (DC 27)7th—*finger of death* (2, DC 24), *greater arcane sight*,
greater shadow conjuration (DC 26)6th—*eyebite* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic*, *shadow walk*, *veil* (DC 25)5th—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *mirage arcana* (DC 24), *shadow evocation* (DC 24),
telepathic bond, *wall of force* (2)4th—*black tentacles*, *dimension door*, *greater invisibility*, *phantasmal killer* (2, DC 22),
shadow conjuration (DC 22)3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *invisibility sphere*, *major image* (DC 21),
ray of exhaustion, *vampiric touch*2nd—*blur*, *blindness/deafness* (2, DC 19), *darkness*, *ghoul touch* (DC 19),
mirror image, *spectral hand*1st—*disguise self*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *shield*,
shocking grasp (2), *vanish*0 (at will)—*bleed*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *open/close***Opposition Schools** enchantment, transmutation**Statistics****Str** 8, **Dex** 10, **Con** 15, **Int** 24, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 13**Base Atk** +8; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 17**Feats** Brew Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Combat Casting, Greater Spell Focus (illusion),
Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus
(Stealth), Silent Spell, Spell Focus (illusion), Spell Penetration, Toughness**Skills** Appraise +26, Craft (alchemy) +26, Fly +10, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge
(history) +31, Knowledge (planes) +26, Intimidate +17, Perception +18, Spellcraft +26,
Stealth +22**Languages** Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Infernal, Primordial**SQ** arcane bond (dagger)**Combat Gear** *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of darkvision*; **Other Gear**
+1 dagger, *amulet of natural armor* +3, *bag of holding* (type I), *belt of mighty*
constitution +2, *cloak of resistance* +4, *gloves of arrow snaring*, *ring of protection*
+4, *scholar's ring*, 5 black onyxes worth 50 gp each (material component for *orb of*
the void)**Defensive Spell Suite** Before combat, an elite Obscurati occultist casts *greater arcane*
sight, *telepathic bond*, *mirror image*, *mage armor*, and *shield*. These effects are
calculated into their stat blocks.**The Screaming Malice**

CR 22

XP 614,400

N Gargantuan aberration

Init +4; **Senses** blindsight 120 ft., low-light vision; Perception +41**Defense****AC** 40, touch 6, flat-footed 40 (+34 natural, -4 size)**hp** 405 (30d8+270)**Fort** +20 **Ref** +10, **Will** +21**Defensive Abilities** all-around vision; **Immune** mind-affecting effects**Weaknesses** ponderously gargantuan**Offense****Speed** 30 ft., swim 60 ft.**Melee** 5 bites +35 (6d6+16/19–20)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.**Special Attacks** shriek



Statistics

Str 42, **Dex** 10, **Con** 26, **Int** 2, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +22; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 32 (can't be tripped)

Feats Ability Focus (shriek), Awesome Blow, Diehard, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite)

Skills Perception +41

SQ many-headed

Special Abilities

Many-Headed (Ex) The screaming malice has five heads, each of which occupies its own space of 10 ft. When the malice moves it can move its heads to any space within 25 ft. of its body. On its turn the malice can take one move action, plus one standard action for each head. It cannot trade these standard actions for additional movement.

The heads are part of the malice, and so share its defenses and hit points. Unlike the last time the party faced this beast, they're strong enough now so conditions they inflict can affect the entire creature.

A head can be severed with a successful sunder attack that deals at least 50 points of damage. At the end of the malice's turn, it regrows any severed heads, restoring itself to five heads.

Ponderously Gargantuan (Ex) The screaming malice can only make attacks against creatures adjacent to one of its heads. It takes a -5 penalty to attack rolls against creatures adjacent to its main body.

Shriek (Ex) As a standard action, a head can roar entrancingly at an adjacent creature. The creature takes 5d8 sonic damage and is slowed for 1 round, as per the *slow* spell (DC 36 Will negates). The save DC is Constitution-based.

The Ash Wolf, Weakened

CR 21

CN Colossal magical beast (fey titan)

Init +18; **Senses** darkvision 600 ft., true seeing, scent; Perception +38

Defense

AC 44, touch 17, flat-footed 21 (+14 Dex, +1 dodge, +27 natural, -8 size); +4 vs. opportunity attacks

hp 413 (25d8+300)

Fort +26, **Ref** +28, **Will** +20

Defensive Abilities ferocity; **DR** 20/epic; **Immune** ability damage, ability drain, death effects, disease, energy drain, fear; **Resist** fire 50, acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, negative energy 30, sonic 30

Offense

Speed 100 ft.

Melee bite +36 (6d12+40/17-20 plus grab or trip)

Space 60 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks carry off, critical hits, hurl foe, hurl tree

Spell-like Abilities (CL 25th; concentration +35)

Constant—*freedom of movement*, *pass without trace*, *true seeing*
At will—*bestow curse* (DC 23), *pyrotechnics*, *transmute metal to wood*
3/day—*commune with nature*
1/day—*fire storm* (DC 27)

Statistics

Str 48, **Dex** 38, **Con** 34, **Int** 15, **Wis** 30, **Cha** 24

Base Atk +25; **CMB** +52 (+56 grab); **CMD** 76 (80 vs. trip)

Feats Bleeding Critical, Combat Expertise, Critical Focus, Dismembering Critical, Dodge, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Natural Attack (bite), Iron Will, Mobility, Skill Focus (Stealth), Spring Attack

Skills Acrobatics +14 (+42 to jump), Knowledge (nature) +27, Perception +38, Perform (sing) +32, Stealth +29

Languages Primordial

SQ fey link, titanic

Special Abilities

Carry Off (Ex) Due to his immense size and incredible speed, the Ash Wolf's preferred tactic is to dash out from the smoke of a forest fire, bite and grab a foe, then sprint away to separate his victim from his allies. To accomplish this, the Ash Wolf uses *hunting surge*, then spring attacks in, jumps over the party, makes a bite attack (typically against an unarmored foe), and takes a -20 penalty to his combat maneuver check to grapple the target. If he succeeds, he does not gain the grappled condition himself and can carry the creature off.

Critical Hits (Ex) Due to his critical feats, when the Father of Thunder confirms a critical hit with his bite, he inflicts 2d6 bleed damage, and the target must succeed a Fortitude save (DC 35) or lose a limb. He has a +4 bonus on all critical confirmation rolls.

Hunting Surge (Su) As a swift action, the Ash Wolf releases a howl that focuses his predatory might. Until the end of his turn he gains a +200 bonus to his speed (granting him a total of +122 to jump checks, so he can easily clear 30 vertical feet). He cannot use this power again on his next turn.

Hurl Tree (Ex) If the Ash Wolf attacks a tree (or other massive object) it can uproot it and hurl it up to 400 feet. The area affected varies slightly based on the projectile, but creatures in a roughly 40-ft. radius take 20d6 damage (Reflex DC 30 half). The hurled object likely knocks down a swath of other trees in its path, and at the GM's discretion creatures in a 40-ft. wide line out to the destination take 5d6 damage (Reflex DC 24 half).

Lost Powers (Ex) The Ash Wolf now lacks its Fast Healing, Recovery, Smoky Mate, and Pack Bond abilities. It is not accompanied by smoldering wolves. Otherwise its powers are the same as when the party last encountered it.

You and Your Friends

Adventure 13

This battle definitely pits Harkover Lee in dragon form against the party, but they might also have to deal with Gale and Delft unless they free them from Ob control ahead of time. Both Delft and Gale are empowered by hiveminds, and if freed from them they are unfortunately not strong enough to contribute in open battle against Harkover.

Harkover Lee, Dragon Tyrant

CR 23

XP 819,200

Male advanced mature adult red dragon fighter 1/sorcerer 0

LN Huge dragon (fire)

Init +4; **Senses** dragon senses, *see invisibility*, smoke vision; Perception +36

Aura fire aura (5-ft., 1d6 fire), frightful presence (210-ft., DC 32)

Defense

AC 52, touch 16, flat-footed 44 (+4 armor, +7 Dex, +1 dodge, +28 natural, +4 shield, -2 size)

hp 454 plus 200 temporary (see hivemind pinnacle) (30 HD; 19d12+1d10+10d6+300)

Fort +24, **Ref** +22, **Will** +24; +8 vs. mind-affecting, spells, and spell-like

Defensive Abilities half damage from acid and electricity; **DR** 10/adamantine (150 points), 10/magic; **Immune** ability score damage, blindness, charms, compulsions, critical hits, deafness, disease, drowning, *magic missile*, poison, stunning, spells that affect physiology or respiration, sleep; **Resist** acid 30, cold 30, electricity 30, sonic 30; **SR** 26

Weaknesses vulnerability to cold

Offense

Speed 70 ft., fly 70 ft. (perfect) or 230 ft. (poor)

Melee bite +37/+37 (2d8+19/19-20 plus 3d6 fire), 2 claws +37 (2d6+13 plus 3d6 fire), 2 wings +35 (1d8+6 plus 3d6 fire), tail slap +35 (2d6+19 plus 3d6 fire)



Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft. (15 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (50-ft. cone, 14d10 fire damage, Reflex DC 35 half, usable every 1d4 rounds), crush (Small creatures, DC 35, 2d8+19)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 19th; concentration +30)

At will—*detect magic*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 19), *suggestion* (DC 20)

Spells Known (CL 21st; concentration +32)

9th (6/day)—*fiery body*, *meteor swarm* (DC 27), *time stop*

8th (6/day)—*mind blank*, *prediction of failure* (DC 25), *protection from spells*

7th (6/day)—*delayed blast fireball* (DC 25), *greater teleport*, *spell turning*

6th (6/day)—*chains of fire* (DC 24), *major curse* (DC 22), *greater dispel magic*

5th (6/day)—*break enchantment*, *fickle winds*, *fire snake* (DC 23), *sending*

4th (7/day)—*dimensional anchor*, *dimension door*, *fear* (DC 21), *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fireball* (DC 21), *fly*, *haste*

2nd (7/day)—*alter self*, *mirror image*, *misdirection*, *resist energy*, *scorching ray*, *see invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *grease* (DC 18), *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*

0th (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed*, *detect poison*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Bloodline draconic (red)

Statistics

Str 36, **Dex** 24, **Con** 28, **Int** 22, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +25; **CMB** +40; **CMD** 57 (61 vs. trip)

Feats Arcane Strike, Bodyguard, Catch Off-Guard, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dispel Critical, Eschew Materials, Empower Spell, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Reposition, In Harm's Way, Multiattack, Power Attack, Repositioning Strike, Riving Strike, Quick Reposition, Quicken Spell, Toughness

Skills Appraise +32, Bluff +38, Fly +28, Intimidate +30, Knowledge (arcana) +38, Knowledge (nobility) +32, Perception +36, Sense Motive +38, Spellcraft +38, Stealth +18

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Orc, Primordial

SQ bloodline arcana (fire spells deal +1 damage per die), change shape (specific humanoid form, *polymorph*), hivemind pinnacle

Gear golden orb, *orange prism ioun stone*

Defensive Spell Suite Before combat, Harkover casts *fiery body*, *mind blank*, *protection from spells*, *spell turning*, *fickle winds*, *stoneskin*, *haste*, *mirror image*, *see invisibility*, *mage armor*, *shield*, and *resist energy* four times (one for each energy type except fire). These spells are factored into his stat block.

Special Abilities

Change Shape (Su) Harkover spends most of his time in human form. In this form, he is Medium-sized, removing his -2 size penalty to AC and attacks. He loses access to his breath weapon, frightful presence, and natural attacks. He can change to his dragon form as a free action.

Hivemind Pinnacle (Su) Harkover is a critical part of the Obscurati's plan, so the two ghost councilors bound to him shield him from mental assault and physical injury. They render him immune to charms and compulsions and grant him the benefits of the advanced creature template, as well as 200 temporary hit points. After he takes 50 damage, the councilors snarl as they become briefly visible. Once Harkover loses all of his temporary hit points, the councilors briefly lose their grip on him, and on Harkover's next round all he does is force out a warning—perhaps about how to disable the explosion, or about how Cherage's rail enclave is where the lanterns in that city are controlled. Thereafter, the ghost councilors reassert control, and Harkover will fight until reduced to 0 hp.

Fire Aura (Su) Harkover is surrounded by an aura of intense heat. All creatures within 5 feet take 1d6 points of fire damage at the beginning of his turn.

Smoke Vision (Ex) Harkover can see perfectly in smoky conditions (such as those created by *pyrotechnics*).

Clever Melee Tactics (Ex) Harkover's combat feats let him use the reposition combat maneuver in place of one attack as part of a full attack, and when he scores a critical hit, he compares his confirmation roll to the target's CMD to reposition the target, in addition to the critical hit's normal effect. When he scores a critical he can also cast *dispel magic* as a swift action as a targeted dispel against that opponent. He typically uses arcane strike if he's going to make a full attack, and whenever he damages a foe with an attack augmented by arcane strike, that creature takes a -2 penalty on saving throws against spells and spell-like abilities for 1 round.



Stover Delft of the Secret Police

CR 17

XP 102,400

Male human rogue (investigator) 18

LG Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +25

Defense

AC 26, touch 18, flat-footed 20 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +5 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural)
hp 81 (18d8)

Fort +8, **Ref** +17, **Will** +10

Defensive Abilities hivemind presence, improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trap sense +5; **Immune** charms, compulsions

Offense

Speed 20 ft. (due to leg wound)

Melee +1 *wounding sword cane* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+1)

Ranged +1 *pistol* +19 (1d8+1/x4)

Special Attacks gestalt strike, sneak attack +9d6

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 20, **Con** 10, **Int** 13, **Wis** 15, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +13; **CMD** 29



Feats Alertness, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Greater Feint, Improved Feint, Martial Weapon Proficiency (sword cane), Persuasive, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (sword cane)

Skills Acrobatics +20, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +25, Escape Artist +23, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (engineering) +12, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (local) +18, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Perception +25, Sense Motive +25, Stealth +25

Languages Common, Primordial

SQ follow up, rogue talents (canny observer, coax information, defensive roll, distracting attack, follow clues, hunter's surprise, improved evasion, slippery mind, thoughtful reexamining)

Gear +4 leather armor, +1 wounding sword cane, +1 pistol, amulet of natural armor +2, belt of incredible dexterity +4, boots of speed, cloak of resistance +2, dust of appearance, ring of protection +2, salve of slipperiness

Special Abilities

Gestalt Strike (Su) At an initiative count 10 points higher than his own, Stover's hivemind lashes out at a creature within 200 feet, dealing 10d6 damage and compelling the creature to hide from Stover as per a *suggestion* spell (CL 18th, Will DC 21 negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Hivemind Presence (Su) Two ghost councilors are bonded to Stover through the Obscurati's hivemind. Their presence grants him a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect), renders him immune to charms and compulsions, and allows him to use gestalt strike. Whenever he fails a Will save against a harmful effect, instead of harming him it harms the ghosts. The first time this happens, the councilors snarl as they become briefly visible. Once this happens three times or if the ghosts are dealt 50 points of positive energy damage, they are destroyed. He loses all the benefits of this ability, and while he remains loyal to the Obscurati, a DC 40 Diplomacy check or a successful *break enchantment* spell against a 20th caster level effect can snap him out of the hivemind altogether. A spirit medium who sees a creature with this ability immediately knows how it functions and how to overcome it.

Hana Soliogn, Obscurati Loyalist

CR 17

XP 102,400

Female eladrin sorcerer 18

CN Medium humanoid (eladrin)

Init +5, **Senses** Perception +15, low-light vision

Defense

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +3 deflection, +1 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 shield)
hp 144 (18d6+72)

Fort +11, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15; +2 vs. charm and compulsion

Defensive Abilities bolstered will, hivemind presence; **Immune** charms, compulsions, wind; **Resist** electricity 20

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (average)

Special Attacks control winds, gestalt strike

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th, concentration +25)

Constant—*overland flight*, *speak with animals* (flying animals only)

10/day—elemental ray (1d6+9 electricity)

2/day—elemental blast (18d6, DC 27)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 18th, concentration +26)

9th (3/day)—*winds of vengeance* (DC 29)

8th (6/day)—*polar ray*, *stormbolts* (DC 28), *summon monster VIII* (elementals only)

7th (7/day)—*elemental body IV*, *mass fly*, *prismatic spray* (DC 27), *scouring winds*

6th (7/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 26), *elemental body III*, *path of the winds* (DC 26), *sirocco* (DC 26)

5th (7/day)—*cloudkill* (DC 23), *elemental body II*, *fickle winds*, *life bubble*, *lightning arc* (DC 25)

4th (8/day)—*ball lightning* (DC 24), *dimension door*, *elemental body I*, *solid fog*, *shout* (DC 24), *storm shield* (as fire shield, but blocks and deals electricity damage)

3rd (8/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *fly*, *lightning bolt* (DC 23), *nondetection*, *protection from energy*, *sleet storm*

2nd (8/day)—*fog cloud*, *gust of wind*, *levitate*, *protection from arrows*, *scorching ray**, *shatter* (DC 22), *whispering wind*

1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 21)*, *feather fall*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *message*, *shield*, *shocking grasp*

0th—*daze*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*, *resistance*

*These spells deal electricity damage.

Bloodline elemental (air)

Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +8; **CMD** 23

Feats Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Eschew Materials, Empower Spell, Flyby Attack, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Greater Spell Penetration, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration, Toughness

Skills Bluff +12, Diplomacy +12, Fly +12, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Knowledge (nature) +4, Knowledge (nobility) +6, Knowledge (planes) +5, Perception +15, Sense Motive +15, Stealth +10

Languages Common, Elven, Primordial, Sylvan

SQ air affinity, bloodline arcana (change energy damage to electricity), eladrin deathlink

Gear belt of mighty constitution +4, cloak of resistance +3, headband of alluring charisma +4, ring of protection +3, robe of scintillating colors, messenger wind

Special Abilities

Air Affinity (Su) Gale can innately control winds, and is immune to the effects of strong wind. She can fly at will and can speak with flying animals, who usually are friendly to her.

Control Winds (Sp) Gale can control winds in a 360-ft. radius. She can use this ability for up to 13 minutes per day, in chunks of at least one minute at a time. Activating or controlling it is a standard action, maintaining is a free action. She can increase winds by up to three steps (enough to turn a still day into a severe storm of 50 miles per hour), or a strong breeze into a small hurricane). Creatures other than her in the area must make a DC 23 Fortitude save each round to resist the winds.

Gestalt Strike (Su) At an initiative count 10 points higher than her own, Gale's hivemind lashes out at a creature within 200 feet, dealing 10d6 damage and causing to channel storm energy for 1d4 rounds (Will DC 27 negates). While so affected, the creature deals 3d6 electricity damage to itself and all other creatures within 30 feet of it at the start of its turn. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Hivemind Presence (Su) Two ghost councilors are bonded to Gale through the Obscurati's hivemind. Their presence grants her a fly speed of 30 feet (perfect), renders her immune to charms and compulsions, and allows her to use gestalt strike. Whenever she fails a Will save against a harmful effect, instead of harming her it harms the ghosts. The first time this happens, the councilors snarl as they become briefly visible. Once this happens three times or if the ghosts are dealt 50 points of positive energy damage, they are destroyed. She loses all the benefits of this ability, and while she remains loyal to the Obscurati, a DC 40 Diplomacy check or a successful *break enchantment* spell against a 20th caster level effect can snap her out of the hivemind altogether. A spirit medium who sees a creature with this ability immediately knows how it functions and how to overcome it.



City Defense Squad

Adventure 13

Memorize these stats, because they'll show up in multiple locations.

City Defense Squad

CR 13

XP 25,600

LN Medium humanoid (various races, troop)

Init +4; **Senses** Perception +25

Defense

AC 29, touch 15, flat-footed 24 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +14 natural)**hp** 171 (18d8+90)**Fort** +12, **Ref** +17, **Will** +9**Defensive Abilities** troop traits

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** troop (4d8+8)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.**Special Attacks** fusillade (DC 25)

Statistics

Str 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 33**Feats** Ability Focus (fusillade), Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness**Skills** Intimidate +18, Perception +25**Languages** various

Special Abilities

Fusillade (Ex) A city defense squad can fire a fusillade of musket bullets as a standard action. This attack takes the form of up to four lines with a range of 200 feet. These lines can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. All creatures in one of these lines' areas of effect take 4d10+4 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC 25 for half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Statistics

Str 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 33**Feats** Bodyguard, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, In Harm's Way, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Toughness**Skills** Perception +19, Spellcraft +24, Stealth +22**Languages** Common**SQ** expeditious intercept, magical defender, protect ally

Special Abilities

Expeditious Intercept (Su) As a standard action, a bookpin bodyguard squad may move 60 feet.

Magical Defender (Sp) If a bookpin bodyguard squad starts its turn with any allied creatures in its space, it may make dispel check to remove a harmful magical effect on each one as per *dispel magic* (CL 20th).

Protect Ally (Ex) A bookpin bodyguard squad provides soft cover to any creature it recognizes as an ally who shares its space. Such protected allies treat squares occupied by the troop as difficult terrain and must succeed at a concentration check (DC = 15 + spell level) to cast spells while so protected, but do not take troop damage from being within the troop's space.



Arch Secula Natalia Degaspore

CR 16

XP 76,800

Female human aristocrat 18

LN Medium humanoid

Init +5; **Senses** Perception +19**Aura** secular presence (30 ft.)

Defense

AC 25, touch 21, flat-footed 24 (+4 armor, +10 deflection, +1 Dex)**hp** 153 (18d8+72)**Fort** +10, **Ref** +9, **Will** +17**Defensive Abilities** minor hivemind presence

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** mwk dagger +13/+8/+3 (1d4–1/19–20)**Ranged** +1 repeating shotgun +15/+10/+5 (1d8+1)**Special Attacks** submit! (DC 22)

Versus Me and the Revolution

Adventure 13

These battles may reuse the city defense squad stats above, and several use Bookpin Bodyguard Squads. Each of the five encounters is intended to be slightly too difficult for one PC, unless they're clever.

Bookpin Bodyguard Squad

CR 15

XP 51,200

LN Medium humanoid (human, troop)

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +19

Defense

AC 33, touch 16, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +18 natural)**hp** 190 (20d8+100)**Fort** +12, **Ref** +18, **Will** +9**Defensive Abilities** troop traits; **SR** 26

Offense

Speed 20 ft.**Melee** troop (5d8+8)**Space** 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.



Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 12, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 17

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 36

Feats Alertness, Deadly Aim, Defensive Combat Training, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Point-Blank Shot, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Toughness

Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +25, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (history) +13, Knowledge (nobility) +19, Knowledge (religion) +18, Linguistics +5, Perception +19, Perform (oratory) +9, Sense Motive +30

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

Gear +1 repeating shotgun, masterwork dagger, belt of mighty constitution +4, bracers of armor +4, brooch of shielding, cloak of resistance +2, elixir of truth, elixir of vision, figurine of wondrous power (silver raven), headband of mental prowess +2 (Wis, Cha)

Special Abilities

Minor Hivemind Presence (Su) A single ghost councilor is bonded to Natalia through the Obscurati's hivemind. This gives her a +10 deflection bonus to AC. Whenever she fails a Will save against a harmful effect, instead of harming her it harms the ghost. The first time this happens, the councilor snarls as it becomes briefly visible. Once this happens three times or if the ghost is dealt 50 points of positive energy damage, it is destroyed. She loses all the benefits of this ability, and is permanently staggered. While she remains loyal to the Obscurati, a DC 40 Diplomacy check or a successful *break enchantment* spell against a 20th caster level effect can snap her out of the hivemind altogether. A spirit medium who sees a creature with this ability immediately knows how it functions and how to overcome it.

Secular Presence (Su) Spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural abilities deal half damage in the aura. Abilities that do not deal damage have only a 50% chance of affecting creatures in the aura. Powers of magic items cannot be activated in the aura. Powers that have an indirect effect, such as using telekinesis outside the aura to throw something into the aura, function normally. Natalia's own abilities are not suppressed by this aura.

Submit! (Sp) As a standard action, Natalia can focus the will of the city-wide hivemind to try to crush the psyche of a foe within 150 feet. The target must make a Will save (DC 22) or else be sickened for one round, take 7d6+18 points of nonlethal damage, and fall prone. A successful save still sickens, but reduces the damage by half and doesn't cause the target to fall prone.

Another Kind of Chain

Adventure 13

The Ladies of Forked Tongues

Gardienne du Cherage

CR 17

XP 102,400

Female tiefling bard (demagogue) 18

N Medium outsider (native)

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +15

Defense

AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 19 (+7 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +1 dodge)

hp 121 (18d8+36)

Fort +10, **Ref** +16, **Will** +12; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Resist cold 5, electricity 5, fire 5

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +2 keen rapier +17/+12/+7 (1d6+2/15–20)

Ranged +1 seeking shortbow +17/+12/+7 (1d6+1/x3)

Special Attacks bardic performance 41 rounds/day (swift action; countersong, dirge of doom, distraction, fascinate, frightening tune, gather crowd, incite violence, inspire competence +5, inspire courage +3, inspire greatness, inspire heroics, righteous cause, soothing performance)

Spell-like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +25)

1/day—darkness

Bard Spells Known (CL 18th; concentration +25)

6th (4/day)—animate objects, irresistible dance (DC 24), mass charm monster (DC 24), project image (DC 22)

5th (5/day)—greater dispel magic, mislead, shadow evocation (DC 21), song of discord (DC 23)

4th (6/day)—cure critical wounds, dimension door, dominate person (DC 22), freedom of movement, locate creature

3rd (6/day)—charm monster (DC 21), confusion (DC 21), displacement, haste, scrying (DC 19), see invisibility

2nd (7/day)—cat's grace, detect thoughts (DC 18), glitterdust (DC 18), invisibility, mirror image, silence (DC 18)

1st (7/day)—charm person (DC 19), comprehend languages, disguise self, grease, hideous laughter (DC 20), silent image (DC 17)

0th (at will)—detect magic, flare (DC 16), light, message, prestidigitation, resistance

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 16, **Con** 14, **Int** 12, **Wis** 8, **Cha** 22

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 29

Feats Arcane Strike, Deadly Aim, Dodge, Mobility, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Point-Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Focus (rapier)

Skills Knowledge (arcana, dungeoneering, history, local, nature, nobility, planes, religion) +13, Perception +15, Perform (act, oratory) +27, Perform (dance, sing) +23, Spellcraft +19, Stealth +23, Use Magic Device +22

Languages Common, Primordial

SQ bardic knowledge +9, famous +5, jack-of-all-trades (use any skill, all skills are class skills), versatile performance (act, dance, comedy, oratory, sing)

Combat Gear scrolls of bestow curse (2), scroll of bull's strength; **Other Gear** +3 glamer chain shirt, +2 keen rapier, +1 seeking shortbow with 20 arrows, cloak of resistance +2, headband of alluring charisma +6, ring of protection +2

Ashima-Shimtu

CR 25

XP 1,638,400

NE Medium outsider (daemon, demon, devil, evil)

Init +11; **Senses** bloodsense 240 ft., darkvision 120 ft., scent, see in darkness; Perception +41

Aura fear (30 ft., DC 40), unnatural aura (30 ft.)

Defense

AC 51, touch 36, flat-footed 40 (+11 Dex, +15 natural, +15 profane)

hp 449 (31d10+279); terrible rejuvenation

Fort +26, **Ref** +21, **Will** +24

Defensive Abilities shield of lies; **DR** 20/cold iron and good; **Immune** acid, death effects, disease, electricity, fire, poison; **Resist** cold 30; **SR** 36

Weaknesses vulnerable to positive energy

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee +5 planar unholy cold iron spiked chain +42/+37/+32/+27 (2d4+14 plus 2d6 vs. good) or 2 claws +32 (1d6+3 plus blood drain)

Special Attacks blood drain (1d4 Con)



Spell-Like Abilities (CL 31st; concentration +48)

At will—*animate chains*, *blood in the water*, *detect thoughts* (DC 27), *greater teleport* (self only plus 50 lbs.), *suggestion* (DC 29)

5/day—*blood crow strike*, *boiling blood* (DC 27), *discern lies* (DC 28)

3/day—*blood biography* (DC 28), *bloody claws* (DC 29), *misdirection*

1/day—*magic jar* (DC 29), *blood of the martyr* (DC 28), *dominate monster* (DC 31), *transmute blood to acid* (DC 34)

Bard Spells Known (CL 31st; concentration +48)
6th (8/day)—*dance of a thousand cuts*, *permanent image* (DC 33), *project image* (DC 33), *veil* (DC 33), *waves of ecstasy* (DC 31)

5th (8/day)—*false vision*, *mislead*, *nightmare* (DC 32), *shadow walk* (DC 32), *song of discord* (DC 33)

4th (8/day)—*hallucinatory terrain* (DC 31), *greater invisibility*, *modify memory* (DC 29), *rainbow pattern* (DC 31), *shout*, *utter contempt* (DC 29)

3rd (9/day)—*confusion* (DC 28), *displacement*, *glibness*, *illusory script* (DC 30), *smug narcissism* (DC 28), *vision of hell* (DC 30)

2nd (9/day)—*blur*, *delay pain* (DC 27), *hypnotic pattern* (DC 29), *mirror image*, *reckless infatuation* (DC 27), *silence* (DC 29)

1st (9/day)—*adoration*, *innocence*, *lesser confusion* (DC 26), *memory lapse* (DC 26), *unnatural lust* (DC 26), *ventriloquism* (DC 28)

0 (at will)—*daze* (DC 25), *ghost sound* (DC 27), *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *unwitting ally* (DC 25)

Statistics

Str 22, **Dex** 32, **Con** 28, **Int** 24, **Wis** 24, **Cha** 40

Base Atk +31; **CMB** +37; **CMD** 73

Feats Ability Focus (suggestion), Antagonize, Combat Casting, Deceitful, Demonic Possession, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Greater Spell Focus (illusion), Greater Spell Penetration, Hover, Improved Possession, Penetrating Possession, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Bluff), Spell Focus (illusion), Spell Penetration, Uncanny Concentration, Voice Of The Sibyl

Skills Bluff +68, Diplomacy +54, Disguise +42, Fly +26, Intimidate +17, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (history) +27, Knowledge (planes) +41, Knowledge (religion) +38, Perception +41, Perform (act) +35, Perform (oratory) +36, Sense Motive +41, Sleight of Hand +34, Spellcraft +38, Stealth +45, Use Magic Device +46;

Racial Modifiers +8 to Bluff

Languages Abyssal, Common, Daemonic, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Infernal, Orc, Undercommon; *telepathy* (1 mile), truespeech

SQ change shape (*alter self*; Small, Medium, or Large humanoid), sacrament of apotheosis

Special Abilities

Bloodsense (Su) Ashima-Shimtu can sense the presence of living creatures within 240 feet (as blindsight).

Demonic Possession Ashima-Shimtu can use *magic jar* as a spell-like ability once per day. If she possesses a creature in this way, she vanishes and is not physically present until she leaves the creature's body.

Improved Possession When possessing a host, Ashima-Shimtu can activate a host body's extraordinary, supernatural, and spell-like abilities, as well as spells known or prepared. In addition, the duration of the possession increases to 24 hours.

Penetrating Possession If a host that Ashima-Shimtu attempts to possess has *protection from evil* or similar spells, Ashima-Shimtu can attempt to dispel the spell (as if she had cast *greater dispel magic*).

Shield of Lies (Su) Deception is Ashima-Shimtu's armor, granting her a +15 profane bonus to her AC. If she fails her saving throw against a *zone of truth* or similar effect, this ability is suppressed until she leaves the area of effect or the duration expires.

Terrible Rejuvenation (Su) When a creature within 30 feet of Ashima-Shimtu is affected by a fear effect, or has the confused, dazed, or fascinated condition, she gains fast healing 40.

Civilized Execution

Adventure 13

Bruse Shantus and Tyrannosaurs



Bruse Shantus

CR 20

XP 307,200

Male minotaur fighter 16

N Medium monstrous humanoid

Init -1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +17

Aura primitive presence (30 ft.)

Defense

AC 27, touch 12, flat-footed 27 (+9 armor, +4 deflection, -1 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 247 (22d10+126)

Fort +18, **Ref** +15, **Will** +19; +4 vs. fear

Defensive Abilities natural cunning

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +4 *impact earth breaker* +31/+26/+21/+16 (3d6+17/19-20/x3), gore +26 (1d6+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks powerful charge (gore +33, 2d6+12), weapon training (hammers +3, heavy blades +1, natural +2)



Statistics

Str 24, **Dex** 8, **Con** 19, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +22; **CMB** +26 (+30 bull rush); **CMD** 35 (37 vs. bull rush)

Feats Bull Rush Strike, Critical Focus, Disruptive, Furious Focus, Great Fortitude, Greater Bull Rush, Greater Weapon Focus (earth breaker), Greater Weapon Specialization (earth breaker), Improved Critical (earth breaker), Improved Bull Rush, Lightning Reflexes, Minotaur's Charge, Power Attack, Spellbreaker, Stand Still, Staggering Critical, Stunning Critical, Toughness, Weapon Focus (earth breaker), Weapon Specialization (earth breaker)

Skills Bluff +24, Climb +15, Diplomacy +24, Intimidate +35, Perception +17, Sense Motive +20, Survival +11

Languages Common, Giant, Orc

SQ armor training 4

Gear +4 *impact earth breaker*, +4 *chainmail*, *belt of physical might* +4 [Str, Con], *circlet of persuasion*, *cloak of resistance* +4, *ring of protection* +4

Special Abilities

Primitive Presence (Su) Bruse Shantus emits an aura of feral power that encourages creatures to engage in savage brawls of tooth and claw. All creatures in the aura are immune to damage from attackers that are outside the target's melee reach.

Ob-Bred Tyrannosaur

CR 15

XP 51,200

N Gargantuan animal

Init +12; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Perception +44

Defense

AC 30, touch 14, flat-footed 22 (+3 Dex, +5 dodge, +16 natural, -4 size)

hp 279 (18d8+198)

Fort +22, **Ref** +19, **Will** +17

DR 6/-; **Immune** mind-affecting effects, paralysis; **SR** 22

Offense

Speed 70 ft.

Melee bite +32 (4d6+31/19-20 plus grab)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 20 ft.

Special Attacks swallow whole (2d8+18, AC 18, hp 27)

Statistics

Str 36, **Dex** 17, **Con** 23, **Int** 2, **Wis** 19, **Cha** 14

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +40 (+44 grapple); **CMD** 58

Feats Bleeding Critical, Critical Focus, Diehard, Endurance, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Run, Skill Focus (Perception)

Skills Perception +44

SQ mighty, powerful bite

Special Abilities

Mighty (Ex) An Ob-bred tyrannosaur represents the pinnacle of evolution, and is far more powerful than a typical tyrannosaurus. It gains 5 bonus hit points per Hit Die, a +5 dodge bonus to AC, a +5 insight bonus to initiative, saving throws, damage, ability checks, and skill checks, and a +10 insight bonus to attack rolls. These bonuses are factored in to its statistics.

Powerful Bite (Ex) An Ob-bred tyrannosaur applies twice its Strength modifier to bite damage.

Sor Daeron and Glaucia Evora



Sor Daeron

CR 19

XP 204,800

Male eladrin magus 20

CN Medium humanoid (eladrin)

Init +9; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +23

Defense

AC 38, touch 20, flat-footed 31 (+9 armor, +4 deflection, +5 Dex, +5 natural, +4 shield)

hp 150 (20d8+60)

Fort +17, **Reflex** +14, **Will** +15; +2 vs. charms and compulsions

Defensive Abilities bolstered will, wound from the holy war

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +5 *frost shocking burst scimitar* +26/+21/+16 (1d6+12/15-20 plus 1d6 cold plus 1d6 electricity)

Special Attacks counterstrike, greater spell combat, spellstrike

Magus Spells Prepared (CL 20th; concentration +27)

6th—*chain lightning* (DC 23), *flesh to stone* (DC 23), *forceful hand*, *greater dispel magic*, *true seeing*, *walk through space*

5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 22), *cone of cold* (DC 22), *fire snake* (DC 22), *geyser* (DC 22), *telekinesis*, *wall of force*

4th—*detect scrying*, *dimension door*, extended *displacement*, intensified *force punch*, empowered *scorching ray* (2)

3rd—*nondetection*, *force hook charge* (2), *haste*, *vampiric touch* (2), *versatile weapon*

2nd—*elemental touch* (DC 19), *frigid touch* (2), *glitterdust*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *web*

1st—*blade lash*, *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 18), *shield*, intensified *shocking grasp* (3)

0—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 20, **Con** 15, **Int** 24, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +16; **CMD** 35

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dervish Dance, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Improved Critical (scimitar), Improved Initiative, Intensified Spell, Lunge, Spell Penetration, Spell Perfection (shocking grasp), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (scimitar), Weapon Specialization (scimitar)

Skills Bluff +20, Fly +28, Knowledge (arcana) +30, Knowledge (history) +31, Intimidate +20, Perception +23, Perform (dance) +2, Profession (soldier) +21, Spellcraft +32, Use Magic Device +23



Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant, Goblin, Infernal, Orc, Primordial
SQ arcane pool (17 points, +5), eladrin deathlink, fighter training, greater spell access, improved spell recall, knowledge pool, magus arcana (accurate strike, arcane accuracy, critical strike, quickened magic, reflection, spell shield), true magus
Combat Gear *wand of greater invisibility* (15 charges), *wand of see invisibility* (10 charges); **Other Gear** *moderate fortification celestial armor*, +3 scimitar, *amulet of natural armor* +5, *belt of physical might* +4 (Dex, Con), *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of vast intelligence* +6, *ring of protection* +4

Special Abilities

Wound From the Holy War (Ex) Sor Daeron's right arm is composed wholly of animated salt crystals. If he is grappled or suffering from a condition that slows, immobilizes, or restrains him, he may dissolve his arm as an immediate action to automatically escape the grapple or end the condition. The arm reforms at the beginning of his next turn.



Glaucia Evora

CR 16

XP 76,800

Female gnoll cleric 15

LG Medium humanoid (gnoll)

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +22

Defense

AC 11, touch 10, flat-footed 11 (+1 natural)**hp** 120 (16d8+20)**Fort** +18, **Ref** +11, **Will** +20

Offense

Speed 30 ft.**Melee** chains +12/+7/+2 (1d8)**Special Attacks** channel positive energy 7/day (8d6, DC 19)**Domain Spell-like Abilities** (CL 15th, concentration +19)

At will—aura of protection (+2 AC, resist 10, 16 rounds/day), freedom's call (16 rounds/day), liberation (16 rounds/day)

7/day—resistant touch (+4)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 15th; concentration +19)8th—*dimensional lock*, *mind blank*7th—*bestow grace of the champion*, *dictum* (DC 21), *repulsion* (DC 21)6th—*antimagic field*, *blade barrier* (DC 20), *greater dispel magic*, *mass bull's strength*5th—*break enchantment*, *breath of life*, *flame strike* (DC 19), *greater command* (DC 19), *spell resistance*4th—*air walk*, *blessing of fervor*, *discern lies* (DC 18), *freedom of movement*, *order's wrath* (DC 18), *restoration*3rd—*chain of perdition*, *dispel magic* (2), *invisibility purge*, *magic circle against evil*, *protection from energy*2nd—*enthral* (DC 16), *shield other*, *silence* (DC 16), *sound burst* (DC 16), *spiritual weapon*, *zone of truth* (DC 16)1st—*bless*, *command* (DC 15), *forbid action* (DC 15), *sanctuary* (DC 15), *shield of faith*, *remove fear***Domains** Liberation, Protection

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 10, **Con** 14, **Int** 13, **Wis** 18, **Cha** 14**Base Atk** +12; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 22**Feats** Alertness, Extra Channel, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Selective Channeling, Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Toughness**Skills** Intimidate +13, Knowledge (arcana) +8, Linguistics +3, Perception +22, Sense Motive +32, Spellcraft +8**Languages** Common, Gnoll, Giant, Orc

The Chancellor's Motorcade

Adventure 13

Hastenschrieff Willamarkanova

CR 16

XP 76,800

Female dwarf aristocrat 18

N Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

Defense

AC 30, touch 20, flat-footed 30 (+10 armor, +10 deflection)**hp** 179 (18d8+98)**Fort** +11, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12; +2 vs. poison, spells, or spell-like abilities**Defensive Abilities** minor hivemind presence

Offense

Speed 20 ft.**Melee** +1 *longsword* +15/+10/+5 (1d8+2/19–20) or mwk dagger +15/+10/+5 (1d4+1/19–20)**Ranged** mwk dagger +14 (1d4+1/19–20)**Special Attacks** stone hammer

Statistics

Str 12, **Dex** 10, **Con** 18, **Int** 14, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 15**Base Atk** +13; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 38**Feats** Alertness, Defensive Combat Training, Great Fortitude, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Vital Strike, Persuasive, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Toughness, Vital Strike**Skills** Appraise +4, Bluff +14, Diplomacy +31, Intimidate +25, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (local) +10, Knowledge (nobility) +13, Linguistics +8, Perception +14, Perform (oratory) +21, Ride +14, Sense Motive +24**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Gnome, Halfling, Sylvan**Gear** +1 *glamered full plate of light fortification*, +1 *longsword*, masterwork dagger, *belt of mighty constitution* +6, *medallion of thoughts*, *rod of splendor*

Special Abilities

Minor Hivemind Presence (Su) A single ghost councilor is bonded to Hastenschrieff through the Obscurati's hivemind. This gives her a +10 deflection bonus to AC. Whenever she fails a Will save against a harmful effect, instead of harming her it harms the ghost. The first time this happens, the councilor snarls as it becomes briefly visible. Once this happens three times or if the ghost is dealt 50 points of positive energy damage, it is destroyed. She loses all the benefits of this ability, and is permanently staggered. She is originally loyal to the Obscurati, so freeing her from



the hivemind won't change her behavior. A spirit medium who sees a creature with this ability immediately knows how it functions and how to overcome it.

Stone Hammer (Su) As a standard action, Hastenschrieff can create an animated object out of a large amount of stone in any space within 100 feet. This can be loose or worked stone, such as the walls of buildings. The object attacks an adjacent creature (+22, 4d10+16 damage), then collapses back into stone.



Kvarti Gorbatiy CR 19

XP 204,800

Male dwarf gunslinger 20

LN Medium humanoid (dwarf)

Init +8, **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., *true seeing*; Perception +22

Defense

AC 33, touch 25, flat-footed 21 (+8 armor, +3 deflection, +6 Dex, +6 dodge)

hp 190 (20d10+80)

Fort +21, **Ref** +28, **Will** +13; +2 vs. poison, spells, and spell-like

Defensive Abilities defensive training, evasion, improved uncanny dodge, nimble +5, stability

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Ranged +5 *rifle* +31/+26/+21/+16 (1d10+11/19-20/x4) or +2 *revolver* +28/+23/+18/+13 (1d8+8/x4)

Special Attacks gun-training (pistol, revolver, rifle, shotgun, +6), hatred

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 22, **Con** 18, **Int** 8, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +20; **CMB** +20; **CMD** 45

Feats Blind-Fight, Clustered Shots, Critical Focus, Deadly Aim, Deft Shootist Deed, Dodge, Extra Grit, Far Shot, Gunsmithing, Improved Critical (rifle), Improved Precise Shot, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Reload (rifle), Ricochet Shot Deed

Skills Appraise +1, Acrobatics +22 (+18 to jump), Knowledge (history) +4, Knowledge (local) +7, Perception +22 (+24 to notice stone), Sense Motive +15, Survival +15, Stealth +23

Languages Common, Dwarven

SQ deeds (bleeding wound [4], cheat death, dead shot, deadeye, death's shot, expert loading, evasive, gunslinger initiative, gunslinger's dodge, lightning reload, menacing shot, pistol-whip, quick clear, slinger's luck, startling shot, stunning shot, targeting, utility shot), grit (4 points), gunsmith, shadow teleport, sniper's eye, true grit (death's shot, targeting)

Combat Gear *oil of silence* (4), *potions of cure serious wounds* (2); **Gear** +4 *mithral shirt*, +2 *revolver*, +5 *rifle with far-reaching sight*, *belt of incredible dexterity* +4, *boots of speed*, *cloak of resistance* +5, *ring of protection* +3, tracer rounds

Special Abilities

Shadow Teleport (Su) As a move action once every 1d4 rounds, Kvarti may teleport to any location in line of sight that is inside of or adjacent to one of Trekhom's spires or towers. He can bring up to one other Medium creature with him, and he may make a Stealth check to hide when he arrives at his destination.

Sniper's Eye (Sp) As long as Kvarti is within one of Trekhom's towers, he has a constant *true seeing* spell active (CL 20th).

Obscurati Lantern Walker

CR 16

XP 76,800

N Large construct

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +0

Defense

AC 34, touch 9, flat-footed 34 (+25 natural, -1 size)

hp 162 (24d10+95)

Fort +8; **Ref** +8; **Will** +8

DR 15/adamantine; **Immune** construct traits, fire

Offense

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 claws +33 (4d6+11 plus grab)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks lantern beam

Statistics

Str 32, **Dex** 10, **Con** —, **Int** —, **Wis** 11, **Cha** 1

Base Atk +24; **CMB** +36 (+40 grapple); **CMD** 46 (50 vs. trip)

Special Abilities

Lantern Beam (Su) As a standard action, an Obscurati lantern walker can focus the light of the lantern in its interior into a beam, firing it as a ranged touch attack at a creature within 100 feet. The beam deals 10d6 fire damage.

Voice of Authority

Adventure 13

Cula Ravjahani

CR 18

XP 153,600

Female half-elf magus 19

N Medium humanoid (elf, human)

Init +6, **Senses** Perception +23

Defense

AC 32, touch 16, flat-footed 29 (+9 armor, +4 deflection, +2 Dex, +1 dodge, +2 natural, +4 shield)

hp 180 (19d8+95)

Fort +18, **Ref** +12, **Will** +15

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +5 *eladrin bane flaming keen longsword* +23/+18/+13 (1d8+11/17-20)

Special Attacks counterstrike, greater spell combat, spellstrike



Magus Spells Prepared (CL 19th, concentration +25)

6th—*disintegrate* (3, DC 22), *freezing sphere*, *mislead*
 5th—*acidic spray* (DC 21), *cone of cold* (DC 21), *cloudkill* (DC 21), *interposing hand*,
telekinesis, *wall of stone*
 4th—*dimension door*, *dragon's breath* (DC 20), *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*,
phantasmal killer (DC 20, 2)
 3rd—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *fly*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *ray of exhaustion* (DC 19),
vampiric touch
 2nd—*acid arrow*, *cat's grace*, *fog cloud*, *frigid touch* (2), *mirror image*, *scorching ray*
 1st—*feather fall*, *grease*, *ray of enfeeblement* (DC 17), *shield*, *shocking grasp* (3)
 0—*acid splash*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Statistics

Str 18, **Dex** 14, **Con** 16, **Int** 22, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 10

Base Atk +14; **CMB** +18; **CMD** 35

Feats Craft Wand, Dodge, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Great Fortitude, Hands of Retribution*, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Toughness, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

*See the *Zeitgeist Player's Guide*

Skills Diplomacy +28, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +28, Knowledge (planes) +28, Perception +23, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +28, Use Magic Device +22

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Orc, Primordial

SQ arcane pool (13 points, +5), fighter training, greater spell access, knowledge pool, magus arcana (close range, enduring blade, maximized magic, prescient defense, wand wielder, wand mastery), improved spell recall

Combat Gear *wand of maximized magic missile* (CL 9th, 10 charges); **Other Gear** +3 *mithral chainmail*, +2 *eladrin bane longsword*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of physical might* +4 (Str, Con), *cloak of resistance* +2, *headband of vast intelligence* +4, *ring of protection* +4

Axis Obscura

Adventure 13

I figure as long as the party gets to do amazing things in the final battle, it's not *really* necessary to push them to the brink of failure. That would be nice, but I personally would be careful not to TPK the party right at the end of a campaign.

Nicodemus, Mastermind of the Obscurati

CR 23

XP 819,200

Male unique human ghost

N Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +13; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +28

Aura incandescent soul (50 ft., Stage III only)

Defense

AC 48, touch 38, flat-footed 39 (+9 deflection, +9 Dex, +10 insight, +10 profane)

hp 1,111 (20d8+260 x 3; see sacramental invulnerability)

Fort +25, **Ref** +25, **Will** +28

Defensive Abilities incorporeal, sacramental invulnerability, shadow-cloaked (Stage I and II only), welcome to the Obscurati; **Immune** undead traits

Offense

Speed fly 60 ft. (good)

Melee corrupting touch +24 (23d6, DC 29)

Special Attacks hungry darkness (Stage II only), malevolence, pyrebound grasp (Stage III only), thoughtseize, worldwide rebuke

Spell-like Abilities (CL 20th; concentration +30)

1/day—*blade barrier* (DC 25), *resilient sphere* (DC 23), *wall of force*, *wall of lava*

Statistics

Str —, **Dex** 28, **Con** —, **Int** 19, **Wis** 23, **Cha** 28

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +29; **CMD** 48

Feats Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Forge Ring, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw, Reach Spell, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Bluff, Diplomacy, Sense Motive, Use Magic Device), Toughness

Skills Acrobatics +24, Bluff +35, Diplomacy +35, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (history) +12, Knowledge (religion) +12, Knowledge (planes) +17, Perception +28, Sense Motive +32, Spellcraft +17, Use Magic Device +35

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Primordial

SQ backlash, divine presence, icon swap, initially disinterested

Special Abilities

Backlash (Su) When reduced to 0 hit points, Nicodemus is destroyed, though the description will vary based on circumstances. Each creature who is linked to Nicodemus (see welcome to the Obscurati) takes 100 damage, but cannot be reduced below 1 hit point in this way.

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of his incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, Nicodemus inflicts 23d6 damage. This damage is not negative energy—it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A DC 29 Fortitude save halves the damage inflicted. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Divine Presence (Su) The *sacrament* allows Nicodemus to move objects as if he were Large, at a range of 20 feet. This allows him to lift a column by spending four move actions, if somehow the colossus Borne cannot aid him. (He can also grow in size to Large as a free action, but that's not really his style, so don't bother doing that unless another PC is also gigantic and attacking him, in order to maintain a good aesthetic for the battle.)



In Stage II, this increases to Huge, 50 feet, and one move action.

In Stage III, it's Gargantuan, 200 feet, and one move action to pull a column entirely free.

Icon Swap (Su) As a swift or move action, Nicodemus chooses an exposed ritual column within 50 feet and telekinetically removes the planar icon in it, drawing the item to his hand; or he delivers an icon he is carrying to the alcove in that column. (Thus it takes him two swift actions or a swift and a move action to fully swap out an icon.)

Malevolence (Su) Once per round, Nicodemus can merge his body with a creature on the Material Plane. This ability is similar to a *magic jar* spell (caster level 20th), except that it does not require a receptacle. To use this ability, the ghost must be adjacent to the target. The target can resist the attack with a successful DC 26 Will save. A creature that successfully saves is immune to that same ghost's malevolence for 24 hours.

Sacramental Invulnerability (Su) Due to the *sacrament of apotheosis*, Nicodemus has triple the normal amount of hit points and a +10 insight bonus to AC and saving throws. He has resist 100 against all types of energy damage. He also has DR 100/– and is immune to conditions from attacks by creatures. He loses the resistances, DR, and immunity to conditions against any attacking creature that addresses Nicodemus by his real name, William Miller, at some point during the encounter.

Shadow-Cloaked (Su) Nicodemus is constantly cloaked in darkness, granting him concealment. He is immune to all damage and conditions except for those caused by positive energy or spells that specifically target undead. If he is adjacent to a source of bright light, or when Nicodemus takes positive energy damage, the shadows are peeled away, and he loses this protection until the end of the attacker's next turn. Simply being in the radius of a light source, however, is not enough. (The central pit of the Axis Seal ritual is a bright light source.)

Thoughtseize (Su) As a standard action, Nicodemus targets one creature within 50 feet. If the target fails a DC 29 Will save, it takes 5d6+20 damage and Nicodemus can cause it to move up to its speed and take a standard action of his choice as an immediate action either before or after the movement. This is a mind-affecting compulsion.

Welcome to the Obscurati (Su) Whenever Nicodemus would take damage, for each PC who linked to a plane during this encounter, prevent 10 of that damage and instead deal that 10 damage to the PC. This link ends if the column the PC lowered is destroyed. Additionally, each time a PC links a plane, Nicodemus may take an extra standard action on his next turn.

Worldwide Rebuke (Su) As a standard action, Nicodemus can make a touch attack against a creature within 20 feet. On a hit, he deals 5d6+20 damage and pushes the target 10 feet away from him. The target must then attempt a DC 29 Fortitude save. On a failure, he is knocked prone and slowed until the end of Nicodemus's next turn, as per the *slow* spell, in addition to being pushed an additional 10 feet. The target must keep attempting Fortitude saves until it succeeds at one, being pushed 10 feet further away for each failed save.

Initially Disinterested (Ex) Nicodemus has two HP thresholds, and his abilities change as he reaches different thresholds.

Threshold 1—A Future Obscured When reduced below 741 hit points, Nicodemus reels a bit, then makes a flicking gesture as if tossing away a cigarette. All negative effects affecting Nicodemus end. Smoke fills the entire battlefield, lasting until the end of Nicodemus's next turn. This smoke provides total concealment for all creatures except Nicodemus, who can see through it.

Threshold 2—Miller's Pyre When reduced below 370 hit points, Nicodemus falls to the ground, then pushes himself up, looking around in a sudden panic, for he has landed atop a tall pile of smoldering books and scrolls, as spectral and insubstantial as he. The papers ignite, and he screams with shock as his ghostly form is engulfed. For a moment it seems he might fall, but then the pyre flares to fifty feet tall, and he emerges, incandescent with rage. All negative effects affecting Nicodemus end. He loses the shadow-cloaked defensive abilities and gains the incandescent soul aura.



Threshold Abilities

Hungry Darkness (Su) In Stage II, Nicodemus can conjure icy shadows in a 10-foot-radius burst within 200 feet as a standard action. Creatures in the area take 4d8+60 cold damage (DC 29 Reflex for half). Creatures who fail the save are also blinded, have their movement speeds reduced by half, and take 5d6 damage each round. They may attempt a DC 29 Fortitude save at the end of each of their turns to end these effects. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Incandescent Soul (Su) Nicodemus emits bright light in a 50-foot radius. A creature that enters or ends its turn in the aura takes 10d6 damage.

Pyrebound Grasp (Su) In Stage III, Nicodemus can reach out for a creature's spirit and attempt to draw it into his own shining soul as a standard action. He targets a creature within 50 feet of him. The target must attempt a DC 29 Will save. If it fails the save, it takes 4d8+60 fire damage and Nicodemus pulls the creature adjacent to him. If the creature is below half of its total hit points after this attack, it falls unconscious as its spirit is bound to Nicodemus's. Any damage or conditions dealt to Nicodemus are dealt to the bound target instead. Each round, the target may attempt a DC 29 Will save to end this effect. Nicodemus can only have one spirit bound to him at a time. When the target saves, or when the target is reduced to 0 HP, it is released and Nicodemus may use this ability again. The save DC is Charisma-based.



**Borne, Obscurati Colossus**

CR 25

XP 1,638,400

N Colossal construct

Init special (see truly colossal); **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Perception +34**Defense****AC** 50, touch 1, flat-footed 50 (–1 Dex, +49 natural, –8 size)**hp** 1,200 (34d10+114 x 4, see truly colossal)**Fort** +21, **Ref** +20, **Will** +21**Defensive Abilities** arcane reflection, hardness 25, Obscurati-granted wards;**Immune** construct traits; **SR** 36**Weaknesses** riven armor, vulnerable to mind-affecting effects**Offense****Speed** 50 ft.**Space** 100 ft.; **Reach** 100 ft.**Special Attacks** crushing fist, spirit cascade, stomp, swipe**Statistics****Str** 51, **Dex** 9, **Con** —, **Int** 15, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 8**Base Atk** +34; **CMB** +62; **CMD** 71**Feats** Ability Focus (spirit cascade), Toughness**Skills** Climb +54, Diplomacy +33, Intimidate +33, Perception +34**Languages** Common, Elven, Primordial**SQ** massive, truly colossal**Special Abilities**

Arcane Reflection (Su) Magical glyphs along Borne's armor deflect cones, lines, rays, and *magic missile* spells, rendering the colossus immune to such effects. There is a 30% chance a deflected effect reflects back in full force at the caster; otherwise it is simply negated.

Crushing Fist (Ex) As a standard action, Borne chooses a space within 50 feet. At the beginning of his next turn, creatures in a 5-foot-radius burst centered on that space take 100 points of damage (Reflex DC 26 for half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Massive (Ex) Normal difficult terrain does not impede the colossus. A Huge or smaller creature can move through his space, and vice-versa. The colossus is simply too large and slow to make attacks of opportunity, and he can be flanked only by Huge or larger foes.

It's possible for a Huge or smaller creature to climb the colossus (Climb DC 30), and he's only capable of targeting such intruders with swipe, or perhaps spirit cascade if the climber isn't smart enough to climb the colossus's back.

Forced movement cannot move Borne more than 25 feet in a given round. Attacks cannot knock him prone unless the source of the attack is at least Gargantuan.

Obscurati-Granted Wards (Su) In addition to the already unparalleled wards inscribed into his armored skin, and the balancing magic of a wayfarer's lantern integrated into his chest, Borne is shielded by massive defensive magic being performed around the island. This grants him a +10 resistance bonus to all saving throws, and he takes no damage from the energy tendril coming out of the seal's center.

If the various machines the Ob set up around the island are destroyed, the protection they generate vanishes. This has no effect on personal-scale weapons, but it means the energy tendril can harm Borne. Likewise, if the lantern in his chest is destroyed (see below), he becomes vulnerable.

Most of the energy in the tendrils dissipates into the air when it hits a smaller creature, but Borne is so huge that if he's in the path of the energy tendril, he takes 200 damage each round, ignoring his hardness.

Riven Armor (Ex) The repairs Nicodemus effected were hasty and the result of magic, not engineering. The once impenetrable colossus has cracks in his armor. Four main locations on Borne's body are particularly vulnerable. A character that spends a standard action to examine the colossus automatically detects these vulnerabilities. Otherwise, if a creature comes within 50 feet of any of these weak points, they become apparent.



- ✦ Either knee. Roughly 75 feet up.
- ✦ Under the chest plate. Roughly 200 feet up.
- ✦ Left armpit. Roughly 225 feet up.
- ✦ Dorsal vents for witchoil engine. Roughly 250 feet up on back.

Each of these four areas have weaker armor, with only defenses AC 46, but still hardness 25. Dealing 100 damage to one of these areas (which also deducts from Borne's main hit points) creates an opening large enough for a Large creature to enter. Inside each area are vulnerable components with the same AC as the 'weaker armor,' and with no hardness or spell resistance. They also are not protected by his arcane reflection ability.

Inside the knee, the joint can be targeted. If it is dealt 50 damage, Borne's speed is reduced by half. If both knees are damaged, his speed falls to 10 feet.

Under the chest plate, the integrated *wayfarer's lantern* can be targeted. If it is dealt 10 damage, it shatters, and Borne takes a -1 penalty to AC, attack rolls, and saving throws for each plane currently linked to the world that was not part of the cosmology when he was built.

In the left armpit, the joint can be targeted. If it is dealt 50 damage, the arm falls limp. Use your best judgment of what actions Borne might be unable to do because one of his arms is out of commission. (Or have him tear off his own arm to use as a club and increase his reach.)



If the witchoil engine is reached, creatures in that compartment take 8d6 fire damage at the end of their turn from the waste heat. If the engine is dealt 200 damage, it destabilizes. At the end of the attacker's next turn, the engine explodes in a 100-foot-radius burst centered on the dorsal vent. The explosion deals 40d6 damage to all creatures in the burst (DC 27 Reflex for half). Half of this damage is fire, while half is negative energy damage. Creatures that fail their saves are also pushed to the edge of the burst. After the explosion, Borne falls, powerless. He can still speak, but cannot take other actions.

Spirit Cascade (Su) As a standard action, Borne can blast spirits from his witchoil-fueled engine out of his eyes to any area he can see within 1,200 feet. All creatures in a 10-foot-radius burst take 10d6 negative energy damage and 1d6 Strength damage (DC 28 Fortitude negates). The save DC is Charisma-based.

Stomp (Ex) As a standard action, Borne chooses a spot within 30 feet. At the start of his next turn, he stomps his foot down at that location. All creatures in a 10-foot-radius burst take 200 points of damage (DC 26 Reflex for half). If they fail their save, they are also knocked prone. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Swipe (Ex) As a standard action, Borne chooses a target space within 50 feet and swings his hand through from one direction to the other. At the beginning of his next turn, all creatures in a 15-foot-by-30-foot swath take 6d6+20 damage (DC 26 Reflex for half). Creatures that fail their save are pushed to the far end of the swath. Borne can use this attack to brush off creatures that have climbed onto him. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Truly Colossal (Ex) Borne does not function quite the same as a normal combatant. He acts at the end of each round, and gets the normal complement of standard, move, and swift actions. However, his physical attacks are very slow, and when he uses crushing fist, swipe, or stomp, he picks a target space, and the attack doesn't arrive until the start of his next turn.

Borne is 300 feet tall and fills a space 100 feet across. He could reasonably be represented on a battle map by having a 5-foot tall person stand above the minis. A move action for him represents a single step, his foot swinging slightly slower than a horse can gallop.

Because of his immense size, he has four times the normal number of hit points.

Vulnerable to Mind-Affecting Effects (Ex) Because of his advanced intellect, Borne is susceptible to mind-affecting effects. Such effects that deal damage bypass his hardness. However, a creature must be within range of his head to target him with mind-affecting effects, which is 200 feet off the ground.

Ghost Council Swarm

CR 21

XP 409,600

NE Medium undead (incorporeal, troop)

Init +5; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +40

Defense

AC 28, touch 28, flat-footed 26 (+1 Dex, +6 deflection, +1 dodge, +10 profane)

hp 287 (25d8+175)

Fort +14, Ref +11, Will +18

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, incorporeal; Immune undead traits

Offense

Speed fly 40 ft. (perfect)

Melee troop (12d6 plus 2d6 energy; DC 30)

Space 20 ft.; Reach 5 ft.

Special Attacks carry off, eldritch grasp, oppressive moan, poltergeist activity, unrefined evocation, welcome to the fold

Spell-like Abilities (CL 25th; concentration +31)

3/day—quicken *wall of force*

Statistics

Str –, Dex 13, Con –, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 22

Base Atk +18; CMB +19; CMD 36

Feats Ability Focus (eldritch grasp, oppressive moan, welcome to the fold), Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*wall of force*), Skill Focus (Perception), Toughness

Skills Fly +37, Knowledge (arcana) +32, Knowledge (religion) +32, Perception +40, Sense Motive +34, Stealth +29

Languages various

SQ fracture

Special Abilities

Eldritch Grasp (Su) The Ghost Council swarm's troop attack deals 12d6 untyped damage and 2d6 energy damage (either acid, cold, electricity, or fire as the swarm chooses). A DC 30 Fortitude save reduces this damage by half.

Oppressive Moan (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, the swarm can unleash a frightening moan as a standard action. All living creatures within 50 feet takes 15d6 sonic damage (Fortitude DC 30 for half). A creature that takes damage from the moan must also make a DC 28 Will save or be shaken for 1 minute. This is a sonic mind-affecting fear effect.

Unrefined Evocation (Su) As a standard action, the ghost council swarm can fire a barrage of scorching rays at nearby foes. They may fire up to twelve rays at creatures within 75 feet (+19 to-hit), but no more than three rays may target a single creature. Each ray deals 4d6 points of fire damage.

Welcome to the Fold (Su) As a standard action, the ghost council swarm may focus their ill will on one creature sharing its space, attempting to rend its soul from its body. The target takes 12d6 negative energy damage (DC 30 Will for half). Until the end of the encounter, the target's attacks deal full damage to the swarm as if it were not incorporeal. If this attack kills the target, he finds his consciousness being drawn into the ghost council, but if he returns to life at some point during this encounter, he is freed from the council, and the swarm is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Fracture (Ex) The swarm has two HP thresholds, and its abilities change as it reaches different thresholds.

Threshold 1 When reduced below 192 HP, as an immediate action, the Ghost Council swarm uses oppressive moan if it is available. It also becomes invisible until the next time it attacks, and flies 50 feet. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Threshold 2 When reduced below 97 HP, the ghost council swarm reduces to 9 contiguous squares as several of the spirits shake their heads and fly away. As an immediate action, the Ghost Council swarm flies 50 feet. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity.

Threshold Powers

Carry Off (Ex) After reaching Threshold 1, the Ghost Council swarm can grab any creature it damages with its troop attack. Its attacks gain the grab special attack, including the +4 bonus to grapple foes, and can grapple corporeal creatures. It can make a CMB check to maintain up to four grapples at once as a swift action. A grappled creature automatically takes troop damage each round.

Poltergeist Activity (Su) After reaching Threshold 2, the Ghost Council swarm gains the ability to telekinetically hurl its foes. Once every 1d4 rounds, the swarm can use the violent thrust version of telekinesis against every creature within 50 feet (CL 25th).



The Jierres and the *Revolution*

Lya, the Ghost Scion

CR 21

XP 409,600

Female tiefling ghost fighter 10 (lore warden)/duelist 10

LN Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +14; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., Perception +32

Defense

AC 42, touch 33, flat-footed 26 (+9 armor, +7 deflection, +6 Dex, +10 dodge)**hp** 250 (20d10+140)**Fort** +20, **Ref** +19, **Will** +12**Defensive Abilities** channel resistance +4, elaborate defense +3, enhanced mobility, parry, rejuvenation; **Immune** undead traits; **Resist** cold 5, electricity 5, fire 30

Offense

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)**Melee** +5 *agile flaming razorbust rapier* +35/+30/+25/+20 (1d6+25/15–20 plus 1d6 fire) or corrupting touch +26 (21d6, DC 27)**Special Attacks** duelist combat (acrobatic charge, crippling critical, precise strike +10, no retreat, riposte), know thy enemy, infernal wrath of the Jierre bloodline, reality wound, telekinesis

Statistics

Str –, **Dex** 23, **Con** –, **Int** 20, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 24**Base Atk** +20; **CMB** +30 (+34 to reposition); **CMD** 57 (59 vs. reposition)**Feats** Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Critical Focus, Dodge, Deflect Arrows, Greater Weapon Focus (rapier), Greater Weapon Specialization (rapier), Improved Critical (rapier), Improved Initiative, Improved Reposition, Iron Will, Mobility, Repositioning Strike, Spring Attack, Staggering Critical, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier), Whirlwind Attack**Skills** Acrobatics +20, Bluff +28, Climb +7, Diplomacy +28, Escape Artist +13, Fly +25, Knowledge (local) +16, Knowledge (nobility) +24, Knowledge (planes) +15, Perception +32, Perform (oratory) +24, Sense Motive +24, Stealth +25, Swim +7**Languages** Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Primordial**SQ** grave trappings, maneuver mastery +4, weapon training (light blades +2, firearms +1)**Gear** +5 *agile flaming razorbust rapier*, +5 *mithral shirt*, *belt of incredible dexterity* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of mental prowess* +4 (Int, Cha)

Special Abilities

Corrupting Touch (Su) By passing part of her incorporeal body through a foe's body as a standard action, Lya inflicts 21d6 damage. This damage is not negative energy—it manifests in the form of physical wounds and aches from supernatural aging. Creatures immune to magical aging are immune to this damage, but otherwise the damage bypasses all forms of damage reduction. A DC 27 Fortitude save halves the damage inflicted.**Duelist Combat (Ex)** Between her Mobility feat and her duelist training, Lya gets a +8 bonus to AC against attacks of opportunity she provokes by moving. She can charge across difficult terrain. She gains an additional +3 dodge bonus to AC when fighting defensively or taking a total defense action.

Her rapier attacks against living creatures with a discernible anatomy deal +10 damage, which is factored in above. Remove this damage against creatures with no proper anatomy.

Whenever she takes a full attack action, she can elect not to take one of her attacks. At any time before her next turn, she can attempt to parry an attack against her or an adjacent ally as an immediate action. To parry, she makes an attack roll, using the same bonuses as the attack she chose to forego. If her attack roll beats the roll of the attacking creature, the attack automatically misses. She also takes a –4 penalty when attempting to parry an attack made against an adjacent ally.

When she successfully parries, she can make an attack of opportunity against the creature whose attack she thwarted.





She may also make an attack of opportunity against an adjacent creature who takes a withdraw action.

Due to her Critical Focus, Repositioning Strike, and Staggering Critical Feats, Lya has a +4 bonus to rolls to confirm critical hits. If her confirmation roll beats the target's CMD, she can reposition them, moving them 5 ft., plus 5 ft. for every 5 points she beat their CMD.

If her attack is a confirmed critical hit, the target is staggered 1d4+1 rounds. A DC 24 Fortitude save reduces the staggered duration to 1 round.

Additionally, when she confirms a critical hit, she can apply one of the following penalties in addition to the damage dealt: reduce all of the target's speeds by 10 feet (minimum 5 feet), 1d4 points of Strength or Dexterity damage, -4 penalty on all saving throws, -4 penalty to Armor Class, or 2d6 points of bleed damage. These penalties last for 1 minute, except for ability damage, which must be healed normally, and bleed damage, which continues until the target receives magic healing or a DC 15 Heal skill check.

Finally, her *razorburst weapon* can cut people's limbs off. If a target is reduced to 30 HP or below, it must make a Fortitude save (DC = damage dealt). On a success, the target loses an extremity of its choice—hand, foot, arm, or leg. On a failure, Lya chooses which extremity the target loses.

So if she's surrounded, she'll use Whirlwind Attack to strike everyone, probably crit a few and shove them overboard while staggering them.

Grave Trappings (Su) Lya continues to be able to use and benefit from spectral duplicates of items she had when she died. These items cannot be destroyed or removed from her. Should Lya be destroyed, her equipment reappears with her upon rejuvenating. Additionally, since she died in or metaphysically near a volcano, she has incredible fire resistance.

Infernal Wrath of the Jierre Bloodline (Su) Once per day as an immediate action when hit by an attack, Lya can cause the creature who hit her to take 5d6 points of fire damage. The creature must make a DC 27 Reflex save or catch on fire, taking an additional 5d6 points of fire damage each round until the flames are extinguished.

Whether or not the creature saves, any debilitating conditions affecting Lya are also transferred to the target.

Reality Wound (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, Lya can make an attack that seems to leave a gash in the world itself. As a free action when she makes an attack, tongues of flame lash out through an apparent rip in space, occupying one 5-ft. square of the space of the target she attacked. Until the end of the encounter, any creature entering or ending its turn in that space takes 5d6 fire damage.

Telekinesis (Su) Lya can use can use *telekinesis* as a standard action once every 1d4 rounds (CL 20th).

Sovereign Han Jierre CR 20 XP 307,200

Male unique tiefling

LN Medium outsider (native)

Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., all-around vision, Perception +39

Defense

AC 36, touch 22, flat-footed 29 (+9 armor, +5 deflection, +1 Dex, +6 dodge, +5 natural)
hp 357 (34d8+204)

Fort +19, **Ref** +15, **Will** +22; one reroll per day of each save

Defensive Abilities *freedom of movement*, slippery mind; **Resist** fire 30

Offense

Speed fly 60 ft. (good)

Ranged 8 rifles +35 (1d8+9/x4)

Special Attacks gestalt commander, infernal wrath of the Jierre bloodline

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 12, **Con** 22, **Int** 22, **Wis** 16, **Cha** 26

Base Atk +24; **CMB** +25; **CMD** 41

Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Great Fortitude, Improved Iron Will, Improved Lightning Reflexes, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Skills many and various

Languages Common, Dwarven, Elven, Infernal, Primordial

Other Gear +5 *mithral shirt*, *amulet of natural armor* +5, *boots of flying*, *headband of mental superiority* +6, *ring of freedom of movement*, *ring of protection* +5

Special Abilities

Gestalt Commander (Su) As a standard action, Han can call upon the combined force of the airship crew to attack targets of his choice. Other soldiers fire, but use his attack bonus and trace range as if from him. This allows him to make eight rifle attacks.

This is only the most obvious use of his psychic connection to the crew. Many others are possible, at your discretion.

Infernal Wrath of the Scion of the Jierre Bloodline (Su) Once per round as an immediate action when hit by an attack or targeted by a spell, Han can cause the creature who attacked him to take 5d6 points of fire damage. The creature must make a DC 34 Reflex save or catch on fire, taking an additional 5d6 points of fire damage each round until the flames are extinguished.

Revolution Elite Crew CR 15

XP 51,200

LN Medium humanoid (human, troop)

Init +8; **Senses** Perception +19

Defense

AC 33, touch 16, flat-footed 28 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +18 natural)

hp 190 (20d8+100)

Fort +12, **Ref** +18, **Will** +9

Defensive Abilities troop traits

Offense

Speed 20 ft.

Melee troop (5d8+8)

Special Attacks dirigible turrets, fusillade (DC 24), incendiary bombs

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Statistics

Str 26, **Dex** 18, **Con** 18, **Int** 11, **Wis** 12, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +21; **CMD** 33

Feats Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Master Siege Engineer, Siege Engineer, Siege Gunner, Toughness

Skills Knowledge (engineering) +20, Perception +19, Profession (siege engineer) +26

Languages Common

Special Abilities

Dirigible Turrets (Ex) If an elite crew is adjacent to one of the *Revolution's* eight turrets, the troop can fire it as standard action, targeting a square within 1,000 feet. All creatures in a 5-foot-radius burst of the point of impact take 12d6 points of bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage (DC 24 Reflex for half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

If the shot is aimed at a space that contains an opposing vessel, in addition to attacking any creatures in the area, make a shipboard weapon attack, d20+12 vs. the ship's Defense. (The attack bonus is lower than normal, representing that they're aiming primarily at people, not vulnerable ship components.)

No matter how many crew are working, each turret can only be loaded and fired once per round.



Fusillade (Ex) An elite crew can fire a fusillade of musket bullets as a standard action.

This attack takes the form of up to four lines with a range of 200 feet. These lines can start from the corner of any square in the troop's space. All creatures in one of these lines' areas of effect take 6d10+4 points of bludgeoning and piercing damage (Reflex DC 24 for half). The save DC is Dexterity-based.

Incendiary Bombs (Ex) If an elite crew is on the gundeck of the *Revolution*, it can take a standard action to pull a lever and release a burning barrel of tar. The attack targets a space directly below the vessel. If another ship is there, make a naval attack, d20+12 vs. Defense. Otherwise, all creatures in a 15-foot-radius burst from the point of impact take 6d6 fire damage (DC 24 Reflex for half). Creatures who fail the save catch on fire, taking 1d6 fire damage each round until the flames are extinguished. The area of the burst also continues to burn for the next three rounds. Creatures that enter or end their turn in the area take 2d6 fire damage. The save DC is Dexterity-based.

No more than one crew can use this ability each round.



Kasvarina Varal

CR 19

XP 204,800

Female eladrin fighter 1/sorcerer 9/elritch knight 10

N Medium humanoid (eladrin)

Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision; Perception +0

Defense

AC 27, touch 16, flat-footed 23 (+9 armor, +4 Dex, +2 natural, +2 deflection)

hp 115 (11d10+9d6+29)

Fort +13, **Ref** +12, **Will** +13; +2 vs. charm and compulsion

Defensive Abilities bolstered will

Offense

Speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *ghost-touch shock rapier* +23/+18/+13 (1d6+3/15-20 plus 1d6 electricity; on a confirmed crit, cast a spell as a swift action which must include target in its effect, does not provoke attack of opportunity)

Ranged mwk shortbow +21/+16/+15 (1d6/x3)

Special Attacks eladrin deathlink, spell critical

Sorcerer Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th; concentration +25)

2/day—mind reader (DC 21)

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 18th; concentration +25)

9th (3/day)—*dominate monster* (DC 26)

8th (5/day)—*power word stun*, *telekinetic sphere* (DC 27)

7th (7/day)—*greater scrying*, *prismatic spray* (DC 26), *power word blind*

6th (7/day)—*chain lightning* (DC 25), *geas*, *true seeing*

5th (7/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 24), *false vision*, *telekinesis*, *teleport*

4th (7/day)—*charm monster* (DC 21), *detect scrying*, *greater invisibility*, *ice storm*, *shout* (DC 23)

3rd (8/day)—*displacement*, *fireball* (DC 22), *fly*, *greater magic weapon*, *suggestion* (DC 20)

2nd (8/day)—*flaming sphere*, *fog cloud*, *frigid touch* (DC 21), *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*, *resist energy*

1st (8/day)—*burning hands* (DC 20), *charm person* (DC 18), *disguise self*, *mount*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*detect magic*, *flare* (DC 19), *ghost sound*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Bloodline rakshasa

SQ bloodline arcana (+4 DC to identify spells she casts using Spellcraft), diverse training silver tongue (8/day, +5 Bluff)

Statistics

Str 10, **Dex** 18, **Con** 12, **Int** 14, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 25

Base Atk +15; **CMB** +14; **CMD** 27

Feats Arcane Armor Mastery, Arcane Armor Training, Craft Wondrous Item, Deceitful, Empower Spell, Improved Critical (rapier), Iron Will, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Greater Weapon Focus (rapier), Maximize Spell, Quick Draw, Spell Focus (evocation), Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier), and Greater Focus (rapier)

Skills Bluff +31, Diplomacy +13, Disguise +9, Intimidate +22, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (engineering) +7, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (planes) +7, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +13, Survival +7

Languages Common, Elven, Infernal, Primordial

Gear +4 *mithral breastplate*, +1 *ghost-touch shock rapier*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *belt of physical perfection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +3, *headband of alluring charisma* +4, *ring of protection* +2, *wand of clairvoyance/clairaudience* (32 charges), *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 10th, 25 charges).

Dr. Wolfgang von Recklinghausen

CR 17

XP 102,400

Male human alchemist (chirurgian) 16/rogue 2

LN Medium humanoid (human)

Init +6; **Senses** Perception +27

Defense

AC 32, touch 15, flat-footed 29 (+6 armor, +2 deflection, +3 Dex, +7 natural, +4 shield)

hp 153 (18d8+72)

Fort +20, **Ref** +22, **Will** +13

Defensive Abilities evasion, preserve organs; **SR** 28

Offense

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (perfect)

Melee +2 *keen rapier* +20/+15/+10 (1d6+1/15-20)

Special Attacks bomb 20/day (8d6+4 fire, DC 21), sneak attack +1d6

Alchemist Extracts Prepared (CL 16th)

6th—*heal*

5th—*resurgent transformation*, *sending*, *spell resistance*

4th—*breath of life* (2), *cure critical wounds* (2), *greater invisibility*

3rd—*arcane sight*, *cure serious wounds* (3), *fly*, *heroism*

2nd—*barkskin*, *blur*, *cure moderate wounds* (3), *resist energy*

1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *disguise self*, *expeditious retreat*, *shield*, *true strike*



Statistics

Str 8, **Dex** 17, **Con** 18, **Int** 18, **Wis** 10, **Cha** 11

Base Atk +13; **CMB** +12; **CMD** 27

Feats Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Expertise, Deft Hands, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Master Alchemist, Skill Focus (Heal), Stealthy, Throw Anything, Weapon Finesse

Skills Bluff +23, Craft (alchemy) +27, Diplomacy +11, Disable Device +29, Heal +29, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (nature) +14, Knowledge (nobility) +11, Perception +27, Sense Motive +27, Spellcraft +27, Stealth +29, Use Magic Device +21

Languages Abyssal, Common, Dwarven, Elven, Primordial

SQ alchemy (alchemy crafting +7, identify potions), anaesthetic, infused curative, mutagen (+4 Con/-2 Cha, +2 natural), discoveries (alchemical zombie, elixir of life, fast bombs, healing bomb, healing touch, infusion, preserve organs, spontaneous healing [80 points per day]), it's alive!, persistent mutagen, power over death, rogue talent (fast stealth), swift alchemy, swift poisoning, trapfinding +1

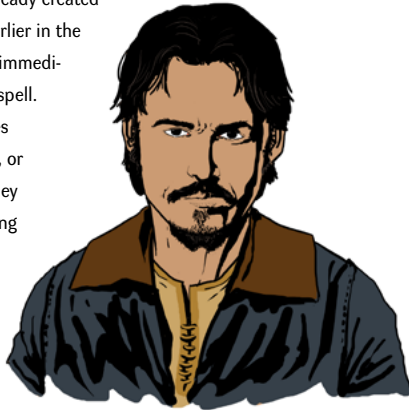
Combat Gear *potions of cure serious wounds* (3); **Other Gear** +4 *leather armor*, +2 *keen rapier*, *belt of physical might* +2 (Dex, Con), *cloak of resistance* +4, *ring of protection* +2

Defensive Spell Suite Before combat, Wolfgang drinks his extracts of *shield*, *barkskin*, *arcane sight*, *fly*, *heroism*, *resurgent transformation*, and *spell resistance*. He also drinks his mutagen to increase his Constitution. These effects are factored into his stat block.

Special Abilities

Elixir of Life (Sp) Wolfgang has already created and consumed an elixir of life earlier in the day. The first time he dies, he is immediately targeted by a *resurrection* spell.

It's Alive! (Su) When Wolfgang uses his healing bomb, healing touch, or spontaneous healing abilities, they manifest as jolts of lightning flying forth from his hands. This is just a cosmetic change to fit his schtick of being, basically, Dr. Frankenstein.



Gradiax, the Steel Lord

Bring in Pemberton's draconic duplicant only if the party is in really dire straits, or in the aftermath of the battle if he sees an opportunity for revenge against his daughter's killer.

Gradiax, the Steel Lord

CR 21

XP 409,600

Male duplicant wyrm red dragon

NE Gargantuan dragon (fire)

Init +2; **Senses** dragon senses, smoke vision; **Perception** +35

Aura fire (10 ft., 2d6 fire), frightful presence (330 ft., DC 28)

Defense

AC 42, touch 4, flat-footed 42 (-2 Dex, +38 natural, -4 size)

hp 391 (27d12+216)

Fort +23, **Ref** +13, **Will** +22; +4 vs. mind-affecting and stun

Defensive Abilities constructed; **DR** 10/adamantine, 20/magic; **Immune** disease, exhaustion, fatigue, fire, paralysis, poison, sleep; **SR** 31

Weaknesses metal shell, vulnerability to cold

Offense

Speed 40 ft., fly 250 ft. (clumsy)

Melee bite +40 (4d6+25/19-20), 2 claws +40 (2d8+17), 2 wings +37 (2d6+8), tail slap +38 (2d8+25)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (20 ft. with bite)

Special Attacks breath weapon (60-ft. cone, DC 31, 22d10 fire), crush (Medium creatures, DC 31, 4d6+22), manipulate flames, melt stone, tail sweep (Small creatures, DC 31, 2d6+22)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 27th; concentration +32)

At will—*detect magic*, *find the path*, *pyrotechnics* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 18), *wall of fire*

Spells Known (CL 17th; concentration +22)

8th (4/day)—*greater shout* (DC 23), *prismatic wall* (DC 23)

7th (6/day)—*limited wish*, *mass hold person* (DC 22), *spell turning*

6th (6/day)—*antimagic field*, *contingency*, *greater dispel magic*

5th (7/day)—*polymorph*, *telekinesis* (DC 20), *teleport*, *wall of force*

4th (7/day)—*fear* (DC 19), *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *displacement*, *haste*, *tongues*

2nd (7/day)—*alter self*, *detect thoughts*, *misdirection*, *resist energy*, *see invisibility*

1st (8/day)—*alarm*, *grease* (DC 16), *magic missile*, *shield*, *true strike*

0 (at will)—*arcane mark*, *bleed*, *light*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Statistics

Str 45, **Dex** 6, **Con** 27, **Int** 20, **Wis** 21, **Cha** 20

Base Atk +27; **CMB** +48; **CMD** 56 (60 vs. trip)

Feats Cleave, Critical Focus, Greater Vital Strike, Improved Critical (bite), Improved Initiative, Improved Iron Will, Improved Vital Strike, Iron Will, Multiattack, Power Attack, Quicken Spell, Stunning Critical, Vital Strike, Wingover

Skills Appraise +35, Bluff +35, Diplomacy +35, Fly +14, Intimidate +35, Knowledge (arcana) +35, Knowledge (history) +35, Perception +35, Sense Motive +35, Spellcraft +35, Stealth +16

Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Elven, Giant, Orc, Primordial

SQ Integrated rockets, change shape (specific humanoid form, polymorph)

Special Abilities

Fire Aura (Su) Gradiax is surrounded by an aura of intense heat. All creatures within 10 feet take 2d6 points of fire damage at the beginning of the dragon's turn.

Integrated Rockets (Ex) Once per minute, Gradiax can use a move action to activate hidden rocket boosters in vents along his back and wings, accelerating him to the speed of a bullet. He flies up to one mile in a mostly straight line. If he ends his movement adjacent to a creature or object, any attack he hits that creature with this turn also causes the target to fall prone. This ability even works on the colossus or a dirigible.

Manipulate Flames (Su) Gradiax can control any fire spell within 110 feet as a standard action. This ability allows him to move any fire effect in the area, as if he were the caster. This ability also allows him to reposition a stationary fire effect, although the new placement must be one allowed by the spell. Finally, for 1 round following the use of this ability, the dragon can control any new fire spell cast within its area of control, as if he were the caster. He can make all decisions allowed to the caster, including canceling the spell if he so desires.

Melt Stone (Su) Gradiax can use his breath weapon to melt rock at a range of 100 feet, affecting a 55-foot-radius area. The area becomes lava to a depth of 1 foot. Any creature in contact with the lava takes 20d6 points of fire damage on the first round, 10d6 on the second, and none thereafter as the lava hardens and cools. If used on a wall or ceiling, treat this ability as an avalanche that deals fire damage.

Smoke Vision (Ex) Gradiax can see perfectly in smoky conditions (such as those created by *pyrotechnics*).

APPENDIX B: Magic and Training

Magic Items

The Vortex Array

Aura overwhelming divination; **CL** 20th

Slot —; **Weight** 30 lbs.

Description

A column-like contraption made of cerebral mesh, diamonds, and living steel, the *Vortex Array* is a masterpiece of Gidim biotechnology. A ship equipped with one can scan regions as small as a single building (taking mere moments) or as vast as a thousand miles (which could require several hours), detecting all magic in it as per *greater arcane sight*. It also provides an overview of the general magical demeanor of a region, detailing any planar traits it might have.

If the *Array* is damaged, there is a chance that its readings will not be accurate when it is activated. The *Vortex Array* can be repaired with a Craft (metalworking) check (DC 30) by a character with the Technologist feat.

Training

A martial scientist who trains with Calily can learn the foundation of her monastery's fighting style, which is based on swift defensive adaptation.

Stance of the Paper Wind

Training

You crumple beneath your foe's attack, but in so doing steal the strength from the blow. In a continuous motion you unfold around the other side of the strike, putting you in position for a deft counterattack.

Requirement: Characters with the Martial Scientist theme who spend time training with Calily Buen can learn this power.

Benefit: As a move action, you move your speed and enter the stance of the paper wind. While in this stance, any attack or damaging effect that allows a Reflex save cannot do more than 30 points of damage to you at once. If an attack would deal more than 30 damage and the attacker is within range, you may make a melee or ranged attack against the attacker as an immediate action.

Additionally, when a creature you have not targeted with an attack since the start of your last round attacks you, you may make a Reflex save (DC equals the attack roll). On a success, you completely ignore the attack.

Special: You can only use one martial scientist technique per day. At the end of 8 hours of rest, you can swap this power for that of another technique.

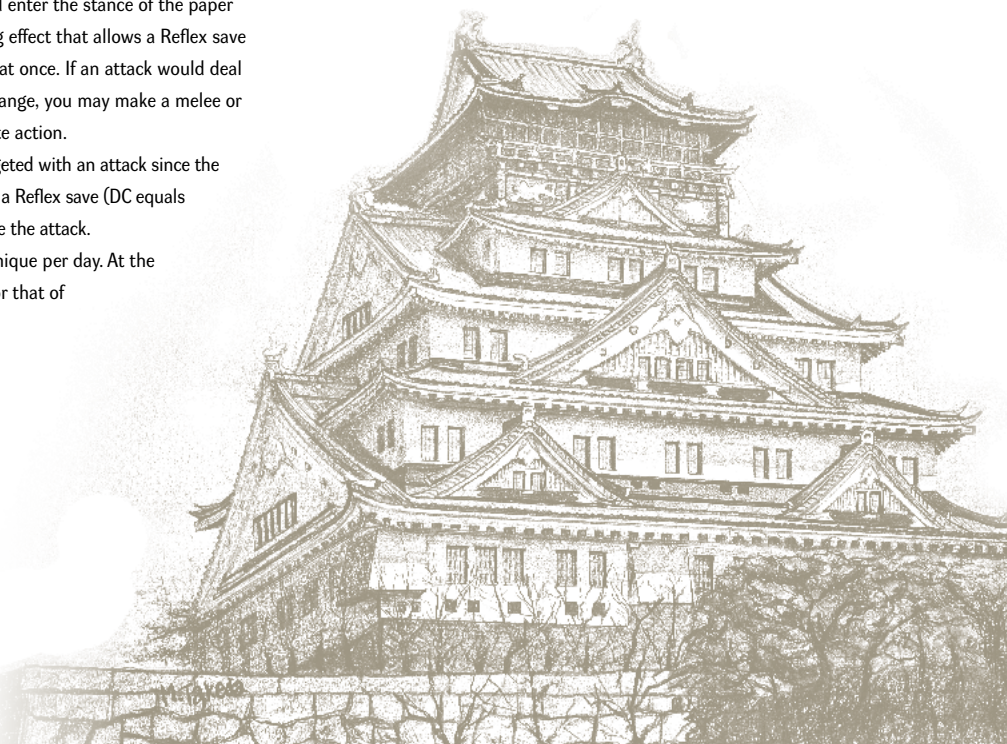
Apotheosis

Seizing Srasama's Divine Portfolio

If the avatar of Srasama is destroyed, whichever PC seized her necklace from Dala becomes a minor god of womanhood. The new god's powers will be fairly limited until he or she acquires some worshippers, but for now Srasama's portfolio grants the ability to use one of the following each day:

- ◆ Send a message to a woman anywhere in the multiverse, which can last up to five minutes and include various sensory effects like a major illusion.
- ◆ As a standard action, heal damage equal to your HP total, divided as you choose among any number of women you touch.
- ◆ As a swift action, grant a woman touched +1 to all attack rolls, saves, and defenses until the end of the encounter.
- ◆ Ensure that a pregnant woman touched will have a healthy birth.
- ◆ Ensure that a woman touched who conceives a child in the next week will bear a daughter.
- ◆ As a standard action, cast *harm* on a female humanoid (DC 16 + Charisma bonus).
- ◆ Speak to the soul of a dead woman touched if it died in the past year, lasting up to five minutes, though this grants no inherent control.

Other than that, the new god is free to choose his or her style of divinity.



APPENDIX C: GM Quick Reference Pages

COLLATED TIMELINES

Here are all the events occurring in the three acts of Adventure Eleven. These days are relative to whenever the adventure starts, since normal calendars no longer seem to apply.

In addition to the god executions listed below, Velkali goddess of oases will be executed the first time the party goes to witness one of these trials, and the god of music will be executed a day later. Just bump the dates a bit to make room.

Day 0: In Ber, every day a few people go missing in Ursaliña, their consciousness consumed to nourishing the feeding tentacle being grown in the Gidim leviathan. Lord Winslow Cadagyr mandates a curfew, orders the prisons opened, and has prisoners assigned as guards for all city gates to prevent anyone from exiting.

In Drakr, Vlendam Heid and his bodyguard Kvarti are trapped in Bhadrhzhavdud when Komanov's army assaults it. The army breaks through part of the old wall and seizes a section of the old city, but then settles in for a siege. Heid teleports a lockbox to the party.

In Crisillyir, the god of the night sky is executed.

Day 1: In Bhadrhzhavdud, Komanov retrieves the lost eye of the Voice of Rot and begins to assemble her arcanoscientific weapon.

In Crisillyir, the god of beasts and magnolias is executed.

Day 3: In Crisillyir, the god of sun and archery is executed.

Day 5: In Ber, a protest outside Cadagyr Estate about missing people is brutally suppressed by the police. Lord Winslow Cadagyr threatens arrest of any shopkeeper who does not keep normal hours.

In Crisillyir, the god of stone and pottery is executed.

Day 7: Komanov completes the weapon. Her army attacks and slays the entire city. She claims the souls of the dead for the Voice of Rot. The only person she spares is Vlendam Heid, taking him as a trophy.

In Crisillyir, the god of the sea and tidepools is executed.

Day 8: After a night of sadistic revelry, the Vsadni conjure giant sleds of ice, which are blown by winds of the army's hivemind blizzard. These vessels travel scores of miles in a day, carrying the doomsday force toward Mirsk. Along the way they wipe out a few minor towns and settlements.

Day 9: In Crisillyir, the god of storms and weddings is executed.

Day 10: In Ber, the streets are noticeably emptier than usual, though some are tempted out by the new bloodsports at the Jaula de Oso. People hear strange beasts during curfew.

Day 11: In Crisillyir, the god of winds and mountain air is executed.

Day 13: In Crisillyir, the god of forges and evocation is executed.

Day 15: In Ber, Lord Cadagyr orders mandatory parades each day to force high spirits, but otherwise people almost never leave their houses.

In Drakr, Komanov's army arrives in Mirsk. Komanov begins to prime her weapon again.

In Crisillyir, the god of love and healing is executed.

Day 17: In Crisillyir, the god of fortune is executed.

Day 19: In Ber, Lord Cadagyr's son Dieter loads a backpack with potions of invisibility and attempts to sneak into the Jaula. He is captured and brought to the leviathan's psychovivisection chamber, then converted into a shock trooper.

In Crisillyir, the god of time and synthesis is executed.

Day 20: In Ber, Lord Cadagyr makes attendance of the daily bloodsport in Jaula de Oso mandatory. Executore Salome Nieves begins to rally marines at the city's docks.

In Drakr, Komanov sacks Mirsk. She lets a few survivors flee by rail for Trekhom.

Day 21: In Crisillyir, the god of children's games is executed. Thereafter the god trials go on hiatus so the party has a chance at least to intercede with the trial of Triegenes.

Day 22: In Ber, marines storm Cadagyr Estate, kill several Gidim, but then are overrun by Gidim warbeasts.

In Drakr, Komanov's army launches again across frozen ground, bound for the capital.

Day 23: In Ber, sporadic looting begins and fires sprout, since most homes are empty. The Gidim openly unleash warbeasts in the streets to keep people from fleeing.

Day 24: In Ber, Gidim infiltrators go door to door, abducting children as final psychic sustenance for the tentacle.

Day 25: In Ber, the tentacle emerges, and nearly every thinking creature within 30 miles is slain. Thousands more Gidim begin to stream into this world, and they ride warbeasts toward Reo Pedresco.

Day 31: The army stops outside Trekhom for Komanov to prime the weapon once again.

Day 38: Doomsday eschatologists attack Trekhom. The city actually holds off their assault for a time, but it falls the next day.

Day 39: With nearly the entire nation of Drakr slain, Komanov orders all her followers to commit suicide and sends their souls to the Voice of Rot. She then heads to the Gyre to witness the end of the world.

Day 40: In Crisillyir, if the party has not interceded, Triegenes is executed, and Alais Primos is destroyed by a lava dragon.



Reality Shift

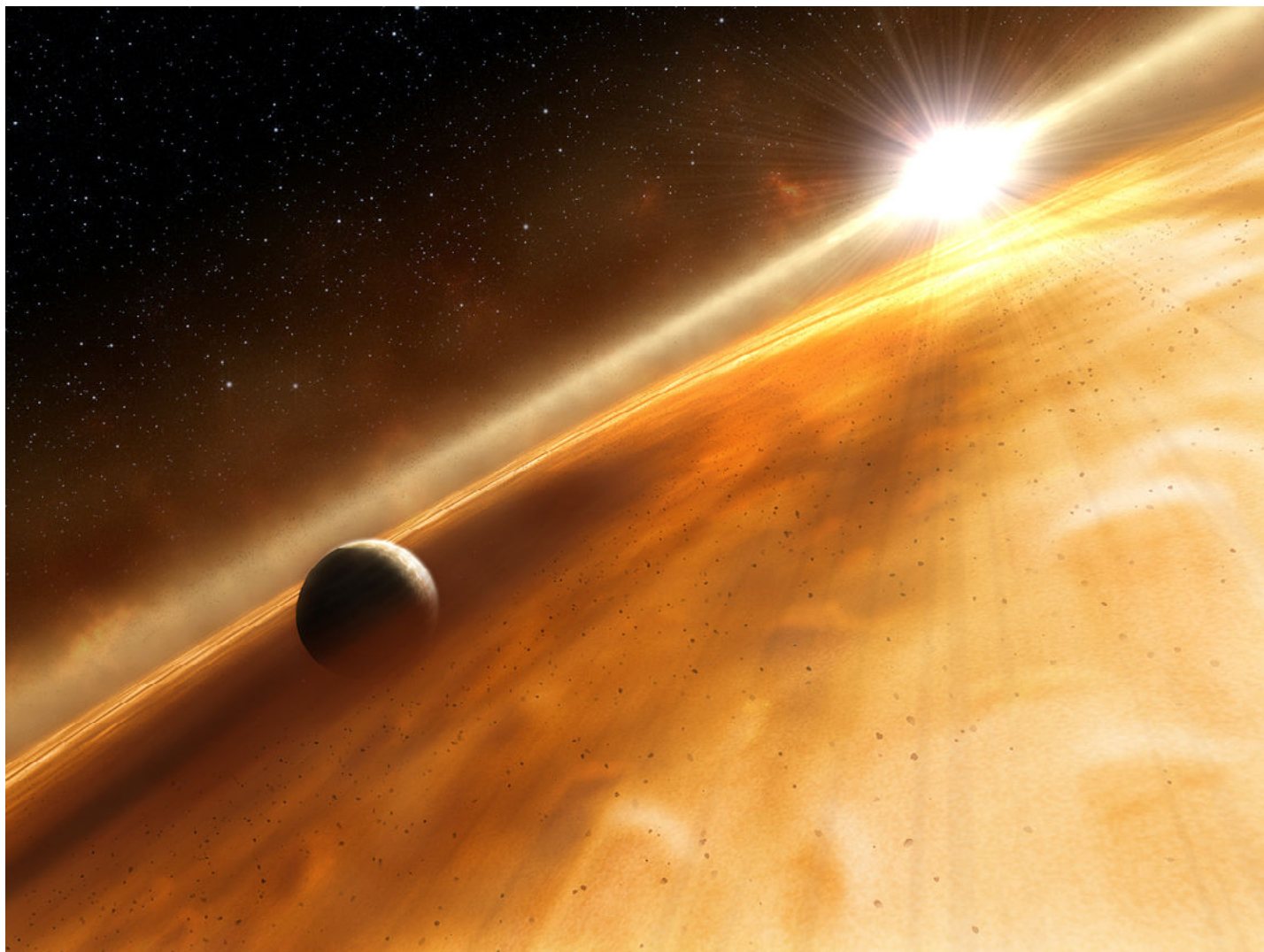
In Adventure Seven, *Schism*, the Obscurati voted on how they wanted to design the new world. Though Nicodemus deemed the actual vote to be illegitimate since spies cast ballots, the ultimate decision closely resembled the MAP proposal—a combination of Miller's Pyre, Panarchists, and the Arboretum, with a token effort to appease the Sky League by including flight.

New Solar System

Planes that exist following the Great Eclipse are:

- ♦ **Av.** The plane of life now turned to the plane of death, still with a Dreams and Mirrors aspect, drifting far from the sun, nearly unseen.
- ♦ **Baden.** Small spectral moon around Fourmyle with a Flight aspect. It is a ghost moon, as if it was once dead. Skyseers sense energy on it that is sympathetic to the Gyre itself.
- ♦ **Fourmyle.** Plane of space with an Empowerment aspect. Allows you to teleport wherever you can see, or where a place is your 'domain.' This plane is filled with craters of warm air, habitability scattered across a desolate surface.
- ♦ **Illocus.** Plane of time with an Expression aspect. Arguments build and cascade, since people do not revert to their normal status quickly. This plane burns with fire in a ring around Fourmyle.
- ♦ **Jiese.** Original plane of fire with a Cunning aspect. Unchanged from the previous plane with the same name.
- ♦ **Mojang.** Unlikely plane of life with Craft and Artifice aspects, which has a faintly purple surface. The terrain on this world is wildly varied, though only a handful of animals exist—such as yellow frogs—that exist seemingly independent of an ecosystem.
- ♦ **Ostea.** A bloody plane of water with a Healing aspect. People heal faster, but blood empowers magic in unusual ways.
- ♦ **Perlocus.** Plane of air with a heavy Speech aspect. Words will carry more weight to sway people's opinions. This plane is surreal; when you say something it has a physical influence.
- ♦ **Ratios.** Plane of earth with a Logic aspect, leading people to use reason in their arguments. The planet is bland and static rock, though strange whispers can be heard from nowhere.

There is no sun. The planets orbit a nexus, but the sun is missing. Instead, dim light is granted by a cloud of stars that seem to be pulled into the Gyre. Skyseers sense that the world is slowly drawing closer to the Gyre, and predict within a year or two the world will be pulled in.





Mechanics of a Broken Age

The following is a breakdown of mechanics that have changed since the completion of the Obscurati's ritual.

- ♦ **Applied Astronomy:** Characters with the Applied Astronomist prestige class get new powers, detailed below.
- ♦ **Black Hole Sun:** Any spell with the light descriptor is 1 level higher, and no spell can produce light for more than 5 minutes. (Magic can produce fire, which emits light; only magical light is affected). All existing magical light effects such as *continual flame* end.

In the new sunless world, *light* is no longer a cantrip, and even high-level heroes might need to rely on torches or lanterns for illumination.

- ♦ **Blood of Ostea:** All creatures immediately stabilize when rendered below 0 hit points. Creatures do not die when they reach a negative hit point score equal to their Constitution. To slay a creature, one *must* perform a *coup de grace* on it.

All creatures reduced to 0 or below immediate heal up to 1 hit point after 1 minute unless they are killed first. Creatures regain all hit points after eight hours of consecutive rest.

- ♦ **Death is Death:** Slain deva no longer reincarnate.
- ♦ **Flight of the Fey:** Eladrin lose access to their racial 'fey step' ability. Instead, all attacks made by eladrin gain the *ghost touch* weapon property due to their connection to the new plane of Death.
- ♦ **Magic Mishaps:** At least initially after the Great Eclipse, whenever a character casts a spell more powerful than a cantrip (either personally or with a magic item), there's a 10% chance per spell level that the effect fails. If it doesn't fail, it causes a mishap of some sort. Supernatural and spell-like abilities function normally.

A character who can use magic of some sort can spend 8 hours researching and practicing, then make a Spellcraft check (DC 20). If he fails he can try again. If successful he becomes able to safely use magic of up to 1st level, with no special chance of failure or mishap. Each further day he can make additional checks to regain mastery of the next higher level of magic, up to whatever is the highest level he knows. A character can only attempt one of these checks per day.

Alternately, a character who has mastered a level of magic can spend 8 hours to aid another character with his or her mastery attempts, granting a +5 bonus to that character's check.

Existing magic items that cast spells are dangerous, but can be rendered safe with a moment's concentration by a spellcaster capable of casting spells of sufficient level.

- ♦ **Reign of the Rational:** All creatures gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy check if they use rational appeals rather than emotional ones. All creatures take a -5 penalty to Intimidate and Sense Motive checks.

- ♦ **Impossibly Distant:** Planar travel works to any of the new worlds in orbit, but all other planes are out of range. The Dreaming and the Bleak Gate are inaccessible. The Gyre can be reached from various areas in the world, but travel is perilous, and one-way. Summoning spells work normally, though.

- ♦ **Teleportation and Communication.** Gold no longer blocks teleportation. However it is not possible to teleport to a location unless you can either see it or you have traveled to it before. Any travel before the Ob's ritual does not count, and scrying is insufficient, so it won't be possible to teleport around the world for a while, until the PCs travel the traditional way first.

Similarly, magical communication cannot contact any creature unless you can either see it or have interacted with it since the Ob's ritual.

You cannot teleport to a spot that is owned or otherwise controlled by someone who has chosen to bar teleporting intruders.

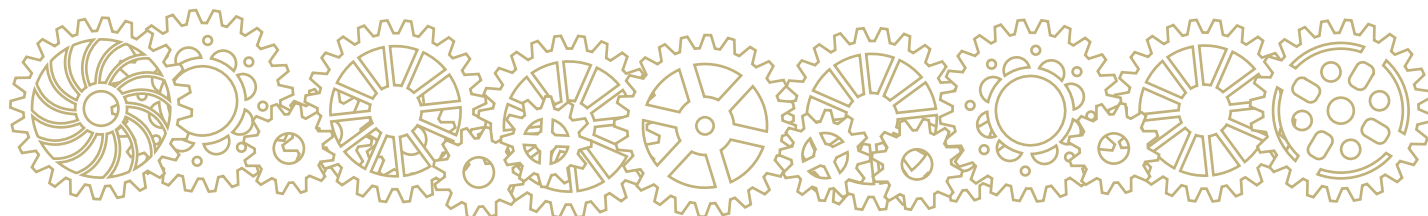
What constitutes ownership tends to follow social consensus. Streets and forests are public unless signs are prominently posted or fences (or even token lines of rope) are set up. The owner of an area can make exceptions for specific creatures or groups of creatures. This restriction only bars teleporting into an area, not out of an area or within an area.

- ♦ **Fourmyle Jaunting.** Every creature is able to *jaunt*—to teleport within line of sight as an innate spell-like ability. As a standard action once per day, a character can teleport anywhere he has line of sight to. He cannot teleport to a spot he could not reach normally (e.g., you have to be able to walk or climb there, so no teleporting through a barred cage). He also cannot teleport if he's being held.

A character with the feat Mobility or Run (or who otherwise focuses on fast movement) can instead use this ability once every five minutes.

(There will be a rash of robberies in the coming weeks until word spreads that all you have to do is *think* and you can bar teleporters from your property.)

- ♦ **Three Miles is so Last Age:** Spells that restore life to the dead are no longer limited by the body having to travel less than three miles from where it died. However, spirits of the dead are visible in mirrors, standing near their bodies. After a few days, these spirits wander off and might be glimpsed occasionally in reflections.
- ♦ **Wings of Liberty:** Magical flight is now possible. Spells such as *fly*, *levitation*, and *overland flight* now have their normal duration, and their spell level is reduced by 1.





Applied Astronomist Prestige Class

The new stars grant new powers, since each world heralds a different fate.

Touching the Wheel of Heaven (Su) You can connect to the new planes, but most of the old ones are no longer accessible.

Table: Planar Connections

1d8:

1. **Jiese**, plane of fire.
2. **Perlocus**, plane of air.
3. **Mojang**, plane of life.
4. **Ostea**, plane of water.
5. **Ratios**, plane of earth.
6. **Fourmyle**, the plane of space.
7. **Illocus**, plane of time and Baden, the ghost moon.
8. **Av**, plane of death.

Heavenly Flare (Su) The effects of the new planes for this ability change.

Plane	Additional Effect
Jiese , plane of fire	2d6 fire damage per round for 1d4 rounds.
Perlocus , plane of air	The target is affected by a suggestion you say for the next 1d4 rounds. (This requires a Will save instead of a Fortitude save.)
Mojang , plane of life	The target cannot heal for 1d4 rounds, and the damage from this attack does not respond to magical healing. Instead, a Craft (any) check functions as a heal check.
Ostea , plane of water	If the target has blood, you can distribute an amount of healing equal to the amount of damage you did among other creatures who have blood (including yourself) within 50 feet of you.
Ratios , plane of earth	The target is stunned for one round, during which time it must briefly answer the first question posed to it.
Fourmyle , plane of space	Teleport the target up to 30 ft.
Illocus , plane of time and Baden , the ghost moon	The target has a fly speed of 60 for 1d4 rounds, but at the start of each of those turns it takes damage equal to however much damage it took the previous round.
Av , plane of death	2d6 negative energy damage and the target is confused until the end of its next turn.

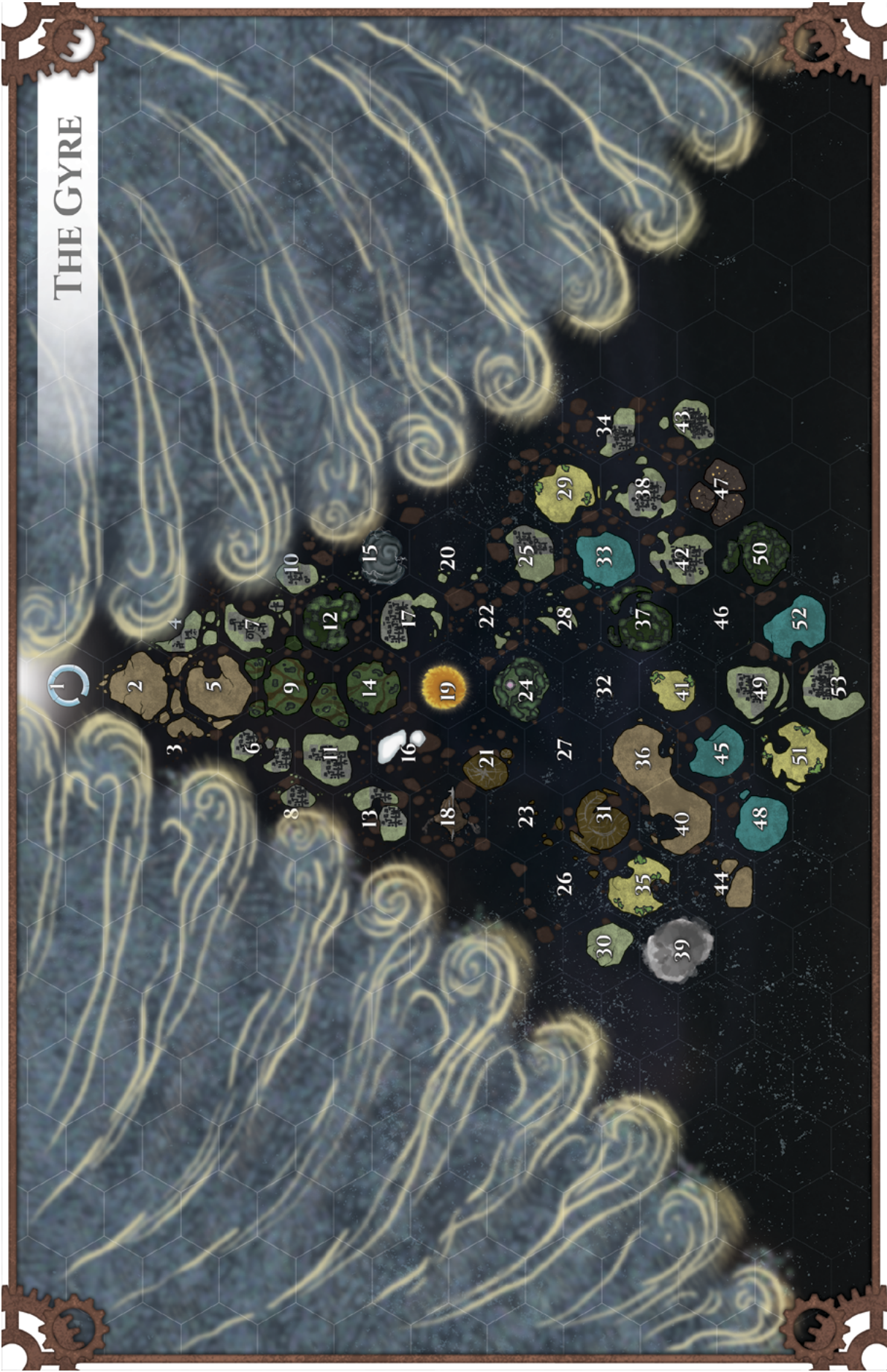
Space Travel (Su) The movement modes are relatively unchanged.

Plane	Movement Option
Jiese , plane of fire	She can take a second 5-foot-step each round as a swift action.
Perlocus , plane of air	She gains a fly speed equal to her base land speed, with good maneuverability.
Mojang , plane of life	She gains a burrow speed equal to half her base land speed.
Ostea , plane of water	She gains a swim speed equal to her base land speed.
Ratios , plane of earth	No new movement mode, but she can treat any creature she can see that is flying as if it were adjacent.
Fourmyle , plane of space	She can teleport 30 feet as a move action.
Illocus , plane of time and Baden , the ghost moon	+10 foot enhancement bonus to base land speed. If she runs, she can pass through 5 feet of solid material as if she were a ghost.
Av , plane of death	She hovers slightly above the ground and seems to pass through small obstacles, allowing her to ignore difficult terrain.

Cataclysmic Conjunction (Su) The manifested planes' abilities are:

Plane	Area Effect
Jiese , plane of fire	As a swift action, the astronomist can create an object composed of solid firegem, of any rough shape, up to 15 feet across in any unoccupied space in the area. The object is as durable as wood, but vanishes when the effect ends.
Perlocus , plane of air	Creatures in the area are affected by charm monster.
Mojang , plane of life	Objects lose hardness and creatures lose DR.
Ostea , plane of water	Area fills with blood to the depth of astronomist's choice, either calm (Swim DC 10) or choppy (DC 20).
Ratios , plane of earth	Creatures in the area roll 1d10+5 in place of 1d20, and any emotion-based effects end.
Fourmyle , plane of space	Astronomist becomes master of the area, and can prevent creatures from entering and/or exiting. As a swift action she can teleport any creature in the area to the edge of it.
Illocus , plane of time and Baden , the ghost moon	Creatures in the area gain a bonus standard action each round, but they can only use it to perform one of the standard actions they performed the previous round.
Av , plane of death	Enemies in the area take a -2 penalty to their Fortitude and Reflex saves and AC. Allies gain a +2 bonus to theirs.







GYRE EXPLORATION

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
1. Reida , the arc of history	Life, Time	Strong prophecy.
2. Teykfa , the ticking pendulum	Earth, Time	People are more aware of the scale of time, and they can better weigh long-term consequences. Time can be manipulated.
3. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
4. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
5. Bonilathe , the storm claw	Air, Fire	Storms spawn creatures.
6. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
7. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
8. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
9. Metarie , the swamp of sabotage	Life, Water	Technology is disrupted.
10. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
11. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
12. Guay , the grove of dreams	Life, Space	Dreams create demiplanes.
13. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
14. Ringes , the barren moor	Earth, Water	Murderous violence.
15. Gardboral , the chimeric maelstrom	Air, Life	Elementals are common and massive.
16. Apo , the unknown disk	Death, Space	Intermittent spheres of annihilation.
17. Iratha Ket , the graveyard revel	Death, Life	Greater altruism. Occasional spontaneous musical numbers.
18. Egalitrix , fortress of the Golden Legion	Fire, Space	Fantastic grand industry will develop, driven by greed.
19. Obliatas , the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
20. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
21. Elofasp , the spawning hive	Earth, Life	Giant obedient beasts.
22. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
23. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
24. Ascetia , the hidden jungle	Life, Time	People are more aware of history.
25. Drozani , a dead city in the clouds	Air, Death	Slowly the birth rate dwindles to zero.
26. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
27. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
28. <i>Empty void</i>	—	A floating graveyard of ships.
29. Etheax , the tended flame	Fire, Time	Patience and fire magic are both easy.
30. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
31. Dunkelweiss , the fermented peaks	Earth, Life	Alcohol is good for you.
32. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
33. Hunlow , a place for pirates	Death, Water	The ocean is literally a blood-thirsty god who loves villains.
34. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
35. Wilanir , the lair of discontent	Air, Water	Dense mists bring ill tidings.
36. Amrou , the salt waste (also 40)	Death, Earth	Mundane counters against supernatural threats are stronger.
37. Thrag , the beastly bounty	Life, Time	All animals and plants are ambulatory and carnivorous.
38. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
39. Apet , the distant plane	Air, Space	Planar travel limited to local system.
40. Amrou , the salt waste (also 36)	~see 36~	~see 36~
41. Bhoior , the walking whisper	Air, Time	Sounds echo, sometimes years later.
42. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
43. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
44. Avilona , the final murmur	Air, Death	Flight is limited to five minutes.
45. Shabboath , the severed sea	Earth, Water	Creates an 'underdark' cavern system.
46. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
47. Urim , the shattered golden chain	Earth, Space	Gold blocks teleportation.
48. Mavisha , the mysterious deep	Water, Time	Islands conceal secrets.
49. Nem , the plane of ruin	Death, Time	Lingering souls are stronger than corporeal undead.
50. Caeloon , the paper wind	Air, Life	People are resilient in the face of tragedy.
51. The Plain of Rice	Space, Water	The entire world is shallow water.
52. Padyer , a clean realm	Fire, Water	Water burns and purges.
53. Av , plane of mirrors	Death, Life	Conjures physical reflection of whatever world it orbits.



Gyre Planes

In the final adventure the party will need to bond their world to eight other planes. They need at least one plane with each of the following elemental *energies* – Air, Earth, Fire, Water, Life, Death, Space, and Time. Most planes they have an option to choose will affect the world, sometimes subtly, occasionally dramatically.

Current Worlds

These planes are currently linked to the party's homeworld, due to the Obscurati's ritual at the Axis Seal.

- ♦ **Jiese, the fire of industry.** Flame-wracked stony wasteland inhabited by beasts and salamanders. *Energies:* Fire, Life. *Effect:* Precision technology functions.
- ♦ **Perlocus, a voice on the wind.** Cloudy skysphere where words can turn the air solid and easily influence creatures. *Energies:* Air, Earth. *Effect:* Persuasion is more effective.
- ♦ **Mojang, a wild artifice.** Faint purple surface, wildly varied terrain, but with few creatures in a primitive ecosystem. *Energies:* Earth, Life. *Effect:* Nature readily follows orders.
- ♦ **Ostea, the beating heart.** Bloody sea that pulses as if it covers a massive heart, with islands of bone. *Energies:* Water, Life. *Effect:* Rapid healing and automatic stabilization.
- ♦ **Ratios, the cold logic.** Bland rock, chill air, where whispers intrude on one's mind. *Energies:* Earth, Space. *Effect:* Intuiting emotions and intimidating becomes harder.
- ♦ **Fourmyle, the selfish dominion.** Desolate rocky world with pockets of warm air in craters. *Energies:* Space, Death. *Effect:* Casual teleportation.
- ♦ **Illocus, the cascading flame.** Spinning ring of fire. *Energies:* Fire, Time. *Effect:* Consequences cascade rapidly (e.g., godminds, apocalypse cults).
- ♦ **Baden, the ghost moon.** A ghost of a dead world, pulled in the moment it was annihilated in the Gyre. *Energies:* Air. *Effect:* Flight is easy.
- ♦ **Av, plane of mirrors.** Drifting away and being pulled into the Gyre. See below.

Dying Worlds

These planes are being drawn into the constellation gears of the Gyre. The numbers beside them correspond with the GM's Map – Gyre Planes.

Planes marked with an asterisk (*) were originally linked to the party's homeworld. Jiese, listed above, was also among these. Planes marked with a dagger (†) are planes where primary plot scenes occur.

Some hexes are 'dead motes,' 'plundered ruins,' or 'empty void.' No specific details are planned for these locations, but the party might have random encounters there or explore to find resources. You could also put scenes of your own devise there.

1. *†**Reida, the arc of history.** A silver ring with a wide section cracked off. *Energies:* Life, Time. *Effect:* Foresight and predestination are strong, but only for a two thousand year cycle.
2. **Teykfa, the ticking pendulum.** A desert dominated by a solitary mesa, within which ticks a millennial clock. The clock is broken, and often skips. *Energies:* Earth, Time. *Effect:* People are more aware of the scale of time, and they can better weigh long-term consequences. Time can be manipulated.
3. *Dead motes.*

4. *Dead motes.*

5. **Bonilathe, the storm claw.** Coastal flats where thunder and lightning conjure reptilian monsters. *Energies:* Air, Fire. *Effect:* Storms spawn creatures.

6. *Dead motes.*

7. *Dead motes.*

8. *Dead motes.*

9. †**Metarie, the swamp of sabotage.** A multi-layered world with swamps and gremlins on each level. *Energies:* Life, Water. *Effect:* Technology is disrupted.

10. *Plundered ruins.*

11. *Plundered ruins.*

12. **Guay, the grove of dreams.** A beautiful forest in painted perpetual autumn, where portals give access to dreams. *Energies:* Life, Space. *Effect:* Dreams create demiplanes.

13. *Dead motes.*

14. **Ringes, the barren moor.** A flat swamp with only a few wild animals. *Energies:* Earth, Water. *Effect:* Intelligent creatures become slowly unstable, and eventually murderously violent.

15. **Gardboral, the chimeric maelstrom.** Titanic thunderstorm surrounding an elemental chaos. *Energies:* Air, Life. *Effect:* Elementals are common and massive.

16. **Apo, the unknown disk.** Mysterious flat disk of bones, baked clay, and cast bronze. Lingering causes it to open and drop intruders into empty space. *Energies:* Death, Space. *Effect:* Intermittent spheres of annihilation.

17. †**Iratha Ket, the graveyard revel.** A city of corpses roused from their tombs by musical lich monarchs, who commands them to protect a handful of living survivors each generation. *Energies:* Death, Air. *Effect:* Greater altruism. Occasional spontaneous musical numbers.

18. †**Egalitrix, fortress of the Golden Legion.** Industrial steampunk fortress clinging to a two-sided volcano floating in space, dominated with golden machinery. *Energies:* Fire, Space. *Effect:* Fantastic grand industry will develop, driven by greed.

19. **Obliatas, the devouring light.** A swooping orb of crackling radiance that hunts evil. *Energies:* Any. *Effect:* Undead are destroyed by the sun.

20. *Dead motes.*

21. **Elofasp, the spawning hive.** Giant spires crafted by insects, all part of the same queen's hive. *Energies:* Earth, Life. *Effect:* Giant obedient beasts.

22. *Empty void.*

23. *Empty void.*

24. †**Ascetia, the hidden jungle.** A flashing beacon shines from a lone lighthouse rising above a trackless jungle. *Energies:* Life, Time. *Effect:* People are more aware of history.

25. **Drozani, a dead city in the clouds.** A pillow of clouds upon which sits a desolate city of rose wood and marble. *Energies:* Air, Death. *Effect:* Slowly the birth rate dwindles to zero.

26. *Empty void.*

27. *Empty void.*

28. *Empty void. Here drift thousands of once-famous dead ships from hundreds of worlds, including Boato, the King of Boats.*



29. Etheax, the tended flame. A goblin tribe casually passes the years until their eventual destruction by performing regular plays in front of a bonfire. *Energies:* Fire, Time. *Effect:* Patience and fire magic are both easy.

30. Plundered ruins.

31. Dunkelweiss, the fermented peaks. A range of mountains with plants that naturally produce streams of beer. *Energies:* Earth, Life. *Effect:* Alcohol is good for you.

32. Empty void.

33. Hunlow, a place for pirates. A skull-shaped archipelago in the midst of an ocean that can reach out immense tendrils of water to let a clan of pirates plunder other planes. *Energies:* Death, Water. *Effect:* The ocean is literally a blood-thirsty god who loves villains.

34. Plundered ruins.

35. Wilanir, the lair of discontent. A frigid and foggy countryside of woods, hills, and caves, where a dragon once laired. *Energies:* Air, Water. *Effect:* Guilt weighs heavily, like a fog.

36. Amrou, the salt waste. A vast salt flat, strewn with tombs of inhuman mummies. *Energies:* Death, Earth. *Effect:* Mundane counters against supernatural threats are stronger, like salt stopping undead. (Also location 40 on the map.)

37. Thrage, the beastly bounty. A steppe where screaming grass is trampled by cannibalistic wildebeest, and all souls reincarnate rapidly with vivid memories. *Energies:* Life, Time. *Effect:* Rapid reincarnation.

38. Plundered ruins.

39. *Apet, the distant plane. A practically formless world with buffeting sandstorms that conceal all location and distance. *Energies:* Air, Space. *Effect:* Planar travel beyond star system is impossible, and between worlds is limited to five minutes.

40. Amrou (part two). See 36.

41. Bhoior, the walking whisper. A hollow world formed from the husk of a colossal petrified turtle, encircled by strong bands of wind. The turtle still moves, every so slowly. *Energies:* Air, Time. *Effect:* Sounds echo, sometimes years later.

42. Plundered ruins.

43. Dead motes.

44. *Avilona, the final murmur. A sky of wisps, with an inert mote of floating rock drifting in feeble winds with few storms. *Energies:* Air, Death. *Effect:* Flight is limited to five minutes.

45. Shabboath, the severed sea. A bog of sinkholes, riddled with tunnels and rivers, inhabited by tentacled, telepathic sea monsters. *Energies:* Earth, Water. *Effect:* Creates an 'underdark' cavern system.

46. Empty void.

47. *Urim, the shattered golden chain. Floating asteroids threaded with gold. *Energies:* Earth, Space. *Effect:* Gold blocks teleportation.

48. *Mavisha, the mysterious deep. A dark, island-dotted sea, whose waves spiral in vast arcs over the surface, hiding secrets far below. *Energies:* Water, Time. *Effect:* Islands conceal secrets.

49. *Nem, the plane of ruin. A flat black landscape with countless openings into an underworld composed of thousands of layers of dead civilizations. *Energies:* Death, Time. *Effect:* Lingering souls are stronger than corporeal undead.

50. *Caeloon, the paper wind. Forested hills of shattered sky islands, dominated by a monastery crafted from folding paper, like an origami crane. *Energies:* Air, Life. *Effect:* People are resilient in the face of tragedy.

51. The Plain of Rice. A shallow saucer-shaped world, where every surface is flooded a foot deep, allowing rice (and nothing else) to flourish. *Energies:* Space, Water. *Effect:* The entire world is shallow water.

52. Padyer, a clean realm. An eerily smooth orb mote that resembles porcelain, with a lapping sea that drifts around the world based on the complex tides of the Gyre. Of course, the water actually is impossibly hot, enough to slag metal, yet it never is sullied by other substances. *Energies:* Fire, Water. *Effect:* Water burns and purges.

53. *Av, plane of mirrors. Hollow orb of frosted glass, currently shattered, with fey landscapes on one side and lurching ghosts on the other. *Energies:* Life, Death. *Effect:* Conjures reflections of whatever world it orbits.

Planes by Element Type

In case you need to quickly know all the planes that provide, say, water energy, please refer to the following lists. They also state the second energy each plane provides, and what their traits are. Entries marked 0 are currently bound to the party's homeworld by the Ob's ritual.

Air Planes

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
0. Perlocus, a voice on the wind.	Air, Earth	Persuasion is more effective.
0. Baden, the ghost moon.	Air	Flight is easy.
5. Bonilathe, the storm claw	Air, Fire	Storms spawn creatures.
15. Gardboral, the chimeric maelstrom	Air, Life	Elementals are common and massive.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
25. Drozani, a dead city in the clouds	Air, Death	Slowly the birth rate dwindles to zero.
35. Wilanir, the lair of discontent	Air, Water	Dense mists bring ill tidings.
39. Apet, the distant plane	Air, Space	Planar travel limited to local system.
41. Bhoior, the walking whisper	Air, Time	Sounds echo, sometimes years later.
44. Avilona, the final murmur	Air, Death	Flight is limited to five minutes.
50. Caeloon, the paper wind	Air, Life	People are resilient in the face of tragedy.



Death Planes

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
0. Fourmyle, the selfish dominion	Death, Space	Casual teleportation.
16. Apo, the unknown disk	Death, Space	Intermittent spheres of annihilation.
17. Iratha Ket, the graveyard revel	Death, Life	Greater altruism. Occasional spontaneous musical numbers.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
25. Drozani, a dead city in the clouds	Air, Death	Slowly the birth rate dwindles to zero.
33. Hunlow, a place for pirates	Death, Water	The ocean is literally a blood-thirsty god who loves villains.
36. Amrou, the salt waste (also 40)	Death, Earth	Mundane counters against supernatural threats are stronger.
44. Avilona, the final murmur	Air, Death	Flight is limited to five minutes.
49. Nem, the plane of ruin	Death, Time	Lingering souls are stronger than corporeal undead.
53. Av, plane of mirrors	Death, Life	Conjures physical reflection of whatever world it orbits.

Earth Planes

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
0. Perlocus, a voice on the wind.	Air, Earth	Persuasion is more effective.
0. Mojang, the wild artifice	Earth, Life	Nature readily follows orders.
0. Ratios, the cold logic	Earth, Space	Intuiting emotions and intimidating becomes harder.
2. Teykfa, the ticking pendulum	Earth, Time	People are more aware of the scale of time, and they can better weigh long-term consequences. Time can be manipulated.
14. Ringes, the barren moor	Earth, Water	Murderous violence.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
21. Elofasp, the spawning hive	Earth, Life	Giant obedient beasts.
31. Dunkelweiss, the fermented peaks	Earth, Life	Alcohol is good for you.
36. Amrou, the salt waste (also 40)	Death, Earth	Mundane counters against supernatural threats are stronger.
45. Shabboath, the severed sea	Earth, Water	Creates an 'underdark' cavern system.
47. Urim, the shattered golden chain	Earth, Space	Gold blocks teleportation.

Fire Planes

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
0. Jiese, the fire of industry	Fire, Life	Precision technology functions.
0. Illocus, the cascading flame	Fire, Time	Consequences cascade rapidly.
5. Bonilathe, the storm claw	Air, Fire	Storms spawn creatures.
18. Egalitrix, fortress of the Golden Legion	Fire, Space	Fantastic grand industry will develop, driven by greed.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
29. Etheax, the tended flame	Fire, Time	Patience and fire magic are both easy.
52. Padyer, a clean realm	Fire, Water	Water burns and purges.

Life Planes

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
0. Jiese, the fire of industry	Fire, Life	Precision technology functions.
0. Mojang, the wild artifice	Earth, Life	Nature readily follows orders.
1. Reida, the arc of history	Life, Time	Strong prophecy.
9. Metarie, the swamp of sabotage	Life, Water	Technology is disrupted.
12. Guay, the grove of dreams	Life, Space	Dreams create demiplanes.
15. Gardboral, the chimeric maelstrom	Air, Life	Elementals are common and massive.
17. Iratha Ket, the graveyard revel	Death, Life	Greater altruism. Occasional spontaneous musical numbers.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
21. Elofasp, the spawning hive	Earth, Life	Giant obedient beasts.
24. Ascetia, the hidden jungle	Life, Time	People are more aware of history.
31. Dunkelweiss, the fermented peaks	Earth, Life	Alcohol is good for you.
37. Thrag, the beastly bounty	Life, Time	All animals and plants are ambulatory and carnivorous.
50. Caeloon, the paper wind	Air, Life	People are resilient in the face of tragedy.
53. Av, plane of mirrors	Death, Life	Conjures physical reflection of whatever world it orbits.



Space Planes

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
0. Fourmyle, the selfish dominion	Death, Space	Casual teleportation.
0. Ratios, the cold logic	Earth, Space	Intuiting emotions and intimidating becomes harder.
12. Guay, the grove of dreams	Life, Space	Dreams create demiplanes.
16. Apo, the unknown disk	Death, Space	Intermittent spheres of annihilation.
18. Egalitrix, fortress of the Golden Legion	Fire, Space	Fantastic grand industry will develop, driven by greed.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
39. Apet, the distant plane	Air, Space	Planar travel limited to local system.
47. Urim, the shattered golden chain	Earth, Space	Gold blocks teleportation.
51. The Plain of Rice	Space, Water	The entire world is shallow water.

Time Planes

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
0. Illocus, the cascading flame	Fire, Time	Consequences cascade rapidly.
1. Reida, the arc of history	Life, Time	Strong prophecy.
2. Teykfa, the ticking pendulum	Earth, Time	People are more aware of the scale of time, and they can better weigh long-term consequences. Time can be manipulated.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
24. Ascetia, the hidden jungle	Life, Time	People are more aware of history.
29. Etheax, the tended flame	Fire, Time	Patience and fire magic are both easy.
37. Thrug, the beastly bounty	Life, Time	All animals and plants are ambulatory and carnivorous.
41. Bhoior, the walking whisper	Air, Time	Sounds echo, sometimes years later.
48. Mavisha, the mysterious deep	Water, Time	Islands conceal secrets.
49. Nem, the plane of ruin	Death, Time	Lingering souls are stronger than corporeal undead.

Water Planes

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
0. Ostea, the beating heart	Life, Water	Rapid healing and automatic stabilization.
9. Metarie, the swamp of sabotage	Life, Water	Technology is disrupted.
14. Ringes, the barren moor	Earth, Water	Murderous violence.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
33. Hunlow, a place for pirates	Death, Water	The ocean is literally a blood-thirsty god who loves villains.
35. Wilanir, the lair of discontent	Air, Water	Dense mists bring ill tidings.
45. Shabboath, the severed sea	Earth, Water	Creates an 'underdark' cavern system.
48. Mavisha, the mysterious deep	Water, Time	Islands conceal secrets.
51. The Plain of Rice	Space, Water	The entire world is shallow water.
52. Padyer, a clean realm	Fire, Water	Water burns and purges.

Possible Combinations

Here we present four possible combinations of planes, listing them by the order in which they fill out the eight slots of elemental energies: fire, air, life, water, earth, space, time, and death.

Utopian. Jiese, Caeloon, Av, Mavisha, Dunkelweiss, Urim, Ascetia, Iratha Ket. People are resilient, harmonious, forward-looking, and altruistic, but are still inventive dreamers who know how to celebrate with good alcohol.

Pastoral. Etheax, Caeloon, Mojang, Metarie, Amrou, Apet, Reida, Av. With no intervention from other worlds and no advancing technology, people live simple, quaint lives where nature responds readily to their labor. There are some supernatural threats like gremlins, fey, and creatures of the dark, but people are prepared for them.

Technocracy. Jiese, Baden, Mojang, Ostea, Ratios, Egalitrix, Etheax, Obliatas. People are patient, industrious, and good at controlling both nature and their emotions. Undead are weak, but airships will be prevalent.

God-Empire. Bonilathe, Apet, Elofasp, Hunlow, Teykfa, Nem, Apo. The world is perilous, wracked with storms, massive beasts, and minor spheres of annihilation, so only people with great power like the PCs can be in charge. A villainous sea god rewards the party with power, and they can linger on as immortal spirits, with no meddling from the rest of the multiverse. They even can control time.

Use this page to keep track of the order in which the party bonds with worlds. When they perform the Axis Seal ritual in adventure thirteen, they'll be able to access worlds on the combat round equivalent to whatever day they bonded to those worlds.

[illegible]



THE FLAMING ZIGGURAT OF AV



One square equals 5ft.



 $1 = 5 \text{ feet}$



MECHANICS OF A BROKEN AGE

The following is a breakdown of mechanics that have changed since the completion of the Obscurati's ritual. Trial and error are the best manner for a PC to discover these mechanical changes, while some high level divination magic may assist in ascertaining the exact changes to the world.

Applied Astronomy: Characters with the Applied Astronomist prestige class get new powers, detailed in Reality Shift in Appendix C.

Black Hole Sun: Any spell with the light descriptor is 1 level higher, and no spell can produce light for more than 5 minutes. (Magic can produce fire, which emits light; only magical light is affected). All existing magical light effects such as *continual flame* end.

In the new sunless world, *light* is no longer a cantrip, and even high-level heroes might need to rely on torches or lanterns for illumination.

Blood of Ostea: All creatures immediately stabilize when rendered below 0 hit points. Creatures do not die when they reach a negative hit point score equal to their Constitution. To slay a creature, one *must* perform a *coup de grace* on it.

All creatures reduced to 0 or below immediate heal up to 1 hit point after 1 minute unless they are killed first. Creatures regain all hit points after eight hours of consecutive rest.

Death is Death: Slain deva no longer reincarnate.

Flight of the Fey: Eladrin lose access to their racial 'fey step' ability. Instead, all attacks made by eladrin gain the *ghost touch* weapon property due to their connection to the new plane of Death.

Magic Mishaps: As detailed above, whenever a character casts a spell more powerful than a cantrip (either personally or with a magic item), there's a 10% chance per spell level that the effect fails. If it doesn't fail, it causes a mishap of some sort. Supernatural and spell-like abilities function normally.

A character who can use magic of some sort can spend 8 hours researching and practicing, then make a Spellcraft check (DC 20). If he fails he can try again. If successful he becomes able to safely use magic of up to 1st level, with no special chance of failure or mishap. Each further day he can make additional checks to regain mastery of the next higher level of magic, up to whatever is the highest level he knows. A character can only attempt one of these checks per day.

Alternately, a character who has mastered a level of magic can spend 8 hours to aid another character with his or her mastery attempts, granting a +5 bonus to that character's check.

Existing magic items that cast spells are dangerous, but can be rendered safe with a moment's concentration by a spellcaster capable of casting spells of sufficient level.

Reign of the Rational: All creatures gain a +5 circumstance bonus on Diplomacy check if they use rational appeals rather than emotional ones. All creatures take a -5 penalty to Intimidate and Sense Motive checks.

Impossibly Distant: Planar travel works to any of the new worlds in orbit, but all other planes are out of range. The Dreaming and the Bleak Gate are inaccessible. The Gyre can be reached from various areas in the world, but travel is perilous, and one-way. Summoning spells work normally, though.

Teleportation and Communication. Gold no longer blocks teleportation. However it is not possible to teleport to a location unless you can either see it or you have traveled to it before. Any travel before the Ob's ritual does not count, and scrying is insufficient, so it won't be possible to teleport around the world for a while, until the PCs travel the traditional way first.

Similarly, magical communication cannot contact any creature unless you can either see it or have interacted with it since the Ob's ritual.

You cannot teleport to a spot that is owned or otherwise controlled by someone who has chosen to bar teleporting intruders.

What constitutes ownership tends to follow social consensus. Streets and forests are public unless signs are prominently posted or fences (or even token lines of rope) are set up. The owner of an area can make exceptions for specific creatures or groups of creatures. This restriction only bars teleporting into an area, not out of an area or within an area.

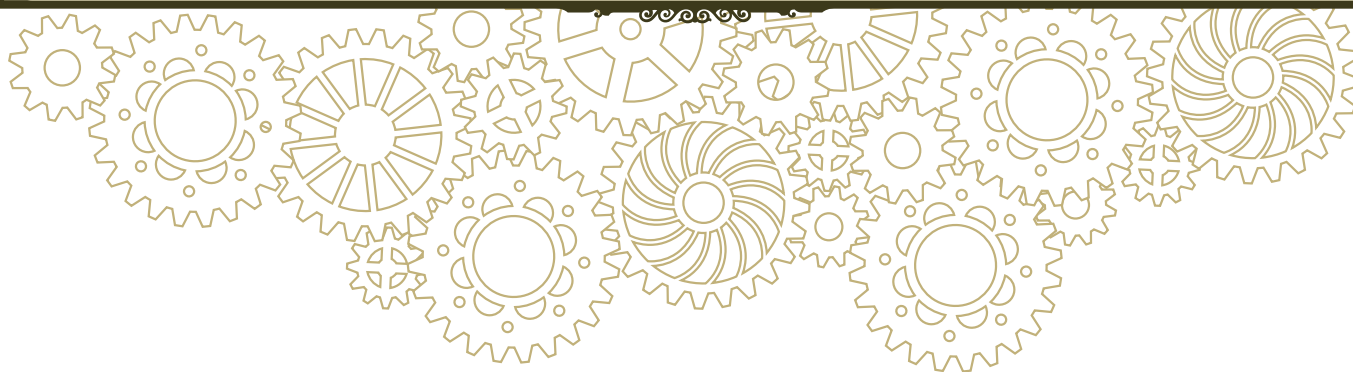
Fourmyle Jaunting. Every creature is able to *jaunt*—to teleport within line of sight as an innate spell-like ability. As a standard action once per day, a character can teleport anywhere he has line of sight to. He cannot teleport to a spot he could not reach normally (e.g., you have to be able to walk or climb there, so no teleporting through a barred cage). He also cannot teleport if he's being held.

A character with the feat Mobility or Run (or who otherwise focuses on fast movement) can instead use this ability once every five minutes.

(There will be a rash of robberies in the coming weeks until word spreads that all you have to do is *think* and you can bar teleporters from your property.)

Three Miles is so Last Age: Spells that restore life to the dead are no longer limited by the body having to travel less than three miles from where it died. However, spirits of the dead are visible in mirrors, standing near their bodies. After a few days, these spirits wander off and might be glimpsed occasionally in reflections.

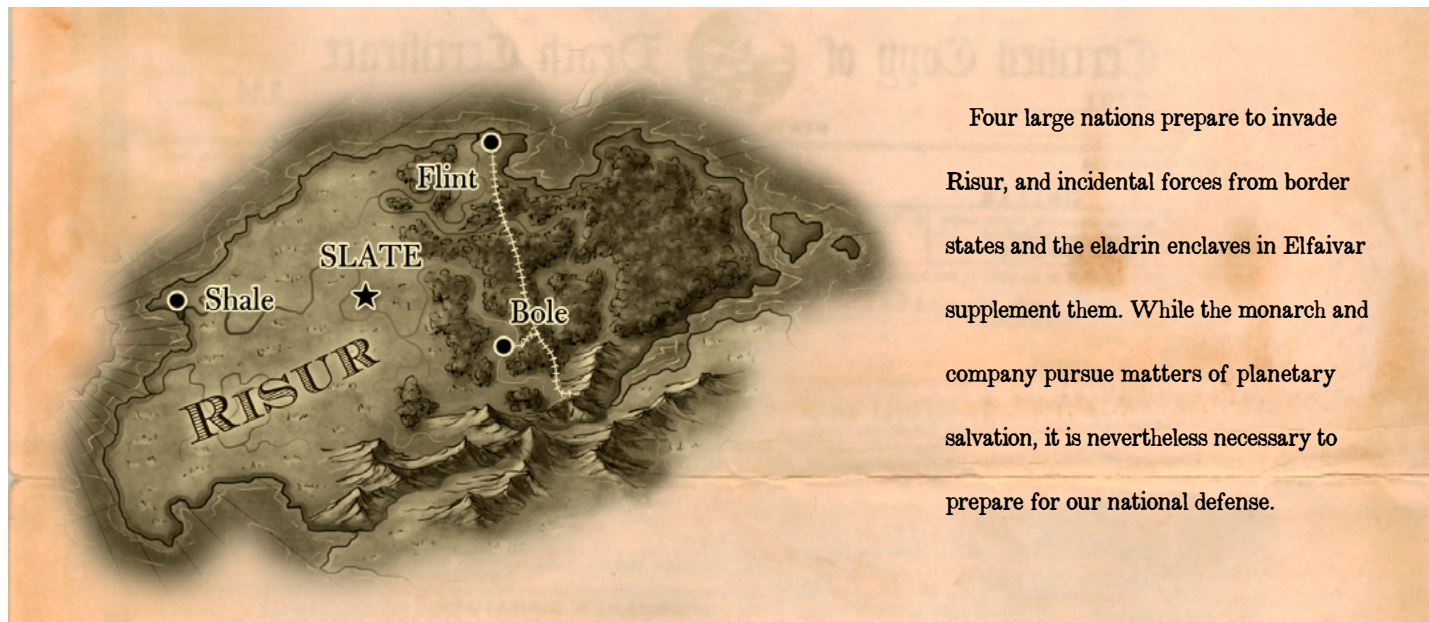
Wings of Liberty: Magical flight is now possible. Spells such as *fly*, *levitation*, and *overland flight* now have their normal duration, and their spell level is reduced by 1.







RISURI NATIONAL DEFENSE



Four large nations prepare to invade Risur, and incidental forces from border states and the eladrin enclaves in Elfaivar supplement them. While the monarch and company pursue matters of planetary salvation, it is nevertheless necessary to prepare for our national defense.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The total Risuri standing military consists of some twenty thousand soldiers. We believe a further eighty thousand citizens could be meaningfully armed and readied, but this would require immense social and economic upheaval.

Our best estimates of the invading forces' military numbers are as follows, and include conscripts and 'soldier-equivalent' monsters. Each hostile nation can certainly field additional forces, but we believe these are the limit of what could be rapidly deployed.

- ♦ **BER.** Thirty thousand. Heroic dangers include immense beasts and druids that can turn into them, plus potentially-unknown weapons designed by Tinker Oddcog.
- ♦ **CRISILLYIR.** Forty-five thousand. Heroic dangers include summoned hosts of angels and powerful divine spellcasters.
- ♦ **DANOR.** Fifty-five thousand. Heroic dangers include elite hivemind-controlled small arms fire and lantern-derived energy weapons.
- ♦ **DRAKR.** Seventy-five thousand. Heroic dangers include giant arcano-scientific artillery and forbidden curses of the old Demonocracy chanted by entire armies.

Military history of course shows that mere manpower is not a key determinant in victory, but it cannot be ignored. Even at our peak, we are outnumbered two-to-one. In a siege a defending force can typically resist an aggressor up to three times their numbers, but of our major cities, only Shale is substantially fortified.

LIKELY OBJECTIVES

Risur has five key centers of power, which the invaders would need to target to defeat us.

- ♦ **SHALE.** Naval power. Fortified, with the largest standing army. Navy based out of Shale is first line of defense against sea invasion.
- ♦ **FLINT.** Industrial production. Limited physical defenses, but significant military presence.
- ♦ **BOLE.** Raw materials. Accessible from the southeast, but poorly defended.
- ♦ **SLATE.** Economic and political center. Difficult for invaders to approach, reasonably fortified. However, traditional defense pacts with the fey are likely no longer active.
- ♦ **WETLANDS.** Food and manpower. Very broad area, hard to defend but also hard to attack.



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RISURI NATIONAL DEFENSE

ARCANE AND TECHNOLOGICAL STANDINGS

New inventions of magic and technology are hard to predict, but we should assume Han Jierre wouldn't launch an attack unless he had a trump card for our primary defenses. We know the Danorans have advanced firearms with munitions enchanted to deter flight and other magic. Drakr has in the past deployed immense cannons capable of leveling yards-wide swaths with a single shot. Ber is renowned for its trained warbeasts, and Crisillyir's long tradition of divine magic might even be bolstered with actual entities from the other worlds they've long claimed they believe in.

Finally, the new hivemind phenomenon might create unusual options for large-unit tactics. We are operating in uncharted territory. If we have any luck, it is that the confederacy arrayed against us do not have a three-hundred-foot-tall golem.

PREDICTION

If they follow the strategy that seems to best exploit our weaknesses, Drakr and Danor could link with a fleet from western Ber and focus on Shale. They could attack within a week, and together they could defeat our naval defenses, albeit at great cost. A new beam projectile witnessed at Axis Island would defeat our walls and make the city's centralized defenses pointless. If the invaders did not worry about casualties, they could seize the city within a week. Three weeks is more likely if they are cautious. Success here gives them relatively uncontested access to our seas.

Simultaneously, eastern Ber could unite with Crisillyir to target Bole. A full defeat is unnecessary; all they need to do is stop shipment of raw materials to Flint, which would slow the beating of our industrial heart.

We predict that, barring providence on our side, the nations arrayed against us could be in a position to assault Shale in as little as six weeks.

A PATH TO VICTORY

However, the situation improves marginally if even one country refrains from invasion. If two refrain, we can likely avoid defeat, though we would assuredly lose territory. Danor alone would be unable to take and hold territory by itself.

We believe our best strategy is a holding action, focused on defense, to stall the enemy while our monarch persuades those who remain in the nations of Ber, Crisillyir, and Drakr that they should abandon this invasion. Fortunately, the new nature of the world appears to have produced grand perils for those three countries, which we can use as leverage to shift their positions.



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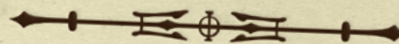
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URSALIÑA NEWS

Several colorful playbills and official notices adorn corner signposts in Ursaliña, all affixed with the two-headed bear that is the city's seal. All news is written in Draconic and Giant (translated here for your convenience).



Keeping You Safe!

Criminals prey upon the unwary—don't give them a target! Due to the absence of a sun, 'day' is officially declared to run from the sixth hour to the eighteenth. Listen for the clocks!

Outside of daytime hours, it is illegal to be outside of your homes, with the exception of travel to and from the festivities at the public house in Resto del Pescador and its surrounding parks.

Foreign visitors who cannot see in the dark will be taken into protective custody and issued travel visas at the cost of two ounces of gold coins if their visit is approved.

Be Mindful But Not Too Mindful!!

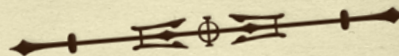
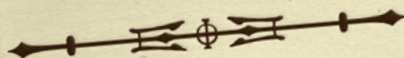
Thinking too much like your neighbors causes the dangerous hivemind threat. Please report possible hiveminds to city police. Remember, Ursaliñans cherish their diversity and unique personalities! Stand out from those around you, and you'll be helping keep us all safe!

Set Your Feet Up!

Fashion-minded and sharp-eyed couriers recently arriving from Seobriga should refresh themselves at the Red Peacock Café in Triunfo Vida district. The fashionable ladies of Ursaliña crave the latest news first—and are willing to pay good money for it! Rooms and baths available.

Fool's Day

Come One, Come All! The jongleurs of Triunfo have turned everything topsy-turvy, and have a show of such acrobatic skill that must be seen to be believed! Performance provided with Cadagyr's grace.



Closed for Renovations

Take heart, lover of the arts! Triunfo Vida's halls will be silent for only a little longer as the Grand Hall is renovated to what Ursaliña deserves: a true marvel of the performing arts! Funds generously provided by the Jesters of Providence and the Local Whaler's League.

Closed for Safety

Centuries of bold action has taken a toll on the Jaula de Oso, and without sun new lighting must be installed so all spectators can witness the action on the field! Inspections will only take a few days, and when it reopens, Maestra Roque promises a spectacle never before seen in our fair city.



LETTER FROM THE END OF THE WORLD

I, Vlendam Heid, son of Anisim Heid, son of Modya Bohm, dictate this letter to professional stenographer Dema Derellova, whose keen fingers won't type on anything but a mastercraft Unalako-brand mecha-typograph. It was personally delivered courtesy of a novel understanding of the teleportation mechanics of this new world, which was crafted by the least-secret conspiracy of our age.

May you have the wisdom and calm to face your coming end.

In a previous correspondence I alerted you to the threat of Grandis Komanov, a radical who had perverted the intent of my philosophical writings and in the process acquired a following of depraved and disgruntled ne'er-do-wells. She inspired a variety of religious devotion among those whose lives were in such a state that they would welcome the end of the world. You might be imagining now what the recent changes in the cosmos could have done for her recruitment efforts, but I assure you you have underestimated her success.

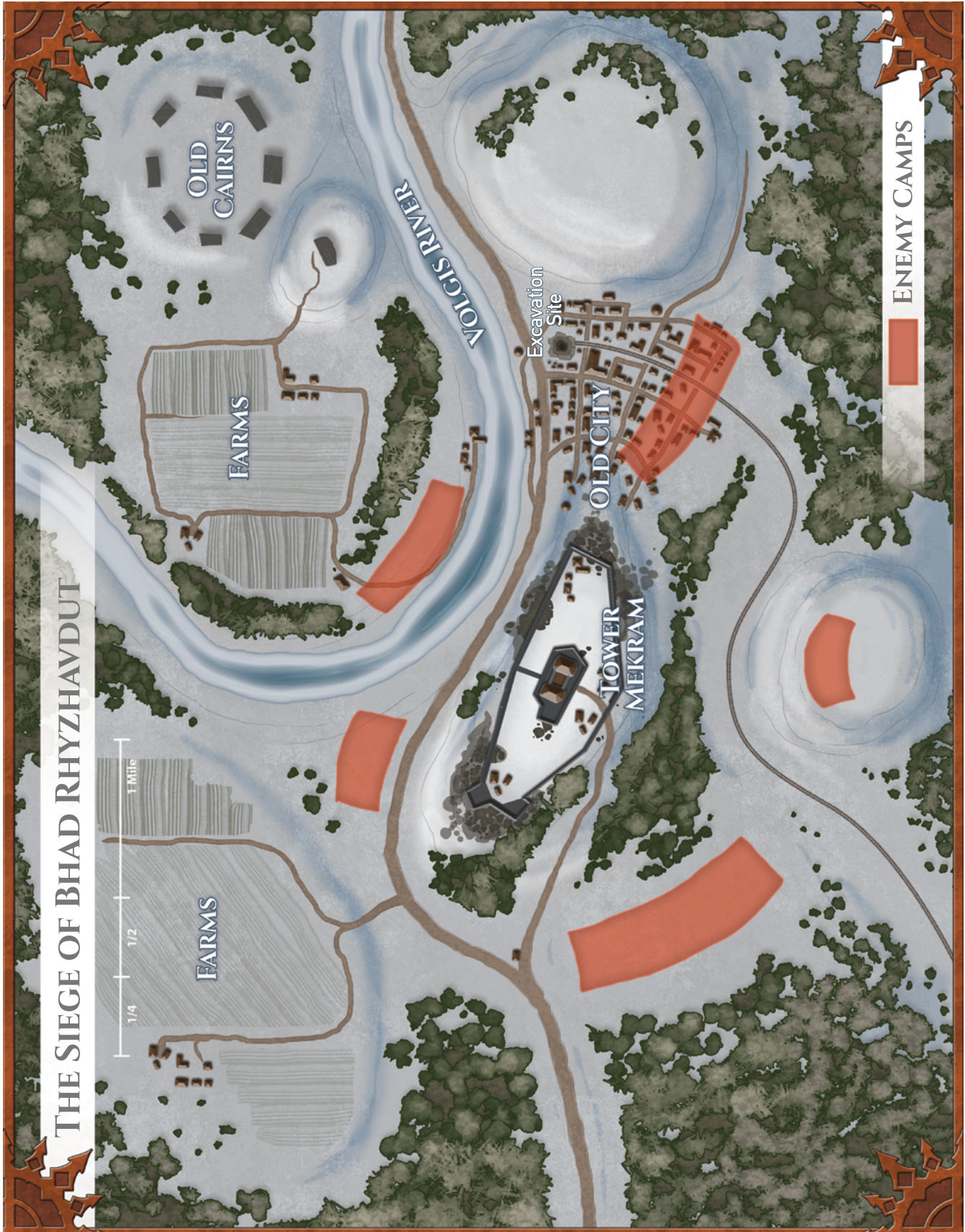
My people have had centuries to refine our fascination with the bleak and gloomy, and though many doomsayers have come and gone, our current situation has rather captured the imagination of a nation. I say this as I look out upon an army of what I wager is twenty or forty thousand souls. If I may get to my point, I am in the city of Bhadravdut in the far east of Drakr, and we are under siege.

I have included in this box materials from Bhadravdut's museum of pre-Demonocracy history. It may seem idle fantasy to you, but it appears our besieger is aided by the reanimated (and rather enlarged) bodies of five ancient warlords, who were prophesied to be present at the final battle of the world. Scouts report she is digging for something in the Old City, and we suspect she will transition from siege to slaughter once she has whatever she is excavating.

Already several thousand citizens of this small city have defected, enticed by Komanov's promise of unadulterated freedom to follow their most base urges. She claims the end of the world is nigh, and I admit it is hard to dispute her. As you appear to be the foremost experts in averting calamity, I write to you in the hope you will make this your problem to address.

Should you decline, I have witnessed your heroics and, with the assumption that your absence is for honorable reasons, I shall not begrudge you. But humbly I entreat you to not let this madwoman lead my nation to an ill-deserved end. Wherever your duty takes you, prepare yourself that your best efforts may fail, and that you might perish in undertaking your duty.

Your friend at the end of the world,
Vlendam Heid





MUSEUM BROCHURE CLIPPING



Музей времён до империи демонов
(Museum of the time before the demon empire)

**На фото: барельеф на изначальном
подъёмном мосту привратной башни крепости**
(Pictured: Carving on the original drawbridge of the tower fortress.)

SYNOPSIS OF THE BIOGRAPHY OF TRIEGENES

Triegenes's autobiography, much like the mortal man himself, is simple and unassuming. Its nine chapters are less than two hundred hand-written pages, and could be easily read in a couple hours. A fish hook made of crude iron keeps the leather band around it in place. He originally composed it as a long epistle to his followers, wanting them to know who he was since he was expecting to die in his battle against the leadership of the Demonocracy.

He discusses the ups and downs of his early life, referring to events involving cultures and politics long since vanished from the world. One day he was caught in a storm at sea and barely survived. Though he couches it in compelling metaphor, the core of the story is that he nearly died, realized that he was nearly forty, wife dead and he with no child, and he didn't think he had been kind enough to others, so he vowed to challenge himself to do better. Due to local events, he ended up leading people into battle against conquerors from across the sea.

Several chapters are devoted to lessons he learned leading people in a war to establish a nation. He spends an entire page extolling the importance of getting enough sleep. A recurring theme is knowing that the purpose of power is not simply to gain more power. After several great victories he had his own nation, but he wanted to defeat the Demonocracy. He was worried that perhaps his ambitions were arrogance, but he defends himself as being motivated to help the slaves of the demons, people who were denied a chance to make more of themselves.

From the writing, it is clear that Triegenes did not trust some of his closest advisors during the campaign against the demons. Some suggested he take a more authoritarian and rigid approach towards ruling the lands they conquered. One passage includes a section that is underlined: "Their desires for power and comfort cannot come at the expense of the people, and I will not allow a new Demonocracy to rule in my name, no matter how pretty the clothes it wears or the masks it hides behind."

The final chapter explains that he has learned how to gain the power of a god, but that if he dies with that power, so too will die those who believe in him. He has always challenged himself to become greater, and this would be the pinnacle of that goal. But if he has this power he fears he'll become a tyrant, and he doesn't want to risk the lives of his followers. He ends with what reads as fatalistic humor. "I have the greatest catch on my hook, but I'm not sure I want to eat it. After all, I'm only fighting horrors from the Abyss. I probably won't need it. If I die in this battle, better it be as a man, not a god. I suppose I have enough power already."

The revelation of his biography, then, is that he never used the *sacrament of apotheosis*. He defeated the Demonocracy with his own power, and died in the process. Tales of his ascension to divinity were mere stories told by those who took power after him.





THE GYRE



THE GYRE

You'll need to explore the Gyre to learn what elemental energies each plane provides, but your guide can provide you with some information from her own travels.

She just watched the mirror-like plane crash (plane 53), which was Av. Five others appeared just six months ago, and though she has explored some of them, she doesn't know their names. They include a world made of ruins of old civilizations layered atop each other (plane 49), a sea with scattered islands she couldn't reach (plane 48), the gold-flecked asteroids where she found you (plane 47), a world of wind-carved stone landmarks that floated too far away for her to reach (plane 44), and a distant plane of obscuring sands (plane 39).

She also watched another world, like a silver ring, be carried north toward the teeth of the Gyre. It looked like it was being pulled by a white comet. She couldn't follow, because there's a gap between the southern and northern planes. She stole a map from a Golden Legion ship which showed the locations and names of planes there, but no details.

Only a few planes here are truly 'safe,' including the windy forest of Caeloon (plane 50), The Plain of Rice (plane 51), and the mountains of Dunkelweiss (plane 31) where rivers of beer flow. Bhoior (plane 41) is eerie – the whole world is a giant, possibly undead turtle where odd voices seem to call to you – but nothing ever accosted your guide while she was there.

Several planes are naturally lethal. Padyer (plane 52) has water that burns like fire. The beasts of Thrag (plane 37) are terribly fast, strong, and cunning. The salt flats of Amrou (plane 36 & 40) are vast, have no water, and are dotted with tombs of mummies. The snowy Wilanir (plane 35) has mists that roll in unexpectedly. She never saw any predators there, but she often found dead prey animals in the wake of a passing fog bank.

The inhabited planes are mostly hostile. If you linger on Shabboath (plane 45), dreams will compel you to enter the flooded tunnels where some massive creature slumbers. The sea of Hunlow (plane 33) is controlled by pirates who kill or capture every outsider, and they take their slaves to an abandoned city, Drozani (plane 25), which floats in the clouds. Perhaps the only friends you might find are the goblins of Etheax (plane 29), but they treat everyone as friends, even the pirates of Hunlow.

A few worlds are completely empty, either plundered ruins or just drifting motes of dead rocks.

Across the deep void, your guide knows that the Golden Legion is based in Egalitrix (plane 18), which resembles an erupting volcano. And she is intrigued by the mystery of a lighthouse on a place they called Ascetia (plane 24), which seems to beckon for people to come. She knows nothing about the other planes of the north, except the names of a few.



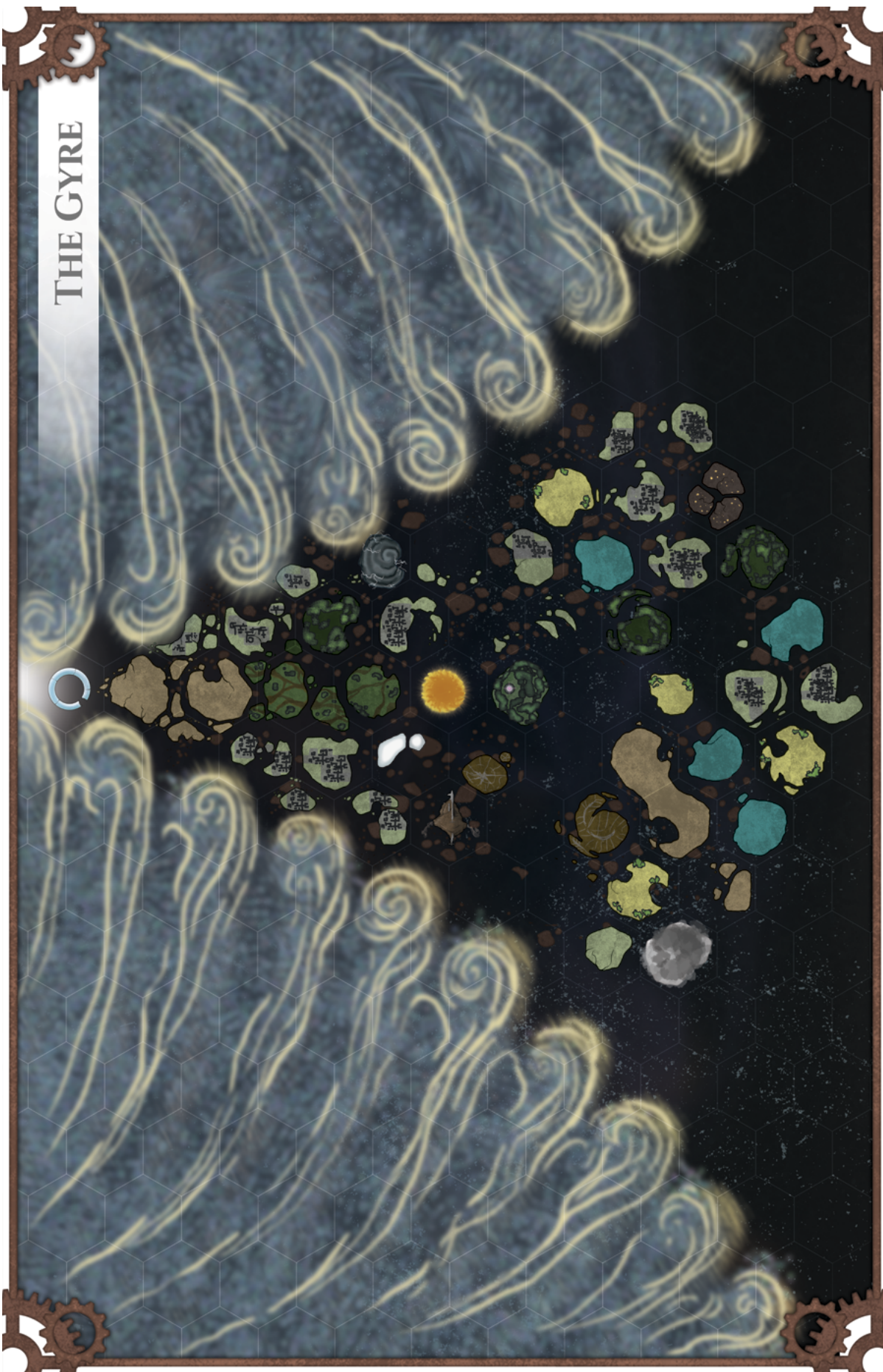
GYRE EXPLORATION

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME	ENERGIES	TRAITS
1.		
2. Teykfa		
3. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
4. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
5. Bonilathe		
6. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
7. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
8. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
9. Metarie		
10. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
11. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
12. Guay		
13. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
14. Ringes		
15. Gardboral		
16. Apo		
17. Iratha Ket		
18. Egalitrix		
19. Obliatas		
20. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
21. Elofasp		
22. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
23. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
24. Ascetia		
25. Drozani		
26. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
27. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME	ENERGIES	TRAITS
28. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
29. Etheax		
30. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
31. Dunkelweiss		
32. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
33. Hunlow		
34. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
35. Wilanir		
36. Amrou		
37. Thrag		
38. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
39. Apet		
40. Amrou		
41. Bhoior		
42. <i>Plundered ruins</i>	—	—
43. <i>Dead motes</i>	—	—
44. Avilona		
45. Shabboath		
46. <i>Empty void</i>	—	—
47. Urin		
48. Mavisha		
49. Nem		
50. Caeloon		
51. The Plain of Rice		
52. Padyer		
53. Av		



THE GYRE



**Reida**

the Arc of History

Life, Time

Teykfa

the Ticking Pendulum

Earth, Time

Bonilathe

the Storm Claw

Air, Fire

Metarie

the Swamp of Sabotage

Life, Water

Guay

the Grove of Dreams

Life, Space

Ringes

the Barren Moor

Earth, Water

Gardboral

the Chimeric Maelstrom

Air, Life

Apo

the Unknown Disk

Death, Space

Iratha Ket

the Graveyard Revel

Death, Life

Egalitrix

Fortress of the Golden Legion

Fire, Space

Obliatas

the Devouring Light

Any

Elofasp

the Spawning Hive

Earth, Life

Ascetia

the Hidden Jungle

Life, Time

Drozani

a Dead City in the Clouds

Air, Death

Etheax

the Tended Flame

Fire, Time

Dunkelweiss

the Fermented Peaks

Earth, Life

Hunlow

a Place for Pirates

Death, Water

Wilanir

the Lair of Discontent

Air, Water

Amrou

the Salt Waste

Death, Earth

Other

Something not in the Gyre

Various Energies



Technology is disrupted.

Storms spawn creatures.

People are more aware of the scale of time, and they can better weigh long-term consequences. Time can be manipulated.

Strong prophecy.

Intermittent spheres of annihilation.

Elementals are common and massive.

Murderous violence.

Dreams create demiplanes.

Giant obedient beasts.

Undead are destroyed by the sun.

Fantastic grand industry will develop, driven by greed.

Greater altruism. Occasional spontaneous musical numbers.

Alcohol is good for you.

Patience and fire magic are both easy.

Slowly the birth rate dwindles to zero.

People are more aware of history.

Something unusual, like Gidim, Mishados, or a homemade pocket dimension.

Mundane counters against supernatural threats are stronger.

Dense mists bring ill tidings.

The ocean is literally a blood-thirsty god who loves villains.

**Thrag**

the Beastly Bounty

Life, Time

Apet

the Distant Plane

Air, Space

Bhoior

the Walking Whisper

Air, Time

Avilona

the Final Murmur

Air, Death

Shabboath

the Severed Sea

Earth, Water

Urim

the Shattered Golden Chain

Earth, Space

Mavisha

the Mysterious Deep

Water, Time

Nem

the Plane of Ruin

Death, Time

Caeloon

the Paper Wind

Air, Life

**The Plain
of Rice**

Space, Water

Padyer

a Clean Realm

Fire, Water

Av

Plane of Mirrors

Death, Life

Jiese

the Fire of Industry

Fire, Life

Perlocus

a Voice on the Wind

Air, Earth

Mojang

a Wild Artifice

Earth, Life

Ostea

the Beating Heart

Life, Water

Ratios

the Cold Logic

Earth, Space

Fourmyle

the Selfish Dominion

Death, Space

Illocus

the Cascading Flame

Fire, Time

Baden

the Ghost Moon

Air



Flight is limited to
five minutes.

Sounds echo, sometimes
years later.

Planar travel limited to
local system.

Rapid reincarnation.

Lingering souls are stronger
than corporeal undead.

Islands conceal secrets.

Gold blocks teleportation.

Creates an 'underdark'
cavern system.

Conjures physical reflection
of whatever world it orbits.

Water burns and purges.

The entire world is
shallow water.

People are resilient in the
face of tragedy.

Rapid healing.

Nature follows orders.

Persuasion is more effective.

Precision technology functions.

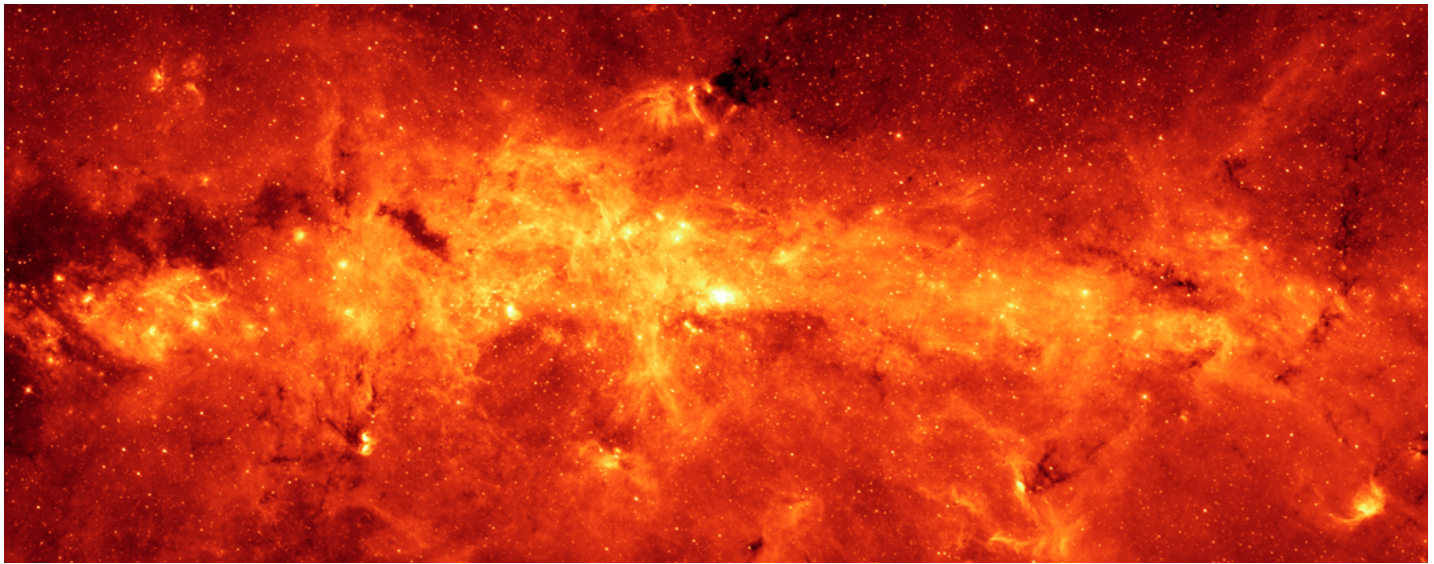
Flight is easy.

Consequences cascade rapidly.

Casual teleportation.

Intuition is weaker, reason
stronger.

The Ritual of the Axis Seal



The ritual details you retrieved from the Grand Librarium of Alais Primos, combined with Pemberton and your own observations of the drained lakebed on Axis Island let you know the following with confidence. Uncertainties remain, however.

Physical Space

The ritual actually involves the entirety of Axis Island, but it is centered on the Axis Seal—a hundred-foot diameter disk of gold, which covers a twenty-foot diameter hemispherical depression in the bedrock, ten feet deep. Out of this depression flare intense blasts of energy from across the multiverse. If the seal were properly seated atop this depression, it would focus that energy and create the sun.

The seal lies in the middle of a four-hundred-foot diameter field of flattened stone, around which carvings of primitive orc runes form seven rings, each twenty-five feet farther out. Spaced somewhat irregularly around these rings are vertical pits. The golden seal itself would only cover the central depression and the innermost ring, but when it is in place the other pits are inaccessible.

The rings represent, in order outward:

- ♦ The plane of fire. (Red)
- ♦ The plane of air. (Orange)
- ♦ The world itself, which has no pit, but is surrounded by a smaller ring that does have a pit, representing the plane of life. (Green)
- ♦ The plane of water. (Dark Blue)
- ♦ The plane of earth. (Gold)
- ♦ The plane of space (Gray), which is surrounded by a smaller ring that has its own pit, representing the plane of time. (Light Blue)
- ♦ The plane of death. (Purple)

Each pit is about fifteen feet in diameter and contains the fifty foot long white stone shaft of a petrified tree. Halfway down that shaft, a small alcove can hold an icon, which represents a particular plane. The Ancients used gold icons marked with symbols representing a

constellation, which set those worlds' place in the night sky. Any hand-held item can be used as an icon, but crafting one requires either close knowledge of the plane, or prolonged study of it.

You already may have some icons you discovered in your investigations, and somehow you know about other worlds that exist in the Gyre, though you're sure you never went there. You're equally sure that very soon you'll gain access to planar icons for some of those worlds. See the end of this document for details of the worlds that may be available to you.

Energetic Tendrils

Arcs of energy from the central depression mostly crackle upward, but every minute or two one will slice out laterally to a distance of several hundred feet. The force is enough to blast back and likely kill anyone who tries to come too close. Sometimes where one of these arcs strikes, a sliver of a world appears – a forest, a crackling lava field, a waterfall—only to vanish a few seconds later. Sometimes even creatures are visible in these slivers. The tendrils are slow enough to avoid if you keep your distance.

Obscurati Interference

The Ob built a small bunker to the northwest of the seal, which was damaged by saboteurs loyal to the Voice of Rot. Ritual mages chanting from within that bunker shielded the colossus Borne, but when they died, the colossus was struck by a tendril and crippled.

When Borne was damaged, he collapsed, and the hundred-foot disk of the seal fell atop him. The colossus suffered immense damage across his body, which cracked his torso and blew apart half an arm and one-and-a-half legs. The ritual was left incomplete.



Manipulating the Ritual Pieces

Crisillyiri scholars posited that the Ancients used mass ritual telekinesis to lift the sunken columns that control the planar links. You'll have to find another way to lift them.

Crane Mechanics

If your airship is equipped with a crane, decide where to mount it, but it's probably best on the rear. It is treated as a ship component, and can be damaged if dealt one 'strike' in naval combat, or destroyed if dealt two. In person-scale combat, it has 200 hit points and hardness 20. Repairing it mid-combat if it's damaged would take at least a minute, ten crew, and an Intelligence check (DC 20), or some sort of magic. If it is destroyed, repairs require magic.

The cables are the most vulnerable spot, and while the gripping claw is deployed, 100 damage dealt to the cable will sever it. Replacing a cable uses the same rules as repairing the crane itself.

The crane has enough lifting capacity to pull one of the 15-ft. diameter, 50-ft. long stone columns in the ritual field out of the ground. To do so, the ship must be positioned so the crane is within thirty feet of the column, no more than sixty feet above the ground, and someone must spend a move action and make a Dexterity check (DC 15) to operate the crane and grab onto the column. No more than one attempt can be made per round.

Once the column is grabbed, directing the crane to lift it only requires a swift action, but it takes two rounds for the column to emerge enough for its planar icon to be replaced. Extracting the full 50-ft. column takes four rounds. If the crane releases the column, it slides back into place over the course of a round.

If the ship moves while hoisting a column, the crane operator must make a Dexterity check as a free action (DC 20) or else the crane loses its grip. If the ship moves out of range, though, the crane automatically

loses its grip. Moving directly upward can pull the column out in a single round. If a column is pulled entirely out of its hole, reseating it is a very fine process, nigh impossible in the heat of battle (DC 25).

Divine Intervention

With the *sacrament of apotheosis*, a PC can use his divine strength to grab a column and pull it out of the ground. It takes four move actions by *sacrament*-empowered PCs to lift a column enough to access the planar icon, or eight actions to remove it fully. Multiple PCs can contribute actions in this way.

A PC who chooses the *Tower Above* boon has quadruple the effect of a normal *sacrament*-empowered PC. One with the *From On High* boon can completely lift a column out with a single move action, and can carry it as easily as he'd carry a one-handed item.

Moving the Seal

The immense golden seal is much heavier. It requires four move actions by *sacrament*-empowered PCs (or one action by a PC with *Tower Above*) to lift the seal barely off the ground and move it 10 feet. A PC with *From On High* can move the seal forty feet with a single move action. A crane on the ship is insufficient.

Swapping Icons

It's as easy as knocking aside the old icon and placing in a new one, though the new one must belong to a plane that is sufficiently charged with energy of the appropriate type. Once the column is lowered fully into the ground, the new plane is linked to this world with a mighty surge of energy. Whoever placed the icon in the column is then able to control that energy. The GM knows what that energy can be used for.

Planes and Powers

The following planes might be available for you to use.

Do note, in the original planar set-up, the plane of earth **Urim** caused gold to block planar travel, so the seal made interplanar travel within the system limited; and **Apet** made planar travel from worlds outside the system difficult; while **Nem** attempted to destroy intruders from other worlds. Almost any other arrangement of planes will result in a world that can be more easily reached by travelers from other planes.

Obscurati Planes

Eight planes are currently linked.

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
A. Jiese , the fire of industry	Fire, Life	Precision technology functions.
B. Perlocus , a voice on the wind	Air, Earth	Persuasion is more effective.
C. Mojang , a wild artifice	Earth, Life	Nature follows orders.
D. Ostea , the beating heart	Life, Water	Rapid healing.
E. Ratios , the cold logic	Earth, Space	Intuition is weaker, reason stronger.
F. Fourmyle , the selfish dominion	Death, Space	Casual teleportation.
G. Illocus , the cascading flame	Fire, Time	Consequences cascade rapidly.
H. Baden , the ghost moon	Air	Flight is easy.





Gyre Planes

Thirty-one planes were available in the Gyre. (Numbering corresponds with the Gyre map.)



PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
1. Reida, the arc of history	Life, Time	Strong prophecy.
2. Teykfa, the ticking pendulum	Earth, Time	People are more aware of the scale of time, and they can better weigh long-term consequences. Time can be manipulated.
5. Bonilathe, the storm claw	Air, Fire	Storms spawn creatures.
9. Metarie, the swamp of sabotage	Life, Water	Technology is disrupted.
12. Guay, the grove of dreams	Life, Space	Dreams create demiplanes.
14. Ringes, the barren moor	Earth, Water	Murderous violence.
15. Gardboral, the chimeric maelstrom	Air, Life	Elementals are common and massive.
16. Apo, the unknown disk	Death, Space	Intermittent spheres of annihilation.
17. Iratha Ket, the graveyard revel	Death, Life	Greater altruism. Occasional spontaneous musical numbers.
18. Egalitrix, fortress of the Golden Legion	Fire, Space	Fantastic grand industry will develop, driven by greed.
19. Obliatas, the devouring light	Any	Undead are destroyed by the sun.
21. Elofasp, the spawning hive	Earth, Life	Giant obedient beasts.
24. Ascetia, the hidden jungle	Life, Time	People are more aware of history.
25. Drozani, a dead city in the clouds	Air, Death	Slowly the birth rate dwindles to zero.
29. Etheax, the tended flame	Fire, Time	Patience and fire magic are both easy.

PLANAR LOCATION, NAME, AND MONIKER	ENERGIES	TRAITS
31. Dunkelweiss, the fermented peaks	Earth, Life	Alcohol is good for you.
33. Hunlow, a place for pirates	Death, Water	The ocean is literally a blood-thirsty god who loves villains.
35. Wilanir, the lair of discontent	Air, Water	Dense mists bring ill tidings.
36 & 40. Amrou, the salt waste	Death, Earth	Mundane counters against supernatural threats are stronger.
37. Thrag, the beastly bounty	Life, Time	Rapid reincarnation.
39. Apet, the distant plane	Air, Space	Planar travel limited to local system.
41. Bhoior, the walking whisper	Air, Time	Sounds echo, sometimes years later.
44. Avilona, the final murmur	Air, Death	Flight is limited to five minutes.
45. Shabboath, the severed sea	Earth, Water	Creates an 'underdark' cavern system.
47. Urim, the shattered golden chain	Earth, Space	Gold blocks teleportation.
48. Mavisha, the mysterious deep	Water, Time	Islands conceal secrets.
49. Nem, the plane of ruin	Death, Time	Lingering souls are stronger than corporeal undead.
50. Caeloon, the paper wind	Air, Life	People are resilient in the face of tragedy.
51. The Plain of Rice	Space, Water	The entire world is shallow water.
52. Padyer, a clean realm	Fire, Water	Water burns and purges.
53. Av, plane of mirrors	Death, Life	Conjures physical reflection of whatever world it orbits.

Completing the Ritual

If at any point all the columns are in the ground, there are links to planes producing all eight energy types, and the golden seal is placed

over the central depression, your information implies that the ritual will be sealed with magic, and the changes made will become permanent.



Final Sacrament

Even with powerful magic it would require years of effort to reopen the seal and make further changes.

It's unclear what would happen if you try to close the seal while columns are still out of the ground.

The party may have learned the *sacrament of apotheosis* from memory events using the *lost arc of Reida*, or been taught it by Ashima-Shimtu or anyone she told it to. While the full scope of the ritual varies depending on the nature of the belief being harnessed, in this fateful hour the *sacrament* can focus the faith of millions so that their champions can transcend the limits of mortal flesh and confront a threat unmatched by any in the world's history. Those who would use this power would be wise to appreciate the immense gift and responsibility they are being granted.



Performing the Sacrament

For the ritual to function, its subject or subjects must be adherents of an ideology that is strongly held by at least hundreds of people. The more fervent and widespread the belief, the greater the boon granted to the subjects shall be. If the belief has a name, the bond to the adherents is stronger, but even those who know it by a different name can contribute.

The ritual requires four people to perform, at least one of whom must be a spellcaster of level 15 or higher. The ritual performers must spread entrails and blood of a lion, an eagle, a whale, and a dragon in a ring. Two golden urns sit in the center of the ring, one empty, the other filled with a mixture of the animals' blood. The subject or subjects of the ritual stands in the center, and those performing the ritual use the animal blood to paint the name of the belief across the subject's flesh. The subject then must shed a notable quantity of blood (enough to deal 20 damage) into the second urn.

The subject or subjects recite the incantation of the ritual: "Before I was nothing but words. Now I am all that is believed. I am faith made flesh. I am flesh made a god."

Once they complete the incantation, their appearance will shift as the power of the faithful floods into them. They might grow in size, their eyes might glow, and if they are not strong-willed enough their entire personality and body might be overwhelmed by the image the believers have of their ideal.

Effects of the Sacrament

The recipients of the ritual, hereafter referred to as 'the vessels,' all gain the following special abilities, as well as specific boons they choose. The number of boons depends on the extent of the faith empowering them.

Mental Effects

The vessels each feel a subconscious connection to all the believers granting them power, hereafter referred to as 'the masses.' There's no control granted by this link, but each side can sense the desires of the other. By concentrating, it's possible for the vessel to speak to any or all of the believers empowering him.

Weak-willed vessels lose their sense of self as the faith of the masses transforms their personalities to match what they believe. This is what happened to Kasvarina's daughter, who was not prepared to be the focus of so much power. Indeed, trying to turn people with weak wills into vessels would drive them insane.

Physical Effects

The vessel is immune to environmental damage that was not created by an active spell effect. The vessel has DR 30/-, resist 30 to all energy types, and is immune to charm and compulsion effects as well as effects that impede movement as if under the effects of a *freedom of movement* spell. However, anyone who says the vessel's real name ignores these resistances and immunities for one hour.



The vessel gains blindsight within 20 ft. Additionally, he can manipulate objects at a range of 20 feet as readily as if in his reach and has a lifting capacity as if he were Large. As a move action he can shift between his normal size and Large, gaining the attendant space and reach. However, this does not alter any of the vessel's ability scores, AC, nor damage.

Physical harm that makes it past the vessel's defenses is shared with the masses. The damage affects the vessel normally, but similar injury is also spread among the masses. If an attack deals 40 fire damage, the vessel would take 10 fire damage, and 10 fire damage would be spread around believers scattered across the world, causing one or two to burst into flames and die. The vessel feels all these deaths.

The death of a vessel has a much greater backlash, though only if no other vessel also shares in the ritual. If all the vessels of a ritual die, many among the masses also perish. The specifics of how widespread this would be are unclear.

Additional Boons

The number of faithful contributing to the *sacrament* determines how many 'boons' are gained, which must be divided among the various vessels. If there's a dispute, the vessels choose their boons in order based on highest Charisma. The GM will inform you of how many boons the party has access to, which depends on how much renown and support you have around this world and beyond. You and the GM may agree on alternative boons, at his discretion.

At-Will Spell-like Ability. The vessel chooses one spell of 6th level or lower from any class spell list. He can use that spell as a spell-like ability at will (Pick something thematic. Searching for the optimal min-maxed choice is forbidden. You're a god now, not a munchkin.)

Tower Above. The vessel's blindsight extends to 50 ft., as does the range he can manipulate objects. He has the lifting capacity of a Huge creature, and can become Huge (or Large), which does not alter his ability scores, defenses, or weapon damage.

From On High. *Requires Tower Above.* The vessel's blindsight extends to 200 ft., as does the range he can manipulate objects. He has the lifting capacity of a Gargantuan creature, and can become Gargantuan (or Huge or Large), which does not alter his ability scores, defenses, or weapon damage. The character in this form is roughly 50 feet tall. The vessel also gains a fly speed of 60 feet (perfect), with an altitude limit of 300 feet.

Unstoppable. The vessel gains a +30 foot bonus to speed in all his modes of movement. All his attacks now deal half damage on a miss.

When the vessel dies, he may make an attack roll at his highest bonus or cast a harmful spell and have it affect all those who harmed him in the past half hour.

Creator. As a standard action, the vessel can create any mundane object up to Huge size anywhere within his reach, or repair a damaged or destroyed object. This can repair up to two points of hull integrity to a ship. If used as an attack, the creation is gradual enough that it requires an attack roll and does no more than 40 damage.

Plentitude. The vessel is immune to blinded, dazed, and stunned conditions, perhaps because he has multiple heads or simply multiple aspects. The vessel can have equipped any number of handheld items, and is always considered to have two hands free. This could be because he has many limbs, or simply shifts reality, or can call items to hand or dismiss them with a thought. This boon does not grant the vessel extra actions, but the vessel does gain a +6 bonus to attack rolls for attacks of opportunity.

Duration

The effect of the ritual lasts for one day, though a vessel can spend a full-round action to end his connection to the faithful. Otherwise, only killing all the vessels will end the ritual prematurely. The ritual cannot be performed again for the same ideal while the first is active, so typically no more than five or so people can act as vessels at once.





Special Thanks to Our Fans

The first fan creation in the ZEITGEIST setting was in early 2011, before the first adventure was even released. I ran a secret playtest for a group of forum members on EN World, and they came up with PCs who would be canonized as the B-Team of the Royal Homeland Constabulary in Flint. Many of the background characters in the first few adventures were originally informants or contacts those constables knew.

Shortly after we released *Island at the Axis of the World*, one of those players began posting recaps of his games. Within a year there were eight different threads about how different groups handled the campaign, and a handful are still active today.¹

For example, poster Nathan “Elfshire” Meister keeps a running list of ‘memorable moments’ from his campaign on an Obsidian Portal blog. My favorite:

Session 33. Following the Adulthood Challenge in the Ber’s Summer Court, the constables came to the realization that Hugo Von Gearkinson had officially become a man.

In an unrelated occurrence, Hugo turned a T-rex into a medium-sized velociraptor for all of six seconds using a prototype shrink ray.

Sometimes events in those game reports struck me as cool enough that I slipped them into future adventures. Meanwhile, Kickstarter backers pledged extra for a chance to make their mark on the setting. John Rogers, writer of a D&D comic and creator of the TV show *Leverage*, came up with two of the ships that the RHC can lend to the constables. One GM invented a city in Ber for a sideplot, which became canon. Rock Rackus’s musical oeuvre, the delicious Goblin spiked pickle, the state of Flint’s journalism, and even the kobold spymaster El Extraño owe their existence to ZEITGEIST fans.

Certainly the grandest involvement of the fanbase came during the ‘Obscurati convocation,’ which ran concurrently with the Kickstarter to fund these hardcover compilations. A thread on EN World served as virtual venue for posters—taking on the roles of Ob officers—as they debated the merits of five proposed ‘new world orders,’ suggested their own changes, and occasionally waxed villainous. The final plan that the Obscurati decides to enact at the end of Adventure Nine is the handiwork of Dame Constance Baden, a.k.a. Raja Doake.

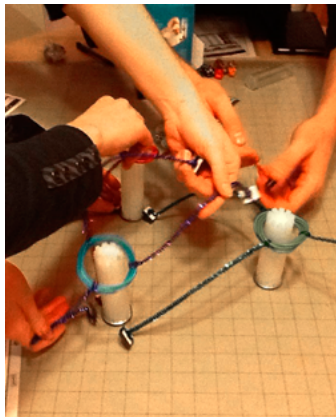
I had the pleasure of running a one-shot for Doake and his gaming group at Gen Con in 2014, where they came in costume as their characters. The GM, of course, had the privilege of playing Rock Rackus.



¹I’m eagerly waiting to hear from the first group to finish the campaign.



Below are a handful of creations and vignettes by other gamers playing through this adventure path.



Steve “Shimrath” Quillen has a knack for building combat set-pieces. Here we see his group trying to solve Lya Jierre’s Three Towers puzzle, then assaulting the lighthouse at the Axis Island fortress, and finally trying to survive the night atop Cauldron Hill.

He joked that for the session after that one, perhaps he should have built a factory map with cardboard, then set it on fire during the combat. Hm. I never saw any photos after that one...



METAGAMERS



ANONYMOUS

Logo of Metagamer’s Anonymous, a podcast at prismatictsunami.com, produced by Erik Carl. I ‘met’ Erik online years ago after finding his gaming blog, where he recounted his group’s play-through of *War of the Burning Sky*. In 2012 he started this podcast, which focuses on character-driven roleplaying, and before long his group started playing *ZEITGEIST*. So far they’ve posted Actual Play sessions up to nearly the end of *The Dying Skyseer*, but just this past month after attending their local convention TsunamiCon, I had the opportunity to visit him and his family of gamers in Wichita, KS.



They had just finished *Cauldron-Born*, so I ran for them a light-hearted one-shot. In keeping with tradition, the GM got to play Rock Rackus.





This illustration by Elly Beck depicts a character in her group, Alienor Contessa Soliogn-Stark, romancing Gale. The Soliogn family – which also owned Gale – adopted Alienor after, as a young child, she survived the shelling of an orphanage in Cherage by future king Aodhan of Risur.² In this group’s campaign, Alienor would go on to kill Lorcan Kell, get her arm severed in the Beran rebellion, and then become a member of the Unseen Court.

I all sorts of adore this illo, and could definitely see the public in Flint buying tawdry romance novels about the alleged liaisons of the city’s famous fey terrorist.


² Alienor’s backstory is tied to a great little in-joke between me and Thurston Hillman, who wrote three of the adventures. At Gen Con in 2013 I ran a one-shot called *The Kraken Caper*, where Thursty played young Aodhan during the Third Yerasol War, on a mission to steal a steam warship out of the Cherage harbor. It was Thursty’s call to fire on the city to distract reinforcements, instantly turning the beloved and regal Aodhan into a scoundrel, to the point that we joked he probably just hit an orphanage. We wrote that into the next adventure as ‘vile Danoran propaganda,’ which is totally true.

This same campaign is source of my biggest “I wish I’d thought of that.” Elly, the artist, joined the group in the middle of the second adventure, and she wanted to play an eladrin woman who thought she’d been stuck in another plane for five centuries, just narrowly missing the Great Malice. The GM posted on EN World that he had an idea, but wanted to be sure it wouldn’t wreck anything later on: he wanted her true identity to be Kasvarina, co-founder of the conspiracy, which would make adventure eight, *Diaspora*, a personal story of her discovering her true past. That was brilliant.



Finally, I need to thank the first fans of ZEITGEIST, my home gaming group, who first playtested the campaign and inspired much of the setting. If you find a good posse of gamers, stick with them, because they’ll give you years

of joy. And occasionally, when you ask for NPC concepts, one of them will say, “How about Kanye West, but an astronaut?”³

Compared to something like Paizo’s Pathfinder setting, our fanbase is comparably small, and I suspect members of different gaming groups will seldom cross paths physically, but through EN World’s messageboards people can meet others with a deep well of shared experiences. And as we bring ZEITGEIST to a close in this book, I personally want to thank our fans for being so invested in what we’ve created. I hope you take it and create the world you want. 

Fin

³ I like Rock Rackus, okay? So sue me.



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